Are CSR communication initiatives effective in social media? Examining the case of the Fast Fashion Industry

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Abstract

Fast fashion clothing brands increasingly rely on social media platforms to interact with consumers and share their new collections, as well as their corporate social responsibility activities. Meanwhile, according to recent research, consumers are increasingly more prone to purchase from socially responsible companies and tend to avoid those that are not so socially responsible. The present research aims to build on current academic literature and examines the impact of social media posts focused on corporate social responsibility by fast fashion brands on consumer behaviour, particularly consumers' purchase intention and online brand engagement. In order to evaluate that, an experiment was implemented with three different scenarios of Instagram posts being created. Two types of corporate social responsibility (social causes and environmental issues) were compared with a control group (regular brand posts). In total, 302 valid responses were obtained in a survey targeted exclusively to Instagram users. Results indicate that both types of corporate social responsibility have a positive impact on consumers' purchase intention and online brand engagement compared to the control group. Furthermore, findings also suggest that women and older individuals reveal significantly higher purchase intention and online brand engagement than men and younger individuals. The conclusions obtained are mostly consistent with the literature. Theoretical and managerial implications of the findings are also discussed, reinforcing the relevance of this study.

As iniciativas de comunicação de RSC nas redes sociais são eficazes? Examinando o caso da indústria de *Fast Fashion*

Maria Carolina Viana

Resumo

As marcas de roupas de *fast fashion* utilizam cada vez mais as redes socais para interagir com os seus consumidores e partilhar as suas novas coleções, bem como as suas atividades de responsabilidade social corporativa. Em simultâneo, e de acordo com estudos recentes, os consumidores estão cada vez mais predispostos a comprar produtos de empresas socialmente responsáveis, procurando evitar aquelas que não o sejam. Tendo como base literatura académica atual, a presente pesquisa tem como objetivo analisar o impacto de *posts* focados na responsabilidade social corporativa publicados por marcas de *fast fashion* nas suas redes sociais no comportamento do consumidor, particularmente na sua intenção de compra e no seu envolvimento online com a marca. Assim, foi realizado um teste com três cenários diferentes, tendo sido, para isso, criados *posts* de Instagram. Dois tipos de responsabilidade social corporativa (causas sociais e questões ambientais) foram comparados com um grupo de controlo (*posts* normais da marca). No total, foram obtidas 302 respostas válidas numa pesquisa direcionada exclusivamente a usuários do Instagram. Os resultados obtidos indicam que ambos os tipos de responsabilidade social corporativa têm um impacto positivo na intenção de compra e no envolvimento online com a marca por parte dos consumidores. Adicionalmente, os resultados sugerem que mulheres e participantes menos jovens revelam intenções de compra e envolvimento online com a marca significativamente mais elevados. As principais conclusões retiradas são consistentes com a literatura. Também são discutidas implicações teóricas e práticas dos resultados obtidos, reforçando, assim, a relevância deste estudo.

Palavras-chave: responsabilidade social corporativa, marketing das redes sociais, indústria de moda, *fast fashion*, intenção de compra, envolvimento online com a marca

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List of Abbreviations

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

ISO – International Standards Organisation

KMO – Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

OBE – Online Brand Engagement

PCA – Principal Component Analysis

PI – Purchase Intention

RQ – Research Question

SMEs – Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction to the Topic

The fashion industry, particularly the fast fashion sector, has an enormous carbon footprint. According to the United Nations, the global fashion industry is responsible for 10% of all greenhouse gas emissions (The New York Times, 2019). The apparel sector is not just responsible for high carbon emissions but also for wastewater production and large amounts of landfill waste. Recently, at the G7 summit, the French President Emmanuel Macron unveiled the Fashion Pact, a set of shared goals for the fashion industry to reduce its environmental impact, where one of the goals is to reach zero carbon emissions by 2050. This initiative has been signed by 30 brands (Forbes, 2019). So, more than ever, there is a need and an enormous pressure for fast fashion companies to start incorporating more socially responsible and sustainable practices in their business. Sustainable fashion is the fashion industry's latest trend.

At the same time, brands are increasingly relying on social media to interact with potential and current consumers to communicate their position and brand values (Hudson, Huang, Roth & Madden, 2016). CSR brand practices are not an exception, so it is extremely relevant to understand the implications of this type of posts in consumers' minds. Fast fashion brands like ZARA and H&M are examples of multinational clothing brands that are actively using social media, mainly Instagram, to share their CSR practices with their audience. All of these companies have decided to communicate and spread these initiatives using social media to reach a broader public, with some of these initiatives becoming viral. For example, according to H&M press release, the brand launched an exclusive "Conscious Collection" made from sustainably sourced materials, such as 100% organic cotton, Tencel or recycled polyester (H&M, 2019). H&M has been promoting this campaign by posting pictures and videos on their social media platforms, with more relevance on Instagram.

1.2. Problem Statement Definition

In this context, more than ever, the negative environmental impact represents a challenge for fast fashion brands since consumers are becoming more educated and aware of this problem. Consumers want companies to become more sustainable while also desiring fashionable clothes at a low price. With a more and more competitive market, fast fashion brands are trying to position themselves in the sustainable fashion trend. Alongside with environmental issues, fast fashion brands are also in the spotlight regarding social factors. Due to scandals that have

revealed unethical practices, these brands are facing scrutiny by the public regarding their employees' work conditions. So, fast fashion brands are making efforts to improve their image by contributing to social and environmental causes. However, are these efforts well perceived by consumers? Do these efforts have a positive impact on consumers' purchase intention and online brand engagement? To address this problem, an extensive literature review is considered in the following chapter covering the topics of CSR, the fashion industry, and the CSR effect on brands and consumers.

1.3. Research Objective and Questions

Given the current prevalence of ethical concerns at a global scale and the emergence of social media, this dissertation aims to evaluate the impact of CSR initiatives communicated in social media by fast fashion brands, analysing the moderating impact between CSR dimensions. In other words, focusing on brands' social media CSR posts, the general objective of this dissertation is to test to what extent the posting of CSR initiatives in fast fashion brands' social media has a positive influence on consumers' purchase intention and online brand engagement.

Therefore, to better address the problem statement, four research questions (RQ) were formulated:

RQ1: How do CSR social media posts influence consumers' purchase intention?
RQ2: What type of CSR social media posts works better at increasing consumers' purchase intention?
RQ3: How do CSR social media posts influence consumers' online brand engagement?
RQ4: What type of CSR social media posts works better at increasing consumers' online brand engagement?

1.4. Academic and Managerial Relevance

This research has scientific and practical relevance. It contributes to the existing literature in that it enriches the understanding of how brands can take advantage of social media to post their CSR activities and improve their consumers' purchase intention and online brand engagement. This dissertation also attempts to test whether different dimensions of CSR posts work better than others, which might be valuable in the decision of what type of initiatives brands should invest, depending on its business and target consumers.

1.5. Dissertation Outline

The present dissertation has six main chapters and is structured as follows: the first chapter introduces the research topic, covering the problem statement and its relevance. Chapter two provides an extensive literature review that serves as the theoretical background for this research. Afterwards, the conceptual framework and the formulated hypotheses are explained in the third chapter. The fourth chapter provides an explanation of the methodology used and the data collection description. The analysis of the results and the following discussion are presented in chapter five. The sixth and last chapter outlines the conclusions and both theoretical and managerial implications of this research as well as overviews the shortcomings of the study and discusses opportunities for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Concept of CSR

Given the broad notion of the topic among scholars, the concept of CSR has several accepted definitions (Carroll, 1999; Mohr, Webb & Harris, 2001; Smith, 2003; Kotler & Lee, 2005; Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2011). According to The European Commission (2011), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is defined as: "a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis" (Kozlowski, Bardecki & Searcy, 2012). It covers essential areas of responsibility and incentivises corporations to act in conformity with laws and ethical norms, to treat employees fairly, to protect the environment and to donate to charity (Mohr et al., 2001). This concept has been developed on the idea of contribution to social well-being, and it could be applied to many industries such as fashion, automobiles, fast-moving consumer goods, hospitality among others (Loureiro & Langaro, 2018). Although CSR is mainly driven by large multinational companies, socially responsible practices, exist in all types of organisations, including SMEs and start-ups (Georgeta, 2008).

CSR has been gaining increasing importance from many scholars and managers, with its relevance being attributed to its impact on companies' image and reputation. (Ellen, Webb & Mohr, 2006; Podnar & Golob, 2007; Perrini, 2011; Melo & Garrido-Morgado, 2012; Chernev & Blair, 2015; Šontaitė-Petkevičienė, 2015). In fact, in the past decade, there has been unprecedented growth in companies' involvement in socially responsible activities. Examples of this are environmental protection issues, such as sustainable practices that reduce carbon emissions and water consumption, and social charity focused on supporting several social causes, unrelated to companies' core business (Chernev & Blair, 2015). There are several terms used in the literature, such as sustainable development, social sustainability, corporate sustainability, among others, that are defined as CSR areas (Stubbs & Cocklin, 2008). Henceforth, for the purpose of this research, the mentioning of CSR will be referencing all these terms.

Kotler and Lee (2005) point out in their review that companies must shift their perspectives on CSR from "an obligation" to "a strategy" (Perrini, 2011). The authors show how CSR practices can establish a new approach of "doing business" that encompasses companies' success with value creation and a positive attitude towards stakeholders and society in general. Indeed,

companies that have introduced this concept in their corporate strategy have been able to increase their stakeholders' satisfaction and improve their corporate image.

CSR can be distinguished between internal and external, depending on who benefits and on who are the parties involved in the activity (Georgeta, 2008). More and more companies are integrating CSR measures in their internal processes (Creyern & Ross, 1997), and also in their external actions impacting the society and the environment positively. By internal processes, the authors mean measures such as having a written code of ethics, corporate training programmes that teach employees how to deal with ethical issues more effectively, and tools which make it easier for employees to report ethical violations and concerns. On the other hand, external actions include CSR practices that are related to consumers, suppliers and stakeholders as well as the environment (Georgeta, 2008).

Over the past decades, businesses have been undergoing the most intense scrutiny they have ever received from the public. Consumers started to gain consciousness that business operations and production processes have a direct impact on the current environmental problems and are putting pressure on corporations to reinvert this situation and reduce their environmental footprint.

2.1.1. CSR Dimensions

CSR is a broad concept that can be subdivided into different dimensions. In past literature, several authors tried to define CSR dimensions. According to Carroll's (1991) pyramid of CSR, in order to be socially responsible companies should consider four primary responsibilities: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic/discretional, while Salmones, Crespo and Bosque (2005) highlight that consumers perceive three dimensions of corporate behaviour: economic, ethical-legal, and philanthropic. The economic dimension of CSR requires a business is profitable, the legal dimension encompasses that a company need to work within a legal framework, the ethical dimension refers to ethical or moral standards, and the discretional dimension is based on a company's voluntary actions that add value to the society (Carroll, 1979). A more recent study suggests that CSR activities could be classified into six broad domains: Community Support, Diversity, Employee Support, Environment, Non-U.S. Operations and Product (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2004). However, companies can engage in CSR activities covering one or more of these six domains.

The ISO 26000 guides on how companies can operate in a socially responsible way by defining the following seven core practices: 1. Organisational Governance (practice and promote ethical behaviour, accountability and transparency), 2. Human Rights (support vulnerable individuals within the company's sphere of influence, 3. Labour Practices (provide fair work conditions and wages, abolish child and forced labour), 4. Environment (implement sustainable practices, reduce the emission of pollutants, promote recycling and renewable resources uses), 5. Fair Operating Practices (practice honesty and fair prices, treat suppliers and consumers fairly, respect property rights), 6. Consumer Issues (protect consumers' health and safety, fulfil consumers' expectations and reduce waste) and 7. Community Involvement and Development (develop actions that benefit society, supporting social issues) (Loureiro, Sardinha & Reijnders, 2012; ISO, 2017).

