Dove AXE

The Two Faces of Corporate Brands

The Impact of Product Brands' Contradictory Corporate Social Responsibility Perceptions on the Consumers' Relationship with the Brands and Corporate Brand

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Unilever
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UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

Master Thesis

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A Unilever Case study

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Date:

April 18th, 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Small accidents are what brought me back to my educational path and are what makes one of my dreams come true; achieving my Master degree. I truly believe in what Paulo Coelho said in his book 'The alchemist', "when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it". In some way it was perfect timing that lead to those small accidents, which eventually gave me motivation, determination, achievement and happiness. It also brought me wonderful people who helped and guided me through this journey. And I take this opportunity to express my most gratitude and respect to them.

First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Ms. Mirjam Galetzka, for helping me through this process. She helped and guided me with the structure, theories and guided me in the right direction when I felt lost. Also, a special thanks goes to Ms. Joyce Karreman for her exceptional feedbacks and guidance. Secondly, I would like to thank, Ms. Ziziane Flemming, for her continuous support during my thesis process and for her contribution to reading and revising my thesis.

I would also like to thank my foster family here in the Netherlands, my aunt and her husband, Lidia and Edmundo Angela. They supported me and opened their home for me in the last year. Thank you for your patience and support. I like to express my gratitude to all my friends that shared their expertise, sincere and valuable guidance and encouragements extended to me.

Last but not least, I would thank my mother for her unconditional love and support. Words cannot express how grateful I am to my mother for all her sacrifices that she has made on my behalf. Her prayers were what sustained me thus far.

These last seven years of my education has been a journey that taught me so much. I am overjoyed to conclude my academic journey and ready to begin a career wherever destiny brings me.

God Bless.

Iriana Werleman
Utrecht, April 18th, 2016

ABSTRACT

There has been a growing body of literature that explores a company's behavior regarding the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) that often is contrary to their stated social responsibility core values (e.g., Wagner, Lutz & Weitz; Janney & Gove, 2011). In addition Wagner, Lutz and Weitz (2009) introduced the concept of corporate hypocrisy and posit when a company exhibits inconsistent CSR information, it elicits the perception of corporate hypocrisy (i.e., the belief that the company claims to be something that is actually not) among its consumers, resulting in negative evaluations towards the company. Previous studies that explored the consequences of this concept and CSR inconsistencies have only regarded the company as one entity (i.e., the company that preaches CSR and also engage in irresponsible behavior). However, research that explores the impact of inconsistent CSR information perceptions from different entities from a company, such as independent product brands owned by the same company, are very limited. Therefore, this study examines the effects of corporate hypocrisy as the consequence of product brands' contradictory CSR information on the consumers' relationship with the brands and on the corporate brand reputation and brand trust. The study results indicate that product brands' contradictory CSR information does elicit perception of corporate hypocrisy and results in negative impact on the corporate reputation and corporate brand trust. The results also showed that corporate hypocrisy has a negative impact on the product brands' consumer-brand relationship.

Keywords: corporate hypocrisy, corporate social responsibility, corporate reputation, corporate brand trust, consumer-brand relationship, corporate communication

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1 INTRODUCTION

Dove and Axe are two highly successful brands owned by Unilever. Dove is a female-targeted personal care product brand that is globally known for their Real Beauty campaigns. In 2004, the campaign was launched to promote self-esteem and confidence in women (Dove USA, 2015). The still ongoing campaign is a movement against negative image of women that are prevalent in modern society and in popular media. The advertisements encourage women to be comfortable in their own skin and to be confident about their bodies by featuring women of all sizes and shapes in the campaigns (Dove USA, 2015).

In contrast, Axe is a men toiletries brand which advertisements purportedly and consistently dramatizes 'boys get girl' benefits resulting from product usage (O'Donell, 2008). Their risqué and often sexually explicit commercials always portrayed the supermodel-type beauties ideal that upheld the very stereotypes that Dove decries (See *Axe's Women-Billion commercial* as an example). The contradictory messages of two powerhouse brands caused that Unilever was accused of hypocrisy because one brand praises women and their natural beauty, while in stark contrast, the other blatantly objectifies and degrades women (Froehlich, 2009).

Until recently, this kind of contradictory messages have gone unnoticed by consumers since Unilever had always been a house-of-brand company where consumers are more familiar with the product's brands but are unaware of their ownership. However, since 2009, in the effort to leverage the value of its reputation as a social responsible company, Unilever chose to include their corporate logo on all its product brands, making the association between the brands and corporate brand more explicit to its consumers. This is after Unilever, like many corporations around the world, took a holistic approach towards corporate social responsibility (hereinafter referred to as CSR) where the company commits to align all the operations of the product brands with sets of core values of socially responsible behavior.

In the last decade, the importance for companies to become socially responsible and to communicate their social responsibility has not only risen substantially but also continues to increase dramatically as a result of concurrent worldwide economic conditions and the resultant skepticism of how corporate practices impact the well-being of societies (Wagner, Lutz, & Weitz, 2009). Although companies like Unilever are developing and communicating more socially responsible policies and procedures through their product brands and directly

through their corporate communication, inconsistent CSR behaviors are bound to increase as the company, in reality, is decentralized with elaborate supply chains.

For instance, Nestle, another fast-moving consumer goods giant, has long presented itself as a responsible sourcing company, which, for example, is strong exhibited through its product brand Nespresso. However, the company has been held liable for using child labor to harvest cacao for some of their chocolate brands (e.g., Kitkat and Crunch) in Ivory Coast (Bernish, 2016; Reuters, 2016). Procter & Gamble (P&G) has also presented itself with strong CSR values through it brands (e.g., Always and Charmin). Yet, they are heavily criticized for using palm oil in many of its brands (e.g., Head & Shoulders, Olay, Safeguard), which is causing deforestation in Indonesia, amongst other places, and making orphans out of orangutans (Davidson, 2014).

The deviation between a product brands' exhibited positive CSR information and contradictory CSR behavior can have dramatic effect on their brand image and on the corporate brand's perception directly and indirectly through transcendence effect from the product brands. Especially in today's world where consumers awareness, sophistication (Lui, 2010), and increased level of sensitivity to social and environmental issues, made companies transgressions more evident to consumers. In addition to this, the growing mass-media coverage, aggressive consumer advocacy groups, rising number of anti-corporate websites (e.g., *www.consumerist.com*, *www.stopcorporateabuse.org*) and popular movie documentaries (e.g., Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room) have also revealed more company's practices that are socially irresponsible, which most of the time contradicts their own core values (Wagner, Lutz, & Weitz, 2009).

Research about the impact of these kinds of CSR inconsistencies on consumers is very limited. Wagner, Lutz and Weitz (2009), explored this area and introduced the concept of perceived corporate hypocrisy and investigated its dynamic as a key psychological mechanism through which inconsistent CSR information affect consumers. The study showed how corporate hypocrisy is a powerful determinant of consumers' firm negative evaluations. This is more evident when firms proactively espouse specific values and subsequent violations of those values create a greater negative effect. However like most previous studies, they treat the firm as one entity (i.e., the company that exhibits CSR information and also engage in irresponsible behavior). The impact of CSR inconsistencies from different sub-entities of a company is very limited (e.g., Ineichen & Florack, 2007). Based on Wagner and Partners (2009) study, the present study wants to investigate the impact of corporate hypocrisy as a consequence of Dove and Axe's contradictory CSR information, on

the consumers' relationship with the brands and on specific corporate brand attributes: corporate reputation and corporate brand trust.

The remainder of this study is organized as follow: it starts by reviewing the evolution of branding: from product branding to corporate branding, and the antecedents of contradictory brand values. Then, the framework involving the concept of corporate hypocrisy, its antecedents and consequences will be discussed. Next, the methods and the results of the main study are described. This study concludes with reflections on the implications and limitations of this study.

Terms clarification

Throughout this study, "corporate brand" refers to the parent company and the "product brand(s)" is the individual and independently operated brand(s) owned by the corporate brand. For clarification, Unilever is the corporate brand while Dove and Axe are the product brands.

Research Questions

RQ1:   *To what extent will corporate hypocrisy as a consequence of Dove and Axe's contradictory CSR information influence Unilever's reputation and brand trust?*

RQ2:   *To what extent will corporate hypocrisy as a consequence of Dove and Axe's contradictory CSR information influence the consumers' relationship with the brands?*

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 From product branding to corporate branding

In the last decade there has been radical changes on how companies manage their brands. Global companies, such as Unilever, often have intricate and complex brand architecture, of multiple brands, aggressive brand extensions, and complex structures involving sub brands and endorsed brands (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). The relationship between the brands and the company recite on the chosen branding strategy of the company. As the extant literature mentions, there are two types of branding strategy as the purest and most extreme manifestations. At one end of the continuum, brands have little to no relationship among each other or the corporate brand ("house-of brand strategy"), whereas at the other end, the brands are highly connected with the corporate brand ("branded house strategy") (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

Unilever is often cited applier of the house-of-brand strategy, where an independent set of stand-alone product brands can each maximize the impact on a specific market (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Marketing in this setting has been traditionally based on the principles of the consumers demand. Over the last 60 years marketing of consumer products has been mostly characterized by layers of added value built around the core functionalities of the product to create and maintain differentiation and preference in a particular market segment (Knox & Bickerton, 2003; Macrae, 1999; Uggla, 1999; Urde, 1999). Early attempts at brand management concentrated on the concepts: brand image (Boulding, 1956), brand positioning (Ries & Trout, 1982), unique selling proposition and the 4P's (i.e., the four elements that define the marketing mix: product, price, place and promotion). These concepts have been the building blocks of product brands marketing ever since the sixties (Knox & Bickerton, 2003).

However, in the nineties there has been a growing body of literature that indicates the inability of these positioning tools to cope with the substantially external pressures that companies now face (Christopher, 1995; Mitchell, 1999). Companies today are having difficulties maintaining credible differentiation in the face of imitation and homogenization of products (Hatch & Shultz, 2001). Also, changes and growing challenges within the global political economy are creating conductive conditions for companies too (Dauvergne & Lister, 2011; Kaye, 2012; Unilever, 2015). Moreover, the fragmentation of traditional market segments that occur as consumers become more sophisticated and more complex markets, renders that companies' products

can no longer base their branding strategies on a predictable market or stable preferential product range (Hatch & Shultz, 2001; Aaker, 2004).

