
IS THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY IN MACEDONIA A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE SEGMENT?

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ABSTRACT

Corporate social responsibility refers to the focus, to the voluntary corporate action of business entities, not only to profit, but also to respect for social goals and protection of the ecological environment, and thus above all the health of people, and the healthy maintenance of living and plant life in nature.

In that regard, the framework convention on tobacco control also refers, where specifically in Article 5.3 many specifics are highlighted, among which, that the tobacco industry carries out activities to distance its image from the deadly nature of the tobacco products it produces and sells, and at the same time, to influence the raising of awareness for the preservation of public health.

British American Tobacco (BAT) claims that "tobacco cultivation plays an important and positive role in livelihoods, helping to improve well-being and increase resilience ie. the tenacity of tobacco farmers and workers."

Also, the larger companies of the tobacco industry emphasize the application of the Strategy of Corporate Social Responsibility, in order to improve their reputation, image and credibility, and to present themselves as good corporate entities, which are also aimed at supporting projects in the field of the arts, higher education, reducing hunger and improving the nutrition of the poor population, certainly, by separating financial resources from their realized profits.

In the paper, in addition to a brief elaboration of the significance of the application of Corporate Social Responsibility in the tobacco industry, quantitative data on tobacco production in the world, individual countries and Macedonia are presented.

Keywords: Corporate Responsibility, Tobacco Production, Health, Ecology, Measures, Ecology.

1. INTRODUCTION

A strategy of corporate social responsibility¹ is also used in the tobacco industry, as an effective political strategy, in particular, by tobacco companies in order to secure certain business-social positions, highlighting their intentions for respect and concern for ensuring social goals and protecting the ecological environment, and thus above all the health of people and the healthy maintenance of the living and plant life in nature, while not resenting their interests for improving their own profits.

The tobacco industry also uses the Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy to improve its reputation, image and credibility in the business world, to present tobacco companies as

¹ Corporate Social responsibility Strategy (CSR)

"good corporate entities" that care about general tobacco control regulation, adapting to its products to the demands of consumers, as well as for the implementation of the general health policy.

In the complex of activities in the tobacco industry in our country, the production, i.e. the cultivation of tobacco, has a special place, as the first major link of the tobacco industry, which also takes place in a number of other countries, first of all, with the aim of improving the financial situation of the poorer population. Although tobacco cultivation plays an important and positive role in the livelihood of the population and improving the family budget, however, research shows that the labor costs of this type of production are high, because tobacco cultivation is a labor-intensive activity that requires many hours of work and effort. The Republic of North Macedonia, according to its tradition, is a famous country for the production of aromatic oriental tobacco, which is added to the mixture of large-leaf tobaccos as a natural additive to cigarettes.²

The paper will present the latest findings from articles, research and official papers, as well as empirical research, related to the application of corporate social responsibility in the tactics of the tobacco industry, with a descriptive, tabular and graphical presentation of the data obtained.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this research, first of all, secondary sources of data related to corporate social responsibility, in general, as well as the tactics of the tobacco industry, were used, then data from a large number of researches and official papers, as well as primary sources, from empirical research.

The empirical research was done in May 2024, with respondents from the municipalities of Prilep, part of Bitola and surrounding municipalities. Statistical processing of the obtained data through the X²-test, between smokers and non-smokers, men and women, as well as separate calculations only between male and female smokers, were also performed. Calculations show that the attitudes of smokers and non-smokers.

For better visibility, in the paper, the obtained and processed results are presented descriptively, tabularly and graphically.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and the discussion after the investigated problem are focused first on the importance of corporate social responsibility in the tactics of the tobacco industry, and then on the knowledge gained from empirical research.

The need for corporate social responsibility in the tobacco industry is necessary from several aspects, especially from the concern for the health of smokers and indirectly also of non-smokers. Thus, the effective and comprehensive policies for tobacco control according to the Framework Convention of the World Health Organization on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and MPOWER³, reinforced the numerous criticisms, warnings and the pronounced anti-smoking

² Additive means an addition, usually to improve the quality of cigarettes

³ <https://www.who.int/news/item/16-11-2021-tobacco-use-falling-who-urges-countries-to-invest-in-helping-more-people-to-quit-tobacco>, WHO MPOWER measures included: monitoring tobacco use and prevention policies, protecting people from secondhand smoke, offering help to quit, warning people about the dangers of tobacco, implementing bans on advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco, increasing taxes on tobacco, etc

campaign, however, the smoking of cigarettes and its products, especially cigarettes is constant, with small variations.

