

Um Bongo and Sports: How Can a Brand Communicate Through its Mascots

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Masters Degree in Management from the Faculdade de Economia da Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

# Um Bongo and Sport – How Can a Brand Communicate Through its Mascots

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A Project carried out on the Children Consumer Behavior Field Lab, with the  
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## 1. Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze if young children (5 to 9 years old) are more aware and have more knowledge of brands that use mascots to communicate their products compared with brands that do not use mascots. Trade characters are useful to create awareness, and consumers that are able to establish empathy with a mascot will also have preference for the product with which the mascot is associated.

The brand in which this study will be focused is Um Bongo. Also, this study will try to ensure that Um Bongo contains the essential components that every children need to practice Sport or any Physical Activity and that Um Bongo can create an incentive within its target to practice sport. Brand mascots also have the capability to be a symbol of the main attributes of a product and to communicate key product benefits of the product, like for example an association with sport.

A specific type of Qualitative Research, Focus Group Analysis was performed with a sample of 30 children, with the objective of gathering information about the brand image of Um Bongo, awareness of brands and also the importance of sports in creating value for Um Bongo.

The results suggest that the use of mascots provide more awareness for a brand, within young children. Moreover, the association with any sport or physical activity may also ensure an increase in the affective values for a given brand, although ethical concerns have to be used in the evaluation of using such claims, namely by checking if the product is nutritionally suitable to be consumed in sports occasions.

**Keywords:** Children: Mascots: Um Bongo: Sport

## 2. Introduction

This study focus on one brand, Um Bongo that since its creation in 1982 relies on the same advertising method: communicating through its mascots. The television advertisement of Um Bongo contains the same music since the product was launched, which enhances its memorization by the consumers. As children's exposure to advertising is extensive and ever increasing (Moses and Baldwin, 2005), it is the goal of this study to analyze if Um Bongo, through the use of its mascots, is able to gather more awareness than similar brands without mascots. The mascots play an important role in Um Bongo, because children retain more the visual elements of the brands, like colors and illustrations (Rossiter, 1975). Mascots are drawn to be memorable (Mizerski, 1995) and the use of them in advertisements is the ideal way to attract attention from children.

Brand image of the brand was measured, from the customer's point of view. The objective was to analyze if there were differences between the image of the brand as seen by the brand and by its consumers. If differences are registered, this means that Um Bongo may not be considering some aspects of its product that are relevant for the choices made by consumers, subsequently meaning that changes in its communication strategies should be performed.

Brand knowledge and awareness will be evaluated, comparing Um Bongo with two competitors that do not use mascots in their promotion. To measure the values and respective differences, research techniques like phrase completion, likert scales and picture interpretations were used in focus groups that were conducted in schools. Along with the children's questionnaires, a small questionnaire was sent to the parents of the participating children with a letter requiring permission for the study to be undertaken. The objective was to understand the buying and consumer behavior of parents and children respectively, also to verify if Um Bongo is perceived as a healthy product or not. One of the objectives of this work project is to guarantee that Um Bongo can increase the practice of sport or any physical activity within its target. To ensure this, two tasks must be performed. The first one is to clarify why physical activities are important to the health of a person.

Second, we must analyze the nutritional components of Um Bongo and see if they are positive for the health of the target consumers and if it can provide energetic levels to a person before the start of any physical activity. For this last step, the opinion from a nutritionist was required.

The results will state if the brand can increase its value by associating itself with sports and will also provide answers to the question if Um Bongo provides health for its consumers.

### **3. Um Bongo**

#### **3.1. Overview**

Um Bongo is a mixed tropical fruit juice that was created in 1982 by Nestlé's subsidiary in the United Kingdom, Libby. Um Bongo's rights to be used in Portugal were acquired in 1992 by Compal, which in 2004 merged into Sumol+Compal. Um Bongo sells close to 14 million liters per year in the Portuguese market, being market leader in value, in the food channel, the second in volume (Fórum da Criança, 2008).

Um Bongo sells 4 juice flavors: 8 fruits, orange, pineapple and strawberry (introduced in the Portuguese market in 2008) in 4 different types of packaging: one and a half liter bottles (1,5 l.), one liter bottles (1 l.), a quarter of liter bottles (0,25 l.) and small packages (“pacotinhos”) of a fifth of a liter (0,2 l.).

Regarding flavors, the best-seller is the 8 fruits mix, accounting for 60% of the sales of Um Bongo, while in the packaging the most popular is the small package of 0.2 liters (66% of sales), (Fórum da Criança, 2008).

Um Bongo uses a total of 6 distribution channels in order that its products reach the final consumers. The most important is the food channel that includes hypermarkets and supermarkets, accounting for 58% of the sales of the company. The Cash&Carry channel follows, with 24% of sales. The other 4 channels, distributors, Horeca (Hotéis, restaurantes e cafés), CNH (contas nacionais horeca – like Lusomundo and McDonalds) and traditional alimentation account for 28%

of the sales of Um Bongo.

A multitude of points of contact is used for the promotion of the company, ranging from the internet to the participation in events. The methods used to reach and gather the attention of the consumer are billboards in the streets, advertising in the television and cinema (the song of Um Bongo is a centerpiece of the communication strategy of the company since its beginnings in the United Kingdom), participation in events directed to children during specific times of the year (children's day, summer, return to school, Christmas...), the internet channel (which includes advergames for the children) and in-place advertising campaigns.

All the data used was provided by Dra.Cidália Almeida, Marketing Director of soft drinks from Sumol+Compal, in a meeting held on February 2010. The data belongs to studies made by Fórum da Criança for the years of 2007 and 2008.

### **3.2. Target**

Um Bongo's target consists of children between 3 and 10 years old, which is known inside the company as “infantil e primária”, that is pre-primary and primary attending children.

These children belong to Piaget's preoperational (2 to 7 years old) and concrete operational (7 to 11 years old) stages of Cognitive Development (John, 1999). Regarding Social Development, they belong to both the Perceptual (3 to 7 years old) and Analytical stages (John, 1999). The Perceptual stage is characterized by a general orientation towards the immediate and readily observable features of the market-place. Children's consumer knowledge is characterized by perceptual features and distinctions, often based on a single dimension or attribute, meaning that decisions are made on the basis of very limited information, usually only a single perceptual dimension.

The Analytical stage is marked by enormous change compared to the Perceptual stage. There are dramatic increases in information processing abilities, resulting in a more complex and sophisticated understanding of the market-place. Children do present more thoughtfulness in their choices, considering more than just a single perceptually salient attribute and employing decision

strategies when choosing a given product (John, 1999).

