

What do consumers "like"? Communicating CSR to consumers in Facebook, views from the airline industry

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Abstract

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ABSTRACT
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What do consumers *like*? Communicating CSR to consumers in Facebook, views from the airline industry

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to investigate airlines' CSR related communication to consumers through Facebook. More specifically the study focused on (a) Finland's largest airline's, Finnair's, perspective to the topic and (b) on the content and consumer reactions to CSR related postings in Facebook. The study explores the phenomenon through three research questions: (1) what is Finnair's perspective to communicating about CSR in Facebook (2) which CSR themes do airlines communicate about in Facebook and (3) which CSR related themes do airlines' Facebook fans react to.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The data of the study was twofold and consisted of (1) interviews with Finnair employees and (2) CSR related updates by 11 airlines in their Facebook communities during a set time period. The interview data was approached through a qualitative analysis and to analyze the Facebook updates, a quantitative content analysis was conducted. The aim of the content analysis was to clarify which CSR topics seem to evoke most reactions in terms of likes, comments and shares in Facebook. The theoretical framework of the study was formed on the basis of a literature review and it focused on a two-way communication model between the company and consumers enabled by social media channels such as Facebook.

Findings and Conclusions

The findings of the interview part of the study indicate that social media in general and Facebook in particular are gaining importance as a channel for communicating CSR to consumers. It is thus possible that the percentage of CSR related Facebook updates, which in this study was 5.5 %, will increase in the future. The results of the content analysis demonstrated that out of CSR related posts, airlines currently communicate mostly about environmental responsibility and society. In addition, the findings indicated that postings related to society ranked highest in likes and the overall reactions, but postings about employees received most comments out of all themes. Respectively, messages related to environmental issues were subject to most shares by Facebook users.

Key words: CSR communication, stakeholder involvement, two-way communication, social media, Facebook, airlines

Tiivistelmä

AALTO-YLIOPISTON KAUPPAKORKEAKOULU
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TIIVISTELMÄ
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Mistä kuluttajat tykkäävät? Yritysvastuuviestintä kuluttajille Facebookissa, näkökulmia lentoalalta.

Tutkimuksen tavoitteet

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli tarkastella lentoyhtiöiden yritysvastuuviestintää kuluttajille Facebookin kautta. Tarkemmin ilmaistuna tutkimus keskittyi Suomen suurimman lentoyhtiön näkemykseen aiheesta sekä lentoyhtiöiden CSR-aiheisten päivitysten teemoihin ja niiden herättämiin reaktioihin Facebookissa. Tutkielma tarkasteli ilmiötä kolmen tutkimuskysymyksen kautta: (1) mikä on Finnairin näkökulma CSR viestintään Facebookissa, (2) mistä CSR-aiheista lentoyhtiöt viestivät tällä hetkellä Facebookissa ja (3) mihin CSR-aiheisiin teemoihin lentoyhtiöiden Facebook fanit reagoivat.

Tutkimusmenetelmät ja teoreettinen viitekehys

Tutkimuksen aineisto koostui (1) haastatteluista Finnairin työntekijöiden kanssa sekä (2) lentoyhtiöiden CSR-aiheisista Facebook-päivityksistä. Haastatteluaineisto analysoitiin kvalitatiivisesti, kun taas Facebook päivityksille suoritettiin kvantitatiivinen sisältöanalyysi. Sisältöanalyysin tavoitteena oli selvittää, mitkä CSR-aiheet herättävät eniten reaktioita tykkäysten, kommenttien ja jakojen muodossa. Tutkielman teoreettinen viitekehys perustui kirjallisuuskatsaukseen ja keskittyi sosiaalisen median kanavien, kuten Facebookin, mahdollistamaan kaksisuuntaiseen viestintämalliin yrityksen ja kuluttajan välillä.

Tutkimuksen tulokset ja johtopäätökset

Haastatteluiden tulokset osoittivat, että sosiaalinen media ja Facebook ovat kasvattamassa merkitystään CSR-viestinnässä kuluttajille. Näin ollen on mahdollista, että CSR-aiheisten Facebook päivitysten määrä, joka tässä tutkimuksessa oli ainoastaan 5,5 %, tulee kasvamaan tulevaisuudessa. Sisältöanalyysin tulokset osoittivat, että lentoyhtiöt viestivät tällä hetkellä enimmäkseen ympäristö- ja yhteiskuntavastuusta Facebookissa. Lisäksi tulokset osoittivat, että yhteiskuntavastuuseen liittyvät päivitykset saivat aikaan eniten reaktioita sekä kokonaisreaktiomäärässä että tykkäysten muodossa. Henkilöstövastuuseen liittyvät päivitykset herättivät eniten kommentointia kun taas ympäristövastuuseen liittyviä viestejä jaettiin eniten eteenpäin omalle verkostolle Facebookissa.

Avainsanat: yritysvastuuviestintä, sidosryhmien osallistaminen, kaksisuuntainen viestintä, sosiaalinen media, Facebook, lentoyhtiöt

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1 INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is gaining visibility and importance in the eyes of many constituencies in today's socially conscious market environment (Argenti, 2007, p. 83; Du, Bhattacharya & Sen; 2010; Capriotti & Moreno, 2009), and communicating about corporate social responsibility efforts is becoming increasingly relevant to organizations (Du et al 2010). According to Insch (2008), CSR has traditionally been communicated through “push media” i.e. one way communication such as reports and corporate websites. However, as competition for the attention of Internet users is getting more intense, meaningful two-way interaction between organizations and their stakeholders is needed (Insch, 2008; Moreno & Capriotti, 2009).

According to various studies, (e.g. Dawkins, 2004; Du et al. 2010; Nielsen & Thomsen, 2007) the main challenges in communicating CSR are reducing stakeholder skepticism and convincing them of the company's sincerity of CSR activities as well as getting the message through to the relevant stakeholder audiences. As a result, Morsing & Schultz (2006) have argued that when companies wish to communicate with stakeholders about their CSR initiatives, they need to involve the stakeholders in a two-way communication process through the stakeholder-involvement strategy. Nielsen and Thomsen (2007) support the argument by stating that due to the globalization of organizations, stakeholder demands for transparency and accountability are increasing.

Currently, new opportunities for engaging a broader range of stakeholders in dialogue regarding CSR matters are provided by the development of new technologies and communication channels commonly known as Web 2.0 and social media (Etter & Fieseler 2010). To date, few academic articles have been written regarding social media use in CSR communication (Etter & Fieseler, 2010; Capriotti, 2009). However, these new technologies have considerable potential for CSR communication due to their diverse scope, enabling of groundbreaking reaction time and the two-way nature of communication.

