



**A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA-BASED CSR
COMMUNICATION ON MTN GHANA'S BRAND REPUTATION.**

BY

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(MAPRM24050)

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND
COMMUNICATION IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS WITH
MARKETING**

DECEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research work, titled “A quantitative analysis on the impact of social media-based CSR communication on MTN Ghana’s brand reputation,” is the result of my own original research and has not been submitted, either wholly or partially, for another degree in this or any other university. I further declare that all sources of information that I have used or quoted in this study have been duly acknowledged by references.

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated first and foremost to the Almighty God, whose unending grace, wisdom, and strength have guided me throughout this academic journey. Truly, “The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me; Your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever” (Psalm 138:8, ESV). These words have been my anchor and motivation, reminding me that every step of this process was directed by his divine purpose.

To my beloved family, especially my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fadda, for their unconditional love, prayers, and unwavering belief in my potential, your sacrifices have been the pillar of my success. This achievement is as much yours as it is mine, and I dedicate it to you with boundless love and appreciation.

Finally, this work is dedicated to everyone who has encouraged and inspired me along the way. May this achievement be a testimony of God’s faithfulness and a reminder that with perseverance and faith, every purpose under heaven will surely be fulfilled.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am profoundly grateful to the Almighty God for His continuous guidance, protection, and wisdom throughout this research process and my entire academic pursuit.

My deepest appreciation goes to my supervisor, Dr. Martin Thompson Kwadzo Ntem, for his invaluable guidance, constructive feedback, and support that have shaped this study into its present form. Your patience, expertise, and mentorship have been truly inspiring.

I also extend my heartfelt thanks to the faculty and staff of the School of Graduate Studies, University of Media, Arts and Communication, for their academic and administrative support.

I am sincerely grateful to my family and friends for their prayers, emotional support, and constant motivation. Their faith in me has made this journey possible and meaningful. Their words of wisdom, support, and encouragement have been a source of strength and inspiration, guiding me through the challenges and triumphs of my master's program.

To my colleagues and classmates, thank you for the camaraderie, insightful discussions, and encouragement we shared along the way.

Finally, a special appreciation goes to all the participants who took the time to respond to my questionnaire. Your input was vital to the successful completion of this research.

ABSTRACT

In an increasingly digital communication landscape, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become a strategic tool for enhancing brand reputation, particularly within competitive sectors like telecommunications. This study examined the influence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) communication on MTN Ghana's brand reputation within the context of the country's increasing reliance on digital platforms. Guided by Stakeholder Theory and Dialogic Communication Theory, the study explored three key areas: The extent of MTN Ghana's CSR communication on social media, the relationship between CSR communication and brand reputation, and the influence of specific CSR initiative types on brand perception. The research adopted a quantitative survey design, collecting responses from 100 social media users who follow MTN Ghana on digital platforms. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis. Findings show that a majority of respondents frequently encounter MTN Ghana's CSR-related content, perceive the messages as clear and credible, and are well aware of initiatives in education, health, and digital inclusion. Correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between CSR communication and brand reputation, while the regression analysis showed that the types of CSR initiatives communicated significantly influence consumers' brand perception. Although environmental sustainability initiatives had lower awareness, educational and digital initiatives were found to strengthen perceptions of MTN as innovative and community-oriented. The study concludes that social media-based CSR communication plays a critical role in shaping MTN Ghana's brand reputation. It recommends increased audience engagement strategies, enhanced storytelling of CSR impact and improved visibility for environmental CSR initiatives. The study contributes to CSR scholarship by providing African-context empirical evidence on digital CSR communication and its branding implications. Limitations include the sample size and

cross-sectional design, and future research should explore comparative telecom studies, mixed-method approaches, and longitudinal analyses.

KEYWORDS: Brand loyalty, Brand reputation, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), CSR communication, Customer perception, Stakeholder engagement, Digital communication, Ghana telecommunications industry.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AMS – Academy of Marketing Science

ANOVA – Analysis of Variance

B2B – Business-to-Business

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility COVID-19

– Coronavirus Disease 2019

df – Degrees of Freedom

F-statistic (F) – Test statistic for ANOVA/Regression significance

HND – Higher National Diploma

ICT – Information and Communication Technology

IJBM – International Journal of Bank Marketing

ISSN – International Standard Serial Number

JBM – Journal of Business Management / Journal of Bank Marketing (as cited)

MTN – Mobile Telecommunication Network

P-value (p) – Probability Value

R – Correlation Coefficient

R^2 – Coefficient of Determination

SHS – Senior High School

SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Std.

Error – Standard Error

t-value (t) – Test Statistic for Regression UN

– United Nations

VIF – Variance Inflation Factor

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The chapter introduces the research problem, outlines the objectives, formulates research questions, establishes the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and also highlights the significance and scope of the study within the Ghanaian telecommunication sector.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a critical strategic tool and philanthropic concept through which organizations build goodwill, demonstrate ethical responsibility, and enhance corporate reputation, and also build a positive and long-lasting relationship with stakeholders (Carroll,1991). In today's digitally connected environment, companies are increasingly turning to social media platforms to communicate CSR initiatives. Social media offers an interactive space where organizations can engage directly with stakeholders, craft narratives around social impact, and co-create brand meaning with their audiences (Colleoni, 2013). For telecommunications companies like MTN Ghana, CSR has become a visible part of their public image, with initiatives spanning education, health, youth empowerment, and environmental sustainability. The MTN Ghana Foundation's initiatives, such as the Bright Scholarships and Save a Life blood drives, are often communicated through platforms such as Twitter (X), Instagram, and Facebook. These channels facilitate real-time interactions, sharing, and receiving feedback from customers and the public in general to foster transparency (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Brand reputation is defined as a collective perception of an organization's trustworthiness, credibility as well as social value which is strongly influenced by the effectiveness and authenticity of corporate communication (Pérez & Rodríguez Del Bosque, 2015). While numerous studies have explored CSR's impact on corporate reputation and consumer behavior, much of the existing research is

based in Western contexts (Fatma, Rahman, & Khan, 2015). In Ghana, the telecommunications industry is central to digital inclusion and socio-economic development, with leading players such as MTN and Telecel employing CSR to foster goodwill and brand trust (Abor, 2017). Although companies like MTN Ghana actively promote their CSR programs through digital platforms, limited research has been done to explore how such communication influences public perception and brand reputation from a quantitative perspective. There is little understanding on how such CSR communication efforts influence public perception and particularly amongst Ghanaian social media users. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the influence of CSR communication on social media on the brand reputation of MTN Ghana from the perspectives of those who engage with this content using a quantitative approach.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In an era where corporate social responsibility (CSR) plays a pivotal role in shaping stakeholder perceptions, businesses are increasingly turning to social media as a key platform for communicating CSR initiatives. Social media, characterized by its immediacy and broad reach has transformed how companies engage with stakeholders and convey their social and environmental commitments (Capriotti, 2011). For telecommunications companies like MTN Ghana, whose operations affect millions of lives, CSR communication through platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram is crucial not only for stakeholder engagement but also for managing brand reputation. Despite the growing body of literature on CSR communication and brand management, significant gaps remain.

Although the relationship between CSR and brand reputation has been extensively studied in developed economies (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010; Pérez & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2015), empirical evidence on the specific role of social media as a CSR communication channel in

influencing brand reputation remains limited, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Existing studies often focus on whether there is a need for context-specific evidence on how CSR messages disseminated through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) shape stakeholder perceptions of brand reputation (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

Moreover, while MTN Ghana frequently showcases its CSR efforts such as health campaigns, youth empowerment, and educational support on platforms like Twitter (X), Facebook, and Instagram, little is known about how these communications are received, interpreted, and emotionally processed by stakeholders, and how these processes contribute to brand meaning. Therefore, this study seeks to quantitatively examine how MTN Ghana's CSR communication on social media influences its brand reputation from the perspective of stakeholders.

Additionally, while several scholars have examined CSR and reputation most CSR related research adopts qualitative or mixed-methods approaches, emphasizing interviews, focus groups, or content analysis (Fatma, Rahman, & Khan, 2015; Ozuem et al., 2016). Quantitative studies statistically that test the relationship between CSR communication on social media and brand reputation are sparse, especially in emerging economies. There is a noticeable lack of quantitative studies that apply statistical tools to test the significance and strength of the relationship between CSR communication through social media and brand reputation. A quantitative, survey-based approach can provide generalizable findings and also help address this gap.

Furthermore, there is a theoretical gap in applying integrated communication and brand reputation models to CSR communication through social media. While Legitimacy and Framing theory have often underpinned CSR studies, there is a need to integrate these with digital communication models to better understand the role of interactive platforms like social media in shaping corporate legitimacy and reputation. The Legitimacy Theory and Framing Theory have traditionally underpinned CSR studies primarily focusing on one-way organizational messaging, where the

organization is the sender and the public is just a passive receiver. Both theories do not adequately account for the interactive, participatory, and user generated nature of social media platforms, where audiences actively shape meanings, aid in creating brand narratives, and influence organizational legitimacy in real time. An example is Framing Theory focuses on how organizations frame issues to influence perception, but it does not address how audiences may reframe or resist these narratives through comments, shares or viral content. Similarly, Legitimacy Theory emphasizes on an organization's efforts to gain acceptance through conformance to societal norms, but it overlooks the two-way dialogue and stakeholder feedback loops that are now central to reputation building on social media platforms like Twitter (X) and Instagram etc. This theoretical disconnection underscores the need to integrate these traditional models with digital communication theories such as Dialogic Communication Theory or the Social-Mediated Publics Model, to better capture how corporate legitimacy and brand reputation are co-constructed through dynamic interactions online.

From a population perspective, most CSR perception studies have focused on internal stakeholders which consist of employees, executives or corporate communicators (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010). There is limited focus on external publics, particularly Ghanaian social media users, who are increasingly shaping the narrative around corporate responsibility and influencing brand equity through online engagement. There is a lack of research focused on social media users, customers, and local communities as meaning makers in CSR communication. Most studies focus on corporate perspectives or generalized consumers. This study focuses specifically on MTN Ghana's social media audience, giving voice to real users and stakeholders who actively engage with CSR messages online.

Given these gaps, this study seeks to fill the void by using a quantitative design to evaluate whether CSR communication on social media influences MTN Ghana's brand reputation from the perspective of Ghanaian social media users.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the extent to which MTN Ghana engages in CSR communication on social media.
2. To determine the relationship between CSR communication on social media and MTN Ghana's brand reputation.
3. To examine the influence of different types of CSR initiatives communicated on social media on brand perception.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How frequently does MTN Ghana communicate its CSR initiatives on social media platforms.
2. Is there a measurable relationship between CSR communication on social media and MTN Ghana's brand reputation?
3. To what extent do consumers perceive MTN Ghana based on the type of CSR initiatives communicated on social media?

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1.5.1 HYPOTHESES ONE

H1₀: A significant relationship does not exist between CSR communication on social media and MTN Ghana's brand reputation.

H1₁: A significant relationship exists between CSR communication on social media and MTN Ghana's brand reputation.

1.5.2 HYPOTHESES TWO

H2₀: The type of CSR initiative communicated on social media does not significantly influence consumer perception of MTN Ghana's brand.

H2₁: The type of CSR initiative communicated on social media significantly influences consumer perception of MTN Ghana's brand.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study holds considerable theoretical significance as it contributes to the existing body of knowledge. Firstly, it extends the theoretical foundation using the Stakeholder theory and Dialogic communication theory to expand the use of communication-based theories in CSR research. It helps explain how organizations can use social media as a two-way, dialogic platform to engage with audiences rather than push messages, and also emphasizes how companies must be accountable not to just their shareholders but to all stakeholders, thereby enhancing the theoretical framework for future studies in digital PR and CSR communication. These two theories used together gives a comprehensive understanding of what organizations communicate and how stakeholders engage with the message communicated.

Findings from this study will also offer actionable insights for MTN Ghana and similar organizations about how to design, frame, and deliver CSR messages in ways that foster credibility and enhance brand image. For corporate communicators, marketers, and CSR professionals at MTN Ghana and other organizations, the findings will offer insights into how effective social media communication strategies and public feedback can enhance brand reputation and stakeholder engagement.

This study will contribute to the limited body of quantitative research on CSR communication in the context of social media in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Ghana. The study adds depth to our understanding of how stakeholders interpret CSR messages and how these interpretations influence brand reputation. It also addresses a critical gap in public relations and strategic communication literature by exploring the influence of CSR communication on brand reputation

using a quantitative method where such studies remain under-explored (Ofori et al.,2014). Additionally, the insights generated can guide corporate communication policies and digital engagement strategies in Ghana. Organizations can use the findings to rethink CSR storytelling, improve transparency, and promote inclusive stakeholder engagement through digital platforms. The research could guide corporate policy formulation in relation to digital CSR communication strategies, particularly within the telecom and broader service industries in Ghana. By focusing on public perception, the study highlights how Ghanaian social media users interpret CSR efforts, contributing to knowledge on the evolving role of consumers in co-creating brand identity online (Fatma, Rahman, & Khan, 2015).

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses exclusively on MTN Ghana, examining how its CSR communication on social media influences brand reputation from the perspective of Ghanaian social media users. The study is geographically limited to Ghana targeting urban and semi urban customers who actively engage with or are exposed to MTN Ghana’s CSR content on platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), and Instagram.

The research employs a quantitative design, using a structured questionnaire to collect data from external stakeholders primarily customers and members of the general public who are active social media users aiming at understanding how meaning is constructed and how these CSR messages are communicated and perceived and in turn influences brand reputation.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study will be structured into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the research, providing insights into the study's context including the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, the study's significance, and its scope. Chapter two offers an extensive review of both

empirical and theoretical literature related to the influence of CSR communication on brand reputation. Chapter three delves into the study's methodology, encompassing research design, research population, sample selection, and sampling techniques. It will also address ethical considerations, procedures for data collection, and the analysis methodology. Chapter four will be dedicated to the analysis of data, presentation of findings, and their subsequent discussion. Finally, Chapter five, the concluding chapter, will present a summary of the study, draw conclusions based on the findings, and provide recommendations arising from the research.

1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a foundational overview of the study by introducing the core research issue, which is the impact of social media-based Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) communication on brand reputation, using MTN Ghana. The chapter began with a background to the study, highlighting the growing relevance of CSR as both a strategic and ethical imperative in corporate governance. In Ghana's telecommunications sector, CSR activities such as MTN Ghana's Bright Scholarship initiative and health drives are increasingly communicated through digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter), offering opportunities for real time engagement and stakeholder dialogue.

The problem statement underscored the research gaps that necessitate this study, particularly the lack of empirical data from Sub-Saharan Africa, the dominance of qualitative methodologies in existing literature, and the limited integration of traditional communication theories with digital engagement models. This study seeks to address these gaps by applying a quantitative approach to explore the relationship between CSR communication on social media and MTN Ghana's brand reputation from the perspective of Ghanaian social media users.

Moving on, three research objectives and corresponding questions were formulated to guide the research. Additionally, two hypotheses were proposed to test the statistical significance of

consumer awareness and perceived credibility of CSR communication in influencing brand reputation. The significance of the study was outlined, emphasizing its theoretical contribution through the integration of Stakeholder Theory and Dialogic Communication Theory, and its practical implications for corporate communicators, digital strategists, and CSR practitioners in Ghana and beyond.

The scope of the study was defined geographically and demographically, focusing on external stakeholders, particularly social media users in urban and semi-urban Ghana who engage with MTN Ghana's CSR initiatives online. The chapter concluded by outlining the organization of the thesis, which comprises five interrelated chapters that collectively advance the study's objectives. In summary, Chapter One has established the rationale, focus, and relevance of the study. It sets the stage for the next chapter, which presents a comprehensive review of related theoretical and empirical literature, identifying conceptual gaps and providing the framework for the current research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an extensive review of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning the study, while also evaluating relevant empirical and scholarly literature on CSR communication, brand reputation and social media engagement within the Ghanaian context.

