

UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS, AND COMMUNICATION

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM (GIJ) CAMPUS

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH



**EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA CSR COMMUNICATION
STRATEGIES ON CUSTOMER BRAND PERCEPTION AND PATRONIZATION IN
GHANA: A STUDY OF KASAPREKO COMPANY LIMITED'S CSR CONTENT
IMPACT ON FACEBOOK**

BY

BERLINDA AMOO

(MADC23079)

**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND
COMMUNICATION, INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER'S DEGREE IN
DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION**

DECEMBER 2024

DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY STUDENT- DISSERTATION

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute.

I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Berlinda Amoo

MADC23079



16/01/2025

Student

Index Number

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

This Dissertation has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Dissertation laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication, UniMAC.

Dr. Rachel V. Brown



16/01/2025

Supervisor

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

This Dissertation is dedicated to my good self for my perseverance in my academic journey.
To my Mentor Dr. Issah Anafure for his constant support in my career and academic advancement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude goes to God Almighty for his Blessings and Grace bestowed upon me throughout my studies. To my resourceful Supervisor Dr. Rachel V. Brown, may the good Lord bless you. Also, the Management and Staff of Kasapreko Ghana Limited, God richly bless you.

ABSTRACT

Social media have become increasingly important for corporate communication over the last couple of years. Consumers nowadays use social media to get information about companies before they make a purchase decision. This makes an effective online communication strategy very important for companies. Besides the fact that consumers have moved online for information about companies, they also want more and more information about the companies they are interested in. Without certain information, consumers do not trust companies anymore. This explains why information about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) over social media platforms has become so important. Companies need to include CSR in their communication strategies if they want to be successful. Now that consumers search online for information, CSR communication has moved from the traditional media to social media as well. This study examines CSR communication on Facebook by Kasapreko Company Limited. Moreover, consumer responses to CSR communication are explored. The research is conducted with the use of quantitative content analysis. The results show that even though CSR communication has moved online, companies are still holding on to the traditional form of CSR communication as PR-messages are the most frequently used type of message for online CSR communication.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	x
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Background of the Study.....	1
1.1 Statement of problem	3
1.2 Research Objectives	4
1.3 Research Questions	5
1.4 Significance of the Study	5
1.5 Kasapreko Company Limited	5
1.6 Methodology	6
1.7 Organisation of the Study.....	7
CHAPTER TWO	9
LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.0 Introduction	9
2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility: The Corporate Perspective and the Consumer Perspective	9
2.1.1 Description of Corporate Social Responsibility	9

2.1.2 Adopting CSR Strategies: The Corporate Perspective	10
2.1.3 CSR Communication: The Corporate Perspective	12
2.1.4 CSR Motives: The Corporate Perspective.....	16
2.1.5 CSR Motives: The Consumer Perspective	18
2.1.6 Effective CSR Communication: The Consumer Perspective	19
2.2 CSR communication and social media.....	22
2.2.1 Social Media and its Influence on Marketing.....	22
2.2.2 CSR Communication Tools.....	26
CHAPTER THREE.....	32
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	32
3.0 Introduction	32
3.1 Research Design.....	32
3.2 Social Media: Facebook.....	33
3.3 Sampling Technique.....	35
3.4 Sample Size.....	35
3.5 Data Collection.....	35
3.6 Categories and Variables.....	36
CHAPTER FOUR.....	39
DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS	39
4.0 Introduction	39
4.1 CSR Communication on Facebook	39

4.1.1 Type of Message.....	39
4.1.2 CSR Topic.....	41
4.2 Consumer Interactivity for CSR Messages	41
Number of Comments per Variable	41
Societal implications	47
CHAPTER 5.....	50
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	50
5.1 Summary of Findings	50
5.2 Recommendations	52
5.3 Recommendation for Future Research.....	53
5.4 Conclusion.....	53
REFERENCES.....	55
APPENDIX.....	60

LISTS OF TABLES

Table 1: Overview of CSR Approaches to CSR communication	15
Table 4.1: Overview of Type of Message Compared to Post Related to CSR (N=406)	40
Table 4.2 Mean of Messages Related to CSR.....	42
Table 4.2: Mean of Comments per CSR Topic.....	43
Table 4.3: Mean of Comments per CSR Approach	44

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility

KCL - Kasapreko Company Limited

PR Messages - Public Relation Messages

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

The importance of social media for companies has risen dramatically over the last couple of years. If companies want to keep up with rest of the world, they need to adopt social media into their communication and media strategies. Social media can now significantly impact a firm's reputation, sales, and even survival (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). Consumers' needs have changed since the rise of Web 2.0 Facebook, as it is now the users and thus the consumers who are in control. Hence, companies need to react by making social media part of their communication strategies. Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms do not only provide new ways to communicate with customers, but they are also useful platforms for advertising and other communication strategies. As Mangold and Faulds (2019) argue: social media have become a major factor in influencing various aspects of consumer behaviour including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase behavior, and post purchase communication and evaluation. Social media have become the place for consumers to discuss and express their critical views of companies, since they consider social media a more trustworthy source than the traditional media sources.

Social media do not only have a major influence on the way companies communicate with consumers about products and services, but also on other kinds of corporate communication, as communication about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). According to Capriotti and Moreno (2017), the internet has become an essential space through which to diffuse information about corporate responsibility. CSR has been on the agendas of both companies and academics for many years. As Jahdi and Acikdili (2019) argue it is beyond argument that CSR has gained a great deal of prominence. CSR has always been a part of companies' agendas, but the public did not pay as much attention as it does now, which means that the importance

of CSR communication has risen. Consumers increasingly want more information about corporate policies and efforts to make sure that the company acts according to the norms of CSR (Jahdi & Acikdili, 2019). Moreover, CSR has become more and more important because of some recent scandals; people do not trust companies anymore without any proof of what they are doing and how they are doing it. The need for companies to communicate their CSR strategies has thus increased very fast. Consumers need to know about a company's CSR efforts in order for the company to benefit from investing in these efforts. Social media provide a new way to communicate CSR efforts, since social media offer companies the opportunity to directly interact with consumers about these efforts and strategies in a way that other media cannot (Jahdi & Acikdili, 2019). Interactivity is considered to be one of the most important characteristics of social media.

Since CSR has been an important issue on businesses' agendas for decades, a lot of academic research regarding CSR has been done already. Although social media is a much more recent phenomenon, many scientific research on the use and effects of social media has been done as well. However, much less research can be found about the use of social media by companies to communicate their CSR efforts. This is probably the case because the need for companies to use social media for CSR communication is a very recent phenomenon. As described above, the need for companies to use social media in their marketing strategies has become increasingly important since the rise of Web 2.0 (Thackeray, Neiger, Hanson, & McKenzie, 2018). The need for companies to use social media for their CSR communication is more recent. This could explain why the amount of academic literature which discusses CSR communication on social media is so limited. However, a lot of research about corporate communication on social media can be found. It is thus specifically research on CSR communication on social media which is still limited. Since there is only a limited amount of literature available which is completely focused on social media as a tool for CSR

communication the research done in this paper is very relevant and worth researching. Moreover, since CSR communication on social media becomes increasingly important for companies, it is scientifically important as well. Scientific research could provide more insight in the most effective ways to communicate CSR on social media, which could help companies to improve their CSR and social media strategies.

1.1 Statement of problem

As time goes by, the behaviour of companies changes in the manner of how they function and execute their activities. The advances in technological development are changing the way companies communicate with their stakeholders and how effective communication can become (Troise & Camilleri, 2021). Social media is a new communication channel which has created the possibility for companies to interact and pursue CSR communication with additional advantages.

The use of social media in companies has grown worldwide, both in bigger and smaller corporations in different industries. Mainly, corporations have recognized the value of these platforms as interactive and relationship building tools (Etter, 2014). Many corporations consider social media as a necessity in their communication strategies, since they can understand why stakeholders respond the way they do to different information (Drenik, 2021). CSR communication has the potential to increase stakeholder engagement, reflecting when stakeholder relations being strengthened. Even so, the scholarly focus has been on finding out why and for which reasons companies use social media for CSR communication, with little exploration into how consumers interact with social media CSR communication and the influence of this CSR communication on consumers' perception.

Notwithstanding, some previous studies indicate that a positive correlation lies between companies pursuing CSR communication and stronger stakeholder relations, where consumers have been a prime focus (Chu, Chen & Gan 2020). Cortado and Chalmeta (2016) presented

that big companies still pursue their CSR communication in a reporting form, rather than a discussing one on Facebook and Twitter, meaning that one-way communication is still being conducted instead of interactive two-way communication. When CSR communication is pursued as a one-way communication, companies lose the benefits proposed by using social media as a relationship building tool. This has been presented by both Etter (2014) studying market leading corporations' CSR communication on Twitter, and Zizka (2017) focusing on the hospitality industry on four social media platforms, wherein both authors concluded that stakeholder engagement decreases when one-way communication is pursued. It has been discussed why two-way communication is not being pursued on social media, and if it may be because opening up to CSR discussions is seen as a risk for receiving criticism and harming corporate reputation. The power asymmetry between the firm and its stakeholders on social media has been highlighted as a plausible reason as to why companies avoid open two-way communication. Nonetheless, these discussions are based from the firm's perspective and which benefits the company may gain or lose when pursuing CSR communication. A consideration of what CSR communication entails from the stakeholders' perspective and what underlying reasons lie within the actions of stakeholders, are aspects in need of development to understand CSR communication on social media from various parties' viewpoints, not only the firm's.

The role of social media for corporate communications is therefore a new and expanding thread of literature within CSR. Thus, the review of previous studies suggests that there should be a focus on the CSR communication over social media and its influence on consumer's brand perception.

1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Examine how KCL use Facebook to communicate their CSR strategies.

- ii. Ascertain customers' responses to CSR communication from KCL on Facebook.
- iii. Explore the impact of KCL CSR communication strategies on Facebook on customer brand perception and patronization.

1.3 Research Questions

- i. How does KCL use Facebook to communicate their CSR strategies?
- ii. How do consumers respond to CSR communication from KCL on Facebook?
- iv. How does KCL CSR communication strategies on Facebook impact customer brand perception and patronization?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study would undoubtedly enrich current discourse on CSR communication strategies on social media providing perspective on the issue in Ghana. It will benefit students especially those interested in CSR and community development. This study would not only enrich their knowledge but will also add to the pool of literature from which future researchers can draw. It will therefore help to extend the frontiers of knowledge on the subject matter.

Moreover, the study would be an addition to the existing works already done in this area by other researchers. Since research endeavour is an on-going process, there is no doubt that this will arouse the interest of other researchers to carry out further investigation in this area.

In practical terms, it would be relevant to government agencies such as Ghana Standard Board. It will not only guide their actions but will also help them in shaping and implementation of policies on CSR activities of companies. Beverages companies will also benefit as they will be aware of the interplay of CSR activities on social and customer patronization.