The use of these technologies is, however, not yet a thoroughly spread practice across companies (Capriotti, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In addition, the academic world has mainly studied the use of the Internet in general for CSR communication (e.g. Pollach, 2003; Branco & Rodriguez, 2006) and on corporate websites (e.g. Moreno & Capriotti, 2009; Chaudri & Wang, 2007), instead of looking into the possibilities offered by these new technologies in terms of two-way CSR communication with stakeholders. Also, the actual CSR messages and proactive communication with the purpose of developing and driving CSR has received less attention in the academia (Nielsen & Thomsen, 2010).

The niche identified here, the lack of research about two-way CSR communication through social media, is approached in this thesis. The study aims to find out an airline's perspective to communicating CSR in social media, to identify which CSR topics consumers find most interesting and which CSR topics are currently communicated in Facebook by airlines. The research methods used in the study are two-fold: quantitative content analysis through which popular CSR themes among the general public are identified and interviews with company representatives.

The theoretical basis for this present study comes from three areas of literature (a) corporate social responsibility and CSR communication, (b) stakeholder involvement theory and (c) social media.

1.1 Research problem

According to Du et al. (2010), corporate social responsibility efforts are not only driven by ideological thinking that companies can be a positive force for social change, but by the potential business returns these efforts might bring back to the company. They continue by stating that potential benefits from CSR activities for companies include generating favorable stakeholder attitudes and better support behaviors such as purchasing from or investing in the company. In the long run, the company can also

build its corporate image, strengthen stakeholder-company relationships, and enhance stakeholders' advocacy behaviors.

These benefits are of course dependent on stakeholder awareness of the company's CSR efforts. According to e.g. Dawkins (2004) and Capriotti and Moreno (2009) communication is often the missing link in the practice of corporate responsibility as the needs for information of 'opinion leaders', influential individuals, as well as mass stakeholder audiences are not satisfied at the moment. According to Pozniak et al. (2011) CSR communication allows making the public aware of a company's acts outside its economic objectives, in order to strengthen its relationship with its stakeholders through transparent and ethical behavior. It would thus seem logical that companies would make more of an effort to receive the full credit for their corporate responsibility activities through CSR communication.

According to Dawkins (2004), the general public is not usually the target audience for specialist communication channels like CSR reports. Pollach (2003), on the other hand, argues that CSR communication has traditionally been targeted to one heterogeneous stakeholder group, the public at large, by disseminating information without adequate knowledge of the needs or interests of these stakeholder groups. Due to this, the awareness of the general public of responsible corporate behavior has remained fairly low even though, according to Dawkins (2004), they do have an interest in receiving information about companies' responsibilities. From this, it can be concluded that if a company wishes to engage the power of consumers and influence their purchase behavior, the effectiveness of CSR communication including the channels used for it and themes communicated, have to be improved.

Often the positive effects of CSR activities are intangible and therefore past research has usually focused on topics like company stakeholder relations (Jones, 1995). Etter and Fieseler (2010) state that improvements in these relations can be considered as a gain of social capital for the company and they see CSR as a long-term investment for enhancing a firm's reputation by creating favorable opinions among its stakeholders instead of something tangible.

As stated, the general public seems to be reacting to companies' CSR activities and at the same time companies want to maximize their business returns by behaving ethically (Du et al, 2010). However they often fail to communicate this to the general public or consumers since their CSR communication is not directed to these groups of stakeholders. It can then be further concluded that more effective channels for communicating about CSR efforts to particularly consumers are needed.

Naturally, one of these potential channels is the Internet that has been gaining importance simultaneously with CSR (Pozniak et al, 2011). The Internet has become a mass communication tool for corporate communication, as companies can now reach their stakeholders all over the world, 365 days a year, 24 hours a day (Pozniak et al, 2011 & Capriotti, 2011). Numerous advantages offered by the Internet include e.g. the disclosure of more information at a lower cost and reduced time, as well as the reach of a larger public audience (Branco & Rodrigues, 2006). New technologies and communication platforms are emerging and especially the use of social media in companies for reaching consumers is becoming increasingly relevant (Aula, 2010).

Concerning CSR communication, there seems to be an interesting trade-off between its credibility and controllability; the less controllable the communicator or the channel is, the more credible it is and vice versa (Du et al, 2010). Also according to Yoon et al. (2006), when consumers hear about a company's CSR activities from a neutral source, they are more likely to react positively than when they learned about it from a corporate source. Du et al, (2010) also mention that companies should reach for more credible yet informal communication channels such as word-of-mouth by stakeholders. Facebook, and social media in general, are communication channels where word-of-mouth and stakeholder dialogue are both immediate and transparent.

In other words, multiple characteristics that bring CSR communication and social media closer to each other can be identified. Trust and transparency, controllability of the communication channel, dialogue and awareness as well as targeting the consumer are all recurring themes appearing in the literature on these two topics. However, as

previously discussed, in order for the communication to be efficient, in addition to the channel, also the message has to be accurately tailored to the recipient.

This Master's Thesis aims to identify what is an airline's perspective to communicating CSR in Facebook, which CSR themes airlines communicate in Facebook and which CSR related themes are most likely to interest consumers in Facebook, in other words help create a dialogue between the company and its stakeholders. The methods used in the present study are qualitative interviews and quantitative content analysis, which is applied to the Facebook communities of 11 airlines. The airline industry and the industry partner Finnair were chosen as the objects of research due to the strategic importance of CSR for the field emerging from its controversial impact on the environment.

1.2 Research question

Based on the previously identified research gap and research problem, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What is Finnair's perspective to communicating about CSR in Facebook?
- 2) Which CSR themes do airlines communicate about in Facebook?
- 3) Which CSR related themes are airlines' Facebook fans reacting to?

1.3 Key concepts

The following section presents the focal concepts of the present thesis.

Corporate social responsibility

There are numerous definitions of corporate responsibility. This study adopts the term corporate social responsibility (CSR) and definition by European Commission “A concept whereby companies decide voluntarily to contribute to a better society and a cleaner environment. A concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis.” (Commission of the European Communities, 2006, p. 5)

Stakeholder

This study adopts the definition of stakeholder by Freeman (1984, p. 25) who defines the term as “Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm's objectives.” This definition includes both primary (e.g. shareholders and customers) and secondary (e.g. governments, media and employees) stakeholders.

