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I Introduction

This section outlines the most essential information about this thesis content. Background, problem statement, purpose and delimitations are the main components included. Also the disposition of the whole paper is included.

I.1 Background

The business world today shares the general consensus that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has established itself as an essential component in every business (Porter & Kramer, 2006; Dawkins, 2004). This is not a progressive statement at all when you consider the great deal of benefits it comes with, particularly in the consumer group of stakeholders. There has been extensive research conducted on the many potential benefits of CSR initiatives where researchers like McElhaney (2009) and Bhattacharya (2010) has stated that engaging in CSR activities is particularly beneficial in the consumer group of stakeholders where it for example increases consumer loyalty and has a reputation enhancing effect. Moreover, there is an additional dimension to CSR through which companies can benefit financially. By being socially responsible, companies attract consumers to apply for jobs, ensure incoming talent, and persuade consumers to invest in their business (McElhaney, 2009; Bhattacharya, 2010). In addition to that, recent studies concluded that the likelihood of consumers switching to socially responsible products has steadily increased over the last fifteen years. (Bhattacharya, 2010) Today, consumers are not only inclined to switch to products linked to a socially responsible company they are even willing to pay more for socially responsible products (Schmeltz, 2013). Evidently the potential benefits from engaging in CSR are many, however, consumers, as opposed to other stakeholders are unlikely to look for information regarding different companies' CSR activities (Dawkins, 2004). This general reluctance has resulted in that communicating ones CSR activities has gotten instrumental for companies to reap the benefits from their efforts. McElhaney (2009, p. 31) stated that, "*A consumer cannot factor in to his or her decision making that which they do not know*". This highlights the true importance of informing society about ones corporate citizenship.

Just as stakeholders like consumers can be very rewarding to good corporate citizens they tend to punish the ones that act irresponsibly or deceitful in their CSR communication (Van de Ven, 2008). This is an example of behavior that will foster stakeholder skepticism, which is one of the biggest hurdles corporations have to overcome in communicating their CSR (Schmeltz, 2013) Consumers value genuine companies with a true concern for the social issues they focus on. When they eva-

luate a corporation's good deeds they tend to look at the company's motives for doing good as either intrinsic or extrinsic. These two types of motives basically assess the genuineness of the company's CSR efforts and either increases stakeholder skepticism or reduces it. If a company's motives are extrinsic their CSR efforts are seen as an attempt to increase its profits leading to low perception of genuineness and high stakeholder skepticism. On the contrary, if a company has intrinsic motives, stakeholders can identify a genuine concern for the matter, which leads to low stakeholder skepticism (Forehand and Grier 2003).

Recently various researchers have been trying to create a clear guideline to how companies can communicate their CSR in a manner that does not foster any stakeholder skepticism. For the most part, managers have been discouraged to speak of their CSR by the fear of consumer abandonment (McElhaney, 2009). A number of different researchers have even been able to conclude that staying quiet and subtle about ones CSR is the most effective way to reduce stakeholder skepticism due to the fact that bragging is often looked as unattractive and dubious (Morsing and Schultz, 2006; Van de Ven, 2008). However, McElhaney (2009) really emphasizes a company's need to tell their CSR story and talks about simplifying the process by linking the CSR activities to the core business, creating a natural fit between the good deeds and the business' core competencies (Bhattacharya, 2010). By doing that they become part of the solution (McElhaney, 2009) and can portray themselves as more genuine and 'intrinsic'. Bhattacharya (2010) also suggests something that she refers to as communicating the cause commitment. This strategy of overcoming consumer skepticism when communicating ones CSR is based on three aspects. These aspects are the amount of input, the durability of the association and the consistency of the input. It has been suggested that by emphasizing these aspects in the communication consumer skepticism will decrease.

1.2 Problem Statement

Regardless of the various proven benefits of communicating ones CSR clearly it remains one of the toughest challenges corporations face today. Managers seem to find the concept challenging and problematic, much due to the difficulty of communicating their CSR efforts in a genuine way that is credible to the consumers (Schmeltz 2013). Consumers are regarded as one of the most skeptical stakeholders a business is involved with when communicating their CSR. But they are also one of the most rewarding segments of stakeholders when companies do communicate their involvement in socially responsible causes in a, to them, good way (Bhattacharya, 2010). In conclusion, companies who fail to overcome consumer skepticism in their CSR communication lose the possibility of reaping the benefits of doing it and even risk losing customers from not being able to convey their message genuinely (Bhattacharya, 2010). There is a disagreement among many prominent researchers in the field of corporate social responsibility on how companies

should communicate their CSR so that they conquer the problem of consumer skepticism (Van de Ven, 2008; Bhattacharya, 2010; McElhaney, 2009; Morsing and Schultz, 2006).

Some older researchers like Morsing and Schultz (2006) have strongly advocated a completely silent approach to eliminate consumer skepticism. However, various researchers have been able to conclude that it is always better to communicate ones CSR efforts than staying silent (McElhaney, 2009; Bhattacharya, 2010). On the basis of that researchers have been developing different strategic proposals for companies to adapt in order to decrease their consumer's skepticism to their CSR communication. Researchers have suggested that companies create a fit between their CSR activities and their core business to increase the perception of genuineness and general care for the cause, to reduce consumer skepticism (Bhattacharya, 2010; McElhaney, 2010). However, what these theories do is they merely emphasize the need for companies to communicate their CSR and are both, somewhat, proven to be efficient in reducing consumer skepticism. Regardless, the confusion remains amongst managers and companies keep a subtle approach to CSR communication because neither theory is established as the most efficient strategy.

1.3 Purpose

Skepticism is one of the main hurdles companies have to overcome when communicating their CSR. If consumers perceive a company's CSR activities as insincere, all the efforts a company has put in on them being socially responsible will at the end of the day have done more harm than good in terms of reaping the benefits of CSR. That is why the purpose of this thesis is to, at the end, be able to conclude which of the two CSR communication strategies, Cause Fit Communication or Cause Commitment Communication, is the most efficient strategy for companies to implement in order to overcome the issue of reducing consumer skepticism when communicating ones CSR efforts depending on what type of CSR you are engaging in. We have developed a research question for us to answer throughout the thesis, which are also going to help us fulfill the purpose of this thesis. The research question is presented below:

RQ: Which CSR communication strategy increases the perception of a company's CSR efforts genuineness the most?

The problem we have been able to identify with managers being confused over communicating their CSR efforts is, according to us, an urgent matter. That is why we believe that through conducting survey among consumers as target population, we can contribute to clearing the fog around the matter and provide businesses a general guiding, when choosing a strategy to add to their CSR quiver. In order to create such guidelines, we remain objective and through inductive approach, we

aim to highlight consumers' understanding and expectations regarding various CSR communication strategies.

1.4 Delimitations

This thesis is performed by conducting a survey amongst all ages, however, considering the forum we went through the respondents were predominantly consumers which are 18-25 years old, and the target population may be judged although it was chosen such due to the fact that young consumers, especially students are much more aware of CSR and companies intentions when pursuing such strategies. Therefore, researchers are quite confident in the accuracy of collected primary data from such target population than including various older groups.

Also, it is important to pinpoint that students are far more sensible about companies' genuineness, which engage in CSR activities, and their consequences on building consumers' trust or triggering consumers' skepticism.

1.5 Outline of the thesis



1. Introduction
2. Frame of Reference
3. Method & Methodology
4. Empirical findings
5. Analysis
6. Conclusion
7. Discussion
8. Suggestions for Further Research

1.5.1 Figure 1. Chapters outline in the thesis

2 Frame of Reference

This section starts by defining CSR through combining relevant theories and explaining different types of the concept as corporate philanthropy and cause related marketing. Afterwards, stakeholder theory is written, and consumers as stakeholders are thoroughly elaborated, since they as a stakeholder group are focus of this thesis. Last, cause fit communication and cause commitment communication, two most relevant theories for communicating CSR efforts are presented.

2.1 Definition of CSR

Corporate Social Responsibility is a concept that first appeared in the latter half of the 20th century in the United States of America (Crane, Matten 2010). By the time of the arrival of Corporate Social Responsibility, both corporations and society had developed an opinion where corporations should have responsibilities towards society in addition to their already financial obligations, like taxes. However, no matter how wide this opinion that later turned into a general demand spread the lack of a clear definition of CSR remained. Many researchers and experts in the field have tried to catch the essential meaning of CSR by constructing numerous definitions but yet the concept is perceived in as many different ways.

Dahlsrud (2008) has made extensive research in this particular area. He conducted research on 37 different definitions of corporate social responsibility from a time period of twenty years. From his thorough research he was able to identify five different dimensions of CSR, which were interconnected, meaning that they were all connected to each other in some way. The definitions that he studied showed him that CSR amounts to a voluntary-, stakeholder-, social-, environmental-, and economic dimension. He also found that the different definitions of CSR had different levels of presence of the different dimensions and that few definitions accounted for all the dimensions. The 37 different definitions studied by Dahlsrud(2006) are just a fraction of all definitions out there and they all aim at explaining the same concept, yet the understanding of what exactly CSR is has not gotten any clearer.

Even though Dahlsrud(2006) found five interconnected dimensions of CSR there are other definitions that have focused on different aspects of corporate social responsibility, which only adds complexity to the concept. Additional levels and parts of the phenomenon has been defined and added to CSR.

The idea of 'shared value' was presented in (Rangan et al. 2012). The idea of 'shared value' is an example of a part of CSR that has been added on later days and is today widely used by companies all over the world. In their article they were also able to conclude that the priority of CSR by corporations is increasing. They did this by referring to an online survey conducted in 2008 where 1, 192 global executives were asked to answer questions about the level of priority of corporate social responsibility. They were able to find that 55 percent had CSR as a high priority and they also projected that this number would increase to about 70 percent by the year of 2010. Along with this they were able to identify and define four different theatres of CSR, these are: the philanthropic-, the giving-, the reengineering the value chain-, and last transforming the eco system-theatres. From this it is clear that the popularity of using CSR as a multifaceted tool in corporations is increasing a lot but yet we are drifting further away from clearly formulating a definition of the concept.

Not only researchers and experts have attempted to formulate a definition of corporate social responsibility. Institutions have been as frequent with their attempts of defining CSR. The European Commission created a definition that they made available on their website with the intention of guiding companies in the field and in their implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility. Their definition of CSR is; *"corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to companies taking responsibility for their impact on society. As evidence suggests, CSR is increasingly important to the competitiveness of enterprises. It can bring benefits in terms of risk management, cost savings, access to capital, customer relationships, human resource management, and innovation capacity."*

The definition that has been provided by the European Commission stands out in the way that it incorporates the benefits of engaging in corporate social responsibility. It justifies corporations to enjoy the fruit their CSR efforts bear. Through this definition we are closing in on our desired definition of corporate social responsibility to apply in our research, however, we are quite not there yet.