1.5 Kasapreko Company Limited

Kasapreko Company Limited (KCL) is one of the leading and successful alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverage producers in Ghana. The company first set up in 1989. It employs a total of 573 regular and contract workers. It is currently undertaking an expansion project which will increase its production capacity by almost three times to meet the growing market demand

from other African countries and beyond. The mission of KCL is to be a multinational company creating lasting value for our stakeholders by producing diversified alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages from herbal and other traditional blends using first class technology. The company is guided by governance structures that encourages organizational effectiveness and motivates staff to achieve excellence. Beyond the borders of Ghana, KCL export to the West African sub region. KCL export directly to Nigeria with plans for advanced to enter into the Eastern and Southern African markets. KCL's products are also in Europe, United States of America, Asia and the other African countries. Due to our exceptional quality standards and professionalism, UTO, Netherlands have partnered with us to bottle and sell some of their products in Ghana. KCL as a responsible corporate citizen is committed to achieving sustainable growth and development in our local communities hence, the company has been actively engaged in supporting community projects.

1.6 Methodology

To answer the research questions, a quantitative content analysis will be conducted to analyze the content of social media posts published by Kasapreko Company Limited, and examine the dimensions of CSR-related activities disclosed, the usage of communication strategies and multimedia elements, and the level of stakeholders' engagement to the post.

Thus, a quantitative content analysis will be chosen for this study to systematically analyze the CSR communication strategies of Kasapreko Company Ltd pages and the corresponding comment valence. The study will sample corporate Facebook posts of Kasapreko Company Ltd. The first step in data collection will be to identify the Facebook profiles from the company. Second, all CSR related Facebook posts of the above-mentioned company, from 2019 until 2024, and the first five comments under all posts from this time span will be collected. The CSR related posts are posts containing topics such as the company's responsibility towards society, environment, economy, employee relations, and ethics. This timeframe was chosen

because based on the study of Yang et al. (2018), little CSR information can be found on Facebook, which is why a longer time frame is beneficial.

This method was chosen because content analysis allows for “the systematic, objective and quantitative analysis of message characteristics” (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 1). Systematic, objective, and quantitative are the main characteristics of content analysis (Kassarjian, 1977). It is these characteristics which distinguish quantitative content analysis from qualitative content analysis or simply critical reading (White & Marsh, 2006; Kassarjian, 1977). This kind of research to be conducted in this study asks for an objective analysis. A qualitative analysis is much more open (White & Marsh, 2006), which is why a quantitative rather than a qualitative content analysis will be selected. Moreover, a quantitative analysis will allow for the systematic analysis of lots of data, while qualitative content analysis is less systematic, making it thus harder to process large amounts of data (White & Marsh, 2006). In order to get objective results on how companies communicate CSR on Facebook, it is necessary to look at large amounts of data, rather than a small sample. When one only analyzes a small sample, the results are harder to generalize. Large amounts of data provide the opportunity, not only to state how the selected company use Facebook to communicate CSR but to also reach a broader conclusion about companies in general.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

This study is divided into five relevant chapters of which the first chapter is this introduction. This includes the background of the study, the problem statement, research questions, objective, specific objectives, significance of the study, delimitation of the study and organization of the study. *Chapter 2* contains a literature review which provides a definition and explanation of CSR. Moreover, CSR strategies and CSR communication will be explored. Because I am also interested in consumer responses to CSR communication, two perspectives are discussed throughout this chapter: the corporate perspective and the consumer perspective.

After a thorough discussion of CSR from both perspectives, a discussion of literature on social media will be provided. The last section of *Chapter 2* provides an analysis of literature about CSR communication tools. *Chapter 3* provides an overview of my methodology. First, different reasons to choose quantitative content analysis as my method will be explained with the help of relevant literature. Secondly, the choice for social media and Facebook will be discussed. Thirdly, the data collection will be described. The last part of the chapter explains the different categories and variables which are part of my codebook. *Chapter 4* contains the results of my research, which will be analyzed. The results will be discussed thematically, but the main focus will be on the entire population of messages which were part of this research. *Chapter 5* contains the conclusion in which the answer to my research question and second question will be stated. The last part of this dissertation contains a discussion of the results. During the discussion, relevant literature will be applied to the results in order to discuss the broader theoretical issues.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, a definition and description of CSR was provided. Moreover, different principles of CSR will be discussed. A precise description of CSR and its different principles and activities is necessary to get a deeper understanding of why companies are focused on CSR communication and why this is important. The corporate perspective on CSR is separated from the consumer perspective, because companies have a different view on CSR than consumers. Both are important to take into consideration for the research of CSR communication on social media, as social media is very interactive and thus gives consumers a lot of space to express their perspective on the CSR communication of the selected companies. Both the selected companies' perspectives on CSR and consumers' perspectives on CSR are investigated in this study, which makes it necessary to address and discuss literature on both perspectives. I will start with the corporate perspective as this is the main focus of my research.

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility: The Corporate Perspective and the Consumer Perspective

2.1.1 Description of Corporate Social Responsibility

Academic literature provides many different definitions to explain CSR but includes in all definitions the same fundamental structure (Khung, Truong, & Thang, 2021). Dahlsrud (2008) emphasizes 37 different definitions of CSR and conclude in his study that CSR definitions refer to five different dimensions: The Environmental, Social, Economic, Stakeholder and Voluntariness dimension. In this study, CSR is defined as companies' commitment to contribute to the improvement of the well-being of society and the environment (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010). This commitment is part of companies' everyday business practices, but also includes other voluntary steps and actions which could be one-time initiatives. According to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the main

principles of CSR are: “accountability, transparency, ethical behaviour, respect of stakeholder interests, respect for the rule of law, respect for international norms of behaviour, and respect for human rights” (ISO 26000, 2010).

Companies are expected to communicate on social responsibility and to take voluntary action on sustainability (ISO 26000, 2010). ISO states that “When approaching and practicing social responsibility, the overarching goal for an organization is to maximize its contribution to sustainable development” (ISO 26000, 2010). In this study, CSR will be regarded as the extra steps, so the voluntary initiatives that companies take to contribute to for example social causes or the environment. This means that contributions which are obligatory, for example from government regulations, will not be considered CSR.

CSR is not just a side activity in which companies can partake; it actually influences many different aspects of an organization (Leonard & McAdam, 2013). Leonard and McAdam (2013) list the following activities as the ones on which CSR has the biggest influence: “product manufacturing and integrity, disclosure labeling and packaging, marketing and advertising, selling practices, pricing, and distribution” (p.29-30). Besides influencing the way in which certain business activities are done, CSR also provides advantages for companies engaging in CSR: “reducing and limiting litigation, protecting brand image, improving customer satisfaction, and reducing absenteeism and employee turnover and increasing the ability to retain talented employees” (Leonard & McAdam, 2013, p.30).

2.1.2 Adopting CSR Strategies: The Corporate Perspective

While most consumers used to only care about the price of products, and did not have any direct interests in companies’ actions in favour of the environment, consumers are now likely to switch to another brand if the other brand has better CSR strategies (Du et al., 2010). Companies are considered to have CSR strategies when CSR is part of their main business strategy and when this strategy is designed to satisfy and attract consumers. Especially in the

US, scandals have made consumers distrustful of corporate practices, which as a result makes them distrustful of companies in general (Leonard & McAdam, 2013). This increases the need for companies to communicate their CSR strategies and efforts, and forces companies to think of new ways to communicate with their (potential) customers. As Du et al. (2010) state “CSR occupies a prominent place on the global corporate agenda in today’s socially conscious market environment” (p.8). Companies do not necessarily take action because they have the power to make social change happen, but companies mostly invest in CSR efforts for their own benefit (Du et al., 2010).

According to Basu and Palazzo (2008), there are three main reasons and motivations for companies to engage in CSR. The first reason is “stakeholder driven” (Basu & Palazzo, 2008, p.122; Mögele & Tropp, 2010). In this case, a company reacts to the demand of an external organization as for example an NGO, so the company is not really taking any CSR action voluntarily (Basu & Palazzo, 2008). The second motivation is “performance driven” (Basu & Palazzo, 2008, p.122; Mögele & Tropp, 2010). This motivation is focused on increasing the company’s profit through CSR actions and the effect of these CSR actions on companies’ profitability. The last reason Basu and Palazzo (2008) mention is “motivation driven” (p.122). The main idea behind this motivation is to improve the company’s reputation. Lindgreen and Swaen (2017) argue that improving customer satisfaction and protecting brand image are nowadays the most important reasons for companies to engage in CSR activities, which is similar to the “motivation driven” reason which Basu and Palazzo mention (2008, p.122).

Companies can benefit from adapting CSR strategies for various reasons. (Lindgreen & Swaen, 2017; McWilliams & Siegel, 2021). Adopting CSR strategies can create a competitive advantage and improve or maintain a company’s image which will have a positive influence on its consumers and employees (Lindgreen & Swaen, 2017). Du et al. (2010) argue that “by being a good corporate citizen, a company can foster consumer loyalty and turn consumers into

company/brand ambassadors and champions who engage in advocacy behaviors” (p.9). According to Lindgreen and Swaen (2017), “companies realize that the development and implementation of CSR programs offers a ‘win-win’ scenario for the organization and its community” (p.3).

When one looks at the advantages of CSR, it seems like CSR is the ultimate way to get a competitive advantage compared to less socially responsible competitors. According to McWilliams and Siegel (2021), “the presumption is that firms that actively support CSR are more reliable and, therefore, their products are of higher quality” (p.119). However, one can ask the question if companies in certain branches which are engaging in CSR still get this competitive advantage now that CSR has become such an important issue on the agenda of most companies. Now that so many companies have adopted CSR strategies, it will become much harder for companies to differentiate themselves from other companies. Their products will no longer be seen as of higher quality, since their competitors engage in CSR as well, and thus offer products of similar quality. This makes this point of view somewhat outdated. Moreover, the difficulty for companies to differentiate themselves from each other through CSR is important to take into consideration when one is studying how companies use social media for CSR communication, as this could help explain both similarities and differences between the types of CSR communication.

2.1.3 CSR Communication: The Corporate Perspective

The content of CSR messages “can pertain largely to a social cause itself or to a company’s specific involvement in a social cause” (Du et al., 2010, p.10). Moreover, consumers will consider CSR messages about a social issue and not about the company or its products suspicious, because there seems to be no advantage for the company itself (Du et al., 2010). However, involvement in a social cause is only one type of CSR. The focus of the research which was conducted in this paper, is on companies’ CSR efforts which contribute to

sustainability. Since the involvement in a social cause can be part of this and this is the type of CSR which consumers are the most critical about, it is important to consider this type of CSR communication separately. As already discussed above, consumers are very critical of companies' motives to engage in CSR, which makes it very important that companies' CSR communication contains information which is considered trustworthy by consumers. According to Du et al. (2010), "CSR communication typically focuses on a company's *involvement* in various social causes, rather than on the social causes themselves" (p. 10). This shows that companies' CSR strategies are mainly designed to benefit the company and not necessarily to cause social change (Du et al., 2010). If their CSR strategies would not be mainly about benefitting the company, the focus of CSR communication would not be as much on the involvement in a social cause, but more about the social cause itself.

