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MEASURING THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES ON STAKEHOLDERS'
PERCEPTIONS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND PURCHASE INTENT

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Abstract

This study examined differences in types of social media messages posted by Kellogg's on Facebook and Instagram. Results indicate Instagram messages significantly increased stakeholders' purchase intent compared to Facebook messages. In addition, corporate social responsibility messages had a positive influence on stakeholders' perceptions of the organization's corporate social responsibility and organization-public relationships. This study compared attitudes towards the organization before and after viewing a social media message. Perceptions of the organization's reputation positively increased after viewing a social media message. This study expands previous research on websites and Facebook posts by analyzing Instagram messages.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is commonly defined as a company fulfilling its economic, legal, and societal obligations (Carroll, 1999). Consumers' expectations regarding CSR in the 21st century differ from decades earlier. Current consumers expect companies to give back to society beyond boosting the economy (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). As Arthur W. Page explained, "All business in a democratic country begins with public permission and exists by public approval," (Page, 1942).

The majority of companies have adopted digital platforms in recent years, changing the nature of organization-public interactions. Among Fortune 500 companies, 98 percent maintain an active presence on social media (Barnes, Lescault & Holmes, 2015). These top companies are increasingly embracing new platforms. In 2015, the number of Fortune 500 companies using Instagram increased by 13 percent from the previous year (Barnes et al., 2015).

Previous research analyzed the type of information companies distribute over digital platforms. Despite a link between CSR messages and improved perceptions of the company, most organizations use their websites and social media accounts to distribute corporate ability messages (Hong & Rim, 2010; Esrock & Leichty, 2000; Tao & Wilson, 2015)

Research on corporate social media pages indicates a positive consumer response to the minority of companies using CSR strategies. Specifically, companies utilizing the CSR strategy on Facebook are more successful at improving stakeholders' attitudes, perceptions, and purchase intent (Haigh, Brubaker, & Whiteside, 2013).

The purpose of this study is to understand how CSR messages on social media influence consumer attitudes and purchase intent. This study specifically compares the effectiveness of

Facebook and Instagram messages, as an increasing number of companies use these platforms to interact with stakeholders.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The History of Corporate Social Responsibility

The theory of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has evolved since the early 1930s. Archie Carroll published a summary of the theory's history, including his own widely cited definition, in 1999. Carroll (1999) explains researchers have mentioned the idea of social responsibility in business since the 1930s and 1940s. However, the most developed writings on defining CSR began in the 1950s.

Carroll (1999) identifies Howard Bowen as the "Father of Corporate Social Responsibility." Bowen published "Social Responsibilities of the Businessman," in which he defined social responsibility as the obligation of businesses to make policy decisions that are "desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society" (Carroll, 1999, p. 270). His definition acknowledged that business owners consider factors outside of making a profit when they choose a course of action. Bowen's belief was large businesses have the potential to repeatedly affect the lives of citizens (Carroll, 1999). Bowen's clear definition of the emerging concept of social responsibility became the basis for future discussions.

Carroll (1999) stated the presence of formal CSR definitions in literature significantly took off in the 1960s. He cites numerous authors who published works in the 1960s regarding CSR. For example, Davis (1960) proposed certain socially responsible decisions can be rationalized because they will pay off for the business in the long-run. Davis (1960) is also responsible for the idea a company's level of social responsibility is equal to their degree of power. According to this idea, companies with more social power have more social responsibility. In addition, Davis' (1960) "Iron Law of Responsibility" theorized companies that do not responsibly use their social power will eventually lose their position in society, because

another firm will take on the responsibility instead. Other writers in the 1960s added specific components to the basic CSR definition. McGuire expanded CSR to include factors beyond economic and legal obligations, also listing politics, communities, education, and society as a whole (as cited in Carroll, 1999). McGuire's definition was more specific because corporations need to consider more than just economic and legal responsibilities. Walton emphasized the voluntary aspect of CSR in his definition, as well as the idea being socially responsible has costs that may not be directly returned (Carroll, 1999).

In the 1970s, the Committee for Economic Development (CED) published a definition of CSR from the point of view of business professionals and educators. The CED definition used a "three concentric circles" model to emphasize the distinct inner, intermediate, and outer levels of CSR (Carroll, 1999).

The inner circle focuses on economic responsibilities. The intermediate circle includes a "responsibility to exercise this economic function with a sensitive awareness of changing social values and priorities" (Carroll, 1999, p. 275). The outer circle requires an engagement with the larger environment of social issues, such as poverty. The issues included in the outer circle are considered to be evolving and changing responsibilities, which corporations must consider in order to be actively engaged in improving society (Carroll, 1999). In 1972, Manne proposed actions considered CSR, saying they must meet three criteria: the action's marginal returns are less than the marginal returns of an alternative action; the action is voluntary; and the action is "an actual corporate expenditure" (as cited in Carroll, 1999, p. 276).

In 1976, Holmes conducted a study of CSR in which she asked corporate executives about their opinions on issues considered socially important at the time. As one of the earliest CSR studies, Holmes' (1976) work also captured the outcomes executives expected if they were

socially responsible. Executives anticipated positive outcomes from being socially responsible, including enhanced corporate reputation (Holmes, 1976).

When Carroll (1979) published "A Three Dimensional Conceptual Model of Corporate Performance," he had three goals: create a solid definition of social responsibility, list the issue areas in which social responsibility exists, and identify the strategy behind social responsiveness. Carroll's (1979) definition of social responsibility states, "The social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time" (p. 500). In this definition, Carroll (1979) proposes a business must consider all four categories in order to fully meet its obligation to society.

A business's primary form of responsibility to society is economic. A business must produce goods society wants, and sell those goods for a profit (Carroll, 1979). Companies also have legal responsibilities, which require they operate in accordance with society's laws and regulations. Ethical responsibilities are more difficult to define (Carroll, 1979). They consist of behaviors and activities outside the strict limits of the law, but nevertheless are still expected by members of society (Carroll, 1979). Discretionary responsibilities allow for the broadest interpretation. This aspect of Carroll's (1979) definition addresses the concept that society expects businesses to take on a social role beyond just economic, legal, and ethical concerns. Discretionary responsibilities can include "making philanthropic donations" or "conducting in-house programs for drug abusers" (Carroll, 1979, p. 500). Each of these actions is completely voluntary and up to the company's discretion.