The chapter begins by exploring the conceptual framework and also investigates the body of empirical data available on CSR communication in the telecommunications sector in Ghana and beyond. It examines how social media has transformed the communication landscape, making it easier for companies to share CSR-related content and engage audiences in real time. Empirical studies have shown that CSR activities communicated through digital platforms tend to receive more visibility and foster greater consumer engagement compared to traditional media channels (Capriotti, Zeler, & Camilleri, 2021). However, the effectiveness of such communication strategies in enhancing brand reputation remains a subject of ongoing research, especially in developing countries where digital literacy and access to social media platforms vary widely.

This chapter also explores foundational theories such as the Stakeholder Theory and the Dialogic Communication Theory, which provides the lens through which the relationship between CSR communication and brand reputation is understood. These theories collectively assert that organizations that transparently and consistently engage stakeholders, especially through interactive digital platforms, are better positioned to cultivate trust, loyalty, and a favorable public image (Freeman, 1984; Kent & Taylor, 2002). Factors such as message framing, consistency, audience trust, and platform choice significantly mediate the impact (Fatma, Rahman, & Khan, 2020). Therefore, understanding the dynamics of social media engagement and how consumers

perceive CSR efforts on digital platforms is crucial for organizations striving to enhance brand value through responsible communication.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study forms the backbone of the study by offering a systematic approach to exploring the interconnected relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) communication, brand reputation, and the role of social media. Rooted in Stakeholder Theory and Dialogic Communication Theory, the framework provides a multidimensional lens to assess how digital communication practices influence public perception of corporate behavior.

The framework identifies CSR communication on social media as the independent variable, which influences the dependent variable, brand reputation. However, this relationship is mediated by three core factors: stakeholder awareness, audience engagement, and perceived credibility. These mediators are essential in explaining how and why CSR communication translates or fails to translate into enhanced brand reputation. The framework thus underscores the importance of not only what is communicated but how it is perceived and interacted with by stakeholders on digital platforms.

This conceptual structure is particularly useful for the telecommunications sector, where customer trust, loyalty, and perception are critical assets. By leveraging CSR messages on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X (formerly Twitter), brands like MTN Ghana aim to strengthen their societal image and consumer relationships. The model thus

illustrates the pathway through which CSR communication, when conducted strategically through social media can foster positive brand reputations and long-term stakeholder

trust.

2.1.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a multidimensional concept that defines a company's commitment to contribute positively to society while maintaining ethical business practices. While early conceptualizations of CSR focused mainly on philanthropy, recent developments emphasize sustainability, stakeholder inclusivity, and long-term social impact (Miska et al., 2021). CSR now includes activities that address environmental concerns, promote ethical labor practices, support community development, and ensure transparent governance.

In the context of emerging economies, including Ghana, CSR often plays a pivotal role in bridging socio-economic gaps. Many CSR initiatives are aimed at improving healthcare delivery, educational infrastructure and community development, areas where state support may be insufficient (Nwobu & Nwobu, 2022). This developmental orientation of CSR enhances the societal relevance of corporate contributions, especially in sectors like telecommunications, where public trust and mass accessibility are central.

For a company like MTN Ghana, CSR serves as both a social license to operate and a strategic branding tool. Initiatives such as rural ICT education programs, maternal health support, and environmental sustainability efforts not only demonstrate corporate citizenship but also reinforce brand credibility. CSR, therefore, is no longer an optional peripheral activity but a central component of MTN Ghana's corporate identity and brand differentiation strategy.

Importantly, in the digital era, how CSR is communicated is as crucial as what is being done. Consumers and stakeholders often judge the sincerity and effectiveness of CSR based on its transparency, relevance, and alignment with social expectations. The effectiveness of CSR in enhancing brand reputation depends significantly on stakeholder perceptions, which are largely shaped by media narratives and personal experiences that are shared online.

2.1.2 Social Media and CSR Communication

The emergence of Web 2.0 technologies has transformed communication paradigms in corporate settings. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X (formerly Twitter), have emerged as pivotal channels for real-time, participatory, and dialogic communication. Unlike traditional media, which is linear and passive, social media offers a two-way engagement model, enabling companies to inform, listen and respond simultaneously (Luarn et al., 2021).

CSR communication through social media allows firms to share not just press releases or reports but stories, videos, photos, live updates and user-generated content that humanize their corporate personality. The dialogic capabilities of these platforms, as emphasized by Kent and Taylor's (2002) Dialogic Communication Theory, enables organizations to foster interactive relationships rather than one-sided broadcasts.

Moreover, the visual and narrative affordances of social media increase the emotional appeal and shareability of CSR content. Hashtags can help categorize campaigns and mobilize communities around causes. Influencer collaborations and employee advocacy can amplify CSR messages to wider audiences, while real-time feedback can provide insights into stakeholder expectations and reactions (Hossain et al., 2022).

Social media also plays a vital role in building perceived transparency and accountability, both of which are critical for building trust in CSR claims. A company that regularly updates its audience on the progress, impact, and future goals of its CSR initiatives is likely to be viewed as more trustworthy and credible. In this way, social media becomes more than a tool for broadcasting, it becomes a platform for co-creating brand meaning in collaboration with stakeholders.

However, scholars warn of the potential backfire effect if CSR communication is perceived as insincere or performative. Overemphasis on self-promotion, lack of measurable impact, or

inconsistencies between stated values and actual practices may erode trust and damage reputation (Coombs & Holladay, 2015). Therefore, CSR communication via social media must balance authenticity, consistency, and engagement to be effective.

2.1.3 Brand Reputation

Brand reputation is a cumulative construct that reflects how a brand is perceived by various stakeholders based on its historical actions, communication strategies, and future intentions. It encompasses trust, credibility, reliability, and social value all of which contribute to how a brand is positioned in the public consciousness (Gürlek & Tuna, 2021). In today's highly competitive and information-rich environments, brand reputation is regarded as a strategic asset with long-term implications for firm performance, customer loyalty, and stakeholder engagement.

Reputation is particularly important in service industries such as telecommunications, where service quality, reliability, and social responsibility often determine consumer choices. For MTN Ghana, whose services touch millions of lives daily, a strong reputation can influence market share, attract partnerships, and reinforce customer loyalty. Conversely, reputational damage whether from service failures, ethical breaches or insincere CSR messaging can also result in customer attrition and regulatory backlash.

Corporate Social Responsibility plays a critical role in shaping brand reputation. When CSR initiatives are genuinely aligned with stakeholder values, they serve as powerful signals of a company's ethical compass and societal commitment. Studies have shown that CSR positively influences consumer trust and purchase intention, especially when stakeholders perceive CSR efforts as authentic, consistent, and beneficial to society (Ullah et al., 2021).

Moreover, the perception of CSR is often mediated by the credibility of the communication platform. Social media, when used effectively, enhances visibility, stakeholder participation, and

message authenticity. Brands that demonstrate accountability by reporting both successes and challenges in their CSR journeys are more likely to build trust and reputation resilience.

In the context of this study, brand reputation is viewed not merely as an outcome variable but as an evolving construct shaped by dialogue, perception, and social legitimacy. It represents how well a company meets public expectations in a transparent, ethical, and socially responsive manner. Thus, understanding how social media-based CSR communication affects brand reputation provides essential insights into brand management in the digital age.

2.2 REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

In the era of digital transformation, social media has significantly reshaped the way organizations communicate their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. The traditional top-down model of CSR communication where companies broadcast messages through annual reports or press releases has shifted towards a more interactive and dialogic model that prioritizes real-time engagement and audience feedback. This shift has profound implications for how stakeholders perceive, interpret and respond to corporate behaviour. The literature indicates that social media-based CSR communication has the potential to enhance stakeholder engagement, brand reputation, and consumer trust, especially when the messaging is consistent, culturally resonant and interactive.

2.2.1 CSR Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

The relationship between CSR communication and stakeholder engagement has been extensively studied across various industries and geographies. In particular, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X (formerly Twitter) have emerged as essential tools for stakeholder outreach due to their immediacy, accessibility, and interactivity. As noted by Appiah et al. (2021), CSR messaging via social media in Ghana does not merely inform stakeholders but

also fosters a sense of corporate citizenship, community participation, and emotional connection. This emotional resonance is particularly effective in building long-term stakeholder loyalty.

The interactive nature of social media enables stakeholders to comment, share and contribute to CSR dialogues, thereby transforming them from passive audiences into active participants. According to Hossain and Rahman (2022), CSR communication strategies that include participatory elements such as online polls, user-generated content, Q&A sessions and live streaming events tend to achieve higher engagement levels. These interactions build a good relationships between the company and its audience, making the brand more humanized and relatable. Moreover, engagement-driven content encourages social sharing, amplifying the reach and impact of CSR initiatives well beyond traditional marketing channels.

Beyond mere engagement, the tone and framing of CSR messages also plays a crucial role. Social media allows companies to adopt narrative and visual storytelling formats that evoke empathy, urgency or pride. When messages are framed within culturally relevant contexts using local languages, festivals or community stories, they become more relatable and impactful (Karjaluoto et al., 2021). For example, a CSR campaign in Ghana that supports local schools or health clinics will likely resonate more deeply if presented with visual testimonials from beneficiaries, accompanied by Ghanaian cultural symbols or local dialects.

2.2.2 CSR Communication and Brand Reputation

The connection between CSR and brand reputation is well-established in the literature. Reputation is often described as the collective judgment of stakeholders about a firm's integrity, social value and competence (Gürlek & Tuna, 2021). Numerous studies affirm that well-communicated CSR activities positively influence public perception and enhance brand reputation by aligning corporate behavior with societal expectations.

Empirical evidence supports the assertion that CSR communication is most effective when it is authentic, transparent, and continuous. Gürlek and Tuna (2021) found that CSR efforts that are perceived as credible and aligned with core business values significantly increase stakeholder trust, which in turn strengthens brand loyalty and advocacy. The study emphasized that CSR activities contribute to the perception of ethical leadership and social responsibility, particularly in developing economies where such values are held in high regard due to persistent development challenges.

Similarly, Karjaluoto et al. (2021) found that CSR communication via social media improves consumer trust and brand image when presented with transparency and cultural sensitivity. Their research highlights the importance of using storytelling techniques and localized narratives, which make CSR messages not only more digestible but also emotionally appealing. In Ghana, where storytelling is deeply rooted in cultural communication, CSR content that includes community narratives, visuals of project implementation, and voices of local beneficiaries tends to elicit stronger emotional responses and more favorable brand evaluations.

Visual content has been particularly noted for its effectiveness in CSR communication. Studies show that the use of infographics, short videos, animations, and photographs significantly boosts information retention and engagement rates compared to plain text (Adegbite et al., 2021). These formats are especially effective on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, where visual storytelling dominates user experience. For MTN Ghana, sharing real-time videos of CSR initiatives such as school donations, health screenings or environmental campaigns can significantly enhance brand goodwill and increase social media visibility.

2.2.3 CSR Communication in Sub-Saharan Africa

In the Sub-Saharan African context, where social, economic, and infrastructural challenges persist, CSR is often perceived not only as a strategic business activity but also as a tool for community empowerment and nation-building. Adegbite et al. (2021) investigated CSR communication across African firms and found that social media campaigns significantly increased stakeholder awareness, community engagement, and positive brand perceptions. However, their study also revealed that the effectiveness of CSR campaigns is largely dependent on message consistency, authenticity, and cultural relevance.

One of the recurring themes in African CSR literature is the importance of local context. Stakeholders in Ghana, for example, may respond more positively to CSR campaigns that address issues such as youth unemployment, digital literacy, maternal health, and rural education issues that are both socially urgent and culturally salient. Thus, companies need to tailor their CSR content to reflect the needs and aspirations of their target communities, rather than relying on generic or global CSR templates.

Despite these promising findings, the effectiveness of social media-based CSR communication in Africa is not without challenges. Digital inequality, selective exposure, and algorithmic filtering on social media platforms can limit the reach of CSR messages. In rural or underserved areas, limited internet access and digital literacy may hinder stakeholder participation in online CSR dialogues. Moreover, platforms like Facebook and Instagram use algorithms that prioritize content based on engagement metrics, which means that unpaid CSR messages may not be prioritized unless promoted via paid advertising (Ullah et al., 2021). Another challenge is the risk of skepticism when CSR communication is overly commercialized or misaligned with actual corporate practices. Ullah et al. (2021) caution that stakeholders can quickly detect

inconsistencies between a company's CSR messaging and its behaviour such as exploitative labor practices, poor customer service or environmental violations. When such dissonance is perceived, it can lead to reputational damage, reduced consumer trust and even backlash campaigns online.

2.2.4 Implications for MTN Ghana and Future Research

For MTN Ghana, these studies underscore the strategic importance of integrating authentic, culturally sensitive, and interactive CSR communication strategies across its digital platforms. Given MTN's position as the leading telecom provider in Ghana, its CSR efforts are subject to heightened public scrutiny and engagement. Communicating these efforts effectively via social media not only enhances public trust but also differentiates MTN in a competitive and rapidly evolving telecommunications market.

Moreover, while qualitative studies have provided valuable insights into CSR communication practices in Ghana, there is still a paucity of quantitative research that systematically measures the impact of CSR communication on specific brand reputation metrics such as trust, credibility, emotional connection, and stakeholder advocacy. This gap presents a significant opportunity for the current study to contribute to both academic literature and practical CSR strategy by offering empirical evidence on the effectiveness of social media-based CSR communication in the Ghanaian context.

2.3 GAPS IN LITERATURE

Although scholarly interest in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and brand reputation has grown significantly over the past two decades, especially with the emergence of digital communication tools, several important gaps remain unaddressed in the existing body of knowledge. This study seeks to fill these gaps by offering empirical insights that are both context

specific and theoretically integrative, with a focus on Ghana's telecommunications sector, an industry that plays a pivotal role in national development and public engagement.

2.3.1 Contextual Gap: The Overrepresentation of Western-Centric Studies

A notable gap in the literature lies in the geographical distribution of existing CSR and brand reputation studies. Much of the scholarly research has been conducted in Western or developed country contexts, particularly in North America, Europe, and parts of Asia (Kim & Ferguson, 2019). These studies often reflect socio-economic, cultural, and digital environments that differ substantially from those in Sub-Saharan Africa. As such, their findings may not adequately capture the dynamics of CSR communication in African markets, where expectations, infrastructural realities and cultural nuances differ.

In particular, Ghana's telecommunications sector has been underrepresented in CSR scholarship. While the sector has become increasingly involved in socially impactful projects from health and education to rural connectivity, limited academic work has systematically explored how these initiatives are communicated through social media and perceived by the public (Appiah et al., 2021). Thus, there is a need for localized research that considers Ghana's unique socio-cultural context, digital penetration levels and public responsiveness to CSR initiatives.

2.3.2 Methodological Gap: Underutilization of Quantitative Approaches

A second critical gap pertains to methodological choices in CSR and communication research. The majority of studies examining the relationship between CSR communication and brand reputation tend to use qualitative or mixed methods approaches, such as content analysis, case studies, or focus group discussions (Hossain & Rahman, 2022). While these methods offer valuable insights

into stakeholder perceptions and organizational narratives, they often lack the generalizability and statistical data that quantitative methods provide.

As a result, empirical validation of theoretical assumptions such as the strength, direction and statistical significance of relationships between CSR communication and brand outcomes is often missing or weakly substantiated. This study addresses this gap by employing a quantitative research design to measure the influence of social media-based CSR communication on brand reputation, using survey data and inferential statistics. The use of a quantitative lens is expected to offer more robust and generalizable findings, which can inform both academic theory and practical strategy.

2.3.3 Theoretical Gap: Limited Use of Stakeholder and Dialogic Communication Theories

Another gap in the literature lies in the theoretical frameworks commonly employed. Existing CSR studies have largely relied on Legitimacy Theory or Institutional Theory, which emphasize how firms seek to align with societal norms or regulatory expectations to gain legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). While useful, these theories often overlook the interactive and participatory nature of CSR communication in the digital age.