Previous research shows that the focus of online CSR communication "was primarily on environmental protection (83%), followed by donations/foundations (40%), by health and safety (19%) as well as by sponsoring, quality control and behavioural codices (18% respectively)" (Mögele & Tropp, 2010, p. 166). Moreover, Mögele and Tropp (2010) found out that the CSR efforts which companies communicated were correlated to the type of organization. The fact that environmental protection is by far the biggest focus in CSR communication can be explained by the fact that many companies are in some way involved with the environment. Even for companies whose products have a very limited influence on the environment, it is quite easy to argue why they are involved with an environmental non-profit organization and what the benefits are for them. Moreover, environmental protection has become one of the most important CSR issues for many consumers.

Du et al. (2010) argue that companies can focus on multiple factors in their CSR communication. The first factor that they mention is "CSR commitment" (Du et al., 2010, p.11). CSR commitment includes communication about a company's commitment to a social

cause (Du et al., 2010). The second factor is “CSR action” which is described as “the societal impact or actual benefits for the target audience of a social cause” (Du et al., 2010, p.11). The third factor is “CSR motives” (Du et al., 2010, p.12). In this kind of CSR communication, companies acknowledge that their CSR motives are beneficial for the social cause, but also for themselves (Du et al., 2010). In this way, stakeholders’ and consumers’ will be less skeptic of the company’s motives (Du et al., 2010). The last important factor which is mentioned is “CSR fit” (Du et al., 2010, p.12). This is the connection between the company and the social cause which the company sponsors; there should be a ‘fit’ between these two in order to convince stakeholders and consumers of both internal and external motives to be involved with this cause (Du et al., 2010). If there is no real connection between a company and the social cause it sponsors, there will likely be more negative reactions from stakeholders (Du et al., 2010). This makes companies very careful about what message they are conveying about their CSR strategies in their CSR communication and advertisements (Mögele & Tropp, 2010).

Besides the issues discussed above, the imagery which is used in CSR communication is very important. As Pomeroy, Johnson, and Noble (2013) argue: “Imagery showing the problem once solved, or neutral imagery, might act to omit the nature of the problem the firm confronted and/or even ‘undersell’ the impacts of firm’s efforts” (p.9). Not only the message itself, but also the imagery which is used is thus highly significant. Designing effective CSR communication which is trusted by its target audience is thus quite hard, as there are many requirements to meet in order to be able to convince the skeptical audience of the message.

Mögele and Tropp (2010) make a similar argument to Du et al. (2010) about the requirements of CSR communication. They argue that “companies’ CSR commitment is or has to be by definition not merely of a philanthropic nature but always also of a commercial business-related nature” (Mögele & Tropp, 2010, p.164). According to Mögele and Tropp (2010), this is the case because “taking responsibility for society (..) is intended to contribute to targeted corporate

image building (corporate identity-enhancing) and thus to the achievement of business goals” (p.164). Therefore, CSR communication should contain a clear balance between the philanthropic aspects of a CSR effort and the benefits the company gets from engaging in the particular CSR effort. According to Mögele and Tropp (2010), it should be avoided that the message is conveyed that a company is engaging in CSR purely for its own business interests. The same is the case for the idea that a company is only taking CSR efforts because it is pressured by society or its stakeholders (Mögele & Tropp, 2010).

Companies should choose an approach to their CSR strategies which is believable and fits in with their identity if they want their CSR communication to be successful. Jahdi and Acikdilli (2009) list ten marketing approaches for CSR communication:

Table 1: Overview of CSR Approaches to CSR communication

<i>Approach</i>	<i>How it was carried out</i>
Posthumous	CSR applied for damage-limitation purposes
Pantomime	Superficial; play-acting dressed up as CSR
Piecemeal	Token gestures at application of CSR
Public relations	Communicating CSR intentions to stakeholders
Parsimonious	Frugal application of CSR
Parrot fashion	Following competition or market leader
Profit driven	CSR application for economic gains only
Proactive	Anticipation of need for and possible benefits of CSR
Partnership	Co-operation with customer and/or other firms
Philanthropic	Attention to welfare of fellow humans in the shape of CSR

Source: Adapted from Jahdi & Acikdilli (2009). Marketing Communications and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Marriage of Convenience or Shotgun Wedding? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 88(1), 105.

As already mentioned above, Mögele and Tropp (2010) argue that CSR communication should contain and communicate a clear balance between the philanthropic aspect of CSR and the benefits for the company to engage in that particular effort. They would thus likely argue that a mixture between the ‘profit driven’ and the ‘philanthropic approach’ works best for CSR communication. These marketing approaches are similar to what Du et al. (2010) call CSR motives. Of these ten different approaches, consumers are likely to only perceive the last three approaches as ‘intrinsic motives’ (Du et al., 2010). The other approaches are likely to be perceived as ‘extrinsic motives’ (Dut at al., 2010) which would thus make consumers believe that a company is only engaging in CSR for its own benefits. However, a profit driven approach should be part of CSR communication; if this is not the case, consumers will not trust the CSR information (Mögele & Tropp, 2010) which means that the CSR communication will not succeed.

2.1.4 CSR Motives: The Corporate Perspective

According to Basu and Palazzo (2008) there are “three dimensions which guide CSR-related activities” (p.122): cognitive, linguistics, and conative (Basu & Palazzo, 2008, p.124). They argue that “activities such as CSR are seen as resulting not directly from external demands but, instead, from organizationally embedded cognitive and linguistic processes” (Basu & Palazzo, 2008, p.123). These authors thus have a different view than the authors already discussed, as they believe that the choice to engage in CSR is intrinsic and thus comes from within the company instead of extrinsic forces (Basu & Palazzo, 2008) which the other authors also consider a very important motive for companies to engage in CSR (Du et al., 2010; Mögele & Tropp, 2010; Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009; Pomeroy et al., 2013). However, while these different views on the choice to engage in CSR were taken into account when I was considering how consumers perceive CSR communication, I differentiated between intrinsic and extrinsic

motives based on the theory by Du et al. (2010), which thus means that most motives were considered to come from extrinsic forces.

Basu and Palazzo might have a different view because they take a different approach to CSR; they are not interested in the content of CSR activities, but in companies' sense-making processes which makes them engage in CSR (Basu & Palazzo, 2008). The cognitive dimension is described as: "the organization's relationships with its stakeholders and views about the broader world (i.e., the "common good" that goes beyond what's good for business), as well as the rationale for engaging in specific activities that might have an impact on key relationships" (Basu & Palazzo, 2008, p.124). Linguistics is considered the explanation of why companies engage in specific activities (Basu & Palazzo, 2008). Jahdi and Acikdilli (2009) mention this dimension as the "justification and transparency" (p.110). The last dimension is the way a company behaves, which is the result of the cognitive dimension (Basu & Palazzo, 2008). All three dimensions are important for the success of CSR communication (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009), which makes it useful to take them into consideration when one is researching CSR communication. These dimensions should be part of or at least underlying CSR communication if a company wants its CSR communication to be successful.

Holbrook argues that "advertising and written communications are generally considered a mirror that represents or reflects the surrounding world" (as cited in Farache & Perks, 2018, p. 244). Holbrook's argument leads Farache and Perks (2018) to conclude that since "CSR advertising reflects CSR," the criticism which CSR advertising receives is also valid for CSR itself (p.244). Farache and Perks (2018) appear to be much more critical of CSR and CSR communication than for example Du et al. (2010) as they argue that CSR communication reflects "the self-serving nature of CSR" (Farache & Perks, 2018, p.244). Companies can select what aspects of their CSR efforts they want to communicate which could make them appear much more responsible and concerned with CSR than they really are, while ignoring their less

responsible actions (Farache & Perks, 2018). However, this is the case for any type of advertisement or form of corporate communication. Companies will always highlight their positive actions and good deeds, while they will try to keep less positive actions or happenings out of the spotlight. This is thus nothing special or specific to CSR communication.

2.1.5 CSR Motives: The Consumer Perspective

While adopting CSR strategies, as described above, can provide companies with many advantages, it is hard for companies to really get these advantages as stakeholders and consumers are often very skeptical about companies' communication about their CSR efforts (Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2010). This is quite contradictory, as on the one hand, consumers demand information about CSR because otherwise they do not trust a company to use fair practices, while on the other hand they are very skeptical about CSR communication (Du et al., 2010). Companies which put too much attention on and spend too much time promoting their CSR efforts are generally distrusted (Du et al., 2010). Companies should thus find some sort of balance in their CSR communication.

As already briefly discussed above, Du et al. (2010) state that consumers have two different views of companies' reasons to engage in CSR. The first view is "extrinsic" (Du et al., 2010). From this point of view, companies only engage in CSR for their own benefits and profits (Du et al., 2010). The second view is that companies engage in CSR from an "intrinsic" motive (Du et al., 2010). From an intrinsic motive, consumers see a company "as acting out of a genuine concern for the focal issue" (Du et al., 2010, p.9). They believe that a company has intrinsic motives to engage in CSR positively influences a company's image and its consumers' loyalty, while they believe that a company's motives are extrinsic can negatively influence a company's image and the behavior of its consumers (Du et al., 2010).

The way consumers perceive companies' motives will be very dependent on companies' CSR communication and the medium which is used to communicate their CSR efforts, which will

be discussed in more detail below. Since private consumers are the main target of many companies, CSR communication is especially important, because the success of a CSR effort is not only dependent on the effort itself, but also on the way consumers perceive the effort and the motives behind it. Companies would not want their consumers to perceive an effort as useless, as this will provide much less benefits for the company. This had made CSR become a major topic in companies' advertising (Mögele & Tropp, 2010). Convincing consumers of the result and necessity of a CSR effort is thus key in CSR communication. Du et al. (2010) mention reducing stakeholder skepticism as one of "the key challenges" of CSR communication (p. 9). They, however, also argue that consumers have come to accept a "win-win situation" (Du et al., 2010, p.10), "believing that CSR initiatives can and should serve both the needs of society and the bottom lines of business" (Du et al., 2010, p.10). Pomeroy, Johnson and Noble (2013) argue that "as responses to firms' CSR initiatives are information-dependent, the quality of CSR communication is critical" (p.2).

2.1.6 Effective CSR Communication: The Consumer Perspective

While one might expect consumers to be very interested in the ways in which CSR efforts are carried out and not just in the outcome of these efforts, Du et al (2010) argue that "a company can focus on the output side of its CSR endeavor" (p.12). Just communicating the impact which a certain CSR effort has on society instead of communicating the undertaking of that particular CSR effort is seen as "an effective communication strategy" (Du et al., 2010, p.12), since, as Sen et al. argue "CSR communication should be factual and avoid the impression of 'bragging'" (2009, as cited in Du et al., 2010, p.12). Consumers are thus not that interested in how CSR efforts are executed; they care much more about the results. The social impact of a CSR effort is seen as a parameter for companies' underlying CSR motives, and whether these motives are intrinsic or extrinsic (Du et al., 2010). The fact that consumers are mainly interested

in the results of companies' CSR efforts is remarkable, since the way in which a certain result or impact on society is reached can also tell a lot about the company.

