SCHOOL OF BRAND LEADERSHIP

# Creating Shared Value:

## A qualitative study referencing specific corporate social initiatives implemented by Unilever in South Africa.

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*I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelor of Art Honours is Strategic Brand Communications degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.*

## Abstract

An exponential growth in, and mass production of, consumer goods has led to a rising public demand for businesses to operate in a socially and environmentally conscious manner. However, without labels to acknowledge these efforts, businesses risk losing the public favour and profit revenue that keeps them afloat.

The Shared Value creation (CSV) approach offers a solution whereby shared value is created between businesses and the environments in which they operate. However, little information exists on the concept being implementation in a South African context -a country whose weak economy and low living conditions would benefit greatly from the approach.

This exploratory study considered the company Unilever, whose implemented initiatives reflected elements of CSV without labelling them as such.

The qualitative case study performed, utilising interview and document findings to offer a personal, human-centered perspective regarding the company's implemented initiatives in relation to CSV.

The findings reflected that, despite Unilever not directly implementing a CSV approach, elements of CSV are evident in the company's actions. The study reveals that similar social issues, if implemented using the CSV approach, hold potential for exponential value-creation in South Africa- a powerful solution for businesses and society who require each other to thrive.

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# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Introduction

As the global demand for companies to integrate their business practices with societal needs grows, so does the need for companies to understand how best to approach this practice (Meulensteen, Vermeulen & Meerman, 2016). This study explores Kramer and Pfitzer's concept of Creating Shared Value (CSV) - which provides companies the opportunity to better the society in which they operate while flourishing financially as a result (Kramer & Pfitzer, 2016).

## 1.2. Background and Context

In 2010, Unilever introduced the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan or USLP - a business model whereby the company could "do well by doing good". Indeed, since its inception the company has seen an exponential increase in profit returns. Furthermore, at a glance, the company's approach to doing business using the USLP seems to reflect CSV elements including: implementing a business model focused on creating value, using the said business model as a means to create value for the company and its operating environment, as well as using the business model as a means to increase profitability and gain competitive advantage. However, the question remains as to whether or not Unilever is in fact implementing the CSV approach through its corporate social initiatives in South Africa.

## 1.3. Rationale

Despite many existing opportunities for companies to serve a much-needed social purpose in South Africa, there is little evidence of CSV existing (in theory or in practice) by companies within a localised context (Jackson, 2018). This study provides fellow companies/researchers looking to build the trust of the public or for information into the newly developed CSV approach, with insight into its implementation within a localized context.

## 1.4. Problem Statement

A company's reputation is a valuable asset that can be used to attract consumers, employees and investors (Kelley, Hemphill & Thams, 2019). However, it is only as valuable as its ability to do so. During the 2007/2008 financial crisis, the environmental and social

sustainability of company operations were called into question by the public (Pirson, 2012). In response, companies engaged in philanthropic practices, hoping to improve their reputation. However, these actions were viewed as reactionary and thus their motivations ingenuous. Thus, amidst the tug of war between company responsibility and public approval, the standards by which they were judged became unclear (Kelley *et al*., 2019).
This resulted in the search for, and development of, new and improved philanthropic approaches that could clarify these motives and offer corporate integrity to the public eye.

Porter and Kramer's CSV concept offered this opportunity. A business model approach to ensuring economic success for businesses whilst improving the lives of the communities in which they operated. This shared value approach seemingly offered actioned integrity and thus the potential to enhance firm competitiveness as a result of public favour (Kelley *et al*., 2019). However, to date, available information on the tools to put this concept into practice, as well as the approach itself, are still in their infancy (Porter, Hills, Pfitzer, Patscheke & Hawkins, 2012). Indeed, a lack of evidence and examples as to how to fully implement the practice, is limiting companies' abilities to gain competitive advantage by reducing their opportunities to co-create shared value within their operating scope (Porter *et al*., 2012).

## 1.5. Purpose Statement

The purpose of this exploratory research study is to, therefore, explore the concept of CSV, making reference to the company Unilever and their implemented corporate social initiatives (CSI) in an attempt to explore whether or not the company does indeed implement this practice in South Africa.

## 1.6. Research Questions

### 1.6.1. Main research Question-

1. Does Unilever implement "Shared Value Creation" through its corporate social initiatives implemented in South Africa?

### 1.6.2. Sub-Questions

1.2. What factors does Unilever consider when implementing its corporate social initiatives in South Africa?

1.3. Do Unilever’s corporate social initiatives implemented in South Africa create value for Unilever as well as for those benefiting from their initiatives?

1.4. Do Unilever’s corporate social initiatives implemented in South Africa result in the parties involved co-creating value for one another?

## 1.7. Research Objectives

With these questions in mind, the following objectives have been made for the study:

1. To identify whether or not Unilever has implemented “Shared Value Creation” through its corporate social initiatives implemented in South Africa.

2. To understand what factors Unilever considers when implementing its corporate social initiatives in South Africa.

3. To better understand whether or not Unilever’s corporate social initiatives implemented in South Africa create value for Unilever as well as for those benefiting from their initiatives.

4. To better understand whether or not Unilever’s corporate social initiatives implemented in South Africa result in the co-creation of value- for both parties as a result of their implementation.

# SECTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1. Conceptualisation

The following concepts are key terms that require both definition and context in order to assist the researcher in understanding and exploring this topic fully:

### 2.1.1. Value Creation

Value creation can be defined as the tangible or intangible profit made as a result of the process of turning a firm's resources (raw materials, labour and capital) into offered goods and services, which are then received by -and satisfy the needs of - the public (Mehera, 2017).

In light of the shared value concept we see a demand for companies to ensure economic value is created for the business whilst ensuring societal value is also created by addressing particular societal needs (Mehera, 2017).

### 2.1.2. Co-creation of Value

Value co-creation refers to the mutually expanding tangible or intangible profit created for a stakeholder and firm involved together in the participation of a company's activities (Jurietti, Mandelli & Fudurić, 2017).

As a result of this participation both parties involved benefit from the action and existence of the other during the engagement process. The value, as a result, can be found in the process of engagement, the profit generated from production as well as from the meaningful experiences that accompany the inclusive nature of the co-creation process (Mehera, 2017).

### 2.1.3. Corporate Philanthropy

Corporate philanthropy can be identified as the transfer of a company's resources - usually used to alleviate societal issues - actioned via charitable intention (Motilewa, Worlu, Agboola, & Chidinma, 2016) (Evans, Seidman, Carey, Chicanos & Causa, 2015).

Implementing corporate philanthropy can provide reputational protection for a firm via the public who views these actions as a way to build "moral capital" – a valuable asset for firms implementing CSR (Handy, 2018: 2).

### 2.1.4. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate social responsibility refers to a firm or business contributing towards the betterment of society in which it operates and thus taking "responsibility" for its actions (Motilewa *et al*., 2016).

When including CSR in business operations, a business organisation normally acts in accordance with the interests of the public- contributing assets to a recognised societal need. In fulfilling this societal obligation, the firm affirms its economic obligation as the public generally responds positively to the actions of the business (Motilewa *et al*., 2016).

To date, CSR has no single definition due to its broad and ever-changing nature as companies integrate and aim to best portray their actions through individual and personalised approaches.

(Lapina, Borkus & Starineca, 2012). However, for the purpose of this research it will be recognised as companies who utilize their resources as a means to contribute to the societies in which they operate (Motilewa *et al*., 2016).

CSR introduces a moral aspect to corporate philanthropy. Whereas philanthropy can be likened to unrelated (business) actions offering charity, CSR issues lean towards the idea of moral obligation. Morality rather than requisite become the driver for value creation within the business and the society in which it operates (Lapina *et al*., 2012). The concept is a precursor to CSV and is widely used by companies when conducting their strategic philanthropic efforts (Chirimubwe, 2015).

### 2.1.5. Creating Shared Value (CSV)

Creating shared value is recognised as a concept, a business model, and an actionable approach - developed in response to growing unsated societal pressure for companies to alleviate their impact on society and contribute towards the environment in which they operate without appearing as motives for public approval. The strategic approach achieves this in various ways: companies adopting the CSV approach adjust their business plan in a manner whereby company operations reduce any societal and environmental damage caused by the company during operations. Furthermore, the approach enables the company to strategically and lucratively use its resources to align with social empowerment initiatives whilst simultaneously producing profit (Porter *et al*., 2012). The approach, unlike its predecessor CSR, is able to co-create value. Indeed, both the stakeholder and business become advocates for value creation. This collaboration and shared creation of value offer businesses integrity, creating value that is not only financial and societal but also meaningful in the eyes of the public (Porter, 2016).

### 2.1.6. Corporate Social Initiatives

Corporate social initiatives refer to the actions manifested by businesses who intend to improve particular societal issues through the allocation of business resources whether it be time, people or profit. These corporate actions of corporate assistance can vary to include programs, policies, or sustainable practices intended to boost societal areas in need of assistance (Zhang, Loh & Wu, 2020).

Unlike the practice of CSR and CSV, a corporate social initiative can stand alone as an individual contribution towards a cause made by a company. In saying that, it is not necessarily limited to traditional corporate philanthropy such as donations (Austin & Gaither, 2016). Corporate social initiatives that align with a firm's business offering or target market scope are considered to be more effective. This is due to a congruence between the firm and the cause it aims to target – offering them an opportunity for legitimacy (Stuart & William, 2015).

## 2.2. Theoretical Foundation

Strategic corporate decisions regarding company resources allocated towards philanthropic funding are carrying more weight as companies are mindful of the perceptions these decisions create and the social "expectations" they potentially meet (Vveinhardt & Zygmantaite, 2015: 1167). To better understand these decision-making factors, researchers can use theories to test hypothesis, facts and findings to assist them in making further predictions and test whether the outcomes of predicted circumstances align with known truths (Collins & Stockton, 2018). This study makes use of the following two theories and framework to guide the research construction whilst assisting in the interpretation of its data (Collins & Stockton, 2018).

