MBA RESEARCH PROPOSAL

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Title

Assessing the factors that drive CSR performance of Food and Drug retail companies listed on the JSE

By

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY- MBAA 874

RESEARCH PROPOSAL EXAMINATION

EVALUATION FORM

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See supervisor's/examiner's comments in the text. Marked by:

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Zane Rich Derbyshire	9 October 2020
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ASSESSING THE FACTORS THAT DRIVE CSR PERFORMANCE OF FOOD AND DRUG RETAIL COMPANIES LISTED ON THE JSE.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has grown into a contentious issue around the world that has many talking about it in newspapers, financial news or even a business magazine. The topics surrounding CSR include corporations and how these corporations set out their goals for the protection and welfare of the communities and environment in which they do their business. Since the beginning the concept of CSR has been introduced, it has become a subject of high interest to all the shareholders of companies, opinions from the public and even so among employees and governments. (Farcane & Bureana, 2015:31).

This study explores the concept and history of corporate social responsibility; where and how the concept came to existence and the different views of researchers about the concept; the significance of CSR through the discussion of the benefits that CSR has on corporations; who implement CSR; the performance and measurement of CSR; and CSR within a South African context. This study also explores the Retail and Drug industry companies listed on the JSE, that has been selected for this study.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Research indicates that defining CSR has proved to be a convoluted matter and even though a more refined definition for CSR exist, there may still be confusion amongst some parties. This could pose a challenge in the process of developing and implementation of a CSR strategy. There is also no uniform method of measuring CSR performance, even though the most commonly used measurement instrument is content analysis through analysis of annual reports (Ahmed, Islam & Hasan, 2012:16; Khlif, Guidara & Souissi, 2015:53). The success of these measurements depend on the proper identification of key indicators to measure CSR performance (Nave & Ferreira, 2019:897; Giannarakis & Theotokas). Tilt (2016:1) explains that research in terms of CSR in developing countries, such as South Africa, is lacking. Also according to Tilt (2016:7-8), no framework as of factors that hinder CSR performance and related reporting in developing countries exist and these countries cannot be placed within the same basket since each have a different economic, political, social and cultural environment. Nave and Ferreira (2019:897) also established in their study that it is crucial to identify barriers that impede CSR implementation and reporting within specific countries. This will reap benefits in order to develop, adopt and implement the most appropriate CSR strategy to ensure the sustainability of corporations. As a first point of reference, the CSR performance and reporting of corporations within South Africa need to be analysed in order to determine if there are advancements. This should provide valuable information towards improvement of CSR strategy. An in-depth understanding of factors that have an impact on the CSR and the reporting thereof of JSE listed Food and Drug Retail companies within South Africa can provide valuable insight in an effort to improve the positive impact of CSR on the corporations as well as its stakeholders that include the community and the economy. In knowing what weaknesses are in place, corporations can start implementing strategies to overcome these, on the other hand, corporations can adopt the strengths of entities who successfully implement CSR within their own strategies without having to go through a lengthy trial and error process.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Primary objective/research question

To determine factors that influence the corporate social responsibility performance of Food and Drug Retail companies listed on the JSE.

Secondary objectives

- Define corporate social responsibility within the context of a developing country.
- Identify indicators to evaluate CSR performance.
- Analyse the CSR performance of the selected Food and Drug Retail companies over a three-year period.
- Investigate factors that influence the CSR performance and reporting thereof, from the perspective of the selected companies.
- Provide recommendations to address negative factors that have an influence on CSR performance and reporting.

1.4 IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED STUDY

Foremost a refined definition for CSR within the context of developing countries could eliminate confusion and proper implementation and reporting on CSR. In knowing what weaknesses or barriers to meaningful CSR performance, corporations can start implementing strategies to overcome these, on the other hand, corporations can adopt the strengths of entities who successfully implement CSR within their own strategies without having to go through a lengthy trial and error process. This should ensure that corporations reap the benefits of CSR practice that may have an impact on their sustainability and contribution towards society and the economy. This study would also contribute towards CSR literature within a developing country perspective.

2. DELIMINATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

2.1 DELIMINATIONS

Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018:157) describe delimitations of a research study as limitations that the researcher deliberately sets for their own research study, in an effort to probability of executibility and completion of the study (namely to prevent the study from becoming impossible to complete). Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018:157) further state that this a means used by the researcher to “control” the study. One of the delimitations of this study is to select a specific industry that is listed on the JSE, namely the Food and Drug Retail industry, as appose to the entire JSE listed companies as this might compromise the feasibility of completion of the study. In addition, another delimitation was the selection of the one of the data collection instrument. A lengthy telephone interview might agitate the interviewee and they might give very short answers in order to conclude the interview as soon as possible, whereby if they are provided with a questionnaire to complete within their own time, they might be less likely to become agitated and in a rush to conclude and leave out important detail.

2.2 ASSUMPTIONS

One assumption of the study is that the companies selected for this study, namely Food and Drug Retail companies listed on the JSE, have all adopted the KING Code of Corporate Governance, which is a JSE listing requirement. The KING Code recommends CSR as a practice, hence it is assumed that the companies selected for this study have executed some or other form of CSR initiative or practice.

3. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Corporate Social Responsibility is the commitment of business to manage and improve the economic, environmental and social implications of the activities at the firm locally, regional as well as on a global level.

Corporation(s) for purpose of this study, corporation(s) is used interchangeably with the word “company”.

Food and Drug Retail Industry Owners and operators of companies in the retail sector of supermarkets that sells food and consumer staple products, general food retail stores, pharmacies and drug retail stores.

Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) a company duly registered and incorporated with limited liability under the company laws of the Republic of South Africa under registration number 2005/022939/06, licensed as an exchange under the Securities Services Act, 2004

KING Code of Corporate Governance the Code of Corporate Practices and Conduct representing the principles of good governance as laid out in the King Report as amended or replaced from time to time.

Table 1.1 List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	**Meaning**
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
JSE	Johannesburg Stocks Exchange

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1. CSR concept and history

The concept corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been around for decades, since the 1950s, but is rather considered to be a twentieth century product even though early research efforts, that provide wide-ranging results, on the concept has been done (Carrolll, 2008:1). It is also a contemporary research issue in the corporate world as well as academia (Tilt, 2016:7; Nave & Ferreira, 2019:885). CSR started with the questions of whether corporations have a moral responsibility, whether they can be regarded as moral agencies and whose interests would these corporations serve (Rossouw & van Vuuren, 2017:82).

