**ABSTRACT**

The snack market in Portugal exhibits a peculiar example of the consumption of low-calorie, economical foods in a modern, first-world country. To provide a introspective look in the workings of the Portuguese snack market, this report will paint a picture of Portuguese society, from demographic factors to economic status, and then delve into a statistical analysis regarding the snack-related corporate sector, presenting as a case study the company “Vieira de Castro & Filhos LDA”.

**INTRODUCTION**

Since the industrial revolutions, human society has experienced quasi-constant changes in all its aspects. In the span of two centuries, an individual’s lifestyle was revolutionised in such proportion that comparison between eras, on any grounds, consistently returns stark differences. With the advent of the secondary sector and the spread of scale economies, humanity suddenly found itself in uncharted territory, a first instance in which available resources outweighed the needs of the population, making survival not only achievable, but probable.   
A modernisation trend took shape in many nations worldwide, parallel to the advent of consumeristic tendencies. As markets developed, the aforementioned economies of scale favoured a high rate of production to guarantee greater returns, strategy that melded especially well in the trade of high necessity goods, addressing primary needs such as nutrition. Moreso, with innovations such as plastic packaging, sterilisation, chemical preservatives and chain production, the prospective of selling ready-made food became a smart and pursuable investment. A natural progression of the process was the birth of mass-made, high-calorie foods today known as “snacks”.  
The Oxford Dictionary of English defines a snack as “a small meal or amount of food, usually eaten in a hurry”. As a matter of fact, this good was born to address the worker’s lifestyle, one accelerating in pace to such an extent that full meals became too time-consuming to consider.   
This report is aimed at building onto this preliminary notion, elaborating on the role of snacks in Portuguese society. The field of study is outlined by the categories of fruit snacks (e.g. dried fruit, processed fruit snacks), snack bars (e.g. cereal bars, protein/energy bars, fruit and nut bars, other snack bars) and sweet biscuits (e.g. chocolate coated biscuits, cookies, filled biscuits, plain biscuits, wafers). The methods employed in handling relevant data are intended to guarantee an objective point of view, offering values and representations in function of single, quantifiable variables. Nonetheless, complications arose in the application of this impartial philosophy, namely unavailability of data and discordant figures between sources, and they were dealt with in the most optimal manner, fully disclosed in sections relative to said problematic topics.   
Following an overview of societal factors that offer context to otherwise isolated economic events, a further section pertains to exploring the operations of an economic agent in the Portuguese snack market, Vieira de Castro & Filhos LDA. Conclusions drawn are general considerations on the present structure of the market, the role of any kind of externality in the achievement of said structure, and potential future developments and directions it could follow.