These developments created the need to deepen the marketing view of the brands to encompass organizational attributes, and shift focus from the integrity of the product brands to the organization behind the brand (Knox & Bickerton, 2003). In response to these views, marketing has entered the age of brand identity (Kapferer, 1997). As support of brand identity variables increased (Ind, 1998; Keller & Aaker, 1992) so did the importance of corporate associations (Keller & Aaker, 1998; Tilley, 1999). This whole development highlights the fact that future marketing success rests upon the development of skills in brand building that harness all organizational assets and competencies to create unique value proposition for product brands (Tilley, 1999). Accordingly, the values and emotions symbolized by the corporate brand are used as a strategic resource to create differentiation, competitive advantage and value proposition (Hatch & Schultz, 2003). In recent years, there has been a body of studies that recognized that corporate branding brings to marketing the ability to use vision and culture of the company explicitly as part of its unique selling proposition (e.g., Aaker, 2004; Balmer, 2001; Balmer & Gray, 2003; Berens, van Riel, & van Bruggen, 2005; Harris & Chernatony, 2001; Ind, 1998).

Apart from differentiate and enhance product brands, corporate brands are also used as strategic tool to communicate the corporate brands' covenant (Balmer, 2001). This has become of strategic importance for companies since we live in a volatile and resource-stressed world, where consumers and NGO's are demanding that companies become more transparent, socially conscious and environmentally responsible. Therefore, in response to these developments, and to ensure long-term viability and growth and enhance corporate reputation, many big companies, including consumer goods giants such as Unilever and P&G, have embedded corporate social responsibility (CSR) into their core business strategy (Dauvergne & Lister, 2011; Lubin & Etsy, 2010). That is, the integration of social and environmental concern in all their businesses operations and their interactions with their stakeholders (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). So in other words, the corporate brand is used, as a strategic tool on the product brands, to communicate clearly and consistently, that given products are owned by a company with immutable distinctive CSR covenant (Balmer, 2002). This is implemented in the effort to increase sales, cross purchasing, attract new consumers, gain consumers loyalty, and access emerging markets (Dauvergne & Lister, 2011).

In the case of Unilever, where most consumers did not relate its products to any corporate brand, by making the connection explicit, they want to leverage the

corporate brands' sustainability associations established by specific product brands through the years before the connection (e.g., Dove's Real Beauty campaigns). That is, through consistent representative activities and CSR associations created at product level, product brands will be strongly associated with the corporate CSR activities (Kay, 2006). Ultimately, the corporate brands ambition is to be associated as a "trust mark of sustainability living" (Unilever, 2015).

In summary, corporate brands have the utility in several regards: they communicate the brands' core values (often seen as covenants), they afford the means of differentiation from their competitors, and they enhance the esteem and loyalty in which the organization is held by its stakeholders (Balmer, 2001).

2.2   Antecedents of product brands' contradictory CSR information

In order for the corporate brand to be successful and effective, it requires the organization's wide-support. The whole corporation from top management to brand managers and across all functional units is involved in realizing the corporate brand, along with all the external stakeholders (Hatch & Schultz, 2003).

Hatch & Schultz (2001; 2003) posit in order to have an effective management of a corporate brand there needs to be an alignment between three essential, independent elements: strategic vision, organizational culture, and corporate image held by stakeholders. Aligning these elements of the corporate brand is not a sequential process, because they are intricately interwoven (Hatch & Shultz, 2001). For instance, in order for a corporate brand to be effectively leveraged, all corporate images held by the external stakeholders needs to mirror the strategic vision of the company that reflects who the company is, and what it aspires to be in the future (image-vision alignment). This requires that the desired core values (such as contained in many vision statements) must resonate within the tacit meanings and values used by organizational members (i.e. their values-in-use or their actual identity) (Hatch & Shultz, 2001). This will serve to create genuine coherence between the promise that the corporate brand makes and the performance that the company delivers (vision-culture alignment).

However, it can happen that the company's vision does not inspire all its subcultures. For example, Unilever, a multinational corporation with operations around the world, is made up of different independent product brands (subcultures) with their own set of values and priorities (e.g., producing sales). When a company's vision does not resonate to all its subcultures, it will result that certain product brands' values are exhibited to consumers that are inconsistent with the overall

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organizational culture and company's core values. By making the association between product brand and corporate brand explicit, product brands with inconsistent brand values will be linked with other products that have consistent brand values with the company's core brand values, which can lead that the corporate brand being perceived as hypocrite.

2.3 Corporate hypocrisy

Corporate hypocrisy is defined as the belief that a company preaches to be something that it is actually not (Wagner et al., 2009). Generally, a person's perception of hypocrisy occurs when there appears to be "distance between assertions and performance" (Shklar, 1984). Research of brand personality in marketing views brands, including both specific products and companies as whole, in terms of distinct "human characteristics" (Aaker, 1997). Additionally, social psychology literature also indicates that, like individuals, organized and coherent groups of people are perceived as having dispositional qualities or characteristics (e.g., Folkes & Kamins, 1999). For example, a company can be perceived as "good/honest" and "bad/dishonest" just like an individual.

Thus, companies, like people, may be perceived as demonstrating hypocrisy when inconsistent information about their own statements and observed behaviors emerges (Wagner et al., 2009). In the context of this study, corporate hypocrisy arises when there is a deviation between two product brands' ethics business practices, which one exhibits positive CSR information (consistent to company core values) and the other exhibits contradictory CSR behavior (inconsistent to company core values), such as unethical business practices.

2.3.1 Consequences

Consumers build on their perceptions of distinct characteristics exhibited by a person (or an organization), such as hypocrisy, to form evaluations on a more global level (Anderson, 1971). Wagner et al., (2009) provides evidence that corporate hypocrisy is a direct reaction of inconsistent CSR information. Because corporate hypocrisy judgments are direct reaction to information about product brands' contradictory CSR information exposure (inconsistent behavior), it is expected that corporate hypocrisy is a key psychological mechanism that affects the consumer's perception of a company and serve also as a mediator of the impact of product brands' contradictory CSR information on corporate reputation, corporate brand trust, and on the product brands' consumer-brand relationship.

Wagner and colleagues (2009) have also identified corporate hypocrisy as a powerful determinant of consumers' firm negative evaluations. Negative effects seem greater on the company, when product brands proactively espouse strong values, and subsequent violations by another product brand contradict those values (Wagner et al., 2009). When one specific product brand observable actions have been decoupled from what other product brand preached to be, stakeholder will question the overall fit between their values, of the product and those of the firm, hence, in a negative impact on the company's overall evaluation (Janney & Gove, 2011).

The negative impact of corporate hypocrisy on brands can be partly due to the fact that negative aspects of brands are perceived to be more diagnostic of negative traits and informative, and weighted more heavily in consumer's judgments than positive aspects, an effect referred to as negativity bias (Herr, Kardes, & Kim, 1991). Thus, when companies perform unethically, they reflect a more unambiguous inference of character than does performing ethically. For example, a company that behaves unethically by employing child labor, provides stronger evidence that the company is an unethical company than the evidence provided about the nature of a company that behaves ethically by avoiding child labor (Folkes & Kamins, 1999). Furthermore, according to Bless & Schwarz (2010) inclusion/exclusion model, in the categorization process of product brands, the inclusion of negative representative information (contradictory CSR behavior) of the target category (i.e., corporate brand), will result in a negative representation of the corporate brand (perceived hypocrisy), hence, a negative evaluation of the corporate brand (assimilation effect).

Literature has shown that in general corporate hypocrisy has a negative impact on companies' evaluation. However, relevant to this study, is how corporate hypocrisy, as reaction of contradictory CSR information, impacts specific corporate attributes such as, corporate reputation, corporate brand trust and product brands' consumer-brand relationship. In view of all thus far have been discussed, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H1: *Product brands' contradictory CSR information elicits a perception of corporate hypocrisy amongst consumers.*

2.4   Corporate reputation

Corporate reputation is considered as one of the most powerful and valuable asset that a company can acquire. Many companies invest vast amount of resources to maintain and protect their corporate reputation. In this study, corporate reputation is

defined as suggested by Fombrun (1996) as "a perceptual representation of a company's past actions and future prospects that describe the firm's overall appeal to all its key constituents when compared to other leading rivals" (p.72). In this perspective, corporate reputation can also be viewed as consumers' global perception of the extent to which a company is well known, good or bad, reliable, trustworthy, reputable, believable, and held in high esteem or regards (Levit, 1965; Robert & Dowling, 2002; Weiss, Anderson, & MacInnis, 1999). Corporate reputation is basically concerned with how people feel about the company based on whatever available information (or misinformation) of the company's activities (CSR initiatives), workplace environment, vision and leadership, past economic performance, and future prospects (Fombrun, 2000; Fombrun, Gardberg, & Sever, 2000). In other words, reputation is by definition a perception owned by the stakeholders instead of the company; reputation is a mental association the stakeholders actually hold.

A favorable corporate reputation can be a prominent source of intangible value that, if optimized, can contribute significantly to creating tangible economic value (Fombrun & Low, 2011). For instance, improving the consumer's perception of products quality (which allows to charge premium prices); sale increases and positive word-of-mouth; protecting the value of the corporation by diminishing the impact of scrutinizing, crisis and/ or competitive attacks; generate positive media coverage; sustain a company's value in the financial market; generate investment interest; and competitive advantage (Feldman, Bahamonde, & Bellido, 2014; Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004; Greyser, 1999; Gotsi & Wilson, 2001).

As valuable of asset corporate reputation can be, it is also one of the most vulnerable asset to any negative development in a company. Negative developments that are seen as being irresponsible and manipulative could lead to distrust in the company and lose social legitimacy; thus, to counter damaging corporate reputation, a company must act consistently according to the demands and expectation of consumers (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001; Shim & Yang, 2015; Wartick, 1992). In the context of this study, corporate hypocrisy is a consequence of perceived inconsistency in the company's observable statement and observable behaviors through its product brands. This means that the expectation build by the accumulative consistent interaction with the company, is not met by the behavior of product brands that are inconsistent with the core values of the corporate brand. Therefore consumers may experience a sense of dissatisfaction and create a negative perception of the company, hence, reputation loss.