Throughout the time of corporate social responsibility there has been various assumptions about the reasoning of corporations' engagement in CSR and, particularly on later days, what benefits they can actually acquire by engaging in CSR activities. One can assume that the reason to why it is so difficult to understand the whole concept of CSR is essentially due to the fact that the terms is so broad. It is a multifaceted subject with social, financial, and environmental aspects for corporations to account for when engaging in CSR activities. In addition to that there have been various aspects added to the concept that we have gone through earlier in this chapter. In our research we have found a definition that works well in our research because it describes CSR clearly both to a corporation- and a consumer segment. We found that the definition of (McElhaney, 2009) fits our research well



because it not only accounts for the good cause a corporation does through its CSR but it also includes the concept of businesses generating profits through their CSR. Lastly it emphasizes the importance of linking CSR activities to the core business. She defines CSR as follows; *“A business strategy that is integrated with core business objectives and core competencies of the firm, and from the outset is designed to create business value and positive social change and is embedded in day to day business culture and operations”* (McElhaney, 2009, p. 31). From this point on, whenever we refer to corporate social responsibility, this is the definition that we are referring to.

2.2 Types of CSR

Just as we have explained in the previous paragraphs, the definitions of CSR as well as the benefits of incorporating a Corporate Social Responsibility program in ones company are many. Just as there are many different definitions and benefits of CSR there are different types of Corporate Social Responsibility. When one speaks of CSR there are both internal CSR activities as well as external CSR activities. Internal CSR activities are actions related to questions about human resource management, in other words questions that concern the employees at the company (Hidayati, 2011). Moreover, internal CSR activities are often out of sight for consumers, which is why we have chosen to focus on the external activities of Corporate Social Responsibility. External CSR activities are related to Corporate Social Responsibility concerning stakeholders like investors, the local community, suppliers and consumers, and so on (Hidayati, 2011). Since our research is focused on overcoming consumer skepticism we have decided to narrow the types of CSR activities down to the external activities that concern the consumer segment of stakeholders. The most relevant types of Corporate Social Responsibility that are communicated to the consumers we have identified are the ones of Corporate Philanthropy along with Cause Related Marketing. Below follows an explanation of both.

2.2.1 Corporate Philanthropy

Corporate philanthropy is a concept created to allow companies to give back to society by setting up charity programs themselves or donating money to, for example, charities or non-profit organizations (Frost, 2015). An example of a company that has been extremely charitable is the Coca-Cola Company who has set up a program they call the Replenish Africa Initiative (RAIN). It is a program that the Coca-Cola Company has committed \$30 million in to, together with NGO's and governments, address water issues in communities by focusing on areas like sanitation and hygiene. The RAIN initiative is also focusing on enhancing sustainable water management practices as well as promoting efficient and sustainable use of water for economic development (Coca-Cola Company CSR).

The donations, though, does not necessarily have to be derived from the sales from a particular product. They do not even have to be financial. Companies can contribute with medicines, clothes, food, and educational equipment like computers and textbooks as well (Frost, 2015). Toms Shoes has been really progressive in this form of corporate giving. Blake Mycoskie founded Toms Shoes in May 2006 after he had traveled to Argentina where he first handedly learned that the children of a village did not have any shoes. After having experienced this he made sure to incorporate his one-for-one strategy into the core business of Tom's Shoes where for every pair of shoes he sold he would also donate one pair to a child in need (Toms Shoes CSR Report).

The truth is that the positive effects of corporate philanthropy on society are exceptional (Porter and Kramer, 2002) so why would not the positive effects of Corporate Philanthropy be as exceptional for the company performing them. Even though it sounds rather contradictory that companies can gain financial benefits from donating money, as a matter of fact, corporate philanthropy comes with many benefits that have positive financial effects on companies. Corporate philanthropy as a way of giving back to society is mainly focused on generating goodwill and positive publicity that sort of comes along with the actions. We are now living in a society with increasing competition and as a matter of fact, positive goodwill and good PR has proven to be huge competitive factors for companies as it persuades consumers to buy their socially responsible products instead of a non-caring alternative (Porter and Kramer, 2002). The reason though why companies' contributions through donations have decreased throughout the last couple of years is because executives feel like they cannot justify the giving, solely because they cannot see the benefits that we earlier proposed (Porter and Kramer, 2002). This is because the benefits of corporate philanthropy rely on companies communicating their CSR efforts to society. Customers are very unlikely to look up what sort of CSR activities their favorite company, brand, or product is associated with. Customers therefore rely on getting that information handed to them (Bhattacharya, 2010). This once more highlights the correlation between enjoying the financial contribution CSR has and the need of communicating it.

2.2.2 Cause Related Marketing

Cause Related Marketing (CRM) is a type of marketing strategy where companies for example donate a percentage of their sales of a certain product to a social cause (Barone 2007). Essentially it is a strategy where companies explicitly use philanthropy to fulfill business objectives (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988). However, as opposed to Corporate Philanthropy the donations are derived from the sales from a particular product and the amount of companies that have adopted cause related marketing strategies have grown during the last couple of years (Barone 2007). An example of a company that has been very out there in terms of cause related mar-

keting is the international diaper giant, Pampers. Back in 2006 they partnered with UNICEF to contribute to the elimination of maternal and newborn tetanus. The way that Pampers would commit to this cause is they decided to donate 1 dose of vaccine for every pack of diapers they sold. Since Pampers and UNICEF partnered to solve this tremendous medical issue they managed to eliminate maternal and newborn tetanus in 15 countries and they are intended to continue their partnership (Procter & Gamble). Also as opposed to corporate philanthropy where the benefits and the allowed intentions for financial gain are rather vague and unclear, cause related marketing is always used to generate positive financial effects (BusinessDictionary.com)

Despite the fact that there are many differences between corporate philanthropy and cause related marketing they are similar in the way that they can both generate a lot of benefits. The first thing that comes to mind when speaking about cause related marketing is that it is a type of sales promotional tool, which in a sense it is. Nevertheless, it comes with several other benefits apart from increasing sales. For example it prevents negative publicity as well as it encourages customers to buy a certain product again and again. This is all together with the positive effects it has on brand awareness, the corporate image and last but not least the brand image (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988).

As we have stated in the following paragraph, the benefits of cause related marketing are many and of big importance for companies performing CRM. However, companies need to be careful when implementing cause related marketing as a promotional tool because customers tend to often perceive it as an exploitation of a social cause in order to generate sales increases (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988). Therefore companies have to balance a fine line in order to not trigger skepticism amongst its consumers. If they can manage to package the cause related marketing in a genuine way it is a strategy that is extremely beneficial both from a corporate perspective as well as a societal perspective, which is exactly what our definition of CSR, presented earlier, highlights.

2.3 Stakeholders

When the concept of stakeholders was first introduced as part of the stakeholder theory by Freeman (1984) it was introduced as a moral concept that suggested that corporation's responsibility went further than to their owners and shareholders. Back then he suggested that a stakeholder is "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (Freeman, 1984). Stakeholders can be found both within an organization as internal stakeholders or outside of the organization as external stakeholders (Bhattacharya, 2010). Below you will find *Figure 1* that shows the most common and important stakeholders of an organization today and it includes both internal stakeholders like employees and external stakeholders like customers and competitors. Regard-

less of whether a stakeholder is found within an organization or externally from it, the stakeholder theory constitutes that a corporation has a responsibility towards them.



2.3.1.1 Figure 2 (The most common internal and external stakeholders for a company)

2.3.2 Consumers as Stakeholders

In this thesis we are going to focus on the consumer segment of stakeholders, considering the fact that they are particularly susceptible to Corporate Social Responsibility and the communication of it. In addition to that, if CSR is communicated properly, corporations have a better chance of reaping the benefits of their engagement in socially responsible activities. For example, Bhattacharya (2010) presented the results from a survey conducted in 2007, which showed that as many as 87 % of the consumers in the United States of America would be willing to switch to another brand or product if it became evident that the company behind that brand or product took their Corporate Social Responsibility seriously. The same survey also showed that consumers would almost be just as willing to abandon a brand or product if they were to find out that the company behind that brand or product did not engage in any socially responsible activities. What this survey tells us is that consumers are extremely rewarding if companies engage in Corporate Social Responsibility as well as they are extremely punishing towards companies who are not socially responsible.

2.3.2.1 Consumer Skepticism

As we presented in the previous paragraph, companies who engage in Corporate Social Responsibility has a high chance of reaping a lot of benefits, especially from the stakeholder segment of consumers (Bhattacharya, 2010). However, it is not as simple as just partaking in socially responsible activities, companies need to com-

municate their CSR to their consumers as well. Communicating ones CSR is essential because if ones consumers does not know about the CSR a company engages in, they cannot account for the good a company does for society in their company assessment and reward them for the good that they actually do (McElhaney, 2009).

When it comes to Corporate Social Responsibility, consumer's expectations tend to be really high and sometimes even unachievable (Dawkins and Lewis 2003). Just as consumers assess the good that corporations do they assess the motives of why corporations engage in Corporate Social Responsibility. This is a particularly sensitive aspect of CSR communication, as it tends to either increase consumer skepticism or reduce it. When companies communicate their CSR to let their consumers know about the social causes they are involved in they face one of the biggest hurdles of CSR communication, which is minimizing consumer skepticism (Forehand and Grier 2003). A major factor that contributes to consumers getting skeptical towards a company's CSR activities is the perceived motives of the CSR. When consumers evaluate a company's motives for engaging in CSR they tend to either think of it as extrinsic motives or intrinsic motives. When consumers perceive a company's CSR motives as extrinsic they get distrustful about the genuineness of the company's concern for the social cause they are supporting. When this happens consumers tend to suspect ulterior motives. As if the company engaged in the CSR is being socially responsible solely to increase profits with no legitimate concern for the social cause. Extrinsic motives foster consumer skepticism, which in turn leads to less benefit from ones CSR activities. On the contrary, intrinsic motives expresses a genuine concern for the social cause a company has decided to support. Owing to that, consumers are more likely to reward the company for their CSR (Bhattacharya, 2010).

However in most cases, companies are likely to convey both intrinsic and extrinsic motives, which in the minds of the consumers is not a bad thing at all. In fact, as long as intrinsic motives are apparent, consumers tend to tolerate extrinsic, self-serving motives as well (Ellen et al. 2006). This however requires that the extrinsic motives are not conveyed in a deceptive way in which the company attempts to portray the extrinsic motives as a genuine concern for a social cause (Forehand and Grier, 2003). This recent study conforms well to our chosen definition of CSR that states that both businesses and society should benefit from Corporate Social Responsibility. However, that calls for both intrinsic- and extrinsic motives, not leaving intrinsic motives outside of the equation.

2.4 Communication of CSR

Corporate Social Responsibility is a very important component in businesses but at the same time it is a very delicate matter as the communication of it can convey motives of CSR that fosters skepticism, which in turn creates a bad perception of the organization itself. Due to this, for a very long time, companies have refrained

from communicating their CSR activities to the public through what is known as the silence strategy (Morsing and Schultz, 2006; Van de Ven, 2008). The silence strategy suggests that not communicating ones CSR is the best strategy, as it does not include any risks of creating skepticism amongst consumers. However what the silence strategy allows for is for third parties like newspapers and other media vehicles to tell society about a company's CSR. Leaving the communication of ones Corporate Social Responsibility in the hands of a third party has proven to be less desired than communicating ones CSR first handedly as the latter allows the companies to convey the message they want to (Bhattacharya, 2010). Nevertheless, companies have refrained from communicating their CSR with the motivation that they are afraid of creating consumer skepticism (Schmeltz, 2013). Owing to this we are, in the following section, going to describe two types of CSR communication that is handled by the company itself and aims at reducing consumer skepticism.

