Social-Cause Marketing & Women Empowerment:

Explanatory case study of a women empowerment cause-related marketing initiative in Brazil
SOCIAL CAUSE MARKETING & WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:
EXPLANATORY CASE STUDY OF A WOMEN EMPOWERMENT CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING INITIATIVE IN BRAZIL

Thesis presented to Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo of Fundação Getulio Vargas, as a requirement to obtain the title of Master in International Management (MPGI).

Knowledge Field: Marketing

Adviser: Prof. Dr. Sérvio Túlio Prado Júnior

SÃO PAULO
2016
Basdereff, Donatella Françoise Nathalie.

65 f.

Orientador: Sérvio Túlio Prado Júnior
Dissertação (MPGI) - Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo.


CDU 396(81)
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Approval Date
16/11/2016

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Abstract:
Cause-related marketing may offer opportunities that can contribute to women’s empowerment while having a positive impact on companies leading such programs. This paper seeks to broaden the existing understanding of women empowerment and entrepreneurship by focusing on the less-studied contemporary phenomenon of women empowerment cause-related marketing. A case study analysis was used to assess two main areas of interest: (1) elements of empowerment social-cause marketing embedded in the program, and (2) individual perceptions of empowerment by participants. The paper revealed that in the case studied (1) this recent corporate practice is a win-win situation using traditional elements of both women empowerment and cause-related marketing practices and, (2) empowers participants mainly in psychological, economic, sociocultural and familial and interpersonal dimensions of their lives.

Keywords:
Cause-related marketing; women empowerment; women entrepreneurship; economic development; research case study
Resumo:
Marketing para causas sociais pode oferecer oportunidades de contribuir ao empoderamento das mulheres ao mesmo tempo que tem um impacto positivo para empresas liderando aqueles programas. Este trabalho procura ampliar o conhecimento atual sobre o empoderamento e empreendedorismo feminino apoiando-se no recém fenômeno menos estudado de marketing para causas sociais de empoderamento feminino. Uma análise de estudo de caso procurou determinar duas áreas de interesse: (1) elementos de empoderamento e marketing para causas sociais incorporados ao programa, e (2) percepções individuais de empoderamento pelas próprias participantes. O estudo mostrou que no caso estudado (1) essa recém tendência corporativa é uma estratégia “win-win” que usa elementos tradicionais de ambos empoderamento feminino e marketing para causas sociais; (2) empodera as participantes nas áreas psicológica, econômica, sociocultural e familiar e interpessoal das suas vidas.

Palavras-chave:
Marketing para causas sociais (MCS); empoderamento das mulheres; empreendedorismo feminino; desenvolvimento econômico; estudo de caso de pesquisa.
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I. Introduction

According to the World Bank, in 2015, global poverty fell under 10%, with the percentage of the world’s population that lives at or below $1.90 a day, dropping from 37% in 1990 and 44% in 1981. We have never being closer to the goal of ending poverty by 2030. Nonetheless, even though extreme poverty has halved, inequalities remain and are higher than ever. In January 2016, the Oxfam Davos report - An Economy for the 1% - revealed that since 2010, the wealth of the poorest half of the world dropped by 30% while the wealth of the 62 richest people rose by more than half a trillion dollars. In 2015, out of the top 1% richest people of the planet, just 9 were women.

Inequalities affect women disproportionately regardless of their country’s stage of development, their social class or their ethnicity. An impressive indicator of gender inequality estimates that there are 6 million missing women every year: 23% are never born, 10% are missing in early childhood, 21% percent in the reproductive years, and 38% above the age of 60 (Sen, 1990; Berniell and Sánchez-Páramo, 2011). Furthermore, women are prejudiced by time-use inequalities spending “almost twice as much time on housework, almost five times as much time on child care, and about half as much time on market work as men do” (Berniell and Sánchez-Páramo, 2011; World Development Report 2012). At all levels of income and development worldwide, these gender inequalities have a direct negative impact on women’s ability to fully partake in market work, be engaged in their career and real productive in their businesses.

The need for time and hence work flexibility is “one reason why women in developing countries are more likely to be involved in informal work (such as running a small business)” (Berniell and Sánchez-Páramo, 2011; World Development Report 2012). It tends to reduce women’s chances to have stable, autonomous income and bargaining power within the household while they reinvest 90% of their income into families and communities compared to 30-40% for men (Unicef Women; Berniell and Sánchez-Páramo, 2011; World Development Report 2012). However, said female-led small businesses can be optimized and developed providing these women with the rules of the game and building their assets. Hence, what is called women empowerment and women entrepreneurship empowerment is a needed means for economic development (Duflo, 2015).

Traditionally addressed by governmental and non-profit actors, the private sector and companies started to become interested into empowering women by maximizing their income as they make 90% of purchasing decisions. In September 2015, The McKinsey Global
Institute’s parity report mapped 15 gender equality indicators for 95 countries and found that 40 of them had high or extremely high levels of gender inequality on at least half of the indicators (divided among four categories: equality in work, essential services and enablers of economic opportunity, legal protection and political voice, and physical security and autonomy). The study found that under a “full-potential” scenario in which women participate in the economy identically to men, it would add up to $28 trillion, or 26%, to annual global GDP in 2025 compared with a business-as-usual scenario. In other words, the economic shortfall due to the gender gap is roughly equivalent to the size of the combined US and Chinese economies today. Hence as Unilever’s puts it: “the advancement of women’s economic inclusion is a business priority” (Unilever’s 2015 Annual Report). Beyond corporate social responsibility, women empowerment is becoming an integral component of companies’ and brands’ marketing strategies.

The purpose of this study is to explore the recent corporate phenomenon of women empowerment social-cause marketing. If both fields have been studied independently, the relation between social-cause marketing and women empowerment has not been explored to the author’s knowledge. The goal is to gain an understanding of this practice’s impact both on corporations and the targeted women. Therefore the research question of the career-paper is the following: Which elements related to the concept of women empowerment may be observed on the Brilhante social-cause marketing case study?

There are two main contributions of this study for management and organizations. Firstly, to add some new evidence explaining the marketing and social impact of a contemporary phenomenon supported by a detailed explanatory case study of Brilhante, one of Unilever’s detergent brands in Brazil. Secondly, to hopefully inspire and encourage companies to do the same with best practice ideas to implement their own women-empowerment social marketing strategy.
II. Literature Review

The studied contemporary phenomenon is situated at the crossroads of two quite different fields. Therefore to best situate the case study and findings, this section will firstly look at literature exploring women empowerment and entrepreneurship definitions, as well as and measurement frameworks. Secondly, it will give an academic overview of social-cause marketing then focus on its most recent evolutions and innovative practices towards women through femvertising and women empowerment.

1. Women empowerment

Empowerment has become a widely used concept in development practices, as part of poverty reduction and economic development programs, and more recently among private sector’s discourse. Nonetheless, it is rarely defined and lacks of measurement frameworks. The World Bank mentioned it for the first time as a way “to enhance the capacity of an individual or group to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes” (World Bank, 2001, 2007). Kabeer (1999) is more specific saying that it is a “process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability”. Hence empowerment entails a “process of change” allowing one to choose in a context where it was previously denied. It gives people the possibilities of alternatives by opposition to poverty, which is often the result of a lack of choices. Here, disempowerment is not to be mistaken with laziness or personal preferences not to do something. A person is considered disempowered if they cannot reach their being-and-doing goals even if one wants to because of contextual conditions (Sen, 1985).

Across the traditional literature (Sen, 1985; Kabeer, 1999; World Bank, 2001), empowerment is defined and structured around three inter-related dimensions namely resources, agency and achievements. First of all, resources can be regarded as empowerment’s preconditions and prerequisites. It encompasses any current or future access to material, human and social resources. Second of all, agency is the empowerment process. It is the decision-making phase as it is “the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them, even in the face of opposition of others” (Kabeer, 1999). Resources and agency together reflect the “capabilities: the potential that people have of living the lives they want, of achieving values ways of “being and doing””(Sen, 1985 in Kabeer, 1999). Last but not least, achievements are the outcomes of
empowerment. In other words, it denotes the well being resulting from the exercised ability of choice. A summary of these definitions is presented in the table below:

**Figure 1. Inter-related dimensions of the empowerment process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of empowerment</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td>Preconditions: Any actual or future access to material, human and social resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency</strong></td>
<td>Process: The decision-making phase: <em>“the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them, even in the face of opposition of others”</em> (Kabeer, 1999). Resources and agency together reflect the <em>“capabilities: the potential that people have of living the lives they want, of achieving values ways of “being and doing””</em> (Sen, 1985 in Kabeer, 1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Achievements</strong></td>
<td>Outcomes: Wellbeing resulting from the exercised ability of choice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Women empowerment is the *“synergy of feminist goals and official development priorities”* (Kabeer, 1999). Empowerment is a question of power (Sen, 1985). A person is disempowered if one cannot achieve one’s being and doing goal even if one wants to (lack of legal authorization, lack of money, lack of time…) In this regard, studying women empowerment separately is justified as it encompasses some unique gender differences in expressing one’s choice unlike other groups. According to Mayoux (2000), women empowerment can have an impact on four dimensions of women’s lives, namely: economic, confidence & physical wellbeing (psychological), social and political. Economic empowerment encompasses access to income, which in turn may confer greater income-decision-making within the household. Increased confidence and physical wellbeing may result from decisions to spend money on themselves and their children. Social empowerment is linked to increased status in the community; and political empowerment comes from increased participation in public life. A summary of the women empowerment dimensions is presented in the figure below.
Figure 2. Four dimensions of women empowerment

![Diagram showing four dimensions of women empowerment: Economic, Social, Confidence & wellbeing (psychological), Political.]


Though it has not been central to empowerment literature, “household and interfamilial relations are a central focus of women’s disempowerment” (Malhotra, 2002). Access to resources for women varies a lot across countries hence restricting differently their decision-making abilities and outcomes depending on the context. Nonetheless, thanks to the advent of cyberfeminism – disruptive online ways by the women for women to showcase other ways of ‘being and doing’ – new materials and a new culture have become globally accessible to women. It helps to break the given local social order by loosing its ‘natural sense’. Access to information and awareness of possible alternatives (not being forced to get married, having a right to a full heritage, not being hit…) may help break the “doxa” – the given social order – and hence have them partake in their empowerment by being at least offered to imagine differently (Bourdieu, 1977).

If empowerment and moreover women empowerment has become a very popular concept among scholars, development actors and even the media and corporations; it lacks a common framework to measure it. Moreover, as empowerment is an essentially qualitative process in nature (Sen, 1993) it makes its evaluation even more difficult as it relies a lot on perceptual data. The World Bank (2007) suggests a model using the measurement of assets and opportunity structure to provide indirect indicators of the degree of empowerment: existence, use and achievement of choices. It keeps the aforementioned notion of agency (Kabeer, 1999) as “actor’s ability to make meaningful choices, that is to consider and purposively choose
“among options” thanks to its “endowment of psychological, informational, organizational, material, financial and human assets” - while introducing the notion of opportunity structure; “the contextual factors of informal and formal rules that affect the extent to which an actor can actually transform those choices into effective actions”. The actual degree of empowerment hence depending both on the extent of one’s ability to make choices and the nature of the contextual factors surrounding it.

