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„The Impact of Consumer Affinity on Consumers'
Willingness to Pay in the context of Corporate Social
Irresponsibility“

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Abstract

Understanding consumers and their behavior is crucial for international marketing in a globalized world, which is undergoing constant change. As a result of this change, people have shifting expectations towards products in general, and certain attitudes and emotions influence their actions. Therefore, it is of high importance for marketers to understand the underlying mechanisms and structures of consumer behavior, to reach people efficiently and ultimately be successful. Due to these reasons, the aim of the thesis was to explore the impact of consumer affinity on consumers' willingness to pay (WTP), taking into consideration the role of corporate social irresponsibility (CSI). To fulfill the purpose of the research, an experimental study was performed. The study implemented a between-subject design with four different groups, which received different stimuli and scenarios. More precisely, people from Germany were introduced to a toothpaste brand originated either in Austria or Sweden and were confronted with CSI-related information about the company or no additional information according to brand actions, depending on the experimental groups. The results of the study revealed that consumer affinity does not have a positive effect on WTP. It does not lead to a willingness to pay a higher price, neither if the product is from Austria, nor if it has its origin in Sweden. Furthermore, no moderating effect of CSI on the relationship between consumer affinity and WTP was detected. From a theoretical perspective the study extended the existing literature about consumer behavior, consumer affinity and CSI by deepening the knowledge in these areas. From the practical point of view, these insights can be useful for marketers in terms of pricing strategy and communication.

Keywords: affinity, willingness to pay, corporate social irresponsibility

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Abbreviations

CSI	Corporate Social Irresponsibility
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
COO	Country of origin
DV	Dependent variable
e.g.	For example (Latin: <i>exempli gratia</i>)
et al.	And others (Latin: <i>et alia</i>)
IV	Independent variable
PSM	Price Sensitivity Meter
WTP	Willingness to pay

1. Introduction

This first chapter provides a general introduction to the topic of the thesis as well as its relevance. It briefly outlines the most important concepts and describes the purpose of the study, the research objectives and questions, and the structure of the work.

1.1 Background and relevance

The year 2020 and 2021 were unique, uncommon, and marked by changes for people all around the world. From a business and economic perspective especially trade and thus consumers faced great challenges. Therefore, it is even more important to analyze and understand the current situation to reach the consumers after these unsafe years in an efficient and appropriate way. After two years determined by Covid-19 and other topics like wars and demonstrations, it is no surprise that consumers are more sensitive than before regarding topics like sustainability and climate change. Within a forecast for the year 2022 the market research institute “Growth from Knowledge” (GfK) came to the result, that sustainability is again one of the top trends in consumer behavior for the upcoming year (GfK, 2022). Besides that, according to the institute, environmental pollution and climate changes are particularly relevant for people in Germany. Especially for Millennials, companies must behave in a socially responsible way (GfK, 2022). Another finding the GfK analysis revealed is, that sustainability is also a major trend for fast moving consumer goods such as food and drinks. It is recommended to be sensitive to these trends, when addressing consumers, as appropriate communication with the target group is essential for the success of a company. Not new but always present as a megatrend is globalization, which makes it possible for consumers to get access to markets and products from all around the world. In addition, people get to know the culture, the people, and many other aspects of different countries. Especially years like 2020 and 2021 have an influence on globalization and reveal or strengthen a new or already existing dimension of such megatrends, such as the glocalization for example (Zukunftsinstitut, 2023). Of course, the above-mentioned trend like sustainability but also megatrends like the globalization have an impact on how people see companies, countries, and products and in the end influence their behavior.

This short insight into current and future developments and trends concerning the market as well as the people, highlights how crucial it is to understand consumer behavior as it can be seen as the

key for every company's success. It is of high importance for marketers to realize how this behavior can be influenced and how certain factors impact the final purchase decision. By gaining a deeper understanding, they can reach the consumers in an effective way, achieve competitive advantage, and consequently operate successfully in an international setting with numerous other businesses that also try to attract consumers.

One of the most relevant aspects is how consumers "see" a company, as a negative perception of a brand can lead to willingness to punish through customers, which can then result in negative effects for the brand equity or the cash flow of the company (Sweetin et al., 2013). In contrast to that, consumers' willingness-to-pay (WTP) for a product can have a very positive effect for the company. To make use of this positive impact, a company needs to have comprehensive knowledge about WTP. Several studies have shown that small adaptations within the pricing strategy can lead to different purchasing behavior of the consumers, which in the end result in better profits and improved performance (Marn et al., 2003). Therefore, it is of high importance to understand the predictors, sources and reasons that influence the consumers' WTP and thus the consumer behavior.

The research is also aware of the relevance of the whole topic, which is the reason for numerous studies about consumer behavior as well as the influence of different factors on WTP. Some articles discuss the WTP for different product categories such as food and others the role of country perception or brand image on WTP (Guo et al., 2018; Li & Kallas, 2021; Siew et al., 2018). Despite that, there are also many studies about the influence of some constructs on the purchasing behavior that have a high relevance and importance for the marketing environment as well as the international marketing, such as consumer affinity and corporate social (ir-)responsibility.

As already mentioned earlier in the introduction, megatrends like globalization or sustainability affect the business environment of companies as well as the behavior of people and therefore consumer behavior worldwide. A globalized world means that consumers have access to a broad range of products, originated from different countries from all around the world. It is well known that different countries have specific images and various reputations. On top of that, some countries are famous for a specific product category, like Germany, for example, for the manufacture of cars. The area of marketing has explored some constructs that provide an understanding for the underlying structures of these phenomena and associations. These include the country image, the country of origin (COO) and consumer affinity.

Consumer affinity can be seen as the consumer's attitude towards a specific country, which can affect purchase intention as well as decision-making in a positive way (Oberecker et al., 2008). In addition, crisis like the recent Covid-19 crisis can lead to changes in the consumer behavior, which then result for example in a preference for local products and a certain resistance to global products (Cambefort, 2020).

Besides that, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a construct that is widely discussed and investigated in the literature. Not just because of topics like climate change and sustainability but also because of a generation of young people who want companies to behave in an ethical way on several relevant topics and of course be consistent in what they are doing and saying. If companies are involved in scandals or do not perform very well regarding ethical standards, consumers refuse to buy their products (Francis & Hoefel, 2018), which shows that in addition to CSR, Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSI) is another concept that plays an important role for specific consumer actions. Several studies have investigated a relationship between CSR as well as CSI and consumer behavior (Antonetti, 2020; De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012; Vitell, 2003).

Therefore, it is of high interest to investigate the interplay between consumer affinity and CSI as both influence the consumer behavior in a specific way and in the end consumers' WTP. To gain a deep knowledge about WTP, it is important to understand the interaction between CSI and consumer affinity, as research has shown that CSI has a negative impact on consumer behavior (Creyer, 1997; Ferreira & Ribeiro, 2017; Sweetin et al., 2013b), whereas consumer affinity positively affects the consumers' decision making (Bernard & Zarrouk-Karoui, 2014; Guo et al., 2018; Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011). By analyzing the interplay between the two constructs, marketers get a better understanding of how to deal with the COO of a product as well as irresponsible actions of the company and the influence CSI and consumer affinity have on the WTP for a product.

1.2 Research gap

As this short introduction of the background has shown, the topic is of high relevance. Therefore, this master's thesis positions itself at the intersection of the above-mentioned areas of research in international marketing, which are consumer affinity, CSI and WTP. It is intended to close the research gaps discussed below.

When investigating attitudes towards foreign countries, researchers often concentrate on the negative feelings, which means animosity within their studies (Oberecker et al., 2008). Affinity was often not taken into consideration and overlooked, although consumer affinity is an important concept to predict consumer behavior (Papadopoulos, 2017; Terasaki et al., 2021). In addition it is of high importance as “a potential tool for policy makers and marketing managers to overcome negative consumer attitudes toward a specific COO and reposition the country image/brand” (Asseraf & Shoham, 2017, p. 376). Therefore, it is important to focus on consumer affinity at this point in research.

The introduction with its short explanation regarding CSI, has shown that both concepts, CSR and CSI are very important in an (international) marketing environment. However, CSR is a common and frequently studied phenomenon, social irresponsibility on the other hand has not been discussed that much within the literature (Lange & Washburn, 2012). Many studies dealt with the topic of CSR, and already provided evidence for its influence on WTP, purchase intentions (Creyer, 1997; Ferreira & Ribeiro, 2017), but also perceived quality (Folkes & Kamins, 1999), whereas CSI is not researched sufficiently in the current state of affairs and thus receives too little attention (Lin-Hi & Müller, 2013). Despite that, already existing studies often focus on the environmental aspect of CSR (Ha-Brookshire & Norum, 2011; Magnusson et al., 2015). Due to these reasons, the author decided to explore CSI rather than CSR and focus on the social aspect of the construct.

Although research has shown that CSI as well as consumer affinity has an impact on consumer behavior, it lacks in investigating the interplay between both constructs. Therefore, this study addresses the relationship between CSI and consumer affinity and more precisely its impact on WTP. In previous studies, the dependent variable of interest has often been another area of consumer behavior than WTP, such as purchase intention, willingness to punish and willingness to buy (Ferreira & Ribeiro, 2017; Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011; Sweetin et al., 2013). Especially for marketing managers it is of high importance to understand consumer behavior that is closer to the actual behavior of consumers, like WTP, compared to attitudes or purchase intentions.

Within their study Diamantopoulos et. al (2021) have discovered some areas for further research. The authors stated that it would be of high interest to investigate how different product categories from different countries of origin translate into the pricing footprint. Additionally, they concluded that you should distinguish between luxury and mass-market to gain deeper insights into the whole topic (Diamantopoulos et al., 2021). Furthermore, within their study about consumer affinity and

its effect on behavioral intentions such as perceived risk and willingness to buy, Oberecker and Diamantopoulos (2011) came to the finding that it is necessary to investigate additional dependent variables such as willingness to pay in future research in order to obtain contributions for strategy definition in the marketing environment.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The overall aim of this thesis is to deliver several theoretical and managerial contributions. From a theoretical perspective, the thesis enriches the already existing literature about consumer affinity, WTP and CSI, by providing new insights into the relationship between the constructs. Through the inclusion of CSI as a moderator of the interplay between consumer affinity and WTP, new findings about how and to which extent irresponsible behavior impacts the effect of consumer affinity on WTP. Especially, the distinction between high and lower affinity and the investigation if the moderating effect of CSI is stronger for one of the cases, offers an extensive understanding about the interaction between both constructs and its effect on WTP.

From a managerial point of view, companies can also draw important conclusions from the results of the study with regard to their strategy in communication or pricing. First of all, additional insights into the impact of consumer affinity on WTP, can help marketers to reach ethnocentric consumers by focusing on the positive feelings towards the COO within their communication (Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011). As it became already visible through the explanation of the research gap, consumer affinity is not as extensively studied as consumer animosity, even though it is at least equally important if not even more important for marketers. From a managerial perspective, identifying the barriers that prevent consumers from buying foreign products, is at least as crucial as understanding what feelings and emotions lead to consumers buying it (Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011). Furthermore, the study can reveal information about price discounts that may have to be employed by a company. Insights can be deduced, if even though the COO is a country with higher consumer affinity, price discounts are nevertheless necessary to counteract the engagement in irresponsible business practices. Additionally, it can be derived from the results if the moderating role of CSI harms the WTP more in case of a high affinity country or a lower affinity country. Finally, can help managers to decide if it is beneficial for a brand to build on the positive feelings towards a country.

1.4 Research objectives and question

Due to the above-mentioned points about the research gaps and the purpose of the study the overall aim of the thesis becomes clear. Therefore, the following research question has to be answered to reach the research objectives:

How does consumer affinity impact consumers' willingness-to-pay and how does corporate social irresponsibility moderate this relationship?

From this research question it can be deduced that the focus of the study is on the relationship between higher and a lower consumer affinity and consumers' WTP, taking into consideration whether a company follows socially irresponsible business practices or not.

1.5 Structure of the work

This master's thesis is divided into 7 chapters. Chapter 1 provides some background information as well as the research gap and question and an outline of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical component of the whole work by explaining the concepts willingness to pay (WTP), consumer affinity and corporate social irresponsibility (CSI).

The third big part of the thesis is about the conceptual framework and the development of the hypotheses, considering the Social Identity Theory and the Emotional Attachment Theory as well as the Attribution Theory.

Chapter 4 builds the empirical part of the work. It deals with the methodological approach, variables and measures and the procedure for the pretest and the main questionnaire in detail.

The fifth chapter provides the results of the empirical part, which are developed through a descriptive analysis and hypotheses testing.

Chapter 6 consists of the discussion of the findings from the study.

The thesis ends with a short summary and conclusion, addressing contribution and limitations of the work as well as an outlook.

2. Theoretical background

The literature review provides insights into the origin, evolution, and current state of consumers' WTP, consumer affinity and CSI. In addition, it describes the relationship between the constructs and the interplay with other constructs as far as it has already been discussed in the literature.

2.1 Consumers' willingness to pay

As already mentioned in the introduction, consumers' WTP is of high relevance for marketing as well as managers and their decision making. It is an important aspect of consumer behavior, which requires a comprehensive understanding to reach the consumer in an efficient way. First of all, it is crucial to understand the price and therefore the individual WTP of the consumer, to establish an appropriate pricing strategies (Völckner, 2008). Next, it is important to research actual behavior rather than attitudes or purchase intentions. Examining WTP allows a stricter test of the effects under investigation, by avoiding biases between intention and actual purchase behavior (Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos, et al., 2012). In addition to that, using WTP as a dependent variable increases the respondents' awareness of the actual cost of purchasing the product, making them more careful and considerate when reporting their pricing footprint (Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos, et al., 2012). Therefore, one of the most important aspects of the investigation of WTP is the monetization of researched effects (Nebenzahl & Jaffe, 1993) as the amount of money people are willing to pay for products under certain conditions is revealed. Hence, it becomes clear why information about the WTP is essential for marketers, as the price is a key tool within the marketing-mix with a powerful impact on sales and profits of a company (Han et al., 2001).

There are many ways to define consumers' willingness to pay. One that is very commonly used is that the construct can be seen as "the maximum amount of money a customer is willing to spend for a product or service" (Homburg et al., 2005, p. 85). The reservation price, as the willingness to pay is also called, is "the price at which the consumer is indifferent between buying and not buying the product" (Jedidi & Zhang, 2002). In a consumer value assessment study in 1992, the authors have emphasized that consumers' WTP is one of the key pillars to develop a marketing strategy as well as a main element for decision making in the marketing area (Anderson et al., 1992). Additionally, a pricing strategy is a very complex process with different factors that need

to be taken into consideration. Established knowledge about the WTP can help the management to fix the right price for a product (Ingenbleek et al., 2013).

For a profound understanding of the concept, it is necessary to make the WTP accurately measurable. Despite several definitions for the construct, there are also various methods to measure the WTP of consumers, such as the contingent valuation, the conjoint analysis, the auction mechanism and the Becker-DeGroot-Marschak (BDM) approach (Becker et al., 1964; Tully & Winer, 2014). These methods can be classified in various ways. Schmidt and Bijmolt developed a table within their study, where the different measurements are grouped according to the type and the context. The two categories for the type are direct and indirect and the differentiation regarding the context is hypothetical and real. A hypothetical context means, that the respondents will be asked what they would pay for the product, but they do not actually have to pay the money, whereas in the real context the respondents are asked to make a real payment. The discrepancy between these two WTPs is a “hypothetical bias” (Schmidt & Bijmolt, 2020). Regarding the type of measurement, the difference between direct and indirect forms lies within the way how respondents are asked for their WTP. The direct type uses open questions, whereas the indirect section asks closed ended questions (Völckner, 2006).

A commonly used indirect pricing technique is the Gabor-Granger method (Völckner, 2006). Within this method, researcher develop a list of prices to then introduce the product to the participants with a preselected but randomly price from the previously created set. The respondents are then asked if they are willing to purchase this exact product for the given price. If yes, the price for the product will be higher in the next round, if no, the randomly chosen price from the set will be lower and the person will be asked again. This procedure is repeated until the highest price a respondent is willing to pay have been found (Lipovetsky et al., 2011). A further developed direct measurement, that also takes into consideration other methods like the Gabor-Granger method is the Price Sensitivity Meter (PSM) developed by Van Westendorp (1976), which helps to determine a price the consumers is willing to pay, that represents the perceived quality of the product (Lipovetsky et al., 2011). The theory consists of different assumptions such as, that there are prices for products that are consumers willing to pay, which lie within a minimum and maximum level, and the amount of money can be seen as equal to the value of the product the consumer has intrinsically assigned (Arru et al., 2022). The PSM approach uses four different price levels to measure the price for which the consumers perceive the product to be “too cheap” as is it so cheap that the person has doubts about the quality or a price level at which the product is “cheap”, but the

consumer would still buy it as there are no doubts regarding the quality. The other two categories are “expensive”, but the consumer is willing to pay the price because of the quality and “too expensive” to consider buying it, regardless of the quality of the product (Arru et al., 2022; Van Westendorp, 1976). The combination of all four answers leads to the so called pricing footprint, which is “a set of prices that a particular consumer associates with distinct inferences regarding a focal product” (Diamantopoulos et al., 2021, p. 750). Thus, the pricing footprint can be assessed empirically by van Westendorp's PSM.

Van Westendorp's method is a well-established and widely spread technique to analyze consumers' price perception that is also used in other studies (Ceylana et al., 2014; Chhabra, 2015; Diamantopoulos et al., 2021; Roll et al., 2010; Steiner & Hendus, 2012). The frequent use of the approach can also be explained by the fact that it produces valid results at a reasonable price (Müller, 2009; Reinecke et al., 2009). Besides that, it is a useful way to establish a price for new product, and it delivers a range of acceptable prices as well as its upper and lower limits, and not just one single point on the price scale like other techniques (Arru et al., 2022; Lipovetsky et al., 2011). These are the reasons for the choice of PSM as the method to measure willingness to pay within this thesis.

2.2 Consumer affinity

This chapter provides a short but general idea about the history of consumer affinity and focuses on the role of the concept for marketing and psychology as these are the most relevant areas for this thesis.

2.2.1 Development and definition of consumer affinity

From a marketing perspective, the origin of the concept goes back to 1980s, when for the first time, affinity was associated with terms like marketing and culture. The reason for the multidisciplinary of the whole topic is based on the various fields that contributed to the origin of affinity such as psychology, economy and management (Serrano-Arcos et al., 2022b). Its theoretical roots can be traced back to the Social Identity Theory, developed by the psychologist Henri Tajfel in 1982. The main principle of the theory states that there are in- and out-groups, as people do not only have their personal self but also so-called social selves, making them identify themselves as

part of a group, which determines their feeling, thinking and acting (Tajfel, 1982). Based on this theory, the reason for affinity towards a specific country is the consideration of a country as an in-group as it seems attractive for a person and therefore can help to develop the own social identity (Nes et al., 2014).

Serrano-Arcos et al. identified the most important marketing areas in which most of the studies regarding affinity took place. These are marketing management, consumer behavior, relationship marketing and international marketing (Serrano-Arcos et al., 2022b). Defining the concept in an international marketing context, it can be seen as an emotion that influences if a person sees a country as an in-group because of specific experiences and therefore likes it and has positive feelings towards it (Oberecker et al., 2008; Serrano-Arcos et al., 2022a). These feelings have an impact on the decisions consumers make towards the purchase of products from this country (Oberecker et al., 2008). In addition to that, Oberecker et. al identified two affinity dimensions, which are “sympathy” and “attachment”, whereas sympathy includes lower positive emotions and attachment represents the influence of the higher positive emotions. The authors used this classification to develop a scale consisting of 7 items to measure affinity (Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011).

A comprehensive systematic review of the construct in 2022, has also revealed relevant characteristics of consumer affinity as well as the interplay between the concept and other variables such as perceived risk, willingness to buy or WTP (Serrano-Arcos et al., 2022b). According to Serrano et al. (2022), affinity is subjective, interactive, an attitude and can have an idiosyncratic or a normative reason. In addition, the basic for the feeling can be traced back to direct or indirect experiences and the emotions are relatively stable but revocable (Serrano-Arcos et al., 2022b). These can be seen as the most important characteristics for this work.

A construct that is very similar to affinity and therefore must be clearly distinguished from the concept is animosity. The origin of animosity in the marketing area goes back to 1998, when a study investigated the negative impact animosity has on the buying decision for a better understanding of the consumer and their purchasing decisions in an international environment (Klein et al., 1998). Within their literature review, Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) defined animosity as a feeling of hostility for a country and therefore towards a product and its country of origin. In addition, they came to the conclusions, that there are different reasons for negative emotions for a country such as the economy, the politics, or the religion. Furthermore, also personal causes can lead to animosity (Riefler & Diamantopoulos, 2007). Another important aspect for defining the concept and differentiate it from affinity is that they cannot be seen as two ends of the one

continuum (Oberecker et al., 2008). This short definition has shown that animosity and affinity are related to a certain extent, but they also must be viewed as distinct concepts. Both constructs have an important impact on the marketing in an international marketplace.

Another aspect which should be mentioned and explained in the context of consumer affinity is the country of origin (COO), as it plays an important role for understanding consumer affinity. The COO can be defined as “the country which a consumer associates a certain product or brand as being its source, regardless of where the product is actually produced” (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2006, p. 29). Besides that, it has an impact on the way how consumers see a brand or product, which then in turn influences how they behave (Melnik et al., 2012). The base to measure the COO, is the so-called country image construct, which says that people form an overall picture of a certain country based on their beliefs or perceptions, production-wise or marketing-wise, whereas this opinion is based on information but also on inferences (Diamantopoulos et al., 2021; Oberecker et al., 2008). Within the country image construct, the consumers’ beliefs refer to characteristics, which are specifically related to a product (Nebenzahl et al., 2003). This results in an important distinction between COO/country image and consumer affinity, since, as already explained above, the latter construct is about emotions and feelings towards a country in general and not product related. However, previous studies have shown that COO has an impact on WTP, in terms of the fact that a better image of a country induces consumers to pay a premium price for products from that country (Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos, et al., 2012). Therefore, this short explanation is very important for the thesis, as it provides an idea about a possible outcome of the study, and a clear distinction between two similar constructs.

An additional phenomenon, which can be briefly addressed in the context of the definition of consumer affinity is xenophilia, which was defined in 1954 by Howard V. Perlmutter as the identification with foreign objects, institutions, or stranger humans over the domestic ones (Perlmutter, 1954, 1956). In the case of xenophilia, the identification is so strong, that it can also be described as love and can even lead to the aversion of the own group. The basis for this concept lies within in- and out-groups, similar to consumer affinity (Perlmutter, 1954, 1956). Nevertheless, consumer affinity and xenophilia must be clearly distinguished from each other, as xenophilia can be seen as the much stronger construct, since both concepts represent positive feelings towards foreign countries, but in the context of consumer affinity it does not lead to dislike of one's own country.

2.2.2 Impact of consumer affinity on consumer behavior

The most important field for the underlying thesis is consumer behavior. The phrase “consumer affinity” has been developed in 2006 as positive feelings of consumers toward a country, which have impacts on the consumer behavior as these emotions influence purchase intentions and buying behavior (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2006). Regarding the role of consumer affinity for marketing, studies from 2008 and 2017 concluded that affinity has major managerial implication as the concept plays an important role for the management to tackle ethnocentric attitudes of the consumers (Oberecker et al., 2008) and therefore, it can also lead to growing sales if appropriately implemented into the communication and positioning of a company (Riefler, 2017).