2.4.1 Cause Fit Communication

As a result of the poor understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility amongst managers, who looked at CSR as merely a cost and charitable deed that they found hard to justify, Porter & Kramer (2006) suggested that companies should approach Corporate Social Responsibility in the same way that they approach their core business choices. This has developed into a concept that is now popularly referred to as core business alignment of Corporate Social Responsibility. What this concept really suggests is a more strategic and accounted for sort of Corporate Social Responsibility where the activities companies engage in are connected to the corporation's core competencies. To phrase this in a more understandable way McElhane (2009) suggested that companies should choose social causes to support to which they can be part of the solution.

Essentially what core business alignment of Corporate Social Responsibility is about is, it is about creating a fit between the social causes a company has chosen to support with the kind of business it is. An example of a company that has succeeded in creating a fit between their core competencies and their corporate giving is the American sports apparel company, Under Armour. Under Armour has developed a CSR program they call 'UA WIN' that looks to empower younger athletes by providing unprivileged kids in unfortunate communities access to sports. They do this by for example investing in activities that use sports as an on and off the field learning tool and by providing the kids with the latest outfits and sports gear (Under Armour Website).

By creating a fit between the social causes a company is involved in with their core competencies does not only simplify the strategic aspect of Corporate Social Responsibility, it can also be used to overcome consumer skepticism when communicating CSR. The reason why a fit can contribute to companies overcoming consumer skepticism is because the fit between a cause and a business affects a consum-

er's CSR attributions (Simmons and Becker-Olsen, 2006). When consumers evaluate the motives of Corporate Social Responsibility they will begin by evaluating the intrinsic motives of a company's communicated CSR and then alter their inference if they through further consideration find factors of extrinsic art like financial incentives. If the fit between the CSR efforts and the core business is low, this prohibits consumers from finding a logical connection between a company's Corporate Social Responsibility and their business. When this happens, consumers are more likely to consider the company's motives further, which makes extrinsic motives more noticeable. Something, that in turn, increases consumer skepticism (Bhattacharya, 2010). Owing to this, companies should highlight the fit between their CSR efforts and their core business, and if there is no distinct connection between these two, companies should explain how their involvement could help solve the social issues (Bhattacharya, 2010).

Let us turn our attention back to the example of Under Armour and their CSR program 'UA WIN'. Now there is already an existing conformity between the core business of Under Armour and the social issue they have chosen to support. Something that decreases the level of thought consumers put into evaluating whether the motives of the CSR are intrinsic or extrinsic. However, they use the fit between their core competencies and the social cause when they communicate their corporate responsibility by emphasizing that their deeds does not just enable kids to play sports but that it works as a teaching/learning tool at the same time. Many people would probably not associate sports with learning about life but when Under Armour introduces this solution to an existing problem it increases the perception of intrinsic motives, which in turn decreases the skepticism of consumers.

2.4.2 Cause Commitment Communication

Another aspect of CSR communication that has been suggested as an effective strategy to overcome consumer skepticism is what is referred to as Cause Commitment Communication. A company can commit to a social cause in various ways by for example donating money through corporate philanthropy or by performing cause related marketing. The commitment consists of three different aspects. These aspects are the amount of input, which basically translates to how much money the company has been able to contribute to a specific social cause. The second aspect of cause commitment is for how long they have been supporting a specific social cause and last but not least the consistency of the input, which in terms of cause related marketing could be the percentage of a product sold that the company has committed to donate to a social cause (Bhattacharya, 2010).

In a previous paragraph we discussed the Corporate Philanthropy of the Coca-Cola Company who communicated its Replenish Africa Initiative (RAIN) through cause commitment communication. They inform people about their initiative on their website by letting people know that they have contributed with \$30 million over a

6 year period emphasizing the duration of the program and the amount that they have committed (Coca Cola CSR).

Sen et al, (2009) suggests that CSR communication should be factual and avoid bragging in order to not risk generating consumer skepticism. Owing to this it is important for companies who are communicating their cause commitment that they emphasize all of the three aspects of the strategy. Only emphasizing for example the amount the company has donated is easily perceived as bragging, which is a skepticism-triggering factor. It is particularly important to communicate the durability of the commitment. When companies have supported a social cause for a long time the perceived genuineness tends to increase which in turn reduces consumer skepticism and legitimizes the communication of the amount of input (Bhattacharya, 2010).

3 Method&Methodology

The following section of this thesis describes the research design and our choice of methodology. It includes parts explaining the research approach and methods as well as our strategy going through with the needed research for this thesis. The choices we have made concerning method and methodology are based on what is most relevant for us and to our desired outcome.

3.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy is the actual connection of a creation and development of certain knowledge in the particular field of research. Therefore, researchers should naturally understand and convey the appropriate philosophy throughout their research (Saunders et al, 2012).

The point of positivism was appropriate for us to use because it takes the place of a natural scientist. This indicates that researchers deal with numbers, which naturally are connected to quantitative methods. Researchers observe and analyze social reality and conclusions may be law-like generalizations, which means that numbers collected through the primary data will prove the reality and support or reject certain theories. The most important task for researchers is to interpret those numbers into words and make them understandable. This philosophy will be used in this research due to the survey tool through which we acquired the primary data. When speaking about positivism, the research should be objective and neutral when conducting the analysis. In this thesis theories are examined through comparing different CSR strategies. In order to do so fictional companies were pre-

sented and different strategies of communication were used in order to see if consumers perceive that companies want to either increase their sales or if they actually care about the social causes in which they engage. Moreover, researchers do not affect nor are they affected by the outcome of the research. Numerical results are interpreted and analyzed in order to prove or improve theories. (Saunders et al., 2012). Many researchers are critical to the positivism because the business and management area is way too complicated to be led by conclusions from primary data. This is due to the fact that more of the people included in the collection of data acts as social actors and do not reflect a hundred percent accurate answers. The term social actors indicate that the people are in different stages of life and therefore interpret and understand the reality in different ways. Although, the advantage of this research philosophy is that only observable phenomena can provide credible data, i.e. facts (Saunders et al, 2012). Consequentially, the data collection, which is mostly associated with positivism, is large samples, which provide credible data as used in this thesis.

3.2 Research Approach

When conducting research it is particularly important to adopt a research approach that conforms well to the type of research one is conducting (Saunders et al., 2012). Depending on what sort of research that is being conducted, researchers typically adopt an inductive or a deductive research approach.

For the research that we are conducting it is best to use the inductive approach. The reason behind the choice of inductive method is that from the primary data we want to build new theory and show the most appropriate strategy when communicating CSR. Consumers as stakeholders of the companies are crucial and therefore their interpretations of CSR strategies should be understood and presented. This leads to the fact that the inductive approach comprises a cause-effect link between different theories in the way which consumers understand their social world. Many support the inductive approach due to the problems that occur in the deductive approach as strict methodology that does not permit alternative explanations of what is going on. Namely, in this research it is important to reflect upon the results collected from consumers and their interpretations or CSR strategies which companies use.

This research conforms well to the inductive approach due to the fact that we want to understand if Cause Fit Communication has a greater effect on reducing consumer skepticism than Cause Commitment Communication when companies engage in Cause Related Marketing or Corporate Philanthropy. However, this approach relies heavily on the context. As stated before, the people included in the survey are social actors and interpret the CSR strategies from their point of view where they are affected by contextual factors. This means, that life stage, educational level and so on are forces which heavily influences the opinion of the people

and therefore it is crucial for us to focus on including students in the research who are more aware of CSR and companies engagement in such. In order to derive conclusions the data collected will be analyzed and simplified so the conclusions will fill a gap in the existing theories and possibly provide suggestions for further research.

3.3 Research Purpose

When speaking of the research purpose, it is most commonly categorized as exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. For our research that we are conducting we deem it most appropriate to use the exploratory research purpose due to the fact that we are investigating a problem, which has not been researched comprehensively before. The goals of exploratory research are to structure theories and make them understandable (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010). According to Saunders et al (2012) this research purpose is beneficial, much thanks to its flexibility to improve theories by analyzing the empirical findings. This is also tied to the inductive research approach, which is used in this thesis due to the importance of the primary data collection

3.4 Research Method

For this research it was most appropriate to use a quantitative method because a survey was chosen as the tool for collecting information about consumers' perceptions and interpretation of companies that has adapted different CSR communication strategies. The tools for the primary data collection, which includes numbers, are connected clearly to quantitative research (Saunders et al, 2012). Therefore, the quantitative research method was used in order to get the best results for the analysis. Mono method includes only one data collection technique and analysis of the collected data, Saunders et al. (2012). In this thesis the primary data was collected through an online survey. According to Saunders et al. (2012), the research method should be chosen carefully in order to be able to derive meaningful and valuable conclusions. Most of the researchers use either quantitative or qualitative research. However, for some papers the choice is a mix of both. Harwell (n.d.) describes that a quantitative research method reflects objectivity, replication and generalization of findings. According to him researchers should put aside their experiences, perceptions and biases when conducting a quantitative study. It is important to reflect upon the consumers' expectations and skepticism about the communication of CSR. The advantage of the quantitative method is that more data can be collected, especially through the survey. However, a disadvantage is that the information collected is more general about the perceptions of various CSR strategies and does not show details of the consumers' point of view.



3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 Literature Review

The literature review that we conducted as a first step of this thesis gave us the chance to get a general idea of different theories presented in existing research papers along with their conclusions. When conducting our literature review we managed to identify numerous types of CSR communication strategies and almost each and everyone was suggested to reduce consumer skepticism, something that we were skeptical towards. Because of this we decided to address this problem by conducting research on two of the most common types of CSR that consumers are exposed to, Cause Related Marketing and Corporate Philanthropy, as well as two commonly suggested communication strategies for reducing consumer skepticism towards Corporate Social Responsibility in order to conclude which of the two communication strategies is the most efficient at reducing consumer skepticism.

During the process of collecting secondary data there are a few things that researchers need to keep in mind. For example, researchers may easily get out of context and analyze articles that are not directly related to the relevant field of research. Another important thing to take into consideration is the fact that theories should be up to date and relevant and applicable in the thesis. If not, researchers can make assumption based on irrelevant facts and produce misleading results (Steward and Kamins, 1993). However, this is not to say that old theories cannot be used, it is still possible for old significant theories that are still found in newer publications. In our process of finding relevant secondary data we considered both of these obstacles and focused on articles, which have been published recently and are relevant to refer to. The method to collect secondary data was acquired through databases such as Google Scholar, The University Library Database, Science Direct and similar online libraries. Most of the articles reviewed are published in journals, which are relevant to this topic and are peer reviewed. Key terms and words as corporate philanthropy, cause related marketing, business cause fit communication, consumer expectations, and consumer skepticism have been used mostly in order to collect information.