In contrast, Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) and Dialogic Communication Theory (Kent & Taylor, 2002) offer more dynamic perspectives by highlighting the relational, two-way nature of CSR communication, especially through social media. However, these theories have not been widely integrated into CSR research in emerging markets. Yang and Kent (2022) observed that dialogic principles, which emphasized openness, mutuality and engagement are crucial for understanding digital CSR communication, yet they remain underutilized in CSR studies conducted in Africa or similar regions. This study contributes to bridging this theoretical gap by explicitly adopting both Stakeholder Theory and Dialogic Communication Theory to explore the

mechanisms through which social media CSR engagement impacts public perceptions and brand outcomes.

2.3.4 Population Gap: Neglect of Social Media Users as Strategic Stakeholders

The literature also reveals a population gap in terms of stakeholder focus. Many studies on CSR and brand reputation have centered on internal stakeholders such as employees and shareholders or broad categories like “consumers” or “the general public.” However, in the current digital communication environment, social media users have emerged as powerful stakeholders who actively shape, amplify, and reinterpret brand narratives (Adegbite et al., 2021). These users are not merely passive recipients of CSR messages, they are co-creators of meaning, engaging with, endorsing or critiquing CSR messages in real-time.

Despite this, the role of social media users as strategic stakeholders in CSR discourse has been under-explored, particularly in the Sub-Saharan African context. Understanding how these users perceive CSR messages, what prompts them to engage and how their interpretations influence brand reputation is essential for designing effective digital CSR strategies. This study addresses this population gap by focusing specifically on social media users in Ghana, thereby offering insights into a stakeholder group that is increasingly central to corporate reputation management in the digital era.

2.3.5 Communication Gap: Challenges of Message Authenticity and Cultural Resonance

Finally, there is a communication gap in the existing literature regarding how authenticity, transparency and cultural relevance of CSR messages influence brand outcomes. While many studies assert that CSR can enhance reputation, fewer have examined how message design, tone, and delivery channels affect stakeholder perceptions in emerging markets. In Ghana, for example,

local language use, community involvement and storytelling traditions may significantly impact how CSR messages are received and interpreted.

Studies such as those by Adegbite et al. (2021) and Karjaluoto et al. (2021) have called for more research that considers these cultural dynamics, but this area remains insufficiently addressed. This study seeks to contribute by evaluating not just the frequency or visibility of CSR messages on social media, but also the stakeholder-perceived credibility and relevance of such messages, particularly within Ghanaian sociocultural settings.

In summary, this study responds to five major gaps in the current literature,: a contextual gap focusing on Ghana's underrepresented telecom sector, a methodological gap concerning the lack of quantitative research, a theoretical gap stemming from limited integration of dialogic and stakeholder theories, a population gap that overlooks social media users as key stakeholders, and a communication gap regarding the need for culturally resonant and authentic CSR messaging. By addressing these deficiencies, the study offers a comprehensive and localized understanding of how social media-based CSR communication can shape brand reputation in Ghana's telecommunications industry, particularly using MTN Ghana as a case study.

2. 4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, two prominent theoretical models, Stakeholder Theory and Dialogic Communication Theory provide the conceptual scaffolding for examining how social media-based CSR communication influences MTN Ghana's brand reputation. These frameworks are particularly relevant in today's digital communication environment, where stakeholder expectations and perceptions are rapidly shaped by online interactions. The integration of these theories offers a multidimensional understanding of the strategic role of CSR communication in shaping brand image, consumer trust and loyalty through interactive digital platforms.

2.4.1 Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984)

The Stakeholder Theory emerged in strategic management as a counterpoint to shareholder primacy. Stakeholder Theory was originally proposed by Freeman (1984) in his seminal work , *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*. This theory posits that organizations are accountable not only to shareholders but also to a broader range of stakeholders who are affected by corporate activities. It challenges the traditional shareholder-centric view of corporations by arguing that businesses should be accountable to a broader range of stakeholders, and these include customers, employees, investors, regulators, suppliers, and the broader community. The theory underscores the importance of ethically managing relationships and communications with these groups to achieve long-term organizational success and legitimacy.

In the context of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Stakeholder Theory offers a vital lens through which companies can evaluate their societal obligations and their strategies for fulfilling them. It suggests that organizations that actively consider stakeholder needs through consistent, transparent and responsive communication which are more likely to build reputational capital and social legitimacy (Hörisch, Freeman, & Schaltegger, 2020). CSR thus becomes a vehicle for value creation, aligning corporate conduct with public expectations and moral standards.

Previous scholarly works articulated three complementary strands which are descriptive (how firms actually behave), instrumental (links to performance) and normative (ethical grounds for considering stakeholder interests) which together position stakeholder management as both morally defensible and strategically valuable (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). More recent reviews have recentered stakeholder theory within strategy and organization scholarship, emphasizing dynamic, multi-stakeholder contexts, value creation for and with stakeholders, and the integration of ethics and competitive advantage (Bridoux & Vishwanathan, 2022).

Contemporary extensions conceptualize value creation as joint and relational, foregrounding fairness, reciprocity and the distribution of value among stakeholders. Scholars have also explored the interfaces between stakeholder theory, sustainability management, and accounting, providing conceptual syntheses that explain how stakeholder information needs shape non-financial reporting and accountability systems (Hörisch, Freeman, & Schaltegger, 2020). In addition, recent work underscores stakeholder salience the relative power, legitimacy and urgency of claims as a determinant of managerial attention and resource allocation, and considers how corporate culture and governance conditions mitigate stakeholder violations (Zaman, 2024).

For companies like MTN Ghana, operating in a highly competitive and regulated telecommunications industry, stakeholder engagement is not optional but essential. Every CSR message especially on social media serves as a touchpoint for stakeholder assessment of the company's credibility and ethical orientation. Research by Abukari and Abdul-Hamid (2018) in the Ghanaian telecom context reveals that transparent CSR reporting correlates strongly with increased stakeholder trust, particularly when those disclosures are culturally relevant and tied to national development goals like education, health, and digital inclusion.

2.4.1.2 Application of Stakeholder Theory in CSR Research

Stakeholder Theory has been a foundational lens for explaining CSR antecedents and consequences across industries and regions. Empirical studies show that when stakeholder concerns are integrated into strategy and communication, firms tend to experience stronger reputational outcomes and in many cases, improved financial performance. Evidence from sustainability and business-society research links stakeholder-centered governance and transparent non-financial reporting to enhanced reputation, investor confidence, and stakeholder trust (Gerged, 2023; Bai, Tang, & Wang, 2023). Meta-analytic and large-sample studies also report positive

associations between CSR performance and brand outcomes when stakeholders perceive initiatives as authentic and material (Wu, 2024; Alam & Islam, 2023).

In the digital communication era, the theory has been repeatedly employed to interpret how social media-based CSR messages shape engagement and reputation. Studies show that CSR content tailored to salient stakeholder values, and communicated with transparency about motives and impacts, increases message credibility, stimulates interaction and strengthens brand advocacy intentions (Dalla-Pria & Lourenço, 2022; Huang, Lin, & Chang, 2022). New evidence further indicates that CSR messaging disseminated through social platforms can increase consumer engagement rates and contribute to positive brand attitudes and loyalty, especially when organizations respond to stakeholders and demonstrate continuity of commitment (Macca, Schoormans, & Viswanathan, 2024). The Stakeholder Theory has been widely applied to explain how corporations engage stakeholders through socially responsible initiatives.

2.4.1.3 Application of Stakeholder Theory in Previous Research

Global research on CSR communication through social media identifies several patterns consistent with Stakeholder Theory.

Message credibility increases when organizations clearly articulate the societal problem, the company's motives which should be values-driven rather than self-interested and measurable impacts. Such transparency reduces attributions of greenwashing and builds trust. Stakeholder responsiveness to adapting content based on feedback and demonstrating accountability correlates with stronger engagement and more favorable brand attitudes. Finally, alignment between CSR topics and stakeholder priorities (e.g., local education, healthcare access, digital inclusion) is associated with higher advocacy intentions and loyalty.

Within Ghana and the broader African telecom context, emerging studies report that CSR contributes to brand performance and loyalty when initiatives are visible, culturally resonant, and communicated effectively. For example, recent work in Ghana's telecom industry finds that environmental, ethical, and social dimensions of CSR predict brand performance, with communication quality shaping the strength of these associations (Amoako & Kumi, 2024). Other Ghana-focused studies observe that while telecoms engage in extensive community initiatives, their online articulation of CSR is often inconsistent, signaling a communicative gap between practice and stakeholder perceptions (Appiah et al., 2023). These findings reinforce the need to examine not only what MTN does under CSR, but how those actions are framed, explained, and dialogically reinforced online.

Despite this progress, several gaps remain. Few Ghana-based studies quantitatively model the pathways by which social media CSR content translates into brand reputation through stakeholder level mechanisms such as awareness, engagement, and perceived credibility. Secondly, cross sectional designs dominate, there is limited use of multi-wave designs that could trace temporal dynamics between CSR communication and reputational change. Furthermore, stakeholder heterogeneity differences in salience and expectations across consumers, regulators, and communities has rarely been modeled explicitly. The present study addresses these gaps by specifying a mediated framework grounded in Stakeholder Theory and testing it with Ghana specific data.

2.4.1.4 Strengths and Limitations of The Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory offers several strengths for CSR communication research;

Starting with its inclusivity, it aligns with the ethical imperative to consider diverse interests, which is central to CSR. It also provides a strategic logic by managing stakeholder relationships and not

just merely moral but also performance-relevant, as reputation and trust are formed through ongoing exchanges with stakeholders. Finally, it accommodates multi-directional value creation and recognizes that stakeholders co-create corporate meaning and legitimacy in digital spaces.

However, the theory has been critiqued for its ambiguity in defining who qualifies as a stakeholder and for being less explicit about digital-era challenges such as social media dynamics, where stakeholders can instantly amplify brand narratives. The theory faces well documented limitations. The boundary problem of who counts as a stakeholder can create analytic ambiguity and managerial overload.

Trade-offs among stakeholder claims are often under-specified especially when resources are scarce and expectations also conflict. Moreover, while the theory addresses salience, it provides limited guidance on prioritizing attention across fast-moving digital publics where issue salience, algorithmic visibility and activist mobilization fluctuate rapidly. Finally, measurement challenges persist, when linking specific stakeholder oriented actions, an example is CSR posts to reputational outcomes requires careful research design to address any issues that might come up.

2.4.1.5 Relevance of the Stakeholder Theory

The relevance of Stakeholder Theory to this study lies in its emphasis on inclusivity and ethical responsibility. It provides a structured foundation for examining how MTN Ghana engages stakeholders especially customers through social media-based CSR initiatives. By assessing how well these digital efforts meet stakeholder expectations, the study aims to determine their contribution to shaping brand reputation. This aligns with earlier findings by Morsing and Schultz (2006), who argued that two-way stakeholder engagement enhances the perceived sincerity of CSR efforts, thereby strengthening corporate reputation.

Moreover, stakeholder theory enhances reputational risk management by helping companies identify and respond to potential conflicts or misalignments between stakeholder expectations and corporate behaviour (Freeman et al., 2020). In the digital age, where public scrutiny is instantaneous and viral backlash is a real threat, proactively managing stakeholder perceptions through CSR communication has become a strategic imperative.

2.4.1.6 Justification of Stakeholder Theory for the Present Study.

The present study investigates how social media-based CSR communication influences brand reputation for MTN Ghana, a dominant player in the country's telecommunications industry. A stakeholder lens is appropriate for three reasons.

First, telecommunications firms operate amid dense stakeholder networks consumers, regulators, communities, employees, suppliers, investors, civil society and media whose expectations are directly shaped through digital channels.

Secondly, CSR activities in relation to health, education etc. targets issues salient to Ghana's development agenda and stakeholder perceptions of these initiatives are therefore central to legitimacy.

Finally, MTN's own governance and reporting system explicitly foregrounds stakeholder engagement and transparency, including group-wide sustainability disclosures and stakeholder mapping practices.

MTN's public reporting indicates a structured approach to stakeholder engagement, with its foundation founded by a policy of allocating 1% of profit after tax to social investments in areas such as education and health. Recent disclosures show long-standing commitments to community projects and transparent reporting on human rights, security and sustainability performance across

markets. These organisational practices underscore that stakeholder consideration is not peripheral but embedded in MTN's strategy further validating Stakeholder Theory as a foundational lens for this research. In Ghana, Abukari and Abdul-Hamid (2018) found that transparent CSR communication in the telecommunications sector fosters stakeholder trust and enhances reputation. Adegbite et al. (2021) further emphasize that in emerging economies, CSR is often seen as a developmental tool that direct

2.4.1.7 Building a Stakeholder Theoretic Framework for This Study

Guided by Stakeholder Theory, the proposed framework conceptualizes social media-based CSR communication as an independent variable that influences brand reputation through three theoretically grounded mediators, and these are stakeholder awareness, stakeholder engagement and perceived credibility. Stakeholder awareness captures the extent to which target publics know about and understand MTN's CSR activities. Stakeholder engagement reflects behavioural and psychological participation consisting of likes, comments, shares etc. Perceived credibility captures the degree to which stakeholders view CSR messages as trustworthy, authenticated and aligned with core values.

The framework identifies CSR communication on social media as the independent variable, the dependent variable being brand reputation is defined as collective stakeholder judgments of MTN's overall character and performance. The framework also recognizes potential moderators. However, this relationship is mediated by three core factors: stakeholder awareness, stakeholder engagement and perceived credibility. These mediators are essential in explaining how and why CSR communication translates or fails to translate into enhanced brand reputation. Together, these specifications translate the broad tenets of Stakeholder Theory into a testable model linked

to measurable constructs. The Stakeholder Theory hypothesizes connects awareness, engagement and credibility to reputation.

Stakeholder Theory offers a rigorous and contextually appropriate foundation for investigating how social media based CSR communication influences MTN Ghana's brand reputation. By prioritizing stakeholder needs and perceptions, the theory helps translate CSR content into testable pathways consisting of awareness, engagement and credibility that are salient in Ghana's digital communication environment. The resulting framework not only address gaps in the local literature but also contribute to the global discourse on how stakeholder-oriented communication strategies shape reputation in emerging markets.

2.4.2 Dialogic Communication Theory (Kent & Taylor, 1998; 2002)

The Dialogic Communication Theory was developed most prominently by Kent and Taylor (1998; 2002) to describe and prescribe communication that builds mutual understanding rather than merely disseminating information. Rooted in the principles of dialogic ethics, the theory advocates for two-way symmetrical communication, where both the organization and its stakeholders participate in a dynamic exchange of ideas and feedback (Kent & Lane, 2021). This model counters traditional one-way, top-down messaging strategies by promoting interactive and participatory communication a central feature of effective CSR engagement on social media.

According to Kent and Taylor (2002), dialogic communication is underpinned by five key principles and these are:

- Mutuality which is fostering a sense of equality and respect between parties.
- Propinquity that has to do with encouraging timely and spontaneous interaction.
- Empathy that is demonstrating concern for stakeholders' viewpoints and emotions.
- Risk which is allowing vulnerability by acknowledging organizational shortcomings.

- Commitment defined as dedicating resources and attention to sustained dialogue.

Kent (2021) advances an architecture for dialogic engagement on social media, specifying philosophical and technical features required for platforms to enable meaningful dialogue. This includes affordances that facilitate responsiveness, reciprocity and communal problem-solving, and cautions against equating interaction metrics with genuine dialogic engagement. In the digital communication landscape, these principles are operationalized through practices such as replying to comments, using interactive tools like polls and Q&A sessions, incorporating user-generated content, and tailoring messages based on stakeholder feedback (Yang & Kent, 2022). These practices not only humanize brands but also make CSR initiatives more accessible and credible.