Carroll (1979) also identifies the social issues that companies must consider. He emphasizes the social issues change over time, and they also vary depending on the industry. This means companies must be aware of the current topics in the social issues landscape.

Companies also have to decide which topics are most relevant to their industry (Carroll, 1979). There is no set way for companies to select which important social issues they need to address (Carroll, 1979).

The final component of Carroll's CSR model is social responsiveness. In his explanation of social responsiveness, Carroll (1979) states company management must not only realize their moral obligation, but also act upon that obligation. Carroll explains, "Social responsiveness can range on a continuum from no response (do nothing) to a proactive response (do much)" (1979, p. 501). This continuum of managerial action is distinct from social responsibility. It is not tied to moral or ethical connotations—instead, the idea of social responsiveness is simply analyzing the way management takes action (Carroll, 1979).

CSR 1980s and 1990s

While CSR writings in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s were primarily focused on defining the concept, studies in the 1980s and 1990s were centered on research and developing new themes. In the 1990s, "writers did not reject the CSR concept, but there were no new definitions added to the body of literature" (Carroll, 1999, p. 292). As Carroll (1999) explained, the new directions and themes maintained the same language as the previously established definitions of CSR.

Wood (1991) used Carroll's three-part CSR model and expanded the ideas in her work on corporate social performance (CSP). Her three-part model specifically emphasized outcomes and actions, and ultimately enabled companies to pragmatically assess the outcomes of socially responsible actions (Wood, 1991). Wood (1991) also clarified three levels of social responsibility: institutional, organizational, and individual. Members of society place expectations for social responsibility on all three levels of the company (Wood, 1991). There are

expectations for all businesses to serve as economic institutions (institutional), expectations for companies based on what they are (organizational), and expectations for managers and employees within the company (individual).

Mapping Corporate Social Responsibility Theories

A few years after Carroll's summary, Garriga and Melé (2004) sorted through the wide array of research to provide a "map" of theories. While Carroll moved through the theories chronologically, Garriga and Melé (2004) separated the theories into four distinct groups: instrumental, political, integrative, and ethical.

Instrumental theories propose wealth creation is the only responsibility a company has to society (Garriga & Melé, 2004). Under these theories, profit maximization is the sole reason for engaging in CSR. Within the instrumental theories, Garriga and Melé (2004) identified three objectives: maximizing shareholder value, achieving competitive advantages, and cause-related marketing. The first theorizes CSR should be undertaken if the interaction increases shareholder value (Garriga & Melé, 2004). The second takes a long-term view by proposing that companies should engage in CSR if it gives them a future competitive advantage, leading to a long-term increase in profits (Garriga & Melé, 2004). The final of the instrumental theories is cause-related marketing, in which a company seeks to increase profits by creating a positive brand image (Garriga & Melé, 2004).

Garriga and Melé (2004) outline a second group of theories called political theories. These theories focus on the power and position of companies within society, and the level of responsibility that accompanies positions of that power. This includes Davis' (1960) previously discussed "Iron Law of Responsibility." It also includes integrative social contract theory, which proposes the relationship between businesses and society is a social contract. These social

contracts can be explicit or implicit agreements between businesses and their communities, according to the norms in the community (Garriga & Melé, 2004). The concept of corporate citizenship also falls under the political category. Corporate citizenship often means accepting a certain level of responsibility for the local community and the environment (Garriga & Melé, 2004).

Integrative theories address the presence of social demands and their influence on business decisions. Integrative theories focus on how management integrates social demands into business operations (Garriga & Melé, 2004). Many of the theories in this category also look at how certain social issues gain attention. As Garriga and Melé (2004) explain, "the theories of this group are focused on the detection and scanning of, and response to, the social demands that achieve social legitimacy" (p. 58). Issue management is an integrative theory that includes the concept of "social responsiveness," or the process by which management detects and responds to social issues. Issue management includes anticipating potential threats to avoid surprises and identifying potential opportunities. It also develops a system within organizations for efficiently responding to issues as they arise (Garriga & Melé, 2004).

The stakeholder management theory also fits in this category. It narrows the focus of responsiveness to issues that affect stakeholders, or people who are affected by the company. Stakeholder management also incorporates stakeholders into the decision-making process regarding social issues (Garriga & Melé, 2004). This type of dialogue is intended to clarify communication between the company and its stakeholder groups, including customers, activists, governments, media, and non-governmental organizations. Garriga and Melé (2004) also consider corporate social performance (CSP) to be an integrative theory. CSP evaluations

incorporate the principles of social responsibility, the degree of responsiveness to social issues, and the outcomes of the company's actions (Garriga & Melé, 2004).

Ethical theories make up the final category (Garriga & Melé, 2004). Some researchers have expanded stakeholder theory to fit in this category, by arguing "a normative core of ethical principles is required" in determining how corporations should act (Garriga & Melé, 2004, p. 60). Normative stakeholder theory focuses on the ethical consideration of all stakeholders, not just shareowners, in business decisions. Sustainable development theories also fall under the ethical theories category. Sustainable development requires meeting the present needs of society without impairing the ability to meet the future needs of society (Garriga & Melé, 2004). Building on the original definition that focused on environmental factors, the definition of sustainable development now integrates environmental, social and economic conditions. Garriga and Melé (2004) cover one final ethical theory, called the "common good approach" (p. 62). This theory holds all businesses, in order to be socially responsible, must contribute positively to the common good of society (Garriga & Melé, 2004). This responsibility stems from the idea corporations are members of society, just like other groups and individuals, and therefore they must look out for society's welfare.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Profitability

After outlining CSR definitions, it is important to look at some of the research analyzing CSR and its relationship to the financial success of the firm. Cochran and Wood (1984) published one of the first studies to find a correlation between CSR and financial performance. Cochran and Wood (1984) enhanced previous studies of CSR and financial performance by using a larger sample and controlling by industry. Their study found the financial aspect correlated most closely with CSR is asset age. In their research, the firms with the oldest assets

had the lowest CSR ratings (Cochran & Wood, 1984). Cochran and Wood (1984) found, "Even after controlling for asset age, using a large sample, and industry-specific control groups, there still is weak support for a link between CSR and financial performance" (p. 55). They conclude CSR is not harmful to a firm's financial success.

