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Public Relations and Sustainability

Proceedings of the 30th International Public Relations Research Symposium BledCom

EDITORS: Dejan Verčič, Ana Tkalac Verčič and Krishnamurthy Sriramesh

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Public Relations and Sustainability

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Extended Abstracts

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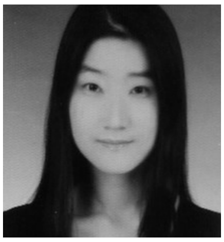

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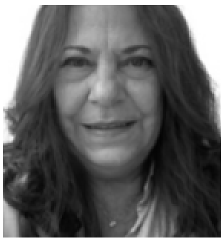
Lučić, Andrea, University of Zagreb (Croatia)

Mager, Leandra, Royal Holloway, University of London (UK)



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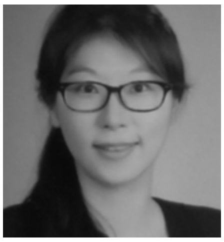

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Quo Vadis Communication? Results of a Survey Among Young German PR/ Communications Practitioners

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Introduction and purpose of the study

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought forward drastic changes into the entire job market including for communicators. While the work became visible and acknowledged, practitioners have also reported higher levels of stress and burnout (Halliwell, 2022). This study therefore focuses on young PR/Comms professional in Germany and their views of the profession looking both at status quo and into the future.

Literature review

In the past years, several studies have explored the future of work including the Qualtrics Future of Work 2021 report and how expectations and collaboration would be influenced by recent developments – the pandemic, VUCA/BANI (Grabmeier 2020, Mack et. al. 2016). While relevant for communicators, none of these studies, to our knowledge, has explored the world of PR/ Communications per se. Moreover, while these studies report differences in age groups and embrace generational definitions, they go about these categories lacking a critical and reflective approach. Our study aims to address both gaps. In doing so, it builds upon previous studies investigating perceptions of the future of PR (Adi 2019, Seidenglanz/Fechner 2021, Zerfaß et. al. 2022 etc.) and focuses on a younger demographic driven by the argument that generations reflect social change and that there is at least broad agreement that those who assume professional responsibility today and in the future have different attitudes than their predecessors.

Methodology

This study used a standardized survey containing items based on a literature review (theoretical concepts, findings of other empirical studies). Purposeful and snowballing sampling methods have been used including sharing the survey with Germany's own PR association (BDKom), the 160 participants into this study being selected based on their reported age (36 and under), the databased and networks used ensuring that participants are PR practitioners.

Results and conclusions

- Choosing an employer the next leadership generation values intrinsic and idealistic factors are valued higher than extrinsic factors. However, especially those members without children at the same time pursue a hedonistic agenda.
- Professional communicators aged below 36 consider themselves dealing with the ramifications of a VUCA world. To a lesser degree they feel impacted by developments which are typically ascribed to the BANI concept.

So they do not see a – at least not yet a completed – change from a VUCA to a BANI world.

- Despite progressive attitudes are typically attributed to younger generations it is all about trust, which is considered as the most important challenge within the next five years. This is true for all PR/Communications professionals regardless of their age.
- There is a significant gap between what PR/Communications does and what it should do regarding its societal but also the internal dimension. Idealist and less pragmatic attitudes of the next leadership generation may lead to a change of the profession within the foreseeable future.

Practical and social implications

- For practitioners and academics alike, this study confirms the need of addressing the core contentious questions around the role and mission of PR/Comms in society.
- A focus on the social dimension of PR (social impact and social value) requires a change in training and learning practices which would lend themselves to more collaborative, reflective and inter-disciplinary approaches.
- Trust remains a core concept for PR. Providing guidance on how to approach the concepts trust, trustworthiness and their link to transparency, authenticity, loyalty and reputation would be greatly beneficial for practitioners.

Keywords

Future of PR, NextGen PR, FuturePRoof, German PR

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Can PR solve wicked problems?

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Introduction and purpose

The role of public relations in addressing hypercomplex and multifaceted societal problems (such as sustainability) is being hotly debated, not least since the COVID-19 pandemic. Often, debates are too generic to lead to usable, practical advice: for example, what might be a meaningful answer to the question about the role and purpose of PR in addressing societal problems? PR as a function is different for a global fossil fuel business, a local government department, or an environmental NGO. The same is true for the individuals or groups practicing PR, and their responsibility – to their employer or client, to society, and to themselves. However, we argue, at its core, PR always aims to persuade. It is necessary to be precise about context and potentially conflicting interests (if not dilemmas) arising from PR's organisational purpose and function, as well as from the actions of practitioners.

Literature review

Sustainability is 'en vogue' as a topic of public and academic discourse. Some authors discuss it in the context of VUCA – to describe a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world (Schick et al. 2017). A recent book by PR practitioners, exploring the growing importance of purpose and authenticity, describes the shift from 'VUCA1.0' to 'VUCA2.0' as both risk, and opportunity for the field.

Another way to describe complex societal challenges is the wicked problems concept, first introduced in 1973 in *Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning* (Rittel and Webber 1973). It distinguishes between tame problems, for which solutions based on science, data and established processes exist, and wicked problems, where no such solutions are available.

The authors of this study argue that sustainability is one of many wicked problems that modern societies are faced with. Analogous to Tolstoy's opening line in Anna Karenina, "VUCA problems are all alike; every wicked problem is wicked in its own way". This remains a much underestimated reality, including for PR and its fraught relationship with persuasion.

Thus, we see VUCA as part of a modern(ist) paradigm, addressing complexity with more complexity, more data, more process. As yet, there is scant evidence that this works – the status of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, or ESG reporting being labelled greenwashing, illustrate the point.

Accepting wicked problems as what they are – which might occasionally lead to paradoxical demands, where conflicting goals can not be met at the same time – might provide a more promising path. This also aligns with metamodern conceptions that go beyond the modern vs postmodern dualism that has dominated academic discourse in PR for a long time. Consequently, if PR is to successfully navigate conflicting interests regarding loyalties and values in sustainability discourse, a metamodern approach is needed that considers the context of the current practice through the lens of wicked societal problems.

Methodology

This is a theoretical, conceptual study, applying a metamodern perspective to PR's challenges with sustainability communication, providing recommendations relevant for academics, practitioners and educators.

Results and conclusions

Until PR finds a way to address its relationship with persuasion, at individual, professional and societal level, professional status and social acceptance will remain elusive. We therefore call for more discussion of the responsible metamodern organisational persuader. Some recommendations for further discussion:

- Introduce reflective practice in daily routines to provide practitioners with opportunities to observe and reflect on values, culture, language to explore differences and identify biases
- Establish ethics conversation forums and build a library of cases
- Create spaces for arbitration where disputes and opposing views can be presented and discussed
- Reconsider and explore mandatory professional licensing options

Practical and social implications

In their 2020 review of Rittel and Webber's wicked problems essay, Pesch and Vermaas conclude that it has become almost impossible to "resolve the fundamental question whose or what conception of the societal good can be accepted as the "good" that is served by administrative activities" (Pesch and Vermaas 2020, p.969). This highlights PR's challenge in addressing sustainability, or even the wider 'social good'. Wickedly complex as these questions may seem, they need to be addressed openly and head-on to make PR sustainable in the sustainability discourse.

Keywords

wicked problems, sustainabilty, persuasion, metamodernism

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Corporations in Borsa Istanbul-Bist sustainability index on the way to the strategic sustainable goals from tactical applications

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Introduction and purpose of the study

The sustainable development goals (SDGs) are defined and prioritized by the United Nations (UN) in order to protect the planet, eliminate poverty, and fight against inequality and injustice. In this context, sustainable development has become a priority on the agenda of the global business. Being a core management function in building favourable relations with all stakeholders, public relations play a significant role in strategically communicating the sustainability strategies and actions of the corporates. In order for sustainability to be reflected in corporate behavior, it is important to define organizational vision, mission, purpose and/or values accordingly (Simões and Sebastiani, 2017). This study aims to examine the extent to which companies internalize, adopt and communicate the issue of sustainability. To this end, the research questions address which of the SDGs companies focus on and to what extent the concept of sustainability is reflected in the goals, vision, mission and values of the organizations.

Literature review

As a relatively new concept and an emerging field of study, sustainability communication requires a clear conceptual and theoretical framework (Golob, Podnar, & Zabkar, 2022). A useful typology suggested by Newig et al. (2013) distinguishes different forms of sustainability communication: communication about sustainability (public discourse oriented), communication of sustainability (persuasion oriented), and communication for sustainability (societal transformation oriented). Although organizations claim that they aim to mobilize and transform their stakeholders for a sustainability-oriented life so that a positive impact can be created, it is arguable whether they consistently act and communicate in sustainability issue. In Turkey, research on sustainability involve either optimistic evaluations of governmental organizations or limited case studies on specific SDGs, sectors or the social media.

Methodology

In order to reveal an understanding on the sustainability actions and communications of the corporates, the study focuses on the companies listed in Borsa Istanbul-BIST Sustainability Index. BIST Sustainability Index constitutes of shares of companies trading in Borsa Istanbul markets in Turkey with high performance on corporate sustainability (https://www.borsaistanbul.com/en). Within this scope, the research sample includes all 61 companies in year 2020 index. From a qualitative approach, the study uses content analysis method to examine corporate web sites and sustainability and integrated reports of year 2021. Content analysis was carried out with an open coding system through studying and discussing the textual data by the two researchers.

Results and conclusions

Analysis of the qualitative data demonstrates that the most concentrated SDGs by the companies are decent work and economic growth (83,6%), responsible consumption and production (80,3%), and climate action (77%). On the other hand, the least concentrated SDGs are no poverty (16,4%) and zero hunger (16,4%). The results reveal that the business in Turkey focuses mainly on economic growth, employment and production processes. Climate crisis is also considered to be a major issue, while there appears to be less engagement in other planetary and human-related issues such as quality education, diversity and equality.

In the study, the goal, vision, mission and values of the companies were examined whether the sustainability concept was manifested. It was found that, of 61, only one company included sustainability both in its vision and values; and of the 58, nine companies mention sustainability in their vision statements. It is remarkable that half of the sample (n=32) do not ever mention about sustainability in their vision, mission or values.

In the ongoing process of the research, the links between SDGs, corporate social responsibility projects and communication activities of the companies will be evaluated by utilizing the model proposed by Newig et al. (2013). This will enable to bring forward an overall picture of corporates in their approaches to sustainability communication.

Practical and social implications

Today, corporates claim having a leading role and advocacy in the issue of sustainability. However, such discourse underestimates the active role of the civil society, the media and communication experts following up global issues, which has long been trying to remind business of their responsibility to the planet and humanity. This study attempts to reveal a holistic picture over the business environment in Turkey. Within this context the study will provide implications to the business and corporate communication professionals how they can potentially contribute to a social transformation.

Keywords

UN sustainable development goals, sustainability communication, corporate identity, corporate behaviour

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Caring or selling? Communicating values or promoting products in PR education

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Public relations research and education have long been perceived as functional to the public relations industry. However, serving corporations' PR needs and grooming communication experts to support their business objectives were often questioned by critical and postmodern scholars who wanted to shift the PR field towards a more activist- and social issues-friendly position, starting from their research agenda and PR curricula. Such a standpoint has become popular recently, mostly among younger publics in developed countries, who expect much more from businesses than meeting the demand for new products and services.
Corporations and their PR functions are now charged by their stakeholders with addressing social, political, and ideological themes and honestly cooperating with activists. Yet, at the same time, PR curricula still lag behind these expectations and rarely deal with subjects other than technical skills, efficiency, and performance, like communicating values, deliberative democracy mechanisms, negotiations, and sustainability, which freshly-minted PR specialists will have to handle in real-life situations.

Research questions

Therefore, it might be beneficial to ask several questions concerning the relationships between PR education and communicating values, social responsibility of the PR industry, and the sustainability of modern institutional communication, according to PR students and educators.

RQ1 – Are PR students taught about values, ethics, social and political issues, activism, social responsibility, and sustainability in PR (in addition to technical and communication skills)?

RQ2 – What are PR students' opinions on these intangible aspects of their PR education? Do they know why these subjects are taught at PR schools? Do they see them as valuable? How – if at all – do PR students plan to apply these issues in their PR careers?

RQ3 – How do PR students and educators evaluate the PR industry when it comes to communicating values and addressing ESG (environmental, social, governance) issues, transparency, equality, diversity, activism, and other causes?

Literature review

Scholars have long pointed out that approaching PR research and education from a purely functional, managerial, and skill-based position – beneficial mainly for practitioners – should be supplemented with a broader social impact and relationship perspective, involving different stakeholders to ensure long-term organizational livelihood and sustainable future for the organization, its environment and the society at large (L'Etang, McKie, Snow, & Xifra, 2016). Consequently, the role of PR is expected to shift from a functional, transmissive process on behalf of an organization or brand to a co-constructive and transformative joint effort of different stakeholders to promote public interest and social issues (Weder, 2022).

Research shows that the vast majority of PR students believe business can and should contribute to solving social and political problems (USC Annenberg, 2022), sometimes with activists whose practices, experience, and voices are under-represented in the public relations industry, research and education. Therefore, the emerging field of activist public relations needs to be more often included in the PR curricula and treated seriously by corporations, brands, and organizations in their communication strategies (Hou, & Wang, 2022).

Methodology

The planned research will apply mixed methods: qualitative (interviews with PR lecturers: academics, and adjuncts) and quantitative (online surveys among PR students in a European country). Respondents (both teachers and students) will be recruited at several universities that run PR sequences in the country. The PR students' perceptions about teaching values and ethics and preparing them to cope with social issues and sustainability themes will be juxtaposed with opinions of their instructors on the same subjects.

Results and conclusions

The research will shed light on the level of preparedness of PR students, teachers and PR curricula to meet expectations of younger generations (especially Gen Z) to cooperate with activists and address social, political, and cultural issues in organizational communication. Moreover, such commitment to teaching about values during PR studies (as opposed to merely technical and communication training required by the industry) can bode well for long-term sustainability policies and efforts of institutions employing young PR practitioners.

Keywords

activism, communicating values, public relations education, social causes, sustainability

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Connecting the networking nodes for sustainable student wellness: The case of UJ's student wellness programme and role of a PR educator

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Introduction to the study

Wellness has become an important topic following Covid-19 demanding from public relations and strategic communication practitioners to understand, plan and evaluate interventions to improve and sustain stakeholder wellness. Within a university context, students as a key stakeholder group, require special attention given the expectations, contractual obligations and social impact their engagement with the institutions' staff and structures represent (Patrick, 2022). Student wellness within a comprehensive university such as University of Johannesburg, is complex given the diverse cultures, individual needs, generational influence, digital competence and educational backgrounds. In addition, environmental and external factors such as high youth unemployment in South Africa, expectations from family and communities, financial support and changing world of work contribute to the complexity of student wellness at a university in the global south.

Universities are mandated to provide students with relevant education and training, to develop them socially, mentally and emotionally while at university and ensuring long-term sustainability of funding and relationships (USAf, 2023).

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) have an average number of 52 000 registered students per annum, making it one of the biggest residential and contact universities in the country. Formal university structures are available to students to assist with the transition from high school to tertiary and include departments such as student affairs (including accommodation, student associations and food aid), financial aid, psychological services, academic support, health clinics and a sport bureau. Connecting these departments and their respective objectives require a concerted effort such a networked perspective.

In applying the network theory (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011) and network perspective (Yang & Saffer, 2019) to identify nodes and their function to student wellness, this study aims to present the emerging process of the symbolic intermediation role of a public relations educator (Benecke, 2019). The multiple roles public relations educators occupy provide them with the symbolic power to promote inclusivity, diverse views, embrace dissent as a catalyst to change, and influencing social change (Benecke, 2019).

Literature review

Public relations scholars have been researching the development of stakeholder networks, the various nodes and actors involved, how these relate to each other and the issue at hand as well as the influence of these networks on society (Yang & Saffer, 2019). Borgatti & Halgin (2011: 1168) distinguish between "network theory which is about the consequences of network variables" while "the theory of networks refers to the processes that determine why networks have the structures they do". The aim of this study is to identify the processes involved to develop student wellness networks.

University student support structures stretch across various departments and faculties often resulting in some student needs either being missed, leaving the student to fend for themselves, or assistance being duplicated such as students being referred for psychological support services by several lecturers given their poor academic performance. Developing a network of support amongst the various stakeholders with the student being at the centre is linked to the student-centred approach followed by UJ.

Public relations and strategic communication are well-established and very successful programmes offered by UJ with several lecturers qualified with doctoral degrees and several years of industry and academic experience. As active faculty members and known for their caring nature (voted as the most caring department in the Faculty of Humanities 2022), PR educators are often expected to occupy multiple roles, including a symbolic intermediary role.

Research approach and data collection

A case study research approach (Cutler, 2004) is followed to investigate the various university student support structures (as nodes) and their ties to student wellness. Interviews with key decision makers within these support structures will analyse their ties, processes and results.

Contribution of the study

The contribution of this study will be the documentation of student wellness support structures within a complex and diverse university context together with the involvement of a PR educator.

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Porn, Positioning and Power: Understanding the exclusion of Porn Pedallers from British Cycling

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Introduction and Purpose of Study

In Spring 2019 a cycling club for adult industry workers who enjoy social and competitive cycling called 'Porn Peddlers' had its British Cycling affiliation revoked due to links with pornography (British Cycling is the national governing body for cycle sport in Great Britain). Porn Peddlers was well established and had held affiliation for several years (allowing it to collect membership payments via the British Cycling platform, giving it public liability insurance and permitting members to race competitively). The removal of this privilege resulted in considerable media attention in the cycling, mainstream and adult media.

This paper explores how British Cycling used deliberate positioning techniques to stigmatize Porn Pedallers to justify its actions, shows how the positions of the two organisations were reframed by the mainstream media (often salaciously), and suggests ways Porn Pedallers could have used counter positioning techniques to lobby for readmittance to British Cycling.

Literature Review

Although work associated with positioning, framing and storytelling is extensive, this has traditionally orientated towards marketing and apart from James' work (2014) and the work that cites her, the specific use of positioning theory is limited in public relations scholarship. The concept of stigma (and positioning to stigmatise others) is rarely discussed as a public relations strategy, with studies preferring to focus on public relations as a management function. Little attention has been paid to the work on stigma by e.g. Tyler (2020) that explores stigma as experienced at a personal level and sees stigmatization as a process of power with the culture of stigma embedded in neoliberal market structures.

The adult industries as the focus of public relations scholarship are largely overlooked (Bridgen, 2023) but the strategies used by and against the adult industry are of interest when we consider the monetary value of the adult industry and the attention it receives in the media. Taken together there is a gap in the scholarship that can in part be addressed by this paper.

Methodology

An interpretivist case study method was deployed drawing on content analysis of organisational announcements, news articles and social media stories discussing British Cycling and Porn Pedallers during March 2019. We draw on James' positioning triangle (2014) to analyse content using three vertices: *Position* (associating Porn Pedallers as outsiders/others not upholding the values of British Cycling); *Speech act/actions* (the language used by British Cycling to associate Porn Pedallers with outsider positioning); and *Storyline* (how stories were used to reinforce the unsuitability of Porn Pedallers as members of British Cycling and how the storyline was (probably unhelpfully) reimagined by the mainstream media). James' positioning theory is based on the work of Harré & van Langenhove (1999) and takes a social constructionist approach to understanding why people say and do certain things in their interactions with others. The paper also draws on issues of legitimacy and power in positioning theory (Wise, 2019) to unearth deeper meaning as to why Porn Pedallers were unable to effectively counter-position and challenge British Cycling.

Results and Conclusions

Research suggests British Cycling was able to dominate media coverage by positioning Porn Pedallers as at odds with British Cycling's aim of promoting 'health and exercise' and its role as a membership organisation serving the British public. British Cycling was able to position itself as acting according to w*orld governing body Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) rules and thus positioning itself as both enforcer and being enforced.* This effectively shut down all debate as to whether Porn Pedallers should be allowed to affiliate. Despite support by some mainstream media including the British Daily Mail, and from famous cyclists, the club was not able to renew its affiliation, or fight for a change in the rules, and the story vanished quickly from the media. Further positioning analysis suggests that even the news media broadly supportive of Porn Peddlers were using the issue as 'clickbait' largely to produce salacious content and were not actively campaigning on behalf of the organisation. Despite having its own strong storylines, Porn Pedallers were constantly on the defensive and, unable to use the media to its advantage, could not position itself differently or change the main narrative to its favour.

Practical and Social Implications

This paper has practical and theoretical value. First, it expands the understanding of positioning theory to the adult industries through integrating the concepts of legitimacy and power. Second, we show how organisations under attack can use media interest to potentially reposition a debate. We illustrate this through a revised positioning model but also show how a particular position can also be reinterpreted by the news media. Third, we stress the role of stigmatisation in public communication discourse and its salience in 'othering' those associated with pornography.

Keywords

Public Relations; professionalism; stigma; positioning; pornography

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“Unfaking” Climate Change. The Impact of Negatively Framed Content on CSR Communication, Company Evaluation and Purchase Intentions

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Funding must be increased to $4.13 trillion every year by 2030 to address climate change effectively, as compared to $632 billion spent in 2019 and 2020. Corporations were estimated to contribute 20% ($124 billions) of that spending. This investment of businesses should be communicated to audiences to generate more support for the climate change issues. At the same time, environmental CSR communication can lead to different company evaluations. Unfortunately, despite prevailing scientific consensus, some supporters of right-wing political ideologies still content climate change (Krange et al., 2021; Lewandowsky et al., 2017; Czarnek et al., 2021). Following the views of populistic opinion leaders and politicians, certain audiences can label climate change communication as fake news. Based on the social psychological findings suggesting greater preference for negatively framed information among right-wing politics supporters (Hibbing et al., 2014), we were interested if more favourable evaluations can be produced if negative framing was used in CSR communication on climate change.

Literature Review

Van Marrewijk (2003) considers the scope of CSR to be delineated by all company’s activities demonstrating the inclusion of “social and environmental concerns in business operations and in interactions with stakeholders” (p. 102). Building on that definition, CSR communication refers to any statements which companies publish to inform the public about their CSR activities. There is notable increase in the researchers’ interest in the perception of CSR communications and its impact on company’s evaluations (e.g. Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Nan & Heo, 2007).

CSR communication can also become controversial, especially when it is related to climate change. Not all stakeholders hold the same political or climate related opinions. In fact, Krange et al. (2021) demonstrated that climate change denial is associated with lack of trust in environmental institutions.

Negativity bias, the principle that “negative events are more salient, potent, dominant in combinations, and generally efficacious than positive events", has been shown to affect especially people with right-leaning political preferences (Hibbing et al., 2014). Relevant findings about publics' response to environmental CSR communication involving positive vs. negative content categories have been mixed. For example, DiRusso and Myrick (2021) found that right-wing individuals react better to positive stimuli. On the other hand, Olsen, Slotegraaf and Chandukala (2014) showed negative effects of positive framing of green products.

Methodology

We recruited 245 participants (M_{Age} = 31.54, SD_{age} = 11.87) and collected information about their political preferences and climate change beliefs using OC-AN questionnaire (Brownlee & Verbos, 2015). To test causal relationship between variables, we created three versions of CSR communication about a fictitious company. Depending on the experimental condition, we used positively (vs. negatively) framed communication about a company's involvement in environmental activities, and a control condition containing general information about a company. Then, we asked participants about their evaluation of the passage, its credibility, actions, the company, and purchase intentions.

Results and conclusions

Consistently with our expectations, left-wing political attitudes were more positively associated with beliefs in climate change occurrence (b =063, $t(244) = 2.397$, $p = .017$, $R^2 = .023$, $F(1,244) = 5.74$, p =.017).

As our primary focus was on the relationship between the label of fake news associated by some publics with climate change and the evaluation of environmental CSR communication, we decided to categorise our participants according to their beliefs in climate change. We predicted that people who exhibited weaker beliefs in climate change (=considered climate change as fake news) would show greater preference for negatively framed CSR communication. The results were opposite. Low support for climate change combined with positively framed content led participants to higher evaluation of CSR communication ($F(1,239) = 13.04$, p<.001), company's actions ($F(1,239) = 15.39$, p<.001), the company ($F(1,239) = 14.85$, p<.001) and purchase intentions ($F(1,239) = 6.07$, p<.01). We hypothesise that promotion focus of audiences with lower beliefs in climate change may explain the preference for positively framed content.

Practical and Social Implications

Our findings suggest that content categories used by companies communicating their sustainability activities should be scrutinised with diligence. While publics who agree with the occurrence of climate change do not now show a preference for positive or negative content in CSR communication, those who doubt it, will favour positively framed information. This finding may be particularly useful for companies communicating with publics of countries where support for climate change is lower and the issue is labelled as fake news.

Keywords

climate change, negativity bias, CSR communication, fake news

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Towards a better future: An assessment of sustainability practices in the aviation sector from the perspective of public relations

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The concept of sustainability, which was brought on the agenda by UN Environment and Development Commission in 1987 with the statement of 'Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", is defined by Mohieldin (2017) as "an approach to development that uses resources in such a way that they continue to exist for others." The concept, that Middleton and Havkins (1998) describe as "a state of balance in which there is harmony between the activities of the human population and their natural, social and cultural environments" (Yavuz, 2016), underlines the "balance" in the continuity of the ecological system, while suggesting the necessity of achieving a balance in consumption.

Individualism based at the center of Frankfurt School scholars Adorno and Horkheimer's, critical approach to consumption industry. According to the scholars; intellectuals should raise awareness of human beings against consumption slavery shaped by production systems. (Buğday ve Babaoğul, 2016:189-190; as cited in Karasar, 2019). In contrary to individualistic context, public relations practitioners, performing sustainability communication, are capable of creating sense about common good among society.

Referring to their sustainability approach, which is also expressed as maintaining the existence, functioning and productivity of ecological systems in the global context, companies have taken many steps to fullfill their social responsibilities. Companies develop strategies upon these initiatives by appealing to the mind and heart of the public and make them visible to society and raise awareness with public relations practices.
Aviation, which is a popular industry with the transportation solutions it offers, is still at the forefront of the sectors that harm the environment on a global scale. Flights produce high levels of carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions and many negative environmental impacts. US Transportation Research Board claimed the major environmental impacts of aviation as on global climate change, air pollution, emissions, ecology and natural habitat, noise, land and material use, energy and water consumption, water pollution and wastes. (Transportation Research Board Environmental Impacts of Aviation Committee, 2004).

The aim of this research is to investigate the sustainability practices and sustainability communication of the aviation sector, and to address transforming sustainability solutions. To understand how aviation sector practice sustainability, case study method was used in this study

from the perspective of qualitative approach and gathered data was examined by content analysis. For specifying the sample purposive (relevance) sampling technique was used. The two leading brands of the Turkish aviation sector, Turkish Airlines and İstanbul Airport, were selected as sample because they produce creative projects in terms of sustainability, consistently implement their sustainability policies, show the results of their work with concrete data, report on regular basis and their efforts is deemed worthy of several international awards.
The relationship between the sustainability policies and public relations practices of these companies has been examined within the framework of the following questions in the context of the literature:

1. How is a sustainable airline and airport characterized as?
2. What kind of strategies have been adopted in this regard to reduce negative impacts of aviation sector?
3. What is the relationship between organizational structure and sustainability strategies?
4. What is the relationship between sustainability approach and corporate culture?
5. What features do sustainability report have as a public relations tool?
6. How sustainability communication is practiced?

In conclusion it is revealed that publishing corporate sustainability reports on regular basis, ensuring stakeholder interaction, stakeholder participation, increasing social acceptance, social media and corporate web site usage for sustainability purposes, implementing activities for rasing sustainability awareness, integrating sustainability to corporate culture and using public relations as a tranformative agent for all these addressed activities creates meaningful improvements for achieving sustainability for future generations.

For further research, national and international public relations practices for sustainability in aviation sector can be examined and compared. Evaluating the outcomes by getting stakeholder feedback is also be suggested.

Keywords

Sustainability, Public Relations, Sustainability Communication, Aviation Sector.

Fruitful futures, well-founded fears, fallacious fantasies: how language professionals view the sustainability of their profession

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Introduction

Professional linguists practise their skills within an uncertain environment. With continued downward pressures on historically low fee-rates, the happenstance of Brexit and the growing use of AI-enabled technology, practitioners in this sector are having to face up to a range of specific challenges. How they view this environment, the conclusions they draw for their own livelihoods and practice and their predictions for the sector as a whole, provide the basis on which a fruitful dialogue can be constructed and pursued between this distinct but diffuse public and those actors who seek to serve, represent, lead and engage with it. Specifically, understanding how professional linguists perceive themselves can be insightful and of practical value to communication practitioners who engage with publics through campaigns, events or activities in various languages, and with a wide geographical scope.

Proposal

Our proposal is to present the findings of research conducted among modern language practitioners into the sustainability of the linguists' profession in the light of recent, current and emerging political, economic, social and technological change. The principal focus is to gather *perceptions about the nature and scale of these challenges… among practising translators, interpreters and* members of other professions who offer and use foreign languages as a key competence and as an important defining feature in their work and professional status… together with *the conclusions that they themselves draw about the sustainability of their own livelihoods as they confront the* combined impacts of these challenges.

Phase 1

The fieldwork is being conducted during the first quarter of 2023, principally among members of the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL), the UK's Royal Charter membership body for linguists and language professionals. Entry into membership is gained through academic qualification, specifically the attainment of specified levels of competence in the use of modern foreign languages. CIOL has a global membership and its members work in a variety of professional settings across a range of economic sectors.

The fieldwork takes the form of individual interviews and survey responses. Initial findings and conclusions will be presented at the CIOL's Translators Day conference in March 2023, based on the results of a first phase of field research among language practitioners under the umbrella title: Talking tongues: 100 Conversations.

Following this presentation and the feedback it elicits, the study will be broadened and further aspects of this study's central theme will be considered for investigation.

Phase 2

A second phase of fieldwork would then be conducted during April-May 2023, both to enlarge the sample size and to gather additional *external insights into trends within the four reference domains* (political, economic, social and technological). It is expected that this second phase of fieldwork will draw additional respondents from other well-recognised cohorts of practitioners from within the wider community of professional linguists.

The authors

This research project is being conducted by Birmingham-based Steve Doswell, corporate communication practitioner, member of CIOL's governing Council, former CEO of the Institute of Internal Communication and a past keynote speaker and frequent participant at BledCom. If this proposal is accepted for BledCom 2023, Steve will present the findings at Bled together with research partner Lavinia Cinca, EU public communication professional, based in Brussels. Lavinia is also a past BledCom participant and has presented research at Bled on three occasions.

A Quarter Century Unravelling Capitol Hill's Communication Managers Summaries and Updates on the Lives of Congressional Press Secretaries

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Introduction and Purpose of the Study/ Research Question

This paper reports on the work of a unique, understudied, often unrecognized, brand of public relations professionals. That is, "press secretaries" (increasingly referred to as "communications directors") who individually serve roughly 435 Members of the United States Congress' House of Representatives. Its research question is: *What principles and processes guide Congressional press secretaries' communication management choices?*

The Literature

Only three published studies have used Capitol Hill's press secretaries as units of analysis (Downes 1998; Hess 1991; Cook 1989). Recognizing this dearth, over 100 analyses describing the nexus of "public relations," "politics," and "public relations" were consulted. Works of dozens of scholars (Denton, Graber, Woodward, Iyengar, and many others) were reviewed. Occasionally, sources which were not academic/peer reviewed where also consulted. This allowed the author to gain an "especially broad, kaleidoscopic collection of insights that speak-- to varying degrees--to the lives of Congress' press secretaries."

Methodology

The paper is built on the evolution of findings from roughly 17 data sets gathered between 1997 and 2022. Their data come from surveys of, interviews with, a focus group among, secondary sources that speak to the work of, and ethnographic observations of, Congress' press secretaries. The findings, which evolved over many years, "matured as new data refined them." Commonly, findings when first discovered were shared (primarily at academic conferences) as "possibilities." As additional research refined the findings, they were reported as "more definitive." The ten findings noted in this paper are the most valid and reliable.

Results and Conclusions

First, a summary of aforementioned "more definitive" findings is provided. These indicate the press secretaries: build deep, often personal, relationships with the Members of Congress they faithfully serve; describe their work with traditional journalists as both "honest" and "guarded"; make their own ethical choices based upon the worldview of the Members of Congress they serve—setting their own values aside when necessary; struggle with how/when/and to what extent they will integrate on-line and new/social/ alternative/digital/emerging media into their work; are “deeply offended” by the label “spin doctor”; et al.

Second, a more extensive discussion of two *areas*--from which new findings are coming to fruition--is provided. Here the author has both extended his literature review and conducted additional Zoom or in-person interviews with today’s press secretaries; these interviews will continue until a few days prior to the 2023 conference.

The *first area* of more recent findings (affinitive with this year’s conference theme) examines the press secretaries’ responses to issues of sustainability. Here (among other indications) the data suggest those working for more liberal members of Congress are more concerned about (and take more time) addressing sustainability policies than those working for more conservative Members. The *second area* of more recent findings discusses the “massive, perhaps profound” changes social media have brought to communication management on Capitol Hill. Here (among other indications) the data suggest increased dependence (for press secretaries serving both parties) on analytics when making communication management decisions.

Practical and Social Implications

The paper is a prelude to the author’s forthcoming book. Its working title is *The Politics and PR of Capitol Hill’s Image Makers: The Role of the Congressional Press Secretary,* and it is under review by Bloomsbury Publishing. A question which the author has raised before and which is germane to this paper, the book, and much of the information shedding light the press secretaries’ jobs arises: *Is the press secretaries’ work good for democracy?*

In response, the author suggests that ultimately the press secretaries’ work is good for democracy. Recognizing criticism of that work (e.g., critics claim information subsidizers such as the press secretaries feed an increasingly “uncivil discourse” and “severe partisan divide in in the United States”) the author responds with the insights that spring from a quotation commonly attributed to Thomas Jefferson and definitively attributed to Ralph Nader--which speaks to the press secretaries’ roles--and which supersedes such criticism. It states: “Information is the currency of democracy.” This quotation builds the foundation for the paper’s final section pointing out the “positive social, political, cultural, and economic influences of the press secretaries’ important jobs.”

Keywords:

Congressional communication management; press secretary/communications director; Capitol Hill’s messaging

Sustainability and conservatism

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The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to clarify the term sustainability for the theory and practice of public relations. Namely: if the success of keeping/sustaining relations with publics mainly rests on communication and if communication rest on the as precise denotation of terms used, then the similar meaning of »sustainable« should be tracked along various stakeholders and various practices where this term is used.

Methodology

The methodology of this study is the semantic analysis and its reference to various fields of science and practice by the Consilience principle (Wilson) field theory (Bourdieu, Einstein), evolutionary biology (Haig, Wagner, Maynard-Smith), communication (Shannon, Sebeok), memetics (Fomin, Drapal) and public relations theory (from Grunig to Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič and Sriramesh).

Results and Conclusions

1. The meaning of the term »sustainability« has lost its self-reflective power, a power to re-evaluate its meaning in the context of highly diversified sciences, technologies and sciences in a society of the 21st century that homogenises more and more along catch-phrases (political correctness) without even an option to challenge it.
2. Since future changes are not known and cannot be known in the principle (Hegel, 2003), the realisation of sustainability can only be evaluated backwards.
3. The sustainability of complex systems like individuals, society and ... lies in the antifragility (Taleb, 2014). Antifragility is grounded on individual interactions as much as possible two-way-symmetrical (Grunig et al., 1989) and should, for that reason, rest on memetic intersubjectivity.
4. Reputation, as one of the cornerstones of public relations, is a value of intellectual capital as one of 6 capitals defined by contemporary corporate reporting. (International <IR> Framework | Integrated Reporting, n.d.)
5. Sustainability is conservative; conservatism is sustainable; both are prone to bottom-up adaptations.
6. Sustainability in communication is defined as the ability of a memetic field to adapt so that it stays the same. This is also valid for a meme, so sustainability can be measured as fitness, which is defined by longevity, fidelity and fecundity.

Practical and social implications

Public relations is a theory and practice that unites various social studies and humanities fields. It explains the culture in which organisations and individuals act and thus helps practitioners to manage relationships within organisations and with the environment. If culture is one of the outcomes of evolution, and if culture, its replication and mutation, is parallel to genetic change, theoreticians and practitioners of the field should imply evolutionary theory and memetics findings. Implications of this paper are theoretical, opening the spectre of sciences that should conciliate and practical, allowing practitioners to add new perspectives on what they could do to manage as sustainable relations as possible.

Keywords

Communication; evolution; memetics; sustainability; intersubjectivity

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Criticism on DEI-related corporate social media postings and how companies handle it

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Social pressure on companies to contribute to a fairer and more inclusive society mounts, and more and more companies commit themselves to corporate political advocacy (CPA), which rather abandons "consensus-driven communication" and has a "focus on social change" (Ciszek & Logan, 2018, p. 119). Pointing to inequalities in a diverse society and taking a stance on such delicate issues on social media is one form of CPA. We investigated which diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) related topics companies address on their social media platforms, how much and what kind of criticism those topics generate, and to what extent and how companies respond to such critical comments. Additionally, possible differences between the social media communication of companies headquartered in Germany/Austria and the US are addressed.

Literature review

DEI have become hotly debated issues with a political and moral nature (Köllen et al., 2018), which can create criticism and even outrage particularly on social media as a public space for discourse and discussion (Ciszek & Logan, 2018). Criticism frequently emerges from a perceived expectancy violation leading to a sense of injustice that arouses unpleasant emotions such as anger or anxiety (Burgoon, 2016). People cope with such emotions by either (1) staying loyal, (2) exiting the relationship, or (3) voicing criticism (Hirschman, 1970). The latter is particularly relevant in the context of social media communication about sensitive topics such as DEI, because taking a stance against social injustices on social media can cause criticism and thus challenges for corporate communication.

Methodology

We conducted a content analysis of DEI-related social media postings and subsequent critical comments on the Facebook and Twitter pages of companies headquartered in the US and Germany/Austria. The sample included the 50 largest US and German-based companies plus the nine largest Austrian companies (Forbes Global 2000). First, the Facebook and/or Twitter pages of the selected companies were searched for DEI-related postings focusing on the seven primary dimensions of diversity at any time in 2021, which reduced the sample to 88. A total of 368 postings (GER/AUT: 145; USA: 223) were identified, saved, and coded. The number of critical user comments was limited to a maximum of five per posting, resulting in the coding and analysis of 1,049 units (GER/AUT: 353; USA: 696).

Results and conclusion

Regarding topics addressed, significantly more US-based companies (n = 83) focused on race/ethnicity compared to German/Austrian companies (n = 13). In contrast, gender (identity) and the empowerment of women was communicated significantly more often by companies headquartered in Germany/Austria (n = 42) than in the US (n = 32). Similarly, in the US, significantly more critical comments were observed in the context of race/ethnicity (n = 134 vs. n = 24), while—proportionally—more critical comments in Germany/Austria addressed gender (identity) and the empowerment of women (n = 47 vs. n = 36) as well as sexual orientation (n = 61 vs. n = 76). Interestingly, 21% of the critical comments did not address the diversity issue raised, but the company's products/services. Lastly, US companies received significantly more emotional (57.5%) and destructive (54%) criticism than German/Austrian companies (emo: 42.2%, destruct: 36.8%).

Companies responded only to one in ten critical comments, with German/Austrian (15%) companies responding significantly more often than US companies (7.8%). Interestingly, 67% of the responses referred to critical comments that were not diversity-related and almost half of those (45%) regarded products and/or services. The degree of emotionality/rationality and constructiveness/destructiveness, respectively, did not have an impact on companies' response behavior.

The study has its limitations as it focused only on large companies in two cultural clusters (Anglo and Germanic Europe). It did not address the interaction of critics with other users, which would lend insights into the dynamics of the controversy. Further research should address these limitations by extending the sample to other cultural clusters and also analyzing user-to-user interactions.

Practical and social implications

DEI-related social media postings frequently engender critical comments, especially in the US. Yet, companies shy away from engaging in dialogue on these delicate issues. Instead, they prefer to answer criticism that relates to their products/services, which may leave the impression of rainbow-washing. By responding to DEI-related criticism companies could use social media to demonstrate openness and emphasize their stance and moral values. Users, in turn, often use social media platforms to voice their anger about anything, as about half of the criticism did not refer to the content of the postings on DEI issues. The findings are in line with Ciszek and Logan's (2018) study, which concludes that social media is rarely a space for dialogue but rather a platform for venting and hostility.

Keywords

Diversity, DEI, social media, criticism, cross-cultural research

Environmental Sustainability: The role of communication in organizational responsibility

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Sustainability, the concept that has arrived maybe with 50 years of delay, is the new buzzword all over the globe. From greenwashing to becoming a real worry, and for some a new business purpose built in the DNA of their organizations, this concept seems to be an unavoidable one in the context of the actual organizations communication departments. The research question that formed the skeleton of the research here being presented even if it has everything to do with sustainability did not use this broader concept in the formulation of the research question or in the analysis but a very concrete aspect of the "sustainability" worries.

How do the organizations belonging to the Global Compact Network Portugal with 2020 reports publicly accessible online express in their sustainability reports, or in their absence, in their activity reports, sustainability issues and in particular the organization's concerns with the "climate"? What use do they make of the concepts of "climate change" and "climate crisis"?

Literature review

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility is understood in a very broad sense and in a formulation indistinguishable from another notion, Corporate Citizenship. If we use these concepts without the search - which is certainly too complex for the purposes of this work - for a full definition, and therefore much more in the sense so dear to Wittgenstein (1953) of family resemblances, we cannot help but focus on their dimension (we know that it is artificially cut) of environmental responsibility.

The notion of 'sustainability' has increasingly been employed with a very broad focus. Although internationally and in the reports of the most important organizations, or even as defined already in 2019 by "The Guardian", "It's a crisis, not a change. (...) Climate change is no longer considered to accurately reflect the seriousness of the overall situation".

Methodology

This research is focused on the 84 Portuguese organizations that are part of the UN Global Compact, an initiative in the area of corporate citizenship, which originated from a proposal by the former UN Secretary General in 2000. It is based on ten principles, in the areas of human rights, labor practices, environmental protection and anti-corruption, and aims to promote the public and voluntary commitment of companies to comply with them.

48 out of these 84 organizations had available online or sent to the researchers after being contacted, their sustainability or activity reports. Therefore, 26 sustainability reports and 22 activity reports were analyzed.

A thematic categorical analysis of manifest messages was performed. NVivo software was used to support data collection and analysis. The categories were defined in a concept-driven strategy and coincide with the major themes under analysis based on the Global Compact proposal, regarding Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Results and conclusions

As argued above, the concept of climate 'crisis' should be preferred to that of climate 'change' to refer to the challenges the world faces. However, in Portugal, little or nothing has been developed from the point of view of communication, and more particularly, of Corporate Communication / Public Relations to understand all these issues. Only 5 out of the 48 reports analyzed present the expression "climate crisis" throughout their pages to refer to the current situation of humanity. It is also curious to note that of the 5 organizations, we could only consider that 4 assume that we are effectively living a climate crisis, because in one of the reports, the sentence is built in the future, as if it were something still hypothetical, that we can prevent, and not yet a reality. If we look at the expression "climate emergency", it only appears in 4 of the reports. Moreover, the term "climate change" is used by 33 out of 48 organizations. And we found "Environmental Sustainability" in 27 documents analyzed.

Practical and social implications

We intend to present a reflection on how organizations communicate their Corporate Social Responsibility practices in aspects more directly related to climate change or the climate crisis. At the same time, it is the authors' intention to promote recognition of the importance of communication for social and behavioral change in the area of climate, as well as its importance in combating the climate emergency. In this way, we hope to contribute to the ethical accountability of communication professionals when working on the topic of climate change / climate crisis from now on.

The CSR reports represent in our neo-liberal societies one of the most relevant aspects of the expression (so many times in figures) not only of the financial health of the organizations but especially of the real worries that have underlined all the CEOs in a certain year.

Keywords

Sustainability, climate emergency, climate crisis, climate change, Global Compact

The relationship between CSR and sustainability: the Olivetti case and how public relations can contribute to a company's sustainability

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Introduction and research question

Organizations that voluntarily integrate environmental and social policies in their business model represent a fundamentally distinct type of the modern corporation, characterized by a governance structure that in addition to financial performance, accounts for the environmental and social impact of the company, a long-term approach towards maximizing inter-temporal profits, an active stakeholder management process, and more developed measurement and reporting systems. However, although the concept has now become mainstream, the argument of this research paper is that successful companies have always been attentive to the wellbeing of its stakeholders, as well as being properly integrated into the social fabric where they operate. A case in point of this research paper is Olivetti, Italy's historic manufacturer of office equipment and information systems, which closely associated its name with corporate social responsibility under the guide of Adriano Olivetti. The company that bears his name became one of the pioneers of information technology, known for its capacity for innovation, design and for having applied the principles of what we now call **corporate social responsibility**. An engineer by training, Adriano Olivetti continued the business started by his father and his name is inextricably linked to a **humanistic vision of the industry** to which he dedicated his entire life. He believed in shared value and in beauty and always worked to create value for employees, customers and communities.

Methodology and literature review

Research shows that companies with high ESG ratings have a lower cost of debt and equity, and that sustainability initiatives can help improve financial performance while fostering public support. The overlap between social and environmental progress and financial gain is called the **shared value opportunity**. In other words, "doing good" can have a direct impact on your company's ability to "do well." Due to this opportunity, it's clear why many businesses have adopted these practices. An interpretative framework (Carroll's CSR pyramid) to analyze the entrepreneurial choices by Adriano Olivetti according to the various perspectives of Corporate Social Responsibility. Corporate social responsibility and sustainability have become prominent issues of strategic importance for any corporation that needs to engage in social problems to ultimately preserve or improve its bottom line.

Results

Neoclassical economics and several management theories assume that the corporation's objective is profit maximization subject to capacity (or other) constraints. During the last 20 years, a growing number of companies have voluntarily integrated social and environmental issues in their business models and daily operations (i.e. their strategy) through the adoption of related corporate policies. The sustainable enterprise focuses on its stakeholders interests. Today this perspective is a central one in the dialogue on enterprise goals and on the nature of the firm, but this was already clear in the past history also through the experience of some enlightened entrepreneurs like Adriano Olivetti, who was able to balance economic responsibility and social ones in his managerial model and he showed that the pillars of sustainability, as we call them today, were internally coherent. This is the essence of sustainability *ante litteram*.

Conclusions and implications

Agreement across disciplines regarding concepts and definitions is necessary for the purpose of establishing construct validity. Companies must make the leap from having the performance to ensure sustainable performance. Sustainable success of an enterprise is achieved through the ability to meet the needs and expectations of its customers and other stakeholders in the long term through effective management of the organization, the environmental awareness organization, and also by learning and applying appropriate improvements and innovations. CSR 2.0 comes down to one thing: clarification and reorientation of the purpose of business. Ultimately, the purpose of business is to serve society, through a solid bottom line, but also through the provision of safe, high-quality products and services that enhance our wellbeing, without eroding our ecological and community life-support systems.

Keywords

CSR, sustainability, Olivetti, community, purpose

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Are Italian companies ready to communicate sustainability? An empirical analysis

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Introduction and research question

Stakeholders' pressure is growing on companies to disclose their sustainability, and regulations in this respect are getting tighter at unprecedented speed, in Europe and beyond. What is the state of the art of sustainability communication? Are communication practitioners able to disclose corporate sustainability effectively? These questions are even more important considering that the new requirements in terms of sustainability reporting represent an opportunity for the communication industry, but also a threat, with different professionals (e.g., accountants, environmental engineers) entering a field traditionally monopolized by communicators.