Figure 3. Relationship between outcomes and correlates of empowerment


The World Bank assumes that agency, opportunity structure and the degree of empowerment have potential outcomes at local, intermediary and macrolevels on several domains – state, market, society – and sub-domains – justice, politics, public services, labor, goods, private services, intra-household, intra-community. More directly this model offers a direct subjective evaluation model of one’s empowerment degree. Targeted people or groups can assess levels of choice that they believe to have after partaking in empowerment programs. The World Bank identifies three gradual aspects of choice corresponding to a determinated level of empowerment. Firstly, the existence of choice acknowledges whether an opportunity to make a choice actually exists. Secondly, the use of choice underlines whether a person or group actually uses said opportunity to choose. Thirdly, the achievement of choice showcases whether the choice resulted in the desired outcome. Hence, according to the World Bank, there is a positive relationship between one’s aspect of choice and one’s empowerment level. Definitions of aspects of choice are presented in the figure below:

Figure 4. Aspects of choice and level of empowerment
Malhotra (2002) offers a useful review of the six most commonly used dimensions to measure empowerment across the household, community, and broader arenas: Economic, Socio-Cultural, Familial and Interpersonal, Legal, Political, and Psychological. She underlines that domestic decision making, access to or control of resources and mobility/freedom of movement are among the most frequently used indicators across literature’s efforts to measure empowerment. Zahira Kamal (2011), focuses on measuring three elements of women empowerment: right to choose, self-reliance (skills to be economically independent) and capacity and strategy of collaborative work.

2. Women entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a multi-faceted phenomenon that is widely studied across various disciplines in the literature. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, it refers to “any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment, a new business organization, or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, a team of individuals, or an established business” (Reynolds, P. et al, 1999, p. 3). As of today, entrepreneuring has been mainly studied around four scholarly approaches as follow (Aldrich; 2005):

As Calás, M.B., Smircich, L., & Bourne, K.A. (2009) underline, this extensive literature merely positions entrepreneurship as an economic phenomenon. Hence it “explicitly or implicitly shares an underlying assumption that the creation of wealth is a (if not the) fundamental goal
of entrepreneurial efforts”. Nonetheless, other scholars such as Rindova (2009), advocate that entrepreneurship is more than just the creation of wealth, such as being a real emancipating process bringing about “new economic, social, institutional and cultural environments through the action of an individual or group of individuals”. Thus in relation to the aforementioned World Bank’s empowerment terminology, entrepreneuring is the agency tool allowing to act on the contextual factors of the opportunity structure in one’s life.

The empowerment attribute of entrepreneurship largely contributes to its positioning as a positive phenomenon and a desirable activity, having a positive impact on economic development (Calás, M.B., Smircich, L., & Bourne, K.A., 2009). It is traditionally examined either under an individual approach – one’s preconceptions and ability to mobilize their resources to launch a business – or around a contextual approach – the social structure influencing the choice and development of an entrepreneur (Aldrich 1999; Sørensen 2007; Thornton 1999 in Hughes et al. 2012). Nonetheless, if the literature on entrepreneurship is extensive; women entrepreneurship is vastly understudied, coming to less than 6-7% of total publications across the top entrepreneurship journals when women represent globally on average 30% of entrepreneurs (Minitti, Arenius, & Langowitz, 2005 in de Bruin et al. (2006).

As of today, woman entrepreneurship literature mainly focused on the financial and economic impact of female led businesses on overall growth and development (Hughes, K. D., Jennings, J. E., Brush, C., Carter, S. and Welte, F, 2012). However, according to Ahl (2006) in Hughes et al. (2012) “our understanding of women’s entrepreneurship has been limited by not considering contextual influences on their entrepreneurial behaviors”

Indeed, entrepreneurship theories and frameworks were developed on men entrepreneurs by men for men whereas women worldwide tend be treated differently hence affecting their perceptions of entrepreneurship opportunities they can take advantage of (e.g., de Bruin, Brush, and Welte 2007; DeTiene and Chandler 2007; McMullen and Shepherd 2006). On one hand, these contextual factors tend to channel women away from entrepreneurship (Birley 1989; Langowitz and Minniti 2007; Scherer, Brodzinski, and Wiebe 1990 in Goltz et al, 2015). On the other hand, they are likely to have other motives than men to start an entrepreneurial activity and their entrance into entrepreneurship has an accrued impact and benefits, notably because they suffer higher unemployment rates and loss in income due to gender inequality (Haugh and Talwar, 2016; GEM, 2015). Despite obstacles, women’s entrepreneurship is increasing and associated with “the improved status of women, enhanced family and community well-being and broader societal gains” (Ardrey et al. 2006; Jamali 2009; Mayoux 1995; Servon 1997; Servon and Doshna 2000; Scott et al. 2012, GEM 2015, World
Bank 2007). In other words, strong evidence demonstrates that women entrepreneurship contributes to economic growth, poverty reduction and societal development.

And if women encounter more structural barriers to entrepreneurial activities, existing literature considers them as capable as men to pursue them. In addition, these limitations can be identified and opened up, enhancing equal access to resources and decision-making. As a result, women entrepreneurship empowerment is justified and highly desirable as literature assumes that the more women are involved in entrepreneurial activities, the more social change will occur (Brush et al., 2004; Carter & Williams, 2003; Greene, Brush, Hart, & Saparito, 1999). The GEM Women’s Special Report (2015) illustrates this point with the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women initiative led in 43 developing countries. The study demonstrates that women entrepreneurs participating in entrepreneurship empowerment programs experienced huge business growth. Employment doubled within six months and revenues increased by 480% on average within 18 months after program completion. Moreover, 87% of participants started mentoring other women entrepreneurs thus creating a virtuous circle.

In contrast, other scholars warn about the downsides of woman entrepreneurship as a synonym for informal small businesses, unstable source of income and entrepreneurial choice made by default and not by choice. Indeed, 1/3 of women worldwide are entrepreneurs by necessity, unable to make the most productive use of their time due to a lack of education, work opportunities or time flexibility needs (GEM, 2015). As a matter of fact, across the globe “women spend almost twice as much time on housework, almost five times as much time on child care, and about half as much time on market work as men do’ (Berniell and Sánchez-Páramo, 2011; World Development Report 2012; Unicef Women; Weiler and Bernasek, 2001).

3. Cause Related Marketing

The late twentieth century saw the rise of a new kind of marketing known by a variety of names such as “societal marketing”, “social issues marketing”, “cause marketing” and “cause-related marketing – CRM” (Bronn & Vrioni 2001; Drumwright 1996 in Lachover and Barak Brandes, 2009). As competition ever increases and consumers request more, many companies seek to make their brand and products stand out by adding social dimensions to their marketing efforts (Bronn & Vrioni 2001) partnering with diverse causes such as AIDS prevention, poverty alleviation, environmental awareness, and so on (Drumwright 1996). Traditionally CRM was the process of doing marketing activities matching specific donations to designated NGOs (Mullen, 1997; Harris and Whalen 2006). Until today, the concept was
enhanced and refers to any marketing and/or corporate ties with a cause (Harris and Whalen; 2006).

Most CRM campaigns have mixed objectives: economic and social. If CRM is not the most efficient marketing practice for an increase in sales, it is highly effective in achieving “company-oriented objectives, such as motivating the work force or communicating the essence of the company’s mission” (Drumwright, 1996). Strong evidence from various studies underlines that most consumers prefer socially responsible brands and products (Cone/Roper, 1993; RSW, 1996). In the USA, 1/3 of consumers place company’s responsible business practices as the 3rd most important buying factor after price and quality. CRM gives competitive advantage and brand lift to the company. In a 2015 global online survey, the consumer’s watch Nielsen polled 30,000 consumers in 60 countries to study consumption determinants. As a result, 66% would pay more for products and services that come from companies that are committed to positive social and environmental impact, up from 55% in 2014 and 50% in 2013. In Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and Africa, this figure is 23%-29% more. If brand trust tops the list of purchase factors, it is positively related to the brand’s reputation and commitment to local community and environment. A environmental friendly company committed to social value and using fresh natural products is a more stronger purchase determinant than the number of promotions and coupon (Nielsen, 2015). In addition, a previous 2014 Nielsen retail sales analysis underlined that brands with a public commitment to sustainability grew over 4%, while those who did not experienced less than 1% economic growth. In this sense, most of the existing literature on this subject thus focused far more on the economic and reputational effectiveness for the company (Bloom, Hoeffler, Keller & Basurto Meza 2006) whereas little is known about CRM’s social impact and changes in social attitudes, notably because it is a subject of controversy (Sargeant & Jay 2004; Schroder 1997 in Lachover and Barak Brandes, 2009).

There has been much discussion about whether CRM is cause-related or cause-exploitative marketing (Andreasen 1996; Bares 1991; Cunningham 1996; Gurin 1987; Ross, Stutts, and Patterson 1991; Varadarajan and Menon 1988 in Lachover and Barak Brandes, 2009). Ethical concerns are as fundamental for consumers as for brands, though for different reasons. On the consumer side, they need to perceive and believe in the company’s involvement with a specific cause (Webb and Mohr, 1998). Consistent track record, long-term commitment and non-economic motivated campaigns are keys to overcome consumers’ skepticism. On the corporate side, there is much more concern about not being perceived exploitative rather than actually not being exploitative and few concerns about the social appropriateness and effectiveness of these campaigns (Drumwright, 1996). The general public’s perception remains
that it is “important for marketers to seek out ways to become good corporate citizens” and that CRM is a “good way to solve social problems” (RSW, 1996; Ptacek & Salazar, 1997 in Bronn & Vrioni 2001) while skepticism towards CRM schemes uniting causes and business prevails. In sum, each company and CRM campaign must prove its worth.

As Duncan & Moriarty (1997) put it, CRM has become more than a communication tool, “the ultimate brand contact, the manifestation of a company’s mission and philosophy, which can drive communication campaigns and even strategy”. The notion of strategy is key as it distinguishes cause-related marketing (CRM) from corporate social responsibility (CSR). The latter encompasses “corporate social actions whose purpose is to satisfy social needs” beyond a company’s legal obligations and brands or products (Angelidis and Ibrahim, 1993). It is something closer to corporate charity whereas CRM, as its name indicates, places the cause at the core of the marketing and thus corporate strategy and operations. When highly successful, CRM becomes the company’s or brand’s raison d’être as, for example, the real beauty cause has become inherently linked to Unilever’s brand Dove. If both CSR and CRM are growing strong among companies, budgets allocated to the latter are much larger. In sum, CRM offers the potential to use the power of the company and/or brand to address better both social issues and its own business, marketing and corporate interests. CRM seems like a win-win situation.

While CRM may sound like an attractive option for a brand, how can one measure its success? On one hand, economic or mix motivated campaigns have objective and quantifiable sales results. Hence it makes it easy to assess whether the experience was positive or not. On the other hand, mix or social motivated campaigns can have a much more subjective and qualitative impact – such as a boost in self-esteem – hence making it difficult to measure success from the company’s side. Drumwright’s (1996) model is a good way to measure both the CRM campaign’s strategy itself as well as the company-cause compatibility and company’s degrees of freedom. Here the latter has to be understood conceptually. As social campaigns have tougher obstacles and hurdles as well as higher intangible objectives, they need more latitude than standard marketing campaigns. This is true from defining noneconomic goals to evaluate results with different key performance indicators (KPIs). This paradigm is hereafter called degrees of freedom. Regarding the company-cause compatibility, according to Drumwright, the relationship of the cause to the company's core business, appears to influence consumers’ perception of the campaign. Hence finding the right match is a very important criterion in the path to success of a CRM campaign. A diagram of preconditions for CRM success is presented below and will be further used to analyze the case study.
Since the 21st century, and especially over the last 5 years, diverse multinational and global brands have embraced the women (empowerment) cause as a core part of their business and marketing strategy. This corporate trend is due to the UN and the World Bank’s public positions stating that there is a “bidirectional relationship between economic development and women’s empowerment” (Duflo, 2012; McKinsey, 2015). As a matter of fact, the UN moved from conceiving gender equality as a prerequisite to achieving other poverty reduction goals, to recognizing its intrinsic and instrumental value setting gender equality and women’s empowerment as Millennium...
Development Goals #3 and #5 in their own right (UN, 2010). In this respect, the World Bank declared gender equality a desirable goal in itself (World Bank, 2011 in Duflo, 2012). Launched by the UN & UN Women as part of the successfully mediatized campaign *He for She* in 2014, 1270 companies, including Unilever signed the CEO statement of support of the 7 Women’s Empowerment Principles. Even though, one can doubt the sincerity of such an engagement and that it is easier signed than done; the global 21st century corporate paradigm towards women is that “*equal treatment of men and women is not just the right thing to do – it is also good for business*”. As it is considered as a benefit cause to both society and companies, it has become the ideal new candidate for cause-related marketing and companies currently do not hesitate to make the most of this new opportunity.