More recently, McWilliams and Siegel (2001) re-examined the relationship between CSR and financial performance. They proposed a framework that managers could use to determine their "ideal" level of engagement in CSR (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). At the time of their research, there was a significant debate over how much money and resources a firm should devote to CSR. In order to answer this question, McWilliams and Siegel (2001) used a supply and demand model. Their model ultimately found "there is some level of CSR that will maximize profits while satisfying the demand for CSR from multiple stakeholders" (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001, p. 125). In order to help managers find this ideal level, they provide a framework involving a cost-benefit analysis. The cost-benefit analysis maximizes profits by identifying the level of CSR at which the increased revenue equals the higher cost of using resources in line with CSR (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). They also raise a point regarding the importance of advertising: customers who value CSR are willing to pay more for products that are socially responsible, but only if they are aware the additional attribute (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). In this way, consumer awareness is a key part of linking CSR efforts to increased purchase intent and revenue.

The second part of McWilliams and Siegel's (2001) research focuses specifically on the link between CSR and profitability. They came to several conclusions regarding CSR activity, including the idea large, diverse companies are more likely to be active in CSR. In their most important conclusion, McWilliams and Siegel (2001) found "a neutral relationship between CSR

activity and firm financial performance" (p. 125). In their research, profits are equal between firms engaging in CSR and firms not engaging in CSR. In the first case, firms are spending more to make their product socially responsible, but they also gain a higher revenue from the product. In the second case, firms are able to make the product at a cheaper price, but they also have to sell the product at a lower price. Therefore, McWilliams and Siegel (2001) ultimately predict a neutral relationship between CSR and financial performance.

Consumer Response to Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives

Despite McWilliams and Siegel's (2001) finding of a neutral relationship between CSR and financial performance, popular polling in the early 2000s found CSR was positively impacting purchase behavior. Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) set out to understand "when, how, and for whom specific CSR initiatives work" (p. 225). They wanted to establish a set of factors that companies could use to guide their CSR decision-making process.

Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) used the results of a survey to analyze the influence of CSR on purchase intent. They found numerous factors can influence consumers' reaction to CSR. A large factor is the consumers' perception of how their views on CSR issues align with the company's views. Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) found this congruence plays a large role in how consumers evaluate a company's CSR efforts. The study also found consumers are more sensitive to negative CSR than positive CSR when evaluating companies (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). In general, the consumers' personal feelings regarding a social issue are the key determinant of their sensitivity to the company's CSR initiatives (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001).

Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) also looked specifically at CSR's influence on purchase intent. First, they considered the indirect effects of CSR on purchase intent, which assumes CSR knowledge contributes to the overall "corporate context for such purchase intentions" (p. 238).

This contribution generally influences purchase intent in a positive way. In this study, however, the authors found the indirect effect of CSR was negative in some cases, due to what they hypothesized as "contrast effect" (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) also found a direct link between CSR and purchase intent. Consumers with certain personal beliefs on CSR-related actions were directly encouraged to purchase a company's product after learning about the company's CSR efforts in that specific area (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001).

Sen and Bhattacharya (2004) found consumer reactions to CSR initiatives vary widely. Each consumer believes differently in the importance of a specific CSR initiative. Therefore, what speaks to one consumer group might not speak to all of a company's consumers in the same way. Sen and Bhattacharya (2004) also found, "the impact of CSR initiatives on outcomes "internal" to the consumer (e.g., awareness, attitudes, and attributions) is significantly greater and more easily assessable than its impact on the "external" or visible outcomes (e.g., purchase behavior, word-of- mouth)" (p. 12). This finding is significant, as it relates to measuring the effect of CSR on purchase behavior. Sen and Bhattacharya (2004) found CSR initiatives positively affect both consumers and social issues. All of these findings reflect a complex model of how CSR influences consumers.

Consumer Expectations

Contributing to the research on how CSR influences consumers, Mohr, Webb, and Harris (2001) used semi-structured interviews to gather consumer thoughts and feelings. They specifically focused on consumer expectations—how much consumers expect companies to be involved in CSR. Mohr et al. (2001) split the interviewees into four categories based on their responses: pre-contemplation, contemplation, action, and maintenance. *Pre-contemplators* do not consider CSR when purchasing a product (Mohr et al., 2001). They make decisions solely based

on rationality. *Contemplators* do not allow CSR to play a large role in their decision-making processes. Some have considered CSR in the past, and some have previously boycotted a company's products based on irresponsible behavior, but they were not actively considering CSR in their purchasing decisions (Mohr, et al., 2001).

Those in the *action* category actively consider CSR when making purchasing decisions, and are generally more aware of CSR initiatives (Mohr et al., 2001). *Maintainers* are committed to being socially responsible consumers. Mohr et al. (2001) explain "CSR is important to them, they work to learn about social issues and the behaviors of specific firms, and they believe that they can have an impact on the social responsibility of companies" (p. 61). Mohr et al. (2001) found most respondents believe CSR influences the success or failure of companies.

Overall, Mohr et al. (2001) found consumers maintain a positive view of socially responsible companies, even though the majority of those interviewed did not regularly consider CSR in their purchasing decisions. The researchers did identify a smaller group of consumers who were actively engaged in understanding CSR initiatives. This smaller group made purchasing decisions based on companies' CSR reputations. As Mohr et al. (2001) explain, this group believes, "Every purchase has implications for the larger society, both in terms of environmental impact and rewarding or punishing companies that are seen as more or less socially responsible" (p. 67). In this way, engaged consumers view themselves as "watchdogs," looking out for the benefits of society (Mohr et al., 2001).