From a CSR communication perspective, dialogic theory explains how organizations can build trust and relational capital by inviting stakeholders into ongoing conversations about social and environmental issues. For example, Chung and Cho (2021) found that organizations employing dialogic principles in their CSR content especially through social media experienced higher engagement levels, increased trust and improved brand attitudes.

In the Ghanaian context, where mobile penetration is high and social media plays an influential role in shaping public discourse, dialogic engagement can deepen emotional and cognitive ties between companies and their audiences. MTN Ghana, being a dominant market player, can significantly benefit from deploying dialogic strategies in its CSR communication ensuring not just dissemination but meaningful interaction.

In particular, Dialogic Communication Theory emphasizes the engagement and interactive dialogue between organizations and their publics on digital platforms. This is especially relevant in today's digital age, where social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram have become pivotal communication tools. In line with this, many corporate entities, including MTN

Ghana, increasingly use social media to disseminate CSR content to influence public perception and brand equity (Kim & Ferguson, 2019).

2.4.2.1 Dialogic Theory in CSR Communication

A recent line of research applies Dialogic Communication Theory to CSR, arguing that dialogic processes help reduce skepticism, enhance perceived authenticity and convert interest into supportive behaviors. Studies show that when stakeholders perceive CSR communication as dialogic and authentic, they report higher trust, stronger online brand community engagement intentions and increased loyalty (Chung & Cho, 2023; Page Center, 2023). Experimental and survey evidence indicates that dialogic responsiveness and stakeholder participation (e.g., polls, Q&A, user-generated content) strengthen empathy and identification with the firm's social causes, which in turn support reputation-enhancing outcomes (Wang et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2023).

Emerging work extends dialogic CSR to organisational practice which is bottom-up, employee involved CSR design is perceived as more dialogic and yields more favorable evaluations than top-down approaches, with effects mediated by perceived dialogic internal communication (Kim, Park, & Sung, 2024). Across platforms, the quality of dialogic cues (e.g., answering criticism, acknowledging limitations, inviting co-creation) is a stronger predictor of reputation outcomes than message volume. In short, dialogic CSR appears to convert communication into relationships by foregrounding mutuality, empathy, and responsiveness.

2.4.2.2 Application of Dialogic Communication Theory in Previous Research

The literature indicates that dialogic cues acknowledging criticism, inviting stakeholder stories, reporting impact with humility enhance perceived authenticity and trust. However, Ghana-specific evidence remains limited, with few studies linking concrete dialogic features of CSR posts to reputation outcomes. Moreover, most designs are cross-sectional and do not capture how dialogic

exchanges evolve over time or across stakeholder segments. This thesis addresses these gaps by operationalizing dialogic quality and testing mediated pathways to brand reputation among MTN Ghana stakeholders.

2.4.2.3 Strengths and Limitations of Dialogic Communication Theory

The strength of Dialogic Communication Theory lies in its practical application to the social media context, where interactive engagement is central. It provides a useful framework for evaluating the quality of CSR communication. Dialogic Communication Theory centers the relational and ethical dimensions of CSR communication by offering fine-grained guidance on how to humanise brands, democratize voice and also translate communication into relationship quality. Its emphasis on mutuality and responsiveness aligns with stakeholder expectations in digital spaces and complements stakeholder-theoretic concerns with legitimacy and value creation.

However, the theory may assume ideal conditions for dialogue that rarely exist online. Algorithmic biases, limited resources for sustained interaction, and selective audience engagement can hinder genuine two-way communication. With its limitation, dialogic quality is difficult to measure reliably, proxy metrics (likes, comments) capture activity more than mutual understanding. Secondly, dialogue can be resource intensive and may expose organizations to reputational risk when acknowledging shortcomings. Also, algorithmic curation and platform incentives often privilege polarizing content, complicating sustained, good-faith dialogue. Finally, the theory under-specifies how to balance competing stakeholder claims in crisis situations, an area where integration with Stakeholder Theory is particularly valuable.

2.4.2.4 Relevance of the Theory

The theory also offers insight into how audiences interpret CSR messages. Dialogic communication fosters transparency and reduces skepticism, which is especially important given

the growing concern over CSR being used as a publicity stunt rather than a genuine social contribution (Ullah et al., 2021). When stakeholders perceive that their voices are heard and acted upon, they are more likely to trust the brand and advocate for it.

The relevance of Dialogic Communication Theory to this study lies in its practical utility for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of MTN Ghana's CSR communication on social media. By applying this framework, the study investigates whether MTN's use of digital platforms fosters meaningful stakeholder dialogue and contributes positively to brand reputation.

2.4.2.5 Relevance to MTN Ghana and the Ghanaian Telecommunications Context

Ghana has high mobile penetration and vibrant social media use, making digital channels central to stakeholder sense-making about telecom providers. MTN Ghana's CSR portfolio implemented primarily through the MTN Foundation in education, health, and economic empowerment creates recurring opportunities for public dialogue. Publicly available reports outline structured stakeholder engagement and transparent disclosure practices. Yet sector studies suggest that Ghanaian telecoms often under-utilise dialogic features online, signaling scope to improve authenticity and responsiveness in CSR communication. Applying the Dialogic Communication Theory in this setting therefore provides a practically useful lens to evaluate whether MTN's social media fosters genuine dialogue that strengthens brand reputation.

2.4.2.6 Dialogic CSR Communication Framework for This Study

Independent variable: Dialogic quality of CSR communication on social media, reflected in mutuality cues, propinquity, empathy, risk and commitment

Dependent variable: brand reputation. Moderators: stakeholder type (consumer, community member, employee), issue salience (education, health, digital inclusion), and prior attitude toward MTN.

Mediators: Perceived authenticity of CSR, stakeholder identification with the firm's social causes, and perceived responsiveness.

The Dialogic Communication Theory hypothesizes connects quality of CSR dialogue (mutuality, empathy, responsiveness, authenticity) to trust, identification and reputation.

2.5 INTEGRATING BOTH THEORIES

While Stakeholder Theory emphasizes who organizations should engage, the Dialogic Communication Theory focuses on how such engagement should occur. Together, they provide a holistic framework for analyzing CSR communication in the digital age. Stakeholder Theory grounds the ethical responsibility of corporations toward diverse publics, while Dialogic Theory operationalizes the methods of achieving meaningful two-way communication. In the case of MTN Ghana, this integration allows for an analysis of both the inclusivity of its CSR communication strategies and the quality of engagement with stakeholders on social media.

The theoretical framework for this study is built around the relationship between CSR communication on social media and brand reputation, mediated by stakeholder awareness, engagement, and credibility. Stakeholder Theory explains why CSR communication must address diverse stakeholder needs to enhance legitimacy, while Dialogic Communication Theory explains how interactive and transparent engagement fosters trust and strengthens brand reputation.

In conclusion, Stakeholder Theory and Dialogic Communication Theory offer a synergistic framework for this research. While Stakeholder Theory focuses on the ethical responsibility to address the needs and expectations of various publics, the Dialogic Communication Theory offers a roadmap for how to engage these stakeholders effectively particularly through digital channels. The integration of both theories enables a more robust analysis of how MTN Ghana's social media-

based CSR initiatives influence stakeholder perceptions and brand reputation in a dynamic communication environment.

2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented a comprehensive and critical review of scholarly literature surrounding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) communication and brand reputation, with particular attention to the emerging role of social media as a vehicle for stakeholder engagement and reputation management. It commenced by clarifying essential conceptual terms, including CSR, brand reputation, stakeholder engagement, and social media-based communication, all of which are foundational to the discourse on corporate communications in the digital age.

The chapter then transitioned into an exploration of theoretical perspectives that inform the study, particularly the Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) and the Dialogic Communication Theory (Kent & Taylor, 1998; 2002). These theories provide not only an interpretive lens but also a robust framework for examining how CSR communications, especially when disseminated through interactive digital platforms like social media, can shape stakeholder perceptions and foster corporate legitimacy. The stakeholder theory emphasizes the ethical responsibility of firms to address and align with the interests of various stakeholders, while the dialogic theory underscores the importance of two-way, mutually respectful, and interactive communication in strengthening relationships with the public.

Furthermore, the chapter synthesized relevant empirical studies that have investigated the intersection between CSR communication and brand reputation in various contexts. Studies such as those by Gürlek and Tuna (2021), Hossain and Rahman (2022), and Appiah et al. (2021) illustrate how well-executed CSR communication can foster brand trust, loyalty, and emotional attachment, particularly when the communication is authentic, transparent, and culturally resonant.

It also highlighted the increasing use of visual and interactive content by organizations to deepen stakeholder engagement and amplify the impact of CSR initiatives.

Despite these contributions, the chapter identified several critical gaps in the existing literature. One of the most significant gaps is the geographical concentration of existing studies, most of which are based in Western or Asian contexts, with relatively limited empirical research focused on Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Ghana's telecommunications industry (Adegbite et al., 2021). There is also a methodological gap, as many existing studies rely on qualitative or mixed-method approaches, with limited application of quantitative designs that could offer generalizable insights (Hossain & Rahman, 2022). Additionally, the chapter pointed to a population gap, noting that while existing literature often focuses on internal stakeholders or general consumers, fewer studies explore the views of social media users who increasingly serve as both audience and co-creators of brand narratives.

Taken together, these insights justify the relevance and timeliness of the present study. By exploring how MTN Ghana's social media-based CSR communication influences its brand reputation among Ghanaian social media users, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence from a relatively under-explored context. The adoption of a quantitative research approach not only fills a methodological void but also enables a rigorous assessment of relationships among key variables. Moreover, by integrating contemporary theoretical models particularly those that emphasize ethical engagement and digital responsiveness, the study offers practical insights for corporate communication professionals aiming to enhance stakeholder relationships through strategic CSR messaging.

Ultimately, this chapter lays a solid foundation for the subsequent parts of the research by framing the conceptual and empirical landscape. It underscores the complex but increasingly critical

intersection of CSR, social media, and brand reputation and positions this research as a valuable contribution to both academic discourse and the strategic practices of organizations operating in digitally connected environments.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in the investigation of CSR communication, social media engagement, and brand reputation in the telecommunications sector in Ghana. The research design, approach, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques are all discussed in this chapter. The choice of a quantitative research approach stems from the aim to objectively measure the impact and relationship between CSR communication through social media on brand reputation.

Moreover, in the digital age, telecommunication companies engage with consumers through multiple channels, including social media, websites, and online campaigns. Quantitative methods are particularly suitable for examining patterns, trends, and statistical relationships (Creswell, 2014). By using structured surveys and questionnaires, this research can collect numerical data from a large sample of respondents, ensuring objectivity, reliability, and generalizability of findings (Bryman, 2016).

3.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm is a set of beliefs and practices that guide how researchers view reality and acquire knowledge (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This study is grounded in the positivist paradigm, which assumes that reality is objective, measurable, and independent of the researcher. Positivism is appropriate for quantitative studies because it emphasizes hypothesis testing, statistical analysis, and generalizability of findings (Neuman, 2014). Adopting the positivist paradigm is appropriate for this because this study aims to examine the measurable relationships between CSR communication on MTN Ghana's social media and MTN Ghana's brand reputation. By testing

hypotheses statistically, the researcher can make objective conclusions about the impact of CSR communication.

3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Philosophical assumptions provide the underlying worldview that guides the choice of research paradigm and methodology (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). They represent beliefs about the nature of reality, knowledge, values, and the process of research. This study adopts the positivist philosophy, which is aligned with a quantitative research approach. The following assumptions underpin the study:

3.2.1 Ontological Assumption (Nature of Reality)

Ontology refers to the researcher's stance on the nature of reality (Scotland, 2012). From a positivist perspective, reality is objective, singular and independent of human perception. The relationship between CSR communication on social media and brand reputation is treated as an observable reality that can be measured through stakeholder responses. For instance, stakeholder awareness, credibility and perceptions of brand reputation are assumed to exist independently and can be quantified through survey data.

3.2.2 Epistemological Assumption (Nature of Knowledge)

Epistemology concerns how knowledge is acquired and what counts as valid knowledge (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Under positivism, knowledge is obtained through empirical observation and measurement and also free from a researcher's bias. Knowledge about the impact of MTN Ghana's CSR communication on brand reputation will be derived from statistically analyzing numerical data collected from MTN Ghana's active social media followers and users. This ensures objectivity and allows generalization of findings.

3.2.3 Axiological Assumption (Role of Values)

Axiology addresses the role of values in research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In positivist research, the researcher strives to remain value-free and objective, minimizing personal bias. The researcher will not impose personal views about MTN Ghana's CSR activities. Instead, ethical measures such as anonymity, voluntary participation, and unbiased questionnaire design will be used to ensure neutrality in data collection and analysis.

3.2.4 Methodological Assumption (Approach to Inquiry)

Methodology refers to the process of systematic inquiry (Saunders et al., 2019). In positivism, this involves deductive reasoning, hypothesis testing and statistical analysis of quantitative data. This research work employs a deductive approach, beginning with established theories Stakeholder Theory and Dialogic Communication Theory to formulate hypotheses, which are then tested using survey data and statistical tools (SPSS).

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

A research approach provides the overall plan for linking philosophical assumptions to specific research methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This study adopts a quantitative approach, which involves collecting numerical data and applying statistical techniques to test hypotheses (Apuke, 2017). The study used a quantitative approach to its investigation. This approach was used to collect, examine, and interpret data methodically and impartially. Data collection involved employing questionnaires to obtain data. The technique collects quantifiable, measurable data that will enable statistical analysis. The approach promoted objectivity and worked to reduce bias in the gathering and interpretation of data. It enables the statistical analysis of data to find patterns, connections, and trends (Hair et al., 2019).

The quantitative method's capacity to produce results that may be applied to a larger population is one of its key advantages (Hair et al., 2019). In essence, the findings obtained through quantitative analysis can be generalized to the broader Ghanaian telecommunications sector, providing insights that have broader relevance and applicability. The key aim of this study is to examine the relationships between CSR communication on MTN Ghana's social media and MTN Ghana's brand reputation. In that regard, the quantitative approach is well-suited for measuring and quantifying these relationships, allowing for a more in-depth understanding of the variables involved (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Numerical data gathered through questionnaires will enable statistical testing of relationships, aligning with the study's positivist stance.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to the overall strategy for integrating different components of the study in a coherent and logical manner (Saunders et al., 2019). Research design outlines the strategy for conducting a study in ways that aid in the selection of methods essential for accurately and clearly addressing the research objectives and or questions (Creswell, 2014). Two critical issues considered in a study design are the purpose and time dimension. The literature outlines three key designs in terms of purpose in social science research and these are exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research (Neumann, 2014). This study adopts a blend of descriptive and explanatory design.

3.4.1 The descriptive design

Descriptive research is a type of research design that aims to depict the characteristics of a phenomenon. In quantitative research, descriptive studies often involve the collection and analysis of numerical data to describe and summarize the features of a population or phenomenon under investigation (Myers, 2013). Descriptive designs are particularly useful when researchers seek to

provide an accurate and detailed portrayal of a situation, group or phenomenon without manipulating variables or establishing causation (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the descriptive design aided in addressing objectives one and two. These objectives sought to assess the extent to which CSR communication on social media has an impact on MTN's brand reputation.

3.4.2 The Explanatory design

The primary objective of the explanatory design is to elucidate the nature of the relationships among variables (Neuman, 2014) and this design is predominantly quantitative. Consistent with the selected research designs, the subsequent section outlines the research approach chosen for this study.

In relation to time dimension for this study, a cross-sectional research design will be used to examine the current perception and relationship amongst these variables. A cross-sectional design enables the collection of data at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of the relationships between variables (Fowler, 2013). This approach is aligned with the research objectives, which are focused on understanding the impact of CSR communication through social media on brand reputation within the Ghanaian telecommunications sector.

3.5 RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a survey research method, which is widely used in quantitative studies to collect standardized data from a sample population (Check & Schutt, 2012).

A survey is a systematic approach to collecting data from a large sample of individuals or organizations (Neuman, 2014) and is well-suited for investigating the impact of CSR communication on social on MTN Ghana's brand reputation.