The effectiveness of CSR communication is dependent and influenced by several different aspects. According to Pomeroy et al. (2013), the main aspects which influence the success of CSR campaigns are: "cognitive associations with other aspects of the firm's identity; extraneous variables, such as the prevailing attitude to large corporations; individuals' involvement with the firm's CSR domain; and general skepticism towards advertising" (p.4). From the different forms of corporate communication, advertising is the most distrusted by consumers (Pomeroy et al., 2013; Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009). Advertisements about companies' environmental actions are especially distrusted, which leads "to accusations of firms' greenwashing" (Pomeroy et al., 2013, p.4). Moreover, Pomeroy et al. (2013) state that "overly positive claims, which CSR claims inevitably are, face the problem of the 'self-promoter's paradox'" (p.4). According to the 'self-promoter's paradox,' promotion of actions like CSR efforts will actually make consumers doubt the action's legitimacy instead of making them believe that a company is taking positive and legitimate actions (Pomeroy et al., 2013). This makes the content of CSR communication so important for the effectiveness of CSR communication.

In cause-related marketing campaigns "the dominant use of vague quantifiers creates confusion over the firm's actual donation performance, which is likely to hinder persuasion effects" (Pracejus et al., 2003/2004 in Pomeroy et al., 2013, p.4). The quantifiers in CSR communication should thus be as clear as possible in order to be effective. Moreover, like Du et al. (2010) and Mögele & Tropp (2010), Pracejus et al. found that there should be certain shared interests or a certain logical relationship between the social cause that a company is supporting and its core business, as a company's "CSR program might be evaluated by both the magnitude of its achievements in particular social domains and the length of its history of

engaging with a domain” (2003/2004, as cited in Pomeroy et al., 2013, p.4). Logically, a short history means a lot of skepticism, while a long history means less skepticism (Pomeroy et al., 2013). This makes one expect that CSR communication from energy companies about sustainability will not attract a lot of skepticism from consumers, as this is a domain in which energy companies have a long history.

Besides the relationship between a company and the social domain for which it is taking CSR efforts, the way in which the outcome of a CSR effort is described in the CSR communication is very important and determines its effectiveness (Pomeroy et al., 2013). Wood differentiates between “the outcome expressed as a policy, the program for putting the policy into operation, or the quantifiable impacts of its policy and programs” (1991, as cited in Pomeroy et al., 2013, p.4). Consumers want to know the outcome of a CSR effort as the outcome is the only thing which can easily be checked and observed (Pomeroy et al., 2013). Motivations and the processes behind a certain CSR effort are much harder to check or observe, which makes them less interesting to the general public (Pomeroy et al., 2013). Moreover, Pomeroy et al. (2013) found that “average scores were higher for the condition in which relatively specific CSR commitment information followed relatively specific social topic” (p.8). They thus found out that the information about the CSR effort and the information about the social cause for which the CSR effort is taken is closely connected in the most successful CSR communication.

Some research has shown that CSR-communication does not always have a positive effect on the success of a company, while other research has proved that it actually can have a very positive effect and win consumers trust (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009). Jahdi and Acikdilli (2009) state that “organizations that highlight their CSR credentials come under increased scrutiny lest they err, while those not doing so are less under the spotlight” (p.105). When companies decide to make their CSR strategies part of their marketing and communication strategies, they thus take a certain risk. This is what Pomeroy et al. (2013) call ‘the self-promoter’s paradox’ (p.4).

Companies engaging in CSR are likely to get more public attention (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009), which on the one hand could work in a company's favor, but on the other hand could work against the company. This is very dependent on how the CSR communication is perceived by consumers, and thus on the way CSR-communication is designed. Pomeroy et al. (2013) argue that "Some firms may be expecting too much of their CSR communications, especially if such positive, pro-social claims out of character with stakeholder perceptions of the firm's identity" (p.10). As already discussed above, there are certain criteria which should be applicable to CSR communication in order to make consumers trust and believe in a CSR effort and the company which is taking the effort. If the CSR effort does not 'fit' with the image the public has of a company, CSR communication will not be successful (Pomeroy et al., 2013). Besides the design of CSR communication, the medium on which CSR is communicated is also very important for its success. There are different tools to communicate CSR. This will be explored in more detail in the next sections of this chapter. Since my research focuses on Facebook, the main focus will be on social media as a CSR communication tool.

2.2 CSR communication and social media

Since CSR communication on social media is the focus of my research, it is important to explore social media and its specific characteristics. First social media as a marketing tool will be explored, after which the focus will shift to CSR communication tools. Since not much research can be found which focuses specifically on CSR communication on social media, more general corporate communication through social media will be discussed. This is relevant for my study because it shows the effect that social media has on corporate communication which is similar for different types of corporate communication.

2.2.1 Social Media and its Influence on Marketing

Corporate marketing and communication have changed dramatically over the last couple of years (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009). As Mangold and Faulds (2019) put it: "the tools and strategies

for communicating with customers have changed significantly with the emergence of the phenomenon known as social media” (p.357). Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre (2017) describe social media technologies as “highly interactive platforms via which individuals and communities share, cocreate, discuss, and modify user-generated content” (p.241). Mangold and Faulds (2019) describe social media as “a wide range of online, word-of-mouth forums including blogs, company sponsored discussion boards and chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer e-mail, consumer product or service ratings websites and forums, Internet discussion boards and forums, moblogs (sites containing digital audio, images, movies, or photographs), and social networking websites” (p.358). Consumers have lost interest in advertisements on traditional media; they now use social media to gather information about companies and their products (Mangold & Faulds, 2019). While social media are often seen as networking platforms, the term thus includes much more than just those types of websites. However, since the focus of this research is just on social media and not on any other networking platforms, only social media will be considered from here on.

The rise of social media has given consumers more power than they have ever had before, as consumers now have taken over the power from marketing and public relations experts (Kietzmann et al., 2017). As Kietzmann et al. (2017) put it: “customers no longer want to be talked at; instead, customers want firms to listen, appropriately engage, and respond” (p.250). Companies have lost control over communication about their brand, as consumers can now create, share, and read or watch information about brands on which companies have no influence (Kietzmann et al., 2017). Now that consumers cannot only interact with the company, but also with each other, companies only have very limited control “over the content and dissemination of information” (Mangold & Faulds, 2009, p.359). Companies have to decide whether they want to participate in social media or simply ignore its existence (Kietzman et al., 2011). Social media have thus forced companies to rethink and reinvent their marketing

and communication strategies, not only for their products, but also for their CSR communication.

Like Du et al. (2010) and Jahdi & Acikdili (2009), Thackeray et al. (2018) mention the opportunity to interact directly with consumers as one of the main reasons for social media's power as a marketing tool. Mickle argues that social media is an important "communication tool to develop brand awareness, image and association" (as cited in Wallace, Wilson, & Miloch, 2019, p.428). It is therefore very important for brand-building and should thus be part of companies' communication strategies (Wallace et al., 2019). Corporate communication on social media has to be different from communication on other media platforms, as the opportunity to interact with consumers provides new ways to build customer relations which makes social media very useful as a marketing tool (Wallace et al., 2019). Another reason for social media's usefulness as a marketing tool is the possibility of "viral marketing" (Thackeray et al., 2018, p.340). Viral marketing means that a marketing message goes 'viral;' it is shared very often and many people have heard of it because of this.

While companies are still in control of the CSR messages they publish on social media, they do not have much control over what happens after they have published the information. Consumers can react freely and write whatever they want, especially when they repost messages. If they react directly on the company's Facebook page, the company at least has the opportunity to defend itself. However, if the message is republished elsewhere, this becomes much harder. As already briefly described above, companies need to offer their own corporate social media page(s) if they want to successfully use social media (Mangold & Faulds, 2019). By offering their own social media pages, companies "can shape discussions in a manner that is consistent with the organization's mission and performance goals" (Mangold & Faulds, 2019, p. 361). Companies thus want their consumers to use the company's own social media pages to interact with each other, since they still have some form of control on these platforms

(Mangold & Faulds, 2019). If consumers use external social media pages or other networking websites or platforms, companies have much less control as they cannot steer a discussion or comments into a certain direction, nor can they intervene. This is not completely true however, as the company could make a user account on the external website as well. However, companies are often not allowed to have an account on these kinds of websites as consumers should have the opportunity to interact with each other freely, without any intervention from companies. A company could use a shadow account, but an extremely positive user would not that easily be trusted by other users. The easiest way for companies to have some form of control is thus to attract consumers to discuss a company on its own networking platforms. Companies thus need to offer their own social media pages, if they do not want consumers to go discuss their company elsewhere on the Internet.

The change in the way consumers perceive and react to corporate communication could partly explain the skepticism about CSR communication which was discussed in the previous section on CSR communication; consumers now have the opportunity to directly express their criticism and skepticism to not only the company, but also to each other. Mainstream media do not offer this opportunity, so there is less space for comments and skepticism. Since social media makes it so easy to reach so many other consumers (Mangold & Faulds, 2019), skepticism will be very easily widespread as well. However, on the other hand, this is contradictory to the fact that consumers trust information on social media more since it is less controlled by the company itself (Du et al., 2010). As Foux puts it: “social media is perceived by consumers as a more trustworthy source of information regarding products and services than corporate-sponsored communications transmitted via the traditional elements of the promotion mix” (2006, as cited in Mangold & Faulds, 2019, p.360). This leads to the expectation that consumers will express less skepticism about content which is published on social media.

2.2.2 CSR Communication Tools

Companies use different channels for their CSR communication. They make use of mainstream media channels, like radio, television, and newspapers, but also of less controlled forms of media as for example blogs or forums used by consumers (Du et al., 2010). While companies used to release reports about their CSR strategies once in a while, most companies have now gone mainstream with their CSR communication and constantly communicate their CSR strategies to the general public (Du et al., 2010). Consumers consider CSR communication which is not completely controlled by the company more trustworthy (Du et al., 2010). This makes social media a very useful platform for CSR communication. The company is still in control of what is communicated, but consumers have the freedom to react and interact with each other and the company about what is posted. Moreover, social media engage consumers much more than other media because it offers the opportunity for interaction, which can help companies to get their customers engaged in their CSR efforts (Du et al., 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2019).

In her book *The New Rules of Green Marketing: Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding*, Ottman (2011) lists “20 new rules for green marketing” (p.18). These rules offer multiple reasons for companies to go public with their CSR communication. Ottman argues that consumers nowadays want to know everything about companies’ practices: “Today’s brands become trusted by practicing “radical transparency,” disclosing the good – and the bad” (p.20). Like the authors discussed above, she mentions social media and websites in general as the most useful way to communicate with consumers: Rule 13, “The brands consumers buy and trust today educate and engage them in meaningful conversation through a variety of media, especially via websites and online social networks. Talking “at” consumers through traditional media and paid advertising can’t build loyalty among empowered consumers in a connected world (Ottman, 2018, p.21). Like Kietzmann et al. (2017), Ottman

argues that consumers no longer “want to be talked at” (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.250); they want to participate in the conversation. Companies need to offer this opportunity for interaction in order to gain a group of loyal customers (Ottman, 2017) and if they want to survive (Kietzmann et al., 2017). This change in consumers’ attitudes makes it necessary for companies to make social media part of their communication strategies and to move away from the use of mainstream media for their CSR communication.