### 2.2.1. The Legitimacy Theory

The Legitimacy theory stems from the term "organisational legitimacy" which implies that a company's existence is dependent on its societal resources, and thus its actions lean towards building a relational exchange or social "contract" with society to gain their favour and to continue to survive (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975).

This theory exposes the thought processes and accompanying motivations by which companies aim to seek recognition for achieving social responsibility within their existing operating scope. The theory assists researchers who are considering companies' motives as they employ specific corporate social initiatives by acknowledging and identifying the external pressures that would influence these companies to do so (Mousa & Hassan, 2015). The Legitimacy theory acknowledges the role of changing social dynamics and emerging crisis as a key factor influencing companies' decision-making processes (Mousa & Hassan, 2015).

Because businesses are subject to the unique and evolving environmental and social factors that exist within their operating scope, their philanthropic decisions also become unique and evolve to meet their business needs (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975).

The resounding effect of evolving circumstances on philanthropic behaviour imply that time and social environments are motivating factors that give insight into philanthropic decisions made by companies, in this case, Unilever, and highlight the importance of the research topic being company and location specific (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975).

### 2.2.2. The Stakeholder theory

As the Legitimacy theory discusses the social and relational exchange between businesses and the society in which they operate, so too does the Stakeholder theory consider a duality in the forming of social value creation (Freeman, Wicks & Parmar, 2004).

The Stakeholder theory dismisses the idea that a business should operate in isolation or that business profits and endeavours should serve to benefit shareholder interests only (Freeman, Harrison & Wicks, 2007).

Rather, the theory places emphasis on a firm's purpose and its role in contributing value towards greater society. The theory emphasises that stakeholder relationships form an integral part of business operations and financial profit is earned as a result of social good performed (Zhang, Loh & Wu, 2020).

From a responsibility perspective, the stakeholder theory calls managers to consider the company's internal values as well as the possible value-creating opportunities of their business within their social scope (Freeman *et al*., 2004).

This heightened mindfulness resonates with the value-focused CSV approach which sees societal inequalities as an opportunity from which business strategies could emerge (Freeman *et al*., 2004) (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

### 2.2.3. The Creating Shared Value (CSV) framework

Porter, Hills, Pfitzer, Patscheke and Hawkins (2012:3) state that businesses can generate "shared value" in three specific ways: "reconceiving products and markets", "redefining" the company's "value chains" to improve the productivity of its resources, and lastly by strengthening its "support" of "local clusters".

The shared value approaches/levels and the benefits they offer towards building value for business and society can be viewed below (adapted from the original CSV document table):

| LEVELS/APPROACHES TO CREATING SHARED VALUE | BUSINESS VALUE CREATED | SOCIAL VALUE CREATED |
|---|---|---|
| Reconceiving products & markets: | ▪ Increased Revenue<br>▪ Increased Share of the Market<br>▪ Increased Market Growth<br>▪ Improved Profitability | ▪ Improved individual care<br>▪ Decreased carbon footprint<br>▪ Better Nutrition<br>▪ Improved Education |
| Redefining productivity in the value chain: | ▪ Improved Productivity<br>▪ Reduced operating costs<br>▪ Secured Supply<br>▪ Improved quality<br>▪ Improved profitability | ▪ Reduced energy use<br>▪ Reduced water use<br>▪ Reduced raw materials<br>▪ Improved job skills<br>▪ Improved employee incentives |
| Enabling cluster development: | ▪ Reduced Costs<br>▪ Improved Distribution Infrastructure<br>▪ Secured Supply<br>▪ Improved workforce access<br>▪ Improved profitability | ▪ Improved education<br>▪ Increased job creation<br>▪ Improved health Nutrition<br>▪ Improved income salary |

*Figure 1: CSV Levels/Approaches and results (Porter et al. 2012: 3)*

These three approaches assist companies in identifying various social innovation options when implementing the CSV concept and can also help researchers identify the companies that use the approach. These attributes will be used in the analysing of the findings and to answer the identified the research questions at a later stage.

## 2.3. Links between problem and current literature

### 2.3.1. Corporate social responsibility

*An introduction into CSR*

CSR is important and as precursor to CSV, exists as the foundation from which CSV was developed.

In considering CSR, one must consider a company's main driver– profit. Profit returns keep companies in business and so, companies make decisions to strategically use their resources in their operations to ensure a potentially greater profit return (Motilewa *et al*., 2016). However, this was not a sustainable practice in light of globalization and the resulting mass consumption of consumer goods. The public as a result, placed pressure on companies to be accountable for and responsible in their profit generating actions or risk losing public favour (and profitability). These acts of responsibility by companies were recognised to manifest as specific company policies and procedures that answered problems at a social level (Motilewa *et al*., 2016). As companies responded to these needs, a need arose for laws and structures to be put in place to ensure such responsibilities could be labelled and acknowledged as such. The term CSR was used – naming the practice of the allocating of company profit, time and action to rebuild and restore social value (Motilewa *et al*., 2016). Progressing from merely philanthropic, the actions were recognised as more substantial and meaningful. Companies realised that there was value in adopting practices that were aligned with own offering ability whilst simultaneously reflecting the same values held by the public – promoting a harmony that could exist between the firm, its practices and society itself (Frigario, 2017). Such synergies were recognised as offering a lucrative and effective approach to restoring reputation and increasing public favour.

*Supporters of CSR*

According to Motilewa et al. (2016: 2672) CSR can be considered a "strategic tool" used by businesses to gain favour and thus increase the potential for profit return. This is because the aligning of activities deemed important by stakeholders and actioned accountably by companies garners increased stakeholder loyalty as they perceive their needs are met by the organization (Motilewa *et al*., 2016).

In addition to this, Gaither, Austin and Schulz (2018) state that although create social value may not be the core motive for companies implementing CSR, effective CSR can lead to positive results for both the company and the environment in which it operates. CSR requirements, in essence form a catalyst which spur on company action, resulting in consciousness introspection and thus the opportunity to create further good and offer authentic positive changes being made for society as the company becomes mindful of its resources (Gaither *et al*., 2018: 48).

*Critics against CSR*

Mwiyeria (2014) states that CSR does achieve social good, however as its natural intention revolves around building business reputation in the eyes of the public, CSR initiatives never fully alleviate the social issue being targeted and thus cannot fully guarantee the public's satisfaction. This stance coincides with the view framed by Nicholson (2017) who says the very nature of CSR is flawed in that the primary driver of a business is to maximize its profit return.

Mwiyeria (2014) brings light previous critical statements involving business and society being positioned against one another, competing for needed resources rather than existing independently. Mwiyeria (2014) states that businesses may look to implementing generic (less effective) CSR activities rather than more expensive tailored approaches as a Public relations tool and in this regard, companies could implement activities that return a guaranteed greater public satisfaction response than other more appropriate activities. This undermines the need for integrity in the responsibility practice. These points show the contesting nature of value generation for a business and the society in which it operates, and makes evident the need for an approach that maximised value creation for all parties whilst ensuring the integrity of corporate philanthropic actions are upheld

### 2.3.2. Creating Shared Value

*An introduction into Creating Shared Value*

Porter et al, 2012 acknowledged that despite the implementation of CSR by companies attempting to restore their corporate reputation, such actions were not effectively rendering the legitimacy of the business world to its previous status - whether it be from contesting value creation or ingenuous methods of perceived profit accrual (Porter *et al.*, 2012).

According to Porter and Kramer (2011), founders of the CSV concept, so great was the phenomenon of CSR's increase in pressure for business to meet societal standards that a combination of political reinforced pressures and extensive policies and legislative acts caused business to fail financially.

Porter and Kramer (2011) suggested that businesses needed an updated approach to value creation that would ensure the restoring of company productivity and reinvigorate profit driven goals. They proposed the idea that societal, environmental and economic profit should not be viewed as competing forces but rather could, using the CSV approach, be positioned strategically in such a way that when structured together could yield a maximum return for all parties involved – that value should be created for all - hence the term "creating shared value” (Porter & Kramer, 2011). This mutually inclusive approach to sharing and creating value would offer self-sustainable value creation that self-perpetuated and offered an empowering approach to profit maximisation for all parties involved. In this approach the public would have to consider the value creating approach- authentic. Due to its self-sustaining nature, the CSV business model, when adopted by companies offers legitimacy in its ability to shift the focus away from a solely profit-driven business motive. The approach in essence is made effective in that profit maximisation is no longer condemned, but rather is a requisite and allows both parties to flourish.

*Supporters of Creating Shared Value*

According to Mehera (2017), the CSV concept has progressed from CSR in its ability to offer a business model designed to prioritise value creation rather than highlight profit maximisation. He states that this development has allowed businesses to pinpoint relevant crucial issues impacting society today, addressing them with a business-focussed approach that offers innovative, mutual, value creation efforts which in turn provide an opportunity for new market openings. Furthermore, he argues that in a market driven by the public’s political needs and wants, the CSV model can assist businesses to better identify these personal needs and then strategically manage resources to create a more sustainable offering that creates value for both business and society (Mehera, 2017). Voltan, Hervieux, and Mills (2017: 1) agree with this point, saying that CSV in fact provides a “win-win” outcome for parties involved and that it contributes to the growth of society in providing a solution to issues of “legitimacy” in a manner that promotes proactivity and collaboration – essential qualities required to boost the future of business and stakeholder engagement.
In a last ode to CSV, Mehera (2017) mentions that social innovation – a process by which companies turn societal challenges into collaborative philanthropic opportunities - is a vital aspect of creating shared value and that the CSV business model provides the opportunity to meet the needs of society whilst building a lucrative business.

*Critics against Creating Shared Value*

According to Beschorner and Hajduk (2017) who cowrote a chapter in a book titled “Creating shared value – concepts, experience, criticism”, the basis from which Porter and Kramer argued a justification for a new approach to corporate responsibility was flawed in that the CSR they referenced did not correlate with an accurate representation of the CSR existing today.

The pair argued that Porter and Kramer oversimplified CSR, positioning it as mere philanthropy rather than a strategic use of company resources. This therefore justified the creation of a new CSR label which could discredit the public who protested against business models whose operations reflected a profit focused - rather than resource preserving - approach (Beschorner & Hajduk, 2017).