Here's why a survey is the preferred method.

Firstly, surveys are ideal for gathering primary data from large groups, using representative samples and standardized questionnaires (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The survey design is appropriate because it facilitates the collection of large amounts of data on CSR communication and brand reputation, enabling the establishment of relationships between variables. This allows the researcher to assess how frequently CSR messages are communicated, their credibility and their influence on brand reputation, consistent with the study's objectives. This study aims to directly gather responses from a substantial number of service sector employees, necessitating a structured survey approach for reliability.

Second, the survey strategy is advantageous as it enables the examination of multiple variables, the collection of quantitative data for statistical analysis, and is suitable for cross-sectional studies (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011), aligning with the characteristics of the current study.

3.6 POPULATION

A population is the entire group of individuals, objects or entities from which a researcher intends to generalize findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The target population for this study comprises MTN Ghana's active social media followers and subscribers. This group is appropriate because they are directly exposed to MTN Ghana's CSR communication through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X) and Instagram, and their perceptions are relevant in assessing brand reputation and can also provide relevant insights into their perceptions of brand reputation.

MTN Ghana, as the leading telecommunications provider in the country, has a subscriber base of over 25 million customers (National Communications Authority, 2023). Out of this number, a significant proportion engages with MTN's digital platforms. Collectively, MTN Ghana has an online community exceeding 2.7 million social media followers, making it a suitable population for a study on social media-based CSR communication. Since it is not feasible to study the entire

population of over 2.7 million followers, a representative sample of 100 respondents will be drawn to provide statistically reliable insights within the scope of this thesis.

3.7 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING STRATEGY

A sample is a subset of the population selected for study (Etikan & Bala, 2017). This study employs a stratified random sampling technique, which involves dividing the population into subgroups (e.g., age, gender, or social media platform) and randomly selecting participants from each stratum. Stratified sampling enhances representativeness and reduces sampling bias (Taherdoost, 2016).

The sample size for this study consisted of 100 respondents who are active followers and subscribers of MTN Ghana. The sample of 100 will be distributed across major platforms (e.g., 40 from Facebook, 30 from Twitter/X, 30 from Instagram), ensuring coverage of MTN Ghana's key digital engagement channels. This distribution reduces platform-specific bias and increases the generalizability of findings. This sample size is appropriate for a quantitative research study, allowing for robust statistical analysis and meaningful insights as recommended by Hair et al. (2019). Although Krejcie and Morgan (1970) recommend larger sample sizes (e.g., 384 for populations >10,000), several scholars note that smaller samples are acceptable in social science research if carefully selected (Hair et al., 2019). A sample of 100 respondents is justified based on: Feasibility given resource, time and access constraints, 100 respondents provide a manageable yet meaningful dataset for this thesis. With statistical adequacy, a minimum of 30–100 respondents is considered acceptable for correlation and regression analyses in explanatory quantitative studies (VanVoorhis & Morgan, 2007). The Stratified random sampling ensures that the 100 respondents adequately reflect the diversity of MTN Ghana's social media user base. It provides a balance between statistical power and feasibility, enabling meaningful analysis of the impact of CSR communication on social media on the brand reputation of MTN Ghana. The sample size is also

manageable and allows for efficient data collection, especially in the context of a diverse and potentially large population within the service sector (Dillman et al., 2014).

The study acknowledges that a sample of 100 may also limit the generalizability of results compared to larger surveys. However, the study's focus is on identifying trends and relationships rather than making national-level generalizations. This limitation will be addressed in the discussion chapter.

3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Heale & Twycross, 2015). To ensure validity, the questionnaire will undergo expert review by academic supervisors and professionals in CSR communication. Reliability refers to the consistency of an instrument in measuring constructs across time and contexts (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). A pilot test involving 30 respondents will be conducted to refine the questions. The reliability of the scales will be assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a threshold of 0.70 considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2019). This ensures that constructs such as CSR credibility and brand reputation are measured consistently.

3.9 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The primary data collection instrument is a structured questionnaire, which is widely used in quantitative research to gather standardized responses (Bryman, 2016). The questionnaire is divided into three sections and these are;

Demographic characteristics of respondents (e.g. age, gender, education)

Questions/Items measuring awareness and perception of MTN Ghana's CSR initiatives communicated on social media, and Questions/Items assessing brand reputation.

A five-point Likert scale (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree) is employed to capture attitudes and perceptions, as it allows for nuanced measurement of constructs (Joshi et al., 2015).

3.10 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Data collection refers to the systematic process of gathering information from respondents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research data collection instrument adopted for the study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data and included a mix of closed-ended questions and Likert scale items. This instrument aligns with the study's objective of measuring the impact of CSR communication on social media on MTN Ghana's brand reputation.

The questionnaire was developed based on the research objectives and questions focusing on key variables such as CSR communication on social media, brand reputation etc. The questionnaire included both closed-ended questions (e.g., yes/no responses, multiple-choice questions) and Likert scale items to capture quantitative data (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). Participants were contacted and informed consent were obtained prior to participation.

Questionnaires was distributed electronically through Google Forms and shared across MTN Ghana's social media platforms and online user groups. Online distribution is cost-effective, time efficient and suitable for reaching a digitally active population (Evans & Mathur, 2018). Responses were collected over a four-week period to ensure a broader response base.

3.11 DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE/PROCEDURE

Data analysis involves examining and interpreting collected data to draw conclusions (Saunders et al., 2019). The quantitative data collected through questionnaires was coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) will be used to summarize demographic data. Inferential statistics

such as correlation analysis, regression analysis and ANOVA will be applied to test hypotheses and determine the strength and direction of relationships between CSR communication and brand reputation.

3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are principles that ensure respect, fairness, and protection of participants during research (Resnik, 2018). Participants will be informed of the study's purpose, assured of confidentiality, and asked to provide informed consent before participating. Participation will be voluntary, and respondents will have the right to withdraw at any point. Data will be stored securely and used solely for academic purposes. The study will adhere to the ethical guidelines of the researcher's institution.

Ensuring the ethical conduct of research is paramount in this study, especially when collecting data from human participants. A number of ethical considerations were adhered to throughout the research process.

The participants were provided with clear and concise informed consent statements explaining the purpose of the study, data collection techniques and their rights as participants and voluntarily agreed to take part.

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used to keep the names of the participants out of the work and protect participants' identities and organisational details. Data was also stored securely and only accessible to the research team and not disclosed to third party.

Autonomy which has to do with participants feeling free to decide for themselves and give the right to withdraw at any point. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence and were not pressured into participating.

The research underwent ethical review and approval by the School of Graduate Studies and Research. Adhering to these ethical considerations helped in protecting the rights and wellbeing of the participants, maintain the integrity of the research, and ensured that the study was conducted in an ethical and responsible manner.

3.13 AUTHENTICITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

The study ensured authenticity through;

Member-checking was conducted by sharing responses and key interpretations with participants for verification and to also determine accuracy.

Clarifying biases, journaling was used to manage researcher bias and ensure findings were grounded in participants' accounts.

Trustworthiness:

Transcript checking, after the data was collected, it was reshared with the respondents to reconfirm certain inputs to prevent biases in order to promote credibility so participants can speak to the fact that their experiences have been captured same as they described.

Maintaining meaning, during the coding process the intended meanings of the participants were maintained even in the process of categorizing data into themes.

3.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter on research methodology is a vital component of the study and has described the methodology adopted to examine the impact of social media-based CSR communication on MTN Ghana's brand reputation. It discussed the research paradigm, approach, design, population, sampling, data collection instruments, validity and reliability, data collection and analysis

procedures and ethical considerations. This chapter lays the foundation for ethical research and the next chapter will present the results of the data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents the findings and discussion of the study. The chapter is divided into multiple sections that logically respond to the research objectives of the study. It starts with demographic data, describing the characteristics of the 100 participants that were involved in the research their gender distribution, age distribution, education and experience of using the social media, period of following the MTN Ghana, which is the main platform used. Next, the chapter examines the first research objective, which is to determine the extent to which MTN Ghana communicates about CSR on social media, presenting descriptive statistics and means of multiple indicators of CSR communication frequency, clarity, and engagement. The chapter goes on to examine the hypotheses of the study, where the first test involves a correlation analysis that investigates the relationship between CSR communication on social media and the brand reputation of MTN Ghana, thus addressing the second research objective. The regression analysis findings are then reported to establish how various forms of CSR initiatives reported in social media impact brand perception, fulfilling the third research objective by interpreting the models and ANOVA results, as well as regression coefficient estimates. The chapter ends with a detailed discussion of findings, which critically compares and contrasts findings with existing empirical literature and theoretical frameworks, comparing and contrasting the findings of the study with what has been previously studied and offers an explanation of where there has been a convergence and where divergences are observed.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The demographic profile of the study provided in Table 4.1 shows some valuable information regarding the social media audience of MTN Ghana and engagement patterns. The sample reflects a reasonably balanced gender representation, with females having a slight majority of 52% against males at 46%. This close gender balance is an indication that the social media CSR communication of MTN Ghana has cross-gender applicability, which can be useful in learning how brand image messages connect with the different segments of consumers. Below is a breakdown of the gender distribution of the participants.

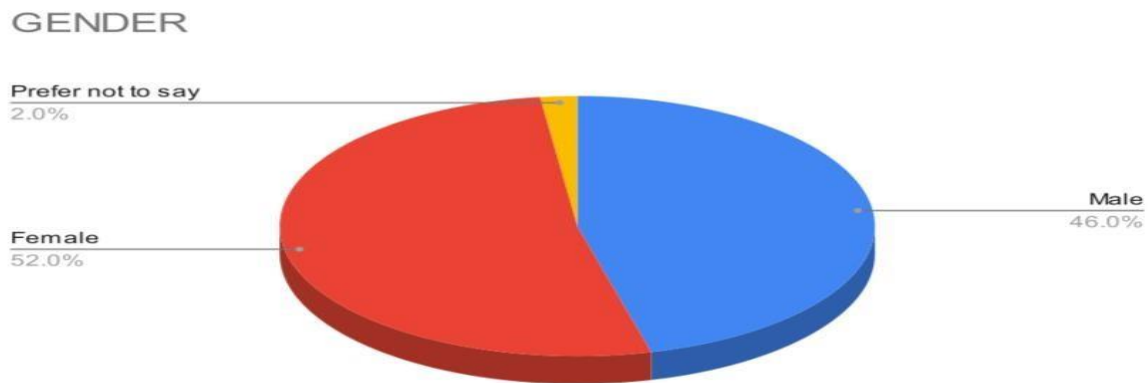


Figure 4.1.1: Gender of participants

The age distribution is very concentrated, with the 26-35 years age group constituting the majority of the respondents at 68%, and the 18-25 years at 26%. The concentration of younger adults, 94% of whom are younger than 36 years of age, suggests that the social media presence of MTN Ghana is also actively used, on the whole, by a youthful, digitally native audience. This result has a profound impact on CSR communication practices because these age groups would generally be more socially responsible and would require corporate openness and genuine involvement in social

matters. The low representation of older age groups implies either the lack of social media usage among the demographics or potential gaps in MTN Ghana's outreach to older consumers.

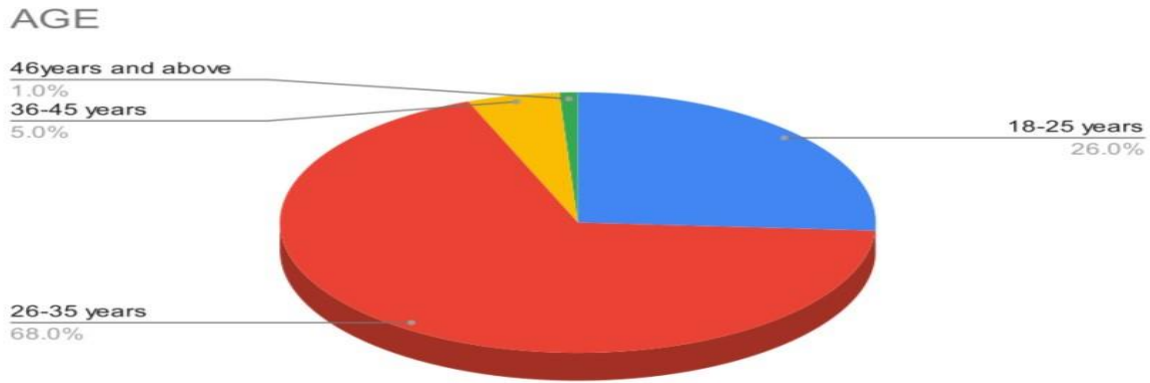


Figure 4.1.2 : Age of participants

The level of education in the sample is also very high, where 59% have bachelor's degrees and 20% have master's degrees, and, altogether, 79% are university level educated. This educated audience will be more critical and discerning when it comes to judging CSR communications, so any corporate social responsibility efforts should be substantive and not superficial. These implications imply that the authenticity and effectiveness of their CSR activities will shape the brand image of MTN Ghana among this group of people, rather than mere promotional messaging.

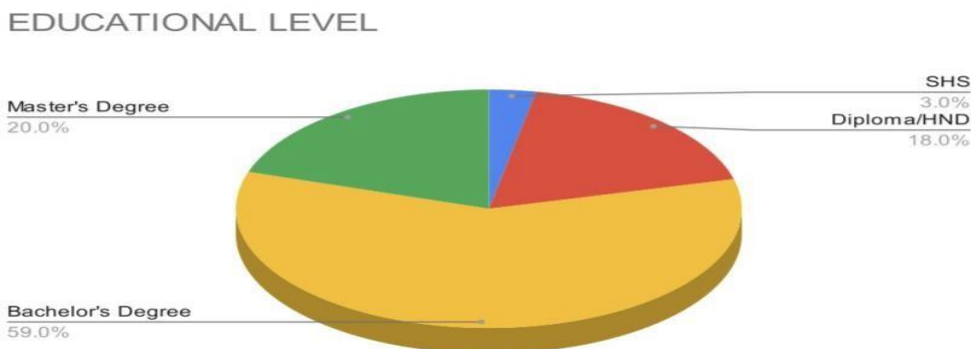


Figure 4.1.3 : Educational level of participants

The duration of engagement illustrates high levels of brand loyalty, with 62% following the MTN Ghana brand over five years or more and 21% over three to four years. This long-term engagement shows a well-established relationship between the brand and its social media followers, giving it a strong basis to communicate the value of CSR effectively.

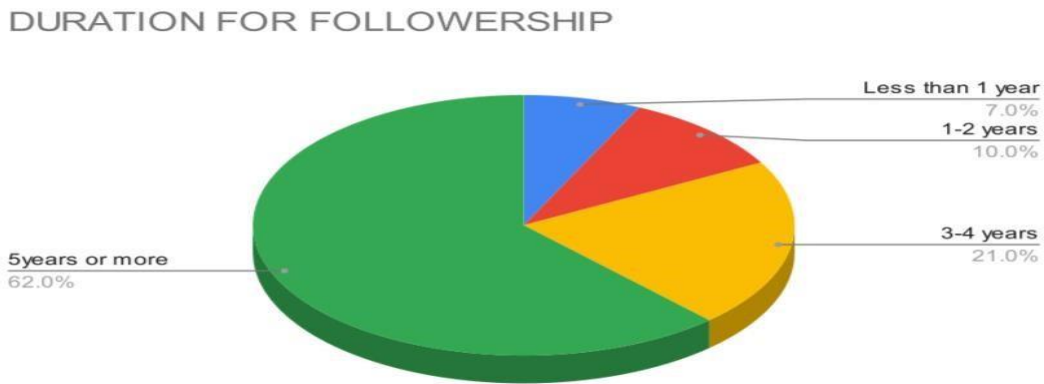


Figure 4.1.4 : Participants duration for following MTN Ghana

Concerning the choice of platforms, Instagram appears to be the leading platform of engagement with 34% of the participants, then Twitter/X (27%), and Facebook (20%), which means that visual and interactive content should be considered in CSR communication strategies.