However, regardless of the fact that there are large anti-smoking propagandas, which are medically justified, there are still statements, i.e. uncensored articles and posts, where it is claimed that tobacco and tobacco smoke have healing properties that help to maintain the health of people and to treat many disorders and diseases.⁴

However, despite intensified anti-smoking propaganda, worldwide tobacco production is declining, although in some countries it continues to grow, supported by the narratives of the tobacco industry.⁵

Tobacco production takes place in a large number of low- and middle-income⁶ countries. The importance of its production is particularly emphasized through the contribution to improving the standard of the poor population, and thus improving the budgets of the respective countries, and obtaining funds for the risks to human health and environmental sustainability during production.⁷

The World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) provides guidance in its Articles 18 and 19 to hold the tobacco industry accountable for the environmental risks and health effects of tobacco cultivation and production.⁸

- Article 18 (Protection of the environment and human health): "In complying with the obligations of this Convention, the parties agree to pay due attention to the protection of the environment and human health in relation to the environments in which they live, in relation to cultivation and production of tobacco products in their own territory".

- Article 19 (Responsibility): "For the purpose of tobacco control, the Parties shall consider undertaking legislative activities or promoting existing laws, in an appropriate manner, to deal with criminal and civil liability, including compensation, where applicable." necessary".⁹

In this view, the measures for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR in English) in the context of the tobacco industry, defined by the World Health Organization (WHO in English) as the promotion of "voluntary measures for an efficient way of dealing with tobacco control and the establishment of partnerships with health interests."¹⁰

Corporate social responsibility (CSR)¹¹ refers to a voluntary corporate action that claims that the priority interest in acting towards the public should be aimed at social goals instead of being driven only by profit.¹²

⁴ [https://matrixworldhr.com/2013/01/18/tobacco smoking helps in maintaining health confirmed by research that escaped censorship](https://matrixworldhr.com/2013/01/18/tobacco-smoking-helps-in-maintaining-health-confirmed-by-research-that-escaped-censorship)

⁵ A. Appau, J. Drope, F. Witoslar, J.J. Chavez & R. Lencucha, Why Do Farmers Grow Tobacco? A Qualitative Exploration of Farmers Perspectives in Indonesia and Phillipines, *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, 2019;16(13):2330, doi:10.3390/ijerph16132330

⁶ M.C. Kulik, S. A. Bialous, S. Munthall & W. Max, Tobacco growing and the sustainable development goals, *Malawi, Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 9 February 2017

⁷ MC Worldwide, A study on the impacts of tobacco growing and the role it plays in rural livelihoods, *British American Tobacco website*, 2019, archived February 2020

⁸ More in World Health Organization, *WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control*, 2003

⁹ Specifically in: *Official Gazette of R. Macedonia*, No. 68 of May 31, 2006. The Law on the Ratification of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control of the World Health Organization, Article 18 and 19

¹⁰ World Health Organization, *Tobacco Industry Interference with Tobacco Control*, WHO website, 2008, accessed June 2020

¹¹ Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

Although corporate social responsibility (CSR) is still an important tool for companies to use to improve their image, there is no widely agreed framework for CSR that specifies minimum standards for social performance.¹³

This creates an opportunity for the company to present itself as generally responsible, regardless of the social, health and environmental damage it may cause.¹⁴ This lack of clarity has enabled tobacco companies to develop CSR programs, even though the World Health Organization emphasizes that tobacco use is a major preventable cause of death in the world, even as the smoking epidemic spreads throughout developing countries.¹⁵

The corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy is used as an effective political strategy by tobacco companies to build support for political positions that favor the interests of the tobacco industry and to weaken the opposition.

The corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy also serves to facilitate access to policy makers, improve the company's reputation as a source of reliable information, and discourage evidence-based tobacco control interventions.¹⁶

In the same way, tobacco companies coordinate the strategy of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to improve their reputation, image and credibility¹⁷, presenting their companies as respective corporate communities, which care both about increasing profits and implementing health policy. and general regulations for tobacco control.¹⁸

But, regardless of the pressure and anti-smoking propaganda, and whatever is happening with the tobacco industry, nevertheless, the popularity of tobacco consumption, especially smoking, continues to develop, with a slight decrease.