A study in 2008 found that consumer affinity has an impact on consumer behavior and people tend to buy products from their affinity countries (Oberecker et al., 2008). As willingness to pay is one aspect of consumer behavior these results help to develop an idea about the relationship between the constructs.

The above-mentioned study was further developed by Oberecker and Diamantopoulos in 2011. Within this additional work, they came to the result that consumer affinity has an additional impact on perceived risk and willingness to buy (Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011).

Ferreira and Ribeiro discovered in 2017 that COO influences the relationship between CSR/CSIR and willingness to pay as a moderator (Ferreira & Ribeiro, 2017). A study from 2012 came to a similar result as it also showed that COO positively influences consumers’ willingness to pay (Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos, et al., 2012).

Bernard and Zarrouk-Karoui joined the research field with a paper in 2014. Through their work they came to the result that consumer affinity affects willingness to pay as well as willingness to buy products from a foreign country in a positive way (Bernard & Zarrouk-Karoui, 2014).

In addition to that, another work from 2018 showed that consumer affinity has a positive impact on product trust and therefore increases the intention to buy a product from an affinity country (Guo et al., 2018).

2.3 Corporate Social Irresponsibility

Corporate social responsibility is a widespread and frequently studied concept. Therefore, this section provides a short introduction of the origin and development of the topic and most importantly how corporate social irresponsibility can be classified compared to it, to subsequently describe the construct in detail afterwards.

2.3.1 Development and definition of CSR and CSI

The origin of CSR can be found back in 1953, when Bowen introduced social responsibilities as the execution of actions in the business environment in such a way that they follow the values, which are set by the society (Bowen, 2013). Over the past decades the understanding of CSR has changed. Bowen's article concentrated on the behavior from individual „businessmen“, whereas the definition of CSR is far more comprehensive nowadays, as it covers the practices of the entire corporation (Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013). In 1979 the concept was further developed by Carroll, who extended Bowen's perspective from the managers' decision to the responsibilities a company has as a whole (Carroll, 1979). In addition, he identified different areas in which social responsibilities are important. These are legal and economic responsibilities as well as ethical and philanthropic ones (Carroll, 1979). In the 1990s the definition of CSR became a more holistic one as the social and the ethical responsibilities as well as the environment became part of the concept (Schlegelmilch, 1994). The high relevance of the concept is also based on the influence on the financial performance of the company, as CSR can increase the success of a company and also has an positive impact on the areas of human resource and marketing (Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013). In the 21st century, many different definition were made to describe the concept (Dahlsrud, 2008). The Commission of the European communities states that CSR can be seen as a foundation for business activities, which can be implemented voluntarily by companies to make sure to incorporate social and environmental interests into their business operations as well as into their interaction with different stakeholders (European Comission & Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2001). This definition also illustrates the importance of the three pillars on which the concept is based: the economic, the social and the environmental pillar (Gomes Silva et al., 2022), through which the company not only has an economic responsibility but also a social and an environmental. In 2011 the European Commission renewed the definition of CSR as “the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society” (European Comission, 2011, p. 6)

to further promote the development and establishment of the policy. By including social, environmental, ethical concerns and human rights as well the consumers and the stakeholders into their overall strategy, enterprises will be able to meet the updated understanding of corporate social responsibility (European Commission, 2011).

In 2009, Turker established a classification into four categories, which are affected by CSR. These are employees, customers, the government and social and non-social stakeholders, the latter being the environmental and societal responsibility (Turker, 2009). Within the scope of the thesis, these two explanations include the most important aspects, according to the author, and provide, together with the points mentioned above, sufficient knowledge of the concept.

According to Lin-Hi and Müller (2013), additionally to the fact that the society expects companies to give something back and do good, a corporation also needs to prevent doing bad things such as the pollution of the environment, failure to respect human rights with respect to their employees and a bad way of dealing with the customers. These actions can be classified under the Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSI) (Lin-Hi & Müller, 2013).

Whereas CSR has been studied a lot over the last years, CSI is just receiving greater attention. As the opposite of CSR it refers to actions of a company, which are not in line with environmental or social requirements (Lange & Washburn, 2012).

CSI was first introduced in an article in 1977, where it was presented as “A socially irresponsible act is a decision to accept an alternative that *is thought by the decision maker to be inferior to another alternative when the effects upon all parties are considered. Generally this involves a gain by one party at the expense of the total system*” (Armstrong, 1977). Since then, the concept has been subject of investigation in many studies. It comprises all practices that can lead to damage or disadvantages for other parties that are associated with the company. These actions can break the law, however they do not necessarily have to (Lin-Hi & Müller, 2013). A paper from 2009 re-examined some former frameworks and defined CSI thereby, among other things, as the pollution of the environment, exploitation of employees and suppliers, rare involvement of the community, insufficient incorporation of CSR and operations being only about profit and not about sustainability (Jones et al., 2009). For a better understanding of CSI, it is useful to divide it into two types - the intentional one and the unintentional one (Lin-Hi & Müller, 2013). Intentional irresponsible actions are means that the company wants to harm other parties to make more profit at the expense of them. Whereas the unintentional form indicates that the harm for others is not deliberated

intended to increase the profit, for example. External drivers can cause unintentional CSI as well but the company is never fully innocent (Lin-Hi & Müller, 2013). It is also possible to divide CSI into punitive and nonpunitive models depending on the response of the consumer to irresponsible actions (Valor et al., 2022). Within the punitive model the consumers punish the brand for their CSI because they are angry, disgusted and outraged (Antonetti, 2020). If the consumer decide for a nonpunitive behavior the reason therefore might be that they forgive the brand, or that they choose to decouple or disengage in a morally way (Valor et al., 2022).

When talking about the origin and development of CSI, it is essential to take into consideration the subdivision of CSR into proactive or reactive strategies, depending on how a firm pursues its CSR initiatives (Groza et al., 2011). Within a proactive approach, the company conducts CSR initiatives and support the whole concept, before it has been accused of something or negative headlines about the brand's behavior have spread (Du et al., 2007). Consumers react to this type of strategy by having more positive feelings towards the brand, which then impact the consumer behavior such as purchasing intentions, as they see a proactive way as altruistic acting of the company (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006). A reactive approach, on the other hand, implies that the company engages in CSR after a scandal or other negative information about a brand became public knowledge in order to limit damage or to improve a negative image as a result of the events (Wagner et al., 2009). It can be seen as a reaction to some irresponsible activities, which influences the consumer in a negative way (Ricks, 2005). This distinction between the different strategies has shown how CSI is linked to corporate social responsibility and how the concept emerges from the definition of CSR.

2.3.2 Influence of CSR and CSI on consumer behavior

The high importance of CSI and CSR nowadays can be traced back to the negative and positive consequences these actions can have for companies. Therefore, previous research has investigated extensively the impact of CSR and CSI on the company. Magnusson et. al (2015) outlined that there is a lot of evidence proving the positive effect of CSR on consumers and therefore the brand in general. These include, for example an increase in loyalty, trust and consumer-company identification (Homburg et al., 2013) as well as a will to reward companies for CSR (Sweetin et al., 2013). Despite that, CSR positively influences the WTP and purchase intention (Ferreira & Ribeiro, 2017) as people are willing to pay higher prices for ethical products and ethical behavior of

a company will be taken into account during the purchase decision (Creyer, 1997). Furthermore, CSR has a positive impact on the brand value and it can become a competitive advantage for the firm (Marquina & Morales, 2012).

In contrast to this, CSI can result in negative effects for the company, such as poor reputation due to bad publicity (Magnusson et al., 2015). Several studies have investigated the individual response towards CSI, as irresponsible actions have a negative impact on the WTP as well as the purchase intention (Ferreira & Ribeiro, 2017) and it can also lead to an increased willingness-to-punish the firm (Sweetin et al., 2013). In case a consumer decides to buy from a company with unethical behavior, they want to get its products for lower prices compared to an ethical firm (Creyer, 1997). Previous research has also investigated negative CSR in more complex relationships, where its effect on WTP or attitudes towards a brand was moderated by other variables such as COO or country image (Ferreira & Ribeiro, 2017; Magnusson et al., 2015).

3. Research design

Within this chapter, the conceptual model is introduced and described, and the hypothesis used for this thesis are developed and presented. It helps to better understand the research question, the aim of the thesis as well as the empirical part.

3.1 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework was developed by reviewing the most relevant literature as well as the elaboration of the research gap based on it. It is presented in figure 1:

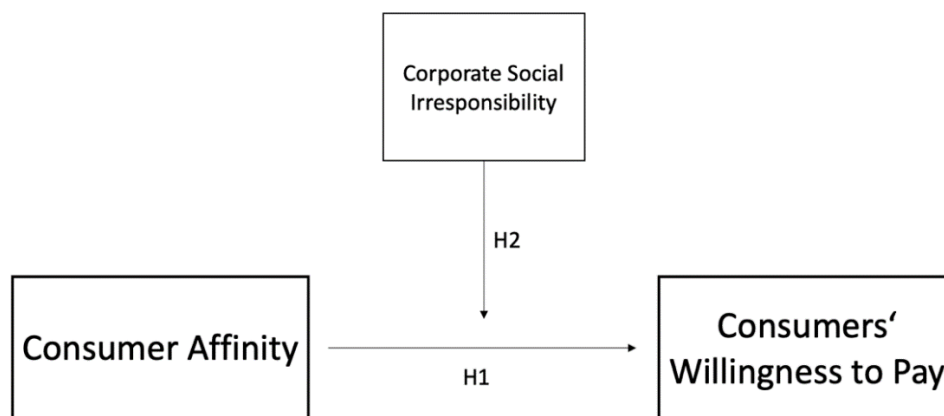


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

The model above sets the basis for the thesis and especially the empirical part. Within the investigation, the effect of consumer affinity on WTP will be tested, taking into consideration that CSI of the brand has a moderating role within the relationship. Within the conceptual framework it becomes visible, that consumer affinity is the independent variable (IV), consumers' WTP the dependent variable (DV) and CSI the moderator of the relationship between DV and IV.

The next chapter deals with the corresponding hypotheses that will be tested to investigate the relationship between the different variables in order to answer the research question. It will also explain theories and arguments from the literature review, to adequately provide justification for the development of the hypotheses.

3.2 Hypotheses

The development of the hypotheses is a key part of this work, as it is the theoretical basis for the empirical part and to gain a better understanding for the data collection, analysis, and interpretation in a later step. Besides that, it helps to completely understand the relationship between the constructs under investigation. For the establishment of the theories, the author makes use of the social identity theory developed by Tajfel (1982) and the emotional attachment theory established by Bowlby (1979), to describe and understand the theoretical anchors of consumer affinity. In a further step, attribution theory by Hamilton (1980) is briefly discussed on order to create a fundamental understanding for the hypothesis, which will be tested to investigate the role of CSI in the overall model.

3.2.1 Social identity theory and emotional attachment theory

From a theoretical perspective, the roots for consumer affinity can be traced back to Tajfel's social identity theory (1982), which deals with so-called in-groups and out-groups. As already mentioned within the literature review, according to this theory people do not only have a personal self but also a social self that is formed by specific in-groups, which people see themselves as part of influencing their way to feel, think and act and therefore their behavior (Tajfel, 1982). Discovered by Oberecker and Diamantopoulos (2011), it can also happen, that a former out-group transforms into a person's in-group due to specific positive experiences one makes with a country, in the specific case of consumer affinity. These experiences are, for example, traveling, and contact to the people from other countries, but also the lifestyle or culture of a foreign country (Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011). If the theory is now linked to consumer affinity, the reasons for positive feelings towards a specific country, is based on the fact, that this particular country can be seen as part of the in-group, which then in turn has an influence on the social identity.

Another theory, that needs to be mentioned in the context of consumer affinity is Bowlby's emotional attachment theory (1979), which describes attachment as an emotional bond that occurs between people but also between a person and objects, such as brands or countries. This emotional connection influences the interaction between a person and the object (Bowlby, 1979). Applying this to the consumer affinity construct, it becomes clear, that the consumer has an emotional attachment to a specific foreign country, which then has an impact on how the person interacts with the country and consequently influences the behavior. The just described theory was developed

within the field of psychology, just like the social identity theory, but can be easily transferred to the area of marketing and is therefore essential for the development of the hypotheses within this thesis.

As already mentioned in earlier chapters, these theories are supported by previous empirical research. Consumer affinity has been linked to willingness to buy and willingness to pay, meaning it influences both concepts in a positive way (Bernard & Zarrouk-Karoui, 2014; Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011). Furthermore consumer affinity positively influences product trust and therefore has a positive impact on the intention to buy (Guo et al., 2018). In addition the construct has been linked to buying intentions, meaning that consumers perceive a certain country as well as the products from the country as attractive and therefore the demand for these products is higher (Nes et al., 2014).

Taking into consideration the theories explained above, together with findings from previous research it is expected that consumer affinity has a positive impact on willingness to pay. Therefore, the first hypothesis is the following:

H1: <i>Consumer affinity has a positive effect on consumers' willingness to pay.</i>

To answer the research question comprehensively and sufficiently, it is in addition necessary, to understand the theoretical foundation of CSI, which will be briefly explained in the next paragraph.

3.2.2 Attribution theory

Based on the attribution theory by Hamilton (1980), Lange and Washburn (2012) identified three main aspects to understand attributions of corporate social irresponsibility, which are affected party non-complicity, corporate culpability, and effect undesirability. These are based on morals, self-preservation and as well as the judgment and inferences (Lange & Washburn, 2012). Transferring this know-how to the conceptual model, it becomes clear that consumers judge companies for social irresponsible behavior. Looking back at the literature review, this effect has already been investigated through former research. CSI has been linked to the willingness to punish a brand,

whereby a positive relationship has been discovered, meaning irresponsible behavior leads to an increased willingness to punish (Sweetin et al., 2013). Furthermore, there is an existing negative effect of CSI on a company's reputation (Magnusson et al., 2015). Additionally, previous research has shown that CSI is negatively linked to willingness to pay and purchase intention (Ferreira & Ribeiro, 2017). Therefore, the author came to the result that CSI will probably negatively moderate the relationship between consumer affinity and WTP. Therefore, the following hypothesis will be tested within the master's thesis to analyze the role of CSI:

H2: *Corporate social irresponsibility negatively moderates the relationship between consumer affinity and willingness to pay.*

After the main hypotheses have been identified, the next chapter explains the empirical part, including the methodology and the data collection.

4. Methodology

The fourth chapter initiates the empirical part of the master's thesis. It introduces the research design, the variables, the pre-tests that have been conducted as well as the stimuli, the main questionnaire, and the data collection.

4.1 Research design

The empirical study was executed through a 2 (Affinity: high and lower) x 2 (Activity: No CSI and CSI) factorial design (see Figure 2). This design was necessary to test the interaction between consumer affinity and CSI and its combined effect on WTP as the dependent variable.

	No Activity	CSI
High Affinity COO	High Affinity COO + no CSI (Experimental group 1)	High affinity COO + CSI (Experimental group 3)
Lower Affinity COO	Lower affinity COO + no CSI (Experimental group 2)	Lower affinity COO + CSI (Experimental group 4)

Figure 2: Experimental set-up

Therefore, the study was divided into four experimental groups. The countries differed in terms of their consumer affinity. In addition to that, the included behavior varied, meaning there was no specific activity visible in the one case and social irresponsible actions were introduced in the other case. To introduce different levels of affinity within the study, a fictitious toothpaste brand was presented. Its COO was a country with high affinity on the one hand and lower affinity on the other hand. For one group, the behavior was manipulated through a short description of social irresponsible activities regarding the working conditions of the brand. The other group did not receive any information about specific actions of the company in terms of how they treat their

employees. All people who participated in the study were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental groups as a between-subject design was employed.

4.1.1 Country of research

The author decided for Germany as a country of research, as it is one of the largest economies of the world, with a nominal GDP of 3,3 trillion euros in 2020 (O'Neill, 2021). It can be seen as one of the largest powers, as the country ranked the third place in total exports as well as imports worldwide in 2021 (OEC, n. d.). In the same year Germany reached exports with a value of 1.632 billion U.S. dollars and imports in the amount of 1.420 billion U.S dollars (WTO, 2023a; WTO, 2023b). This generated a trade surplus of approximately 211 billion U.S dollars, which ranks Germany at the 2nd place among the 20 countries with the highest trade surplus in 2021 (WTO, 2023c). The fact that Germany is so highly positioned in terms of trade, increases the likelihood that residents have been exposed to COOs other than Germany when purchasing products.

In addition to that, in 2022, Germany was in the 6th place, according to a statistic that ranks the top 50 countries based on their KOF Index (KOF, 2022). This index evaluates countries in terms of their globalization, based on political, social, and economic aspects, whereby the flow of information, capital and goods is included in its perception of globalization (Statista Research Department, 2023).

The country's unemployment rate is one of the lowest of the EU. In February 2023, only 2,9% of the 15- to 74-years old were unemployed, compared to a rate of 6% for the whole EU (Destatis, 2023). On top of that, a GfK study revealed an increased purchasing power in 2023, which means a net disposable income of 26.271 € per capita (GfK, 2022).

In terms of digitalization Germany is slightly above the average of the EU. It was in the 13th place of the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) in 2022. This index includes factors such as human capital, connectivity, integration of digital technology and digital public services (European Commission, 2022). The aspect of digitalization is relevant because an online survey was conducted for the study. To perform this survey, the residents of Germany need to have a certain level of digital skills. The given nature of this ability can be proven by the ranking mentioned above.

From a geographic perspective, Germany is located in the center of Europe which means that it has many bordering countries such as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Switzerland, Sweden,

or the Netherlands. This fact increases the probability that people from Germany has been exposed to the people, as well as the culture of other countries.

Germany is integrated into the world economy with a stable economy and therefore was chosen as the research setting, for a study in an international business environment.

4.1.2 Product category

The choice of the product for the study was toothpaste for various reasons. First, toothpaste is a Fast-Moving-Consumer-Good (FMCG), which is used by many people regardless of their age and gender, normally on a daily basis. This means, the likelihood that the respondents, who got confronted with the study, know, and use the product is much higher compared to luxury goods or products that require a very high level of involvement or a long decision-making process. A statistic from 2022 shows, that oral and dental care, which includes toothpaste, is the most used personal care product category by consumers in Germany (Statista, 2023).

Despite that, consumers in Germany have access to toothpaste brands from different COOs, such as Italy, Switzerland, the U.S., Austria, or Sweden, which is why the product is a good choice as a research setting. Further, the subject of CSR has already been relevant for a long time in the FMCG sector and has also arrived in the area of personal care and oral care products. CSR has an impact on the image of oral care brands and is present in their strategies as a case study about Colgate has shown (Siripipatthanakul & Sixl-Daniell, 2021). The brand also publishes an annual “sustainability and social impact report” (Colgate-Palmolive Company, 2021), which additionally demonstrates that CSR has arrived in the oral care sector. Therefore, the author thinks that CSI might also play a role for the product category and decided to use toothpaste for the study.

4.2 Variables and measures

Within this chapter all relevant variables that were used for the study are presented in combination with the scales to measure them.

4.2.1 Dependent variable

As the dependent variable, the author uses consumers' WTP. It was already defined in the introduction as "the maximum amount of money a customer is willing to spend for a product or service" (Homburg et al., 2005, p.85).

To make WTP measurable, this thesis uses Van Westendorp's PSM (1976). The method asks the respondents for four different price levels at which they perceive a product as too cheap, cheap, expensive, and too expensive with regards to the quality of the product. The exact scale can be seen in table 1.

Variable	Measurement
<u>Willingness to Pay (WTP)</u> "The maximum amount of money a customer is willing to spend for a product or service" (Homburg et al., 2005, p. 85)	four items with open-ended price questions according to Van Westendorp's PSM (Arru et al., 2022; Van Westendorp, 1976): • At what price would you begin to think the product is so inexpensive that you would question the quality and not consider it (too cheap)? • At what price would you think the product is a bargain (a great buy for the money—cheap)? • At what price would you begin to think the product is getting expensive, but you still might consider it (expensive)? • At what price would you begin to think the product is too expensive to consider (too expensive)?

Table 1: Dependent variable

By using a price range and not a single question to detect consumer's price perception, the study allows the respondents to designate their expectations regarding the price for a product without any recommendation (Arru et al., 2022).

Previous research has shown, that the third question, where respondents answer at which price the product is getting expensive but they would still consider to buy it, is the person's maximal WTP (Roll et al., 2010). According to Diamantopoulos et al. (2021), from an economic point of view, the WTP should be equal to the reservation price of a person, which represents the maximum

amount of money a customer is willing to pay for a certain product. Due to this understanding of the reservation price, the just mentioned expensive price point is therefore an underestimation of the WTP (Diamantopoulos et al., 2021). As in table 1 defined, the too expensive price point is an overestimation of the WTP, as the price for the product is so high, that the respondent does not consider paying for it. Therefore, this study takes the average of the expensive and the too expensive element, to balance the overestimation and the underestimation. Thus, the mean of these two price points leads to an adequate estimation of the actual individual WTP.

4.2.2 Independent variable

The independent variable for the main study is consumer affinity, which is defined by Oberecker et al. (2008, p. 26) as the “feeling of liking, sympathy, and even attachment toward a specific foreign country [...] that positively affects the consumer’s decision making associated with products and services originating from the affinity country”.

The independent variable is also called predictor, as it is the cause of an effect (Field, 2018). The study included two different versions of the independent variable, by introducing a product originated in a high consumer affinity country (Austria) on the one hand and a lower affinity country (Sweden) on the other hand. The author identified these two countries through a pre-test, which will be explained in more detail in a later chapter. To make the independent variable measurable, Oberecker and Diamantopoulos’ (2011) consumer affinity scale was used. The original scale was adapted within the study similar to previous studies (Bernard & Zarrouk-Karoui, 2014; Cakici & Shukla, 2017; Guo et al., 2018). The detailed measurement can be found in table 2.

Variable	Measurement
<u>Consumer Affinity</u> “A feeling of liking, sympathy, and even attachment toward a specific foreign country [...] that positively affects the consumer’s decision making associated with products and services originating from the affinity country” (Oberecker et al., 2008, p. 26)	Seven items on a seven point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) (Bernard & Zarrouk-Karoui, 2014; Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011): • I have a pleasant feeling toward this country. • I like this country. • I have feeling of sympathy toward this country. • I am captivated by this country. • I am feeling attached to this country. • I love this country.

	• This country inspires me.
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Table 2: Independent variable

4.2.3 Moderator variable

As the conceptual model has already shown, CSI was used as the moderator for this study. CSI is defined as the “corporate actions that result in (potential) disadvantages and/or harm to other actors” (Lin-Hi & Müller, 2013, p. 1932). To include the moderator variable in the questionnaire, four experimental groups were introduced. Each of them described the same brand, originated in either Austria or Sweden being involved in irresponsible actions towards their employees or no information about such irresponsible actions was given. These scenarios were also tested within a pre-test, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.3. To ensure that the respondents read, understand, and perceive the described actions of the brand as CSI, they were asked to express their perception of the brand. They had to answer the following question within the main questionnaire: “I think that this text describes a brand that is:” 1 = socially irresponsible to 7 = socially responsible, on a seven-point bipolar semantic differential scale. The fictitious brand, mentioned in the scenario was also developed within the pre-test which will be described in chapter 4.3.

4.2.4 Control variables

The study also used several control variables to ensure that there are no confounds and to rule out external factors that might also cause a specific effect on the dependent variable (Field, 2018). The author included price sensitivity, product involvement and cause involvement as control variables, which are explained in table 3 in more detail.