PRIMARY PLATFORMS USED

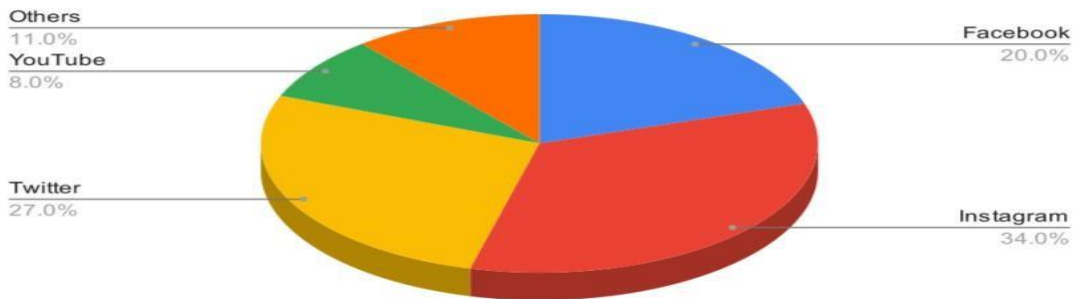


Figure 4.1.5 : Primary platforms used by participants

Table 4.1 Demographic Information

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	52	52.0
	Male	46	46.0
Age	18-25 years	26	26.0
	26-35 years	68	68.0
	36-45 years	5	5.0
	46 years and above	1	1.0
Education	Bachelor's Degree	59	59.0
	Diploma / HND	18	18.0
	Master's Degree	20	20.0
	SHS	3	3.0
Duration of following MTN	1-2 years	10	10.0

Ghana on social media	3-4 years	21	21.0
	5 years or more	62	62.0
	Less than 1 year	7	7.0
Primary platform used to engage MTN Ghana	Facebook	20	20.0
	Instagram	34	34.0
	Other (Short answer option enabled)	11	11.0
	Twitter/X	27	27.0
	YouTube	8	8.0

4.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Objective 1: The Extent to which MTN Ghana engages in CSR communication on social media

In this section, the results on the extent to which MTN Ghana engages in CSR communication on social media are presented in Table 4.2.1 to fulfill the first research objective.

Table 4.2.1 Extent to which MTN Ghana engages in CSR communication on social media

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
I frequently come across MTN Ghana's CSR-related posts on social media.	5 (5.0%)	10 (10%)	33 (33%)	38 (38%)	14 (14%)	1.019

MTN Ghana communicates its CSR initiatives regularly	4 (4%)	10 (10%)	22 (22%)	47 (47%)	17 (17%)	1.012
across multiple social media platforms.						
The content of MTN Ghana's CSR posts clearly explains the purpose of each initiative.	4 (4%)	8 (8%)	19 (19%)	51(51%)	18(18%)	.988
I am aware of MTN Ghana's CSR projects in areas such as health, education, and digital inclusion.	3 (3%)	15 (15%)	18 (18%)	49 (49%)	15(15%)	1.017
MTN Ghana provides updates and progress reports on its CSR initiatives via social media.	3(3%)	8(8%)	29 (29%)	48 (48%)	12 (12%)	.912
The frequency of MTN Ghana's CSR communication helps me stay informed about its community impact.	5 (5%)	9 (9%)	23 (23%)	50 (50%)	13 (13%)	.998
I occasionally engage (like, comment, share) with MTN Ghana's CSR-related posts.	14(14%)	14(14%)	37 (37%)	26 (26%)	9 (9%)	1.155

The results above show that there is a moderate positive perception about the CSR communication activities of MTN Ghana on social media, with the majority of indicators showing a great deal of engagement and awareness among the respondents. The data indicate that 52% of participants agree with or strongly agree that they often find posts related to the CSR of MTN Ghana, 33% are neutral, and 15% disagree. This trend indicates that although there is an apparent CSR presence of MTN Ghana on social media, it could still utilise the growth by ensuring that all of its audience can see it regularly. The average score of 1.019 shows that there is relatively low variability of the answers, which presupposes a general agreement on the visibility of CSR communications.

In terms of regularity and multi-platform nature of the CSR communication, 64% of the survey participants attest that MTN Ghana regularly communicates its initiatives on different social media platforms, and only 14% of them disagree. This result, with a mean of 1.012, indicates that CSR dissemination strategies go across platforms. Additionally, the perceived clarity of CSR content seems strong, where 69% agree that posts are sufficient in explaining the purposes of the initiatives, which suggests that MTN Ghana manages to make its CSR initiatives comprehensible and reachable to its audience. The awareness rates of particular areas of CSR like health, education and digital inclusion stand at 64%, which proves thematic messaging resonates with followers.

Provision of progress updates is positively acknowledged by 60% of the respondents, but the percentage of neutral is significantly larger at 29% implying that not all the followers would be able to track or notice progress updates. Likewise, 63% confirm that the frequency of communication also allows them to stay aware of community impact, which confirms the effectiveness of the engagement strategy by MTN Ghana.

Nevertheless, there is a crucial observation of active engagement, with only 35% reporting they engage occasionally with CSR posts by liking, commenting, or sharing, 28% disagree, and 37% remain neutral. The relatively low level of engagement, as indicated in the largest mean score of 1.155, means that though the respondents are made aware of and informed about the CSR communications of MTN Ghana, the awareness is not always translated into active involvement and amplification of CSR communications.

4.2.3 TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Objective 2: Relationship between CSR communication on social media and MTN Ghana’s brand reputation

In this section, a correlation analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis: *H₁: A significant relationship exists between CSR communication on social media and MTN Ghana’s brand reputation.* The findings are presented in Table 4.3 below;

Table 4.3 Correlation Analysis

		MTN Ghana’s brand reputation
CSR communication on social media	Pearson Correlation	.602**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	100

The correlation analysis shows that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between CSR communication in social media and the brand reputation of MTN Ghana, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.602 and a level of significance of $p < 0.001$. This positive relationship is moderate to strong, showing that with the increased or advancement of CSR communication

efforts by MTN Ghana on social media, there was a commensurate increase in the brand reputation of the company to the audience. The p-value of 0.000 is highly significant, and it confirms that such a relationship is not accidental and that such a relationship can be generalized beyond the sample of 100 respondents. Therefore, the hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

These findings have significant implications for the strategic communication planning at MTN Ghana. The findings confirm the practical relevance of investing in effective social media CSR communication plans as an effective way of building brand reputation. This implies that the current attempt by MTN Ghana to share its corporate social responsibility initiatives through social media platforms is paying off in terms of reputational gains. Therefore, to maximize the positive brand perception and competitive advantage in the Ghana telecommunications market, the organization needs to reflect on strengthening and enhancing its CSR communication practices, making them sustainable, authentic, and aligned with the expectations of stakeholders.

Objective 3: Influence of different types of CSR initiatives communicated on social media on brand perception

In this section, a regression analysis was performed to test the second hypothesis: H_2 : *The type of CSR initiative communicated on social media significantly influences consumer perception of MTN Ghana's brand.* The results are presented in Tables 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6.

MODEL SUMMARY

As shown in Table 4.4, the model summary illustrates the overall explanatory power of the CSR initiatives reported on social media in explaining the perception of brands. The value of R is 0.600, which shows the strong positive correlation of the predictor variable (CSR initiatives) with the dependent variable (brand perception). The R-squared value of 0.360 indicates that the initiative

of CSR explains 36% of the variance in the brand perception of the social media followers in the case of CSR in the company. This implies that the alteration in the perception of the brand among consumers can be explained by the presence of a wide range of CSR initiatives shared on social media platforms by about one-third. This explanatory power is robust, as evidenced by the adjusted R Square of 0.353 even after considering the number of predictors in the model. Although 36% is a significant influence, the rest of the 64% variance indicates that brand perception is influenced by other factors other than communication about CSR.

Table 4.4 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.600 ^a	.360	.353	.65322
a. Predictors: (Constant), CSR initiatives				

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Table 4.5 shows ANOVA results, which are used to test the overall statistical significance of the regression model. F-statistic of 55.048 and the significance value of 0.000 ($p = \text{less than } 0.001$), confirm that the regression model has a statistically significant value and fits the data well. This means that CSR-related activities reported on social media are a strong predictor of brand perception compared to the expectation of a random chance.

Table 4.5 ANOVA

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Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.489	1	23.489	55.048	.000 ^b
	Residual	41.816	98	.427		
Total		65.305	99			
a. Dependent Variable: Brand Perception						
b. Predictors: (Constant), CSR initiatives						

REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS

Table 4.6 regression coefficients give more specific information about the nature and the degree of the relationship between CSR initiatives and brand perception. The unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.528) suggests that brand perception gains 0.528 units with each one-unit change in the quality or intensity of CSR initiatives reported on social media. The t-value of 7.419 with significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.001$) shows that CSR initiatives are a significant predictor of brand perception. The hypothesis (H2) is accepted based on the unstandardized coefficient and p-value. The collinearity statistics, of which the tolerance was 1.000 and VIF was 1.000, showed no evidence of the multicollinearity issue, which proves the validity of these findings.

Table 4.6 Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics

		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.855	.259		7.175	.000		
	CSR Initiatives	.528	.071	.600	7.419	.000	1.000	1.000
a. Dependent Variable: Brand Perception								

4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS 4.3.1 The Extent to which MTN Ghana Engages in CSR Communication on Social Media

The results of the current research have shown that the presence of social media CSR communication in MTN Ghana is moderate, as 52% of the respondents have stated that they regularly encounter CSR-related content. This observation is consistent with the current studies that have highlighted the strategic value of social media as a CSR communication tool. Capriotti (2011) established that through digital platforms, companies are able to attain a higher level of transparency and real-time interaction between the company and the stakeholders, which enhances consumer relationships. Likewise, the fact that the current study has confirmed that 64% of the respondents recognized that 64% of the communication by MTN Ghana about its CSR activities was regular and multi-platform, supports the claim that social media has increased the coverage of CSR activities to larger groups, allowing proactive participation (Kim and Ferguson, 2018).

Nonetheless, the research found that there is an important difference between awareness and action and that only 35% of participants said they occasionally engaged with CSRs' posts by liking, commenting, or sharing. This observation is contrary to the argument by Morsing and Schultz (2006) regarding dialogic CSR communication in the digital era, which concludes that mere

statements of CSR practices are inadequate, but rather that the stakeholders need to be actively involved in discussions. The low rate of engagement implies that although Mtn Ghana does well in terms of reporting CSR messages, the mode of communication can be more information oriented instead of interactive. This finding echoes recent research by Castellano and Dutot (2013) on CSR communication using social media, which found that companies tended to focus on the controlled form of communication rather than the interactive form of communication.

The research result that the majority of the participants believe that the content of the CSR activities of MTN Ghana is clear in terms of the purposes of initiatives, 69% of the respondents, can even confirm the effective message clarity of the research, which underlines the focus of the stakeholder theory on establishing a clear message with various stakeholder groups (Freeman, 2010; Donaldson and Preston, 1995). This transparency is especially essential in the Ghanaian telecommunications environment, where Amoako et al. (2024) discovered that brand knowledge subsequently influences organisational brand value across telecommunications companies. The current research builds on this insight by showing that clear CSR communication helps in this brand knowledge building.

The comparatively high level of awareness (64%) of CSR activities by MTN Ghana in certain areas, like health, education, and digital inclusion, is on par with the CSR pyramid suggested by Carroll (1991) that sees the necessity of dealing with multiple stakeholder expectations in the economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic levels. This thematic variety in CSR communication portrays a multidimensional approach to the modern CSR scholarship. Amoako et al. (2024) particularly studied the effect of environmental, ethical, and social dimensions of CSR on brand performance in the Ghana telecommunications industry and concluded that all the dimensions have unique contributions to overall brand performance. The results of the current research indicate that

the communication strategy used in MTN Ghana allows highlighting this multidimensional engagement.

However, the moderate neutral level of response (29%) concerning CSR progress update shows that there might be differences in the follow-through communication. This observation is contrary to the best practices in the literature of CSR communication, which is focused on the importance of sustained engagements and reporting (Polonsky, 2015). The difference between the original CSR announcements and the later progress reporting can be due to the lack of resources or strategic focus; however, in the long-term, it can erode the trust of stakeholders. Lock and Schulz-Knappe (2019) have determined that credible CSR communication is credible in predicting legitimacy, and incomplete reporting is likely to undermine this credibility.

However, interestingly, the demographic structure of the respondents, mostly young and highly educated (94% under 36 years, 79% with university degrees), can be seen as possibly contributing to both the high level of awareness and the seemingly paradoxical low turnout. This demographic segment is in line with world trends where younger and educated consumers are also becoming aware of corporate social responsibility and more skeptical about corporate CSR intentions (Forehand & Grier, 2003). Bhattacharya et al. (2021) also emphasized that consumers appreciate CSR but also question corporate authenticity, which can be why awareness does not necessarily lead to engagement in the study under consideration.

4.3.2 Relationship between CSR Communication on Social Media and MTN Ghana's Brand Reputation

The empirical evidence of the study, by finding a significant positive correlation between CSR communication on social media and brand reputation ($r = 0.602$, $p < 0.001$), offers empirical evidence of existing theoretical frameworks of connecting CSR with reputational consequences.

This moderate-strong correlation supports a vast amount of previous studies that have proven that CSR has a positive impact on corporate reputation (Brammer and Pavelin, 2016; Gardberg et al., 2019). In particular, the magnitude of the correlation coefficient is consistent with the process model of the CSR communication developed by Kim (2019), which theorized that effective CSR communication creates CSR knowledge, trust, and, eventually, increases the perception of the corporate reputation amongst the consumers.

Within the framework of the telecommunications sector in Ghana, the results can be used to build on the study by Kodua and Mensah (2017), which investigated the impact of CSR on brand loyalty among telecom consumers in Ghana but did not specifically examine the mediating role of social media communication. The contribution of the current research is that it empirically confirms that social media-based CSR communication, instead of CSR activities in general, is significantly correlated with reputation improvement. This is a critical distinction considering the digitalization of stakeholder engagement in new markets.

This relationship between the variables is quite strong ($r = 0.602$) as compared to some other similar studies in developed markets. In their study of French organizations, Castello et al. (2016) identified more modest correlations between CSR communication strategies and e-reputation. This difference can be explained by the contextual factors of Ghana's telecommunications industry, where CSR is relatively new but highly appreciated by stakeholders. Salifu et al. (2023) discovered that the ethical and philanthropic CSR dimensions have a strong influence on brand awareness and loyalty in the Ghanaian telecom market, indicating that in a market where CSR is becoming a competitive advantage, the communication of CSR is associated with especially significant reputational value benefits.

These results are also consistent with the stakeholder theory approaches, which assume that CSR generates value by responding to the interests of various stakeholders (Freeman, 2023). According

to Polonsky (2015), the key stakeholder groups in making CSR decisions include employees and the general population, and the sample presented in the current study, consisting mainly of young and educated social media users, is a key public stakeholder group whose perceptions significantly influence corporate reputation. The significant correlation supports that the CSR communication by MTN Ghana is effective in reaching and affecting these important stakeholder groups.

Although the positive significance of the correlation is observed, it fails to consider any form of moderating variables, like perceived CSR authenticity or attribution of motives. Forehand and Grier (2003) established that consumers develop skepticism when they view CSR programs as profit-making or not genuine. On the same note, content analysis conducted by Einwiller et al. (2010) established that media coverage of CSR had a significant influence on the reputation of automotive companies through valence. The quantitative methodology of the present research provides the general correlation but fails to investigate whether specific kinds of CSR communication content (e.g., cause-based marketing and corporate philanthropy) produce dissimilar reputational impacts.

The result also echoes with the social exchange theory, which elucidates CSR-reputation relationships by expounding reciprocal processes in which companies give social benefits and get improved reputation and legitimacy in return (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Ajayi and Mmutle (2021) suggested that companies improve firm reputation through appropriate CSR programs and communication channels, and the given study empirically supports the given suggestion in the Ghanaian context. The substantial correlation indicates that the investments that MTN Ghana has made in social media CSR communication yield tangible reputational returns.