Social Media

Web 2.0 is a concept developed by O'Reilly in 2005 which refers to platforms where content and applications are simultaneously modified by many users.

The definition used for social media in this study is by Kaplan and Haenlein, (2010, p. 61) ”a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.”

Facebook

This study focuses greatly on Facebook, which is defined by Techtarget as follows: “Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to

create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues” (Techtarget, 2010).

Next, some of the most common functionalities of Facebook are explained.

Facebook page

A Facebook page is a public profile that enables people to share their business and products with Facebook users. (Facebook, 2012)

Facebook post

A Facebook post or status update is an update feature which allows users to share their thoughts and important information with their friends. A post or status is usually short, a few sentences long and can be enhanced with a multimedia file like a photo or video clip. When a status is updated, it posts on the user's personal page as well as in the news feeds of their friends. Facebook post can be commented, liked or shared further by the user's network.

The “like” feature

Facebook users can use the “like” functionality for liking a corporate website and thus become a follower. The "like" button is also a feature that allows users to show their support for specific comments, pictures, wall posts, statuses, or fan pages, by simply clicking the button (Techtarget, 2011). A like leaves a trace of the user, as his/her name appears in the list of likers.

Comment

Under each post or a status update, a vertical white box appears to which users can leave their comments. The comments will then line up under the post, leaving the commenter's name visible above the comment.

Share

Posts can be shared further in users' own profiles, by using the "share" button located under the post. The post will then appear to the user's network with a notion of 'via' the original poster.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This Master's thesis consists of six main sections– 1) Introduction, 2) Literature Review, 3) Methodology and Data, 4) Findings 5) Discussion and 6) Conclusions.

The second chapter – Literature Review – is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on the concept of corporate social responsibility and CSR communication. It provides some general information regarding the concept of CSR, its communication and challenges related to it. The second section presents stakeholder involvement and dialogue theories, as well as theory related to communicating CSR to the general public. The third section in the Literature Review concentrates on CSR communication on the Internet and in social media. At the end of the third section a summary of the Literature Review is presented together with the Theoretical Framework for this study.

The third chapter of the current study – Data and Methods – describes the research methods used and the data collected for the analysis. The fourth chapter– Findings presents the findings from the analysis of the collected data. In the fifth chapter these findings are discussed. And finally, the fifth chapter – Conclusions – provides the research summary, the practical implications of the study, its limitations and suggestions for future research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

As stated in the introduction, the objective of this thesis is to investigate what is Finnair's perspective to communicating about CSR in Facebook, what airlines communicate about corporate social responsibility in Facebook and which CSR topics seem to interest consumers the most in this specific communication channel. This chapter presents a review of literature relevant to this topic. First, a brief overview of corporate social responsibility is provided, followed by a section on CSR communication. Third, stakeholder engagement and dialogue are assessed and fourth, the concept of social media and Facebook and their use in corporate communication are discussed.

2.1 Corporate social responsibility

Lately, CSR has been gaining interest in both academia and the business world. However, there is no one single, widely accepted definition for the concept. The following chapter defines CSR as it is understood in this present study.

According to Waddock (2008) corporate social responsibility (CSR) is often used alternatively with terms such as corporate citizenship (CC), corporate responsibility (CR), business ethics, and sustainability. Sustainability refers to responsible, transparent, and accountable practices on issues of the environment, society, and corporate governance.

In addition, there are various other definitions of the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) which is the term used in this thesis. Perhaps one of the most used and widely accepted is by Holme and Watts (2000, p.8) which defines CSR as follows:

“ Corporate Social Responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large.”

There are differences in the definitions between Europe and the United States. Since the present thesis concentrates mainly on European companies, the differences are highlighted here. The definition of CSR by the European Commission is:

“A concept whereby companies decide voluntarily to contribute to a better society and a cleaner environment. A concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis.”

This European definition highlights many key aspects of CSR such as the voluntary nature, integration of social and environmental concerns in the business operations and interaction with stakeholders. Nevertheless, in the USA, minimal legislative control on business is considered preferable and companies have to use internal policies to demonstrate CSR (Kampf, 2007). CSR in the USA also has typically had more of a philanthropic nature, meaning that companies donate a share of their profits to charitable causes. This might be due to their lack of extensive social security (Kampf, 2007). The European model, on the contrary, focuses on operating the core business in a socially responsible way.

According to Cornelissen (2011, p. 234), companies' main target has traditionally been behaving as economic entities destined to generate profit to themselves and their shareholders. However, he states that there has been a shift towards the thinking that companies are expected to show a level of responsibility towards the whole society. In other words, CSR has been gaining relevance due to the expectations of the international community, NGOs and pressure groups, and organizations consider CSR as an effort to boost their reputation. In today's world, especially in Europe, integrating responsibility into the business operations is becoming almost a “license to operate”. Freeman et al. (2008) state that in our globalizing world, it is essential for us all to hold corporations accountable for meeting economic goals in a socially responsible and

ethical way.

Cornelissen (2011, p.236) adds that these reputational benefits are also becoming more important as markets are suffering from product homogeneity and increasing competition. In addition, media is constantly reporting about corporate actions and many organizations have come to the conclusion that that doing business in a responsible way offers both strategic and reputational benefits. Du et al, (2010) continue that these reputational benefits then further result in generating favorable stakeholder attitudes and better support behaviors like purchasing from or investing in the company.

According to Insch (2008), companies involved in CSR see that businesses have the responsibility to give something back to the community and they wish to appear as good corporate citizens. Apart from its philanthropic nature, CSR has proved to be an effective marketing and positioning tool for enhancing corporate reputation. (Insch, 2008)

Even though CSR has been gaining importance lately, it is definitely not a new phenomenon. Carroll (1999) discusses the evolution of CSR in the 20th century and names Howard Bowen and Keith Davis as the Fathers of the CSR designation. Already Davis (1960) argued that CSR should be seen in a more managerial context and that some socially responsible business decisions can be financially profitable in the long-run, thus compensating for the first-hand expenses. This interpretation became more widely accepted in the late 1970s and 1980s. (Carroll, 1999)

For the purpose of this thesis, a widely used framework for CSR by John Elkington (1997), '*triple bottom line*', is explained in more detail. The framework divides corporate social responsibility in three categories of responsibility; social (people), environmental (planet) and economical (profits). Social responsibility refers to social and labor issues inside and outside the company such as employee support and compensation, gender and ethnic balance of the workforce, reduction of corruption and

health and safety codes. Environmental responsibility involves integrating environmental care into business operations, such as reduction of harmful wastes and the development of environmentally-friendly production processes. Economical responsibility stands for the conventional bottom line of manufacturing and selling products in order to generate financial profit for the company and its shareholders. Usually economic responsibility is the starting point for organizations before the consideration of social and environmental manners (Elkington, 1997).