This is the primary target, the secondary target being the parents of the children. The parents are important for the company because children of the age of the target normally don't buy the products for their own consumption, and in most of the cases they don't even choose them, that responsibility lying with the parents, that buy the products they believe are beneficial for the health of their children.

Um Bongo perceives itself as a funny brand, full of joy and adventure that gives to the children quality products that also guarantees them some fun. The elements that help transmit these properties of the brand to its target are the mascots, which will be the subject of further analysis. The song is one of most known features of the company, as it isn't changed since the company was established and also because it has now crossed two generations, influencing today's children as it influenced their parents. Also, we must not forget the use of jungle animals as the mascots. Animal representations are generally used in products with important nutritional qualities, given the associations with vitality and dynamism that certain animals create (Côte-Real, 2007).

Being a soft drink without gas, more specifically a mixed-fruit juice (composed by 20% of juice) the competitors of Um Bongo are many and varied. As a drink that can be consumed at any time of the day and complement every meal, its substitutes are other juices, mixed or 100% juices, yoghurts, milk (plain or mixed with chocolate), or even soft drinks with gas (Coca-Cola and Sumol).

However, the main market where Um Bongo competes is the kids segment, where it is market leader by volume, with a 6.2% market share in the juices and soft drink market (Nielsen Food Index, 2009). Many of the competing brands use mascots to communicate their products that being the reason why they are considered copies of Um Bongo, although they are succeeding in stealing clients from Um Bongo. These are private labels, brands created by the distribution chains to be sold at their places at a cheaper price than other brands. The private labels that compete with Um

Bongo in the kids segment are: Sonae (Mico&Mica), Minipreço, Auchan (Rik&Rok) just to mention some. Their image is based on a mascot or other appealing character and mixed with an easy-handling colorful packaging.

#### **4. Mascots**

Um Bongo's mascots are probably the most recognizable and important element in the communication of Um Bongo's products. To deeply analyze mascots it is important to distinguish and define all the types of characters used by brands to promote their products. Trade characters join brand names and trade-marks as an identification device. Whenever the consumer sees or hears the character, an association forms in his or her mind that relates the trade character to its advertiser or product (Kirkpatrick, 1952).

The characters of a brand are a specific type of sign of the brand that is distinguished by the fact that they incorporate animal or human figurative elements (Côte-Real, 2007). According to Keller (1998), characters are useful to create awareness, because they are rich in images and colors, attaining the attention of the consumers. One study by Van Auken and Lonial (1985) states that cartoon characters can serve to create an aura of trust among children. Also, Aaker (2000) considers that if consumers have strong feelings over a character they will create favorable perceptions about products to which the character is associated. Characters are important in the children segment because they allow children to establish an emotional connection with the brand, which simultaneously allows them to memorize it (Brée and Cegarra, 1994). According to Keller (2008), are quite useful for creating brand awareness and help to communicate key product benefits. The function of brand characters are the following: act as the principal visual expression of the brand, represent an iconic complement, be a symbol of the main attributes of a product of a brand and to establish an affective connection with the brand.

Perez (2004) states that characters can be already known personalities (celebrities, ex: Cristiano Ronaldo); persons that associate themselves with brands, known as publicity personalities (ex:



Marta/Ok Teleseguro) and mascots. Furthermore, Pecheaux and Derbaix (1999), state that there are two types of representations of characters: Human representations and Animal representations, the latter being particularly used in products that have important nutritional qualities, as breakfast cereals, given the vitality and dynamic associations that some animals generate.

This features of mascots fit perfectly with Um Bongo's mascots. These mascots were created only for the use of Um Bongo, and possess exactly the characteristics that are ultimately known to be the one's that the brand itself sees as its identity. Um Bongo's mascots are funny, adventurous and cool, being easy for the children to like them and relate to them. Also, they are full of color, being easy to memorize and recognize. This is an important aspect because, as Mizerski (1995) puts it, mascots are drawn to assure its memorization, assuring that the transmission of the product's message is easier, producing favorable effects in the formation of attitude and at the level of product identification. The color and animation aspect of Um Bongo's mascots are also important because children retain more the visual elements of the brands, like colors and illustrations (Rossiter, 1975). Kids of course have an enormous attraction to characters, and they essentially relate to or identify with characters in one of four ways: Nurturing, Like Me, Emulation and Disidentification (Acuff, 1999). What a child's payoff is or what "he gets out of" his relationship with a character is that he gets his needs met in some regard. Similarly, the manufacturer also has a payoff from utilizing characters. He either gains Equity or a Competitive Edge over its competitors, in a sense that some products and their mascots are almost synonymous.

## **5. Ethics**

Whilst doing research with children some ethical considerations must be taken into account. Some authors consider that children cannot be granted the autonomy to decide what is best for their own interests; such decisions should be made by adults (Keddie, 2000). It is assumed that parents will take a paternalistic role in the care, education, and protection of their children; being also their obligation, sometimes, to restrict the liberty of their children (Ahuja, Walker and Tadepalli, 2001).

So, it is of the biggest importance to:

1. Inform the parents from the children that are involved in the investigation (Ahuja, Walker and Tadepalli, 2001; UNICEF, 2002).
2. Provide the basic information's that are needed to perform the investigation, to both parents and children. For instance, explain what kind of methodological procedures are going to be used and also what's the investigation's objective (Ahuja, Walker and Tadepalli, 2001).
3. Guarantee the existence of an explicit and informed consent from both the parents and children (UNICEF, 2002).

Along with these procedures, the anonymity of the children that participated was guaranteed, the parents being informed in the letter that was sent to each one asking for permission for their children to participate, and the children before starting the interview.

## **6. Sport and Um Bongo**

### **6.1. Importance of Sport**

Physical activities and sport are generally considered to be vital for the health of children, in particular. It is considered that regular physical activity assumes a relevant role in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and that high levels of physical activity during the childhood and adolescence increase the probability of similar levels of participation during adult life. (Fernandes and Pereira, 2006). The positive influence of sports practice over health is considered to be intuitive. Its regular practice, notwithstanding the presence of any disease or infirmity, are commonly associated as very important to the preservation of physical, social and mental well-being of people. (Silva, 2002). Moreover, regular physical activity is associated with a longer and healthier life, with a decrease in the risk of cardiac diseases, hypertension, diabetes, obesity and even some types of cancer (Wang, Pereira and Mota; 2006).

One of the motivations to the practice of physical activities is the risks that are generated by physical inactivity. For example, in the United States, physical inactivity is considered to be the

second biggest death cause, while contributing to obesity, being responsible for 1 in each 10 deaths (Booth *et al.*, 2000). In Portugal the data isn't so clear, but one of the main death causes are the diseases in the circulatory system, which along with coronary diseases, diabetes and obesity are a result from physical inactivity (Lopes *et al.*, 2004).