Moreover, the higher expectations created by strong positioned product brands, for instance for having social responsible initiatives (e.g., Ben & Jerry's, The body

Shop), the higher the reputational risk for the corporate brand if another product brand fails to live up to those expectations (Balmer & Greyser, 2003).

Furthermore, perceived hypocrisy is a consequence of the disconnect between the corporate brand's espoused CSR core values and its product brands' espouse values, beliefs, principles, etc., which can be covert, obvious, implicit or explicit (Philippe & Koehler, 2005). Therefore, corporate hypocrisy can reflect on the corporate organization as not having an effective governance to live up the expectations and demands of stakeholders. Thus, damaging the corporate vision and leadership vision, resulting in negative corporate reputation.

Previous studies also indicate that corporate hypocrisy negatively impacts corporate reputation regarding the attribution of CSR motives (Shim & Yang, 2015). In general, companies' CSR activities guide consumers' perception about the firm (e.g., Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009; Knox & Maklan, 2004), but also the company's CSR motives have been found to be critical in forming attitudes towards a company (Bae & Cameron, 2006). Attribution of CSR motives became an evident aspect in consumers information processing, because the so-called "green washing" activities (i.e., the inappropriate overstatement of corporate CSR credits), and increased reports of unethical business practices, may have led to increased cynicism and mistrust towards companies' CSR activities (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009).

In the evaluation process of CSR information, consumers apply attribution analysis to examine the degree in which the CSR activity is perceived as self-serving or altruistic motives (Ellen, 2006). The former regards CSR as typical marketing tactics for long-term profits and efficiency through improved image and competiveness (Ellen, 2006), and risk-management practices aiming to keep the status quo for a stable business environment (Bondy, Matten, & Moon, 2004). The latter regards CSR as means to pursuit of proper economic responsibility, business-society relationship, and diverse societal welfare (Stolz, 2010). If consumers perceive self-serving motives significantly greater than altruistic motives, the company is more likely to be judged as hypocrite. Therefore, authors like Zhong Hongwu (2007), Shim (2013) and Wang and Wang (2014) have identified attribution of CSR motives as an antecedent of corporate hypocrisy.

Ample research has studied attribution of CSR motives. For instance, according to Bae and Cameron (2006) perceived genuine motives of CSR leads to more positive corporate reputation evaluation, while perceived self-serving motives for CSR might lead to negative reputation evaluations. Thus, corporate hypocrisy impact corporate reputation in the sense that consumers perceived CSR activities only for

profit purposes and not for the greater good for society, therefore, damaging the CSR image of the company, hence, the reputation.

Corporate hypocrisy can also impact corporate reputation in terms of the negative emotions evoked by the contradiction of espoused CSR information (Wagner et al., 2009). Consumer might experience a sense of betrayal, anger disgust and therefore, creates a negative image of the company that can stir up negative publicity for companies or negative word-of-mouth, and consequently, damaging the corporate reputation.

In sum, corporate hypocrisy negatively impact corporate reputation regarding the inconsistent of the CSR activities of the company, attribution of egoistical CSR motives and evoked negative emotions. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed:

H2: Consumers' perceived corporate hypocrisy impacts corporate reputation negatively.

2.5   Corporate brand trust

Brand trust is one of the most important components of the consumer's relationship with a brand and the most notable factor in a company's success. Delgado, Munuera and Yagua (2003) define brand trust as a "feeling of security held by the consumer in his/her interaction with the brand, that is based on the perception that the brand is reliable and responsible for the interest and welfare of the consumer" (p. 11).

This definition consists of relevant components that are consistent with previous research on trust. Delgado et al. (2003), first points out that this definition of brand trust involves a willingness to put oneself at risk, through reliance on the promise of value that the brand represents. Secondly, the definition is based on feelings of confidence and security. Third, it also based on general expectancy, because there is always a possibility for error. Fourth, this definition also requires making depositional attributions to the brand such that it is regarded as reliable, dependable, honest etc.

There is a consonance in the brand trust literature, that trust is conceptualized as having two distinct dimensions that reflects different perspective from which a brand may be considered trustworthy: (1) *fiability* (referred also as reliable(Morgan & Hunt, 1994) or credibility (Doney & Cannon, 1997)) and (2) *intentionality* (also referred as benevolence (Larzelere & Huston, 1980)).

The *fiability* dimension has technical or competence-based characteristics that concern the perception that the brand can fulfill or satisfy consumers' needs

(Delgado et al., 2003; Mayer, James, & Schoorman, 1995; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). It relates to the individual's belief that the brand can deliver its promised value (Delgado et al., 2003). This dimension is essential for trusting in a brand because, as afore noted, brands encompass covenant and its reliability for that accomplishment of that promise leads consumers to trust in the occurrence of future satisfaction (Delgado et al., 2003). The *intentionality* dimension has motivational nature that is concerned with the belief the brand is not going to take advantage of the consumers' vulnerability (Delgado et al., 2003). It reflects an emotional security on part of the consumer that the brand will be responsible and caring despite of future crises situations and circumstances with the offered product (Delgado et al., 2003).

Besides the two-dimensional idea of brand trust discussed, some authors distinguish brand trust with one more dimension: Integrity (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). A company's integrity is a consumers' perception that the company adheres to a set of principles that the consumer find acceptable (Mayer & Davis, 1999). It is the attribution of loyal motivation to a brand with respect to its promise involving the terms of the exchange; in other words, the honesty of its 'claims' in the broadest meaning of the word (Gurviez & Korchia, 2003). To sum up the whole conceptualization of brand trust, a trustworthy corporate brand is one that consistently keeps its promise of value to consumers through how the product is developed, produced, sold, serviced, and advertised. Even in negative developments of the company.

Brand trust at a corporate level (herein after referred as *corporate brand trust*) is not only developed by using corporate communication, but also through a transference process, in which trust is transferred from one trusted "proof source" to another person or group with which the trustor has little or no direct experience (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Lau & Lee, 1999). In other words, brand trust developed at product level is transferred to the corporate brand, which consumers have little or no direct experience. Brand trust can be used by the corporate brand as an essential element in building a strong consumers relationship and sustainable market share (Urban, Sultan, & Qualls, 2000).

There are several predicators between the consumers' relationship with a brand over time that could harm brand trust: credibility, benevolence and integrity (Doney & Cannon, 1997). The factor credibility could be harmed by a negative development such as, corporate hypocrisy, because it damages the perception that the company could realize its value promised to its consumers. The result could lead to distrust in the company, which can also be transferred to other product brands in the portfolio (Doney & Cannon, 1997). Moreover, brand trust is considered as a form of an

expectancy which means that it is based on the consumers' belief that the brand has specific qualities that makes it consistent, competent, honest, responsible, and so on (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Larzelere & Huston, 1980). Taking this into account, according to Darke, Ashworth and Main (2010) failing to live up to consumer's expectations leads to negative disconfirmation, which results in generalized distrust towards the company. And, as mentioned before, the higher the expectancy created by the CSR values, the greater the damage. They, further, pointed out that such perception not only can lead to much broader carryover effect that extend not only to different product brands from the same company, but also to very different products from different firms.

Furthermore, in a case of corporate hypocrisy, the intention of doing the right thing is harmed. Hypocrisy means that the company has been dishonest and insincere about their claims to care about the welfare of their consumers, which leads to distrust in the company. Additionally, in CSR perspective, perceived hypocrisy evolving CSR activities, reinforce consumers' perception that CSR in brand activities are just a "gimmick" that companies use to manipulate, which results in generalized distrust towards the company (VanHamme & Grobben, 2007). As a result, this study present the following hypothesis:

H3: Consumers' perceived corporate hypocrisy influences corporate brand trust negatively.

2.6 Product's consumer-brand relationship

In today's altered business environment, companies find that their future success is more in keeping customers than by seeking new customers, and that they should emphasize and differentiate not only on functional but also the emotional aspects of their brands. Therefore, consumer-brand relationship is a crucial factor in today's marketing environment.

This study defines consumer-brand relationship as suggested by Chang and Chieng (2006) as "the tie between a person and a brand that is voluntary or is enforced interpedently between the person and the brand" (p. 935). Consumer-brand relationship at product level involves the successful establishment of the brand meanings (i.e., brand image brand, brand associations personality, and brand attitude) in the minds of consumers that are created directly – from consumers' own experience with brand- or indirectly – through the depiction of the brand in marketing activities or by some other source of information (e.g., word-of-mouth) (Chang & Chieng, 2006). The brand serves as mechanism in engaging both buyer and seller in

a long-term consumer-brand relationship that can lead to greater sales, less price susceptibility, consumer loyalty, and a higher margin (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Fournier, 1998; Keller, 1993).

Consumer-brand relationship is described as a higher-order construct with several dimensions. In literature, there are diverse views on its dimensions, but the most frequently suggested dimensions in existing studies are commitment, satisfaction and trust (Chang & Chieng, 2006). Several predictors can exist between a consumer-brand relationship that can harm these dimensions.

Perceived hypocrisy can restrain consumers' commitment to the brand because the association that the brand has with another brand contradictive brands' value that goes against their self-concept. According to Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) consumers' relationship with a product brand is based on consumers' identification with the brand that helped them to satisfy one or more key self-definitional needs. Specifically, consumers identify with subset of brands associations that constitutes the brand's identity such as the brand values as embodied in its operating principles (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). When a consumer experiences hypocrisy, as the realization that another product practice contradictory CSR behaviors that are emphatically brought into one's immediate awareness, the consumer will experience a sort of cognitive dissonance, because it goes against their self-identification needs (Hammons, 2010). This elicits negative affective state of discomfort, which consumers are inclined to take action to reduce by removing the dissonant cognition (i.e., avoid the product brand) (Festinger, 1957). Thus, consumers might retract their commitment to one brand because it is associated with one that goes against their values.