Due to the nature of the present study, even further categorization is needed. Nielsen and Thomsen (2007) used seven CSR categories when analyzing companies' CSR reporting; employees, local community, environment, society, corporate governance and accountability, measurement and corporate website structure. The categorization of this thesis will be based on this division, however two latter categories, measurement and corporate website structure are excluded due to their irrelevance. If we wish to proportion the five remaining themes to Elkington's (1997) division, it could be claimed that employees, local community and society represent Elkington's *people*, environmental is the *planet* and corporate governance and accountability represent the *profit*. From this comparison it can be concluded that the main difference between these categorizations is found in the more detailed division of social responsibility in Nielsen and Thomsen (2007).

It is important that CSR activities are complemented with CSR communication, as without efficient communication companies' CSR activities are left unnoticed by the important stakeholders (Capriotti and Moreno 2009). In the next chapter of this thesis CSR communication is discussed further.

2.2 CSR Communication

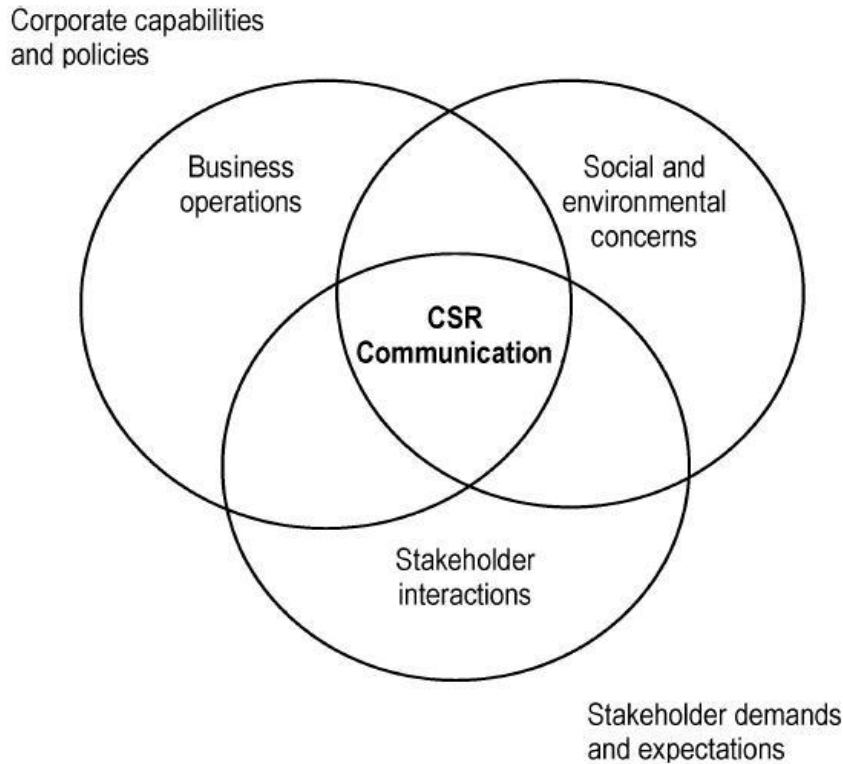
As discussed in the previous chapter, corporate social responsibility is becoming increasingly important in today's world as companies are expected to give back to the community they operate in. Every company needs to assess its social responsibility when

considering its own reputation (Argenti, 2007 p. 55 & 82) and an ever increasing number of companies are recognizing the reputational risks and opportunities brought by CSR. Aligning corporate behavior with stakeholder expectations is a continuous business priority for these companies (Dawkins, 2004).

Nielsen and Thomsen (2010) argue that companies are under increasing pressure due to the strengthening interrelation between effectiveness or performance and corporate social responsibility. In other words companies are expected to be more and more profitable simultaneously with operating responsibly. Nielsen and Thomsen (2007) further argue that this leads to increasingly complicated management and communication of the two aspects; performance and responsibility.

In order to understand what CSR communication is, corporate communication needs to be defined. In this present thesis a definition for corporate communication by Van Riel (1995) is adopted. He states that corporate communication is “an instrument of management by means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external communication are harmonized as effectively and efficiently as possible. In order to further understand how to communicate CSR efficiently and effectively, communication theories and definitions need to be further investigated. Podnar (2008) defines CSR communication simply as the dissemination of true and transparent information about the integration of a company’s business operations, social and environmental concerns, and interactions with stakeholders in order to influence stakeholders’ and society’s image of the organization (Figure 1).

Figure 1: CSR communication (Podnar, 2008 p.76)



Ihlen, Bartlett and May (2011, p.8) first define corporate social responsibility communication as a company's attempt to negotiate its relationship to stakeholders and the public at large and further as the way that companies communicate about their CSR activities. Both of these previous definitions mention the interaction with stakeholders. Nevertheless, Podnar's (2008) definition suggests that the information has to be available, whereas Ihlen et al. (2011) bring up the company's attempt to negotiate with its stakeholders, i.e. representing a more proactive approach to assessing CSR matters. In other words, Podnar (2008) is suggesting one-way communication with stakeholder whereas Ihlen et al. (2011) are taking it one step further by suggesting two-way communication with stakeholders regarding CSR matters.

Dawkins (2004) suggests a similar strategy as Ihlen et al. (2011) by stating that it is essential for companies to align their corporate responsibility communication with their stakeholders' concerns if they wish to capitalize the potential reputational benefits of their CSR activities. In other words, companies should target CSR messages relevant to their influential stakeholders.

It was earlier mentioned that the most important potential benefits of corporate social responsibility are maximizing profits and strengthening the corporate image and the relationships with stakeholders in the long-term. The realization of these benefits is however directly dependent on stakeholders' awareness of these actions. If communication is not efficient i.e. doesn't reach its audience due to e.g. irrelevant content or bad choice of channel, these efforts stay unnoticed by the general public.