Pfau, Haigh, Simms, and Wigley (2008) conducted an experiment to understand the direct effect CSR has on public opinion. Pfau et al. (2008) found CSR campaigns have a positive effect on consumers' perceptions of a company's image, reputation, and credibility. This positive effect exists if the consumers are well-informed about the company's social responsibility

efforts. By including campaign awareness as a moderating variable, the authors could determine that campaign awareness does have a significant impact on perceptions (Pfau et al., 2008). The authors recommend companies utilize sustained communication campaigns about CSR efforts, in order to overcome the low customer awareness levels (Pfau et al., 2008).

CSR and Purchase Intention

David, Kline, and Dai (2005) expanded the research on CSR and purchase intent. David et al. (2005) analyzed how both CSR and corporate expertise influence purchase intent. They conducted a survey using Nike, Wendy's, Phillip Morris, and Microsoft as sample companies, and they only included respondents who indicated a familiarity with each company. They found mixed results for each of the companies. CSR values and corporate expertise formed significant paths to purchase intention for both Nike and Wendy's (David et al., 2005). For Microsoft, corporate expertise stood out as the primary path to purchase intention, and CSR values were not significantly linked (David et al., 2005). Finally, for Phillip Morris, CSR values were more significant than corporate expertise in predicting purchase intention (David et al., 2005). While the results varied for each company, David et al. (2005) found significant evidence that CSR values contribute to purchase intention.

David et al. (2005) analyzed familiarity with CSR practices in their 2005 study as well. Awareness of CSR initiatives and familiarity with CSR values significantly influenced purchase intention for three out of the four companies (David et al., 2005). Of those three companies, CSR familiarity directly influenced corporate identity and purchase intention for one company (David et al., 2005). David et al. (2005) summarized the study by explaining, "CSR practices have a significant link to the two dimensions of corporate identity—Corporate Expertise and CSR Values…these two dimensions are separately related to purchase intention" (p. 309). Their

findings are significant for corporations, especially as they determine publicity efforts regarding CSR initiatives. One reason companies practice CSR is to bolster relationships with stakeholders. These relationships are known as organization-public relationships (OPR).

Organization – Public Relationships and Corporate Social Responsibility

Ledingham and Bruning (1998, p. 62) define organization – public relationships as "the state which exists between an organization and its key publics, in which actions of either can impact the economic, social, cultural or political well being of the other." There are six components of organization – public relationships including: satisfaction (favorable feelings about the relationship), commitment (decision to maintain/promote the relationship), trust (confidence and willingness to be open), control mutuality (power to influence the other), communal relationships (concerned with welfare of the other party), and exchange relationships (equal exchange benefits) (Hon & Grunig, 1999).

These relationships are placed on a continuum. At one end is the "concern for others," or relationships where both parties receive benefits from the relationship, known as a communal relationship. Exploitive relationships, relationships where one party takes advantage of the other by not fulfilling an obligation, anchors the other end of the continuum, "concern for self interest." Organizations have different relationships with different publics (Hung, 2005).

Haigh et al. (2013) found Facebook pages employing a corporate social responsibility communications strategy bolster stakeholders' perceptions of the organization – public relationship, corporate social responsibility, and purchase intent better than Facebook pages employing a corporate ability or hybrid communications approach.

Corporate Social Responsibility Messages Online

Researchers have analyzed how companies communicate CSR efforts using their

websites. Esrock and Leichty (2000) found many companies include CSR efforts on their websites, but the social responsibility content is second in prominence compared to other content on the home page, such as product information or corporate history. While the majority of websites directed content at investors, the sections targeted to consumers were most likely to include CSR information (Esrock & Leichty, 2000). Companies with website content focused on consumers had websites with more social responsibility coverage (Esrock & Leichty, 2000).

Kim and Rader (2010) compared the websites of all Fortune 500 companies to determine which strategy they used: corporate ability, CSR, or a hybrid. The corporate ability strategy focuses on the company's expertise in products and services, while the CSR strategy focuses on the company's efforts to be a socially responsible member of society. A hybrid strategy employs a combination of corporate ability and CSR. Kim and Rader (2010) found the majority of companies focus on corporate ability on their websites. However, the top 100 Fortune 500 companies were more likely to use a CSR strategy on their websites, rather than a corporate ability strategy or a hybrid strategy (Kim & Rader, 2010). Kim and Rader (2010) wrote, "This particular result could be explained by the fact that as a corporation becomes larger, public scrutiny against it increases as do the expectations for the corporations to address social responsibilities" (p. 75).

Kim and Rader (2010) also recorded the prevalence of various CSR messages on websites. They found community involvement messages were the most prevalent and philanthropic contribution messages were the second most common. In comparison to Esrock and Leichty (2000), Kim and Rader (2010) found a significant increase in the number of CSR messages on corporate websites.

Hong and Rim (2010) found a positive relationship between information on corporate websites and consumers' perception of CSR. The more consumers pay attention to a company's website, the more likely they are to perceive the company as socially responsible (Hong & Rim, 2010). Customers who view the company as socially responsible are also more likely to trust the company, which leads to positive word-of-mouth communication (Hong & Rim, 2010). In addition, they found customer use of corporate websites also leads to increased trust in the company. They found "corporate social responsibility's indirect influence on positive word-of-mouth communication, which has been recognized to have significant effects on organizations' bottom lines" (Hong & Rim, 2010, p. 390). This finding indicates one method by which CSR influences economic success.

Recent CSR research analyzes how companies are incorporating CSR in their social media presence. Haigh (2014) looked at how companies differentiate content on their website versus their social media platforms. Haigh's (2014) study found company websites were more likely to include public relations materials, such as media kits and fact sheets, than company Facebook pages. Haigh (2014) also looked at whether Facebook pages and websites used a CSR frame, a corporate ability frame (focused on products and services), or a hybrid approach. She found websites were more likely to use a CSR frame, while Facebook pages used a corporate ability frame more often. Finally, Haigh's (2014) study determined websites include more CSR information overall than Facebook pages.