Methodology and literature review

Companies disclose their sustainability through a variety of channels, but their communication mix varies widely across industries: firms offering FMCGs, for instance, use advertising and social media much more than firms serving B2B markets. To ensure the comparability of information we decided to focus on website-based communication of sustainability, based on the assumption that corporate websites are traditionally a repository of information about corporate performance, regardless of the business they are in. Different authors studied websites to analyse sustainability communication practices (Williams & Pei 1999, Birth et al. 2008, Gill et al. 2008, Wanderley et al. 2008). Siano *et al.* (2016) offered a framework for the systematic analysis of sustainability communication through corporate websites, measuring four dimensions (orientation, structure, ergonomics and content) and 64 items. We applied this framework to the nine largest companies by turnover of a mid-sized Italian region, Friuli Venezia Giulia, under the assumption that, other things being equal, larger companies should be able to control larger communication budgets, and thus leverage better professional skills.

Results

The nine largest companies of Friuli Venezia Giulia are all B2B firms, in many cases belonging to traditional heavy industries such as steelmaking and shipbuilding. Notwithstanding these commonalities, their web-based sustainability communication presents broad variations. In terms of Siano *et al.* (2016)'s framework, four companies out of nine obtained "excellent" scores, one ranked as "adequate", three as "fair" and one as "weak". The full paper describes the performance of each corporate website under the four dimensions and discusses whether traces of greenwashing can be detected, based on the five "sins" singled out by Siano *et al.* (2016), i.e. no proof, irrelevance, vagueness, unidirectional approach to stakeholders and worshipping of false labels.

Conclusions and implications

The results of this analysis are not especially comforting. Whereas about half of the companies we observed perform well, the remaining half seems to pay little attention to sustainability communication. Due to their sheer size, these companies are highly visible, so their limited proficiency in sustainability communication is a matter of concern. If many of the market leaders seem unable to stand out, it is also reasonable to infer that, at least on average, smaller firms are unlikely to perform better. Our data set does not allow whether the problem is on the supply side (communicators are not proficient in sustainability communication) or on the demand side (companies are not truly interested in disclosing their sustainability performance), but the outcome is the same under both hypotheses: for the time being, the ability to communicate sustainability effectively seems to be in limited supply. If this is true, we envisage two risks for the future: a) firms are going to face a major bottleneck once the requirement to step up sustainability communication kicks in; b) unless communicators invest today on the skills needed in the future, they may be crowded out of the market by other professionals who are already investing in this direction.

Keywords

sustainability, greenwashing, reporting, web-based communication, Italy

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What is the relationship between sustainability and CSR?

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Introduction and purpose of the study

During the past decades, corporate responsibility as well as corporate sustainability have become core aspects for companies around the world. There does not exist one common definition of these two concepts. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) generally refers to the consideration of the impact business practices have on society, employees, and all other stakeholders. Creating and following CSR practices means acting as harmless and as responsible as possible along the whole supply chain and fitting well into the existing societal system. Meanwhile, corporate sustainability rather comprises a wholesome self-carrying system that endures over time. It consists of three dimensions: environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Thus, CSR and corporate sustainability do have some common aspects – especially with regards to the social dimension of sustainability – but are in general different concepts. Still, they are often barely separated or even used synonymously. The importance of sustainability as well as social responsibility is growing steadily, so that there is an academic, societal, and corporate interest in following the development of these constructs, sharpen their definitions and especially find out how far and in what manner they are related to each other. Especially the practical relationship – measured empirically – is of great importance to derive recommendations for firms as well as political administration. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between CSR and the different dimensions of sustainability more clearly from an empirical viewpoint and gain more insight into its implications for business and political as well as legal stakeholders.

Literature Review:

While there exist several recent studies that examine the relationship between CSR and sustainability using different empirical approaches, those mainly focus on countries outside of Europe and – to the authors' knowledge – there exists no recent study that empirically assesses this relationship for German businesses. The growing popularity of sustainability and CSR led to the production of several studies trying to provide theoretical frameworks for the relationship. Still, the empirical literature in Europe is only in its beginnings. Therefore, this study resorts back to the basics and focuses on the analysis of the existence of a relationship between CSR and sustainability and tests which dimensions of sustainability are the closest related to CSR.

Methodology:

The data used in this study is gathered by a method called social listening. Social listening means that various source types on the internet are searched for statements including certain keywords and referring to certain entities, e.g., companies. These fragments are further sorted by reputation dimensions and tonalities. The analysis is performed with the help of artificial intelligence that combs through the content with special consideration of the linguistic features and thus identifies and categorises the fragments. The sample used in this study consists of roughly 400.000 fragments for about 40 large companies in Germany. Based on that, time series for the number of fragments were created. Those time series focus on fragments with reference to the three different sustainability dimensions (excluding all CSR-related fragments) and on fragments referring to CSR. For each of the companies investigated, correlation coefficients of these time series were computed resulting in a distribution of several hundred correlation coefficients which provides an empirical measure for the relationship between sustainability and CSR. Thereby, the authors offer a first impression of the previously unclear link between the two phenomena for the German context.

Results and conclusions:

The empiricial results quite clearly show that there is a relationship between CSR an the different dimensions of sustainability: Generally speaking, the more CSR is talked about, the more the other aspects of sustainability are talked about. Also, there is no evidence that the strength of that correlation on average differs from dimension to dimension.

Practical and social implications:

Corporate CSR reporting correlates not only with social sustainability reporting, but also with environmental and economic sustainability reporting. This shows that the public's perception of the social, ecological and economic responsibility of companies does not occur in isolation, but rather a networked overall impression is created - which is supported by all three dimensions of responsibility.
This opens up the opportunity for companies to play to their strengths in the public perception of a single sustainability dimension and thus achieve a positive overall impression, as long as no negative impressions in one of the other sustainability dimensions counteract this.
For the CSR commitment of companies, this in turn means that the perception of CSR activities has an impact on the perception of ecological and economic sustainability.

Keywords

sustainability, social listening, CSR

Reconsidering the Trade Association as a driver and promoter of sustainability; observations from the travel, tourism and hospitality sector

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Trade Associations (TAs) are viewed as organisations which focus on producer and customer exchanges across the markets of their members (Kahl and Grodal, 2016; Rosa *et.al.*, 1999). They interpret events for members, generate intelligence and influence market practice.

The interpretations afforded by TAs depend on a wide range of communications techniques including oral briefings, trade meetings, the production of white papers and guides, media briefings and responses. These techniques are carefully curated and delivered within well-policed corporate and design guidelines. These interpretations are extended by trade media, active participation in social channels and direct involvement with policymakers and regulators.

TAs are increasingly encouraged to consider issues that stretch beyond their narrow product and customer concerns. This paper will reconsider this, drawing on new empirical research and applying institutional theory. The authors look at the extent TAs are now co-ordinating, encouraging and helping to promote pan-industry action around sustainability issues. The focus of this exploratory study will be the UK's travel, tourism and hospitality sectors.

Literature review

Clarke's (2004) study of 17 travel and tourism-related trade bodies showed that only a small minority regarded environmental criteria as compulsory for TA membership. However, the author predicted that TAs will be increasingly important in developing environmental sustainability.

Institutional theory (Furusten, 2023) aids the authors' work when considering how TAs are increasingly looking to develop relationships with society to extend their boundaries beyond the specific interests of their members. The construction and negotiation of these new boundaries are more frequently focused on sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) issues. By engaging with new actors outside of their fields, theory suggests that TA members may feel that changing boundaries threatens pre-existing homogenous values and behaviours. However, current research on how TAs deal with mimetic shifts, whereby an organisation simultaneously seeks to meet the interest of its members and society, is highly limited (Font, 2019).

Emerging evidence suggests attitudes and behaviours of TAs are changing as their understanding of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has grown. Recent studies by the Metal and Chemical industries and the Business Travel Association use SDGs to reframe approaches to sustainability.

Methodology

This study uses a multi-method and an interpretivist approach. It will draw on 20+ key-person interviews, set to be completed by May, with leading actors in the UK travel, tourism and hospitality sector. The interviews explore TA members' attitudes toward sustainability. Specifically, they consider, TAs' roles in co-ordinating, sense-making and encouraging industry-based programmes, including their implementation. Furthermore, the role that communications is playing in response to changing sustainability priorities is also scrutinised. A critical overview of actions undertaken by TAs is being undertaken, using the SDGs as a framework to assess progress and future priorities.

Results and Conclusions

Initial research reveals a strong appetite for sustainable industry collaboration but also recognises the challenges of coordination. The use of the SDGs reveals a strong desire for TAs to set specific sustainability priorities. The challenges faced during the recovery of COVID have slowed efforts towards sustainability issues. Steps toward considering issues that lie beyond the immediate commercial needs of TA members are evidenced. Further research across a wider range of TA industries is required to establish deeper trends, as well as the voice and role TAs may have on global issues.

Practical and social implications

The growing willingness of the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors to identify new roles for their TAs, to assist with coordinating, promoting and enabling effective sustainable approaches, illustrates that TAs are transcending their historical role of representing members' direct interests. TAs now exist in a delicately balanced position whereby permission is being given to them to promote wider agendas whilst recognising that support from members may be missing.

Keywords

TradeAssociations; Sustainability; Travel; UNDevelopmentGoals; PR

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Will AI be the end of PR as we know it? A vision for professional sustainability

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What should organizations (and PR practitioners) know about AI regulations worldwide so that they can responsibly lead in AI driven world? Should we even be assuming that role, and if so, on what basis? This paper argues that the underpinning premise should be a new ethical vision, developed collaboratively, to provide a framework within which PR can play its linking, facilitative and ethical guardianship roles.

Current duality exists regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence. While AI promises to aid humanity in unprecedented ways ranging from automatizing work to aiding in finding cures for presently deadly diseases, AI also presents an existential threat to humanity if left unchecked. In many ways, this paper addresses professional sustainability in the face of growing AI concerns. We argue that participating in and oftentimes leading on policy conversations can prepare organizations and PR practitioners to assure strong professional standards regarding the responsible use of AI and organizational accountability. During the past several years, discussions on the need for formal policy as well as well-articulated ethical guidelines have been led by private, public, governmental, and intergovernmental bodies. For example, the European Parliament's recent study completed in March 2020 on the ethics of artificial intelligence, which is based on the Montreal Declaration, which in turn was based on the The Forum on the Socially Responsible Development of Artificial Intelligence, which was held in Montreal on November 2 and 3, 2017, addresses issues of ethics in to the use of AI. The Montreal Declaration calls on all actors, including individual citizens throughout the world, to support the basic goal, among many, that there should be an ethical framework for the development and deployment of AI (Montreal Declaration for Responsible AI Report, 2018). Although some governmental and intergovernmental bodies operationalize ethical concerns to a more prescriptive policy, this does not mean creating a new set of legal prescriptions or proscriptions for PR; rather, a PR ethic establishes the foundation for ethics to be the "dynamic basis for the normative evaluation and guidance of AI technologies, referring to human dignity, well-being and the prevention of harm as a compass and rooted in the ethics of science and technology" (UNESCO, 2021, p. 4).

This calls for building on existing PR ethical approaches: because ethical, as well as moral questions and issues, are rapidly changing over time with the use and development of AI technologies (UNESCO, 2021, p.4). Hence, PR needs a new ethical vision for an increasingly AI-driven world in which organizations are deploying trustworthy AI and use accountability to mitigate the risks (Curtis, Gillespie, & Lockey, 2012). Therefore, a larger question driving this paper is: What should organizations (and PR practitioners) know about AI regulations worldwide so that they can responsibly lead in AI driven world? Our analysis of existing regulations from governmental, intergovernmental organizations, as well as professional PR organizations, agencies, and corporations, is premised on the following questions: How do regulations address benefits and risks of AI of which organizations and public relations professionals should be?

Specifically, how are issues (privacy, transparency, algorithmic governmentality) and benefits (increasing efficiency, combatting ransomware, expanding possibilities of knowledge and learning) addressed, if at all? This paper is divided into several sections. We begin with an overview of the existing regulations, and then we move to the analysis of regulations on levels of governmental, intergovernmental levels, as well as what policies, if any, PR professional bodies suggest.

Next, we move to application of what we've learned about AI regulations and how those might be helpful to various types of organizations, PR practitioners within these organizations, as well as PR agencies. In conclusion, we will discuss how AI governance and algorithmic governmentality shape discourses, business strategies, and future directions for organizations and for PR practitioners.

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Corporate Social Responsibility, Regional Culture, and Sustainability: Case of NEPG Low-priced Medicine

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Introduction and purpose

There has been an explosive growth in demand for pain-relief medicines, vitamins, and flu drugs after China relaxed its COVID-19 policies (China Daily, 2022). People rushed to hoard medicines, which were once expensive and hard to buy. On this occasion, news about acetaminophen tablets produced by Northeast Pharmaceutical Group (NEPG) and only priced at CNY2/20 tablets over the past 20 years has been widely spread on Chinese social media. Hot discussions about NEPG's low price in medicines all the time were triggered online, and topics related to NEPG have been the most trending on Sina Weibo. Although NEPG was hit with a $19 million fine for dominance abuse in China, people showed great mercy and forgiveness to the corporation influenced by the news. NEPG was reputed as a corporation with social responsibility, and the demands for NEPG products once faced an oversupply situation. In addition, NEPG achieved several limits ups despite the bull market.

In the case of NEPG's low medicine price during the pandemic, this study will examine the brand reputation reversal through corporate social responsibility (CSR) activity and explore the relationship between CSR and sustainability according to public opinions.

Literature review

CSR is usually associated with an approach to integrating environmental and social aspects into corporate activities (Baumgartner, 2013). Within the broader concept of sustainable development, scholars have interpreted the complex relationships between CSR and corporate sustainability (CS) and explained how CSR could be integrated into CS as either the ultimate goal or a transitional stage for a corporation (Ashrafi et al., 2018). Besides, studies have examined that CSR can significantly improve CS, and corporate reputation has a mediating effect between CSR and CS (Pang et al., 2022). The case of NEPG also provides a reference for the contribution of brand reputation to the relationship between CSR and CS.

Methods

This study collected valid 5,472 samples in terms of the keyword "Northeast Pharm" from Weibo from 15 Dec 2022 to 15 Jan 2023. We used LDA to extract the topics of research samples and examined the regional characteristics of sentiment by matching the location shown by the IP of audiences. This study also conducted text analysis to further understand the specific connotations of the topics and sentiments.

Results and conclusions

LDA analysis extracted six topics in this study, showing the focus of the public opinion expressed regarding NEPG's low-priced medicine. The six topics are 'dilemma during the pandemic,' 'social responsibility,' 'the role of the times,' 'medicine supply,' 'regional culture and memory,' and 'corporate development.' In a review of the texts, people expressed their praise for NEPG due to not only the low-priced medicine all the time but also their CSR activities in history since its establishment. Sadness reflected in the texts referred to moved emotions and pointed to Northeast China in terms of its regional history and its social role in the national dilemma. For example, people compared Northeast China to the eldest son of P.R.C., indicating that NEPG has been taking social responsibility. The majority of disgusting sentiment was about criticizing the corporations which raised the medicine price, reflecting their recognition of NEPG's CSR behavior. NEPG regained its reputation through the low-priced medicine news, and people also expressed their understanding and support for NEPG despite the negative punishment news. On the one hand, NEPG achieved societal sustainability as its CSR behavior satisfied people's demands in a dilemma. On the other hand, NEPG gained corporate sustainability due to the repaired brand image, increased brand awareness, and promoted business profit.

In addition, this study indicated that regional culture plays a role in CSR decisions and behavior, further contributing to sustainability. People, especially those who are located in Northeast China, reviewed the regional history and expressed great pride in the region and its regional culture. According to the texts, people also connected NEPG's CSR to the culture and tradition of Northeast China, which are enthusiasm, simplicity, kindness, and generosity.

Practical and social implications

This study provides a reference for understanding the relationship between CSR and sustainability (corporate and societal). Also, the case reflects the role of cultural factors in CSR activities and sustainability-related activities.

Keywords

corporate social responsibility, sustainability, regional culture

Does sustainable development need more conscious PR practitioners? A comparative analysis of the perspectives of PR professionals and scholars on sustainability

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Introduction and Purpose of the Study

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is now at the center of the PR agenda. The value of PR in influencing perceptions and raising awareness among internal and external stakeholders about sustainability, encouraging volunteerism, and monitoring related issues is undeniable. As it is now a requirement rather than a trend for organizations to adopt a sustainable approach, most PR professionals all over the world are responsible for integrating sustainability into their organizations', or clients' communication strategies. Thus, the way that sustainability and sustainable development are viewed, embraced, and assessed by PR professionals is crucial. On the other side, the communication schools that raise future professionals and decision-makers play an essential role in shaping knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to sustainability. The purpose of this study is to explore the understanding of sustainability of PR professionals, and scholars to find out problems, needs, or opportunities to struggle for sustainable development. It also aims to bring different perspectives together to provide suggestions to empower PR and communication specialists who (will) work for a sustainable world.

Literature Review

Modern public relations offers a solid framework for sustainable development with its theories, strategies and practices. The current and potential PR professionals should internalize the sustainability concept not just for managing the reputation of the companies, but also for real change. Considering "the vague, ambiguous, undefined, and often contradictory" meaning of sustainable development (Fergus and Rowney, 2005, p. 19), it is very important to grasp the perspectives where everybody has their own responsibilities to handle the issue.

By considering this framework, the following research questions are presented in this research:

- RQ1: How do PR academicians and professionals approach sustainability and sustainable development?
  - RQ1.1: To what degree do PR academicians attach importance to sustainable development and its dimensions (economic, social, environmental)?
  - RQ1.2: To what degree do PR professionals attach importance to sustainable development and its dimensions (economic, social, environmental)?
- RQ2: How do PR professionals and scholars

conceptualize CSR and sustainability?
- RQ3: What are the perceived challenges and limitations for sustainable development for PR professionals?
- RQ4: How do PR professionals and scholars evaluate the role of public relations for sustainable development?
- RQ5: What changes, if needed, should be made to PR education to enhance the skill set of future professionals for sustainable development?

The interview guide includes questions about legal/cultural/financial/political aspects of sustainability, PR curriculum, ethics, greenwashing, ESG, SDGs, activism, sustainability reporting, science/environmental/risk communication, and non-governmental and non-profit organizations.

Methodology

This qualitative research employs a semi-structured in-depth interviewing method. To address questions about PR professionals' perspectives, fifteen PR practitioners who work in director positions at public relations agencies in Istanbul will be interviewed. The interviews for the academic part of the research will be conducted with fifteen professors who teach in public relations departments with at least five years of teaching experience at universities in Istanbul. The online interviews started in January and are planned to be completed in April 2023. The participants were selected through a purposive sampling technique. The analysis of the data will be done utilizing a thematic analysis approach.

Results and Conclusions

The research will find out whether there is a gap to be filled or an opportunity to be used for a more sustainable future considering the key role of PR. The study has several limitations. First, the participants may not be representative of all PR scholars and professionals in Turkey due to the non-probability sampling method. A national sample of participants may be used in future studies to increase the representativeness.

Practical and Social Implications

This study will provide insights to find ways to identify a more realistic future by going beyond the institutional focus as McKie and Galloway (2007, p. 374) pointed out in their call to scholars and practitioners. The findings are expected to be significant in broadening the skill set of PR practitioners to tackle a variety of challenges in organizations and the larger public sphere.

Keywords

sustainable development", "sustainability", "PR profession", "PR education"

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Internal Social Media Use for an Attractive Internal Employer Brand

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Introduction and purpose

Employees are crucial for improving the competitive strength of organizations in the global economy (Tumasjan et al., 2020). Given the volatility of the labour market, organizations are challenged to retain the right employees at the right time (OECD, 2022). Striving to be an "employer of choice" and thus engaging in employer branding (EB) activities has become the norm for many organizations. EB highlights the unique aspects of the firm's employment benefits that differentiate it from those of its competitors both for current (internal EB) and future employees (external EB). The way current employees evaluate their employer plays an important role in advocating the employer brand as they are the best EB ambassadors (Itam et al., 2020). With the rise of social media, employees can play active communication roles within the organization (Pekkala and Luoma-aho, 2017; Madsen and Verhoeven, 2019). Through social media, employees function as brand ambassadors who shape the employer brand from within with everything they do and say online (Dreher, 2014). Organizations which are more aware of their social media conversations internally score higher on employee satisfaction (Tsai et al. 2009).

Although there are studies exploring the relationship between internal communication satisfaction and internal employer branding (Verčič, 2021; Itam, 2020), as well as studies on the effect of internal social media (ISM) use on employee satisfaction (Madsen and Verhoeven, 2019), there is limited empirical evidence on the use of ISM for building an attractive internal employer brand. The contribution of our study is two-fold: first, it adds empirically to existent conceptual work on internal EB; second, it explores how ISM in firms play a role in internal EB. We define the following research question:
How do employees and organizations use ISM and how does that use relate to internal EB?

Literature review

We conceptualize the internal employer brand as the identity of an employer for employees (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016). Research shows that a strong employer brand positively affects employee engagement and satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour (Schlager et al., 2011; Hoppe, 2018), as well as employee commitment (Chhabra and Sharma, 2014), which increases employee retention (Adler and Ghiselli, 2015). Several studies suggest a positive relationship between internal communication satisfaction and engagement (Welch, 2011; Verčič and Vokič, 2017), internal communication satisfaction and overall employer attractiveness (Vokić et al., 2023), internal communication and a positive employee experience with the employer brand (Punjaisri et al., 2009; Itam et al., 2020).

Research on ISM use finds that employees are willing to engage in organizational ambassadorship as authentic and credible communicators (van Zoonen et al., 2014). We define ISM use as "a user-friendly and visible web-based communication arena inside an organization in which coworkers and managers can communicate, interact, connect, and make sense of their work and organizational life" (Madsen, 2017, p.3). We build a conceptual model, which serves as a starting point for exploring the use of ISM for an attractive internal EB.

Methodology

We conduct research into organizations in the North of the Netherlands from 3 main sectors: Healthcare, IT and Energy. Firstly, these sectors experience constraints in positioning themselves as an employer. Secondly, the Northern Netherlands likes to promote itself as an innovative region in these sectors (AWVN, 2019). Ten organizations in each sector are selected using snowballing sampling (Neergaard, 2007). Main criterion is that they use ISM for internal communication.

Having in mind the explorative character of our research, we use a multilevel approach: 1) in-depth interviews with managers HR/communication on various aspects e.g. their evaluation of the employer brand, the preferred brand attributes, how engaged employees are, how ISM are used, what kind of information is shared; 2) questionnaire among employees on how engaged they are, how they evaluate the employer brand and whether and how they use ISM to communicate with colleagues and managers. The topics on ISM use were derived from Madsen (2017). We use Berthon et al. (2005) for assessing the attractiveness of the internal EB.

Results

The analysis is still in progress. Results will be completed in May 2023. As we carry out a qualitative study using snowballing technique, results are vulnerable to generalizations.

Implications

The practical intent of the study is to provide managers with a benchmark instrument on how their internal employer brand ranks among their employees.

Keywords

employer branding, internal employer brand, internal social media use, employer attractiveness

Talking about Sustainability in the Fashion Industry: Just a Feel-Good Factor?

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Introduction

In July 2023, a marketing student filed a class action lawsuit against the Swedish fashion retailer H&M, claiming that she had overpaid for a product which was labeled as „conscious". The products from the „Conscious collection" were advertised as using less water through the manufacturing process – but it turned out otherwise in this particular case. (Wicker, 2022) Few months later, British-based online fashion retailer Boohoo announced that they have hired US reality-TV celebrity Kourtney Kardashian, known for her lavish lifestyle, to help them go on a "sustainability journey". (Haidari, 2022) The Chinese fashion retailer has been using Tik Tok influencers to promote #sheinhaul, fostering overconsumption practices, and releasing about 700 to 1000 new products every day. (Elan, 2021)

Literature review

Fashion industry has long been accused of misleading customers with „greenwashing" claims and promoting overconsumption through various PR, pricing and production strategies and tactics. Many researchers have described various aspects and forms of sustainability issues and greenwashing in the fashion industry (Mukendi et al., 2020; Thorisdottir and Johansdottir, 2020; Adamkiewicz et al., 2022; Volero, 2022). Some studies have analysed the impact on consumer behavior to tackle the gap between the talking and walking, when it comes to ethical consumption (Neumann, 2020; Musova et al., 2021; Pereira et al., 2021). In the past decade, there have been many initiatives and even proceeding legislative regulations to tackle the problem of greenwashing and misleading customers with false environmental and ethical claims, especially in the fashion industry, such as the Higg Index and United Nations Global Compact Code (Islam, Perry and Gills, 2021). The European Union has been working on a "greenwashing regulation bill" or "anti-greenwashing laws" (Bonanni, 2022). To close the gap between the "walk and talk" or "the knowledge-to-action gap" (Overall, Makkula and Moisander, 2012), it is necessary to analyze which communicative actions are merely symbolic and possibly lead to better emotional shopping experience of the consumers ("feel-good factor"), and which have the direct "call to action" appeal.

We can state that the question of sustainability, especially in the fashion industry, is closely linked to communication and public relations strategies – firstly, what to disclose and what not to talk about (Jestratuevis, Uanhoro and Creighton, 2022); secondly, how to talk about it, which language and words to use (Peison-Smith and Evans, 2017). Anne Peirson-Smith and Susan

Evans (2017) have analyzed the public perception of "green" vocabulary in focus groups (but limited to Chinese/Cantonese language), and they have found that using the "green discourse" in marketing texts is creating merely a "linguistic cycle of confusion" in some cases.

Methodology

Our research question is: "What are the key narrative frames and terms, which global fast fashion retailers use to describe sustainability and ethical issues?"

Our hypothesis is that the frames, narratives and issues will be vague, confusing or "feel-good" promises.

The dataset will consist of annual reports published by the companies, including ESG reports or sustainability reports (depending on availability). We will examine three companies, which we have mentioned above, which are closely linked to the reported ethical issues and experienced a notable media "scandal" because of their actions (H&M, Boohoo and Shein). We will use semiotic analysis to uncover deep rooted relations and meanings linked to the key frames and issues.

Purpose of this study

Purpose of this study is to analyse the corporate communication of the fashion producers and categorize key frames, narratives and wording used throughout the sustainability/ESG reports. In an additional analysis in the future, we will test them through consumer focus groups, similarly to the Peirson and Evans preliminary study (2017).

Practical and social implications

Practical and social implications of this study will lead to a better understanding the role of communication in sustainability and ESG issues among the fashion producers. We will point out specifically to those frames and narratives, which should be avoided as vague, misleading or considered as "greenwashing".

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The Role of Communication in Establishing a Shared-Purpose Driven Organisation

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Introduction and purpose of the study

The message is clear: the stakeholders nowadays have high expectations for business to contribute to resolving societal and environmental issues (Braig & Edinger-Schons, 2020; Arthur W. Page Society, 2022). In response, more and more corporations have started to provide clear purpose statements, explaining their values and missions and their expected social impacts to publics. A publicly stated committed purpose and set of values can help organisations to overcome challenges, to understand the need to adapt, and, most of all, to foster collaborations with different stakeholders which ensure organisations behave in a sustainable manner (Lleo, Bastons, Rey, & Ruiz-Perez, 2021).

Whilst it seems to have become mainstream that contributing to the society is a purpose for an organisation, Zahra and Wright (2016) emphasized that organisations and businesses should strike a balance between gaining economic or "financial wealth", and enhancing the quality of life in a society, i.e., "social wealth." Purpose-driven organisations have the mission to put their business model of searching for profit at the service of a social or environmental goal. Currently, the discussions of purpose-driven organisations and the resulting benefits in public relations literature are just in their infancy stage. We'd like to explore what role public relations can play in operationalising this concept and helping an organisation address the public expectations to bring positive impact to the society while maintaining its economic goals? Moreover, from the prosocial perspective, the purpose an organisation develops should meet public expectations. We propose that organisations may enact this performance through dialogic communication and by listening to stakeholders. In this essay, we are discussing purpose-driven organisations, shared purpose, dialogic communication and organisational listening and propose how public relations can contribute to an organisation's better performance in the society.

Literature review

Purpose-Driven Organizations and Shared Purpose by Partnering with Key Stakeholders

Management scholars Bartlett and Ghoshal (1994) defined purpose as "a company's moral response to its broadly defined responsibilities, not an amoral plan for exploiting commercial opportunity" (p. 88), and they posited the top management's role in both communication and action is to inspire the employees in an organization to develop a common sense of purpose. In this research, we define organizational purpose as *the ethical reason and the guiding principle for* *an organization to accomplish its business goals that result in economic and social values.*

Our definition fits the research focus on how an organization's prosocial approach to business helps resolve societal issues and brings values to stakeholders. To reach such outcomes, we consider an organisation's prosocial approach on purpose can be expanded to a new perspective: a shared purpose (Lleo et al., 2021), a purpose co-decided by the management and the stakeholders essential for achieving the organizational purpose. An organization with a defined purpose is enabled to develop clear goals and objectives for its performance.

Shared Purpose Through Dialogic Communication and Organizational Listening
The most important dimension of dialogic communication is the orientation to others (Kent & Taylor, 2002). The dialogic approach emphasises sharing and developing mutual understanding with publics (Uysal, 2018). Hence, dialogic communication enables an organization to develop a shared purpose that is agreed by and creates value for stakeholders, inasmuch as the dialogic approach allows organizations to engage with stakeholders to strengthen organizations and society.

The International Listening Association (ILA) defined listening as "the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or non-verbal messages" (ILA, 1995, p. 4). In public relations research, Macnamara (2016) considered the characteristics of effective ethical listening should include recognizing and being attentive to others, acknowledging others' views, providing fair interpretations of what others say, making the effort to understand and providing feedback to others' views, perspectives, and feelings in an appropriate manner. In a similar vein, Capizzo and Feinman (2022) contended that organizations should perform civic listening so that they can share responsibilities in communities, societal decision making, and problem solving.

Methodology

This research intends to develop a theory paper on the role of communication in developing a shared-purpose driven organisation. As a result, we will consult literature from business, organizational theory, and communication. In addition, we will analyze successful cases from the Arthur Page Society for purpose-driven companies on how CCOs help their organisations implementing the corporate purpose in their business operations and engagement with stakeholders.

Results and Conclusions

This paper will discuss how engaging and listening to key stakeholders, such as employees, shareholders, the community, and the government on their expectations helps an organisation developing a shared purpose that allows it to work closer with the society and the stakeholders on societal issues. This theory paper is concluded with propositions on the role of communication for a purpose-driven organisation.

Practical and social implications

Establishing a shared purpose should be accomplished by two-way communication that involves dialogue and listening. This is how CCOs can contribute to an organisation's responsibility as a corporate citizen to engage and to work with stakeholders in resolving social issues/problems.

Keywords

Purpose-driven organisations, Dialogic Communication, Organisational Listening, Sustainability, Prosocial Communication

A Lens to Examine Communication Through Business Continuity Management

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Introduction and purpose of the study

This paper approaches sustainability from a perspective that combines organizational cyber resilience with the principles of business continuity management. The paper describes how a modified Resilience Matrix (Linkov et al., 2013) can be used as a framework to understand communication and communication management. This Resilience Matrix combines an event management cycle with elements of business continuity and cyber threat intelligence in the context of the EU Commission funded Project DYNAMO.
The research questions of this study are:

- RQ1: How can the Resilience Matrix be used to explain communication needs and requirements in different stages of the event management cycle?
- RQ2: How can the Resilience Matrix be used to explain communication management needs and requirements in different stages of the event management cycle?

Literature review

The Resilience Matrix has been developed to facilitate focusing on creating shared situational awareness and decentralized decision-making by distributing information across networks operating in physical, information, cognitive, and social domains. (Linkov et al. 2013). It does not, however, explicitly discuss or state the role of communication in different phases of the event management cycle and resilience development. Communication and communication management can contribute to organizational resilience (Buzzanell 2010; Ishak and Williams 2018). Effective multistakeholder communication and collaboration is essential for reputation and continuity management, and consequently for increased cyber resilience (Knight & Nurse 2018). Resilience is impacted not only by the technological elements of cyber physical systems (CPS), but also by human elements (Ruoslahti, 2020).

Methodology

The Resilience Matrix has been developed for the DYNAMO project. This development process has included literature review and a series of development workshops that resulted in the development of the Resilience Matrix. It will be used to make sense of communication and communication management needs and requirements in the different stages on the resilience cycle. The Resilience Matrix will be used as a framework to describe what kind of implications this perspective could have for communication and communication management.

Results and conclusions

The Resilience Matrix developed for the DYNAMO project recognizes a six-phase event management cycle. The plan phase, that has been defined as a single phase in the matrix by Linkov et al. (2013), is divided here into three phases: prepare, prevent, and protect. The RM phase 'response' corresponds to the absorb phase in the matrix by Linkov et al. (2013), while the 'recover' phase is the same in both matrixes, followed by the same phases 'learn', and 'adapt'. In the Resilience Matrix, elements of cyber threat intelligence (CTI) and business continuity management (BCM) including risks, critical functions, key personnel, guidelines and procedures, and open communication, are combined with the event management cycle phases. Communication is described as one of the elements in the Resilience Matrix. The other elements in the RM can set different requirements to communication and communication management.

Practical and social implications

The role of communication in the organizational cyber resilience throughout the resilience cycle calls for more research in the field of communication and communication management. It is important to understand what kind of communication can help to foster organizational cyber resilience and make the organization vulnerable or in turn promote organizational cyber resilience. Further study with the RM as a framework of data collection and analysis can provide valuable knowledge that will have practical implications in organizations in communication management and planning in complex and fast changing digital environment. Added understanding of how to manage and plan communication, and communicate organizational cyber resilience is a contribution to theory and may even benefit society.

Keywords

Organizational cyber resilience, cyber risk communication, cyber crisis communication, business continuity management

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Re-public relations: An issue-centered approach to organizations and publics

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Introduction and purpose of the study

The incremental attention and demands for CSR, current global sustainability transitions, and the increasing entanglements of organizations with all sorts of sociopolitical crises and issues in the digital society, compels PR to focus on societal relevance, mediated communication and sustainability. The epistemological and ontological roots of the key concept of publics in PR offers a robust foundation for theorizing about organization-society connections and issue-based relations between organizations and publics. However, the current under-conceptualization and strong organization-centeredness of the concept of publics is a severe problem and shortcoming in PR literature (Sommerfeldt & Iannocone, 2023).

The term publics origins in pragmatist theory. Especially the ideas of Dewey have been influential in PR theory from as early as the 1950's forward (Rakow, 2018). The Deweyan notion that publics manifest as dynamic assemblages of actors that self-organize and become communicative, as they are indirectly implicated in issues has long been applied in PR research, but for arbitrary reasons. Particularly James Grunig, and others focusing on organization-public relationships (OPR), translated Dewey's ideas of public formation around issues as a form of democratic politics to the organizational context (i.e., public formation in terms of associations around organizational issues) and argued PR should concentrate on fostering relationships with organizational publics (Sommerfeldt & Iannocone, 2023).

In this essay, I elaborate recent calls to re-embed the concept of publics in the work of the American pragmatist John Dewey (Rakow, 2018; Sommerfeldt & Iannocone, 2023). More specifically, based on recent interpretations and elaborations of the famous Dewey-Lippmann debate in current pragmatist political philosophy and the issue mapping literature (see e.g., Marres, 2007), I propose a research perspective pertaining to issue-centered relationships between organizations and publics.

Literature review and methodology

An often-forgotten point of the Lippmann-Dewey polemic is how these two pragmatists eventually came to conjointly develop the argument that "the settlement of public issues depends on institutional outsiders adopting and articulating those issues, and bringing them to the attention of institutions that are equipped to deal with them" (Marres, 2007, p. 775). This perspective puts issues center-stage and emphasizes the process of issue-formation by publics engaged in displacing the issue to locations suitable for settlement.

Pragmatist social scientists have used Dewey's and Lippmann's ideas to study issue formation on- and offline. In accordance with the broad notion of the displacement of politics (i.e., over the last decades political decision-making has been widely dispersed to non-traditional/non-democratic locations such as NGO's, corporations, and transnational organizations), these accounts highlight that publics in search for settlement of public issues do not a priori discriminate between formal and informal political addresses. For example, issue mapping studies show how networks of environmental actors, NGO's, and other organizations are engaged in efforts to address issues at organizations like the World Bank and the United Nations, by forming hyperlinked networks and discursive alliances online. Current cases of networks of civil-society organizations, civilians, scientists, NGO's, activists, etc. addressing climate change at large energy companies (see e.g., the climate case against Shell) signals similar dynamics.

Results

Especially in these times of declining political power of, and trust in, governments and other political institutions in combination with societal turmoil and a stronger focus on the social responsibility of organizations, (digital) publics will increasingly seek multiple disparate institutions for addressing and settling issues; for example, addressing climate change at governments, transnational organizations and multinational corporations. In turn, as issue mapping studies show, organizations themselves are part of publics engaged in issue formation. This highlights the dual role of organizations and PR in issues: Organizations engage in issue-based PR as issue-addresser and -addressee.

In the paper a case-based (i.e., the climate case against Shell in the Netherlands) model is presented which outlines how organizations may apply issue-based PR as both issues-addressers and -addressees. In addition, concrete suggestions for empirical quantitative (i.e., issue mapping combined with automated framing analysis) and qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups and participatory research) research are outlined.

Conclusion

The approach presented in this essay is timely and valuable for PR research, practice, education, as well as for other social actors (e.g., journalists and citizens), as it reconnects organizational PR via issue publics to society and current multi-actor problems.

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Organizational Learning for Sustainable Employee Engagement: Redefining Employee Engagement for Shifting U.S. Workforce Expectations

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Introduction

Gallup's annual Q12 survey results from its latest 2022 survey revealed that younger generations of U.S. employees (Gen Z and Millennials) are increasingly demonstrating active disengagement in the workplace compared to older generations (Harter, 2023). Consequently, this relaxed attitude of younger employees about their job has baffled managers and management and has warned U.S. organizations to explore better ways to engage younger employees. In the meantime, in the U.S., quiet quitting has emerged as a phenomenon that describes an attitude among young generations of employees who refuse to exert discretionary extra-role efforts beyond their formal job responsibilities. Quiet quitting describes an employee attitude that rejects "the idea that work should be at the central focus of their life…. the expectations of giving their all or putting in extra hours (Zenger & Folkman, 2022, para 1). Quiet quitting is a new name for an old behavior that describes the lack of engagement. However, the prevalence of quiet quitting attitudes among younger generations of the U.S. workforce makes management worry about why their efforts to increase employee engagement have not resulted in increased employee engagement among Gen Z and younger Millennial employees.

Literature

Organizational psychology scholars generally agree that employee engagement means an activated, passionate, and motivated psychological state of an employee that drives discretionary efforts in in-role and extra-role performances (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Engaged employees demonstrate a high level of participation in organizational activities typically outside their formal job responsibilities. Consequently, scholars have explored antecedents of engagement, such as trust, job satisfaction, organizational and supervisorial support, symmetrical employee communication, or transformative leadership, from the theoretical frameworks of employee-organization relationship management and social exchange theory (Kang & Sung, 2017).

However, despite increasing organizational efforts to harness the enthusiasm and commitment of younger generations of employees, younger generations refuse to subscribe to the organization-centered labor ideology that demands all-consuming commitment from employees, such as their obsession with employee engagement.

The stimulus-Response model of organizational learning explores the interactions between organizations and the external environment by focusing on how organizations adapt to the changes in the organizational environment via the process of organizational learning. Organizational learning and adaptation in response to shifting internal and external organizational environments facilitate organizations toward achieving effectiveness and sustainable development via reflective change (Gnyawali & Stewart, 2003). In the evolving and changing psyche of the U.S. workforce, U.S. organizations must explore sustainable ways to engage their employees. In other words, the conventionally-held expectations of discretionary efforts, aka employee engagement, must also undergo a systematic reevaluation that meets the changing workplace expectations and environment that we are witnessing among the younger generations of employees.

Scope and Method

The purpose of this study is to critically examine the antecedents of employee engagement from the literature from disciplines of organizational management, psychology, human resources, and employee-organization relationship management and reassess the significant associations of these antecedents with employee engagement or the lack thereof based on the known characteristics of Gen Z and Millennial U.S. employees.

A meta-analysis of the literature on engagement and Gen Z and Millennial employee characteristics will provide theoretical rationales for proposing a set of prepositions for a revised paradigm for sustainable employee engagement for the emerging workforce.

Conclusions

The meta-analysis of the antecedents will provide us with a revised paradigm and a definition of employee engagement as sustainable workplace expectations for sustainable organizational governance in the reality of shifting attitudes and norms of the younger U.S. labor force. Hopefully, the revised paradigm and the definition will provide scholars and practitioners of organizational communication and management with better organizational systems to garner employee commitment and enthusiasm from younger generations of employees.

Keywords

Employee Engagement, Sustainable Workplace, Antecedents of Employee Engagement, Workplace Expectations, Gen Z Employees, Millennial Employees, Organizational Learning,

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An Examination of Inoculating Strategies for Effective Communication with Active Publics

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Introduction and Purpose of the Study

The fact that organizations inevitably experience crises (Coombs, 2015) highlights the importance of effective crisis communication with the public. While public relations scholars including Grunig (1997) have identified the key targets (i.e., active publics) organizations need to prioritize to protect themselves from adverse environments, strategies for effectively communicating with these targets have not received sufficient scholarly attention. This study attempts to fill this gap by exploring strategies for communicating—inoculating messages—effectively with key targets.

The study was conducted in the organization rumor context. Recent technological advances including the development of social media—which facilitates public information sharing—have exposed organizations to increased crisis threats. Regardless of their nature, organizational crises tend to involve certain degrees of uncertainty and to require time for investigation. Such uncertainty and information vacancy lead to the creation and spread of rumors (Coombs, 2015). To sum up, this study examines the effects of inoculating messages in communicating with active publics who are known to be more likely to threaten organizations in the rumor crisis context.

Literature Review

Inoculation theory, developed by McGuire (1961), explains how individuals' pre-existing beliefs or attitudes can be maintained in the face of challenges or attempts to alter them. As a motivational strategy to protect an existing stance (McGuire, 1961), the theory provides a basis for building public resilience against various types of misinformation including rumors. Echoing the medical function of vaccines, the theory posits that exposure to weak counterarguments helps individuals develop resistance to stronger counterarguments they may face in the future because such early exposure leads them to seek out information that supports their existing, threatened stances. Despite its potential effectiveness as a strategy to strengthen resistance to organizational crises, the theory's application in public relations has, with few exceptions (e.g., Wan & Pfau, 2004), remained limited.

Meanwhile, the situational theory of publics posits that individuals' activeness varies based on the extent to which they recognize, are involved in, and perceive constraints to resolving problems. Specifically, individuals become more active as their recognition of and involvement in given problems increase and the constraints they perceive decrease. Such public activeness also influences their information processing. Active publics are more likely to seek for and elaborate on problem-related information to cope with problematic situations, while less active publics process and elaborate on information rather passively (Grunig, 1997).

Based on these two lines of prior research, the current study posited that inoculating messages that contains more counterarguing information are more effective for communicating with individuals with higher levels of public activeness, because active publics are more likely to seek detailed information to solve related problems.

Methodology

To compare the effects of inoculating messages to general persuasive messages, this study employed an online experiment with 212 participants. Messages (inoculation vs. general persuasive) were manipulated and public activeness was measured.

Results and Conclusions

The results showed that inoculating messages were more effective in increasing intentions to verify rumors among active publics. However, the use of inoculating messages (vs. general persuasive messages) did not influence attitudes toward rumor sharing or corporate reputation.

Practical and Social Implications

This study's finding that inoculating message are more effective in leading active publics to verify rumors suggests that public relations practitioners should consider utilizing such messages during crises. Given that active publics are the primary communication targets for organizations during crises, inoculating messages deserve practical consideration. Furthermore, the current study's findings are expected to have applications in non-profit and governmental contexts, which have also witnessed various forms of misinformation, including fake news regarding COVID-19.

Keywords

inoculation theory, public activeness, crisis, rumor

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Australian Publics' (dis)engagement with sustainability issues

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Introduction and purpose of the study

This study aims to explore how publics' perceptions about sustainability-related issues influence their disengagement and information behavior in sustainability issues.

Literature review

Facilitating public engagement in *future-oriented and distant* issues, especially climate change and sustainability issues, has been proven to be difficult (Weber, 2010). An empirical study found that individuals experience psychological distance when evaluating possible issues which may (or may not) occur in the future (Jones, Hine, & Marks, 2017). The *construal level theory of psychological distance* explains that when individuals perceive psychological distance from a source/an object, their information processing is affected such that distant issues (i.e., distal objects) are mentally represented at an *abstract* level whereas urgent issues (i.e., proximal objects) are represented at a *concrete* level (Young, 2015). As such, when individuals see sustainability as a distant issue, they may also see it as being unactionable. Such a psychological distance could cause individuals to disengage with discussions on sustainability-related issues, which are critical for the sustainable development of the country.

Citizen disengagement, where citizens distance themselves from their government physically or emotionally, is a significant and growing concern for policy makers (Bowden, Luoma-aho, & Naumann, 2016). For democracy to function effectively, active, yet constructive engagement from citizens in current and future-oriented issues is desired. As such, while studying citizen engagement is important for governments across the country, it is integral to also examine citizen disengagement and identify the possible factors that cause it.

Methodology

Online survey from nationally representative samples of the Australian population was conducted in November 2022. Three different structural equation models (SEM) were tested using IBM AMOS version 28.

Results and conclusions

The first SEM model results show that when publics perceive sustainability-related issues as *distant* issues from their life, they don't consider reducing such sustainability-related issues desirable or feasible. Publics' perception of distance from the issues lead to disengagement intention toward sustainability-related issues, while their perceived desirability and feasibility of reducing sustainability-related issues do not have any impact on their disengagement intention (Figure 1).

The second SEM model's results show that when publics perceive sustainability-related issues as *distant* issues from their life, they are still willing to seek information about those issues. Interestingly, publics' perceived desirability and feasibility of reducing such sustainability-related issues lead to different behavioral outcomes. When publics see addressing sustainability-related issues desirable, they are willing to engage in information seeking behavior to learn more about those issues. However, when they see acting on the issues feasible, they are not interested in seeking information about the issues anymore (Figure 2).

The third SEM model results also shared the similar patterns: when publics perceive sustainability-related issues as *distant* issues from their life, they are still willing to forward information about those issues to others. Same as the results in the first and the second model, publics don't consider reducing sustainability-related issues desirable or feasible when they feel the issues distant from themselves. When publics see acting on sustainability-related issues desirable, they are willing to engage in information forwarding behavior to voluntarily share useful information about those issues with other people. However, when they see addressing the issues feasible or actionable, they are not engaging in information forwarding behavior anymore (Figure 3).

Practical and Social Implications

There is no existing framework that guides local government officials and staff to approach 'disengaged and demotivated citizens' or to facilitate engagement regarding sustainability issues with them. Australia's local governments have committed to improving citizen participation and engagement to ensure citizens' meaningful voices are reflected in its policy decision making about sustainability issues. For example, local governments have provided multiple processes and methods for citizen engagement, which are focussed on opportunities for community groups and non-government organisations/actors to participate in debates on policies (Head, 2011). Despite this increasing focus on driving citizen participation and engagement, there is no framework to help local government officials and staff to understand and reduce the causes and outcomes of citizen disengagement in sustainability issues. This gap in our knowledge calls for the development of a comprehensive framework of citizen engagement that encompasses listening to disengaged citizens' voices as well as engaged citizens', having meaningful dialogue, reflecting insights from listening and dialogues into the processes of policy development and implementation, and communicating policy outcomes in an effective manner. This study generated new knowledge about both citizen engagement and disengagement in sustainability-related issues. Data results show that practitioners should devise strategies that reduce citizens' perception of distance about sustainability-related issues while increasing their perception of desirability which in turn will promote their information behavior.