Although many frameworks exist to conceptualise CSR dimensions, this study focuses on Alvarado-Herrera, Bigne, Aldas-Manzano and Curras-Perez (2017) review. The authors developed and validated a measurement scale for consumers' perceptions of CSR using a sustainable development three-dimensional approach: Social Equity, Environmental Protection and Economic Development. However, for the aim of this research, only two of these dimensions are considered: Social Equity and Environmental Protection (Appendix 1). By social equity dimension, the authors mean all activities that benefit society in general, such as the sponsorship of educational, health and cultural programmes, being highly committed to well-defined ethical principles, making financial donations to social causes and helping to improve quality of life in the local community. Alternatively, environmental protection is defined by the authors as all activities that companies can engage in to support the environment such as the sponsorship of pro-environmental programmes, allocating resources to offer services compatible with the environment, carrying out programmes to reduce pollution, protecting the environment, recycling its waste materials adequately, using only the necessary natural resources.

The economic dimension of CSR was excluded from this research since, according to some studies (Maignan, 2001; Alvarado-Herrera et al., 2017) it is not a good representation of consumers' perceptions of CSR, strengthening the argument that CSR is not about making a profit for these stakeholders. Many individuals think that the economic dimension of CSR is what the firm does for itself, whereas the other dimensions are what the firm does for others. Indeed, Brown and Dacin (1997) distinguished two types of associations perceived by consumers concerning a company: corporate ability associations, which refer to how well the

company is in produces and delivers products and services (mainly technical and economic); and CSR associations, which are ''the reflection of a firm's status and activities with regard to its perceived social obligations'' that correspond to non-economic issues.

2.1.2. CSR in Marketing

Even though several companies have the goodwill to incorporate CSR practices as part of their business strategy, not all communicate it effectively to the general public, particularly consumers. When doing this, companies often implement one of two perspectives: either they include CSR issues in their marketing tool, or they become responsible regarding environmental and social issues without promoting it (Polonsky, 1994). With this in mind, when companies opt for the first approach, their CSR initiatives might be consistent with their core business, making them seem more trustworthy. An example of this would be producing long-lasting products and educating consumers, as well as introducing conscious sales and marketing approaches (Bocken & Short, 2016).

Corporate societal marketing is defined as the incorporation of marketing initiatives that have at least one non-economic objective related to society's welfare (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). The concept has been used by companies to satisfy multiple goals such as implementing successful marketing techniques to enhance corporate image and reputation or differing themselves from other players. Consumers' perception of a company's positive impact in society can meaningfully influence a brand's strength and equity (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002).

Furthermore, companies need to align their CSR practices with their whole strategy for consumers to recognise their actions reliably. Consumers usually tend to reject practices perceived as false or fabricated, which leads to severe damage to a company's reputation. Therefore, companies must communicate their CSR intentions in a comprehensible way (McDaniel & Rylander, 1993). In Sen and Bhattacharya's (2001) study, their findings suggest that marketers need to adopt a strategic perspective when making CSR decisions considering not only the company's situation but also their competitors and the opinion of their key stakeholders regarding other CSR issues. Bloom, Hoeffler, Keller and Meza (2006) have investigated how social-cause marketing affects consumer perceptions. The authors found that high versus low brand-cause fit depends on whether the brand is already known for its CSR associations. Brands already acknowledged for positive CSR associations should pursue high brand-cause fit since it helps to support the existing associations. Moreover, according to other

research, the higher the brand-cause fit, the more effective the image tends to be and the more relevant the positive impact on consumers' behaviour (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006; Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006). If consumers do not perceive well brand's motivation for establishing a specific brand-cause CSR association, they care less about those associations and tend to raise negative opinions driven by the company's self-interest (Bigné-Alcañiz, Rafael Currás-Pérez, Ruiz-Mafé & Sanz-Blas, 2012; Ellen et al., 2006).

2.1.3. CSR and Social Media

Currently, approximately 56% of the world's population are active Internet users, with China, India and The United States being the countries in which the majority of global Internet users are located (Statista, 2019b). The emergence of social media was crucial for the expansion of internet usage worldwide and has affected the way companies are doing business.

Social media have changed the way brand-related content is produced, distributed and consumed (Ángeles Oviedo-García, Muñoz-Expósito, Castellanos-Verdugo & Sancho-Mejías, 2014). These platforms are seen as an opportunity for marketers to share companies' marketing communications to a large number of individuals quickly (Cooke & Buckley, 2008). Indeed, this type of media has changed how consumers engage with brands (Schivinski, Christodoulides & Dabrowski, 2016) and has a vital role in raising awareness and influencing consumers' opinions, attitudes, purchase behaviour, and post-purchase communication and evaluation (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). So, more than ever, companies need to integrate social media platforms in their marketing strategies (Hudson et al., 2016). For instance, as literature proves, social media is an effective channel for online marketing and has similarities to word-of-mouth advertising (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011).

In this context, should companies communicate their CSR practices using digital tools, particularly using their social media platforms? As mentioned before, consumer awareness of a brand's CSR initiatives is a crucial prerequisite to their positive association with it, so companies are investing a lot on effective methods for sharing their actions in order to increase consumer knowledge about it. Previous research found that traditional advertising may not be the best approach to share brands' CSR activities since third-party sources are likely to be more efficient and credible in convincing people of the benevolent nature of a company's practices (Chernev & Blair, 2015). Thus, by communicating their CSR initiatives through social media, brands can partially eliminate this effect since they are simply sharing a post in their social

media profiles, while at the same time reaching a broader public, increasing consumer awareness and engagement. However, further investigation about social media as a tool for CSR communications is required (Rim & Song, 2016) as just a few studies focused on CSR and social media.

2.2. The Fashion Industry

The fashion industry is one of the world's most important industries, driving a significant part of the global economy. Indeed, if global fashion industry was an individual country, it would represent the seventh-largest economy according to its GDP (McKinsey & Company, 2016). Although McKinsey Global Fashion Index (2018) forecasts an industry growth of 3.5 to 4.5 percent in 2019, slightly below 2018's growth which was predicted at 4 to 5 percent, the global apparel market is projected to grow in value from 1.3 trillion U.S. dollars in 2015 to about 1.5 trillion dollars in 2020 (Statista, 2019a).

According to the European Parliamentary Research Service, the clothing industry accounts for between 2% and 10% of the environmental impact of EU consumption (Šajn, 2019), being amongst the most polluting ones for the environment.

Regarding the fashion industry as a whole, social and environmental matters are becoming a priority for an increasing number of companies. More companies are starting to gain consciousness that they need to adopt CSR practices in their business strategy. In accordance to the Pulse Survey, in 2018, 66% of executives included in the survey had multiple sustainability-related targets compared with only 56% in the previous year (Global Fashion Agenda & BCG, 2018).

The fashion industry went through a significant transformation within the last decades (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Joergens, 2006). The changing dynamics of the clothing sector led consumers to desire good quality products at an affordable price in speed to market (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010) which led to the development of the concept of Fast Fashion.

2.2.1. Fast Fashion

Fast fashion can be conceptualised as a business model that combines low-cost fashionable clothes with quick responsiveness and recurrent collection changes (Caro & Martínez-de-Albéniz, 2015). This concept has been described by several authors as a growing sector characterized by low predictability, high impulse buying, short life cycle, low-cost prices and

high volatility of market demand (Fernie & Sparks, 1998; Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang & Chan, 2012).

The emergence of the fast fashion trend challenged the traditional fashion model, focused on clothes for four seasons per year, and introduced a new fashion segment driven by speed, affordability, and ever-changing fashion trends. These days, there is a constant need to refresh collections, and consumers visit fashion stores with the idea of 'Here Today, Gone Tomorrow' (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). Brands like ZARA and H&M are changing the clothes displayed in-store on a weekly basis and launching limited collections every season (Fletcher, 2010). In this highly competitive environment, fast fashion companies need to take the speed to market approach in order to correspond to consumer needs (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). Due to these factors, fast fashion is sometimes referred to as throwaway fashion (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010).

In the last years, the fast fashion sector has faced severe scrutiny and has been criticized for its lack of environmental and social norms. On the one hand, the sector has been associated with overconsumption and a throwaway culture since clothes are being produced massively, using economies of scale, only with profitability in mind (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). Consumers are also discarding more textile than before. Some studies support this statement, for example, according to Morgan and Birtwistle (2009), in the UK, more than one million kilograms of textiles are sent to landfill every year. On the other hand, terrible incidents that took place in developing countries with low-cost labour, such as the Rana Plaza collapse in Bangladesh in 2013, have exposed the downsides of fast fashion. This disaster killed over 1,100 apparel workers and called public attention to the reality of work conditions in the industry (The Guardian, 2018). Due to cases like this terrible incident that put the fast fashion industry in the spotlight for bad reasons, consumers' trust in the goodwill of fast fashion brands is being shattered (Shen, Wang, Lo, & Shum, 2012).

The existing academic literature on fast fashion is somewhat limited (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010) and appeals for additional research on whether CSR practices are well-perceived by consumers and if they have a positive impact on consumers' purchase intention and online brand engagement. In other words, there is little research that can attest to the effectiveness of these CSR practices on consumers of fast fashion brands.

2.2.2. Sustainable Fashion

To address the environmental impact of fast fashion and to survive in this highly competitive context, apparel brands are becoming eco-conscious. Sustainable fashion or eco-fashion intends to maximize benefits for the society while at the same time reducing negative environmental impacts (Claudio, 2007; Joergens, 2006). The ISO defined eco-fashion as "identifying the general environmental performance of a product within a product group based on its whole life-cycle in order to contribute to improvements in key environmental measures and to support sustainable consumption patterns" (Claudio, 2007). In the literature, Joergens (2006) uses the term "ethical fashion" as fashionable clothes that incorporate fair trade principles with sweatshop-free labour conditions while not harming the environment or workers by using biodegradable and organic cotton.

While in the early 1990s 'green fashion' was criticised for offering poor quality garment at premium prices (Nakano, 2007), over the last decade, a sustainable fashion movement has driven the fashion industry. Many companies are moving up their business towards more socially and environmentally responsible practices (Global Fashion Agenda & BCG, 2018). Sustainable fashion is clearly one of the top trends in fashion nowadays.

Fashion players, more than ever, are being pressured into taking an active position on social and environmental issues in order to satisfy consumers' demands. Younger consumers are more conscious and concerned about these causes. They progressively back their beliefs with their shopping habits, supporting brands that are aligned with their values and avoiding those that do not. Indeed, nine in ten Generation Z consumers consider that companies have a responsibility to address environmental and social issues (McKinsey & Company, 2018). However, concerns over environmental and social issues are not restricted to younger consumers. People are becoming more fashion-conscious and aware that their consumption choices have a direct impact on society (Laroche, Bergeron & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001), particularly in developed countries. Two-thirds of consumers worldwide say they would switch, avoid or boycott brands based on their stance on controversial issues (McKinsey & Company, 2018). Other past studies support these findings and have shown that consumers reward companies that treat their employees and the environment fairly and reprove those that do not (Creyer & Ross, 1997; Forte & Lamont, 1998). These concerns experienced an increase in consumer awareness through a raising amount of attention on the issue in the media, which consequently led to a boost in the global market of environmentally friendly apparel (Laroche et al., 2001; Yan,

Hyllegard, & Blaesi, 2012). Besides, Joergens' (2006) research has found little evidence that ethical issues have any effect on consumers' fashion purchase behaviour since, when it comes to apparel purchase, most consumers are more interested in their personal needs than in ethical and environmental issues.

The current context is challenging for these brands, on the one hand, they seek to position themselves as a sustainable organisation that wants to minimise their social and environmental impact in the society, on the other hand, they want to attract everyone offering fashionable clothes at a competitive price. So, which actions are fashion brands doing to contribute to social and environmental issues? Some brands such as Patagonia and Timberland already have high CSR standards and are recognised by their consumers as sustainable fashion brands, perhaps making it necessary for other players to strengthen their CSR efforts in order to be noticed (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Mass-market fast fashion retailers such as H&M and ZARA have introduced products that incorporate the use of environmentally friendly materials such as organic cotton (Kozlowski et al., 2012). However, in most cases, these activities are rather ad hoc and barely connected with the core elements of the companies' value propositions. Regarding the supply chain, fashion brands should work on improving its transparency, otherwise more conscious consumers will begin to suspect that they are hiding something. Ensuring transparency is a first step towards brands becoming responsible and accountable for their supply chain. For instance, according to the Fashion Transparency Index, Adidas, Reebok and H&M are the leaders when it comes to transparency in their supply chain (The Guardian, 2019).

Consumers do seem to demand more information about the brands' actions in order to make better ethical judgements. So, there is a role for sustainable fashion brands to communicate this more effectively (Joergens, 2006). In doing so, companies are investing in their future, hoping that the voluntary commitment they adopt will help increase their profitability sustainably.