The authors also argued that CSV incorrectly promoted the idea that businesses automatically fulfil the needs of society when making a profit. They believed that this approach was still single minded and financially motivated in that it saw fulfilling social needs as a “means to an end” rather than the business employing ethically responsible behaviour (Beschorner & Hajduk, 2017: 2).

Although businesses are profit driven and operate on the basis of economic return, their actions cannot exist in isolation - businesses need to take on this responsibility as societal players contributing without an ulterior motive.

The pair questioned whether true legitimacy is achieved for corporations who employ the CSV approach as the businesses social impact is limited only to options that yield a strategic return on investments made (Beschorner & Hajduk, 2017).

### 2.3.3. Creating Shared Value in South Africa

South Africa as a country is facing serious socio-economic trials. The economy at present is weaker than ever before and there exists a deep wealth gap between the poor and rich citizens of the country despite the attempt to achieve democratic and economic reform post 1994 (Nicholson, 2017). The need for companies to adopt CSR practices and create social value has become increasingly crucial in order to assist the government whose efforts to eradicate the disparity seem to yield no lasting result (Wachira & Ger, 2020). It has thus become evident that without the participation of businesses, full transformation towards equality, more accessible healthcare, available and quality education and effective governance cannot be achieved (Wachira & Ger, 2020).

In regard to a compulsory implementation of CSR, the South African government introduced the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) act to support populations of colour who were marginalized during apartheid. This has, as a result, forced a mindset shift where businesses now have to consider their own social value creation through their employee hiring and retention processes (Kabir, Mukuddem-Petersen & Petersen, 2015).

Despite this mandatory CSR shift and exposure increase there are only a few examples of businesses employing the CSV approach and labelling it as such (Fredericksz, 2015). Many companies including Discovery & Unilever employ various aspects of CSV but are yet to label their approach as such, making it difficult for companies and fellow researchers interested in the implementation of the approach to study it and share the results of their findings (Wachira & Ger, 2020).

## 2.4. Conclusion

The CSV approach is one that has evolved to accommodate for changing business and societal needs – specifically ones where corporate social responsibility was no longer a satisfactory nor lucrative solution. Thus, the CSV concept is still evolving - as CSR has - to accommodate for the need to balance both social and business requirements without the compromising of the other.

More information is needed in order for researchers and companies to implement the CSV approach in a manner that allows for renewed growth and societal reform. There is overwhelming evidence that signals that the relationship between corporate and social wellbeing is an intricate and interwoven dynamic that requires information beyond the evidence existing only in theory and via seminal works. Only when more information is available can researchers and companies best understand how to implement the CSV practice.

# SECTION 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

## 3.1. Paradigm

Although some research around CSV development existed in theory -showing quantitative statistics and results- little human perspective and decision-based understanding could be gained from existing studies (a crucial part of the CSV decision making process) (Rachmawati *et al*., 2019). The paradigm chosen for this study was interpretative as the interpretivist paradigm provided a framework from which researchers could use human experience to give insight into the social reality in which they live (Ponelis, 2015). All philanthropic approaches involved decision making processes and when exploring these phenomena in relation to thus study, the interpretivist paradigm favoured each person's perspective in that together they allowed for the construction of a subjective reality - which broadened CSV's current theoretical perspective to one that was focused on depth of understanding (Ponelis, 2015) (Rachmawati *et al*., 2019).

When engaging in philanthropy, each company has different values, needs and unique motivating factors that influence their business decisions and resulting philanthropic actions. The interpretivist paradigm best fit the study as its results are not designed to be replicated en masse (Chetty, 2014). Furthermore, in order for businesses to trust the results enough to apply them for themselves, the results required dependability, credibility, confirmability and transferability- qualities that occur naturally when implementing an interpretivist paradigm (Ponelis, 2015). Interpretivists believe that there are numerous "subjective" existing realities based on societal constructs (Thomas, 2010: 295). This ontological view makes reference to uncovering how society has interpreted and formulated relationships between businesses and societal issues- a key component to understanding the complex relationship between society and businesses when it comes to considering the CSV concept (Ponelis, 2015).
The epistemological view of Interpretivism believes knowledge is as valuable as it is "relative" (Thomas, 2010: 292). Theories are given importance and hold value in accordance to how they add context to the study and aid in the interpretation of its meaning (Ponelis, 2015). This is relevant In that both the Stakeholder theory and Legitimacy theory are only as valuable as they appropriate and useful in their ability to unpack the dynamic between business motivations and decisions in regard to social expectations and appeasing public and (environmental ) needs. Axiologically, "relevance" is esteemed higher than "rigor" which

is applicable as the information gathered is from particular cases rather than en masse (Ponelis, 2015: 538). This was thus the approach needed for understanding this topic within a localised context.

## 3.2. Research Approach

The research aimed to provide insight into the CSV approach by looking at Unilever's implementation of their initiatives in relation to the CSV concept –essentially from the perspective of those who were involved in either their implementation (Unilever) or as benefactors of the initiatives themselves. The study was thus qualitative in nature in that for qualitative research, researchers believe that peoples' experiences give meaning to situations or phenomena within that particular context (Chetty, 2014). As these varying perspectives are explored, researchers believe them to give deeper insight into the construction of social phenomena (Ponelis, 2015). A qualitative approach thus permitted the researcher to gain subjective understanding and offered the opportunity to produce rich, contextual information from participants, which in turn added deeper insight into the topic within its natural, social setting (Collins and Stockton, 2018).

According to Ponelis (2015), a case study uses a range of research methods to obtain "rich descriptions" that can be applied to similar situations. As the Unilever company and its approach to CSV as a single entity was to be explored, a case study approach was chosen as the methodological approach as it offered the researcher the opportunity to engage with the participants in strategic, streamlined manner that aligned with the Unilever company in particular and thus could offer a structured environment within which the findings could be considered in relation to the Unilever perspective (Nicholson, 2017). The research was exploratory in that it aimed to gain insight and understanding in regard to the CSV concept and its implementation in order to assist other researchers and companies in becoming familiar with the concept and the implementation of Corporate social initiatives in the context of identified CSV criteria (Davis, 2014).

Lastly, the research used an inductive approach to theorising whereby concepts were inferred from the data gathered and thereafter analysed (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). This approach allowed for the building of a new or existing theory- aligning with the need to gain insight into the concept of CSV, the implementation of the CSV approach and for other researchers or companies interested in learning more about the concept and its implementation, understand better how to recognise it in action (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

## 3.3. Population and Sampling

According to Pascoe (2014), a population can be defined as the complete collection of people or individuals from whom data or information is needed.

### 3.3.1. Nature of the Population

When defining the nature of the population for this study, the researcher considered the possible information sources or units of analysis that would best assist the researcher in answering the study's research question regarding how Unilever has implemented CSV through its corporate social initiatives in South Africa.

Social artifacts (in the form of documents and texts) as well as individuals, both of whom were directly related to Unilever's corporate social initiatives in South Africa, were thus deemed to be the nature of the population for this study.

### 3.4. Unique characteristics

The researcher identified shared attributes or "population parameters" which were a subset of the nature of the population but also assisted in determining the size and unique population characteristics that required identification for the study to take place (Pascoe, 2014: 134).

### 3.4.1. Social artifacts – Documents and Texts

Regarding the social artifacts: the documents and texts considered needed to make reference to corporate social initiatives implemented by the Unilever in South Africa. These texts or documents needed to be published by an unbiased and neutral source, who received no compensation from the for the publication and lastly the articles needed to consider initiatives that reflected at the very least, a corporate socially responsible narrative, for the CSV concept could only exist from this foundation. Documents to be considered thus included content that could be explored in terms of the company offering a business-related solution to a specific societal or environmental need that would as a result create value for society

### 3.4.2. Individuals

Regarding the individuals: the population needed to have knowledge of, or be involved in, the implementation of Unilever's implemented corporate social initiatives. These individuals would have engaged with initiative related action implemented within a South African context.

## 3.5. Target Population

According to Jackson (2018), a target population comprises everyone who subsists within the population parameters indicated above. The target population for the study was deduced by the topic and its research questions.

The target population regarding the social artifacts included documents and texts that existed online, of which could give information regarding how Unilever implemented its corporate social initiatives in South Africa.

The target population regarding the individuals included South African residents who were either Unilever employees (who had had some involvement in the company's corporate social initiatives implemented within the last five years) or individuals who belonged to communities who benefitted from the said initiatives.

### 3.5.1 Accessible Population

According to Jackson (2018) an accessible population refers to a segment of the population, deduced from the target population that was available and accessible to the researcher. Due to the nature of the study existing at a tertiary level, the study was limited both in scope and financially. In light of these limitations, and because of the researcher's place of residence, the study was only conducted in the province of Kwazulu-Natal. The accessible population included those who fit the population parameters identified as well as those who, being contacted by the researcher, were willing to participate in the study. These individuals also included those who had access to technology and who were able to communicate via online Zoom calls. Such Zoom calls were necessary due to the in-person data collection approaches that had become unfeasible due to COVID-19 social distancing regulations (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

Regarding the social artifacts to consider, the accessible population referred to the text and documents that were made available to the public and could be accessed by the researcher.

## 3.6. Sampling

According to Jackson (2018), sampling refers to the action whereby the researcher selects a previously determined number of participating units that pertain to the identified characteristics from the greater target population. This selection can be identified as a subset and representation of the considered population (Jackson, 2018). In the case of qualitative research, this selection will assist other researchers and companies interested in the topic to apply or transfer the findings to their studies or intended actions.

## 3.7. Units of Analysis

The sample chosen for this study pertained to the units of analysis identified when defining the nature of the population.

Thus, social artifacts as well as individuals relating to Unilever's corporate social initiatives in South Africa were considered as the units of analysis for the study.

The decision to define two units of analysis for the study were motivated by the fact that the development of CSV provided a "reputability" that was regarded as a valuable asset when gaining the trust of the public. The need to preserve this reputability was considered in the researcher's approach to gathering the sources from which the information would be collected. The researcher chose to consider both individuals and social artifacts as the range of analysis units provided a broader scope from which data could be collected.

