

# **CONSUMERS AND THEIR BUYING DECISION MAKING BASED ON PRICE AND INFORMATION ABOUT CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR). CASE STUDY: UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS FROM A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN MEXICO**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The articles objective is to demonstrate that a socially responsible consumer is interested of being informed about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices and is also willing to pay a higher price for a product made with CSR. Criteria of price as well as the interest of being informed about CSR practices were the two variables analyzed for the Chi-Square test. Even though CSR was declared as an important issue for the majority of participants, products made with CSR hasn't achieved much influence in the buying decision making or in the need of being informed about the CSR practices. The need to create social consciousness for consumers to promote CSR practices through the buying decision making was also demonstrated.

## **KEYWORDS**

Citizen consumer, corporate social responsibility, buying decision.

**JEL classification:** M12

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## RESUMEN

*Consumidores y su decisión de compra basada en precio e información sobre Responsabilidad Social Corporativa (RSC). Caso de estudio: estudiantes de pregrado de una universidad privada en México*

El objetivo de este artículo es demostrar que un consumidor socialmente responsable está interesado en informarse sobre la Responsabilidad Social Corporativa (RSC) de la empresa así como está dispuesto a pagar un precio más alto por aquel producto que ha sido realizado de forma socialmente responsable. Los criterios de precio e interés en informarse sobre las prácticas de RSC de las empresas a las que compran sus productos y/o servicios fueron considerados para las pruebas estadísticas de Chi-Cuadrada. Aunque la RSC fue definida como un tema importante para la mayoría de los participantes, los posibles productos elaborados con RSC no lograron tener una influencia importante en las decisiones de compra, así como tampoco la necesidad de estar informados acerca del RSC de las empresas. Lo anterior muestra la necesidad de crear conciencia ciudadana en los consumidores para privilegiar las prácticas de RSC a través de las decisiones de compra informadas.

## PALABRAS CLAVE

Consumo ciudadano, responsabilidad social empresarial, decisión de compra.

## RESUMO

*Os consumidores e suas decisões de compra com base no preço e informação sobre Responsabilidade Social Corporativa (RSC). Caso de estudo: alunos de graduação em uma universidade privada do México*

O objetivo deste artigo é demonstrar que um consumidor socialmente responsável tem interesse em se informar sobre a Responsabilidade Social Corporativa (RSC) da empresa assim como está disposto a pagar um aumento de preço pelo produto que foi realizado de forma socialmente responsável. Os critérios de preço e interesse em se informar sobre as práticas de RSC das empresas em que compram seus produtos e/ou serviços foram considerados para os testes estatísticos de chi-quadrado. Apesar de a RSE ter sido definida como uma questão importante para a maioria dos participantes, os possíveis produtos elaborados com RSC não conseguiram ter uma influência importante sobre as decisões de compra bem como sobre a necessidade de estar informado acerca das RSC das empresas. O anterior mostra a necessidade de criar uma consciência cívica nos consumidores para privilegiar as práticas de RSC através das decisões de compra informadas.

## PALAVRAS CHAVE

Consumo cívico, responsabilidade social empresarial, decisão de compra.

## INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is being currently stimulated by the consumers who question if the company that is behind a product's brand has social responsibility practices. Social responsibility will not be developed unless the consumer rewards a company's CSR practices through her/his buying decision. The citizen consumer must be informed and make decisions based on the CSR criteria. On the other hand, the citizen consumer must pressure through her/his buying decision (and even denounce) if a company lacks CSR strategies.

For this reason, the citizen consumer must be informed of the social and environmental problems, demand information regarding the CSR, and in this manner, include this information in her/his decision when buying a product.

The citizen consumer recognizes that the CSR is a requirement for a highly developed society. The citizen consumer is also the one that grants social legitimacy to the company's practices. Therefore, the citizen consumer's role becomes an important stakeholder for the CSR promotion.