2.3. CSR Effect on Brands and Consumers

Given the relevance of CSR, several studies in the literature have addressed the effect that these measures have on consumers' attitudes and consequent on brands' success (Chernev & Blair, 2015). In this digital era, consumers are exposed and respond to various stimuli, some of them produced by marketers and sellers. CSR initiatives are not an exception. Thus, managers need to understand how consumers respond to these actions as it helps firms to develop more

effective CSR strategies and consequently, improving their profitably (Feldman & Vasquez-Parraga, 2013). For instance, the authors point out that CSR can be used as a tool to attract and retain customers.

Many scholars suggest that consumers have a positive attitude towards companies that engage in CSR activities (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2004; Sen et al., 2006; Chernev & Blair, 2015). Hoeffler and Keller (2002) proposed that the result of CSR on consumers' responses happen through its impact on many dimensions of brand knowledge, among them: brand image, brand awareness, brand credibility, brand feelings, brand engagement and brand community. Moreover, according to the literature, CSR affects consumers' responses regarding the company image but also to its products, increasing the likelihood of consumers buying them (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Mohr et al., 2001; Feldman & Vasquez-Parraga, 2013). Even though not all consumers behave in the same way, a study showed that consumers are more sensitive to "irresponsible" than to "responsible" corporate behaviour (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2004).

These days environmental issues, such as global warming, are top concerns of our society, but they also represent opportunities for managers (Luchs, Naylor, Irwin & Raghunathan, 2010). If brands can develop and promote ethical and sustainable values, a significant share of consumers states that they are willing to pay a premium price for ethically produced products (Kotler, 2011; Feldman & Vasquez-Parraga, 2013). According to Nielsen (2014), 55% of people are willing to spend more on products and services from companies committed to positive social and environmental impact.

Previous studies have explored how CSR practices might impact consumers' responses through influencing many dimensions such as brand attitude (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2012), brand awareness, brand engagement (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002) and purchase intention (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Ellen et al., 2006; Barone, Norman & Miyazaki, 2007; Wongpitch, Minakan, Powpaka & Laohavichien, 2016). However, for the purpose of this research, the effect of CSR initiatives on consumers will be evaluated, having into consideration two criteria: consumers' purchase intention and online brand engagement.

2.3.1. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention indicates an individual's willingness to buy something. Upon taking a purchasing decision, consumers evaluate products according to the importance of particular attributes that distinguish them. Consumers internalize a company's CSR image in their

purchasing decision making (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Sen & Bhattacharya's, 2001; Ellen et al., 2006; Barone et al., 2007; Trudel & Cotter, 2009; Choi & Ng, 2011).

Mohr et al. (2001) investigate whether CSR has a positive effect on consumers' purchase intention. In their analysis consumers stated that they expect companies to behave ethically and to support the environment and, although some of them reported that they sometimes take these factors into account, the authors found that the effect of CSR on purchase intention is limited as most consumers do not regularly use it as a purchasing criterion. Also, Sen and Bhattacharya (2004), go further into the topic and show that the relationship between CSR and purchasing behaviour is dependent on several constraints being met: consumers care about the cause that the company is supporting, the existence of high brand-cause fit, the product perception as good quality and consumers not being asked to pay a higher price for social responsibility. Additionally, prior research suggests that CSR initiatives can generate consumer purchase intention when consumers are aware of companies' motivations for being involved in CSR measures (Feldman & Vasquez-Parraga, 2013).

Regarding the fashion industry, the previously considered findings may not correlate with how consumers actually behave in the fashion market (Dickson, 2000). The author reports that, according to his survey results, currently, consumers are concerned about socially responsible causes, yet they are not prepared to incorporate this concern into their apparel purchase decisions.

2.3.2. Brand Engagement

Consumer brand engagement is defined as "the level of a customer's cognitive, emotional and behavioural investment in specific brand interactions" (Hollebeek, 2011).

Schivinski et al. (2016) in their review have developed a scale to measure consumers' brand engagement on social media that was built on the earlier theoretical framework - Consumers' Online Brand-Related Activities (COBRAs) - developed by Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011). The authors defined three levels of consumer engagement with brand-related social media content: Consuming, Contributing and Creating. First, individuals are consuming brand-related media when they are faced with a picture or video displaying a product. Then, the contributing dimension refers to when consumers like or comment a post online. Lastly, when consumers share a picture or video of a product on social media, they are creating brand-related content (Schivinski et al., 2016).

Moreover, other scholars also indicate that consumers' social media interactions improve the brand relationship with them (Hudson et al., 2016). Managers are trying to adapt their strategies investing in social media platforms as a way of engagement with consumers. Thus, understanding the factors that drive consumers to engage with brands is vital in the current competitive environment. Different brand-related activities on social media may involve different levels of engagement (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2004). However, which motivation factors drive consumers to engage in CSR social media posts? Sen and Bhattacharya (2004) suggest that one behavioural outcome of positive CSR practices is consumers' willingness to talk positively about companies' CSR behaviour. As mentioned before, word-of-mouth has similarities to social media platforms (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011) so, when consumers are exposed to these brands' CSR posts in social media, they are also willing to engage with them by liking, commenting or even sharing that post.

3. Hypotheses and Conceptual Framework

After exploring the existing literature about the topics of CSR and its effect on brands and consumers, social media marketing and fashion industry, this chapter presents the conceptual framework and the hypotheses tested in this research.

Given the relevance of the topic, many studies have analysed the effects of CSR on consumers' responses, among them: purchase intention and brand engagement (Loureiro & Langaro, 2018). However, fewer studies have addressed the impact of different CSR initiatives on these responses. Accordingly, independent variables are represented by CSR type (social causes and environmental issues). In this sense, different perspectives are used as the theoretical foundation for the following proposed hypotheses.

3.1. Hypotheses

Some studies focused on evaluating the effects of CSR initiatives on consumers' purchase intention, with results being consistently positive across studies (Mohr et al., 2001; Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006; Auger, Devinney, Louviere & Burke, 2010). However, according to the literature, several aspects influence whether CSR initiatives have a positive impact on consumers' purchase intention or not. Firstly, it is generally accepted that the higher the similarity and compatibility between the brand and the cause, the higher the impact on consumers' purchase intention (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006; Barone et al., 2007; Bigné-Alcañiz, 2012). Second, when consumers personally support the CSR cause that the brand focuses on, they are likely to see a higher congruence between themselves and the brand which may lead to an increase in their purchase intention (Mohr & Webb, 2005). Then, according to Kong and Zhang (2014) experiment, "green advertising" has a higher effect on consumers' purchase intention for products that are considered harmful for society and the environment.

Only a limited number of studies examine different types of CSR initiatives (Mohr & Webb, 2005; Auger et al., 2010). According to Auger et al. (2010), the effect of CSR on consumers' purchase intention did not differ between types of CSR (environmental vs labour conditions). Also, Mohr and Webb (2005) prior research indicates that both environmental and philanthropic dimensions of CSR had a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intention. The authors' findings show that environmental CSR had a stronger effect on company evaluation when compared to the philanthropic domain, nevertheless, this interaction was not significant for purchase intention.

Auger et al. (2010) suggest that when making purchase decisions, consumers make trade-offs between price (what they are giving) and different product attributes such as quality (what they are receiving). In this sense, it vital to wonder to which extent do environmental issues and social causes create value to consumers. In other words, examine if these types of CSR initiatives are considered by consumers as a valuable attribute when buying products.

Based on the above research and to address the first two research questions, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: CSR social media posts have a positive impact on consumers' purchase intention.

> **H1a:** *CSR social media posts focused on social causes have a significantly higher effect on consumers' purchase intention than posts without any CSR association.*

> **H1b:** *CSR social media posts focused on environmental issues have a significantly higher effect on consumers' purchase intention than posts without any CSR association.*

As stated in the literature review, Hoeffler and Keller (2002) suggested that CSR has an impact on consumers' brand engagement. However, considering social media, do CSR communications have a positive impact on consumers' online engagement? Scholars recommend social media as a CSR communication tool since it generates communication and dialogue in an interactive way (Cho, Furey & Mohr, 2017). Moreover, it enables consumer involvement and increases engagement (Kent & Taylor, 2016). When CSR communications are seen as sincere, it helps to increase consumer engagement (Uzunoğlu, Türkel & Yaman Akyar, 2017), reinforcing the message that the company is entirely transparent and committed to its CSR practices (Dunn & Harness, 2018).

However, further investigation about CSR effects on consumers' responses is needed since there is a gap in the existing literature about studying the impact of different types of CSR on consumers' engagement, mainly when these CSR initiatives are communicated using brands' social media platforms.

In this sense, in order to address the RQ3 and RQ4 and to examine to which extent do CSR social media posts have an impact on consumers' online brand engagement, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H2: CSR social media posts have a positive impact on consumers' online brand engagement.

> ***H2a:*** *CSR social media posts focused on social causes have a significantly higher effect on consumers' online brand engagement than posts without any CSR association.*

> ***H2b:*** *CSR social media posts focused on environmental issues have a significantly higher effect on consumers online brand engagement than posts without any CSR association.*

3.2. Conceptual Framework

The developed conceptual framework is based on the literature review in line with the research purpose of this research. The drawn model consists of a schematic perspective of the hypotheses explained above. This model's logic was designed to test the impact of different CSR initiatives on consumers' responses, considering as dependent variables, consumers' purchase intention and online brand engagement (Figure 1).
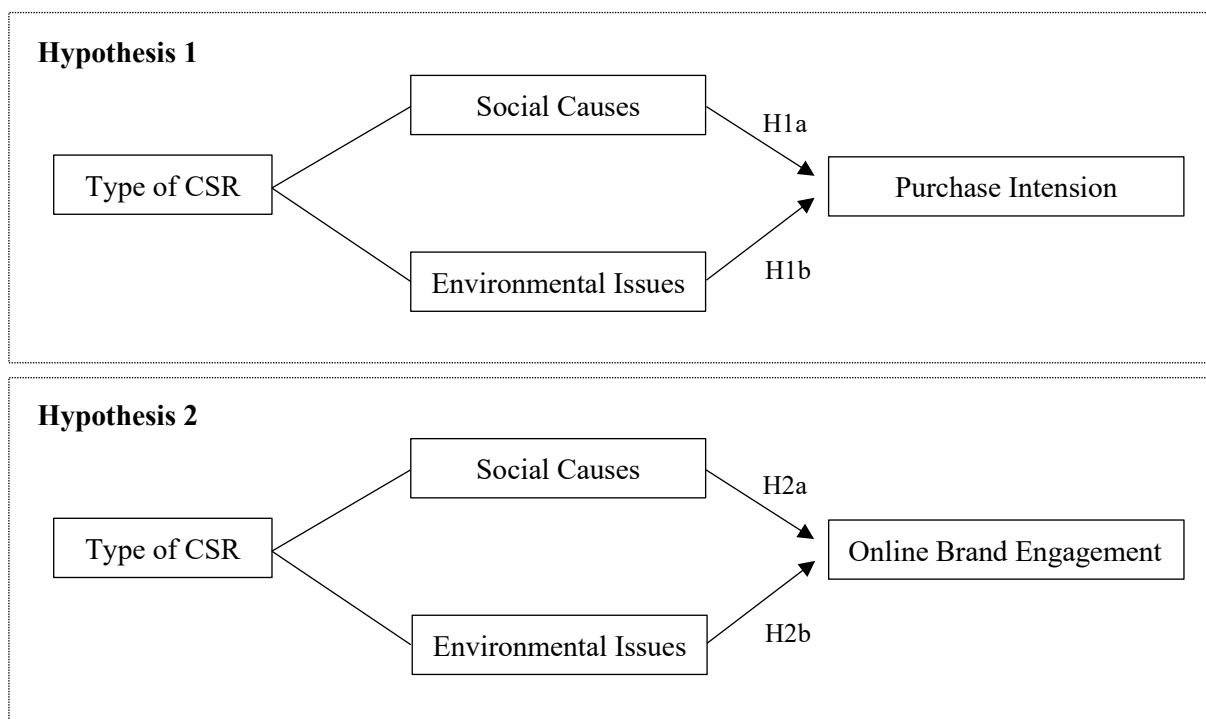
Figure 1: Conceptual Model

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Method

To test the previously mentioned hypotheses, primary, as well as secondary data, have been collected. The secondary data was based on a thorough literature review, based mainly on journals, articles, books and academic papers but also on relevant websites and companies' reports. This contributed to enriching the knowledge about the research topic as well as exploring existing information, providing context for this study and identifying gaps in existing research.