This research is significant in consideration of Haigh et al.'s (2013) research on stakeholders' perceptions of information presented on Facebook. Haigh et al. (2013) found Facebook pages using a CSR strategy are more successful at improving "stakeholders' attitudes, perceptions of the organization-public relationship, CSR, and purchase intent," when compared

to Facebook pages using the corporate ability frame or hybrid frame (p. 64). Their research supported previous research, which found awareness of CSR efforts leads to greater purchase intent among stakeholders (Haigh et al., 2013). In addition, Haigh et al.'s (2013) research highlights the importance of maintaining an interactive corporate Facebook page, in order to improve stakeholders' attitudes and perceptions.

Tao and Wilson (2015) examined companies' Twitter and Facebook pages. Consistent with Haigh's (2014) study on Facebook pages, they found the majority of companies used a corporate ability strategy on both Twitter and Facebook, rather than a CSR strategy. Tao and Wilson (2015) did not find any companies truly utilizing a hybrid strategy of corporate ability and CSR. While some companies included CSR information, corporate ability information, such as product and service expertise, dominated the Twitter and Facebook pages (Tao & Wilson, 2015).

Eberle, Berens and Li (2013) also analyzed the influence of using interactive online media to communicate about CSR efforts. Their results indicated "message credibility and stakeholder feelings of identification with the company increase when CSR messages are perceived as more interactive" (p. 740). Eberle et al. (2013) found interactive online media create a bridge of connectivity between stakeholders and companies, which increases the effectiveness of CSR communication. Both message credibility and feelings of identification positively influence corporate reputation. They also make stakeholders more likely to spread positive messages about the company through word-of-mouth (Eberle et al., 2013).

This study expands research on the influence CSR messages have on consumers' attitudes by analyzing consumers' response to Facebook and Instagram messages. It expands on the research of Haigh et al. (2013) by examining different forms of social media. Haigh et al.

(2013) only looked at Facebook. There are several different forms of social media available now, including Instagram. This study examines if messages on different forms of social media (e.g., Instagram and Facebook) impact stakeholders differently. This leads to the first research question.

> **RQ1**: Do Facebook and Instagram messages impact stakeholders' perceptions of corporate social responsibility, organization-public relationships, and purchase intent differently?

> Haigh et al. (2013) found CSR messages had a more positive impact on perceptions of

CSR, organization-public relationships, and purchase intent. The current study extends that study by looking at the differences between corporate ability, hybrid, and CSR messages that organizations' posts on Instagram and Facebook. The current study expects the CSR messages to still have the most positive impact on stakeholders regardless if they appear on Instagram or Facebook.

> **H1**: Stakeholders reading corporate social responsibility messages will have more positive perceptions of corporate social responsibility, organization-public relationships, and purchase intent.

> Pfau et al. (2008) found CSR messages had a positive impact on stakeholders'

perceptions of the organization's reputation. The current study examines if participants' perceptions of the organizations' reputation will be positively impacted by reading social media messages rather than a story as in the Pfau et al. (2008) study. The following research question is asked:

> **RQ2**: Will participants' perceptions of the organization's reputation change after reading a social media message?

Chapter 3 Method

The purpose of this study was to compare different types of social media messages (CSR, ability, and hybrid), as well as social media platforms. An experiment was distributed online using Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Kellogg's was selected due to its presence among the top 50 ranking companies from the Corporate Citizenship and Reputation Institute's 2015 Corporate Social Responsibility Index. Social media messages from Kellogg's Facebook and Instagram pages were used as stimuli. **One** of six messages was randomly assigned: corporate social responsibility Facebook ($n = 87$), corporate ability Facebook ($n = 86$), hybrid Facebook ($n = 85$), corporate social responsibility Instagram ($n = 89$), corporate ability Instagram ($n = 88$), hybrid Instagram ($n = 84$).

Participants

Participants were 18 years of age or older ($N = 519$). They implied consent and then were able to start the experiment. More than half of the participants were women (59.2%). The average age was 37.82 with a standard deviation of 11.84 and a range of 20 to 71 years of age. Over three-fourths of participants had earned college credit (36.8% bachelor's degrees, 27% some college classes, and 12.5% had master's degrees). More than two-thirds of participants were Caucasian (83.4%), 7.3% were African-American, 4.8% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 3.1% were Hispanic/Latino, and 1.4% failed to report ethnicity.

Procedures

A "hit" was generated on Amazon Mechanical Turk. Once the "hit" was published, anyone over the age of 18 who was living in the United States could take the study for a payment of $1. After consenting to take part in the experiment, participants answered questions measuring Kellogg's brand involvement and reputation. After viewing one of the randomly assigned social

media messages (corporate social responsibility Facebook, corporate ability Facebook, hybrid Facebook, corporate social responsibility Instagram, corporate ability Instagram, hybrid Instagram), participants responded to questions addressing brand attitude, corporate social responsibility, organization-public relationship variables, and purchase intent.

Measures

Brand Involvement. Brand involvement was measured using seven bipolar adjective pairs from the Zaichkowsky (1985) involvement scale. Adjectives included: unimportant/important; of no concern/of much concern; means nothing/means a lot; doesn't matter to me/matters to me; insignificant/significant; irrelevant/relevant ($\alpha = .96$, $M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.41$).

Reputation. Reputation was measured using seven bipolar adjective pairs (Anderson & Robertson, 1995). Adjectives included: not reputable/reputable; usually wrong/usually right; a follower/a leader; uninformed/well informed; late with new products/first with new products; ignorant/knowledgeable; unreliable/reliable ($\alpha = .93$, $M = 5.18$, $SD = 1.06_{Time1}$ and $M = 5.35$, $SD = 1.17_{Time2}$).