**Figure 7. Women’s Empowerment Principles – CEO statement of support.**

1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
2. Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
4. Promote education, training and professional development for women.
5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

Source: the author from UN Women, 2015.

As women turned the new CRM paradigm, it was notably embraced by the fast consumer goods industry (FCMG). It was mainly translated into women’s empowerment principle #5 through the apparition of a growing new advertising movement called *femvertising*. The latter – a mix of feminism and advertising words – became popular in 2014 in the 11th edition of AdvertisingWeek. It can be defined as an advertising practice leveraging “*positive
profemale messages to empower women to increase sales” (Welch, 2014). On a business point of view, this change is long overdue when one knows that women represent a $14 trillion market, control 85% of household purchasing decisions and that 52% of them reported having bought a product because they liked the way women were portrayed in the ad (SheKnows in Welch, 2014). Nonetheless, the advertising industry long and still remains sexist, mostly because only 11% of advertising creative directors are women, rising a little bit from the 3% they represented in 2013. (3 Percent Conference in Welch, 2014).

To date, the pioneer and most famous femvertising campaign to date is the Real Beauty campaign launched in 2004 by Dove, a Unilever body care brand responsible itself for 1/5th of the group’s personal care revenue. Still being used, it tackles key body gender representations in our society with the aim of creating a discussion around these preconceived ideas, promote all kind of beauty and women’s self-esteem. According to AdAge, sales at Dove increased from $2.5 billion to $4 billion in the 10 years since it launched its Real Beauty movement. Since then, many others followed such as portrayed below in this non-exhaustive table.

Figure 8. Major femvertising campaigns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company &amp; Brand</th>
<th>Femvertising campaign</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Pitch</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unilever – Dove</td>
<td>Real Beauty – global</td>
<td>Tackle key body gender representations, create a discussion around these preconceived ideas, promote all kind of beauty and women’s self-esteem.</td>
<td>Video showcase: - Before/after photoshop edits on a woman - Usual negative comments made to women about their personal and professional choices - Group experience with US teenage girls about selfies, self-confidence and beauty</td>
<td>2003-now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;G’s – Always</td>
<td>#LikeAGirl – global</td>
<td>To tackle the pejorative connation of doing</td>
<td>Girls and women are asked to do several activities “like a girl”: adult women</td>
<td>2014-now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company/Brand</td>
<td>Campaign Description</td>
<td>Key Message</td>
<td>Gendered Representation</td>
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<tr>
<td>recent video – USA</td>
<td>things “like a girl” in most societies around the globe, to encourage women to keep on doing sports.</td>
<td>respond doing then in a weak way while young girls just act normal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>P&amp;G – Ariel Serie of videos #ShareTheLoad – India</td>
<td>To reflect the unequal gendered time use for house and childcare by inviting men to get more involved.</td>
<td>An Indian active woman comes home after work and has to deal with her double day, taking care of her kids, husband and father. The father starts to reflect upon this inequality and apologizes for it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HelloFlo Video “Full Moon Party” – USA</td>
<td>To break the taboo &amp; shame of period.</td>
<td>A young girl fakes having her periods. In response, her mother throws a full-moon-1st-period party.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Verizon Campaign “Inspire her mind”</td>
<td>To encourage girls and parents to pursue scientific careers rather than subjects associated with the female gender.</td>
<td>Words, negative comments and restrictions made to girls because they are girls since they are young. The impact on their non-scientific career choice because of that.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls Who Code Campaigns “Why girls can’t code?” – USA</td>
<td>To take a deadpan look at tech's gender gap with humour</td>
<td>Several women coders mock sexist clichés for girls not to code.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Getty Images – iStock – global</td>
<td>To change gender and notably women’s</td>
<td>Creation of a new common stock of photographs with modern gendered representations.</td>
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2016

2014
This recent, USA driven and on-going evolution from traditional sexist gendered representation in advertising to femvertising practices is a first step in women empowerment CRM. As mentioned above, it mainly addresses the women empowerment’s principle #5 focusing on implementing enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women. Nonetheless, the social impact of such practices is less evident and much harder to measure rather than the positive economic and brand impact those companies beneficiated from. Women cause-related marketing now seems ready to go one step further than mere femvertising. It actually starts to implement and fund women empowerment programs for targeted groups of women. Thus, women empowerment CRM seems to be moving from potential indirect positive social impact on women’s representations in our society to a more direct concrete positive impact on the lives of thousands of women around the world, whether it be on their income, self-esteem, bargaining power… This contemporary phenomenon is illustrated by the work of Brilhante, a Unilever detergent brand in Brazil and will be the object of our case study analysis.

III. Framework Analysis

To answer the research question – which elements related to the concept of women empowerment may be observed on the Brilhante social-cause marketing case study? – the
The author aims at assessing two main areas of interest – the company & the targeted empowered group of women – through the case study analysis of Brilhante’s practices with its program Escola Brilhante (EB):

**Figure 9. Framework Analysis**

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<tr>
<th>Assessment goal</th>
<th>Subject of analysis</th>
<th>Framework</th>
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| Does the program led by the brand Brilhante correspond to the criteria of an empowerment program? Can it be considered successful from the company’s side? | Identify elements of women empowerment embedded in the program. | 1) Use the World Bank’s model to access on which empowerment element the EB program is touching upon: agency, opportunity structure, degree of empowerment  
2) Use the Malhotra (2002) model to evaluate which arena of a women’s life is impacted by the EB program: Economic, Socio-Cultural, Familial/Interpersonal, Legal, Political and Psychological. |
| Does the program led by the brand Brilhante correspond to the criteria of a cause-related marketing program? Can it be considered successful from the company’s side? | Identify elements of cause-related marketing embedded in the program. | 1) Use Drumwright’s (1996) model of the preconditions for success of social campaigns and compare it with Brilhante’s program. |
| Has the program had an effective social impact on participating women? Can they be considered empowered? Was the program hence successful and could be an inspiration for other brands/companies? | Measure individual perceptions of empowerment by participating women in the program. | 1) Compare interview and testimony results with the World Bank degree of empowerment model and the development outcomes  
2) Compare results with the Malhotra (2002) model. |
Regarding the chosen models to draw the overall framework, as above studied in the literature review, the Drumwright’s (1996) model is a good way to measure both the cause-related campaign’s strategy itself as well as the company-cause compatibility and company’s degrees of freedom. We will match the following criteria with the elements encountered in the Ciclo Brilhante campaign: brand’s economic performance, company’s culture, company’s and brand’s advertising history, campaign’s objectives, commitment and content, relationship of the cause and core business, affinity for the cause among key constituents and support of the campaign by the cause community. As for the empowerment part, we will use both the World Bank’s and Malhotra’s models to get an idea of both the ways and the arenas of empowerment in the participants’ lives.

IV. Methodology

The author has chosen the research case study methodology to answer the research question – which elements related to the concept of women empowerment may be observed on the Brilhante social-cause marketing case study? The author believes it is the best suitable methodology to showcase evidence due to the following three elements.

Firstly, it is “adapted to what & why questions” (Yin, 2009). In this study, one of the main goals is to understand what is being done and used in terms of women empowerment elements by the company, hence answering the “what” question. The study aims at understanding the company’s motives to do so, hence answering the “why” question. Secondly, “the investigator has little control over the events” (Yin, 2009). For a start, companies and brands such as Unilever and Brilhante are taking over women empowerment social-cause marketing whether we like it or not. Thus the author can only passively witness these corporate practices while having little-to-no incidence on it. Last but not least, the focus of this research case study is on a “contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context”. The quest for sustainable business, social-cause marketing and new ways of engaging with customers are current global new trends that are here to last due to global agenda. Women empowerment cause-related marketing is definitely a contemporary phenomenon that is still understudied. In sum, this research case study takes the form of an explanatory single case study with an
embedded survey submitted to participating women in the empowerment program. Besides, it might be considered an exploratory case study as well as women empowerment social-cause marketing is something new that differs from mere cause-related marketing and femvertising. The exploratory aspect is defined by the “what” question - what is being done by this specific social-cause marketing program to empower women - and hence what lessons can be drawn from it to incentivize more similar initiatives.

In terms of data and evidence collection required for a research case study, several traditional sources were used such as documentation, interviews and direct observation (Yin, 2009). First and foremost, as the object of study is a corporate marketing case, a lot of the documentation comes from the brand’s umbrella company: Unilever itself. Types of documentation used were diverse such as annual report, press releases, and corporate information online. Thus, this material was used with caution by the author in order to objectivize it when it is biased in favor of the company’s initiatives. This is the reason why the author conducted interviews with different organizational informants. On one hand, she met the Brilhante’s marketing team in São Paulo to get additional information from the documentation and challenge them on key points. On the other hand, she met with Brilhante’s non-profit Brazilian partner Aliança Empreendedora, specialist in entrepreneurial inclusion for micro-entrepreneurs, to analyse their perception of the program’s content and results as well as their thoughts on the sustainable women-friendly corporate attitude of the brand. Last but not least, the author submitted an online survey to participants of the studied Ciclo Brilhante program. Composed of 9 questions with an approximate duration of less than 10 minutes, it was communicated to 450 women both by email and the participant’s Facebook group. The survey totaled 62 respondents.

Last but not least, why was the specific Ciclo Brilhante case chosen as object of this research case study? While women empowerment cause-related marketing is a global trend, it is largely led by the USA and Anglophone femvertising. The author wanted to explore the translation of this contemporary phenomenon in Brazil, both a developing and non-English speaking country. To this extent, the Ciclo Brilhante appears as an innovative cause-related marketing women-empowerment program, the very first of its kind in Brazil and one of the few existing worldwide.
V. Case Study

1. Global company Unilever & local brand Brilhante

Unilever is a global company operating in the fast-moving consumer goods industry (FMCG). According to its Annual Report in 2015, it is present in more than 190 countries, in 7 out of 10 households across the world and in every single one in Brazil. It operates in the following four market segments: Home Care / Personal Care / Foods / Refreshment. Two billion people use Unilever’s products on a daily basis. Its portfolio is composed of “more than 400 brands focused on health and wellbeing, 13 of which generate sales in excess of €1 billion a year”, namely: Axe, Dove, Heartbrand, Hellmann’s, Knorr, Lipton, Lux, Magnum, Omo, Rama, Rexona, Sunsilk and Surf. The company’s twenty most famous brands are responsible for 70% of its sales revenue. Nonetheless, Unilever seeks to have a balanced portfolio of both world leading brands and local trusted names. Its competitors are mainly Procter & Gamble (which operates exactly the same market segments with rival strong global and local leading brands) as well as to a lesser extent Nestlé, L’Oréal, Danone, KraftHeinz, Colgate-Palmolive and the other top 25 FMCG companies that had combined sales of about €530 billion in 2015 (Unilever’s Annual Report, 2015).