Search Parameters	
Database and search engines	Primo and Jönköping University Library, online libraries as Scopus, Science Direct, Google Scholar
Search words	Corporate Social Responsibility, Corporate philanthropy, Cause related marketing, Cause fit communication, Cause commitment communication
Literature types	Books and Academic articles
Publication period	1988-2015, but most of literature dates after 2000

3.5.2 Survey

Considering the fact that our research is conducted over a very limited period of time we thought that conducting a survey would give us the best chance to as efficiently as possible be able to collect the necessary empirical data in order to grasp different CSR communication strategies. Surveys are a very convenient method for collecting primary data since people like giving feedback in simple forms. When we chose our tool of gathering data we also had to consider the fact that we are conducting quantitative research in which a survey gives us the best chance to collect quantitative data. When conducting a survey there are a few things that one as a researcher has to take into consideration. For example, researchers need to be careful when selecting the number of questions in order to keep the data of high quality and eliminate the number of people who does not finish the survey to a minimum. Practices have shown that long surveys have diminishing response rates and include unnecessary questions, which participants in the survey are not completing (Fielding et al. 2008). We have thoroughly considered the length of the survey when constructing it so that a bare minimum of questions are included but enough questions are asked to still give us a fair and accurate result. In order for us to avoid any misunderstandings we wrote clear instructions and repeated relevant information throughout the survey in accordance to what Fielding et al. (2008) suggested in his article.

To conclude, we considered creating an online survey where the participants would be given a number of statements representing the different types of Corporate Social Responsibility and CSR Communication strategies that would be followed by a series of questions regarding the genuineness of the portrayed company would give us the best chance to collect the most data, in numbers, as well as the most accurate and fair data, which could help us conclude which of the two strategies are the most efficient at reducing consumer skepticism.

3.6 Sampling Design

Due to our limited period of time to conduct our research we had to efficiently be able to derive a sample size from the population. Saunders (2012) suggests that researchers should derive a sample in order to acquire information for the population in which researchers are interested. Malhotra (2004) presents a sampling design process that was very helpful. The most important step, according to Malhotra (2004), is to appoint a target population. For our research, we had to choose a target population that we could easily reach and that is aware of Corporate Social Responsibility. Ultimately, our target population came down to individuals between the ages of 25 and up, who are aware of Corporate Social Responsibility. We target this population mostly because they understand CSR and can better recognize the intentions behind various communication strategies. In order to prove which communication strategy is best at reducing consumer skepticism students can reflect upon the statements included in the survey.

Moreover, a likert scale was included in the survey in order to understand the degree of the agreement or disagreement for every statement, which was included in the survey. The neutral choice of neither agree or disagree was disregarded because the aim of this research is to understand which CSR communication strategy is more efficient at reducing consumer skepticism. The advantages of using a scale like the likert scale is that it is convenient, it reflects respondents favorable point of view, and it is efficient because it is used for every one of the statements included in the survey. (C.R. Kothari, 2004) However, the disadvantage of this scale is the lack of explanation of why the respondents choose certain degrees of agreement or disagreement.

Malhotra (2004) also discussed the importance of selecting a sampling technique. After giving this some thought and having revised techniques like probability- and non-probability sampling as well as convenience sampling (Saunders et al., 2012) we concluded that we should use the judgmental sampling technique. Judgmental sampling is a version of convenience sampling where individuals included in the sample are chosen by judgment more carefully to represent a reliable result. The researchers do not include individuals by convenience but by the appropriateness to possess needed traits and information. Considering the fact that we are enrolled at a university where everyone has more or less knowledge about Corporate Social Responsibility we could target students enrolled at our university and still get a good distribution between gender and age and through that be able to obtain fair and accurate results.

3.6.1 SampleSize

Another essential component when constructing a survey is the sample size (Malhotra, 2004). It is essential for us to get a large number of people who are willing to participate in our research by answering our survey in order for us to be able to

conclude which of the two of our chosen CSR communication strategies are the most efficient at reducing consumer skepticism. In our research we aim at collecting at least 100 unique answers. This would represent a good sample size and would be able to prove any massive variances in opinions when it comes to the communication of Corporate Social Responsibility.

3.7 Constructing the Survey

As we have stated in previous sections of this theses, the purpose of this thesis is to be able to conclude which of the two, Cause Fit Communication or Cause Commitment Communication, is the most appropriate CSR communication strategy when it comes to reducing consumer skepticism that is triggered by CSR communication. Taking into account the fact that companies engage in different types of CSR we wanted to include both Corporate Philanthropy as well as Cause Related Marketing, which are, as we have stated before, two of the most common types of CSR that consumers are exposed to. We wanted to include both of these types of CSR to see whether or not there is a consistency in each communication strategy's efficiency of reducing consumer skepticism on the different types of Corporate Social Responsibility. In other words, we wanted to see if there is one type of CSR communication that is preferable for both types of Corporate Social Responsibility or if the communication strategy has to be alternated depending on whether you are engaged in Corporate Philanthropic- or Cause Related Marketing activities.

3.7.1 Creating Fictional Companies

When we constructed this survey we wanted to make sure that the participants did not bring in any already existing brand- or company perceptions into their answers, as we feared that this would shift focus away from the actual CSR communication that they were exposed to. In order to ensure this we had to develop three fictional companies that no participant had any previous relationship to. We therefore created some background information for each and every fictional company that would give the survey participants an idea of what industry and the size of the market they operated in. Below follows a description of each company that we created.

- *Company A is a popular running shoe manufacturer that is known around the globe.*
- *Company B is a skin care company specializing in skin care products for kids and adolescents.*
- *Company C is a national interior decoration company.*

3.7.2 Section of the Survey

Since we wanted to test both Cause Fit Communication and Cause Commitment Communication on both Cause Related Marketing- as well as Corporate Philanthropic activities we had to split the survey into five sections. The first section would consist of questions on gender and age. Moving on, one section would represent Cause Fit Communication on Cause Related Marketing; one would represent Cause Commitment Communication on Cause Related Marketing while the other two would represent Cause Fit Communication on Corporate Philanthropy and Cause Commitment Communication on Corporate Philanthropy.

3.7.2.1 Gender & Age

The reason why we wanted our participants to provide us with information about their gender and their age is simply because we wanted to be able to prove that we had gotten a good distribution between gender and age, which helps improve the accuracy of our study.

3.7.2.2 Cause Fit Communication on CRM

For the second section of the survey we wanted to see how consumers perceived a company's performance of Cause Related Marketing when communicated with the Cause Fit Strategy. In order for us to do this we used all of the three fictional companies and created CSR statements and assigned to each company. The CSR statements that we created had varying cause fit. We wrote one statement where the cause fit was obvious, one where the cause fit existed but was not obvious and lastly one statement where the cause fit barely existed. The reason why we created statements with varying fit is because we wanted to see how the perception of the company's genuineness differed as the logicity of the cause fit decreased. In these statements we also had to make sure that we did not include any numbers due to the fact that we solely wanted the logicity of the cause fit to be the prime factor when testing the genuineness of the company. We also had to emphasize the fact that the contributions were related to the sales of particular product that the company offered. In order to test the perception of the different companies' CSR efforts every statement was followed by two questions:

Q1: Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company "X" is contributing to society mainly because:

- *They care about the social cause*
- *They want to increase sales*

Q2: Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company "X" is genuinely concerned about the social cause?

- *Strongly Agree*

- *Agree*
- *Disagree*
- *StronglyDisagree*

What the first question would tell us is whether the participants perceived the company's engagement in CSR as to mainly support the social cause or to increase sales, i.e. tell us whether they perceived intrinsic- or extrinsic motives. Owing to that, the second questions would allow us to see if the participants allowed for any extrinsic motives if they had perceived them in the first question.

3.7.2.3 Cause Commitment Communication on CRM

For the third section of the thesis we wanted to test how consumers perceived Cause Related Marketing when communicated with the Cause Commitment Strategy. As opposed to when testing the Cause Fit Communication we did not want to use all of the three fictional companies due to the fact that we did not want the logicity of the fit to be a prime factor. Instead we wanted the amount that the company had committed to the social cause as well as for how long they had been contributing to the social cause to be the prime factor when testing this strategy. In order for us to do this we only used Company B that had a medium cause fit and created three different statements around this company with varying commitment. We created one statement where the amount of money and the period of time they had been contributing to a social cause were high, one where the amount of money and the period of time were low and lastly one where they were going to start contributing with a large amount. The reason to why we did this is because we wanted to see whether or not the perception of the company's genuineness changed as the contribution decreased. However, again, we had to make sure that we emphasized the fact that the contributions came from the profits from a particular product that the company offered. In order to test this we used the same questions as for the first section, which would tell us whether the participants perceived the company's engagement in CSR as to mainly support the social cause or to increase sales, i.e. tell us whether they perceived intrinsic- or extrinsic motives. The second questions, like in the first section, would allow us to see if the participants allowed for any extrinsic motives if they had perceived them in the first question

3.7.2.4 Cause Fit Communication on Corporate Philanthropy

For the fourth section of the survey we wanted to see how the participants perceived a company's philanthropic activities when communicated with the Cause Fit Strategy. Just as we did when testing the effects of Cause Fit Communication on Cause Related Marketing we used all the three fictional companies when we tested the Cause Fit Communication on Corporate Philanthropy as well. However we had to alter the statements that we assigned to each company slightly, emphasizing the fact that the money that they contributed did not derive from the sales from a particular product but merely that the company had committed an amount to a social

cause not mentioning from where it came. Nevertheless, the statements still varied in terms of cause fit. We created one statement with an obvious cause fit, one where it existed but was not obvious and lastly one where it barely existed. Again, we wanted to make sure not to include any numbers, as we wanted the logicity of the fit to be the prime factor when testing whether the perception of the companies' genuineness differed as the logicity of the cause fit decreased. In order to test this we used the same questions as we had done in the first two sections which would let us know whether the participants perceived the company's engagement in CSR as to mainly support the social cause or to increase sales, i.e. tell us whether they perceived intrinsic- or extrinsic motives. The second questions, like in the first section, would allow us to see if the participants allowed for any extrinsic motives if they had perceived them in the first question

3.7.2.5 Cause Commitment Communication on Corporate Philanthropy

For the fifth and final section of the thesis we wanted to see how consumers perceived a company's engagement in Corporate Philanthropy when communicated with the Cause Commitment Strategy. Just as for the third section we only used one company, Company B, as we did not want the cause fit to be a prime factor. Instead we wanted the amount, which the company had contributed and the period of time they had been contributing to a social cause to be the prime factor for the participants when answering the questions on Cause Commitment Communication of Corporate Philanthropy. We therefore created three different statements; one where the amount and period of time was high, one where the amount and period of time was low and one where the company was going to start committing a large amount of money to a social cause. As opposed to when creating the statement on Cause Commitment Communication on Cause Related Marketing we had to make sure that we emphasized the fact that the company did not contribute with money that came from the sales from a particular product. When testing whether the perception of the company's genuineness decreased as the amount and time contributed decreased we used the same questions as for every other statement. This would let us know whether the participants perceived the company's engagement in CSR as to mainly support the social cause or to increase sales, i.e. tell us whether they perceived intrinsic- or extrinsic motives. The second questions, like in the first section, would allow us to see if the participants allowed for any extrinsic motives if they had perceived them in the first question

3.8 Data Analysis

Since we have collected numbers in our research that we have conducted we are going to analyze these numbers by using different tools. The aim is to clearly show how particular groups of our sample have answered the survey, i.e. if they perceive the communicated CSR as either genuine or dubious. In order for us to be able to

do this we have used various tools, all of which are presented in the following paragraphs.