Keywords

construal level theory of psychological distance, disengagement, desirability, information seeking, information forwarding, feasibility, sustainability

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Figure 1

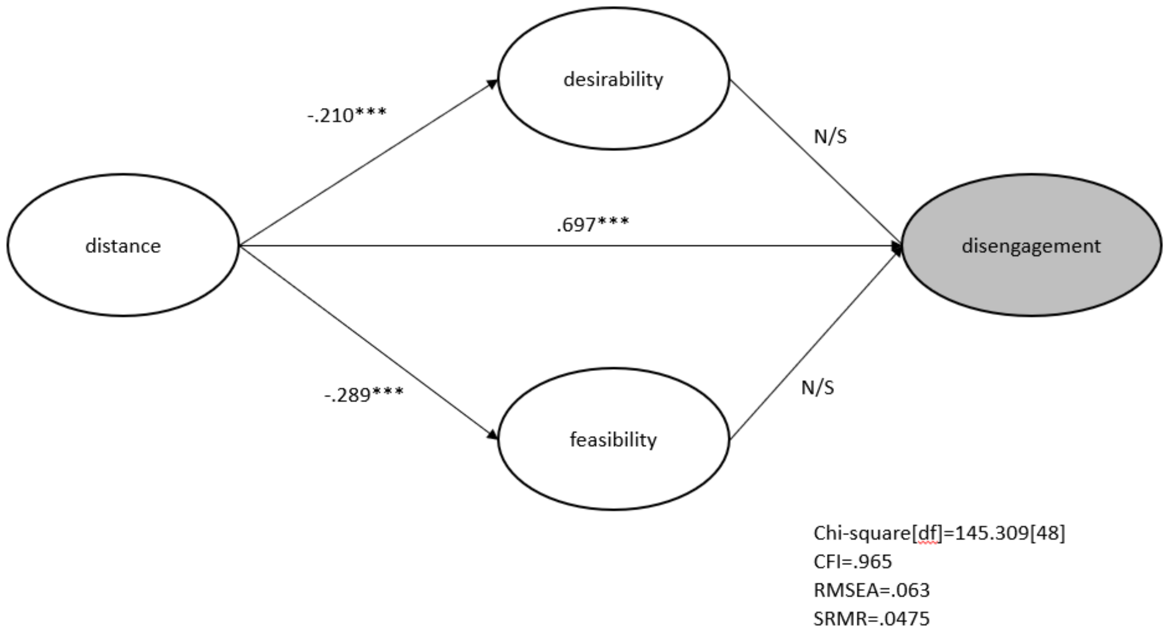
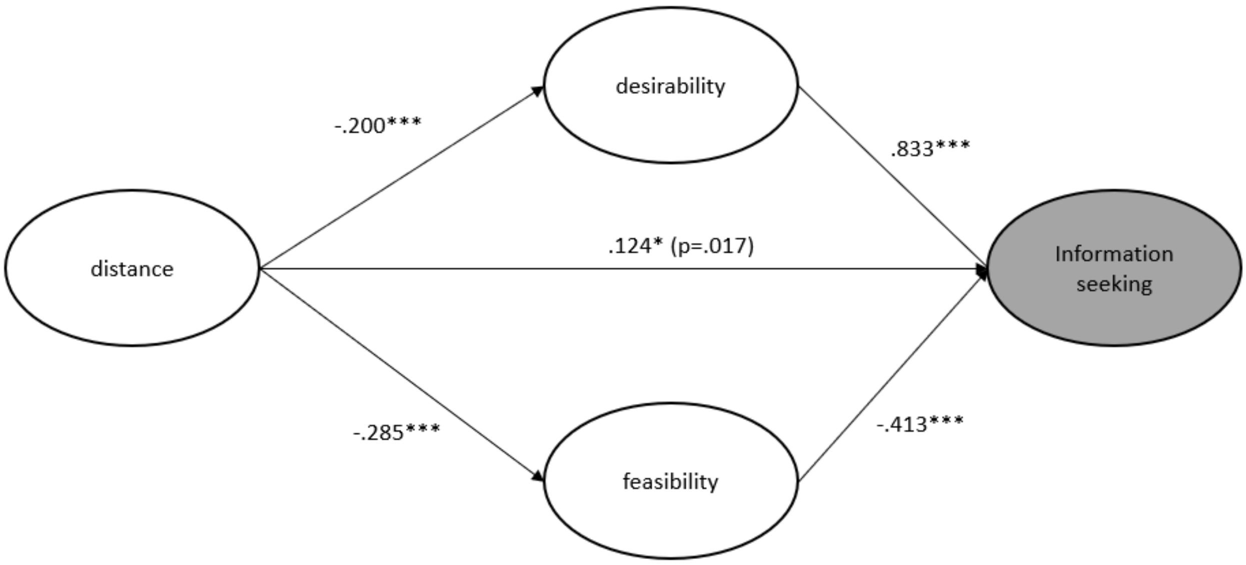
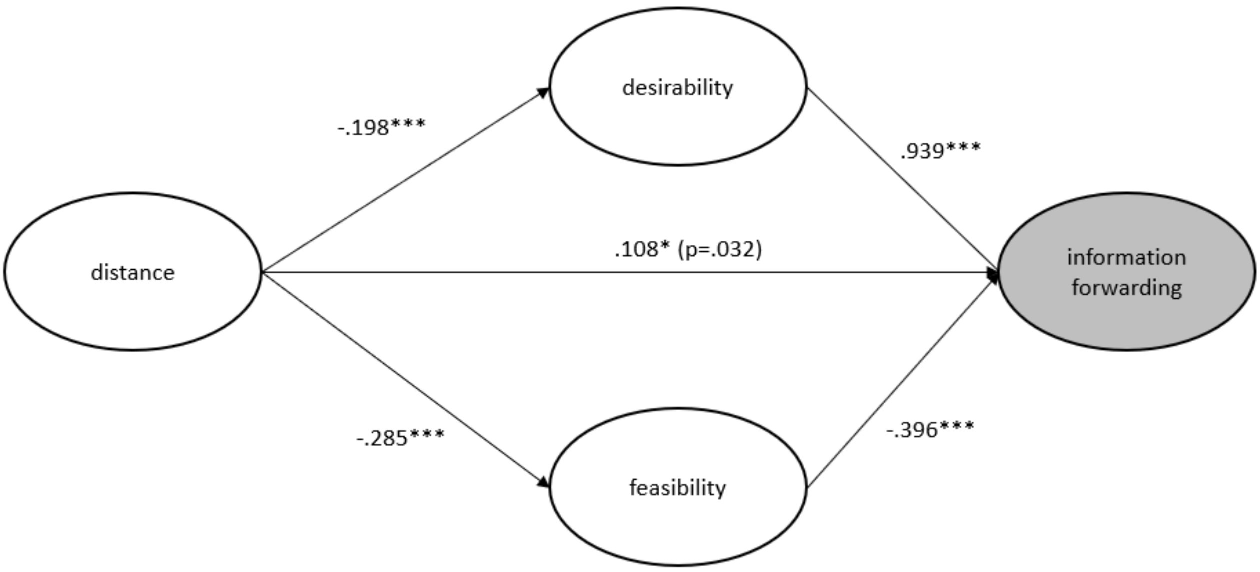


Figure 2



Chi-square[df]=156.730[48]
CFI=.963
RMSEA=.067
SRMR=.0489

Figure 3



Chi-square[df]=180.932[59]
CFI=.962
RMSEA=.064
SRMR=.0517

“Why do I feel so alone?” Leadership of ‘in’ and ‘out’ groups in remote Public Relations and Communications teams

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Introduction and Purpose of Study

Since March 2020, much of the Public Relations and Communications Industry (PRCI) has had to adapt to managing individual team-members who are no longer physically co-located. Despite the slow return of workers to the office, it is anticipated that many PRCI workers will continue to fully or partially work from home (Holden, 2022).

In response to such a rapid, discontinuous change, this paper explores remote management from the perspective of the newly re-located PRCI worker in the early months of 2020. Using a qualitative methodology, it deploys Leader/Member Exchange theory to examine the relationship between PRCI leaders and both ‘in’ and ‘out-groups’ within remote teams.

Literature Review

The theoretical framework of the study centres on Leader/Member Exchange or LMX theory. Dansereau et al. (1975)this longitudinal study found that the degree of latitude that a superior granted to a member to negotiate his role was predictive of subsequent behavior on the part of both superior and member. Contrary to traditional views of leadership, superiors typically employed both leadership and supervision techniques within their units. With a select subset of their members, superiors developed leadership exchanges (influence without authority argue that LMX differs from theories of leadership from the dominant management paradigm in that it describes the *differentiated* relationship between the leader and follower. Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995) argue that previously developed leadership approaches predominantly focus on the characteristics or behaviours of the leader, for example, Trait (Kirkpatick & Locke, 1991), Path-Goal (Evans, 1970) and Situational/Contingency theories (Fiedler, 1964). LMX theory, by contrast, attempts to provide a more focussed view than previous leadership theories that assume the leader adopts a single ‘Average Leadership Style’ (ALS), rather than tailoring their style for individual followers (Van Breukelen et al., 2006).

The central tenet of LMX theory is that the leader’s “time, energy and competence resources” are finite and often restricted (Estel et al., 2019, p. 2)time, energy, making it difficult for leaders to develop high quality relationships with every team-member. This leads to the creation of favoured *in-groups*, collections of individuals who possess qualities that are attractive to the leader (initiative, motivation, helpfulness etc), and *out-groups* who do not (Martin et al., 2016).

While a number of contemporary studies have examined leadership and trust in remote teams, no closely related research can be identified for the PRCI sector. Similarly, the most recently published study on 'in' and 'out-groups' in remote teams dates from 2003 (Bos et al., 2004), while all other studies identified took the leader or group perspective rather than the individual follower's perception.

This paper redresses such a gap by focusing on the leader/follower relationship from the perspective of the remote PRCI worker. It examines the dynamic relationship between leadership styles (Lewin et al., 1939), physical and motivational needs (Maslow, 1943), the exchange relationship between team-members and managers (Dansereau et al., 1975)this longitudinal study found that the degree of latitude that a superior granted to a member to negotiate his role was predictive of subsequent behavior on the part of both superior and member. Contrary to traditional views of leadership, superiors typically employed both leadership and supervision techniques within their units. With a select subset of their members, superiors developed leadership exchanges (influence without authority and the motivation, creativity and productivity resulting from that exchange.

Methodology:

Using an interpretative research paradigm, subjectivist ontology and interpretivistic and phenomenological epistemology, the study uses qualitative analysis of primary data obtained from seven in-depth, semi-structured interviews to answer the question:
How can leadership styles be adapted to maintain and improve motivation, creativity and productivity amongst PRCI teams during periods of remote deployment?

Results and conclusions:

The findings demonstrate that:

- PRCI teams led by managers with little or no experience of leading workers remotely experienced reduced motivation, creativity, and productivity.
- involuntary 'out' group members experienced an acute sense of isolation and disassociation in such an environment.
- the PRCI workers most likely to experience such involuntary marginalisation were either female or homosexual.

Practical and Social Implications:

Current commentators predict the future working environment will be multi-modal (Watkins, 2012; Holden, 2022) and as the shock of change subsides and the remote office/studio becomes more established, *good* PRCI managers will require contemporary sources of information on remote leadership to improve working relationships with teams.

This study suggests that the inherent challenges of maintaining motivation, creativity and productivity in remote teams may be related to the quality of relationship established between the manager and the managed, and identifies a series of recommendations on how such challenges can be avoided by PRCI leaders in future.

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What makes citizens resilient or vulnerable to disinformation? Identifying connected factors and introducing a new conceptual framework

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Introduction and purpose

The question as to why people do or do not believe or share disinformation leads to a mosaic of different approaches and research results. To navigate the increasingly convoluted landscape of disinformation research, owed to its multidisciplinary nature and exponential-like growth since 2016, we applied a systematic review of literature to answer the research question: which factors are connected to individuals' resilience and vulnerability to disinformation?

Literature review

Previous years have witnessed numerous initiatives to counter disinformation belief, but research results on their effectiveness are inconsistent (Marwick, 2018). We argue that to develop targeted solutions, we first need to understand the root of the problem and identify factors that are connected to the endorsement of disinformation versus their dismissal. Applying the concept of 'resilience' to disinformation opens a new pathway for understanding the issue at hand. Historically applied in different disciplines, resilience in essence relates to the ability to withstand, adapt and recover, mitigating potential negative effects of adversity or threat (Masten et al., 1990; Sapienza & Masten, 2011). In the context of disinformation, we define resilience as a capability, which manifests in the process of encountering disinformation and results in either questioning or recognition and dismissal. Vulnerability to disinformation on the other hand leads to an implicit or explicit acceptance of disinformation, which can take the form of sharing false information due to lack of deliberation, being deceived by it, believing disinformation, or subconsciously internalizing its message.

Methodology

Our approach is two-fold: we first conducted a systematic review to identify all connected factors to resilience and vulnerability to disinformation. The standardized, protocol-driven methodology and rigorous search for all relevant literature allows for a reliable overview and comparison of research results on the topic. In a second step we applied the results to the socio-ecological model (McLeroy et al., 1988) to put the findings into context. We conducted the systematic review according to the PRISMA Guidelines (PRISMA, 2021), and retrieved the articles from Web of Science, Communication and Mass Media Complete and PsycInfo. Included were empirical studies, which were published in peer-reviewed journals from 2011-2022 and written in English. In total n=1586 articles were retrieved, of which n=95 met the criteria for inclusion. The screening process was performed independently by two researchers for enhanced reliability.

Results and conclusions

Our geospatial analysis confirms the findings of previous studies, identifying the US as the main source of research. The topic is in most cases approached from a psychological perspective, and mainly focuses on factors related to conspiracy beliefs. The qualitative thematic analysis reveals twelve factors, which have been connected to resilience or vulnerability to disinformation thus far: thinking styles, political ideology, worldview and beliefs, pathologies, knowledge, emotions, (social) media use, demographics, perceived control, trust, culture, and environment. There is a clear focus on micro level and intrapersonal factors, such as people's abilities and characteristics. To move the debate forward, research should not only focus on the micro level but also on meso level factors, exploring the influence of peers, family and (social media) communities.

Practical and social implications

The analysis goes beyond mapping the field or content and applies the results to the socio-ecological model, providing a more holistic view on what constitutes resilience to disinformation and identifying relevant gaps for research. Our proposed framework intends to aid researchers as well as practitioners, carving out various levels of influence and thus providing insight for multi-level interventions to increase resilience. The large scope of this systematic review, which allows for rich insights, is both an asset and weakness to our work. Disinformation comes in many shapes and forms, consequently we cannot assume that they take effect identically. As the research results show, influencing factors act additively, with single factors mostly only accounting for little variance, which further emphasizes the importance of approaches that allow for uncovering and exploring a range of factors and interdependencies.

Keywords

disinformation, resilience, vulnerability, belief, sharing

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Understanding Predictors of Employees' Turnover Intentions in times of CEO-Initiated Crises

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Introduction and purpose of the study

In July 2018, John Schnatter, the founder of the eponymous pizza chain Papa John's made headlines when it was revealed that Schantter had used the n-word during a crisis table-top drill (Kirsch, 2018). Reports of the incident caused uproar on social media, triggering a reputational crisis, and Schnatter was forced to resign as chairman of the company he founded. With increasing number of instances of organizational crises triggered by corporate leaders and CEOs, particularly those that have cults of personality and loyal followers such as Schnatter and Elon Musk, a key question facing public relations practice is how do employees respond when their organizations face such leadership-centered crises. The present study seeks to shed light upon this question.

Literature review

The study of organizational misconduct enjoys a long history spanning several disciplines, including legal (e.g., Coffee Jr., 1977), management (e.g., Maclean, 2008), and communication (e.g., Krishna, Kim & Shim, 2018) literatures. As cases of organizational misconduct continue to come to light, whether it be in the corporate, governmental, or non-profit worlds, the need for continued investigations of the causes, outcomes, and impacts of organizational misconduct remains a scholarly imperative. Of particular interest is how employees react when the misconduct stems from key organizational leaders such as CEOs and chairpersons of the board.
In recent years, scholars have built on the identity perspective and proposed identity fusion as a key predictor of publics' reaction to organizational misconduct. Lin and Sung (2014) posited the idea of brand identity fusion as an immunity granting cognitive phenomena that serves to protect and preserve customer-brand relationships in the face of brand transgressions. Extending the idea of identity fusion to employees, this study focuses on two research questions: what are the predictors of employees' identity fusion? And how is employees' identity fusion related to their reactions to a CEO-initiated corporate misconduct?

Methodology

Surveys were conducted among 505 Americans who are employed by companies with 1000 or more employees. Participants were first asked about their relationship with the organization, their identity fusion with the organization, as well as their tenure with the organization among other items. Participants were then asked to read a short vignette which stated that their CEO had been accused of using racial slurs and discriminating against minority employees. Participants were then asked about their reactions to this news.

Results and conclusions

Structural equation modeling was used to understand the relationships between the variables. Length of employment ($\beta = .103$, $p < .0001$) and company performance ($\beta = .35$, $p < .0001$) were positively associated with identity fusion whereas scope of operation ($\beta = -.12$, $p < .0001$) and union status ($\beta = -.59$, $p < .0001$) were negatively associated with identity fusion. Identity fusion in turn was positively associated with situational motivation to learn about the crisis ($\beta = .14$, $p < .0001$), which was positively associated with turnover intentions. Length of employment ($\beta = -.11$, $p < .001$) and company performance ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .05$) negatively impacted turnover intentions.

Practical and social implications

The purpose of this study was to understand employees' turnover intentions upon learning of corporate misconduct perpetrated by a company leader, i.e., CEO. The findings indicate that the longer employees stay with a company the more likely they are to experience identity fusion with the employer but also report lower turnover intentions during times of crisis. Thus, this study unveils two additional advantages of employee retention, pointing to the importance of employee engagement and retention efforts.

Keywords

corporate misconduct, identity fusion, turnover intentions

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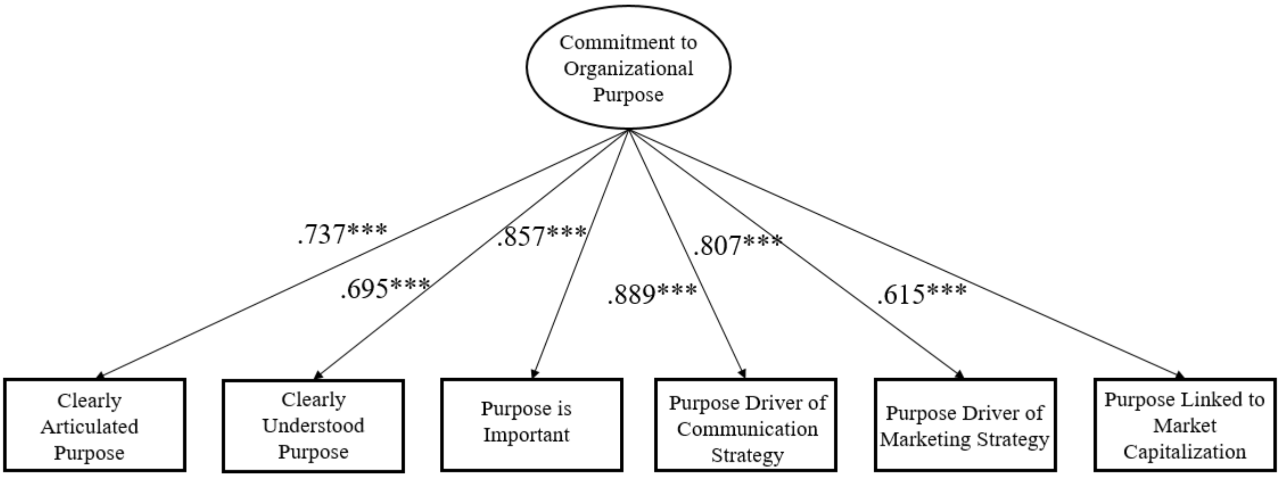
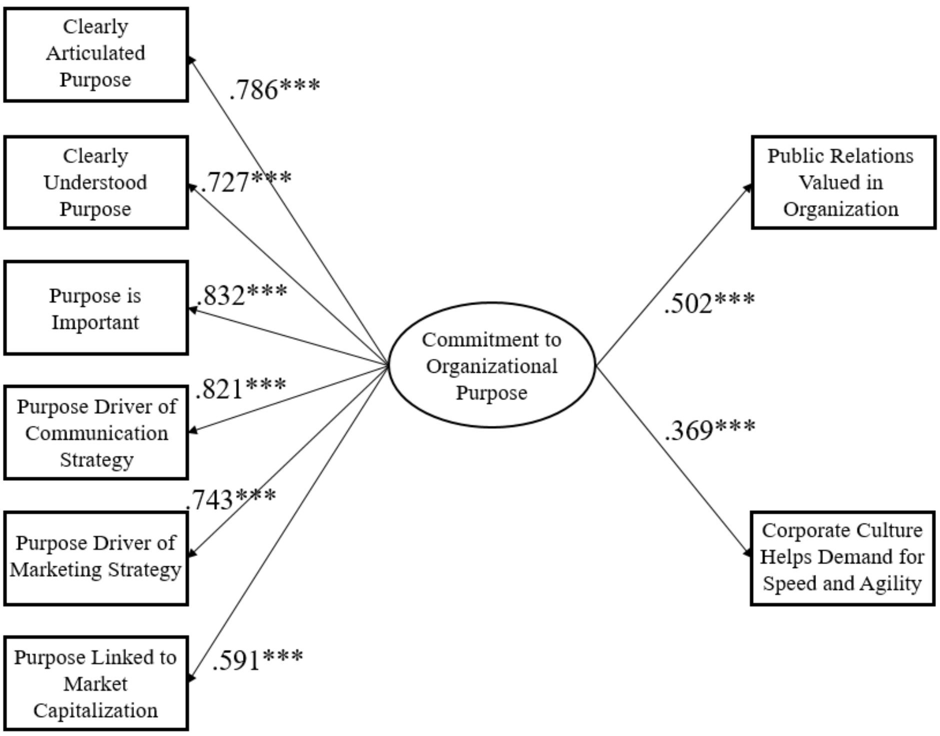
Figure 1: Results of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses



Exploratory Factor Analysis
Bartlett test of sphericity
X^2 (15) = 2447.816, $p < .001$
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy
KMO = 0.866
Eigenvalue: 4.031; 67.19%

Confirmatory Factor Analysis
X^2 (8) = 78.89, $p < .001$
CFI = .971
SRMR = .032

Figure 2: Results of structural equation modeling



Measurement Model
X^2 (16) = 80.25, $p < .001$
CFI = .975
SRMR = .033
RMSEA = .080

Structural Model
X^2 (11) = 98.69, $p < .001$
CFI = .968
SRMR = .046

Segmentation of public in children vaccination communication in Slovenia, implementing STOPS/CAPS and pragmatic multimethod approach

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Sustainability can be understood as societal goal that relates to the ability of people to safely co-exist on Earth over a long time. In public health perspective, vaccination programmes significantly add to long term safe co-existing. On the other hand, in society there is no generally accepted consensus about their benefits and hazards and that makes promotion of vaccination rather difficult. To improve it, the paper advocates a model for recognising involvement of mothers of young children in communication of children vaccination, developed by applying situational theory of problem solving (Kim and Grunig, 2011) to vaccination as sensitive and insufficiently researched interdisciplinary topic (Vrdelja, 2023).

Literature review

In the original study we are drawing on situational theory of publics (Gruning, 1997 and 2005), particularly on STOPS and CAPS (Kim and Grunig, 2011), as well as on studies demonstrating importance of vaccination programmes (e.g., Andre et.al, 2008) and particularly the crucial role of communication in vaccination programmes accomplishment (e.g., Leask et. al, 2012; Olowo et.al, 2020).

Methodology

The model has been empirically confirmed on a general level, drawing on large probability sample of mothers in Slovenia (year 2016, N = 1704), using bivariate statistical methods (Vrdelja, 2023). In the core of the paper, we upgrade data analyses of attitudes and communication patterns by employing complex graphical and multivariate statistical analyses (e.g., ANOVA and multidimensional agglomerative hierarchical clustering) to a) confirm the model on the more detailed level, b) provide vivid inside into results, c) validate the results by triangulation, and finally d) uncover and present meaningful segments (publics) for communication of children vaccination.

Results and conclusions

We demonstrate how communication behaviour, measured as frequency of information acquisition, information selection and information transmission in traditional and social media as well as in direct communication, differ with level of cognitive and affective involvement in the topic, accompanied with level of trust in science, in health system and in medical personnel. In general, high level of involvement and low level of trust match more extensive and more intensive communication behaviour, but there are significant differences in components of communication behaviour (i.e., communication channels and forms of communication activity). As expected, online sources of information turned out to be the most distinctive.

Practical and social implications

The presented relations among attitudes and communication behaviour, and in particular their fusion in obtained segments enable improvement of every step of children vaccination communication planning and implementation.

Keywords

STOPS (situational theory of problem solving), CAPS (communicative behaviour in problem solving), vaccine hesitancy, vaccination communication, trust

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Media image on social (ir) responsibility of Croatian banks

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a function of business reputation of a company is in close relationship with media visibility of sustainable and socially responsible practices and, indirectly, with media image of a company. PR department's efforts in promoting visibility of company's socially responsible policies is often being evaluated and measured. The purpose of this study is to investigate the question of effectiveness of PR activities in promoting socially responsible practices, hence the main research question can be posited as follows: Is PR coverage of CSR policies of a company in any correlation with the media image of the company? The banking sector was taken as an example, more precisely, three Croatian banks – Zagrebačka banka (ZABA), Erste&Steiermärkische Bank and Privredna banka Zagreb (PBZ).

Literature review

In order to position the research agenda presented in this talk, a review of papers on communicating CSR activities and media image of CSR will be provided. Manheim & Pratt (1986) investigate if social-responsibility programs are communicated effectively enough in terms of maximizing the returns on corporate efforts. Du et al. (2010) follow the same motivation (maximizing business returns to CSR) in their positing the conceptual framework for effective communication of CSR. Cahan et al. (2015) examine whether firms that act more socially responsible receive more favourable media coverage and whether firms use CSR to actively manage their media image. Mandina et al. (2014) investigate the effectiveness of CSR in enhancing company`s image by questioning respondents, which are representatives of key stakeholders. The topic is also approached from the impression management perspective, hence Tata & Prasad (2014) want to answer the question if CSR image perceived by audiences is accurate portrayal of the organization's CSR identity and congruent with the desired CSR image.

Methodology

The main method used for collecting data on PR coverage of socially responsible practices is content analysis of banks' promotional articles in the Croatian digital media. The analysis will be done on a corpus consisted of promotional webpage articles published in the period January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022.
On the other hand, the main method for collecting data on media perception of the three chosen banks will be content analysis of press-clipping material on those banks in the same period (during year of 2022). The results of the two analysis will then be compared.

Results and conclusions

The main result of the study will be the proposal of a novel model for measuring effectiveness of PR activities in promoting socially responsible practices and in creating company's media image. Besides that, the result is in the possibility to find the examples of successful, as well as of less successful implementation of CSR policies and its PR coverage technics.

Practical and social implications

Practical implications of the research could be offering guidelines for efficient communicating of socially responsible practices in the business sector. Indirectly, this contribution is questioning the purposefulness and ethical implications of CSR in the banking sector.

Keywords

corporate social responsibility of banks, PR coverage of CSR, media image of banks

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Sustainable Early Warning Systems (EWS) in Disaster Management: Can communication practitioners provide the answer?

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Introduction and purpose of the study

An Early Warning System (EWS) can be defined as a proactive communication system that assist governmental departments in providing information for evidence-based planning and acting on disasters, and include information dissemination to communities during times of disaster (UN 2023). The benefits of an EWS include saving lives and infrastructure, and limiting the impact of a disaster on livelihoods. Through the UNDPs Signature Programme various such systems have been put in place across Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

The United Nations made the following statement about EWS: "A successful EWS saves lives and jobs, land and infrastructures and supports long-term sustainability" (UN 2023). The need for an EWS is also mentioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically in the Sustainable Development Goals Target 13 (Demir & Kim 2023; Twigg 2021). In this context an EWS is seen to be directly aligned with supporting sustainability goals.
However, in contrast, Twigg (2021) argues that sustainability is rarely discussed in practice when considering EWS, with a lack of clarity of what sustainability would entail and how it will be applied to the EWS development process.

Furthermore, it could be argued that an EWS is a function of the disaster risk reduction field. However, Fraustino et al (2012) clarifies that communication is central in the EWS process, by stating that it includes, but are not limited to, "information disseminated to the public by governments, emergency management organizations, and disaster responders, as well as disaster information created and shared by journalists and the public". Sudmeier-Rieux (2016) agrees by urging an integrated approach to the areas of disaster management, communication and sustainability in order to include all social factors involved at all levels of society in the EWS. It therefore requires knowledge of communication, in order for the EWS to be successful and sustainable.

This paper aims to further elaborate on the requirements for an EWS to be seen as sustainable.

Literature review

Disaster risk reduction, communication management and community development literature are used to investigate this phenomenon. Disaster risk reduction theory examines the impact of disasters on social, economic and environmental level, with the focus on creating resilience. Strategic communication management literature is used to highlight a pro-active approach, and stakeholder management to promote collaboration for mutual benefit. Community development literature highlights the community's human rights, right to inclusion and principles of empowerment.

Methodology

The interdisciplinary literature study will synthesise previous research with the reality of case studies to discover meta-level guidance for sustainable EWSs. This paper forms part of a larger study aimed at developing a sustainable EWS for the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

Results and conclusions

Overall, it would seem that the role of the community, especially including the most vulnerable, would be crucial in developing an EWS that will be sustainable. In particular, it has been found that specifically in the first phase of developing the EWS – understanding the risks and hazards of the area – there is generally a lack of community involvement. It is of utmost importance to understand the community's view on risks and hazards, as well as indigenous knowledge, before developing a system. Secondly, in the third phase of developing a EWS – disseminating trust-worthy information – clear buy-in from the community is needed.

It can be argued that in the realm of disaster communication when creating an EWS, the social element of inclusion of the community, should be prioritised.

Practical and social implications

The role of a communication practitioner that can liaise with the community, encourage community participation, and has a clear understanding of creating a trust relationship, are crucial in the development of EWSs in the field of disaster risk reduction.

Keywords

Disaster communication; Early warning systems; Sustainability

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Remarks on communication and sustainability: in search of the best practices

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Introduction and purpose of the study

In the recent decades, we have seen organisations changing and adapting to numerous factors. Sustainability is now a must have for their survival, making communication a key aspect of these organisational changes. More than ever, the employee is at the core of what is the identity and culture of organisations, which now seek to meet their needs and expectations.
The starting point of this research was then to understand the role of communication in relation to sustainability topics - how can the communication function enhance the matter of sustainability among employees so that they become agents of change?

Literature review

The United Nations 2030 Agenda is proposing a clear and realistic path towards sustainability. This made organisations necessarily more aware of the impact their activity has on the community and, above all, whether this impact is positive and socially accepted.

Sustainability is therefore a strategic imperative for them and is essential for their financial viability and success (Eweje, 2011; Preston, 2001 cited by Brunton, Eweje & Taskin, 2017). However, there is still a lack of consensus on the concept of sustainability (Weder, Krainer, & Karmasin, 2021), as is the case for internal communication. In its core, internal communication contributes to the internal relations and commitment of employees, promoting a sense of belonging. The interaction of both disciplines within the organisations will be the focus of this paper, as per Karmasin argues (2002) "sustainability is a communication problem".

Methodology

This research is focused on the National Sustainability Award of a newspaper in a southern European country, specifically companies that applied for the Sustainability Communication category.

Out of the 26 private and public sector companies that are part of this universe, semi-structured script-based interviews were conducted with communication and/or sustainability specialists to eight private sector companies to understand what role communication plays at an organisational level and its dynamic with sustainability themes. The data collection period ran from October 2021 to January 2022 and was conducted online.

A thematic categorical analysis of manifest messages was conducted, with the categories were defined in both concept-driven and data-driven subcategories.

Results and conclusions

The results show that there is no unanimous answer to the starting question, although there are several points of convergence between the participants. What was noted during the interview process is that the internal and external factors of each organisation influence how the communication is perceived. In most cases, communication is seen as technical and the dynamic between both disciplines as one of being at the service of.

This conclusion was seen as an opportunity to present broader considerations on what can be considered as good practices regarding what is the role of communication in relation to sustainability topics in organisations, as well as its role in changing employee behaviour.

From the literature review and analysis of the results, five main considerations arose: 1. establish a shared definition of what is each organisation view of sustainability, so that employees can make their own judgements and decide to adopt or modify certain behaviours based on it; 2. communicate with purpose from the active listening of employees and their expectations and needs, in order to establish a two-way relationship with them; 3. present ‘sustainability’ as part of a story that involves the employees and helps them understand how it impacts them, leading to the co-creation of communication processes; 4. rethink the role that managers can have in what concerns sustainability themes within organisations, by being active examples and potential enhancement engagement mechanisms; 5. promote a culture that creates the necessary environment for the employees to become advocates of sustainability themes and the organisation itself.

In what concerns the limitations of this research, we must consider the fact that the research was carried out in a period still extremely marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the fact that each organisation was responsible for selecting the person to be interviewed, which has influenced each other’s vision of sustainability and/or communication.

Practical and social implications

It is intended that the considerations presented contribute to address sustainability in organisations and how communication can play a major role on the involvement, empowerment, and motivation of employees by actively co-creating a perception of what is sustainability and what is the employee role in it.

Finally, acknowledging that the sample presented in this study is rather small and non-representative, it is considered that it would be extremely interesting to replicate the study in a representative sample and to see whether the results would be similar or not, and what further considerations could be reached.

Keywords

Corporate Communication; Internal Communication; Sustainability; Good Practices.

On Sustainability Publics: Theories of Segmentation and Incentivization for Effective Strategic Environmental Communication

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Introduction

Despite the growing body of evidence chronicling environmental and sustainability issues, public engagement remains nonoptimal. There is a general sense that the ill-effects of these issues will not be felt for a long time. Indeed, the central challenge in environmental communication is to articulate the exigence of the issues despite the fact that individual citizens are not currently encountering related problematic situations personally. The rise in media coverage, geopolitical disorder, and scientific research highlights the pertinence of public indifference. Our paper (funded by an Arthur W. Page Center grant) aims to understand why citizens choose - or choose not - to engage with environmental issues. Our framework integrates theories of problem solving with citizen incentives and generates segmentation strategies for citizen-publics in the United States, Italy, and Portugal.

Literature review

The challenge in sustainability communication is rooted in the nature of publics. Citizens do not pay attention to issues unless problematic situations directly affect individuals. According to the situational theory of problem solving (STOPS) (Kim & Grunig, 2011), media and elite attention to social problems are not requisite conditions for motivating lay publics to search for and share problem-related information. Hence, sustainability communicators face serious difficulties in grasping the attention of publics.

Currently it is unclear how to elicit higher levels of attention and action in lay publics. What is more, the digital information space is prone to rapid diffusion of pseudo-information and, with regard to environment and sustainability, can be characterized by inadequate or illegitimate content. Without research seeking to mitigate this problem, things could become much worse.

Kim and Ni (2013) classified two types of communication problems: (1) Organization-Initiated Public Relations (OPR) problems and (2) Public-Initiated Public Relations (PPR) problems. Here, OPR will be used because, as mentioned above, publics have not arisen organically in the context of environmental issues and therefore cannot serve as the initiators of communication development. With reference to OPR, Kim and Ni suggest synthetic public segmentation strategies that identify likely sympathizers who may serve as key points for information campaigns. Kim and Ni's framework of segmentation is predicated on the situational theory of problem solving (STOPS), which explains the situational nature of publics and thus assists in the identification of potential sustainability publics (J. Grunig, 1997). Also relevant is an earlier theoretical model of incentives, including material, solidary, purposive, or selective incentives (J. Grunig, 1989).

Thus, this study seeks to search for relevant publics and discern why some are more active than others regarding environmental issues. In doing so, it will be possible to refine communication strategies that incentivize cognition and communicative action.

Methodology

The research team is conducting Computer Assisted Web Interviews (CAWI) in the United States, Italy, and Portugal. The CAWIs will be administered to samples of 500 citizens in each country, 1,500 citizens in total. The interviews are dedicated to understanding participants' situational perception, cognition, and incentives, as well as understanding communicative actions on digital platforms and perceived message framing of environmental issues.

Results

As this study is in progress, findings will be presented and discussed at the conference. Findings will suggest a set of new theoretical principles for effective public communication concerning sustainability issues.

Implications

This study has both theoretical and practical implications. Findings could be used by practitioners and governments for sustainability communication campaigns or public relations interventions to foster pro-sustainability publics and continued engagement (i.e., OPR problem, Kim & Ni, 2013). Concerning theories, results will introduce new public engagement strategies, synthesize a foundational theory of publics, and renew classical conceptual accounts of active publics' incentives (e.g., Olson, 1971, J. Grunig, 1997).

Keywords

public segmentation, incentives, STOPS, sustainability, environmental communication

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How can anti-consumption be effectively communicated?

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Overconsumption leads society toward environmental, social, and personal disbalance. As consumption boycotting, anti-consumption represents the solution that leads consumers toward overall social and personal equilibrium and well-being. The paper aims to analyse the efficient path of the positioning the anti-consumption in consumer perception through communication appeals. The purpose of the paper is to recommend communication guidelines to empower anti-consumption among consumers.
Literature review – Anti-consumption is defined as the deliberate and meaningful exclusion or expulsion of goods from consumption or the reuse of already acquired goods to avoid consumption (Makri et al., 2020). It represents the rejection of consumer practices and a strong aversion to consumption (Zavestoski, 2002) which leads consumers toward personal welfare. As such it is in complete contradiction to very nature of everyday communication appeals that are developed and implemented to proclaim larger consumption. Anti-consumers are defined as consumers driven by the tendency to be a part of sustainable and social well-being (Pangarkar, Shukla and Charles, 2021). The typology of anti-consumption identified four different kinds of consumers (Iyer and Muncy, 2009): general-societal (consumers concerned about social and environmental well-being), general-personal (consumers driven by a spiritual or ethical belief that focusing on self-serving activities is wrong), brand-societal (consumers guided by the belief that specific brands or products are harmful to the environment and society), and brand personal (consumers that practice avoidance of a brand due to related negative events). Evidently, general-societal and general-personal are target market that brands that with to position themselves as anti-consumption could target.

Methodology

Previous research lacks any analysis of existing anti-consumption appeals and their strategies. In order to identify, target, and implement potential strategies, the paper conducted a case study analysis including relevant communication strategies that are using anti-consumption appeals in different industries considering anti-consumption consumer typology. The sample of communication appeals includes campaigns diverse set of industries (fashion, functional clothing, food etc.) that is analysed through the classification of chosen market strategy and goals, target market, ethical grounds and the alignment with the overall image and communication.

Results and conclusions

The paper brings recommendations for the shaping of marketing strategies and communication appeals. Also, the paper proves that anti-consumption appeals are possible to implement in marketing communication. Results present very valuable, upcoming and relevant topic that the market yet has not discovered.

Practical and social implications

The presented recommendations can serve companies as showcase to discover the idea of anti-consumption as communication appeals. Through the efficient strategies, companies could create an image of a socially responsible company. On the other hand, by empowering anti-consumption, consumers could reach personal welfare and participate in overall social equilibrium. Finally, the paper brings recommendations for further research in the context of the evaluation of the implemented strategies.

Keywords

anti-consumption, sustianbility, marketing communication, communication appeals

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Communication and Sustainability in Public Health: Bibliometric Analysis

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Introduction

The rapid growth of health expenditures, reduction in public funding, population aging and the need for greater integration between safety and environment affect sustainable development in Health. Assessing the sustainability of public sector organizations requires a multidisciplinary approach and involves different areas of knowledge, including medicine, informatics, engineering, sociology, anthropology, social work, administration, law, and communication sciences.

In this context, government agencies end up needing the development and evaluation of health communication strategies to support the creation and assessment of health communication tactics to decision-making. Information capacity based on trends in health care reform and health information technologies must manage unprecedented amounts of information for public health assurance and assessment, including population-level health surveillance and metrics. If health departments have the required capabilities, advancements in electronic health records, interoperability and information interchange, public information sharing, and other areas can help information management.

Purpose

The objective of this research is to provide a global and bibliometric overview of communication and sustainability in Health, pointing out the thematic trends, research topics, theories, methods presented in the studies, countries and authors that most contribute to the development of issues in order to identify gaps in the literature and to guide emerging opportunities in the literature, in the field of global social public relations.

Literature Review

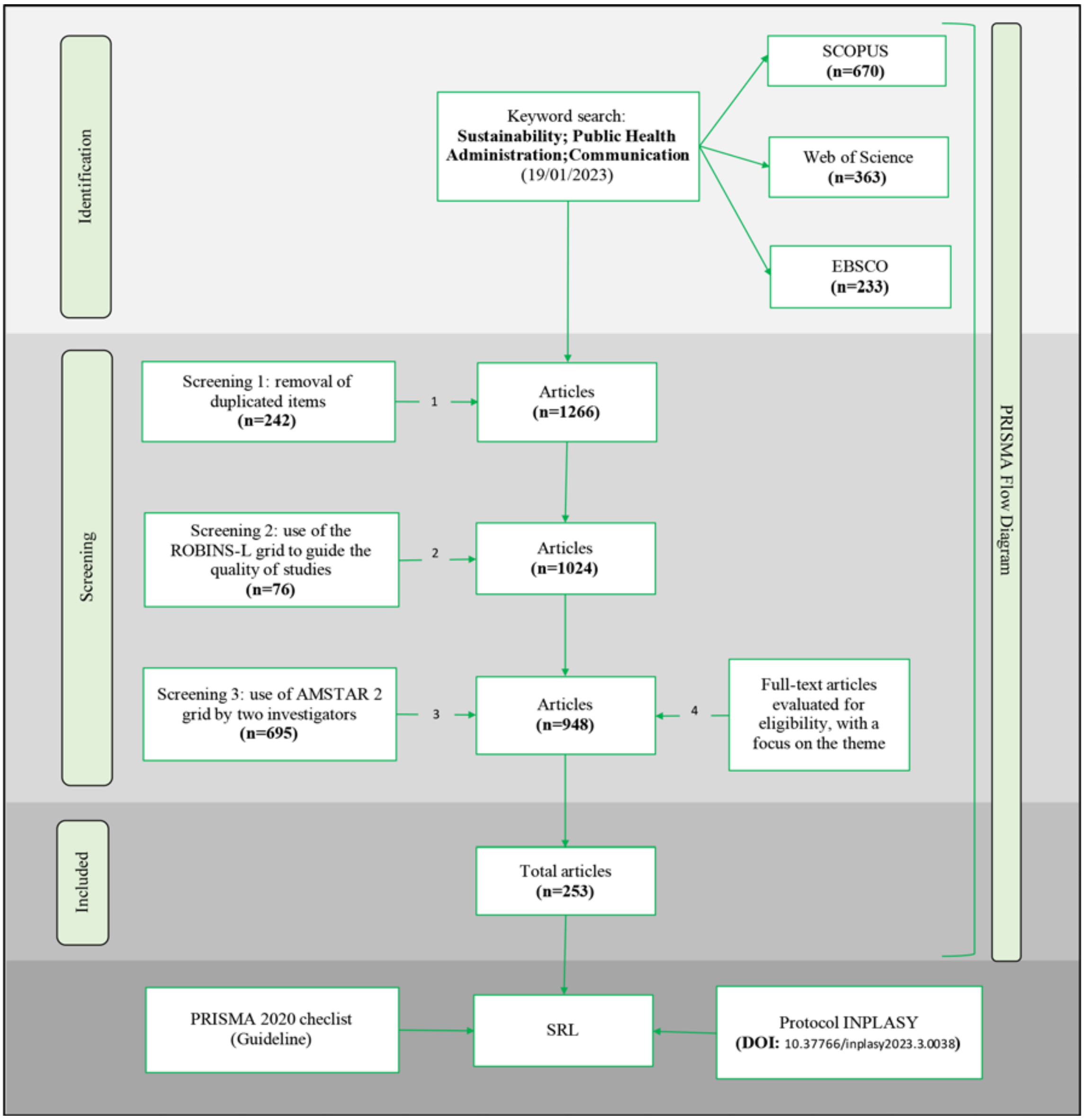
The assessment of eHealth must consider that information and communication technologies (ICT) are only part of an organization's innovation system. It is essential to understand the human factors involved in health systems, the environment and the contexts in which ICT are used in Health.

An important objective of any Health communication effort is to maintain its delivery and effectiveness over time. During the Covid-19 emergency period, communication and media reports were extremely important. On the one hand, the "emotional" character of communication aimed to promote solidarity and unity among citizens. Opposed to that, scientific communication has played a key role both as technical and scientific consultation for the policy maker and as a guide for mass communication (Valenti et al., 2023). The World Health Organization (WHO) launched an international public relations campaign to tackle the Covid-19 virus, focusing on three main axes: advertisements, images, and videos (Al Zubaidi & Ahmed, 2022). Health information plays an important role in risk prevention. As it broadens even farther, the Internet is emerging as an important source of health information for the public (Ekezie et al., 2022). Another important component are cell phones, which have become the most widespread communication technology across the world. It improves health car simply by allow appointment reminders, to enable mobile blood glucose meters. These programs, called "mHealth", contribute to the current shift in international health described by many scholars as "global health".

Methodology

The study presents a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). In this sense, following the PRISMA checklist 2020, an attempt will be made to map and summarize the results of studies based on research in the Web of Science (WoS), SCOPUS

Figure 1: Identification of studies via databases and registers



and EBSCO databases. The RSL protocol and registration in INPLASY will be developed.

To support the conduction of the RSL, a guiding grid of the quality of the studies will be selected (e.g., ROBINS-L), excluding the usually designated gray literature. To guarantee the quality of the review, the inclusion and exclusion process of articles will be conducted by two researchers. In addition, the articles included in the study are subject to the AMSTAR-2 grid, used to ensure the quality of the analysis. Figure 1 shows the different approaches that we intend to highlight.

Results Expected

As a result, it is expected to contribute to the literature regarding sustainable public relations practices and, considering the needs and guidelines of government institutions, contribute to better formulations of public communication.

Keywords

Sustainability; public health administration; communication.

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Examining the Impact of Leaders' Use of Motivating Language on Employees' Psychological Well-being during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Employees' psychological well-being has achieved increasing scholarly attention over the past decade (Walden, 2021). The issue has been further brought to the spotlight during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the multi-level challenges this public health crisis posed to employees' mental health and overall well-being. Given the demonstrated linkages between employees' psychological well-being and various employee and organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, employee engagement, organizational commitment, and employee retention (Brunetto et al., 2012; Walden, 2021), scholars from the fields of communication and management have examined various antecedents of employees' psychological well-being.

Among the sundry influencers of employees' psychological well-being, leadership communication arguably plays an irreplaceable role due to supervisors' day-to-day interactions with employees. Especially during the turbulent times when the organizations' normal operations and work routines are interrupted, employees naturally look to their leaders for information, guidance, support, and assurance (Men et al., 2022). Leadership communication, particularly those from employees' direct supervisors, could largely impact how employees feel and perceive the situation and their employer organization. Yet, what and how supervisors should communicate during such uncertain crisis times and its nuanced impact on employees' psychological well-being remain underexplored.