Jahdi and Acikdili (2009) make a similar argument to the argument discussed above which Du et al. (2010) make about the use of mainstream media as a marketing tool for CSR communication. However, they seem slightly more convinced that mainstream media can in fact convey CSR messages. They state that “any and every marketing communications tool is capable of conveying a company's CSR messages and contributing to its corporate image and brand equity” (Jahdi & Acikdili, 2009, p.106). However, like Du et al. (2010) they argue that some media are more useful than others, since the reaction to “marketing communication tools” (p.106) from consumers and other businesses is often not very positive as they do not consider messages from these tools trustworthy (Jahdi & Acikdili, 2009). Jahdi and Acikdili (2009) do not address social media specifically, but they mention the Internet as the most useful tool for CSR communication, since it offers the opportunity to interact and get into conversation with customers. Since interaction is one of the key characteristics of social media, this would make social media an especially useful marketing tool for CSR communication. The interactivity between the corporation and consumers is part of the research conducted in this study, because this characteristic of social media makes it the most useful tool for CSR communication.

According to Capriotti and Moreno (2017), “corporate responsibility is one of the most prominent themes in the field of public relations” (p.85). Like the other authors discussed above, Capriotti and Moreno (2017) state interactivity as one of the most important features of the Internet. This possibility to directly communicate with consumers is very relevant for public

relations (Capriotti & Moreno, 2017). Their research focuses on corporate websites. They reach the conclusion that CSR communication is extremely important for the majority of companies, as they all spend a major and prominent part of their website on CSR communication (Capriotti & Moreno, 2017).

The companies which were part of Capriotti and Moreno's (2017) research all had "very low interactivity levels in connection with issues related to CSR" (p.89). This could be explained by the fact that corporate websites do not offer the same kind of interactivity which social media offer. Social media users can immediately react without having to register on a website, as they are already registered on the social media platform they are on. Another explanation could be that consumers did not consider the CSR information on the websites to be trustworthy. Corporate websites are a marketing tool which is completely controlled by the company itself, which often makes consumers suspicious of the information that is provided (Du et al., 2010). Together with the rather limited opportunity for interaction compared to social media, this could explain why the interaction between the companies and consumers was so limited. The outcome would likely have been different if Capriotti and Moreno (2017) had researched companies' social media pages.

It is important for companies to choose the right medium for their corporate communication (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). This choice depends "on the target group to be reached and the message to be communicated" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020, p.65). Each type of social media attracts a certain type of consumer (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). A study from DEI Worldwide (2008) has shown that

70% of consumers have visited social media sites to get information; 49% of these consumers have made a purchase decision based on the information they found through the social media sites; 60% said they

were likely to use social media sites to pass along information to others online; and 45% of those who searched for information via social media sites engaged in word-of-mouth (DEI Worldwide 2008, as cited in Kim & Ko, 2022, p.1481).

If companies do not participate in social media, they will not reach as many consumers as they could reach and they thus miss an important opportunity to attract consumers (Kim & Ko, 2022). The fact that social media has become such an important tool for consumers to gain information before they choose a certain company or before they buy a product could help explain why social media are such a useful tool for CSR communication. If consumers turn to social media for information about a company before they make a purchasing decision, it is very important that the social media page has information on CSR, as consumers nowadays demand CSR information and do not trust companies who do not provide any CSR communication (Du et al., 2010).

According to Winer (2019), there are four main factors which have caused companies to move from traditional media to social media. One of these factors is particularly applicable to CSR communication: “marketers today are talking of creating “experiences” for their customers in an attempt to differentiate their products and services from competitors” (Winer, 2019, p.108). Since traditional media only offer one-way communication, this is hard to achieve, which causes companies to search for other ways to interact with consumers (Winer, 2019). Moreover, companies want consumers to interact more with them and about them, since interaction makes consumers more engaged with the company which increases the chance that they become loyal customers (Winer, 2019). Since consumers are often skeptical of CSR communication (Du et al., 2010) interaction is likely to help in convincing consumers of a company’s goodwill and commitment to a CSR effort. It is this interactivity which makes social media so relevant for the research which is conducted in this paper, as this influences the type

of CSR communication that companies publish. If consumers can directly respond to CSR communication, companies are likely to adjust their messages with this fact in mind.

Companies used to have five types of advertising and marketing in their communication mix: “advertising, (TV, print, radio, outdoor), sales promotion, direct marketing, publicity/public relations, and personal selling” (Winer, 2019, p.109). All these communication forms only offer one-way communication: “from the company through the media to consumers” (Winer, 2019, p.109). This has changed with the up rise of social media which has interactivity as one of its main characteristics (Winer, 2019). This in turn has changed the communication model; corporate communication no longer goes one-way but has moved to two-way communication, as “consumers are now interacting with the company, the media, and, importantly, each other” (Winer, 2019, p.109). According to Xiang and Gretzel (2016), “The contents generated by these social media include a variety of new and emerging sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated, and used by consumers with the intent of educating each other about products, brands, services and issues” (p.180). If consumers use social media for these purposes, it is crucial for companies to include CSR communication, since companies’ CSR strategies play such an important role in consumers’ decisions to choose a certain company or product or to go for its competitor (Du et al., 2018).

McCorkindale’s (2018) research of 55 Facebook pages of the Fortune 50 companies shows that the rise of social media does not necessarily mean that companies have adopted social media for their CSR communication, as only 21.8 percent of the companies’ Facebook pages which he researched contained some form of CSR communication. However, it should be kept in mind that this research was carried out in 2010 when the use of social media was rising, but not as far up as it is now. Moreover, Pan and Xu (2019) researched 500 Fortune US-based companies and found out that most of the companies “valued social responsibility online not only in terms of social and environmental issues, but also overall contributions to society” (as

cited in McCorkindale, 2018, section Corporate Social Responsibility, para. 3), which shows that companies recognize the importance of communicating CSR online. However, it remains unclear how companies use social media for CSR communication and how they interact with consumers, as there is a lack of literature which focuses on this specifically. This can be explained by the fact that corporate use of social media is still quite a recent phenomenon.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter contains a clarification and description of the method I choose for my research. Moreover, my sampling method will be explained, as well as the choices that I made for my codebook.

3.1 Research Design

A quantitative content analysis will be carried out. This method will be chosen because content analysis allows for the systematic, objective and quantitative analysis of message characteristics (Neuendorf, 2012). Systematic, objective, and quantitative are the main characteristics of content analysis (Kassarjian, 2007). It is these characteristics which distinguish quantitative content analysis from qualitative content analysis or simply critical reading (White & Marsh, 2006; Kassarjian, 2007). The kind of research as being conducted in this study asks for an objective analysis. An inductive analysis could answer the research questions, but it would make the results less reliable and less useful for future research, as the outcomes would only apply to the communication of these particular companies. A qualitative analysis is much more open (White & Marsh, 2006), which is why a quantitative rather than a qualitative content analysis will be selected. Moreover, a quantitative analysis allows for the systematic analysis of lots of data, while qualitative content analysis is less systematic, making it thus harder to process large amounts of data (White & Marsh, 2006). In order to get objective results on how companies communicate CSR on Facebook, it is necessary to look at large amounts of data, rather than a small sample. When one only analyzes a small sample, the results are harder to generalize. Large amounts of data provide the opportunity, not only to state how the selected companies use Facebook to communicate CSR but to also reach a broader conclusion.

When one wants to process large amount of data in an objective and systematic way, it is extremely important that the categories of analysis be defined so precisely that different analysts may apply them to the same body of content and secure the same results (Kassarjian, 2007). Therefore, each step in the research process must be carried out on the basis of explicitly formulated rules and procedures (Kassarjian, 2007). The researcher's subjective influence should be eliminated as much as possible. In short, the rules should be so clear that every researcher who carries out the research should come to the same results and conclusions. This is the ultimate test for objectivity.

Similar research to this one under study, shows that quantitative content analysis is the best method for my study. McCorkindale (2010) carried out a study in which he analyzed how corporations are using Facebook, what information the company posted on its sites, how it engaged with its publics, and whether it integrated social responsibility activities on its pages. He used quantitative content analysis for his analysis of the selected companies' Facebook pages. McCorkindale (2010) coded CSR as the presence of community-based or volunteer activities outside the scope of the corporation itself.

3.2 Social Media: Facebook

As already explained in the introduction, this research focuses on CSR communication on the Facebook pages. The choice for social media was made because it is still quite a recent phenomenon that companies use social media to actively communicate with their customers, and to communicate their strategies. Moreover, social media use by companies becomes increasingly important, even so that companies are forced to change their communication strategies (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Because of this change in corporate communication strategies, it is highly likely that the amount of CSR communication on social media by the selected companies has increased over the last couple of years and will keep increasing. This change in corporate communication and the increased attention for CSR makes one expect to

find significant amounts of CSR communication on the selected companies' social media pages. Moreover, two of the three companies declare sustainability as their main strategy, which makes it even more likely that they would use social media to communicate CSR. Altogether, this justifies why the choice for social media was made. Facebook was chosen over Twitter, because the number of followers on Twitter is for all companies significantly lower than the amount of people who like the companies' pages on Facebook. Moreover, Facebook allows for more direct interaction and conversation than Twitter, and it provides more room to post comments on companies' pages as it does not have the limit of 140 signs. This gives companies more room to communicate their message. Altogether, this makes Facebook more useful to research how companies communicate their CSR strategies.

A time period of ten months will be selected for this research. The choice was made to select the last ten months before the research was carried out, because I am interested in recent CSR communication. This means that Facebook posts from 2019 to 2024 were selected. All messages from the selected companies in the time period were selected, because I am also interested in how many messages of the population from this time period do contain CSR communication. The choice was thus made to select the entire population for this time period instead of sampling and to include messages which do not contain any CSR communication. Moreover, posts which exist of images are included as well, since they all include text and can thus be treated similarly to textual posts.

Besides the posts from the selected company, the comments from consumers will be included in my research. The choice was made to draw a selective sample, because of the massive number of comments during the selected time period. During the data collection, it will establish that many comments only exist of a closed answer to a closed question asked by the company. For example, consumers are asked a multiple-choice question and they have to choose A, B, C, or D or they have to guess the answer to an open question. Since I do not

consider these answers to be comments to the CSR message of the company and these answers do not contain any openings for interaction about the CSR post, these types of answers were excluded from my research. After these comments were excluded, for the company the first 100 comments to posts which contained CSR communication will be selected for my analysis. This means that a total of 100 comments will be coded. The first hundred comments will be selected, because I am also interested in interactivity. A random sample would not provide as much insight into interactivity between consumers and the selected companies, because there would only be a very small chance that both the consumer's comment and the company's response would be part of the sample which makes it very hard to measure interactivity.

3.3 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used for this study was the purposive sampling technique. This technique allowed the utilization of all CSR-related Facebook posts made by Kasapreko Company Limited (KCL) between 2019 to 2024. For each CSR-related Facebook post made by Kasapreko, the first 100 comments were selected and analyzed to focus on consumer interactions.