Milton Friedman concluded that corporations do not have a moral responsibility and that they only have a responsibility towards the shareholders to realise profit for them and to comply with laws of society (Freeman & Liedtka, 1991:93; Rossouw & van Vuuren, 2017:82). Friedman also stated corporations cannot be held socially responsible since they are not moral persons and social actions should exclusively be performed if it is in the interest of the corporation (Rossouw & van Vuuren, 2017:82). Christopher Stone was one of the first individuals who publicly disagreed with the views of Friedman in a book he wrote when he refuted Friedman’s view on

CSR (Rossouw & van Vuuren, 2017:84). In short, Stone concluded that managers do not ever explicitly promise to maximise profits of a corporation, in addition, he added that laws are reactive and only implemented when damage has been done. He then ultimately concluded that corporations have a moral obligation and corporations should engage in self-initiated CSR (Rossouw and van Vuuren, 2017:885). This subsequently lead to the question of whether corporations or entities are moral agents.

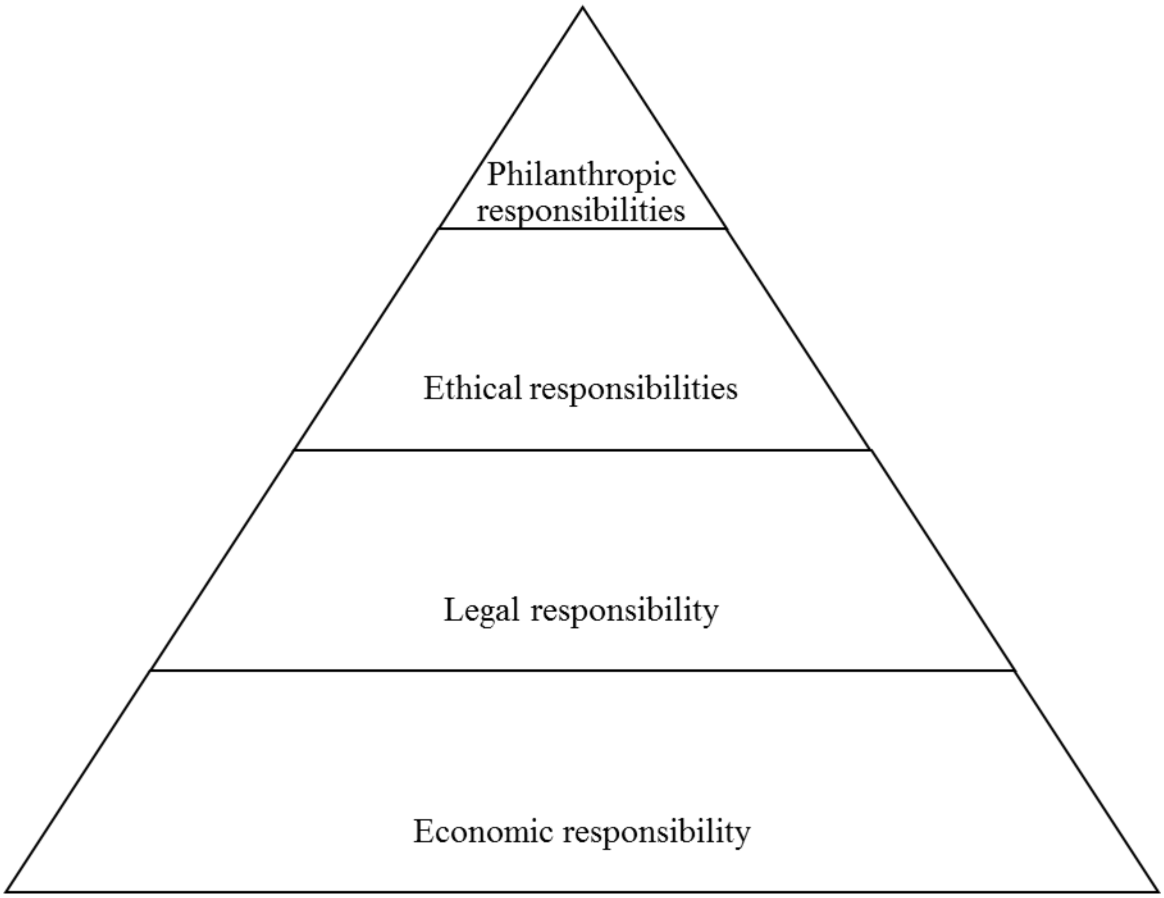
Peter French then challenged Friedman's views and concluded that corporations are moral persons based on the two criteria for moral responsibility (Rossouw and van Vuuren, 2017:88). Edward Freeman then developed the stakeholder theory based on a legal, economic and stakeholder argument and asserted all stakeholders should be treated equally and corporations should add value to them all (Rossouw and van Vuuren, 2017:90). Kenneth Goodpastor subsequently agreed with Edward Freeman, however disagreed that all stakeholders are equal. Goodpaster was of the view that corporations have a special duty towards shareholders and management need to find ways in which the entity fulfils its moral obligations to all stakeholders without sacrificing the private economic mission of the entity (Rossouw and van Vuuren, 2017:94). In other words, if corporations gave away all their resources to the community and nothing is left to grow the company then the company would have to close down and the community would lose in any case.

The concept of CSR has become more and more important such that the term has been in discussions whereby famous debates took place, research, and where comments were made (Farcane & Bureana, 2015:31). Europe has over decades become so fascinated with the concept of CSR that they have discovered that there is substantial evidence that scholars and practitioners are taking the social concern very serious in Europe and these are often displayed in the form of consultancies, formal writings, conferences, and research (Carroll, 2008:2). CSR policies and practices have more recently grabbed the attention of Asian countries as well (Carroll, 2008:1). South Africa is no different. Mervin King chaired a committee on corporate governance in 1993 and the King Code of Corporate Governance was developed which encourages corporate citizenship and a stakeholder inclusive approach (Kretzschmar *et al*. 2019:133).

Dahlsrud (2008:1) and Schwartz and Carroll (2003:503) assert that there has been a challenge and uncertainty in both the corporate and academic world for researchers to derive to the most appropriate definition for CSR and that the concept still remain ambiguous to some. Dahlsrud (2008:1) is also of the view that inconsistent definitions surrounding CSR might pose a significant problem in terms of implementation. The first efforts of a formal definition for CSR date back to Bowen (1953) and Moir (2001) followed by Carroll's definitions of CSR (Dahlsrud, 2008:2).