To fill this important research void and enrich the body of knowledge on leadership communication during turbulent times, this study adopts the theoretical lens of Motivating Language Theory (MLT) that prescribes three types of strategic languages that leaders can utilize: direction-giving, empathetic, and meaning-making languages. Specifically, this study proposed a conceptual model that predicts the positive impact of leaders' use of motivating language on employees' psychological well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. To delineate how this process works, the study proposes leader trust as a potential mediator in this process.

Literature review/conceptualization

As one of the dominant theories in leadership communication that have been widely tested in socio-cultural contexts (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2018), motivating language theory suggests that leaders' use of direction giving (i.e., which clarifies goals, expectations, responsibilities and provides guidance), empathetic (i.e., which expresses care, sensitivity, and support that creates interpersonal bonds), and meaning-making languages (i.e., which emphasizes vision, culture, values, etc.) can lead to various workplace outcomes. This study links such strategic leader speak to leadership trust and employees' psychological well-being. Trust toward the leader is defined as the employees' willingness to be vulnerable to the words, actions, and decisions of his or her supervisor (Williams, 2001). Employees' psychological well-being is defined to include a "hedonic" component that emphasizes positive feelings, emotions, moods, and overall life satisfaction and a "eudaimonic" aspect that stresses purposeful experiences that provide directions, meaningfulness, and self-fulfillment (Boniwell & Henry, 2007).

Method

To test the proposed conceptual model, an online survey was conducted with 391 full-time employees in the U.S. recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk in May 2020. The average age of the respondents was 33.26 years (SD = 9.49). Among the respondents, 64% were male and 36% were female. The majority of respondents (88%) earned 2-year college degree or higher. Over 42% (42.7%) of them held positions in the organization as middle-level management, followed by non-management (34.6%), lower-level management (18.8%), and upper-level management (3.8%). Measures of the study were all adopted from existing literature and demonstrated satisfactory reliabilities.

Results and conclusions

Path analysis with demographic variables controlled showed that leaders' use of direction-giving language (β=.25, p<.001) and empathetic language (β =.57, p<.001) both nurtured employee trust toward the leader during the COVID-19 pandemic. While leadership trust did not directly influence employees' psychological well-being, leaders' use of direction-giving language (β =.29, p<.001) and empathetic language (β =.15, p=.07) both showed significant positive effects, with the former casting a stronger effect. Surprisingly, leaders' use of meaning-making language did not influence employee trust toward the leader; yet, it negatively influenced employees' psychological well-being (β =-.20, p<.01), which suggests that vision, values, and cultural communication might not be the most relevant and imperative to employees during the challenging pandemic times. In a mode of frustration, anxiety, and uncertainties, leaders' communication of irrelevant information could potentially complicate the issue and cause information overload that backlashes. To cultivates trust and enhance employees' psychological wellbeing, leaders should prioritize information transparency, provide clear directions, guidance, and task parameters as well as communicate empathy, compassion, care, and sensitivity to employees' needs.

Practical and social implications

Overall, this study advanced leadership communication and internal communication literature and expanded the application of MLT to crisis times. The findings provide important practical implications for internal communication professionals and organizational leaders who aspire to foster a trusting and psychologically healthy workforce that can thrive over challenging times.

Keywords

leadership communication, internal communication, motivating language theory, psychological well-being, COVID-19

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Does 360º communication promote more sustainable behavior in organizations?

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Introduction and Purpose of the Study

This research seeks to understand how communication can influence the sustainable attitudes and behaviors of organizational actors.

As such, we will consider the communication climate that presents itself as horizontal, bidirectional and symmetrical, trying to understand how this influences managers and, consequently, the attitudes and behaviors that employees adopt. This is because it is known (it is justified in the literature review chapter) that increasingly organizations seek managers who have a mentoring role, contrary to the authoritarian role. Our question is: does this role facilitate the motivation that employees have for more sustainable attitudes and behaviors?

Literature Review

Contrary to what the traditional currents advocated, organizational communication can involve interaction processes. These processes allow the transmission of ideas in several directions, namely, in a downward direction, in an upward direction and in a lateral direction, where the sender and the receiver of the message come to assume identical relevance within the organization. In this sense, organizational communication can act at the level of all organizational actors (e.g. employees transmit information to customers; managers provide instructions to their supervisors) (Conrad & Poole, 2012). Therefore, in addition to vertical communication (i.e., between managers and subordinates), horizontal communication (i.e., between the various organizational actors) has also been developing.

It is known that in organizations whose cultures tend to be more collaborative and where there is greater power sharing, a specific type of communication tends to develop that is called supportive communication. In a generic way, supportive communication tends to be clear, precise, open and shared (Czech & Forward, 2010).

It is perceived, that in the case of supportive communication, opinions are easily accepted by others, making it effective for the interpersonal relationships that are established between the organizational actors (Czech & Forward, 2010; Larsen & Folger, 1993). In the literature, there has been an increase in the interest in studying issues related to the communication that is established between managers and subordinates, mainly due to the achievement of organizational goals that it may allow (Steele & Plenty, 2010; Larsen & Folger, 1993). In addition, as of the 21st century, the vision of leaderships as holders of command and power has been changing; this notion has been replaced by the concepts of coach, mentor, and facilitator (Johansson, 2015; Johansson, 2018). For this very reason, the newest companies have been looking seeking an organizational democracy in which all members are involved in decision members in decision making (360-degree communication). This is where we understand the relevance of 360-degree communication that can, in turn, lead to greater organizational democracy and, consequently, to more sustainable behavior by organizational actors.

H: The application of the 360-degree communication is positively related to a communication climate of trust, openness and support and, leading to greater organizational democracy and more sustainable behavior.

Methodology

The main objective of this study was to understand which independent variables may be responsible for greater organizational citizenship behaviors (more sustainable), on the part of organizational actors. In this sense, we have as independent variable the "360-degree communication", as mediator variable "the supportive communication from managers" and as dependent variable the "sustainable behaviors of employees".

According to these variables we created a questionnaire, taking into account different types of behavioral scales (corresponding to each of the variables). We applied this questionnaire to managers and to employees. We obtained a total of 800 responses.

The answers to this questionnaire allowed us to create an analysis model that establishes a relationship between the study variables (which we explain briefly in the results)

Results and Conclusions

With the analysis of the questionnaire responses, we were able to conclude that, in fact, 360-degree communication is an important independent variable. In companies where communication is vertical, horizontal, bidirectional and symmetrical, managers adopt a supportive communication and, in turn, employees assume that the organization is more democratic and feel more motivated to adopt sustainable behaviors and to represent the organization. That is, these three variables are related to each other and this relationship is a positive one.

Practical and Social Implications

The results of this study refer us to two fundamental aspects in Public Relations.

The first is related to the need for organizations to assume "Excellent Public Relations". This concept has been advocated by the author Grunig and is also related to sustainability.

This research gives us a possible path (even if indirect) to motivate employees to adopt sustainable attitudes and behaviors and to represent their organizations in this sense.

The second is related to the need to update the concept of corporate social responsibility. It is known that, nowadays, this concept is not only related to environmental issues, but also to the professional relationships that are established among organizational actors.

Keywords

360-degree communication; Organizational Actors; Sustainable behaviors

Perceptions about corporate positioning on controversial sociopolitical issues: Examining big pharma engagement with patient advocacy

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The ideal of universal human rights is one of the most relevant social and political legacies of the 20th century (Clapham, 2015). In the scope of this legacy, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was established in 2015 as "a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity" (United Nations, 2021). However, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights implies a wide variety of other rights that are very divisive and controversial (Moyn, 2010). Even though it is generally accepted that corporations are responsible for respecting human rights, too many times big companies still operate in a context that fails to meet human rights standards set by the United Nations (Bacchi, 2018). Large international enterprises, including the pharmaceutical industry, have severe reputational problems related to the challenging and complex balance between their primary purpose (i.e., profit) and the way they address societal problems (Leisinger, 2005; Gallup, 2019). There is recognition that these matters are related to the "public's perception" (Caliber's Global Pharma Study, 2020).

Aligned with the critical school of PR—which includes authors such as Adi (2020), Coombs & Holladay (2012a, b), Demetrious (2006, 2013), Edwards & Hodges (2011), L'Etang (2009, 2015), O'Brien (2018, 2020) and, Weder (2021)—this paper conceptualizes PR as an "art of perception" with the capacity to influence the maintenance or disruption of social structures (Leaf, 2014). To achieve specific goals, organizations, companies, countries, and individuals face situations where it is necessary to change perceptions. Although this term can be associated with a manipulative dimension, there is nothing inherently wrong, illegal, or immoral with the management of perceptions as it is present, in a more obvious or subtle way, in many, if not all, forms of interpersonal, organizational, and social communication. The way the facts are presented and perceived is "what counts whenever a problem must be solved, or an opportunity maximized," and different audiences perceive the same messages differently (Leaf, 2014, p. 258).

Many patient advocacy groups defending the needs of people with a particular disease maintain relationships with the pharmaceutical industry, and the sector uses patient advocacy groups as a channel to communicate with other stakeholders such as governments and the media. In addition, pharma companies are prolific financial donors to patient organizations (Kang et al., 2019), ensuring that new drugs arriving on the market meet the needs of patients, thus supposedly fulfilling their responsibilities to society. This research examines whether pharmaceutical companies are perceived by patient advocacy groups as genuinely engaged in their struggles for human rights.

Public relations have the potential to interfere and create changes in realities that are socially constructed based on symbolic interactions. In the context of business, public relations contributions to issues related to human rights and sustainability are often associated with corporate social responsibility (CSR). However, in the current highly volatile media environment, CSR communication strategies are often perceived as just dealing with image cleaning without a more robust commitment to socio-political causes and issues. Public relations professionals need to deal with these new reputational risks. In this context, some companies have advanced further in their socially responsible initiatives. They are supporting controversial causes related (or not) to their core business, producing forms of corporate activism on which the present research focuses.

An ethnographic study was conducted—including document analysis, 33 interviews, and participant observation—with a patient advocacy group, "Portuguese Activist Group for HIV/AIDS Treatment" (GAT), for six months (January–June 2021). In addition, the CSR domains on the websites of the seven pharmaceutical companies that support GAT were also analyzed.

Findings suggest that despite financial and technical support, the pharma companies do not publicly engage with GAT's advocacy for breaking the stigma and stereotypes that affect people infected by HIV or at risk of becoming infected (migrants, prisoners, sex workers, drug users, gay men, and others). The results indicate that the study participants perceive the pharma companies that financially support GAT as mainly concerned with exchanging business-related interests. The companies presented a transactional vision of their engagement in social responsibility and sustainability while avoiding engagement in human rights sociopolitical issues considered controversial.

The data obtained allow a practical understanding that these companies' financial and technical support does not replace (in the minds of stakeholders) the strength of their public endorsement and advocacy on complex sociopolitical and global concerns related to human rights (corporate activism).

Keywords

Public relations; corporate activism; controversial sociopolitical issues; perception management

The Sustainability Communication in Turkish Higher Educational Institutions: Going Sustainable on Mission and Vision Statements?

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Introduction and purpose of the study (and RQs)

The main objective of the study is to understand if public relations graduates are equipped with the knowledge of sustainability during their undergraduate studies. The analysis will be made on the public relations curriculums of three countries in Spain, Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates, including public and private universities which have a public relations program. Sustainability knowledge and behaviour is important because human, social, economic and environmental factors- the four pillars of sustainability- are the key for the future. There are studies conducted which highlight the courses that need to be included in a public relations curriculum. The authors of the research paper claim that sustainability education should be an inevitable component of today's public relations programs because of the role and function of a public relations professional.

Literature review

According to Székely and Knirsch (2005, p. 628) "Sustainability is about building a society in which a proper balance is created between economic, social and ecological aims." Today, we must be more educated and aware of our environment and the interrelationship of the environment with socioeconomic activities, as our ability to progress and survive is affected by them (McFarlane and Ogazon, 2011). The educational processes should raise awareness of sustainable development and develop competencies that enable people to participate in finding innovative solutions to economic, social, technological, and cultural problems (Michelsen and Fischer, 2017).

The students of higher education represent a population with the intellectual ability to absorb many dimensions of the concept of sustainability (Sibbel, 2009). It could be said that for some professions the sustainability awareness and knowledge is more vital because of the nature and power of the profession. Public relations is one of these areas. Public relations practitioners take on various roles in responding to publics' concerns and also increase the sustainability of institutions (Jeong and Park, 2017).

Methodology

A mixed methodology is used, combining content analysis of the academic content of the undergraduate PR programs published on the universities' websites and semi-structured interviews conducted with public relations educators.

For the selection of the sample, 30 universities will be included in the analysis from the three countries- Spain, Turkey, and UAE- based on the Times Higher Education (THE) world 5 public and top 5 private universities. The analysis will take into consideration whether there are specific courses titled sustainability, or whether sustainability is mentioned in any other courses in the public relations curriculums. In addition to the content analysis, a total 15 interviews (5 from each country) will be carried out with public relations educators to understand how sustainability should be integrated into public relations curriculums, and why, whether there had been issues in integrating sustainability in the courses, and the approach of public relations students to sustainability. The semi-structured interviews will be conducted with public relations educators, who are offering sustainability courses and/or others.

Results and conclusions

The research has not yet completed**.** Results will allow us to find out if sustainability knowledge is given to public relations students at the high-ranking universities' public relations programs, whether there is a difference in this respect between public and private universities, and whether the sustainability content is preparing (or not) the future public relations professionals to manage sustainable communication in organisations. Semi-structured interviews with educators will help us to understand their experiences with sustainability teaching, the importance of sustainability for public relations profession and also the training needs they may have identified in the field of sustainability and public relations teaching.

Practical and social implications

The research will shed light how different countries' public relations programs are considering sustainability education currently. It is expected that the public relations program planners and public relations educators take into consideration sustainability in public relations education by updating/adjusting the curriculums. The study will also provide insights on how to best integrate sustainability to public relations education.

Keywords

Public relations, sustainability education, public relations curriculum, higher education.

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Sustainable body image: fitspiration, overweight, and body positivity

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Introduction and Purpose of the Study

In 2000, the World Health Organization declared obesity a worldwide pandemic – and the status has not changed to date. Only in Czechia, 60% of the population is considered overweight or obese (Eurostat data from 2019, last updated 2022). It is then no surprise that both traditional and social media in the country dedicate a significant space to topics connected to body weight. However, there has been a shift in body image perception in Czechia. At the turn of the 21st century, traditional media saw dieting with minimum references to exercise as a solution to weight-gain, and an overweight person would traditionally not be pictured in a positive light on the cover of a lifestyle magazine. Twenty years later, exercise is the most commonly recommended activity for maintaining a healthy lifestyle (Ortová, 2023), and at the same time, – and with the expansion of social media – movements such as body positivity have become a topic even in the mainstream press.

Literature Review

Various researchers (esp. Cohen et al., 2019; Mulgrew et al., 2017; Mulgrew & Courtney, 2022) confirmed that body positivity movements contributed to the better mental health of overweight people and raised the level of social acceptance of different bodies. On the other hand, Jerónimo & Carraça, (2022)but emerging research indicates that exposure to it can have a negative impact on body image. This study aims to analyze the relationship between individuals' exposure to fitspiration content and body image measures or associated variables (e.g., appearance comparison suggest that the so-called "fitspiration" content on social media be potentially harmful, especially to the younger population. Slater et al. (2017) then offer a solution to that in the form of combining self-compassion quotes and fitspiration images, which might be "attenuating the negative impact of social media on women's body satisfaction" (ibid). Moreover, in their work, Mulgrew & Courtney (2022) and Mulgrew et al. (2018) proposed that exposure to realistic videos of exercising women who were engaged in a local health campaign "produced higher intent to engage in exercise in the following week." In the more recent work, the authors also called upon other researchers to dive into the area of creating inspirational content for functional self-care encouragement. In my work, I intend to follow this invitation indirectly.

Methodology

To this date and my knowledge, no researcher has yet directly asked the question "How do people with Body Mass Index (BMI) over 25 who use social media perceive body positivity in connection to fitness?" This idea also comes from Cohen's (2019) work, where she discusses that when "fat girls" say they can exercise, they usually picture yoga as the primary form of exercise. I conducted hour-long semi-structured interviews with 10 Czech women aged 18-34 during December, 2022. This age group was selected because of Instagram's leading user group (Statista, 2023). The women must fit in the BMI 25+ category and had to express to be active Instagram users and interested in body positivity content. In the interviews, they were asked about their perceptions of their own body and what body positivity means to them. Most importantly, they evaluated fitness content from in total four body-positive influencers with BMI over 25 and under 25. The picture instrument created by Pulvers et al. (2004) was used to estimate the BMI of the selected influencers. The participants of the study were acquainted with the sensitivity of the topic and signed an ethical approval.

Results and Conclusions

The first thing the participants described was not a body-positive approach but a body-neutral approach of being thankful that their bodies´ functionality. Also, most of these women said they regularly exercise and follow fitness content. However, they rather connect this content to thin or muscular influencers than those suffering from being overweight. When being shown these two types of influencers, they mostly sympathized with the overweight ones and chose them as more likely to follow. On the other hand, the preliminary results of my research showed that fitspiration does not necessarily mean that it would be demotivating for overweight women, as some of them still considered the fitspiration content more likely to follow. Also, for the participants, overweight people in fitness content are fine if the person shown is not morbidly obese.

The limitation of the study its qualitative form which cannot transfer the results to the whole population. Also, some participants might not have shared their genuine opinions due to the topic's sensitivity. Using the BMI might be perceived as a simplification of body weight and body image evaluation, however, in medical terms, this is still considered a primary scale used by the medical public in Czechia.

Practical and Social Implications

This study shows that further research in the field is needed to promote healthy behavior on social media and to motivate overweight influencers to share their fitness journey. Also, it provokes further debate on re-evaluation of fitness weight-loss communication towards overweight people.

Keywords

body positivity, fitness communication, social media, Instagram, body image

Corporate Social Innovation & Strategic Communication: Cross-fertilized Model Proposal

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Companies are social actors that operate in complex and fluid markets and can transform social problems into economic opportunities. Under constant social and financial monitoring, global corporate strategies are developed based on societies' expectations about their contribution to the common good. Corporate Social Innovation (CSI) is yet another concept becoming relevant in social responsibility and value creation imperatives, mainly in sociology, technological innovations and economics (Mustapha et al., 2021).

Consequently, companies must balance corporate purpose, reputation, and strategy with local realities and social needs to achieve their social and corporate purposes. CSI should produce new revenue sources and generate a more socially relevant innovation system and corporate culture that leverage competitive advantage (e.g., Herrera, 2015; Kanter, 1999; Mirvis et al., 2016). Literature about CSI is still meagre once this concept overlaps with many existing theoretical backgrounds posing understanding problems (Tabares, 2020). Additionally, its management tends to be complicated due to sparse literature on institutional mechanisms for integrating social innovation into strategy and operations (Dionisio & Raupp de Vargas, 2020).

CSI is envisaged as a development of CSR since CSI has a strategic intent. It represents a strategic investment that companies manage (such as other corporate projects), applying their total assets and knowledge through deeper collaboration internally - across functions within the company - and externally (NGO, Government, among others). CSI aims to co-create something new, providing sustainable solutions to social needs. CSI is motivated to address social needs in a long-term way (Samidi et al., 2021) and deliberately allocates resources for that matter (Mirvis et al., 2016). The growth and evolution of CSI are a response to institutional pressures to enhance their legitimacy (Dionisio & Raupp de Vargas, 2020), boosting cross-fertilization between commercial and social efforts in a bidirectional way. In our opinion, CSI as a collaborative and synergistic effort (Popoli, 2017) requires strategic communication for stakeholder relationship management and social and environmental monitoring. Thus, CSI relies on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria and grasps into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A general bibliographic search on Mendeley with the expression "Corporate Social Innovation" yielded 56 results in peer-reviewed scientific articles with an open period. These papers date from 2013 to 2022. Among the outlets, there is a predominance of journals from Business (e.g., Journal of Business Research, Business and Society, Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Business Strategy, International Business Review) and sustainability and social responsibility (e.g., International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development, Corporate Social Responsibility & Environment Management, Social Responsibility Journal).

Given the lack of strategic communication reference publications, a new search was done in the EBSCO database without significant additional results. The expression did not appear in any paper title. Lim & Lee (2022) mentions "Corporate Social Innovation" in the article's keywords. A search with the expression "creating shared value" returned results equally scanty, highlighting the article by Chen et al. (2020).

Because of these results and given the configuration of the Corporate Social Innovation Model proposed by the Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation (Wirtenberg, 2021), a question arises: how can strategic communication scholars contribute to the understanding of Corporate Social Innovation?

This is a conceptual paper; we aim to discuss and parallel strategic communication / public relations models and the CSI model and highlight how to combine them, influencing academia and practice. Building a cross-fertilized model may help to identify case studies for future research.

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Strategic communication as a transformative approach in the context of sustainable development

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Introduction and purpose of the study

From a constructivist and structuralist point of view, communication in all its facets is the limiting factor as well as the enabling factor in social processes, such as sustainable development. Thus, we argue for a strategic communication (SC) approach, which is open for social issues and values and aims to bring about a change toward sustainability in companies and in society. While PR approaches usually focus on selling outcomes and disseminating information from an organization to its stakeholders, this strategic communications approach understands communication more as a (social) process with transformative power through building institutions. In this paper, we outline different types of sustainability communication and design a model of Transformative Strategic Communication (TSC).

Literature review

On the one hand, strategic communication is mostly analyzed at the meso-level of organizations and from an economic perspective, and society-based research is still lacking (Pleil et al 2021). On the other hand, sociology discusses that while we have more and better education as well as modern technologies, we have less knowledge about reality due to increasing complexity, especially in the debate about the climate crisis and the aim of a sustainable future. One reason for this phenomenon is, that the knowledge we need for sustainable actions depends more on scientific expertise and prognosis than on practical experiences (Amlinger & Nachtwey 2021). Considering the deep and comprehensive transformation towards a sustainable society, a strategic communication approach is needed, which allows for complexity as well as connecting and enabling the interaction between actors in the sense of community building and with the aim of supporting social change.

At the same time, there is a call for communication science to be not only normative but transformative (Krüger & Meyen 2018). A Transformative strategic communication approach can help practitioners and researchers to identify the challenges and opportunities as well as develop new concepts for strategic communication to face today's urgent and relevant problems and crises. Furthermore, this approach can provide a framework for analyzing how the practice and function of SC are changing and evolving in the context of transformation.

Methodology

In this conceptional paper we argue that the sustainable transformation is depending strongly on the public communication system, communication strategies, and different enhancing roles like change agents (WBGU 2011). So far, the role of media has been the main topic of discussion in this context (Beiler & Krüger 2018). However, it also seems necessary to take a closer look at the role of strategic communication. We will present case studies based on guided interviews and document analysis to contribute to a concrete understanding of the concept of TSC.

Results and conclusions

As a result, we propose a draft concept of Transformative Strategic Communications (TSC). The case studies offer first learnings of a transformative approach of communication. In line with Krüger & Meyen (2018) we argue for a shared responsibility of strategic communication also for social change in the sense of sustainable transformation. Elements from the fields of campaigning, change communication and social psychology are incorporated into TSC. However, it is also necessary to discuss how TSC should be designed so that it allows broad participation by social groups. From a theoretical point of view, references to transformative science as well as to the organic theory of PR (Vujnovic et al 2021) can be discussed.

Practical and social implications

Sustainability communication by companies has so far mostly been understood either as reporting or as an opportunity for the positioning in the sense of marketing or image building. TSC, on the other hand, involves the will to shape developments in the corporate environment. This goes together with the widespread desire for more social impact of companies, as the current Trust Barometer shows (Edelman 2023). At the same time, TSC offers great potential, especially when used by public institutions. However, the approach requires strategies and competencies on the part of the actors, which still need to be explored in greater detail.

Keywords

Strategic Communication, Sustainability, Social Transformation, Sustainable Development

Understanding and Navigating the Shift Toward a Purpose-Driven Sustainable Marketing Strategy: The Implications for Communications with Internal and External Stakeholders

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Recently, a growing number of for-profit firms have begun joining non-profits and hybrid institutions in defining an organizational purpose that goes beyond profit maximization as their primary objective to also include environmental and social goals. This article examines the shifts in marketing strategy that occur when firms adopt and prioritize an organizational purpose that recognizes, but also transcends, traditional financial performance outcomes to include environmental and social objectives. Such shifts have substantial theoretical and managerial significance but remain unexamined in the literature. Specifically, we address the following questions: *How does prioritizing an organizational purpose shape marketing strategy*? *How does a firm navigate the transition to a purpose-driven marketing strategy, and what role does marketing play in the transition? What are the implications for firms' communication with internal and external stakeholders*?

Literature review

A review of the academic literature reveals increasing interest in the concept of *organizational purpose* (Gartenberg, Prat, and Serafeim 2019; Gioia et al. 2013; Henderson and Van den Steen 2015; Hollensbe et al. 2014; Mayer 2021; Salem Khalifa 2012). In the context of for-profit firms, this concept is increasingly viewed as a firm's reason to exist that pursues "profitable solutions to the problems of people and planet" (British Academy 2018, p. 10; Mayer 2021). In framing our investigation, we adopt and build on this perspective.

Methodology

This paper combines in-depth interviews with insights from extant writings and academic literature to develop an understanding of how prioritizing an organizational purpose impacts marketing strategy. Employing a grounded, discovery-oriented approach, we identify specific changes in marketing strategy that result from a purpose-driven approach. We also develop a process model describing how firms transition to a purpose-driven marketing strategy. Finally, we explore how different stages in the transition process can affect important firm outcomes including brand reputation, financial performance, and performance towards the firm's purpose. Throughout the paper, we use our findings to generate propositions that provide a template for future marketing research on organizational purpose.

Results and conclusions

First, our analysis reveals that adopting and prioritizing an organizational purpose shifts the overarching goal of marketing strategy as well as its formulation, implementation and evaluation.

Second, our research into the transition process to purpose-driven marketing reveals a critically important distinction between a firm's *desire to pursue a purpose-driven marketing strategy* (purpose-intent) and the extent to which a firm *enacts a purpose-driven marketing strategy* (purpose-enactment). This distinction is important because it sheds light on different states of organizational tension that manifest as a firm matures in its pursuit of a purpose-driven marketing strategy.

Third, this paper develops propositions regarding the drivers of tension states, and the impact of tension states on important firm outcomes including wellbeing performance, brand reputation, and financial performance.

Limitations and future research

This paper uses a combination of in-depth interviews, extant artifacts, and archival data to develop theory regarding how becoming purpose-driven impacts marketing strategy. Our propositions need to be empirically examined and tested by future research. Moreover, our sample was primarily made up of large, incumbent, for-profit firms. Our literature review suggests that the framework we develop, and the propositions we propose, should hold for other types of organizations as well. Nevertheless, future research should examine the extent to which this is true.

Practical and social implications

Purpose-driven marketing strategy entails the formulation and implementation of marketing efforts to guide both internal and external stakeholders in ways that lead to the achievement of the purpose-relevant wellbeing outcomes. More specifically, marketing strategies need to proactively seek, shape, and switch both internal and external stakeholders to help with the pursuit of the purpose and the achievement of purpose-relevant wellbeing outcomes. This places the marketing function in the role of being a key change agent within the firm. Once a firm has started on its purpose-journey and marketing strategy has started to prioritize wellbeing outcomes, marketing activity needs to further facilitate this transition, encouraging the unconverted with narratives and proof points, and bolstering the position of those who already support being purpose-driven.

Keywords

Organizational Purpose, Purpose-driven Marketing Strategy, Wellbeing, Organizational Tension

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Diversity, equity and inclusion: A study on communication practices for a more sustainable workplace

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Introduction and purpose

As underlined in the call for papers, the main purpose of public relations is the synchronization of organizations with their environments, in normal times as well as in response to crises and changes. Crises and changes can contribute to accelerating companies' pathway towards sustainability, like those engendered by the recent COVID-19 pandemic which prompted a renewed emphasis on work-life balance, inclusion and sustainable work practices. This paper addresses the theme of public relations and sustainability by focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) corporate strategies with an eye on internal and external communication practices sustaining DEI efforts in organizations.

Literature review

DEI research and practice have been recently gaining ground in different national contexts driven by sociodemographic changes, exemplary initiatives by multinational companies, common goals set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the already cited renewed expectations of employees generated by the COVID-19 crisis (see e.g., Mazzei, Quaratino & Ravazzani, 2021). This study builds on research on DEI corporate strategies and the link between DEI and sustainability/CSR (e.g., Karatas-Özkan et al., 2014). It also acknowledges the critical role of communication, which has been previously described as essential to frame policy aspects and adapt to the sensitivity of diverse groups inside and outside the company (Maier & Ravazzani, 2021). Despite this, studies on diversity-focused communication are still sporadic, with few exceptions examining internal (e.g., Wolfgruber & Einwiller, 2023) and external (e.g., Maier & Ravazzani, 2021) communication, which calls for additional research.

Methodology

The empirical research is based on the accounts of 21 managers and professionals responsible for DEI and/or with communication-related roles from 13 Italian companies. Qualitative data were collected through 4 focus groups and 2 interviews carried out between September and November 2022.

Results and conclusions

Results show the characteristics and recent evolutions of DEI corporate strategies in the studied organizations by detailing: objectives and rationale behind the policy; diversity dimensions addressed; HR, internal and external communication practices; dedicated structure and roles;

planning, budget, and measurement; involvement of top managers, middle managers and employees at all levels; challenges in managing and communicating DEI.

In summary, the analysis revealed that organizations pursue DEI mainly for reputation-building purposes, with a view to preserving the relational capital and avoiding crises among various stakeholders. Internally, DEI strategies focus on employees' well-being and psychological safety, work effectiveness and innovation. Externally, DEI strategies focus on attracting and retaining talent, understanding the diversity of markets, and generating a positive impact on society from a corporate social responsibility perspective.

In many cases, DEI was presented as part of the broader corporate sustainability strategy, often with the person responsible for it working within the Sustainability department.

Internal communication was described as key for creating awareness about DEI practices, supporting cultural change, and listening to internal needs. Surprisingly, external communication appeared not so extensively leveraged to avoid the risk of "diversity washing".

Future research is needed to enlarge the number of companies and experiences considered as well as to clarify the contextual factors shaping an organization's DEI strategy in accordance with environmental demands and specifically with sustainability pressures.

Practical implications

This study offers tools and reflections that communication and DEI managers can use for effective strategizing and for devising effective framing and discursive strategies, keeping in mind that "the communication of DM (diversity management) is challenging as it is not only focusing on anti-discrimination and social objectives but is rather a valuable investment in the sustainability of a company" (Jablonski, 2017, in Maier & Ravazzani, 2019, p. 281).

Keywords

diversity, equity and inclusion, sustainability, internal communication, external communication

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The Place of Sustainability in Public Relations Education in Spain, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates: A Preliminary Study

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Introduction and purpose of the study (and RQs)

The main objective of the study is to understand if public relations graduates are equipped with the knowledge of sustainability during their undergraduate studies. The analysis will be made on the public relations curriculums of three countries in Spain, Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates, including public and private universities which have a public relations program. Sustainability knowledge and behaviour is important because human, social, economic and environmental factors- the four pillars of sustainability- are the key for the future. There are studies conducted which highlight the courses that need to be included in a public relations curriculum. The authors of the research paper claim that sustainability education should be an inevitable component of today's public relations programs because of the role and function of a public relations professional.

Literature review

According to Székely and Knirsch (2005, p. 628) "Sustainability is about building a society in which a proper balance is created between economic, social and ecological aims." Today, we must be more educated and aware of our environment and the interrelationship of the environment with socioeconomic activities, as our ability to progress and survive is affected by them (McFarlane and Ogazon, 2011). The educational processes should raise awareness of sustainable development and develop competencies that enable people to participate in finding innovative solutions to economic, social, technological, and cultural problems (Michelsen and Fischer, 2017).

The students of higher education represent a population with the intellectual ability to absorb many dimensions of the concept of sustainability (Sibbel, 2009). It could be said that for some professions the sustainability awareness and knowledge is more vital because of the nature and power of the profession. Public relations is one of these areas. Public relations practitioners take on various roles in responding to publics' concerns and also increase the sustainability of institutions (Jeong and Park, 2017).

Methodology

A mixed methodology is used, combining content analysis of the academic content of the undergraduate PR programs published on the universities' websites and semi-structured interviews conducted with public relations educators. For the selection of the sample, 30 universities will be included in the analysis from the three countries- Spain, Turkey, and UAE- based on the Times Higher Education (THE) world 5 public and top 5 private universities. The analysis will take into consideration whether there are specific courses titled sustainability, or whether sustainability is mentioned in any other courses in the public relations curriculums. In addition to the content analysis, a total 15 interviews (5 from each country) will be carried out with public relations educators to understand how sustainability should be integrated into public relations curriculums, and why, whether there had been issues in integrating sustainability in the courses, and the approach of public relations students to sustainability. The semi-structured interviews will be conducted with public relations educators, who are offering sustainability courses and/or others.

Results and conclusions

The research has not yet completed**.** Results will allow us to find out if sustainability knowledge is given to public relations students at the high-ranking universities' public relations programs, whether there is a difference in this respect between public and private universities, and whether the sustainability content is preparing (or not) the future public relations professionals to manage sustainable communication in organisations. Semi-structured interviews with educators will help us to understand their experiences with sustainability teaching, the importance of sustainability for public relations profession and also the training needs they may have identified in the field of sustainability and public relations teaching.

Practical and social implications

The research will shed light how different countries' public relations programs are considering sustainability education currently. It is expected that the public relations program planners and public relations educators take into consideration sustainability in public relations education by updating/adjusting the curriculums. The study will also provide insights on how to best integrate sustainability to public relations education.

Keywords

Public relations, sustainability education, public relations curriculum, higher education.

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Academic publications create sustainable knowledge in funded projects

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Introduction and purpose of the study

This paper describes an approach where the sustainability of externally funded projects can be increased by creating knowledge by first focusing on academic publications that then lead to more specified knowledge toward needed official outcomes and deliverables. Funded projects are expected to output project results, new knowledge for innovation, and project communication and dissemination. The research question is: How can academic publishing promote knowledge development in externally funded projects?

Literature review

Co-creation involves communication and interaction (Gustafsson, Kristensson & Witell 2012). Knowledge creation can be approached from the perspective of co-creation, where collaboration requires communication among multiple actors (Galvagno & Dalli 2014, Pirinen 2015). In the context of externally funded projects knowledge can be conceptualized as value (Ruoslahti, 2019). Effective multistakeholder communication and collaboration is essential for reputation and continuity management (Knight & Nurse 2018).

Methodology

The method of this study is participatory action research. Project ECHO (the European network of Cybersecurity centres and competence Hub for innovation and Operations) task Societal impact assessment, where the focus of knowledge creation were individual studies that each aimed at publishing an academic paper. These individual studies produced an emerging and collective body of knowledge that was then condensed and referenced when producing task outcomes and writing its three official deliverables. This same approach is now taken in the DYNAMO (Dynamic Resilience Assessment Method including combined Business Continuity Management and Cyber Threat Intelligence solution for Critical Sectors) project work package Dynamic business continuity: resilience assessment & AI-based solutions.

Results and conclusions

Under the efforts of ECHO Societal impact assessment there have been 15 academic articles published, with 14 authors involved. These academic publications were then used to generate content for the needed deliverables of the task. This practical project approach example demonstrates that focusing first on can be a very valid and rewarding way of knowledge creation in the context of funded projects. Besides these official funded ECHO efforts, the project provided opportunities for student learning, as the total body of knowledge were elaborated and enrichened by six bachelor's theses and 150 ECTS.

Practical and social implications

First, where appropriate, this approach serves to promote knowledge creation and transfers. An additional practical implication of these results is that project output communication can be used to help guide and focus project input and throughput communication, and work efforts in ways that promote knowledge creation and dissemination in academic forums. These academic publications may also serve individual authors as part of their doctoral studies and as overall academic merit. On a wider note, authored academic publications provide an excellent basis project public relations as practical dissemination messages, professional articles, and web, newsletters, or blog posts. The academic implications are an increased academic visibility. All these implications help promote the sustainability of the project and its results.

Keywords

Academic articles, Funded projects, Dissemination, Public relations

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Green communication and moral outrages in the context of revisited Situational Crisis Communication Theory

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Introduction and purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to examine relevance and application of green communication practices in management of the key elements of cognitive appraisals that lead to moral outrages associated with the crises. The study aims to identify if and how green communication is used to mitigate both crisis risks and emergence of moral outrage. Additionally, the study aims to differentiate between ethical and unethical green communication practices in the context of their impact on corporate legitimacy and value congruence between an organization and its stakeholders.

Literature review

Contextualized within the legitimacy theory (Scherer et al., 2013), three types of legitimacy contribute to the development of corporate legitimacy: cognitive, pragmatic, and moral legitimacy. Cognitive legitimacy is based on common assumptions of an organization's societal environment. Moral legitimacy relies on judgments about the organization, its behavior, and ethics. Pragmatic legitimacy is based on the perception of key stakeholders related to their personal benefit from corporate activities and communication. Green communication is a significant contributor to the development of moral legitimacy of an organization (Seele & Gatti, 2017). At the same time, revelations of environmentally irresponsible behaviors or unethical green communications, such as greenwashing, are identified as possible sources of crises (Coombs & Holladay, 2015). This is especially relevant as the concern about the involvement and practices of organizations regarding environmental issues has been raised significantly in the recent years, with stakeholders becoming increasingly sensitive and critical towards the companies that do not respect the environment (Pizzetti et al., 2020).

Revisited Situational Crisis Communication Theory (Coombs & Holladay, 2022) suggests inclusion of the moral outrage as a cognitive appraisal associated with the theory. The moral outrage has three key elements: assessment of situation as negative, appraisal of responsibility, and perception of injustice and greed. Moreover, Coombs and Holladay (2022) indicated the need of redefinition of the response strategies to the crises that generate high moral outrage and highlighted an importance of questioning value congruence between the stakeholders and organizations during such crises.

Methodology

A document analysis has been deployed to identify the role of green communications in the context of crisis response. Total of 66 cases, including 26 described in the research articles, and 40 cases identified in publicly available media databases and websites, had been included in the research.

Each case has been analyzed from the ethical perspective of green communication practice (ethical or unethical communication) and associated with a particular element of the crisis development or response, as described in the revisited Situational Crisis Communication Theory (Coombs and Holladay, 2022). Further, sentiment analysis has been deployed for the cases that are possibly associated with negative aspect of triadic appraisal of the moral outrage.

Results and conclusions

The document analysis of research publications and media content reviewed within this study indicated a significant role of green communications in the context of the moral outrage triadic appraisal discussed in the reformulated Situational Crisis Communication Theory. Unethical green communication, such as greenwashing or various forms of misleading corporate green claims, occurs as active contributor, or, in certain cases, as a key source of development of negative aspect of an appraisal, consequently leading to crises that generate high moral outrage. Moreover, findings of the study indicate that companies are using green communication to mitigate the responsibility, that is identified as second critical element of the triadic appraisal. Further, green communication is used as a tool to address the issues related to the perception of injustice and greed, when the crisis is not caused by environmental issues or unethical green communication practices.

Analyzing in the context of application of green communication to respond to the crises described in the revisited Situational Crisis Communication Theory, the literature evidence indicates that companies can use green communication to address the crises that come with high moral outrage, such as scansis and management misconduct. Green communication, if company practiced it ethically, can help to address both need for ethical base response and acknowledgement of the moral violations. In addition, ethical green communication can be used during and after crisis to reduce the risk of questioning the value congruence between the stakeholders and the organization, and consequently represents potentially powerful element of the bolstering strategy.

Practical and social implications

The study provides guidelines to communication practitioners about possible usage od green communication in primary and secondary crisis response strategies described in the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (Coombs & Holladay, 2022). Moreover, the study offers the evidence about possible negative reputational impact of unethical green communication practices and exposures of irresponsible behaviors during the crises. It also depicts how such practices and behaviors contribute to the generation and development of high moral outrages related to the crises.

Keywords

green communication, crisis communication, Situational Crisis Communication Theory

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Ways to Foster Internal Communities: Harnessing the Power of Effective CSR Communication

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Introduction and Purpose

Organizations are increasingly expected to contribute to social good. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are examples of such contributions. Organizations have attempted to align their CSR activities with business goals and actively communicated to stakeholders about such activities, often in the hopes of improving organizational reputation and brand values. A key audience of such CSR communication is employees. Internal CSR communication has been tied to positive employee outcomes, including enhanced job performance and creativity. Theoretical frameworks such as the excellence theory, relationship management theory, and dialogue theory have been commonly applied in CSR communication research in public relations. In this paper, we introduce an alternative framework to help shed light on the mechanisms to sustain employee CSR involvement. Adopting a community approach (cf. Shen & Jiang, 2021), internal CSR communication can help enable and empower employees to become active agents who are essential internal community members. Strong internal CSR communities could naturally drive employees' job satisfaction and voluntary citizenship behaviors towards other internal community members.

Literature Review

Following the community approach to internal public relations by Shen and Jiang (2021), we argue that organizations and employees are both members of internal communities regarding CSR. The role of public relations is to foster and sustain communities. Such communities are "created and dissolved by voluntary individuals and/or organizations with shared experiences, interests, identities and norms" (Shen & Jiang, 2021, p. 420). When organizations engage in internal CSR communication that is informative, relevant, transparent, consistent, factual, and non-promotional to their employees, employees are likely to feel enabled, supported, and empowered. These internal CSR agents will potentially derive a sense of community regarding pertinent CSR issues. These community agents will ultimately be more satisfied at work and show higher levels of contextual performance.

The key concepts involved in our study are effective internal CSR communication, employee CSR agency, employee sense of CSR community, employee job satisfaction and contextual performance. Effective internal CSR communication is informative, relevant, transparent, consistent, factual, and non-promotional. Such effective communication could enable employees to be more involved in CSR. Their CSR agency can be manifested first as self-efficacy, or beliefs in their ability to enhance their organization's CSR activities for example. Also, such agency of internal community members can demonstrate as peer CSR support and members' opportunity to provide input and contribute to their organizations in terms of CSR. Employees' sense of agency will likely activate their sense of community, which in turn enhances their job satisfaction and contextual performance.

Methodology

We will conduct an online survey, using participant pools from a market research company. All measures have been previously validated. IRB approval has been secured. Data collection will take 2-3 weeks to complete. We expect data analysis, including descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling analysis, to be done in March. Our full manuscript will be prepared in late Spring.

Results and Conclusion

We expect to identify the role of effective CSR communication in building and sustaining internal communities on CSR issues. The camaraderie could have a transformative impact on individual employees' positive feelings as well as actual voluntary behaviors at work.

Practical and Social Implications

We hope to add empirical evidence to the community approach to public relations. With relationship-building and dialogue tools at their disposal, public relations professionals are fully capable of strengthening communities of various sizes and bringing different groups to work together toward common community goals. Such community-enhancing work can easily transcend organizational and national boundaries as people seek creative and sustainable solutions to social-economic issues that impact us all.

Keywords

Community approach, effective CSR communication, employee CSR agency, sense of community, employee behaviors

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Shen, H., & Jiang, H. (2021). Rethinking internal public relations: Organizations and publics as community members. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 33*(6), 415-428.

Toward Sustaining an Alumni Community: The Role of Identity and Agency on Alumni Engagement

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Introduction and Purpose

As the world becomes increasingly polarized and distrust surged, scholars have envisioned different ways that public relations can contribute to the common good. For example, Shen and Jiang (2021) renewed the call for a community approach to public relations, echoing the proposition by Kruckeberg and Starck (1988) that public relations should be about restoring and maintaining a sense of community. On the other hand, recent research (e.g., Ni & Shen, 2023) on publics highlighted the importance of people's identity, particularly their **identity salience**, in influencing their perceptions, motivations, and even behaviors. Therefore, guided by the community approach, our study sought to identify ways to sustain communities in such times of turmoil. Specifically in the higher education context, we examined the ways in which alumni's **identity strength** and **salience** impacted their sense of **agency** and ultimately their **engagement** behaviors.

Literature Review

Adopting the seven tenets of community approach by Shen and Jiang (2021), grounded in responsive communitarianism, we believe that a core pillar of community development is community members' individual agency. Integrating literature from intercultural communication, sociology, and public relations, we investigated the drivers (e.g., identity strength and salience) and outcomes (alumni engagement) of alumni's individual agency.

Individual agency highlights community members' ability to disrupt community rules, processes, and values, or choose not to do so (Shen & Jiang, 2021). Alumni's identity strength refers to their identification with an academic unit as a part of their self-description whereas identity salience denotes the *relative importance* of such an identification to their total sense of self. Research has shown that more salient and stronger group membership could increase individual's self efficacy, a component of individual agency. Empowered community members often are more active actors in community life.

Methodology

We distributed an online survey among a U.S.-based academic unit's alumni database. A total of 217 alumni completed the survey in Spring 2022, with validated measures on five-point Likert-type scales. We performed descriptive statistics to develop profiles of participants, a series of hierarchical regression to identify control variables, and a two-step structural equation modeling analysis to test the hypotheses.

Results and Conclusion

The alumni identified strongly with the academic unit (*M* = 4.43, *SD* = .75), but their identity salience was moderate (*M* = 3.11, *SD* = 1.24). Their level of agency was also moderate (self-efficacy: *M* = 3.72, *SD* = .93; peer support: *M* = 3.47, *SD* = 1.02; ability to influence: *M* = 3.16, *SD* = 1.00). The alumni reported lower levels of instrumental engagement (*M* = 1.49, *SD* = .62) and communicative engagement (*M* = 1.49, *SD* = .76) but a moderate level of affective engagement (*M* = 3.19, *SD* = .99). All measures were highly reliable, with alpha values ranging from .77 to .95.

Based on hierarchical regression results, age was controlled for in the follow-up two-step structural equation modeling analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis yielded satisfactory results, with good model fit index values and high loadings of items on their respective factors. Second-order structural phase analysis results revealed that both identity strength (path = .53, $p < .001$) and identity salience (path = .32, $p < .001$) were significant predictors of individual agency, which in turn significantly impacted alumni engagement (path = .84, $p < .001$). Indirect effects results showed that individual agency was a significant mediator between the identity variables and alumni engagement.

In conclusion, alumni's identity with an academic unit and the salience of such an identity could activate their agency, including self efficacy, sense of peer support, and ability to influence the organization. Empowered alumni agents would be more likely to engage with the academic unit, including guest lecturing, mentoring, providing career opportunities, attending events, communicating, and feeling enthusiastic and excited about the organization.

Practical and Social Implications

Extending our findings beyond a higher education setting, we believe that community building remains an effective way to strengthen social cohesion and reduce conflict and polarization. Organizations and publics are all members of the larger communities, bound by agreed-upon and renegotiated community rules and norms. Enabled and empowered institutional and individual community members can sustain growth and creativity as they work towards common goals. Public relations professionals are key to this participatory process.

Keywords

Community development, identity strength, identity salience, agency, alumni engagement

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Internal and External Aspects of Sustainability Communication. An investigation of CSR reporting and media coverage in different industries 2020-21

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Introduction and purpose of the study

According to the conference call of papers, crises and change are driving forces behind the Public Relations profession and sustainability is the ability of a system to maintain continuity over time. It therefore seems more and more important that companies include sustainability communication on a professional level in their focus. This is necessary in order not only to maintain their (and at the end our all) simple existence on the long run, but first also to implement sustainability on a normative level all over their organisation including external stakeholders and thus to develop positively. But how sustainable are sustainability reporting and sustainability related media relations of companies? What are the sustainability issues they are focussing on? And what the differences on the topics mentioned can be observed between different countries or industries? This paper will present two exploratory studies addressing these and other questions: On the one hand, the study examines sustainability issues in companies' (self) reporting in Europe and the U. S., and on the other hand, it analyses the sustainability media reporting on different industries in Germany.