Furthermore, hypocrisy also elicit a negative affective experience for a consumer, which can affect the dimension satisfaction of the consumer-brand relationship because it refers to the consumers' cognitive and affective evaluation based on their experience with the brand (Storbacka, Strandvik, & Gronroos, 1994). Moreover, (Kouzes & Posner, 1993) contend that the effect of hypocrisy as reaction of inconsistency between espoused CSR information and the actions that follow, creates a conflict and false expectation, which diminish the consumer's satisfaction with the brand.

Furthermore, hypocrisy can also erode the brand trust of the product brands. The trust dimension in the consumer-brand relationship is a psychological variable mirroring a set of accumulated presumptions involving the credibility, integrity and benevolence that consumers attributes to the brand (Gurviez & Korchia, 2003). A brand (e.g., Axe), without even being associated with other product brand, that is

caught engaging in irresponsible behaviors, can damage its brand trust because it goes against the acceptable ethical principles such as fairness and honesty. When such brand is associated with another brand that exhibits positive CSR information (e.g., Dove), it could elicit perception of corporate hypocrisy; which can result in negatively impact Dove's consumer-brand relationship indirectly through transcendence effect. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: Consumers' perceived corporate hypocrisy affect both Dove and Axe's consumer-brand relationship negatively.

H5: Consumers' perceived corporate hypocrisy mediates the influence of product brands' contradictory values on (a) corporate reputation and (b) corporate brand trust, and on (c) product brands' consumer-brand relationship.

2.7 Research model

This study proposes that as a consequence of product brands' contradictory CSR information, consumers will elicit perceived corporate hypocrisy, hence, negatively affecting corporate reputation, corporate brand trust and the consumer-brand relationship of the product brands. Figure 1 shows the research model that is designed for this study.

Figure 1 Conceptual Model
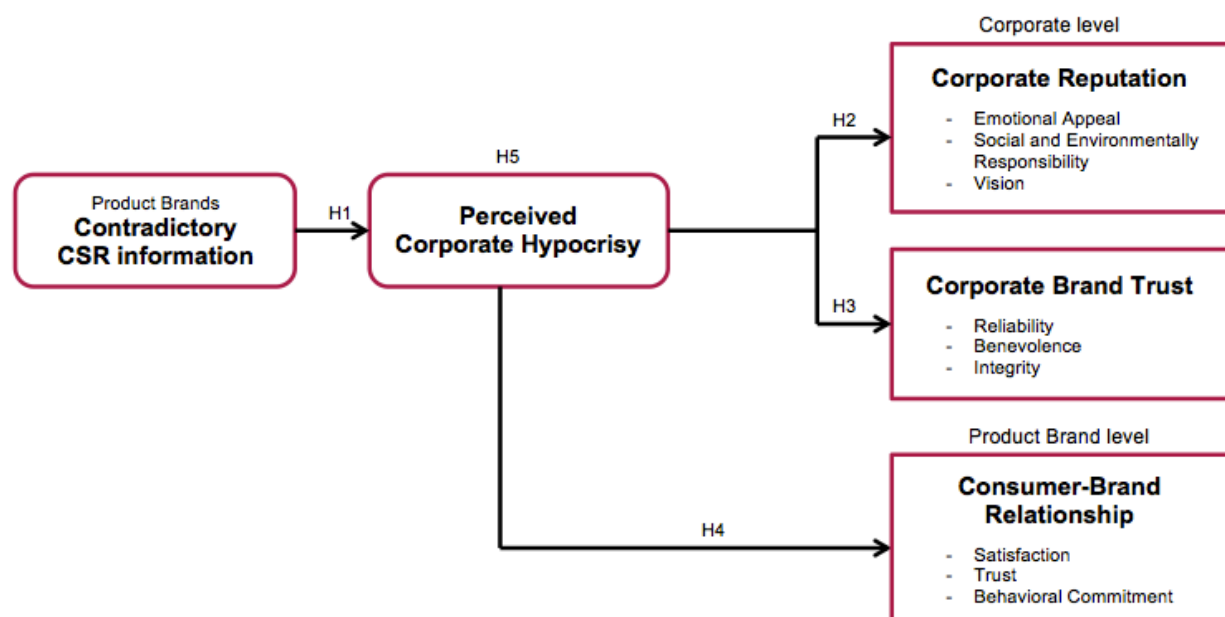
3 METHODS

In order to test the conceptual research model, a main study using a survey as method was conducted. A focus group was held beforehand to establish the stimulus materials. In this section, the research design, methods and procedures will be discussed.

3.1 Focus group

The aim of the focus group was first to affirm the manipulation of the stimulus material. Secondly, to determine which dimensions of corporate reputation, corporate brand trust and consumer-brand relationship are more relevant to the context of this study. And ultimately, to test if the adapted scales items for the aforementioned dependent variables were clear and relevant to the study.

The focus group consisted of six participants: 4 women and 2 men. Two of these participants were students between the ages 18 and 21, and the rest were employed participants with an age range from 25 to 33 years old. The group also had different origins; 2 were Dutch, 3 were Arubans and 1 was Moroccan.

The participants were randomly assigned to one of the two scenarios of contradictory CSR information: Dove vs. Axe and Ben & Jerry's vs. Suave. Each scenario consisted of two website news articles in which one reports a positive CSR information and the other subtly reports the contradictory CSR behavior. In both scenario articles, Unilever is explicitly mentioned as the parent brand of the product brands (See appendix A for the Ben & Jerry's/ Suave articles and appendix B for the Dove/Axe articles). After being instructed to read both articles of the assigned scenario, the participants were asked some questions.

First, they were asked, "what is the difference between the articles?" Participants assigned to the Dove/Axe scenario agreed to what was implied with the articles: Dove empowers women and Axe degrades women. For the Ben & Jerry's/Suave scenario, they also agreed on what was implied with the articles: Ben & Jerry's promotes responsible sourcing, while Suave degrades the environment. When asked if there was a clear contradiction between the articles, all of them agreed. Also, to affirm if there was a clear indication of corporate hypocrisy, the participants were asked the questions of corporate hypocrisy scale, which all of them agreed with the statements.

Secondly, participants were asked to indicate which dimensions of each dependent variables were more relevant to the context of this study. The items corresponding to the different dimensions of the dependent variables were asked to

the participants and they were also asked to elaborate if the items were relevant or not when exposed to corporate hypocrisy. For the dependent variable corporate reputation, of its six dimensions (i.e., emotional appeal, workplace environment, social responsibility, product and services, financial performance, and vision and leadership) only emotional appeal and social responsibility were clearly relevant to the participants. The dimension vision and leadership the participants were a bit hesitant, indicating that when thinking about the corporate hypocrisy they won't necessarily think about the leadership of the company, however they would consider the vision of the company if they were asked about it. Therefore, the items about leadership were excluded from the survey. Moreover, to make all dimensions items more relevant and clear, they suggested to reformulate the items. As for the rest of the dimensions, product and services, workplace environment, and financial performance were irrelevant to them.

As anticipated all the dimensions of corporate brand trust (i.e., credibility, benevolence and integrity) were relevant to the participants. When asked each item of the dimensions most of them clearly understood what was being asked and agreed with the statements. And lastly, as anticipated the participants all agreed that the most relevant dimensions of consumer-brand relationship were satisfaction, commitment and trust. When asked the items for each dimension, some suggested to change some words in the items or delete some questions that seemed confusing.

The results of this focus group contributed to the literature review in the sense, of determining which dimensions of, for instance, corporate reputation is relevant to this study and which are not. Also, it contributed to create more in-depth scales items for each dimension.

3.2   Main study

3.2.1   Research design

In this study, a single factor between subject research design was employed to investigate the impact of corporate hypocrisy as a consequence of product brands' contradictory CSR information on the consumers' relationship with the brand and on corporate reputation and corporate brand trust. The independent variable was product brands' CSR information (inconsistent vs. consistent), while the dependent variables were consumer-brand relationship (product level), corporate reputation and corporate brand trust. Perceived corporate hypocrisy served as the mediator variable (see Figure 1). To test the hypotheses, two conditions based on Dove and Axe's

CSR information were developed[1]. The first condition was labeled the "contradiction condition" and the second as the "control condition" (the label was assigned for the sake of clarify in describing the method).

Contradiction condition. This condition consisted of two stimulus materials in the form of website news articles that were written and developed in Photoshop software, specifically for the purpose of this study. The first article, reports Dove's positive CSR activities (see Appendix B: article 1). The article highlights Dove's Real Beauty campaign and how Dove opened the conversation in society about body image and self-esteem through its high-profile marketing activities. The article also mentions Unilever as the parent brand and how Dove's positive CSR activities is part of Unilever's ambitious plans of intense social purpose in society through its brands and sustainable growth. The second article in this condition reports Axe's marketing activities that contradict Dove's CSR information, but it is not implicitly pointed out to the participants in the article (see Appendix B: article 2). The article highlight Axe's marketing strategy that derives its success by convincing men that its line of products will make them irresistible to women, which is exhibited in sexual explicit commercials that features super-model type beauties. In this condition it is implied that while Dove celebrates women for their natural beauty, Axe objectifies women using scantly dressed super-model type beauties as a reward for using the products. To subtly indicate the contradiction, it is also mentioned in the article that Axe "managed to grab the attention of the media and activists alike with their often sexist commercials and for the objectification of women". To make the Unilever association explicit, Unilever as the parent brand is also mentioned. The articles in this condition are the same articles used in the focus group.