3.8.1 Google Docs

The online tool for creating and publishing surveys from Google was considered the most convenient to use because of its simplicity and clearness. Additionally, there were Excel tables exported with the data from the answers of the participants. All of this data was stored and saved in order not to lose track of the primary data collection.

3.8.2 Percentages

The most used statistical tool for analyzing quantitative data are percentages, which show the information as a proportion of a whole. (T. Powell and Renner, 2003) explains that percentages are easy to interpret from numbers to words. Namely, people find them the most understandable statistic tool. However, there are many possibilities to make error when using percentages. According to (T. Powell, Renner, 2003) the most important factors, which should be taken into consideration are using the correct base, rounding percentages, adding percentages and averaging percentages. In order to choose the correct base researchers need to be clear which is the base for the shown percentage. There are varieties as the total number of participants sampled, those who answered the question, or those to who the certain question is applicable. In our survey, the bases of the shown percentages are the people who answered the questions and therefore took part of the total number of respondents of a certain question. It is also common to use rounding percentages with decimals. However, we will avoid the usage of decimals due to simplicity and clearness of the results. A third important factor is adding percentages, which apply only to mutually exclusive categories, which do not overlap (T. Powell and Renner, 2003). This is applicable to our survey because we used only close-ended questions and it was possible to choose only one alternative. Last, averaging percentages when adding all of them in one table may lead to errors. As, for example the numbers of respondents, divided by the total number of alternative may reduce the probability of this kind of errors.

3.8.3 Frequency distribution

When one variable is examined at a time indicates frequency distribution according to Malhotra (2004). The main goal with this examination and interpretation of the data and information gathered is to show how every respondent's answers are connected with the values of one variable. This numbers can be analyzed and conveyed to percentages in order to create pie charts and tables in order to visually present the outcomes of different questions and answers. The main reason why this is considered an appropriate tool to be used in this thesis is because it allows readers to find the primary data easier and understand it better.

3.8.4 Cross Tabulations

Cross tabulation tool is more complicated than frequency distribution since it combines two or more variables, which are being examined in a same table at a same time. It shows the number of answers for the different statements and questions.

According to Malhotra, (2004) this tool is essential to use in order to understand how one variable is connected to another one or more. It is very important to use such tables in order to compare different variables through the outcomes of the survey. In this thesis, the cross tabulations play the most important role because the aim was to compare the different CSR strategies and to find out which reduces consumer skepticism most efficiently. By using this tool we were able to show the outcomes of the survey in histograms as well as tables.

The aim of this tool is also to represent whether age and gender play role how people perceive CSR strategies of the companies'. This was also taken into consideration when using the cross tabulations. In order to prove how the consumers' skepticism can be reduced we will use a comparison of the statements from the respondents' answers.

Both frequency distribution table and cross tabulation tables can be send upon request. According to the SPSS software the file has special format and therefore it is more complicated to incorporate it in this paper. Moreover, the main findings from the spss analysis are presented and discussed in the empirical part as percentages.

3.9 Research validity

In order to create or improve existing theories, every research should be accurate and relevant to the chosen topic. Moreover, in order to make room for further working possibilities a researcher should be aware of internal and external validity as well as reliability of the outcomes of their work. Internal validity measures if the collection of the primary data reflects on reality (Saunders et al., 2012). In this thesis survey was used and moreover the positivism is used as research philosophy in order to show the point of view of the consumers and their opinions. Not, the ones of the researchers. Therefore through this tool it is shown how nowadays different CSR strategies are perceived.

On the other hand, external validity measures if the conclusions are applicable to reality and if such are possible to perform. (Saunders et al, 2012) At this point the conclusions of this thesis are contradictory to some of the theories and therefore may affect the existing literature in a different manner. In other words, the consumers and their standpoint do not support some parts of the theories.

4 Empirical Findings

The findings of the collection of primary data are presented in this chapter. In order to make as coherent as possible, the statements are presented and described separately. The outcomes from every statement are shown in tables.

As we explained in a previous section of this thesis the purpose of the survey was to conduct research on two very common types of CSR and two common CSR communication strategies to be able to conclude which of the two strategies that is the most efficient at reducing consumer skepticism in each and every type of Corporate Social Responsibility. In our survey we managed to collect the answers from a group of 108 participants that consisted of an almost even distribution of men and women. The majority of our participants were between the ages of 18 and 25 but older participants also helped contribute to our findings by answering our survey. In the pie charts below you will find the full distribution of the participants in the survey based on gender and age.

4.1 Section I

Gender Distribution (n=108)

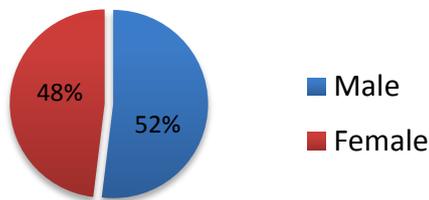


Figure 4.1 (Gender distribution of survey participants)

Age Distribution (n=108)

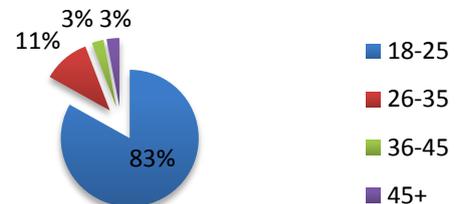


Figure 4.2 (Age distribution of survey participants)

For the first section of the survey we asked our participants to answer questions based on three statements that all represented Cause Fit Communication of Cause Related Marketing where the logicity of the fit varied.

4.1.1 Statement I

For the first statement, which represented an obvious fit between the business and the social cause they supported, the participants were given the following as the company's background information: *"Company A is a popular running shoe manufacturer that is known around the globe"*. With that information, the first statement read as follows: *"Giving is a core component of our business and we believe that through giving we can contribute to creating a better world for the less fortunate. Kenya has a long history of developing great athletes and the majority of these grow up running barefoot. That is why we have committed to donate one pair*

of our shoes for every pair sold to a child in Kenya so he or she can train like a world-class athlete from day one.” The ensuing questions, question 1 and 2, and answers are presented in *Table 1* below.

Table 4.13 (Questions & Answers for Statement 1)

Question 1	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company A is contributing to society mainly because:	
	<u>Total</u>
They care about the social cause	43%
They want to increase sales	57%
Question 2	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company A is genuinely concerned about the social cause?	
	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Agree	9%
Agree	50%
Disagree	38%
Strongly Disagree	3%

4.1.2 Statement 2

The second statement was still about the Cause Fit Communication of Cause Related Marketing, only in the statement, the fit between the business and the social cause the company had chosen to support was not as obvious as in the first one. For the second statement the participants were given the following as company background information; “*Company B is a skin care company specializing in skin care products for kids and adolescents*”. With that information the second statement read as follows: “*Every day thousands of kids are bullied because they suffer from acne and other skin related diseases. This often leads to exclusion and depression. We believe that every child and teenager in this country deserves an education free from bullying, which is why we are donating a percentage of the profits from our Acne treatment assortment to a ‘stop bullying’ organization*”. The ensuing questions, question 2 and 3, and answers are presented in *Table 2* below.

Table 4.14 (Questions and answers for Statement 2)

Question 3	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is contributing to society mainly because:	
	<u>Total</u>
They care about the social cause	45%
They want to increase sales	54%

Question 4

Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is genuinely concerned about the social cause?

	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Agree	6%
Agree	56%
Disagree	34%
Strongly Disagree	5%

4.1.3 Statement 3

The third and concluding statement on Cause Fit Communication for Cause Related Marketing barely had a fit between the business and the social cause they had chosen to support. However, a fit was created in their CSR communication. For this third statement the participants were given the following company background information: *“Company C is a national interior decoration company”*. With that information, the third statement read as follows: *“More than 80% of our employees are women and an even bigger fraction of our customers are female as well. Our business would just not be able to go on without women. One of every eight women will get diagnosed with breast cancer, which is why we feel an obligation to give back to all women out there by donating a percentage of our sales on selected products to the Pink Ribbon Association to help raise awareness about breast cancer”* The ensuing questions, question 4 and 5, and answers are presented in *Table 3*, which you will find below.

Table 4.15 (Questions and answers for Statement 3)

Question 5

Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company C is contributing to society mainly because:

	<u>Total</u>
They care about the social cause	60%
They want to increase sales	40%

Question 6

Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company C is genuinely concerned about the social cause?

	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Agree	20%
Agree	56%
Disagree	22%
Strongly Disagree	2%

4.2 Section 2

For the second section of the survey we asked our participants to consider the fictional company, “Company B” for all of the three statements, statements 4, 5 and 6, regarding Cause Commitment Communication of Cause Related Marketing. “*Company B is a skin care company specializing in skin care products for kids and adolescents*” In this section the commitment in terms of how much money and for how long a company had been supporting a social cause was going to be the prime factor in the communication. Because of this we created three different statements in which we let the Cause Commitment vary from high to low to see what sort of communication reduced consumer skepticism the most.

4.2.1 Statement 4

The first statement of this section, statement four overall, represented Cause Commitment Communication where the commitment was high and it read as follows: “*For ten years now we have been working together with an anti bullying organization to help stop kids from getting bullied. Throughout our cooperation we have been donating 10 % of our profits from our acne treatment assortment, collecting an amount of \$1 million dollars to help prevent kids from getting bullied*”. The following questions, questions 7 and 8, and answers are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4.16 - Questions and answers for Statement 4

Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is contributing to society mainly because:	
	<u>Total</u>
They care about the social cause	69%
They want to increase sales	31%

Question 8	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is genuinely concerned about the social cause?	
	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Agree	17%
Agree	60%
Disagree	20%
Strongly Disagree	3%

4.2.2 Statement 5

The second statement, fifth overall, of Cause Commitment Communication of Cause Related Marketing represented a company’s communication where the commitment was low. It still involved Company B about which the participants were given

some background information after which the statement followed. The second statement read as follows: *“For 1 year now we have been working together with an anti bullying organization to help stop kids from getting bullied. Throughout our co-operation we have been donating 1 % of our profits from our acne treatment assortment, collecting an amount of \$100.000 to help prevent kids from getting bullied”*. After the participants had read the statement they were given the following questions to answer based upon the information they were given in statement 5. The questions and answers to questions 9 and 10 are presented in *Table 5* below.

Table 4.17 - Questions and answers for Statement 5

Question 9	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is contributing to society mainly because:	
	<u>Total</u>
They care about the social cause	38%
They want to increase sales	62%
Question 10	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is genuinely concerned about the social cause?	
	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Agree	9%
Agree	40%
Disagree	41%
Strongly Disagree	10%

4.2.3 Statement 6

Statement 6 overall and the third and final statement of section two regarding Cause Commitment Communication of Cause Related marketing represented a company’s communication of a commitment to a social cause that was going to start in a near future. As for the entire second section the participants were given the company background information of Company B after which they were asked to read statement 6 that read as follows: *“As of next month we will start a cooperation with an anti bullying organization to help stop kids from getting bullied. Throughout our cooperation we are going to donate 5% of our profits from our acne treatment assortment hoping to collect over \$1 million by the end of the year. Help us to prevent kids from getting bullied”*. Questions 11 and 12 followed the statement and are together with the answers presented in *Table 6* below.