However, for many companies, publishing environmental and social performance information in the same manner as traditional financial statements has become the most common way of communicating about CSR activities (Argenti, 2007 p. 56; Birth et al., 2006). Even though there are various economic and legal restrictions which companies are required to obey, CSR statements and reports tend to concentrate more on the generally expected ethical and preferred philanthropic activities (O'Connor & Shumate, 2010). CSR reports are directed to only a very specific group of stakeholders, which contradicts with the definitions of both Podnar (2008) and Ihlen et al (2011). In addition, Nielsen and Thomsen (2007) state that due to the lack of an established framework for reporting and common understanding and terminology of CSR, CSR reports between companies have not even been comparable.

Du et al. (2010) on the other hand emphasize the importance of managers' understanding of key issues related to CSR communication, such as message content and channel, and an understanding of company and stakeholder specific factors affecting the effectiveness of the communication. They continue that communicating CSR is a delicate matter in minimizing stakeholder skepticism i.e. conveying intrinsic motives.

This section has given some definitions of CSR communication in addition to discussing its delicate nature, typical channels of communication as well as the need for interactive communication with stakeholders. Later in the present thesis the latter will be assessed further but first some of the main challenges of CSR communication are discussed.

2.2.1 Challenges of CSR communication

As stated, CSR is a fairly delicate matter and communicating about the topic might be challenging at times. Most typical obstacles in communicating about CSR include stakeholders' poor awareness, low trust and adverse attitudes towards CSR activities (Du et al, 2010; Dawkins, 2004; Argenti, 2007) as well as companies' poor choice of channels and lack of consistency between CSR messages and the company mission (Argenti, 2007; Dawkins, 2004). Next, these challenges are discussed further.

Du et. al (2010) and Dawkins (2004) state that external stakeholders' poor awareness and unfavorable attributions towards companies' CSR activities remain as the most critical obstacles in trying to maximize the business benefits from these activities. This highlights the need of companies to communicate about their CSR activities more effectively to their stakeholders.

According to Argenti (2007 p. 82), companies should first engage in CSR programs that are consistent with the company's vision and related to the business the company is in, in order to be perceived credible. Second, the channels of communicating about these activities have to be carefully considered. Dawkins as well (2004) identifies diverse information requirements and the examination of different stakeholder groups as a challenge of CSR communication.

Du et al. (2010) state that stakeholders tend to claim they wish to know about the CSR efforts of companies they buy from and invest in, but aggressive promotion of these

activities might easily turn against the companies since it makes stakeholders leery of their motives. They (2010) present two stakeholder attributions of a company's CSR activities; extrinsic, meaning the company is seen as attempting to increase its profits and intrinsic in which the company is seen to act out of a genuine interest in the focal issue. Forehand and Grier (2003) further argue that intrinsic attributions lead to stakeholders making positive deductions about the company's underlying character, whereas extrinsic motives lead to more negative perceptions and behavior toward the company.

According to Forehand and Grier (2003), consumers do not respond negatively to extrinsic CSR motives only, but rather to any marketing strategies which seem manipulative or misleading. They also state that companies can decrease stakeholder skepticism by enhancing the credibility of their CSR messages and generating goodwill by taking cognizance of both types of stakeholder attributions, extrinsic and intrinsic, in their CSR communication.

In other words, consistency between CSR messages or programs and the company vision, together with recognizing the needs of different stakeholder groups seem to be the keys for tackling the main challenges of CSR communication: stakeholder skepticism and poor awareness of company CSR efforts.

2.3 Stakeholder involvement

The previous sections discussed CSR communication and challenges involved in it. Various scholars (e.g. Du et al, 2010; Dawkins, 2004; Argenti 2007) have argued that stakeholder expectations and concerns as well as understanding stakeholders specific needs regarding CSR communication have a major role in succeeding in the practice. Since this thesis concentrates on communicating CSR to consumers through social media, stakeholder involvement and dialogue are covered next.

According to Cornelissen (2011, p. 237) managers' approach to communicating to stakeholders about CSR tends to be based on a model of persuasion rather than 'democratic' communication or a 'dialogue'. Stakeholders are rarely included in critical decision making and it is one reason why organizations might face difficulties when engaging into a real dialogue with their stakeholders.

Birth et al. (2006) agree by stating that CSR activities are more and more communicated to stakeholders because companies want to influence them. Also Raupp (2011) discusses the fact that stakeholder theory has become an increasingly relevant concept of strategic management and business ethics during the past decade. There is a close link between stakeholder thinking and the notion of corporate social responsibility, since organizations are supposed to act responsibly towards the society.

Also Etter and Plotkowiak (2011) state that building relationships through interactive CSR communication provides a manner to raise awareness and lower skepticism, which were earlier identified as the main challenges of CSR communication. Freeman et al. (2008) have even argued that stakeholder thinking and CSR are the same thing, and should not be separated.

Understanding who its stakeholders are is vital to any company (Freeman, 1984). Communicating efficiently about CSR to stakeholders requires the company to first identify its stakeholders, and second to understand which topics these stakeholders are concerned about and interested in, what is important to them and what they already know about the company. This knowledge enables the company to structure the right kinds of programs and to choose the right channels to reach the constituencies relevant to it, in order to enhance its reputation. (Argenti, 2007, p.83; Raupp, 2011).

Morsing and Schultz (2006) point out that critical attention from stakeholders is not only restricted to the company itself, but also focuses on the decisions and actions of its suppliers, consumers and politicians. This means that CSR engagement requires more

advanced and ongoing stakeholder awareness which calls for more advanced communication strategies than before (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Also Dawkins (2004) states that there is evidence that corporate responsibility communication is not efficiently targeted to the different stakeholder audiences, leading to the message not currently getting through to many stakeholder groups.

As a potential solution to these challenges, Morsing and Schultz (2006) mention the stakeholder engagement process focusing on developing a long-term mutual relationship instead of simply focusing on immediate profit. It does not mean that economic profit would be irrelevant, however, engaging frequently with stakeholders whose support is vital to the company should not be overlooked. According to Morsing and Schultz (2006), there is an increasing need for the development of advanced two-way communication processes when companies are communicating about their CSR initiatives. Even though one-way informative communication is practical for certain more informative issues such as figures, it is not enough since it rules out the “opposite side” – stakeholders – from the discussion. Due to this, participation and dialogue are becoming a natural element of corporate communication. (Morsing & Schultz, 2006)

Morsing and Schultz (2006) present three CSR communication strategies moving from classical monologue to more dialogue-based stakeholder relationships; the stakeholder information strategy, the stakeholder response strategy and the stakeholder involvement strategy. This model is strongly based on Grunig and Hunts’ (1984) famous four models of public relations which include press agency/publicity, public information model, two-way asymmetrical model and two-way symmetrical model. In their communication strategies Morsing and Schulz (2006) leave the first of Grunig and Hunts’ (1984) models, press agency/ publicity, out arguing it is not relevant in CSR communication.