Before diving into the main analysis of this research, qualitative techniques were used to generate an initial pool of CSR posts from fast fashion brands. Later, based in the pool, CSR posts were created for a fictional fashion brand that will work as stimuli embodied in the quantitative data collection. Before getting the final CSR posts, the developed posts were pre-tested to ensure that they were well perceived in terms of visually appealing and message.

Regarding primary quantitative data, an online survey was conducted for testing the research hypotheses that will allow to set conclusions and explain the main findings of this dissertation. An online survey was conducted since this technique has several advantages over other survey formats (Evans & Mathur, 2005). It allows for high flexibility, speed-efficiency and convenience of the survey administration while making it is easier to reach a large sample of respondents and a control over answers order. Moreover, it helps in tracking and analysing responses of individuals quickly (Ilieva, Baron & Healey, 2001). Finally, it ensures participants' anonymity to reduce the social desirability bias that is likely to occur in social and environmental responsible questions (Carrington, Neville, & Whitwell, 2010).

The questionnaire was subject to a pre-test where it was shared to twelve individuals to assure the feasibility and relevance of the questions and that participants perceived the questions and stimuli presented. Recommendations and improvements were taken into account before sending out the questionnaire to the final sample. The final survey was sent to the respondents through different online channels: WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, e-mail and referring by some participants within their network, which made it possible to reach a high number of participants in a short period of time. This way, the sample is totally random and includes all types of individuals from different generations.

4.2. Stimuli Development

To achieve the research purpose of this study and to test the previously mentioned hypotheses, it was vital to create CSR social media posts that work as stimuli in our quantitative analysis, explained in the next section.

The exploratory research consisted of an extensive online analysis of five fast fashion brands' Instagram profile to obtain new insights and gain familiarity with the subject. The brands were selected based on previous research from Caro and Martínez-de-Albéniz (2015) that used Factiva's global news database and PDF documents available on Google search to generate a ranking of fast fashion brands according to the frequency count of the term "fast fashion" and respective fashion brand names (Appendix 2). Considering this brands' list, only the following have a significant physical presence of stores in Portugal and thus were selected: H&M, ZARA, Mango, Benetton and C&A. Additionally, all the chosen companies embrace CSR initiatives within the fast fashion industry and actively communicate their activities through sustainability reports and social media posts.

This research is focused solely on the social media platform Instagram since, according to HubSpot (2019), 80% of Instagram users follow at least one company. All the posts collected were published by the brands during 2019, assuring that they are relevant and updated. Afterwards, the gathered posts were classified into one of the two CSR studied dimensions (social causes versus environmental issues). A total of 103 Instagram posts from the selected fast fashion brands were analysed – 33 regarding social causes and 70 concerning environmental issues (Table 1).

Table 1: Analysed CSR Posts

Fast Fashion Brand	Social Causes	Environmental Issues	Total
H&M	4	18	22
ZARA	7	19	26
Mango	2	14	16
Benetton	11	16	27
C&A	9	3	12
Total	**33**	**70**	**103**

Number of posts gathered from fast fashion brands' Instagram considered on this analysis (between January 2019 and October 2019).

This stage was crucial to build, as accurately as possible, the fictional brand's posts used in the questionnaire. The developed posts were created based on the existing ones. The reason behind the decision to develop fictional brand posts was to reduce biased answers and to eliminate previous brand associations.

Going into more detail, the stimuli used in the study were three scenarios of pictures posted by a fictional fast fashion brand – SWAN – on its Instagram profile (@swan_x_fashion). Three experiment groups were developed with three posts each - 3 Control Posts (without any CSR association) versus 3 Social Causes Posts versus 3 Environmental Issues Posts. Hence, three different pictures used among all the scenarios were selected to guarantee that they are comparable. The only aspect that changed between groups was the posts' messages. Moreover, the message presented in each post aimed to be clear and included some hashtags to make it realistic. For this step, the previous collection of real fast fashion posts was handy.

The themes and causes supported by the fictional brand in its CSR posts were designed to be as related as possible to the brand's value chain. When consumers perceive a high brand-cause fit, the image transfer tends to be more effective and credible, having a major impact on consumers' responses (Loureiro & Langaro, 2018).

To figure out if the developed fictional brand posts were well perceived by the audience and to gather additional valuable insights about the understanding of the two CSR dimensions, there were conducted six informal face-to-face interviews. During the interviews, participants were exposed to the nine created posts and asked to read them carefully. The posts were shown in a digital format since participants were asked to visit the SWAN Instagram profile (@swan_x_fashion). This way, participants were exposed to the posts in the most credible way, a way similar to the one that survey participants were later exposed to. Afterwards, they were asked to comment on the posts regarding its design and content. In this step, participants could freely express their feelings about the posts and suggest any potential improvements. Lastly, they were requested to classify the posts into one of the three groups, to assure that they perceived the main message that the posts wanted to transmit. This step was crucial to pre-test of the stimuli to assure whether noticed the different CSR dimension being proposed to distinguish them from posts that do not have any CSR reference. Each interview took around fifteen minutes and was conducted in Portuguese since it was the native language of all the participants. After this pre-test, some modifications on the posts' messages were made. The final created stimuli can be found in Appendix 3.

4.3. Online Survey

The main study of this research used a structured and self-administered questionnaire that was conducted online through the platform Qualtrics. This platform allows to gather data quickly and without any additional costs. Besides, it also gives higher convenience and flexibility to participants since the survey can be accessed without temporal or spatial restrictions. Moreover, participants can respond either on their computer or mobile phone, closing and opening the link with their answers saved as many times as they want. The survey was accepting responses during a period of ten days from November 15th to November 24th. The online survey responses were later analysed using SPSS version 25.0.

The questionnaire was divided into seven main sections. Firstly, it started with a screening question to guarantee that participants have an Instagram account otherwise, ending the survey for those who do not have it. Then, participants were asked to rank several aspects according to their influence on their purchase decision regarding fashion products. After this question, a small presentation of a fictional brand – SWAN – was presented to participants to contextualize them for the following questions. Next, the survey was divided into three blocks (Control vs Social Causes vs Environmental Issues). Each respondent was randomly but evenly allocated to one of the groups and exposed to a different scenario. Each scenario consisted of three pictures posted on the brand's Instagram. Again, as already mentioned, the posts' pictures are comparable within scenarios, with its message being the only variable that changes among them. A set of control questions was then asked regarding whether participants liked the posts and which of the main messages do they believe is being communicated in the three posts that they saw. The point of this was to check if participants understood and perceived the stimuli that they were exposed to. Following this section, questions to measure consumers' purchase intention, as well as online brand engagement were asked, with the purpose of understanding participants' opinion about SWAN after being exposed to the stimuli. Afterwards, general questions concerning participants fashion consumption behaviour were also asked to understand their level of social and environmental responsibility. Finally, the last section consisted of demographic questions such as gender, age, nationality, educational level, current occupation and net monthly income.

Both dependent variables, consumers' purchase intention and online brand engagement, were assessed by asking participants to indicate their level of agreement with six items each. Both scale items of the constructs used were retrieved from the literature, based on previous research

to assure reliable results and are presented in the following Table of Constructs (Table 2). Purchase intention was measured using a scale developed by Spears and Singh (2004) while online brand engagement developed by Langaro, Salgueiro and Rita (2019). Additionality, the respondents were also asked to specify their overall intention to buy the brand SWAN in the future. All the variables were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, being (1) 'Completely Disagree' and (7) 'Completely Agree'.

Table 2: Table of Constructs

Author	Dimension	Item
Spears & Singh (2004)	**Purchase Intention (PI)**	**PI.1:** In the future, I would definitely buy clothes from this brand.
		PI.2: I am curious to know more about this brand.
		PI.3: The probability that this brand is trustworthy is very high.
		PI.4: It will easily become my main clothing brand.
		PI.5: I will frequently buy it.
		PI.6: If this brand is not available in the places I usually shop, I will look for it somewhere else.
Langaro, Salgueiro, & Rita (2019)	**Online Brand Engagement (OBE)**	**OBE.1:** I will read brand posts on the brand's Instagram.
		OBE.2: I will click "like" to posts, photos or videos on the brand's Instagram.
		OBE.3: I will access video and music links that are posted on the brand's Instagram.
		OBE.4: I will comment on the posts published on the brand's Instagram.
		OBE.5: I will share with friends the content published on the brand's Instagram.
		OBE.6: I will read others' comments on the brand's Instagram posts.

To sum up, an experimental design was followed with three scenarios being tested (Control, Social Causes and Environmental Issues). The results were analysed for their effects between groups for two constructs: PI and OBE.

As mentioned above, the survey was pre-tested before the official launch to assure that the questions were as clear and uniform as possible and to prevent respondents' different interpretations that could lead to biased answers. It was also necessary to check if random stimuli were working correctly and whether the items were understood and clear. The group of respondents was composed of twelve master students, who are currently writing their dissertation, using a similar tool in their studies. They were contacted via WhatsApp through a private message asking for their participation in the pre-test. Only minor adjustments were made, including spelling mistakes, question order adjustments and question elimination to shorten the duration of the questionnaire. In order to reduce language barriers, the questionnaire was translated into both English and Portuguese. For further details about the survey, please consult Appendix 4.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Sample Characterization

A total of 438 responses were recorded, with a dropout rate of 21.7%, which leaves a total of 347 completed responses. From these 347 responses, 45 were from individuals that do not have an Instagram profile. Therefore, these 45 questionnaires were eliminated from the sample. Consequently, the final sample considered for data analysis was composed of 302 participants. As the survey was developed online, using Qualtrics, no missing data was encountered since it is possible to make responses mandatory for all the questions.

Considering socio-demographic characteristics, no restrictions were added in terms of who could answer the survey. Moreover, in order to reduce the dropout rate, all socio-demographic questions have the possible answer of 'Prefer not to say' if participants do not want to disclose some personal information. To characterize the sample in the study, a descriptive analysis was conducted using SPSS.

The demographics analysis of the survey revealed a majority of female participation (71.9%) compared with male (26.5%), which is considered reasonable since women usually care more about fashion, having more motivation to finish answering the questionnaire. Still, five respondents prefer not to reveal their gender (1.7%) (Figure 2). Regarding the age segmentation, it was concentrated in the young population, 12.6% of respondents were less than 18 years old, and more than a half of participants (52.6%) was between 18 and 24 years old, 13.6% were between 25 and 34 years old, followed by 7.6% of participants with ages between 35 and 44. Next, 10.6% were between 45 and 54 years old, followed by ranges of 55-64 and 65 or older that represent a less significant percentage of 2% and 0.3%, respectively. (Figure 3).
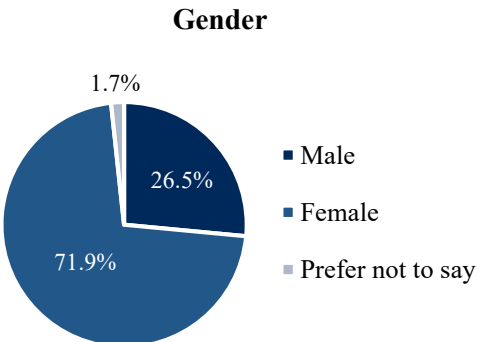
Figure 2: Gender Distribution in Percentages
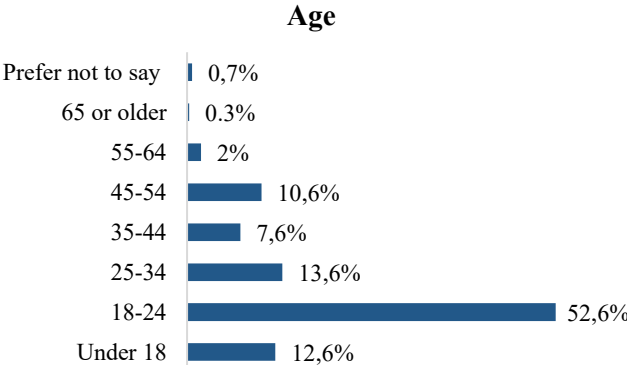
Figure 3: Age Distribution in Percentages

Participants from twelve nationalities answered the questionnaire. A clear majority of participants are Portuguese (92.1%), followed by Germans (2%), Italians (1.3%) and Spanish (1.3%).