This first unit of analysis, social artefacts, provided an initial foundation from which data could be drawn and findings could be considered. This initial data offered a unique perspective as secondary data from which primary data could be sourced from the second unit of analysis – individuals.

The multiple units of analysis offered a unique perspective in that should the findings from the primary data (individuals) have corroborated with the secondary data findings (from the articles), the research confirmability would have thus been sustained. This would in turn, uphold the reputability of the study which would be important for researchers or companies considering CSV implementing within a South African context as such practices find value in offering legitimacy as a source of reputability (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

## 3.8. Sampling method

Due to the study being exploratory and qualitative in nature, as well as the fact that accessible population was limited due to mitigating factors, it was recognised that non-probability sampling would be best suited to gain access to participants (whilst still ensuring the research question and research objectives could be answered and met accordingly) (Enslin, 2003).

Non-probability sampling meant that not all units of analysis identified would have an “equal opportunity” to be used for the study (Jackson, 2018: 27). However, due to the study being qualitative and based on human understanding - where transferability is favoured over generalizability- a smaller selected sample remained effective as it ensured that the characteristics required for the case study at hand could be chosen specifically (Thomas, 2010).

The study thus used “intentional”, purposive, sampling methods to gain “information-rich” sources for the case study (Thomas, 2010).

This approach ensured that prevalent information could be sourced from the appropriate participants, who directly related to the study and were thus able to give reliable feedback on the topic.

This particular approach allowed the researcher to choose participants based on necessary elements of characteristics required for the research to be accurate. This method ensured that the sample was made up of participants that met the characteristics required to answer the research questions. (Pascoe, 2014).

## 3.9. Sample size

The intended sample size for the research regarding the social artifacts included three articles- each pertaining to a corporate social initiative implemented by the company to address a social or environmental issue.

Regarding the sample size of individuals, two Unilever employees involved in the

development and implementation of corporate social initiatives and two individuals who benefited from the said company's corporate social initiatives were considered. This size was small as some participants were unavailable due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic which caused workplace displacement (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). The researcher chose to use an equal ratio of Unilever employee to initiative beneficiary to y to offer a non-biased perspective of CSV regarding the corporate social initiatives in question.
Furthermore, as the researcher required information and feedback that was rich and detailed in order to provide results that can be transferable, the sample size despite being small allowed for the exploration of human understanding pertaining to this specific study and thus preserved "transferability" (Jackson, 2018: 39).

## 3.10. Data Collection Methods

Multiple methods were chosen to collect data as it gave a more comprehensive picture of the topic (Thomas, 2010).

### 3.10.1. Document review

The first chosen method of data collection, used for the qualitative research study, was the reviewing of documents and texts via document review (O'Leary, 2017). In relation to the study and Unilever these documents included both published and unpublished works about the company's initiatives – all available to the general public (O'Leary, 2017). This data collection method was chosen because according to Bowen (2009), the reviewing of documents provides data that offers background as well as context to a study.

As the concept definitions and actions pertaining to CSR and CSV evolve continuously, the document review data collection method provided a means of following change" in company approaches and developments especially in relation to Unilever's practices regarding their Sustainable Living Plan (Bowen, 2009: 30) (Motilewa *et al.*, 2016).

The documents and texts also provided data that could enhance the confirmability of the study as the review and analysis of such documents were used as a tool to substantiate the evidence collected from other sources (Bowen, 2009: 30). Thus, document review was chosen for its ability to assist the researcher in verifying and validating findings related to the research topic, research problem, questions and objectives (Bowen, 2009).

**Document review- data collection process**

According to O'Leary (2017) conducting a document review involves the collecting, "interrogating" and reviewing of texts. The following, identified document review steps were thus conducted by the researcher in relation to this study:

1. Text collection – the researcher collected texts that were relevant. These texts pertained to Unilever's corporate social initiatives and were found to be both general and brand specific. These initiatives included Unilever offering desks for school children made of recycled company waste, Unilever's Joko Tea brand, providing a platform for Gender based violence relief for women and For the company's Domestos bleach brand, the 'Cleaner toilets brighter futures" campaign whereby toilet facilities for schools were implemented and products offered as a means to promote sanitation.

2. Text organisation – the gathered texts, were then organised and labelled according to the brands product offering, the apparent social or environmental. Need identified and the initiative the company them implemented to counteract this issue.

3. Text duplication – the researcher then made duplicates of the initial texts for "annotation" purposes.

4. Confirmation of text validity – the researcher then investigated the integrity and legitimacy of the collected texts including the publisher and their credibility.

5. Evaluation of text "agenda" – the researcher then evaluated the texts to eliminated sponsored texts that promoted the company. This considered possible text or researcher bias whilst simultaneously ensured that company motive was not a driver in the text publication and content offering.

6. Exploration of "background information" – the researcher then explored and identified evidence regarding the author or creator of the text, the audience for whom the text was written, the purpose of the text, as well as its corresponding layout.

7. Identification of "background" or "latent" content – the researcher considered questions relating to the text such as "Who was the producer the text?", "For what

was the text produced?", "What were the text production circumstances? "Why, when, and where was the text produced?" and "What would this "type" of data be classified as?

8. Exploration of content – the researcher then explored the data and analysed it via textual analysis to gather relevant information required for the study.

For this study, the researcher created a template by which the document review process could be conducted. The template which can be referred to in Appendix D, ensured that specific prominent details required for the study were considered before the document was used. Such details considered were pertinent to the researcher in answering the research question as well as in ensuring the consideration of the documents' integrity

### 3.10.2. Semi- structured interviews

The second data collection tool involved obtaining data through the use of semi-structured interviews. The participants involved in the semi-structured interview data collection process, included Unilever employees involved in the company's identified initiatives as well as individuals who directly or indirectly benefitted from Unilever's said initiatives. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to gain a rich, deep understanding of the data collected as the method was intimate and conversational (O'Leary, 2017).

This approach resonated with the exploratory nature of the qualitative study which aimed to gain human based understanding in order to better comprehend the existence of social phenomena – namely the CSV practice in action. As a result, the researcher was able to engage with participants perspectives regarding the practice as well as provide them with the opportunity to clarify on points made and "probe" for more "details" where necessary (Collins and Stockton, 2018: 6).

The semi- structured interviews were intended to be conducted in-person, at a public location agreed upon prior to the meeting. However, in light of the social distancing criteria implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the participants were unable to meet face-to-face with the researcher. The researcher therefore conducted online semi-structured interviews- via Zoom- to ensure that the safety of both researcher and participants were upheld (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

### Unilever employees

Actions were taken by the researcher prior to the commencement of the semi structured interviews. The researcher sought Unilever employee participants via the company's official email address made available on the company's website (Unilever, 2020). This process of inquiry provided no response. The researcher then attempted to use another email made available through a former Unilever employee known to her personally, which provided assistance in gaining access to, and in arranging communication with, Unilever employee participants identified in the sample.

After identifying and sourcing the willing participants, the researcher gained permission from Unilever's head of department to conduct the semi structured interviews with the employees. Once permission was granted and consent forms were signed by the participants, the researcher then communicated with the participants to arrange interview times available for both parties. The researcher and participant then agreed upon a suitable location for the Zoom interview to take place.

### Initiative beneficiaries

Actions taken to collect the data from the community beneficiaries included identifying and sourcing the willing participants, arranging the participants interview availability and agreeing upon a suitable location for the Zoom interview to take place. Once those variables were established and consent was given by participants, the researcher prepared to conduct the interview with the participants at the arranged times.

### Semi-structured interviews- data collection process

Prior to the interviews, the participants were provided with information regarding the nature of the research as well as the researcher's involvement in the process. The researcher then asked the participant to sign a consent form to ensure the ethical nature of the data-collection process was upheld.

Interviews were recorded on smart phones and were later (post-interview) transcribed via Word document in preparation for analysis (Jackson, 2018). The researcher conducted the semi-structured interviews over a fourteen-day period. The established research collection times fell between 8am and 5pm from Monday to Saturday which increased the availability of said participants as they were either at work or could be interviewed during a free period or were at home and had free time in which the researcher could then use to conduct the interview.

In regard to the semi-structured interview process, the consenting participants were asked their name and information for re-contacting purposes. The participants were also asked whether they required clarity on any information regarding the research process. The researcher, being involved in this research collection process, also needed to ensure respect and "rapport" was built with participants (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014: 188). The researcher thus asked the participants general questions about their day. Once rapport was established, the participant was then asked the predetermined questions according to the constructed semi- structured interview questionnaires which were developed to answer the study's defined research questions (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). When the researcher was finished asking the participant the questions, the researcher thanked the participant and asked the participant if they had any further questions. After this interview process was conducted, the recording was then transcribed into textual data by the researcher, in preparation for data analysis.

Overall the researcher ensured that she maintained an unbiased and impartial approach when interviewing participants in order to prevent partiality and thus a skewing of data results (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

## 3.11. Data Analysis Methods

Data was transcribed and analysed using a qualitative content analysis method for both the reviewed Unilever documents as well as the transcribed, semi-structured interviews.

This method assisted the researcher as it helped to identify common themes and common patterns which ensured an understanding of the text, as well provided an effective method by which results could be interpreted and findings communicated (Bowen, 2009) (Thomas, 2010).

According to Strydom & Bezuidenhout (2014), qualitative content analysis concerns the researcher's exploration and identification of themes that exist rooted within the text. When the researcher engaged in qualitative content analysis process, the researcher underwent the cyclical process of working through the text, uncovering and recognising themes, and patterns that could be used to give meaning to the text. These results translated into findings which in turn provided insight into the social dynamics and decisions surrounding the CSV process (Bowen, 2009) (Thomas, 2010).

### 3.11.1. Document and textual analysis

Regarding the analysis of the reviewed document content, qualitative content analysis also known as "textual" analysis was chosen in its ability to identify both apparent and hidden meanings within the documents' text (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014: 234). The term "document analysis" was identified as a possible analysis method, however it was found that the term was synonymous with the term and process used for textual or qualitative content analysis (Bowen, 2009) (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). The term "qualitative content analysis" was chosen as the steps under the definition provided the researcher a clearer understanding of the processes used to analyse the chosen documents.