As we've seen, there is clear evidence of the positive effects of physical activity in a person's health, or if we prefer, the nasty effects of physical inactivity in the health of the population. Regarding children, there are strong scientific evidence that there is a strong relation between practicing physical activity throughout childhood and adult life and the health of an adult. The bigger the practice, more healthy a person becomes. Also, physical activity during childhood contributes to an increase in the health of the children (Lopes *et al.*, 2004). The same authors state that infancy and adolescence are considered to be determinant in gaining healthy habits that will last until a person reaches adulthood. Moreover, Wang, Pereira and Mota (2006) state that from adolescence onwards the levels of physical activity of individuals tend to decrease, meaning that childhood is the phase in a person's life when physical activity is more important and fundamental.

From these conclusions we can say that physical activity is fundamental for the health of a person, and that creating physical habits in the childhood is considered very important for the maintenance of physical habits throughout our lives.

## **6.2. Nutritionist's Opinion on Um Bongo**

Now that it is ensured that practice of sports is beneficial for one's life, particularly children, it must be analyzed whether or not Um Bongo is considered a healthy product, ideal for the consumption of children. So, in order to understand it, the opinion from a nutritionist was required.

The nutritionist that was contacted was Dr. Maria Ana Carvalho, Teacher of Nutritional Sciences at Universidade Atlântica, and the basic question that needed an answer was: Are Um Bongo's nutritive characteristics good for the children's health? Dr. Maria Ana answered that most soft drinks are not particularly adequate to children in the sense that they have big amounts of sugar in

them. Specifically speaking of Um Bongo, if we consider one glass full of Um Bongo, or a little package (pacotinho), that has 250 ml, it contains approximately 3 packages of sugar, like those we use with espresso coffee. So, for the children the best option would be always to drink water, followed by natural fruit juices or 100% fruit juices.

The first topic is cleared; Um Bongo is not one of the optimal drinks for children's health. But there's still another topic to be answered, whether or not Um Bongo is ideal to be consumed before children practice sport. Because energy is needed for someone who wants to practice sport, given that Um Bongo contains lots of sugar probably it would be perfect to consume it 1 hour before the start of sports practice. When inquired about the food habits before the practice of sports by children, Dr. Maria Ana Carvalho stated that children should eat a meal rich in complex sugars like pasta or integral bread, 3 hours before they start the practice. Or they can do a light meal 1 hour before the start of the practice, like eat yoghurt or a piece of fruit. The sugars that are part of Um Bongo are simple sugars which are quickly absorbed by a person's organism, so the meals that were previously stated would be better suited.

Therefore, the results from the interview suggest that Um Bongo isn't a healthy product, considering that the amounts of sugar contained can't be beneficial for its consumer.

## **7. Hypothesis**

Consumers form beliefs about brand attributes and benefits in different ways (Keller, 2008). Brand attributes are those descriptive features that characterize a product or service and benefits are the personal value and meaning that consumers attach to a given product or service. Different experiences may create a variety of beliefs and attributes that a consumer associates with a brand.

According to Aaker (1996), brand identity is a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for, while implying a promise to the customers of the brand. Identity of a brand lies on the sender's side

(Kapferer, 1992). The purpose of brand identity is to specify the brand's meaning, aim and self-image. Brand image is the interpretation of the projected identity of the brand by the consumers. One can say that identity proceeds image (Kapferer, 1992). Aaker's interpretation is simpler (Aaker, 1996). He states that brand identity is the goal, perceptions that the strategists want associated with the brand, while brand image is the current reality of the brand, as seen by its consumers.

The goal of the first hypothesis is to access if the way the brand projects itself (brand identity) is similar to the way the consumers of Um Bongo see the brand (brand image).

*H1: The Brand Identity of Um Bongo is similar to its Brand Image.*

Um Bongo is a brand directed to children, and frequently participates in children-directed events. They do so by sending a person dressed up as the elephant of Um Bongo. The elephant is used because Um Bongo believes it's one of the most popular mascots of the brand, one with great awareness (the word believes was used because when asked if any study was ever performed in order to analyze which mascot was the most popular, Um Bongo stated that a study of the kind was never realized). The second hypothesis will test this statement of the brand.

*H2: The most popular mascot of Um Bongo among children is the Elephant.*

To establish Brand Awareness a brand must increase its familiarity among end consumers through repeated exposure. That is, the more a consumer “experiences” a brand the more likely he is to strongly register the brand in memory (Keller, 2008). This means that the bigger and bolder the advertising campaigns of a brand, the better it will be for the memorization of the brand by the customers. The following hypothesis deal with awareness and knowledge of brands. As it was previously stated, the main objective of this study is to guarantee that brands that use mascots present greater values of awareness than brands without mascots. Therefore, Hypothesis 3a is the following

*H3a: Um Bongo presents higher values of knowledge among its target than brands that do not use mascots.*

Many studies mention the fact that children's exposure to commercials has considerable influence on their brand awareness (Macklin, 1983; Goldberg, 1990). The ever increasing number of independent television stations contributes to an increase of television advertisement towards kids (McNeal, 1992). Slogans are short phrases that communicate descriptive or persuasive information about the brand (Keller, 2008). Slogans are powerful branding devices because they are extremely efficient in creating brand equity. For attracting and holding children's attention, moving pictures are much better than still pictures, and pictures of any kind are a lot better than words, because children react much more to “motivating scenes”.

Many studies have been made on the effects of TV Commercials on children (Wells, 1965; Berey and Pollay, 1968; Ward and Robertson, 1970; Ward, Robertson and Wackman, 1971; Ward and Wackman, 1972). Goldberg and Gorn (1974) clarified that commercial exposure affect attitude and behavior, as children who see an advertisement for a toy react more favorably than an unadvertised toy. Therefore it is relevant to analyze if advertisement helps memorize the brand and create affection, which leads to the last hypothesis:

*H3b: Um Bongo's slogan is more popular than slogan's from rival companies that do not use mascots.*

## **8. Methodology**

### **8.1. Design**

The data gathering process in order to test the hypothesis presented above was divided into two parts. The first part consisted of quantitative research was conducted with the children's parents. A short structured survey was directed to the parents of the interviewed children, to better understand the answers provided by their children.