Considering the sample's current occupation, the most significant branch of respondents (58.3%) were full-time students, being 44.4% Bachelor or Master students and 13.9% High School students. Followed by them, 31.8% of participants are currently employed, and 7% are student-workers. Unemployed respondents represent only 1.7% of the sample (Figure 4). Looking at the sample's educational level, 45.7% have a Bachelor's degree, 27.8% a Master's degree while 24.2% had only completed high school education. Only a small percentage of respondents owned a Doctorate degree (1%) (Figure 5).
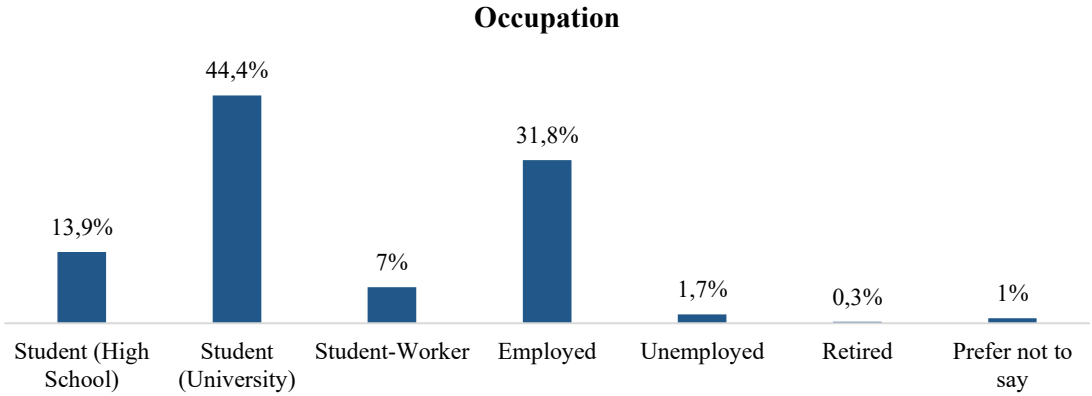
Occupation

Figure 4: Current Occupation Distribution in Percentages
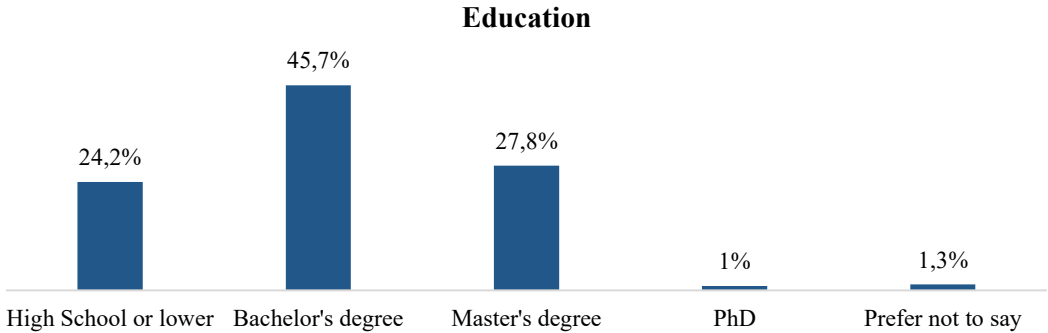
Education

Figure 5: Education Level Distribution in Percentages

Lastly, information about participants' level of net monthly income showed that the majority of respondents have less than 500€ per month (32.8%) which is in line with the fact that a vast majority of respondents are still students. Then, 15.9% have a monthly net income between 500€ and 999€ and 16.9% earn between 1000€ and 1999€. Furthermore, 7% of participants said

that earn between 2000€ and 2999€ and just 2.9% revealed that earn 3000€ or more. Also, it is worthy of mentioning that a significant part of respondents (24.5%) preferred not to say their monthly income (Figure 6).
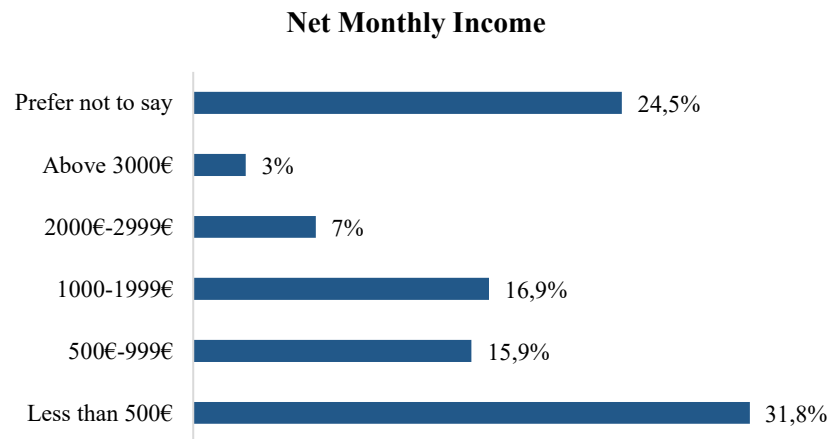
Net Monthly Income

Figure 6: Net Monthly Income Distribution in Percentages

Please consult Appendix 5 for more detailed information as well as SPSS tables regarding the sample characterization.

5.2. Scale Reliability

Even though the scales used in this research were adapted from the literature, it is necessary to assure the reliability and consistency of the items used. In this sense, the indicator chosen to check the internal consistency in this study was Cronbach's α (alpha). This measure consists of a reliability test (Malhotra, 2009), and it is a widely used statistical measure for Likert-type scales assessing the internal consistency of multi-item scales that intend to measure the same construct. Cronbach's α is expressed on a range from 0.1 to 1, however, for this research purposes, only values above 0.7 are acceptable. Anyhow, values above 0.9 are suggesting redundancy among scale items and should be avoided (Streiner, 2003; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). In other words, this indicator states that the higher the value between 0.7 and 0.9, the more reliable and internally consistent is a particular scale of items that intends to measure a specific construct.

As mentioned in the methodology, each scale was composed of six items (Table 2). Both Cronbach's α were reliable, higher than 0.7, which indicates that there are more internal consistency and a higher probability that the items considered in this study explain the same dimension. For the first construct (PI), the Cronbach's α was 0.869, and for the second construct

(OBE) 0.886 (Table 3). However, a more in-depth analysis was conducted in order to assess the impact of removing one item in Cronbach 's α result. This analysis showed that the Cronbach's α for OBE could not be improved even with the elimination of one item. However, PI would have a higher Cronbach 's α if the item PI.4: "The probability that this brand is trustworthy is very high." was eliminated from the analysis. However, according to Pallant (2005), for established and well-validated scales, the elimination of an item should be only considered if the α value is lower than 0.7, which is not the case.

Table 3: Reliability Test – Cronbach's Alpha

Dimension	Items Included	Cronbach's α	Revaluation	Improved Cronbach's α
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI.1, PI.2, PI.3, PI.4, PI.5, PI.6	**0.869**	Eliminate PI.4	0.870
Online Brand Engagement (OBE)	OBE.1, OBE.2, OBE.3, OBE.4, OBE.5, OBE.6	**0.886**		

5.3. Scale Validity

The scale validity analysis refers to the assessment of the degree to which a given scale of items measures what it is intended to measure. In this sense, in order to validate the constructs for uni-dimensionality, a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted. A total of twelve items were analysed with rotation Varimax. Two factors were extracted that explain 63.385% of the total variance. The first factor explains 35.309% and the second factor 28.076% (Table 4).

Regarding the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), this indicator ranges from 0 to 1, with 0.6 being the minimum value for a good PCA (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). However, the higher the KMO value, the higher the sample adequacy for the analysis. The obtained KMO value is 0.930, which is an outstanding value that verifies this analysis (Table 4). Also, the Barlett's Test of Sphericity suggested a sig.=0.00, which means that the test is significant (sig. value equal to 0.05 or lower) (Pallant, 2005). It is worthy of referring that, during all the statistical analysis, a confidence interval of 95% was considered, meaning that the hypotheses were rejected when the p-value was inferior to 0.05 (sig.<0.05).

Table 4: Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

Item	Component 1	Component 2
KMO = 0.930		
OBE.3: I will access video and music links that are posted on the brand's Instagram.	0.773	
OBE.1: I will read brand posts on the brand's Instagram.	0.772	
OBE.6: I will read others' comments on the brand's Instagram posts.	0.749	
OBE.5: I will share with friends the content published on the brand's Instagram.	0.749	
OBE.2: I will click "like" to posts, photos or videos on the brand's Instagram.	0.744	
OBE.4: I will comment on the posts published on the brand's Instagram.	0.642	
PI.3: The probability that this brand is trustworthy is very high.		0.791
PI.1: In the future, I would definitely buy clothes from this brand.		0.759
PI.5: I will frequently buy it.		0.665
PI.4: It will easily become my main clothing brand.		0.652
PI.2: I am curious to know more about this brand.		0.619
PI.6: If this brand is not available in the places I usually shop, I will look for it somewhere else.		0.608
% of Variance Explained	**35.309**	**28.076**

After validating all the items, to build the relevant constructs in the study, namely PI and OBE, a simple average of the scores of each item was later calculated.

For further details about the PCA analysis as well as the KMO value and the percentage of variance explained, please consult Appendix 6.

5.4. Group Comparison and Manipulation Check

Before testing the proposed hypotheses, it is necessary to guarantee that the three experiment groups (Control vs Social Causes vs Environmental Issues) are comparable among each other regarding gender, age, education and level of social and environmental responsibility. In this sense, crosstabs with frequencies, as well as Chi-Square tests (that help verifying if there are significant differences between groups) were conducted for each variable. The results showed that the three groups are identical in terms of gender (sig.=0.484), age (sig.=0.300) and education level (sig.0.460). When it comes to the participants' level of social and environmental responsibility, we reject the null hypothesis (sig.=0.006). Therefore, there is a significant difference among groups in this aspect. Overall, the groups are quite comparable and homogeneous even though some differences were suggested. Please see Appendix 7 for the crosstabs and Chi-Square tables.

After verifying that the three groups are comparable, it is necessary to assess if participants of each group perceived the stimuli that they were exposed to. The manipulation check was conducted by asking participants randomly exposed to one of the three groups what they believed to be the main message that the brand wants to communicate. The results obtained show that the majority of respondents understood the respective message embedded in each stimulus. Precisely, from the 102 respondents that were exposed to the control group, 74.1% comprehended the message of the posts. From the 96 participants that saw the posts that are supporting social causes, 79.2% perceived well the message, and 90.4% of the 94 respondents exposed to the posts with messages related to the environmental issues understood that posts' message (Table 5). It is possible to infer that the posts regarding environmental issues posts were well understood by a larger percentage of participants.

Table 5: Manipulation Check

Group	% of participants that perceived the stimuli' message*
Control (N=112)	74.1%
Social Causes (N=96)	79.2%
Environmental Issues (N=94)	90.4%
Total (N=302)	80.8%

*valid percent

5.5. Normality Tests

Before testing the proposed hypotheses, it is necessary to check if the sample follows a normal distribution to decide whether a parametric or a non-parametric test should be used. By running a normality analysis and looking at the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it is possible to check whether the distribution of scores is normally distributed or not. Hence, a non-significant result (sig.>0.05) indicates normality in the distribution (Pallant, 2005).

As presented in Table 6, the normality of the distribution scores was not verified (sig.<0.05) for both constructs, which is quite common in larger samples (Pallant, 2005). However, according to the Central Limit Theorem, as long as the sample is based on 30 or more observations (N=302), the sampling distribution of the mean can be assumed to be normal (Mordkoff, 2011).

Table 6: Normality Test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
PI	0.063	302	**0.006**	-0.240	0.140	-0.230	0.280
OBE	0-063	302	**0.005**	-0.051	0.140	-0.586	0.280

5.6. Main Results

With the intention of testing the research hypotheses, it is necessary to compare the three groups (Control vs Social Causes vs Environmental Issues) with the dependent variables PI and OBE. An ANOVA test is a proper method to study the effect of one or more independent categorical variables on one continuous dependent variable (Rutherford, 2011). Therefore, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test whether CSR type affects consumers' PI and OBE. Results for each hypothesis are presented next.