The application of corporate social responsibility in the tactics of the tobacco industry, especially in the case of cigarette smoking, an empirical investigation was conducted based on the statements of both smokers and non-smokers, by asking: Do you mind that the tobacco industry, i.e. the companies that manufacture cigars, are warning that smoking cigars is bad for the health of smokers? In fact, through questioning on the second group of respondents, smokers-non-smokers, both according to the respective sexes (men, women), and together, an effort was made to answer whether the hypothesis that corporate social responsibility refers to a focus on voluntary corporate the actions of the tobacco company, in respect of social goals and protection of the ecological environment, and therefore the health of people and the healthy maintenance of the living and plant world in nature, and not only in the pursuit of greater profit. Through the given answers, a complete picture can be formed for smokers, despite various anti-propaganda and indications against smoking, especially its harmfulness to the health of active and passive

¹² B. Geiger, Valentina Cuzzocrea, Corporate social responsibility and conflicts of interest in the alcohol and gambling industries: a post-political discourse? B. Geiger, Valentina Cuzzocrea Published 1 June 2017 The British journal of sociology Corpus ID: 20150040 DOI:10.1111/1468-4446.12249

¹³ All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Responsibility Group, Associate members of the APCRG

¹⁴ All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Responsibility Group

¹⁵ G. Fooks, A. Gilmore, J. Collin et al., The limits of corporate social responsibility: techniques of neutralization, stakeholder management and political CSR, *J Bus Ethics*, 2013;112(2):283-299, doi: 10.1007/s10551-012-1250-5

¹⁶ G. Fooks & A. Gilmore, Corporate Philanthropy, Political Influence, and Health Policy, *PLoS ONE*, 2013, 8(11):5, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0080864

¹⁷ P.A. McDaniel, B. Cadman, R.E. Malone, Shared vision, shared vulnerability: A content analysis of corporate social responsibility information on tobacco industry websites, *Preventative Medicine*, 2016;89(1):337-344, doi:10.1016/j.ympmed.2016.05.033

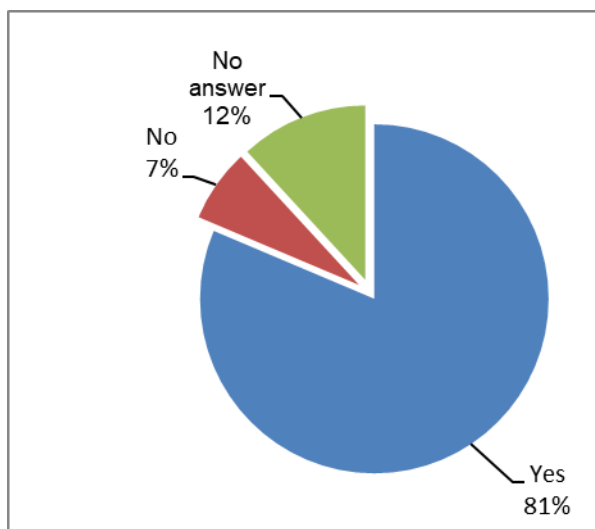
¹⁸ J. Joshua, Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Costs, In: *The Economics of Addictive Behaviours*, 2017;1(1):101-105, doi:10.1007/978-3-319-46960-7_8

smokers and to the entire ecology, smoking is still applied to cigar smokers. The collected and processed answers of all the respondents are presented tabularly and graphically in the tables and graphs that follow.