Getting the citizen to become a citizen consumer and to assume her/his new role in society is a challenge. The reasons are multiple; one of them is that there has not been a lot of research done. The lack of research limits the possibility for knowledge to be generated, discussed and debated in managerial, social and environmental CSR forums.

Critics about CSR as Hanlon (2008), and Kuhn and Deetz (2008) argue

that CSR could be a manipulative strategy where social commitment is only pretended and is not real. For this reason, a citizen consumer must be interested in knowing about CSR strategies and also she/he must be willing to pay extra for product made with CSR.

The objective is to probe that a responsible consumer is willing to pay for a higher price product as well as the criterion of being informed about CSR.

With this purpose the analysis of four different positions of responsible consumption regarding both criteria (price and information) is taken: consumer by price, conventional consumer, informed consumer, and citizen consumer. This is an exploratory, non experimental research based on the measuring instrument designed by a research group of the Deusto University in Spain (Garcia, Gibaja and Mujika, 2007). The sample size is integrated for 189 random selected participants.

The findings report that the profile of (1) the consumer that base her/his decision on the lowest price product, (2) the conventional consumer, and (3) the informed consumer; are represented significantly in this group of participants. Nevertheless, (4) the citizen consumer which links both the willingness to pay for a higher price product and willingness to be informed about CSR practices was not significantly identified. The findings demonstrate the need to create consciousness in the consumer about the CSR criteria in order to become a citizen consumer that may apply her/his autonomy in her/his buying decision marking.

As part of the theoretical framework, a link between CSR and consumer is analyzed in the first section of this article. In the second section five hypotheses are established related to price and need to be informed. In section three methodology is presented, and in section four the results of the empirical study are offered and discussed. Finally, in section five the conclusion and limitations are presented.

## **I. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A company that invests in a country with social inequality and gets benefits because of its low socioeconomic status must do something to assume its internal and external social and environmental responsibility; this is what is known as CSR. As part of its social framework, the company must intend to generate wealth and also impact on the public good (Mercado, 2007; Schvarstein, 2003).

If the company does not assume its social responsibility, it is not only irresponsible, but nonstrategic decision.

A currently common critic made to companies is the avoidance of its social responsibility. In some occasions, not only do companies reduce social responsibility expenses, but are also capable of performing against social responsibility in order to increase private goods (profit). Young (2004) contention is that wealth implies the inclusion of social development as part of the company strategy. But, in certain cases, companies are only oriented to create profit, but not wealth.

Young (2004) defends rescuing the public interest and equating with the

private interest, since responding to a public interest was the reason why the concept of corporation was created. Regarding this position, he proposes the binomial “both/and”; a binomial which implicates recognizing the difference between the company’s private interest (profit) and the social responsibility. Nevertheless, they are linked as well, making it one part of the other. In other words, there is no social responsibility without private interest, and there is not private interest without social responsibility. This relationship is part of the rationality demanded for current social challenges.

According to Cortina (1994), and Cortina and Martínez (2001), a company interested in getting social legitimacy must respect its own internal goods. The internal goods are those that correspond to its *raison d’être*. For example, it is a business’s internal good to provide useful products and services for the society, to provide job opportunities that guarantee a life with dignity for its employees, and to generate social and economic development through the company’s strategies.

Every company has external goods as well. Examples of external goods are profit, social recognition, and power. External goods are generated when the organization has oriented its strategies to internal goods or *raison d’être*. External goods do not constitute the core of the organization, but are resources which facilitate the achievement of internal goods. Nevertheless an organization that is only oriented to external goods and ignores internal goods becomes corrupted.