A deductive qualitative content analysis approach refers to the action whereby the researcher analyses the text from "general" to "specific" (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). A conceptual framework, deduced from the identified study theories, was thus used to identify textual codes, group themes and interpret the themes according to the study's context.

Identifying these patterns and themes within a CSV context, provided the researcher with information regarding the existing secondary information available that could reenforce the validity and consistency of findings from the other data collection tool – semi structured interviews (Bowen, 2009) (Maree *et al*, 2007). This practice ensured the findings maintained the "reputability" so valued by the public.

### 3.11.2. Semi-structured interviews analysis

The qualitative content analysis method was also chosen to analyse transcribed texts from the semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher. This approach ensured a "fracturing" of the data which, in turn, allowed the researcher to rearrange and give order to the text (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014: 236).

### 3.11.3. Qualitative content analysis process

The process of analysing data using the qualitative content data analysis method involved grouping data into portions and thereafter assigning the data to larger grouped categories whose meanings were related (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014: 234). This, therefore, ensured that the coded and themed data could be "applied" to the text (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014: 234). This process assisted the researcher in identifying patterns which, in turn, assisted the researcher in developing further categories (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014).

According to Bezuidenhout & Cronje (2014), the process of conducting qualitative content analysis comprises of the following steps:

1. The preparing of data.

   The researcher collected and transcribed the raw data from the recorded interviews, as well as from the sourced articles. Once all the data was collected and in textual form, the researcher then read through the texts, becoming familiar with their contents. The documents were then reviewed, organised and labelled according to article/transcribed interview context, the perspective from which the article was written, and the corporate social initiatives that the content referred to. These notes provided a level of transparency for the researcher as the notes showed evidence of the researcher interpreting the data.

2. The analysis of the coding unit.

   At this stage the researcher decided upon the coding units used to analyse the data. These coding units assisted the researcher by offering a guide from which elements of the CSV offering could be drawn from the transcribed articles and interviews. And which then could assist in the development of categories by which CSV approach could be explored in its implementation.

3. The development of “categories”, coding schemes or “conceptual frameworks”.

   At this stage the researcher labelled the codes and grouped them into categories. This was done making by identifying commonalities in identified isolated text. Every code and theme were defined in a clear and systemic manner to ensure that the findings could be presented in a legible and more easily interpreted format. The codes themes and categories were thus “exhaustive”, “mutually exclusive” and “specific” (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014: 235).

4. The testing of coding schemes via “sample tests”.

   At this stage the coding units, themes and categories were tested on a sample of the data to ensure clarity and text consistency.

5. The coding of texts.

   At this stage the text open coding was used using a Microsoft word plug-in. The researcher read through the texts to gain familiarity with the content. Phrases and words relating to the identified coding unit were labeled and the plug-in application isolated these phrases. The concepts were then grouped into the categories that related to the CSV conceptual framework. The process involved the researcher fracturing the data, analysing it, conceptualising the data and thereafter comparing, categorizing and re-catagorising the data.

6. The assessment of "coding consistency".

   After the coding process was completed, the researcher checked the consistency of the coding process.

7. The defining of coded data conclusions and interpretations.

   The researcher presented the meanings derived from the data as "reconstructions" according to the identified categories. The process was done considering the theories – Legitimacy theory and Stakeholder theory- used as guides to interpret the data and motives driving companies to implementing corporate social initiatives. Also considered was the researchers own understanding of the process of CSV implementation as well as the need for the findings to answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives identified.

   The researcher explained the relationships found within the text findings and showed evidence of her considering "extraneous" information. The researcher then took all factors into consideration to avoid interpretations of the text that could be considered false.

8. The reporting of methods and findings

   The findings of the data were then reported and presented in regard to the manner in which the researcher coded, analysed, and interpreted the data. This was conducted in a manner that aimed to preserve the trustworthiness of the study.

## SECTION 4: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The following findings are grouped according to the process by which a CSV approach can be identified, and then considered in its implementation. They are grouped and presented as headings according to this process. The findings will then be considered according to each initiative. They are unpacked from an interview perspective, and an article perspective, and then compared. After this the initiative findings are explored in relation to the company approach versus a recipient approach regarding the initiatives and are then positioned holistically to establish and answer the research questions and sub-questions. The table relating to these findings can be found in the appendices labeled: Appendix A.

### 4.1. Findings

#### 4.1.1. The fundamental elements of CSV

Considering the CSV framework, there were fundamental elements required in order to explore whether or not CSV is implemented by a company.
These aspects, the foundation and requisite for CSV consideration were identified, applied to the transcribed texts and used as a means to answer the research questions.

#### 4.1.2. CSV categories

The CSV approach requires the following elements in order to be considered as such. These elements are labelled and then referenced according to the findings drawn from both the articles and individual interviews conducted

**The presence of an issue**

Unilever considered pressing South African issues which they then related to initiatives to be solved through company practices
These issues included:

- the mismanagement of packaging, with current trends of improper disposal to result in “the oceans could contain more plastics than fish by weight 2050”.
- a lack of funds required to purchase school desks for children in low income areas,
- the high rate of Gender based violence in South Africa
  and

- A lack of basic sanitation afforded to individuals in low income areas.

**A corresponding corporate social Initiative implemented by the company**

The CSV approach then entailed a response to this issue.
For the mismanagement of plastic as well as the lack of funds available for school equipment, Unilever offered school desks made of recycled plastic to schools without funding. “Tackling Gender based violence” according to a Unilever employee, Unilever aligned their Joko tea brand with an anti – GBV movement. Lastly, to address the issue of a lack of sanitation, Unilever implemented the “Cleaner toilets brighter future” program offering restoration of school toilets, Unilever products to maintain this hygiene, and skills training to maintain this standard.

**Social/Environmental value created**

In relation to the social/environmental value created, Unilever reduced environmental waste and offered amenities to improve education. They offered coverage as well as support and funding to combat gender-based violence as well as offered education and products to improve hygiene.

**Business value created**

As a result of these initiatives, business value includes the “driving of business growth” securing supply, improving profitability and increasing publicity.

**Shared value created**

In order for CSV to be labelled as such, a key component is the co-creation of value through the initiative for both parties which becomes sustainable and contributes towards business success.
From the data collected, feedback in this regard included statements such as “it was a once off thing”, “we sell more product … so directly I don’t think so”, and “the problem we have…. Is still existing”. This indicates that shared value may not evident as a result of initiatives implemented. In saying this however, the data needs to be more intricately considered by comparing perspectives and considering each initiative in isolation.

## 4.2. Interpretation of Findings

**Initiative: The donation of school desks to schools lacking funding for resources.**

When interviewing the principal at one of the schools that Unilever donated “desks” to, it was evident that although the tables were useful, they did not solve the requirements for traditional school desks This does not necessary indicate that the CSV approach is not applied, rather it insinuates that it may not have been effective. Furthermore, the individual commented that the initiative was in fact a “once off thing” . This indicates that shared value was not created and thus the data and perspective indicate that Unilever did not implement the CSV approach in regard to this CSI.

In terms of the article relating to the initiative, the initiative did correspond with the social upliftment associated with a CSV approach including offering “school desks that can be used towards various community projects”. Regarding the CSV approach this aligns with the framework whereby community value is created. The article also stated that the company aimed to “double its business whilst reducing environmental impact”. Although this does indicate value creation, the article mentioned that the desks were “sponsored” which insinuates “philanthropy” was initiated rather than a mutually beneficial value exchange.

A Unilever employee was not available for an interview and thus the CSV approach is be considered without this perspective. Overall, it can be deduced from the data collected that the initiative did not implement the CSV approach as it did not create shared value.

**Initiative: Activating POWA- offering GBV coverage, resources and support for women vulnerable to the dangers of gender-based violence in South Africa.**

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, the researcher did not interview a beneficiary of the gender-based violence initiative. This initiative will thus be considered from the perspective of the neutral article published as well as from the perspective of a Unilever employee personally involved in the implementation of the project.

The article published referred to an activation at Gateway theatre of shopping in Durban, where the public was invited to start a conversation about the topic to “educate individuals”. The initiative correlates with the CSV approach in offering education to individuals affected by the social issue. The article made no mention of shared value however and positioned the company as rather offering “support to the cause”.

It was also explained that the initiative was based on both an educational and financial offering. The employee also mentioned that many of the victims of gender-based violence were women who purchased Joko tea. This does reflect a CSV approach reflecting a business model generating shared value for both the company and beneficiary.

**Initiative: Partnering with Domestos to implement the "Cleaner toilets brighter future program".**

This initiative offered the most insight and detail into the personal impact and effects of Unilever's CSIs. From a beneficiary perspective, the teacher at the school who was involved in the initiative made mention that the school was earmarked by Unilever for the initiative. He made mention that the school had a "problem with the toilets"; and that their "hygiene" was poor. In mentioning that a company representative supervised the cleaning of the toilets" and "gave products" to assist in keeping them clean, it was evident that the company was using its resources to align with the social need and to educate the community. However, mutually created and maintained social value was not evident in that he mentioned they "didn't have anything to give" the company in return. The interviewee stated that he believed the initiative was good for Unilever's "social responsibility" indicating that the approach reflected more of a CSR perspective.

The article reenforced the idea that education was offered as school attendance increased "by 90%" as a result of the program. The article mentioned that the company benefited from an increase in revenue return and was committed to "doing good business " by doing good. This, although theoretically reflecting a CSV mantra, indicates that the initiative actions and results do not reflect CSV's requirement for mutual value creation.
A Unilever employee was not available to be interviewed for the specific initiative and so the article and beneficiary interview were considered in the CSV implementation in question.
The findings indicate that the initiative may have been indirectly beneficial for both parties in terms of the education and resource offered by the company in exchange for a potential increase in Domestos product purchases.