H1: CSR social media posts have a positive impact on consumers' purchase intention.

> *H1a: CSR social media posts focused on social causes have a significantly higher effect on consumers' purchase intention than posts without any CSR association.*

> *H1b: CSR social media posts focused on environmental issues have a significantly higher effect on consumers' purchase intention than posts without any CSR association.*

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H1 says that CSR posts (a. social causes and b. environmental issues) would lead to a more favourable consumers' PI. In this sense, to test these hypotheses, the One-way ANOVA was the chosen test. A requirement for the ANOVA test is the homogeneity of variances between each comparison group. This was tested by using the Levene's test. There was no statistically significant difference found in the variance between the groups, as demonstrated by a p-value higher than 0.05 (sig.=0.109), so ANOVA assumption of homogeneity of variances is not violated, and we can pursue with the analysis. Observing the descriptives, respondents exposed to social causes and environmental issues condition suggested a significant higher PI than participants exposed to the control group (Mean$_{Social}$=4.63, Mean$_{Enviromentl}$=4.46, Mean$_{Control}$=3.73) (Table 7).

Table 7: Means, Standard Deviations and Levene's Test for Hypothesis 1

Control		Social Causes		Environmental Issues		
Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	**Levene's Test**
3.73	1.08	4.63	1.13	4.46	0.91	**0.109**

Looking at the ANOVA table, the results reveal a significant effect of experimental condition on PI, since we reject the null hypotheses of equality of means (sig.=0.00) (Table 8). However, this does not allow us to distinguish between groups. The statistical significance of the differences between each pair of groups is provided in the multiple comparisons table, which gives the results of the post-hoc tests (Pallant, 2005). Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for social causes and environmental issues group was significantly different from the control group. Therefore, H1a and H1b are supported.

Table 8: ANOVA Test for Hypothesis 1

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	48,345	2	24,172	22,057	**,000**
Within Groups	327,679	299	1,096		
Total	376,024	301			

Please consult Appendix 8 for the SPSS tables regarding the ANOVA test for the dependent variable PI.

H2: CSR social media posts have a positive impact on consumers' online brand engagement.

> ***H2a:*** *CSR social media posts focused on social causes have a significantly higher effect on consumers' online brand engagement than posts without any CSR association.*

> ***H2b:*** *CSR social media posts focused on environmental issues have a significantly higher effect on consumers online brand engagement than posts without any CSR association.*

Following a similar logic, H2 says that CSR posts (a. social causes and b. environmental issues) would lead to a more favourable consumers' OBE. Again, One-way ANOVA test was used. Once again, there was no statistically significant difference found in the variance between the groups as verified by a p-value higher than 0.05 (sig.=0.558). By looking at the descriptive statistics, participants exposed to social causes and environmental condition suggest a significant higher OBE than participants exposed to the control group (Mean$_{Social}$=3.92, Mean$_{Enviromentl}$=3.76, Mean$_{Control}$=2.92) (Table 9).

Table 9: Means, Standard Deviations and Levene's Test for Hypothesis 2

Control		Social Causes		Environmental Issues		
Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levene's Test
2.92	1.25	3.92	1.39	3.76	1.26	**0.558**

This is in line with the results of the ANOVA test suggesting a significant difference among the mean scores on OBE for the three groups (sig.=0.000) (Table 10). Again, it is also necessary to look at the multiple comparisons, and the same pattern of results was obtained, suggesting that the mean score for social causes group and environmental issues group significantly different from the control group. Consequently, H2.a and H2.b are supported.

Table 10: ANOVA Test for Hypothesis 2

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	60,303	2	30,151	17,845	**,000**
Within Groups	505.197	299	1,690		
Total	565,500	301			

Please consult Appendix 9 for the SPSS tables regarding the ANOVA test for the dependent variable OBE.

Do social media posts with a CSR message have a higher impact on consumers' PI and OBE compared with posts without any CSR association? The answer to this question seems to be "yes". The research findings indicate that CSR posts do have a significantly higher effect on consumers' PI and OBE and are in line with previous results obtained by other authors (Mohr et al., 2001; Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). To sum up, the four formulated hypotheses are supported (Table 11), since we reject all the null hypotheses.

Table 11: Summary of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Null Hypotheses	Sig.	Decision
H1.a	*The impact on consumers' PI is equal among the two groups (Social Causes and Control) – the means are equal.*	0.00	Reject the null hypothesis. Support H1.a
H1.b	*The impact on consumers' PI is equal among the two groups (Environmental Issues and Control) – the means are equal.*	0.00	Reject the null hypothesis. Support H1.b
H2.a	*The impact on consumers' OBE is equal among the two groups (Social Causes and Control) – the means are equal.*	0.00	Reject the null hypothesis. Support H2.a
H2.b	*The impact on consumers' OBE is equal among the two groups (Environmental Issues and Control) – the means are equal.*	0.00	Reject the null hypothesis. Support H2.b

Furthermore, the results could not indicate which type of CSR post works better to increase these consumers' responses (RQ2 and RQ4). In fact, regarding both indicators (PI and OBE), no statistically significant difference was found between social and environmental posts, so we cannot state that one cause works better than the other. The obtained results are consistent with research findings by previous authors (Mohr & Webb, 2005; Auger et al., 2010) that argue that the effect of CSR on consumers' PI does not differentiate between types. However, respondents exposed to the social causes' posts showed a slightly higher PI and OBE when compared to respondents exposed to environmental issues' posts. These results are not expected since they are somewhat contradictory to previous literature. Auger et al. (2010) and Mohr and Webb (2005) studies suggest that even without a significant difference between CSR types, consumers' responses are more influenced by environmental than social concerns. According to Auger et al. (2010) research, environmental issues tend to have a more direct impact on consumers than social causes. Environmental issues have a global impact (e.g. recycling,

reducing pollution,) while social issues are more distant from final consumers' (e.g. labour conditions). In the same vein, Mohr and Webb (2005) argue that not contributing in a philanthropical way is seen as less harmful for society than damaging the environment.

5.7. Further Analysis

To better comprehend the previously mentioned findings, it is also important to understand the sample distribution in terms of CSR importance on consumers' minds. Regarding the CSR level of the participants, when asked if they consider themselves socially and environmentally responsible when buying clothes, it is possible to state that only a small percentage of people considered themselves at least somewhat socially and environmentally responsible (25.5%) compared to 51.6% of people that do not consider themselves socially and environmentally responsible. Still, a significant branch of the respondents (22.8%) do not see themselves as someone who is either specifically socially or environmentally responsible, but rather something in the middle (Appendix 7).

The results also show that older consumers (35 years old or older) consider themselves more socially and environmentally responsible (33.3%) when compared with younger consumers (23.5%) (Appendix 10). This finding is in contrast with previous studies that found that younger consumers tend to be more socially and environmentally conscious (De Pelsmacker, Driesen & Rayp, 2005).

Outside the scope of the concept model, but also relevant for the study, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests whether there is a difference in the PI for demographic characteristics such as gender and age. A statistically significant difference was found in the mean scores of PI regarding both gender and age. The results suggest that women ($Mean_{Female}$=4.38, $Mean_{Male}$=3.88) and older participants ($Mean_{Old}$=4.60, $Mean_{Young}$=4.15) have higher PI regarding SWAN (Appendix 11). The same pattern of results was observed for OBE. Women ($Mean_{Female}$=3.71, $Mean_{Male}$=2.96) and older respondents ($Mean_{Old}$=3.89, $Mean_{Young}$=3.39) reveal a significantly higher OBE regarding SWAN (Appendix 12). As already mentioned, older participants consider themselves more socially and environmentally responsible. Besides that, this could also be explained due to the fact that women (88.5%) and older (87.1%) individuals showed that they somewhat like more the content presented on SWAN posts when compared to men (80%) and younger (85.7%) respondents (Appendix 13 and 14).

6. Conclusions

6.1. Main Conclusions

The main objective of this study was to test to which extent the posting of CSR initiatives in fast fashion brands' social media has a positive impact on consumers' PI and OBE. With this in mind, and after an extensive review of the existing literature, a fictional brand, SWAN, was created. Moreover, three experimental groups were created to manipulate CSR to test the formulated hypotheses. In order to assess consumers' PI, a scale developed by Spears and Singh (2014) was used. To test consumers' OBE, the scale used was developed by Langaro et al. (2019). The developed conceptual framework has proved to be feasible, with all variables of each construct having good reliability and validity.

The gathered sample consisted of 302 participants, 112 composed the control group, 96 were exposed to social causes and 94 to environmental issues posts. The sample distribution has a majority of female and young respondents. In terms of CSR level, a significant part of respondents does not consider themselves socially and environmentally responsible.

Survey results are consistent with the literature and reveal that, in general, consumers show higher levels of PI and OBE when exposed to CSR posts compared to when they are exposed to posts without any CSR association.

Additionally, the obtained findings could not indicate which type of CSR post works better to increase consumers' PI and OBE, since no statistically significant difference was found between social and environmental posts. Hence, looking at our sample's results, it is not possible to state that one cause might work better than the other for a specific consumer's response.

Furthermore, findings suggest that women and older respondents (35 years old or older) revealed higher PI and OBE regarding SWAN.

Overall, all four formulated hypotheses are supported since results suggest that consumers' intention to purchase clothes and engage with the brand online are higher when they are exposed to CSR posts (both social and environmental) than when they are exposed to posts exclusively about the brands' products, regular brand posts without any CSR association.

6.2. Theoretical and Managerial Implications

This chapter aims to summarize the theoretical and managerial contribution of this study.

Regarding theoretical implications, this research contributes to the existing literature in the sense that enriches the understanding of whether CSR initiatives communicated through social media impact consumers' PI and OBE. By designing three comparable scenarios, this research also compares consumers' responses between groups. It takes into consideration two indicators: purchase intention, which has somewhat previously explored by several authors, and online brand engagement, which fulfils a gap in the literature since only few research papers studied CSR impacts on this consumer's response.

The understanding of consumer responses towards CSR social media posts is crucial to managerial practices of fast fashion brand's managers, particularly these days when the sector is facing an unprecedented level of scrutiny on their polluting footprint, and multinational brands are losing its credibility and reputation. Knowledge of how consumers' respond to CSR posts might be useful to decide if it is worthy to invest in CSR and adapt its communication and marketing strategy which may lead to the increase of sales and, consequently, company profitability.

In a nutshell, the findings of this study are extremely relevant for both the fast fashion brands, that are able to improve consumers' opinion on the company, which will lead to increase profit, and the society and environment, since, according to this research, brands have economic incentives to engage in beneficial CSR initiatives.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

The results presented in this research encompass some shortcomings that reduce the generalisability of our findings and should be taken into consideration upon interpretation.

First, it is relevant to underline that the conceptualisation of the two types of CSR for this study was not an easy task. Even though several authors in the literature have studied this topic, there is not a consensus on which different CSR dimensions could be well-perceived by consumers. In this sense, it was difficult to compare findings between studies.

Another limitation is the sample size and distribution. The gathered sample of 302 total respondents might not be representative due to its small size. Moreover, in terms of distribution,

the sample is unbalanced concerning demographic aspects (namely, gender, age and nationality). Therefore, in future research, to overcome this shortcoming, we encourage other researchers to develop a long-term study that enables the collection of a larger and balanced sample.