In other words, a company whose business' main objective is the search of profits is dissociated from what legitimize it from the society's perception. It's interesting to observe how the "both/and" to which Young (2004) refers makes sense to the company's strategies. This reciprocal relationship implies that the social aspects affect (in a positive and negative way) the company's interests. According to Young (2006) high risk investments correlate with high economical benefits, but not necessarily with value maximization. For instance, in a high risk social environment (where there's lack of economic, politic, or social stability), this risk can drastically affect a company. In other words, the company's activities are not isolated from the social context. The social context influences the company but the company influences the social context as well. A way to join the "both/and" is through what is established as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The World Economic Forum (2010a) defines Corporate Social Responsibility as the Stakeholder Concept: "responding to stakeholder expectations while maximizing the corporation's profitability; wider financial, environmental and social impact; minimizing negative and maximizing positive effects on corporate stakeholders" (p. 1) and also establishes in its report that business should feel a certain responsibility to fight hunger (World Economic Forum, 2010b): "that businesses are not humanitarian organizations, but to a certain extent they should feel and take the responsibility to fight hunger or poverty in general" (p. 1). On the other hand, in the Green Book, established by The

European Union (Comisión de las Comunidades Europeas, 2001), CSR is defined as a company's voluntary integration of social and environmental concerns in its commercial operations and the relationships with their stakeholders. It is clear how the first definition emphasizes in the internal and external work of the organization while the second definition makes emphasis on the voluntary position (Brito, 2005).

With respect to Mexico, according to CEMEFI (2010) (an association which supports CSR in Mexico), social responsibility has been confused with social actions. It has not been comprehended that CSR is beyond that, since it is not about donating an economic amount, but about sharing talents, capacities and infrastructure in order to respond to social challenges.

It is also a misinterpretation to define CSR in terms of costs, since it should be considered as an investment to society. Although the economic affair is important and necessary, the mistake is to think that a donation as an act of generosity and not as an act of responsibility (Ruíz, 2005). An act of generosity can result from spontaneous interest, but it does not guarantee its permanence.

An act of CSR implies assuming the commitment of attending the internal, external, and environmental CSR issues of an organization. The company assumes CSR, which implies social challenges related to employees, clients, society and environment, among others.

When a company assumes social responsibility, it is not only an altruistic but a strategic decision. For

example, every company benefits from having a high prepared labor, developing its suppliers, or enlarging the market of clients. But human and economic capitals are not generated by themselves. The *invisible hand* (a term used by the economist Adam Smith to describe the natural force that guides free market capitalism through competition for scarce resources) sometimes does not do its job well. This is an important reason which justifies that a company must collaborate to generate social development through CSR.

In this way, social responsibility should not be viewed as a trend, but as a permanent issue in the managerial agenda. Social responsibility is not only focused on the community context, but must also include the internal, external and environmental challenges.

In this sense CSR is not a tangential but a transversal matter to managerial life. In other words, through CSR the company is oriented to produce quality products, to offer fair prices, to pay fair salaries, to improve labor conditions; and is committed to the environmental and community issues (Ruíz, 2004).

On the other hand, some companies limit their CSR scope to respect the law and generate profit; any other issue is viewed as a deviation from their interests (Friedman, 1970). The social wellbeing that they assume refers to tax payment. There is still a lack of social conscience in the managerial scope with respect to CSR.

Besides the lack of culture of CSR and the limitations of not understanding

or completely assuming, there are not enough empirical studies that promote and support the positive results of the efforts done for CSR strategies by some Latin American companies (Brito, 2005).

The form of evaluating the isolated efforts done by some companies is limited to self-evaluations process supported by their own internal reports. There is a lack of an objective evaluation process conducted by an independent organism.

Although one of the intentions of the CSR is to increase the worker's quality of life as well as that of the community, there are some companies' examples that show the contrary (Simpson and Green, 2003). Although the CSR tends to generate a higher sense of commitment in the labor force, it is also questioned whether it is just part of a marketing strategy.

About the Danone-Mexico case (Brito, 2005) its CSR practices have increased drastically the revenues. In this sense, the consumers have acquired a leading role to promote CSR since they are willing to pay a higher amount for products that come from a company that has demonstrate interest in promoting it.