## 4.3. Findings in relation to the theories

### 4.3.1. Legitimacy theory

In relation to the Legitimacy theory, it is evident through the ability to offer initiatives that correlate with recognisable and impacting social issues, that legitimacy is created for the Unilever company. This finding is evidently reenforced by Unilever accompanying the initiatives with “cameramen”. The articles that followed evidently offered coverage for the company which in the eyes of the pubic offered a sense of corporate legitimacy.

### 4.3.2. Stakeholder theory

The last individual to be interviewed was a Unilever employee directly related in the implementation of Unilever’s USLP. The USLP reflects the elements of the Stakeholder theory whereby there exists a “duality” in the forming of social value creation (Freeman, Wicks & Parmar, 2004).

Unilever employs the integrated nature of the Stakeholder theory in that their very business model aims to contribute value towards greater society. Just as the theory emphasizes the value of integrating stakeholders in business operations and profiting as a result of social good performed, so does the very nature of the USLP achieve this. (Zhang, Loh & Wu, 2020). In relation to the CSV concept the approach is value driven and employs a deep consciousness in relation to implementing business practices that alleviate societal inequalities- viewing them as opportunities from which business strategies can emerge (Freeman, *et al*., 2004) (Porter & Kramer, 2011). However, the theory does not reflect shared value creation, and although Unilever resonates with the Stakeholder theory and its desire to offer a meaningful return (based on company offering), the theory itself does not validate a CSV approach.

## 4.4. Validity reliability and trustworthiness of findings

For this qualitative study, there was a need to ensure “trustworthiness” as it gained an “in depth” understanding of social dynamics (Jackson, 2018: 39) (Nicholson, 2017). For this topic, the nature of companies’ legitimacy being in question further heightened the need to ensure such trustworthiness. To maintain the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher implemented processes to ensure the dependability, credibility, confirmability and transferability of the results (Ponelis, 2015) (Jackson, 2018).

To ensure dependability, the researcher described and documented the research process with great care, this was done to offer consistency throughout the data collection process and the consistency of the result across article and participant findings reflected that the data could critically examined and proved worthy by others (Jackson, 2018).

“Credibility” refers to the research findings being “trustworthy and believable” (Thomas, 2010: 319). To ensure this, the researcher utilised methods of research collection and analysis that were “well-established” and recognised within the research field (Jackson, 2018: 39).

Research “confirmability” refers to the relationship accuracy between collected data and the researcher’s “interpretations” and actual research findings (Jackson, 2018: 39). Confirmability was reflected in that the existing literature evident in the literature review moving from a CSR to CSV approach, and their apparent differences reflected the findings that Unilever approach their implementation of initiatives in a manner that reflected the precursor to CSV- CSR (Jackson, 2018: 40).

Lastly, to ensure the study findings were transferable to similar research studies, the researcher offered “thick descriptions” of the research in context to give the reader information from which could be applied future studies with similar contexts (Thomas, 2010: 320).

# SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

## 5.1. Answering the research questions

The findings of the study provided the researcher the ability to answer the research question and sub-questions accordingly.

### 5.1.2. Sub- Questions

1.2. What factors does Unilever consider when implementing its corporate social initiatives in South Africa?

Unilever considers prevalent issues affecting both the environment and the people of South Africa that are at a disadvantage because of economic and resulting environmental circumstances. The company intends to align these issues with its product offering, to create credibility. This approach is integral in both the CSV and CSR concept but is not exclusive to the CSV approach.

1.3. Do Unilever's corporate social initiatives implemented in South Africa create value for Unilever as well as for those benefiting from their initiatives?

The corporate social initiatives implemented by Unilever do indeed create value for the company as well as those who benefit from the initiatives. This value manifest from the company as increased profitability due to the direct result of increased product usage and media coverage and thus influence of company reputability.

1.4. Do Unilever's corporate social initiatives implemented in South Africa result in the parties involved co-creating value for one another?

The corporate social initiatives that were considered reflected that Unilever's initiatives do not result in the parties co-creating value for one another, from the initiatives considered, it was evident that the issue to be solved could offer no direct recompense for the company.

### 5.1.3. Main research Question

1. Does Unilever implement “Shared Value Creation” through its corporate social initiatives implemented in South Africa?

To answer the question, it is evident that Unilever does not implement “Shared Value Creation” or the CSV approach through its corporate social initiatives implemented in South Africa. Although the company has implemented a business model approach to creating value within the society in which it operates, a key component of CSV involves the co-creation of value, which in turn increases business profitability.

There are indeed elements of CSV in Unilever's implementation of its corporate social initiatives in South Africa, but its purpose is not to use the initiatives directly as a means to generate profit.

## 5.2. Solving the research problem

The research has alleviated the larger problem of a lack of existing evidence on the implementation of the CSV Approach within a South African context. Although further information will benefit researcher and companies interested in implementing the CSV practices within a South African context, the research offers an in-depth perspective of the CSV approach, and the categories and elements by which it can be recognised.
For South Africa, a country who can benefit from companies who create a value approach that is sustainable and meaningful in its efforts, the information offers companies the ability to to gain competitive advantage- using social issues as opportunities to improve on the co-creation of shared value within their operating scope (Porter *et al*., 2012).

## 5.3. Reaching the research goal

The research was thus able to reach the research goal in by exploring the CSIs implemented by Unilever and as a result, understanding whether or not the company implemented a CSV approach.

## 5.4. Answering the research objectives

The research objective to identify whether or not Unilever has implemented “Shared Value Creation” through its corporate social initiatives implemented in South Africa has been achieved. The findings offered insight into the factors considered when Unilever implements its corporate social initiatives in South Africa. These factors included the Unilever offering, and its ability to link to an apparent social or environmental issue

The findings assisted the researcher in bettering understand that Unilevers initiatives do indeed create value for Unilever as well as for those benefiting from their initiatives. In saying that however, it is clear that Unilever's corporate social initiatives implemented in South Africa does not result in the co-creation of value- for both parties and the CSV approach is not implemented by the company.

## 5.5. Implication of findings for future practice

The findings offer insight into the criteria by which the CSV concept can be identified in its implementation. Furthermore, in offering information to companies and researchers interested in the approach, the potential to initiate conversation and action that could spark further initiatives that benefit the country becomes apparent. The study offers heuristic value in that going forward, companies can better position themselves with information on how to approach corporate social initiatives in a manner that creates shared value. Such efforts would differ from existing as "once off" philanthropic actions that don't stimulate further value creation efforts. The research is valuable in a time and age where accountability is more sought after than ever. Unilever's USLP is effective in offering solutions that better society which indicates value can be found in exploring the CSV concept.

## 5.6. Ethical Concerns

For this qualitative study, the depth of research requires the researcher to interact with the participants "deeply", entering "into their space" in order to collect the data required (Thomas, 2010: 317).

The issues considered thus included:

- Gaining informed consent from participants.
- Ensuring no participant was at risk of exposure to COVID-19 (harm and risk prevention).

- Establishing honesty and trust with participants through openness and transparency.

- Preserving the confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of participants.
- Maintaining cultural sensitivity by considering possible values or cultural differences that may affect the data collection process.

To ensure the integrity of the above issues was preserved the researcher create an open communication dialogue with participants prior to the study so that the participant was well informed of the nature of the study, their role in the study, and that confidentially will be preserved. This researcher honoured this intent by ensuring all interview documents were kept confidential and that nobody has access to this raw information apart from the researcher. To further ensure the integrity of this data collection the researcher ensured a consent form was completed by participants at their own discretion – ensuring the data collected was done so ethically.

## 5.7. Limitations

According to Jackson (2018: 46), limitations can be defined as limits or constraints in a research study that are not within the researcher's "control". The limitations for this study included time, resource limitation, access to participants and sample size (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014: 275).

- **Time**: The time frame in which the research could be conducted was constrained to the 2020 academic year. As a result, the researcher was limited in volume of evidence that could be collected within the particular time frame. Furthermore, the time constraint limited the depth of the research that could be conducted in relation to the subject and thus the findings themselves were not as "robust" as what the researcher would have intended (Jackson, 2018: 46). A clear timeline and roll-out plan was designed to guarantee the research was conducted in a manner that was timely and thus lucrative (Jackson, 2018: 46).

- **Resources**: The researcher, being a student was limited to resources afforded to those at a tertiary level. Also, by not being a member of an organisational body with access to available "field researchers" the researcher was only be able to gather research that was available to her (Jackson, 2018: 46). Furthermore, as the researcher was the sole conductor of the research, the researcher was unable to conduct research across a variety of firms and thus the researcher chose to confine the "scope of the investigation" to a single company only (Jackson, 2018).

- **Access to participants**: Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, certain social distancing rules and regulations required social engagements to become more meticulous. These health and safety regulations were considered to avoid exposing the researcher or participants to the coronavirus. This limited the researcher in her ability to access the participants physically. The researcher, therefore, to address this issue, arranged with participants to conduct interviews and focus groups via digital platforms including Zoom to ensure social distancing and preservation of the health and safety of participants.

- **Sample size (delimitation)**: The sample size of the participants used when conducting the research was small due to limited time and resource access and was therefore not be a true "representative" of the "entire population" (Jackson, 2018: 46). However, to address this, the researcher ensured that the sample size was large enough to guarantee an "in-depth understanding" of results (Harrison, Birks, Franklin & Mills, 2017) (Jackson, 2018: 46).