Variable	Measurement
<u>Price sensitivity</u> “an individual difference variable describing how individual consumers react to price levels or changes in price levels” (Goldsmith & Newell, 1997, p. 164)	Three items on a seven-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) (Chua et al., 2015; Lichtenstein et al., 1988): • When it comes to choosing a [], I rely heavily on price. • I will buy a [] when it is on promotion. • I choose the lowest priced [] that will suit my needs.

<u>Product involvement</u> “general level of interest in the object or the centrality of the object to the person’s ego structure” (Bloch & Richins, 1983, p. 70)	Three items on a seven-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985) • [] is very important to me. • I choose my [] very carefully. • Choosing a [] is an important decision for me.
<u>Cause involvement</u> “the degree to which consumers find the cause to be personally relevant to them” (Grau & Folse, 2007, p. 20)	Five items on a seven-point bipolar semantic differential scale (Grau & Folse, 2007; Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy, 1990): The cause is • unimportant - important to me • means nothing to me - means a lot to me is personally • relevant - irrelevant to me (the author has switched the order of the two expressions for the data collection) • doesn’t - does matter a great deal to me • is of no - great concern to me

Table 3: Control variables

Price sensitivity is the first variable that needs to be taken into consideration. It is defined as “an individual difference variable describing how individual consumers react to price levels or changes in price levels” (Goldsmith & Newell, 1997, p. 164). Previous studies have already shown that price sensitivity influences the assessment of a product or brand and also affects the process while buying decisions are made, as well as the perceived value of a product (Chua et al., 2015; Goldsmith & Newell, 1997). Despite that, research came to the result that consumers that are highly price sensitive will react stronger to changes in prices, which means demanding more if the price gets lower and less if the price gets higher, compared to consumers that are less sensitive (Goldsmith & Newell, 1997). Therefore, it is possible that the price sensitivity has an influence on the WTP.

Another variable that needs to be controlled is the product involvement. Defined as the “general level of interest in the object or the centrality of the object to the person’s ego structure” (Bloch & Richins, 1983, p. 70). The interest in a specific product class is rooted in the fact that the product satisfies values and goals that are important to the consumer personally (Mittal & Lee, 1989).

Previous research has shown that product involvement affects consumers' WTP (Campbell et al., 2014). Thus, product involvement needs to be considered within the study.

The last variable that has to be controlled is cause involvement in social issues, as the study includes a CSI scenario. Previous research defined the concept as "the degree to which consumers find the cause to be personally relevant to them" (Grau & Folse, 2007, p. 20). Furthermore, the reasons for the high personal relevance of a topic can be rooted in former experiences or the self-concept of a person (Grau & Folse, 2007). Additionally, prior studies have shown that the stronger the involvement into a cause, the stronger the impact on the company's donation amount on WTP (Koschate-Fischer, Stefan, et al., 2012). According to Hill and Lee (2015), information about the sustainability of a company will be processed more intensively, when the respondent is deeper involved in the environmental issue, which in turn leads to a better evaluation of the fit (Hill & Lee, 2015). Due to these reasons, it is important to ask respondents regarding their cause involvement as it might influence consumers' WTP.

The author included an attention check by asking the respondent to choose "strongly agree" for one item. Implementing such an instructed-response item is a popular and successful way to secure the validity of the scale measurements, by detecting inattentive respondents (Kung et al., 2018).

Finally, the main questionnaire ended with demographic variables, which are listed in detail in Appendix C.

4.3 Pre-tests

Within this chapter, the results of the two conducted pre-tests will be presented. The first pre-test had the aim to find a suitable fictitious brand name. The author tested if associations regarding specific product categories and COO effects exist, to avoid distortions of perception and biases within the main study. Additionally, the respondents' affinity towards five different countries was tested. Within a second pre-test, the CSI scenario as well as the product were introduced, to test for believability, authenticity, and recognition. Additionally, the second pre-test tested consumer affinity again, to gain more differentiated results compared to the first pre-test.

As the research country was Germany for both pre-tests, and therefore the respondents are German-speaking people, the back-translation procedure was used, whereby the original English questionnaire is translated into another language and then back into English to make sure that the

translation is as close as possible to the original (Ozolins et al., 2020). Therefore, a native speaking person from Germany translated both pre-tests into German and they were then back translated by a person who speaks English fluently.

4.3.1 Pre-test 1: Affinity countries and fictitious brand name

The first pre-test was implemented through the online platform “SoSci Survey”. The questionnaire took about 3 minutes and consisted of two parts. The first section was about consumer affinity. It introduced 5 different countries, which had to be evaluated by the respondents to determine the ones with higher and lower affinity. The second part asked the respondents to answer questions about three different fictitious brand names, which were “D2X”, “Nubic”, and “Kona”. These were developed through brainstorming and discussions. After expiration of the running time 42 respondents participated in the survey. Two of them had to be excluded due to missing responses and one due to a nationality other than German. Additionally, seven participants had to be excluded as they were not able to answer all affinity items, which means in the end 32 results could be used for the analysis.

The aim of the first part was to identify two different countries, one with high affinity and one with lower affinity. Therefore, five countries (Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Netherlands) were presented, which participants had to rate in terms of their feelings towards the different countries. The selection of the countries was made through a consultation of friends and family from Germany. They were asked to name three countries towards which they have the most positive feelings. After comparing the frequencies of nominations of each individual country, five countries, which were mentioned most frequent, were implemented in the pre-test. To measure the affinity within the first test, a scale established by Oberecker and Diamantopoulos (2011) was used. Respondents were asked questions about feelings of pleasure, attachment, and sympathy towards the five countries and had to state their position on a scale from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”.

This first pre-test did not lead to sufficiently meaningful and differentiated results regarding the countries, which is why consumer affinity was again tested in the second pre-test. The analysis revealed that all means for affinity were slightly above the mid-point of 3 but none of the countries showed actual high affinity (see table 4). To figure out a high affinity country and a lower affinity country that can be used in the main study, consumer affinity had to be tested again with other

countries. On top of that, a seven-point Likert scale will be used for the second pre-test to reach more difference between the means of the single countries.

	A_ITA_ SCALE	A_ESP_ SCALE	A_GRC_ SCALE	A_PRT_ SCALE	A_NDL_ SCALE
Mean	3.71	3.26	3.22	3.08	3.10
Median	3.93	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.00
Mode	4.14	2.86	2.14	2.43	3.00
Std. Deviation	.720	.907	.925	.887	.958
Variance	.518	.823	.856	.786	.918
Skewness	-.639	-.048	-.243	.106	.038
Std. Error of Skewness	.414	.414	.414	.414	.414
Kurtosis	.402	-.557	-.338	-.773	-.829
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.809	.809	.809	.809	.809

Table 4: Consumer affinity pre-test 1

Furthermore, the aim of the second part was to expose a fictitious brand name to which consumers have no associations, neither in terms of COO nor product category. The three above mentioned brand names were developed through brainstorming, discussions with other people as well as the use of an AI-based platform called “namelix”. Additionally, each idea was double checked with already existing brand names. To check for familiarity of the established names, two questions regarding each brand were asked: “Does [brand name] remind you of any specific country?” and “Does [brand name] remind you of any specific product category?”. The order of the three brand names was randomized to avoid biases. The name “D2X” reminded some people of product categories, such as deodorant, motorcycle or a camera. Additionally, they named associations with countries such as Nepal or Germany. For the brand name “Kona” the most associations were found overall. Four participants associated it with products such as cameras, beer, furniture, cars, and coffee. In terms of countries, the name reminded them of Croatia, the Netherlands, the United

States and Germany. “Nubic” has revealed the fewest associations. There were only four product related associations such as Rubik’s cube, leather products, fashion, and make-up, but not a single one with any country. The results of the brand name associations are listed in table 5.

		Frequency	Percentage
Does “D2X” remind you of a specific country?	Yes	2	6.3
	No	30	93.8
	Total	32	100.0
Does “D2X” remind you of a specific country?	Yes	5	15.6
	No	27	84.4
	Total	32	100.0
Does “Nubic” remind you of a specific country?	Yes	0	0
	No	32	100.0
	Total	32	100.0
Does “Nubic” remind you of a specific country?	Yes	4	12.5
	No	28	87.5
	Total	32	100.0
Does “Kona” remind you of a specific country?	Yes	4	12.5
	No	28	87.5
	Total	32	100.0
Does “Kona” remind you of a specific country?	Yes	6	18.8
	No	26	81.3
	Total	32	100.0

Table 5: Brand name associations

The fact that there are no specific country associations with “Nubic” is important, as the COO plays a key role for the further course of the study. Therefore, “Nubic” was chosen as the brand name for the main study as it revealed the smallest number of associations in general.

4.3.2 Pre-test 2: CSI scenario and consumer affinity

Just like the first pre-test, the second one was also implemented through “SoSci Survey”. It took the respondents around 5 minutes to finish the questionnaire, which consisted of two parts. In a first step the participants were asked about the believability and perception of the stimulus and the scenario. Despite that, the second pre-test tested consumer affinity again, since the first one did not lead to the desired results. The study introduced five countries, which then had to be evaluated by the participants regarding their feelings towards these countries. Overall, 43 people participated in the survey. One person had to be excluded due to missing responses. This leads to a total of 42 respondents, whose data can be used for analysis.

The first part was necessary to make sure the stimulus that will be used in the main questionnaire is believable, as it is fictitious, and the socially irresponsible actions have to get recognized by the respondents. The text included the most important information about the brand “Nubic”, its business areas as well as the way how activities are performed. Additionally, the stimulus informed the reader about Nubic’s plan to sell their product in Germany in the year 2023. The information about social irresponsible actions were based on other CSR and CSI scenarios, which were already used in previous research (Barbarossa et al., 2022; Sweetin et al., 2013). The participants were informed about the non-inclusive working environment, the long working hours, and the lack of social responsibility of the firm. As already mentioned earlier, four different scenarios will be tested in the main study. Nevertheless, only one stimulus including the CSI scenario was tested within pre-test 2, as the text did not contain any COO-related information and it should be tested regarding the believability and perception of the irresponsible actions. At a later point, the author will add two different COOs and will cross out the irresponsible behavior of the company once for every COO, to create four different stimuli in the main questionnaire. A product image of the toothpaste was presented to the participants below the text.

In a first step the, the respondents were asked about believability through a four item seven-point Likert scale. The statements: “For me, the scenario presented is authentic”; “For me, the scenario presented is realistic”, “I think that the scenario is understandable”, and “I believe this scenario could happen in real life.” had to be assessed on a scale, whereby 1 indicated that the person strongly disagrees and 7 represents strong agreement.

Despite that, the perception of the activities was tested by asking two items on a seven-point Likert scale. The participants had to evaluate the statements “I perceive Nubic’s actions portrayed in the

text as:” and “I think that this text describes a brand that is:” from 1 = socially irresponsible to 7 = socially responsible.

The evaluation of the data has proven, that the scenario is believable ($M_{BEL} = 5,54$) and the brand's irresponsible action were perceived to be irresponsible ($M_{PER} = 2,44$). Therefore, the high mean for believability and the low mean for perception of actions illustrate that the designed stimulus and scenario is appropriate and can be used for the main study. The detailed results of the analysis of the data are presented in table 6 and 7.

	Authentic	Realistic	Understandable	Happen in real life
Mean	5.14	5.50	5.55	5.95
Median	5.5	6.00	6.00	6.00
Mode	6	7	7	7
Std. Deviation	1.555	1.596	1.626	1.343
Variance	2.418	2.549	2.644	1.803
Skewness	-.903	-1.227	-1.215	-1.624
Std. Error of Skewness	.365	.365	.365	.365
Kurtosis	.571	1.243	1.117	3.300
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.717	.717	.717	.717

Table 6: CSI scenario believability

	Action perception	Brand perception
Mean	2.33	2.55
Median	2.00	2.00
Mode	2.00	1.00
Std. Deviation	1.262	1.485
Variance	1.593	2.205

Skewness	1.466	1.123
Std. Error of Skewness	.365	.365
Kurtosis	.571	1.243
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.717	.717

Table 7: Perception of actions and brand

The aim of the other part of pre-test 2, was to obtain one country with high consumer affinity and another with lower consumer affinity. Therefore, five countries, other than the ones from the first pre-test were introduced. This time, the selection of the countries was based on a statistic from 2022, which is about the ten most popular destinations for German emigrants (Destatis, 2022). The author decided to go with the first five countries, where Switzerland is the most common destination, followed by Austria, Spain, France, and the Netherlands. As Spain was already tested within the first pre-test and has not led to successful results, the country was excluded and Belgium, which ranked on the sixth place, was chosen instead. Participants had to evaluate all five countries according to their feelings towards these. Similar to the first pre-test consumer affinity was measured through Oberecker and Diamantopoulos' (2011) scale. However, the participants only had to rate the following two items out of the original seven items: "I have a feeling of sympathy toward this country." And "I am feeling attached to this country." on a seven-point Likert scale, whereby 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree".

To analyze the results, composite variables for every country were created. The new variable was based on the two consumer affinity questions for each country. By comparing the means of the countries, it became visible, that Austria has the highest mean ($M_{ASCALE_AUT} = 5.29$) and Sweden ranks second place ($M_{ASCALE_SWE} = 4.50$) (see table 6). Afterwards, a paired sample t-test was applied to check if the two means are significant different. The results of the test revealed significant difference between the consumer affinity towards Austria and Sweden ($t(41) = 2.90$, $p = 0.006$, $d = 0.45$).

	ASCALE_ CHE	ASCALE_ AUT	ASCALE_ FRA	ASCALE_ BEL	ASCALE_ SWE
Mean	4.06	5.29	3.50	3.68	4.50
Median	4.00	5.50	3.50	4.00	4.25
Mode	4.00	6.00	3.00	4.00	4.25
Std. Deviation	1.122	1.375	1.274	1.204	1.996
Variance	1.259	1.892	1.622	1.449	1.439
Skewness	0.334	-.893	.139	.107	-.412
Std. Error of Skewness	.365	.365	.365	.365	.365
Kurtosis	.644	.336	-.567	-.852	.885
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.717	.717	.717	.717	.717

Table 8: Consumer affinity pre-test 2

Due to these facts, Austria was selected as the high affinity country and Sweden as the lower affinity country.

After all necessary information from the different pre-tests had been collected, it was possible to create the main questionnaire.

4.4 Questionnaire & Data Collection

As already explained, the country of research was Germany. Therefore, the back-translations procedure was also be applied for the main questionnaire to ensure that the questionnaire follows the English original as much as possible (Ozolins et al., 2020).

After the translation process was finished, the main study was developed through “SoSci Survey”, just like both pre-tests. Overall, four different versions of the online questionnaire were created to realize the different experimental groups described under research design. The four groups differed according to the COO of the toothpaste and if CSI was included in the text or not. Depending on the group, the affinity questions were adapted according to Austria (for the experimental groups 1

and 3) or Sweden (for the experimental groups 2 and 4). Furthermore, some questions were cancelled as there was no need to ask for the perception of the activities and the brand or include cause involvement as a control variable for the experimental groups 1 and 2, as no CSI was included. Despite that, all versions were identical.

After four variations of the main questionnaire had been created, they were pretested with four Germans to make sure that no problems occur during the completion of the study. The respondents have been instructed to provide comments if any difficulties arise or something is not clear. During the process, the focus was on the appearance, the handling, and the general performance of the questionnaire. Despite that, all questions have been reviewed to make sure they are not offensive, ambiguous, confusing, or leading. As there were no comments, the questionnaire was published without additional adaptations.

As a between-subject design was implemented, every respondent experienced only one of the four scenarios. The allocation to a certain group happened through randomization. A detailed version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.

People were recruited by sharing the link of the questionnaire on social media channels such as Whatsapp, Instagram, and Facebook. Friends and family were asked to forward the link to their colleagues in Germany or student groups from different universities. The author also used the platform “SurveyCircle” and “SurveySwap” to reach respondents. In addition to that, a QR code was used to approach people directly. Finally, the platform “clickworker”, which is a consumer panel, was used, to recruit the remaining participants.

Every version of the questionnaire started with a welcome text, which introduced the respondents to the questionnaire, explained the purpose of the study together with all the terms and conditions of participation. Afterwards, they had to read a text about a toothpaste brand, and they saw a picture of the product. The final version of the stimulus differed slightly from the text in the pre-test as it had to be adjusted due to comprehension and readability reasons. The adapted text was again handed over to three people from Germany, to make sure that the changes do not have any effect. There were no comments or difficulties compared to the original text.

After the respondents received the information from the text and the corresponding product picture, they had to indicate four prices, based on Van Westendorp’s PSM (1976). There were no restrictions, and they were allowed to enter all prices in Euros. Next, they were asked to answer seven affinity questions towards the countries Austria or Sweden (depending on the group),

according to Oberecker and Diamantopoulos (2011). If a person was part of a group with CSI in the text, an additional question about the perception of the actions had to be completed. Subsequently, a list of control variables had to be answered, including price sensitivity (Chua et al., 2015) and product involvement (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985). Depending on the group, additional questions about cause involvement (Grau & Folse, 2007) were presented. This section also contained the attention check (Kung et al., 2018). The questionnaire ended with general demographic questions such as gender or citizenship.

In total 317 people took part in the online survey. First, 12 respondents with incomplete answers were deleted. Another 8 participants were excluded from the dataset due to a wrong answer for the attention check item. Additionally, 9 cases had to be cancelled since they were neither German citizens nor had they lived in Germany for more than 6 years. One respondent was younger than 18 years old, which resulted in an exclusion of the case. Another condition that needed to be fulfilled, was to maintain the price transitivity according to Van Westendorp's PSM (1976). The questionnaire started with the too cheap question, followed by the cheap question, while the expensive price question was in third place and the too expensive. Therefore, the prices indicated by the respondents had to meet the condition that $\text{too cheap} < \text{cheap} < \text{expensive} < \text{too expensive}$. 17 cases had to be excluded as they did not pass the price transitivity check. Furthermore, there was the need to detect outliers in the data set. This means every price that exceeded the limit of $\text{MEAN} + 3 * \text{SD}$ had to be crossed out. It led to 9 additional respondents that had to be excluded, 3 of them were not eliminated despite of the fact that they did not meet the requirement. For these specific cases, the violation occurred within the too cheap and cheap price category, which were not taken into consideration in the calculation of the individual WTP. Thus, a total of 6 participants were deleted. For the price transitivity and the outliers check, the data was split into the four experimental groups. After the whole process, 264 cases remained to be included in the analysis.

5. Results

This chapter presents the main results of the experimental study followed by a discussion. After certain assumptions got checked, it starts with a description of the sample profile. Next, the reliability of the constructs as well as manipulation checks and controls are described. The last step is about the hypotheses testing. A detailed presentation of all SPSS results is listed in appendix D.

5.1 Assumptions

Before any data analysis and the hypotheses testing can be done, a few assumptions need to be checked. These include independence of observations, identification of outliers, normal distribution of the data, homogeneity of variances (homoscedasticity), linearity, normal distribution of residuals and homoscedasticity of residuals. All the assumptions will be tested for each experimental group.

Independence of the measurements can be assumed, as no respondent was part of two or more groups. Every person got allocated to only one experimental group through randomization.

For the second assumption, all relevant variables of experimental group 1 (Austria & no CSI) got analyzed regarding outliers. The data revealed only one slight outlier for WTP and one for product involvement, which can be kept in the sample. The Shapiro-Wilk test was significant for consumer affinity ($p < 0.05$), WTP ($p < 0.05$) and product involvement ($p < 0.05$), which indicates that the data is not normally distributed. Nevertheless, normal distribution can be assumed, as $n > 30$ (Field, 2018). Price sensitivity had a non-significant result ($p > 0.05$), which proves the normal distribution. Additionally, the Q-Q Plots confirm the insights (Appendix D). Therefore, the assumption of normal distribution and outliers is met.

A boxplot of the second experimental group (Sweden & no CSI) reveals one extreme outlier for WTP (see appendix D) which needs to be eliminated. In addition to that, there are some slight outliers for WTP, similar to product involvement. These can be kept for the analysis. According to normal distribution, the Shapiro-Wilk test was not significant for consumer affinity ($p > 0.05$) and price sensitivity ($p > 0.05$), hence, these variables are normally distributed. Significant results for WTP ($p < 0.001$) and product involvement ($p < 0.05$) indicate that the data is not normally

distributed. As $n > 30$, normal distribution can be assumed for all variables (Field, 2018). The Q-Q Plots underpin these findings (Appendix D).

In experimental group three (Austria & CSI), one extreme outlier for WTP was detected through the boxplot (see appendix D). Therefore, this case had to be deleted. Product involvement and cause involvement each exhibited one slight outlier. Both can be part of further analyses. In terms of normal distribution, consumer affinity, price sensitivity and product involvement showed non-significant results for the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > 0.05$). These variables can be accepted as normally distributed. The test was significant for WTP ($p < 0.05$), cause involvement ($p < 0.001$) and perception of the scenario ($p < 0.001$), which means that these constructs are not normally distributed. Due to the central limit theorem normal distribution can be assumed for WTP, cause involvement and perception of the scenario, as $n > 30$ (Field, 2018). The Q-Q Plots show a distribution of the data near to normal (Appendix D).

The analysis of the fourth experimental group (Sweden & CSI) regarding outliers revealed slight outliers for WTP, product involvement and cause involvement, which can stay in the data set. The Shapiro-Wilk test was not significant for consumer affinity ($p > 0.05$) and product involvement ($p > 0.05$), which proves normal distribution of the data. The results were significant for WTP ($p < 0.05$), price sensitivity ($p < 0.05$), cause involvement ($p < 0.001$) and perception of the scenario ($p < 0.05$), indicating that all these variables are not normally distributed. Nevertheless, as $n > 30$ within the experimental group, normal distribution can be assumed (Field, 2018). The results are additionally illustrated through Q-Q plots (Appendix D).

After potential outliers were identified and normal distribution was checked, two additional cases had to be deleted, which means a final sample of 262 people. After the exclusion, the two assumptions are also considered as given. Next, the homogeneity of variances has to be checked.

To test for homoscedasticity, the Levene test was used. It checks if the variances are approximately equal across the four experimental groups. The test statistic was significant for WTP ($p < 0.05$), which means that there exist group differences regarding the variances (see appendix D). The violation of homoscedasticity can be ignored if the group sizes are more or less equal (Field, 2018). Therefore, the assumption can be considered as given for the outcome variable. As the Levene test was not significant ($p > 0.05$) for consumer affinity, price sensitivity, product involvement, cause involvement and perception of the scenario, and thus homoscedasticity was present, the assumption was met.

To test for linearity in all four experimental groups, a matrix scatterplot with LOESS smoothing was created for each group separately. The results for the different subgroups were similar. The visual inspection of the figures revealed a linear relationship between some variables as an approximately straight line can be identified (see appendix D). The assumption is therefore partly met for each experimental group.

To test the last two assumptions, homoscedasticity and normal distribution of the residuals, separate scatterplots for the standardized residuals and the standardized predicted values were created. As no clear pattern could be identified within the figures for the different groups, homoscedasticity of the residuals can be assumed in all cases (see appendix D). Regarding the normal distribution of the residuals, the histograms of the residuals revealed a shape, similar to a bell shape. In addition to that, the P-P plot of the standardized residuals showed that they are close to the line of a normal distribution (see appendix D). Thus, normal distribution of the residuals can also be assumed within all experimental groups.

After the statistical assumptions have been checked to ensure the accuracy of the results, the upcoming chapters deal with the analysis of data.

5.2 Sample profile

As figure 3 shows, the final sample consisted of 262 respondents, of whom 138 (52.67 %) were female, 123 (46.95 %) were male and 1 diverse (0.38%).