Nevertheless for most of the products, in Mexican and Latino America societies, the consumer limits to judging the company in terms of quality of a service or product. In other words, the increased value that a CSR gives to the society is not always perceived by the client-consumer. As it can be observed, there is not only a lack of CSR company's culture but also a lack of conscience of their stakeholders and their new roles (Brito, 2005).

On the other hand, CSR strategies that influences in the consumer's decision making, may be the results of a good marketing strategy, and not necessarily as part of a socially responsible project (Brito, 2005). In other words, the consumer sometimes prefers a company that seems to be socially responsible and not necessarily the one that actually is responsible.

The interest to be socially responsible is also associated to a management strategic decision. Companies like Danone-Mexico, have analyzed which are those social causes to which consumers are more sensible. Once identified, they direct their efforts to CSR strategies in order to positively influence their clients and consumers (Brito, 2005).

A criterion that European consumers take into account is the CSR related to environment. In countries like Holland, where the company must report the environmental effect, the consumer could refuse to buy a product if the company that produces it does not take into account their negative effects over the environment. At least in Europe it is common to consider the CSR as a criterion when an employee is looking for a job position. But in Mexico, as in many Latin American countries, there is an oversupply of labor force, so CSR consideration is not taken into account when selecting a job (Ruiz, 2004).

There is still quite a lot to do in Mexico and Latin America with respect to the promotion and implementation of CSR strategies. CSR promotion demands educated consumers, a more collaborative civil society, and a greater influence from the media,

public policy, strategic buyers and suppliers. It is important to create a collective conscience that a better future for our societies is in everyone's hands.

Making academic research about citizen consumer, could promote CSR as part of the buying decision making criterion. For this reason, there is an increasing interest in research about it. According to Auger and Devinney (2007) contention "previous research on ethical consumerism has played a critical role in highlighting the potential impact of ethical issues on consumer decision-making and motivating researchers to study the phenomenon more closely" (p. 379).

Based on Freestone and McGoldrick (2008) it can be assumed that there has been an important change in the consumer style, since the consumer is orienting her/his buying decision making in a responsible consumption, although his motives are unknown,

There are strong indications that many consumers are switching towards more socially and environmentally responsible products and services, reflecting a shift in consumer values indicated in several countries. However, little is known about the motives that drive some toward, or deter others from, higher levels of ethical concern and action in their purchasing decisions. (p. 445)

According to Beckmann (2007) consuming in a responsible manner implies overcoming some market barriers that prevent the consumer from taking an effective and efficient decision. Consuming with responsibility is seen as a time consuming activity, economically disadvanta-

geous and stressful. These failures in the market create a gap between the self reported intention of responsible purchasing and the translation into personal behavior.

Based on Valor (2008) there are three types of obstacles that could be found when consumers want to behave responsibly:

- 1) Motivational obstacles: the willingness to make a political statement depends on self identity and perceived efficacy.
- 2) Cognitive obstacles: opportunity to get information and ability to process, store and recall information about brands.
- 3) Behavioral obstacles: opportunity and ability to find a fair brand to purchase. (p. 316-317)

Beckmann (2007) and Valor (2008) argue that it is possible to affirm that the responsible consumption is not a simple decision to make since there are barriers that limit the consumer's interest of being more responsible in the buying of products.

In relation to responsible consumption it is also possible to identify the influence of the consumer's decision by the values of the company where she/he works. According to Cambra-Fierro, Polo-Redondo and Wilson (2007),

Organization's corporate values influence not only its employees' behavior within the work environment but also impact on their global values system outside of the work environment affecting buying behavior practices in relation to a more social responsible consuming. (p. 157)

In this sense, responsible consumption has also been found when the consumer searches affinity with the social causes that she/he supports, and those that are promoted by the

company that sells the products she/he buys. Barone, Andrew, Norman, and Miyazaki (2007) argue "the effects of retailer-cause fit are moderated by consumer perceptions of the retailer's motive for engaging in cause-related marketing, by the affinity that consumers hold for the social cause component of the campaign" (p. 437). Even when the relationship of CSR and consumer is an interesting issue, not enough research has been done to analyze the current state of the consumer and her/his responsibility in buying decision making in the Latin American context.