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# Appendix A: Table of Findings

| Tab ed Interv ew f nd ngs: nd v dua Sem -Structured Interv ews | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Context | Unit o analysis | Analysis Perspective | Product /service o ering | ssue | Unilever initiative o ering | Social value created | Business value created | Shared value created /co-created value |
| Initiative involving Unilever providing recycled desks to children within community who lacked funding for school equipment | Individuals (transcribed interview) | Beneficiary (principal) | General | "very low-income bracket of a parents and we thought you know we don't have funds"<br>"desks that we needed to buy" | | "that so instead of children sitting around and eating they can eat at the table"<br>"do homework at these desks"<br>"and it was in the paper and it's taken a pic in that's what we did " | "and take photos etc."<br>"welcomed the entourage from Unilever and from the Department of Education as well so they can see"<br>"They came with their camera men and everything else I suppose it was for their magazine and so "<br>"and it was in the paper and it's taken a pic in that's what we did " | "there was nothing that they asked for in return"<br>"was just a once-off thing"<br>"we utilized the desks for other things now"<br>"the problem that we have with the parents is still existing " |
| Insight into the Joko tea brand partnering with POWA to combat GBV and domestic violence against women in South Africa | Individuals (transcribed interview) | Unilever employee | Joko | South Africa is South African women stay in domestically violent relationships but an average of 10 to 15 years so we would just be trying to change that narrative"<br>"social injustice against women " | "entire hub dedicated to helping people understand where to go"<br>""helping the individuals in that they're getting donations "<br>"R5,000,000 Rand a year to them "<br>""we've got it everywhere Facebook Instagram " | "we're trying to help the people who need immediate help "<br>"space of safety for women and uplifting women"<br>"hub dedicated to helping people understand where to go "<br>"R5,000,000 Rand a year to them " | "we've got it everywhere Facebook Instagram "<br>"we are selling more product and obviously that hits our profits and we're able to be more successful as a company" | "if people buy more Joko we benefit and that we are selling more product and obviously that hits our profits and we're able to be more successful as a company"<br>" directly I don't think so"<br>"chances are many of those women are the ones who are buying Joko we're helping women at large but lots of them would be Joko consumers themselves "<br>"sometimes the people who buy your product aren't necessarily the ones getting helped by it"<br>"donate about R5,000,000" |
| Initiative involving Domestos cleaner toilets brighter futures program | Individuals (transcribed interview) | Beneficiary (schoolteacher) | Domestos | "problem with the toilets "<br>"hygiene of the toilets" | "gave us the products uh they also supervised the cleaning of the toilets " | "teach us the learners' toilets how to keep them clean"<br>"helped us to be aware "<br>"they helped us to get that culture of cleanliness "<br>"taught us especially about hygiene "<br>"also, they taught the learners to conduct themselves " | "but they interview us a lady comes "<br>"good for their social responsibility " | "No, we don't have anything to give them " |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Insight into Unilever approach to corporate social initiatives implemented in South Africa | Individuals (transcribed interview) | Unilever employee | General | "COVID has cost the world "<br>"climate change"<br>"health"<br>"product…disposal"<br>"environmental footprint "<br>"handwashing sanitation and oral care "<br>"POWA" (Domestic violence) | "globally there was a set of targets that were developed then I think each country so coming a little bit more ,local enough what I would have also done , what I did was also look at our country's very specific needs and we chose target areas and goals based on that filtering process"<br>"behaviour change program for handwashing sanitation and oral care and now with COVID that was together with the department of education to expand that program into every single school so that's going into 28000 schools this year "<br>"is our plastic commitment where we announced that we now are going to collect back all the plastic , or more plastic than we sell and collect that back is going to cost us money so it's a commitment that we've made and that we've globally committed to" | "USLP covers all brands and all countries and goes beyond just environment it looks at social good at well and it goes beyond just the manufacture of our products so we look at everything from the sourcing of it to the manufacture of it to its end life disposal "<br>"example we have a national creche and sanitation program and that started with learners at primary school from quintile 1-5 so it goes to more than 15000 schools with the behaviour change program for handwashing sanitation and oral care"<br>"children who would directly then benefit from the training by the teachers are the children but the thing about behaviour change is that the theory is that the children will then go and influence their parents "<br>"implementing things like water neutrality, carbon neutrality | "it goes beyond just the manufacture of our products so we look at everything from the sourcing of it to the manufacture of it to its end life disposal"<br>"the USLP is meant to drive business growth,"<br>"implementing things like water neutrality, carbon neutrality | "doesn't do corporate social responsibility in the traditional sense 10ish years ago when we launched the USLP It sort of became our new model to play our role in increasing our positive social impacts which we do via the USLP "<br>"social responsibility usually in traditional sense implies charity where the USLP is more about building sustainable businesses model "<br>"We have a plan to reduce our environmental footprint and to do positive social good throughout our business while we grow our business "<br>"goal looked at the big changes that needed to happen in the world and how can we make the biggest difference so it's sort of overlapping our brands what we have to capabilities to do through our entire extended supply chain for example sourcing 100 percent of our agricultural material is a huge goal because we have a huge role to play there "<br>"I think on a on a macro level we realise in that for in order for ourselves to drive as a business society should thrive, so on that level everything that we trying to do links with the sustainable development goal in building a better world. "<br>"Joko as an example the program that we're doing was meant to benefit the beneficiaries of the program but we also really hope to grow the Joko brand and as the brand grows the more people we can help, so the more packs of tea that gets sold the more money we raise for POWA"<br>"our plastic commitment where we announced that we now are going to collect back all the plastic , or more plastic than we sell and collect that back is going to cost us money so it's a commitment that we've made and that we've globally committed to so we will do it but it will definitely cost more money especially at the beginning " |

Tab ed Interv ew f nd ngs: Transcr bed Documents

| Context | Unit of analysis | Analysis Perspective | Product /service offering | ssue | Unilever initiative offering | Social value created | Business value created | Shared value created /co-created value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Initiative involving Unilever providing recycled desks to children within community who lacked funding for school equipment | Article | Neutral source | General | "We experience many struggles because learners come from families supported by social grants and cannot afford to pay school fees."<br>"as previously a desk would be shared amongst three learners at a time, thereby affecting the overall productivity of the child and the school at large, especially during exams."<br>"under-resourced facilities" | "latest recipients of 250 desks "<br>"upcycles these post-consumer multi-layered multi-film materials into planks which are then assembled into school desks.'"<br>"Wildlands was incredibly proud to be working with OMO to see the distribution of 500 green desks in schools in KZN and Gauteng"<br>"school desks that can be used towards various community development projects." | "education to empower learners from marginalized communities and drive positive change."<br>"a profound impact on literacy development and academic performance at the schools."<br>"programs such as 'The Renewed Project', to better manage the waste we produce "<br>"cleaning the communities where we work and in turn, supporting the education of children."<br>"effectively removing 20 000 kilograms of previously unrecycled plastic materials from landfill sites and providing learners with a better chance for their future." | "Unilever has committed to ensuring that all its plastic packaging is fully reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025."<br>"made it possible for Unilever to transform the way it does business by transforming multi-layered waste into useful items" | "ambition to double its business while reducing its environmental impact."<br>"sponsorship of desks" |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Insight into the Joko tea brand partnering with POWA to combat GBV and domestic violence against women in South Africa | Article | Neutral source | Joko | "domestic violence against women in South Africa."<br>"women keep quiet because of the stigma they face from their communities," | "invited people to take and wear a ribbon- "<br>"unique activation at Durban's Gateway Theatre of Shopping" | "start a conversation about it and being a safe space for people that need to talk."<br>"raising much-needed awareness for the cause"<br>"It's also an opportunity to talk to men, especially those, who do not abuse to encourage them to speak out against the abuse"<br>"educate our children" | "invited people to take and wear a ribbon"<br>"unique activation at Durban's Gateway Theatre of Shopping" | "To prove our support to the cause " |
| Initiative involving Domestos cleaner toilets brighter futures program | Article | Neutral source | Domestos | "no access to basic sanitation"<br>"doesn't have access to adequate sanitation and nowhere is the crisis more evident than in South African schools"<br>"misses almost 70% of their school days due to sickness." | "renovating and installing school toilets in 2014"<br>"to the Domestos and UNICEF project, BRIGHTER FUTURE"<br>"help educate the students about toilet hygiene and maintenance" | "job creation is welcomed in these communities"<br>"educate the students about toilet hygiene and maintenance"<br>"660 schools have benefitted from the program and school attendance has improved to well over 90%"<br>"has improved education, improved health and increased job creation" | "Domestos secured supply, improved profitability and maintained and extended its position as South Africa's market-leading toilet cleaner"<br>"Domestos generated R7.5 million for UNICEF and was declared as Unilever SA's fastest growing brand." | "Domestos added the UNICEF's logo and a 'call to action' on to the front of all Domestos bottles. 5% of the proceeds of every Domestos bottle purchased is donated to the Domestos and UNICEF project"<br>"that require help and investment. Domestos and UNICEF are committed to continue doing good business while doing good " |

## Appendix B: Interview Questionnaire 1 - Unilever Employees

Name:

Job Title:

Job description:

Questions:

1. What are Unilever's views on Corporate Social Responsibility?

1.1. What role does Unilever's approach to Corporate Social Responsibility play in relation to the company's business model?

2. How has Unilever chosen the corporate social initiatives it has implemented in South Africa from 2015 -2020?

3. Who are the individuals who have benefitted from the company's implemented corporate social initiatives in South Africa?

3.2. Would you consider these individuals related to the company in any way?

<u>Checklist/Prompts</u>

- Staff
- Future Employees
- Resource Areas
- Consumers
- Other

3.3. Does the success of the individuals/community benefit the company in any way?

3.3.1. If yes – would the benefits be considered short or long term benefits?

3.4. Does the success of the company benefit the individuals/community in any way?

3.4.1. If yes – would the benefits be considered short or long term benefits?

4. What is Unilever's understanding of Creating Shared Value?

5. What value has been created through Unilever implementing its corporate social initiatives in South Africa?

6. Which social issues would you say have been largely impacted through Unilever's implementing of its corporate social initiatives?

Checklist/Prompts

External (social)

- Environment
- Sanitation
- Healthcare
- Employment
- Education
- Community satisfaction
- Safety
- Housing & Infrastructure
- Other

External

(consumer)

- Consumer satisfaction/ pride
- Increased community participation
- Increased public support for social issues
- Other

- Internal

(Unilever)

- Employee satisfaction/pride
- Workplace Efficiency
- Improved sales
- Reduced production costs
- Other

7. Did/ do any of the corporate social initiatives implemented by Unilever come at a financial cost to the company?

7.1. If yes, what were the areas requiring financial aid from the company in order to function?

<u>Checklist/Prompts</u>

- Donations
- Salaries
- Materials
- Other

8. Did/ do any of the corporate social initiatives implemented by Unilever come at an internal social cost to the company?