Literature Review

As a theoretical framework of this paper, the conceptualization of sustainability was dealt with. It was pointed out again that already at the end of the 20th century more and more crises hit the world. Based on this, the urgency has become apparent that technologies and social organizations must be improved to improve sustainability (WCED, 1987). Furthermore, it has been mentioned that corporate communication of companies has a significant impact on the company's reputation (Cornelissen, 2004; Van Riel & Fombrum, 2007). Subsequently, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations will be used to analyse them intensively by applying them to the subject of the study. However, according to Pradhan et al. (2017), the difficulty here is to be able to measure the success of the implementation of SDGs in companies in a target-oriented manner.

Methodology

The first study examines if, and to what extent, the UN's 12 Sustainable Goals are represented in formal reporting of the German Stock Index

DAX 30 and the listed companies on the Dow Jones Industrial Index. Applying a quantitative analysis, financial and non-financial documents (n= 314) from 2019 to 2020, and website sections (n= 230), concentrating on Values, CSR, Sustainability, SGDs, and Covid-19, are analysed. This data collection process took place from May 1, 2020, to May 25, 2020.

Study two contains a research question which examines how and to what extent does the media report on the topic of sustainability in the financial, media and sports industry in Germany. Therefore, a quantitative analysis was used as the research design, based on thematic query by media intelligence service "Press Relations". The codebook as a measurement tool includes, in addition to baseline data, acting persons, such as internal and external actors, how the different SDGs were addressed, and, of course, the industries. The study was conducted in the period November 1, 2020, to October 31, 2021. Numerous of articles (n=1017) which include daily newspapers, magazines and trade journals in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, were examined.

Results and conclusions

The results of the first study show differences among DAX and DJ listed companies in regard of their SDG representation: German companies have a higher general reference to SDGs than American corporations that focus much more on their own industries.

Study two found a distinct reporting on sustainability issues across three different industries: The least coverage on SDG issues during the analysed period could be found within the sports industry; the most intensive and positive media reporting was observed in the finance industry; in the media industry there was the highest coverage on peace and justice issues.

All in all, the two explorative studies show a high degree of necessary differentiation regarding industries, self-representation, and media reporting as well as across national contexts. Of course, the two studies have several limitations: For instance, the two studies had to follow partly different research designs although they were based on the same theoretical foundations and approaches.

Practical and social implications

The paper once again demonstrates the importance of sustainability issues for corporations and their communications around the globe. It also shows that some industries, including the media industry, still need to catch up. The study can serve as „food for thought" for companies and academics: It can help them to better understand the implications and dynamics of SDG communication. To act really professional in this context and not to focus only on very small aspects near to "greenwashing" is a really important task for the future!

Keywords

Sustainability, CSR, ESG, Public Relations, Communications

"Personal" Influence in "Public" Relations Practices: Evidence from Italy

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Introduction and Purpose of the Study

Personal influence is one of the most ubiquitous, and arguably powerful, tools that humans of every culture use. Public relations practitioners also use personal influence in leveraging relationships with their stakeholders – perhaps much more so than they would like to admit. Yet, scholarship in our field has paid scant attention on how personal influence is leveraged for different public relations purposes in different cultural contexts. Most studies have been restricted to a few countries of Asia. To widen the focus of public relations scholarship vis-à-vis personal influence, this study empirically investigated the presence, and use, of personal influence among Italian public relations professionals.

Literature Review

The importance of personal influence has received greater recognition in allied communication disciplines than in public relations even though public relations practitioners rely heavily on their personal connections to get professional work done. Early communication theorizing such as the two-step-flow in mass communication (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955), and the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1962) and subsequent studies showed the important role of opinions leaders in influencing public perceptions of media messages. In recent years, the phenomenon of social media influencers has exploded as well as the interest in these digital natives' use of personal influence (e.g., Bakker, 2018; Freberg *et al.*, 2011; Khamis *et al.*, 2017). The four models of public relations offered by Grunig and Hunt (1984), that dominated public relations literature at least for three decades, only focused on mass-mediated communication. It was only when the models were tested outside the Western countries that the extensive use of personal influence via practitioners' own interpersonal relationships with stakeholders were identified (Chen and Chen, 2004; Chow and Ng, 2004; Hung, 2004, Sriramesh, 1988, 1992, Huang, 1990). Personal influence refers to the capacity of certain individuals to obtain something by counting on their relations with other individuals. Sriramesh and Fisher (2021) in reviewing public relations literature focused on personal influence argue that public relations is connaturally a profession about persuasion, and persuasion is often elicited through personal influence as a part of relationship building effort undertaken by public relations professionals. To be effective, personal influence depends on the status, trustworthiness, and credibility of individuals in a reciprocal relationship (Toth 2000). Mutual and beneficial relationships with stakeholders build trust and credibility and "both of which are necessary when trying to persuade, in a non-normative sense, various stakeholders to take an action, attitude, or stance" (Sriramesh and Fisher, 2021, p. 338). Hence, personal influence as a dimension of relationship management is also a strong indicator of successful public relations (Toth, 2000), and can lead to positive organizational outcomes (e.g., Gallicano, 2009; Valentini, 2009; White *et al.*, 2010).

Methodology

A survey was conducted through a self-administrated, web-based questionnaire and was developed from earlier studies investigating personal influence in public relations literature. Survey participants included public relations professionals across the three major sectors: public/government, non-profit, and for-profit private sectors.

Results and Conclusions

The findings show the presence and regular use of personal influence by professionals from all sectors to cultivate interpersonal relationships. Personal influence is considered a personal resource and used to leverage own influencing power. The findings also document four major manifestations of personal influence, that were named: relational closeness strategy, engagement strategy, expertise strategy, and added value strategy. Although there a few overlaps, many of these manifestations are distinctly different from personal influence identified by earlier studies, especially from Asia. This lends credence to our assumptions that personal influence is not limited to Asian or non-Western cultures and that personal influence is pragmatic and effective as a public relations tool.

Practical and Social Implications

The study helps us understand how Italian professionals leverage their personal influence in their daily public relations activities. Further, it helps us delineate differences in the manifestations of this ubiquitous public relations tool in difference cultures. These key dimensions help us advance the body of knowledge of public relations.

Keywords

Personal influence public relations, public relations in Italy, personal influence strategies

Internal communication channel trends, the energy crisis and sustainability: Can a middle ground be found in South Africa?

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Introduction and purpose of the study

During Covid-19 the importance of internal communication as a lifeline for organisations, were highlighted once again. However, since the pandemic further seemingly incompatible challenges for internal communication has arisen, like the energy crisis, and the question of sustainability.

The emergence of an energy crisis impacting on electricity provision, which in turn impacts on technology use in communication, has been opposing increasing technological advances. Various countries face rolling electricity blackouts. Some examples include developing countries like Pakistan, India and South Africa. However, the phenomenon is not limited to developing countries. Austria, Switzerland and the UK, as some examples of developed countries has also started to prepare for possible blackouts (Evans 2023; World Population Review, 2023). In South Africa, Eskom (the South African national electricity utility), is unable to supply power to the entire country at the same time, necessitating loadshedding (a blackout schedule by rotating the available electricity between consumers) in blocks of 4–6 hours at a time. As a result, electronic means of communication becomes almost obsolete.

Sustainable internal communication (not communicating about sustainability) is the next challenge. For internal communication, as a business function to stay viable it needs to reflect the sustainability agenda of the organisation within its own operations. Although the sustainability agenda suggests a wider definition than just environmental impact (UN 2023), the preservation of natural resources and limiting their environmental footprint is the focus of this study.

This study aims to understand how the abovementioned elements contribute to new trends in internal communication, by analysing longitudinal data gathered from internal communication practitioners and consultants in South Africa.

Literature review

The study is conducted from a systems and reflective approach and will use a multi-dimensional theoretical framework to accommodate the complex research context. Elements from the following theories will be incorporated in the theoretical framework: stakeholder relationship management theory, strategic communication management theory, technological acceptance model, uses and gratification theory and sustainability theory.

The baseline study that would provide information to the research is Sutton's (2020) PhD in which she found: (1) that the South African environment is the major driver impacting on how internal communication is executed, and (2) the preference for electronic internal communication channels, which did not reflect stakeholder needs.

Methodology

A qualitative, longitudinal method will be used by comparing the pre-pandemic data (gathered by Sutton in 2019) to data gathered after the pandemic and during the electricity crisis (in 2022). A qualitative longitudinal research method was seen as appropriate for this study, as it explores the respondents' views over time and during different challenging environmental challenges.

The same ten internal communication practitioners at the Top 500 companies in South Africa, as well as the eight internal communication consultants in South Africa that were purposively selected, were again used in the study.

Results and conclusions

South African organisations are struggling to implement and adopt new technology trends. Internal communication practitioners and consultants highlight that most organisations (in different industries) experience a lack of free WiFi in the workplace, access to smartphones, and unequal levels in training and literacy, over and above the electricity outages.

The above then leads to the post-pandemic trend to move back to traditional forms of internal communication, such as town hall meetings (where possible) and printed media, which more closely resembles the stakeholder needs. Interviewees argued that, even more than face to face opportunities, printed media ensured their messages reaching the internal stakeholders. It therefore provided clear goal achievement value, specifically where internal communication departments have to compete for funding.

However, the strong move back to printed forms of internal communication seems to oppose the sustainability agenda. Interestingly, very few interviewees mentioned a concern for sustainability and prioritised it lower than the need to get their message across.

Practical and social implications

Lessons learnt from this research could extend to internal communication practitioners in other countries facing, or potentially facing, similar challenges.

Finding a sustainable way of communicating through printed material in the context of an energy crisis could not only help the internal communication departments be more business relevant, but help the internal communication department strategically contribute to the overall organisation's sustainability goals.

In addition, future studies could investigate this challenge within the wider sustainability discussion, as per the UN definition.

Keywords

Internal Communication; Internal Communication Channels; Energy crisis; Sustainability

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The impact of corporate social responsibility on brand loyalty and employer brand reception: The mediating role of brand authenticity

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Introduction and purpose of the study

For quite some time researchers have focused on the way organizations conduct their business in terms of being socially responsible (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Publics tend to recognize the way organizations manage their business practices, and they tend to positively reciprocate when an organization's business focus shifts from profit-driven to environmental, social and governance (ESG) framework (Tkalac Verčič & Sinčić Ćorić, 2018). However, this is only possible when an organization's corporate social responsibility (CSR) is authentic, and is perceived as such (Alhouti et al., 2016).

The question that arises is whether it is possible to build employer brand perception and loyalty based on corporate social responsibility without understanding the role of brand authenticity?

Literature review

While CSR research has extensively dealt with customer-based outcomes (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012), we argue that CSR indeed does impact customer's perception of an organization, especially within ESG-oriented generation, but at the same time it is responsible for shaping an organization's employer brand.

With major changes that are happening all around, consumers are becoming more aware of how businesses, both positively and negatively, impact the world. For them to perceive an organization's corporate brand as positive, they require organizations to strive towards responsible business practices. When organizations communicate how they achieve CSR, external publics gain an insight into how an organization ensures positive impact on an environmental and societal scale by creating sustainable governance. This, in turn, creates positive perception of an organization and increases brand loyalty (Tkalac Verčič & Sinčić Ćorić, 2018).

ESG oriented business practices are becoming increasingly more important among younger generations of consumers, since negative impact on environment and society leads to greater uncertainty about their future (Spiegelhalter et al., 2011). These consumers, especially generation Z, require organizations to be responsible and to transparently communicate their responsibility. Less and less are they willing to support and associate themselves with brands that evade their environmental and societal responsibility (Dabija et al., 2019). It is, therefore, crucial to determine whether brand authenticity drives loyalty to an organization, as determined by both brand loyalty and perceived employer attractiveness among ESG-oriented generation.

Methodology

In order to determine whether ensuring authentic perception of CSR can drive loyalty, both among customers and potential employees, we will conduct structural equation modelling. We are in the process of collecting data, using previously validated scales that measure customer's perception of CSR, perceived brand authenticity, brand loyalty and employer attractiveness. Data is being collected among generation Z, which we identified as the generation whose primary focus are sustainable business practices, to determine if positive CSR perception drives their loyalty.

Results and conclusion

We are still in the process of data collection. We will complete our research and conduct the appropriate analysis before June 30th 2023.

Practical and social implications

Results of the study aim to determine the importance of communicating, and participating in, CSR and ESG oriented business practices with the intent to create loyal customers and potential employees among ESG oriented generation of consumers.

Keywords

Corporate social responsibility; environmental, social, governance; brand authenticity; brand loyalty; employer brand.

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Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG). Just a "public relations exercise"?

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Introduction and purpose of the study

The Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) framework for corporate planning and reporting is 20 years old next year. Since a 2004 meeting of the United Nations and a group of financial institutions in Switzerland, ESG has matured from a nascent corporate social responsibility initiative to a significant new asset class for sustainable investing. In Europe alone, exchange-traded funds (ETFs) invested with ESG principles had inflows of €51bn ($54bn) in 2022, accounting for 65 percent of all fund flows according to analysis from Morningstar (Human, 2023).

Despite this momentum, in January 2023, 21 Republican state attorneys-general in the US began a legal and media attack at corporate proxy advisers over their ESG-compliant recommendations for state pension funds and other investments tied to climate and social goals. Specifically, the campaign has warned ISS and Glass Lewis against making voting recommendations based on net zero carbon emissions goals. This paper offers an assessment of the argumentation used by this new generation of campaigners and influencers against ESG principles who have emerged in since 2020 and the public relations argumentation used to promote and defend ESG.

Literature review

In a report on the ESG opportunity for PR, Waddington and White (2021) reminded practitioners that there is "no bigger issue" to which they should be attending and went on to identify eight areas where they could assist clients or their own organisation with PR tasks that are related to ESG. Yet the relationship between public relations and ESG is not always positive. One recent analysis conceded that while ESG emerged partially as an extension of CSR activity and had made widespread impact in some fields, for many companies, it was no more than "a public relations exercise" (Daugaard and Ding, 2022).

Methodology

The methodology used in this paper is an analysis of the public relations discourse used by the campaigners against ESG that have emerged in the last five years. The study is based on a search of press statements, online and print news coverage using ProQuest to gather a corpus.

Results and conclusions

The concerted campaign by Republican state attorneys-general in the US is a case of one part of the US government (Republican attorneys general at state level) actively campaigning against the guidance and proposed policy of another, the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The argumentation used by opponents of ESG in their public relations discourse has combined populist and legal contentions. The populist discourse is that the actions of fund managers who pursue ESG strategies are making ordinary citizens poorer: "Your actions threaten the economic value of our states' and citizens investments and pensions – interests that may not be subordinated to your social and environmental belief".

Practical and social implications

The ESG framework for investment has become an enduring and effective driver of corporate change towards sustainability in the face of the climate emergency. ESG has also been positioned by the United Nations (UN) as central to the corporate response to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Analysis of public relations discourse in this study suggests lines of argument that ESG proponents could use to counter the "local versus global" argumentation that is being used by US Republicans and other opponents of ESG.

Keywords

ESG, environment, sustainability, investment.

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Attitudes towards sustainable development and employer brands: Comparing generations X, Y and Z, in two countries

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Sustainable development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Commission, 1987, p. 47) and has the aim of uniting the interests of economic growth and environmental protection (Cho et al., 2021). It is a part of corporate social responsibility and has an economic, social, and environmental dimension (Choi & Ng, 2011). A part of managing sustainable organizations is communicating organizational commitment to it (Godemann & Michelsen, 2011). There is a growing stream of research on sustainability communication, as well as its positive outcomes, such as enhancing organizational reputation (Park & Cameron, 2013), increasing intention to purchase (Choi & Ng, 2011), or affecting employer brands (Rzemieniak & Wawer, 2021), especially for the new generations entering the workforce. The main goal of this study was to contribute to the understanding of the connection between attitudes towards sustainable development communication and attitudes towards employer brands. We wanted to test this relationship and see if it is affected by nationality and age.

Literature review:

As economic, social, technological, and demographic changes are reshaping the environment, organizations need to focus their attention on employees, current and potential. The aim for organizations should be to develop values with which employees can identify and through that ensure involvement, loyalty, and long-term success. Sustainable development plays an important role in organizations employer branding and how potential (and current) employees perceive it. Those potential employees are increasingly recruited from the new, younger generations. Though analyzing the relationship between these areas seems quite logical and obvious, there is not much research in the area (Rzemieniak et al., 2021). The research that can be found is related to CSR and job attractiveness (Turban & Greening, 1997) or CSR perception and employer attractiveness (Tkalac Verčič & Sinčić Ćorić, 2017). There is a lack of cross-generational and multinational comparison towards sustainability (Brand et al., 2022). In this paper we focus on Generations X, Y and Z. We test if the connection between attitudes towards sustainable development and employer attractiveness varies according to 1) generation; and 2) nationality. Although the literature is inconclusive about the potential effects, we expect a differential impact of both generation and nationality.

Methodology

To answer the research question, we will use two sets of items for measuring attitudes (towards sustainable development and employer brands). Attitudes towards sustainable development will be measured with 5 items developed by TNS Kantar (Bask et al., 2020), and attitudes towards employer brands will be measured with 4 items used for the measurement of ethics and CSR dimension (a part of the Employer brand scale by Tanwar and Prasad, 2016). We will use a purposeful stratified sample from three generations (x, y, and z) in two countries (Croatia and Slovenia).

Results and conclusion

The study tests an implicit progressivist assumption in sustainability discourse that support for sustainability in general is inversely proportional with age and economic development.

Practical and social implications:

The main practical implication of the study to help manage sustainable development communication and adjust it to specific needs of different generations and cultures.

Keywords:

Sustainable development attitude, employer brand, generational differences, national differences.

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The impacts of communication in sustainability in Italy

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Introduction and purpose of the study

The recent proposal (October 2022) by Global Alliance to include among the 17 SDGs a new objective involving responsible communication attests to the importance of the communication asset in the framework of an overall ecological transition process. Starting from this assumption, the research aims to investigate the state of the art of environmental communication in Italy by verifying how much communication contributes to the correct declination of environmental sustainability issues.

Methodology

To date, it is not yet possible to quantify the sample, which will be communicated in the study. The subject of the research will be small and medium-sized enterprises, large companies and public institutions. To evaluate the outcome of the actions, an ex ante closed-ended test will be administered to take a snapshot of the present, which will be repeated ex post to measure improvement deviations. The objectives of the paper are to demonstrate the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the communication asset in sustainability processes by highlighting possible areas of priority for action in the future.

Results and conclusions

Since this is a start-up research at the state it is not possible to identify definitive conclusions. These will emerge in the course of the analytical work and will be ready for presentation at the conference in question.

Potential implications for practice and society

Understanding the state of the art of communicative presence in the organizational chart and decision-making of organizations allows for more precise identification of vulnerable areas allowing future research to focus analytical efforts on the most needful spaces of intervention by modulating corrective actions more quickly and operationally. All this against a decision-making delay that in the Italian landscape is already evident and inescapable. In addition, a more exact knowledge of the existing situation can allow a more effective accreditation of communication not only with respect to the purpose of sustainability but also as a daily practice of dialogue with the public and reporting on the actions put in place.

Keywords

Multidisciplinarity: *communication involves an exact knowledge of the various organizational areas* that it has a duty to represent and narrate. A communicator is a professional with a necessarily multidisciplinary skill set to be calibrated according to the priorities indicated.

Complexity: *the frame of reference is highly complex in terms of the number of interlocutors, interconnected issues and, from a communicative point of view, the adoption of numerous grammars with respect to a single purpose. Therefore, it is important to always remember complexity as a variable in any communication intervention regardless of the nature and purpose of the organization implementing it.*

Responsible communication: *communication is 50% information and 50% persuasion; ensuring this balance in any communicative process protects the quality of the process itself by mitigating the risk of greenwashing and imposing on each communicator deontological and operational responsibility in the choice of tools, tone of language and substance of information released externally.*

Uniqueness: *every communicative process is a unique and non-replicable process. While this assumption implies a difficulty in comparing experiences, it fully justifies an increasingly responsible approach calibrated over the medium to long term, to the benefit of isolated actions that are not continuous over time.*

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Legitimatization of gas in the hydrogen discourse in Australia

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Introduction / purpose:

The paper examines how hydrogen is represented in international, national and social media in Australia and how the hydrogen story not only travels from industry to the media, but much more how it is also communicatively used by the gas industry to get the social license for keeping a fossil fuel legitimate.

Background

The use of renewable energies is rapidly expanding on a global scale. The climate crisis and current political situation in Europe has accelerated the development and introduction of innovative technologies. Hydrogen is one such innovation, that has the potential to respond to the increasing possibility of energy security, especially in countries that are dependent on imported gas and with prevailing challenges of rising energy costs and fear of blackouts. On the other side of the globe, countries like Australia are aiming for global leadership in the export of renewable energy; here, hydrogen is debated as the technology of the future, green hydrogen as the way to transform renewable energy like wind and solar into a form of energy that is not only easier to transport but also easier to store. In this situation, the gas industry seeks to preserve their position in conventional and future energy markets. This requires specific communication strategies and new forms of Sustainability-PR, aiming at re-framing a fossil energy source and positioning gas and the existing infrastructure (pipelines etc.) as inevitable in the transition process from grey (gas based) to green hydrogen and the general expansion of hydrogen production.

The biggest challenge from a Public Relations perspective: The introduction of a new, rather complex technology creates either a lack of interest and understanding or a public controversy, not only on a community level (NIMBY-phenomenon), but also on a larger scale in environmental discourses, where gas is often perceived as the new coal. First endeavors of the gas industry to 'greenify' gas by labeling it as "natural gas" or even "sustainable gas" led to greenwashing accusations, mistrust and general skepticism on sustainability communication. The question arises: What is the communication and legitimization potential for the gas industry producing and delivering a 'fossil fuel' in the sustainability discourse? How does the gas industry keep / get their license to operate? And what role does hydrogen play in getting the social license to operate?

Literature Review

The role of the gas industry in times of an emerging energy crisis and in the light of climate change is critical. Existing literature predominantly explores the introduction of new energy technologies and related information strategies from either an energy management, development and policy or public acceptance perspective (i.e., Lee et al., 2022; Batel / Devine-Wright, 2015; Emodi et al., 2021; Bharadwaj et al., 2023; Schmidt & Donsbach, 2016; Djerf-Pierre et al., 2015). From a communication perspective, previous media content analyses also focus mainly on renewable energy and their representation in the media (Rochyadi-Reetz et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2014; Hindmarsh, 2014; Devine-Wright, 2011, Wright & Reid, 2011). The research shows that in many countries the development of renewable energy sources is controversially debated, especially regarding infrastructural, economic, social and environmental aspects and times of crisis (Vespa et al., 2022; Dehler-Holland et al., 2021).

Analyzing the hydrogen discourse in traditional media formats like newspapers or magazines on the one hand and the resonance of the topics discussed on social media helps to reconstruct the hydrogen related debate and to explore the way gas is talked about in relation to the new technology. An analysis of the framing of gas in the hydrogen discourse as well as sustainability related narratives in this discourse has not yet been undertaken , thus the study at hand has been conceptualized.

Methodology

This study is not just centred on the topics, but also the framing of an issue by politicians, the industry, specific key players and scientists. Therefore, the study at hand examines how traditional and social media cover gas as a critical energy resource, related specifically to hydrogen as a new form of energy and storage. Building up on existing conceptual work on framing renewable energy (Rochyadi-Reetz et al., 2019) and with specific framing concepts that are tested in energy and sustainability communication (Snow & Benford, 2000; Weder, 2021; Benighaus & Bleicher, 2018; Ganowski et al., 2018; Luederitz et al., 2016), and existing literature from the area of strategic sustainability communication (Weder et al., 2021; Guske et al., 2019; Berg-Hukkinen, 2011), we created a framework for three legitimization strategies that are key for Sustainability-PR: (1) the narrative of growth and gain (green economy narrative, eco-efficient growth, prognostic, solution focused), (2) the narrative of de-growth and loss (diagnostic, problem focused) and (3) the narrative of post-growth (mobilization, critique, telling a story about the future).

For the combined quantitative and qualitative media content-analysis, the first set of data from Australian media outlets was collected with a google domain search for the last 5 years (2017-2022; wide array of search terms), which was then filtered for relevance (natural gas and hydrogen) and scraped from the original sources (250 characters or more). We topic modelled to the sample of articles (N= 9,253) to distinguish themes in the discourse, this was followed by a qualitative analysis of a randomized sample of N = 900 articles, answering not only the question of how much the hydrogen story has established on the media agenda within the past 5 years, but also how this story is told. The articles were picked proportional from the topics, and a frame analysis (manual coding / 3 coders) was applied. Twitter data consisted of Tweets mentioning the word "hydrogen" from a list of 181 accounts considered influential in hydrogen-related Twitter discourse. Using the DATA (DMRC Academic Twitter Archive) collector (Vodden, 2022), N= 2.4 million tweets and retweets were collected. The analysis of social media data is currently in progress, preliminary findings will be provided at the conference in addition to the detailed analysis of the (traditional) media discourse.

Results and conclusions

The dominant topics in which gas (and its potential as future energy source) is debated in Australia are financial and economic aspects (export), policy development and in particular geopolitics as well as agricultural aspects in the production of biofuels from a broader perspective. However, the deep dive with a qualitative analysis of the media coverage shows that while the economic benefits of hydrogen were framed as potential, hydrogen is highly politicized, and we found a relatively small number of environmental and technology frames, and if so, they were mainly related to the impact of the Glasgow Climate Change Conference in 2021.

The narrative of growth and a prognostic perspective on the future is dominant, hydrogen is seen as a solution for existing problems, while the gas industry was discussed predominantly in line with the story of degradation of environment – if it even played a role. This is supported by the finding that the environment frame was not seen as important in a prognostic, future and growth perspective.

The study at hand shows that hydrogen technologies are still emergent and communicated very vaguely; arguments around the potential of hydrogen to store (surplus) energy and thus, the interplay of gas, hydrogen and renewable energy sources are not communicated specifically as well as only common sense-statements around export or future potential for net-zero strategies are given, which are less likely to engage stakeholder and motivate action. Thus, the study at hand explores the missed potential from a Sustainability-PR perspective, in creating a story of gas as source and facilitator of energy transition processes to all renewables. There is also a lack of motivational storytelling and scenarios of how this role of the gas industry in transition processes could look like.

Practical, social and research implications

Exploring both the hydrogen and gas as an energy source discourse, offers possible insights into the existing (and missing) communication strategies of an industry which is still focused on their “product” (gas). Industry is trying to reframe a fossil fuel as “natural” or “renewable”, which it is not. Thus, the study not only points to problems of miscommunication but also highlights a gap in communication opportunities from a Sustainability-PR. Local stories and engagement and an energy security perspective is missed within the current ways (and lack) of communication, i.e., bringing in an energy security frame. The practical implications of the study thus are, that in the future, energy policy activities and the gas industry in particular need to get their social license to operate by communicating an “outgoing” energy resource as facilitator and “backup” in times of uncertainty and crisis, which will be further discussed at the end of the paper/presentation as well as future research potential.

Keywords

Framing, narrative, storytelling hydrogen, renewable energy, future fuel, SLO

Redesigning public relations beyond sustainability: Discursive entrepreneurs, deep adaptation, and hyper-reflexivity

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Introduction

This paper considers the design, methods, and roles of public relations in a context that has already gone beyond sustainability. Building on converging disciplinary and interdisciplinary research that acknowledges the present Anthropocene age as an evolving epoch of potentially catastrophic changes, it contends both that escaping escalating risks will take more than earth summits, geoengineering, and technological fixes, and that a different kind of public relations is required to confront the profound, human-induced instability that stalks the Anthropocene. Answering the research question "How to engage more effectively with the current and coming challenges of the Anthropocene", the authors frame ways forward around three clusters of concepts and practices.

Literature

Anthropocene literature fractures conventional distinctions between humanity and nature and generates questions about dealing with our detrimental impact as a species that also threatens our own life support systems. This paper reviews perspectives from philosophy, politics, and science to evaluate their implications for public relations. Dryzek and Pickering's (2019) book demonstrates how institutions inherited from the preceding Holocene period have a pathological path dependency that favours ecologically destructive outcomes and that thwarts attempts to confront the planetary problems while purporting to solve them. To better respond, the authors advocate for an ecological reflexivity requiring "the incorporation into human institutions of better ways to listen to ecological systems" with the hope that responding to signals from the Earth system will generate the foresight "to anticipate potentially catastrophic changes in the system" (p. 18).

Scanning an organisation's environment and listening to stakeholders is core public relations business. However, path dependency illustrates how the state and market – given their preoccupation with material growth and perception of the natural world as primarily a resource – systematically frustrate attempts to check planetary degradation. As a management discipline public relations plays an important role in the corporate capture of climate agendas and contributes to how information about the condition of the natural world is repressed by feedback systems; how ecological concerns are subjugated; how status quo narratives are promoted; and how the non-human world continues to be exploited.

Despite globalised rhetoric associated with sustainable development and business movements promoting ESG (Environment, Social and Corporate Governance), the character of this dilemma does not change: “sustainable development is a lie. It has been a successful one because it helps middle class professionals earn salaries while pretending that’s for them caring about the world” (Bendall, 2023).

To avoid following pathological pathways, the authors propose three ways forward for public relations: discursive entrepreneurship (to extend listening capabilities to “hear” signals from earth system scientists and the natural world) and to shape a formative sphere for more Anthropocene-appropriate responses; deep adaptation (to foreground the role of intermediaries and develop dynamic strategies aligning with geological time scales and post-anthropocentric thinking); and an expanded hyper-reflexivity (to respond to signals from the earth itself and expand empathy to include humans, non-humans and inanimate objects).

Methodology

Drawn from, and interpreting, interdisciplinary research and contemporary issues, this conceptual paper aims to communicate, contribute to, and stimulate Anthropocene-informed debates in public relations.

Conclusions

Public relations in the Anthropocene must engage in its own process of deep adaptation. Specifics include developing its capacity to listen to feedback from natural systems and other non-humans; and extending environmental scanning beyond the issues generated by humans in order to broaden stakeholder theory to reconsider the character of nature as a stakeholder and how to best engage with it (Laine, 2010).

Implications

Ecological reflexivity also requires rethinking the core values and practices underpinning public relations. This will involve focussing on non-human stakeholders, listening to, and developing, empathy for nature as well as cultivating the ability to adapt rapidly on mitigation. There is potential to add this thinking to existing public relations scholarship on Climate Change Denial (e.g., Almiron & Xifra, 2021; Munshi & Kurian, 2020) and activist PR, and to synthesise it with compatible works (e.g., Complexity Science-Inspired approaches, the Stakeholder Environment as a Commons, and Wicked Problems), but the field urgently needs to undertake the radical work and research required.

The findings generated by this study have been used to inform the development of a new sustainability communication programme to be delivered to experienced communication practitioners on behalf of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations in the United Kingdom. The module seeks to answer the question how do you listen to nature?

Keywords

Adaptation, Anthropocene, listening, non-human stakeholders.

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Exploring the Public Engagement in Missing People on Social Media Platform - Douyin Xunren as An Example

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Introduction and purpose of study

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) means that firms need to uphold ethical standards in their activities and consider their impact on stakeholders and societies (Sarkar & Searcy, 2016). The widespread use of the internet has opened a myriad of new opportunities for firms wishing to achieve greater effectiveness in CSR and communication. Social media with unrivalled connectivity has become an increasingly popular channel. In 2016, ByteDance, a Chinese internet technology company, launched its CSR initiative "Douyin Xunren" campaign on its Douyin platform, a destination for short-form mobile videos. "Douyin Xunren" aimed to assist missing people search across Mainland China. Contrary to traditional ways of searching, such as asking around and posting notices, short videos are used in Douyin platform as the carrier to spread information about missing persons and mobilize users to look for them.

The study aims to explore how the content features of videos on "Douyin Xuren" affect public engagement and whether findings from research about Western social media (i.e., Twitter) can be applied to Chinese social media (i.e. Douyin).

Literature review

According to Moran, Muzellec & Johnson (2020), call-to-actions (CTA) can effectively increase social media engagement by increasing clicks, likes, or shares. The same could also apply to missing person appeals on social media. Solymosi, Petcu & Wilkinson (2020) explored the public engagement with missing person appeals on Twitter and discovered that tweets which included a call-to-action ultimately resulted in higher engagement.

Solymosi, Petcu & Wilkinson (2020) who examined public engagement with missing person appeals on Twitter discovered that tweets with multiple photos induce higher engagement than those with only a single image and those without.

Storytelling is defined as facts expressed through emotions that heighten engagement and the desire to act (Dickman, 2003). Numerous studies have established storytelling as a useful tool in increasing customer engagement by evoking emotions and enhancing persuasiveness (Gorry & Westbrook, 2011). Robiady, Windasari & Nita (2021) further explored this concept in the online non-profit crowdfunding setting and uncovered that storytelling had a significant positive effect on both customer engagement and donation achievements.

Methodology

A content analysis was conducted on the videos from the Douyin Xunren platform. Top 100 video samples, published between 2021 and 2022, were selected according to the popularity (total number of likes). Among these samples, 92 videos promoting missing people were valid samples and 8 invalid ones with unrelated topics were excluded. The videos were evaluated in three attributes: CTA (a combination of verbal and written forms), variability images (number of images with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 10) and storytelling (covering different storytelling elements, incl. title, type, context, storyline, scenes, characters, style, content, significance, and inclusion). Public engagement refers to the sum of the number of likes, comments and forwards for each video. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS to assess the relationship between the variables.

Results and conclusion

Statistically, there was a significant correlation between CTA and audience engagement ($r=0.486$, $p<0.017$), and no significant difference was shown in the participation of different types of CTA. Variability images were also positively correlated with audience engagement ($r=0.531$, $p<0.001$), with 40% of the videos in the sample contained at least two quality portraits. These suggest that the more videos that contain recognizable images, the higher the engagement of the audience. When examining the relationship between storytelling and audience engagement, the search videos with storytelling generated high level of engagement ($r=0.596$, $p<0.002$), indicating the positive impact of storytelling on public engagement. Overall, all three attributes provide public with more detailed information that resonates with them emotionally, thus encouraging them to take action to help return missing people to their families.

Practical and theoretical implications

Enriching the study of CTA efficiency, the findings show when conducting online CSR campaigns about missing person appeals, individuals and social media platforms may adopt multi-sensory CTAs to stimulate the public's perceptual and emotional bonding to motivate engagement. A high variety of characteristic images provide viewers with more direct and explicit information, which could lead to a comprehensive understanding and proactive engagement. It concludes that CSR content on short-video platforms like Douyin should fit the platform tonality of visual stimulation. The research also shows that complete and informative storytelling in online CSR communication gets viewers' attention and engages viewers with a deeper emotional resonance. Therefore, it is recommended that individuals and social media platforms may consider enhancing the integration of storytelling in CSR video content to connect with the public.

Compared to missing person appeals on Twitter, Douyin Xuren also addresses perceived sentiment of viewers; this study dived into more content features including CTAs, photos and storytelling that contribute to engagement results, which goes beyond the findings on Twitter. Future studies can be expanded to more social content formats or to validate whether higher public engagement in online CSR campaigns of missing people appeals may bring higher efficiency to successful searching.

Keywords

CSR, engagement, missing people, social media platform, Douyin Xunren

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Consequences of Unfulfilled International Commitments to Sustainability

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Purpose

In 2015, 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted a New Sustainable Development Agenda (NSDA) to end poverty by 2030 and pursue a sustainable future. However, reports have shown that prosperous countries put less effort into sustainability than developing countries (Gill, 2021). This study applies the situational theory of problem solving (STOPS) to discern what kinds of adverse situations countries will encounter if they violate global publics' expectations.

Literature Review

Organizations choose socially preferable values to serve as behavioral guidelines and the core elements of their identities. These values also contribute to public schemas used to identify organizations (Grunig, 1993). Advocated attractive values are a part of symbolic activities which do not entail significant benefits for organizations (Grunig, 1993; Grunig et al., 2002). Further, organizations risk adverse consequences without behavioral activities to support symbolic value-making (Grunig, 1993). To publics, the disparity between expectation (symbolic activity) and experience (behavioral activity) diminishes organizational credibility, attraction and legitimacy.

STOPS hypothesizes that individuals' problem recognition, constraint recognition, and involvement determine their communication behavior (Kim & Grunig, 2011) Notably, problem recognition examines the gap between *what we expect* and *what we experience*.

In addition, this study includes exposure to environmental education as a leading variable of referent criteria, an antecedent in the STOPS model. Educated publics tend to detect problems faster and more sensitively (Dewey, 1916).

Hypotheses

H1: The bigger the expectation disconfirmation regarding NSDA (problem recognition), the higher the situational motivation in problem solving.

H2: The higher the constraint recognition regarding NSDA, the lower the situational motivation in problem solving.

H3: The higher the involvement recognition regarding NSDA, the higher the situational motivation in problem solving.

H4: The higher the situational motivation in problem solving, the higher the communicative action.

H5: The more exposed to pro-environmental education, the higher the presence of a referent criterion.
H6: The higher the presence of a referent criterion, the higher the communicative action.

Methodology

Through online surveys with Americans, this study will compare countries that have exhibited sustainable behavior and countries that have shown no change from 2012-2019. Participants will complete a questionnaire measuring the level of expectation disconfirmation, constraint recognition, involvement recognition, exposure to environmental education, and communication behavior.

Results

People are expected to show more positive communication actions toward faithful countries and adverse reactions toward unfaithful countries. However, the intensity of praise and criticism will differ depending on the individual's educational level and situational settings. A limitation of the study would be conducting the survey only in the U.S., where most educational institutes teach the importance of sustainability. Future research should compare countries that heavily emphasize the importance of sustainability with those that do not.

Implications

Theoretically, STOPS will be transposed to a geopolitical setting; 'education' will be explored as a possible antecedent. Practically, countries will be aware of the risk associated with unrequited symbolic activity.

Keywords

STOPS, New Sustainable Development Agenda, environmental education

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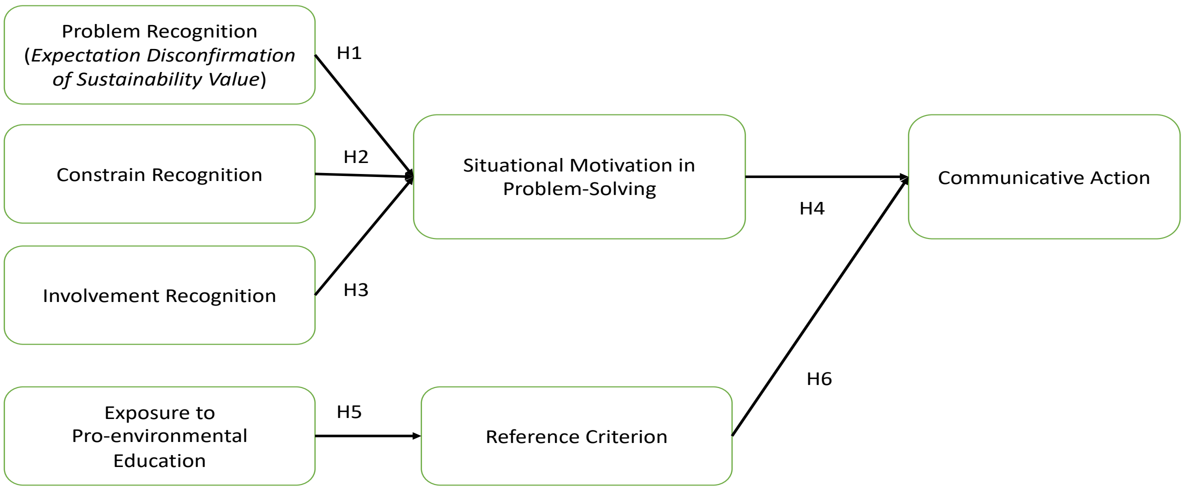
Figure: Research Model



Words Matter: The Consequences of Supervisor Verbal Aggressiveness on Workplace Culture, Employee-Organization Relationships, and Employee Behavior

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Effective communication with internal stakeholders is crucial for organizations and leaders amidst the rising trend of "quiet quitting" and the Great Resignation. Research has shown that managers who lack effective communication and trust-building skills are more likely to have disengaged employees who engage in deviant behaviors. According to Zenger and Folkman (2022), managers who are least effective have three to four times as many employees who participate in "quiet quitting." This lack of motivation and deviant behavior has been attributed to inappropriate and abusive supervision by managers (Tepper et al., 2008). This study examines the impact of negative communication behavior by managers and argues that employees' counterproductive work behavior is partly a result of their managers' use of verbal aggression.

While scholars have shed light on the importance of *exemplary* internal communication and its role in promoting positive employee behaviors (Jiang & Men, 2017; Kang & Sung, 2017), limited attention has been given to the negative impact of *destructive* internal communication. To address this gap, the current study aims to examine the harmful effects of supervisor verbal aggressiveness on the emotional culture of a team, the quality of the employee-organization relationship, and ultimately, employees' counterproductive work behaviors.

Literature review

Bullying and verbal abuse are unfortunately prevalent in the workplace. According to research, 30% of American workers have reported being directly bullied, and 49% have either experienced bullying or witnessed it in their workplace (Namie, 2021). Such bullying is often enacted through communication exchanges, with the majority of instances being initiated by supervisors targeting subordinates. In this study, we focus on the use of verbal aggressiveness by supervisors, which encompasses name-calling, the use of vulgar and demeaning language, gaslighting, and making threats (Infante & Rancer, 1996). It is important to distinguish verbal aggressiveness from a lack of exemplary communication, as it represents a distinct behavior that embodies the opposite of effective communication.

This study examines the relationship between supervisor verbal aggressiveness and subordinates' counterproductive work behavior, which is defined as intentional behavior that is contrary to the organization's interests (Gruys & Sackett, 2003). Additionally, the study aims to unravel the underlying process that drives this relationship by examining the connection between supervisors' verbal aggressiveness, the negative emotional culture within teams, and decreased quality of the employee-organization relationship. By investigating the detrimental effects of supervisor verbal aggressiveness on culture, relationships, and employee behavior, this study highlights the need for organizations to take proactive measures to address this form of leadership communication behavior.

Methodology

To test the proposed hypotheses, we conducted an online survey through Qualtrics. Our sample was selected through quota sampling to ensure that the demographics of the participants (e.g., gender, age, race, ethnicity) were representative of the general population as per the U.S. Census. Participants were required to be full-time U.S. workers employed in medium and large-sized organizations. Our final sample consisted of 392 cases. The average age of participants was 46 years old, with women making up 51.8% of the participants.

Results and conclusions

Findings revealed that supervisor verbal aggressiveness predicts employees' counterproductive work behaviors. Moreover, verbal aggressiveness contributes to the formation of a negative team culture which in turn fuels employees' deviant behaviors. However, we did not find any evidence of a negative relationship between verbal aggressiveness and decreased employee-organization relationship quality, nor between relationship quality and counterproductive work behaviors.

Our study advances the existing literature on leadership communication by emphasizing the destructive impact of the dark side of leadership communication. By highlighting the negative emotional culture and employee counterproductive work behavior as direct consequences of supervisor verbal aggressiveness, our research expands the current theoretical understanding of verbal aggressiveness in the workplace.

A key limitation of our study is that the data were collected only at a single point in time, which hinders our ability to establish causality between the variables being examined. In order to further explore the causal relationships, future research could consider conducting field experiments and collecting data over a longer period to establish a clear causal sequence among the variables.

Practical and social implications

The findings of this study have important implications for the profession. It is crucial for supervisors to be mindful of the impact of their communication style on their subordinates and team culture. They must be cautious in avoiding the use of verbal aggressiveness and should strive to communicate in a respectful and professional manner. To this end, leadership development programs should place a strong emphasis on teaching effective communication skills, including empathy, argumentation, and communication competence (Avtgis & Chory, 2010). In addition, organizations should consider including assessments of verbal aggressiveness as part of supervisors' performance evaluations.

Keywords

verbal aggressiveness, leadership communication, employee-organization relationship, culture, counterproductive work behavior

Constructing what is the right thing to do: Framing the political responsibility of Fifa sponsors in Qatar World Cup 2022

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Introduction

The corporate sociopolitical advocacy (CSA) phenomenon has become increasingly common in contemporary society. It is partially driven by the public demanding corporations to take a stance on controversial political and social issues. Although aligning with the public's interest, when a company commits to CSA, its demonstration of support for or opposition to one side of a controversial sociopolitical issue has the risk of alienating certain stakeholder groups. Thus, corporations often face the dilemma of what is the right thing to do.

Literature review

In communication literature, most research focused on understanding the impact of CSA on corporate constituents. Only a few studies examined how the public pressure corporations to engage in CSA. To fill this gap, this study advances the knowledge of CSA by examining the role of media in constructing corporations' political responsibility in sociopolitical issues.

Methodology

Qatar World Cup 2022 human rights controversy was chosen as a case. Informed by framing theory, the study employs qualitative content analysis to analyze 293 international news coverages related to two Qatar World Cup 2022 human rights issues: working conditions of migrant workers and LGBTQ rights.

Originality

This study contributes to the literature by (1) demonstrating the construction of corporations' political responsibility on two human rights issues and comparing them; (2) exploring the news media's role in constructing the political responsibility of corporations to engage in social political issues.

Practical and social implications

The findings of this study provide guidelines for communication managers on determining a proper CSA strategy towards a controversial issue intensified in public debate.

Keywords

corporate sociopolitical advocacy, political issues, news media, human rights, corporate communication

How are corporate sustainability activities reflected in the evaluation of companies' media appearance?

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Despite the considerable volume of publications on sustainability, the literature is fragmented, studies are primarily focusing on self-reported methods or literature reviews and either on social, environmental or governance dimension of sustainability and hence omitting the interrelatedness of dimensions. A few studies examined CSR-related media content and none of them used clipping data to complement the self-reported data in the context of measuring corporate sustainability (Lee & Carroll, 2011). To help reduce some of the gaps, we present a framework for measuring corporate sustainability grounded in ESG framework (Sustainability Business Index – ©TPI) and we question whether the self-reported results on corporate sustainability activities are also reflected in sustainability-related media appearances.

The research questions we focus on are: (1) Is ©TPI score related to sustainability-related media appearances; and (2) Do companies that score high on ©TPI have more favorable sustainability-related media appearances?

Literature review

Sustainability activities
To be successful in corporate sustainability, the managers should first examine various sustainability activities and integrate them into a coherent strategy. However, the literature on such activities is unsystematic and scattered and to develop ©TPI, an extensive literature review was conducted to identify the activities (Čater, Čater, Milić & Žabkar, in press).

Media appearances
Frequency of media appearances and the tone (positive / negative / neutral) of media content have effects on firm's reputation. Also, media appearances may influence firm's strategies and engagement in various sustainability activities since, larger media coverage (positive or negative) facilitates voluntary participation in various sustainability activities (Barbeito-Caamaño & Chalmeta, 2020; Gan, 2006).

Methodology

Our study is twofold. Data about sustainability activities was collected with two questionnaires between December 2021 and February 2022 from employees responsible for ESG in medium or large companies in a CEE country: 91 firms responded to the environmental and governance dimensions (7.6% response rate) and 130 to the social dimension (10.6% response rate) of the ©TPI questionnaire. Three dimensions of sustainability index were determined: social (TPI_S), environmental (TPI_E) and governance (TPI_G).