Carroll (2016:5) defined CSR in terms of a corporations' responsibility by way of a pyramid.

Illustration 1.1: Carroll's CSR pyramid



In 1979 a four-part definition of CSR was originally published (Carroll, 2016:4). The form of the pyramid came in 1991 when Carroll took out the four-part definition of CSR and re-formed it into a pyramid (Carroll, 2016:4). The geometric design of the pyramid was selected because of its simplicity, intuitive, and designed to withstand the test of time (Carroll, 2016:4). Subsequently, the economic responsibility was placed as the foundational phase because it is a requirement for business. The point of CSR here is that CSR should be built upon the principle of an economically sound and sustainable business, in other words, the business should make a profit for investors to see, for shareholders to get capital gains or dividends, the employees getting fair employment, and the customers receiving good quality from the products (Carroll, 2016:4; ACCA, 2019:38-39). However, this will be all good if the business is seen as more socially responsible if profits are earned in a legal manner because it is how society also expects the business to obey and comply with the rules and regulations of the law (Carroll, 2016:4; ACCA, 2019:38-39). In addition, businesses are also required to act in an ethical manner. Meaning that businesses are to act in a manner that is fair and just to avoid harm that could be done to all stakeholders with whom the business interacts with (Carroll, 2016:4). In order for a business to be classed philanthropic, it is expected that the business be a good corporate citizen, that is to give back to the communities in the form of charitable donations, giving employees the opportunities or chances to improve their own lives, contributing financially, physically, and human resources, as well as contributions to local communities (Carroll, 2016:4; ACCA, 2019:38-39).

The definition for CSR has however been refined over the years and consensus has been reached as to what the most appropriate definition for CSR is where Naidoo, Booysen and Rayner (2018:377) define CSR as:

> *"the commitment of business to managing and improving the economic, environmental and social implications of its activities at the firm, local, regional and global level"*

On top of the definition refinement of CSR, researchers also categorise corporations based on the stance that they take in terms of implementation of CSR. One example is that of Johnson *et al*. (ACCA, 2019:40) that categorises corporations CSR approach adopted into four ethical stances. According to Johnson's four ethical stances a company will position in one of these:

- **"Short-term shareholder interest"** in other words, it depends if governments impose constraints on governance e.g. laws, but other than that, there is no obligation to go any further than that. This means that companies are there only to make profits, pay their taxes, and creating job opportunities in order to comply with law and nothing more than that. Companies in this stance rely strongly on controls and objectives that are set out to achieve the main aim and is find unlikely that they will respond to outside pressure. Examples of companies who would fall in this stance of Johnson would be large multinational companies quoted on many different stock exchanges.
- "**Long-term shareholder interest"** The image of the corporate world here may be heightened by an assumption of wider responsibilities. What may prevent a build-up of social and political pressure for legal regulation here is the exercise of corporate power. An approach such as this is quite pragmatic for the fact that it acknowledges that the pursuit of profit, over the long term will not maintain shareholder wealth. Organisation such as this are merely led by individuals who are supportive and who encourages best practice to respond to outside pressure and to engage with its stakeholders. Groceries stores and retailers with a strong focus on consumers are examples of companies that would be under this stance.
- **"Multiple stakeholder obligations"** An organisation would not be able to function if groups such as the suppliers, the employers and customers are not recognised unless the organisation accept the legitimacy of stakeholders and their claims. Here the board uses the stakeholders view to follow strategies that yonder pure profit generation. The public sector organisations, those operating in the arts, and the educational establishments are examples of this this stance.
- **"Shaper of society"** Even though it is acknowledged that such a role is largely preserve of public sector organisations, it is motivated enough for every organisation to at least attempt to follow. Shaper of society requires that visionary leadership working together with other organisations pursue an agenda of social and market change. Be in supportive of individual responsibility that gets taken across the organisation in order to achieve this. It

is however, still debatable if such organisations really exist, even though some of these traits may be present such as supportive management styles, visionary leadership and having a desire for social change.

Companies can have different opinions of CSR and hence will take a different stance, and this might particularly be linked to what they deem the importance of CSR to be.

4.2. CSR significance

A question that was outstanding was why corporations should engage in CSR. a paradigm shift took place that led corporations to apply the triple bottom-line reporting and then integrated reporting, since corporations started to understand the powerful influence they have on the society and the environment (Kretzschmar *et al*. 2019:112). When corporations voluntarily implement CSR it will be more likely that the leadership of such a corporation will lead to the enhancement in the corporation's reputation, they will be building meaningful relationships and develop trust amongst their stakeholders, and this will result in the company reaching economic benefits of their positive awareness in the market in which they trade (Naidoo *et al*., 2018:379).

The overall benefits of CSR are categorised into three classes by Nave and Ferreira (2019:893), being reputation, performance and competitive advantage. Which according to Chong and Tan (2010:361) can be further categorised into internal and external benefits. The internal benefits may include, amongst others, developing employee competencies, knowledge and skills, attracting and retaining better employees to the corporation because such employees believe that these corporations uphold ethical values (Chong & Tan, 2010:361-363; Sprinkle & Maines, 2010:447). The external benefits of corporations practicing CSR that have been identified by Chong and Tan (2010:360) are upstanding reputation, reduction of business risks, boosting their sales revenue, customer goodwill and an increase in rival cost (Chong and Tan, 2010:360). In a study done by Galbreath (2010:412) it was found that CSR has a positive link with customer loyalty and employer commitment as well as employee commitment to the corporation. Another study that was done by Adeneye and Ahmed (2015:152) found that effective CSR practices also maximised the profits of the shareholders of those corporations who practice CSR. Corporations came to understand the value of implementation of CSR, but an approach was necessary to measure the performance. By measuring CSR performance, corporations would be able to identify their strengths and weaknesses, adjust their strategies and identify opportunities for improvement (Giannarakis & Theotokas, 2011:4).