Control condition. In this condition, like the first condition, consisted of two website articles that were written and developed specifically for the purpose of this study. The first article is the same Dove article presented in the contradiction condition, in which Dove's positive CSR activities are reported. The second article in this condition, unlike the former condition, reports Axe's positive CSR activities, which is consistent with Dove's CSR information (Appendix B: article 3). The article highlights Axe's 'Make Love not War' campaign, which aims to generate unprecedented awareness of the peace message and encourage young people to

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[1] Unlike, the two scenarios used in the focus group (Dove/Axe and Ben & Jerry/Suave), the main study only used the Dove and Axe scenario of CSR information. The reasoning behind this decision is because each scenario represented different kind of contradiction regarding the activities. The Dove/Axe scenario represents a contradiction between two product brands' marketing strategy, which are explicitly presented to consumers (even though they might not know the association). And, the Ben & Jerry's/Suave scenario represents a contradiction between two product brand, which one exhibits positive CSR information through its marketing activities, and the other engage in irresponsible behavior in their supply chain (e.g., irresponsible sourcing), which are activities not directly explicit to consumers. While, the latter scenario would make interesting results, this study would like to maintain itself to contradiction made in marketing strategies, hence, the exclusion of the Ben & Jerry's/Suave scenario.

actions that will have positive impact on their communities and the world. Also, the article explicitly mentions Unilever as the parent brand to make the association between Dove and Axe more explicit. The manipulation of the articles were affirmed by the focus group and reaffirmed with a small pretest.

3.2.2   Procedures

An anonymous questionnaire was distributed using Qualtrics Survey Software. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions. In both conditions, the participants were, first, exposed to a website article in which it is reported Dove's positive CSR activities. Afterwards, they were exposed to another website article, which, in the contradiction condition, it implicitly reported Axe's contradictory CSR behavior and, in the control condition, it reported Axe's positive CSR activities. Before each article, the participants were asked some control questions and after reading both articles, participants indicated their beliefs about Unilever's hypocrisy and assess (a) Unilever's reputation, (b) brand trust, and (c) Dove's and Axe's consumer-brand relationship. Last, the participants were asked to indicate if they knew of Dove and Axe association and also to answer some demographic questions.

3.2.3   Participants

The preliminary dataset had 143 respondents that started the questionnaire, which 101 of these respondents completed the questionnaire. The dropouts rate is probably due to an error on the website of Qualtrics that caused that these respondents could not see the second article of the assigned condition[2]. The 42 incomplete questionnaires were omitted from the analysis, leaving a total number of 101 valid respondents. The sample consisted of 69 female respondents (68.3%) and 32 male respondents (31.7%). The participants' ages ranged from 19 till 64 years old and had an average age of 35 (SD=10.64). 30.7% of the participants have a higher professional education (HBO), while 23.8% of the participants have a middle vocational education (MBO). In the overview of the demographics (Table 1) indicate that the total respondents for each condition and the respondents' age were equally distributed between the two conditions. The gender of the respondents was overall skewed towards female than male participants in both conditions.

As for Dove's and Axe's brand familiarity and favorability among participants. In general, participants were familiar with Dove (99%) and Axe (88%). Participants in the control condition (78%) did not know of Axe as much in the contradictory

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[2] While the questionnaire was active, a high rate of dropouts was noticed. A close analysis of the problem suggested that participants could not see the article. Qualtrics customer service was contacted, but could not do anything about it.

condition (98%) (See Appendix C for an overview of results). Also, participants in both conditions equally have a favorable image of both Dove (M_{Contra}= 3.71, SD= 1.12; $M_{Control}$= 3.98, SD=0.92; t (95.92)= -1.35, p > .05) and Axe (M_{Contra}= 3.81, SD= 1.21; $M_{Control}$= 2.82, SD=1.27; t (90)= 1.44, p > .05). Moreover, most of participants (66.3%) did not know that Dove and Axe were associated with Unilever, however, most of them were aware of Unilever corporate brand (52.5%).

Table 1 Participants' Demographics

| | Total (N =101) (%) | Conditions | | t | df |
		Contradictory (n =51) (%)	Control (n =50) (%)		
Gender					
Male	32 (31.7)	16 (31.4)	16 (32.0)		
Female	69 (68.3)	35 (68.6)	34 (68.0)		
Age (years)					
Mean (*SD*)	35.35 (10.64)	34.31 (10.54)	36.40 (10.75)	-.99[ns]	99
Education					
VMBO	4 (4.0)	4 (7.8)	0 (0.0)		
HAVO	13 (12.9)	7 (13.7)	6 (12.0)		
VWO	6 (5.9)	4 (7.8)	2 (4.0)		
MBO	24 (23.8)	15 (29.4)	9 (18.0)		
HBO	31 (30.7)	13 (25.5)	18 (36.0)		
WO	15 (14.9)	5 (9.8)	10 (20.0)		
Others	8 (7.9)	3 (5.9)	5 (10.0)		

[ns] Not significant *p* > .05

3.2.4 Measures

Some of the scales in this study were adopted from previous studies to measure the dependent variables. All variables were rated based on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree (see Appendix D for all the scales and items used in the questionnaire).

    Control questions. In both conditions, participants were asked some control questions before reading each article and after reading both articles. *Before reading each article*, participants' familiarity and general favorability towards Dove and Axe were measured. Familiarity was measured with a two-item scale consisting of yes or no questions: "do you know this brand?" and "have you purchased a product from this brand before?" And the favorability towards the product brands was measured based on a five-point bipolar scale that consisted of only one item (Unfavorable-Favorable). *After reading both articles*, after assessing the dependent variables, a

control question was also emplaced to indicate participants' awareness of Unilever association with both Dove and Axe with a yes or no question: "Did you know that Unilever is the manufacturer of both Dove and Axe?" And lastly, Unilever brand awareness was also measured with a three-item scale consisting of questions such as, "I know Unilever" and "I have seen this logo on products".

Corporate hypocrisy. Corporate hypocrisy was partly measured with a four-item scale that was derived from the study conducted by Wagner, Lutz and Weitz (2009). Based on literature and the focus group that suggested that attribution of CSR motives and emotional responses are strong antecedents of perceived hypocrisy, four extra items were added: "Unilever has self-serving motives to engage in social responsible campaigns, such as Dove's Real Beauty campaign", "I feel angry towards Unilever", "I'm annoyed with Unilever", and "I'm irritated with Unilever". The eight-item scale was measured based on five-point Likert scale and proved to be reliable (α= .94).

Corporate reputation. Corporate reputation was measured by an eight-items scale that was adapted from the Reputation Quotient developed by Fombrun, Gardberg and Sever (2000). The focus group indicated that the dimensions more relevant to this study were emotional appeal (3 items), social and environmental responsibility (4 items), and the company's vision (1 item). The focus group also suggested that three items of the dimension social and environmental responsibility needed to be reformulated in order to be more relevant to the context of this study. For instance, the item "this company supports good cause" was reformulated to "this company shows its commitment toward society by improving the welfare of the communities in which it operates"; the item "this company is an environmentally responsible company" was reformulated to "Unilever fully embraces social responsibility"; and the item "this company has clear vision of its future" was reformulated to "Unilever has a clear corporate social responsibility vision". To measure the overall perception of corporate social responsibility of Unilever, two extra items were added: "I have a favorable impression of Unilever's social responsibility activities" and "I have a positive attitude about Unilever's social responsibility activities". The overall scale of eight items that was measured based on a five-point Likert scale was reliable in both conditions (α= .96). See Table 2 for all Cronbach's alpha coefficient values including the subscales)

Corporate brand trust. Corporate brand trust was measured based on a ten-items scale, which were derived from different studies (Erdem, Swait, & Louviere, 2002; Gurviez & Korchia, 2003; Kim, Lee, & Lee, 2005; Lau & Lee, 1999; Walsh, Beatty, & Shui, 2009). According to the results of the focus group, all dimensions of

brand trust were relevant to this study namely; credibility (3 items), benevolence (3 items) and integrity (4 items). The focus group also suggested to reformulate one item from the dimension credibility to make it more specific to the context of this study, hence the item "I have great confidence in this company" was reformulated to "I have great confidence in Unilever actions as a social responsible company". The scale was measured based on a five-point Likert scale and had an overall reliability co-efficient of .96.

Product consumer-brand relationship. Consumer-brand relationship was measured based on a twelve-items scale adapted from Kim, Lee and Lee (2005) and Lau and Lee (1999). The focus group indicated the most relevant dimensions for this study were satisfaction (2 items), commitment (3 items) and trust (7 items). The dimension trust was enforced with four extra items derived from the study conducted by Lau and Lee (1999). The derived items were based only on the extrinsic characteristics of the product brand. The overall consumer-brand relationship scale was proved to be reliable (α = .95).

Table 2 Reliability Analyses of Scales

Scales and subscales [a]	No. of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Corporate hypocrisy	8	.94
Corporate reputation	8	.96
Emotional Appeal	3	.91
Corporate Social Responsibility	4	.93
Vision [b]	1	
Corporate brand trust	10	.96
Credibility	3	.92
Benevolence	3	.92
Integrity	4	.85
Consumer-brand relationship	12	.95
Satisfaction	2	.66
Trust	7	.93
Behavioral commitment	3	.84

[a] All scales were measured based on a 5-point Likert scale (1=totally disagree/ 5= totally agree)
[b] This dimension consisted of only one item

4 RESULTS

In this section, the results of the main study are discussed. During the data analysis, SPSS statistic software was used to conduct calculations and test the hypotheses. H_1, H_2, H_3, and H_4 were tested with an independent sample t-tests. And a simple linear regression analysis was used to test mediating role of corporate hypocrisy as proposed by H_5. Prior to testing the hypotheses, the dataset that consisted of a total of 143 surveys was adjusted; 42 incomplete surveys were omitted, negative items were recoded, Cronbach's alpha scored were determined and all items were computed into constructs.

Main study

The impact contradictory CSR information on consumers' perceived corporate hypocrisy. To test H_1, the overall impact of consistency of CSR information on perceived corporate hypocrisy was assessed using an independent t test. Consistency of CSR information (inconsistent CSR information: contradictory condition vs. consistent CSR information: control condition) was the independent variable and perceived corporate hypocrisy was the dependent variable. As anticipated, participants who were exposed to the contradictory condition (M=3.27, SD= .77) exhibited significantly higher perception of corporate hypocrisy than participants who were exposed to the control condition (M= 2.50, SD= .89); (t (99)=4.65, p < .001. Therefore, providing full support for H_1. See table 3 for an overview of the results.