In 2015, Unilever’s turnover represented €53.3 billion, with an underlying sales growth of 4.1% in 2015 which is a good performance in the current economic global growth of 3% and up from 2.9% in 2014. Emerging markets now account for 57% of its sales, and this share keeps growing. Among its business categories, personal care is the most profitable accounting for almost half of the sales with a €20.1 billion turnover and high core operating margin of 18.9%, its second biggest segment was foods - €12.9 billion and 18.2% margin, and its third was home care - €10.2 billion and 7.6% margin, and its last was refreshment – €10.1 billion and 9.4% margin (Unilever’s Annual Report, 2015). In the home care market – to which the brand object of our case study belongs: Brilhante – Unilever generates more than 80% of its sales in emerging markets with a quite low operating margin in comparison to personal care. Thus, the company’s “main strategic role is to grow competitively and step up profitability, while scaling up household care” (Unilever’s Annual Report, 2015). Firstly, home care needs to adapt to the 21st century and “address consumer needs at a time of rapidly growing urbanization and rising employment of women”. Households and in particular active women worldwide do not have much time to dedicate to home care and hence need the most efficient and least exhaustive
products. Secondly it needs to innovate to anticipate future trends while thirdly cutting manufacture based and overheads costs while developing premium offers.

In Brazil, Unilever’s Home Care portfolio is composed of the following supplies with both global and local dedicated brands. One can note that almost half of it is composed of laundry detergents:

- **Cleaning products:** Cif (global), Vim (local - Brazil, Bangladesh, Canada, India, Pakistan), Sun (global)
- **Fabric softeners:** Comfort (global), Fofo – fabric softener (local - Brazil)
- **Laundry detergents:** **Brilhante (local - Brazil), OMO** (known as Persil & Skip in Europe - global – Unilever’s #1), Surf (global - #2 brand), Ala (local - Argentina, Brazil).

Figure 10. Unilever’s Brazilian portfolio with detailed home care brands

Source: the author from Unilever’s 2015 Annual Report and website. In Brazil, Unilever divides its portfolio into three and not four segments. In yellow are highlighted detergent brands.

Brilhante is one of Unilever’s brands in Brazil. Launched in 1986, it was added to the group’s portfolio as a local brand. The brand’s products range from laundry powder detergent, bleach and sanitary water (the proprieties of the latter being highly acclaimed in Brazil for its cleaning properties while its use is almost inexisten in other countries). The brand’s promise to consumers is to keep whites white: “brancura impecável sem estragar tecidos e cores”. Brilhante's core target consumer is the “modern women” portrayed as the powerful Brazilian active woman that has to do everything – work and housework – while not wasting her time using multiple inefficient products. Hence, Unilever positions its brand as 21st century’s women’s right hand: “o braço direito das mulheres do século XXI”. One must
acknowledge that Brilhante’s women-are-heroes positioning is definitely more modern than the traditional market leader OMO’s kids-centered approach. As the latter focuses on children, housewives and family life; Brilhante strategically portrays women as daily heroes able to successfully do it all: great business or career with a clean and loved house and family. Nonetheless, in spite of the brand’s “modern persona”, it does not seem to question the general problem of laundry and house care being women’s exclusive duties. An interview conducted with Brilhante’s marketing team confirmed that the brand had no interest whatsoever in tackling this issue when the latter is a problem and a cause per se tackled by competitor P&G with its Ariel’s #sharetheload campaign in India.

Figure 11. Examples of OMO’s and Brilhante’s commercials

Source: OMO’s and Brilhante’s websites. OMO claims to be “the only detergent that goes further for your son to go further as well” and that “dirt is good” whereas Brilhante argues that “the power to shine comes from you” and “shine more with Brilhante”.

In terms of market segmentation within Unilever’s laundry detergent brands in Brazil, OMO is largely ahead competition, having almost become a synonym for detergent in Portuguese. If OMO’s prestige has been traditionally higher, the demand gap seems to be
narrowing in favor of market’s second brand, Brilhante, due to the Brazilian economic crisis and households’ needs to cut costs. Actually, Brilhante’s marketing team told the author that people still use OMO but mix it with a bigger dose of Brilhante’s detergent in order to use OMO’s product longer. Lastly, Surf could be considered as equal to Brilhante in terms of pricing and target though with less popularity and stocks. On the other hand, Ala is a very specific product dedicated to Brazilian Northeast lower-income population. It cannot be found anywhere else in Brazil and focuses on detergent’s basic functions with specific attention on whiteness and perfume, which are key criteria to poorer Brazilian households.

Figure 12. Internal market segmentation among Unilever’s detergent brands in Brazil

#1 OMO
- Class A & B - premium - around R$ 10 per kg
- Brand's Mission: children, housewife, happy family
- 3 personas: perfectionist housewife, kids-centered and balance lifestyle between work and kids.

#2 Brilhante
- Class B/C - value-brand / low-cost - around R$ 7 per kg
- Brand's Mission: Make women shine professionally & at home. Super efficient all-in-one product for those who do not have a minute to themselves.
- With the crisis, the sales tend to increase as it is a better price performance option than OMO for instance

#3 Surf & Ala
- Class C (& D) - value-brand / low-cost - around R$ 6-7 per kg
- Ala is only sold in the Brazilian North-East region, very local reference, targets lower-income population
- Surf is similar to Brilhante with a focus on perfume. Targets active woman with a peaceful routine < super busy entrepreneurial and ambitious Brilhante woman.

Source: the author from interview with Brilhante’s marketing team. The aforementioned social classes are defined by the IBGE for the Brazilian market. As of 2015, there were defined as such:
- E – up to 2 minimum wages: up to R$ 1.576,00
- D – from 2 to 4 minimum wages: from R$ 1.576,01 to R$ 3.152,00
- C – from 4 to 10 minimum wages: from R$ 3.152,01 to R$ 7.880,00
- B – from 10 to 20 minimum wages: from R$ 7.880,01 to R$ 15.760,00
- A – above 20 minimum wages: R$ 15.760,01 or more

2. Unilever’s commitment to sustainability
As claimed in its Annual Report in 2015, more than 172,000 people work for the multinational with 43% of managers being women. To date, the company is the number 1 FMCG employer of choice among students in 26 countries. Nonetheless, in times of rising environmental and societal concerns and difficult retention of in-house talents within companies, Unilever chose to embrace sustainable business. In 2015, the company’s CEO announced the launch of the Sustainable Living Plan. Its goal is to “decouple our growth from our environmental impact, while at the same time increasing our positive social impact” (Unilever, 2015). By 2020, Unilever aims to:

- Help more than a billion people through better health and well-being
- Halve the environmental footprint of its products and sourcing 100% sustainable agricultural raw materials sustainably
- Enhance the livelihoods of people across its value chain.

As of today, it claims to have reached 303 million people through hand washing, safe drinking water, oral health and self-esteem programs around the globe. It says to have reduced its waste impact by around 11% since 2010 and already sourced half of its raw materials sustainably. The company understands that being sustainable is not a mere communication trend, but a real critical economic and internal issue. It is a way to both keep ahead competition and making more profits while staying an attractive workplace for its current and future employees. In this respect, the results have been immediate. In its 2015 Sustainable Report, Unilever announced for the first time that purpose-driven brands were growing at twice the rate of the rest of the business and accounted for half of Unilever’s growth in 2014. Hence, this sets real economic incentive for it to becoming sustainable. In response, Unilever created a specific unit for what it calls its “sustainable living brands”. The latter are defined as “responsible business and responsible brands” responding to consumers’ eco-friendly concerns.

Figure 13. Unilever’s vision of sustainable business and sustainable living brands
Although this is good news – both for the planet and the business – this business unit broadly encompasses a lot of different brands from real sustainable initiatives such as Ben & Jerry’s to traditional brands more or less involved in social-cause marketing campaigns and programs such as Dove, Lifebuoy, Brilhante, Rin, Comfort... For instance, on one hand selling products in sachets for a very small fee is considered sustainable as it gives access to shampoo, toothpaste, soap to the base of the pyramid population in developing markets that could not afford these products otherwise. Nonetheless, on the other hand, individual packaging raises environmental concerns in terms of waste generation - a particularly acute issue for developing
countries, as well as raising prices compared to bigger packaging, hence setting a double poverty burden. To conclude, if any brand can hypothetically be sustainable, for what it is worth, one has to carefully look at each brand’s initiatives and sourcing within this category before taking for granted Unilever’s sustainable communications. The best example to illustrate this is the striking contrast between Unilever’s declarations on halving its environmental footprint and improving worker’s conditions along the value chain while ignoring the plight of workers poisoned by toxic mercury at its thermometer factory in Kodaikanal, India during 14 years. It took the highly viral protest video Kodaikanal Won’t (viewed more than 3.8 million times on YouTube) and 8 more months for the group to finally compensate the workers.

3. **Unilever’s commitment to women**

If most companies in the FMCG industry tend to embrace more or less seriously the sustainable trend as it has a direct contact and impact for consumers’ concerns and demands evolutions; Unilever really emphasizes in its communication its strong position and commitment towards women whether they be its employees or consumers. In its annual report, it claims that over 70% of the company’s consumers are women while they represent 32% of Unilever’s value chain as growers, distributors, factory and office employees. As aforementioned in the introduction, in its sustainable living plan Unilever acknowledges both gender inequality and women’s “ripple effect on families, communities and economies” as they do “60% of the world’s work and earn only 10% of the world’s income, yet they reinvest 90% of income into their families”\(^{13}\). Besides, household structures have changed thus strongly impacting Unilever’s revenues and strategy. The number of households and hence potential buyers has increased as “single occupant households have risen to 17.5% worldwide and 33% in Western Europe” (Unilever, 2015). This is partly linked to women’s changing role in society. If they are the main actor in the purchase decision, they now account for 50% of graduates in many countries and all around the world participate more in the labor market, including at higher executive roles and wages. Hence their expectations, purchasing power and demands for FMCG brands have changed.

Unilever seems to be taking women empowerment’s stake very seriously and wants to be a pioneer in new concrete women inclusive approaches. The brand defines this as: “access to new opportunities and better working conditions, including improved safety, training and education, career progression and better pay”. It participated to elaborating the United Nations’ new 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (also known
as the Global Goals), which set gender equality and women empowerment as Global Goal #5. In 2015, along with UN Women, Unilever committed over the next three years to expand economic opportunities for women in its value chain, help reduce unpaid care work and improve safety for women and girls. In its Annual Report in 2015, the company claimed that by 2020 it would empower 5 million women, consumers and employees combined though it didn’t specify how this commitment would translate into practice. As mentioned above, the company is a signatory of the HeForShe campaign and the CEO’s statement of support of the 7 Women’s Empowerment Principles. In Brazil, Unilever joined the Associação Movimento Mulher 360 - the business movement for women’s economic development - along major FMCG companies and multinationals. To say the least, one cannot say Unilever is hypocritical as it shouts it loud and clear its female-oriented business intentions in its 2015 Annual Report: “Addressing barriers to gender equality is not just the right thing to do. It is also vital for our future growth. We consider the respect and promotion of women’s rights and the advancement of women’s economic inclusion a business priority. By promoting the formal and active participation of women in the economy, we aim to transform lives, families, communities and economies. In turn, we have the opportunity to grow our markets, brands and business”. In sum, the company set forth that the road to gender equality is paved with business opportunities and that it would shoot itself in the foot if it did not partake in it.