4.3. CSR performance and measurement thereof

According to Ahmed, Islam and Hasan (2012:16) two generally accepted approaches are used to measure CSR. Reputation index, being the first approach, is described as where a firm's dimensions of social performance is rated by knowledgeable stakeholders. The second method is being described as the content analysis method of how CSR is measured, whereby a corporation's performance is measured based on their reports on CSR, including annual reports. Many researchers resort to content analysis to measure the CSR performance of corporations (Khlif, Guidara & Souissi, 2015:53). In another study done by Charitoudi, Giannarakis and Lazarides (2011:449) they reported that there is no single method that can be used to measure CSR because CSR is a broad concept and its dimensions makes the formation of performance framework a much complex process. They also found that there is not one established method in measuring CSR performance not even on a national level because of the difference in national and cultural characteristics. Nave & Ferreira (2019:897) and Giannarakis and Theotokas (2011:4) are of the view that this challenge can be overcome through thorough identification of indicators to evaluate CSR performance. In another study done by Adeneye and Ahmed (2015:151) they used a measure called CSR index to measure CSR performance. They measured the company's performance by making use of market to book value (MBV), the size of the company (Size), and a measurement called return on capital employed. Using the CSR index measurement Adeneye and Ahmed (2015:161) found a substantial relationship between a company practicing CSR and financial performance. They discovered that listed company's did much better financially then non-listed company's simply because those listed companies are more corporate socially responsible towards their stakeholders.

Some research has also been done by scholars as to how factors that have an influence on a corporations CSR performance. Tsoutsoura (2004:3-20) assert that the values of the corporation, planning, management, employee commitment to CSR, resource availability and cost of adopting CSR are some of the factors that influence CSR performance and reporting. The study was based on companies that form part of the Domini 400 Social Index in the United States. Van Beurden and Gössling (2008:420-421) conclude that factors that influence CSR performance include: the corporation's size, the industry in which the corporation trades, risk, safeguarding, bridging, adaptive capability, customer satisfaction, availability of fund, environmental dynamics, prior's year turnover, the type of management, level of pollution, investment intensity, shareholder expectations and differentiation. Tilt (2016:1) cautions that these research findings are predominantly related to developed countries and that researchers fail to investigate factors that influence CSR performance and reporting in developing countries. Tilt (2016:8) argues that the dynamics of developed and developing countries differ since each have a different economic, political, social and cultural environment.

It is worth investigating what factors in particular have an impact on the CSR of companies within South Africa and whether these coincide with literature or whether there are several other factors not yet reported by literature.

4.4. CSR within a South African context

Within a South African (developing country) context, some researchers conducted research on the relationship between companies listed on the JSE that participate in CSR initiatives, disclosures thereof or CSR investments and the financial performance of the companies. Chetty *et al*. (2015) conducted a study on the impact that CSR public announcements had on the financial returns of non-listed and JSE listed companies in South Africa between 2004 and 2013 and found that CSR activities does not have a significant impact on the financial performance of the companies included in the study. Similarly, Du Toit and Lekoloane (2018) researched the impact of CSR investment on the financial performance of companies listed on the JSE between 2009 and 2014 and found no real relationship exists, however, companies who do invest in CSR are more likely to be granted the opportunity to list on the JSE Social Responsibility Investment Index (JSE SRI Index). The JSE SRI Index plays an influential role in the sustainability of top companies in South Africa (Du Toit & Lekoloane, 2018:3).

In contrast, in a recent study conducted by Wasara and Ganda (2019) on the relationship between CSR disclosure of 10 mining companies listed on the JSE over the period of 2010 to 2014, it was found that there is a positive relationship between the companies' financial performance and CSI disclosure, in particular environmental disclosures.

Nonetheless the inconclusive results on the relationship between CSR initiatives, disclosures thereof or CSR investments and the financial performance, adopting a CSR business strategy holds several benefits that have an impact on the viability of organisations (Naidoo *et al*., 2018:379; Nave & Ferreira, 2019:893; Chong and Tan, 2010:361; Chong & Tan, 2010:361-363; Sprinkle & Maines, 2010:447) that should not be overlooked. And in South Africa, when an organisation seeks to expand its operations significantly in order to gain a greater market share advantage, listing on the JSE might be their best option, since listing on the stocks exchange comes with the benefit of raising additional funds, especially when taking on more gearing is not an option (JSE, 2020a) and as mentioned earlier, listing on the JSE SRI Index plays an influential role in the sustainability of top companies in South Africa (Du Toit & Lekoloane, 2018:3).

In South Africa, it is mandatory for companies listed or that have the prospects of listing on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) to implement the King Code of Corporate Governance for South Africa as amended from time to time (JSE Listing Requirement, 2017: section 3.84). In terms of the King IV Report (2016:4-5), organisations cannot exist independently from society as they form part of it and therefore organisations have to be proactive in the management of the needs and interest of all stakeholders of that organisation. The King IV Report (2016:18) also states that organisations have to participate in sustainable development of the organisation by adopting an integrated approach that sustains the capital of the organisation as well as the economy, society and environment (referred to as the triple context). Hence, companies listed on the JSE have the mandatory obligation to incorporate within their business approach and participate in corporate social responsibility initiatives. The JSE listed companies would also have to report on their capital and the triple context within their integrated reports (King IV Report, 2016:5).

Prior research examined the relationship between CSR initiatives, disclosures thereof or CSR investments and the financial performance of companies, but a closer look at factors that influence the CSR performance and the actual CSR performance of companies listed on the JSE deserves attention. As a starting point a sector of the JSE that contributes substantially towards the South African Gross Domestic Product (GDP) should be explored. The retail food industry alone contributed 9 percent to the overall South African GDP in 2016 that equated to R491.6 billion in revenue (Ntloedibe, 2017:1). The JSE Food and Drug Retail industry currently comprises of six companies that have a combined market capitalisation of R186.8 billion, of which five of those companies are in the JSE Top 100 based on their market capitalisation (African Markets, 2020; Top Foreign Stocks 2020). Companies trading in the Food and Drug Retail industry is most likely to include a balanced number of initiatives that create value in terms of the economy, society and the environment, that ultimately includes all three aspects of CSR. As appose to companies in say, the mining industry, that will tend to direct their focus more towards value creation in terms of the environment.

5. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS/ RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. DESCRIPTION OF OVERALL RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is the quest on investigating probes to questions or problems through the collection and analysis of data by conducting proper planning, investigation and to structure the answers to your questions or problems validly, accurately, objectively and economically (Kumar, 2011:94). Maree *et al.* (2016:51) further describes the research design as methods which are the tools that researchers makes use of to collect data. Research design can either adopt a quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods approach (Kumar, 2011:103; Maree *et al*., 2016:40-42). Quantitative research design is described by Kumar (2011:103) as a study that are detailed, a design that is also well structured, and which has been tested for its reliability and validity and can also be easily recognised and defined. A quantitative research design also tends to have more emphasis on quantification during the collection and analysis of data and makes use of a deductive approach (or rather scientific approach whereby theory guides research) with regards to the relationship amid the theory and relationship (Bryman *et al*., 2018:31). Kumar (2011:103) explains that qualitative research design, on the other hand, either do not have the attributes of quantitative research or might have them but to a smaller degree. (Bryman *et al*., 2018:31) also explains that qualitative research design uses an approach that emphasize more on words than on the quantification during the collection of data.

A qualitative research design will be adopted in my study since a theory will not be tested, but rather the aim is to obtain theory from the data, and analysis thereof, will be obtained from integrated reports of the Food and Drug Retail companies listed on the JSE and questions that will be provided to the selected companies in order for them to provide their perspective on factors that influence their CSR performance.

Furthermore, Mackenzie and Knipe (2006:2) state that the way in which a researcher investigates and interpret knowledge gained through the research process is influenced by the theoretical framework within which the research positions. This theoretical framework is known as a research paradigm (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006:2). A number of research paradigms exist, of which some of the most common, or rather traditional, are positivism and interpretivism. Positivism is referred to as a “scientific” paradigm and strives to investigates hypotheses or test whether a theory is valid or otherwise (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006:2-3; Taylor & Medina, 2013:2). On the other hand, interpretivism, according to Mackenzie and Knipe (2006:3), and Taylor and Medina (2013:4-5), aims to gain a detailed understanding of a phenomena and theory is not tested, but rather generated inductively as the research process unfolds.

This research aims to gain a detailed understanding of the CSR performance of Food and Drug retailer companies listed on the JSE through the analysis of the integrated reports and responses obtained from CSR representatives from the selected companies pertaining to the matter. Hence, the interpretivism paradigm is adopted.

Furthermore, Kumar (2011:107) describes cross-sectional study as a design that is known amongst researchers as a “one-shot” or “status study” commonly used in the social sciences. Prevalence of this design are also aimed at finding the phenomenon, attitude, situation, issue or problem by making use of a cross-section of a population (Kumar, 2011:107). Research conducted using a cross-sectional design is confined to a single period in time according to Kothari, 2004:4). Cross-sectional study design has an advantage by making use of a before and after design test. This test measures the performance and also the impact of its effectiveness of a program that aims to find the change or phenomenon between the cross-sectional two points and is measured by comparing before and after the intervention of the program (Kumar, 2011:107). (Bryman *et al.,* 2018:106*)* states that a cross-sectional design is a method used to collect data on rather more than one single point in time to collect quantitative or quantifiable data using two or more variables. Longitudinal study on the other hand is rather used to determine the pattern of change that is in relation to time, rather than to measuring the extent of change as in finding the phenomenon, attitude, situation, issue or problem (Kumar, 2011:107). Also referred to as research that is carried on over multiple points in time according to Kothari (2004:4).

According to Kumar (2011:110) “*In longitudinal studies the study population is visited a number of times at regular intervals usually over a long period, to collect the required information.”* Thus, this study will make use of longitudinal study design because it will analyse the integrated reports of the Food and Drug Retail companies that are listed on the JSE selected for this study over several points in time, namely three years in order to collect the required information.

5.2. POPULATION/SAMPLING

According to Kumar (2011:193) and Maree *et al.* (2016:192) sampling refers to the process whereby the researcher selects a few targets from a bigger group of targets that is referred to as the population. The population of this study is companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), of which the researcher aims to study those companies listed on the JSE that trade within the Food and Drug Retail industry.

The JSE, established in 1887, is a platform that offers capital markets where securities are traded under regulated procedures (JSE, 2020b). Companies make use of this platform to raise capital and to where investors can gain exposure to major capital markets (JSE, 2020b). At present, the JSE is the largest stocks exchange in Africa and is ranked the 19th largest stock exchange globally (JSE, 2020b). The CEIC (2020) reported that there were 345 companies that were listed on the JSE as at June 2020 trading in 37 industries (African Markets, 2020; Top Foreign Stocks, 2020). The more refined selected population for this study will constitute of companies that are listed on the JSE that trade within the Food and Drug Retail industry. The retail food industry alone contributed 9 percent to the overall South African GDP in 2016 that equated to R491.6 billion in revenue (Ntloedibe, 2017:1). The JSE Food and Drug Retails industry have a combined market capitalisation of R186.8 billion, of which five of those companies are in the JSE Top 100 based on their market capitalisation (African Markets, 2020; Top Foreign Stocks 2020). The selected company's integrated reports will be selected over a three-year period and these will be analysed.

There are currently six companies that are listed on the JSE that trade within the Food and Drug Retail industry. All six these companies will be selected for this study African Markets, 2020; Top Foreign Stocks 2020). These companies are:

- The SPAR Group limited

- Dis-Chem Pharmacies
- Shoprite Holdings Limited
- Pick N Pay Holdings Limited
- Pick N Pay Stores Limited
- Massmart Holdings Limited
- Clicks Group Limited

Even though there are seven individual companies listed above, Pick N Pay Holdings Limited and Pick N Pay Stores Limited's financial and other results are reported in one integrated report, hence reducing the number to six.

Several sampling strategies exist from which a researcher can select from. Sampling strategies can be categorised as either probability sampling or non-probability sampling (Kumar, 2011:198; Maree *et al*., 2016:192-197; Bryman *et al*., 2018:173, 178). Whereby probability sampling involves random sampling, in contrast to non-probability sampling where random techniques are not used to select the sample. (Kumar, 2011:198; Maree *et al*., 2016:192-197; Bryman *et al*., 2018:173, 178).

The sampling strategy used in this study is non-probability sampling, since the entire population of companies trading in the Food and Drug Retails industry listed on the JSE were selected. Furthermore, the particular strategy of non-probability sampling that will be adopted is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is defined as a strategy adopted to select a case or participants in a strategic manner so that the targets selected are relevant to the research problem that the researcher aims to solve and is most commonly used in qualitative research. (Kumar, 2011:207; Maree *et al*., 2016:198; Bryman *et al*., 2018:186). The JSE listed companies that are in the Food and Drug Retail industry are the companies that will be selected on purpose to solve the research problem within this qualitative study.