Recent research in banking has revealed the same trends. Researchers in a study of CSR communication within the Indian banking sector found that consumer brand advocacy behaviour created by CSR has a significant reinforcement of trust and reputation (Fatma & Khan 2023, 2023).

The present research extrapolates these results to the telecommunications industry in the African environment and proves that CSR-reputation association has no sectoral and geographical confines and might be moderated by industry and cultural peculiarities.

Findings of the study contradict some of the critical perspectives in CSR that highlight how CSR communication can have detrimental impacts. Yoon et al. (2006) have discovered that the CSR initiatives may backfire when consumers doubt the motives of companies, but the current research demonstrates the consistency of the positive associations. This dissimilarity could be an indicator of how MTN Ghana plans its CSR communications or the fact that Ghanaian consumers are more responsive to corporate social programs. Alternatively, it can reflect a social desirability bias in the responses, whereby the respondents could exaggerate positive perceptions of CSR because of normative expectations.

4.3.3 Influence of Different Types of CSR Initiatives on Brand Perception

The regression results that indicate that CSR activities explain 36% of variance in brand perception ($R^2 = 0.360$, $p < 0.001$) yield strong empirical evidence on the significant role CSR plays in influencing consumer perception in the Ghanaian telecommunications industry. The result is consistent with and builds upon a seminal study by Lai et al. (2010), which showed that CSR has a positive impact on brand performance by mediating the brand equity and corporate reputation. The R^2 of the current study is similar to the result of Lai et al. (2010), which indicates that the effect of CSR on brand perception has cross-cultural consistency irrespective of the contextual differences between developed and emerging markets.

The unstandardized regression coefficient ($B = 0.528$, $p < 0.001$) suggests that one unit improvement in CSR initiative quality or intensity results in an increase in brand perception of about one-half unit. This is a significant effect size and supports the extensive research conducted

by Amoako et al. (2024) of 1,106 telecommunications firms in Ghana, which identified that environmental, ethical and social CSR dimensions had a significant impact on different brand performance outcomes such as brand knowledge, brand loyalty and organisational brand value. The present research is significant as it shows that the cumulative effect of CSR initiatives reported through social media is not only statistically significant but also practically significant in terms of its impact on overall brand perception.

The explanatory power of the model (36% of variance) is also consistent with a study by Hur, Kim, and Woo (2014), who established that CSR results in corporate brand equity mediated by brand credibility and reputation mechanisms. The findings of the present study indicate that within the framework of social media communication, CSR initiatives have a direct effect on brand perception, potentially through similar mediating pathways. Kim's (2019) process model of CSR communication supports this interpretation, which theorizes that CSR communication affects corporate reputation through a process involving CSR knowledge, CSR trust, and reputation perception.

Nevertheless, the unexplained variance of 64% of the brand perception points to the fact that, although the CSR initiatives hold significance, they are not the only determinants of the brand perception of consumers in the telecommunications sector. This observation is consistent with the study conducted by Jain et al. (2018) that focused on consumer-brand relationships on social media platforms; it stresses that various touchpoint, such as product quality, customer service, pricing, and general user experience, have a combined impact on brand perceptions. The telecommunications market competition in Ghana, comprising six major entities in the market (Affran et al., 2019), is highly competitive, so service delivery excellence and network reliability could take up significant shares of the unexplained variance.

The result of the study, which states that CSR initiatives are important predictors of brand perception, confirms the suggestion of stakeholder theory that the meeting of stakeholder expectations improves the legitimacy and favorability of organizations (Freeman, 1984). Particularly, the pyramid model of CSR by Carroll (1991) indicates that companies should address the economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic issues at the same time, to satisfy the expectations of different stakeholders. Although the present research did not break down the CSR into specific dimensions, similar studies in the telecommunications industry in Ghana have demonstrated the difference in its influence. As an example, Salifu et al. (2023) discovered that brand loyalty was the strongest affected by ethical and philanthropic CSR aspects, whereas legal responsibilities showed weaker associations.

Interestingly, the existing findings are somewhat contrary to other studies, which have focused on skepticism of CSR as a major challenge to favorable brand performance. Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) warned that the corporate motives underlying the CSR activities are easily doubted by consumers, which can reduce the beneficial impacts. Nonetheless, the overall positive and significant correlation observed in the present research indicates that, among the readers of social media in the case of MTN Ghana, the CSR activities are viewed in a positive way and are associated with a better brand image. This difference could be due to a number of reasons: (1) the specificity of the authenticity and strategic fit of the CSR activities of the Ghanaian Multinational corporation MTN with the needs of the Ghanaian societies; (2) the efficiency of social media communication in expressing a particular sincerity; or (3) differences between Western and African cultures in terms of their receptivity to CSR.

The results of the research provide solid evidence of the resource-based perspective of CSR that suggests that CSR is a form of strategic resource that has the potential to create competitive advantage (Kumar and Tiwari, 2011). The CSR initiatives that are promoted through social media

can be a decisive factor in telecommunications, where the services offered are becoming commoditized. A study by Kayirangwa et al. (2018) on the telecommunications industry in Rwanda discovered that perceived firm performance was largely impacted by the use of philanthropic CSR strategies, reinforcing the idea that CSR can be used strategically, as opposed to being a mere corporate citizenship.

An interesting observation of the present results is that they are in line with the recent study on CSR communication during times of crisis. Research undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic discovered that brand image and loyalty were greatly improved through CSR activities when properly communicated (Bae et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2021). Although the present research was not carried out within the framework of a particular crisis, the telecommunications industry in Ghana continues to be affected by a range of issues such as regulatory pressures, infrastructure needs, and socioeconomic inequalities. In this regard, CSR activities that respond to the most urgent needs in society (health, education, digital inclusion) can have an especially strong influence on brand perception.

Findings of the study also contribute to the current discussions on the CSR communication strategies. Du et al. (2010) asserted that successful CSR initiatives require proper communication to create corporate and brand image, but most companies do not know how to communicate CSR without making it sound self-promotional. The positive results of the current study imply that MTN Ghana has managed this issue relatively effectively, at least within its social media audience. Nevertheless, the previous result of low active participation (35%) indicates that there may be an opportunity in encouraging two-way communication as opposed to unidirectional information transfer.

Theoretically, the results confirm the applicability of the social identity theory to the CSR settings.

Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) established that consumers form organisational identification based

on perceived congruence between corporate values and personal values. CSR initiatives which are well communicated and which are aligned with the values of the stakeholders will aid in bettering this recognition, which ultimately leads to brand perception. CSR activities in Ghana, and Ghana in particular, community welfare, education and health are highly regarded, and therefore, it is possible that the high level of consumer-brand identification facilitated by community welfare, education and health activities is the reason behind the high level of impact on brand perception. The contextual setting of the study in the telecommunication sector of Ghana helps in giving valuable information on the role of CSR in the emerging market. Although CSR research has been traditionally concentrated on developed economies, Amoako (2017) pointed out that companies have moral responsibilities that they must take into account the welfare of the customers, irrespective of geographical conditions. The existing results prove that the brand-perception effect produced by CSR is not only a developed market phenomenon but also has a significant implication in the African markets, where the corporate resources can substantially contribute to the development of the society.

Lastly, the results also carry significant implications in learning about the strategic nature of CSR. In a study by Adeneye and Maryam (2015), the researchers found an instrumental relationship between CSR and the return on capital used, implying that CSR serves business objectives beyond altruism. The fact that the current study demonstrates that CSR initiatives have a strong impact on brand perception corroborates this instrumental view, which implies that the investments that are made by the CSR of MTN Ghana have a real impact in the sense that they create a positive impact on the brand perceptions of consumers. The finding supports the business argument of CSR in emerging markets, which potentially leads to greater corporate investment in socially responsible activities.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter Four presented the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of data collected for the study. The chapter began with an examination of the demographic characteristics of the participants from diverse age ranges, educational levels and telecommunications usage patterns. This demographic profile provided a strong foundation for understanding how CSR communication is perceived within the industry. The chapter further analysed the four main constructs of the study. Descriptive statistics showed generally positive perceptions across all constructs, suggesting that telecom customers in Ghana are increasingly aware of CSR activities and consider them important in shaping their evaluation of telecom brands.

Reliability tests using Cronbach's alpha confirmed strong internal consistency across all scales, ensuring the validity of the measures used. Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships among the constructs, particularly between CSR communication credibility and brand reputation. Regression results further demonstrated that CSR communication exerts a meaningful and statistically significant influence on brand reputation, indicating that effective communication strategies enhance how telecom brands are perceived by the public.

Overall, the findings in Chapter Four confirmed that CSR communication its frequency, credibility, and the nature of initiatives communicated plays a vital role in shaping telecom brand reputation in Ghana. The results provide empirical support for the hypotheses and set the stage for the conclusions, recommendations, and contributions presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter synthesizes the major findings of the study, draws conclusions based on the research objectives and presents practical recommendations for MTN Ghana and the other telecommunications network and also future researchers. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a coherent interpretation of the results presented in Chapter Four and to show how these results align with the overarching aim of the study which is to examine the impact of social media-based CSR communication on MTN Ghana's brand reputation.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The study adopted a quantitative research design using a structured questionnaire to collect data from 100 social media users who follow MTN Ghana's digital platforms. The research was guided by three objectives:

1. To examine the extent to which MTN Ghana engages in CSR communication on social media.
2. To determine the relationship between CSR communication on social media and MTN Ghana's brand reputation.
3. To examine the influence of different types of CSR initiatives communicated on social media on brand perception.

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and linear regression. The study was underpinned by Stakeholder Theory and Dialogic Communication Theory, emphasizing that

CSR communication is meaningful only when stakeholders perceive, understand and engage with an organization's philanthropic and developmental activities.

5.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

5.2.1 Demographic characteristics of participants

The demographic profile of the participants provides an essential contextual foundation for interpreting the findings of this study on the impact of social-media-based CSR communication on MTN Ghana's brand reputation. A total of 100 participants took part in the survey, representing a diverse cross-section of MTN Ghana's social media audience. These demographic characteristics help establish the credibility of the data and demonstrate the representativeness of users who engage with MTN Ghana online. The gender distribution showed a relatively balanced representation, with females constituting 52% and males 46% of the sample, while 2% preferred not to disclose their gender. This balance is important because it reflects the active participation of both genders on social media platforms in Ghana. The slightly higher representation of females aligns with recent social media statistics suggesting increased female engagement with brand related content, particularly in urban environments.

In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents fell within the economically active and socially media-savvy age brackets. Most participants were between 26 - 35 years (68%), indicating that this age group forms the largest proportion of MTN's online audience and is highly responsive to digital communication. Additionally, 26% were aged 18 - 25 years, a demographic known for high digital fluency and engagement with online brands. A smaller proportion belonged to the 36 - 45 years category (5%), while only 1% were 46 years and above. This distribution suggests that

CSR communication on social media predominantly reaches a younger, more technologically inclined population who tend to rely on digital platforms for corporate updates, brand interactions and information consumption.

With respect to educational level, the findings revealed a highly educated sample. A majority of the respondents (59%) possessed a Bachelor's degree, while 20% held Master's degrees, reflecting a strong representation of individuals with higher education. Additionally, 18% of respondents reported having Diploma/HND qualifications, and 3% indicated SHS level education. This educational profile implies that the sample is largely composed of individuals who are well equipped to interpret, evaluate and form informed opinions about CSR activities communicated through social media. The relatively high academic attainment within the sample may also influence their expectations of transparency, credibility and authenticity in CSR messaging.

Regarding the duration of following MTN Ghana on social media, the data indicated that a substantial majority (62%) had followed the company for five years or more, suggesting a long term engagement with MTN's digital platforms. Another 21% had followed the brand for 3 - 4 years, while 10% had been connected for 1 - 2 years and the remaining 7% had followed MTN for less than a year. This level of long term digital engagement suggests that most respondents have had considerable exposure to MTN's CSR communication efforts and are therefore well positioned to provide informed feedback on the brand's communication strategies.

In terms of the primary social media platform used to engage MTN Ghana, the results showed that Instagram was the most used platform (34%), followed by Twitter/X (27%) and Facebook (20%). YouTube accounted for 8%, while 11% of respondents indicated using "Other" platforms, referring to emerging digital channels or messaging applications. This distribution reflects broader digital trends in Ghana where Instagram and Twitter are increasingly preferred among young, urban users

for brand interaction and CSR-related content. The prominence of these platforms provides insight into where MTN Ghana should prioritize its CSR communication efforts.

Overall, the demographic findings reveal that MTN's social media audience is predominantly young, educated, digitally engaged and long-term followers of the brand. These characteristics are critical in understanding the nature of stakeholder expectations and the potential impact of CSR communication on brand reputation. The demographics also indicate that the respondents possess the necessary awareness, digital literacy and engagement experience to offer reliable feedback on MTN Ghana's CSR initiatives communicated through social media. These insights provide an important foundation for interpreting the substantive findings presented in this study.

5.2.2 KEY FINDINGS

This section provides an expanded summary of key findings according to respondent characteristics and each research objective.

Objective 1 : To examine the extent to which MTN Ghana engages in CSR communication on social media

With regard to the first objective, which sought to examine the extent to which MTN Ghana engages in CSR communication on social media, the findings revealed that CSR communication is relatively consistent and moderately visible to the public but engagement is relatively low. Findings indicate that MTN Ghana maintains a consistent and moderate-to-high level of CSR communication across digital platforms. With the key results, 52% frequently encounter CSR posts, 64% agree that MTN communicates CSR initiatives regularly, 69% believe CSR messages are clear, easy to understand and explain the purpose of initiatives, 64% confirm awareness of

MTN's CSR projects in health, education and digital inclusion, 61% agree that MTN provides updates and progress reports on CSR activities. However, engagement levels are modest with only 35% stating they occasionally interact (like/comment/share) with CSR posts. These findings show that MTN Ghana is active in communicating CSR on social media, yet there remains room to enhance visibility and two-way engagement. Interactive strategies may be needed to drive deeper engagement.

Objective 2 : To determine the relationship between CSR communication on social media and MTN Ghana's brand reputation.

CSR communication is a key driver of brand reputation. When MTN communicates its initiatives consistently, transparently and authentically, consumers develop greater trust, admiration and loyalty toward the brand. The second objective aimed to determine the relationship between CSR communication on social media and MTN Ghana's brand reputation. The findings strongly indicated a positive relationship between the two. Quantitative analysis revealed a significant positive relationship. Pearson correlation coefficient: $r = 0.602$, $p < 0.001$. This indicates a moderately strong relationship between CSR communication and brand reputation. The additional findings from descriptive data was 70%+ of respondents consider MTN's CSR posts credible, trustworthy and authentic, 69% believe MTN's CSR communication enhances their perception of the company as socially responsible and 67% agree CSR communication affects their perception of brand reputation positively.

The participant consistently rated MTN's CSR communication as credible, authentic and reflective of genuine social concern. Perceptions of trustworthiness and transparency were also high, demonstrating that CSR messaging contributes meaningfully to how the brand is perceived. Items

assessing brand reputation received some of the highest mean scores in the entire dataset, clearly suggesting that CSR communication plays a substantial role in shaping stakeholder perceptions.

These results align with the broader literature that positions CSR communication as a strategic driver of corporate trust, credibility and consumer loyalty. The study therefore concludes that CSR communication is a critical component of MTN Ghana's reputation-building efforts.

Objective 3 : To examine the influence of different types of CSR initiatives communicated on social media on brand perception.