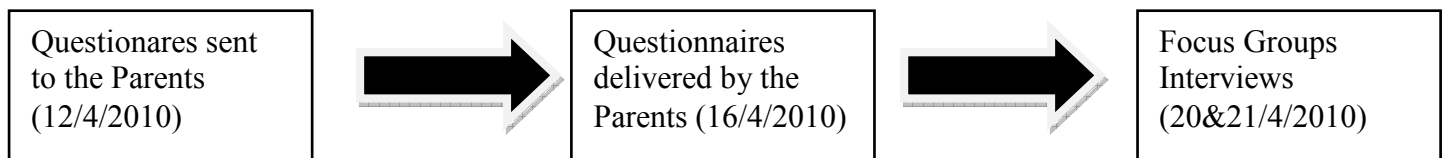
The questionnaire consisted of Dichotomous Questions, Scale Questions and Multiple-Choice Questions that were used to understand the consumer behavior of the households. The consumer

behavior was important to understand how often and which type of soft drinks were consumed in the household along with the reasons of the choices made. To analyze those patterns Dichotomous questions and Multiple-Choice Questions were used. There were also performed some questions about the consumption of Um Bongo. It was asked if Um Bongo was consumed inside the household and the reasons for (not) consuming the product.

Along with questions about consuming habits, some questions about the sports practice of their children were also asked.

The second part presented an exploratory research based on Qualitative Research directed to children. The Qualitative Research procedure used is called Focus Group.

The flow chart of the design process is presented below.



Focus Groups are used to test programs, models and services and are also effective in observing children's view on different types of subjects. (Coyle *et al*, 2007). Even before settling by the Focus Group approach, Qualitative Research was immediately selected as the ideal form of generating output from the interviewed children. Qualitative approaches are particularly suitable for doing research with children, as the researcher is able to reach the natural environment (classrooms, playgrounds) in which children cohabit, being able to provide interesting information while in their “natural habitat” (Greig *et al*, 1999). Equally, children represent an excellent source of the kind of data that are at the heart of qualitative research – rich descriptions in words and pictures that capture children's experiences and understandings.

Various techniques were used while conducting the Focus Groups, all of them inserted in the outline, which was previously structured in bullet points for better guidance (Krueger, 2002).

The Most used method was Picture Interpretations were performed: Children were presented with cards containing multiple pictures, ranging from brands that used mascots to perform their products to pictures of mascots of a brand, and were asked to choose among the pictures the one they preferred.

Likert Scales, particularly the Smiling Face Scale was used to assess whether children liked a particular brand. Likert scales are a widely used non-comparative rating scale, which requires the respondents to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with certain statements or stimulus provided (Birks and Malhotra, 2007). Likert scales are easy to apply and are usually administrated in personal questionnaires and telephone or e-mail conducted surveys (Aaker *et al*, 2010).

Smiling Faces are commonly used in doing research with children (Wells, 1985; John *et al*, 1983; Mizerski, 1995), one of the reasons being the fact that, when carefully instructed, children use these faces well, and they are much readier to use them than they are to use words or numbers (Wells, 1985).

The term “like” was used according to the following characteristics: Taste, image, communication and knowledge. This scale was fundamental to understand if children knew the existence of the brand that was presented in the card.

Following the Smiling Face Scale, Phrase Completion was used to determine if, along with knowing the brand, children were familiar with its communication strategies, namely the communication in television. Phrase completion is the simplest form of completion tests, which involves giving a respondent an incomplete sentence, which is to be completed with a phrase (Aaker *et al*, 2010).

The outline and cards that compose the Focus Group script can be found in Appendix 2.

## **8.2. Sample**

The sample consisted of 30 children, 8 pre-primary kids (5 years old), 10 second graders (7 years



old) and 12 fourth graders (9 years old). The children were all randomly chosen from one class (also randomly chosen) belonging to a private school in Lisbon. The children belong to Um Bongo's target population (3 to 10 years old). Normally, focus group sessions have 6 to 10 people participate, but as we are dealing with children the optimal size for a Focus Group is between 4 and 6 kids a session (Krueger, 2002). Sessions with the pre-primary class had 4 kids in each session, 5 in the session for second graders and 6 for the fourth graders, meaning that 6 Focus Groups were organized, 2 for each age segment. The sessions were performed in the children's classrooms, in order to observe them in their environment (Birks and Malhotra, 2007).

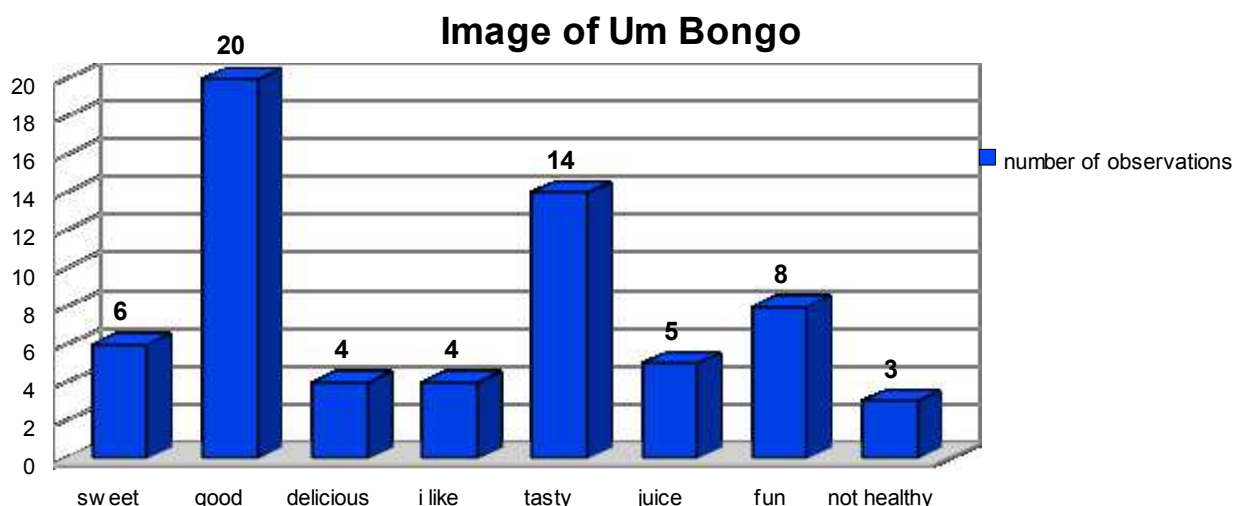
The data collected from the interviews was analyzed through descriptive statistics, Excel and SPSS; the SPSS tables being utilized to understand the nature of the relationship between different variables (examine if variables in test are (in) dependent of each other).