Consequences of perceived corporate hypocrisy on corporate reputation and corporate brand trust. To test the impact of corporate hypocrisy on corporate reputation and brand trust proposed in H_2 and H_3 an independent sample t test was also conducted. Consistency of CSR information (inconsistent CSR information: contradictory condition vs. consistent CSR information: control condition) was the independent variable and corporate reputation and corporate brand trust were the dependent variables. In support of H_2, the results showed that participants in the contradictory condition, which exhibits higher perception of corporate hypocrisy, assessed corporate reputation significantly less favorable (M= 3.00, SD= .66) than participants in the control condition which exhibited lower perception of corporate hypocrisy (M= 3.51, SD= .88); t (91.13)= -3.27, p < .05. See Table 3 for results and also for Means and standard deviations of the dimensions.

Table 3 Means, Standard Deviations and t-values estimations of Contradictory – and Control condition

Scales and subscales [a]	Contradictory (*n*=51)		Control (*n*=50)		*t*	*df*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Corporate hypocrisy	3.27	.77	2.50	.89	4.65**	99
Inconsistency of behavior	3.50	.79	2.81	.98	3.92**	99
Attribution of CSR motives	3.55	.81	2.70	1.11	4.40**	99
Emotional response	2.86	1.01	2.01	.99	4.21**	99
Corporate reputation	3.00	.66	3.51	.88	-3.27*	91.13
Emotional Appeal	2.98	.71	3.38	.99	-2.33*	88.88
Corporate Social Responsibility	3.02	.71	3.59	.85	-3.60**	99
Vision [b]	2.94	.79	3.56	.99	-3.47**	93.17
Corporate brand trust	2.82	.69	3.39	.89	-3.60**	99
Credibility	2.86	.76	3.30	1.04	-2.46*	89.57
Benevolence	2.85	.83	3.49	.93	-3.67**	99
Integrity	2.76	.65	3.37	.86	-4.01**	91.45
Consumer-brand relationship: Dove	3.34	.54	3.77	.69	-3.50**	99
Satisfaction	3.67	.68	3.86	.70	-1.41	99
Trust	3.31	.53	3.78	.69	-3.82**	99
Behavioral commitment	3.18	.64	3.69	.77	-3.60**	99
Consumer-brand relationship: Axe	2.92	.61	3.23	.79	-2.16*	99
Satisfaction	3.67	.68	3.86	.70	-1.41	99
Trust	2.90	.63	3.28	.78	-2.65**	99
Behavioral commitment	2.86	.71	3.13	.95	-1.63	99

Note. Estimation based on total sample (*N*=101)
[a] All constructs were measured based on a 5-point Likert scale (1=totally disagree/ 5= totally agree)
* *p* < .05
** *p* < .01

Also, in support of H3, participants who were exposed to the contradictory condition assessed corporate brand trust significantly less favorable (*M*= 2.82, *SD*= .69) than participants who were exposed to the control condition (*M*= 3.39, *SD*= .89); *t* (99)= -3.60, *p* < .01.

Impact of corporate hypocrisy on Dove and Axe's consumer-brand relationship. To test H4 – the impact of corporate hypocrisy on Dove and Axe's consumer-brand relationship – an independent sample *t* test was also conducted. The independent variable was the consistency of CSR information (inconsistent CSR information: contradictory condition vs. consistent CSR information: control condition) and the dependent variables were Dove and Axe's consumer-brand relationship. As Table 3

outlines, participants in the contradictory condition assessed both Dove and Axe's consumer-brand relationship significantly less favorable (M_{Dove}= 3.34, *SD*= .54; M_{Axe}= 2.92, *SD*= .61) than participants in the control condition (M_{Dove}= 3.77, *SD*= .69; M_{Axe}= 3.23, *SD*= .79); t_{Dove} (99)= - 3.50, *p* < 0.01, t_{Axe} (99)= - 2.16, *p* < 0.05. Given these findings H$_4$ is fully supported.

The results also suggest that corporate hypocrisy might have more impact on Axe's consumer-brand relationship (*M* = 2.92, *SD*= .61) than Dove's consumer-brand relationship (*M* = 3.34, *SD*= .54). This study cannot confirm these data, however they could be addressed in future research.

Mediating role of corporate hypocrisy. The mediation effect of perceived corporate hypocrisy was measured using the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach. A simple linear regression was calculated to test if perceived corporate hypocrisy predicts the impact of corporate reputation, brand trust and the Dove and Axe's consumer-brand relationship. Beforehand, the independent variable consistency of CSR information was dummy coded (inconsistent CSR information: contradictory condition= 1; consistent CSR information: control condition =2) in order to do the analyses.

In step 1 of the mediation model, the direct effect of contradictory CSR information on corporate reputation (*β* = .31, *t* (99)= 3.28, *p* < .01) corporate brand trust (*β* = .34, *t* (99)= 3.60, *p* < .01) and consumer-brand relationship (Dove: *β* = .33, *t* (99)= 3.50, *p* < .01; Axe: *β*= .21, *t* (99)= 2.16, *p* < .01) were significant, excluding the mediator. Step 2, showed that the direct effect of contradictory brand values on corporate hypocrisy were also significant; *β* = -.42, *t* (1)= -4.65, *p* < .01. Step 3 and 4 of the mediation process shows that the mediating role of corporate hypocrisy was significant on corporate reputation (*β* = -.71, *t* (98)= -9.17, *p* < .01), corporate brand trust (*β* = -.62, *t* (98)= -7.45, *p* < .01), and consumer-brand relationship (Dove: *β* = -.43, *t* (98)= -4.44, *p* < .01; Axe: *β* = -.97, *t* (98)= -6.39, *p* < .01). While, the direct effect of consistency of CSR information on corporate reputation (*β* = .01, *t* (98)= .15, *p* > .05) corporate brand trust (*β* = .08, *t* (98)= .91, *p* > .05) and the product brands' consumer-brand relationship (Dove: *β* = .15, *t* (98)= 1.57, *p* > .05; Axe: *β*= -.04, *t* (98)= -.39, *p* >.05) was not significant.

When direct and indirect effect in a structural model are compared to test for mediation, evidence for full mediation occurs when the indirect path from the independent to the ultimate dependent variable is significant and the direct path between those two construct exhibit non-significance (Wagner et al., 2009). On that note, step 4 of the analyses revealed that corporate hypocrisy is a full mediator between contradictory brand values and corporate reputation, corporate brand trust

and consumer-brand relationship. A Sobel test was also conducted to prove the mediation role of corporate hypocrisy and found full mediation on corporate reputation ($z = 2.40$, $p < 0.01$), corporate brand trust ($z = -2.35$, $p < 0.01$) and the product brands' consumer-brand relationship (Dove: $z = 2.29$, $p < 0.05$; Axe: $z = 2.37$, $p < 0.01$).

Therefore, it can be concluded that contradictory brand values predicts corporate reputation, corporate brand trust and consumer-relationship through the mediated role of corporate hypocrisy, hence, confirming H_5. Table 4 provides an overview of all the corresponding estimates and t-values for each step of the mediation analysis.

Table 4 Mediation Analyses

	Direct effect		Indirect Effect			Evidence of Mediation
	β	t	β	t	Sobel Z	
Step 1						
Contradictory CSR information -->						
Corporate reputation	.31**	3.28				
Contradictory CSR information -->						
Corporate brand trust	.34**	3.60				
Contradictory CSR information -->						
Consumer-brand relationship						
Dove	.33**	3.50				
Axe	.21*	2.16				
Step 2						
Contradictory CSR information -->						
Corporate hypocrisy	-.42**	-4.65				
Step 3 and 4						
Contradictory CSR information- ->						
Corporate hypocrisy -->						
Corporate reputation	.01	.15	-.71**	-9.17	2.40**	Full mediation
Contradictory CSR information- ->						
Corporate hypocrisy -->						
Corporate brand trust	.08	.91	.62**	-7.45	-2.35**	Full mediation

Continued…

Contradictory CSR information- ->						
Corporate hypocrisy -->						
Consumer-brand relationship						
Dove	.15	1.57	-.43**	-4.44	2.29*	Full mediation
Axe	-.04	-.39	-.59**	-6.39	2.37**	Full mediation

Note. Estimation based on total sample (*N*=101)
* *p* < .05
** *p* < .01

5 DISCUSSION

Although there have been prior studies on the impact of different valence product information on consumers, it remains unclear on how consumers perceive and react distinctively to contradictory CSR information from product brands of the same corporate brand. Taking steps towards closing this gap, this study aimed to explore the impact of contradictory CSR information of Dove and Axe on their consumer-brand relationship and on Unilever's (the parent company) corporate reputation and corporate brand trust. A one factor experimental study using two conditions (inconsistent CSR information: contradictory condition vs. consistent CSR information: control condition) was conducted. Transferring the corporate hypocrisy research of Wagner, Lutz and Weitz (2009) to the context of this stud. This study gives a new insight on the concept of perceived corporate hypocrisy as a consequence of product brands' contradictory CSR information. In line with extent CSR-related research and the research of Wagner and colleagues, this study theorized a negative impact on product brands' consumer brand relationship, the corporate brand's reputation and brand trust. Moreover, this study also suggested that corporate hypocrisy function as a key psychological mechanism in consumers' processing of contradictory brand values, exerting a mediating role in the impact of such contradiction on the dependent variables of the product brands and the corporate brand.

The results of this study supported the presented conceptual framework. This study found supporting evidence that the product brands' contradictory CSR information of product brands have a substantial negative impact on consumers, eliciting perception of corporate hypocrisy and thus adversely affecting their relationship with the brands, the perception of the corporate brand's reputation and corporate brand trust. These results are in line with those of Wagner, Wietz and Lutz (2009) that first came with the concept of corporate hypocrisy as a consequence of inconsistent CSR information. While their study only suggested a negative consumer's evaluation of the firm, this study found evidence that the concept of corporate hypocrisy can also be applied to contradictory CSR information between two product brands of the same parent company and its consequences can go far beyond damaging the consumer's relationship with the brands, as well to damaging the corporate brand's reputation and brand trust. Accordingly, this could impact other brands in the portfolio through transcendence effect, which can be explained by the inclusion/exclusion model by Bless and Schwarz (2010). According to this model, when product brands are categorized with certain corporate brands that have

negative reputation, it can result into a negative representation of the product brands, hence, negative evaluation towards the product brands, an occurrence that the authors called an assimilation effect. Moreover, the negative effects of hypocrisy as a consequence of contradictory CSR information created at product level on the corporate brand might be considered to be an assimilation effect according to the inclusion/exclusion model. While categorizing the two product brands under the same corporate brand, the product brands' contradictory CSR information created a negative representation of the corporate brand that resulted in the negative judgments towards the corporate brand.