We used one-year media clipping data (year 2021, Kliping) from a sample of 170 medium and large companies from all major media in the country, containing keywords related to the three dimensions (87 keywords). Each media publication was examined and evaluated either as positive, negative, or neutral. As weights, data on media reach was used. Sustainability scores on each dimension were compared to each company's ©TPI questionnaire score.

Results and conclusions

Correlations between ©TPI dimensions and clipping data show a positive relationship between TPI_S and media valence; companies which perform well in socially responsible activities play an important role in the community and that is reflected in the media appearances. Interestingly, there is a positive correlation between TPI_S and negative media valence, which may infer that companies' efforts relating to variety of stakeholders are heavily scrutinized by the media. Further analysis is needed to look for differences between firms' size and industry for more insightful findings and discussion. A positive relationship was found between TPI_S and firms' media appearances in content containing social or governance related keywords. This finding is somewhat expected since firms which are more involved with socially responsible activities are expected to receive more media attention.

Correlation analysis between environmental (TPI_E) and governance (TPI_G) dimensions and clipping data shows a significant and positive relationship between TPI_E and positive valence media appearances. Also, TPI_E is significantly related to media content containing environmental keywords. The finding suggests that the firms' efforts to protect natural environment are praised by the media. Conversely, the non-significant results between TPI_G and media reach are somewhat surprising and further analysis is needed to better understand it.

Practical and social implications

The developed ©TPI can be applied to medium and large companies in any industry. With the combination of self-reported and clipping data, ©TPI holistically measures firm's sustainability performance. Consequently, it can become a cornerstone measure of sustainability performance in the CEE region and beyond.

Keywords

Corporate sustainability, sustainability index, clipping, measuring sustainability

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Towards a better future: An assessment of sustainability practices in the aviation sector from the perspective of public relations

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Introduction

With the sustainability approach, which is also expressed as maintaining the existence, functions and productivity of ecological systems in the global context, brands have initiated many studies in order to fulfill their social social responsibility duties. Public relations and corporate communication plans are used to publicize these efforts and create awareness of sustainability by raising public awareness. In addition, brand reputation is also managed through these practices. Brands develop strategies that increase rational benefit by appealing to the minds and hearts of consumers with an understanding of sustainability.

The task of Public Relations is to establish a positive dialog with the target audience and potential customers and to create a positive image. It is a necessity to create the image and corporate identity of the organization, to promote the values of the organization and the organization (Yavuz, 2016:334). Ingeç, (2021); according to Rex F. Harlow's comprehensive definition of public relations in 1976, *"Public relations is a unique management function that helps to establish and maintain the process of mutual communication, acceptance, understanding and cooperation between an organization and its publics."* Public Relations should adopt an inclusive management approach, namely management, based on communication, focused on the social and psychological needs of individuals (İngeç, 2021: 331, 332).

Public relations is a field that manages the communication process carried out in line with the rules determined in order to ensure information flow, motivation, integration, evaluation, training, decision-making and control in the realization of the goals of the organization. Sustainability communication is a communication approach used to manage relations between stakeholders in order to create awareness and behavioral change regarding environmental, social and economic sustainability (Özgen, 2022:e3). The support and participation of all stakeholders is also important for the success of PR professionals' sustainability communication efforts. Sustainability communication plays an active role in the adoption of corporate sustainability projects by internal and external stakeholders as well as in the formation of a sustainability-oriented corporate culture (Akbayır, 2019). A harmony of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity (DEI), Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) is crucial for the realization of these goals in businesses. IFC standards for international financing also encourage companies to develop sustainability-centered business models. For financial support to be given to businesses, the business must first have some standards. In this context, businesses are expected to fulfill many criteria such as environmental risk management, labor and working conditions, resource efficiency, prevention of environmental pollution, public health and safety, protection of biodiversity, sustainable management of living natural resources and many other criteria. In a nutshell, sustainability starts with the understanding of social social responsibility, which is at the center of Public Relations planning, and emphasizes the right of people to live in a healthy world both today and in the future.

The aviation sector is one of the most environmentally damaging sectors globally. In this context, it is important to plan sustainability efforts in the aviation sector. In this study, sustainability efforts in the aviation sector are examined in relation to the discipline of Public Relations. Qualitative research method was used in the study. In order to understand how the aviation sector implements sustainability, case study method was used in this study from the perspective of qualitative approach and the collected data were analyzed by content analysis. Purposive (convenience) sampling technique was used to determine the sample. Turkish Airlines was preferred for the airline sample and İGA Istanbul Airport was preferred for the airport sample. Turkish Airlines and Istanbul Airport, two leading brands in the Turkish aviation industry, were selected as the sample because they produce creative projects on sustainability, implement sustainability policies consistently, demonstrate the results of their work with concrete data, report regularly, and their work has been deemed worthy of many international awards. In addition, these two brands were also preferred due to their market share in the sector and high number of passengers. The answers to the following research questions were sought in the context of the United Nations Sustainability Goals.

Research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of a sustainable airline and airport?
2. What strategy has the aviation industry adopted to reduce its negative impact on the environment?
3. What is the relationship between sustainability and corporate culture?
4. Sustainability and PR relationship in the aviation industry

Data were collected by analyzing the sustainability reports and corporate web pages of the brands in the sample. The data are described and interpreted in the context of sustainability and PR activities.

Overview of the Concept of Sustainability

Sustainability is the realization that today's generations are responsible for the future. It also means ensuring that economic developments, material resources and values are protected and transferred to future generations (Yavuz, 2016:330, 331). In other words, sustainability means meeting today's needs while considering tomorrow's needs (Balay, 2022:839). The prominent features of sustainable economies are the regulation of relations between human and nature, ensuring that future generations benefit fairly from the world's resources, avoiding wastefulness in services and products, and prioritizing economic efficiency (Baumgartner and Quaas, 2010).

After the Industrial Revolution, while businesses focused on growth, environmental damage was ignored. With the awareness of consumers, thinking about social transformation and sustainability has also contributed to corporate image and reputation (Kavoğlu, 2012: 14, 15). Kotler (2000) states that with this change, both marketing practitioners and theoreticians have changed their perspectives in line with this change in perception. In this context, businesses need to work with a philosophy that includes social social responsibility (Kotler, 2000: 17).

After the Second World War, the concept of sustainability started to be considered due to concerns about the long-term depletion of the world's resources. The concept of sustainability, which came to the fore with the declaration of the Club of Rome, first drew attention to the importance of energy resources and food resources. Many meetings held in the following years emphasized that the depletion of non-renewable energy resources and other natural resources and environmental pollution are problems that require international cooperation. The world's resources are finite and sustainable development of the physical-chemical-biological environment is crucial. At its Summit in 2000, the United Nations proposed an 8-point "21st Century Goals" for international development. At the 2015 Summit, the 17-point "Sustainable Development Goals" replaced these recommendations. These consist of environmental and economic sustainability goals as well as social and social sustainable development goals. For the realization of these goals, 169 targets were set (Alpman and Göğüş, 2017:2). International agreements have started to take action on sustainability and the climate crisis. Transformation is essential to protect the planet. In order for this transformation to be widespread and rapid, all countries need to implement transformative policies in line with sustainable development goals (Balay, 2022:838).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals consist of 17 articles. Businesses refer to these articles while making sustainability planning with an international approach. These are; *No poverty, Zero hunger, Good healty and well-being, Quality education, Gender quality, Clean water and sanitation, Affordable and clean energy, Decent work and economic growth, Industy, innovation and infrastructure, Reduced inequalities, Sustainable cities and communities, Responsible sonsumption and production, Climate action, Life below water, Life on land, Peace, justice and strong institutions, Partnerships fort he goals*

Corporate social responsibility activities of businesses are also very important for sustainability. In other words, corporate social responsibility is the economic, social and environmental programs carried out for all stakeholders. Practices related to social responsibility and sustainability concepts are the main responsibility of public relations departments. In this context, all planning should be coordinated by Public Relations (Hoştut, 2018:103).

As it is known, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), while providing financial support to businesses, makes evaluations according to sustainability studies on issues such as resoırce efficiency, community, biodiversity, cultural heritage, indigenous people. Coordination with all stakeholders is also essential in fulfilling the IFC criteria based on IFC performance standards in sustainability studies planned by PR.

Turkish Civil Aviation and Sustainability Approach in Aviation

The Chinese invented the kite around 400 BC. Since the kite was the forerunner of balloons and gliders, it has an important place in the history of aviation. The first successful manned flight attempt was made by Abbas Ibn Firnas of Andalusia in 852. Hazerfen Ahmet Çelebi, one of the scientists of the Ottoman Empire, made the first flight attempt in Istanbul in 1630 with wings he built himself. In 1783, the Montgolfier brothers made the first manned flight with a balloon. The first sustainable, controllable motorized flight was made in 1903 with the airplane produced by the Wright brothers. In 1909, German Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin founded the world's first commercial airline. In Istanbul, Turkey, the first airport was opened in 1912 and the first civil aviation flights were made in 1933 (Ekşi, 2019).

Aviation covers a wide range of areas from the design, production, use and operation of airplanes (The Oxford Dictionary, 2014). Airline transportation contributes to the economies of countries and is also an important sector in terms of its social, cultural and environmental impacts. Civil Aviation activities are carried out according to the standards set by international institutions such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC), the European Organization for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL) and the European Association of Aviation Authorities (JAA) (Oto, 2011:12).

With globalization, the aviation sector connects the world at commercial and cultural points and contributes to the formation of a global village. However, when the environment is considered, it should not be forgotten that the aviation industry is one of the most environmentally damaging sectors. For this reason, efforts are being made rapidly on sustainability in aviation and these efforts are publicized through Public Relations.

The U.S. Transportation Research Board explained the main environmental impacts of civil aviation as global climate change, air pollution, emissions, ecology and natural habitat, noise, land and material use, energy and water consumption, water pollution and waste (Transportation Research Board Environmental Impacts of Aviation Committee 2004, cited in Karasar, 2019:11). Karasar, 2019:11).

Airports are suitable places for the installation of renewable energy facilities to consume energy without interruption (Yıldız et al., 2020: 171). Points such as following the rules, minimizing negative environmental impacts, and thinking about the environment first while developing summarize the environmental policy of the aviation sector. As Karasar 2019:10 emphasizes, Deep Ecology and Voluntary Simplicity approaches are on the agenda when designing life sustainably. These approaches have an important place in the aviation industry as in all sectors. The aviation industry is one of the leading sectors that need to develop a sustainable business strategy. Since there are negative environmental impacts in both production and service in the aviation industry, steps should be taken to reduce them.

Who is Turkish Airlines (THY)?

Turkish Airlines, THY, started its journey with 5 airplanes on May 20, 1933 and today it is the airline that flies to the most destinations in the world. Flying to more than 120 countries and over 300 destinations, THY has won many awards. In 2022, the World Class award was given to seven global airlines, including Turkish Airlines. Turkish Airlines is a member of the Star Alliance and has won many awards such as Europe's Best Airline, Europe's Best Inflight Entertainment System and Best Business Class Catering. Star Alliance is the first truly global airline alliance founded in 1997 to provide international travelers with worldwide access, recognition and seamless service. Turkish Airlines also sponsors a wide range of sports including football, basketball, golf, equestrian, and golf, and has been the main sponsor of the EuroLeague, a competition of 18 European sports clubs, since 2000.

About IGA Istanbul Airport

Istanbul Grand Airport started construction of the new Istanbul Airport in 2015 and the new airport opened in 2018 and started operating at full capacity in 2019. Since the construction of the airport, all operations have been managed in an environmentally responsible manner. İGA Istanbul Airport serves with its 1.4 million square meter main terminal building, 3 independent runways, air control tower and support facilities. Istanbul Airport received an international certificate by signing the 'Covid-19 Aviation Health Safety Protocol' issued by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). It is the first airport in the world to receive the 'Airport Health Accreditation' certificate issued by Airports Council International (ACI). Istanbul Airport received the 'Digital Transformation Award' at the 16th ACI Europe Awards organized by Airports Council International Europe (ACI Europe). Istanbul Airport is the Best Airport in Europe in the field of digital transformation. Awarded the "5-Star Airport" award by Skytrax, İGA received the "Airport of the Year" award in 2021 and 2022 from Regional Air Transport, one of the most important publications of the global aviation industry, and the "Best Transit Airport" and "Best Family-Friendly International Airport" awards at the "2022 Leisure Lifestyle Awards" given by Global Traveler, a travel magazine headquartered in the USA. Istanbul Airport also received the "5 Star Airport" award from Skytrax. IGA is also the recipient of the "Outstanding Achievement" award by the Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX). Making a name for itself with its green library and numerous social responsibility activities, IGA supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and works with the slogan "Our diversity is our richness". Aiming to be Carbon Neutral by 2050, the airport conducts all its operations in accordance with sustainability principles.

Aviation affects the rural-urban environment, ecological balance and natural life due to negative environmental impacts. Therefore, sustainability should be considered under 3 headings: economic, social and environmental in harmony with the ecosystem (Oto, 2011:17, 30)

Findings

In this section, the details of sustainability practices at the airline and airport are explained in the context of Turkish Airlines and Istanbul Airport. The place of sustainability studies in Public Relations studies in the context of public disclosure, corporate culture, reputation and image management is indicated.

Sustainability Practices from Airline Perspective

Turkish Airlines regularly publishes its sustainability reports every year, which are accessible to all stakeholders. In these reports, the company explains its sustainability efforts in great detail. The company divides its sustainability efforts into three categories: very high priority issues, high priority issues and important issues, and conducts them through national and international projects.

THY developed a sustainability program at 4 main points in order to support sustainable development: Management, economy, environment society. Turkish Airlines Sustainability Working Committees work on the following topics:

- Sustainability Strategy,
- Corporate Social Responsibility and Communication Projects,
- Emissions Management
- Sustainable Practices

What is Turkish Airlines doing for the Birleşmiş Milletler sustainable development goals?

- For Articles 1 and 2 (1.1 Eradication of Extreme Poverty 1.4 Equal Access to Property, Basic Services, Technology and Economic Resources 2.4 Sustainable Food Production and Resilient Agricultural Practices)

Turkish Airlines generates direct and indirect economic value in geographies through the socio-economic connectivity it provides between its destinations. It provides employment for millions of people. In 2021, Turkish Airlines operated flights to 25 of the 46 countries categorized as the least developed countries by the United Nations. In this context, Turkish Airlines contributes to the economic development of these countries by carrying their production to target markets. It also enables these countries to develop social relations with the world.

It is developing a Sustainable Bio-Jet Fuel Project through R&D projects with universities. Thus, agricultural lands will not be used for the production of sustainable aviation fuels. Sustainable biofuel will be produced without polluting water, soil and other natural resources.

- For Article 3 (3.3 Combating Infectious Diseases 3.8 Achieving Universal Health Coverage 3.B Supporting Research and Development for Affordable Vaccines and Medicines and Universal Access to them)

With cold chain corridors on over 400 different routes, Turkish Cargo plays a leading role in the transportation of vaccines and medicines under favorable conditions. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated the importance of the vaccine and medical supply chain, but this transportation is not limited to the days of the pandemic. Turkish Airlines supplies vaccines and medical supplies to Africa and many other destinations.

- For Article 4 (4.3 Equal Access to Affordable Technical, Vocational and Higher Education 4.4 Increasing the Number of People Qualified for Financial Success 4.5 Ending Discrimination in Education)

Turkish Airlines supports employee development through collaborations with universities' undergraduate and graduate programs. In addition, employment opportunities are increased.

- For Articles 5 and 10 (5.1 Eliminate Discrimination against Women and Girls 5.5 Ensure Full Participation in Leadership and Decision Making 5.C Develop and Strengthen Applicable Legislation and Policies for Gender Equality, 10. 2 Promote Universal Social, Economic and Political Inclusion 10.3 Ensure Equal Opportunities and Eliminate Discrimination 10.4 Implement Fiscal and Social Policies that Promote Equality 10.A Special and Differentiated Treatment for Developing Countries)

Diversity and equality are among the company's core values. Equal treatment of employees is of primary importance. Male and female employees are employed in a balanced manner. The participation of disadvantaged individuals in the workforce is supported with fair wages and working conditions. Cargo transportation is carried out for the needs of developing countries.

- For items 7.12.13 (7.2 Increase the Global Share of Renewable Energy 7.3 Double the Improvement in Energy Efficiency 7.A Support Access to Clean Energy Research, Technology and Investment 12.2 Sustainable Management and Use of Natural Resources 12.4 Responsible Chemical and Waste Management 12.5 Significantly Reduce Waste Generation 12. 6 Encourage Companies to Implement Sustainability Practices and Sustainability Reporting 12.8 Promote a Universal Understanding of Sustainable Lifestyles 13.1 Strengthen Resilience and Adaptive Capacity to Climate-Related Disasters 13.2 Integrate Climate Change Measures into Policies and Plans 13.3 Enhance Knowledge and Capacity to Combat Climate Change)

Turkish Airlines consciously manages the environmental impacts arising from flight operations within the context of its Sustainability Policy and Environmental Policy. The airline makes plans to reduce its impacts in areas such as combating climate change, environmental impact management, responsible procurement, waste management, energy and emission management and clean energy. It optimizes flight operations to increase fuel efficiency to reduce its carbon footprint. It also invests in new technologies and adds new generation aircraft to its fleet. It prioritizes aircraft and engines with high fuel efficiency. It conducts sustainable bio-fuel development studies. Recyclable products are preferred for the products and materials used in the aircraft. Internal communication activities on sustainability are carried out to raise the awareness of employees.

- For item 9 (9.4 Improvement of All Industries and Infrastructures for Sustainability 9.5 Increasing Research and Improving Industrial Technologies)

The Company is constantly renewing its fleet. Its fleet, which has an average age of 8.5 years with its new generation aircraft, continuously improves its infrastructure through digitalization, R&D and innovation efforts.

- For Article 11 (11.2 Accessible and Sustainable Transportation Systems 11.5 Reducing the Negative Impacts of Natural Disasters 11.6 Reducing the Environmental Impacts of Cities)

Airlines bring cultures together by connecting different cities of the world. It plans to reduce the negative impacts of noise and carbon emissions on sustainable urban life. Continuously improves its low-noise operation capability. It manages waste. It cooperates to meet the needs of the people of the region in disaster-affected areas and plans aids.

- For Article 15 (15.3 Halting Deforestation and Restoring Degraded Forests 15.7 Eliminating Illegal Hunting and Trafficking of Protected Species)

It has signed the "United for Wildlife Buckingham Palace Declaration" (UFW) to prevent illegal trade in wild animals and to raise sectoral awareness on this issue. In addition, environmentally friendly materials are preferred in the products given to passengers. Toys given to child passengers are Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified products.

Work on the items summarized above continues rapidly. In 2022, Turkish Airlines is the first and only airline to be included in the BIST Sustainability 25 Index. The Company effectively communicates its social responsibility and sustainability efforts, which are part of its corporate culture, to the media and all internal and external stakeholders through the activities of the Corporate Communications Department.

Sustainability Practices from the Perspective of Istanbul Airport

Sustainability efforts at Istanbul Airport are managed with an integrated approach covering all operations and internal and external stakeholders are informed through the Corporate Communications Department. Efficient use of natural resources is an important point of IGA's sustainable environmental approach. The IGA Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Report was taken into consideration when planning environmental performance strategies. Sustainability reports are published regularly every year. Airport stakeholder communication is planned by the Corporate Affairs Directorate. Attaching importance to transparent and good communication, the brand carries out important activities in areas such as social media, press communication, sponsorship, environmental and social responsibility projects, culture and art activities. In addition, the Customer Experience Directorate also communicates with external stakeholders.

In order to minimize the environmental footprint, Combating Climate Change is given importance. Work is planned under the Climate Change Adaptation and Action Plan. In this context, the authorities participated in the Climate Week in New York in 2017 and the 25th Inter-Country Climate Negotiations Summit organized by the United Nations in Spain in 2019. On climate, Istanbul Airport is the world's largest LEED-certified building as of the date of certification. The entire terminal and outdoor areas are monitored with IoT (Internet of Things) LoraWan technology to ensure optimization in operations. Thus, energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emission reduction are aimed.

İGA, which conducts sustainability studies at international standards in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, has been certified by the British Standards Institution in the following categories:

- ISO 14001 Environmental Management
- ISO 27001 Information Security Management
- ISO 50001 Energy Management Systems
- ISO 9001 Quality Management
- ISO 10002 Customer Satisfaction Management

Extensive Trainings for Raising Environmental Awareness are provided, aiming to raise sustainability awareness among all stakeholders. In this context, Istanbul Airport offers a wide range of trainings such as Environmental and Sustainability Rules, Wildlife Management Trainings, ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management System trainings, ISO 14001 Environmental Management System Awareness Raising Trainings and ISO 50001 Energy Management System Awareness Raising Trainings, Zero Waste Program trainings, Sustainability Projects trainings.

How is a Sustainable Environmental Approach Planned at IGA Airport?

- carbon emission management
- energy efficiency
- water management
- waste management
- biodiversity and wildlife management
- noise management

According to IGA 2020 sustainability report data; 52.95 Million TL was spent on environmental activities and investments. In 2020, 297 tons less carbon dioxide emissions, 13,149 barrels of fuel saved, 10 million kilowatts of energy saved, 297 kg of raw materials saved compared to 2019.

In the context of sustainability at the airport, plans are made especially in the areas of emission management, waste management, water management, biodiversity, noise management, energy efficiency and zero carbon. Emission management activities to reduce the carbon footprint are carried out within the scope of the program to combat climate change. ISO 14064 Greenhouse Gas Calculation and Management System infrastructure was established. Annual reporting for the ISO 14064 Greenhouse Gas Management standard continues. In addition, heating, cooling and ventilation systems were optimized in accordance with the climate, minimizing greenhouse gas emissions at source.

Wastewater at the airport is collected through the wastewater sewage infrastructure system and treated at the Domestic Biological Wastewater Treatment Plant with a capacity of 15 thousand m3 /day, and the recycled water is used as landscaping and cooling water.

A "Zero Waste Program" has been developed for Total Waste Management. According to this target, waste-related performance indicators of all companies that manage and deal with waste are regularly monitored. Waste is tracked from the source to the final point through a database and software. In addition, an art workshop was established with the ARTWIST (From Waste to Art) Project. Artwist aims to raise waste awareness and provide social and economic benefits for the project's target groups.

Thanks to the Biodiversity Action Plan, wildlife is regularly monitored throughout the year and measures are taken to protect the habitat. Aurica also carries out afforestation activities.

Noise measurements are made around the airport and noise maps are prepared. Strategic Noise Map is being prepared and online monitoring continues.

The zero carbon target is planned in accordance with the Standard for Establishment Level Calculation and Reporting of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Removals. In this context, a 2050 Carbon Neutral roadmap has been determined. Energy efficiency: ISO 50001 Energy Management System has been installed and effective studies are carried out on conscious energy consumption and energy saving. All systems are continuously controlled and continuity is ensured. For example, total direct greengas emission (scope 1 - tons of Co2) was reduced from 37,370.70 in 2019 to 28,102.88 in 2020. Water consumption per year (m3) decreased from 1,3331,673 in 2019 to 829,447 in 2020. Specific energy consumption (kWh/ passenger) decreased from 170.89 in 2019 to 126.23 in 2020.

According to the sustainability report, between 2020 and 2021; carbon dioxide emissions decreased by 297 tons. 13,146 barrels of fuel saved, 10 million kilowatts of energy saved, 297 kg. of raw materials saved, 5973 m3 of storage space saved.

The report explains that sustainability is important in the corporate culture and that the airport provides a fair, equal and safe working environment that values employee development. The organization has an open corporate culture. Discrimination is not allowed in any way. Gender Equality is also fundamental to the corporate culture. Table 1 summarizes the corporate culture and competencies of Istanbul Airport.

In addition, the Cultural Ambassadors Program was planned to create the corporate culture and values of İGA. It is important that employees have a happy career journey in the company. Equal opportunity is emphasized. Training and personal development of employees are supported through trainings at İGA Academy. Inclusion and equality are important. In addition, projects within the context of accessible airport policies are announced to stakeholders through the press. One of the most important parts of İGA's corporate culture is sustainability. Plans are made in this context under the leadership of the Sustainability Committee. Stakeholder dialog is of utmost importance.

Table 1: İSTANBUL AIRPORT COMPETENCIES
Source: Çukurkaya, 2019:150

CORPORATE COMPETENCIES	FUNCTIONAL COMPETENCIES	MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES
Internal & External Customer Sensibility	Work Information	Strategic Perspective
Communication & Team Spirit	Taking Responsibility & Sense Of Business Ownership	Target & Direction Union
Innovation & Proactivity	Planned And Programmed Work	Focused On Development
Continuous Development	Analytical Thinking & Problem Solving	Recognition & Appreciation
Respect	Producing Quality & Efficient Business Results	Change Management

Conclusion

"The society of the age of manufactured uncertainties is a risk society" (Balay, 2022:837). Damage to the environment is a great risk for the future of the world and it is essential to develop sustainability awareness on an international platform to prevent this.

> Sustainability processes are based on the principles of stability, responsibility and accountability. Sustainability practices are needed in the context of businesses' missions to integrate with and contribute to society. The answer to the question of how the business will bring the eco-system in which it is located to a better point is in sustainability studies (Özgen, 2022:e2).

The answers to the research questions of the study investigating sustainability communication in the aviation industry are summarized below:

The tangible indicator of transparent information flow is sustainability reports, which include numerical data, the company's sustainability approach and all sustainability-related activities. These reports are published regularly every year and shared openly with the public. Therefore, sustainability reports are the most important communication tool of the brand in sustainability communication. It has been determined that both aviation brands in the sample have prepared reports reflecting their sustainability approach and have planned and implemented all communication activities, especially media.

Both brands have plans and projects in line with the sustainability goals of the United Nations. Both brands have taken measures to reduce the negative environmental impacts of the aviation industry, and are working on topics such as combating climate change, energy management, waste management, water management, noise pollution, use of sustainable materials, development and use of environmentally friendly aviation fuels, young fleet, planning research and development collaborations with universities to develop new technologies, gender equality, fair working environment, inclusion and diversity.

In addition to being responsible for coordinating with the management and relevant departments in the preparation of annual sustainability reports, Public Relations specialists are also responsible for publicizing the awards received by the brand, planning and implementing events and meetings with stakeholders in line with the brand's sustainability approach, and preparing press releases. In addition, under the coordination of the Corporate Communications department, they also plan trainings and social responsibility projects for internal and external target audiences in order to raise social awareness on sustainability.

Sustainability is one of the most important parts of the corporate culture of both brands. In order for this understanding of sustainability to be reflected and adopted in the corporate culture, strategic communication activities are carried out for the internal target audience.

Stakeholder dialog is emphasized in sustainability efforts and collaborative projects are carried out. Corporate Communication departments carry out the necessary communication activities to publicize and understand social social responsibility projects. In this context, the two brands in the sample plan comprehensive communication activities for their stakeholders with the principle of transparent communication on sustainability. It is understood that detailed studies are carried out to inform the public, raise awareness, and manage the image and reputation of the brand.

Sustainability strategies of airports and airlines are not only important in terms of respect for the future of the world, but also valuable in terms of brand value, corporate reputation, efficiency in business processes, innovation, cost optimization and financial value, access to international financing and financing opportunities, and opportunities in the international market. In this context, the development of sustainability strategies and strong communication are important. The planning of Corporate Communications departments and the theme of sustainability in public relations activities are also very valuable in terms of social social responsibility.

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A Lens to Examine Communication Through Business Continuity Management

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Introduction

Cyber incidents and business interruptions rank as the foremost business risks according to the Allianz Risk Barometer 2023 (Allianz Risk Barometer, 2023). Today's organizations may almost constantly face adversities and critical incidents such as natural or manmade disasters, technological innovations, public relations crises, and cyber-attacks. This has led many organizations to reconsider their approaches to their business continuity management processes and practices, and to resilience building. Furthermore, individuals, organizations, and society are becoming more dependent on complex and interlinked cyber systems and their interconnections to carrying out everyday activities. The growing number and sophistication of cybersecurity threats and attacks have become a reality in the daily life and have also evolved into one of the foremost risks to jeopardize business continuity (Michel & King, 2019). Continuity management strategies for critical infrastructure operators and their networks, such as other organizations rely on other networks. They can be viewed as part of a system of systems. Resilience and continuity of these systems can be enhanced by studying and improving interconnectivity and functions between these networks (Linkov et al., 2013).

The process of building resilience needs communication and collaboration between social networks (Vos, 2017). Resilience and continuity management have wide societal impacts and they are particularly important for critical infrastructure organizations (Ruoslahti, 2020). Business Continuity Management (BCM) is a process that attempts to identify threats and their impacts on an organization. The BCM process offers a framework for building organizational resilience and facilitates an efficient response when encountering critical events. (BSI 2006; ISO 22301:2019; Herbane, 2016.) Basic BCM principles that can help in managing continuity and consequently improving resilience are e.g., identifying risks, critical activities, key personnel, creating guidelines and procedures, and open communication (Ruoslahti, 2020).

The Resilience Matrix has been developed to help in focusing on creating shared situational awareness and to facilitate decision-making by sharing information across networks operating in physical, information, cognitive, and social domains (Linkov et al., 2013). The Resilience Matrix does not explicitly discuss or state the role of communication in different phases of the event management cycle and resilience development. Communication and communication management can, however, contribute to organizational resilience (Buzzanell, 2010; Ishak & Williams, 2018). Effective multistakeholder communication and collaboration is essential for continuity and reputation management, and consequently for improved organizational cyber resilience (Knight & Nurse, 2018).

This paper approaches sustainability from a perspective that combines organizational cyber resilience with the principles of business continuity management. The purpose of this paper is to describe how a modified Resilience Matrix (Linkov et al., 2013) can be used as a framework to understand and explain communication and communication management within different stages of the resilience cycle. The Resilience Matrix discussed in this article combines an event management cycle with elements of business continuity management and an element of cyber threat intelligence in the context of the EU Commission funded Project DYNAMO (Dynamic Resilience Assessment Method including a combined Business Continuity Management and Cyber Threat Intelligence solution for Critical Sectors). In this article, the modified Resilience Matrix is viewed and explained through the theoretical background presented in the paper, and implications for communication and communication management are presented.

The research questions of this study are:

- RQ1: How can the Resilience Matrix be used to explain communication needs and requirements in different stages of the event management cycle?
- RQ2: How can the Resilience Matrix be used to explain communication management needs and requirements in different stages of the event management cycle?

Literature review

The National Academy of Sciences (2012) defines resilience as "the ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from, or more successfully adapt to actual or potential adverse events". Resilience can also be seen as the capability of a system to recover in the middle of shocks or stressful events over time (Palma-Oliveira & Trump, 2016).

Organizational resilience and business continuity management

On an organizational level, the term 'resilience' can describe the inherent characteristics of organizations that can respond more quickly, recover faster, or develop more unusual ways of doing business under pressure than others (Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2007). In the field of economics, resilience is often characterized as the aspiration or aim of business continuity management systems, or as the articulation of the future state of organization following achievement of its strategy. Business Continuity Management can be seen as one of several activities that support and enhance resilience. (Herbane, 2016.) Organizational resilience can also be approached as a dynamic process that needs to be developed with the understanding of the different types of capacities within organization that contribute to resilience (Madani & Parast, 2021).

Resilience can be characterized as a dynamic construct, where organizations that are considered resilient can either adopt an anchored or an adaptive mindset towards resilience (Ishak & Williams, 2018). Anchored-resilient organizations, when encountering a critical event "are surprised but prepared, think about how to maintain their identity, and quickly look for a return to normalcy" (p. 192). Adaptive-resilient organizations, "understand disruptions as part of their process, view change as normal, and look forward to how they can adapt" (p. 192). (Ishak & Williams, 2018.)

The National Initiative for Cybersecurity Careers and Studies (NICCS) defines cybersecurity as "[t]he activity or process, ability or capability, or state whereby information and communications systems and the information contained therein are protected from and/or defended against damage, unauthorized use or modification, or exploitation" (NICCS, 2023). Dalal et al. (2022) include the human-factor in the definition of cyber security, more specifically the definition of organizational cyber security as "the efforts organizations take to protect and defend their information assets, regardless of the form in which those assets exist, from threats internal and external to the organization" (p. 5).

The term 'cyber resilience' can be defined as the ability of the system to prepare, absorb, recover, and adapt to adverse effects, particularly effects associated with cyberattacks (Linkov & Kott, 2018). Björck et al. (2015) define the concept of cyber resilience referring "to the ability to continuously deliver the intended outcome despite adverse cyber events" (p. 312). Thus, they state that for the cyber resilience to be effective and efficient it needs to be approached holistically and in parallel on several levels within organization.

A systems approach to resilience can be described and analyzed using the Resilience Matrix, that has been developed to facilitate focusing on creating shared situational awareness and decentralized decision-making by distributing information across networks operating in physical, information, cognitive, and social domains. (Linkov et al., 2013.) The Resilience Matrix or event management cycle can be simplified into four functions: plan, absorb, recover, and adapt. 1) The plan-phase involves establishing procedures to ensure the availability of services and the proper functioning of assets, 2) the absorb-phase involves tasks such as preserving the functionality and service availability of the most crucial assets while mitigating disruptions, 3) in the recovery phase, the organization strives to recover assets, restore their functions, and ensure service availability, and 4) the adapt-phase includes gaining and collecting knowledge and information about the event for learning and changing of procedures, configuring the systems, and re-training the personnel. The Resilience Matrix covers each phase of the event management cycle with each domain: physical, information, cognitive, social, providing guidelines for resilience metrics that need to be developed and combined to measure overall system resilience. (Linkov et al., 2013; National Research Council, 2012.)

Business Continuity Management (BCM) can be characterized as a management process that seeks to comprehensively identify threats and their impacts on an organization. The BCM process offers a framework for building organizational resilience and facilitates an efficient response when hit by an adverse event, while safeguarding the interests of stakeholders, reputation, brand, and value-generating activities (BSI 2006; ISO 22301:2019). BCM can be described as a cyclical process, where a well implemented plan-phase prepares the organization and its personnel to absorb- and recover-phases, while the adapt-phase encourages feedback that is utilized to improve future operations and planning (Savage, 2002). Especially, when developing continuity management against cyber threats and aiming at enhancing organizational cyber resilience, the plan-phase can be divided into three sub-phases: prepare, prevent, and protect (Hiermaier, Scharte & Fischer, 2019).
One traditional BCM approach describes a process where the plan-phase consists of several basic BCM principles: 1) conducting a business impact analysis (BIA), 2) defining recovery time targets (RTO, RPO), 3) performing a risk assessment (RA), 4) obtaining executive support, 5) testing the process, and 6) providing training and creating awareness (Lindstedt & Armour, 2017). BCM can thus be considered to enhance knowledge management and dynamic capabilities that can then again improve organizational performance and resilience against critical events (Fischbacher-Smith, 2017).

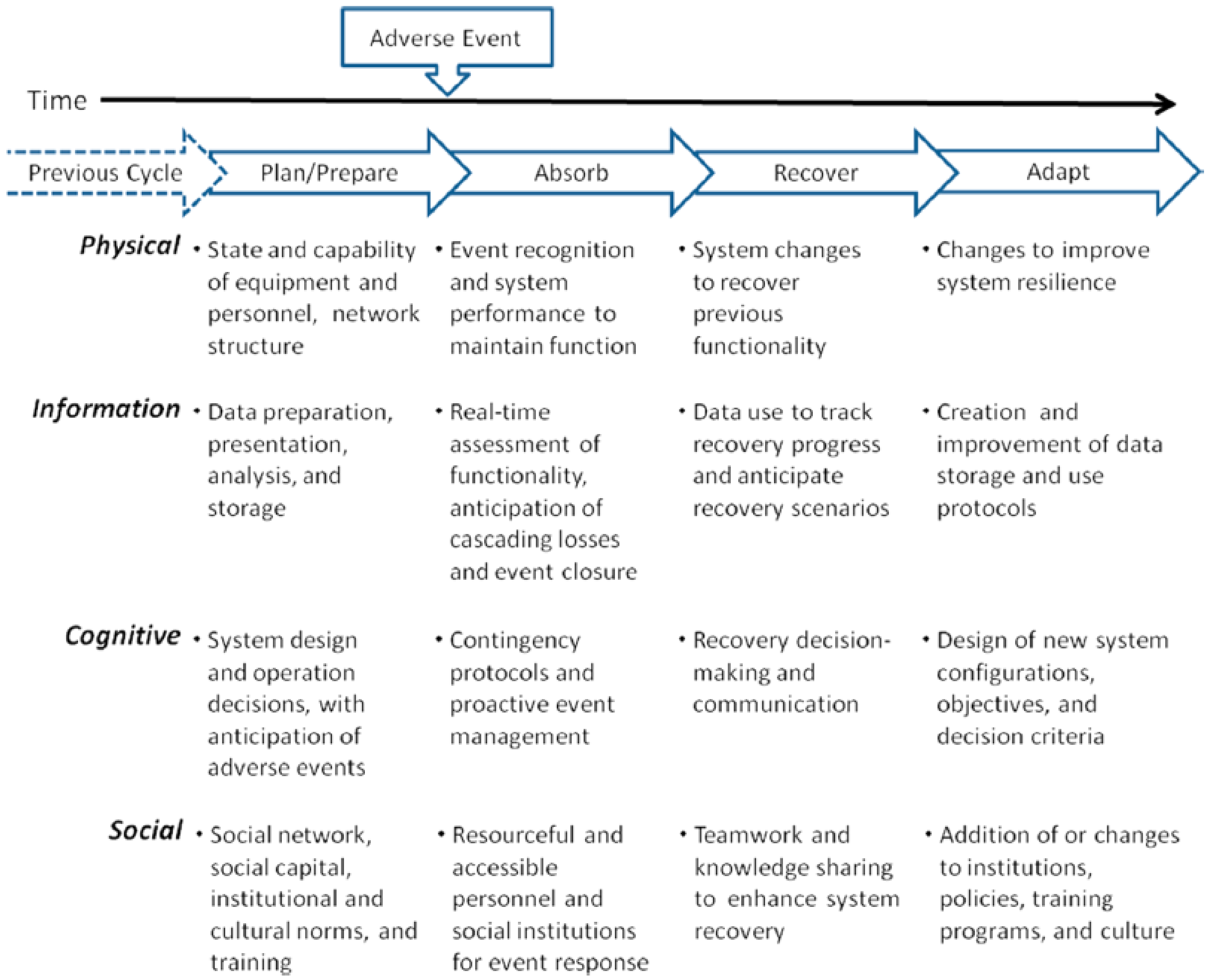

Figure 1: The Resilience Matrix (Linkov et al. 2013)

The organizational capabilities that support and facilitate business continuity planning can be described as 1) adequate and genuine management commitment, 2) a clear continuity strategy, 3) a plan for regular development, 4) training and counselling, and 5) periodic reporting (Maurer & Lechner, 2014). Traditional approaches to BCM have been criticized for not being flexible and adaptive enough (Lindstedt & Armour, 2016; Hatton & Brown, 2021). An Adaptive Business Continuity (ABC) approach suggests that continuous improvement of organizational recovery capabilities with a focus on continued delivery of services can be achieved by following nine principles: 1) create continuous value, 2) document only for mnemonics, 3) engage at many levels within the organization, 4) exercise for improvement, not for testing, 5) learn the business, 6) measure and benchmark, 7) obtain step-by-step direction from leadership, 8) exclude the risk assessment and business impact analysis, and 9) prepare for impacts, not causes (Lindstedt & Armour, 2016). Flexibility and adaptability in BCM can be achieved through 1) integrating business continuity and strategic management more closely; 2) embedding a resilience thinking culture across the organization; 3) decentralizing business continuity planning; 4) planning based on principles; and 5) exercising more frequently (Hatton & Brown, 2021).

Communication contributing to organizational resilience

Weick and Sutcliffe (2015) state that instead of technical control measures and formal procedures, cultural features, which they define as "mindful organizing", such as a general preoccupation with failure, a reluctance to simplify, a sensitivity to operations, a commitment to resilience and a deference to expertise, contribute to organizations achieving resilience. Different organizational practices enable mindful organizing; resilience is built through sharing values and norms, and collaborating, i.e., through constant communication and recalibration of the situation. Thus, resilience can be constructed via communicative practices or communication processes (Buzzanell, 2010: Ishak & Williams, 2018).

Communication contributes to organizational resilience in different ways, it supports reputation management as part of continuity management (Vos, 2017). Communication aims to clarify risks and how they are managed and enables collaboration for preparedness activities (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005). Communication facilitates the creation of situational awareness, and supports crisis management, information sharing, decision making, and contributes to lessons learnt sharing, and training (Vos & Schoemaker, 2004). Communication also supports the interaction between stakeholders and enhances commitment and awareness building contributing that way to continuity management of an organization. (Vos, 2017).

Buzzanell (2010) claims that the communicative construction of resilience consists of five processes: crafting normalcy, maintaining, and utilizing communication networks, using alternative logics to make sense of the situation; legitimizing negative feelings while foregrounding productive action; and affirming identity anchors. Thus, organizational resilience is constituted through communicative processes (Ishak & Williams, 2018). An adverse event, such as natural disaster, pandemic, or system failure, leads to individuals and organizations enacting the communicative practices of resilience (Buzzanell, 2010). As organizational communication continues to evolve, organizations should consider the multifaceted, dynamic nature of resilience also in the preparation and recovery stages of the resilience (Ishak & Williams, 2018).

Risk communication has been actively researched in the field of communication (Nurse et al. 2011; Goerlandt et al. 2020). From the BCM and the organizational resilience cycle point of view, there are several essential topics emerging. A crucial area of focus should be on risks with potentially significant societal consequences, such as climate action failure, weapons of mass destruction, breakdown of information infrastructure, natural disasters, and cyberattacks (Goerlandt et al. 2020).

In the field of public relations, there is a considerable amount of research on crisis communications, situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) (Coombs, 2007) and theory of image restoration (Benoit, 1997) being the major models in this area (Avery et al., 2010). A lot of crisis communication research focuses on corporate crisis communication strategies to research response strategies during a crisis (Cannaerts 2020). Avery et al. (2010) state that situational crisis communication theory and the theory of image restoration provide frameworks for the types of responses available to organizations during a crisis, but they have been criticized for not being practical, and not providing more detailed criteria that would facilitate organizations to determine which approach to use in a crisis.

Cannaerts (2020) proposes a multistakeholder perspective towards crisis communication rather than studying it more narrowly from the perspective of crisis response strategies. For crisis communication to be effective it needs to be diversified across different crisis stages and diverse stakeholders; internal and external collaboration and training and rehearsal between stakeholders are of great importance for effective crisis communication. Regarding cyber crises, Knight, and Nurse (2020) suggest a public communication model for communicating in the case of cyber incident such as data breach. They state that effective multistakeholder communication and collaboration is essential for reputation and continuity management, and consequently for cyber resilience.

Different stages of the resilience cycle can be used to describe how communication tasks vary during the stages (Vos, 2017). The Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication model (CERC), that was originally developed for healthcare crisis situations, provides a framework for interactive crisis communication (Veil et al., 2008). In the CERC model, crisis communication is implemented in five different stages of the event management cycle. 1) In the pre-crisis stage, the operating environment is monitored and warning messages about the crisis are received. The goal of communication is to provide guidance and prepare for a possible crisis and plan activities. 2) During the initial event stage, communication aims to reduce uncertainty, and support different target groups. 3) In the maintenance stage, the aim is to create and maintain situational awareness by communicating about the background of the event. In addition, communication is needed for cooperation to restore normalcy and to correct rumors and misunderstandings. 4) In the resolution stage, communication is needed to inform the target groups on how the crisis was managed and to increase awareness of possible new risks. 5) In the evaluation stage, the communication enables the evaluation of crisis management and crisis communication, sharing of lessons learned, and knowledge about the crisis. (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Veil et al., 2008.) It can be suggested, that since the five-stage implementation of crisis communication in the CERC model describes communication also in the plan (prepare, prevent and protect) phase of the event management cycle, the model could offer insights also regarding communication in the resilience cycle.

BCM in organizational resilience

Critical success factors of BCM are, e.g., management support, organizational preparedness, and embeddedness of continuity practices across the organization. It is essential for senior management to initiate, authorize, and support a business continuity program from the initial stages of its implementation (Chow, 2000; Järveläinen 2013). Organizational preparedness encompasses understanding diverse recovery methods and risk mitigation strategies, developing, and maintaining business continuity plans, building crisis management teams, and establishing redundancy among key personnel (Lindström, Samuelsson, & Hägerfors, 2010; Herbane, Elliot & Swartz, 2004).

Embeddedness of continuity practices means integrating practices into processes, and staff and senior management being highly committed to work within the organization. To enhance the integration of the BCM process and practices, organizations can employ different ways to communicate and emphasize the importance of BCM, including awareness-raising, training, and addressing the varying topics of BCM from the perspectives of different target groups. (Herbane, Elliot & Swartz, 2004.) The main approaches to business continuity management arise from collaborative work and effective communication between stakeholders. Collaboration and communication enable monitoring the context and building reliable relationships, thus facilitating the development of collective responses during crises. Leaders and managers should foster a collaborative culture within the organization and with its stakeholders, actively take part in daily work to strengthen employee commitment and show support. (Sánchez & De Batista, 2023.)

Methodology

This paper approaches sustainability from a perspective that combines organizational cyber resilience with the principles of business continuity management. This paper describes a modified Resilience Matrix (Linkov et al., 2013), and how it can be used as a framework to understand and explain communication and communication management within different stages of the resilience cycle. The Resilience Matrix discussed in this article combines an event management cycle with elements of business continuity management and an element of cyber threat intelligence in the context of the EU Commission funded Project DYNAMO (Dynamic Resilience Assessment Method including a combined Business Continuity Management and Cyber Threat Intelligence solution for Critical Sectors). The methods of the development process of the modified Resilience Matrix have included a literature review and a series of development workshops that resulted in the development of the DYNAMO Resilience Matrix (DRM). The DYNAMO Resilience Matrix is based on the Resilience Matrix by Linkov et al. (2013) and on a prior matrix by Ruoslahti (2020).

The DYNAMO Resilience Matrix developed for the project recognizes a six-phase event management cycle (Figure 2). The plan-phase, that has been defined as a single phase in the matrix by Linkov et al. (2013), is divided here into three phases: prepare, prevent, and protect, based on the model proposed by Hiermaier et al. (2019). The response-phase corresponds to the absorb phase in the matrix by Linkov et al. (2013), while the recover-phase is the same in both matrixes, followed by the same learn and adapt-phase. In the modified Resilience Matrix, elements of cyber threat intelligence (CTI) and business continuity management (BCM) including risks, critical functions, key personnel, guidelines and procedures, and open communication, are combined with the event management cycle.

The research questions of this study are:

- RQ1: How can the Resilience Matrix be used to explain communication needs and requirements in different stages of the event management cycle?
- RQ2: How can the Resilience Matrix be used to explain communication management needs and requirements in different stages of the event management cycle?

Results

The Resilience Matrix can be used to view and explain communication and communication management needs and requirements in different stages of the event management cycle by utilizing the matrix as a framework for data collection and for theoretical approaches. In this article, the aim is to view and describe the DYNAMO Resilience Matrix through the theoretical background presented in the paper and present implications for communication and communication management.