First, in the stakeholder information strategy, communication is always one-way, from organizations to stakeholders. The purpose is to disseminate information and inform the public as objectively as possible about the company. By adopting this model, companies use active press relations programs, concurrently producing news for the media and use

a variety of brochures, pamphlets, magazines, facts, numbers and figures in informing the public (Morsing and Schultz, 2006).

If companies are not getting positive recognition from their stakeholders, they need to illustrate and promote of their desirable qualities more. However, this kind of promoting will probably evoke stakeholder skepticism, especially if the company has previously suffered from a bad reputation or a legitimacy threat such as a corporate scandal. Contemporary companies should rather increasingly invest in preparing for and preventing these kinds of legitimacy problems. Informing about CSR initiatives afterwards might be seen as a means for covering up a problem, hence the stakeholder information strategy can be seen as 'double-edged sword'. (Morsing & Schultz, 2006)

Top management might feel that when the company is doing the right thing, all that is needed is to communicate about these CSR activities to its stakeholders in order to build and maintain positive stakeholder support. This CSR strategy considers that initiatives don't need to be supported by the external stakeholders as the company itself is seen as the only trustworthy source of information (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

Second, Morsing and Scultz (2006) present the stakeholder response strategy which is based on a two-way asymmetric model in comparison to the stakeholder involvement strategy that is based on a two-way symmetric model. In both of these models the information flows to and from the public, but the two-way asymmetric model assumes there is an imbalance in favor of the company as it is trying to affect the attitudes and behavior of the public but is trying to stay unchanged. The company has to make corporate decisions and actions relevant to its stakeholders in order to engage them and gain external support. In the stakeholder response strategy, stakeholders' responsiveness rather than their pro-active engagement in communication processes is being highlighted, and stakeholders are seen as influential, but passively responding to corporate undertakings. When a company is trying to understand stakeholder concerns about CSR matters according to a certain internal framework, it risks hearing its own message reflecting back and the answers are likely to be what they wanted to hear, since

the company is the one asking the questions and choosing the setting (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

Third, the stakeholder involvement strategy proposes a dialogue between the company and its stakeholders. In this strategy, there is often persuasion from both sides as the company and its stakeholders are trying to persuade the other to change. In an ideal situation, both sides would change due to the exchange of information through symmetric communication. Companies should not only influence but seek to be influenced by their stakeholders, in order to change when it is necessary. Stakeholder involvement strategy is more about inviting stakeholders to negotiate rather than shoving a particular initiative to them. Through this strategy, the company is able to stay informed about its stakeholders' current expectations and its potential influence on those expectations, as well as letting those expectations influence the company. The involvement strategy further proposes that stakeholders need to be involved in order to develop and promote positive support. It is suggested that companies regularly engage in a dialogue with their stakeholders to ensure mutually beneficial action. (Morsing & Schultz, 2006)

Also Moreno and Capriotti (2009) support the idea of dialogue by stating that any responsibility initiative corporations engage in to gain legitimacy and the public's confidence has to be communicating with, and responding to the demands of the company's stakeholders. As discussed above, Du et. al. (2010) state that the key requirements for obtaining strategic benefits from CSR communication are creating stakeholder awareness and managing stakeholder attributions.

From the literature presented in this section, it can be concluded that companies are recommended to engage in a regular dialogue with their stakeholders in order to understand their concerns and respond to these concerns as suggested by Morsing and Schultz's (2006) stakeholder involvement strategy. This way companies can structure the right kinds of programs and to choose the right channels to reach the constituencies relevant to them, in order to enhance its reputation like Argenti (2007) and Raupp (2011)

proposed. In order to do this, companies need to engage in the use of different, more dialogical, communication channels like social media.

2.3.1 Stakeholder dialogue

Since the present thesis focuses on CSR communication in social media, which represents a two-way model of communication, stakeholder dialogue will be further discussed.

According to Roberts (2003), dialogical communication can be seen as a suitable vehicle for the implementation of CSR since in addition to giving the company a possibility to manage its reputation, it enables engaging fully with those susceptible to the effects of corporate behavior. Dialogue gives companies the chance to learn which issues matter, how to attach meanings to them and how to integrate them successfully into the CSR strategy (Golob & Podnar, 2011). The main purpose for organizations to facilitate dialogue online with stakeholders is the expected feedback or reactions from visitors (Jo & Kim, 2003).

Dialogue has an important role in the implementation of CSR strategy, gaining legitimacy and trust through organizational transparency and responding to and meeting the expectations of stakeholders (Garcia-Marza, 2005). Transparency is the first step in building a dialogue that is capable of achieving trust in a relationship. (Golob & Podnar, 2011)

Pedersen (2006, p. 140-142) presents a practice-oriented process of stakeholder dialogue and gives guidelines for the participatory approach to CSR and corresponding levels of stakeholder engagement. Pedersen describes the following five aspects of stakeholder dialogue:

1) *Inclusion*

All relevant stakeholders are participating in the dialogue, ideally meaning that all groups affecting or being affected by a decision are taken into consideration.

2) *Openness*

Open topics are discussed leaving space for stakeholders' judgments and opinions instead of alternatives already being predetermined by the organization.

3) *Tolerance*

Alternative and also critical opinions are heard in order for the dialogue to be participatory.

4) *Empowerment*

There is a correlation between the level of influence and level of commitment. The more stakeholders are able to affect decisions, the more they are committed to participate in the discussion.

5) *Transparency*

Information about the dialogue process and outcomes is available and unlimited, and not compromising the true value of the dialogue.

By following these five guidelines, organizations are able to engage in an honest, transparent and participatory dialogue with their stakeholders. However, Pedersen (2006) also states that the theoretically ideal CSR dialogue is usually impossible to attain and it might not even be desirable. Organizations typically find themselves somewhere between high and low stakeholder engagement, due to the expensive and time-consuming process of stakeholder identification and communication.

Golob and Podnar (2011) point out that making a decision of implementing dialogical communication strategies for CSR is complex and demands compromises due to the wide spectrum of stakeholders. Jo and Kim (2003) found that Internet might be one solution to the problem as interactivity and multimedia orientation have significant

effects on relationship building between the organization and the public. They further suggest that the enhancement of companies' online interactivity and community involvement play an important role in the relationship with stakeholders. They however echo Capriotti (2011) in stating that the potential of Internet for building interactive relationships is not fully used at the moment.