3.4 Sample Size

The sample size was made up of all CSR-related Facebook posts by Kasapreko during the study period (2019 to 2024), with specific selection of first 100 consumer comments per post; this provided a manageable but quite a representative sample dataset for analysis.

3.5 Data Collection

The data was collected with the use of Netvizz. Netvizz can be described as “a data collection and extraction application that allows researchers to export data in standard file formats from different sections of the Facebook social networking service” (Rieder, 2013). No other functions than the ability to easily extract and export data into a Word file will be used. The study systematically sorted each message based on its date and grouped them with their

comments. This provided a clear overview not only of the number of comments to a company's post, but also of the content of the comments. Interactivity is one of the main characteristics of social media (Winer, 2009). The fact that consumers can now directly communicate with companies and each other gives consumers more power than they ever had before (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Ottman, 2011). This makes it very interesting to look at consumers' responses to CSR communication, and explains why the choice was made to not only select the companies' Facebook posts but the comments by consumers as well. The comments were analyzed in relation to the company's posts which the comments belonged to.

3.6 Categories and Variables

The content of the Facebook posts was coded by the following categories: "type of message" (Geerlinks, 2013), post related to CSR, "CSR topic" (Geerlinks, 2013), encouragement of CSR behaviour (Geerlinks, 2013), description of outcome of CSR action, and CSR approach. Type of message, CSR topic, and encouragement of CSR behaviour were based on previous research about online CSR communication conducted by Geerlinks (2013). However, the variables belonging to these categories were selected from another research.

The variable interactions were divided into different categories which were then coded for number of comments, tone of voice of comments, and direct interaction between the company and consumers. If a post was coded for the category 'post related to CSR' as 'no,' the post does not contain any CSR communication, which means that the post was excluded for further coding, as were the comments to that post. Posts were coded as not containing CSR communication when it did not contain any of the CSR topics which were selected for this research. 'Type of message' was included because it could provide insight in what kinds of messages are the most common for CSR communication on social media. Moreover, the type of message is related to the level of skepticism of consumers; they are more skeptical of advertisements than of any other kind of corporate communication (Pomeroy et al., 2013).

This makes the type of message significant when one is investigating how companies are communicating CSR. The variables were selected based on the types of messages which were found during the data collection.

The variables social issue/charity are based on the standards of CSR as described by ISO (ISO 26000, 2010), and Mögele and Tropp's (2010) research of the focus of online CSR communication. 'Charity' was also chosen based on Mögele and Tropp's (2010) research, but also because of other researchers' focus on CSR communication about social causes, as for example Du et al. (2010).

'Encouragement of CSR behaviour' was divided into 'Yes' and 'No' in which 'Yes' is divided into five variables: Yes, encouraging sustainable behaviour, Yes, encouraging donations to charity, Yes, encouraging to contribute to social issue, Yes, encouraging to contribute to the environment, and Yes, other. These variables are linked and based on the variables which belong to 'CSR Topic.' 'Description of outcome of CSR action' exists of the variables 'yes' and 'no.' The category is based on the fact that consumers are mainly interested in the outcome of a CSR effort instead of how the company reached this outcome (Du et al., 2010; Pomeroy et al., 2013). 'Description of outcome of CSR action' is defined as: a clear description of what results were reached by taking CSR efforts. 'CSR approach' was selected because consumers consider underlying motives for CSR communication very important, even so that this could affect the effectiveness of CSR communication (Du et al., 2010; Mögele & Tropp, 2010; Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009; Pomeroy et al., 2013). Therefore, it is important to take a company's marketing approach or motive into consideration when one is investigating how companies communicate their CSR strategies. The variables in this category are taken from Jahdi and Acikdilli's (2009) list of marketing approaches. Since these approaches are connected to the motives mentioned by other authors, I considered them the most useful, as these approaches are more specific than the motives described by other researchers.

Interactivity was measured by simply counting the number of comments to messages for which the comments were included in the research. The second measurement was whether there was any direct interaction between the company and the consumers commenting on a post. The answer is 'yes' if the company directly responds to the comments belonging to a certain post. The last category which focused on the comments was the 'tone of voice of comments.' The possible variables were: positive/ approving, neutral, negative/ disapproving, and non-related. This category was included because I am not only interested in the level of interactivity, but also in consumers' responses to CSR communication on Facebook.

A comment was coded 'positive/approving' if it was approving or supporting the CSR post which was decided based on the use of positive words and a positive tone of voice in the comment. 'Neutral' was coded when a comment did neither have a negative or positive tone of voice. 'Negative/disapproving' was selected when a consumer clearly disapproved of the CSR post which was decided based on the use of negative words and a negative tone of voice in the comment. 'Non-related' was coded when a consumer posted a comment which was not related to the topic of the CSR post, for example a question about an invoice or other customer-related inquiry. In the analysis and results sections of this thesis, the comments will be considered related to the post they belong with. This choice will be made, because this could provide more insight into the way consumers perceive CSR communication, and of which topics they are less skeptical. As discussed in the previous chapter, consumers are often very skeptical of CSR communication which has a significant impact on the way CSR strategies are communicated (Du et al., 2010; Pomeroy et al., 2013). This should be taken into consideration when one is studying how companies communicate their CSR strategies through social media.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I will attempt by analyzing the results from data collated. While the results of CSR communication on Facebook per Kasapreko will be discussed, the main focus will be on the population, which exists of all the data extracted from Kasapreko Facebook page over a time period of ten months. Notwithstanding, the focus will thus be on the posts which contain CSR content as these posts are the focus of this research. The results were analyzed based on cross tabulations and Chi-square tests, in order to be able to test the significance of the results for the entire population of CSR communication. Moreover, the results for interactivity will be analyzed. ANOVA tests together with post-hoc tests were performed to test the significance for the results on interactivity in order to be able to answer the question how consumers respond to CSR communication on Facebook.

4.1 CSR Communication on Facebook

In this section, the results for how CSR is communicated on Facebook by the selected company will be discussed. The results are divided by variable or comparison of variables to provide a clear overview of the results.

4.1.1 Type of Message

From a closer look at the population of messages which were analyzed, it becomes clear that PR-messages (23.5%) are most frequently used to communicate CSR. PR-messages were posted twenty times in total; nineteen of these messages were related to CSR. Advertisements were the most occurring type of messages, as 82 messages which contained advertisements were posted. However, only nine advertisements (10%) were related to CSR. Tip/suggestion to consumers was the least occurring category for posts which were related to CSR, as only two of this type of post contained CSR communication. A Pearson's Chi-square test proves that the

relationship between the type of message and the message containing CSR is significant. The Cramer's V test shows that there is a significant strong association between the type of message and the fact whether a message is CSR-related or non-CSR related. The relationship is significant for all variables. An overview of the types of messages which are most often related to CSR is provided in *Table 4* below.

Table 4.1: Overview of Type of Message Compared to Post Related to CSR (N=406)

Types of messages	of Post related to CSR: Yes	Amount of Post messages per type	of Post related to CSR: No	Amount of non-CSR messages per type	Total %	Total Amount
Advertisement	11.1%	9	22.5%	73	20.2%	82
Poll	6.2%	5	15.1%	49	13.3%	54
Competition	6.2%	5	12.9%	42	11.6%	47
Game	2.5%	2	12.0%	39	10.1%	41
News	19.8%	16	4.0%	13	7.1%	29
Event	18.5%	15	8.6%	28	10.6%	43
PR-message	23.5%	19	0.3%	1	4.9%	20
Question or comment to consumers	9.9%	8	13.8%	45	13.1%	53
Tip/suggestion to consumers	2.5%	2	10.8%	35	9.1%	37
Total	100%	81	100%	325	100%	406

Notes. P -value significance levels: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.005$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Pearson's Chi-square $\chi^2(8, N=406) = 121.13, p = <.001^{***}$, Cramer's $V = .55$.

4.1.2 CSR Topic

Kasapreko communicates CSR in a different form. Sustainability/environment was by far the most frequently occurring topic in messages which contained CSR communication. In the course of the research, it was observed that most companies have now gone mainstream with their CSR communication, instead of releasing a report about their CSR strategies occasionally.

It was also observed that some respondents consider the social impact of CSR effort by Kasapreko as one of the best ways to discover Kasapreko's underlying motives, which explains why they are so interested in CSR results.

The type of message which most often contained a description of the outcome of a CSR action was again the PR-message. This again shows that even though CSR communication has moved to social media and has become more frequent, companies like Kasapreko are still holding on to old ways to communicate their CSR strategies through PR even though social media are a relatively new platform.

The fact that messages about events also often contain descriptions of the outcome of a CSR action shows that Kasapreko really want to convince consumers of their CSR strategies, as most of these messages were aimed at building consumers desire and interest to purchase more of Awake mineral water, out of which a percentage of generated revenue will be dedicated to support the Korle Bu Cardiothoracic Centre.

4.2 Consumer Interactivity for CSR Messages

In this section, the results for consumers' interactivity and consumer responses to CSR communication are reported to ascertain consumers' reactions to CSR communication.

Number of Comments per Variable

For 354 messages, the number of comments were counted to be able to compare the level of interactivity for messages which were directly related to CSR and messages which were not considered to be CSR communication. The number of comments to the other 52 messages were excluded, because the comments were missing and could thus not be included in the sample. As

is shown in **Table 4.2**, the mean for messages which were not related to CSR is greater than the mean for messages which were related to CSR. A one-way ANOVA test indicated that the difference in mean between messages related to CSR and messages not related to CSR is significant. This means that based on comments, Facebook interaction was much higher for messages which were not CSR related.

Table 4.2 Mean of Messages Related to CSR

Message related to CSR	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Yes	18.69	70	39.650
No	64.11	284	140.778

Note. One-way ANOVA, $F(1, 352) = 7.134, p = .008^{**}$

The average amounts of comments per CSR topic were very close to each other for the topics; sustainability/environment, and green marketing. The mean for charity/ social issue, however, is much lower than for the other two topics. A one-way ANOVA test was performed and showed that the differences in mean between the different topics are significant. However, the performance of a Bonferroni post-hoc test showed no significant differences in mean between the different CSR topics. The mean differences are thus not significant. This could be explained by the fact that the amount of non-CSR related communication is much higher than the amount of CSR-related communication. Further, the mean for ‘none of the above’ is much higher due to the larger number of messages which were coded for this variable. However, since this higher number of messages were taken into consideration and put in proportion for the post-hoc comparison to the other topics, the difference is found not to be significant.

Sustainability/environment has the highest mean of the topics which are related to CSR ($M=21.77$). This could be explained by the fact that sustainability/environment is the most frequently occurring CSR topic, but also because sustainability is the most important CSR topic.

Moreover, sustainability is an issue that is on the minds of many consumers, which could make this one of the most interesting CSR topics for consumers to interact about.

Table 4.2: Mean of Comments per CSR Topic

CSR Topic	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Sustainability/environment	21.77	48	46.651
Charity/social issue	13.83	12	19.981
Green marketing	19.44	39	26.549
None of the above	68.81	255	147.528
Total	55.13	354	128.545

Notes. One-way ANOVA, $F(3, 350) = 3.529, p = .015^*$

Bonferroni post-hoc test showed no significant differences between CSR topics.

