

# **Market research: CSR & consumer behavior**

**Professor:** Pagà Peris, Roger

**Office hours:** by appointment

**Course Type:** Elective

**Credits:** 3 ECTS

**Term:** 3rd

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## **Course Description**

“Should our company start selling in a foreign market?”, “Should our company choose a different endorser for one of its brands?”, “Should our company invest in CSR?” Although organizational decisions can be very diverse, there is at least one thing they have in common: to make those decisions in an informed way, market research is needed.

In this course, the student will learn how to think like a market researcher. This will involve familiarizing oneself with the so-called **market research process**: a systematic approach in which decisions-to-be-made (e.g., should we invest in CSR?) are transformed into more specific, and measurable questions (e.g., how does our target audience perceive companies in our sector that engage in CSR?). Then, those more specific and measurable questions are answered by collecting data, which requires deciding on a suitable methodology (How should we learn more about our target audience’s CSR perceptions: should we do depth interviews? Online surveys? Something else entirely?). Thus, the market research process is both about **1) identifying the right information** to make decisions, and **2) identifying how to best obtain that information**. This course will focus on both aspects of the market research process and how to use them to optimize organizational decisions (both CSR-related, and beyond).

After learning about the market research process, this course will focus on consumer behavior. Specifically, the course will tackle three aspects of consumer behavior that are relevant for a company’s CSR-related decisions: consumer learning, consumer motivation, and consumer decision making:

- By understanding how consumers **learn** about products, brands, and companies, the student will be better equipped to effectively link certain CSR practices to a product, brand, or company, thus creating a strong connection.
- By understanding what **motivates** consumers to make purchase decisions, the student will be better equipped to design CSR-related communication strategies that are compelling and can improve consumer attitudes.
- By understanding how consumers **make decisions**, the student will be better equipped to comprehend when and how CSR marketing affects the consumer’s decisions short term (purchase) and long term (loyalty).

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### The course in the study plan

This **elective** course belongs to the subject of **Social Dimension of Sustainability** of the study plan. It takes place in the **third quarter**.

### Objectives and competences

- 1) Learning to transform strategic decisions into specific, measurable research questions that, when answered, allow for informed decision making.
- 2) Familiarizing oneself with a variety of theoretical frameworks for research.
- 3) Learning a taxonomy of research methodologies, the circumstances under which they should be used, and how to implement them.
- 4) Familiarizing oneself with how consumers learn to associate certain products, brands or companies with positive (or negative) stimuli, and how this process can be manipulated.
- 5) Learning about consumers' multiple sources of motivation, and how those change consumer behavior.
- 6) Familiarizing oneself with a variety of mindsets that consumers can adopt when making decisions.
- 7) Using the market research and consumer behavior insights seen throughout the course to make better CSR-related decisions, both in terms of whether to invest in CSR or not, what type of CSR to invest in, and how to promote and communicate that to consumers.

### Related SDG

SDG 4: Quality Education

SDG 5: Gender Equality

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

## COURSE LEARNING PLAN

### Methodology

The course features 8 sessions that last three hours each. The course is divided in 2 blocks:

#### **Block 1: Fundamentals of Market Research**

This block will be covered in sessions 1 to 5. The block will introduce the planning stages of the market research process: problem definition, approach development, and research design.

#### **Block 2: Consumer Behavior**

This block will be covered in sessions 6 to 8. The block will introduce a variety of insights from the social psychology literature to better understand the topics of consumer learning, consumer motivation, and consumer decision making.

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For both blocks, PowerPoint presentations summarizing each topic will be uploaded before each session. Since both blocks are theory-heavy, emphasis will be put on explaining the new concepts and ideas by using real-life examples, including CSR-related ones.

Students are expected to participate during the lectures; the goal is to achieve a dialogue between the lecturer and the students, rather than a monologue in which the lecturer talks and students passively listen to him.

Most topics covered during sessions 1 to 8 will include group assignments that will give students an opportunity to apply what they learnt.

**Hours devoted by the student (according to ECTS) 75**

### Evaluation criteria

The final grade is the weighted average of:

- **Final exam (50%):** a combination of multiple choice and short-answered questions. A minimum grade of **4/10** in the final exam is required to be able to pass the course.
- **Group Assignments (40%):** will generally involve case studies. They will be an opportunity for students to apply the concepts seen in class to real-life situations.
- **Class attendance and participation (10%)**

Other evaluation aspects to consider:

#### Retake

Students who fail the course during regular evaluation will be allowed ONE re-take of the examination/evaluation. Students that pass any retake exam should get a 5 by default as a final grade for the course. If the course is again failed after the retake, students will have to register again for the course the following year.

#### No-show

In case of a justified no-show to an exam, the student must inform the corresponding faculty member and the director(s) of the program so that they study the possibility of rescheduling the exam (one possibility being during the "Retake" period). In the meantime, the student will get an "incomplete", which will be replaced by the actual grade after the final exam is taken. The "incomplete" will not be reflected on the student's Academic Transcript.

#### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is to use another's work and to present it as one's own without acknowledging the sources in the correct way. All essays, reports or projects handed in by a student must be original work completed by the student. By enrolling at any ESCI UPF BSM Master of Science and signing the "Honor Code," students acknowledge that they understand the schools' policy on plagiarism and certify that all course assignments will be their own work, except where indicated

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by correct referencing. Failing to do so may result in automatic expulsion from the program.

### Contents and Schedule

Session Date	Topic	Activities
02/04/25	Course Presentation Introduction to Market Research (MR)	
23/04/25	Stage 1 and 2 of the MR process: problem definition and approach development.	Assignment 1
30/04/25	Stage 3 of the MR process: research designs	
14/05/25	Qualitative research designs in detail	Assignment 2
21/05/25	Quantitative research designs in detail	
28/05/25	Consumer learning	
04/06/25	Consumer motivation	Assignment 3
11/06/25	Consumer decision making	
18/06/25	Final Exam	

### Bio of Professor

**Pagà, Roger:** holds a PhD in Economics, Finance and Management from Pompeu Fabra University. Is a Lecturer at the Barcelona School of Management at Pompeu Fabra University (UPF-BSM). He has served as the academic coordinator of the M.Sc. in Marketing at UPF-BSM. Before joining UPF-BSM's core faculty, he collaborated with Toulouse Business School as a lecturer. He teaches both at UPF-BSM and at ESCI-UPF School of International Studies. His courses cover a broad set of topics within the area of marketing, ranging from consumer behavior, to market research, to data analysis. His scientific work places special emphasis in the areas of consumer behavior, social psychology, and decision making. He is also involved in knowledge transfer activities about the circular economy (Mercadona Chair in Circular Economy).

### Reading Materials/ Bibliography/Resources

- Burns, A. C., & Bush, R. F. (2004). *Marketing research: Online research applications*. Prentice Hall.
- Kardes, F.R., Cline, T.W., Cronley, M.L. (2011), *Consumer Behavior: Science and Practice*. South-Western: Cengage Learning.
- Malhotra, N. K. (2008). *Marketing research: An applied orientation, 5/e*. Pearson Education India.