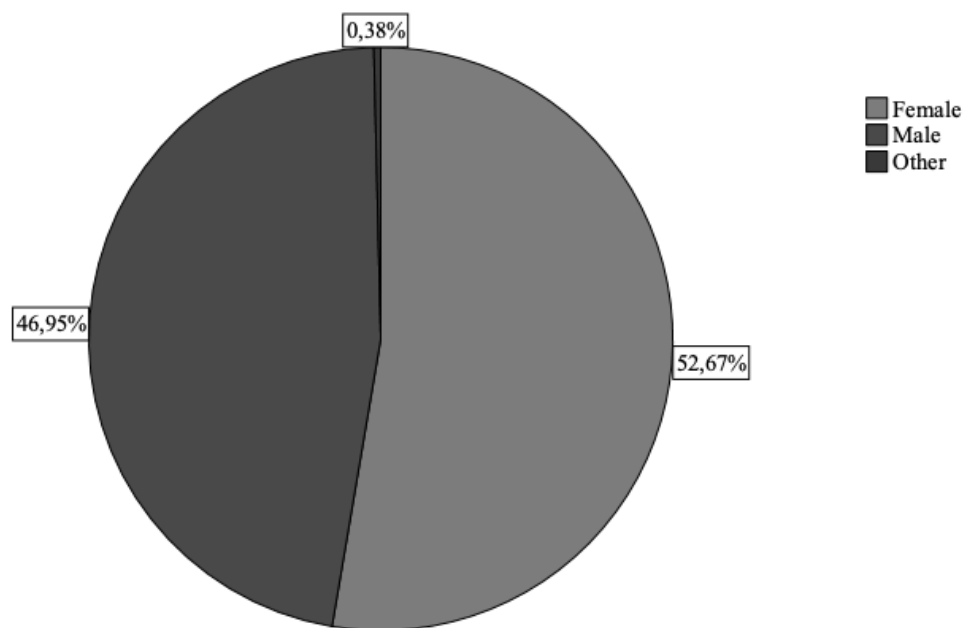


Figure 3: Gender

The age of the sample ranged from 18 to 74 ($M = 33.34$ years, $SD = 11.29$). As figure 4 illustrates, most of the participants ($> 50\%$) were between 21 and 30 years old, followed by the ones between 31 and 40.

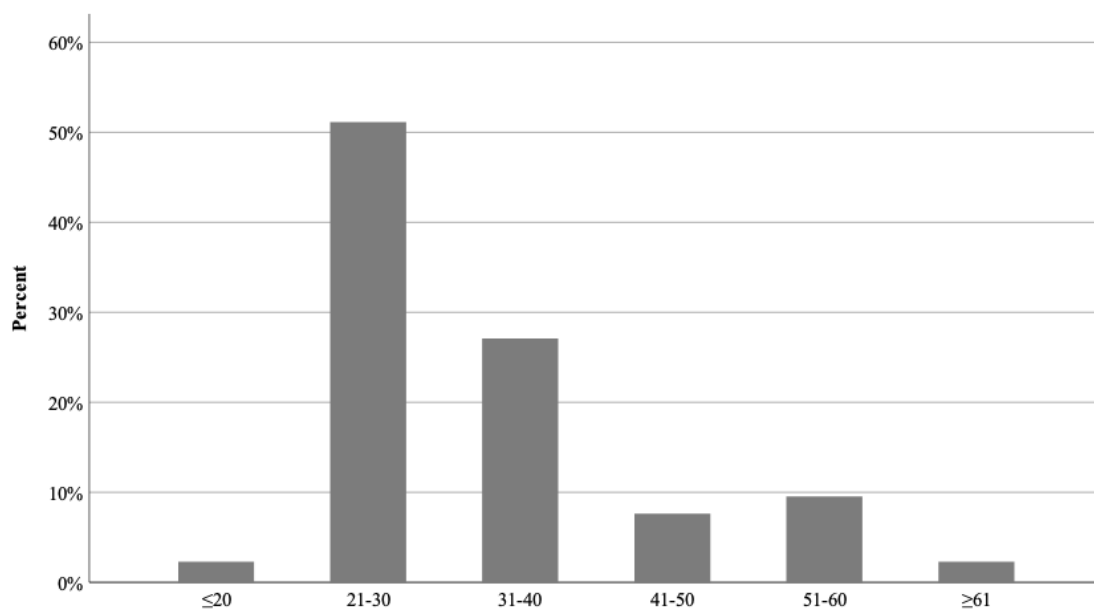


Figure 4: Age

Despite that, the respondents had to indicate their citizenship and if they have lived for more than 6 years in Germany. 258 of the respondents (98.5%) have a German citizenship. The 4 participants who are not German have lived in Germany for at least 6 years.

Figure 5 shows, that in terms of their occupation, 172 people were employed (65.65 %), followed by the second largest group, with 77 students (29.39 %). The remaining 13 respondents were either unemployed (1.91 %), retired (1.15 %) or answered the alternative other (1.91 %).

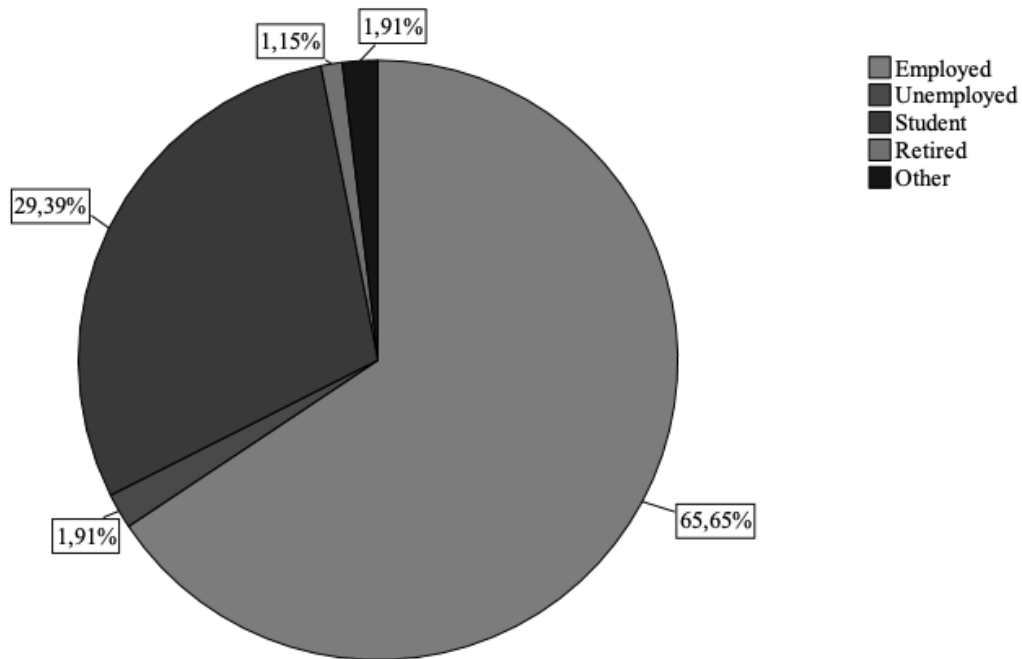


Figure 5: Occupation

According to the income, 63 respondents answered that they earn 2001 – 3000 € (24.05 %), as figure 6 shows. 58 people answered that they have an income between 1000 – 2001 € (22.14 %), same as the number of respondents who answered ≤ 1000 € (22.14 %). All together 58 respondents indicated that they earn 3001 – 4000 € (10.30 %), 4001 – 5000 € (5.73 %) or more than 5001 € (6.11 %). Furthermore, 25 participants (9.54 %) did not answer the question as it was optional. All SPSS outputs for the demographics are listed in detail in appendix D.

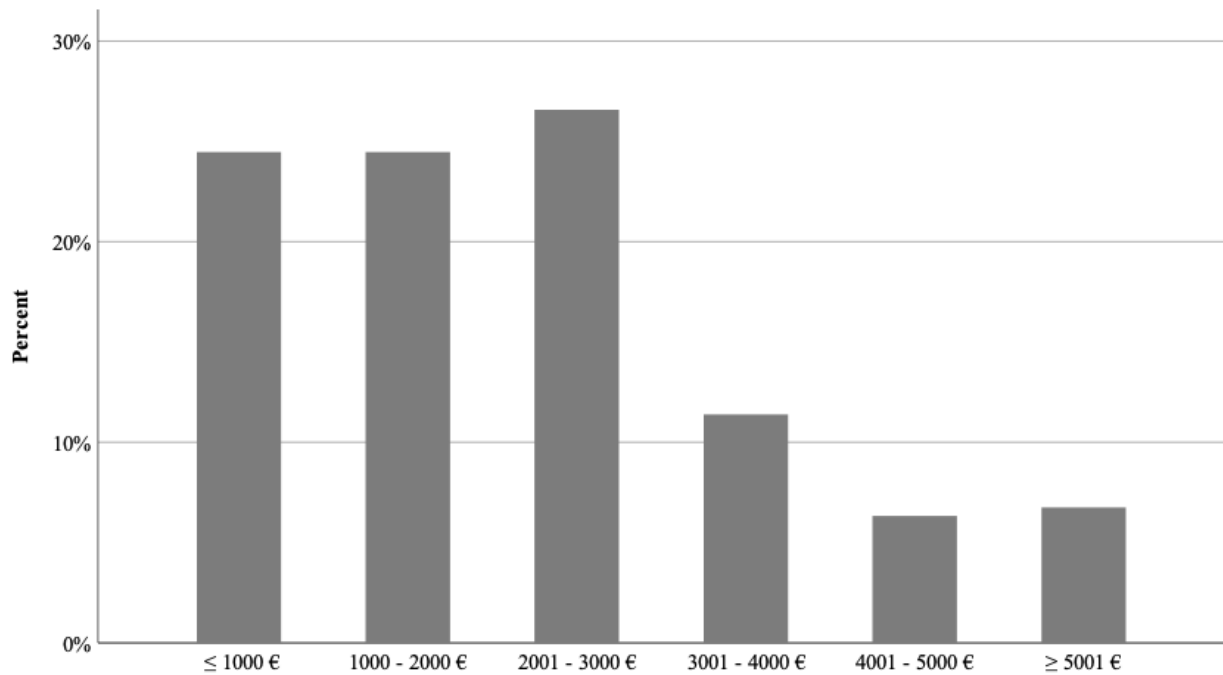


Figure 6: Income

5.3 Reliability

Before starting with the hypotheses testing, the reliability of the scales which were used to measure the different constructs needs to be checked. Although the author applied scales that are well established and were already implemented in other studies, the reliability must be tested, as the scales were translated from English into German. Cronbach's α (Cronbach, 1951) was calculated to measure the reliability. According to Field (2018), a level between 0.7 and 0.8 can be interpreted as a good level of reliability. Other authors state a level of above 0.5 as acceptable (Hair et al., 2010). As table 9 demonstrates, all the values for all constructs are above the accepted levels, which indicates reliability of all scales.

	Composite variables	Number of items	Cronbach's (α)
Experimental group 1	Willingness to pay	4	0.870
	Consumer affinity	7	0.884
	Price sensitivity	3	0.748

	Product involvement	3	0.844
Experimental group 2	Willingness to pay	4	0.895
	Consumer affinity	7	0.904
	Price sensitivity	3	0.739
	Product involvement	3	0.825
Experimental group 3	Willingness to pay	4	0.851
	Consumer affinity	7	0.886
	Price sensitivity	3	0.635
	Product involvement	3	0.761
	Cause involvement	5	0.962
Experimental group 4	Willingness to pay	4	0.823
	Consumer affinity	7	0.883
	Price sensitivity	3	0.822
	Product involvement	3	0.857
	Cause involvement	5	0.969

Table 9: Reliability of the scales

5.4 Controls

As price sensitivity, product involvement and cause involvement were employed as control variables within the study, their descriptive statistics have to be analyzed. Additionally, they need to be compared between the different experimental groups through a one-way ANOVA, where the covariates act as the dependent variables and the four groups as the independent variable. Overall, the participants of the study had a moderate price sensitivity ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.46$), a moderate to high product involvement ($M = 4.98$, $SD = 1.19$) and a high cause involvement ($M = 5.44$, $SD = 1.46$). Cause involvement is analyzed for two experimental groups, as it was only employed for

the groups where CSI was involved. Therefore, the comparison of this control variable only takes place between these two groups through an independent sample t-test.

In a next step the one-way ANOVA was conducted to make a comparison of each control across the different experimental groups. The results reveal that there is no significant difference between the groups regarding price sensitivity ($F(3, 258) = 1.97; p > 0.05$). Furthermore, the one-way ANOVA does not reveal significant group differences for product involvement ($F(3, 258) = 0.50; p > 0.05$). Similarly, the experimental groups 3 and 4 are not significantly different in terms of cause involvement ($F(1, 116) = 0.16, p > 0.05$). The means of the control variables are similar across the different groups. Nevertheless, they are all still included in upcoming hypotheses testing, as they might have an influence on WTP. All SPSS outputs are listed in appendix D.

5.5 Manipulation check

To verify if the manipulation through CSI was successful within the main study, the mean for the perception of the activities and the brand is calculated. As the participant read about irresponsible actions from the brand, it is expected that they answered rather low on a scale from 1 = “socially irresponsible” to 7 = “socially responsible”. According to the results, the manipulation was successful as the mean for the perception of the actions is rather low ($M = 3.11, SD = 1.48$). Therefore, people who received the scenario recognized it as irresponsible behavior.

5.6 Descriptive statistics of the constructs

Next, the different constructs will be analyzed for each experimental group regarding their descriptive statistics (see appendix D). Compound variables were created for each construct by calculating the mean. These new variables are also required for further calculations.

For experimental group 1 (Austria & no CSI), the consumer affinity towards Austria is rather high ($M = 5.26, SD = 0.95$) the WTP is moderate ($M = 4.47, SD = 1.75$) similar to the price sensitivity ($M = 4.14, SD = 1.46$). The respondents indicated moderate to high product involvement ($M = 4.97, SD = 1.20$). The first group consists of 71 participants.

Within experimental group 2 (Sweden & no CSI) the affinity towards Sweden is moderate to high ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 1.12$), whereas the WTP is moderate ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 2.31$). The participants had a medium price sensitivity ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.42$) and a moderate to high product involvement ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 1.24$). A total of 73 people is in group 2.

The 55 respondents of the third experimental group (Austria & CSI) indicated a moderate to high consumer affinity towards the country Austria ($M = 4.76$, $SD = 1.15$) and a medium WTP for the product ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.90$). The price sensitivity is also moderate to high ($M = 4.62$, $SD = 1.24$), whereas product involvement is high ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.08$) same as cause involvement ($M = 5.50$, $SD = 1.40$). The participants perceived the scenario as rather irresponsible ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.35$).

The fourth experimental group (Sweden & CSI) reveals moderate to high affinity regarding the country Sweden ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.02$) and a medium WTP ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 1.58$). The respondents' price sensitivity is moderate ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 1.64$). Product involvement ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.22$) and cause involvement ($M = 5.39$, $SD = 1.53$) are rather high. The participants of the fourth group also perceived the actions within the scenario as irresponsible ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.58$). Experimental group 4 consists of 63 participants. All numbers are listed in table 10, for a better overview.

	Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Experimental group 1	Consumer affinity	71	2.86	7.00	5.27	0.95
	Willingness to pay	71	1.09	9.99	4.47	1.75
	Price sensitivity	71	1.00	7.00	4.14	1.46
	Product involvement	71	2.00	7.00	4.97	1.20
Experimental group 2	Consumer affinity	73	2.00	7.00	4.82	1.13
	Willingness to pay	73	1.45	12.50	4.91	2.31
	Price sensitivity	73	1.33	7.00	4.01	1.41
	Product involvement	73	1.33	7.00	4.85	1.24
	Consumer affinity	55	2.43	6.86	4.76	1.15

Experimental group 3	Willingness to pay	55	1.50	8.50	3.92	1.90
	Price sensitivity	55	2.00	7.00	4.62	1.25
	Product involvement	55	2.33	7.00	5.09	1.08
	Cause involvement	55	1.00	7.00	5.50	1.40
	Perception of scenario	55	1.00	6.00	3.02	1.35
Experimental group 4	Consumer affinity	63	2.57	6.71	4.87	1.02
	Willingness to pay	63	1.70	9.00	4.23	1.58
	Price sensitivity	63	1.00	7.00	4.16	1.64
	Product involvement	63	2.00	7.00	5.05	1.22
	Cause involvement	63	1.00	7.00	5.39	1.53
	Perception of scenario	63	1.00	7.00	3.19	1.58

Table 10: Descriptive statistics

5.7 Hypotheses Testing

The first step of the main analysis consists of several independent sample t-tests to detect differences in the consumer affinity towards Austria and Sweden and the WTP for a product originating from one or the other country. The tests additionally check if the manipulation through CSI was successful and has led to the expected results. Finally, a moderation analysis (Model 1) will be conducted using the PROCESS macro based on Hayes (2018). This process is based on linear regressions to examine the moderating role of CSI for the interaction between consumer affinity and WTP.

To test for differences in the experimental groups regarding consumer affinity and WTP the following four independent sample t-tests have to be conducted:

1. Compare mean consumer affinity for Austria (experimental group 1 + 3) and Sweden (experimental group (2 + 4))

2. Compare mean WTP for Austria + no CSI (experimental group 1) and Sweden + no CSI (experimental group 2)
3. Compare mean WTP for Austria + no CSI and Austria + CSI (within group comparison)
4. Compare mean WTP for Sweden + no CSI and Sweden + CSI (within group comparison)

The first calculation reveals that the consumer affinity towards Austria ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.07$) is higher compared to the affinity towards Sweden ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 1.08$). The independent sample t-test shows that the equal variances of both groups can be assumed as the Levene's test is not significant ($p > 0.05$). However, the difference between Austria and Sweden is not significant ($t(260) = 1.51$, $p > 0.05$, $d = 0.19$).

The comparison of the mean WTP for Austria and Sweden shows that the mean WTP is higher for a product from Sweden ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 2.31$) compared to Austria ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.75$). According to the independent sample t-test, the variances are not equal between the groups ($p < 0.05$), and the difference between the two means is not statistically significant ($t(133.99) = -1.29$, $p > 0.05$, $d = -0.22$).

The within-group calculation for Austria demonstrates that the WTP for an Austrian product is higher if there is no CSI-related information included ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.75$) compared to the WTP if CSI is mentioned ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.90$). As the Levene's test is not significant ($p > 0.05$), equal variances are assumed. The independent sample t-test is not significant ($t(124) = 1.69$, $p > 0.05$, $d = 0.30$) and therefore there is no statistically significant difference between the means of the two groups.

According to the fourth calculation, the WTP for products from Sweden is higher without information about CSI ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 2.31$) in comparison to the WTP if CSI is included ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 1.58$). The assumption of equal variances across the groups is not given, as the Levene's test is significant ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the independent sample t-test is significant ($t(127.52) = 2.02$, $p < 0.05$, $d = 0.34$), which indicates that the difference between the mean WTP for both groups is significant.

After a comparison between specific groups were made and first insights could be gained, the moderation analysis model 1 of the PROCESS routine by Hayes (2018) was performed. This analysis allows to test the direct effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, together with the impact of the moderator on the relationship. Additionally, during the calculation further control variables can be checked. As there are two levels of the independent variable (Austria as

high affinity country and Sweden as lower affinity country), two regressions were performed through Hayes' PROCESS routine model 1, to test all necessary effects.

For the first setup, consumer affinity for Austria is the independent variable and WTP for products from Austria the dependent variable. The CSI scenario works as the moderator. Price sensitivity and product involvement are the control variables. Cause involvement could not be included, because it was not measured in all experimental groups.

The results show that the overall model was significant ($p < 0.05$) and explained 11,9% of variance of the WTP for the Austrian brand. The direct effect of consumer affinity on WTP is positive but statistically not significant ($p > 0.05$). Price sensitivity and product involvement both have a negative effect on WTP, but only price sensitivity is significant ($B = -0.38$, $p < 0.05$). The interaction term has no significant effect on WTP, which means that CSI has no moderating role for the relationship between consumer affinity and WTP. Therefore, H1 and H2 are rejected as they are not statistically supported.

The setup for the second regression is like the first one. The only difference is that the independent variable is consumer affinity towards Sweden and the dependent variable is WTP for a Swedish product. The moderator is again CSI, and the control variables stay the same.

The second regression reveals similar results as the first one. The overall model is significant ($p < 0.05$) and explains 17,7% of the independent variable. The direct effect of consumer affinity on WTP is again positive but not significant ($p > 0.05$). The control variables have again a negative effect on WTP, but only the effect of price sensitivity is statistically significant ($B = -0.5$, $p < 0.05$). CSI does not moderate the relationship between consumer affinity and WTP, as the interaction term is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Thus, H1 and H2 are rejected as there is no valid support.

Finally, the analysis has demonstrated that H1 as well as H2 are not supported, which leads to the finding that the positive impact of consumer affinity on WTP is not statistically supported, and CSI does not play a moderating role in the relationship between these both variables. The detailed SPSS outputs for all regressions can be found in appendix D.

6. Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to further deepen the understanding of the construct WTP in an international marketing setting. Of specific interest was the influence of consumer affinity on WTP and to what extent it influences the dependent variable. Additionally, the role of CSI within the relationship was taken into consideration. In order to gain new knowledge, an experimental study has been developed based on the fact that consumer decisions and behavior is influenced by certain attitudes and emotions of consumers, which has an impact on their thinking and acting (Oberecker et al., 2008; Tajfel, 1982). The study was built on the assumption, that consumer affinity has a positive impact on the decision making of consumers and therefore their WTP, as positive feelings towards a country make people willing to pay more for a product originated from that country (Bernard & Zarrouk-Karoui, 2014). Furthermore, the question of how information about irresponsible actions of a company impacts the relationship and if it leads to an overall decrease in the WTP, should be answered.

The initial comparison through independent sample t-tests revealed some first insights into how the results from the main study might turn out and if the hypotheses are supported or not. First of all, there was no significant difference between the mean affinity of the countries Austria and Sweden, which means the initial idea of Austria as a high affinity country and Sweden as a lower affinity country was not reflected by the results. Furthermore, the WTP between both countries was not significantly different, which could be due to the fact that the difference between the mean affinity is non-existent. Additionally, and even more important, the within group comparison of WTP for Austria between the group that received CSI-related information and the group that did not, showed no significant difference. Based on these results, it can already be assumed that CSI is probably not a moderator within the relationship between consumer affinity and WTP. Nevertheless, the within-group comparison of WTP for Sweden revealed significant difference between the two groups (no CSI and CSI), which suggests that CSI might have a moderating role in the interaction of DV and IV after all.

The final results of the study demonstrate no effect of consumer affinity on WTP, neither for high consumer affinity, nor for lower affinity. Moreover, the findings indicate no moderating role of CSI within the investigated relationship. Therefore, it has to be discussed why the outcome, against the expectations, differs from the results of previous studies, where consumer affinity had a positive impact on different dimension of consumer behavior (Bernard & Zarrouk-Karoui, 2014; Guo et al., 2018; Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011).

A first reason for the difference in the outcomes might be the use of “softer” dependent variables in other studies, which measured the impact of consumer affinity on buying intentions (Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011), willingness to buy and perceived risk (Oberecker et al., 2008) or product trust (Guo et al., 2018). Although the investigation of these dependent variables show, if consumer affinity increases the intention to buy, the willingness to buy a product or decreases the perceived risk, it does not necessarily mean that it leads to actual purchase behavior as there are biases between the former and the latter (Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos, et al., 2012). WTP is a much stricter test to investigate specific effects since it is closer to the actual behavior as people are confronted with the actual costs to purchase the product under certain conditions (Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos, et al., 2012). Therefore, the use of WTP as the outcome variable might be one important reason for not discovering a positive effect of consumer affinity on the dependent variable.