Lastly, the conclusions of this research concern a fictional fast fashion brand, so, results can only be generalized for this particular industry and cannot be generalized to other industries. The findings need further research, perhaps, by conducting an adapted research design with different stimuli, to be able to be generalized to a different type of industry or product. Additionally, since this research was focused on Instagram, future research could consider, for example, the usage of Facebook in order to replicate this study, complementing and supporting our findings. Moreover, it would be interesting to see research focused on broader consumers' responses to CSR posts instead of just studying the impact on consumers' PI and OBE, analysing, namely, the impact on brand attitude.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: CSR Dimensions by Alvarado-Herrera et al. (2017)

Consumer's Perceptions of CSR Scale

Dimension	Item
Social Equity	In my opinion, regarding society, X is really…
	… Trying to sponsor educational programmes
	… Trying to sponsor public health programmes
	… Trying to be highly committed to well-defined ethical principles
	… Trying to sponsor cultural programmes
	… Trying to make financial donations to social causes
	… Trying to help to improve quality of life in the local community
Environmental Protection	In my opinion, regarding the environment, X is really…
	… Trying to sponsor pro-environmental programmes
	… Trying to allocate resources to offer services compatible with the environment
	… Trying to carry out programmes to reduce pollution
	… Trying to protect the environment
	… Trying to recycle its waste materials properly
	… Trying to use only the necessary natural resources

Adapted from Alvarado-Herrera et al., (2017)

Appendix 2: Fast Fashion Brand List by Caro and Martínez-de-Albéniz (2015)

Specialty Apparel Retailer	No. of appearances in Factiva search		No. of appearances in PDF online search	
	rank	% appearances	% appearances	rank
H&M*	1	37.1%	41.0%	2
ZARA/Inditex*	2	29.2%	45.9%%	1
Gap	3	11.9%	18.2%	3
Uniqlo/Fast Retailing	4	9.9%	9.4%	8
Topshop	5	9.3%	13.7%	4
Forever 21	6	7.5%	11.2%	6
Mango*	7	4.3%	12.4%	5
Wet Seal	8	3.2%	0.6%	16
Benetton*	9	3.1%	10.1%	7
New Look	10	2.8%	6.2%	9
Esprit	11	2.8%	4.7%	10
C&A*	12	1.9%	4.7%	11
American Apparel	13	1.2%	2.6%	13
Urban Outfitters	14	0.9%	2.8%	12
Peacocks	15	0.5%	1.1%	15
Charlotte Russe	16	0.5%	0.2%	17
Armani Exchange	17	0.3%	1.5%	14

*Brands considered for this research

Appendix 3: Stimuli

Control Post 1	Social Causes Post 1	Environmental Issues Post 1

swan_x_fashion SWAN X | Check out the latest exclusive collection now available online and in all stores #SwanX #WearFashion

swan_x_fashion SWAN X | Have you wondered who made your clothes? We want to share this collection's production process with you. Join us on our journey and follow our stories to learn more about the employees involved in the production. We are improving quality of life in this community! #FairWorkConditions

swan_x_fashion SWAN X | Did you know that Swan X garments are made from 100% organic cotton and produced in Zero Discharge factories? By buying this collection you are protecting the environment! #ProtectTheEnvironment #OrganicCotton

Control Post 2   **Social Causes Post 2**   **Environmental Issues Post 2**

swan_x_fashion SWAN X | FALL ESSENTIALS | Comfy and stylish are not opposites this season! #SwanX #WearFashion

swan_x_fashion SWAN X | We are fully committed to providing healthy and safe work conditions as well as fair salaries to all workers in our factories located in Bangladesh. To make sure that these policies are being met every factory is inspected every two months #HightEthicalStandars

swan_x_fashion SWAN X | Think about new generations. Help us to preserve freshwater resources and to reduce water consumption in the production process. Wear our most sustainable environmentally friendly collection #ProtectThePlanet

Control Post 3 **Social Causes Post 3** **Environmental Issues Post 3**

swan_x_fashion

swan_x_fashion SWAN X | WINTER IS COMING | Calling our denim lovers, discover our latest women and menswear collection #SwanX #Denim

swan_x_fashion

swan_x_fashion SWAN X | FASHION IS FOR ALL | When buying one of our Winter coats we give another to a person in need. This Winter no one will be cold. Join us and Santa Casa da Misericórdia Portuguesa in this campaign and help those who need it most! #SolidarityCampaign

swan_x_fashion

swan_x_fashion SWAN X | HELP US TO RECYCLE | We are working with our suppliers to create a circular system that will enable us to recover textile waste and cuttings from our own production and begin to use it to manufacture new garment #Rewear #Reuse #Recycle

Appendix 4: Survey

Dear Participant,

This survey is part of my dissertation for my Master's in Management with Specialization in Strategic Marketing by Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics. Your participation is vital for the success of this research.

I kindly ask you to read carefully through the questions and answer as honestly as possible. There are no correct or incorrect answers. Your answers will remain anonymous and confidential, they will be used only for the purpose of this research.

The estimated duration of the survey is **5 minutes**. If you have any doubts or questions, please contact me via carolinamcaviana@gmail.com.

Thank you very much in advance for your participation!

Carolina Viana

Screening Question

Q1. Do you have an **Instagram** account?

○ Yes

○ No (if "No" is selected skip to the end of the survey)

Q2. Please **rank** the following aspects according to their influence on your **purchase decision** regarding **fashion products**:

_____ Social aspects (country of origin, workers' conditions, etc.)

_____ Environmental aspects (materials, chemicals involved in the production, etc.)

_____ Price

_____ Style

_____ Comfort

_____ Brand

_____ Convenience (store location, order clothes online, etc.)

Brand Presentation

SWAN is among the leading fashion brands for men and women, competing with brands like ZARA and H&M.

SWAN is a new brand that has recently established itself in the Portuguese market. The brand is one of Europe's largest apparel retailer and has stores in other counties such as the UK, Spain, Germany and Italy.

Stimuli Presentation

Now imagining that you follow **SWAN** on **Instagram**...

You are going to see **3 pictures posted by the brand**.

Please read the posts and its captions carefully. You will not be able to go back after this section.

Randomized Stimuli (Participants are exposed to three posts of one group)

1. Control Group
2. Social Causes Group
3. Environmental Issues Group

Stimuli Control Questions

Q3. Considering the posts you saw, please indicate to which extent do you agree with the following extent:

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
In general, I like the content that is presented in the posts.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4. After reading these 3 posts, what do you think that is the **main message** that the brand wants to communicate?

- ○   Exclusively share its new collection
- ○   Support social causes
- ○   Support environmental issues

Purchase Intention Questions

Please answer the following questions based on your opinion of the previously presented **pictures** and respective **messages.**

Q5. Please indicate to which extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
In the future, I would definitely buy clothes from this brand.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am curious to know more about this brand.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The probability that this brand is trustworthy is very high.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It will easily become my main clothing brand.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will frequently buy it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If this brand, is not available in the places I usually shop, I will look for it somewhere else.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q6. To sum up, what is your overall **purchase intention** regarding **SWAN** in the future?

○ 1 - Very low

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5

○ 6

○ 7 - Very high

Online Brand Engagement Question

Again, please answer the following question based on your opinion of the previously presented **pictures** and respective **messages**.

Q7. Please indicate to which extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
I will read this brand posts on the brand's Instagram.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will click "like" to posts, photos or videos on the brand's Instagram.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will access video and music links that are posted on the brand's Instagram.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will comment on the posts published on the brand's Instagram.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will share with friends the content published on the brand's Instagram.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will read others' comments to the brand's Instagram posts.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q8. Regarding your **fashion consumption** behaviour, please indicate to which extent do you agree with the following statement:

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
I believe my personal fashion consumption behaviour has an impact on environment.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I try to reduce my overall consumption of clothes to only what I really need.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I inform myself about the manufacturing process of the clothes that I buy.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I make an effort to avoid brands whose processes potentially cause environmental damage.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I make an effort to avoid brands that do not treat their employees and suppliers fairly.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied when I purchase products from brands that contribute to social/environmental causes.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When buying clothes, sustainability is more important to me than the price-quality ratio.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am willing to pay higher prices for clothes that comply with social and environmental standards.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q9. Overall, when **buying clothes**, to which extent do you consider yourself to be **socially and environmentally responsible**?

- ○ Not at all
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5
- ○ 6
- ○ 7 - Definitely

Demographic Questions

Q10. Gender:

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Prefer not to say

Q11. Age:

- ○ Under 18
- ○ 18-24
- ○ 25-34
- ○ 35-44
- ○ 45-54
- ○ 55-64
- ○ 65 or older
- ○ Prefer not to say

Q12. Nationality: _____

Q13. Education:

- ○ High School or lower
- ○ Bachelor's degree
- ○ Master's degree
- ○ PhD
- ○ Prefer not to say

Q14. Current Occupation:

- ○ Student (High School)
- ○ Student (Bachelor/Master/other)
- ○ Student-Worker
- ○ Employed
- ○ Unemployed
- ○ Retired
- ○ Prefer not to say

Q15. Net Monthly Income:

- ○ Less than 500€
- ○ 500€ - 999€
- ○ 1000€ - 1999€
- ○ 2000€ - 2999€
- ○ Above 3000€
- ○ Prefer not to say

Thank you very much for your participation!

It is very much appreciated if you could please share the survey within your network.

Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	80	26,5	26,5
Female	217	71,9	98,3
Prefer not to say	5	1,7	100,0
Total	302	100,0	

Age

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Under 18	38	12,6	12,6
18-24	159	52,6	65,2
25-34	41	13,6	78,8
35-44	23	7,6	86,4
45-54	32	10,6	97,0
55-64	6	2,0	99,0
65 or older	1	,3	99,3
Prefer not to say	2	,7	100,0
Total	302	100,0	

List of Countries

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Angola	1	,3	,3
Austria	2	,7	1,0
Brazil	1	,3	1,3
Germany	6	2,0	3,3
Indonesia	2	,7	4,0
Ireland	1	,3	4,3
Italy	4	1,3	5,6
Netherlands	1	,3	6,0
Norway	1	,3	6,3
Portugal	278	92,1	98,3
Spain	4	1,3	99,7
Thailand	1	,3	100,0
Total	302	100,0	

Current Occupation

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Student (High School)	42	13,9	13,9
Student (University)	134	44,4	58,3
Student-Worker	21	7,0	65,2
Employed	96	31,8	97,0
Unemployed	5	1,7	98,7
Retired	1	,3	99,0
Prefer not to say	3	1,0	100,0
Total	302	100,0	

Education

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
High School or lower	73	24,2	24,2
Bachelor's degree	138	45,7	69,9
Master's degree	84	27,8	97,7
PhD	3	1,0	98,7
Prefer not to say	4	1,3	100,0
Total	302	100,0	

Net Monthly Income

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 500€	99	32,8	32,8
500€ - 999€	48	15,9	48,7
1000€ - 1999€	51	16,9	65,6
2000€ - 2999€	21	7,0	72,5
Above 3000€	9	3,0	75,5
Prefer not to say	74	24,5	100,0
Total	302	100,0	

Appendix 6: Validity Analysis

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		**,930**
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2086,750
	df	66
	Sig.	,000

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6,543	54,523	54,523	6,543	54,523	54,523	4,237	**35,309**	35,309
2	1,063	8,862	63,385	1,063	8,862	63,385	3,369	**28,076**	**63,385**
3	,745	6,210	69,595						
4	,648	5,397	74,992						
5	,599	4,994	79,985						
6	,549	4,574	84,559						
7	,393	3,278	87,837						
8	,363	3,024	90,860						
9	,322	2,683	93,543						
10	,276	2,303	95,846						
11	,250	2,081	97,927						
12	,249	2,073	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component	
	1	2
OBE.3	,773	
OBE.1	,772	
OBE.6	,749	
OBE.5	,749	
OBE.2	,744	
OBE.4	,642	
PI.3		,791
PI.1		,759
PI.5		,665
PI.4		,652
PI.2		,619
PI.6		,608

Extraction Method: PCA
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Appendix 7: Group Comparison – Crosstabs and Chi-Square Tests

Crosstab

			Gender			
			Male	Female	Prefer not to say	Total
Group	Control	Count	34	77	1	112
		% within Group	30,4%	68,8%	0,9%	100,0%
	Social Causes	Count	25	70	1	96
		% within Group	26,0%	72,9%	1,0%	100,0%
	Environmental Issues	Count	21	70	3	94
		% within Group	22,3%	74,5%	3,2%	100,0%
Total		Count	80	217	5	302
		% within Group	26,5%	71,9%	1,7%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests for Gender

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3,457ᵃ	4	**,484**
Likelihood Ratio	3,288	4	,511
Linear-by-Linear Association	2,454	1	,117
N of Valid Cases	302		

a. 3 cells (33,3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,56.

Crosstab

			Age								Total
			Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 or older	Prefer not to say	
Group	Control	Count	10	65	17	9	10	0	1	0	112
		% within Group	8,9%	58,0%	15,2%	8,0%	8,9%	0,0%	0,9%	0,0%	100,0%
	Social Causes	Count	13	50	9	7	11	5	0	1	96
		% within Group	13,5%	52,1%	9,4%	7,3%	11,5%	5,2%	0,0%	1,0%	100,0%
	Environmental Issues	Count	15	44	15	7	11	1	0	1	94
		% within Group	16,0%	46,8%	16,0%	7,4%	11,7%	1,1%	0,0%	1,1%	100,0%
Total		Count	38	159	41	23	32	6	1	2	302
		% within Group	12,6%	52,6%	13,6%	7,6%	10,6%	2,0%	0,3%	0,7%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests for Age

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16,225[a]	14	**,300**
Likelihood Ratio	18,138	14	,201
Linear-by-Linear Association	,179	1	,672
N of Valid Cases	302		

a. 9 cells (37,5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,31.