This study also found evidence of mediation that supports the role of perceived corporate hypocrisy as a key psychological mechanism in processing of contradictory CSR information between two product brands. This finding is consistent with the study of Wagner and colleagues (2009) that also explored the mediating role of corporate hypocrisy. This result suggests that when consumers are confronted with contradictory CSR information from product brands that are associated to the same parent company, it creates an perception that the company claims something that it is not. This can elicits a belief in consumers' mind that the company uses CSR only as a strategic tool to generate profit than for the benefit of consumers' welfare. This creates a negative emotional response that leads that the consumer would evaluate the firm negatively.

The results also found supporting evidence that Dove and Axe's contradictory CSR information does have a negative effect on both product brands' consumer-brand relationship. Axe's consumer-brand relationship is negatively affected due to the negative aspect of its engagement in contradictory CSR behavior, which are perceived to be more diagnostic of negative traits and informative, and weighted more heavily in consumer's mind than positive aspects (Herr, Kardes & Kim, 1991). Dove's consumer-brand relationship is most likely to be negatively affected through the transcendence effect from Axe's contradictory CSR behavior.

In addition, the findings also suggests that the impact of perceived corporate hypocrisy might be more adverse on the brand engaging in the contradictory CSR behavior than the brand exhibiting the positive CSR information. These results would be in line with those of previous studies indicating the possibility that Dove's strong reputation as a brand actively engaging in CSR activities might have mitigated the impact of corporate hypocrisy (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2007; Shimp, 1997). Further research is required to affirm these results.

5.1 Limitations and recommendation for future research

The limitations of this study can provide some guidance for future studies. Although this study's experimental approach provides a new insight into the casual impact of corporate hypocrisy as a consequence of product brands' contradictory CSR information, the external validity of the suggested dynamics of corporate hypocrisy perception in this context needs to be strengthened by future studies.

This study is limited in that it only used one type of product brands' contradictory CSR information, that is, the contradiction between Dove and Axe in their marketing activities. This scenario hardly represents all existing CSR contradictions within a company such as Unilever. Future research could focus more on the impact of other types of contradictions between product brands such as; within the product brands' supply chain (e.g., one product brand claiming to engage in responsible sourcing by associating with organizations such as Fairtrade, while another product brand, within the same company, engages in irresponsible sourcing by using child labor in development countries in which the raw materials for their product originates). Future research could also focus on not only on value-related or CSR contradictions, but also on contradictions related to functional core values (e.g., a car brand claiming and delivers exceptional car safety, which is consistent with the parent company core values, while another car brand, within the same company neglects safety policies and causes many accidents and does major recalls).

Furthermore, this study only considers the FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) industry. Future longitudinal research on the perception and impacts of corporate hypocrisy across various industries and different types of CSR contradictions would be highly relevant.

This research is also limited in that it the current framework it does not take into consideration potential moderating role variables. It would be worthwhile for future research to investigate how criteria such as, consumers' social issue involvement, consumers' identification and commitment with the product- and corporate brand, and extremity of unethical behavior, can shape perceptions of contradictory CSR information and its outcomes.

Moreover, the theoretical framework can be expanded to include additional dependent variables, such as perceived product quality, consumer purchase intentions and overall corporate brand image. It would be also highly relevant to investigate if the impact of corporate hypocrisy has a transcendence effect on the whole portfolio of the company or only on the specific product brands, which their CSR information contradicts each other, was made explicit to consumers. Also, additional experimental treatments can be included in future research, such as

sequence of positive CSR information and behavior, and magnitude of CSR information exposed to consumers.

Also, this study regards the dependent variables (i.e., corporate reputation and corporate brand trust) as one-dimensional variables, instead of multidimensional variables. It would be highly relevant to investigate which dimensions of corporate reputation and corporate brand trust is more impacted by corporate hypocrisy.

And the last limitation of this study regards its validity. Due to time limitations, this study only gathered a relatively small number of respondents using a snowball sampling, which does not allow the findings of this study to be generalized.

5.2   Managerial implications

This study has managerial implications for brand management and contemporary marketing management. The findings suggest the existence of destructive effects of the product brands' contradictory CSR information, which can trigger consumer's perception of corporate hypocrisy and thus jeopardizing the corporate reputation, corporate brand trust and the product brands' consumer-brand relationship. Thus, two independent stand alone product brands associated with each other by means of the same parent company (e.g., Nestlé), which one exhibits positive CSR information (e.g., Nespresso Fair trade associations) and the other contradictory CSR behavior (e.g., child labor) made explicit to consumers, can lead to substantial negative consumer's reactions. These negative reactions can potentially lead to overall negative perceptions towards the product brands and corporate brand. These findings are especially noteworthy because extant research suggests that even uniformly positive CSR from a company, in this case through its product brands, tends to be limited in its ability to create desired positive impact on consumer's evaluation towards the product brands and more limited to the parent company (Mohr & Webb, 2005; Sen Bhattacharya, 2001; Wagner, Weitz & Lutz, 2009).

Factoring in these insight from previous studies with the results of this study, may motivate corporate brand managers to consistently monitor and emphasize on the importance of consistent CSR information exhibited not only through their product brands' marketing activities, but also through all organizational members behaviors in all of its business operations. The corporate CSR values should be reflected through all the business operations. While this might be very difficult for many big companies such as, Unilever and P& G, with operations around the world, they might just need to limit their CSR information in their product brand's marketing activities, while still in the process of aligning CSR values throughout their operations.

Finally, this research ha identified perceived corporate hypocrisy in the context of product brands' contradictory CSR information as a strong determinant of negative consumers' evaluation towards the product brands and corporate brands that will result in damaging the reputation and brand trust. These findings should be of high importance for companies because their most important intangible assets that have been built for decades could be damaged with a simple business or marketing strategy. While more research is needed to fully understand the dynamics of corporate hypocrisy, companies should be more proactively in managing their CSR information through the whole company.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Focus group stimulus materials

1. *Ben & Jerry's article (positive CSR information)*
2. *Suave article (contradictory CSR behavior)*

Article 1: Ben & Jerry's (positive CSR information)

Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream: One Cool brand

Charles Clark ✉ ♥
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PACKAGING THE FUTURE
the road to greener packaging at ben & jerry's

Next time you indulge a funky flavor from Ben & Jerry's ice cream, you can feel great — not guilty — because you're supporting a conscientious company with significant environmental initiatives. From sourcing ingredients to packaging products, Ben & Jerry's addresses the footprint its ice cream business leaves on the world. Some of these efforts include composting waste, reducing paper use, improving the energy efficiency of stores and production plants and turning ice cream by products into chemical-free fertilizer. Ben & Jerry's also works with dairy farmers and scientists to develop better ways to handle dairy farm manure — a major source of pollution. Furthermore, the milk that goes into each delectable flavor comes from cows that have not been treated with artificial growth hormones.

Ben & Jerry's is owned nowadays by UNILEVER, a company that have commited to make a positive impact in many ways: through their brands, their commercial operations and relationships, through voluntary contributions, and through the various other ways in which we engage with society. Their main goal is to conduct their operations with integrity and with respect for the many people, organisations and environments our business touches.

Article 2: Suave (contradictory CSR behavior)

MediaDailyNews

Pulling back the shower curtain: Find out about Unilever's dirty secret!

by Joe Mandese @mp_joemandese, 7 hours ago   💬 Comment   ⭐ Recommend (4)

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Unilever claims that nearly 5 billion people use its products, among them the shampoo Suave. But what's not so squeaky clean is that Unilever is making those billions of consumers unknowingly part of an environmental scandal.

Greenpeace today reveals the result of a yearlong investigation showing UNILVER is sourcing palm oil from companies connected to widespread forest devastation. Its sourcing policies also expose its supply chain to forest fires and habitat destruction that is further pushing the Sumatran tiger to the edge of extinction.

Palm oil is a common ingredient in detergents, shampoos, cosmetics and other household goods that the company manufactures. That's not to say palm oil is the problem, but palm oil from forest destruction – dirty palm oil – is.

So how does this affect you? Well, this means that every time you and your family reach for a bottle of Suave, from the supermarket shelf to the bathroom cabinet, UNILEVER is making you a part of this scandal.

Appendix B: Main study stimulus materials

1. *Dove article (positive CSR information)*
2. *Axe article (contradictory CSR behavior)*
3. *Axe article (positive CSR information)*

Article 1: Dove (positive CSR information)

The Beauty of Dove RealBeauty Campaign

Dove wants you to Imagine a World Where Beauty is a Source of Confidence, Not Anxiety

The Dove brand, owned by UNILEVER is rooted in listening to women. Dove launched the Campaign for Real Beauty in 2004 that started a global conversation about the need for a wider definition of beauty after a study proved the hypothesis that the definition of beauty had become limiting and unattainable. Dove has employed various communications vehicles to challenge beauty stereotypes and invite women to join a discussion about beauty. For instance, when the Campaign for Real Beauty focused on the idea that girls are bombarded with unrealistic, unattainable images and images of beauty that impact their self-esteem, the brand teamed up with the entertainment industry to show that what girls see in movies and magazines represents an unrealistic standard of beauty. Onslaught, an online film dramatizing the barrage of beauty images girls face, dramatized this point.

Dove's campaigns are part of UNILEVER's ambitious plans of intense social purpose and sustainable growth. UNILEVER is committed to supporting sustainability and providing their consumers around the world with products they need to look good, feel good and get more out of life.