In practical terms, how does Unilever could pretend to empower 5 million women by 2020? Within the group, all brands can launch dedicated programs to meet the challenge. Since 2006, it claims to have “enabled around 800,000 women to develop their skills, made up of 70,000 micro-entrepreneurs in India and around 730,000 on tea smallholdings in Kenya and India. we also enabled around 600,000 smallholder farmers and 1.8 million small-scale retailers to access initiatives, which aimed to improve their agricultural practices or increase their sales” (Unilever’s Annual Report, 2015). One of the most famous global initiatives is Dove’s Campaign for Real Beauty, which features real women instead of models for communications and commercials. The brand launched the Dove Self Esteem fund to educate, inspire and boost self-confidence of millions of women about beauty. It claims that 30,000 women beneficiated from it in Brazil, though once more doesn’t explain how. The hair care band Sunslik launched another global beauty initiative. It partnered some of the world’s leading curly hair specialists to elaborate formulas tailored to treat all hair conditions such as hair-fall, frizz, limp locks and uncontrollable curls. The toothpaste brand Close-UP provides affordable oral care solution in developing countries to improve access to health-care and self-confidence as physical appearance is an important vector of social discrimination and wellbeing across the
planet. If most of these aforementioned initiatives are linked to beauty, health-care and physical appearance, others focused on developing middle-class women’s personal and professional skills. A women empowerment program was thus launched and run in parallel by local detergent brands Brilhante in Brazil and Rin in India. Unilever claims that as of 2015, 114 000 women had beneficited from these trainings in both countries and are still running. The Brazilian program Ciclo Brilhante is the object of our case study and will be further developed in the following sector.

4. Women empowerment program: Ciclo Brilhante

The content of this section comes from several sources. Firstly, interviews run with Brilhante’s marketing team and with the women and business empowerment partner Aliança Empreendedora. Secondly, Unilever’s press releases (video and articles). Thirdly, my own direct observation and analysis of the Ciclo Brilhante program both on the online course platform and participants’ interactions on their Facebook group.

The Brazilian laundry detergent brand Brilhante currently leads a women empowerment and entrepreneurial program as part of its marketing strategy: Ciclo Brilhante. Launched in November 2015, the latter positions itself a life-changing 100% free e-learning and classrooms course on entrepreneurship. Dedicated to Brilhante women, the program positions itself as “the course where one learns how to open or develop one’s own business to grow in personal and professional life” (Unilever’s video press release, 2016). Here the expression “Brilhante women” is to be understood as shining women, those middle-class Brazilian women who fight to do it all: a great job and/or company as well as a happy family. The targeted participants are urban warriors, hyperactive entrepreneurs of their lives and daily heroes, even without acknowledging it. According to the brand’s marketing team, usually deprived of superior education, they have in common a sense of modesty, low self-confidence and willingness to move forward in their professional and personal life. One does not have to be a Brilhante client to partake in the program. The brand initially divulged Ciclo Brilhante’s applications through dedicated promoted and organic posts on Facebook and Instagram presented below. It also counted on influencers selected by a PR company to communicate on the initiative to targeted groups of women bloggers, journalists, and entrepreneurs. According to the brand, 40 000 women enrolled in the first class of 2015. The completion of the course gives a diploma. Season 2 started in June 2016. Unfortunately, the brand does not disclose the course completion when
it tends to be lower than 13% in most massive open online courses (MOOCs) worldwide\textsuperscript{16}. Hence, one has to note that this research is lacking a major indicator of success to make strong hypothesis on the effectiveness of social-cause marketing on women empowerment.

Figure 14. Brilhante’s promotional social posts for Escola Brilhante & Escola de Você

The Ciclo Brilhante program is divided into three stages:

- **1\textsuperscript{st} step - Escola de Você (Your School):** an online course focused on women empowerment: self-esteem, well-being, personal organization… The brand partners with Escola de Você whose platform and content is produced by Ana Paula Padrão and Natália Leite, two famous Brazilian journalists involved with women’s professional and personal development. In this first stage, the brand has a traditional role of sponsor financing the production twenty five-minutes videos made by the two journalists.

- **2\textsuperscript{nd} step - Escola Brilhante (Brilhante School):** an online course focused on launching or developing one’s business. The brand partners with the Brazilian non-profit organization Aliança Empreendedora, specialized in business inclusion and micro-entrepreneurs to produce the content. It keeps the same format as the previous stage: 20 videos of 5 min. Each video sets a situation any entrepreneur could face and the solution to it as well as tips from specialists and real-success stories from real women. It also gives homework “prazeres de casa” and pdf organizing tools and templates to be more efficient.

- **3\textsuperscript{rd} step - Hora de Brilhar (Time to Shine):** Escola Brilhante participants were offered to apply for a specific selective in-class individual training in Sao Paulo. Among a
thousand applicants, Aliança Empreendedora and Unilever spotted 50 promising women for their personality, engagement, motivation as well as initial stage of business. Upon a selection event in São Paulo, 10 were finally picked to benefit from the training with specialists. Eventually, 3 of them won a prize of R$7,000 to develop their business. All 10 finalists became archetypes of the Brilhante women, real-life success stories brand ambassador in the brand’s new marketing campaign as well as source of inspiration and motivation for participants of Ciclo Brilhante’s second season.

- In addition, Brilhante just launched in September 2016 another complementary resource to its 3 stages program. Called **Meu Negócio Brilhante** (My brilliant business) it is an online trustable and massive source of content on female entrepreneurship. The website powered by the brand is independent from both Brilhante’s website and Ciclo Brilhante’s platform. The main goal is to organically reach women beyond Brilhante’s network answering their search queries on entrepreneurship, running a business, planning directly from Google search results. The platform’s production and management is outsourced to Green Park Content – a content marketing publisher based in São Paulo and London.

Figure 15. Ciclo Brilhante’s three stages and the course’s conclusion diploma

Ciclo Brilhante is a local initiative of Brilhante’s marketing department at Unilever Brazil. Nonetheless, as mentioned above the global company is closely watching brand pilot projects to evaluate if they are worth replicating from a country and/or a brand to another. Thus, the undisclosed budget allowed to this project is part of the local Brilhante marketing budget and does not come from any extra corporate social responsibility or global cause-related
marketing budget line. In the aftermath of the Brazilian economic crisis in 2015/2016, Brilhante’s marketing team told the author that this budget tends to be narrowed down and some of Hora de Brilhar’s follow-up projects had to be cut down. Ciclo Brilhante’s marketing goal is to generate brand awareness, love and a strong community rather than drive sales. The latter would obviously be a positive consequence but cannot certainly not be considered the main driver unlike Brilhante’s traditional advertising practices. This new approach is in line with Unilever’s primary concern to innovate in terms of marketing as people’s media consumption and habits change. Digital marketing and the boom in video now drive sales through all customer channels forcing greater transparency and adaptation from the brand (Unilever’s Annual Report, 2015).

Brilhante chose to set entrepreneurship at the core of its program for two reasons. Firstly, it matches the brand’s persona of the active women and daily hero entrepreneur of her life. Secondly, the brand claims that out of 70% of women who would like to be entrepreneurs in Brazil, only 7% have achieved this (TGI Ibope in Unilever’s press video release, 2016). The brand also states that Brazilian middle-class growth was driven by women over the last years. According to IBGE 2015, middle class C makes up 50% of Brazilian population with 40% of women having a formal job and 38.7% being heads of family (IBGE 2015 in Unilever’s press video release, 2016). Hence, through Ciclo Brilhante, the brand positions itself as Brazilian middle-class women’s key partner and driver to strive and shine as entrepreneurs. To this extent, the brand rhetorically asks in its press video release: “what could we do to help them strive even more in life?” (“o que poderiamos fazer para ajudar eles ainda mais progredir na vida?”) Similarly to most of the above literature review, Unilever and the brand Brilhante conceive female entrepreneurship as a positive tool for personal and economic development as opposed to a default choice or informal situation needed for time-flexibility and family issues. The 2015 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Brazil seems to check Unilever’s statements that entrepreneurship seems to be a real desirable option among women in the country. “Having one’s own business” ranks in 5th position among the Brazilian female population aspirations while “having a career” ranks 7th, similar to the masculine population. Furthermore, 2/3 of female entrepreneurship in Brazil is driven by opportunity rather than by constraint with the exception of 2015, which can be explained by women’s choice to enter the work market rather than launching a business to complement the household income in times of economic crisis (GEM, 2015).

Figure 16. Entrepreneurship as a choice vs. necessity according to gender in Brazil
After having presented the Brilhante case study and the context in which it takes place, it is possible to answer the research question: which elements related to the concept of women empowerment may be observed on the Brilhante social-cause marketing case study? As aforementioned in the framework’s presentation, the case analysis will be carried out in three stages. Firstly, the author will try to identify Ciclo Brilhante’s elements of empowerment on a corporate side. Secondly, the author will search for the program’s cause-related marketing elements. Lastly, the author will identify the program’s social impact on women through the analysis of participants’ testimonies and answers to an online survey.

1. **Elements of empowerment in the Ciclo Brilhante program**

   To identify Ciclo Brilhante’s empowerment elements, the author combines two empowerment measurement models, as she believes they are deeply intertwined. On one hand, the World Bank’s model accesses on which level and empowerment element the program is acting or not: resources, agency, opportunity structure, degree of empowerment. On the other hand, the Malhotra (2002) model evaluates which arenas of women’s life are impacted by the Ciclo Brilhante: Economic, Socio-Cultural, Familial/ Interpersonal, Legal, Political and Psychological.
To start with, one has to remember the World Bank’s empowerment definition as “to enhance the capacity of an individual or group to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes” (World Bank, 2001, 2007). In this respect, Ciclo Brilhante positions itself as an empowerment program as it claims to change women’s life being a “course where one learns how to open or develop one’s own business to grow in personal and professional life”. Hence, according to the World Bank’s model the program is an agency factor which tackles participating women’s opportunity structure and eventually leads to development outcomes and degrees of empowerment. We will develop each of these elements over the next paragraphs.

The Ciclo Brilhante acts on agency characteristics through the resources (also known as endowments) it provides participants with. As a reminder, the latter is defined as the “actor’s ability to make meaningful choices, that is to consider and purposely choose among options” thanks to its “endowment of psychological, informational, organizational, material, financial and human assets” (World Bank, Kabeer, 1999). Ciclo Brilhante offers access to several material and immaterial resources such as:

- **Informational endowment**: traditional business knowledge that most self-made women entrepreneurs never had access to such as accounting, marketing, strategy, and management.
- **Organizational endowment**: time management, efficiency and setting professional, and personal goals.
- **Psychological endowment**: break the entrepreneurial myths, boost in self-confidence, and self-esteem to dare open a business.
- **Material endowment**: online classes, live chats with mentors, toolbox of useful templates and ready-to-use materials for one’s business.
- **Financial endowment**: direct financial help for the three winners of Hora de Brilhar and indirect financial endowment through the increased financial and business knowledge accumulated that may impact positively impact one’s business
- **Human endowment**: access to a network of similar female entrepreneurs, access to a network of mentors and role models

In its agency role the brand Brilhante provides women with capabilities to “live the life they want, of achieving values ways of “being and doing”” (Sen, 1985 in Kabeer, 1999). It incentivizes the women to break the much-feted doxa imposed on them by society and choose
for themselves. As the World Bank puts it, the program deals with women’s opportunity structures. It acts on “the contextual factors of informal and formal rules that affect the extent to which an actor can actually transform those choices into effective actions”. Indeed the program changes both external and self-perception of female entrepreneurs. It gives them the opportunity to believe much more in themselves therefore allowing friends, families and business partners to see them differently. In sum, the program seems to have a positive impact on the opportunity structures, allowing participants to surpass themselves.