For the encouragement of CSR behaviour, the average amount of comments is very low, which makes interactivity low as well. The mean for messages encouraging sustainable behaviour is 10.90 ($N=30$), while the mean for CSR messages which do not encourage CSR behaviour is 24.53 ($N=40$). A one-way ANOVA test shows that the difference in number of comments between messages which are encouraging CSR behaviour and messages which are not encouraging CSR behaviour is not significant, $F(1, 68) = 2.055, p = .156$. Based on the difference in the mean of the number of comments per category, one would expect the difference between the two types of messages (encouraging and not encouraging CSR behaviour) to be significant, but the one-way ANOVA test shows that the two groups do not differ significantly. The encouragement of CSR behaviour does thus not cause more interactivity nor do messages which do not contain any encouragement of CSR behavior.

Since the approach to CSR which is taken in CSR communication has a lot of influence on how consumers perceive CSR communication, one would expect big differences in the average amounts of comments between the different approaches. Since consumers are especially

skeptical of certain approaches, as for example the philanthropic approach, one would expect either a very low or very high mean for this variable. However, the mean of the philanthropic approach ($M = 20.29$) is very close to the average total mean ($M = 18.69$). The proactive approach has the highest mean of 34.35, while profit-driven has the lowest mean with 8.75. This means that messages with a proactive approach had the highest level of interactivity based on the number of comments. It is remarkable and significant that the most often occurring approach (public relations), which makes up for more than half of the total population of CSR messages, has an average of 10.26 comments, which is much lower than the average for the total population of CSR messages ($N=70$, $M=18.69$). This means that the mean for the total population is highly influenced by peaks in certain variables. However, a one-way ANOVA shows that there is no significant difference in the average amount of comments between the different CSR approaches (see *Table 4.3*). According to the one-way ANOVA test, the description of a CSR outcome does not significantly influence the average amount of comments either, $F(1, 68) = 1.659$, $p = .202$.

Table 4.3: Mean of Comments per CSR Approach

CSR Approach	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Public relations	10.26	34	12.702
Profit driven	8.75	1	5.500
Proactive	34.35	2	19.652
Partnership	18.54	3	16.340
Philanthropic	20.29	7	16.183
Total	18.69	70	19.650

Note. One-way ANOVA, $F(4, 69) = 1.120$, $p = > 0.05$ (.355)

The mean of the number of comments per type of message, it becomes clear that the types of messages there is an incentive for consumers to respond have the highest mean, as poll ($M = 125.86$, $SD = 196.791$), game ($M = 118.08$, $SD = 151.699$), and tip/suggestion to consumers (M

= 100.71, $SD = 284.749$) have the highest average amounts of comments. News, event, and PR-message which are the type of messages which most often contain CSR communication have much lower averages, $M = 14.07$ ($SD = 14.155$), $M = 11.27$ ($SD = 22.207$), and $M = 14.89$ ($SD = 15.710$) respectively. A one-way ANOVA test shows that the average amount of comments differs significantly across the different types of messages, $F(8, 345) = 6.44$, $p < .001$. A Bonferroni post-hoc test showed that poll differs the most significantly from the other types of messages: Advertisement, $M_{\text{difference}} = 103.738$, $p < .001^{***}$; News, $M_{\text{difference}} = 111,794$ $p < .005^{**}$; Event, $M_{\text{difference}} = 114.596$, $p < .005^{**}$; PR-message $M_{\text{difference}} = 110.974$, $p < .05^{*}$; Question or comment to consumers, $M_{\text{difference}} = 108.220$, $p < .001^{***}$.

It was observed that the messages which often contained CSR-related content had the lowest average amount of social media comments; this is an indication that CSR communication attracts fewer social media interactivity than other forms of online corporate communication. This is confirmed by the fact that polls differ the most significantly from the other types of messages as polls do not often contain CSR communication (6.2% of all CSR communication).

Not only interactivity between consumers is an important characteristic of social media, but also the possibility for companies to directly interact with consumers. Because this research is focused on Facebook posts which contain CSR communication. The results show that the company interacted with consumers in 57.5 percent of the total CSR communication ($N = 81$). A comparison between the average amount of comments and interactivity between Kasapreko and consumers revealed that the average amount of comments is much higher when there is interaction between the company and consumers ($M = 27.93$, $SD = 49.561$ compared to $M = 5.62$, $SD = 7.957$). A one-way ANOVA test shows that the relationship between the number of comments and direct interactivity between companies and consumers is significant, $F(1, 68) = 5.746$, $p = .019$. This means that the larger the number of comments, the higher the chance that there is direct interactivity between the company and consumers. However, the interaction is not

always about the CSR message, in some cases the interaction is about an issue which a consumer addressed, as for example a complaint about customer-related inquiries.

It is quite revealing that the results show that the average number of comments is much lower for CSR-related communication than for non-CSR related communication. However, this can be explained by the fact that Kasapreko company very regularly posts polls, games, tips/suggestions to consumers, and competitions which are not related to CSR.

During the data analysis and from the results, it was observed that these types of messages get much more responses than other types of messages. It could be stated that a low number of comments means that consumers are accepting CSR communication without much skepticism.

CSR communication used to be communicated through press releases which were released once in a while (Du et al., 2010). This makes it not very surprising that the most often occurring type of message for CSR communication on Facebook is a PR-message. This shows that even though CSR communication has moved to social media, companies still hold on to old formats of communication. The fact that news is the second most often used form of CSR communication on Facebook is not very surprising either, as this is also a very traditional form of corporate communication. However, since Facebook is designed to post short and compact messages, it is also quite logical that these more traditional forms of corporate communication are transferred to social media, as they allow for links to other websites where more information can be provided. This is often the case for both types of messages. From this fact, it can be tentatively concluded that even though CSR communication has moved to online platforms like social media, the essence of CSR communication is still the same based on the most frequent types of messages.

The differences in the average amount of comments between the different CSR topics (sustainability/environment, charity/social issue, and green marketing) are too small to be significant to be taken into consideration for this discussion, as are the differences for messages which encourage CSR behavior and messages which do not. The CSR approach is relevant

because, as already discussed above, the approach has a lot of influence on how consumers perceive CSR communication. Public relations have one of the lowest average number of comments which could mean that this is an approach which does not attract many consumer responses, neither positive or negative. The philanthropic approach has a much higher average amount of responses, but the average is still close to the mean for the population. This approach does get more responses than for example the public relations approach which could be the case because consumers are more skeptical of this approach (Du et al., 2010; Pomeroy et al., 2013). However, one could also argue that a high number of comments is positive and desirable for Kasapreko because this means that consumers are engaging in the companies' messages. Moreover, more comments mean more opportunities for interaction with consumers, which can help companies to get consumers more engaged to their CSR efforts and strategies (Du et al., 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

This was also proven by my results, which showed that there is direct relation between the average amount of comments and direct interaction. The higher the average amount of comments for CSR-related communication, the higher the chance that there was direct interaction between the company and consumers. Since there was direct interaction for the larger part of all CSR communication, it can be argued that companies did make use of Facebook's interactive function for their CSR communication, but their use is still rather limited.

Societal implications

CSR communication is usually focused on the engagement of a company in a social cause and is not as much about asking for attention for the social cause itself. From the foregoing results, sustainability appears to be by far the most occurring CSR topic among the respondents. Moreover, there is a prevalence of consumers valuing sustainability more and more nowadays. This could be attributed to the ever-growing need for a healthy style of living across the globe.

It thus benefits companies to become more sustainable and to adopt sustainable CSR strategies. It is also a believable cause to be involved in a brewery company.

Consumers are often very skeptical of CSR communication when the benefits of CSR efforts for the company are not clear. Kasapreko, on one hand, clearly indicates that the revenue from the sale of the Awake mineral water brand will be used to support the Korle Bu Cardiothoracic Centre. This leads to less skepticism about the Awake mineral water and the accompanying CSR campaign; less skepticism means more successful CSR communication. From the results, the amount of CSR communication about charity/social issues is quite low. Based on these results, it can be tentatively concluded that many companies view charity/social CSR to have less benefits relative to sustainability CSR. However, it can still benefit them if they effectively communicate their involvement, like Kasapreko. It should thus be clear why they are involved in charity or a social cause, otherwise consumers will be very skeptical and the CSR communication will not be effective.

The encouragement of CSR behaviour can be considered in relation to the above. To be successful, the motives behind CSR communication should be clear if companies want consumers to consider their CSR communication to be trustworthy.

It has been observed that consumers are mostly interested in the results of a CSR action and not as much in how these results are achieved. The outcome of a CSR effort is the only thing consumers can check; checking which steps were taken to reach the result is much harder. From the results, it became evident that Kasapreko specifically described the outcome of a CSR action in just over half of their CSR communication on social media. Consumers consider the social impact of a CSR effort one of the best ways to discover companies' underlying motives, which explains why they are so interested in CSR results. The description of the outcome of a CSR action determines its effectiveness, which would mean that only half of the total CSR

communication from my population would be effective. However, this cannot be stated based on my results alone and is also not the goal of my research as the effectiveness does not tell anything about how Kasapreko company is communicating CSR.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This chapter consolidates the insights derived from the analysis of Kasapreko Company Limited's (KCL) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) communication strategies on Facebook, along with consumer responses to these strategies. The study's objectives were to examine how KCL employs Facebook to communicate its CSR initiatives, ascertain consumer responses to such communication, and evaluate the impact of these strategies on customer brand perception and patronization.

The analysis of comments on Kasapreko's Facebook posts were collated and analyzed. Based on the data analysis, the research questions were answered and various revelations were made.

On the question of how Kasapreko uses Facebook to communicate its CSR strategies, it was revealed that Kasapreko primarily uses Facebook as the major social media platform with specific CSR messages that focused on topics like environmental protection, donations to charities, and community development. It was further revealed, however, that the content of Kasapreko's CSR messages was largely one-directional, with minimal efforts to create interactive avenue or two-way communication between the consumers and the company. Kasapreko's Facebook posts often highlighted the company's CSR contributions but do not actively pull in the consumers' engagement or discussions on the posts, thus, Kasapreko misses the opportunity to fully take advantage of Facebook's interactive potential.

The second research question sought to answer the question on how consumers respond to CSR communication from Kasapreko on Facebook. Consumers' responses to Kasapreko's CSR communication on Facebook revealed moderate engagement. Even though CSR messages regarding donations and community development received positive interactions, the overall responses of the consumers were dominated by neutral comments. How consumers responded

indicated that while some consumers appreciated the CSR communication efforts, the lack of interactivity between them and Kasapreko as well as the lack of deeper resonance limited the consumers' active participation and subsequently, enthusiasm. It was revealed that the comments of the Facebook posts mostly failed to generate substantial discussions, emotional connections, and in-depth interactivity.

The third research question aimed at answering the question on how Kasapreko's communication strategies on Facebook impact brand perception and patronage. This question sought to provide the fundamental information towards achieving the main research objective. It was revealed that Kasapreko's CSR communication strategies on Facebook had moderate impact on consumers' brand perception and patronization. Though Kasapreko has successfully raised awareness about its CSR activities, the communication was predominantly one-way communication which limited the potential of the communication to strengthen loyalty for the Kasapreko brand; the communication also did not significantly enhance consumer patronage. The moderate impact of Kasapreko's CSR communication strategy was the absence of interactivity between the consumers and the Facebook posts.