Article 2: Axe (contradictory CSR behavior)

The AXE effect Still has an effect on consumers

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Here's what 'Game of Thrones' stars look like in real life

12 awesome facts about WWE superstar Brock Lesnar

by Taboola

Axe, a brand owned by UNILEVER has become one of the world's most popular male grooming brands, by being a guy's best first move. Cool, adventurous and never dull, Axe is designed to keep guys a step ahead in the dating game. The brand Axe derives its success by convincing men that its line of products will make them irresistible to the opposite sex. The "Axe Effect" causes all women to become sex-crazed maniacs that aggressively pursue any male wearing the product.Their risqué and often sexually explicit commercials always feautures supermodel-type beauty are attention-grabbing that are famous around the world. They also managed to grab the attention of the media and activist alike with their often sexist and for objectification of women in their ads.

However, Axe advertsings with suggestive message, bawdy humor, and cool-guy machismo have proven very effective for the brand as sales continued to grow at a rate above company average. They also have been recognised by the prestigious Cannes Lions Advertising Awards – they've won more than ten of the event's sought-after accolades.

Article 3: Axe (positive CSR information)

Axe wants its fans to spread the Peace message

Charles Clark ✉ ✈
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Videos You May Like

6 scientifically proven features men find attractive in women

Five teenagers invented a suitcase that solves the biggest problem with

Here's what 'Game of Thrones' stars look like in real life

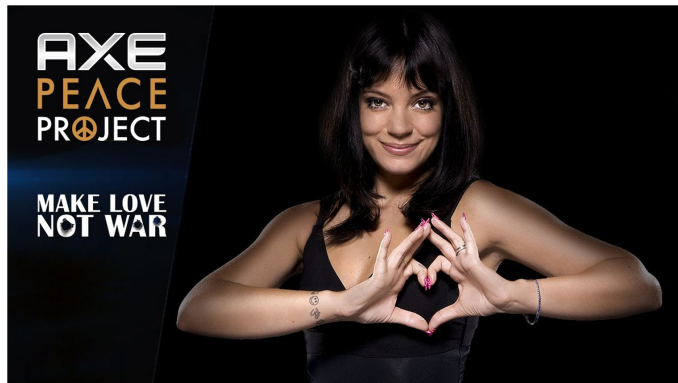12 awesome facts about WWE superstar Brock Lesnar

by Taboola

Axe has inspired more than 425,000 people around the world to take action to promote peace and improve their communities as part of its global Peace campaign.

Axe, a UNILEVER brand, has launched a global campaign that brings girls and guys together to 'make love, not war'.The Axe Peace campaign aims to generate unprecedented awareness of the peace message and encourage young people to take simple but meaningful actions that will have a positive impact on the future of their communities and the world they will inherit. For the campaign Axe has partnered with international non-profit organisation Peace One Day to drive awareness and action for Peace Day on 21 September – an annual event of non-violence and ceasefire unanimously adopted by all United Nations member states. "Our inspiration for creating the 'Make Love Not War' campaign for Axe Peace was knowing that our ability to bring guys and girls together could be used powerfully to have an impact on a huge scale." says Tomas Marcenaro, Global Vice President for Axe.

Appendix C: Main study control questions results

Table 5 Participants' Brand Familiarity, Favorability and Corporate Brand Descriptive
Results

| | | Total (N =101) (%) | Conditions | | t | df |
			Contradictory (n =51) (%)	Control (n =50) (%)		
Brand Familiarity						
Brand awareness						
Dove	*Yes*	100 (99.0)	50 (98.0)	50 (100.0)		
	No	1 (1.0)	1 (2.0)	0 (0.0)		
Axe	*Yes*	88 (87.1)	50 (98.0)	38 (76.0)		
	No	13 (12.9)	1 (2.0)	12 (24.0)		
Purchase behavior						
Dove	*Yes*	89 (88.1)	44 (86.3)	45 (90.0)		
	No	12 (11.9)	7 (13.7)	5 (10.0)		
Axe	*Yes*	45 (44.6)	28 (54.9)	17 (34.0)		
	No	56 (55.4)	23 (45.1)	33 (66.0)		
Brand favorability [a] *M (SD)*						
Dove		3.84 (1.03)	3.71 (1.12)	3.98 (0.92)	-1.35[ns]	95.92
Axe		3.00 (1.25)	3.81 (1.21)	2.82 (1.27)	1.44[ns]	99
Corporate brand association						
	Yes	34 (33.7)	17 (33.3)	17 (34.0)		
	No	67 (66.3)	34 (66.7)	33 (66.0)		
Corporate brand awareness						
Logo awareness	*Yes*	53 (52.5)	25 (49.0)	25 (50.0)		
	No	48 (47.5)	26 (51.0)	25 (50.0)		
Logo recognition	*Yes*	56 (55.4)	27 (52.9)	29 (58.0)		
	No	45 (44.6)	24 (47.1)	21 (42.0)		

[ns] Not significant $p > .05$
[a] Scale was measured based on a 5-piont bi-polar scale (unfavorable- favorable)

Appendix D: Main study questionnaire scales and items

Introduction (Informed consent form)

Dear participants,

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

Completing this survey will take about **10 minutes** and your responses are completely anonymous. The results will be used only for academic purposes.

By participating in this survey you will not only contribute to my master thesis, but also to a scientific research in the field of corporate branding. During this survey you will be asked to read two articles of two separate product brands. Thereafter, questions will follow about your attitude towards the product brands and corporate brand. This is about *your* opinion, so there is **no** right or wrong answer. You can withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

If you have any questions about the survey or the research, please contact me at i.c.d.r.werleman@student.utwente.nl

Your participation is highly appreciated.

Kind regards,

Iriana Werleman

Master student Communication Studies, University of Twente

☑ I have read all of the above information regarding this study and understand what it says. I agree to voluntarily take part in this study and I agree that my answers would be used solely for the purpose of this study.

Control questions

Before each article

Product brands' familiarity

Please answer these short questions about the brand Dove/Axe (Yes or no).

PBFAM 1   Do you know this brand?

PBFAM 2   Have you ever purchased a product from this brand?

Product Brand favorability

In general, your feelings towards Dove/Axe is…

PBFAV   Favorable –Unfavorable

At the end of the survey

Corporate brand association

Did you know that Unilever is the manufacturer of both Dove and Axe?

CBASSO   Yes-no

Unilever brand awareness

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the brand

awareness of Unilever (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree)

CBAWARE 1 I know Unilever

CBAWARE 2 I have seen this logo on products

CBAWARE 3 I recognize the logo of Unilever

Corporate hypocrisy (Wagner, Lutz, & Weitz, 2009)

Based on the articles, to what extent do you agree with the following statements

about Unilever? (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree)

Inconsistency of behavior

CBHYPO 1   Unilever exhibits inconsistent message through its product brands

                  Dove and Axe*

CBHYPO 2   Unilever acts hypocritically

CBHYPO 3   Unilever does two different things

CBHYPO 4   Unilever pretends to be something it is not

Attribution of CSR motives

CBHYPO 5   Unilever has self-serving motives to engage in social responsible

                  campaigns, such as Dove's Real Beauty campaign*

Emotional response

CBHYPO 6   I'm feel angry with Unilever*

CBHYPO 7   I'm annoyed with Unilever*

CBHYPO 8   I'm irritated with Unilever*

* Extra items

Corporate reputation (Fombrun, Gardberg, & Sever, 2000)

Based on the articles, to what extent do your agree with the following statements

about Unilever's reputation? (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree)

Emotional appeal

CBREP 1   I have a good feeling about Unilever

CBREP 2   I admire and respect Unilever

CBREP 3   I trust Unilever

Social and environmentally responsibility

CBREP 4   This company shows its commitment toward society by improving the
            welfare of the communities in which it operates*

CBREP 5   Unilever fully embraces social responsibility*

CBREP 6   I have a favorable impression of Unilever's social responsibility
            activities**

CBREP 7   I have a positive attitude about Unilever's social responsibility
            activities**

Vision

CBREP 8   Unilever has a clear corporate social responsibility vision*

* Reformulated items
**Extra Items added

Corporate brand trust (Erdem, Swait, & Louviere, 2002; Gurviez & Korchia, 2003;
Kim, Lee, & Lee, 2005; Lau & Lee, 1999; Walsh, Beatty, & Shui, 2009)
*Based of the articles, to what extent do your agree with the following statements
about Unilever's brand trust? (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree)*

Reliability/credibility

CBTRUST 1   I feel that I can trust Unilever completely

CBTRUST 2   I have great confidence in Unilever actions as a social responsible
            company*

CBTRUST 3   Unilever delivers what it promise

Benevolence

CBTRUST 4   I can depend on this company to do the right thing for the community

CBTRUSR 5   Unilever is concerned about the general welfare of its consumer

CBTRUST 6   Unilever acts in the best interest of its consumers

Integrity

CBTRUST 7   Unilever is sincere with its consumers

CBTRUST 8   Unilever is honest

CBTRUST 9   Unilever has high integrity

CBTRUST 10 Unilever actions are inconsistent**

* Reformulated items
**Reversed Item

Consumer-brand relationship (Kim, Lee, & Lee, 2005; Lau & Lee, 1999)

Based on the articles, to what extent do you agree with the following statements about the brand Dove/Axe? (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree)

Satisfaction

PBCBR 1   I really like the brand Dove/Axe

PBCBR 2   This brand disappoints me*

Trust

PBCBR 3   I trust the brand Dove/Axe

PBCBR 4   Dove/Axe is reliable brand

PBCBR 5   I have a great confidence in the brand Dove/Axe

PBCBR 6   I can depend on this brand to do the right thing for the community

PBCBR 7   Dove/Axe is honest with its consumers

PBCBR 8   I would buy a product from Dove/Axe

PBCBR 9   Dove/Axe works hard for my well-being

Behavioral commitment

PBCBR 10   I want to keep buying product from the brand Dove/Axe

PBCBR 11   I would praise and defend Dove/Axe

PBCBR 12   I would appreciate Dove/Axe for a long time

* Reversed items

Demographic questions

What is your gender?

GENDER   Male or Female

What is your age? (Open-ended)

AGE   …

What is your highest level of education you have completed? (Single answer)

EDUCATION   VMBO, HAVO, VWO, MBO, HBO, WO and other.