The event management cycle with its four functions: plan, absorb, recover, and adapt, and with its four domains: physical, information, cognitive, and social, could be implied to contain communication as one of the elements to be looked at and developed when aiming at overall resilience of a system, such as an organization. The event management cycle, or the Resilience Matrix (Linkov et al. 2013) does not explicitly discuss or state the role of communication in different phases of the event management cycle and resilience development. However, when viewing communication through the DYNAMO Resilience Matrix, where the event management cycle is combined with elements of business continuity, and an aspect of cyber threat intelligence is

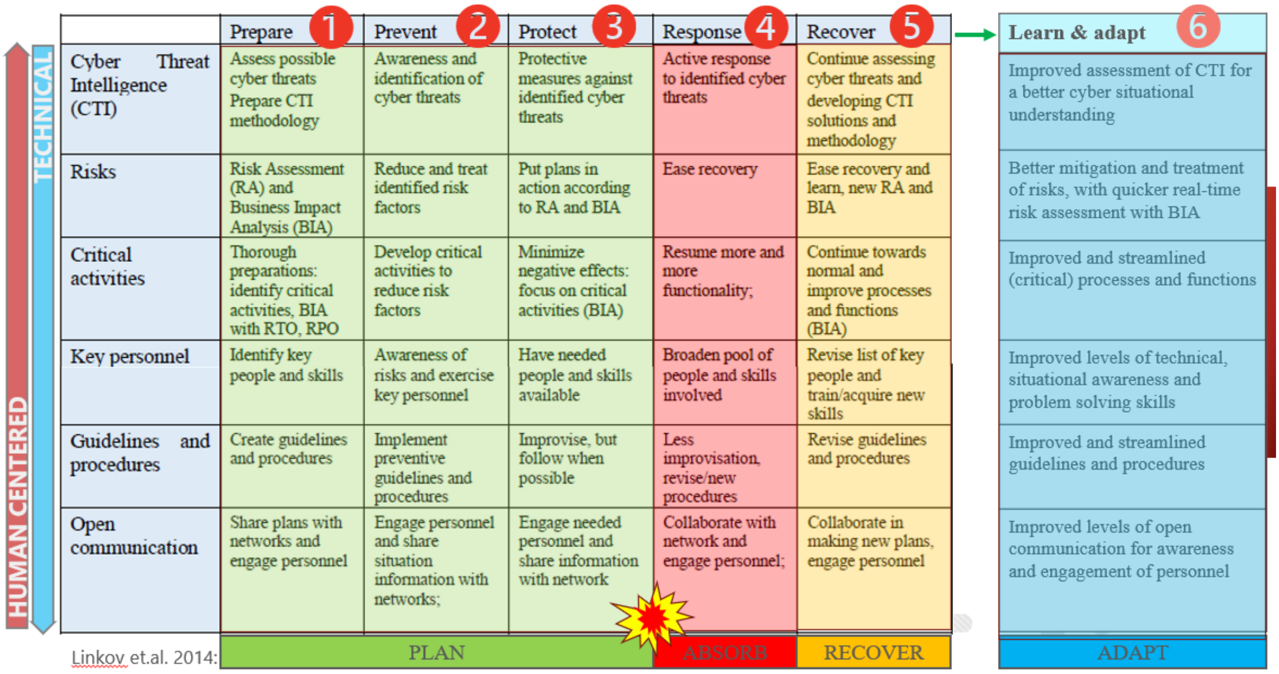

Figure 2: The DYNAMO Resilience Matrix (DRM).
Combined from Linkov et al. (2013) and from Ruoslahti (2020).

added, and through the theoretical background presented in this article, it can be claimed that communication and communication management is needed in various parts of the Resilience Matrix.

In the plan phase, that in this paper includes three sub-phases: prepare, prevent, and protect, communication and communication management is needed for prevention and preparedness. When conducting the various BCM functions, i.e., considering CTI, identifying, and assessing risks, identifying critical activities, and key personnel and competencies, and creating guidelines and procedures, communication and communication management can be claimed to be part of those functions. Communication and communication management within those functions aids in creating awareness of risks and prevention and in collaborating for preparedness activities (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Veil et al., 2008.), as well as of the significance of business continuity management in the organization (Herbane, Elliot & Swartz, 2004). Communication is part of mindful organizing, where it enables e.g., preoccupation with failure through collaboration and sharing norms such as guidelines and procedures (Weick & Suttcliffe, 2015). Communication contributes to resilience mindset of an organization by promoting a culture that emphasizes situational awareness (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2015). By collaborating and communicating, it is possible to monitor the context and establish relationships to support the development of collective responses during crisis (Sánchez & De Batista, 2023). Thus, communication also supports the interaction between stakeholders and enhances commitment (Vos, 2017) and engagement to the BCM that is part of resilience building (Herbane, Elliot & Swartz, 2004).

In the response-phase of the Resilience Matrix, communication and communication management supports BCM functions by providing warnings and instructions (Vos, 2017), as well as by explaining the crisis to relevant target groups and stakeholders (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Veil et al., 2008; Vos, 2017). People make sense of the organization through communication (Weick, 2001), and sense making in case of a crisis happens via interaction and interpretative actions (Vos, 2017). Also, in the response-phase there is a need for situational awareness; resilience is built through constant communication that aids recalibrate the situation (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2015). Individuals and organizations enact the communicative practices of resilience also in the response-phase, as there is a need to make sense of the situation, collaborate and utilize communication networks to craft normalcy (Buzzanell, 2010).

In the recover-phase, communication and communication management can facilitate exchanging experiences and views (Vos, 2017), and sharing knowledge and lessons learnt, as well as support organizational learning (Vos & Schoemaker, 2004; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Veil et al., 2008). Also, after a critical event, communication enables affirming identity anchors, thus supporting the recovery back to normalcy (Buzzanell, 2010). The role of communication and communication management is essential in enabling internal and external collaboration and training and exercise with employees and stakeholders also in the recover-phase (Cannaerts, 2020).

Conclusions

Communication and communication management needs and requirements in different stages of the event management cycle can be described and explained by utilizing the DYNAMO Resilience Matrix as a framework for an approach where earlier studies and research results are viewed in relation to the different parts in the matrix.

Communication is one of the factors contributing to organizational resilience in various ways. The role of communication in the organizational cyber resilience throughout the resilience cycle calls for more research in the field of communication and communication management. It is important to understand what kind of communication and communication management can foster organizational cyber resilience, or in the worst case, dismantle resilience. The modified Resilience Matrix offers an integrative approach to organizational cyber resilience combining theoretical and practical aspects of technological and human factors. Cyber resilience and what constitutes it needs to be addressed from an integrated perspective, not only from the technology point of view. Policy makers, corporate executives, managers, employees, and cybersecurity professionals need the integrated view on cyber resilience to understand and plan holistically for cyber resilience. Further study with the modified Resilience Matrix as a framework of data collection and analysis can provide valuable knowledge that will have practical implications in organizations in communication management and planning in complex and fast changing digital environment. Added understanding of how to manage and plan communication, and communicate organizational cyber resilience is a contribution to theory and may even benefit society.

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The impacts of communication in sustainability in Italy

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Introduction

Globally, communication is becoming increasingly important as a lever to increase the sustainability of organisations and thus contribute more generally to sustainable development.
In the face of the worsening environmental and social crises that we are currently experiencing, this process has accelerated in recent times, receiving new and relevant calls from both international bodies and those representing the world of communication itself.

In December 2022, for example, the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) will see the light of day, endorsed by the European Parliament and the Council of Europe as a useful tool for achieving sustainability goals, including climate neutrality by 2050.

Indeed, the timetable for the entry into force of the new non-financial reporting obligations envisages a massive expansion of the scope of companies affected, some from 2024 and others from 2026. Among other things, even organisations not affected by the reporting obligations will still have to comply voluntarily if they want to be kept in the supply chain of those subject to the constraint. Added to this is the growing attention of consumers towards those organisations that certify their commitment to the environment and the common good.

Thus, the entire business world is stimulated not only to adopt sustainable behaviour in environmental and social terms, but also and above all to equip itself to place stakeholder relations at the centre of its activities as an indispensable asset.

Stakeholder management must be practised *ex ante*, at the policy-making stage, by integrating stakeholder concerns into the organisation's strategies.

The introduction of the concept of double materiality, which requires reporting not only on the impact of the company on sustainability issues (inside-out perspective), but also on the impact of sustainability issues on the company (outside-in perspective), also contributes to broadening the scope of reporting, the mapping of stakeholders with whom to relate, and the type of communication techniques and tools to be deployed.

At the same time, just a year ago, the *Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management*[1] mobilised by launching a call to support the appeal to the United Nations to add a new goal to the Sustainable Development Goals dedicated to 'Responsible Communication', starting with the recognition of the crucial role it plays in creating trust, consensus, dialogue, and partnerships between different actors, which are pre-conditions for the effective and transversal pursuit of all the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

The origin of the research

But in the face of an increased responsibility attributed to communication for sustainable development and a greater awareness of communicators in this regard at an international level, what is the state of the art of environmental communication in Italy?

This issue has been analysed in two volumes published - between 2020 and 2022 - by the former working group dedicated to environmental communication of the Italian Public Relations Federation, integrated with other professionals: these are "*Libro Bianco sulla comunicazione ambientale*"[2] and "*L'anello mancante. La comunicazione ambientale alla prova della transizione ecologica*".[3]

In the first book, environmental communication is investigated for the first time in all its complexity, with a multidisciplinary methodological approach, from the processes of training and professional recognition to the experiences developed within various spheres ranging from infrastructure, companies, theatre, museums, utilities, etc.

In the second book, the focus is on the investigation of models, methodologies and tools to be made available to different organisational and application realities, in an attempt to provide concrete answers to those who are accountable to regulations, investors, consumers, other companies and institutions and still find themselves unprepared. Now that the approaches and implementation tools have been mapped out, the natural next step becomes the field study, in order to understand whether communication today is indeed already an asset that can make a relevant and effective contribution to the sustainability path of organisations. Furthermore, the aim is to understand how strongly and with what margins for improvement.

On this topic, the comparison between the literature and practice highlights some relevant aspects, but also some misunderstandings. This sometimes makes it difficult for the external observer to distinguish good practice from bad. The complexity of a rapidly changing market and the pressure of public opinion on sustain-

1 The Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management is the confederation of the world's leading public relations and communication management associations and institutions representing around 360,000 professionals and academics worldwide.

2 Libro Bianco sulla comunicazione ambientale, Stefano Martello, Sergio Vazzoler (eds.); foreword by Rossella Sobrero; contributions by: Federica Bosello, Matteo Colle, Emilio Conti, Stefania Itolli, Stefano Martello, Alberto Marzetta, Roberto Mezzalama, Gloria Milan, Riccardo Parigi, Maria Grazia Persico, Paolo Silingardi, Marco Talluri, Sergio Vazzoler, published by Pacini Editore for the New Fabric series in 2020

3 L'anello mancante. La comunicazione ambientale alla prova della transizione ecologica, Stefano Martello, Sergio Vazzoler (eds.); preface by Ermete Realaci; contributions by: Giulia Armuzzi, Federica Bosello, Micol Burighel, Matteo Colle, Emilio Conti, Luisa Crisigiovanni, Fabio Iraldo, Stefano Martello, Alberto Marzetta, Gloria Milan, Riccardo Parigi, Maria Grazia Persico, Massimiliano Pontillo, Marco Talluri, Sergio Vazzoler; afterword by: Ottavia Ortolani; published by Pacini Editore for the New Fabric series in 2022.

able development issues may sometimes push companies to hastily adopt solutions, conduct and communication approaches that are disconnected from a real corporate sustainability strategy. In this way, companies risk greenwashing. The desire to provide quick answers to the market and stakeholders does not allow for reflection and the identification of clear and measurable objectives, but gives way to isolated and unproductive communication initiatives, with negative effects on internal relations and dialogue with stakeholders.

We could mention, for example, the effects of these choices on intergenerational dynamics, particularly on the younger generations. Often frustrated expectations, unmet needs and fears lead to reactions of anger and resistance that prevent the opening of a dialogue and inhibit any attempt to work together for change. In this way, companies find themselves in a vicious circle that renders all communication efforts sterile.

Research methodology

In 2023, the working group deemed it important to sound out the state of the art of sustainability communication in Italy and its direct impacts through the analysis of the activities of a significant sample in terms of relevance of its impacts made up of large companies, SMEs and Public Institutions.

In order to achieve this, the methodology of qualitative-quantitative analysis was used, articulated in several steps consisting of different activities:

1. the first phase consisted of a 13-question questionnaire designed to provide a snapshot of the state of the art on the following macro issues: sustainability reporting and its tools, prevalence of ESG issues and factors, organisational impacts, double materiality, stakeholder engagement and benefit taking;
2. the second involved the administration of the questionnaire to a sample of 100 organisations, distributed throughout Italy, divided as follows: large companies, SMEs and public institutions;
3. the third phase consisted of processing the responses to the questionnaire and analysing the results;
4. the fourth phase, which based from the findings that emerged from the analysis of the responses, consisted of an in-depth interview with 7 organisations representative of the initial sample on 4 key macro themes: stakeholder engagement, reporting, measurement (KPIs) and double materiality.

Research findings

The contact system strongly favoured the relational aspect and the dialogue phase with the organisations. 36% of the identified sample responded to the questionnaire, highlighting, albeit informally, the reactive level and interest of the organisations involved in the macro topics investigated.

The breakdown of responding organisations is as follows: 44% large companies, 42% SMEs and 14% public sector organisations.

The findings are summarised below.

1. **Knowledge of reporting tools**: All those involved in the survey are familiar with the sustainability report. Knowledge of the other tools (social report, environmental report, Non-Financial Statement, integrated report) is functional to the type of organisation involved. Furthermore, all organisations that responded indicated that they were familiar with at least 1 of the sustainability reporting tools. This underlines the extent to which sustainability is now part of each organisation's knowledge.
2. **Realisation of communication tools**: On this issue, 72% of the sample declared that

they realised or were in the process of realising a sustainability report. The other tools are probably identified according to the type of organisation, while 11% of the sample indicated that they do not implement any tools.

3. **Benefits of sustainability reporting:** The organisations involved highlighted the benefits listed below:
    - improved business risk management 75%;
    - improved active participation of relevant stakeholders in business operations 75%;
    - improvement in medium- to long-term strategic planning 70%;
    - easier access to line of credit 64%;
    - easier access to public funding 42%;
    - strengthened brand reputation in investor relations 61%;
    - improved economic performance 22%;
    - sustainability reporting is only a cost for the company 0%.

The analysis of this data provides two immediate indications. The first is the improvement in the risk profile resulting from the introduction of sustainability reporting. Indeed, risk analysis in all its senses is the basis for the double-materiality approach. The second is that sustainability reporting is not perceived as merely a cost to the organisation, which is consistent with the results of the previous responses.

4. **Double-Materiality Approach**: It is noteworthy that 58% of the organisations surveyed use double-materiality (inside-out risks and outside-in risks) in sustainability reporting, which is really interesting because it shows how proactive organisations are and how they anticipate the mandatory requirement expressed in the CSRD. 19% of the sample still use traditional materiality that only analyses the organisation's outward impacts, and 23% do not prepare a materiality analysis. These last two figures allow us to argue that companies need to continue to deepen their understanding of the subject in order to draw up a true double-materiality report, which is central to the new European sustainability reporting directive.
5. **Organisational profile "Sustainability Committee"**: just over half of the organizations involved have a Sustainability Committee in their organization chart. This means that, from an organisational point of view, there is a polarisation between those organisations that have planned and have an *ad hoc* committee to monitor sustainability issues and those that do not have one. This fact leads us to reflect on the fact that, despite everything, sustainability is still not fully accredited in the organisational profile of companies, making it more difficult to deal with the complexity of the challenge/commitment.
6. **Significance of stakeholder relations**: 97% of the sample consider stakeholder engagement activities to be very relevant, both in terms of internal and external engagement. In terms of implementation methods, it is interesting to note that 50% of the sample define their engagement activity as structured, while the remaining half are taking steps to structure it. It is evident that organisations are becoming aware of the importance of stakeholder engagement as a strategically planned activity.

    Regarding stakeholder engagement methods, the most commonly used are working groups, company visits, the company website, newsletters, meetings, events and school visits.
7. **Benefits of stakeholder engagement**: The analysis shows that the benefits are related to the risk management from an ESG perspective, to the values of the brand, to the brand reputation, to improvement listening and dialogue as a process, to ensure the economic and social growth.
8. **Importance of communication and environmental communication:** Communication is confirmed as a strategic asset in the phases of building, governing and

measuring the organisation's relationship with stakeholders. Particular emphasis is also placed on environmental communication activities, considered relevant by 86% of the sample, while 14% of the sample has not yet implemented any communication activities, a fact that makes it necessary to reflect on possible difficulties related to the complexity of the subject or the economic and organisational effort required.

In terms of the communication methods used by organisations, events (87%) are in first place, followed by the dissemination of the sustainability report (81%) and thematic visits to the organisation's plants (71%). This shows how organisations are "faithful" to their mission, a fact also confirmed by the response on the "organisational impact" analysed in point 5 and perhaps still far from establishing a more structured and coherent approach to the complexity that sustainability expresses.

The second phase involved in-depth interviews with 7 organisations selected as particularly significant for the sector of reference and the objectives of the research in order to explore three key areas of sustainability communication identified in the analysis of the first phase:

1. **Engagement**,
2. **Reporting** and
3. **Measurement (KPI)**.

These three issues were investigated:

a. The status of implementation,
b. The critical issues encountered,
c. the results achieved and the impact on sustainability policies.

In addition, the double-materiality approach was analysed to verify the acceptability of this new reporting parameter and to identify any critical issues.

Specifically, the following evidence emerged:

1. **Engagement**: the main evidence concerns the need for a strategic and simultaneously widespread conduct that equally interests all the organisation's publics including those that appear to be peripheral. By extending the scenario of listening first and then acting, the strategy can cover all the expectations expressed by stakeholders and become a force capable of consolidating the brand's reputation at all levels and a natural antidote to conflicts and polarisation of opinion. In this sense, the listening and planning phases assume a strategic value capable of acting concretely to transform actions of a 'sporadic' nature into projects hinged in time and space.
2. **Reporting**: the sustainability report is confirmed as a well-known and practised tool for organisations. The objective is increasingly focused on towards the positive qualification of the relationship with the various stakeholders. Companies are increasingly using this tool from an ESG perspective to measure their social, environmental and governance impacts. And it is precisely the direct involvement of management in the processes of defining and reporting on sustainability that is an important outcome of the preparation of the report, which is becoming a useful tool for managing sustainability policies, triggering innovative processes on the organisational and production front, and implementing a rewarding relationship with stakeholders.
3. **Measurement:** Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are fundamental tools for measuring and managing an organisation's success. Indeed, there is a growing awareness of sustainability in terms of measurement. KPIs for measuring sustainability impact are crucial for different organisations to track and assess our environmental, social and economic contributions. These KPIs help organisations measure progress towards sustainability

goals and demonstrate commitment to responsible practices. In addition, transparency in reporting these metrics to stakeholders is essential to building trust and credibility in sustainability efforts.

4. **Double-Materiality:** Organisations are approaching double-materiality with caution, but with the awareness that they will need to comply with a European regulation in the very near future. Double-materiality is a new and not easy issue for organisations to deal with. At the moment, there is not as clear and defined a 'literature' on the subject to guide the way forward, and this is seen by some organisations as a barrier to adoption. Others, on the other hand, have already started to tackle the issue in a more pioneering way, trying to identify the difficulties involved in analysing positive and negative impacts, in defining the right stakeholders to involve, in order to succeed in combining the two materialities, the traditional one linked to impacts and the financial one.

Conclusions

It is clear from the survey results and the interviews conducted that sustainability has now become part of the organisations' knowledge base. All organisations are aware of the need to integrate this paradigm into their communication methods as well.

Many organisations, especially large companies, already operate in this context, using its tools and dynamics with awareness.

Despite the fact that almost all of the organisations surveyed consider the stakeholder engagement process to be absolutely relevant in risk management and brand reputation, only half of the sample stated that they are planning and structuring this process, while the remaining half are in the process of structuring it.

One critical area that emerged from the survey is the fact that, in general, organisations do not have a Sustainability Committee in-house. This shows that, even today, sustainability is still not fully accredited in the organisational profile, making it more difficult to deal with the complexity of the challenge and commitments required to transform sustainable actions into an integrated long-term sustainability strategy.

In conclusion, communication, including sustainability and environmental communication, plays an important role in an organisation's sustainability path. For the future, it is emphasised that communication will have to play an increasingly decisive role in the implementation of the sustainability strategy, both inside and outside the organisation, weaving like a weaver the fabric between the different competences and the relationships between the different categories of stakeholders, for an increasingly integrated and long-term process.

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Academic publications create sustainable knowledge in funded projects

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Introduction and purpose of the study

The European Union (EU) promotes innovative collaborations across different sectors and cross-borders, where multiple authorities, academic institutions, end-users, and industry are involved in innovation projects. Europe aims to increase its competitive advantage (European Commission, 2016). EU-funded innovation projects are part of the industrial innovation policies of the European Union (EU). Innovation projects bring together multiple stakeholders that may have very diverse backgrounds to co- create knowledge through complex cooperation (Ruoslahti, 2018), and the Horizon program calls for European research and development initiatives to strengthen collaboration for innovation (European Commission, 2019), "multidisciplinary and multisectoral networks can play important roles in members' competitiveness" (Alves, Marques, Saur & Marques, 2007, p. 32).

EU-funded innovation projects may involve high numbers of participants and they can, therefore, be characterized as complex. This complexity can be seen as a positive characteristic as Bassett-Jones (2005) for example, concludes that, diversity can enhance creativity and innovation, although when managed poorly, it can also be "a cause of misunderstanding, suspicion and conflict" (p. 169).

Diverse input helps facilitate innovation and complex problem-solving, as creativity is a source of new ideas and creative processes, and it "is a complex and diffuse construct" (Alves et al., 2007, p. 28). Besides proposed innovations output, project results, and new knowledge for innovation, externally funded innovation projects are expected to provide active project communication and dissemination.

This paper describes an approach where the sustainability of externally funded projects can be increased by creating knowledge by first focusing on academic publication of articles (also referred to as papers) that then lead to more specified knowledge toward needed official outcomes and deliverables. This approach adds to project communication and dissemination toward academic audiences.

The research question is: How can academic publishing promote knowledge development in externally funded projects?

Literature

The European Commission (2014) outlines that communication on European research projects should aim at demonstrating the ways in, which "European collaboration has achieved more than have otherwise been possible" (p. 1) and how its outcomes are both relevant to the lives of us Europeans. In the context of externally funded projects knowledge can be conceptualized as value (Ruoslahti, 2019).

Innovation Projects

According to Franco and Pinho (2019) innovation needs research to create technological advancements and new or improved products. EU-funded innovation projects are multi-stakeholder projects, as their consortia are required to include multiple actors that represent end-users, industry, and/or academia (European Commission, 2019). Innovation network stakeholders need to put enough emphasis on discussing what expectations they have for their relationships and the emergent culture during the innovation project (Mitleton-Kelly, 2005). Networks of relationships are sustained through communication, feedback, and inter-dependence. "When they meet a constraint, they are able to explore the space of possibilities and find a different way of doing things, i.e., they are creative and innovative" (Mitleton-Kelly, 2005, p. 45). Projects face internal or external crises to form turbulent environments; "as many crises combine different kinds of threats, cooperation with other actors is needed for their mitigation" (Vos, 2017).

Organizations explore for alternative ways to work toward their aims (Mitleton-Kelly, 2005), and opportunities for encounters can support the co-creation of value by mapping end-user processes and practices (Payne, Storbacka & Frow, 2008). Innovation projects can be studied as systems and their global features should be seen as a whole (Aaltonen and Sanders, 2005). Stakeholder management offers a systematic approach to organize involved relationships between organizations and the stakeholders (Roloff, 2008). Knowledge co- creation is important in promoting structured innovation and creativity, which build competitive advantage (Bagayogo et al., 2014). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) advocate dynamic interactions between stakeholders to create new knowledge.

Project dissemination

Co-creation involves communication and interaction (Gustafsson, Kristensson & Witell 2012). Knowledge creation can be approached from the perspective of co-creation, where collaboration requires communication among multiple actors (Bhalla 2014, Galvagno & Dalli 2014, Pirinen 2015).

Timely project communication on the success of project activities is a core interest of projects during and even beyond, the lifespan of the project (European Commission, 2014). Dissemination plans provide frameworks to coordinate and manage communication activities throughout the implementation of the project (GAP, 2016; SAFETY4RAILS, 2020). Project dissemination includes both dissemination materials and dissemination activities. (Hyttinen, 2017).

The best use of project results is when they are taken up by end-users, policymakers, the scientific community, or industry (European Commission, 2014). Project dissemination of European Union (EU) funded research and innovation projects should highlight achieving more by collaboration than would have been possible without it (Hyttinen, 2017).

Projects in themself function as organizations, which each have a plan, vision, mission, clear budget, and schedule (Henriksson, Ruoslahti & Hyttinen, 2018). Showing relevant outcomes makes better use of results within the triple-helix model of innovation with interactions between academia (universities), industry and government (Hyttinen, 2017). Main actor organizations in projects are partners by contract who work together to generate new knowledge, skills, and innovations (Henriksson et al., 2018). Learning by Developing (LbD) is an action model where projects are seen as learning environments that provide a context with five dimensions: authenticity, experiential nature, partnership, creativity, and research orientation (Laurea, 2011). Thus, projects can be seen as authentic environments, which employ experiential approaches in partnership to aim at creative innovations with a research-based orientation. The value that is authentically created output, which comes from joint activities, shared experiences, and partnerships between its stakeholders seeking to enhance the reputation of the project, position its outcomes and internal consistency (Vos & Schoemaker, 2011). Project, partners co-create with stakeholders, so their shared experiences become vital for dissemination, where new competencies become built on knowledge sharing between organized groups of experts and professionals (Pirinen, 2015).

Wilson et al. (2010) find that a key dissemination success factor is to interact with end users and Davis Cross (2015) notes that traditional ways of sharing knowledge and interacting with end-users such as press releases, seminars and conferences should be coupled with modern electronic platforms that provide secure possibilities for co-creative knowledge sharing and learning online.

Publishing project results

The key aim for dissemination is to make research results known to different stakeholder groups, such as academia, industry, professional end user organizations, and policymakers in a planned and targeted way (European Commission, 2017). Project communication refers to the strategic and targeted measures that promote the project action and results to a multitude of audiences, and possibly engaging in a two-way exchange, an example of which are articles that are presented in academic conferences to reach out to academic audiences to demonstrate how EU funding contributes to tackling societal challenges (European Commission, 2016).

The quality of project research can be improved by developing professionalism in the management of external communication, and by actively sharing best practices (Vos & Schoemaker, 2004). Co-creation can improve resource integration in complex settings and offer a framework to design and manage co-creation processes (Frow et al., 2015), such as this article writing process.

Methodology

The method of this study is participatory action research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1995) and co-creative writing (Engeström, 2004). This method was used in the Horizon 2020 funded project ECHO, the *European network of Cybersecurity centres and competence Hub for innovation and Operations*, task 9.5 (T9.5) *Societal impact assessment*.

The work in ECHO T9.5 was structured partly to produce knowledge creation as individual studies, many of which aimed at publishing academic papers. This was possible, as most outputs of T9.5 these individual studies did not include sensitive or confidential information. These individual studies produced an emerging and collective body of knowledge that was then condensed and referenced when producing task outcomes and writing its three official deliverables.

Researchers in ECHO T9.5 were encouraged to structure the output of their work as academic articles, which were submitted for publication to relevant academic journals and conferences. The choice of publication forum was left to the authors of each article. A paper was presented at each of the two conferences, the 11th International Conference on Multimedia Communications, Services and Security (MCSS 2022) and Digilience 2022 which were hosted in collaboration with the ECHO project.

Results

The sample of this study are 17 academic articles published under the efforts of ECHO T9.5 *Societal impact assessment*. These academic publications involved 14 authors.
Firstly, these academic papers generated input to provide valuable knowledge and background content for the throughput efforts towards e.g., deliverables D9.13 *Societal impact assessment toolkit*, D9.14 *E-skills & Training toolkit*, which were the planned official outputs of T9.5. Secondly, eight of these published papers were included as the individual cases that comprised the main body of text in deliverable D9.15 *Selected case studies* (Figure 1).

Figure 1 demonstrates that this practical project approach example demonstrates that focusing first on proving needed background knowledge as input, and work on this provide planned deliverables as outputs can be a very valid and rewarding way of knowledge creation in the context of funded projects. This approach has also been adopted in another Horizon-funded project DYNAMO, where the task T3.2 *Human factors for dynamic resilience*.

The sample of this article are seventeen (n = 17) published academic papers produced background knowledge for the outputs of T9.5. Four of these individual studies produced knowledge deliverable D9.13 *Societal impact assessment toolkit*. Seven studies created knowledge for D9.14 *E-skills & Training toolkit*. The deliverable D9.15 Selected case studies contains eight studies, one of which also contributed to D9.13 (Table 1).

The seventeen articles of the sample involve 14 different authors from three different organizations. Only two of these were by one author, which shows the co-creative nature of the T9.5 efforts. Of these papers fifteen (15) were written co-creatively by two or more authors, four of them by three authors, and two of them by four authors.

The published articles of the sample have been cited a total of 46 times and have been presented to audiences of approximately 310 conference participants. These efforts have also been reported as communication and dissemination efforts under the ECHO project.

Besides these official funded ECHO efforts, the project provided opportunities for student learning at the Laurea University of Applied Sciences, which was coordinator for T9.5. The total body of knowledge were elaborated and enriched by six bachelor's theses that, though not part

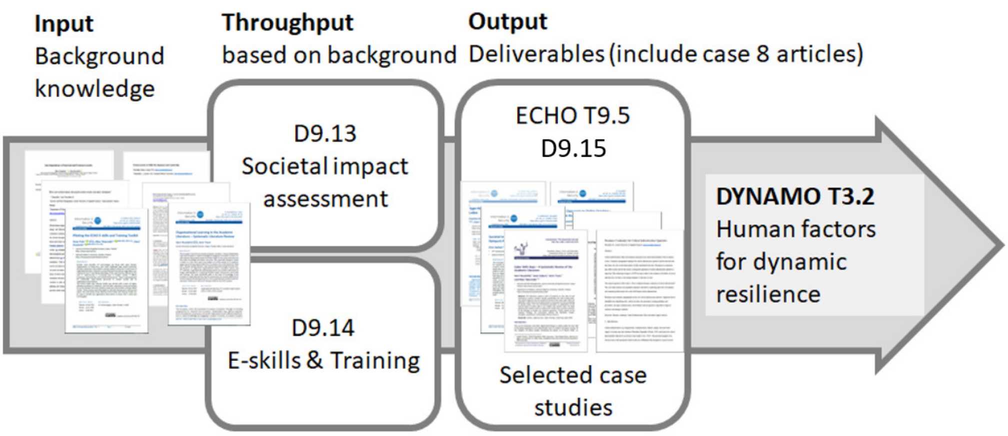

Figure 1: Academic papers published under the task for background knowledge and as part of deliverables.

Table 1: Academic papers published under ECHO task 9.5.

#	Task	Authors	Title	Published	Cited	Conference audience (~)
1	ECHO D9.13	Aaltola, K. & Ruoslahti, H.	Showing evidence of safeguarding networks in Cyber-Physical Domains by Societal Impact Assessment	Springer, in press, 2021	-	-
2	ECHO D9.13	Aaltola, K. & Ruoslahti, H.	Societal Impact Assessment of a Cyber Security Network Project	Information & Security: An International Journal, 46, no. 1, 53-64, 2020	2	-
3	ECHO D9.13	Hytönen E., Trent. A. & Ruoslahti, H.	Societal Impacts of Cyber Security in Academic Literature – a Systematic Literature Review	Proceedings of the European Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security. 2022	1	40
4	ECHO D9.13 and D9.15	Ruoslahti, H. & Davis, B.	Societal Impacts of Cyber Security Assets of Project ECHO	WSEAS Transactions on Environment and Development, 17, 1274-1283. 2021	2	30
5	ECHO D9.14	Aaltola, K., Ruoslahti, H. & Heinonen, J.	Cyber Range (CR) capabilities, interactions and features in acquisition of cyber skills by experts – Empirical study	European Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security (ECCWS) 2022	2	45
6	ECHO D9.14	Ruoslahti H., Coburn, J., Trent, A. & Tikanmäki, I.	Cyber Skills Gaps – a Systematic Literature Review of Academic Literature	Connections: The Quarterly Journal. 2022	5	-
7	ECHO D9.14	Ruoslahti, H.	From Classroom to Online Teaching – A Case during COVID19	Information & Security: An International Journal, 46, no. 3, 285-292. 2020	5	-
8	ECHO D9.14	Ruoslahti, H. & Trent, A.	Organizational Learning in the Academic Literature – Systematic Literature Review	Information & Security: An International Journal, 46, no. 1: 65-78. 2020	12	-

Table 1: Academic papers published under ECHO task 9.5. (continued)

9	ECHO D9.14	Pöyhönen, J., Rajamäki, J., Ruoslahti, H. & Lehto, M.	Cyber Situational Awareness in Critical Infrastructure Protection	Annals of Disaster Risk Sciences: Special issue on cyber-security of critical infrastructure, Vol 3, No 1. 2020	10	-
10	ECHO D9.15	Ruoslahti, H. & Heinonen, J.	Societal Impacts of Cybersecurity	The 11th International Conference on Multimedia Communications, Services and Security – MCSS 2022		45
11	ECHO D9.15	Rajamäki, J. & Ruoslahti, H.	ECHO Federated Cyber Range as a Tool for Validating SHAPES services	Proceedings of the 20th European Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security. Eze, T., L. Speakman & C. Onwubiko (Eds.), Academic Conferences International, Reading. 2022	-	40
12	ECHO D9.15	Aaltola, K., Ruoslahti, H. & Heinonen, J.	Desired cybersecurity skills and skills acquisition methods in the organizations	European Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security (Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 1-9).	-	40
13	ECHO D9.15	Aaltola, K.	Empirical study on cyber range capabilities, interactions and learning features	Digital Transformation, Cyber Security and Resilience of Modern Societies, Springer. 2021	6	-
14	ECHO D9.15	Rathod, P. & Kämppi, P.	Cybersecurity Workforce Capacity Building: a case of specialisation studies within the undergraduate programme	Presented in ICCWS 2020 15th International Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security, Norfolk, USA. 2022	-	45
15	ECHO D9.15	Ruoslahti, H. & Tikanmäki, I.	Impacts of Cybersecurity on Skills Development and Leadership	Tulevaisuudenkestävä bisnes–osaaminen systeemeissä: johtaminen ja yrittäjyys–osa 4. 2022	1	25

Table 1: Academic papers published under ECHO task 9.5. (continued)

16	ECHO D9.15	Tikanmäki, I. & Ruoslahti, H.	E-Skills in Cybersecurity	International Conference on Multimedia Communications, Services and Security (pp. 36-48). Cham: Springer International Publishing. 2022	-	35
17	ECHO D9.15	Frisk, I., Tikanmäki, I. & Ruoslahti, H.	Case Laurea – ECHO E-skills and Training Toolkit	Digilience 2022	-	30
				TOTAL	**46**	**310**

Table 2: How the published articles relate to attributes from literature.

Attributes from literature	How the published articles relate
Co-creative collaboration requires communication among multiple actors (Bhalla, 2014)	Fifteen articles published under the case task were written co-creatively by two or more authors: four by three and two by four authors
Dissemination plans provide frameworks to coordinate and manage communication activities (SAFETY4RAILS, 2020)	These articles were coordinated research efforts, which doubled as communication and dissemination activities
Highlight achieving more by collaboration than would have been possible without it (Hyttinen, 2017)	Co-creative research efforts and ensuing academic papers achieved more by collaboration
New competencies become built on knowledge sharing between organized groups of experts and professionals (Pirinen, 2015)	These academic papers show fifteen practical examples of how competencies become built on knowledge sharing ECHO experts
Key aim to make research results known to different stakeholder groups, such as academia (European Commission, 2017)	These academic papers show seventeen examples of making research results known to academia
Co-creation can improve resource integration and framework for co-creation processes (Frow et al., 2015)	The co-creative writing process helped improve resource integration for a co-creation process in the case task.

of the funded efforts of ECHO, were written in collaboration with the task T9.5, and 150 ECTS from student assignment which also drew from the work of this task.

Co-creative collaboration requires communication among multiple actors are demonstrated in that fifteen articles published under the case task ECHO T9.5 were co-creatively written and involving multiple authors. Dissemination plans can provide clear frameworks to coordinate and manage communication activities, and these articles demonstrate an example of coordinated research efforts to create knowledge and could also be reported as communication and dissemination activities. These academic papers show seventeen practical examples of openly sharing knowledge and making research results known to academia. Co-creation can improve resource integration and provide a framework for co-creation processes, and the co-creative writing process under the case task ECHO T9.5 helped improve resource integration for a co-creation process in the case task.

Conclusions

First, where appropriate, this approach serves to promote knowledge creation and transfers. Co-creative writing within the efforts of externally funded projects can improve resource integration within the project task in question and provide a framework for co-creation processes for knowledge creation.

An additional practical implication of these results is that project output communication can be used to help guide and focus project input and throughput communication, and work efforts in ways that promote knowledge creation and dissemination in academic forums. These academic publications may also serve individual authors as part of their doctoral studies and as overall academic merit.

On a wider note, authored academic publications provide an excellent basis project public relations as practical dissemination messages, professional articles, and web, newsletters, or blog posts. This same approach has now been adopted to the DYNAMO, Dynamic Resilience Assessment Method including combined Business Continuity Management and Cyber Threat Intelligence solution for Critical Sectors -project task T3.2 *Human factors in business continuity management and resilience development*.

The work in DYNAMO T3.2 during the spring of 2024 will be organized accordingly to co-creatively write 10 – 15 academic papers that can be submitted for publication. These papers will create a body of knowledge that will be used to write the T3.2 section in the DYNAMO deliverable D3.2

This approach is not suitable for all project tasks. When the data is sensitive and outputs confidential, open academic publications may not be possible. However, even though in such cases limited studies from open-source materials could help provide needed background for the more sensitive efforts or restricted deliverables. The potential of article volumes as high as in this case example of ECHO T9.5 or the planned efforts of DYNAMO T3.2 may not be possible, but any publications are a plus for knowledge creation, dissemination, and co-creative writing processes.

The academic implications of this study are that it demonstrates increased academic visibility. Publications in both academic journals and conferences promote open academic discussion. Conference presentations especially promote timely face-to-face discussions and connections, which may result in future collaborations between cross-border researchers across scientific sectors.

More study is recommended on the outreach of the knowledge from academic papers. This study has only looked at the numbers of citations and sizes of conference audiences. More in-depth results could be gained by looking at if and how these ideas presented in the sample articles have been used to integrate further new knowledge. All these implications help promote the sustainability of the project and its results. This has been the case in ECHO T9.5 and is expected to be so also in DYNAMO T3.2, where research efforts will aim at published articles to produce needed background knowledge for official outputs.

Acknowledgement

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Internal and External Aspects of Sustainability Communication. An investigation of CSR reporting and media coverage in different industries 2020-21

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Introduction

In 2015, the UN introduced the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2018) to build a common ground for generating worldwide improvement in a variety of areas related to environmental, social, economic, and ethical aspects. Adopted by all 193 United Nations member states, the plan offers "a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future" (United Nations, 2018, n.p.). Ongoing sustainability crises require leaders to be ready for fast-changing circumstances and sustainability management to be established on a strategic (change) level (Boone et al., 2020).

Crises and change are also driving forces behind the Public Relations profession that understands sustainability very general as the ability of a system to maintain continuity over time (see the Call for Papers of this conference). It therefore seems more and more important that companies include sustainability communication on a professional level. This is necessary in order not only to safeguard their existence in the long run, but also in a short and medium-term perspective, to implement sustainability on a normative level all over their organisation including external stakeholders to create positive development. But how sustainable are sustainability (self-)reporting and sustainability-related media relations of companies? What are the sustainability issues they are focussing on? And what differences related to the mentioned topics can be observed between different countries or industries? This paper will present two exploratory quantitative content analyses. The first study examines if, and to what extent, the UN's 17 Sustainable Goals are represented in formal reporting of the German Stock Index DAX 30 and the listed companies on the Dow Jones Industrial Index. Study 2 looks at how and to what extent daily newspapers, magazines and trade journals in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland report on the topic of sustainability in the financial, media and in Germany.

Theoretical Foundation & State of the Research

In the following, key terms are defined, and an eclectic state of research is presented. Due to the limited scope of this paper, only a few selected studies are cited to provide a brief overview of research on ESG management, CSR management and sustainability management and related communication.

Sustainability, CSR & ESG in general

The concept of sustainability was first defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in December 1983 (United Nations, 1983). In its famous so called "Brundtland Report", the WCED (1987) emphasises that technology and the behaviour of organisations of all kinds are the decisive factors for successful sustainability. In 2015, as mentioned above, the United Nations presented the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (DGs) (United Nations, 2018). A detailed presentation of the individual goals will be omitted here, as they will appear in the later analyses and are easily accessible via the cited sources.

CSR stands for "Corporate Social Responsibility" and pursues the idea that companies, with a special focus on internal and external stakeholders, commit themselves to ecologically and ethically correct actions under the aspect of corporate success and are also guided by social values (Hopkins, 2012). CSR defines the range of obligations a company has towards society (Carroll, 1971). Wood (1991) distinguishes between different levels of CSR. In this context, the institutional level of CSR is the way a company legitimises itself. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) defines CSR as the moral behaviour of a company towards society (World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 1999).

The term ESG stands for "Environmental, Social, Governance" and was popularly first used in a 2004 report entitled "Who Cares Wins," a joint initiative of financial institutions at the invitation of the United Nations (The Global Compact, 2004). It means that corporate financial goals go hand in hand with the fulfilment of environmental and social goals as well as responsible corporate governance (von Jürgensonn & Köster, 2021). As a term for a more holistic concept of sustainability, ESG seems to be gaining acceptance in recent years and also to be replacing the previous use of the CSR concept in many areas. However, it is most frequently used in relation to financial reporting (as recently also criticised in this context, as other papers in these conference proceedings show).

Management of sustainability, CSR and ESG as a more specific aspect

Sustainability management refers more specifically to the management practices of a company aimed at its sustainable development. Looking at modern industry, it can be said that sustainability management primarily refers to the economic production and consumption of services and products from the perspective of protecting and preserving the environment and its resources (Cohen, 2011). As sustainability management has become indispensable, the corresponding research is also growing. In a recent study, more than 40,000 articles from 27 leading management journals were examined to find out how and whether sustainability is positioned as a separate research discipline in the management environment (Dordi & Palaschuk, 2022). The authors found that the discourse on sustainability management is increasing and that more and more articles address this topic. The study also shows that there is still a lot of research to be done in the field of sustainability management.
CSR management means in this context that companies maintain their core activities and additionally focus their activities on their social responsibility. The focus is on customers, employees, other relevant stakeholder groups and society as a whole (Wunder, 2017). Gamerschlag et al. (2010) showed that a company's profitability correlates positively with a higher implementation of environmental information in corporate CSR communication (Gamerschlag

et al., 2010). According to Schaltegger (2011), sustainability commitment influences the environmental success of companies to an unprecedented extent, with the type of corporate governance in particular influencing the relevance of sustainability for corporate success. However, Crane et al. (2017) conclude that there is not yet a clear answer to how CSR management affects a company's profitability, as appropriate methods and measurement indicators are being developed slowly.

ESG management focuses on the fact that companies must not only pay attention to economic factors in their business activities, but also take sustainability factors into account; the idea of is that companies fulfil their social responsibility, but also optimise their corporate success through a sustainable and responsible orientation (Conrads et al., 2021). ESG management also means that investment decisions of companies should be based on classic, financial components paired with social, environmental, ecological and governmental factors. When companies take into account environmental aspects in their managerial decisions, it means that, for example, emissions, energy consumption or other environmental initiatives are included. The social responsibility of a company can be measured by the fact that companies assume and take into account, for instance, appropriate working conditions and human rights. The analysis of a company's performance in a governance dimension therefore refers to efforts against corruption, tax payments, actions of the CEO or the independence and transparency of various corporate bodies (Silvola & Landau, 2021). A quantitative bibliometric analysis of 981 articles from over 141 journals published on ESG management between 2001 and 2021 (Senadheera et al., 2022) showed that the number of articles on ESG almost doubled every year from 2017 onwards; one reason for this is that the results of ESG rating providers have an impact on direct financial aspects, among others.

Communication of sustainability, CSR and ESG as focus of this paper

An important aspect of sustainability, CSR and ESG as well as their management is the corresponding professional communication. In the literature, especially CSR communication has received a lot of attention. It can be understood as a special, yet fundamental aspect of CSR (or, more generally, of sustainability and ESG). This aspect functions as "a process of anticipating stakeholders' expectations" linked with an "articulation of the respective sustainability policy […] to provide true and transparent information about a company's or a brand's integration of its business operations, social and environmental concerns, and interactions with stakeholders" (Podnar, 2008). Schoeneborn & Trittin (2013) highlight CSR communication's role as an instrument to influence the perception of the organisation by the stakeholders. However, their instrumental perspective limits CSR communication to a transmission function only. Therefore, the objective of research in the area is to find techniques to communicate CSR messages more effectively to stakeholders (Bhattacharya, Sen & Korschun, 2011).

According to the literature, sustainability, CSR and ESG communication is becoming increasingly important to attract customers, investors and business partners: The origin of this development can be found in the financial sector, where due to negative previous experiences, investors have agreed to place ESG-related issues as a prerequisite for investment. From there, a whole web of sustainability, compliance and CSR communication has developed (Germann & Seitz, 2022). And since at least a decade, climate change was one of the core factors for sustainability-related communication of all kinds (Newig, 2011). It therefore offers a variety of opportunities for future research (Pan et al., 2022). From a practical perspective, successful sustainability communication is associated with various factors. On the one hand, companies must implement a thematically appropriate strategy that is communicated externally (Heinrich & Schmidtpeter, 2018). Corresponding specialised reports by companies are therefore indispensable for enhancing their reputation in society. Above all, however, they offer orientation for investors. A study that examined the potential of ESG factors and related indicators in relation to their competitiveness using a sample of selected sustainability reports shows that the frequency of ESG-related buzzwords is increasing significantly (Jilkova & Knihova, 2022).

But not only the external, also the internal side of CSR communication is crucial (Bekmeier et al., 2017; Duthler & Danesh, 2018; Song & Tao 2022). Based on several empirical studies dealing with an insurance case, Sievert & Wagner (2017) could show that the conditions which influence the sustainability processes are predominantly top-down oriented and even if participation is required, it is rarely realised. According to Sievert al. (2021), only if these structures and the hierarchies behind them are culturally much more open, internal CSR communication can become part of sensemaking processes within the organisation: "If companies really want to act in more responsible way, a more communicative approach is needed concerning CSR communication and management. In this context, CSR communication via internal social media can be a role model for more interactive internal communication in general."

State of research on sustainability, CSR and ESG communication in different industries

In addition, there is quite a lot of recent literature available about sustainability communication concerning individual industries. Examples are the airline industry, (Zieba & Johansson, 2022), automotive (Cioca et al., 2019), civil service (Laužikas & Miliūtė, 2020), especially fashion (Da Giau et al., 2016; SanMiguel et al., 2021; Turunen & Halmen, 2021), food (de Leon et al., 2021), forestry (Lähtinen et al., 2017), logistics (Piecyk & Björklund, 2015; Centobelli et al., 2020), mining (Lodhia, 2014), real estate (Masalskyte et al., 2014), retail (Simões & Sebastiani, 2017) shipping (Wang et al.), tourism (Bogren & Sörenson, 2021) or wineries (Dressler & Paunovic, 2021). However, research to date offers only little insight into sustainability across industries. However, for the sake of brevity and with a view to our own empirical analysis presented below, this paper will concentrate on the finance, media and sports industry.