Crosstab

			Education					
			High School or lower	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	PhD	Prefer not to say	Total
Group	Control	Count	21	56	34	1	0	112
		% within Group	18,8%	50,0%	30,4%	0,9%	0,0%	100,0%
	Social Causes	Count	28	42	24	1	1	96
		% within Group	29,2%	43,8%	25,0%	1,0%	1,0%	100,0%
	Environmental Issues	Count	24	40	26	1	3	94
		% within Group	25,5%	42,6%	27,7%	1,1%	3,2%	100,0%
Total		Count	73	138	84	3	4	302
		% within Group	24,2%	45,7%	27,8%	1,0%	1,3%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests for Education

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7,730[a]	8	**,460**
Likelihood Ratio	8,557	8	,381
Linear-by-Linear Association	,001	1	,982
N of Valid Cases	302		

a. 6 cells (40,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,93.

Crosstab for CSR Level

Overall, when buying clothes, to which extent do you consider yourself to be socially and environmentally responsible?

			1- Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Definitely	Total
Group	Control	Count	12	22	41	20	15	1	1	112
		% within Group	10,7%	19,6%	36,6%	17,9%	13,4%	0,9%	0,9%	100,0%
	Social Causes	Count	7	12	21	26	18	10	2	96
		% within Group	7,3%	12,5%	21,9%	27,1%	18,8%	10,4%	2,1%	100,0%
	Environmental Issues	Count	5	9	27	23	21	4	5	94
		% within Group	5,3%	9,6%	28,7%	24,5%	22,3%	4,3%	5,3%	100,0%
Total		Count	24	43	89	69	54	15	8	302
		% within Group	7,9%	14,2%	29,5%	22,8%	17,9%	5,0%	2,6%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27,677[a]	12	**,006**
Likelihood Ratio	28,227	12	,005
Linear-by-Linear Association	14,431	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	302		

a. 5 cells (23,8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2,49.

Appendix 8: Testing Hypothesis 1 - ANOVA Test

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Control	112	**3,7292**	1,08038	,10209	3,5269	3,9315	1,33	6,67
Social Causes	96	**4,6319**	1,13063	,11539	4,4029	4,8610	1,33	6,83
Environmental Issues	94	**4,4557**	,90801	,09365	4,2697	4,6417	1,83	6,50
Total	302	**4,2423**	1,11770	,06432	4,1157	4,3688	1,33	6,83

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Purchase Intention	Based on Mean	2,236	2	299	**,109**
	Based on Median	2,097	2	299	,125
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2,097	2	290,611	,125
	Based on trimmed mean	2,192	2	299	,113

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	48,345	2	24,172	**22,057**	**,000**
Within Groups	327,679	299	1,096		
Total	376,024	301			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention
Tukey HSD

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
Control	Social Causes	-,90278*	,14560	**,000**	-1,2457	-,5598
	Environmental Issues	-,72651*	,14644	**,000**	-1,0714	-,3816
Social Causes	Control	,90278*	,14560	**,000**	,5598	1,2457
	Environmental Issues	,17627	,15190	,478	-,1815	,5341
Environmental Issues	Control	,72651*	,14644	**,000**	,3816	1,0714
	Social Causes	-,17627	,15190	,478	-,5341	,1815

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Appendix 9: Testing Hypothesis 2 - ANOVA Test

Descriptives

Online Brand Engagement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Control	112	**2,9226**	1,24981	,11810	2,6886	3,1566	1,00	5,83
Social Causes	96	**3,9167**	1,39275	,14215	3,6345	4,1989	1,00	6,67
Environmental Issues	94	**3,7589**	1,25952	,12991	3,5009	4,0168	1,00	7,00
Total	302	**3,4989**	1,37067	,07887	3,3437	3,6541	1,00	7,00

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Online Brand Engagement	Based on Mean	,584	2	299	**,558**
	Based on Median	,490	2	299	,613
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,490	2	285,828	,613
	Based on trimmed mean	,570	2	299	,566

ANOVA

Online Brand Engagement

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	60,303	2	30,151	**17,845**	**,000**
Within Groups	505,197	299	1,690		
Total	565,500	301			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Online Brand Engagement

Tukey HSD

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	Social Causes	-,99405*	,18079	**,000**	-1,4199	-,5682
	Environmental Issues	-,83625*	,18183	**,000**	-1,2645	-,4080
Social Causes	Control	,99405*	,18079	**,000**	,5682	1,4199
	Environmental Issues	,15780	,18861	,681	-,2865	,6021
Environmental Issues	Control	,83625*	,18183	**,000**	,4080	1,2645
	Social Causes	-,15780	,18861	,681	-,6021	,2865

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Appendix 10: Crosstabs for Age and Level of CSR

Crosstab

			Overall, when buying clothes, to which extent do you consider yourself to be socially and environmentally responsible?							
			1- Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Definitely	Total
Age:	Young	Count	21	38	73	50	37	11	8	238
		% within Age:	8,8%	16,0%	30,7%	21,0%	15,5%	4,6%	3,4%	100%
	Old	Count	3	5	15	19	16	4	0	62
		% within Age:	4,8%	8,1%	24,2%	30,6%	25,8%	6,5%	0,0%	100%
	Prefer not to say	Count	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
		% within Age:	0,0%	0,0%	50,0%	0,0%	50,0%	0,0%	0,0%	100%
Total		Count	24	43	89	69	54	15	8	302
		% within Age:	7,9%	14,2%	29,5%	22,8%	17,9%	5,0%	2,6%	100%

Appendix 11: ANOVA Test – Purchase Intention for Gender and Age

Descriptives

Purchase Intention

Gender:	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
					95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
Male	80	**3,88**	1,190	,133	3,62	4,15	1	6
Female	217	**4,38**	1,071	,073	4,24	4,52	1	7
Prefer not to say	5	**4,03**	,606	,271	3,28	4,79	3	5
Total	302	**4,24**	1,118	,064	4,12	4,37	1	7

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Purchase Intention	Based on Mean	1,604	2	299	**,203**
	Based on Median	1,671	2	299	,190
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1,671	2	295,993	,190
	Based on trimmed mean	1,594	2	299	,205

ANOVA

Purchase Intention

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	14,773	2	7,386	6,113	**,002**
Within Groups	361,251	299	1,208		
Total	376,024	301			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Tukey HSD

(I) Gender:	(J) Gender:	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
					95% Confidence Interval	
Male	Female	-,499[*]	,144	**,002**	-,84	-,16
	Prefer not to say	-,152	,507	,952	-1,35	1,04
Female	Male	,499[*]	,144	**,002**	,16	,84
	Prefer not to say	,347	,497	,765	-,82	1,52
Prefer not to say	Male	,152	,507	,952	-1,04	1,35
	Female	-,347	,497	,765	-1,52	,82

Descriptives

Purchase Intention

Age:	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Young	238	**4,15**	1,129	,073	4,00	4,29	1	7
Old	62	**4,60**	1,017	,129	4,35	4,86	2	7
Prefer not to say	2	**4,25**	,589	,417	-1,04	9,54	4	5
Total	302	**4,24**	1,118	,064	4,12	4,37	1	7

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Purchase Intention	Based on Mean	1,363	2	299	**,258**
	Based on Median	1,440	2	299	,238
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1,440	2	297,957	,238
	Based on trimmed mean	1,395	2	299	,249

ANOVA

Purchase Intention

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10,276	2	5,138	**4,200**	**,016**
Within Groups	365,747	299	1,223		
Total	376,024	301			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Tukey HSD

(I) Age:	(J) Age:	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Young	Old	-,457*	,158	**,011**	-,83	-,09
	Prefer not to say	-,102	,785	,991	-1,95	1,75
Old	Young	,457*	,158	**,011**	,09	,83
	Prefer not to say	,355	,795	,896	-1,52	2,23
Prefer not to say	Young	,102	,785	,991	-1,75	1,95
	Old	-,355	,795	,896	-2,23	1,52

Appendix 12: ANOVA Test – Online Brand Engagement for Gender and Age

Descriptives

Online Brand Engagement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Male	80	**2,96**	1,352	,151	2,66	3,26	1	6
Female	217	**3,71**	1,337	,091	3,53	3,89	1	7
Prefer not to say	5	**3,13**	,594	,266	2,40	3,87	2	4
Total	302	**3,50**	1,371	,079	3,34	3,65	1	7

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Online Brand Engagement	Based on Mean	1,864	2	299	**,157**
	Based on Median	2,001	2	299	,137
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2,001	2	294,199	,137
	Based on trimmed mean	1,907	2	299	,150

ANOVA

Online Brand Engagement

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	33,407	2	16,703	**9,386**	**,000**
Within Groups	532,093	299	1,780		
Total	565,500	301			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Online Brand Engagement

Tukey HSD

(I) Gender:	(J) Gender:	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Male	Female	-,748*	,174	**,000**	-1,16	-,34
	Prefer not to say	-,175	,615	,956	-1,62	1,27
Female	Male	,748*	,174	**,000**	,34	1,16
	Prefer not to say	,573	,603	,609	-,85	1,99
Prefer not to say	Male	,175	,615	,956	-1,27	1,62
	Female	-,573	,603	,609	-1,99	,85

Descriptives

Online Brand Engagement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Young	238	**3,39**	1,363	,088	3,22	3,57	1	7
Old	62	**3,89**	1,360	,173	3,54	4,24	1	7
Prefer not to say	2	**3,75**	,589	,417	-1,54	9,04	3	4
Total	302	**3,50**	1,371	,079	3,34	3,65	1	7

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Online Brand Engagement	Based on Mean	,801	2	299	**,450**
	Based on Median	,737	2	299	,479
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,737	2	297,994	,479
	Based on trimmed mean	,808	2	299	,447

ANOVA

Online Brand Engagement

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12,170	2	6,085	**3,288**	**,039**
Within Groups	553,329	299	1,851		
Total	565,500	301			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Online Brand Engagement

Tukey HSD

(I) Age:	(J) Age:	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Young	Old	-,495*	,194	**,030**	-,95	-,04
	Prefer not to say	-,355	,966	,928	-2,63	1,92
Old	Young	,495*	,194	**,030**	,04	,95
	Prefer not to say	,140	,977	,989	-2,16	2,44
Prefer not to say	Young	,355	,966	,928	-1,92	2,63
	Old	-,140	,977	,989	-2,44	2,16

Appendix 13: Crosstabs for Gender and Posts Liking

Crosstab

In general, I like the content that is presented in the posts.

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Gender:	Male	Count	1	5	1	9	12	38	14	80
		% within Gender:	1,3%	6,3%	1,3%	11,3%	15,0%	47,5%	17,5%	100,0%
	Female	Count	3	5	4	13	43	82	67	217
		% within Gender:	1,4%	2,3%	1,8%	6,0%	19,8%	37,8%	30,9%	100,0%
	Prefer not to say	Count	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	5
		% within Gender:	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	40,0%	0,0%	60,0%	0,0%	100,0%
Total		Count	4	10	5	24	55	123	81	302
		% within Gender:	1,3%	3,3%	1,7%	7,9%	18,2%	40,7%	26,8%	100,0%

Appendix 14: Crosstabs for Age and Posts Liking

Crosstab

In general, I like the content that is presented in the posts.

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Age:	Young	Count	4	8	5	17	46	91	67	238
		% within Age:	1,7%	3,4%	2,1%	7,1%	19,3%	38,2%	28,2%	100,0%
	Old	Count	0	2	0	6	9	31	14	62
		% within Age:	0,0%	3,2%	0,0%	9,7%	14,5%	50,0%	22,6%	100,0%
	Prefer not to say	Count	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
		% within Age:	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	50,0%	0,0%	50,0%	0,0%	100,0%
Total		Count	4	10	5	24	55	123	81	302
		% within Age:	1,3%	3,3%	1,7%	7,9%	18,2%	40,7%	26,8%	100,0%