According to the surveys reported by Cone (2009), 79% of the American consumers declared that they would be willing to change a brand for the same price and quality if the other brand were associated with a good cause. On the other hand, in a study reported by García *et al.* (2007), 72,5% of the consumers from the Basque Country (Spain) would buy product made with CSR even if it was more higher price. Only a 7,1% would be willing to buy the lower price product. Regarding CSR in Chile, ACCIONRSE (2010) reports that in a survey done to Chile consumers 39% has considered punishing an irresponsible company, and 17% affirmed that they have punished companies previously.

Specifically about price, it is considered that the disposition to pay for a higher price product is important to favor a responsible consumption since the majority of the companies that try to integrate socially responsible practices increase their costs in the short term (Zicari, 2009). When the cost is increased, the price is also



increased as well. The company must fulfill the responsibilities demanded by the interior of the organization, by the society, and by the environment (Costa, 2009).

As responsible consumers, the need to be informed about the CSR practices is an important criterion to consider as well. A study done in Spain, regarding the media's work and CSR reported by Comunicarseweb (2009, july), demonstrates that 85% of the participants considered that the CSR actions should be announced. They also think that the lack of communication regarding CSR actions makes them loose strength and efficacy toward their challenges.

Based on the previous studies, it is possible to identify that both: price and information criteria, are significant for those consumers that consider CSR as an important issue for the society improvement. Taking as criteria both price and need to be informed about the CSR practices, the following consumer's profile was defined. For each definition, the former theoretical framework was taking as a reference (see Table 1).

Consumer price oriented: these are consumers that are not interested in informing themselves about the CSR practices of the companies whose products they buy and their buying decision is usually the lowest price product.

Informed consumer: these are consumers that are interested in informing themselves of the CSR practices of the companies whose products they buy but in the end decide their purchase based on the product's price.

Conventional consumer: these are consumers that show no interest in informing themselves about the CSR of the companies whose products they buy, but that could buy a product that was advertised as CSR product, even if it were more expensive.

Citizen consumer: these are consumers that demonstrate interest in informing themselves about the CSR of the companies whose products they buy and that are willing to buy a product advertised as CSR product, even if it is more expensive.

**Table 1.** Types of consumer based on price and information about CSR

	Has no interest in informing her/himself about the CSR of the company whose product is buying	Has interest in informing her/himself about the CSR of the company whose product is buying
<b>Lowest price criteria</b>	Consumer price oriented Based on the lowest price, and also does not want to be informed about CSR.	Informed consumer Based on the lowest price, and also does want to be informed about CSR.
<b>CSR criteria</b>	Conventional consumer Based on CSR (not on the lowest price), and also does not want to be informed about CSR.	Citizen consumer Based on CSR (not on the lowest price), and also does want to be informed about CSR.

Source: Authors.

2. HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1.** There is a dependent significant direct relation between the independent variable (price) and the dependent variable (being informed).

**Hypothesis 2.** There is a specific situation where the consumer searches for *the lowest price* and *does not want to be informed about CSR practices* which is affecting the dependent significant relation between both variables (price and be informed) (consumer price oriented).

**Hypothesis 3.** There is a specific situation where the consumer searches for *the lowest price* and *want to be informed about CSR practices* which is affecting the dependent significant relation between both variables (price and be informed) (informed consumer).

**Hypothesis 4.** There is a specific situation where the consumer *is willing to pay an overprice product (made with CSR)* and *does not want to be informed about CSR practices* which is affecting the dependent significant relation between both variables (price and be informed) (conventional consumer).

**Hypothesis 5.** There is a specific situation where the consumer *is willing to pay a higher price product (made with CSR)* and *want to be informed about CSR practices* which is affect-

ing the dependent significant relation between both variables (price and be informed) (citizen consumer).