The findings highlighted that Kasapreko primarily utilizes Facebook as a platform to disseminate PR-style CSR messages, emphasizing topics such as environmental protection, donations to charities, and community development. However, the content of Kasapreko largely remains one-directional, characterized by minimal efforts to foster interactive or two-way communication. Even though there was evidence of consumer engagement with CSR posts, it was observed that neutral comments often outweighed positive or negative responses, suggesting that there was a lack of deeper resonance or even active participation from the audience.

The study further highlighted that CSR topics related to donations and community development gained the highest positive interactions. Despite these efforts, Kasapreko's CSR communication failed to shift from traditional, one-way dissemination to a more dynamic, interactive format that takes advantage of the unique capabilities of social media platforms like Facebook. The lack of interactivity might possibly explain the reason why the overall impact on brand perception and patronization for Awake mineral water was moderate rather than transformative.

Based on the foregoing answers and findings, it can be deduced that while Kasapreko's CSR communication on Facebook has achieved some level of consumer awareness and appreciation, the full potential of the CSR communication over social media vastly remains untapped. The results and findings suggest that a more strategic and interactive approach to CSR communication by Kasapreko could enhance consumer engagement significantly while positively influencing brand perception, patronage, and ultimately loyalty.

5.2 Recommendations

Considering these findings, several recommendations for Kasapreko and similar industry firms to optimize their CSR communication strategies on social media platforms can be deduced.

Kasapreko should move away from a predominantly PR-focused approach for CSR communication to a more interactive communication strategy over social media. Kasapreko should encourage consumers to share their views on posts, stories, and ideas related to CSR initiatives made on the company's social media platforms. Through this, Kasapreko can foster deeper engagement and create a sense of community around its brand.

Kasapreko should also make their CSR communication over social media platforms more engaging and visually appealing through videos, infographics, and real-time event updates. For instance, a short video showcasing the impact of the contributions made to the Korle Bu

Cardiothoracic Centre from the sales revenue of the Awake mineral water could significantly resonate with consumers than a simple post that is just text-based.

Generally, consumers are increasingly skeptical of CSR efforts that appear self-serving or disingenuous. It has been revealed in previous studies that consumers believe CSR efforts are only for the benefits of the organization and profit maximization or goodwill is just the ulterior motive. Kasapreko's CSR communication should reflect genuine commitment to societal and environmental well-being.

Kasapreko's current CSR efforts are commendable, notwithstanding, KCL could explore additional CSR avenues that resonate with its consumers such initiatives related to education, youth empowerment, or the prevalent mental health awareness. These themes are highly likely to appeal to different segments of the consumer base and expand the impact of Kasapreko's CSR activities.

5.3 Recommendation for Future Research

This study emphasizes the significance of integrating interactivity and transparency in CSR communication on social media. Further future studies could expand on these findings by exploring the long-term impact of interactive CSR communication on consumer loyalty. Also, comparative studies involving multiple companies across different industries other than the distilleries could be studied to provide broader insights into best CSR communication practices.

5.4 Conclusion

The study revealed some key insights into Kasapreko's use of Facebook for communicating its CSR strategies. While Kasapreko's CSR communication on Facebook has made some progress in raising awareness, generating consumer interest, and fostering the company's goodwill, there is quite some room for improvement. Adopting a more interactive, transparent, and consumer-centric approach by Kasapreko will enhance its brand perception among consumers and drive well-meaning engagement and loyalty among consumers. Subsequently, these efforts

can contribute to the achievement of a double faceted benefit, thus achieving social and business objectives, while solidifying Kasapreko's brand reputation as a socially responsible and forward-thinking organization.

Although Kasapreko's CSR efforts over Facebook raised awareness and garnered some positive consumer responses, they fell short of fostering meaningful engagement, dialogue, and interactivity with its consumers and other stakeholders. The lack of consistent interactivity or personalization in KCL's communication strategy results in missed opportunities to deepen emotional connections with consumers. This lack of consistent interaction between Kasapreko's Facebook communication and consumers aligns with the broader challenges faced by companies that communicate CSR strategies over social media, even more so that CSR efforts by companies have been viewed as self-serving.

REFERENCES

- Abitbol, A., & Lee, S. (2017). Messages on CSR-dedicated Facebook pages: What works and what doesn't. *Public Relations Review*, 43(4), 796–808.
- Araujo, T., Kollat, J., & Corporate Communication. (2018). Communicating effectively about CSR on Twitter: The power of engaging strategies and storytelling elements. *Internet Research*, 28(2), 419–431.
- Austin, L., & Gaither, B. (2016). Examining public response to corporate social initiative types: A quantitative content analysis of Coca-Cola's social media. *Social Marketing Quarterly*, 22(4), 290–306.
- Basu, K. & Palazzo, G. (2008). Corporate Social Responsibility: A process model of sense making. *Academy of Management Review*, 33(1), 122 – 136.
- Bhattacharya, C., & Sen, S. (2004). Doing better at doing good: When, why, and how consumers respond to corporate social initiatives. *California Management Review*, 47(1), 9–24.
- Capriotti, P., & Moreno, A. (2007). Corporate citizenship and public relations: The importance and interactivity of social responsibility issues on corporate websites. *Public Relations Review*, 33(1), 84-91.
- Capriotti, P., & Moreno, A. (2017). Corporate citizenship and public relations: The importance and interactivity of social responsibility issues on corporate websites. *Public Relations Review*, 33(1), 84-91.
- Chaudhri, V., & Jian Wang. (2007). Communicating corporate social responsibility on the internet: A case study of the top 100 information technology companies in India. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 21(2), 232–247.

- Constantinides, E. & Fountain, S. J. (2008). Web 2.0: Conceptual foundations and marketing issues. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 9(3), 231-244.
- Constantinides, E. & Fountain, S. J. (2018). Web 2.0: Conceptual foundations and marketing issues. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 9(3), 231-244.
- Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010. Maximizing business returns to corporate social responsibility (CSR): The role of CSR communication.
- Du, S., & Vieira, E. (2012). Striving for legitimacy through corporate social responsibility: Insights from oil companies. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 110(4), 413–427.
- Farache, F. & Perks, K.J. (2010). CSR advertisements: A legitimacy tool? *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15(3), 235 – 248.
- Geerlinks, J. (2013). *Corporate Social Responsibility and social media: how do retailers interact with consumers?* Unpublished master's thesis for master's degree. Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands.
- Haanpää, L. (2007). Consumers' green commitment: indication of a postmodern lifestyle? *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 31(5), 478-486.
- Jahdi, K.S. & Acikdilli, G. (2009). Marketing Communications and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Marriage of Convenience or Shotgun Wedding? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 88(1), 103–113.
- Jahdi, K.S. & Acikdilli, G. (2019). Marketing Communications and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Marriage of Convenience or Shotgun Wedding? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 88(1), 103–113.
- Kaplan, A.M. & Haenlein, M. (2001). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 9-68.

- Kassarjian, H.H. (1977). Content analysis in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 4 (1), 8-18.
- Kietzmann, H.J., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I.P., & Silvestre, B.S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons*, 54(3), 241-21.
- Kietzmann, H.J., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I.P., & Silvestre, B.S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons*, 54(3), 241-21.
- Kim, A.J., & Ko, E. (2012). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(10), 1480 – 1486.
- Leonard, D. & McAdam, R. (2003). Quality and Ethics. Social Corporate Responsibility. *Quality Progress*, 36(10), 27-32.
- Leonard, D. & McAdam, R. (2013). Quality and ethics. Social corporate responsibility. *Quality Progress*, 36(10), 27-32.
- Lindgreen, A. & Swaen V. (2010). Corporate Social Responsibility. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 12(1), 1 – 7.
- Lock, I., & Schulz-Knappe, C. (2019). Credible corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication predicts legitimacy. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 24(1), 2–20.
- Mangold, W. G. & Faulds, D.J. (2019). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons*, 52(4), 357-365.

- McDonald, L. M. (2006). *Use of different corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives as a crisis mitigation strategy*. 2nd Biennial Conference of the Academy of World Business, Marketing and Management Development. Paris: Academy of World Business, Marketing and Development.
- McWilliams, A. & Siegel, D. (2011). Corporate social responsibility: A theory of the firm perspective. *The Academy of Management Review*, 26(1), 117-127.
- Men, L., & Tsai, W. (2014). Perceptual, attitudinal, and behavioral outcomes of organization-public engagement on corporate social networking Sites. *Journal of Public Relations Research: Public Relations and Engagement*, 26(5), 417–435.
- Mögele, B. & Tropp, J. (2010). The emergence of CSR as an advertising topic: A longitudinal study of German CSR advertisements. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 16(3), 163–181.
- Razzaq, A., Ansari, N., Razzaq, Z., & Awan, H. (2018). The impact of fashion involvement and pro-environmental attitude on sustainable clothing consumption: The moderating role of Islamic religiosity. *SAGE Open*, 8(2).
- Rim, H., & Song, D. (2016). How negative becomes less negative: Understanding the effects of comment valence and response sidedness in social media. *Journal of Communication*, 66(3), 475–495.
- Thackeray, R., Neiger, B.L., Hanson, C.L., & McKenzie, J.F. (2018). Enhancing promotional strategies within social marketing programs use of Web 2.0 social media. *Health Promotion Practice*, 9(4), 338-343.

Williams, R. (2018). Study: 92% of marketers plan to ramp up Instagram influencer efforts.

Retrieved from <https://www.mobilemarketer.com/news/study-92-of-marketers-planto-ramp-up-instagram-influencer-efforts/522003/>

Yang, J., Basile, K., & Letourneau, O. (2018). The impact of social media platform selection on effectively communicating about corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 26(1), 65–87.

APPENDIX
UNIMAC- IJ

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

MA DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Codebook: CSR Communication on Facebook

Category I. Type of message

1. Advertisement
2. Poll
3. Competition
4. Game
5. News
6. Event
7. PR-message
8. Question or comment to consumers
9. Tip/suggestion to consumers

Category II. CSR Topic

10. Sustainability/environment
11. Charity/ social issue
12. Green marketing
13. None of the above

Category III. Post related to CSR

14. Yes

15. No

Category IV. Encouragement of CSR behaviour

16. No

17. Yes, encouraging sustainable behaviour

18. Yes, encouraging donations to charity

19. Yes, encouraging to contribute to social issue

20. Yes, encouraging to contribute to the environment

21. Yes, other

Category V. Description of outcome of CSR action

22. Yes

23. No

Category VI. CSR approach

24. Public relations

25. Profit driven

26. Proactive

27. Partnership

28. Philanthropic

Category VII. Number of comments

Category VIII. Direct interaction between company and commenter

29. Yes

30. No

Category IX. Tone of voice of comments

31. Positive/Approving

32. Neutral

33. Negative/Disapproving

34. Non-related