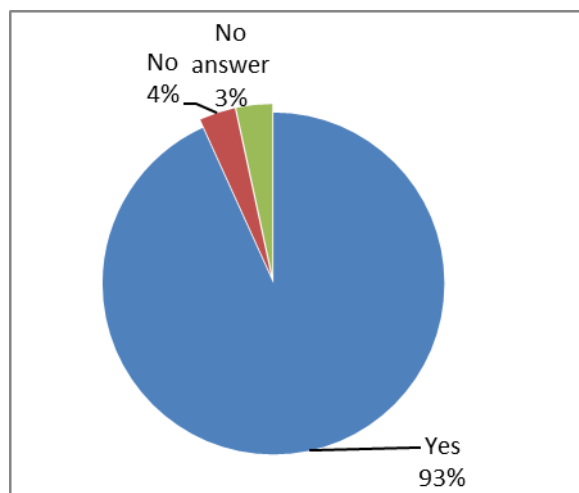
Table 1. Overview of the responses of cigarette smokers and non-smokers (men and women), to the question: Do you think that the tobacco industry, that is, the cigarette manufacturing companies, warn that cigarette smoking has a bad effect on the health of smokers?

Do you think that the tobacco industry, i.e. cigarette manufacturing companies, warn that smoking cigarettes has a bad effect on the health of smokers?	Cigarette smokers - total (men and women) in absolute values	Cigarette smokers - total (men and women) in %	Non-smokers of cigarettes- Overall (men and women) in absolute values	Non-smokers of cigarettes- total (men and women) in %
Yes	192	81%	220	93%
No (I'm not interested)	16	7%	8	3%
No answer	28	12%	8	3%
In total	236	100%	236	100%

Attached is a graphic presentation of the statements:



Graph 1. Statements of cigarette smokers - both men and women, on the question: Do



Graph 2. Statements of non-smokers of cigarettes - men and women together, on the

you think that the tobacco industry, that is, the companies that produce cigarettes, warn that smoking cigarettes has a bad effect on the health of smokers?

question: Do you think that the tobacco industry, that is, the companies that produce cigarettes, warn that smoking cigarettes has a bad effect on the health of smokers?

According to the tabular and graphic presentation on this question of the group of smoking respondents - overall (men and women) and the group of non-smoking respondents - overall (men and women), it is noted that the respondents from both groups show identical answers, according to the question.

We present the calculated values of the X^2 -test and the contingency coefficient S in comparison with the theoretical value:

$$X^2 \text{ 0.05 -test (calculated value) } = 0.07 < X^2 \text{ 00.5 -test (table value) } = 5.991$$

The contingency coefficient S is 0.18

Thus, the calculated value of the X^2 -test for this question is 0.07, which is lower than the theoretically calculated and given value of 5.991 and indicates that the answers of the two groups of respondents smokers - together (men and women) and non-smokers - together (men and women) are similar, confirming the hypothesis that tobacco companies are not only focused on making a profit, but also have a social responsibility to protect human health and the environment.

In order to obtain more specific knowledge about cigarette smoking, comparative calculations were also made, directly between the same sexes (male smokers-male non-smokers, as well as female smokers and female non-smokers) and mixed sexes (male and female smokers with male and female non-smokers) and through the question posed to all respondents: Do you know (are you aware) that cigarettes have a bad effect on the health of smokers?

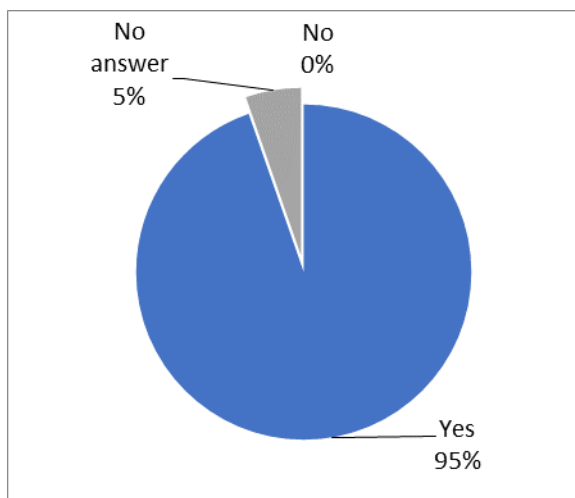
So, for smokers (male smokers and female smokers), the question was titled: Do you know (are you aware) that cigarettes have a bad effect on the health of smokers, that is, that you as a smoker can also have a bad effect on your health?

The collected and processed answers of all the respondents are shown tabular and graphically, in the following table and graphs. First of all, the comparative comparisons and calculations of the answers given by male cigarette smokers with non-male cigarette smokers, according to the stated question, are given.