3. METHODOLOGY

*Population and Sample Definition*

371 Undergraduate senior students from a private university in Mexico with work experience were defined as the population and the sample was defined considering the criteria presented in Table 2.

*Instrument*

Consumer’s opinion about Corporate Social Responsibility provided by the KN Ikerteam (García *et al.*, 2007) from the Deusto University at San Sebastián, the Basque Country, Spain.

*Research questions*

Q051. Supposing two products of similar characteristics: one of these is a product made with CSR and the other not...

- 1. Would you buy the product made with CSR, even if it were more expensive?
- 2. Would you buy the product made with CSR only if it were of the same price?
- 3. You would buy the lowest possible product price, whichever it is.

Table 2. Statistical sample definition

Criteria	Data	Formula	Sample size
Confidence Level=95%	N=371		n= 189
Sampling Error=5%	Z= 1,96	$n = \frac{Z^2 \pi (1 - \pi) N}{E^2 (N - 1) + Z^2 \pi (1 - \pi)}$	participants
E=0,05			(Random selection)
$\pi=0,50$			

4. You would not buy the product made with CSR.

Q056. Would you like to be more informed about CSR practices from the companies whose products you buy?

- 1. Very informed
- 2. Little (or not) informed

**Statistical analysis. Chi-Square Test for Independence**

Considering that a sample of size  $n$  is taken from a population (normal distribution), there is a well-known result which allows a test to be made of whether the variance of the population has a pre-determined value.

**4. DISCUSSION**

Hypothesis 1 is accepted (see Table 3), there is a dependent significant direct relation between the independent variable (price) and the dependent variable (be informed) (sig. 0,000).

In order to identify in which specific situation the independent variables (price) affects the depended variable (be informed) Standardized Residuals were observed (see Table 4).

Based on the statistical results:

Hypothesis 2 is accepted: standardized residual= 4,2 > Z (+/-1,64)

Hypothesis 3 is accepted: standardized residual= -2,0 > Z (+/-1,64)

Hypothesis 4 is accepted: standardized residual= -1,8 > Z (+/-1,64)

Hypothesis 5 is rejected: standardized residual= 0,9 > Z (+/-1,64)

Bilateral significant level 5%

According to the independence statistics test done for the previous variables, the following categories can be identified:

- 1) Consumers based on price: a group of consumers was identified in this area (standardized residual=4,2). This profile is defined as those who decided based on price and not in terms of the company's CSR whose products they are buying; they have no interest of being informed about the company's CSR policies whose products they are buying.
- 2) Informed consumer: a group of consumers was identified in this area (standardized residual = -2,0). This profile is defined as those who have interest of being informed about the company's CSR whose products they are buying but in the end decide to buy based on price.
- 3) Conventional consumer: a group of consumers was identified in this

**Table 3.** Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Sig. asymptotic (bilateral)
Pearson Chi-square	27,131*	3	0
Reason for verisimilitude	21.378	3	0
Linear by linear association	21.365	1	0
Number of valid cases	189		

\*Three cells (37,5%) have an expected frequency below 5. The minimum expected frequency is 0,36.

Table 4. Contingency Table

Information about CSR		1) Would you buy the product made with CSR even if it were more expensive?	2) Would you buy the product made with CSR only if it were of the same price?	3) Would you buy the lowest price product, whichever one it is?	4) Would you not buy the product made with CSR?	Total
Very informed	Count	107	41	6	1	155
	Expected count	98,4	41,8	13,1	1,6	155
	% of Prd CSR Information	69,00%	26,50%	3,90%	0,60%	100,00%
	% of preference for CSR	89,20%	80,40%	37,50%	50,00%	82,00%
	% of total	56,60%	21,70%	3,20%	0,50%	82,00%
	Standardized residuals	0,9	-0,1	-2	-0,5	
Little (not) informed	Count	13	10	10	1	34
	Expected count	21,6	9,2	2,9	0,4	34
	% of Prd CSR Information	38,20%	29,40%	29,40%	2,90%	100,00%
	% of preference for CSR	10,80%	19,60%	62,50%	50,00%	18,00%
	% of total	6,90%	5,30%	5,30%	0,50%	18,00%
	Standardized residuals	-1,8	0,3	4,2	1,1	
Total	Count	120	51	16	2	189
	Expected count	120	51	16	2	189
	% of Prd CSR Information	63,50%	27,00%	8,50%	1,10%	100,00%
	% of preference for CSR	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
	% of total	63,50%	27,00%	8,50%	1,10%	100,00%