These previous sections have provided insight to stakeholder theory, the stakeholder involvement strategy and guidelines for the practice of stakeholder dialogue. Next, the practice of communicating CSR to the stakeholder group that is the primary target group of company Facebook communities, the general public, will be elaborated.

2.4 Communicating to the public

This thesis focuses on communicating CSR to the general public and consumers through social media, more specifically Facebook. According to Schrader, Hansen and Halbes (2006, p. 307) consumer oriented CSR communication (COCCOM) is "all communication activities which are specifically or among others targeted at consumers and which deal with corporate social and/or ecological responsibility". The topic of this thesis, communicating about CSR in Facebook, definitely falls under this definition.

As mentioned in the earlier chapters, there are various academic studies claiming that key stakeholders such as consumers are increasingly likely to take actions toward rewarding good corporate citizens and punishing bad ones, and companies are interested in the benefits that can be achieved through engagement in CSR (Du et al, 2010; Dawkins, 2004). Consumers are a stakeholder group that potentially presents notable business benefits from CSR activities through purchasing from or investing in the company. At its best, good corporate citizenship can lead to consumer loyalty and even turn consumers into company or brand ambassadors. This can show as endorsement behavior like willingness to pay a higher price or spreading a positive word about the company (Du et al, 2010).

However, according to Pollach (2003), CSR communication has traditionally been targeted to one heterogeneous stakeholder group, which is the public at large, without further investigation of the diverse information requirements of different stakeholders mentioned by Dawkins (2004). In addition, according to Dawkins (2004), the general public is not usually the target audience for specialist communication channels like CSR reports or the new integrated reports combining financial reporting and CSR reporting (Verschoor, 2011) but they are rather targeted to analysts and CSR professionals. The awareness of the general public of responsible corporate behavior has remained fairly low even though they have an interest in receiving information about companies' responsible actions. Therefore it can be stated that if a company wishes to engage mass consumer power and influence purchasing behavior, the effectiveness of CSR communication has to be improved (Dawkins, 2004).

A study conducted by Ipsos MORI (2010), shows that 25 % of the British public strongly agree that knowing more about company's social, environmental and ethical behavior would influence their purchase decisions. The study also demonstrates that consumers prefer a clear communicating strategy and CSR program together with tailored messages, style and channels of communication. They wish the communication would meet different expectations of the various stakeholder audiences while maintaining the overall coherence of the company's message.

Also Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) have studied the marketing perspective of CSR and its direct and indirect influence on consumer behavior. They conclude that consumers' company evaluations are more sensitive to negative than positive CSR information. This is noteworthy, since it means managers should be especially conscious about the actions that are perceived as socially irresponsible. In addition, companies should research a variety of CSR initiatives and choose the ones supported most by their key consumer segments in order to have a positive financial impact. (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001).

However, Dawkins (2004) argues that most consumers are not actively looking for more information on corporate behavior and therefore most effective communication

channels for companies seem to be cause-marketing campaigns i.e. supporting a certain cause, point-of-purchase communication and word of mouth. As discussed earlier, the case chosen for cause marketing is essential in order to avoid the risk of it being inappropriate to the company profile. Analysis of risks and opportunities related to the cause must be conducted by the company (Dawkins, 2004)

Also Lee, Park, Rapert and Newman (2011) suggest that the perceived fit between a consumer and company's CSR activities affects consumer loyalty positively. They further argue that companies should consider consumer-oriented CSR activities since activities related to consumers' lifestyle and values are perceived favorably. (Lee et al, 2011) In other words, by understanding better target the customers' values and lifestyle, CSR programs and strategies can be made more effective.

It can be concluded from previous literature that CSR communication, as it is done at the moment, is not targeting consumers as a primary audience. In addition, consumers seem to be interested in the matter, but they are not actively looking for information. If they were to receive this information somewhere, it might affect positively their attitudes towards the company as well as the actual buying behavior. It can thus be suggested that companies should provide this information somewhere where the consumers (or a part of them) are present already, and where two-way discussion is possible e.g. in social media. Apart from finding the appropriate channel for reaching the right audience, also the content of a message has a major role in effective communication (Argenti, 2007). Thus, the content of CSR message is next discussed.

2.5 CSR message content

As stated earlier in the present thesis, different stakeholders have different expectations and needs for information thus the message content and channels have to be carefully designed. In addition, it is essential to maintain the consistency of the message throughout these multiple channels of communication (Du et.al, 2010). Since the CSR

message has an important role in the present thesis as a subject of research, message content is discussed further.

According to Friestad and Wright (2004) consumers are more likely to be suspicious of ulterior motives when a company is communicating a CSR message that is predominantly about a social issue rather than about the company or its products. If the issue is not a logical fit with the company's business, the credibility of the communication is reduced (Friestad & Wright, 2004).

However, according to Du et al (2010), most CSR communication is usually focused on company's involvement in the cause rather than on the cause itself. They continue by presenting various factors that a company can emphasize in its CSR communication, including commitment, impact, motives and fit. Next, these factors will be presented in more detail.

CSR Commitment. Commitment to a certain cause can be emphasized through donating funds, or by providing other company resources such as marketing expertise, human capital or R&D capability to a certain cause. A company can choose between focusing on one or several aspects of its commitment to a social cause (Du et al, 2010). Commitment can be measured by the amount of input, durability of the association and the consistency of the input (Dwyer et al, 1987).

CSR Impact. Focusing on the impact of a CSR activity means focusing on the output of the activity in question, i.e. what are the actual benefits to the target audience of the social causes (Du et al, 2010). Emphasizing the actual benefits is an effective CSR communication strategy, since the communication should be factual and avoid the impression of bragging (Sen et al, 2009). Webb and Mohr (1998) claim that the durability of a cause can be used in judging a company's motives for supporting a cause. Long-term commitments are seen as being driven by a genuine concern, whereas short-term campaigns are more likely seen as a way of exploiting the cause for the sake of profit.

CSR Motives. As stated earlier, one of the main challenges in CSR communication is decreasing stakeholder skepticism. Companies have the option of denying business-related motives and emphasizing only altruistic motives behind their actions or the option of being honest and sharing the underlying business motives of their CSR initiatives (Du et al 2010). It might actually work for the company's benefit to acknowledge the extrinsic business-related motives in their CSR message, since it might increase the credibility of the communication and reduce stakeholder skepticism (Du et al, 2010).