In terms of development outcomes, the author uses Malhotra’s qualification (2002) to identify the dimensions and areas of a participant’s life impacted or not by the program. It is interesting to compare Ciclo Brilhante’s features to this model as it is widely used in the (women) empowerment literature for measurement purposes. Hence the Malhotra model helps to objectivize the program’s empowerment impact rather than merely relying on the company’s feedback and/or participants’ perceptions (which will be studied and confronted later on this study). According to the model, Ciclo Brilhante’s features may have an impact on four areas of participants’ lives as it provides and/or incentivizes them with:

- **Economic**: access to employment; ownership of assets and land; access to credit; incentives to launch or develop one’s business, better financial skills.
- **Socio-cultural**: participation in extra-familial groups and social networks; literacy and access to a broad range of educational options; Positive media images of women, their roles and contributions
- **Psychological**: Self-esteem; self-efficacy; psychological well-being; potential of mobilization; sense of inclusion and entitlement; systemic acceptance of women’s entitlement and inclusion.
- **Legal**: better understanding of their rights and duties in terms of taxe, accounting.

In sum, as long as the company and the program features are concerned, the program does seem to have empowerment attributes. In terms of degree of empowerment, it allows a minima the existence of choice, which is the first out of the three empowerment degrees defined by the World Bank. Regarding the last two – use and achievement of choice – they only can be estimated qualitatively from participant’s feedback and will be studied later on in this analysis. Here it is interesting to compare the program’s empowerment impact one can observe through the application of both the World Bank and Malhotra’s analytical framework with the results claimed by Brilhante. While the brand’s marketing team had not set any prior
empowerment key performance indicators (KPIs) to the program; it did commissioned the Ibope Institute and FBiz Report to report on Ciclo Brilhante 2015’s results and feedback. Even though the brand refused to share the full survey with the author, it declared that: “the results went beyond expectations. Brilhante really changed women’s lives” (Unilever’s video press release, 2016). It claims to have had a direct impact on women’s businesses and professional expectations with an 86% increase of participating women who “want to open its own business” from 22 to 41%; a 24% increase in professional expectations, from 74% to 98% and a 42% increase in self-esteem. A major unexpected success was the strong community online and offline built by participants to exchange on the course and respective business issues and advices. Hence, according to our empowerment measurement framework, the brand asserts a strong economic and psychological impact only when the author identified a larger potential of impact through a dual framework analysis. A scheme above sums up the program’s empowerment elements.

Figure 17. Ciclo Brilhante’s elements of empowerment according to the dual framework analysis
2. **Elements of cause-related marketing in the Ciclo Brilhante program**

The framework allowed us to showcase that Ciclo Brilhante does incorporate empowerment elements, even though not as radically transformative as the brand advocates. Similarly, Drumwright’s model (1996) allows us to analyze whether or not Ciclo Brilhante can be considered a successful cause-related marketing campaign. As it studies the preconditions for success of social campaigns, it is a good way to measure if the program corresponds to a cause-related marketing (CRM) campaign strategy. It also allows the analysis of the company-cause compatibility and company’s background; hence pointing out the company’s credibility and perceived success in doing such a CRM campaign.

To start with, Drumwright (1996) categorizes CRM campaigns under three labels depending on their goal: “some are solely economic (hereafter “economic”); some are purely social (“noneconomic”); and some have mixed economic and social objectives (“mixed”). To this extent Ciclo Brilhante can be regarded as a noneconomic campaign. Indeed, as stated by the brand’s marketing team, women empowerment, brand awareness and building a strong community are the main objectives whereas sales increase is only an indirect positive consequence. As the campaign is not mere femvertising for Brilhante products but really an independent women empowerment program, it reinforces the fact that it is noneconomic motivated as it is dissociated from the brands’ products. According to Drumwright (1996), a successful CRM campaign relies on three pillars: degrees of freedom, campaign strategy and company-cause compatibility.

Degree of Empowerment: existence of choice
The degree of freedom has to be understood conceptually. As social campaigns have tougher obstacles and hurdles as well as higher intangible objectives – empowerment for instance being a very subjective notion, they need more latitude than standard marketing campaigns. This is true from defining noneconomic goals to evaluating results with different key performance indicators (KPIs). This latitude and paradigm shift requires three factors: economic performance, company culture and advertising history. Firstly, in terms of economic performance the brand Brilhante has several advantages. Both Unilever and Brilhante are long-term established actors supported by billion-reais revenues. Hence even though the local marketing budget is restricted and home care is one of the least profitable business units; the brand has the liberty to lead noneconomic motivated campaigns and innovate in its marketing practices. Secondly, Unilever’s company culture is no stranger to taking marketing risks and has a history of civic-mindedness. The best example to illustrate this is Dove’s Real Beauty movement started in 2004 as mentioned above. Besides, the company’s adoption of a sustainable living agenda in 2015, as well as its expressed commitments towards women can only favor the brand’s managers to factor social marketing. Thirdly, in terms of advertising history, aside from Dove, Unilever is less known for femvertising than its direct competitor P&G that is responsible for Always, Ariel and Pantene’s recent women-oriented successes. Nonetheless, Drumwright (1996) underlines that not having a CRM advertising history is not necessarily a bad thing. Furthermore, as Brilhante has quite a “modern” brand persona as opposed to OMO for instance, it has the potential to innovate and try new marketing practices. In sum, thanks to being part of Unilever, the Brilhante brand had a sufficient initial degree of freedom and internal corporate incentives to promote and succeed in its CRM campaign.

Regarding campaign strategy, Drumwright (1996) suggests looking at three elements: the objectives, the time commitment and the content. As mentioned above, Ciclo Brilhante is a noneconomic driven campaign mainly focused on improving the brand’s image – generating brand love - and promoting sustainable company-oriented objectives such as improving gender equality and empowering women. As all noneconomic motivated campaigns, it is much more likely to succeed and be accepted by the public (Drumwright, 1996). In terms of commitment, the fact that the brand renewed Ciclo Brilhante’s program for a second year is a very positive element. Drumwright stresses that the most trustworthy, authentic and successful gender equality campaigns last at least three years. For instance, Dove’s Real Beauty campaign has lasted for more than a decade. And indeed, women empowerment is a long-term cause, it would not make sense for the brand to showcase it for a quarter only. Last but not least, Ciclo Brilhante’s content is particularly well thought at in terms of both message and execution. This
is notably due to the fact that the brand partnered with some of the cause’s specialists to produce and communicate the content. Aliança Empreendedorá, which is responsible for Escola Brilhante’s content, is a non-profit organization specialized in micro-entrepreneurs and business inclusion for middle-class and bottom of the pyramid Brazilians. It hence knows exactly what to say and what not to say in order to deliver the right message and impact without offending participants. In Ciclo Brilhante’s courses, the language is deliberately kept simple with a lot of gestures, message repetition and concrete examples in order to involve as many women as possible without over-simplifying, which could offend as well.

Figure 19. Ana Paula Padrão and Natália Leite, in Escola Brilhante

Eventually, let’s take a look at the company-cause compatibility through the study of the relationship of the cause to the company’s core business, the cause affinity among constituents and the support of the cause community. According to Drumwright, the relationship of the cause to the company’s core business appears to influence consumers’ perception of the campaign. To this extent, Brilhante’s relationship with women empowerment could be perceived to benefit indirectly the business as the cause flourished. For instance, if women are effectively empowered, strive and earn more revenues, they are more likely to be loyal clients and recommend the brand. Drumwright considers that the most advantageous relationship is the indirect one, as it avoids cynical reactions from consumers about the company’s opportunistic
or exploitative motive as well as irrelevant campaigns that do not connect at all with the brand’s consumers. On the other hand affinity for the cause among key constituents increases the probability of success. The fact that both Brilhante’s marketing team and the consumers (who are the targeted cause themselves) are enthusiast about the program is very positive and supports its success.

Last but not least, the support of the cause community was thought from the start in Ciclo Brilhante. The brand’s partnership with the cause specialist Aliança Empreendedora ensured the program’s support from the cause community, understanding how the contrary could have dramatic consequences in addition to not be tailored to the targeted women. When asked about what it thought of corporations’ recent interest for women and women empowerment programs, the non profit partner Aliança Empreendedora claimed that it sees it as a very positive trend. Non-profit organizations like them have been working for a while with corporate social responsibility (CSR) departments of big corporations, but they now play in the marketing department. Therefore, it means a much larger budget both for the programs’s quality as well as for communications on it hence enhancing the potential social impact on women. Aliança Empreendedora hopes more brands will follow this example. As Drumwright (1996) put it: “Interaction and association with the cause community lends credibility and expertise to the company’s effort”. In sum, Ciclo Brilhante can be considered a successful CRM program for its very good campaign strategy and company-cause compatibility. Even though it benefits from a sufficient degree of freedom, it would be its weakest point compared to the rest due to the low performance of the home care business unit and lack of record in terms of femvertising. The figure on the next page portrays Ciclo Brilhante’s CRM features within the Drumwright’s framework.
Figure 19. Ciclo Brilhante’s elements of a successful cause-related marketing (CRM) campaign based on Drumwright’s model (1996)

Ciclo Brilhante CRM campaign

Degrees of freedom: sufficient

Company Culture: Sustainable Living Plan, corporate incentives to socially innovate

Advertising History: only Dove, weakest point, room for innovation

Economic performance: support of a multinational, home care has the weakest operating margin, room for innovation

Objectives: noneconomic, brand love + community (indirectly sales)

Commitment: programme renewed for a 2nd year, not short term

Content: right message, tone of voice & execution

Campaign strategy: well-thought & executed

Company-cause compatibility: tailored to the cause, very smart partnership approach

Relationship of the cause and core business: indirect

Affinity for the cause among key constituents: committed marketing team + consumers are the cause

Support of the cause community: partnership with Aliança Empreendedor

Source: the author from Drumwright, 1996
3. Participants’ perception of empowerment and opinion on the program

After having analyzed Ciclo Brilhante’s program from a corporate side, both on its empowerment elements and cause-related marketing attributes; it is interesting to understand how it effectively impacts participating women. In order to be considered a successful women empowerment cause-related marketing program, participants must perceive themselves as empowered. Hence one needs to analyze women’s subjective individual perceptions of empowerment and compare them to the framework to objectivize the results as much as possible. As has been done for the program itself in order to evaluate if it was an empowerment program or not, these perceptions will be compared to both the World Bank’s and Malhotra’s empowerment measurement models.

In terms of individual data and evidence collection, two sources have been used and compared to the framework:

- Three video testimonies of Hora de Brilhar’s finalists discussing their experience
- The results of an online survey\(^\text{20}\) elaborated by the author and submitted by email and Facebook to 450 participants of Ciclo Brilhante’s 1st edition in 2015. Even though approximately 40,000 partook in program, the brand wouldn’t give access to their personal contact details hence limiting the outreach. Out of the 450 who received the survey, 62 responded to it. This gives a 13.8% response rate among respondents, and of 0.16% of total participants. Hence the survey cannot be considered representative; still it remains the best existing way to approximate the women’s individual perceptions of empowerment.