Organization-Public Relationship. Three dimensions of the Ki and Hon (2007) organization-public relationship scale were used in this study. The questions were placed on seven-point, Likert scales. Questions were reworded slightly to fit the purpose of this study. Dimensions included: *satisfaction* (both the organization and the public benefit from their relationship; the public is dissatisfied with its interaction with the organization; the public is happy with the organization; generally speaking, the public is unhappy with the relationship the organization has established with them; the public enjoys dealing with the organization; the organization fails to satisfy the public's needs; the public feels it is important to the organization;

and in general, and nothing of value has been accomplished by the organization for the public)

(α = .89, M = 5.10, SD = 1.00); **trust** (the organization treats the public fairly and justly;

whenever the organization makes an important decision, the organization considers the decision's

impact on the public; the organization can be relied on to keep its promises; the organization

takes public opinion into account when making decisions; the public feels very confident about

abilities of the organization; sound principles guide the organization's behavior; and the

organization misleads the public) (α = .93, M = 4.94, SD = 1.07); and **commitment** (the

organization is trying to maintain a long-term commitment; the organization wants to maintain a

positive relationship; compared to other organizations, the public values its relationship with this

organization the most; the public would rather work with the organization than against it; and the

public feels a sense of loyalty to the organization) (α = .88, M = 5.22, SD = .99).

Brand Attitude. Overall attitude toward the organization was assessed with a global

attitude measure adapted from Burgoon et al. (1978). It consisted of six, 7-interval semantic

differential scales including: good/bad, positive/negative, wise/foolish, valuable/worthless,

favorable/unfavorable, and acceptable/unacceptable (α = .97, M = 5.37, SD = 1.29).

Corporate Social Responsibility. Corporate social responsibility was measured using

five items on 7-point Likert scales. Questions included: the organization is committed to using a

portion of its profits to help nonprofits; the organization gives back to the communities in which

it does business; local nonprofits benefit from the organization's contributions; the organization

integrates charitable contributions into its business activities; the organization is involved in

corporate giving (Lichtenstein et al., 2004) (α = .96, M = 4.70, SD = 1.08).

Purchase Intent. Purchase intent was measured by combining two scales from Gill et al.

(1988) and Urbany et al. (1997). The questions asked if participants would purchase Kellogg's

products/services. Adjective pairs included: unlikely/likely; nonexistent/existent;

improbable/probable; impossible/possible; uncertain/certain; definitely would not/definitely

would ($\alpha = .96$, $M = 5.34$, $SD = 1.41$).

Chapter 4 Results

This study examined differences in types of social media messages posted by Kellogg's. To examine Research Question 1 an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed on the independent variable form of social media (Instagram or Facebook) and the dependent variables stakeholders' perceptions of corporate social responsibility, organization-public relationships, and purchase intent. The only significant difference found was for *purchase intent* ($F(1, 518) =$ 4.27, $p =.03$, $\eta^2 = .01$). Instagram scored higher on purchase intent ($M = 5.47$, $SD = .1.31$) than Facebook ($M = 5.21$, $SD = 1.50$). There were no significant differences for *corporate social responsibility* $F(1, 518) = 1.98$, $p =.16$, $\eta^2 = .00$ or the dimensions of *organization-public relationships* (*satisfaction* $F(1, 518) = .16$, $p =.69$, $\eta^2 = .00$; *trust* $F(1, 518) = .29$, $p =.59$, $\eta^2 =$ .00); and *commitment* $F(1, 518) = 1.28$, $p =.29$, $\eta^2 = .00$). See Table 1.

Hypothesis 1 stated stakeholders reading corporate social responsibility messages would have more positive perceptions of corporate social responsibility, organization-public relationships, and purchase intent. Participants reading corporate social responsibility messages did indicate more positive perceptions of *corporate social responsibility* $F(2, 518) = 19.27$, $p =.000$, $\eta^2 = .10$, and two dimensions of *organization-public relationships* (*satisfaction* $F(2, 518) = 4.28$, $p =.01$, $\eta^2 = .02$; and *trust* $F(2, 518) = 3.12$, $p =.05$, $\eta^2 = .01$). There were no significant differences for the organization-public relationship dimension of *commitment* $F(2, 518) = 2.60$, $p =.08$, $\eta^2 = .01$, or *purchase intent* $F(1, 518) = 1.00$, $p =.37$, $\eta^2 = .00$. See Table 2.

Tukey HSD post hoc comparisons of means indicated those reading corporate social responsibility messages had significantly more positive perceptions of corporate social responsibility ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.06$) than those reading corporate ability messages ($M = 4.56$, $SD = .95$) and hybrid messages ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 1.10$).

Those reading corporate social responsibility messages had significantly more positive perceptions of the organization-public relationship dimension of *satisfaction* (*M* = 5.25, *SD* = .99) than those reading corporate ability messages (*M* = 5.11, *SD* = .97) and hybrid messages (*M* = 4.93, *SD* = 1.03). They also indicated higher levels of *trust* (*M* = 5.07, *SD* = 1.12) than those reading corporate ability messages (*M* = 4.94, *SD* = .96) and hybrid messages (*M* = 4.79, *SD* = 1.12). Hypothesis 1 was partially supported. Those reading corporate social responsibility messages did indicate higher perceptions of corporate social responsibility and certain dimensions of the organization-public relationship. There were no significant differences found for message type and purchase intent.

A paired sample t-test was used to examine Research Question 2. Research Question 2 asked if participants' perceptions of the organization's reputation would change after reading a message. A paired sample t-test computed on the pre-stimuli and post-stimuli measures. Results indicate stakeholders' perceptions of the organization's reputation became more positive $t(518) = 5.97$, *p* = .000 from pre-stimuli (*M* = 5.18, *SD* = 1.06) to post-stimuli (*M* = 5.35, *SD* = 1.17).

Table 1: Scores for Dependent Variables Based on Social Media Type

	Facebook	Instagram
Dependent Variables		
Attitude	5.26 (1.18)	5.43 (1.14)
Corporate Social Responsibility	4.64 (1.03)	4.77 (1.12)
OPR - Satisfaction	5.08 (.99)	5.12 (1.01)
OPR – Trust	4.91 (1.08)	4.96 (1.07)
OPR – Commitment	5.12 (1.02)	5.27 (.96)
Purchase Intent	5.21 (1.50)*	5.47 (1.31)*

Note: Means and standard deviations (listed in parentheses) are listed. Corporate social responsibility was measured using 5 items developed by Lichtenstein et al. (2004) on a 7-point Likert scales. Purchase intent was measured using scales from Gill et al. (1988) and Urbany et al. (1997). Perceptions of the organization – public relationship was measured using 8 items for satisfaction, 7 items for trust, and 5 items for commitment, using a Likert scales (Ki & Hon, 2007).