## 9. Results

### 9.1. Image of Um Bongo

The first result presented regards the first hypothesis tested, the brand image of Um Bongo according to its consumers. Each child was presented with a card and was asked to write at maximum 3 definitions of how they perceive the brand Um Bongo (Card 2). The results are as it follows:

Graphic 1: Identity of Um Bongo according to its consumers

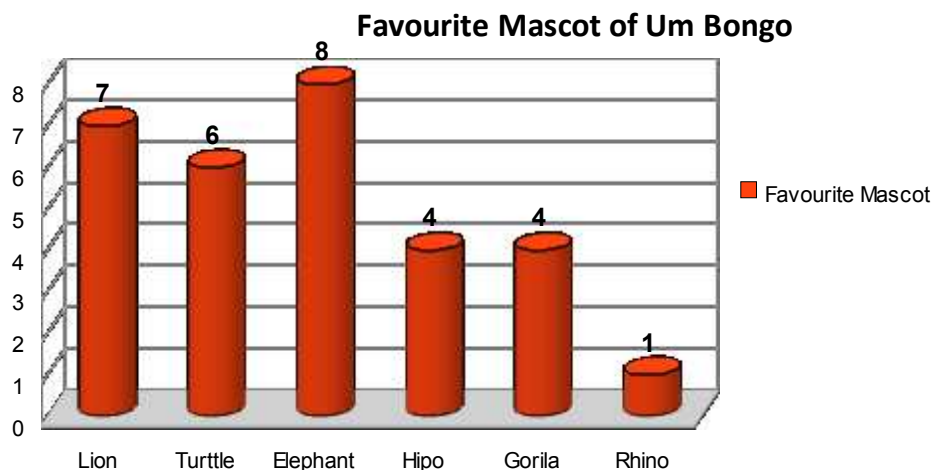


As we can see, the most common answers were good, tasty and fun. Um Bongo perceives its identity as fun, joyful and adventurous. As the table shows, the only common feature between the brand viewed by itself and by the consumers is that the brand is considered to be fun. The results show that the characteristics that the brand endorses to itself weren't mentioned by the children interviewed. Furthermore, the results obtained show that the attributes mentioned by the participants are functional, not emotional like the ones that represent the image of Um Bongo as the company sees itself. Therefore, regarding the conclusions from the table, H1 is rejected.

## 9.2. Most Popular Mascot of Um Bongo

The second hypothesis was related to the most popular mascot of Um Bongo. The reason why this hypothesis was considered lied in the choice of Um Bongo to use the elephant as the mascot presented in children-directed events. Card 3 was presented to the participants, who were asked to choose the mascot of Um Bongo they related more with.

**Graphic 2: Most Popular Mascot of Um Bongo**



The graphic shows us that the favorite mascot from the participants is the elephant, followed by the lion and turtle, and the hypothesis is not rejected. The immense popularity the elephant enjoyed in both genders is one of the reasons for the use of the elephant to represent the brand in events.

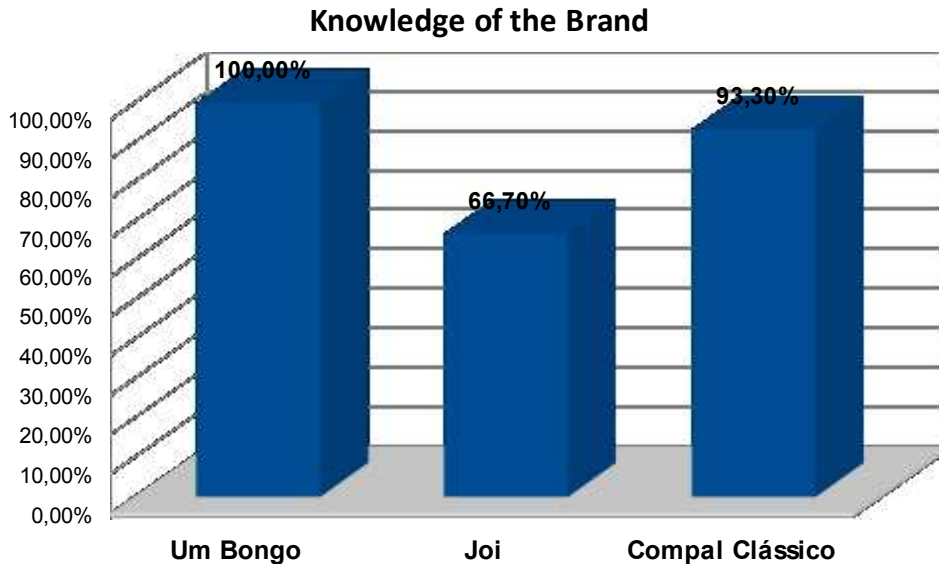
Concerning this point, 31.25% of the female participants chose the elephant as its favorite mascots (the most popular between female participants) and 21, 43% of the male participants chose it; equally the most popular, with the same number of observations as the lion and turtle. Therefore, the reasons that led Um Bongo to use the elephant as its representative in events are proven. H2 is not rejected.

### **9.3. Knowledge and Awareness of the Brands**

Hypothesis 3 and 3b respect brand knowledge and brand awareness. Brand Knowledge consists of a brand node in memory with a variety of associations linked to it (Keller, 2008). The same author states that brand awareness is related to the strength of the brand node or trace in memory. The first one is associated with brand knowledge, as it will be tested whether or not consumers have more knowledge about a brand that uses mascots in communicating its product than brands who do not use it. The firms that were chosen to be compared are Compal Clássico and Jói. There were two reasons for the choice of these two brands. First, they have market shares similar to Um Bongo (10,1% and 6,1% respectively for Compal Clássico and Jói, against 6,2% of Um Bongo; Nielsen Food Index, 2009). Second, both Jói and Compal Clássico don't use mascots in their advertisement campaigns. A remark, Jói uses a mascot called Jojoi but it's only used in advertisement of the small packages (200ml) of Jói, which is the package that sells less in Jói, and the brand doesn't communicate with Jojoi, so it will be considered that Jói has no mascot.