Another reason for not finding the expected effect might be the consumer affinity level for Austria and Sweden. The affinity towards both countries could be higher as the main questionnaire revealed rather a moderate to high level of consumer affinity towards both countries. Previous studies (e.g. Bernard & Zarrouk-Karoui, 2014; Guo et al., 2018; Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011) that discovered a positive impact of consumer affinity on behavior in general and specifically on WTP asked the respondents to indicate their “favorite” country. By doing so, these authors made sure that the degree of affinity towards the mentioned countries is high. Thus, the rather moderate affinity levels towards Austria and Sweden could be another reason, why the author was not able to determine a positive impact of the independent variable on WTP.

Despite the fact that the study did not detect any direct effect, also no moderation effect of CSI could be found. One possible explanation might be, that the perception of the scenario was not as “irresponsible” as expected. Thus, the scenario could have been recognized more clearly as CSI, which might have made it possible to identify a moderating role of CSI. In addition, a different methodology could have been helpful to detect a moderating effect. The study implemented a between-subject design, which means every respondent got to see the scenario or not, depending on the group. A within-subjects design, where the participant first receives the stimulus without CSI and afterwards the stimulus with the information about irresponsible actions might lead to different results, regarding CSI as a moderator. People might perceive CSI stronger and would have a direct comparison, which could lead to a different result.

7. Conclusion

After the main findings of the master's thesis have been discussed, possible theoretical and managerial implications of the work need to be elaborated. Finally, the limitations need to be addressed as well as an outlook for future research.

7.1 Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, the underlying work contributes to the literature and deepens the knowledge about consumer behavior in the international marketing context. Particularly, it provides a better understanding of whether and to what extent consumer affinity impacts WTP and if CSI plays a moderating role, as it is the first study that puts into relation these three constructs.

Therefore, the thesis extends already existing literature. In the first place, by investigating a dependent variable that is close to actual behavior. The work also follows the suggestion of previous studies to test WTP as an outcome variable to gain possible insights for the development of appropriate strategies in marketing (Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011). Additionally, the thesis indicates that the positive impact of consumer affinity on “softer” outcome variables such as evaluation of products (Terasaki et al., 2021), willingness to buy, perceived risk (Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011) or product trust (Guo et al., 2018), does not necessarily transfer into actual behavior of the consumer.

Another contribution of the study is the distinction between a high and a lower affinity country, as it is the first work making such a differentiation for the independent variable, as far as the author knows. Even though, the study did not lead to significant results in terms of the two affinity levels, it may be interesting to explore the different effects on WTP.

Furthermore, by including CSI as a moderator, the study expands existing work which already examines the relationship between consumer affinity and WTP (Bernard & Zarrouk-Karoui, 2014).

In addition to that, the findings provide a new idea about the role of CSI for consumer behavior, and especially WTP. Irresponsible actions might not have such an important impact on purchase decisions and WTP like ethical behavior (Creyer, 1997), especially within a consumer affinity setting.

Finally, the current thesis was able to deepen the existing knowledge, even though no significant results were achieved. On the one hand it focused on consumer affinity, which is often not considered as a predictor for specific behavior compared to animosity (Oberecker et al., 2008). On the other hand, the author put CSI in relation with the predictor and the outcome variable. CSI as a construct is also not that much researched compared to CSR (Lange & Washburn, 2012). Thus, the work makes an important theoretical contribution by considering these less studied constructs.

7.2 Managerial Implications

The current thesis additionally provides some important managerial contributions. First, in a globalized world, international marketing plays an increasingly relevant role. Therefore, understanding the positive feelings of consumers towards a certain country is crucial in this exact setting. Furthermore, as already discussed in the introduction, CSI has an increasing impact on consumer behavior. Due to these facts, marketer need deep knowledge about these constructs to develop a successful strategy in order to reach the consumers efficiently. As the study unites all these aspects, it provides information about to which extent consumer affinity and CSI transfers into consumer behavior. Thus, it allows marketing managers to draw the necessary inferences and implement them into their strategies. Depending on whether it is a company that wants to expand to Germany and comes from Austria, Sweden or a similar country, or a company that may have acted in a socially irresponsible way and has to deal with it, conclusions can be drawn from this work. It shows how German consumers feel and react to Austria and Sweden as COO and how strongly the irresponsible behavior affects the consumers' WTP.

Furthermore, it yields insights that can be used for the development of a pricing strategy. The results of the study show, that consumer affinity has no positive impact on the consumer WTP. Hence, if marketing activities include affinity country cues, this information will not necessarily lead to the willingness to pay a higher price for the product.

Similarly, the findings indicate that the role of CSI is not as important as expected. Therefore, marketers might focus their marketing resources on other aspects of the company or the product, such as consumer satisfaction or social CSR with a greater impact on WTP (Homburg et al., 2005; Tully & Winer, 2014). Nevertheless, companies should be careful when dealing with their

irresponsible actions, as former studies have proven that unethical behavior harms the firm (Creyer, 1997) and has a negative effect on the purchase intention, WTP (Ferreira & Ribeiro, 2017) or increases the willingness to punish a company (Sweetin et al., 2013). Therefore, irresponsible actions should be avoided or counteracted, even though no results were revealed by the study.

Additionally, the findings provide new knowledge about German consumers and their affinity towards Austria and Sweden. It can be concluded that people from Germany neither maintain a high affinity towards Austria, nor towards Sweden, which does not transfer into a higher willingness to pay. From a managerial perspective, this might be a useful information for an appropriate communication strategy. Other aspects than the information about the COO might be more effective to reach German consumers. For companies from Austria or Sweden it probably makes sense to expand into countries other than Germany, with a higher consumer affinity to the respective countries to rely on COO cues within the strategy.

In general, the findings of the study might be interesting for countries, which resemble the research country in terms of size and development.

7.3 Limitations and future research

Besides several managerial and theoretical implications of the thesis it also exhibits some limitations, which, however, provide indications for future research.

First of all, the generalizability of the findings is limited. The study was performed in Germany, which means, that the results are only interesting for countries that are similar to the research country. Furthermore, only one low involvement product category was chosen for the investigation. Therefore, the insights are only applicable for this type of products. An idea for future research might be to focus on a product category with high involvement and to choose different countries of research. Additionally, it could be interesting to compare products from different categories within one study, such as mass-market products and luxury products to reveal the differences.

Next, the stimulus was based on a fictitious brand. The author decided to use such a brand to prevent associations with already existing ones. However, it can lead to negative assessment from the participants as they are not familiar with it (Aruan et al., 2018). To prevent this limitation, further research could introduce a real brand to gain additional insights into the effect of consumer affinity

on WTP for products from the brand. For this procedure it is essential to control for brand image and associations.

Another limitation refers to consumer affinity, as the difference between the high and the lower affinity country was not significant within the main study. Although, the author proved significant difference between the mean consumer affinity of both countries in the pre-test, it was not confirmed in the main analysis. A larger difference between the countries should be aimed next time in order to eventually achieve significant difference in the main study.

An additional limitation is the perception of the scenario. The mean perception is quite high ($M = 3,14$) on a scale from 1 = “socially irresponsible” to 7 = “socially responsible”. Thus, the respondents did not perceive the irresponsible actions as irresponsible as expected. The rather moderate perception of the scenario as irresponsible behavior might have an impact on the results. CSI could possibly have played a moderating role in the relationship if it had been clearly perceived as such. This aspect leads to another limitation related to the methodological approach, as participants were assigned to only one of four experimental groups. For future research a within-subject design might be helpful to gain additional insights. When people have to answer their WTP without CSI first, and afterwards under the condition of CSI, it might lead to a better comparison between both groups.

In conclusion, this thesis provides some interesting new insights into the relationship between consumer affinity, WTP and CSI, from a managerial as well as a theoretical perspective. The realization of the ideas for future research can extend the present work by creating deeper knowledge and better understanding of the interplay between the constructs.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Pretest 2 (English + German version)

Pretest 2 (English version)



The following study is conducted at the Institute for Marketing and International Business at the University of Vienna (Austria) and is part of my master thesis. The study deals with consumer behavior and is exclusively for scientific purpose and does not follow any commercial interest.

- Participation in the study is voluntary. You can stop the questionnaire at any time.
- Your participation is anonymous, your answers cannot be traced back to you.
- This also means that your personal data set is not identifiable to us after completion of the survey.
- We treat all your information as strictly confidential.
- It is important that you read the questions carefully and follow the instructions carefully.
- There is no time limit for this questionnaire. Please take your time to complete the questionnaire.
- It will take approximately 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

If you have any questions about this survey, you can contact me at the email address below.

Thank you for participating in the survey!

Antonia from Terzi

a11941011@univie.ac.at

Section 1 (Stimuli + scenario, believability, and perception)

Please read the following text carefully:

Nubic is a company that produces toothpastes. The company is considered to be an industry leader in terms of oral hygiene and caries prevention. The company's manufacturing facilities are modernized, and they use the most advanced production equipment and processes. Nubic is planning to start selling their toothpastes in Germany in 2023. However, Nubic has recently been criticized for its non-inclusive work environment and excessively long working hours, which underlines its lack of social responsibility.

Below you can see a picture of the product:



1. Please evaluate the following statements:

	Strongly disagree  Strongly agree						
For me, the scenario presented is authentic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

For me, the scenario presented is realistic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I think that the scenario is understandable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe this scenario could happen in real life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Please evaluate the following statements:

	Socially irresponsible					Socially responsible	
I perceive Nubic’s actions portrayed in the article as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I think that this article describes a brand that is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 2 (Consumer affinity)

1. Please evaluate the statements below about the following country:

Switzerland	Strongly disagree Strongly agree						
I have feeling of sympathy toward this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am feeling attached to this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Please evaluate the statements below about the following country:

Austria	Strongly disagree Strongly agree						
I have feeling of sympathy toward this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am feeling attached to this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Please evaluate the statements below about the following country:

France	Strongly disagree  Strongly agree						
I have feeling of sympathy toward this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am feeling attached to this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. Please evaluate the statements below about the following country:

Belgium	Strongly disagree  Strongly agree						
I have feeling of sympathy toward this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am feeling attached to this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Please evaluate the statements below about the following country:

Sweden	Strongly disagree  Strongly agree						
I have feeling of sympathy toward this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am feeling attached to this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 3 (Demographics)

1. Gender:

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Other

2. Age in years:

3. Citizenship

- ☐ German
- ☐ Other

4. Have you been living in Germany for more than 6 years?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. Employment

- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Other

Thank you for your participation!

We would like to thank you very much for your assistance.

Your answers have been recorded; you can now close the browser.



Die folgende Studie wird am Institut für Marketing und Internationale Wirtschaft der Universität Wien (Österreich) durchgeführt und ist Teil meiner Masterarbeit. Die Studie befasst sich mit dem Konsumentenverhalten und ist ausschließlich für den wissenschaftlichen Zweck bestimmt und folgt keinem kommerziellen Interesse.

- Die Teilnahme an der Studie ist freiwillig. Sie können den Fragebogen jederzeit abbrechen.
- Ihre Teilnahme ist anonym, Ihre Antworten können nicht auf Sie zurückgeführt werden.
- Das bedeutet ebenfalls, dass Ihr persönlicher Datensatz nach Abschluss der Befragung für uns nicht identifizierbar ist.
- Wir behandeln all Ihre Angaben streng vertraulich.
- Es ist wichtig, dass Sie die Fragen sorgfältig lesen und die Anweisungen genau befolgen.
- Für diesen Fragebogen gibt es kein Zeitlimit. Bitte nehmen Sie sich Zeit zum Ausfüllen des Fragebogens.
- Das Ausfüllen des Fragebogens wird etwa 5 Minuten dauern.

Wenn Sie Fragen zu dieser Umfrage haben, können Sie mich unter der unten angegebenen E-Mail-Adresse kontaktieren.

Vielen Dank, dass Sie an der Umfrage teilnehmen!

Antonia von Terzi

a11941011@univie.ac.at

Bitte lesen Sie den folgenden Text aufmerksam:

Nubic ist ein Unternehmen, das Zahnpasta herstellt. Das Unternehmen gilt als Branchenführer im Bereich der Mundhygiene und Kariesprävention. Die Fertigungsstätten des Unternehmens sind modernisiert und nutzen die fortschrittlichsten Produktionsanlagen und -prozesse. Nubic plant, seine Zahnpasta ab 2023 in Deutschland zu verkaufen. Nubic wurde jedoch für sein nicht integratives Arbeitsumfeld und seine übermäßig langen Arbeitszeiten kritisiert, was seine mangelnde soziale Verantwortung unterstreicht.

Hier finden Sie ein Bild von dem Produkt:



3. Bitte bewerten Sie die folgenden Aussagen:

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu  Stimme voll zu						
Für mich ist das dargestellte Szenario authentisch.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Für mich ist das dargestellte Szenario realistisch.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Ich denke, dass das Szenario verständlich ist.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ich glaube, dass dieses Szenario im realen Leben eintreten könnte.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. Bitte bewerten Sie die folgenden Aussagen:

	Sozial un- verantwortlich				Sozial verantwort- lich		
Ich nehme die in dem Artikel dargestellten Handlungen von Nubic wie folgt wahr:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ich denke, dass dieser Artikel eine Marke beschreibt, die ___ ist.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 2 (Consumer affinity)

1. Bitte bewerten Sie die untenstehenden Aussagen zu dem folgenden Land:

Schweiz	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu  Stimme voll zu						
Ich verspüre ein Gefühl der Sympathie für dieses Land.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ich fühle mich mit diesem Land verbunden.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Bitte bewerten Sie die untenstehenden Aussagen zu dem folgenden Land:

Österreich	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu  Stimme voll zu						
Ich verspüre ein Gefühl der Sympathie für dieses Land.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Ich fühle mich mit diesem Land verbunden.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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3. Bitte bewerten Sie die untenstehenden Aussagen zu dem folgenden Land:

Frankreich	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu  Stimme voll zu						
Ich verspüre ein Gefühl der Sympathie für dieses Land.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ich fühle mich mit diesem Land verbunden.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. Bitte bewerten Sie die untenstehenden Aussagen zu dem folgenden Land:

Belgien	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu  Stimme voll zu						
Ich verspüre ein Gefühl der Sympathie für dieses Land.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ich fühle mich mit diesem Land verbunden.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Bitte bewerten Sie die untenstehenden Aussagen zu dem folgenden Land:

Schweden	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu  Stimme voll zu						
Ich verspüre ein Gefühl der Sympathie für dieses Land.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ich fühle mich mit diesem Land verbunden.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 3 (Demographics)

1. Geschlecht:

- ☐ Weiblich
- ☐ Männlich
- ☐ Nicht-binär
- ☐ Andere

2. Alter in Jahren:

3. Staatsbürgerschaft:

- ☐ Deutsch
- ☐ Andere

4. Leben Sie seit mehr als 6 Jahren in Deutschland?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein

5. Beschäftigung:

- ☐ Berufstätig
- ☐ Arbeitslos
- ☐ Student/in
- ☐ Rentner/in
- ☐ Andere

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

Wir möchten uns ganz herzlich für Ihre Mithilfe bedanken.

Ihre Antworten wurden gespeichert, Sie können das Browser-Fenster nun schließen.

Appendix B: Pretest 2 results

Scenario believability and perception of the brand

Statistics			Statistics		
SCALE_BEL			SCALE_PER		
N	Valid	42	N	Valid	42
	Missing	0		Missing	0
Mean		5,5357	Mean		2,4405
Median		5,7500	Median		2,0000
Std. Deviation		1,26704	Std. Deviation		1,30292
Range		6,00	Range		6,00
Minimum		1,00	Minimum		1,00
Maximum		7,00	Maximum		7,00

Consumer affinity

Statistics						
		ASCALE_CHE	ASCALE_AUT	ASCALE_FRA	ASCALE_BEL	ASCALE_SWE
N	Valid	42	42	42	42	42
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4,0595	5,2857	3,5000	3,6786	4,5000
Std. Error of Mean		,17311	,21224	,19651	,18574	,18510
Median		4,0000	5,5000	3,5000	4,0000	4,2500
Mode		4,00	6,00	3,00 ^a	4,00	4,00
Std. Deviation		1,12186	1,37549	1,27356	1,20376	1,19959
Variance		1,259	1,892	1,622	1,449	1,439
Skewness		,334	-,893	,139	,107	-,412
Std. Error of Skewness		,365	,365	,365	,365	,365
Kurtosis		,644	,336	-,567	-,852	,885
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,717	,717	,717	,717	,717

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	ASCALE_AUT	5,2857	42	1,37549	,21224
	ASCALE_SWE	4,5000	42	1,19959	,18510

Paired Samples Correlations

			Correlation	Significance	
				One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
Pair 1	ASCALE_AUT & ASCALE_SWE	42	,070	,329	,659

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					Significance		
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	
					Lower	Upper			One-Sided p Two-Sided p
Pair 1	ASCALE_AUT - ASCALE_SWE	,78571	1,76048	,27165	,23711	1,33432	2,892	41	,003 ,006

Paired Samples Effect Sizes

			Standardized ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Pair 1	ASCALE_AUT – ASCALE_SWE	Cohen's d	1,76048	,446	,126	,761
		Hedges' correction	1,77679	,442	,125	,754

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
Cohen's d uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference.
Hedges' correction uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference, plus a correction factor.

Appendix C: Main questionnaire (Experimental group 3, English + German version)

Main questionnaire (English version)



The following study is conducted at the Institute for Marketing and International Business at the University of Vienna (Austria) and is part of my master thesis. The study deals with consumer behavior and is exclusively for scientific purpose and does not follow any commercial interest.

- Participation in the study is voluntary. You can stop the questionnaire at any time.
- Your participation is anonymous, your answers cannot be traced back to you.
- This also means that your personal data set is not identifiable to us after completion of the survey.
- We treat all your information as strictly confidential.
- It is important that you read the questions carefully and follow the instructions carefully.
- There is no time limit for this questionnaire. Please take your time to complete the questionnaire.
- It will take approximately 5-7 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

If you have any questions about this survey, you can contact me at the email address below.

Thank you for participating in the survey!

Antonia from Terzi

a11941011@univie.ac.at

Section 1 (Stimuli + scenario, experimental group 1)

Please read the following text carefully:

Nubic is a company from Austria that produces toothpaste. The company is considered to be an industry leader in the field of oral hygiene and caries prevention. The company's manufacturing facilities in Germany are modernized and they use the most advanced production equipment and processes. Nubic has been selling its toothpastes in Germany since 2020. However, Nubic has recently been criticized for its non-inclusive work environment and excessively long working hours, which underlines its lack of social responsibility.

Below you can see a picture of the product:



Section 2 (WTP)

1. Please answer the following questions based on the product picture and the information about the brand you just received.

At what price would you consider the price of this product so low that you would question its quality?	€
At what price would you consider the product to be a bargain – a great buy for the money?	€

At what price would you consider the product starting to get expensive – not out of the question, but you'd need to give some thought to buying it?	€
At what price would you consider this product so expensive that you would not consider buying it?	€

Section 3 (Consumer affinity)

2. Please evaluate the following statements about the country Austria:

Please choose a number between 1 and 7 that best represents your opinion.

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
I have a pleasant feeling toward this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have feelings of sympathy toward this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am captivated by this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am feeling attached to this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I love this country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This country inspires me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 4 (Scenario perception)

3. Please evaluate the following statement:

	Socially irresponsible				Socially responsible		
I think that this article describes a brand that is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 5 (Control variables + attention check)

4. Please then indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Please choose a number between 1 and 7 that best represents your opinion.

	Strongly disagree  Strongly agree						
When it comes to choosing a toothpaste, I rely heavily on price.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will buy a toothpaste when it is on promotion.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I choose the lowest priced toothpaste that will suit my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Toothpaste is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Please select “strongly agree” at this point.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I choose my toothpaste very carefully.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Choosing a toothpaste is an important decision for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Now please answer the following statements:

Please choose a number between 1 and 7 that best represents your opinion.

Social issues are...

Social issues are...								
unimportant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	important to me.
means nothing to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	means a lot to me.

is personally irrelevant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	is personally relevant to me.
doesn't matter a great deal to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	does matter a great deal to me.
is of no concern to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	is of great concern to me.

Section 6 (Demographics)

6. Gender:

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Other

7. Age in years:

8. Citizenship:

- ☐ German
- ☐ Other

9. Have you been living in Germany for more than 6 years?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

10. Employment:

- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Other

11. Income (optional):

- ☐ < 1000 €
- ☐ 1001 – 2000 €
- ☐ 2001 – 3000 €
- ☐ 3001 – 4000 €
- ☐ 4001 – 5000 €
- ☐ > 5001 €

Thank you for your participation!

We would like to thank you very much for your assistance.

Your answers have been recorded; you can now close the browser.

Main questionnaire (German version)



Die folgende Studie wird am Institut für Marketing und Internationale Wirtschaft der Universität Wien (Österreich) durchgeführt und ist Teil meiner Masterarbeit. Die Studie befasst sich mit dem Konsumentenverhalten und ist ausschließlich für den wissenschaftlichen Zweck bestimmt und folgt keinem kommerziellen Interesse.

- Die Teilnahme an der Studie ist freiwillig. Sie können den Fragebogen jederzeit abbrechen.
- Ihre Teilnahme ist anonym, Ihre Antworten können nicht auf Sie zurückgeführt werden.
- Das bedeutet ebenfalls, dass Ihr persönlicher Datensatz nach Abschluss der Befragung für uns nicht identifizierbar ist.
- Wir behandeln all Ihre Angaben streng vertraulich.
- Es ist wichtig, dass Sie die Fragen sorgfältig lesen und die Anweisungen genau befolgen.
- Für diesen Fragebogen gibt es kein Zeitlimit. Bitte nehmen Sie sich Zeit zum Ausfüllen des Fragebogens.
- Das Ausfüllen des Fragebogens wird etwa 5-7 Minuten dauern.

Wenn Sie Fragen zu dieser Umfrage haben, können Sie mich unter der unten angegebenen E-Mail-Adresse kontaktieren.

Vielen Dank, dass Sie an der Umfrage teilnehmen!

Antonia von Terzi

a11941011@univie.ac.at

Section 1 (Stimuli + scenario, experimental group 1)

Bitte lesen Sie den folgenden Text aufmerksam:

Nubic ist ein Unternehmen aus Österreich, das Zahnpasta herstellt. Das Unternehmen gilt als Branchenführer im Bereich der Mundhygiene und Kariesprävention. Die Fertigungsstätten des Unternehmens in Deutschland sind modernisiert und sie nutzen die fortschrittlichsten Produktionsanlagen und -prozesse. Nubic vertreibt seine Zahnpasten seit 2020 in Deutschland. Allerdings wurde Nubic in letzter Zeit für sein nicht integratives Arbeitsumfeld und seine übermäßig langen Arbeitszeiten kritisiert, was seine mangelnde soziale Verantwortung unterstreicht.

Hier finden Sie ein Bild von dem Produkt:



Section 2 (WTP)

1. Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen auf der Grundlage des Produktbildes und der Informationen über die Marke, die Sie gerade gesehen haben.

Zu welchem Preis würden Sie den Preis dieses Produkts für so niedrig halten, dass Sie seine Qualität in Frage stellen würden?