The third objective sought to identify how different types of CSR initiatives communicated on social media influence brand perception. Findings showed that respondents were generally more aware of CSR initiatives relating to education, health and digital inclusion than those related to environmental sustainability. Educational and digital initiatives were particularly recognized for shaping perceptions of MTN as an innovative and future-oriented brand, while health-related initiatives strengthened emotional connection and social empathy. Environmental sustainability initiatives recorded the lowest levels of awareness, indicating that communication in this area is less effective or less frequent. Awareness levels were highest for CSR in education (65%), health (62%) and digital inclusion (52%). Environmental sustainability had the lowest awareness (26%) and the regression analysis revealed that CSR initiative types explain 36% of the variance in brand perception ($R^2 = 0.360$) with regression coefficient: $\beta = 0.528$, $p < 0.001$.

This means that the types of CSR initiatives MTN promotes significantly shapes how consumers perceive the brand. Educational and digital initiatives strongly influence perceptions of MTN as innovative, while health-related CSR builds emotional connection. Despite this variation across initiative types, respondents agreed that CSR initiatives collectively influence their perception of

MTN's overall brand image. This demonstrates that while some CSR categories are more impactful than others, all forms of CSR communication contribute to brand perception to varying degrees.

Overall, the findings from the three objectives demonstrate that MTN Ghana's CSR communication on social media is moderately effective, positively influences brand reputation and affects brand perception differently depending on the type of initiative communicated. The results highlight strengths in communication transparency and credibility but also reveal opportunities for enhancing engagement, improving awareness of specific CSR areas and diversifying content delivery strategies. These key findings provide a foundation for developing strategic recommendations and contribute to academic understanding of how CSR communication functions in the digital landscape of emerging markets.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusions have been drawn. MTN Ghana engages actively in CSR communication on social media with high visibility and clarity of messages, however, audience engagement remains moderate, indicating an opportunity for more dialogic (two-way) interaction. It is also known that CSR communication significantly enhances MTN's brand reputation. The positive relationship shows that consumers interpret CSR messages as a reflection of corporate responsibility, ethical conduct and community commitment. The different type of CSR initiatives also significantly influences consumer brand perception. CSR communication strengthens MTN's ethical relationship with stakeholders and fosters trust through transparent and interactive digital communication.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study provide meaningful insights into how social media based CSR communication influences MTN Ghana's brand reputation. While the results affirm that CSR

communication positively shapes stakeholder awareness, credibility perceptions and overall brand image, they also highlight areas that require strategic improvement, particularly regarding engagement levels and the visibility of certain CSR initiatives such as environmental sustainability. Therefore, the following recommendations are presented to guide MTN Ghana and similar telecommunications firms in strengthening their CSR communication strategies, enhancing stakeholder engagement and maximizing the reputational value derived from CSR initiatives.

These recommendations are grounded in the empirical evidence generated from the survey responses, supported by relevant literature and aligned with global best practices in CSR and digital communication. They are intended to offer practical steps that can help organizations improve the clarity, frequency and impact of CSR messages shared on social media, ultimately fostering deeper stakeholder trust and sustaining a positive brand reputation.

First and foremost, MTN Ghana should strengthen the consistency and frequency of its CSR communication across social media platforms. Although respondents generally agreed that the company communicates its CSR initiatives regularly, a notable proportion exhibited neutral responses. This suggests that the communication pattern may not be sufficiently structured or predictable. Developing a clearly defined CSR communication calendar, providing routine updates and sharing follow up reports can help improve message retention and enhance stakeholder awareness, thereby reinforcing trust in the brand. The clarity and depth of CSR messages also require improvement. While the majority of respondents reported that CSR posts were clear, a considerable number remained neutral regarding their comprehension of certain initiatives, particularly those related to environmental sustainability. MTN Ghana should therefore invest in more detailed, engaging and visually appealing communication formats such as infographics, short

video narratives, and simplified explanations of each CSR initiative. Doing so will increase comprehension and strengthen the perceived credibility of CSR activities.

Secondly, stakeholder engagement with CSR content was relatively low, with many participants indicating minimal interaction with posts. To address this, MTN Ghana should incorporate more interactive communication strategies by introducing live Q&A sessions, testimonials, user generated CSR stories, interactive polls, CSR themed challenges to stimulate higher engagement. Such dialogic, two-way communication fosters stronger audience involvement and builds deeper trust and loyalty among stakeholders.

In addition, the study revealed low awareness of MTN Ghana's environmental sustainability initiatives compared to education, health, and digital inclusion. This calls for more robust communication efforts in this domain. MTN Ghana should amplify visibility by sharing before-and-after visuals, showcasing measurable impact, and highlighting partnerships with environmental organizations. Targeted environmental campaigns and community-based projects will also help enhance public awareness.

Furthermore , MTN Ghana should tailor CSR communication to the demographic and platform preferences of its audience. The study found that Instagram and Twitter/X were the most commonly used platforms for engaging with the company. Therefore, CSR messaging should be customized for each platform: visually rich content for Instagram, real-time updates for Twitter/X, narrative-driven posts for Facebook and more documentary-style CSR content for YouTube. This platform-sensitive approach will increase engagement and message relevance.

- Instagram → visually compelling CSR storytelling
- Twitter/X → real time updates or conversations

- YouTube → documentary style CSR impact videos

Additionally, the company should conduct regular assessments of the effectiveness of its CSR communication. Periodic surveys, focus groups and social media analytics tools such as sentiment analysis and engagement metrics can help MTN Ghana evaluate stakeholder perceptions and adjust communication strategies accordingly. Consistent monitoring and evaluation will ensure that CSR content remains relevant and impactful and openly addressing challenges and lessons learned will also contribute to stronger perceptions of honesty and accountability.

Finally, MTN Ghana should strengthen collaborations with credible partners, including NGOs, community leaders and social media influencers. Partnerships enhance the legitimacy and visibility of CSR initiatives and help extend the reach of corporate messages. Influencers, particularly those who are socially conscious and community-oriented can help amplify CSR campaigns and improve public trust in MTN's community engagement efforts.

Collectively, these recommendations offer a strategic roadmap for enhancing MTN Ghana's CSR communication on social media. Their implementation will not only strengthen stakeholder awareness and engagement but also reinforce MTN's reputation as a socially responsible and community-driven brand.

5.5 CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE

This study makes several significant contributions to the body of knowledge on corporate social responsibility (CSR), digital communication and brand reputation, particularly within the context of emerging markets such as Ghana. While international literature on CSR communication is extensive, the intersection between CSR, social media engagement and brand perception in subSaharan Africa remains under explored. This research therefore provides fresh empirical insights that expand existing theoretical, methodological and practical understandings in the field.

This study contributes to academic literature and practical knowledge in the following ways:

To begin with, the study contributes to the theoretical advancement of CSR communication research by integrating Stakeholder Theory and Dialogic Communication Theory to examine how social media based CSR initiatives influence brand reputation. Although these theories have been widely applied individually, their combined application in the Ghanaian telecommunications context is limited. This study shows that stakeholder awareness, perceived credibility, dialogic responsiveness and message authenticity serve as crucial mediating links between CSR communication and brand reputation. By empirically validating these relationships, the study enriches theoretical discourse on how digital communication platforms shape stakeholder perceptions in modern CSR practice.

Secondly, the study contributes valuable empirical evidence to African-focused CSR scholarship. Much of the existing literature predominantly reflects Western corporate environments, where CSR is often driven by strict regulatory frameworks and stakeholder activism. By contrast, this study demonstrates how CSR communication functions in a developing economy where social media plays a growing but culturally nuanced role in shaping public opinion. The findings highlight that Ghanaian consumers show high sensitivity to transparency, frequent updates and authenticity in CSR messages revealing unique behavioural patterns that may differ from those documented in global studies. This expands the geographical scope of CSR communication research and provides contextual knowledge relevant to scholars, practitioners and policymakers in Ghana and other emerging markets.

Additionally, the study contributes methodologically by developing a comprehensive measurement framework for evaluating the dimensions of social media based CSR communication. Through the construction of composite scales frequency and awareness, credibility and influence, types of CSR

initiatives and overall brand reputation the research offers validated indicators that future studies can adopt or refine. The high reliability scores across the scales demonstrate their usefulness for assessing similar digital CSR communication models in other contexts. This measurement structure adds methodological value to quantitative CSR communication research. In addition this research also contributes to knowledge by serving as one of the few Ghana-based empirical studies that assess the quantitative impact of CSR communication on brand reputation using robust statistical techniques, including correlation and composite mean analysis. By demonstrating clear positive associations between CSR communication variables and brand reputation outcomes, the study reinforces the growing recognition of CSR as a strategic communication tool rather than merely a philanthropic obligation. This deepens academic understanding of CSR's strategic value in corporate reputation building within developing economies.

Moreover, the findings contribute practically to industry knowledge by identifying the specific types of CSR initiatives that most strongly shape consumer perceptions in the telecommunications sector. While education, health and digital inclusion initiatives were widely recognized and positively associated with MTN Ghana's brand reputation, environmental sustainability initiatives recorded significantly lower awareness levels. This insight offers evidence-based guidance for companies seeking to optimize the visibility and impact of their CSR activities. The findings therefore bridge the gap between academic research and corporate strategy helping telecommunication companies design more effective digital communication frameworks.

Finally, the study offers new knowledge regarding consumer engagement behaviors on social media in relation to CSR messaging. Despite widespread awareness of MTN Ghana's CSR initiatives, engagement levels such as liking, commenting or sharing remained relatively low. This reveals a "passive awareness" trend that has not been adequately captured in existing CSR

literature. Understanding this behavioural gap contributes to the broader discourse on online stakeholder engagement and provides direction for future digital communication strategies.

In summary, this study advances theoretical debates, enriches African-centred CSR scholarship, introduces a reliable quantitative measurement model, provides practical insights for corporate decision-making and uncovers emerging behavioural trends in digital stakeholder engagement. These contributions collectively strengthen the academic and practical relevance of CSR communication studies and provide a strong foundation for subsequent research in Ghana and beyond.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite the significance of the findings, the study had some limitations:

The sample size and sampling technique, which have to do with the use of 100 participants and this limit the generalizability to the entire Ghanaian population. Data was collected at one point in time, preventing any establishment of causation. The study did not analyze whether different social media platforms produce varying levels of CSR impact, which can also be looked at. The participants' awareness also relied on self-report rather than digital tracking or content analysis.

5.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While the study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. To address these limitations, future research should consider a larger and more diverse sample sizes to improve statistical power and generalizability. Mixed-methods approaches combining surveys, interviews and content analysis should be adopted for richer insights. Longitudinal studies to track changes in brand perception over time. Platform specific CSR effectiveness can also be studied e.g., comparing Instagram vs. Twitter vs. Facebook. Studies on CSR authenticity and consumer trust,

particularly examining whether consumers differentiate genuine CSR from corporate image building. Comparative studies across multiple telecom companies (MTN, Vodafone, Telecel) to identify industry-wide patterns can also be worked on.

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the conclusions, recommendations, contributions to knowledge and limitations of the study based on the findings discussed in Chapter Four. The study confirmed that MTN's social media based CSR communication significantly enhances consumer awareness, strengthens perceptions of credibility and positively influences overall brand reputation. Key recommendations were proposed for improving CSR content clarity, enhancing engagement strategies and expanding CSR visibility across platforms. The chapter also outlined the theoretical, methodological and practical contributions of the research to the fields of corporate communication, digital CSR and brand management in Ghana. Finally, the study's limitations and suggestions for future research were highlighted to guide subsequent scholarly work.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Informed Consent

Dear Participant,

This study is conducted by a graduate student at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UNIMAC) in fulfillment of a master’s degree in public relations with Marketing. This questionnaire is intended to solicit your inputs on the topic: ‘A quantitative analysis of the impact of social media-based CSR on MTN GHANA’s brand reputation. The responses will be for academic purposes and so confidentiality and anonymity are assured.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

.....

Participant’s Signature

Appendix 2: Research Instrument

UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant,

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted. The study is titled “A Quantitative Analysis of the Impact of Social Media-Based CSR Communication on MTN Ghana’s Brand Reputation.

The purpose of this study is to explore how MTN Ghana’s communication of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities on social media platforms influences public awareness, perceptions and the overall reputation of the brand. Your participation is voluntary and there are no right or wrong answers only your honest opinions are needed. All responses will remain strictly anonymous and confidential and no personal identifiers such as names, contact details or IP addresses will be collected.

By proceeding to answer the questions, you confirm that you have read this information and voluntarily agree to participate in the study. Your input will contribute valuable insights to academic research on CSR communication and brand reputation within Ghana’s telecommunications industry.

Thank you for your time and contribution.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

2. What is your age?

18–25 years

26–35 years

36–45 years

46 years and above

3. What is your highest educational level?

SHS

Diploma / HND

Bachelor's Degree

Master's Degree

Other (please specify) _____

4. Duration of following MTN Ghana on social media?

Less than 1 year

1–2 years

3–4 years

5 years or more

5. Which primary platform do you use to engage MTN Ghana?

Facebook

Instagram

Twitter/X

YouTube

Other (please specify) _____

Section B: Frequency and Awareness of CSR Communication

This section focuses on how often you come across MTN's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) messages. Please answer based on your personal experience and what you have observed. Please indicate by selecting the statement that best reflects your views using the scale below: Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

6. I frequently come across MTN Ghana's CSR-related posts on social media.

7. MTN Ghana communicates its CSR initiatives regularly across multiple social media platforms.

8. The content of MTN Ghana's CSR posts clearly explains the purpose of each initiative.
9. I am aware of MTN Ghana's CSR projects in areas such as health, education, and digital inclusion.
10. MTN Ghana provides updates and progress reports on its CSR initiatives via social media.
11. The frequency of MTN Ghana's CSR communication helps me stay informed about its community impact.
12. I occasionally engage (like, comment, share) with MTN Ghana's CSR-related posts.

Section C: Credibility and Perceived Influence on Brand Reputation

This section assesses your views on how trustworthy, believable, and influential your telecom provider's CSR messages are. Kindly respond based on your honest perceptions. Please indicate by selecting the statement that best reflects your views using the scale below:

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

13. MTN Ghana's CSR posts on social media appear credible and trustworthy.
14. The CSR information shared by MTN Ghana reflects a genuine concern for society.
15. The tone and language of MTN Ghana's CSR posts make them believable and authentic.
16. I perceive MTN Ghana as a socially responsible organization due to its CSR communication.
17. MTN Ghana's CSR communication positively affects my perception of its brand reputation.
18. MTN Ghana's online CSR engagement makes me more likely to trust the brand.
19. The transparency of MTN Ghana's CSR communication distinguishes it from other telecom brands.

Section D: Types of CSR Initiatives and Brand Perception

This section explores your awareness and perception of the different types of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives carried out by MTN Ghana and it also assesses how these initiatives shape your overall perception of the brand. Kindly respond based on your personal observations and experiences.

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

20. I am aware of MTN Ghana's CSR initiatives in education (e.g., scholarships, school projects).
21. I am aware of MTN Ghana's CSR initiatives in health (e.g., medical support, blood donations).
22. I am aware of MTN Ghana's CSR initiatives in digital inclusion (e.g., ICT training, tech hubs).
23. I am aware of MTN Ghana's CSR initiatives in environmental sustainability (e.g., tree planting, recycling).
24. Educational and digital initiatives make me view MTN Ghana as an innovative and future oriented brand.
25. Health-related CSR initiatives enhance my emotional connection with MTN Ghana.
26. The type of CSR initiative communicated influences my perception of MTN Ghana's overall brand image.

Section E: Overall Brand Reputation

This final section explores how MTN Ghana's CSR activities and communication shape your overall perception of the brand. Your responses will help us understand the connection between CSR and brand reputation. Please indicate by selecting the statement that best reflects your views using the scale below:

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

27. MTN Ghana has a strong reputation as a socially responsible brand.

28. MTN Ghana's CSR communication enhances my respect for the brand.

29. MTN Ghana's CSR efforts make me more likely to recommend its services to others.

30. I perceive MTN Ghana as a trustworthy and community-driven organization.

31. MTN Ghana's consistent CSR communication strengthens its long-term reputation.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study. Your responses are highly valuable and will contribute to a deeper understanding of how social media-based Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) communication influences brand reputation in Ghana's telecommunications industry.