Table 4.18 - Questions and answers for Statement 6

Question 11	
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Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is contributing to society mainly because:	
	<u>Total</u>
They care about the social cause	42%
They want to increase sales	58%
Question 12	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is genuinely concerned about the social cause?	
	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Agree	6%
Agree	48%
Disagree	40%
Strongly Disagree	6%

Questions 11 and 12 concludes the research on communication strategies regarding Cause Related Marketing, which leads us into the third section of the survey and the beginning of the research on communication strategies on Corporate Philanthropy.

4.3 Section 3

We started this section of the survey with three statements about Cause Fit Communication of Corporate Philanthropic activities. Here, the logicity of the fit was going to be the prime variable, which was going to tell us whether consumer skepticism was triggered or not.

4.3.1 Statement 7

The first statement of this section, and seventh overall, represented communication of a logical and obvious fit between the business and the social cause and the participants were given the following company background information for Company A: *“Company A is a popular running shoe manufacturer that is known around the globe”*. With that information the following statement read as follows: *“As a world leading running shoe company we feel an obligation to provide kids all around the world with the best possible conditions to succeed as athletes. Kenya has a history of producing many great athletes, which is why we have decided to start a program in Kenya to help build training facilities and provide these training facilities with equipment and most importantly shoes for every participant”*. The ensuing questions, questions 13 and 14, and answers are presented in *Table 7* below.

Table 4.19 - Questions and answers for Statement 7

Question 13

Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company A is contributing to society mainly because:	
	<u>Total</u>
They care about the social cause	66%
They want to increase sales	34%
Question 14	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company A is genuinely concerned about the social cause?	
	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Agree	22%
Agree	54%
Disagree	22%
Strongly Disagree	2%

4.3.2 Statement 8

The eighth statement represented communication of a business and cause fit that was not obvious but yet existing. The participants were given the same background information of Company B that they had received earlier. *“Company B is a skin care company specializing in skin care products for kids and adolescents”*. The eighth statement about Cause Fit Communication of Corporate Philanthropy read as follows: *“Every day thousands of kids are bullied because they suffer from Acne and other skin related diseases. This often leads to exclusion and depression. We believe that every child and teenager in this country deserves an education free from bullying, which is why we have partnered with an anti bullying organization to help raise awareness about bullying and the consequences of it”*. The questions and answers following statement 8 are presented in *Table 8* below.

Table 4.20 - Questions and answers for Statement 8

Question 15	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is contributing to society mainly because:	
	<u>Total</u>
They care about the social cause	62%
They want to increase sales	38%
Question 16	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is genuinely concerned about the social cause?	
	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Agree	18%

Agree	55%
Disagree	23%
Strongly Disagree	5%

4.3.3 Statement 9

For the ninth statement the participants were again given the background information of Company C, which read as follows: “*Company C is a national interior decoration company*”. Following that they were asked to read the statement representing a fit that barely existed but that was created in the CSR communication. Statement 9 read as follows: “*More than 80% of our employees are women and an even bigger fraction of our customers are female as well. Our business would just not be able to go on without women. One of every eight women will get diagnosed with breast cancer, which is why we feel an obligation to give back to all women out there by setting up local support groups for women with breast cancer and their families*”. The questions regarding statement 9 and its answers are presented in *Table 9* below.

Table 4.21 - Questions and answers for Statement 9

Question 17	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company C is contributing to society mainly because:	
	<u>Total</u>
They care about the social cause	73%
They want to increase sales	27%
Question 18	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company C is genuinely concerned about the social cause?	
	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Agree	24%
Agree	54%
Disagree	19%
Strongly Disagree	4%

The ninth statement was the final and concluding statement of Cause Fit Communication on Corporate Philanthropy and lead us into the final and fourth section of the survey.

4.4 Section 4

The fourth section of the survey treated the communication strategy of Cause Commitment Communication on Corporate Philanthropy. For the three final statements of this survey we asked the participants to consider Company B for all

of the statements, “Company B is a skin care company specializing in skin care products for kids and adolescents”.

4.4.1 Statement 10

The first statement of Cause Commitment Communication on Corporate Philanthropy represented the CSR communication of Company B where the commitment was high and it read as follows: “For ten years now we have been working together with an anti bullying organization to help stop kids from getting bullied. Throughout our cooperation we have committed over \$1 million to help raise awareness of bullying and the consequences of it by educating over 500 of the country’s middle schools about bullying”. The ensuing questions, questions 19 and 20, and answers are presented below in Table 10.

Table 4.22 - Questions and answers for Statement 10

Question 19	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is contributing to society mainly because:	
	<u>Total</u>
They care about the social cause	80%
They want to increase sales	20%
Question 20	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is genuinely concerned about the social cause?	
	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Agree	26%
Agree	58%
Disagree	14%
Strongly Disagree	2%

4.4.2 Statement 11

The eleventh statement still concerned the Cause Commitment Communication of Company B’s Corporate Philanthropy and it represented a low commitment to the social cause and read as follows: “For one year now we have been working together with an anti bullying organization to help stop kids from getting bullied. Throughout our cooperation we have committed over \$100,000 to help raise awareness of bullying and the consequences of it by educating over 50 of the country’s middle schools about bullying”. The questions and answers concerning statement 11 are presented in Table 11 below.

Table 4.23 - Questions and answers for Statement 11

Question 21	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is contributing to society mainly because:	

	<u>Total</u>
They care about the social cause	61%
They want to increase sales	39%
Question 22	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is genuinely concerned about the social cause?	
	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Agree	13%
Agree	56%
Disagree	29%
Strongly Disagree	2%

4.4.3 Statement 12

Statement 12, the last and final statement of our survey represented Cause Commitment Communication of Corporate Philanthropy and Company B's commencing commitment to a social cause. Statement 12 read as follows: *"As of next month we will start a cooperation with an anti bullying organization to help stop kids from getting bullied. Throughout our cooperation we are going to commit over \$1 million to help educate the nation's schools about bullying and the consequences of it"*. The questions and answers concerning statement 12 are presented in *Table 12* below.

Table 4.24 - Questions and answers for Statement 12

Question 23	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is contributing to society mainly because:	
	<u>Total</u>
They care about the social cause	56%
They want to increase sales	44%
Question 24	
Based on the statement above, do you believe that Company B is genuinely concerned about the social cause?	
	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Agree	13%
Agree	56%
Disagree	30%
Strongly Disagree	2%

5 Analysis

In the following paragraphs we are going to interpret and analyze the results from the survey and compare those results to the theories we have obtained through our literature review.

Analysis will allow us to conclude which of the two communication strategies, Cause Fit Communication or Cause Commitment Communication, is the most efficient at reducing consumer skepticism when companies communicate their CSR. In our analysis we are going to start by analyzing the age- and gender distribution. Owing to that, we will analyze the CFC strategy and its effects on reducing consumer skepticism both on CRM and Corporate Philanthropic activities. We are also going to analyze the CMM strategy on CRM as well as Corporate Philanthropic activities as well. By doing this we will have gathered the information so that we can fulfill the purpose of this thesis and at the end of this thesis be able to conclude which of the two communication strategies is the preferable type of CSR communication when companies look at reducing consumer skepticism.

5.1 Gender- & Age Distribution

In our survey we had a total of 108 participants from whom we collected information on each and every individual's gender and age in order to be able to present a good ratio of men and women as well as young and old people. A good gender- and age distribution would represent a somewhat authentic population, which would certainly help us present accurate data.

The 108 people who participated in our survey had a very even spread between men and women, which enabled us to present an authentic sample group. As for the age distribution the vast majority of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 35, which at first glance does not represent an authentic population. However, we do not necessarily see this as a problem considering the fact that, young consumers have different values, preferences of communication and maybe most importantly, they value communication transparency more than any other generation (Schmeltz, 2013). Because of this, young consumers are more likely to identify intrinsic as well as extrinsic motives in the companies' CSR communication. When taking that into account, a sample group with predominantly young people rather helps us present an accurate study than it hurts the authenticity of our sample group and results.



5.2 Analysis of Cause Fit Communication

Cause Fit Communication has been suggested a very effective method for reducing consumer skepticism when communicating ones engagement in CSR. The reason to why it has been suggested as such an effective communication strategy is much due to its ability to affect the consumers' CSR attributions (Simmons and Becker-Olsen, 2006). Cause Fit Communication is essentially about communicating a logical fit between the social cause that a company is supporting and the company's core competencies. What Bhattacharya (2010) suggests is that the more logical and obvious the fit is in the eyes of the consumers the more they will perceive intrinsic motives and a genuine care for the cause. However, if a company communicates a social cause that is vaguely connected to the core business it will lead to consumer's perceiving extrinsic motives and insincere care for the social cause, which in turn increases skepticism. To conclude, what the Cause Fit Communication strategy suggests is that a company's perception of genuineness will increase as the logicity and clarity of the fit between the social cause and the core business increases.

5.2.1 Consumer Perception of CFC on CRM

When we tested the Cause Fit Communication strategy on Cause Related Marketing activities we presented CSR statements that represented varying fit between the social cause and the core competencies of the company. What the theory suggested was that the more logical and obvious this fit was the more genuine a perception of the company it would produce (Bhattacharya, 2010). However, what we found was the opposite. Our three statements represented three different companies' communication of their engagement in Cause Related Marketing activities.

5.2.1.1 Analysis of Statement 1

Company A had a very natural, logical and obvious fit between their social cause and their core business. This proved to be the statement that produced the highest level of consumers perceiving the company's engagement in CSR as mainly to increase their sales as opposed to caring for the social cause. Of the 57 % who perceived the company's engagement in CSR to be mainly to increase sales, 34 % still thought that they expressed a genuine concern for the social cause, allowing for the extrinsic motives the company had conveyed in their CSR statement. This still leaves a total of 38 % who believes that the company is insincere in their support of the social cause and does not allow for any extrinsic motives at all.

5.2.1.2 Analysis of Statement 2

For the second statement and Company B we presented a statement where the logicity of the fit was not obvious but when explained it made much sense. Now what the theory suggested here is that when the logic of the fit is not obvious, consumers will tend to think more of the motives of the company's engagement in CSR

and thus, identify more extrinsic motives (Bhattacharya, 2010). However, compared to Statement 1 where the logic of the fit was very obvious the participants perceived Company B's engagement in CSR slightly more as if they were doing it because they cared for the social cause as opposed to them wanting to increase their sales. Nevertheless a mere 2 % more than in the previous statement perceived this company as engaging in CSR because they cared about the social cause. Needless to say, 2 % can represent a large amount of people. The 2 % increase in people perceiving the company as if they cared for the cause is great, however, of the 55 % who believed the company wanted to mainly increase sales, only 32 % strongly agreed or agreed that the company had a genuine concern for the social cause, resulting in a smaller amount of people allowing for extrinsic motives.