The hypothesis will be tested determining knowledge of the brand, all the children were shown Cards 4, 5 and 6 where they were presented a likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, 1 accounting to “doesn't like at all” and 5 accounting to “likes very much”. Each child who knew the brand needed to put a value in the scale that accounted for what they felt about the brand. But before answering, it was asked if they knew the brand. If a child didn't know the brand, she couldn't answer to the second part. So, knowledge of the brand was measured by asking “Do you know this brand?” Descriptive Statistics were used for measuring the awareness of the brands, and the results are as

follow:



**Graphic 3: Knowledge of the Brands**

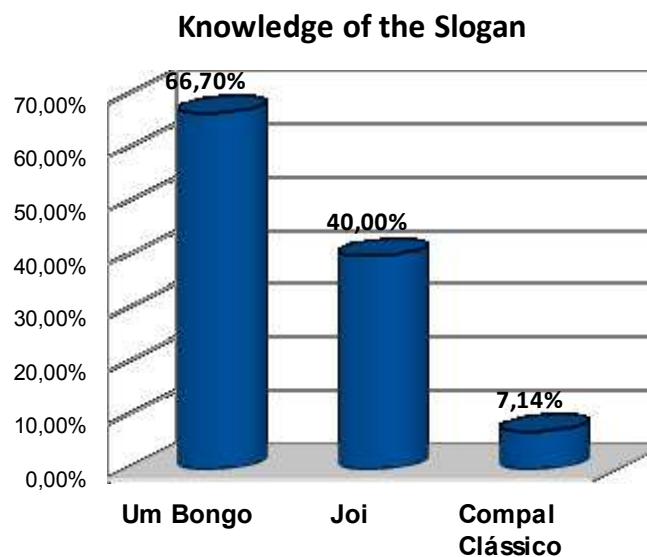
As the sample is composed by 30 participants, all knew Um Bongo, 20 knew Jói and 28 knew Compal Clássico.

In order to analyze if there is any relationship between the knowledge results for each firm, Cross-Tabs SPSS analysis was performed. Each brand was compared with the other brands (pair) also regarding the gender of the participants; however, the results suggest that there is no significant relationship between the knowledge results of the three brands. (Chi-Square (D.F. = 8, n =30) = 14, 8;  $p = 0,063$ ). Moreover, the nature of the relationship between pairs of brands was then tested. Between Um Bongo and Compal Clássico the results indicate that the results of the two brands are independent from each other (Chi-Square (D.F. = 6, n =30) = 6,003;  $p = 0,423$ ). The same conclusion can be withdrawn from the tests between Um Bongo and Jói (Chi-Square (D.F. = 6, n =30) = 5,705;  $p = 0,457$ ) and between Compal Clássico and Jói (Chi-Square (D.F. = 12, n =30) = 7, 75;  $p = 0,804$ ), meaning that the results of knowledge of the brands are independent from each other.

It is clear that Um Bongo, the brand that uses mascots, is more known among young children than

its rivals without mascots, therefore we do not reject H3a.

The last hypothesis, H3b relates to the advertising Slogan of the Brands. Once again, respondents were shown Cards 4, 5 and 6 and were asked to write the slogan of each brand. The method used was Phrase Completion, as the respondents had the beginning of the sentence written and were asked to complete it. Only respondents who knew the brand could answer this, meaning that those who didn't complete the Likert Scales also couldn't complete the sentence.



Graphic 4: Knowledge of the Slogan from the Brand

From the graphic we can conclude that 66, 7% of the respondents who knew the brand Um Bongo also knew its slogan, meaning that 20 individuals knew it. For Jói, 8 individuals out of 20 who knew the brand are familiar with the slogan, and for Compal Clássico only 2 individuals out of 28 who knew the brand are familiar with the slogan. Um Bongo presented higher values than its competitors, probably because uses a special type of slogan, a jingle. A jingle can be seen as an extended musical slogan. Jingles are perhaps more valuable in enhancing brand awareness, because they often repeat the brand name in a clever and amusing way, allowing its memorization (Keller, 2008). So we must say that the awareness of the brand is bigger than the awareness of brands that do not use mascots in their promotion. Therefore, we do not reject H3b.

## 9.4. Affectivity

Cards number 4, 5 and 6 contained likert scales to assess how the participants evaluated each brand based on their own experiences with the brands (from 1=do not like to 5=likes very much). A note to the fact that, as previously mentioned, only participants that knew the brands could complete the likert scales otherwise they would be attributing values to a brand/product they had never tried. The following table is a reproduction from the original SPSS file.

**Table 1: Affectiveness Values for each Brand**

	Um Bongo	Jói	Compal Clássico
<b>Knows</b>	<b>30</b>	20	28
<b>Doesen't Know</b>	0	<b>10</b>	2
<b>Mean (1 to 5)</b>	4,43	4,3	<b>4,58</b>
<b>Mode</b>	5	5	5

**Note: highest value in Bold**

From Table 1 we can analyse that even though is the best known brand, it is Compal Clássico who presents the highest values of affectivity. Even Jói, from who one third of the participants didn't know the brand, presented affectivity values similar to those of Um Bongo. It is surprising to see that the children 5 to 9 years old prefer the generalist product from Sumol+Compal to the children-directed one.

## 10. Discussion

### 10.1. Hypothesis

From the four hypothesis proposed, three were supported, and one refused. Although we must not forget that they only required the use of descriptive statistics to prove them, along with the fact that

the sample was too small.

The first hypothesis, Um Bongo's image as viewed by the consumers, shows that there are differences between the brand identity and the brand image Um Bongo. It must be stated that for the image of Um Bongo only its primary target (children) was consulted, not the secondary target (parents of the children). The parents of the children are considered a secondary target only because they are responsible for buying the products for their households, regarding that the publicity of Um Bongo is only directed towards children.

The favorite mascot of Um Bongo (H2) was indeed the Elephant, as it was tested. Therefore, it is proven that Um Bongo correctly uses the Elephant as the mascot that should attend children-related activities. The choice of this specific mascot was based on the fact that the brand considered it one of the mascots with more visibility in its portfolio, along with the fact that it is equally popular in both genders. Both this assumptions were proven, therefore were correctly assumed by the brand.

Note: Um Bongo uses the elephant as its mascot in events such as book fairs, and children-directed festivals/parties. These are events with low visibility, so the result of H2 is independent from the use of the elephant in the events.

The tests of awareness of the brand compared with brands with no mascots suffer from the same limitations as above mentioned. The first test assessed the awareness of the 3 brands. The results proven that the brand Um Bongo (with mascots) was more recognized than its competitors that do not use mascots in their marketing communication tools (Jói and Compal Clássico), therefore H3a is valid and accepted.

H3b followed the same pattern, another awareness test, in this case to ensure the knowledge children had about the advertising slogans of the brands. Once again the hypothesis wanted to prove that Um Bongo presented higher values of awareness than the other brands. H3b was accepted, meaning that Um Bongo's slogan is more popular and more known than the ones from both Jói and Compal Clássico.

## **10.2. Research Problem**

Considering Um Bongo and sport, the research problem aimed at researching whether or not there could be a relationship between Um Bongo and Sports. The problem shows that there can be a relationship between the two of them. 70% of the inquired admitted to become increasingly satisfied with Um Bongo if their favorite mascots practiced children's favorite sports. This value can be justified by the fact that children consider that the brand is “representing” them. One 9-year old girl stated: “I would feel happy if the elephant (her favorite mascot) practiced Ballet (her favorite sport). Because if Um Bongo uses it in its advertisement it means that not only me but many other girls have the same taste in terms of sport. So it is good to feel represented in that way, and to know that I’m not the only one who likes ballet.” (Focus Groups second graders).