8.1. If yes, what were the costs to the company in implementing the corporate social initiatives?

<u>Checklist/Prompts</u>

- Extra Staff
  - Time Away from Work
  - Salaries
  - Materials
  - Other

9. Would you consider saying the benefits outweigh the costs or the other way around? Please elaborate…

10. Are there any initiatives, relating to social issues, that Unilever is considering implementing in the future that would co- create value for the company and the company's surrounding community or environment?

## Appendix C: Interview Questionnaire 2 - Unilever Initiative Beneficiary

Interviewee Name:
Job Title:

Job description:

Questions:

1. Tell me about the problem that you were facing in your community

   Prompts (cluster development)

   - Products
   - Service

2. What year was this

3. Who was affected by the problem the most?

4. How were they affected

5. Was there anyone else affected by the problem?

6. How were they affected?

7. How did you first come into contact with the company Unilever?

8. Tell me about the discussions or talks that took place.

9. Tell me about the actual events that took place between the community and the company to help with the problem that was discussed.

10. What did the company provide you with?

11. How is the problem now?

- Solved
- better
- Same
- Worse

12. Did the initiative cost you anything?

- Finances
- People
- Materials
- Time

13. Did the company ask for anything in return?

14. Was anyone in the community involved with Unilever before this in any way?

5.1 If yes, in what way?

<u>Checklist/Prompts</u>

- Staff
- Future Employees
- Resource Areas
- Consumers
- Other

15. Is anyone in the community involved with Unilever after this action took place?

5.2 If yes, how?

Checklist/Prompts

- Staff
- Future Employees
- Resource Areas
- Consumers
- Other

16. Do you have any relationship with Unilever after this?

17. Looking back now, how would you describe the experience with the company in helping the people that were affected the most by this problem,?

18. Looking back now, how would you describe the experience with the company in helping the other people that were also affected by this problem?

19. How do you think being involved with this initiative, helped Unilever as a company?

## Appendix D: Document Review Table Template

<table>
<tr><td>Classified theme:</td><td colspan="2"></td><td>Document/text number:</td><td></td></tr>
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<tr><td>Date published:</td><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Document checklist and data review</td></tr>
<tr><td>Copies/ duplicated of document/text are made:</td><td colspan="2">Yes</td><td colspan="2">No</td></tr>
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<tr><td rowspan="2">Background information exploration</td><td>Author/creator</td><td>Intended audience</td><td>Document/text purpose</td><td>Document/text layout</td></tr>
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|---|---|---|---|---|
| Part 1. Latent context exploration | Producer of document/text | What was the document/text produced for? | Document/text production circumstances | |
| | | | | |
| Part 2. Latent context exploration | Why was the document/text produced? | When was the document/text produced? | Where was the document/text produced? | Data classification type: |
| | | | | |
| Content exploration | | | | |

## Appendix E: Ethical Clearance Letter

THE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

vega

Varsity College

ROSEBANK COLLEGE

MSA

**11 September 2020**

**Student name:** Julie Dancaster
[redacted]
**Campus:** Vega Bordeaux

**Re: Approval of BA Strategic Brand Communications Proposal and Ethics Clearance**

**HONOURS/PGDIP ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER**

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

ADVTECH HOUSE
Inanda Greens
54 Wierda Rd West
Wierda Valley 2196
P.O. Box 2369
Randburg 2125

BAC

## GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

*Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.*

***Please note:*** The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor: Mbali Rame[redacted]

[redacted]graduate Coordinator (CPC): Dr Tish Taylor

# Annexure 1: Final Research Report Summary Document Table

**TITLE:** *Creating Shared Value: a qualitative study referencing specific corporate social initiatives implemented by Unilever in South Africa.*

| Research Purpose/ Objective | Primary Research Question | Research Rationale | Seminal Authors/ Sources | Literature Review – Conceptual Framework | Paradigm | Approach | Data Collection Method(s) | Ethics | Key Findings | Recommen-dations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The purpose of the research study was to explore the concept of CSV, making reference to the company Unilever and their implemented corporate social initiatives (CSI) in an attempt to explore whether or not the company does indeed implement this practice in South Africa. | 1. Does Unilever implement "Shared Value Creation" through its corporate social initiatives implemented in South Africa? | Despite many existing opportunities for companies to serve a much-needed social purpose in South Africa, there is little evidence of CSV existing (in theory or in practice) within a localised context This study provides fellow companies/researchers looking to build the trust of the public or for information into the newly developed CSV approach, with insight into its implementation within a localized context. | The Legitimacy Theory (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975)<br><br>The Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, Harrison & Wicks, 2007)<br><br>The Creating Shared Value (CSV) Framework (Porter, Hills, Pfitzer, Patscheke and Hawkins, 2012) | **Theme 1:**<br>Corporate Social Responsibility<br><br>-Introduction to CSR<br>-Supporters of CSR<br>-Critics against CSR<br><br>**Theme 2:**<br>Creating Shared Value<br><br>-Introduction to CSV<br>-Supporters of CSV<br>-Critics against CSV<br>-CSV in South Africa | **Paradigm**<br>Interpretivism<br><br>**Epistemology**<br>The epistemological view of Interpretivism believes knowledge is as valuable as it is "relative". Theories are given importance and hold value in accordance to how they add context to the study and aid in the interpretation of its meaning (Ponelis, 2015). | ***Qualitative Approach***<br><br>**Population**<br><br>**Population Parameters**<br>South African residents who are either Unilever employees or individuals belonging to communities who benefited from Unilever's in South Africa. | Document review and semi-structured interviews | The issues considered thus included:<br>•Gaining informed consent from participants<br>•Ensuring no participant was at risk of exposure to COVID-19 (harm and risk prevention).<br>•Establishing honesty and trust with participants through openness and transparency.<br>•Preserving the confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of participants.<br>•Maintaining cultural sensitivity by considering possible values or cultural differences could affect the data collection process. | Unilever considers issue affecting both the environment and the people of South Africa- the motivation from which CSV is initiated<br>The corporate social initiatives implemented by Unilever create value for the company and for those who benefit from the initiatives/<br>The value created from these considered initiatives is not co-created, nor does it generate shared value for both parties as a result o implementation.<br>Unilever does therefore not implement the CSV approach | It is recommended that companies and researchers interested in the CSV practice continue to seek further research regarding the concepts implementa-tion in a South African context as it is evident that CSV is an evolvig concept that evolves to accomodate rising sociarl and encvironemnatl needs.<br><br>As made evident by the criics of CSV, the CSV concept may present a simplified version of CSR, amd thus underestimate its effectivenss. developement. Researchers could assertain with further studies, whether or not CSR vs CSV offers the greater financial and return as well as toconsider which of the approaches, if any offer a greater return on Legitmacy gained by the public. |
| **Research Problem** | **Secondary Questions** | **Research Objectives** | **Key Concepts** | **Key Theories** | | **Sampling** | **Data Analysis Method(s)** | **Limitations** | **Key Contribution** | |
| Available information on the tools to put the CSV concept into practice, as well as information on the approach itself, are still in their infancy (Porter, Hills, Pfitzer, Patscheke & Hawkins, 2012). Indeed, a lack of evidence and examples as to how to fully implement the practice, is limiting companies' abilities to gain competitive advantage by reducing their opportunities to co-create shared value within their operating scope (Porter et al., 2012). | 1.2 .What factors does Unilever consider when implementing its corporate social initiatives in South Africa?<br><br>1.3 .Do Unilever's corporate social initiatives implement-ed in South Africa create value for Unilever as well as for those benefiting from their initiatives?<br><br>1.4. Do Unilever's corporate social initiatives implement-ed in South Africa result in the parties involved co-creating value for one another? | 1.To identify whether or not Unilever has implemented "Shared Value Creation" through its CSI'S implemented in South Africa.<br><br>2.To understand what factors Unilever considers when implementing its corporate social initiatives in South Africa.<br><br>3.To better understand whether or not Unilever's CSI's implemented in South Africa create value for Unilever as well as for those benefiting from their initiatives.<br><br>4.To better understand whether or not Unilever's CSI's implemented in South Africa result in the co-creation of value- for both parties as a result of their implementation. | Value Creation<br><br>Co-Creation of Value<br><br>Corporate Philanthropy<br><br>Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)<br><br>Creating Shared Value (CSV)<br><br>Corporate Social Initiatives | The Legitimacy Theory (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975)<br><br>The Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, Harrison & Wicks, 2007)<br><br>The Creating Shared Value (CSV) Framework (Porter, Hills, Pfitzer, Patscheke and Hawkins, 2012) | **Ontology**<br>Interpretivists believe that there are numerous "subjective" existing realities based on societal constructs (Thomas, 2010: 295).<br><br>**Axiology**<br>Axiologically, "relevance" is esteemed higher than "rigor" which is applicable as the information gathered is from particular cases rather than en masse (Ponelis, 2015:538) | **Non-probability sampling**<br><br>**Sampling method**<br>Purposive sampling<br><br>**Size**<br>The sample size for the research included three articles- each pertaining to a corporate social initiative implemented by the company and four individuals-two Unilever employees invoved in the initiaves imlementation and two individuals who benefited from the company's corporate social initiatives. | **Unit of Analysis**<br>Individuals and Artifacts<br><br>**Data Analysis Method(s)**<br>Individuals and Artifacts | Time: The time frame was constrained in order to meet project deadlines. Furthermore, the time constraint limited the depth of the research that could be conducted.<br>•Resources: The researcher, being a student was limited to resources afforded to those at a tertiary level.<br>•Access to participants: Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, certain social distancing rules and regulations limited the researcher in her ability to access the participants<br>-Sample size (delimitation):, the sample size of the particpants used to conduct the researcg was small due to limited time and resource access | The research offered evidence on the implementation of the CSV Approach within a South African context.<br>The research offered an in-depth perspective of the CSV approach, and the categories and elements by which it can be recognised.<br>For South Africa, who could benefit from companies who create a value approach that is sustainable and meaningful in its efforts, the information offers companies the ability to gain competitive advantage by using this information as an opportunities to improve the co-creation of shared value within their operating scope (Porter et al., 2012). | |