5.2.1.3 Analysis of Statement 3

The most interesting findings from our study on Cause Fit Communication on Cause Related Marketing activities was found in the statement where Company C communicated a CSR statement where a fit between their social cause and their core business barely existed but was logically created through their communication. For the first time, the majority of the participants found that the company engaged in CSR mainly because they cared about the social cause as opposed to wanting to increase sales. Statement 3 also allowed for the highest level of allowance of extrinsic motives. Of the 40 % who stated that they thought that Company C supported the social cause mainly because they wanted to increase sales, 47 % still found that the company had a genuine concern for the social cause. This statement was also the statement in which the highest number of the participants perceived a genuine care for the social case with a total of 76 %.

5.2.1.4 Thoughts of CFC on CRM

The findings in this first section of our survey contradict what previously has been suggested in the literature (Bhattacharya, 2010). It seems as if there is an additional layer to this type of communication. When the fit is obvious like Statement 1 with Company A, the numbers are not bad, there is a total of 43 % that perceives that the company is mainly supporting the social cause because they care for it and 59 % agrees or strongly agrees that the company has a genuine care for the social cause, i.e. allows for extrinsic, self serving motives. Nevertheless, the majority still believes that the company is engaging in CSR to serve themselves at first. What we have found here is that it is not so much about how logic and obvious the actual fit is but more about how logic and obvious one can communicate it to be. This is strongly supported by the findings in Statement 3, where Company C is engaging in CSR that does not really have anything to do with their core competencies but they communicate it in a very logical way so that the fit is perceived as logic and obvious. Compared to the statement in which Company a conveyed a very logic and obvious fit the perception of engaging in CSR as mainly because they care about the social cause increased with 17 %. For Statement 2, though, where Company B

communicated their engagement in CSR and emphasized their fit rather than creating it did not have the same effect on the perception of the company's genuineness, merely increasing the perception of performing CSR because they care about the social cause with 2 % compared to the example in Statement 1. This seems to be the case for the tolerance of extrinsic motives as well. When the fit is logically explained rather than logically created it seems as if the consumers are much more tolerant of extrinsic, self-serving motives. The theory suggested that when the consumers had to think about the logic of the fit between the business and the social cause they had chosen to support they were more likely to identify extrinsic motives and perceive insincerity. But if the company is explaining the logic behind their CSR there is no need for contemplation, which rules out the identification of extrinsic motives, which increases the perception of genuineness, which we believe, in turn, increases the tolerance of extrinsic motives and reduces consumer skepticism.

5.2.2 Consumer Perception of CFC on Corporate Philanthropy

Just like we had done when testing the Cause Fit Communication strategy on Cause Related Marketing activities we presented the participants to three different CSR statements from three different companies where the logic and obviousness of the fit between the social cause and the core business varied. As we mentioned before, Bhattacharya (2010), has suggested that the perception of a company's level of genuineness increases as the logic of the fit increases. However, when we began analyzing the results of the Cause Fit Communication strategy on Cause Related Marketing, we seemed to find the opposite. What we found was that it was not the logic of the fit itself that either increased or decreased consumer skepticism but the company's ability to create and communicate an obvious and logical fit between the company and the social cause. These findings were strengthened when we analyzed the results from the survey that aimed at studying the consumer skepticism reducing effects of Cause Fit Communication on Corporate Philanthropic activities, which we are to present below. The relevant statements from the survey are Statement 7, 8 & 9.

5.2.2.1 Analysis of Statement 7

In Statement 7, Company A communicated their engagement in CSR with a logical and obvious fit between their core business and the social cause. Here, the majority, 66 %, of the participants perceived the company as to engage in CSR mainly because they cared about the social cause as opposed to wanting to increase their sales. Also, a total of 76 % agreed or strongly agreed that the company had a genuine concern for the social cause. In addition to that, of the 34 % who thought that the company mainly supported the cause for their own benefit 41 % still believed that Company A had a genuine concern for the social cause. This is a large increase when one compares it to the findings from the part of the survey studying the ef-

fects of Cause Fit Communication on Cause Related Marketing, however we do not believe that the increase depends so much on the strategy of communication but on the fact that when companies communicate Corporate Philanthropic activities they tend to not communicate where the money comes from. In Cause Related Marketing the company emphasizes the source through which they make money that they donate, for example, the profits from the sales of a certain product but when companies communicate Corporate Philanthropic activities they leave this type of information out.

5.2.2.2 Analysis of Statement 8

In Statement 8, Company B communicated a logical fit that was not obvious. Here we could identify an increase in the perception of the company performing CSR as mainly because they care about the social cause when compared to the equivalent statement when we tested Cause Fit Communication on Cause Related Marketing. Here a total of 62 % found that the company supported the cause because they cared about it as opposed to wanting to increase their sales and as many as 73 % recognized the company as genuinely caring for the social cause. However, of the 38 % who believed that Company B mainly wanted to increase sales, only 34 % perceived that the company had a genuine care for the social cause. These numbers still tells us that the participants allows for extrinsic motives, but not as much as in the first statement with Company A. We still believe that the big increase from the results from the test of Cause Fit Communication on Cause Related Marketing depends on the fact that here, Company B does not emphasize that the money derives from the sales of a particular product but merely that they have committed an amount of money to a social cause. There was a slight decrease in the percentage that found that the company engaged in CSR mainly because they cared for the social cause.

5.2.2.3 Analysis of Statement 9

The third statement of testing Cause Fit Communication on Corporate Philanthropy, Statement 9 overall, was again the statement in which we found the most interesting results. In this statement, where Company C communicated a CSR statement where a fit between the core business and the social cause barely existed but was created through the communication, a total of 73 % perceived that the company engaged in CSR mainly because they cared about the social cause. Also, a total of 78 % agreed or strongly agreed that the company expressed a genuine concern for the social cause. The really interesting part with the results from this statement though was the fact that of the small 27 % who believed that Company C supported their social cause mainly to increase sales, only 28 % perceived a genuine concern for the social cause. When we tested the Cause Fit Communication strategy on Cause Related Marketing, of the 40 % who considered the company's engagement in CSR was to increase sales, 47 % still identified a genuine concern for the social cause allowing for extrinsic motives. Here, it seems as if by eliminating the com-

munication of where the money that has been donated comes from, Company C has been able to 'win over' the people who believed the company engaged in CSR to increase sales but identified a genuine concern to perceive the company as performing CSR mainly because they care about the social cause.

5.2.2.4 Thoughts of CFC on Corporate Philanthropy

The findings from this section of the thesis again go against what Bhattacharya (2010) suggested. Statement 7 in the survey represented Company A's CSR communication of CSR efforts that were obvious and logical to the consumers. Even though the theory suggested by Bhattacharya (2010) stated that this would generate a low level of consumer skepticism and high tolerance for extrinsic motives, of the three statements representing CFC on Corporate Philanthropy this statement generated the second highest level of genuineness. The highest level of genuineness, tolerance of extrinsic motives along with the statement triggering the lowest levels of consumer skepticism was the ninth overall statement. This strengthens our suggestion that the reduction of consumer skepticism does not depend so much on the logic of the fit itself but rather on how logic and obvious one can communicate it to be. Another interesting finding from studying the effects of CFC on CRM and Corporate Philanthropy was that for every statement the number of people who perceived the company as genuine increased as well as the tolerance for the extrinsic, self-serving motives. We believe that this does not have to do with how well the cause fit is communicated, but rather on the fact that when companies communicate Corporate Philanthropy they tend to avoid to tell people where the donations derive from and simply say that they have committed an amount of money to a social cause. When companies communicate CRM, on the other hand, they state that the contributions derive from the profits of a particular product. By doing this they are encouraging people to buy their products and essentially say that their contributions to the social cause depends on how many of their consumers will buy their products, i.e. it is perceived as a sales technique rather than a good deed. This increases the extrinsic motives, which increases the consumer skepticism.

5.3 Analysis of Cause Commitment Communication

Cause Commitment Communication is another CSR communication strategy that has been suggested as an effective method for reducing consumer skepticism. Cause Commitment Communication is based on a company communicating how much money they have been contributing with, for how long they have been doing it and applicable to Cause Related Marketing, the percentage of the profits they are willing to contribute with. What Bhattacharya (2010) suggests is that a company will be perceived as more genuine the more they are willing to contribute to a social cause. The time they have been doing it is also an important aspect for companies that are looking to reduce consumer skepticism. The longer a company has

been contributing to a social cause, the more genuine it is perceived and in turn the less skeptical consumers get about their motives (Bhattacharya, 2010).

5.3.1 Consumer Perceptions of CMM on CRM

For the study on Cause Commitment Communication on Cause Related Marketing everything seems to conform much better to the suggested theories from the literature. When testing Cause Commitment Communication we did not want the cause fit to be a prime factor, which is why we used the same company for every statement and let the amount of money and the time the company had been contributing to a cause vary instead. We tested whether the perception of a company's genuineness increased with the amount contributed and the time they had been committing to particular social cause. The relevant statements from the survey are Statements 4, 5 & 6.

5.3.1.1 Analysis of Statement 4

In Statement 4 Company B communicated a CSR statement in which they had contributed with a large amount of money for a long period of time as well as they had committed a high percentage of the profits from a certain product. Just as the theory Bhattacharya (2010) suggested, we could see that a total of 69 % of the participants perceived the company's engagement in CSR as if they mainly did it because they cared for the social cause. In total, 77 % said that they agreed or strongly agreed that the company expressed a genuine concern for the social cause they supported. For this statement, 31 % said to believe that the company engaged in CSR mainly to increase sales and out of these 31 %, only 35 % thought that they expressed a genuine concern for the social cause. This means that a third of the people who perceived extrinsic motives tolerate them, which is basically equivalent to what the other communication strategy produced. This goes well with what Bhattacharya suggested that communicating the contribution of a large amount of money for a long period of time increases the perception of genuineness. At the same time, though, some may perceive the communication of large contributions as bragging, which affects the tolerance of extrinsic motives negatively (Sen et al, 2009).

5.3.1.2 Analysis of Statement 5

In the fifth statement we let Company B communicate a CSR statement in which the contribution to the social cause was very low and the period of time they had been contributing was also low. In addition to that the percentage of the profits from a particular product that the company was willing to contribute with was also very low. Here, as suggested by Bhattacharya (2010) the perception of the company as genuine was very low and the skepticism that arose from this statement was high. A total of 62 % recognized the company's engagement in CSR as mainly to increase their sales and for the first time in this survey the majority felt that the company had no genuine concern for the social cause. This means that the toler-

ance of extrinsic motives is very low and the skepticism to the company's engagement in CSR is very high. If we compare these findings to the ones in Statement 4 where we assumed that the reason to why 2/3 did not tolerate any extrinsic motives was due to bragging we can see here that the smaller amounts communicated does not make up for the negative effects of 'bragging'.

5.3.1.3 Analysis of Statement 6

In Statement 6 we let Company B communicate a statement in which they informed the public that they were about to start a contribution to a social cause. We thought that it would be interesting to include an example like this to see whether or not it is preferable for companies to tell the public about their embarking CSR activities. The CSR statement read that Company B was going to contribute a medium amount over a short period of time and commit a medium percentage of the profits from a particular product. What we found here was really interesting, the participants were a bit more positive towards this type of communication as opposed to the communication presented in statement 5. A total of 42 % believed that the company was about to start contributing to the social cause because they cared about it and 54 % recognized a genuine care for the social cause. However, only 30 % of the participants who believed that the company was engaging in CSR mainly to increase their sales perceived that the company had a genuine care for the social cause. Along with the fact that a high 11 % of the people who thought that the company was engaging in CSR mainly because they cared for the social cause did not identify any genuine concern for the social cause. What this boils down to is a very low tolerance for extrinsic motives. We think that this may have to do with the fact that the consumers perceive the communication of a CSR project that is about to start as bragging. As Sen et al (2009) suggested this has a negative effect on the tolerance of extrinsic motives, which drives up consumer skepticism as it increases.