The integrated reports of the six companies selected for this study can be found on the world wide web or the McGregor BFA database of the North-West University that provides stock market research data.

The integrated reports of the Food and Drug Retail companies that are listed on the JSE is readily available to the public. An application programme named “McGregor” can also be used to obtain data from. Hence the information required for this study will not be difficult to gain access to.

Because my research is of companies listed on the JSE who have to comply with the KING IV that requires companies to be good corporate citizens, i.e. be involved in corporate social responsibilities. The Food and Drug Retail industry also makes a significant contribution toward the GDP and the JSE. Food and Drug Retail companies listed on the JSE CSR initiatives are also most likely to be a combination of value creation toward the economy, society and the environment, that includes all three aspects of CSR. Whereas another industry, for example mining, would focus more on environmental value creation. Hence, the study of the Food and Drug Retail JSE listed companies will include a balanced look at all three aspects of CSR.

5.3. DATA COLLECTION

Data collected through research can either take the form of primary data or secondary data. Primary data can be described as data that is fresh or derived from the original source for the first time from the study conducted (Kothari, 2004:95; Bryman *et al*., 2018:268). On the contrary, secondary data is derived from existing textual data, legislation, policies, documents and existing research. This research will look at the historical integrated reports of the companies selected for this study over a three-year period. The type of data for this study will constitute primary data as it will be obtained from the primary sources, that is the integrated reports of the companies and through responses from representatives from the selected companies.

Data gathering methods can include surveys or questionnaires, interviews, observation, content analysis and literature review (Bryman *et al*., 2018:190; 213; 242; 298). Three data collection techniques will be used to address the secondary objectives, being a literature review, content analysis and questionnaire.

The first two secondary objectives of this study are to define CSR from a developing country perspective and the factors that influence CSR and CSR reporting. This can be achieved through reviewing existing literature on the matters (Bryman *et al*., 2018:92). The third and fourth objectives are to analyse the integrated reports of the companies selected for this study. Kothari (2004:110) and Bryman *et al*. (2018:42) describe a content analysis as the analysis of documents to identify themes or categories of information, meanings of the results obtained and the number of instances an occurrence takes place. The integrated reports will be analysed to derive to themes of how the companies report their CSR and the performance will be analysed through identification of performance indicators against which performance can be measured. Lastly, Bryman *et al*. (2018:191) defines questionnaires as a written list of questions that respondents have to complete themselves. A new questionnaire will be developed for this study to determine, from the perspectives of the companies selected for this study, what factors influence their CSR performance and reporting.

The information for the literature review will be collected from existing articles from journals and the internet using platforms such as Google Scholar, amongst others. The integrated reports will be downloaded from the websites of the companies selected, from the world-wide web. If there are any issues with obtaining the integrated reports for three years, McGregor BFA database will be used.

In terms of the questionnaires, these will be electronic online questionnaires that will be distributed via email, to the CSR departments or representatives of the companies selected for this study in order for them to complete.

5.4. DATA ANALYSIS

The way in which the data gathered will be analysed, should depend on the way in which the data was collected.

Maree *et al*. (2016:114) state that the data gathered from the content analysis and the questionnaires should first be prepared for analysis. In terms of the literature review, Bryman *et al*. (2018:96) suggests obtaining a holistic comprehension of the results found within the review of literature and to report a summary of the findings.

For the content analysis of the integrated reports, Maree *et al*. (2016:116) and Bryman *et al*. (2018:354-355) suggest coding of the data, that is thoroughly analysing the data and to divide the results obtained into meaningful categories and to derive at themes based on the interpretation of the data. Microsoft Excel will be a software program that will be used to compare the CSR performance of the selected companies year on year. Bryman *et al*. (2018:354) further suggests "summative content analysis" where comparisons are to be made and interpretation of the results is followed, whereby the researcher reports the obvious themes identified as well as any hidden information derived from the results.

Lastly, in terms of the analysis of the questionnaires, Kumar (2011:254) states that the data should first be edited by way of scrutinising the questionnaires for any missing or incomplete information. Also according to Kumar (2011:254), this should be followed by coding of the data by dividing the responses into categories, after which the data should be divided into frequencies of distribution (how many times a specific response comes through) and reconstructed into main concepts.

5.5. ASSESSING AND DEMONSTRATING THE QUALITY AND RIGOUR OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH DESIGN

The proposed research of this still will ensure that the research will be of the highest quality by implementing the following according to the requirements that a qualitative research should approach.

5.5.1 Credibility

According to Maree *et al* (2016:123) "Credibility is enhanced through the development of an early familiarity with the participants and the participating organisations, but also through well-defined, purposive sampling, detailed data collection methods and triangulation". Others methods such as regular debriefing between the researcher and the supervisor, the reflective notes of the researcher as well as member checks (Maree *et al* 2016:123). The researcher is familiarised with the companies selected for this study, that are all listed on the JSE. All information pertaining to the companies, operations, financial statements and integrated reports are also available on the world wide web, which the researcher has already taken a look at.

5.5.2 Transferability

Diane (2014:89) asserts that transferability are the findings which can be applied to other groups or settings. The findings of this study can be shared with any company listed on the JSE. Since there is no uniform way in which CSR performance is measured, the manner in which it will be assessed in this study could be adopted for other companies listed on the JSE. Also, since no framework of factors that hinders the CSR performance of companies, the factors identified in this study should provide valuable insight to other companies (in different industries as the one selected) that could assist in the process of development of an appropriate CSR strategy.

5.5.3 Dependability

Dependability is concerned with whether the same results will be observed twice (Kumar, 2011:185). It can however, be achieved when another researcher agrees with the research process at each stage (Diane,2014:89). For purpose of this study, the results will not be analysed twice. The CSR performance of the companies selected and the analysis of the factors that influence the CSR performance will only be “observed” at a specific point in time and not reassessed at a different point in time.

5.5.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is the degree of neutrality to which the results of the study are confirmed or corroborated by the participants and not by the researcher's bias, interest, or the researcher's motivation (Kumar, 2011:185; Maree *et al* 2016:125). The researcher will research the most appropriate manner in which the CSR performance of companies listed on the JSE should be measured, hence the measurement of CSR performance will not be based on the researcher's preference. These most appropriate measurements determined will be adopted for this study. CSR performance results obtained by the researcher will be supported by the results obtained from the questionnaires distributed to CSR representatives of the companies selected for this study.