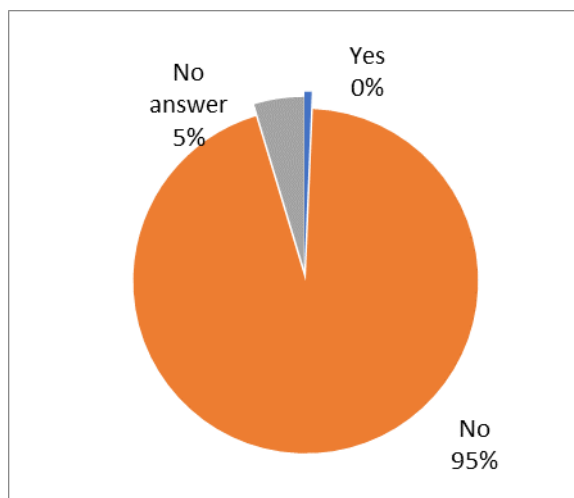
Table 2. Overview of the responses of cigarette smokers and non-smokers - men, to the question: Do you know (are you aware) that cigarettes have a bad effect on the health of smokers)?

Do you know (are you aware) that cigarettes have a bad effect on the health of smokers)?	Cigarette smokers-men in absolute values	Cigarette smokers - men in %	Non-smokers of cigarettes-men in absolute values	Non-smokers of cigarettes - men in %	In total in absolute values	In total in %
Yes	142	95%	1	1%	143	48 %
No (I'm not interested)	0	0%	142	94%	142	47%
No answer	8	5%	7	5%	15	5%
In total	150	100%	150	100%	300	100%

Attached is a graphic presentation of the statements:



Graph 3. Statements of male cigarette smokers to the question: Do you know (are you aware) that cigarettes have a bad effect on the health of smokers, that is, that you, as a smoker, can have a bad effect on your health?



Graph 4. Statements of male non-smokers regarding the question: Do you know (are you aware) that cigarettes have a bad effect on the health of smokers, that is, that you, as a smoker, can have a bad effect on your health?

According to the tabular and graphic presentation on this question of the group of smoking-male respondents and the group of non-smoking-male respondents, it is noted that the respondents from the two groups to which they belong show identically opposite answers according to the questions asked.

We present the calculated values of the X^2 -test and the contingency coefficient S in comparison with the theoretical value:

$$X^2 \text{ 0.05 -test (calculated value) } = 1.874 < X^2 \text{ 0.5 -test (table value) } = 5.991$$

The contingency coefficient C is 0.696

Thus, the calculated value of the X^2 -test for this question is 1.874, which is lower than the theoretically calculated and given value of 5.991, and indicates that the answers of the two groups of respondents, male smokers and non-smoking males, are almost diametrically similar, confirming the hypothesis that the decision to smoke or not to smoke cigarettes by smokers or non-smokers depends on their persuasiveness and desire to smoke or not to smoke, regardless of the impact of various indications about the harm of smoking on people's health.

Generally speaking, according to the statistically processed data from the empirical research and their overall summarization, it can be concluded that it is very difficult for a large part of smokers to quit smoking, while not paying attention to their health, despite the large written or painted warnings about the dangers of smoking and indications from the medical profession. This means that the smoker remains a smoker who has developed an attitude towards smoking and that is almost the same for men and women, which is confirmed by the calculations.

4. CONCLUSION

From the clearly presented approach, processing, analysis, results and discussion of this research, it can be concluded that tobacco companies, in their own way, proclaim that they apply corporate social responsibility and therefore focus on voluntary corporate action, in respect of social goals. and the protection of the ecological environment, and therefore the health of people and the healthy maintenance of the living and plant world in nature, and not only towards the realization of greater profit.

In fact, the general responsibility of the company is a self-regulating business model that helps the company to be responsible, both to the general public, to affected parties, and to itself.

Practicing corporate social responsibility, tobacco companies must be aware of the impact that the production of tobacco and tobacco products has on all aspects of society, including economic, social and environmental impact and human health.

Thus, the calculated values on the X^2 -test indicate that the answers to the two groups of respondents, smokers - together (men and women) and non-smokers - together (men and women) are similar, confirming the hypothesis that tobacco companies are not only targeting realization of profit, wealth and social responsibility for the protection of human health and the environment.

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