5.3.1.4 Thoughts of CMM on CRM

The results from the survey of CMM on CRM seem to conform well to the theories that have been presented by Bhattacharya (2010) and Sen (2009). However, what we have noticed when analyzing these results is that including numbers, in terms of, how much a company has contributed to a social cause, is a very delicate matter that can either increase the perception of genuineness or trigger high levels of consumer skepticism. By analyzing the results it looks like the factor of bragging is unavoidable when including numbers in ones CSR communication and that it is better to communicate the high contributions and risk a little bit of bragging than not doing the opposite. We think that the big differences in the perception of Company B in statements 5 and 6 depend on the fact that one is contributing a larger percentage than the other. This tells us that the proportion that a company is contributing is essential when communicating their CSR.

5.3.2 Consumer Perceptions of CMM on Corporate Philanthropy

For the study on CMM on Corporate Philanthropy the results seemed to conform well, once again, to the theories suggested by Bhattacharya (2010). Larger contributions over longer periods of time was perceived more as genuine as opposed to low contributions over short periods of time. What this study would also tell us was whether or not what we had suggested in the previous section of the survey was true or not. There we had found that people perceived a company's communication of embarking CSR activities as more genuine than the communication of low and short contributions. However, we suggested that this depended on the fact that the company that was going to start their contribution had committed a higher portion of their profits than the company who had a low and short contribution. The relevant statements from the survey are statements 10, 11 & 12.

5.3.2.1 Analysis of Statement 10

In statement 10 we obtained results that strengthened the theory suggested by Bhattacharya (2010). Companies who communicate a high contribution over a long period of time increase the perception of genuine as well as they increase the tolerance for extrinsic motives. The results from this statement showed that a high 80 % believed that the company was engaging in CSR mainly because they cared for the social cause along with 84 % who perceived that the company had a genuine concern for the social cause. In addition to that, of the 20 % who believed that the company was mainly contributing to the social cause for their own benefit, 36 % allowed for extrinsic, self-serving motives, by identifying a genuine concern expressed by the company. That only leaves a mere 16 %, in total, who does not allow for any extrinsic, self serving motives when using this type of communication, that is the lowest for this entire survey.

5.3.2.2 Analysis of Statement 11

In the eleventh statement we let the same company communicate the same CSR strategy, but this time they had contributed with a small amount of money over a short period of time. The majority of the participants believed that the company was engaging in CSR mainly because they cared for the social cause and a total of 69 % agreed or strongly agreed that the company was expressing a genuine concern for the social cause, leaving 31 % non-tolerant to extrinsic motives. From this, one can conclude that 1/3 of the participants was skeptical towards this type of CSR communication. However, in the equivalent statement of CMM on CRM, the perception of the company as genuine had increased considerably. When we analyzed the equivalent question for CMM on CRM we suggested that the extreme perception of insincerity and the low tolerance of extrinsic motives depended on the low proportions they were willing to donate. When the company is not communicating how big of a percentage they are contributing the consumer skepticism has decreased substantially.

5.3.2.3 Analysis of Statement 12

For the twelfth and concluding statement of this survey we once again let Company B present a CSR statement where they were going to start medium contributions to a social cause for a short period of time. When we tested this before we saw that this type of communication triggered less consumer skepticism than the type of communication where the company expressed a low and short contribution to a social cause. This turned out to not be the case this time. A total of 56 % believed that the company was going to start contributing to the social cause mainly because they cared for the social cause along with 69 % who believed that the company expressed a genuine concern for the social cause. Compared to the second statement where 61 % said to believe that the company engaged in CSR mainly because they care about the social cause along with 69 % who allowed for extrinsic self-serving motives.

5.3.2.4 Thoughts of CMM on Corporate Philanthropy

The results from the survey of CMM on Corporate Philanthropy conform well to the theories that have been presented by Bhattacharya (2010). Once again the tests on Corporate Philanthropy where the source of the donations is not mentioned in the communication has proven to be very efficient at reducing consumer skepticism. Our findings have also helped us conclude that when the source of the money that is donated is communicated to the public it is essential that the proportions are high rather than low. Statement 12 also tells us that telling the public about ones CSR efforts that are going to start can be perceived as bragging but that it is not necessarily something bad, as long as the numbers are not too low. Last but not least it strengthens our argument that using numbers in ones CSR communication is a delicate matter as the consumer skepticism increases, as the numbers gets smaller. When this happens a company's CSR communication is easily perceived as bragging or it does not live up to the high expectations of the consumers (Dawkins & Lewis, 2003), which in turn, increases consumer skepticism.

6 Conclusion

This chapter comprises empirical study, literature study and consequentially the analysis where everything is connected to make sense. We refer to the initial purpose of this thesis and answer the research question.

The purpose of this thesis, as explained before, was to investigate whether Cause Commitment Communication was a better CSR communication strategy than

Cause Fit Communication at reducing consumer skepticism. Based on that purpose we created our research question; *Which CSR communication strategy increases the perception of a company's CSR efforts genuineness and reduces consumer skepticism the most?* Researchers argued the different CSR communication strategies cases to why they should be the most efficient at reducing consumer skepticism and also highlighted things to avoid and consider when adopting the different communication strategies.

Cause Commitment Communication for one, is very efficient at reducing consumer skepticism given that the contributions are high and that none of the three aspects of cause commitment is left out. When companies adapt Cause Commitment Communication they have to make sure to include the amount of input, for how long they have been contributing to a particular social cause and lastly the consistency of the input (Bhattacharya, 2010). If one is left out, poorly emphasized or simply does not live up to the consumer expectations the perception of extrinsic motives will increase and consumers will become skeptical towards the motives of the company's engagement in CSR. For Cause Fit Communication on the other hand, Bhattacharya (2010) suggested that the more logical the fit between the social cause and the core business was, the more genuine a perception the company would convey through their CSR communication. What we found through our study though was that the true logic of the fit was not as crucial as first thought. We found that it was the ability of the company to communicate a logical fit and therefore making it obvious. The reason why it had been suggested that a logical fit would decrease consumer skepticism is because the more logical the fit, the less the consumer would contemplate over the company's motives. However, if they are forced to think over their motives, which an illogical fit does, the extrinsic motives become more apparent. This triggers consumer skepticism. What we found though was that by communicating the logic of the, i.e. making the fit obvious for the consumers they were not forced to think of the motives at all, since the company had already made it evident to them. That eliminated the whole contemplation of whether the consumers found the company's engagement in CSR as genuine or dubious. This decreases consumer skepticism.

Considering all these pros and cons of each communication strategy, which one is the best for companies to adapt when looking to reduce consumer skepticism? In our analysis we managed to find that the strategy that produced the highest perception of genuineness as well as the highest tolerance for extrinsic motives was Cause Commitment Communication. But to add to this, Cause Commitment Communication was also the communication strategy that produced the highest level of consumer skepticism and the lowest tolerance of extrinsic motives. Cause Fit Communication was also a good strategy for reducing consumer skepticism. However, we learned that it was not so much about how logic the fit was but about how logic one could make it look in the communication. From the results it is really dif-

difficult to select one strategy that is the most efficient at reducing consumer skepticism. We believe that they can be equally good as long as one stays within the guidelines of the usage of each communication strategy. In the following section we will emphasize these guidelines and based on our research suggest how we believe that the different communication strategies can be used most efficiently in terms of reducing consumer skepticism

7 Discussion

In the following section we will provide a few suggestions to how companies should use the different communication strategies most efficiently in order to reduce consumer skepticism as well as pinpoint some things to avoid when adopting these CSR communication strategies.

7.1 Guidelines for Cause Fit Communication

The theories for this strategy suggests that it is a great strategy to reduce consumer skepticism due to the ability it has to influence the consumer's CSR attributions. By presenting a logical and obvious fit consumers immediately identify the intrinsic motives of the company and does not continue in the thought process to look for extrinsic motives. However, what we found was that it was even better to communicatively create a fit between the cause and the business and logically explain it to the consumers. We believe that by doing this the consumers do not even have to contemplate over whether the company's motives are of intrinsic- or extrinsic art and therefor are perceived as even more genuine than they were if they had communicated an extremely logical and obvious fit, like the one we presented in Statement 1. This is not to say that it is bad to have a logical and obvious fit between the business and the social cause one is supporting. However, when this is the case it is important for the companies to logically explain the fit to the consumers to not risk generating any perceptions of extrinsic motives. We also learned that it is always better to not mention in the communication where the money comes from, for example, if the money donated derives from the sales from a particular product. In our study, the consumers perceived the companies who did not include this type of information in their CSR communication as more genuine and it triggered less consumer skepticism. Based on our research, if companies stick to these guidelines they will have success in reducing consumer skepticism towards their CSR efforts with the Cause Fit Communication Strategy, just as good as any other suggested strategy.

7.2 Guidelines for Cause Commitment Communication

The theories for this strategy suggests that it is just as good as any other strategy at reducing consumer skepticism provided that the companies stay within the guidelines that the theory suggests. In our research we found that this was true. As long as companies communicated a high contribution and a contribution that had been going on for a long period of time combined with a high consistency of the contributions they generated really efficient effects on reducing consumer skepticism. However, what our study also showed us were a few things that companies should avoid when using this type of CSR communication. What we found here seems to be a common denominator for both our CSR communication strategies. This is that it was always better perceived if companies did not include where the donations had derived from. We believe that this is because it is perceived more as a sales technique than it looks like a good deed, which makes the extrinsic motives more apparent as well as it increases the consumer skepticism. We also found that for companies who are not making big donations, or companies that has not been contributing to a cause for a long period of time should stay away from this type of CSR communication. The low contributions and the short contributions were always perceived by the preponderance of our respondents as self-serving rather than as good deeds. We also found that bragging is unavoidable in this type of CSR communication but that it is worth to communicate it anyway, as long as the contributions are high and have been going on for a while. As long as companies stick to these guidelines Cause Commitment Communication can be just as good as the next CSR communication strategy at reducing consumer skepticism.

8 Suggestions for Further Research

The final chapter represents how this thesis has made contribution in the field of CSR communication and how this area can be further researched in the future.

In this thesis we have only studied the effects of the Cause Commitment Communication strategy and the effects of the Cause Fit Communication strategy separately. What would be interesting to see in further research is if these two can be combined to become even more efficient or if a combination of the two will increase bragging perceptions and thought processes that makes extrinsic motives even more apparent. Another thing that would be interesting to see is whether there is a way for companies to reduce the perception of bragging when using Cause Commitment Communication, which seemed to be unavoidable based on the results that we obtained through our survey. Our results suggest that it is much more complicated to communicate Cause Related Marketing activities as supposed to Corporate Philanthropy. What would also be interesting to see in further research is if there are communication techniques that can be used in order to overcome the skepticism that communicating where the money donated derives from.

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