* significant at $p < .05$ level

Table 2: Scores for Dependent Variables Based on Message Type

	Experimental Condition:		
	CSR	Ability	Hybrid
Dependent Variables	(n = 176)	(n = 174)	(n = 169)
Attitude	5.40 (1.19)	5.43 (1.10)	5.24 (1.20)
Corporate Social Responsibility	5.10 (1.06)*	4.56 (.95)	4.45 (1.10)
OPR - Satisfaction	5.25 (.99)*	5.11 (.97)	4.93 (1.03)
OPR – Trust	5.07 (1.12)*	4.94 (.96)	4.79 (1.12)
OPR – Commitment	5.33 (1.03)	5.22 (.92)	5.09 (1.01)
Purchase Intent	5.44 (1.37)	5.36 (1.41)	5.22 (1.46)

Note: Means and standard deviations (listed in parentheses) are listed. Corporate social responsibility was measured using 5 items developed by Lichtenstein et al. (2004) on a 7-point Likert scales. Purchase intent was measured using scales from Gill et al. (1988) and Urbany et al. (1997). Perceptions of the organization – public relationship was measured using 8 items for satisfaction, 7 items for trust, and 5 items for commitment, using a Likert scales (Ki & Hon, 2007).

* significant at $p < .05$ level

Chapter 5 Discussion

This study examined how different social media messages influence consumer attitudes, perceptions, and purchase intent. Using Kellogg's as an example, this study analyzed the difference between message type (CSR, ability, and hybrid) and social media platform (Facebook and Instagram) on effectively influencing stakeholders.

Research Question 1 asked if Facebook and Instagram messages impact stakeholders' perceptions of corporate social responsibility, organization-public relationships, and purchase intent. The findings expand previous research by Haigh et al. (2013), which only looked at Facebook messages, by analyzing the difference between Facebook and Instagram messages. The current study found a significant difference between Facebook and Instagram for one aspect of stakeholders' responses, purchase intent. Stakeholders who viewed a message on Instagram, regardless of message type (CSR, ability, or hybrid), were more likely to indicate intent to purchase the company's product.

Hypothesis 1 predicted stakeholders reading corporate social responsibility messages would have more positive perceptions of corporate social responsibility, organization-public relationships, and purchase intent. The current findings partially support Haigh et al.'s (2013) findings indicating CSR messages on Facebook have a significant influence on stakeholders' attitudes, perceptions of OPR, CSR, and purchase intent. This study found stakeholders reading the CSR messages on either Facebook or Instagram had significantly more positive perceptions of CSR and two dimensions of OPR: satisfaction and trust. This study did not find a significant relationship between CSR messages and OPR-commitment or purchase intent.

This study expanded the work by Haigh et al. (2013) by looking at two social media sites: Facebook and Instagram. CSR messages had a more positive impact on stakeholders compared to ability and hybrid messages, regardless of the social media platform.

Research Question 2 asked if participants' perceptions of the organization's reputation would change after reading a social media message. The current findings support previous research identifying a positive relationship between CSR messages and stakeholders' perceptions of the organization's reputation (Pfau et al., 2008; Haigh et al., 2013). Stakeholders' perceptions of the organization's reputation became significantly more positive after reading a social media message from either Facebook or Instagram.

This study expanded the previous research in this area by using social media messages as the stimuli, rather than a story about the company. These findings indicate social media messages are also capable of positively influencing stakeholders' perceptions of an organization's reputation.

Future Directions/Limitations

One potential limitation of this study is the lack of time between pre-stimuli testing and post-stimuli testing. The pre-stimuli and post-stimuli questions were asked within the same survey, taken at one time. Testing the post-attitudes a week after recording the pre-attitudes might offer a more accurate result. The study also had a disproportionate number of female (59.2%) and Caucasian (83.4%) respondents.

Additional research on the influence of social media messages is necessary to confirm these findings. Relatively little research has been conducted on companies' use of emerging platforms, such as Instagram. Future studies should expand the body of research on the types of messages companies use on the major social media platforms.

Practical Implications

This study expands the current understanding of how CSR messages on Facebook and Instagram positively influence stakeholders' perceptions of companies. Public relations professionals should use this information to develop social media strategies incorporating CSR messages. This study shows stakeholders respond positively to CSR messages, when compared to ability or hybrid messages. In addition, professionals can use this information to understand how consumers respond differently to each social media platform. This study is one of the first to analyze Instagram, and the findings indicate purchase intent is higher in response to Instagram posts compared to Facebook posts.

This study supports the positive influence social media activity can have on stakeholders. Professionals should be encouraged to maintain active social media accounts, due to the overall improvement of attitudes after reading a social media message.

Appendix A IRB Approval

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

Date: January 5, 2016

From: Jodi Mathieu, IRB Analyst

To: Kristen Laubscher

Type of Submission:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Examining Social Media and its Impact on Stakeholders
Principal Investigator:	Kristen Laubscher
Study ID:	STUDY00004072
Submission ID:	STUDY00004072
Funding:	College of Communications
Documents Approved:	• KLquestions.doc (2.01), Category: Data Collection Instrument • HRP-591Research_KL.pdf (2), Category: IRB Protocol • messages/stimuli (1), Category: Data Collection Instrument

The Office for Research Protections determined that the proposed activity, as described in the above-referenced submission, does not require formal IRB review because the research met the criteria for exempt research according to the policies of this institution and the provisions of applicable federal regulations.

Continuing Progress Reports are **not** required for exempt research. Record of this research determined to be exempt will be maintained for five years from the date of this notification. If your research will continue beyond five years, please contact the Office for Research Protections closer to the determination end date.