€

Zu welchem Preis würden Sie das Produkt für ein Schnäppchen halten – ein guter Kauf für das Geld?	€
Zu welchem Preis würde das Produkt Ihrer Meinung nach anfangen, teuer zu werden – nicht ausgeschlossen, aber Sie müssten über den Kauf nachdenken?	€
Zu welchem Preis würden Sie das Produkt als so teuer ansehen, dass Sie es nicht mehr kaufen würden?	€

Section 3 (consumer affinity)

2. Bitte bewerten Sie die untenstehenden Aussagen zu dem Land Österreich:

Bitte wählen Sie eine Zahl zwischen 1 und 7, die Ihre Meinung am besten wiedergibt.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu  Stimme voll zu						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ich empfinde ein angenehmes Gefühl gegenüber diesem Land.							
Ich mag dieses Land.							
Ich verspüre ein Gefühl der Sympathie für dieses Land.							
Ich bin von diesem Land fasziniert.							
Ich fühle mich mit diesem Land verbunden.							
Ich liebe dieses Land.							
Dieses Land inspiriert mich.							

Section 4 (Scenario perception)

3. Bitte bewerten Sie die folgende Aussage:

	sozial un- verantwort- lich				Sozial verantwort- lich		
Ich denke, dass dieser Artikel eine Marke beschreibt, die ____ ist.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 5 (Control variables)

4. Bitte geben Sie anschließend an, inwieweit Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen oder nicht zustimmen.

Bitte wählen Sie eine Zahl zwischen 1 und 7, die Ihre Meinung am besten wiedergibt.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu  Stimme voll zu						
Wenn es um die Wahl einer Zahnpasta geht, achte ich stark auf den Preis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ich kaufe eine Zahnpasta, wenn sie im Angebot ist.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ich wähle die preisgünstigste Zahnpasta, die meinen Bedürfnissen erfüllt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Zahnpasta ist für mich sehr wichtig.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bitte wählen Sie „stimme voll zu“ an dieser Stelle aus.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ich wähle meine Zahnpasta sehr sorgfältig aus.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Die Wahl einer Zahnpasta ist eine wichtige Entscheidung für mich.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Beantworten Sie nun bitte die folgenden Aussagen:

Bitte wählen Sie eine Zahl zwischen 1 und 7, die Ihre Meinung am besten wiedergibt.

Soziale Belange...



sind unwichtig für mich.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	sind wichtig für mich.
bedeuten mir nichts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	bedeuten mir viel.
sind für mich persönlich irrelevant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	sind für mich persönlich relevant.
sind für mich nicht von großer Wichtigkeit.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	sind für mich von großer Wichtigkeit.
sind für mich nicht von Belang.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	sind für mich von großem Belang.

Section 6 (Demographics)

6. Geschlecht:

- ☐ Weiblich
- ☐ Männlich
- ☐ Nicht-binär
- ☐ Andere

7. Alter in Jahren:

8. Staatsbürgerschaft:

- ☐ Deutsch
- ☐ Andere

9. Leben Sie seit mehr als 6 Jahren in Deutschland?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein

10. Beschäftigung:

- ☐ Berufstätig
- ☐ Arbeitslos
- ☐ Student/in
- ☐ Rentner/in
- ☐ Andere

11. Einkommen (optional):

- ☐ < 1000 €
- ☐ 1001 – 2000 €
- ☐ 2001 – 3000 €
- ☐ 3001 – 4000 €
- ☐ 4001 – 5000 €
- ☐ > 5001 €

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

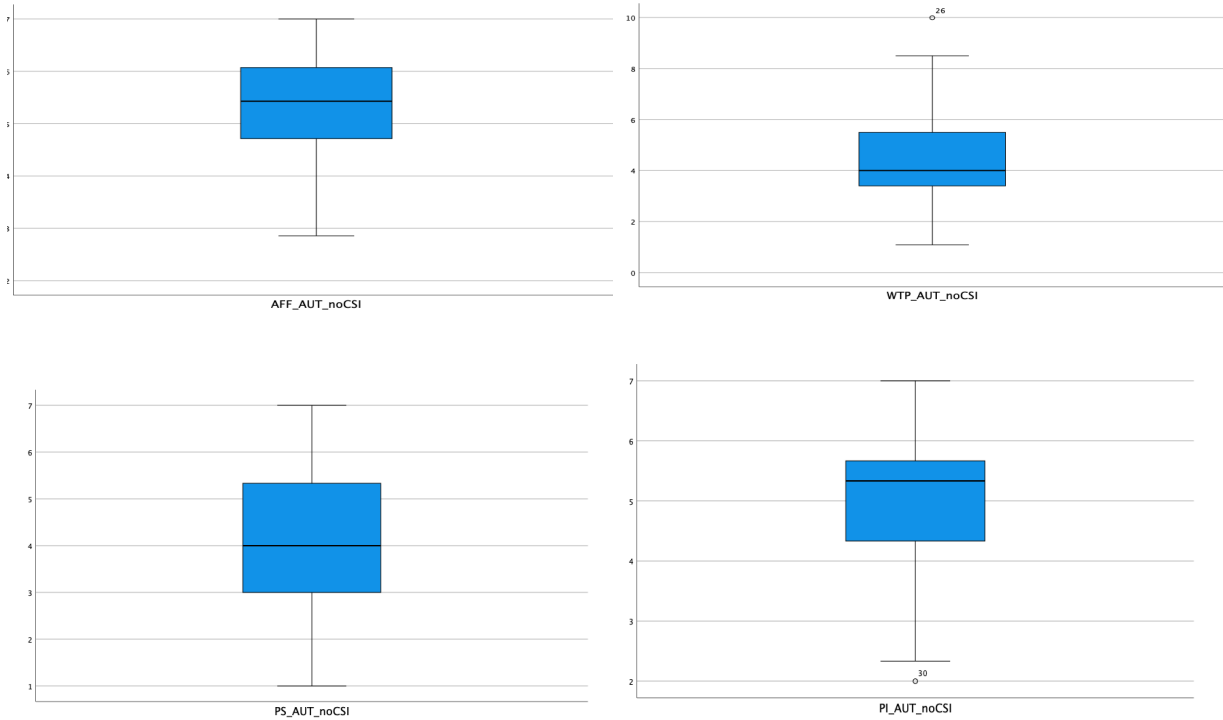
Wir möchten uns ganz herzlich für Ihre Mithilfe bedanken.

Ihre Antworten wurden gespeichert, Sie können das Browser-Fenster nun schließen.

Appendix D: Data analysis outputs

Statistical assumptions – outliers and normal distribution

Experimental group 1

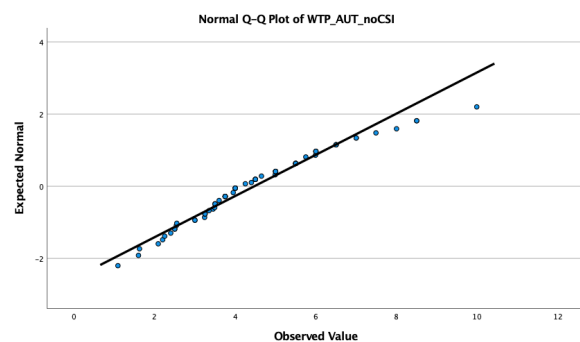
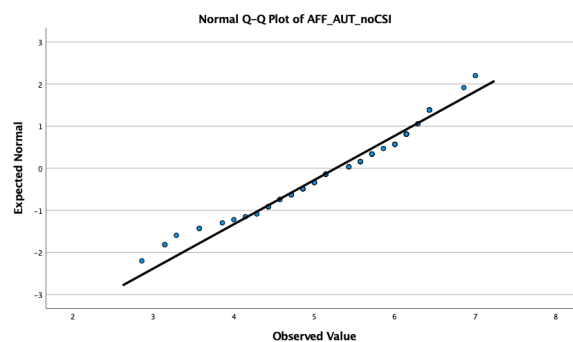


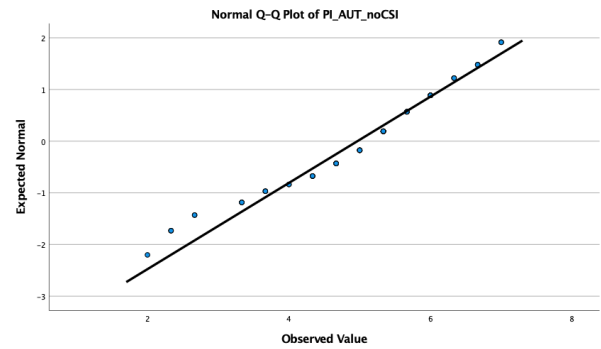
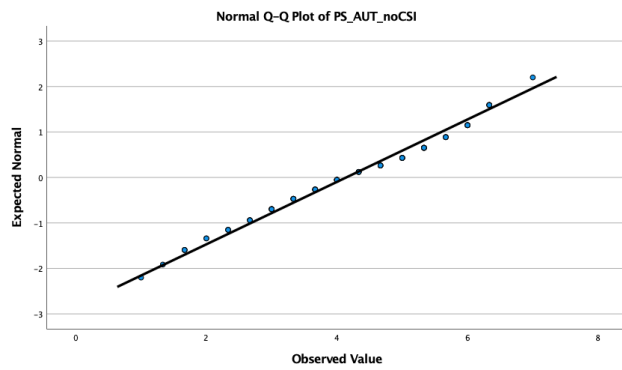
Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
AFF_AUT_noCSI	,091	71	,200 [*]	,961	71	,026
WTP_AUT_noCSI	,127	71	,006	,963	71	,036
PS_AUT_noCSI	,089	71	,200 [*]	,974	71	,140
PI_AUT_noCSI	,141	71	,001	,950	71	,007

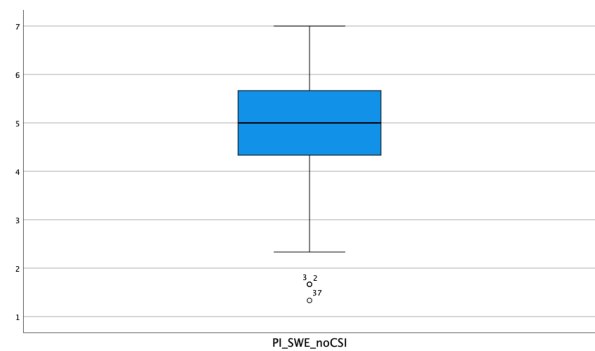
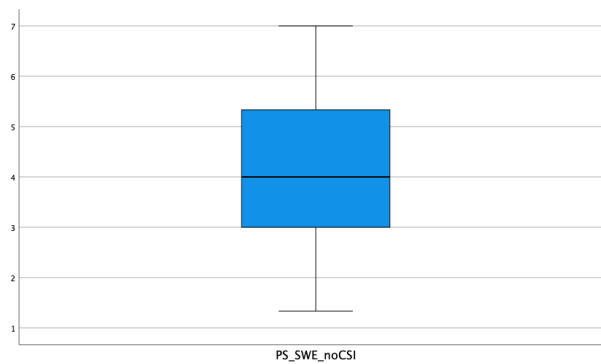
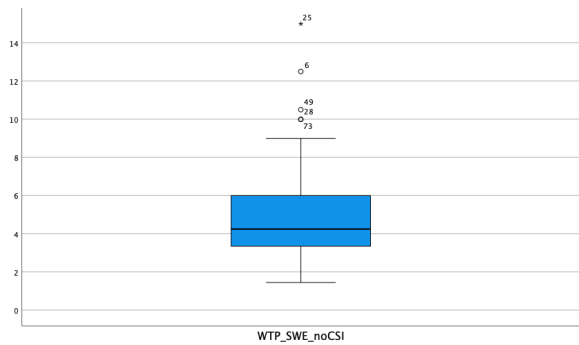
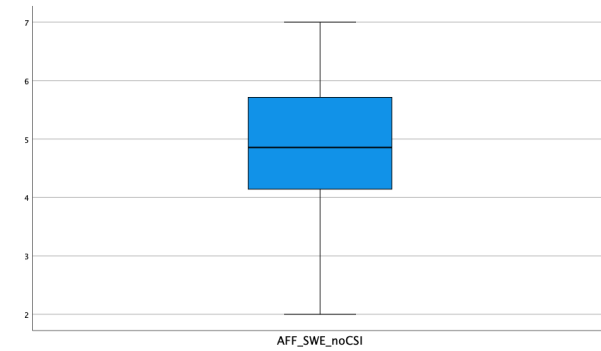
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction





Experimental group 2

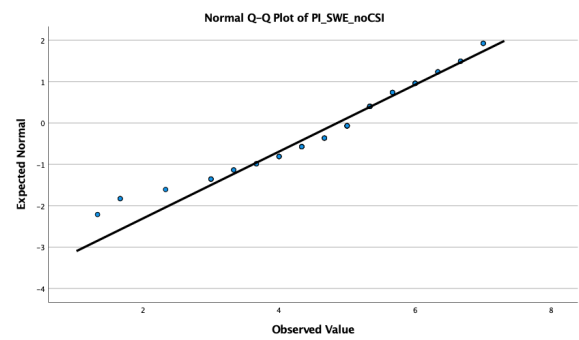
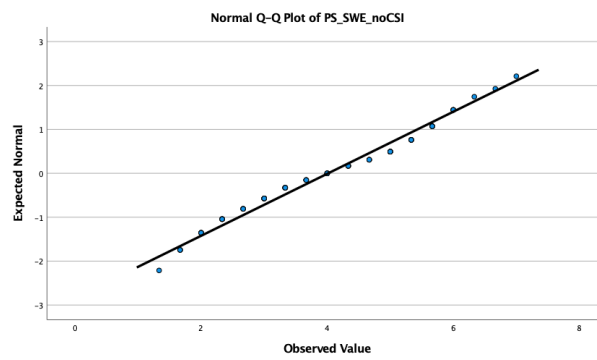
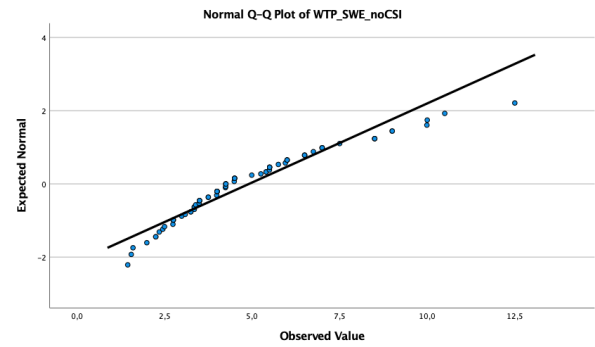
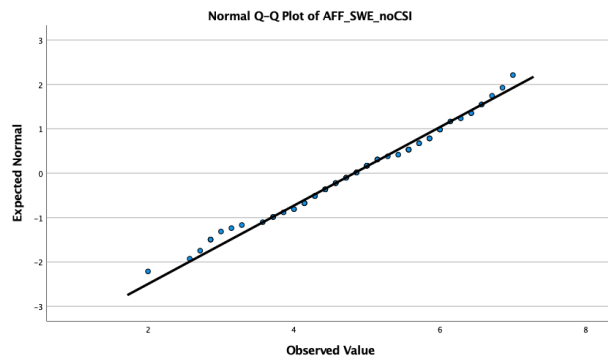


Tests of Normality

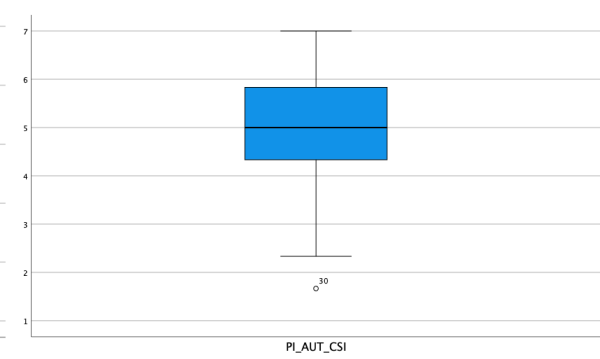
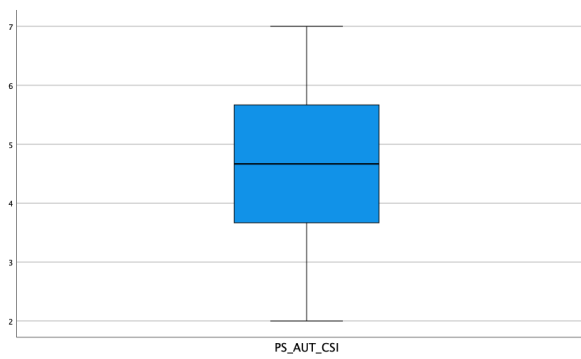
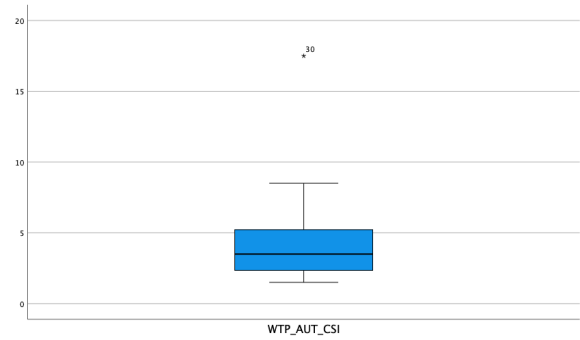
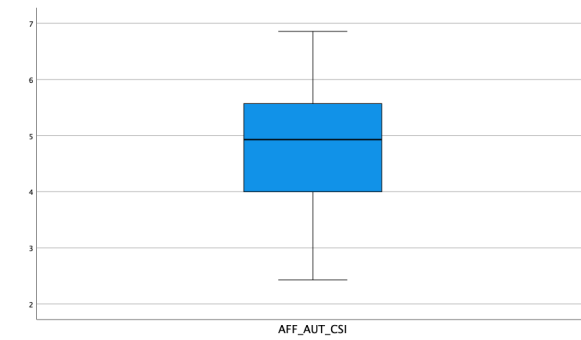
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
AFF_SWE_noCSI	,074	73	,200*	,983	73	,443
WTP_SWE_noCSI	,160	73	<,001	,927	73	<,001
PS_SWE_noCSI	,113	73	,022	,967	73	,055
PI_SWE_noCSI	,163	73	<,001	,949	73	,005

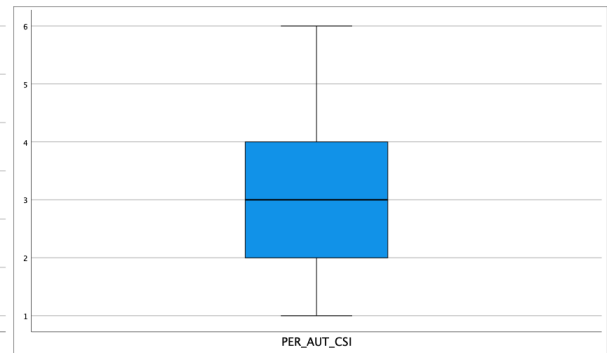
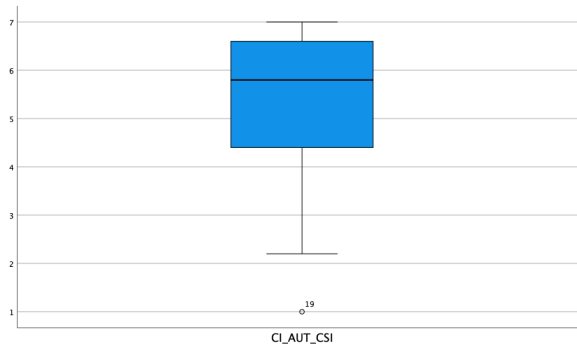
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction



Experimental group 3



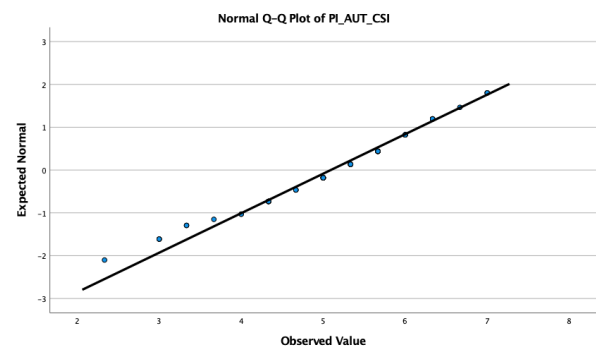
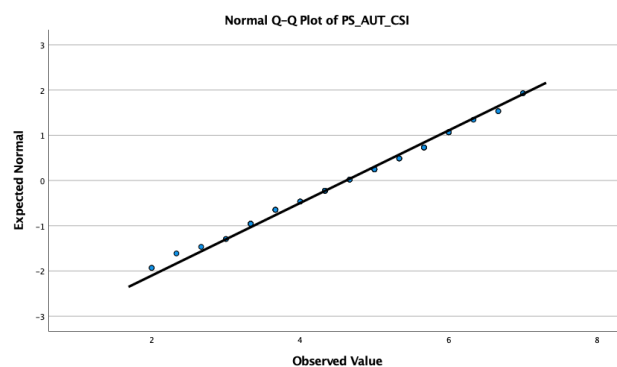
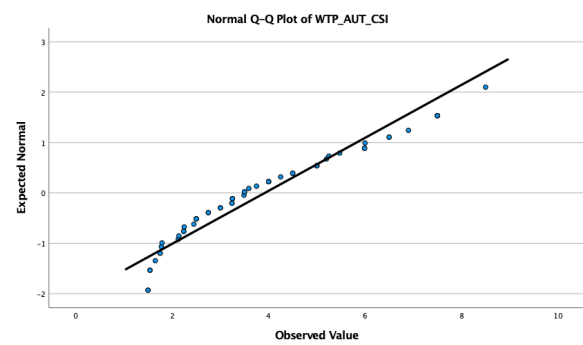
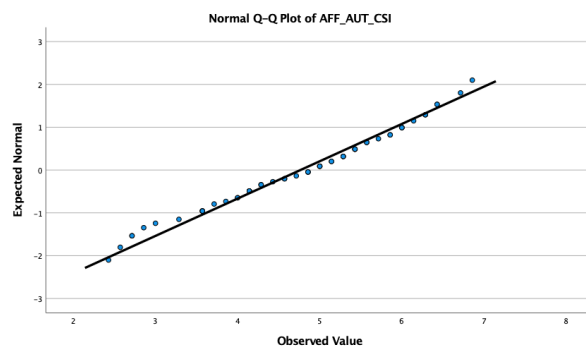


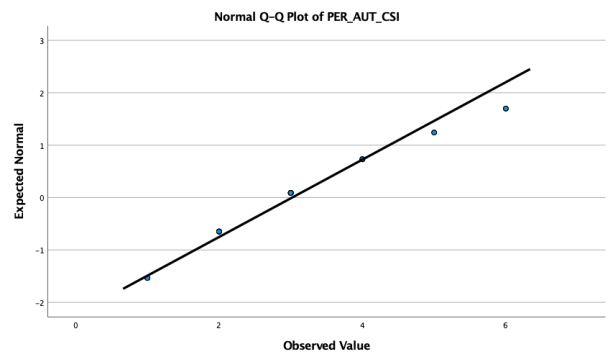
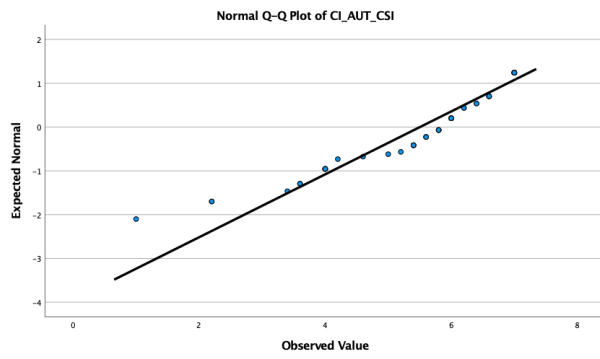
Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
AFF_AUT_CSI	,078	55	,200*	,974	55	,272
WTP_AUT_CSI	,115	55	,069	,928	55	,003
PS_AUT_CSI	,075	55	,200*	,980	55	,484
PI_AUT_CSI	,121	55	,043	,968	55	,145
CI_AUT_CSI	,180	55	<,001	,880	55	<,001
PER_AUT_CSI	,178	55	<,001	,913	55	<,001