The objective of this survey and the videos analysis was to compare Brilhante’s marketing team’s communication to the reality experienced by these women, both in terms of who they are and how empowered they felt or not by the program. So, how did these women hear about the program Escola Brilhante? 88% of the participants heard about it through social media (Instagram and Facebook), 9% of word of mouth and only 3% of traditional media (TV, magazine, newspaper or radio). Who are the participants? They live all around Brazil, with a specific concentration around the states of Sao Paulo 44%, Minas Gerais 11%, Rio Grande do Sul 9% and Rio de Janeiro 5%. The North-East, South-East and South of the country are represented among participants whereas women from Center-West and North of Brazil are not in this sample. It is very likely that the latter were very few in the program as the most rural and less connected and educated states in Brazil. In terms of social class and household revenues...
among the respondents, 18% belong to class E, 28% to class D, 37% to medium class C, 12% to class B and 5% to class A. When Brilhante’s marketing team claims to have consumers from mainly upper middle class B and middle class C, in fact the program seems to attract women of more modest incomes with 84% of them coming from lower-middle classes C-E and 49% only from upper middle class B-C. Seeing these results, the deliberate choice by the brand to use a very simple tone of voice seems to have been tailored to its audience.

**Figure 20. Participants' Social Classes & Level of Education**

In terms of level of study, the results contrast largely with the brand and partner beliefs that most Brilhante women did not have access to higher and graduate education. Indeed, most of the respondents seem to be highly educated with 67% having a graduate or post-graduate degree, 22% having completed high school, 5% having completed a technical degree and only less than 4% having completed primary school or middle school. Why would such educated women need or be interested in such an empowerment program then? One explication may be that even though these women did study, they still felt self-confidence and/or lacked necessary business skills to lead their entrepreneurial projects.

In order to measure respondents’ own perception of empowerment, they were asked two questions to answer both the World Bank’s degree of empowerment and Malhotra’s areas of empowerment. Regarding the degree of empowerment, respondents were asked about their existence, use and achievement of choice after partaking in the program. Across all respondents, regardless of the stage of participation in the program, 80% of them consider having been empowered in some way, with 23% having more existence of choice, 30% a higher use of
choice, 28% already having had achievements of choice while 19 % doesn’t recognize itself in the abovementioned empowerment options. As studied above, the empowerment elements embedded in Ciclo Brilhante tend to facilitate the existence of choice. Hence here the results seem to have surpassed Ciclo Brilhante’s minim expectations of empowerment degree as 58% of respondents claim to have larger use of choice or achievements.

Besides, it is interesting to note, that the deeper participants were involved in the Ciclo Brilhante, notably through the selective in-class last stage Hora de Brilhar, the deeper the degree of empowerment is. One can note in green in the above figure 43% of Hora de Brilhhar participants have already experienced empowerment outcomes resulting from the program whereas only 14% of their counterparts who partook in the online general course Escola Brilhante experienced empowerment achievements to date. Hence, there seems to be a positive relationship between the degree of engagement of the program and empowerment outcomes. Thus, if the online empowerment process seems efficient enough to have more existence and use of choice, eventually empowerment results need a more in-depth in-class process. It thus means that according to brand commitment, certain degrees of empowerment can be reached.

Figure 21. Degrees of empowerment experienced by participants

Regarding Malhotra’s measurement model of empowerment dimensions, respondents were asked which areas of their professional and/or personal lives had been impacted because of their participation in the program. They could choose as many areas as they considered to have been impacted. As a result the most empowered dimensions among respondents are: psychological 63%, economic 58%, sociocultural 53%, familial and interpersonal 37%, political 14% and juridical 7%. Only 7% of respondents answered they had not felt
empowerment in any of these dimensions. If one goes back to Ciclo Brilhante’s goal to be “the course where one learns how to open or develop one’s own business to grow in personal and professional life” (Unilever’s video press release, 2016); the program can indeed be considered successful looking at these numbers.

Figure 22. Empowered dimensions of participants' lives

![Bar chart showing percentages of participants' empowered dimensions]


Last but not least, if the social goal of the CRM campaign seems to have been reached, what about the company-oriented objective to look more sustainable and generate brand love? If 88% of the respondents knew the brand beforehand, only 67% were clients. After the Ciclo Brilhante program, 68% of respondents declare to buy more brand products and/or recommend it to friends whereas 32% says it did not influence their shopping decisions or word of mouth. One has to remember that sales increase was not the program’s main objective nor had set specific KPIs, hence the aforementioned numbers can be considered satisfying for the brand. It may not have reached that many new clients, but it succeeded to retain and please existing ones. Indeed, if only one respondent worsened its opinion of the brand after partaking in the programme Ciclo Brilhante, 67% declare to have a better image of the brand and 42% of them said it remained equivalent. Hence in terms of brand lift and brand image, one can only say that the result is rather positive for Brilhante. On the brand’s side, in its 2016 video press release, it claims having had a return on investment (ROI) of twenty two times its initial investment in the program’s first season. As the brand did not set previous KPIs and denied to give further explanations on what this figure really means, it is quite troublesome to take into account as a
measure of success. However, due to the brand’s allegations, one may guess that Ciclo Brilhante had positive consequences on the brand’s image and relationship to its audience.

In terms of brand credibility in its women empowerment cause-related marketing approach, 70% of respondents believe Brilhante really wants to help women strive. Among other respondents, 5% believed in the brand initiative but underlined that it was not the only brand to do so, 11% argued that even tough it was pure marketing they liked the initiative while 9% did not have opinion on it and 4% of respondents made additional comments. On one hand, a respondent underlined that the brand was killing two birds – marketing and women empowerment – with one stone as the more women strive, the larger their revenues and, hence the more the brand grows. On the other hand, another respondent criticized the brand’s attitude as pure marketing. She deplores this fact and claims that the brand would probably be pleasantly surprised if it got really more committed to this program and women. Hence, while Brilhante claims to be perceived as “a brand that is interested and takes care of women”, participants are not naïve. If on average they approve and support the brand’s initiative and commitment towards women, they do get the marketing mechanisms behind it.

VII. Findings, Limitations & Conclusion

This case study presents some limitations. First the program was recently launched in 2015. Hence one lacks mid-term and long-term feedback to measure its effective empowerment impact. Secondly, the brand refused to share its data on the program, leaving the author the only option to attempt to share a survey with as many participants as possible with no possibility to test women that did not participate in the program as a comparison. Hence the survey’s respondents make only 0,16% of the total program participants which cannot be considered under any circumstance representative of the program’s impact even though it remains the best way to approximate empowerment impact and measurement which are, as above explained in the literature review, a very a subjective notion by essence. Thirdly, most of the case study sources originate from the company itself, hence the author tried to regard it with the utmost objectivity as possible to disentangle between facts and mere communication propaganda. Last but not least, the author herself as a woman and as a researcher has strong personal positions on the object of study. Even though she tried her best to stay objective, it is a bias to take into account.
The purpose of this study was to approach the recent corporate phenomenon of women empowerment social-cause marketing and to gain an understanding of this practice’s impact both on the corporation and the targeted women. Through the analysis of the Brilhante social-cause marketing case study, we have seen that it does seem to be an efficient means of both women empowerment and well as of marketing and brand awareness for the company. On one hand, 80% of respondents acknowledge having being positively empowered to some degree by the program, mainly in the psychological, economic, sociocultural and familial/interpersonal areas of their lives. Even though this sample cannot be considered representative, it does indicate some kind of positive impact. On the other side, the brand succeeded in establishing an innovative program encompassing both empowerment and cause-related marketing elements. It was not regarded as a bad initiative from both the cause specialists and its audience, while having a positive impact on brand love and image. Thus, what are the key takeaways of this case study and best practices to succeed in women-empowerment social-cause marketing?

Firstly, women empowerment cause-related marketing has a potential of a much larger and more tangible impact than its contemporary femvertising. If the latter may reflect in direct psychological and indirect sociocultural and familiar and interpersonal empowerment, in the form of boost in self-esteem or change of perception of one’s role in society for instance; it has no impact whatsoever on economic empowerment. The general thrust of participant’s feedbacks, notably from the program’s three finalists that benefited as well from intense in-class training, is the strong impact in terms of business organization, financial and managerial knowledge. This results in better structured and growing female-led businesses, and is likely to have a positive impact on informal businesses decrease. While femvertising focuses on broadcasting existence of choice (The World Bank, 2001), women empowerment CRM goes one step further allowing women to use and achieve new opportunities. This is great news while underlining that femvertising alone as well as too little committed women empowerment CRM strategies are not enough to make gender change happen.

Secondly, more than for any classical cause-related marketing campaign, company-cause compatibility and campaign’s strategy really have to be well thought and executed (Drumwright, 1996). Over the last five years, femvertising has become the ultimate and, almost mandatory trend, notably due to immediate online bashing of sexist advertisings all over the internet; one must not fall neither into feminism washing – surfing on femvertising trend without having brand credibility and public’s confidence. Hence, a smart move by Brilhante to be remembered, was to partner with a local cause specialist empowerment non-profit actor – Aliança Empreendedora – in order to ensure that the program’s design, content and
communications was tailored to targeted public’s expectations and abilities while ensuring itself the support and trust of the cause community. As witnessed with Brilhante’s case, with the right partners and strategy, a brand has nothing to lose and even everything to win in shifting to a women empowerment/femvertising marketing attitude.

In sum, this program Ciclo Brilhante is not revolutionary. In a country of 100 million women like Brazil, 40 000 participants and, only 10 in the intense last stage in-class training Hora de Brilhar, is not a lot, especially when one does not have the course completion rate. The program does not invest huge amounts in women’s businesses and it is not old enough to measure mid-term and long-term empowerment effects on both women’s professional and personal lives. Nonetheless, Ciclo Brilhante does show positive signs that a new impactful win-win marketing is possible, further than traditional marketing or mere femvertising. In times of growing competition, this marketing and corporate paradigm shift could be one of the many opportunities for 21st century women to grow up in a differently minded environment enabling their full potential.

Footnotes

1 World Bank, press release, 2015
2 Oxfam Davos Report, 2016
For a full list of direct and indirect empowerment indicators used by the World Bank, refer to appendix 1.

For a full table of commonly used dimensions of empowerment and operationalization, see appendix 2.

Access the full results on Nielsen’s website.


Both the World Bank & Malhotra models were aforementioned and explained in details in the literature review’s women empowerment section.

See figure 8 that showcases major femvertising examples.

As portrayed on the brand’s website.

See commercial with Portuguese subtitles.

The full transcript of the interview of Brilhante’s marketing can be found in the appendix 3.

For more details, refer to sustainable living strategy’s presentation on Unilever’s website.

Refer to full Unilever’s analysis of women opportunities on its website.

See Unilever’s press release: Unilever em prol do empoderamento feminino, 10/03/2016

Full interviews can be found in appendix.

Onah, Sinclair, Boyatt, Dropout rates of massive open online courses: behavioural patterns, The University of Warwick, retrieve from: https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/dcs/people/research/csrmaj/daniel_onah_edulearn14.pdf

Meu Negocio Brilhante’s Official Website: http://www.meunegociobrilhante.com.br

See appendix 2 for the full commonly used empowerment dimensions.

For more information, refer to the table of femvertising campaigns in the literature review section.

The full survey and results can be found in appendix 4.