Changes to exempt research only need to be submitted to the Office for Research Protections in limited circumstances described in the below-referenced Investigator Manual. If changes are being considered and there are questions about whether IRB review is needed, please contact the Office for Research Protections.

Penn State researchers are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within CATS IRB (http://irb.psu.edu).

This correspondence should be maintained with your records.

Appendix B List of Scales

Brand Involvement Scale (Zaichkowsky, 1985): Seven bipolar adjective pairs:

unimportant/important; of no concern/of much concern; means nothing/means a lot; doesn't

matter to me/matters to me; insignificant/significant; irrelevant/relevant.

Reputation Scale (Anderson & Robertson, 1995): Seven bipolar adjective pairs: not

reputable/reputable; usually wrong/usually right; a follower/a leader; uninformed/well informed;

late with new products/first with new products; ignorant/knowledgeable; unreliable/reliable

Organization-Public Relationship Scale (Ki & Hon, 2007): Using three OPR dimensions

(satisfaction, trust, and commitment) questions were asked using 7-point, Likert scales:

Satisfaction: both the organization and the public benefit from their relationship; the public is

dissatisfied with its interaction with the organization; the public is happy with the organization;

generally speaking, the public is unhappy with the relationship the organization has established

with them; the public enjoys dealing with the organization; the organization fails to satisfy the

public's needs; the public feels it is important to the organization; and in general, and nothing of

value has been accomplished by the organization for the public.

Trust: the organization treats the public fairly and justly; whenever the organization makes an

important decision, the organization considers the decision's impact on the public; the

organization can be relied on to keep its promises; the organization takes public opinion into

account when making decisions; the public feels very confident about abilities of the

organization; sound principles guide the organization's behavior; and the organization misleads

the public

*Commitment***:** the organization is trying to maintain a long-term commitment; the organization wants to maintain a positive relationship; compared to other organizations, the public values its relationship with this organization the most; the public would rather work with the organization than against it; and the public feels a sense of loyalty to the organization

Global Attitude Measure (Burgoon et al., 1978): Six, 7-interval semantic differential scales including: good/bad, positive/negative, wise/foolish, valuable/worthless, favorable/unfavorable, and acceptable/unacceptable.

Corporate Social Responsibility Scale (Lichtenstein et al., 2004): Five items on 7-point Likert scales: the organization is committed to using a portion of its profits to help nonprofits; the organization gives back to the communities in which it does business; local nonprofits benefit from the organization's contributions; the organization integrates charitable contributions into its business activities; the organization is involved in corporate giving.

Purchase Intent Scale (Gill et al., 1988; Urbany et al., 1997): The questions asked if participants would purchase Kellogg's products/services. Adjective pairs included: unlikely/likely; nonexistent/existent; improbable/probable; impossible/possible; uncertain/certain; definitely would not/definitely would.

Appendix C Social Media Stimuli

Facebook-CSR

Facebook-Hybrid

Facebook-Corporate Ability

Kellogg's added 4 new photos.
December 18, 2015 at 11:00am · ❋

Have you found the bowl that matches your soul? Find it at
StirUpBreakfast.com. #StirUpBreakfast

Malty Nutty
Banana

Mexican
Chocolate

Cinnamon
Apple

Grown Up
Trail Mix

Instagram-CSR

1 in 5 children in the US may go to school hungry.*
You can help.

kelloggsus   FOLLOW

121 likes   44w

kelloggsus Join Kellogg's to help provide
school breakfasts to children in need.
kelloggs.com/give

Add a comment...   ○ ○ ○

Instagram-Hybrid

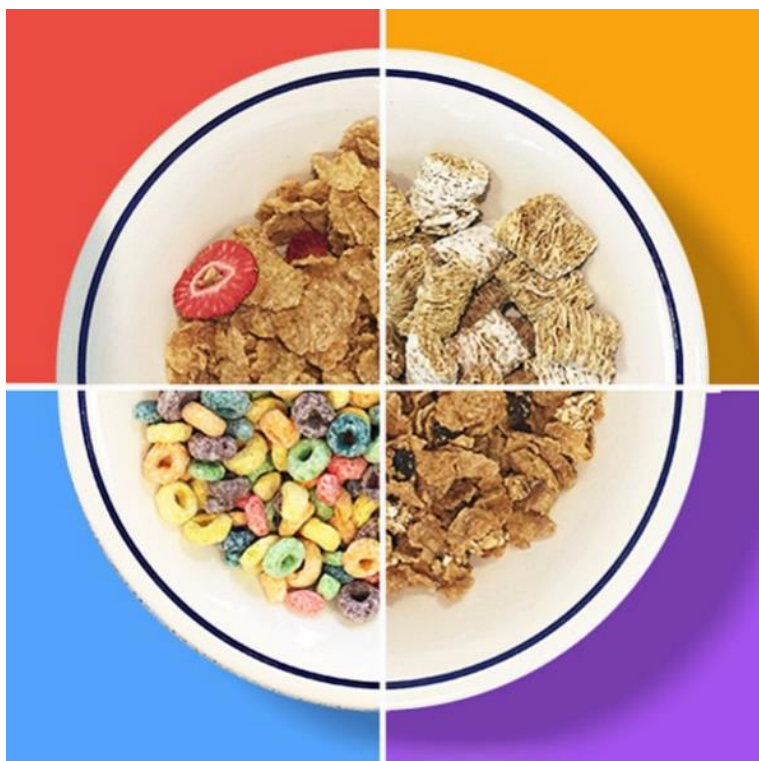

Instagram-Corporate Ability

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Organizing campus-wide events, including a lecture series highlighting public figures from the university; Creating and maintaining program website (www.sites.psu.edu/discern); Creating weekly advertisements on Photoshop, purchasing ad space in student newspaper
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Represented a major mid-Atlantic supermarket chain, a high-visibility non-profit and a federal agency; Drafted press releases, media advisories, and photo releases; Prepared daily clip reports for the supermarket chain's executive team; Pitched stories to regional and national media outlets; Developed comprehensive social media schedules and drafted blog material
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