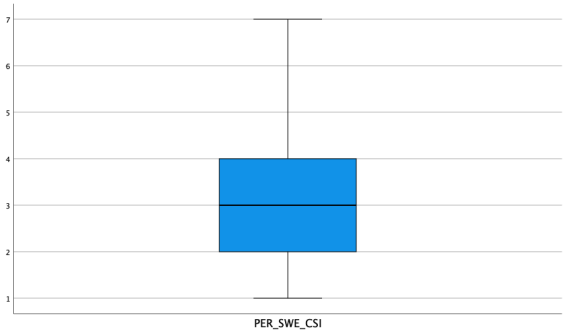
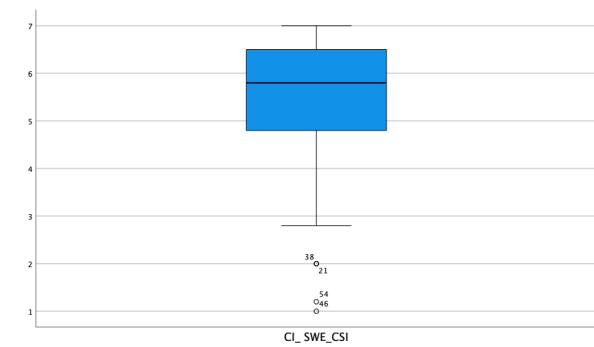
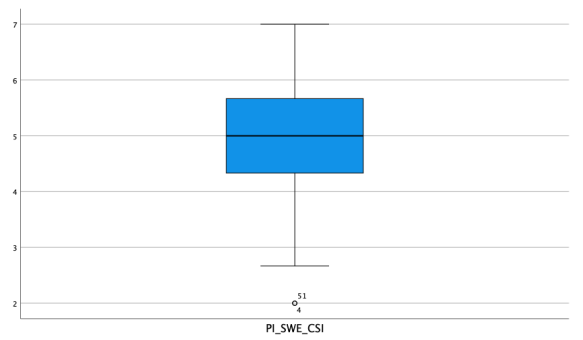
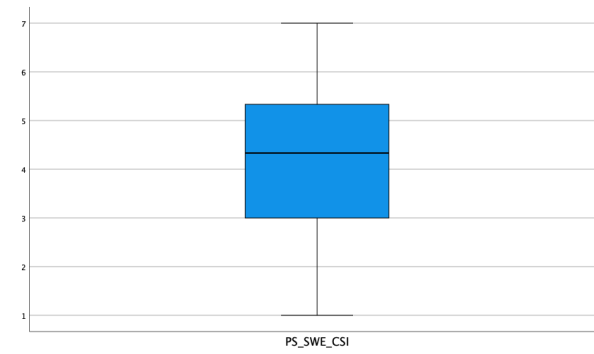
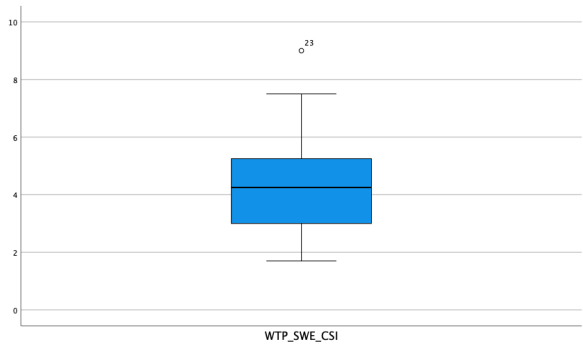
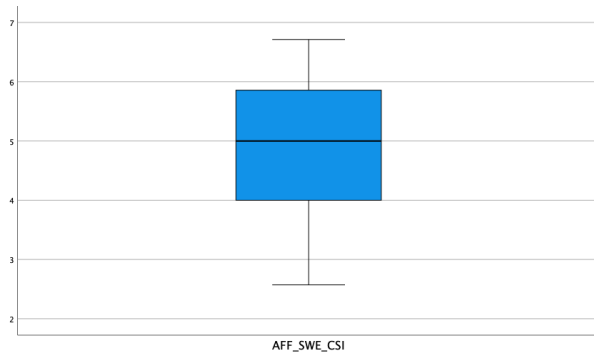
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a. Lilliefors Significance Correction





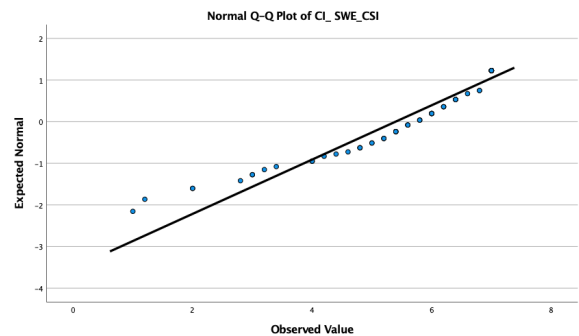
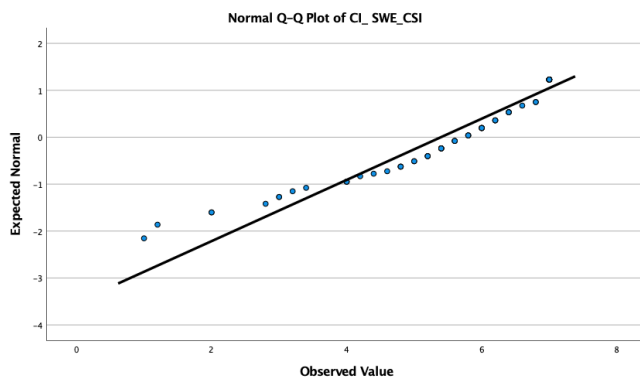
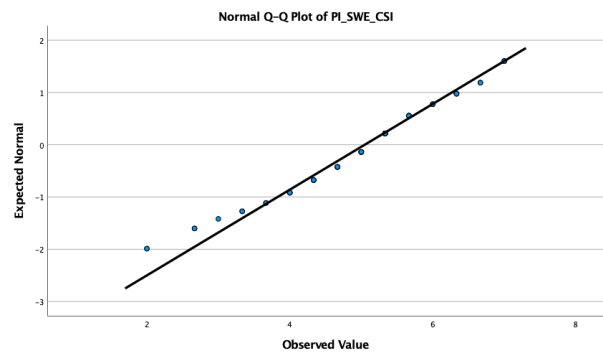
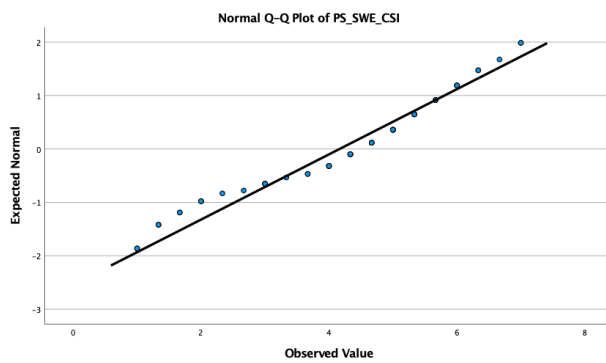
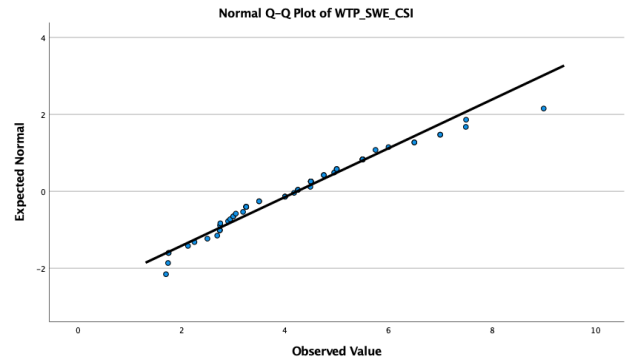
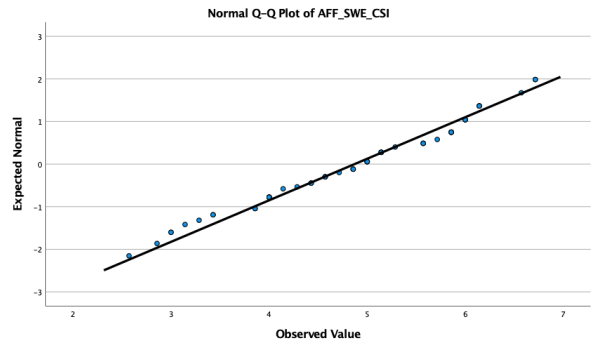
Experimental group 4



Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
AFF_SWE_CSI	,102	63	,169	,970	63	,133
WTP_SWE_CSI	,114	63	,040	,962	63	,048
PS_SWE_CSI	,128	63	,012	,946	63	,008
PL_SWE_CSI	,103	63	,091	,963	63	,053
CL_SWE_CSI	,147	63	,002	,882	63	<,001
PER_SWE_CSI	,155	63	<,001	,932	63	,002

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction



Statistical assumptions - Homogeneity of variances

Descriptives

WTP_all

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
AUT_noCSI	71	4,4709	1,75174	,20789	4,0563	4,8855	1,09	9,99
SWE_noCSI	73	4,9121	2,31428	,27087	4,3722	5,4521	1,45	12,50
AUT_CSI	55	3,9201	1,90193	,25646	3,4059	4,4343	1,50	8,50
SWE_CSI	63	4,2327	1,57871	,19890	3,8351	4,6303	1,70	9,00
Total	262	4,4209	1,94178	,11996	4,1847	4,6572	1,09	12,50

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
WTP_all	Based on Mean	3,311	3	258	,021
	Based on Median	1,941	3	258	,123
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1,941	3	219,385	,124
	Based on trimmed mean	2,916	3	258	,035

ANOVA

WTP_all

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	33,819	3	11,273	3,061	,029
Within Groups	950,286	258	3,683		
Total	984,105	261			

Descriptives

Affinity_all

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
AUT_noCSI	71	5,2656	,95138	,11291	5,0404	5,4908	2,86	7,00
SWE_noCSI	73	4,8239	1,13177	,13246	4,5598	5,0879	2,00	7,00
AUT_CSI	55	4,7636	1,14722	,15469	4,4535	5,0738	2,43	6,86
SWE_CSI	63	4,8707	1,02494	,12913	4,6126	5,1289	2,57	6,71
Total	262	4,9422	1,07623	,06649	4,8113	5,0731	2,00	7,00

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Affinity_all	Based on Mean	1,058	3	258	,368
	Based on Median	,966	3	258	,410
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,966	3	253,803	,410
	Based on trimmed mean	1,043	3	258	,374

ANOVA

Affinity_all

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10,523	3	3,508	3,101	,027
Within Groups	291,786	258	1,131		
Total	302,308	261			

Descriptives

PS_all

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
AUT_noCSI	71	4,1408	1,45696	,17291	3,7960	4,4857	1,00	7,00
SWE_noCSI	73	4,0137	1,41578	,16570	3,6834	4,3440	1,33	7,00
AUT_CSI	55	4,6182	1,24626	,16805	4,2813	4,9551	2,00	7,00
SWE_CSI	63	4,1640	1,63833	,20641	3,7514	4,5766	1,00	7,00
Total	262	4,2112	1,45908	,09014	4,0337	4,3887	1,00	7,00

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PS_all	Based on Mean	1,669	3	258	,174
	Based on Median	1,352	3	258	,258
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1,352	3	239,359	,258
	Based on trimmed mean	1,630	3	258	,183

ANOVA

PS_all

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12,449	3	4,150	1,971	,119
Within Groups	543,198	258	2,105		
Total	555,647	261			

Descriptives

PI_all

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
AUT_noCSI	71	4,9671	1,19809	,14219	4,6836	5,2507	2,00	7,00
SWE_noCSI	73	4,8539	1,23726	,14481	4,5652	5,1426	1,33	7,00
AUT_CSI	55	5,0909	1,08384	,14615	4,7979	5,3839	2,33	7,00
SWE_CSI	63	5,0476	1,21940	,15363	4,7405	5,3547	2,00	7,00
Total	262	4,9809	1,18816	,07340	4,8364	5,1255	1,33	7,00

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PI_all	Based on Mean	,165	3	258	,920
	Based on Median	,107	3	258	,956
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,107	3	249,969	,956
	Based on trimmed mean	,135	3	258	,939

ANOVA

PI_all

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2,137	3	,712	,502	,681
Within Groups	366,323	258	1,420		
Total	368,460	261			

Group Statistics

		ExpGrp	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CI_all	AUT_CSI		55	5,5018	1,39197	,18769
	SWE_CSI		63	5,3937	1,53285	,19312

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
CI_all	Equal variances assumed	,407	,525	,399	116	,345	,691	,10817	,27108	-,42874	,64508
	Equal variances not assumed			,402	115,809	,344	,689	,10817	,26930	-,42523	,64157

Group Statistics

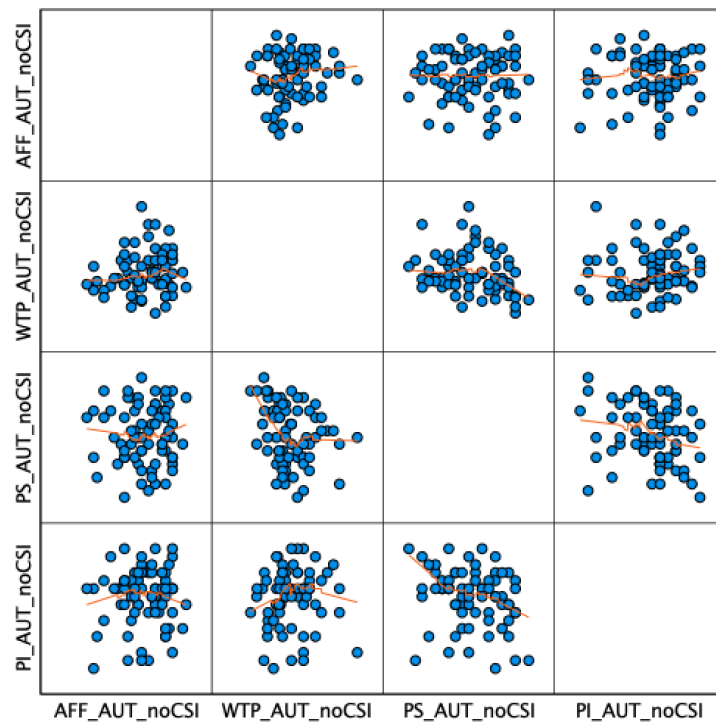
	ExpGrp	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PER_all	AUT_CSI	55	3,0182	1,35388	,18256
	SWE_CSI	63	3,1905	1,58478	,19966

Independent Samples Test

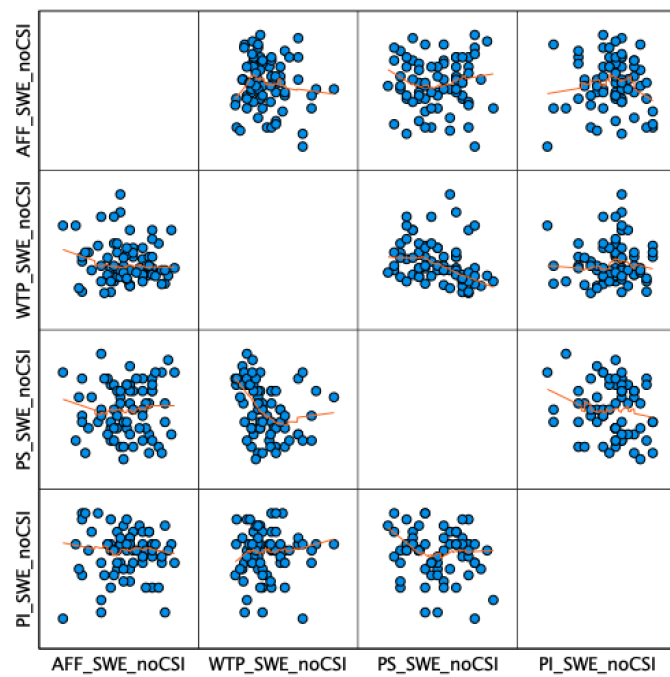
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
PER_all	Equal variances assumed	2,628	,108	-,630	116	,265	,530	-,17229	,27345	-,71389	,36930
	Equal variances not assumed			-,637	115,952	,263	,525	-,17229	,27054	-,70814	,36355

Statistical assumptions – linearity

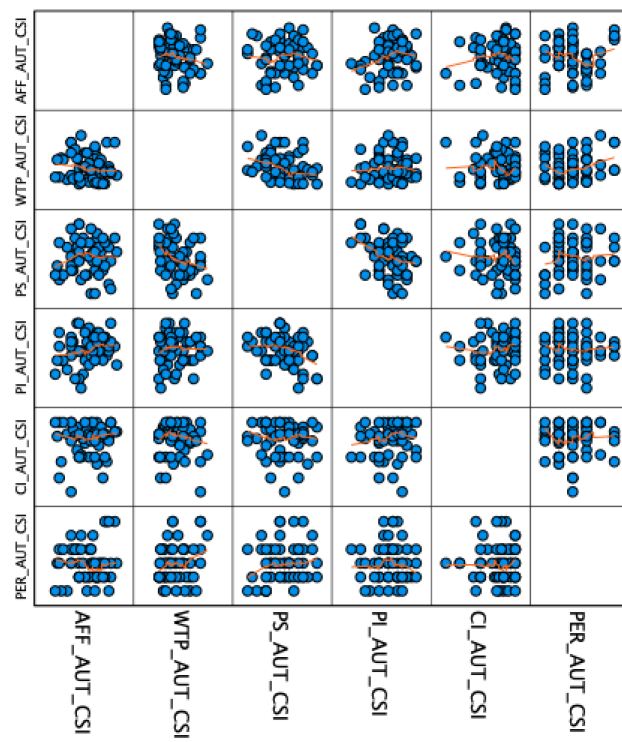
Experimental group 1



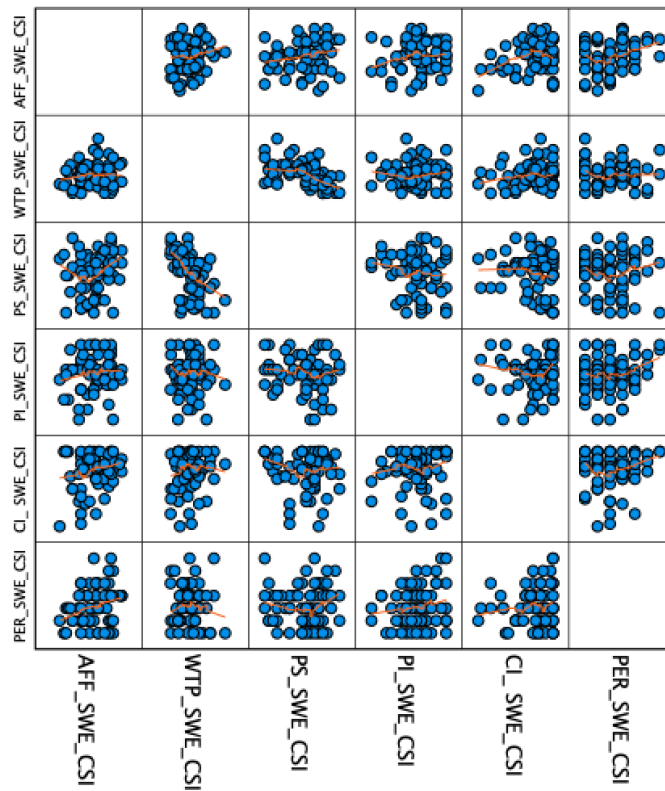
Experimental group 2



Experimental group 3

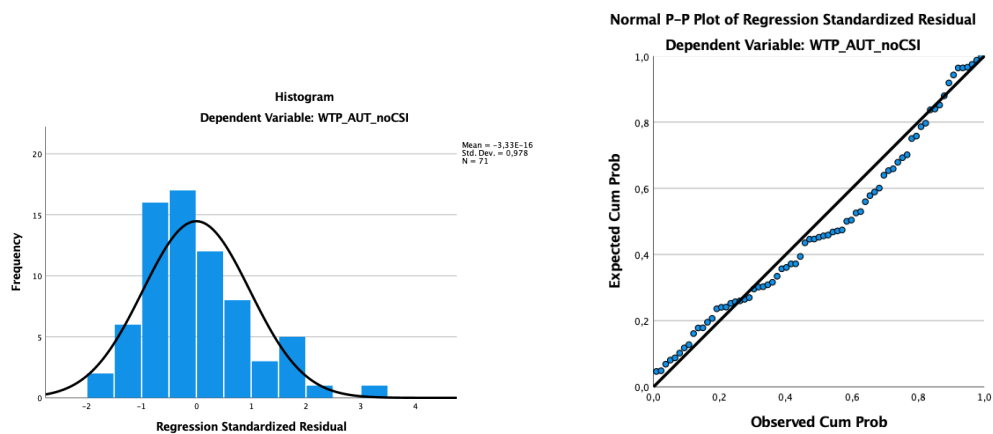


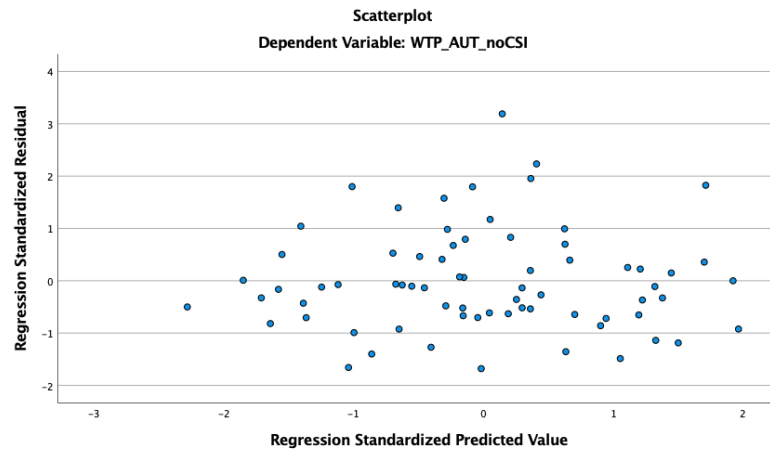
Experimental group 4



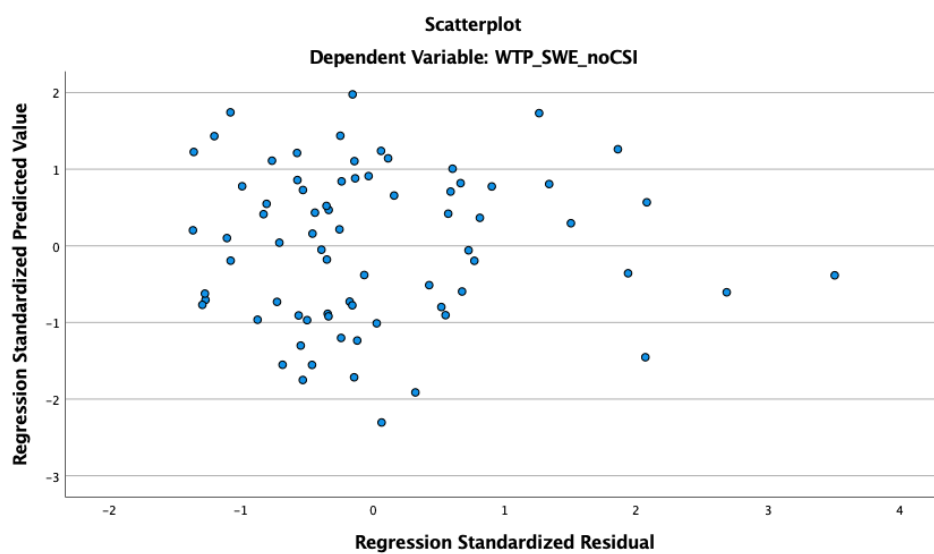
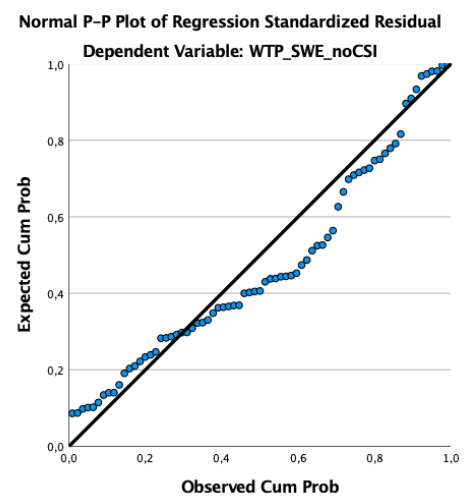
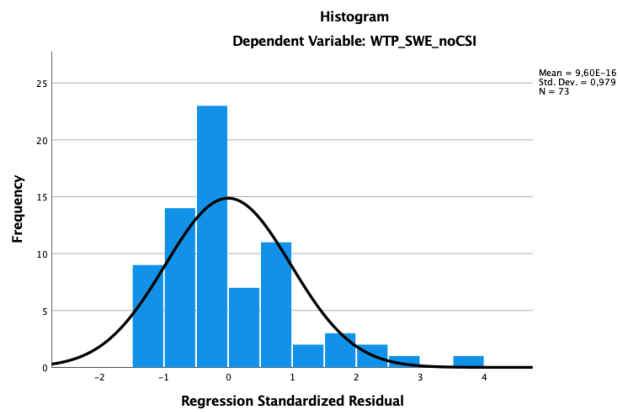
Statistical assumption – normal distribution of residuals and homoscedasticity