5.6. RESEARCH ETHICS

According to Creswell and Poth (2018:53-54) ethical considerations at the planning process of the research is crucial. As a starting point, ethical approval or clearance will be obtained from the Economic and Management Sciences Research and Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) of the North-West University will be obtained prior to execution of this research. Another important factor to consider is the protection of the identity of the research participants (Maree *et al*., 2016:44). The identity of the companies selected for this study cannot be kept confidential in the study, however, results obtained from the questionnaire on the factor that influence CSR performance will not be linked to the specific companies, but will rather be presented as a collective for the entire population. The representatives who complete the questionnaires will also be requested to complete a consent form prior to completion of the questionnaire (Maree *et al*., 2016:44). It will also be reiterated to the participants of the questionnaire, that taking part in this study is voluntary.

6. PROPOSED CHAPTER LAYOUT

Chapter 1 – Research proposal

In this chapter, an introduction to this study, an overview of the research problem, the primary and secondary objectives and the proposed research methodology will be discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 2 – Article on factors that influence the CSR performance of Food and Drug Retail companies listed on the JSE

In this chapter, the results obtained from the execution of the research (aimed at addressing the objectives) will be discussed. This includes an analysis of the CSR performance of the companies selected for this study and the factors that affect the CSR performance and reporting thereof.

Chapter 3 – Conclusion and recommendation

In this chapter an overview of the study will be provided, the key results will be summarised and discussed and recommendations will be made based on the results. Recommendations for further research will also be made.

7. PROPOSED PROJECT PLAN FOR DELIVERY

Table 1.2: Year 2021 projected plan

	Jan	*Feb*	*Mar*	*Apr*	*May*	*Jun*	*Jul*	*Aug*	*Sep*	*Oct*	*Nov*
1. Refinement of research proposal	x										
2. Ethical clearance		x									
3. Literature review		x	x								
4. Execution – CSR performance			x	x							
5. Execution -				x	x						

questionnaires											
6. Results and discussions and conclusion						X	x	x			
7. Language editing									x		
8. Finalisation and submission										x	

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APPENDIX A

- **Data collection instrument(-s) –**
- **Questionnaires**

Proposed email/letter to companies

Request to partake in research study

Your company has been selected for a research study in fulfilment of a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) at the North-West University and you are hereby invited to partake in. The aim of the study is to analyse the corporate social responsibility performance and reporting thereof, as well as factors that influence the performance of Food and Drug retail companies listed on the JSE, in an effort to identify the strengths of the current corporate social responsibility strategies adopted. In addition, this study also aims to identify any barriers that may affect the corporate social responsibility performance of companies, in order to recommendations to address these. This should assist companies who are yet to adopt a corporate social responsibility strategy to focus on the strengths of existing participants and to be mindful of any barriers that may exist.

As part of this study, you are required to complete the online questionnaire in the link attached in this email.

The ethics number of this study obtained from the NWU is …..
You can be assured that the information received will remain confidential and none of the responses from a specific company will be identified, but instead, the results obtained from the questionnaires will be presented in aggregate and no results for an individual company will be reported. It is also important that you understand that participation in this study is voluntary.

The responses of the questionnaire will be used for research purposes and the findings of this study will be made available to your company upon request thereof.

Your queries can be directed to Zane Derbyshire at zane.derbyshire7@gmail.com or 072 911 7689 or Prof Ronnie Lotriet at ronnie.lotriet@nwu.ac.za.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE (Google Forms will be used)
[ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE]

Thank you for taking part in this study. The aim of the study is to analyse the corporate social responsibility performance and reporting thereof, as well as factors that influence the performance of Food and Drug retail companies listed on the JSE, in an effort to identify the strengths of the current corporate social responsibility strategies adopted. In addition, this study also aims to identify any barriers that may affect the corporate social responsibility performance of companies, in order to recommendations to address these. This should assist companies who are yet to adopt a corporate social responsibility strategy to focus on the strengths of existing participants and to be mindful of any barriers that may exist.

TERMS

This questionnaire is anonymous, and your participation is voluntary. No participation can be identified. The collective anonymous results will be reported. Should you have any questions, you can contact the researchers, Zane Derbyshire at zane.derbyshire7@gmail.com or 072 911 7689 or Prof Ronnie Lotriet at ronnie.lotriet@nwu.ac.za.

1. Do you agree that the responses may be used for academic purposes?

Yes	❑
No	❑

2. Corporate social responsibility forms an integral part of our corporation's strategy

True	❑
False	❑

3. ____H
ow does your company define corporate social responsibility?

4. Our corporate social responsibility strategy incorporates the following initiatives (value creation) for the stakeholders:

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Not applicable**
Economic value creation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Environmental value creation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Social value creation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

5. How would you rate your company's current corporate social responsibility performance (latest financial year reported on)?

	Excellent	**Very Good**	**Good**	**Poor**
Corporate social responsibility performance	❑	❑	❑	❑

6. How would you rate your company's corporate social responsibility performance in the two preceding financial years to the latest reported financial year?

	Excellent	**Very Good**	**Good**	**Poor**
Corporate social responsibility	❑	❑	❑	❑

performance				

7. List your five (5) major stakeholders

____

____

____

____

____

8. ____D
escribe the factors that influence your company’s corporate social responsibility performance

____

____

____

____

____

9. ____D
escribe any strengths of your current corporate social responsibility strategy

____

____

____

____

____

10. ____E
xplain any barriers or challenges to your company’s corporate social responsibility reporting

11. Explain any barriers or challenges to your company's corporate social responsibility performance (e.g. resources)

[End of questionnaire]

APPENDIX B

- Informed consent form -

Ethics informed consent

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant

This **Informed Consent Statement** serves to confirm the following information as it relates to the officially approved research project at the North-West University on “Assessing the factors that drive CSR performance of Food and Drug retail companies listed on the JSE.”

1. The sole purpose of this study is to obtain information from customers like yourself to determine the nature of your everyday green buying behaviour experience related to the research topic.
2. Participation is completely voluntary and you may opt-out at any time. You may also decide not to answer specific questions.
3. The procedure to be followed is quantitative research design, which entails a questionnaire. Basic background information will be asked e.g. your age, function and related experience to the topic.
4. Confidentiality of the data is guaranteed and only the combined results will be used for research and publication purposes.
5. The data gathered from the questionnaires will only be used for research purposes.
6. Please note that there are four classifying variables in Section 5 (age, employment, gender and ethnicity) which will be used only to profile the respondents who partook in this study. It will be used in comparative analysis to distinguish green customer behaviour among different customer profiles. Note that only the combined results will be used and at no stage can any specific respondent or his/her data entry be isolated and analysed. (You may also select the option not to answer the specific question should you feel like it.)
7. Also note that this study does not have a correct or incorrect answer to any of the questions. This means that in comparing profiles of respondents, there is not a correct or incorrect behavioural profile. The study merely analyse green consumer behaviour as is.