For the finance industry, sustainability and related communication seems to be a high priority issue. A lot of information on this can be found in surveys dealing with Corporate Responsibility Reporting's including communication of e. g. investment companies. In this context, KPMG International's (2022) "Survey of Corporate Responsibility Reporting" demonstrates that "sustainability reporting has become an accepted part of disclosure and transparency for many large companies, with a continued uptake of sustainability reporting globally and increasing integration into mainstream financial reporting." European companies have emerged as global leaders in this regard (Campagnolo et al., 2015). In this context, some authors have developed "archetypes" e. g. for the banking industry (Yip & Bocken, 2018). But KPMG International (2022) also states that "this work is challenging and growth in reporting has slowed as companies focus inward, assessing the investment necessary to mitigate their risks and take advantage of the opportunities that have come to light".

Concerning the media and communication industry, the prioritisation of sustainability appears to be limited. In democratic countries, journalistic media typically function as watchdogs of those in power but they rarely criticise each other, which is why media journalism (journalistic reporting of the media industry itself) is relatively marginal (Neverla, 2019). The few existing empirical findings in this regard are mostly related to how news organisations report on sustainability issues in the broader (non-journalistic) media environment, for example regarding new digital technologies (Brantner & Sauerwein, 2021) or issues of data protection and data security in digital environments (Meissner & von Nordheim, 2018). Furthermore, it is worth mentioning a conference of the "European Media Management Association" (EMMA) in 2021 on the topic of "Media Management and Sustainability". In this context, a special journal publication has been announced, but is not yet available except some first articles with a much broader, also economic understanding of sustainability (Bomnüter et al., 2023). Further specific und specialised analysis on the media industry and its sustainability have been done also out of the two presented research studies in this paper and will be published soon separately (Sievert et al., forthcoming).

If comes to the sports industry, a lot of existing literature can be found dealing directly or indirectly with the major North American professional leagues (e. g. Ciletti et al., 2010; Mallen et al., 2013; MuCullough, 2020). In comparison, however, it looks like sustainability communication is not perceived as that important in this industry. A current overview is provided, for example, by Cury et al. (2023), who observes sustainability and its communication "as an emerging field with predominantly North American (in terms of both authorship and geographical settings) studies", stating a high need for further development. The comparatively quite few European studies emphasise a lot of national differences (François et al., 2019): Communication by French clubs obviously "tends to highlight sport's values, involve few media channels, whereas communication by UK clubs explicitly vaunts their social responsibility and involves numerous channels." The situation for international Corporate Brands seems to be even more differentiated (François et al., 2021). All in all, a "pragmatic perspective on the future of sustainability in sport", as postulated by Kellison and McCullough (2018), seems to be predominant in this industry.

Theoretical conclusions & selected hypotheses on both studies within this paper

The theoretical foundations and the state of the research have shown clearly that sustainability, CSR and ESG are overlapping concepts both from an academic and managerial perspective. At the same time, they are still different subjects with non-identical perspectives. We therefore decided to use the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals as a comprehensive framework including a broad variety of sustainability dimensions. Based on this multi-faceted concept, this paper will from here on consistently use the term "sustainability communication".

With a view to the literature on sustainability and its communication, it also became clear that climate action is the most frequently addressed SDG in recent years. In addition, differences between U.S. American and European sustainability reporting were mentioned. But most notably, there are important differences between industries regarding sustainability communication.
Based on these observations, this paper will focus on the following six hypotheses:

- H_1: Climate Action is by far the most frequently mentioned SDG in companies' documents.
- H_2: European companies address a greater variety of SDG issues in their reporting than American.
- H_3: There are huge difference between industries related to which SDG sectors are covered.
- H_4: Climate Action is by far the most frequently mentioned SDG in the media coverage during 2020-21

- H_5: Depending on the industry, media coverage on SDG tends to be either a side aspect or an exclusive report.
- H_6: The tonality of media reporting on sustainability issues differs a lot between industries.
- Hypotheses 1 to 3 will be answered with the first study conducted within this paper; study two will focus on hypotheses 4 to 6. The overall methodology for both studies will be presented in the following chapter.

Methodology & Limitations

This paper presents two exploratory studies which are both based on quantitative content analyses of sustainability communication while adopting different perspectives (internal and external). The first study examines if, and to what extent, the UNs' 17 Sustainable Development Goals are represented in formal reporting of the German Stock Index DAX 30 and the listed companies on the Dow Jones Industrial Index. Applying a quantitative content analysis, 314 financial and non-financial documents from 2018 to 2020, and 230 website sections, concentrating in one way or the other on Corporates Values, CSR, Sustainability, SDGs and Covid-19, are analysed. For this purpose, the broad sustainability definition mentioned above was used. The data collection process took place from May 1, 2020 to May 25, 2020.[1]

For the second study, we conducted a manual content analysis (n = 1017) of online news reporting containing topical keywords related to sustainability in three industries (media, sports, and finance). Besides the SDG categories, the authors also coded the tonality and the weighting of the sustainability aspect within each article, among other variables. The time frame was November 1, 2020, until October 31, 2021. The sample included a broad range of websites, most of which belong to relevant newspapers, magazines, and business papers predominantly from Germany, but also featured key outlets from Austria and Switzerland. With regard to both industries, relevant articles were selected according to the prevalent, sustainability-related keywords in the finance and the media industry. Both database queries have been elaborated iteratively until a sample with a tolerable amount of false positives was achieved. The primary aim, thus, was not to compare the absolute numbers of articles on all industries, but rather to have a solid sample for the analysis of sustainability dimensions addressed in media reporting.[2]

Concerning the methodology, it should be noted that both studies have clear limitations: The first exploratory study focuses only on large European and American companies. The limitations of the second study are mainly related to thematic differences within the different industries (sports, finance, media), which is why it was not possible to use the same keywords. Furthermore, the SDGs are broad categories that do not allow for a more differentiated analysis. Finally, it should be mentioned that due to different approaches, the two studies delineate the media industry as an industry a bit differently.
For reasons of space, the following presentation of results for this paper concentrates on the hypotheses. By the way, for the sake of clarity in the partly very complex figures, decimal places have been omitted from Study 1 here and in the following for this paper.

1 For this first sub-study, the authors would like to thank Castulus Kolo and Sofia Matt for the fruitful collaboration.

2 The authors also like to thank the participants of a student project in the Media and Communication Management Master's program at Macromedia University, who contributed significantly to the data collection of this second sub-study, namely: Tom Brinckmann, Susanne Bruns, Cenk Erdem, Philipp Leben, Justin Lissner, Simon Lorscheid, Joris Müller, Fabian Richter, Lucas Schmitz, Viktoria Schulte-Witten, Markus Strausfeld. Finally, we also would like to thank the partner of the second project, the media intelligence firm pressrelations.

4 Selected Results

Hypotheses linked to Company reports, internal documents and websites

H_1: Climate Action is by far the most frequently mentioned SDG in the companies' documents

The results (figure 1) show that a general reference to SDGs is made in about 70 per cent of all documents and website sections. In roughly 30 per cent of all analysed data there is no reference to SDGs. This hypothesis could not be confirmed. "Climate Action", although ranking highest, was not by far the most frequently mentioned SDG in the companies' documents. It was mentioned 16 per cent in total—and closely followed by SDG 8 "Decent Work, Growth" with a total of 15 per cent. "Consumption and Production" as the 12th SDG was mentioned a total of 14 per cent in the documents of the companies surveyed. This shows that there were no big differences with regard to how often SDGs were addressed.

H_2: European companies address overall much more SDG issues in their reporting than American

DAX companies have a higher SDG representation than Dow Jones companies as visible in figure 2. The 17 SDGs among all Types of Media Divides by DAX and DJ shows that the mean value for the DAX is 14.2 per cent and for the DJ 7.9 per cent. Thus, the second hypothesis was confirmed.

A total of 264 DAX companies and 299 DJ companies were examined in the study. First of all, it can be seen that DAX companies often address by far more SDG topics in their reporting. What is particularly worth mentioning is that not

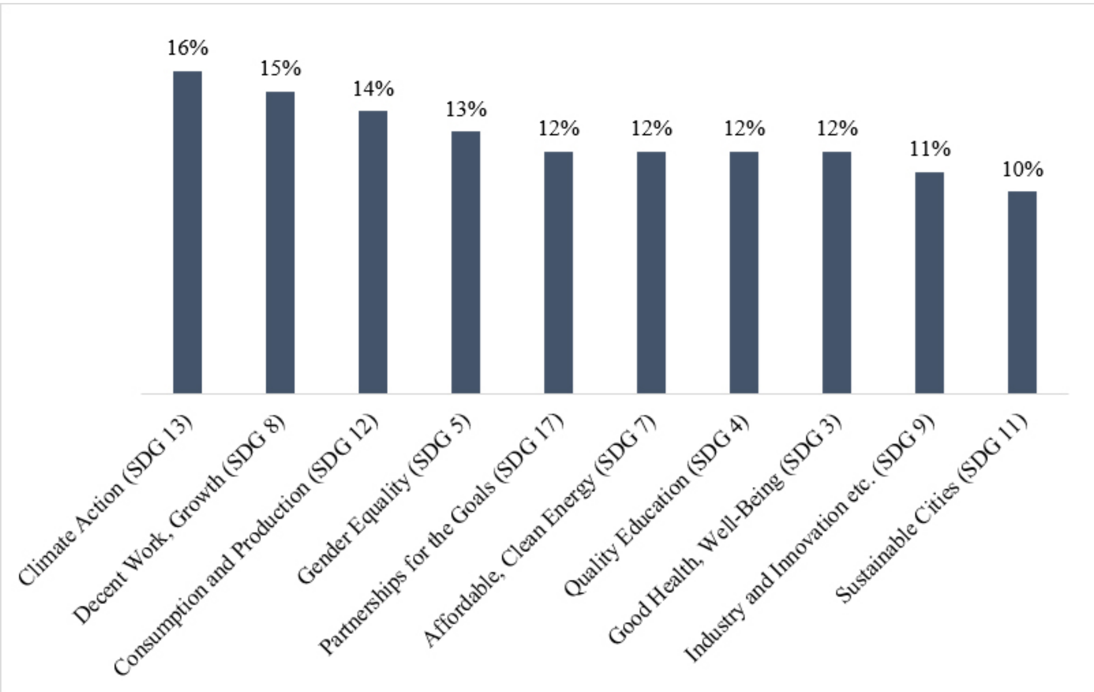

Figure 1: Ten most frequently mentioned SDGs among all types of analysed media (Study 1; n= 314; multiple assignments possible.

a single SDG was addressed more often by DJ companies than by DAX companies. Only poverty was addressed by both DJ and DAX companies with 5 per cent each. The biggest difference can be seen in the reporting of the ninth SDG “Industry and Innovation”. In the case of American companies, this SDG was only addressed in 5 per cent of the cases examined. In contrast, 17 per cent of German companies report on this SDG.

H_3: There are huge difference between industries related to which SDG sectors are covered

There are huge differences between industries visible in figure 3 and therefor this hypothesis can be considered confirmed. Obviously, many industries do focus a lot on SDG which seem to be very closed to their business.

As examples can be mentioned “Affordable and clean energy” (21 per cent) for the “Energy, Chemicals, Industry Suppliers” field, “Good

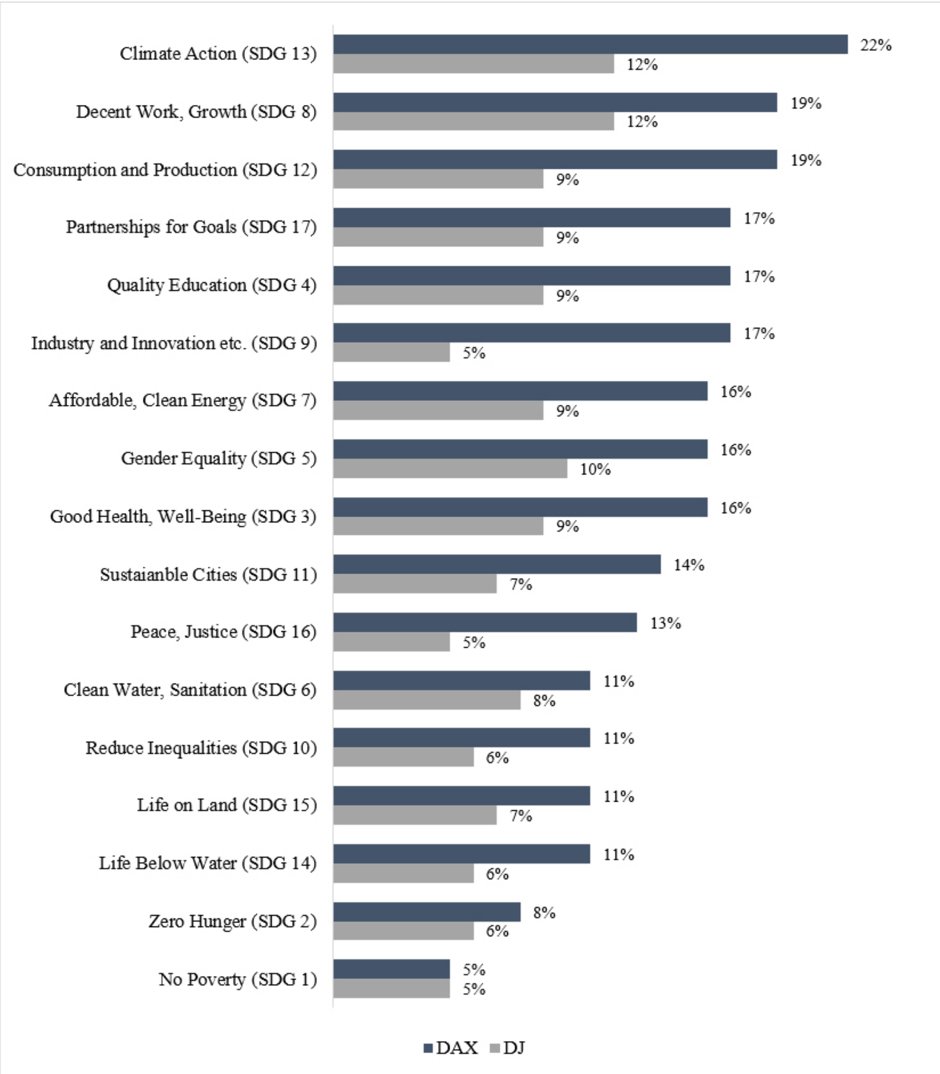

Figure 2: Representation of 17 SDGs among all types of company owned media by DAX and DJ (Study 1; n = 314); multiple assignments possible.)

Health, Wellbeing" (also 21 per cent') for the "Pharmaceutical and Health Care" companies or "Climate Action" (22 per cent) for the "Automotive, Aerospace, Machinery" industries. The situation for Financial Services and linked businesses as well as for the group led by Fast Moving Consumer Goods is quite more dispersed without having one clearly leading sustainability aim.

However, only within the context of "Information Technology, Media, Telecommunication" there seems to be a really addressing of very different SDG sectors with three around 20, seven around 15 and another four around ten per cent. This could be understood as an indicator that the

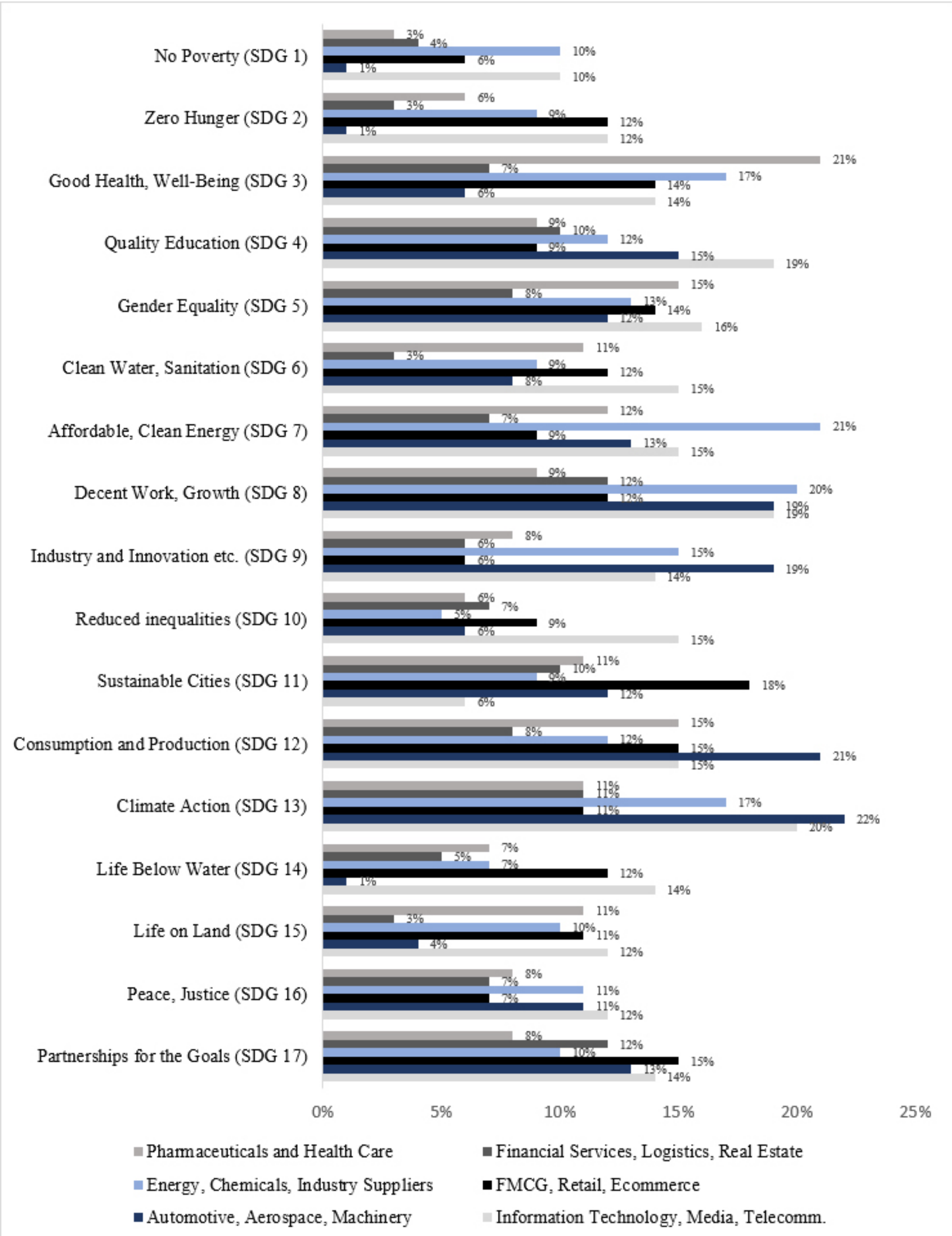

Figure 3: Distribution of SDGs among various industry fields (Study 1; n= 314; multiple assignments possible).

media-related companies analyzed do take the approach of the UN SDGs a bit more holistically than others do. However, one could also ask if maybe media companies' SDG communication might be more professional and better in reality.

Hypotheses linked to media news coverage

H_4: Climate Action is by far the most frequently mentioned SDG in the media coverage during 2020-21

This hypothesis has to be rejected. "Climate Action" is only the second most frequently addressed in the context of the finance industry (24.0 per cent) after "Sustainable Consumption and Production" (36.6 per cent), and it does not play any significant role in the sports or the media business (figure 4). This is quite surprising given that, for instance, the film industry has an enormous carbon dioxide footprint due to high energy consumption or professional sports clubs

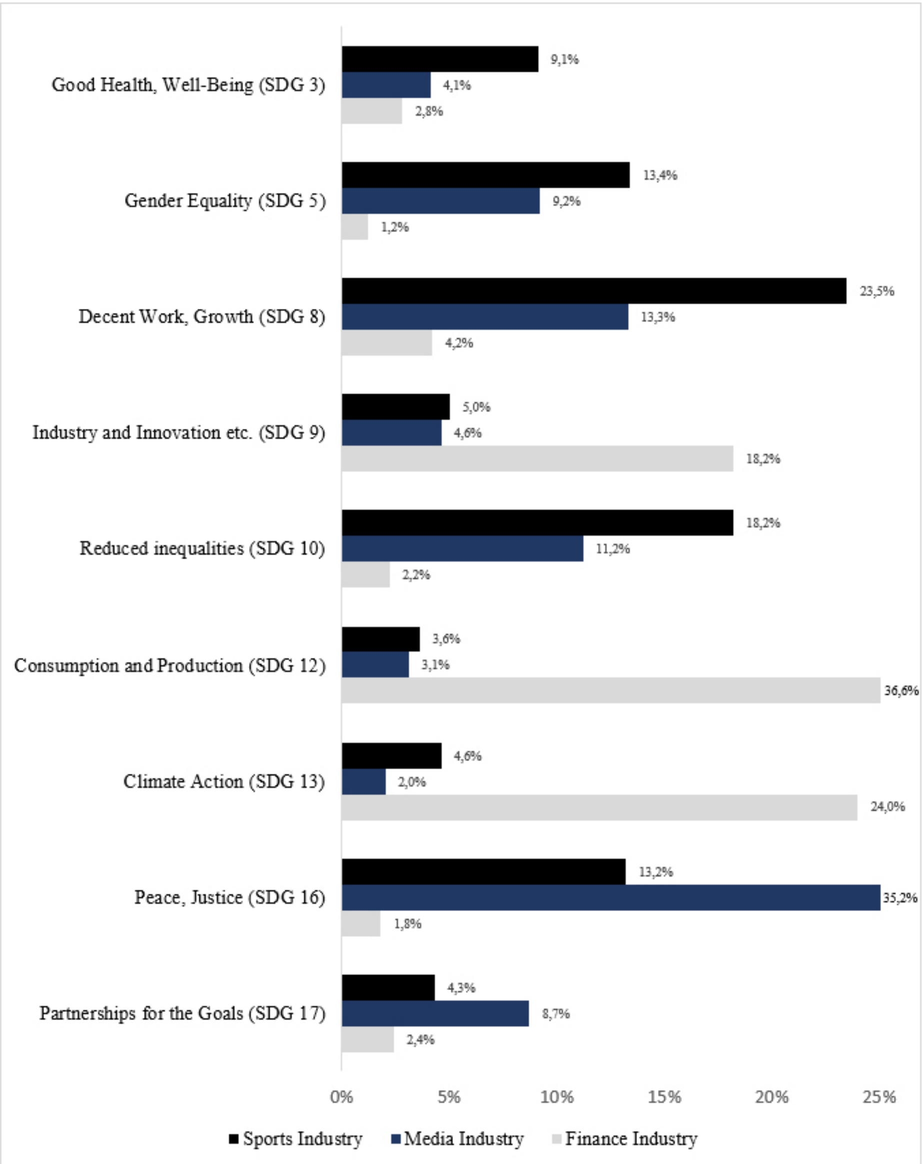

Figure 4: Distribution of SDGs with a minimum prevalence of 5 per cent (Study 2; n = 1017; multiple entries possible; percentages refer to the total number of coded SDGs within an industry).

due to frequent air travel.

If we take a deeper look at the data, we find that media reporting pays attention to very different aspects of sustainability depending on the industry. While “Sustainable Consumption and Production”, as already mentioned, dominates coverage of the finance industry, the most frequently reported dimensions in the sports and the media business are “Decent Work and Growth” (23.5 per cent) and “Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions” (35.2 per cent) respectively. The latter, which may at first sight seem surprising, is probably due to media’s watchdog role in society, which has increasingly come under pressure around the world in recent years.

H_5: Depending on the industry, media coverage on SDG tends to be either a side aspect or an exclusive report

Due to the limited interest of journalism in covering its own business; as mentioned above in the literature, it was assumed that how prominently sustainability issues are addressed in reporting (with regard to the thematic focus of the coded articles) would also differ. The data confirm this at least to a certain degree concerning the media industry, where sustainability topics have clearly the lowest proportion of exclusive reporting on such topics, at 22,7 per cent. Finance comes in at 43,9 per cent and sports at 49,0 per cent. However, concerning the media industry, the

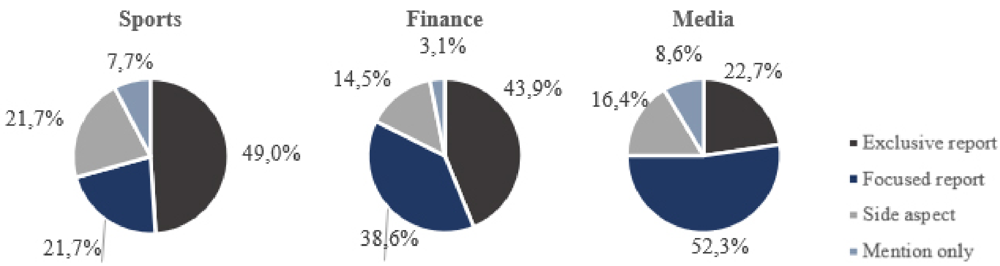

Figure 5: Focus on sustainability in media coverage per industry (Study 2; n= 1.000).

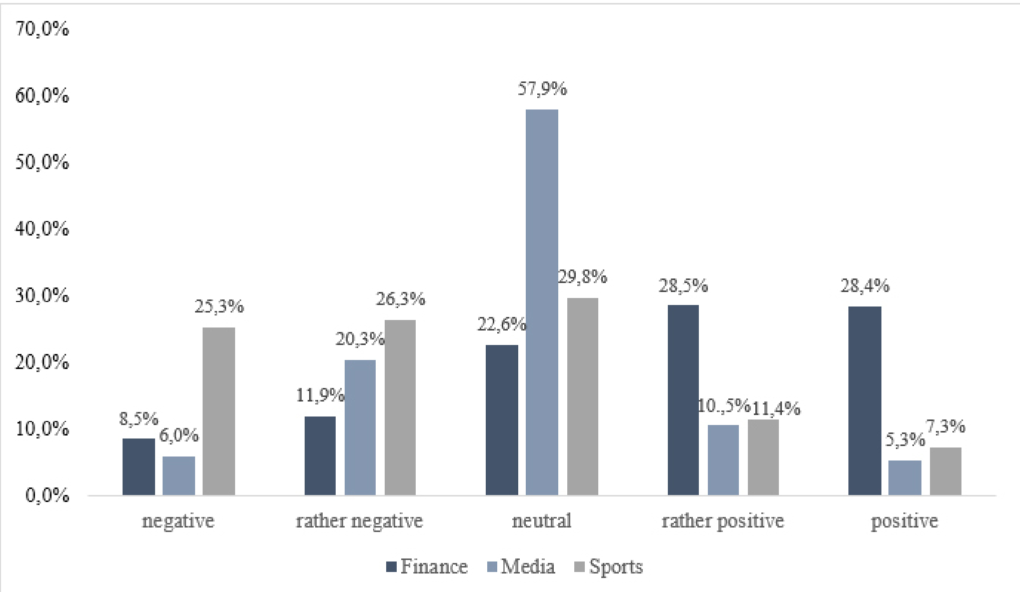

Figure 6: Tonality of media coverage by focus (Study 2; n= 1001).

second most prominent category is the most frequent across all industries with 52,3 per cent. Finance and sports have only 38,6 per cent and 21,7 per cent respectively in this category. The hypothesis can therefore only be confirmed to a limited extent. It is striking, however, that when sustainability is addressed in the media coverage of all three industries, it is usually the dominant aspect within the respective articles. This is quite surprising given the overall relatively low attention towards sustainability in the sports and media businesses.

H_6: The tonality of media reporting on sustainability issues differs a lot between industries.

This hypothesis could be confirmed, as the finance industry as a whole was rated 56.9 per cent positive and rather positive, followed by the sports industry with 17.7 per cent and only last the Media industry with 15.8 per cent. It is conspicuous that sustainability coverage related to the media industry is predominantly neutral—while the finance industry shows a slant towards a positive tonality and coverage of the sports industry has a slightly negative tonality. This is another evidence how coverage differs between industries. In other words, there seems to be a general tendency in each industry regarding the tonality when it comes to media coverage of sustainability. This implies that it might be more difficult e. g. for a PR professional in the sports business to get sustainability coverage with a positive tonality. On the contrary, it appears to be relatively easier in the finance industry to do so. An alternative interpretation would be that communicators in the finance industry are more effective in generating positive reporting as compared to their colleagues in the sports business.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to showcase internal and external aspects of sustainability communication by investigating thematically related self-reporting and external media coverage in different industries.

First, the analyses conducted here shows very clearly a **high degree of differentiation** already within, but also between (self-)reporting and media coverage regarding sustainability issues. Among other aspects, the importance of climate action as a key SDG was not as high as expected in both studies. Study 1 showed that European countries devote more attention to SDG issues than the U.S. corporations. Study 2 showed that the tonality and the thematic focus of media reporting depended a lot on the industry covered.

Secondly, the country and industry-specific variables also have several **implications that practitioners of sustainability communication** should be aware of. The range of professionally manageable aspects is probably very limited. E.g., tonality can probably only be influenced to a very limited degree by communicators. Studies like the one presented here can help practitioners to better understand the complexity and detail of sustainability communication and a necessity for a very high degree of specific professionalisation.

Thirdly, the paper entails clear limitations as mentioned in the methodology, but it also demonstrates some of the potential for future research that may allow for a **broader in-depth knowledge**. In this context, there are many desiderata already for each individual study, e.g. a broader international approach. Also, it would be desirable to develop an „all in one“ study on sustainability communication comparing (self-)reporting, media coverage, and – additionally – self-reflection of professionals, combining different industries in one integrative research design instead of many industry-specific studies. All in all, theory building and research on comparative sustainability communication is still at the very beginning. The proceedings of the Bledcom conference, however, are a good and important step to answer at least some of the questions raised. Given its overall importance, sustainability communication needs, in many contexts, a very quick and in-depth professionalisation based on profound academic knowledge.

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Professional Sustainability in a Time of AI-Generated Disinformation: A Challenge for Public Relations and Communication Management Practitioners

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Although disinformation – the "deliberate spread of misleading or biased information" (McCorkindale, 2020, p. 1) – has been a challenge with which public relations and communication management have been grappling for many years, AI-generated disinformation creates fresh problems for practitioners and scholars. This form of disinformation (also referred to as 'AI-assisted disinformation') involves AI, and AI tools, being used to produce disinformation (Temby, 2020). Although much of today's disinformation involves AI in some form, this paper distinguishes disinformation (that usually incorporates AI) from AI-generated disinformation (that is actively produced through, or by, AI).

The intentionally deceptive content that is part of AI-generated disinformation is created and spread through multiple means. These include AI-assisted deepfakes (synthetic images or videos of people and events), automated bots, text generator tools, and sockpuppets (online identities posing as real people), among other things (Subramaniam, 2021; Temby, 2020). AI enables the scale of the – increasingly realistic – disinformation to be expanded significantly, the speed of its distribution to be accelerated, and its volume to be increased. Adding to this troubling situation is the fact that AI technologies are developing at an "extremely rapid pace" (Béranger, 2021, p. xi). This type of AI-powered disinformation is already causing varied forms of harm, ranging from publics being deceived to election campaigns being subjected to tampering. In the hands of hostile state actors, Temby (2020) warns, "AI tools have the potential to produce disinformation on a scale to overwhelm communication networks".

This paper explores the implications of developments in AI-generated disinformation for the professional sustainability of public relations and communication management practitioners. The paper argues that this form of disinformation will increasingly negatively impact the professional sustainability of these practitioners. Crisis situations involving AI-generated disinformation are especially likely to impact practitioners' professional sustainability negatively. Scholars and practitioners in public relations and related areas need to grapple more urgently with AI-generated disinformation and draw on other fields to widen their repertoire of approaches for dealing with this more problematic version of disinformation. If practitioners find themselves inadequately prepared for tackling the difficulties arising from AI-generated disinformation, particularly in crisis situations, their ability to operate productively will likely decline, and the organisations and communities that they serve will likely suffer multiple negative consequences, ranging from large-scale relationship damage to financial losses.

The paper contributes to two areas of public relations scholarship, the first area being scholarship about disinformation. This area of inquiry, Edwards (2021) points out, has its roots in research about propaganda and public opinion manipulation. Over the decades, authors such as Shell (1992) have highlighted the unethical nature of disinformation in organisational contexts. Recently, various scholars (see, for example, Macnamara, 2020; Thompson, 2020) have emphasised the concerning growth of digital disinformation around the world. More specific studies have examined, for instance, 'prebunking strategies' for public relations disinformation attacks (Boman, 2021), and the nature of disinformation-susceptible publics (Krishna, 2021).

The second area of scholarship to which the paper contributes is the area of AI in public relations. This is a relatively new, but rapidly expanding, area that is being given increasing attention due to the growth of AI technologies and their uses in the profession and societies more broadly. Initial work about 'algorithmic public relations' (Collister, 2015), as well as automata in connection with publics (Tilson, 2017), has been enlarged through studies examining the functional uses of AI in public relations, critical issues, ethical challenges, and the teaching- and learning-related considerations with which educators need to grapple; for a recent overview of the scholarship about AI in public relations, see Swiatek et al. (2023).

Although growing numbers of public relations studies are examining AI critically, few are focusing directly on AI in connection with disinformation and crisis. Critical studies have examined, for instance, the damage caused by Big Data-driven public relations (Gregory & Halff, 2020), as well as the ways in which AI technologies perpetuate biases, and limit voice and diversity (Bourne & Edwards, 2021). In terms of disinformation, Wiesenberg and Tench (2020) have examined the usage of social bots in a disinformation era. While scholarship about AI in crisis communication has been growing in recent years – primarily focusing on AI, public relations and crisis prediction (see, for example, Farrokhi, Shirazi, Hajli & Tajvidi, 2020; Ghani & Gordon, 2022) – AI-generated disinformation has received little attention to date in the crisis communication scholarship. As this brief outline of the literature has shown, a need exists to understand the implications of AI-generated disinformation for public relations. Specifically, in terms of practice, research is needed to understand how (or even whether) the public relations profession has engaged with AI-generated disinformation; understanding this situation is the first step in determining the ways in which the profession can undertake further work in dealing with this type of disinformation in safeguarding practitioners' professional sustainability.

The remainder of this paper is divided into five sections. First, professional sustainability, in relation to AI-generated disinformation, is discussed in greater depth. Second, the method used to understand how (if at all) AI-generated disinformation is being discussed in the public relations profession is outlined. Third, the results of research about the state of existing public relations discussions about AI-generated disinformation are presented. Fourth, the implications arising from these results are discussed. Fifth, final thoughts and avenues for future research are presented in the conclusion.

Professional Sustainability in Relation to AI-Generated Disinformation

With societies around the world increasingly focusing on the welfare of workers, professional sustainability is being given ever-greater attention in both macro-level (public) and micro-level (organisational unit) contexts. As Friedman and Banta (2023) note, sustainability can be defined, drawing on Robertson (2014), as a system's ability to function and endure autonomously in the long term. With this definition in mind, these authors describe professional sustainability, incorporating the view of Hoel et al. (2021), as the extent to which a given profession, or trained group of individuals, can continue to operate as a productive entity in current and future conditions. Friedman and Banta share the view of Pereno and Eriksson (2020) that any consideration of professional sustainability, or a profession's systemwide ability to maintain its current workforce in a feasible way, needs to understand the extent to which the current socio-political climate hinders or supports both the profession-at-large and each practitioner distinctly.

Both individual communication practitioners and the communication profession-at-large face increasingly significant challenges from AI-generated disinformation, especially in crisis situations. As noted in the paper's introduction, this type of disinformation makes communicators' work much more challenging on multiple levels – ranging from the building of relationships and trust to the maintaining of reputations – thus negatively impacting professional sustainability. The difficulty of dealing successfully with AI-generated disinformation in crisis situations is especially acute. Digital technologies, and particularly social media, have made practitioners' jobs increasingly difficult by changing the dynamics of crises considerably. Valentini, Romenti, and Kruckeberg (2018) note the growing consensus that social media exacerbate the development of critical situations and the formation of new types of crises. The result of this ever-more challenging situation, they explain, is that the managers of organisations that are affected by crises “have less time to plan and to implement actions to solve these crises and, thus, to restore their reputations, with even less time to monitor how publics perceive and discursively talk about these organizations' actions in their online networks” (Valentini, Romenti, & Kruckeberg, 2018, p. 59).

To understand the state of current industry discussions about AI-generated disinformation in connection with public relations, and especially crises and crisis communication, original research examined the news items and commentary published in online trade media. This research was required to understand how – or even whether – this nascent form of disinformation, and the chaos that it entails, has begun to be discussed by communication professionals. These individuals need to gain a sense of the difficulties created by large volumes of rapidly spread, relationship- and reputation-damaging deceptive content that can overwhelm the practitioners trying to respond to it. Through this first research-focused step, the profession can (in the not-too-distant future) undertake further work in dealing with this type of disinformation and, by extension, help to safeguard the professional sustainability of communicators and the communication profession-at-large.

Method

To understand the ways in which public relations practitioners have engaged with AI-generated disinformation to date, especially in crisis situations, the following research question guided the original research: “How (if at all) is AI-generated disinformation being discussed in public relations and crisis communication trade media?" To answer this research question, conventional qualitative content analysis, following Hsieh & Shannon (2005), was used. This method was chosen as the most suitable tool to help answer the research question because it allows emerging themes and patterns to be identified in data, allowing "categories and names for categories to flow from the data" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). The analysis was undertaken by searching the leading online public relations media portals for published content about disinformation, crises, and crisis communication. The portals were: *PRWeek*, *O'Dwyer's*, *PR Daily*, *PRovoke Media*, *Public Relations Today*, and *PR News Online*. This selection of leading industry news and commentary portals sufficed to understand the nature of the current discussions. To ensure that no published content was overlooked, a more universal Google search was also undertaken using five search strings – featuring the asterisk wildcard to help the search capture as many relevant results as possible – in connection with public relations, crisis communication, crisis, and crises:

- "AI * disinformation" + "public relations",
- "AI * disinformation" + "crisis communication",
- "AI * disinformation" + "crisis", and
- "AI * disinformation" + "crises".

All of these searches – involving the online trade media portals, as well as Google – enabled a comprehensive understanding of the state of current discussions to be formed.

Results

The examination of the published industry content revealed that, on the whole, professionals in public relations and related areas are yet to engage meaningfully with AI-generated disinformation, especially in relation to crises and crisis communication. This finding is understandable, given the fact that this form of disinformation is so new. It is also understandable given the multiple forms that disinformation takes, and practitioners' divided focus on those varying forms. The industry portals featured many articles about disinformation – as a topic in its own right, and in relation to crisis – but very few articles about AI-generated, -assisted or -powered disinformation. One *PRWeek* article, 'Tech Talk with Blackbird.AI CEO Wasim Khaled', notes that "Blackbird is an AI-driven, disinformation intelligence platform". A commentary (on *O'Dwyer's*) by one of the founders of Cyabra, a SaaS platform that uses AI to detect disinformation online, also encourages professionals to use AI to fight disinformation. These results show that part of the profession is beginning to understand the need to use AI to counter disinformation: a positive sign.

Otherwise, the disinformation-related articles on the industry portals covered various topics. Many *PRovoke Media* articles about disinformation related to the Russian invasion of Ukraine; these articles included, for instance, 'Combatting Misinformation & Disinformation: The 10 Greatest Myths About The War In Ukraine', 'Agency Creates Toolkit To Fight Russia's Disinformation War', and 'Analysis: A Turning Point In The Disinformation War?'. The published content on *Public Relations Today* covered digital disinformation from multiple angles; examples included 'Most Americans Consider Disinformation a Problem, Study Finds' (re-published from *PRSay*), 'Traditional and Social Media Are Sowing Disinformation and Division, Report Says' (published from *PRSay*), 'Why disinformation is one of the biggest problems in society—and may prolong the pandemic' (republished from *Agility PR Solutions*).

The broader searches using Google indicated that relevant discussions are still few. Several websites published Blackbird.AI's announcement about the completion of a $10M Series A fundraising effort deliberately designed to enhance the organisation's efforts in combating disinformation. The site *Marketing Brew* published a news item, titled 'PR giant Weber Shandwick wants to help brands combat fake articles, narratives about them', dealing with Weber Shandwick's new Media Security Center designed to help brands combat misinformation and disinformation; the Center provides access to the Blackbird. AI platform. Otherwise, it is other fields – from international relations to defense – that are currently leading the discussions about AI-fueled disinformation. Examples of articles published in these other fields include 'Deep Fakes and Dead Hands: Artificial Intelligence's Impact on Strategic Risk' (published by the Nuclear Threat Initiative), 'Deepfakes and Synthetic Media in the Financial System: Assessing Threat Scenarios' (published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), and 'Researchers Warn Of 'Dangerous' Artificial Intelligence-Generated Disinformation At Scale' (published by Edge).

Discussion

The results of the original research indicate that communication practitioners need to begin to discuss the threats posed by AI-generated disinformation more earnestly in order to help safeguard professional sustainability, for individuals and the profession-at-large, more effectively. The communication professions' discussions are clearly and sadly lagging behind discussions taking place in other fields. In addition to discussing the threats posed by AI-generated disinformation more actively, the professionals also need to engage in more earnest brainstorming to develop creative solutions to a set of challenges that will only grow in the coming years.

In that respect, the professionals should draw on theory and practice from other fields to expand the current debates and to enrich the repertoire of options available to combat AI-generated disinformation. These options include the use of media forensics techniques (that help to determine whether audio or video files have been subjected to tampering), technologies to ensure the provenance of content, and media education (to help individuals learn how to evaluate information critically) (Subramaniam, 2021). Some of these options will be helpful primarily for practitioners, while other options are also likely to help stakeholders and the members of publics with which practitioners engage more generally. These options will become increasingly important for helping manage crisis situations, in particular.

Ultimately, though, combatting AI-generated disinformation will require a multi-pronged approach, not just from communications professionals, but also from professionals in other fields. Honigberg (2022, par. 2) rightly points out that:

> While machine learning techniques can also be used to combat disinformation, they will likely remain insufficient to counterbalance the expanding universe of anonymous digital mercenaries. Unless liberal democracies develop whole-of-society counter-disinformation strategies, AI-enhanced disinformation operations will further exacerbate political polarization, erode citizen trust in societal institutions, and blur the lines between truth and lies.

Hence, communication practitioners will likely need to work more closely with the defense and security sectors, as well as government agencies, to assist in the broader fight against AI-generated disinformation.

Conclusion

Increasingly sophisticated disinformation has made the work of strategic communicators tough. AI-generated disinformation has made it even tougher. Developments in this type of disinformation in the years to come will make it tougher still. Indeed, this paper has argued that this form of disinformation will increasingly negatively impact the professional sustainability of these communicators. Crisis situations involving AI-generated disinformation are especially likely to impact practitioners' professional sustainability negatively. The paper's original research has shown that scholars and practitioners in public relations and related communication areas need to grapple more urgently with AI-generated disinformation and draw on other fields to widen their repertoire of approaches for dealing with this more problematic version of disinformation.

Given this need to continue to challenge the spread and negative impacts of AI-generated disinformation, as well as the need to strengthen professional sustainability, the paper opens a range of avenues for further research. Future studies could employ other research methods, such as interviews or focus groups, to understand professional communicators' current and desired approaches for dealing with, as well as perceptions of, AI-generated disinformation. Action research could also be used to develop practical approaches with relevant stakeholders for dealing with the disinformation in sustainability-boosting ways using techniques from other fields. The sooner communication practitioners and scholars begin to tackle the difficulties created by AI-generated disinformation more effectively, the sooner professional sustainability will begin to be upheld more successfully.

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Segmentation of public in children vaccination communication in Slovenia, implementing STOPS/CAPS and pragmatic multimethod approach

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Introduction and purpose of the study

In public health perspective, vaccination programmes significantly add to long term safe co-existing. On the other hand, in society there is no generally accepted consensus about their benefits and risks and that makes promotion of vaccination rather difficult. To improve it, the paper advocates a model for recognising involvement of mothers of young children in communication of children vaccination, developed by applying situational theory to vaccination as sensitive and insufficiently researched interdisciplinary topic (Vrdelja, 2023), as well as introduces methodological complements to empirical analyses of the model data.

Literature review

In the study we are drawing on Situational Theory of Publics (STP; Gruning, 1997 and 2005), particularly on Situational Theory of Problem Solving and on Communicative Actions in Problem Solving (STOPS and CAPS; Kim and Grunig, 2011), as well as on studies demonstrating importance of vaccination programmes (e.g., Andre et.al, 2008) and particularly the crucial role of communication in vaccination programmes accomplishment (e.g., Leask et. al, 2012; Olowo et.al, 2020).

Methodology

Situational motivation has been conceptualized as a) affective involvement, b) cognitive involvement, c) trust in the paediatrician, d) trust in the health system and e) trust in science. These five variables have been measured on five-point Likert scale. Communicative action has been conceptualized through a) information acquisition, b) information selection and c) information transmission, each on four or five different channels respectively. For these fourteen variables five points categorical scale describing frequentness of use has been employed. The model with the above defined indicators has been empirically confirmed on a general level, drawing on large probability sample of mothers in Slovenia (year 2016, N = 1704), using bivariate statistical methods (Vrdelja, 2023). In so doing, we have encountered the problem of dealing with a very large number of bivariate statistics, determining association between pairs of variables. With just five numerical indicators measuring situational motivation and fourteen ordinal indicators measuring communicative action, there are seven hundred pairs of variables and consequently the same number of associations to evaluate and interpret. Such a big number of pieces of information is certainly difficult to accomplish, summarize and present in a comprehendible way. Therefore, in the core of the paper, we upgrade data analyses with two more pragmatic, jet efficient ways to analyze typical STOPS models, based on combination of numerical and categorical variables. The first one draws on reach tradition of visual methods and depicts associations between situational motivational variables and communicative action variables with line graphs. Its ultimate advantage is that line graphs are much easier to comprehend (follow) than sets of numbers. The second way draws on formal mathematical procedures, namely on multivariate agglomerative clustering method and seriously reduces the final number of associations that must be evaluated and interpreted, since in the core of this method are analyses of similarities in data matrix, heading to fusion of parts that are similar enough to be regarded being equal in further analyses.

Results and conclusions

Both advocated innovative ways of analysing the STOPS model provided us with an abundance of consequential results, presented in an upcoming journal article. Here, in the extended abstract, we would like to draw attention to some of them, connecting both applied methods.

Primarily, we have visibly demonstrated how communication behaviour, measured as frequency of information acquisition, information selection and information transmission in traditional and social media as well as in direct communication, differ with level of cognitive and affective involvement in the topic, accompanied with level of trust in science, in health system and in medical personnel (paediatrician). In general, high level of involvement, accompanied with low level of trust correspond to significantly more frequent communication and vice versa, but there are suggestive differences regarding components of communication behaviour (i.e., communication channels and forms of communication activity). As expected, online channels turned out to be the most distinctive. Furthermore, information transmission stands out when associations are considered on a more detailed level.

Besides the vivid insight in relations among indicators in the analysed STOPS model, an outline of segments of the public under investigation in Slovenia has been provided as a supplementary result of hierarchical agglomerative clustering method. On the most general level, three constructive segments develop. The first is characterized by high involvement and low trust accompanied with intensive communicative activity. The antagonistic one is distinguished by low involvement and high trust, complemented with lack of communicative action. The third is somewhere in the middle regarding situational motivation variables as well as communicative action indicators. Segmentation on more detailed levels reveals additional valuable microsegments.

Practical and social implications

The uncovered relations among attitudes and communication behaviour, and in particular their fusion in outlined segments enable improvement of every step of children vaccination communication planning and implementation.

***Keywords*:** *STOPS (situational theory of problem solving), CAPS (communicative behaviour in problem solving), vaccine hesitancy, vaccination communication, trust*

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