On the other hand, 66.7% stated that they would practice their favorite sport more regularly and more happily if it was used by Um Bongo. One possible explanation for the value to be smaller than the previous question's value may be stated through a sentence from one 9-year old boy: “I would be happy to see the Gorilla practicing Judo, but it wouldn't make me practice more Judo. As I already practice it very often and I really like it, it wouldn't make me keener on it.”

Considering the results obtained in the previous paragraphs, it can be considered that Um Bongo and its parent company Sumol+Compal, could earn more awareness and more consumers if they could use sports references more often in their advertisement campaigns. One example for that case is the product Um Bongo de Morango has in its package one of the mascots, the lion, doing Skate. This is already one step towards creating incentive for the practice of some kind of physical activity.

## **11. Conclusion**

The main findings of this study were that a brand that uses mascots in its advertising campaigns is able to create more awareness in its target, if we consider a primary target of 3 to 10 year old children. Um Bongo, as seen by the brand and by its primary target, is perceived as a fun, joyful and



with tasty products; which can be defined as a children's only brand. This contributes to a bigger visibility and awareness of the brand among children, relying in a communication strategy based on the mascots that the brand uses. The mascots also contribute to the enduring longevity of its television advertisements which are based in the same song since the product was created in 1982. The slogan “Um Bongo, o bom sabor da selva” is still very popular among children, making it the best known jingle among the ones that were compared in this study.

Surprisingly, Um Bongo is not the favorite product of children, at least those who compose the sample, Compal Clássico being the most favorite that achieved higher affective values than Um Bongo. The children interviewed were asked to complete likert scales in which they indicated the value that they considered appropriate to measure what they felt about the brand in question. Surprisingly, the average value for Compal Clássico was superior to the value of Um Bongo (4, 58 and 4, 43 respectively for Compal and Um Bongo). It can be concluded that Um Bongo has more awareness, but the sample used considered better the generalist product from Sumol+Compal to the children-directed Um Bongo.

Considering the relation between Um Bongo and sports, Um Bongo would benefit if it could use more sports associations in the advertisement of its products. The use of sports celebrities' sports-persons or creation of a special edition of Um Bongo related with sports events would benefit the brand and create more value.

Nevertheless, there are ethical implications for Um Bongo associating itself with sport. The nutritionist interviewed clearly stated that Um Bongo it's not one of the healthiest products available, along with the fact that it is not advisable for children to consume it before the practice of physical activities. Sumol+Compal has corporate responsibility over its customers, and its website states that themes related with the health of its consumers, obesity and mainly child obesity are of the biggest importance for the company.

If Um Bongo was to be associated with sport it must reduce the quantity of sugar it has in its

composition, in order to become of the drinks of preference for all those who practice sport.

Furthermore, if Um Bongo wants to capitalize its association with sports, some changes in the product must be undertaken. The product as it is nowadays contains more sugar than it is advised for those who seek a healthy lifestyle, therefore Um Bongo should reduce its sugar levels in case the brand was to be associated with sports.

As it was previously discussed in this study, all the participants in the study were from a private school that presents a higher socioeconomically level than the average in our country, which can represent a bias to the study. Even though, it would be interesting and eventful if the same study could be applied to another socioeconomically stratus of the population, to deeply analyze the extent of the results. This would provide some interesting views and results, which would give a different nature and relevance to the study (D'Alessio *et al.*, 2009).

Not ignoring these limitations, the results displayed may become a starting point to further investigations regarding mascots of brands and its impact on the choices of consumers.

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## **Appendix 1 – Questionnaire and Letter for the Parents**



Assunto: **Pedido de autorização para participação em estudo sobre mascotes de marcas**

Exmo. Sr. Encarregado de Educação

O meu nome é André Ribeiro Marques, sou aluno de mestrado de gestão da Faculdade de Economia da Universidade Nova de Lisboa e encontro-me neste momento a realizar a minha tese na área de comportamento das crianças enquanto consumidores.

Para esse efeito, estou a realizar um estudo sobre a marcas de sumos, mascotes de marcas e sobre a importância da prática desportiva, pelo qual necessito que o seu educando(a) participasse num grupo de discussão com outras crianças suas colegas. Necessito igualmente que o(a) Sr(a). me respondesse a um breve questionário e o devolvesse no colégio juntamente com esta folha de autorização assinada.

Os dados recolhidos serão analisados por mim, sendo apenas publicados na tese os resultados deste estudo, mantendo a confidencialidade e anonimato dos alunos que nele participaram. Não será feita nenhuma referência ao nome do colégio onde o estudo foi realizado (sendo apenas mencionado se se tratava uma escola pública ou privada).

Com os melhores cumprimentos,

---

Autorizo o(a) meu filho(a) \_\_\_\_\_ do \_\_\_º ano,  
turma \_\_\_ a participar neste estudo.

\_\_\_\_\_ de \_\_\_\_\_, de 2010

Assinatura do Encarregado de Educação:

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## Questionário

### Um Bongo

1. De entre as seguintes marcas assinale quais as que o(a) seu filho(a) consome regularmente [Assinale com uma cruz a resposta(s) correcta].

Um Bongo	Joy	Capri-Sonne	Lipton Ice-Tea	Outros

- Caso tenha assinalado **Um Bongo** na questão anterior por favor diga-me qual a regularidade com que o(a) seu filho(a) o consome [Assinale com uma cruz a resposta(s) correcta].

Todos os dias	Uma Vez por Dia	4-5 Dias/Semana	2-3 Dias/Semana	1 Dia/Semana

- 9.5. Quais as ocasiões do dia em que o(a) seu filho(a) consome Um Bongo [Assinale com uma cruz a resposta(s) correcta]?

Pequeno-Almoço	Durante a Manhã	Almoço	Lanche	Jantar/Noite

- 1.4. Quem é a pessoa responsável por escolher o produto?

Pais	Filhos	Escolha Mútua

- 1.5. Caso tenha respondido **Pais** na questão anterior diga-me porque motivo compra Um Bongo para o(a) seu filho(a) se ele(a) não pede para o consumir?

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- 1.6. Considera Um Bongo um produto saudável para a saúde do(a) seu filho(a)? Porquê?

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## 2. Desporto

2.1. O seu filho(a) pratica desporto?

Sim	Não

2.2. Caso a resposta à questão anterior seja **Sim** por favor indique qual o desporto [Assinale com uma cruz a resposta(s) correcta].