See figure 7

References


Berniell, María Inés, and Carolina Sánchez-Páramo. (2011) Overview of Time Use Data Used


Appendix 1: Examples of indirect and direct indicators of empowerment by the World Bank
### Table 1. Examples of Indirect Indicators: Asset Endowment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset endowment</th>
<th>Indicator (sex-disaggregated)</th>
<th>Existing sources or instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Capacity to envisage change</td>
<td>IQMSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational</td>
<td>Frequency of radio listening or access to different media sources</td>
<td>IQMSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Membership in organizations</td>
<td>IQMSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Ownership of productive assets, such as land</td>
<td>LSMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Value of household savings in last year (cash and other forms)</td>
<td>Household Budget Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Literacy level</td>
<td>LSMS education module</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: IQMSC = Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital. LSMS = Living Standards Measurement Study.*

### Table 2. Examples of Indirect Indicators: Opportunity Structure

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain (change)</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Existing sources or instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State (justice)</td>
<td>Index of civil liberties</td>
<td>Freedom House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State (political)</td>
<td>Index of political rights</td>
<td>Freedom House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State (public services)</td>
<td>Percentage of budget allocation devoted to PRSP</td>
<td>PRSP policy matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of population unable to access at least one basic service</td>
<td>World Bank Country Policy and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in the previous year because of (a) cost, (b) physical distance, or (c)</td>
<td>Institutional Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>social distance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market (labor)</td>
<td>Percentage of employers complying with state regulations on core labor</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market (goods)</td>
<td>Access to and use of productive assets by income quintile</td>
<td>LSMS-type survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market (private services)</td>
<td>Percentage of women or ethnic and religious minorities accessing</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>specified financial services in previous year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of formal, operational mechanisms to ensure transparency and</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>accountability of financial service providers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society (intra-household)</td>
<td>Number of formal justice cases filed regarding violations of women’s</td>
<td>World Bank Country Policy and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rights (domestic abuse) per year</td>
<td>Institutional Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society (intra-community)</td>
<td>Exclusion from community association life based on social identity</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: PRSP = Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. LSMS = Living Standards Measurement Study.*

N/A = Not available.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Concept/theme</th>
<th>Indicator (disaggregated by social and economic group)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State (justice)</td>
<td>Accessible justice</td>
<td>Recall data on types of justice systems and frequency of use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency of use of justice system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairness of justice system</td>
<td>Perceptual scoring of fairness of treatment and outcomes, plus social difference in treatment, accountability, ease of use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to complain about justice system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safety and security of citizens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State (politics)</td>
<td>Participatory democracy</td>
<td>Recall data on frequency of elections at different levels, voting entitlements, and voting behavior (including independence of decision making)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical and independent voting choice</td>
<td>Perceptual scoring of interest in elections, knowledge of parties, involvement in political processes (including aspirations), fairness of electoral process, and accountability of elected officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of accountability mechanisms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State (public services)</td>
<td>Citizen voice and social accountability</td>
<td>Perceptual and recall data on service availability, accessibility, and making complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accessible, quality, and relevant services</td>
<td>Recall data on services used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perceptual scoring of quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of complaints (distinguishing by social group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market (labor)</td>
<td>Freedom to enter labor market (skill-based)</td>
<td>Perceptual scoring of ease of entry and movement in labor market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom to withdraw and withhold labor</td>
<td>Perceptual data on constraints to labor market entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to command market price for labor</td>
<td>Recall data on union membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perceptual data on labor rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market (goods)</td>
<td>Ability to access productive inputs</td>
<td>Perceptual data on access to productive inputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to access consumption goods</td>
<td>Recall data on consumer behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market (private services)</td>
<td>Access to and use of formal or informal credit</td>
<td>Recall data on credit access and use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to infrastructure</td>
<td>Recall data on use of transport and telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to information</td>
<td>Recall data on use of different media and information sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society (intra-household)</td>
<td>Influence and control over strategic choices</td>
<td>Perceptual data on household decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women’s control over body and reproductive choices</td>
<td>Perceptual scoring of women’s control over body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society (intra-community)</td>
<td>Freedom of association</td>
<td>Perceptual data on constraints to association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom of mobility</td>
<td>Perceptual data on mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation in community decision making</td>
<td>Recall data on decision making in community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Alsop, Bertelsen, and Holland (2006)*

**Appendix 2: Commonly used dimensions of empowerment by Malhotra (2002)**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Broader Arenas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Women’s control over income; relative contribution to family support; access to and control of family resources</td>
<td>Women’s access to employment; ownership of assets and land; access to credit; involvement and/or representation in local trade associations; access to markets</td>
<td>Women’s representation in high paying jobs; women CEOs; representation of women’s economic interests in macroeconomic policies, state and federal budgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Cultural</td>
<td>Women’s freedom of movement; lack of discrimination against daughters; commitment to educating daughters</td>
<td>Women’s visibility in and access to social spaces; access to modern transportation; participation in extra-familial groups and social networks; shift in patriarchal norms (such as son preference); symbolic representation of the female in myth and ritual</td>
<td>Women’s literacy and access to a broad range of educational options; Positive media images of women, their roles and contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familial/Interpersonal</td>
<td>Participation in domestic decision-making; control over sexual relations; ability to make childbearing decisions, use contraception, access abortion; control over spouse selection and marriage timing; freedom from domestic violence</td>
<td>Shifts in marriage and kinship systems indicating greater value and autonomy for women (e.g., later marriages, self selection of spouses, reduction in the practice of dowry; acceptability of divorce); local campaigns against domestic violence</td>
<td>Regional/national trends in timing of marriage, options for divorce; political, legal, religious support for (or lack of active opposition to) such shifts; systems providing easy access to contraception, safe abortion, reproductive health services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>Knowledge of legal rights; domestic support for exercising rights</td>
<td>Community mobilization for rights; campaigns for rights awareness; effective local enforcement of legal rights</td>
<td>Laws supporting women’s rights, access to resources and options; Advocacy for rights and legislation; use of judicial system to redress rights violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Knowledge of political system and means of access to it; domestic support for political engagement; exercising the right to vote</td>
<td>Women’s involvement or mobilization in the local political system/campaigns; support for specific candidates or legislation; representation in local bodies of government</td>
<td>Women’s representation in regional and national bodies of government; strength as a voting bloc; representation of women’s interests in effective lobbies and interest groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Self-esteem; self-efficacy; psychological well-being</td>
<td>Collective awareness of injustice, potential of mobilization</td>
<td>Women’s sense of inclusion and entitlement; systemic acceptance of women’s entitlement and inclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why and who was at the origin of the Ciclo Brilhante’s initiative?

Brilhante currently leads two distinctive projects for women as part of its marketing strategy. The main goal of these women-social-marketing campaigns is to “gerar amor por Brilhante” aka generate love for the brand/brand awareness and community rather than drive sales (might be a positive consequence of it but definitely not the main target – for this traditional advertising)

Ciclo Brilhante – launched in X 2015
- **Escola de Você**: platform and content produced by the two journalists. Brilhante has a traditional role of sponsor of 20 videos of 5 min. Focus: women empowerment (self-esteem, well-being…). Estimated participants: 20 000 women for the 1st class of 2015 – new application campaign running now in June 2016 through 2 videos posted on Brilhante’s Facebook page + 2 paid posts on Facebook and Instagram.
- **Escola Brilhante**: 50 own video classes of 5 min each + organizing tools and templates produced by the NGO Aliança Empreendedora for Brilhante. Focus: entrepreneurship, empower women to launch/develop their businesses. Estimated participants: 50 000 women for the 1st class of 2015 – new application campaign to start soon. Brilhante’s ambition is to at least double its number in 2016 as told by the marketing team. First campaign also counted on influencers picked up by a PR company to communicate on the initiative to targeted groups of women (bloggers, journalists, entrepreneurs…).
- **Hora de Brilhar**: among the Escola Brilhante participants, the Aliança Empreendedora along with the brand spotted 50 promising women for their personality, engagement, motivation (≠ stage of their business) → 10 were finally selected to benefit from a special presential training in Sao Paulo, 3 won a prize of R$ 7000. Those 10 women turned symbol/archetypes of the Brilhante woman.

Meu Negocio Brilhante – to be launched in July 2016
- Goal: to reach organically women beyond Brilhante’s network answering their search queries on entrepreneurship, running a business… with relevant content.
- How? Creating a trustable and massive source of content on woman entrepreneurship (in Brazil, in Portuguese) published on new unbranded website called Meu Negocio Brilhante (*My brilliant/shining business*).
- Production: Outsourced to Green Park Content – a content marketing publisher based in Sao Paulo and London.

Who supports financially and operationally the project? Were there any unexpected difficulties in developing, implementing and growing this project?

- Those initiatives come from Unilever Brazil ≠ incentivized by the global company. Nonetheless the global company is closely watching those pilot projects to see if they are worth replicating from a country and/or a brand to another.
- The budget allowed to these projects is part of the local Brilhante marketing budget. Now with the crisis this budget tends be to narrowed down and some following projects for the targeted group of hora de brilhar had to be cut.

Why focusing on women, empowerment and entrepreneurship (rather than domestic violence or other themes)? How is Brilhante positioned in comparison with other Unilever’s detergents? Why choosing this brand and not the global leader – OMO – to do it? Wouldn’t it be more impactful?

- the whole Brilhante’s brand identity and mission relies on active modern women contrary to OMO – a more traditional brand that focuses on kids. Hence it makes sense to have Brilhante taking a stand for women empowerment rather than another of Unilever’s detergent brands. → *the team didn’t mention the Unilever’s Sustainable Living Plan and goal to empower 5 million women by 2020.*
- The Brilhante Woman = Class C. Wants to have it all: great family life (a clean house and happy kids and couple) + a great career especially being their own boss. Women Brilhante // entrepreneurs of their lives, non-stop, hyper-active, warriors, need to do it all even without acknowledging it; sense of modesty.
for Mother’s Day, 100 female influencers in Brazil received a book telling about the women related initiatives undertaken by Dove, Seda and Brilhante. The three Unilever’s brands most active towards women → no feedback on this.

**Unilever’s home care laundry detergent’s portfolio in Brazil**

- **#1 OMO**
  - Class A & B - premium - around 11 R$/product
  - Brand's Mission: children
  - 3 personas: perfectionist housewife, wants the best for her kids and balance lifestyle between work and kids.

- **#2 Brilhante**
  - Class C - value-brand / low-cost - around 6 R$/product
  - Targets woman. Make the women shine in their home and professionally. Super efficient all-in-one product for those who do not have a minute to themselves.
  - With the crisis, the sales go up as it is a good price performance option ≠ OMO.

- **#3 Surf & Ala**
  - Class C (& D) - value-brand / low-cost - around 4.5 R$/product
  - Ala is only sold in the Brazilian North-East region and a local reference.
  - Surf is similar to Brilhante with a focus on perfume. Targets active woman with a peaceful routine < super busy entrepreneurial and ambitious Brilhante woman.

**Does Brilhante measure its impact? Were there any fixed KPIs/goals to reach? sales? media coverage? Does the brand get (positive/negative/neutral) feedback from participating women?**

- No specific KPIs to measure women empowerment and entrepreneurship incentives were set ex-ante nor ex-post
- Unexpected level of adhesion and engagement of the women in the ciclo Brilhante. real sentiment to belong to a community cf. the participants themselves ≠ the brand, created facebook and whatsapp groups + Escola Brilhante ambassadors around Brazil to help each others and meet up in real life. No community manager paid by the brand to animate those groups ≠ official brand page.

**Does Brilhante gets inspiration and/or shares its best practices in terms of women empowerment with other Unilever brands (for instance as part of the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan)? in Brazil and abroad?**

No but the global is looking at their pilot to get inspiration.

**Appendix 4: Examples of Ciclo Brilhante participants: Brilhante Women**
Source: Escola Brilhante’s Facebook group.