Please indicate your consent

I hereby give my consent after having read the above information that my data may be used as stated above.	**YES**	**NO**
I hereby give my consent that my demographic data may be used to develop a profile for green consumer behaviour	**YES**	**NO**

Thank you for your time.

The researcher

APPENDIX C

- Application for ethical clearance –

Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)

Application for ethics approval: New application

DOCUMENTATION INCLUDED (Please indicate the documentation included, where applicable)					
RESEARCH WITH PARTICIPANTS (Complete sections A, B and C)	**YES**	**NO**	**RESEARCH WITH NO PARTICIPANTS*** (Complete sections A, B and D)	**YES**	**NO**
Application form	◉	○	Application form	○	◉
Scientific committee ethics recommendation form (SCERF)	◉	○	Scientific committee ethics recommendation form (SCERF)	○	◉
Code of conduct			Code of conduct		
Approved research proposal (or similar)			Approved research proposal (or similar)		
Consent form			Communication documents (if applicable)		
Data collection tool			Other (please elaborate below):		
Communication documents (if applicable)					
Other (please elaborate below):					

* Research that does not involve contact with human participants, including literature reviews, publicly available data, etc.

SECTION A: RESEARCHERS' DETAILS

PROJECT HEAD/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/SUPERVISOR DETAILS					
Surname	DERBYSHIRE	Name	ZANE RICH	Title	Mr
University no.	22212949	E-mail	zane.derbyshire7@gmail.com		
Research entity	NWU BUSINESS SCHOOL	Contact no.	072 911 7689		
Project/study title	Assessing the factors that drive the CSR performance of Food and Drug Retail companies listed o				
STUDENT DETAILS (IF APPLICABLE)					
Surname	DERBYSHIRE	Name	ZANE RICH	Student no.	22212949
Contact no.	072 911 7689	E-mail	zane.derbyshire7@gmail.com		

SECTION B: APPLICATION DETAILS

1. Is this research part of a project that already has ethics approval (i.e. phased research)? If yes, (a) provide a brief description of the progress to date, and (b) indicate the aspects of this application that are new to the project.	YES	○
	NO	◉

SECTION C: RESEARCH WITH PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPANTS		
3. Does the study involve participants who are considered vulnerable or unable to give informed consent? If yes, please elaborate.	YES	○
	NO	◉
4. Will the study require permission from a gatekeeper/entity/organisation for access to the participants? If yes, please explain the nature of the access required.	YES	
	NO	
Consent would need to be required for the CSR representatives of the companies selected for this study to take part in this study.		
5. Describe the characteristics of the participants to be included in the study by explaining: (a) who the participants are; (b) the inclusion and exclusion criteria (i.e. the characteristics that the prospective subjects must have and the characteristics that disqualify prospective subjects from inclusion in the study); (c) the recruitment and sampling strategy; and (d) the sample size.		
JSE listed Food and Drug Retail companies are selected for this study. There are 6 companies listed on the JSE that fit this description. Their Integrated Reports will be analysed and 6 representatives of CSR will be contacted to take part in the questionnaire.		
6. Describe the relationship between the researcher(s) and the participants and declare any conflicts of interest by the researcher(s) that might increase the risk level of the research (e.g. employee of the organisation where the study is planned, or a hierarchal relationship with participants, etc.), and the measures that will be taken to minimise the conflict of interest.		
None to note.		
7. Please describe the nature of all contact with participants (e.g. who will have contact with the participants, what will be communicated, how will this be communicated, how will data be collected, what will the role of the researcher(s) and participants be, etc.)		
The primary researcher will have contact with the participants, by way of email and telephone. Data will be collected through Integrated Reports (that are available on the internet). Also, questionnaires will be distributed to 6 representatives of the companies selected for this study to complete and send back to the primary researcher.		
8. What will the expected direct and/or indirect benefits and risks of this study be for participants?		
No benefits will be offered to any participant who take part in this study. The only indirect benefit might be the recommendations that come from this study, that the companies have an option of taking into consideration or not. There is no known risk for participants of this study.		

INFORMED CONSENT/ASSENT		
9. Please provide detail on how informed consent/assent to participate in the research will be sought.		
Via a letter of consent.		
10. Will participants be informed on what the purpose of the study is?	YES	●
	NO	○
11. Is participation in the study voluntary?	YES	●
	NO	○
12. Can participants withdraw from the study if they wish to do so?	YES	●
	NO	○
13. Are participants informed that the data will be used for research purposes (i.e. published)?	YES	●
	NO	○
If you have answered 'No' to any of the questions above, please explain. Not applicable		
14. Please explain how confidentiality and/or anonymity will be maintained in the study.		
Not applicable		
15. Will participants be rewarded or given incentives? If yes, please elaborate on the nature of the reward/incentive and the process to be followed.	YES	○
	NO	●
Not applicable		

SECTION D*: RESEARCH WITH NO PARTICIPANTS

* This section relates to research that does not involve contact with human participants, including literature reviews, publicly available data, etc.

ACCESS TO DATA
16. Describe the nature of the data/information that will be used in the study (e.g. a systematic review or secondary data). Where will the data/information be sourced from? Is this data/information publicly available?
The data that will be used is the latest 3 Integrated Reports of the JSE listed Food and Drug Retail companies, from the internet or McGregor database. In addition, questionnaires will be circulated to the CSR representatives of the companies selected. All the data gathered will constitute primary data.

17. Will the study require permission from a gatekeeper/entity/organisation for access to the data/information? If yes, please explain the nature of the access required.	YES	○
	NO	●
	N/A	○

18. In the case of using secondary data, describe how data/information will be obtained from the source.
Not applicable

SIGNATURE			
By signing this document, I certify that the information provided is accurate and complete.			
Principal investigator	Zane Derbyshire Digitally signed by Zane Derbyshire Date: 2020.10.09 13:49:20 +02'00'	**Date**	9-Oct-2020