Futebol	Basket	Voleibol	Natação	Ténis	Outro

Caso a resposta tenha sido **Outro** identifique qual: \_\_\_\_\_

2.3. Quantas vezes por semana o(a) seu filho(a) pratica desporto?

Todos os Dias	4-5 Dias/Semana	2-3 Dias/Semana	1 Dia por Semana

Obrigada!

## **Appendix 2 – Focus Group Script and Layout**

## Um Bongo and Sports: How can a Brand Communicate Through its Mascots

Olá a todos. O meu nome é André, e estou a fazer um trabalho sobre mascotes de marcas para a minha universidade e gostava que respondessem a algumas perguntas que vos vou fazer. Foram vocês os seleccionados porque foram os vossos pais deram autorização para participarem. Se não quiserem responder às perguntas podem sair, ninguém está aqui obrigado. Os dados que resultarem das vossas respostas vão ser utilizados apenas por mim, para fazer o trabalho. Mais ninguém vai ter acesso aos dados. Vou-vos pedir os vossos nomes para nos podermos tratar por “tu”, mas no meu trabalho os vossos nomes não vão aparecer. Da mesma forma, não tenham vergonha das vossas respostas, porque não há respostas certas nem erradas, e nem os vossos pais nem os professores vão saber o que responderam. Estão prontos? Alguma dúvida? Então vamos começar!

### 1. Mascotes

Objectivos:

Testar o reconhecimento das mascotes das marcas

Como:

Mostrar **cartão n°1** com 6 marcas com mascotes e assinalar quais as mascotes que as crianças conhecem – 1 cartão para cada criança

Tempo Estimado: 5-10 minutos

- Um Bongo

Objectivos:

Testar identidade da marca (segundo os consumidores)

Discussão – o que as crianças entendem como sendo mascotes (definição e porquê dessa definição)

Como:

Mostrar **cartão n°2** (imagem de Um Bongo) e pedir a cada criança que descreva o que para si significa a marca Um Bongo – 1 cartão para cada criança

Tempo Estimado: 10-15 minutos

### 2.1. Mascote Preferida

Objectivos:

Descobrir qual a mascote preferida de entre as mascotes da Um Bongo – **cartão n°3**

Analisar diferenças entre sexos

Analisar o porquê das diferenças

## Um Bongo and Sports: How can a Brand Communicate Through its Mascots

Tempo Estimado: 3-5 minutos

### 3. Um Bongo vs Marcas Sem Mascotes

Objectivos:

Testar afectividade das diferentes marcas

Como: **Mostrar cartão nº4, 5 e 6**, pedir para assinalarem na escala de afectividade qual o valor que cada uma das marcas representa para cada criança – 1 cartão para cada criança

**Analisar se a marca com mascote gera mais afectividade que as marcas sem mascote**

- Porquê?

- Influência de Publicidade?

- Mascote atrai mais as atenções?

Testar reconhecimento dos slogans das respectivas marcas – Pedir para completarem as frases presentes nos cartões (**cartão nº4, 5 e 6**)

Entender o porquê dos valores de afectividade observados

### 3. Um Bongo e Desporto

Objectivos:

Testar se as mascotes de Um Bongo têm o poder de influenciar a prática desportiva dos consumidores

Utilizar a mascote favorita de cada um para exemplificar

Qual a mascote que gostaria de ver associada a um desporto

Como:

Mostrar **cartão nº7** e pedir para identificarem que desporto a mascote está a exemplificar

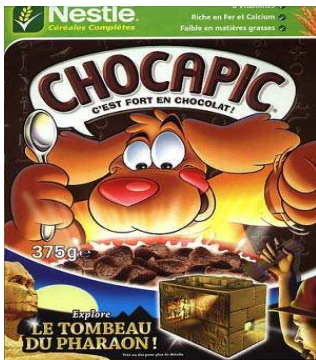
Mostrar **cartão nº3** e pedir a cada criança para dizerem que desporto gostavam que a sua mascote preferida de Um Bongo gostavam de ver a praticar desporto.

Perguntar se praticariam algum desporto se a sua mascote preferida fosse associada a certo desporto

Um Bongo and Sports: How can a Brand Communicate Through its Mascots

**Cartão nº1**

Assinala com uma cruz todas as marcas que conheces



## Cartão nº2

Para mim um Bongo é...



- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Um Bongo and Sports: How can a Brand Communicate Through its Mascots



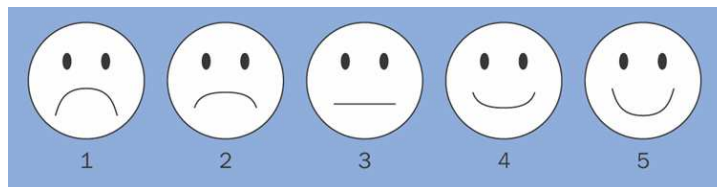
### Cartão nº3

Assinala qual a mascote de Um Bongo de que gostas mais



## Cartão nº4

Assinala na escala debaixo da imagem o valor que representa o quanto gostas desta marca

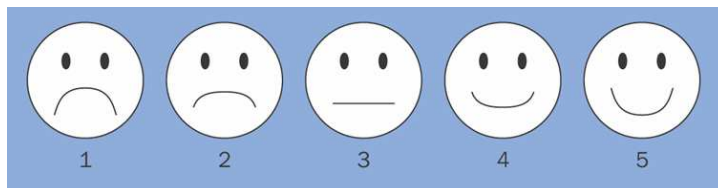


Completa a frase acerca desta marca:

Um Bongo, o \_\_\_\_\_

## Cartão nº5

Assinala na escala debaixo da imagem o valor que representa o quanto gostas desta marca

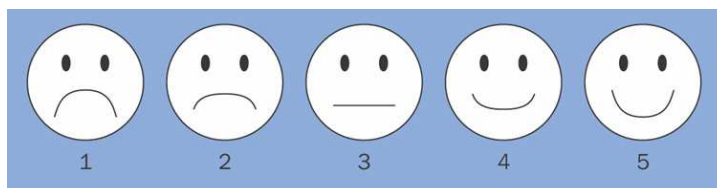


Completa a frase acerca desta marca:

Junta-te ao clube, diverte-te \_\_\_\_\_

## Cartão nº6

Assinala na escala debaixo da imagem o valor que representa o quanto gostas desta marca



Completa a frase acerca desta marca:

Compal Clássico, fruta que \_\_\_\_\_

Um Bongo and Sports: How can a Brand Communicate Through its Mascots

Um Bongo and Sports: How can a Brand Communicate Through its Mascots

## Cartão nº7

Que desporto está a mascote a praticar? A que marca pertence esta mascote?