- area (standardized residual -1,8). This profile is described as those who decide based on the social responsibility criterion, and price is not an important factor in their buying decision making; nonetheless they have no interest in being informed about the company's CSR policies whose products they are buying.
- 4) Citizen consumer: this group of consumers could not be identified, there is not significant evidence a subgroup with this profile. The expected profile is described as a group of consumers who have

the interest of being informed about the company's CSR whose products they are buying and decide based on the criterion of social responsibility; price is not an important factor for this type of consumer.

Based on the results it can be concluded that the first type of consumer decides what to buy based on the lowest price and she/he is not interested in being informed about CSR practices (62,5% of the consumers that take the lowest price as criterion, does not want to be informed about CSR practices).

The second type of consumer recognizes the need to be informed about CSR, but will anyway take her/his decision based on the lowest prices (37,5% of the consumers that take the lowest price as criterion, does want to be informed about CSR practices).

The third type of consumer is willing to pay for a higher price product made with CSR, but does not want to be informed about CSR practices (10,8% of the consumers that pay for a higher price product made with CSR as criterion, does want to be informed about CSR practices).

Even though CSR is an important issue for the majority of participants (97,9%), CSR hasn't achieved much influence in the buying decision making or in the need of being informed about the CSR practices.<sup>1</sup>

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The authors conclude that even when the subject of CSR is an interesting issue for the Mexican consumers that participated in this study, the majority still guides their buying decision making based on the price and most of them are not interested in being informed about CSR practices.

In other words, the importance that the consumer gives to the CSR is still in a conceptual level. The Mexican consumers that participated in this study deny doing the effort required to concrete the CSR because they do not want to make an effort of being informed about the CSR, and also refuse to use their buying power to promote CSR strategies for the social wellbeing.

Even when consumers recognize the importance of the CSR as part of the public interest, their private interest influences them more in their buying decision. For this reason, even when recognizing that CSR is important, the consumer prioritizes the acquisition of products less expensive, in some cases choosing companies that avoid CSR implementation.

Since the consumer is not willing to make the effort toward the CSR an internal contradiction arises. There is a fracture between what the consumer considers important or desirable as CSR, and the way in which she/he supports with her/his buying power.

It is important to promote and support CSR practices through a new type of consumer that is better informed about the CSR issues. The authors recognize that an important effort is required in order to achieve well educated and informed consumers in the Mexican society; consumers that use their buying power in order to achieve a more equal society.

## 6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE LINES OF RESEARCH

A limitation found in this study was the type of consumer that participated in the research, since it was composed by senior undergraduate university students. Because of the sample limitation this research's results cannot be generalized.

Similar studies can also be broadened to include Latin American countries like Colombia, Chile, and Brazil, since they have been working in CSR

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1 The empirical study about CSR and consumer, reported by Deusto University (Basque Country, Spain) and conducted by the KN IkerTeam, reports that a 72,5% of consumers would buy a responsibly manufactured product even if it were more expensive; only a 7,1% would be willing to buy the lowest price product.

as well. For this reason this research should be considered as the first approach to the concept of citizen consumer. This line of research has been hardly explored in the Latin American context but the future findings could be an important power to promote CSR strategies oriented to increase the social and environmental wellbeing.

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