Experimental group 1

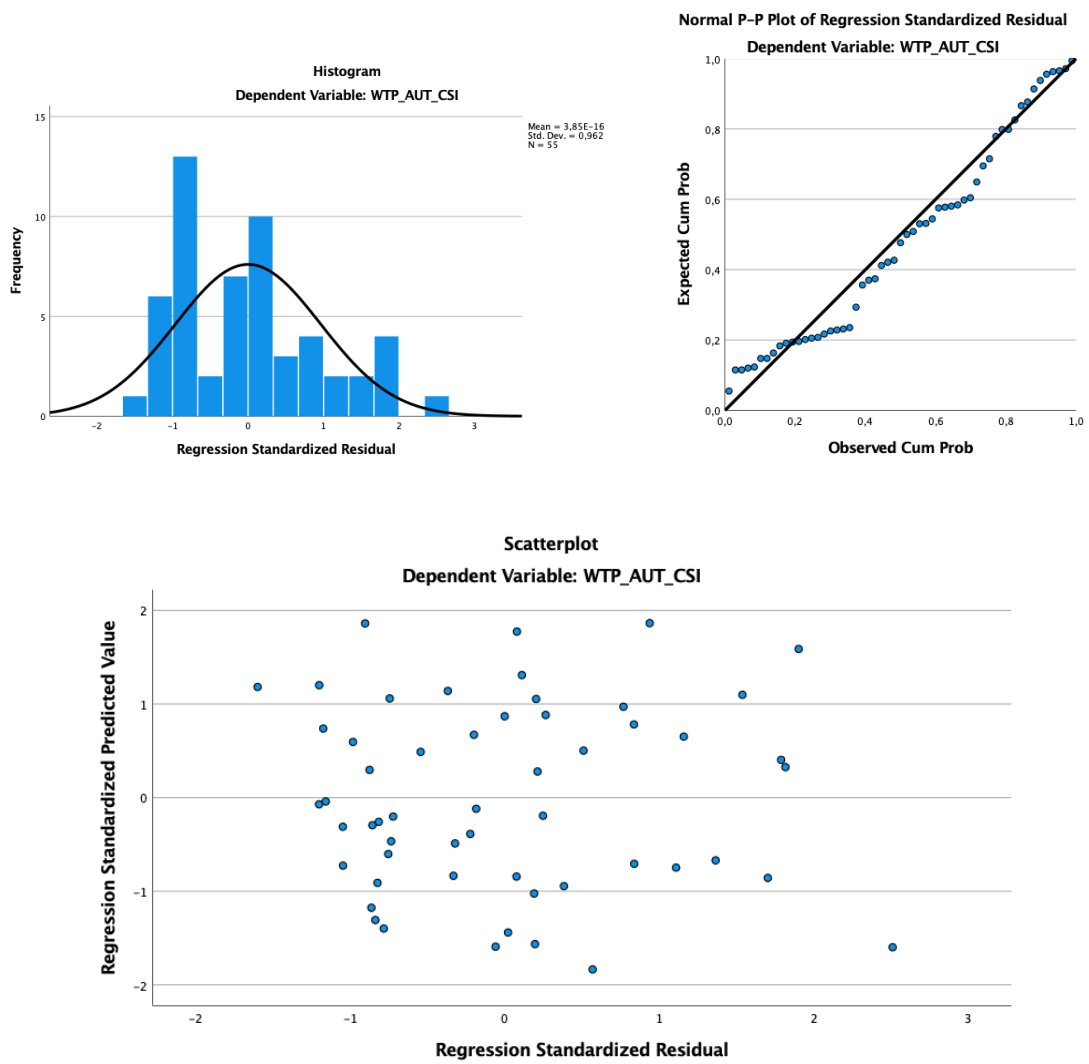




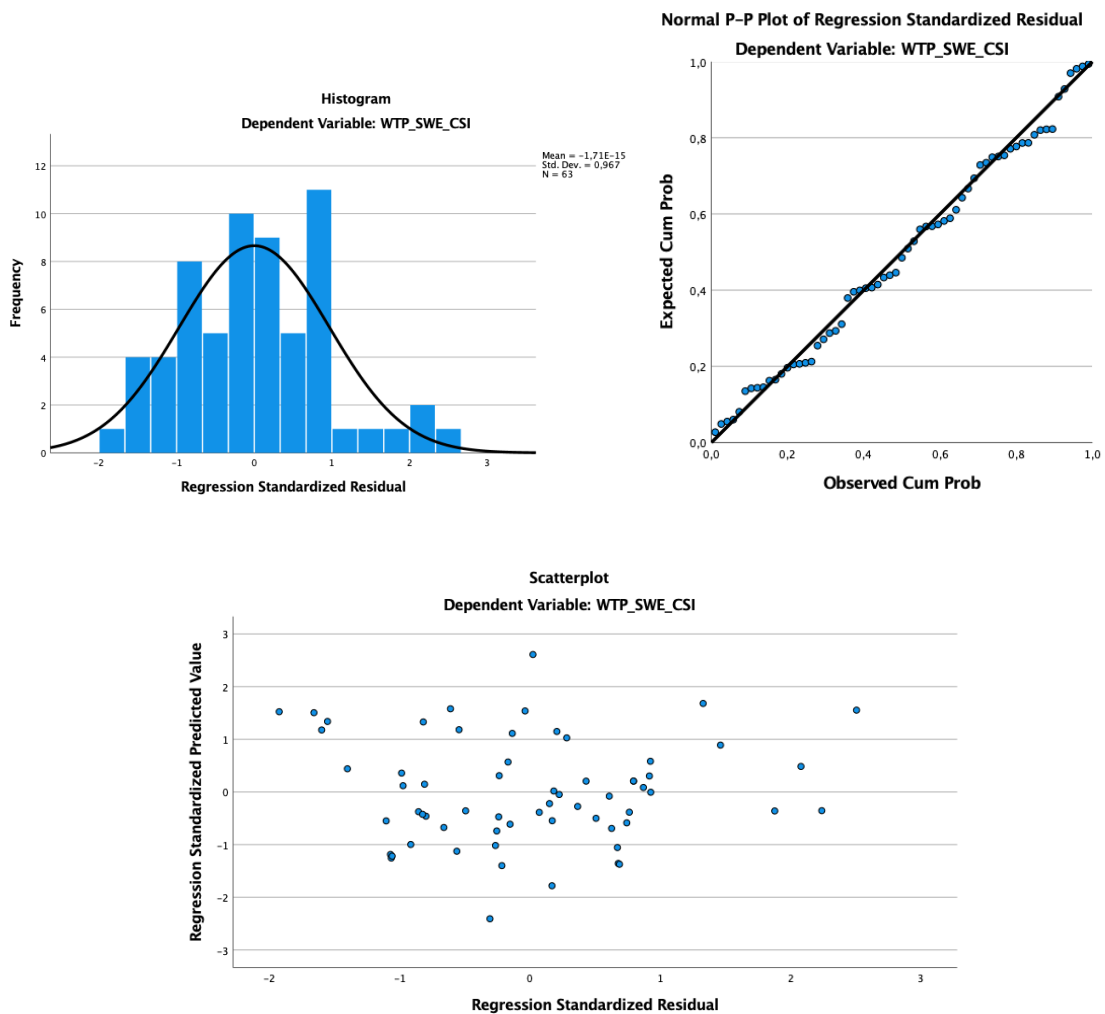
Experimental group 2



Experimental group 3



Experimental group 4



Sample profile

Gender						Statistics		
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Age in years		
Valid	Female	138	52,67	52,67	52,67	N	Valid	262
	Male	123	46,95	46,95	99,62		Missing	0
	Other	1	,38	,38	100,0	Mean	33,34	
	Total	262	100,0	100,0		Std. Deviation	11,291	
						Minimum	18	
						Maximum	74	

Citizenship					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	German	258	98,47	98,47	98,5
	Other	4	1,53	1,53	100,0
	Total	262	100,0	100,0	

Have you lived in Germany for more than 6 years?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	256	97,71	97,71	97,71
	No	6	2,29	2,29	100,0
	Total	262	100,0	100,0	

Occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Employed	172	65,65	65,65	65,65
	Unemployed	5	1,91	1,91	67,56
	Student	77	29,39	29,39	96,95
	Retired	3	1,15	1,15	98,09
	Other	5	1,91	1,91	100,0
	Total	262	100,0	100,0	

Income (optional)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	≤ 1000 €	58	22,14	24,47	24,47
	1001 – 2000 €	58	22,14	24,47	48,95
	2001 – 3000 €	63	24,05	26,58	75,53
	3001 – 4000 €	27	10,31	11,39	86,92
	4001 – 5000 €	15	5,73	6,33	93,25
	≥ 5001 €	16	6,11	6,75	100,0
	Total	237	90,46	100,0	
Missing	not answered	25	9,54		
Total		262	100,0		

Controls

Control variables (whole sample)

Statistics

		PS_all	PI_all	CI_all
N	Valid	262	262	118
	Missing	0	0	144
Mean		4,2112	4,9809	5,4441
Median		4,3333	5,0000	5,8000
Mode		5,00	5,33	7,00
Std. Deviation		1,45908	1,18816	1,46366
Variance		2,129	1,412	2,142

Price sensitivity

Descriptives

PS_all

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
AUT_noCSI	71	4,1408	1,45696	,17291	3,7960	4,4857	1,00	7,00
SWE_noCSI	73	4,0137	1,41578	,16570	3,6834	4,3440	1,33	7,00
AUT_CSI	55	4,6182	1,24626	,16805	4,2813	4,9551	2,00	7,00
SWE_CSI	63	4,1640	1,63833	,20641	3,7514	4,5766	1,00	7,00
Total	262	4,2112	1,45908	,09014	4,0337	4,3887	1,00	7,00

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PS_all	Based on Mean	1,669	3	258	,174
	Based on Median	1,352	3	258	,258
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1,352	3	239,359	,258
	Based on trimmed mean	1,630	3	258	,183

ANOVA

PS_all

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12,449	3	4,150	1,971	,119
Within Groups	543,198	258	2,105		
Total	555,647	261			

Product involvement

Descriptives

PI_all

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
AUT_noCSI	71	4,9671	1,19809	,14219	4,6836	5,2507	2,00	7,00
SWE_noCSI	73	4,8539	1,23726	,14481	4,5652	5,1426	1,33	7,00
AUT_CSI	55	5,0909	1,08384	,14615	4,7979	5,3839	2,33	7,00
SWE_CSI	63	5,0476	1,21940	,15363	4,7405	5,3547	2,00	7,00
Total	262	4,9809	1,18816	,07340	4,8364	5,1255	1,33	7,00

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PI_all	Based on Mean	,165	3	258	,920
	Based on Median	,107	3	258	,956
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,107	3	249,969	,956
	Based on trimmed mean	,135	3	258	,939

ANOVA					
PI_all					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2,137	3	,712	,502	,681
Within Groups	366,323	258	1,420		
Total	368,460	261			

Cause involvement

Descriptives								
CI_all								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
AUT_CSI	55	5,5018	1,39197	,18769	5,1255	5,8781	1,00	7,00
SWE_CSI	63	5,3937	1,53285	,19312	5,0076	5,7797	1,00	7,00
Total	118	5,4441	1,46366	,13474	5,1772	5,7109	1,00	7,00

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
CI_all	Based on Mean	,407	1	116	,525
	Based on Median	,466	1	116	,496
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,466	1	114,958	,496
	Based on trimmed mean	,459	1	116	,500

ANOVA					
CI_all					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	,344	1	,344	,159	,691
Within Groups	250,307	116	2,158		
Total	250,651	117			

Manipulation check

Scenario perception

Statistics		
PER_all		
N	Valid	118
	Missing	144
Mean		3,1102
Median		3,0000
Mode		2,00
Std. Deviation		1,47795
Variance		2,184

Descriptive statistics

Experimental group 1

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
AFF_AUT_noCSI	71	2,86	7,00	5,2656	,95138
WTP_AUT_noCSI	71	1,09	9,99	4,4709	1,75174
PS_AUT_noCSI	71	1,00	7,00	4,1408	1,45696
PI_AUT_noCSI	71	2,00	7,00	4,9671	1,19809
Valid N (listwise)	71				

Experimental group 2

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
AFF_SWE_noCSI	73	2,00	7,00	4,8239	1,13177
WTP_SWE_noCSI	73	1,45	12,50	4,9121	2,31428
PS_SWE_noCSI	73	1,33	7,00	4,0137	1,41578
PI_SWE_noCSI	73	1,33	7,00	4,8539	1,23726
Valid N (listwise)	73				

Experimental group 3

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
AFF_AUT_CSI	55	2,43	6,86	4,7636	1,14722
WTP_AUT_CSI	55	1,50	8,50	3,9201	1,90193
PS_AUT_CSI	55	2,00	7,00	4,6182	1,24626
PI_AUT_CSI	55	2,33	7,00	5,0909	1,08384
CI_AUT_CSI	55	1,00	7,00	5,5018	1,39197
PER_AUT_CSI	55	1,00	6,00	3,0182	1,35388
Valid N (listwise)	55				

Experimental group 4

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
AFF_SWE_CSI	63	2,57	6,71	4,8707	1,02494
WTP_SWE_CSI	63	1,70	9,00	4,2327	1,57871
PS_SWE_CSI	63	1,00	7,00	4,1640	1,63833
PI_SWE_CSI	63	2,00	7,00	5,0476	1,21940
CI_SWE_CSI	63	1,00	7,00	5,3937	1,53285
PER_SWE_CSI	63	1,00	7,00	3,1905	1,58478
Valid N (listwise)	63				

Main Analysis

Independent sample t-test – Comparison between mean consumer affinity for Austria and Sweden

Group Statistics

	COUNTRY	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Affinity_all	AUT	126	5,0465	1,06673	,09503
	SWE	136	4,8456	1,07989	,09260

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Affinity_all	Equal variances assumed	,015	,903	1,513	260	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	,20090	,13275	Lower	Upper
	Equal variances not assumed			1,514	258,925	,066	,131	,20090	,13269	-,06038	,46218

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardized ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Affinity_all	Cohen's d	1,07358	,187	-,056	,430
	Hedges' correction	1,07669	,187	-,056	,429
	Glass's delta	1,07989	,186	-,058	,429

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
 Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
 Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
 Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.

Independent sample t-test – Comparison between mean WTP Austria and Sweden

Group Statistics

	COUNTRY	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WTP_all	AUT	71	4,4709	1,75174	,20789
	SWE	73	4,9121	2,31428	,27087

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
WTP_all	Equal variances assumed	4,649	,033	-1,287	142	,100	,200	-,44121	,34275	-1,11876	,23634
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,292	133,988	,099	,199	-,44121	,34145	-1,11654	,23412

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizera	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
WTP_all	Cohen's d	2,05630	-,215	-,542	,113
	Hedges' correction	2,06724	-,213	-,539	,113
	Glass's delta	2,31428	-,191	-,518	,138

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.

Independent sample t-test – Comparison between mean WTP Austria + no CSI and Austria + CSI

Group Statistics

	ExpGroup	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WTPAUT	AUTnoCSI	71	4,4709	1,75174	,20789
	AUTCSI	55	3,9201	1,90193	,25646

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
WTPAUT	Equal variances assumed	1,182	,279	1,686	124	,047	,094	,55082	,32668	-,09578	1,19743
	Equal variances not assumed			1,668	111,234	,049	,098	,55082	,33014	-,10335	1,20499

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizera	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
WTPAUT	Cohen's d	1,81867	,303	-,052	,656
	Hedges' correction	1,82976	,301	-,051	,652
	Glass's delta	1,90193	,290	-,068	,645

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
 Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
 Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
 Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.

Independent sample t-test – Comparison between mean WTP Austria + no CSI and Austria + CSI

Group Statistics

ExpGroup		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WTPSWE	SWE_noCSI	73	4,9121	2,31428	,27087
	SWE_CSI	63	4,2327	1,57871	,19890

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
WTPSWE	Equal variances assumed	7,470	,007	1,968	134	,026	,051	,67942	,34526	-,00343	1,36228
	Equal variances not assumed			2,022	127,523	,023	,045	,67942	,33605	,01447	1,34438

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizera	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
WTPSWE	Cohen's d	2,00772	,338	-,002	,677
	Hedges' correction	2,01905	,337	-,002	,673
	Glass's delta	1,57871	,430	,083	,774

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
 Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
 Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
 Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.

PROCESS routine by Hayes (2018) – Austria

Run MATRIX procedure:

***** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 *****

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. www.afhayes.com
Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

Model : 1
Y : WTPAUT
X : AFFAUT
W : MOD

Covariates:
PS PI

Sample
Size: 126

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
WTPAUT

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,3448	,1189	3,0806	3,2380	5,0000	120,0000	,0089

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	5,9604	1,0274	5,8015	,0000	3,9262	7,9945
AFFAUT	,0981	,1554	,6313	,5290	-,2096	,4059
MOD	-,3440	,3326	-1,0344	,3030	-1,0025	,3145
Int_1	-,4439	,3044	-1,4582	,1474	-1,0467	,1588
PS	-,3832	,1202	-3,1874	,0018	-,6213	-,1452
PI	-,0235	,1451	-,1619	,8716	-,3108	,2638

Product terms key:

Int_1 : AFFAUT x MOD

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	,0156	2,1264	1,0000	120,0000	,1474

***** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS *****

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
95,0000

NOTE: The following variables were mean centered prior to analysis:
MOD AFFAUT

----- END MATRIX -----

PROCESS routine by Hayes (2018) – Sweden

Run MATRIX procedure:

***** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 *****

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. www.afhayes.com
Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

Model : 1
Y : WTPSWE
X : AFFSWE
W : CSI

Covariates:
PS PI

Sample
Size: 136

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
WTPSWE

Model Summary

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	,4204	,1767	3,5197	5,5801	5,0000	130,0000	,0001

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	7,0271	,8699	8,0778	,0000	5,3060	8,7482
AFFSWE	,0525	,1518	,3458	,7300	-,2479	,3529
CSI	-,5932	,3243	-1,8294	,0696	-1,2347	,0483
Int_1	,5551	,3057	1,8158	,0717	-,0497	1,1599
PS	-,5034	,1089	-4,6217	,0000	-,7189	-,2879
PI	-,0770	,1340	-,5743	,5667	-,3421	,1882

Product terms key:

Int_1 : AFFSWE x CSI

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	,0209	3,2971	1,0000	130,0000	,0717

***** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS *****

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
95,0000

NOTE: The following variables were mean centered prior to analysis:
CSI AFFSWE

----- END MATRIX -----

Appendix E: Abstract German

Das Verständnis für Konsumenten und ihr Verhalten ist für das internationale Marketing in einer globalisierten Welt, die einem ständigen Wandel unterworfen ist, von entscheidender Bedeutung. Infolge des Wandels verändern sich die Erwartungen der Menschen an Produkte im Allgemeinen und bestimmte Einstellungen und Emotionen beeinflussen ihr Handeln. Daher ist es für Marketingverantwortliche von großer Bedeutung, die zugrundeliegenden Mechanismen und Strukturen des Verbraucherverhaltens zu verstehen, um Menschen effizient zu erreichen und letztendlich erfolgreich zu sein. Aus diesen Gründen war es das Ziel dieser Arbeit, den Einfluss der Affinität der Verbraucher auf die Zahlungsbereitschaft (WTP) zu untersuchen, wobei die Rolle der sozialen und gesellschaftlichen Unverantwortlichkeit von Unternehmen (Corporate Social Irresponsibility - CSI) ebenfalls berücksichtigt wurde. Zur Erfüllung des Forschungszwecks wurde eine experimentelle Studie durchgeführt. In der Studie wurde ein Between-Subject-Design mit vier verschiedenen Gruppen verwendet, die unterschiedliche Stimuli und Szenarien erhielten. Genauer gesagt wurde Personen aus Deutschland eine Zahnpasta vorgestellt, die entweder aus Österreich oder Schweden stammte, und je nach Versuchsgruppe wurden sie mit CSI-bezogenen Informationen über das Unternehmen oder ohne Zusatzinformationen zu unverantwortlichem Markenverhalten konfrontiert. Die Ergebnisse der Studie zeigen, dass die Affinität der Konsumenten keinen positiven Einfluss auf die WTP hat. Sie führt nicht zu einer höheren Zahlungsbereitschaft, weder wenn das Produkt aus Österreich kommt, noch wenn es aus Schweden stammt. Darüber hinaus konnte kein moderierender Effekt von CSI auf die Beziehung zwischen Affinität und WTP festgestellt werden. Aus theoretischer Sicht erweitert die Studie die bestehende Literatur über Konsumentenverhalten, Konsumentenaffinität und CSI, indem sie das Wissen in diesen Bereichen vertieft. Aus praktischer Sicht können diese Erkenntnisse für Marketingverantwortliche im Hinblick auf die Preisgestaltung und Kommunikation nützlich sein.

Schlüsselwörter: Affinität, Zahlungsbereitschaft, soziale Unverantwortlichkeit von Unternehmen