CSR Fit. The fit between the CSR cause and the company was already discussed previously. Corporate social responsibility fit can result from common associations the company or brand has with a cause, the sense of solidarity with a specific target segment or from associations created in a specific social domain in the past (Du et al, 2010). According to Dawkins (2004) a low CSR fit, originating from a lack of logical connection between the cause and the company can make the extrinsic motives more substantial and reduce positive stakeholder reactions towards the company's CSR initiatives. Corporate responsibility programs with an unclear fit risk being regarded as a smokescreen for unethical behavior.

In addition, Du et. al (2010) state that companies have to monitor what is considered as a priority issue by its main stakeholder groups. Nonetheless, it should be kept in mind that it is not always recommended to choose the 'hot' issue, but rather finding a balance between popularity and the relevance to the company core business.

In short, companies have to be careful when planning their CSR messages. In order to gain credibility to their message, a logical connection between the cause and the company has to exist. In addition, it might be recommendable to share the underlying business motives behind CSR initiatives to lower consumer skepticism. Also consistency and commitment for the cause are recommended by both Du et al. (2010) and Dwyer et al. (1987)

Now that the message content for efficient CSR communication has been discussed, the channels for disseminating these messages are elaborated.

2.5.1 Message channels

As mentioned previously, official documents such as annual reports and specific corporate social responsibility reports have been a popular channel for communicating about company's CSR activities. Nielsen and Thomsen (2007) state that the increased popularity of non-financial reporting can be seen as an attempt to increase companies' transparency about social and environmental issues. Various certificates and auditing procedures have emerged that go beyond the traditional financial accounting (Nielsen and Thomsen, 2007).

According to Etter and Fieseler (2010), CSR reports are complex, fact oriented and rarely have any relevance to consumers' buying behavior. In addition, it is usual that private consumers are not even seen as a relevant target group for these publications. This seems to be contrasting with the relevance consumers have to the company through their purchasing power according to economic theory.

Channels for CSR communication in use to target the general public are sections on corporate websites dedicated to CSR, which are available to all Internet users (Du et al, 2010). In addition, traditional advertisements in the form of e.g. TV commercials, product packaging and magazine and billboard advertisements are also used (Du et al, 2010).

Contrasting with these company-controlled CSR communication channels is the increasing number of external communicators like the media, customers, and consumer forums that are not controlled by the company itself (Du et al, 2010). There seems to be an interesting trade-off between the credibility and controllability of CSR communication so that the less controllable the communicator or the channel is, the

more credible it is and vice versa (Du et al, 2010). When consumers hear about company's CSR activities from a neutral-source, they are more likely to react positively than when they learned about it from a corporate source. (Yoon, et al ,2006). Du et al (2010) also mention that companies should reach for informal yet credible communication channels such as word-of-mouth by stakeholders due to their credible nature. These suggestions definitely support the use of social media as a channel for CSR communication.

2.6 CSR communication on the Internet

As stated previously, companies need to find more efficient ways to communicate with their stakeholders and the Internet has become a great tool for reaching consumers around the clock. The Internet allows companies to present their agenda and messages on CSR at a lower cost and reduced time, and deliver this message to a large audience without being controlled or manipulated by other entities (Jo & Jung, 2005).

Several studies (e.g. Downes & McMillan, 2000; Taylor et al, 2001) present two manners for companies to communicate with their stakeholders through the web; unidirectional (one-way) and bidirectional (two-way). According to Capriotti (2011), traditional CSR communication on the Internet has been unidirectional, like static CSR focused websites as a part of the company's corporate site, downloadable reports, brochures and presentations. These tools use a one-way model of communication, since companies are not expecting to initiate or maintain a dialogue through these channels but to simply disseminate information. This way these channels could be seen to represent the first and second of Morsing and Schultz's CSR communication strategies presented in section 2.1. the stakeholder information and response strategies.

Capriotti's (2011) view of traditional CSR communication on the Internet suggests that one of the main characteristics of the Internet – interactivity – has been lacking attention (Schultz, 2000; Jo & Kim, 2003). Internet, however, could be used to facilitate

bidirectional communication between the company and its stakeholders. This type of communication can be used for establishing and building relationships, allowing dialogue and interaction, hence providing a high level of interactivity (Moreno & Capriotti, 2009). According to Capriotti (2011), the concept of transparency of dialogue is highlighted here, since companies are providing this information to all for discussion and are able to gain feedback about CSR issues.

As stated, stakeholders are not actively looking for CSR information and CSR reports are not directed to all types of stakeholders. Hence embedding the corporate responsibility messages in more mainstream communication together with clear explanation of its relevance to the stakeholder might be efficient. It is also noteworthy that even though the Internet is used to customize CSR messages to different stakeholder audiences, creative use of offline channels like point-of-purchase communication is also needed as not all stakeholders are reachable online (Dawkins 2004).

Stakeholder involvement and dialogue, as well as the use of the Internet for communicating CSR were discussed in the earlier chapters. It was stated that the stakeholder involvement strategy enables the company to stay informed about its stakeholders' current expectations and letting those expectations affect the company by engaging in a dialogue. By doing this, the company together with its stakeholders ensures mutually beneficial action. This strategy has to be facilitated through channels that allow the stakeholders and companies to establish a dialogue. The next chapter will explain why social media is a potential tool for facilitating this dialogue.

2.7 Social media

Companies might be afraid of the loss of control on what is written about them online, as the corporate website, controlled by the company itself, is no longer the only source of information to the Internet user when typing the company name into a search engine. Social media is becoming ever more relevant to organizations due to the increasing

amount of users and contributors. Kaplan and Haenlain, (2010) argue that even though social media is definitely a revolutionary trend, companies do not yet seem to be comfortable in this new environment where consumers can speak and share information freely with each other without being controlled by the company.

This chapter provides a clarification of the fairly complex concept of social media. The concept of social media can be explained by first referring to two other concepts; Web 2.0 and user generated content (UGC). (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) The term Web 2.0, introduced by O'Reilly (2005) refers to platforms where content and applications are simultaneously modified by many users. Web 2.0 could be said to present the ideological and technological foundation of social media, whereas UGC refers to the sum of all ways in which people make use of social media, i.e. the media content that is produced by the users and is available to the public. Social media, then, is a group of Internet-based applications building on the foundations of Web 2.0 and UGC (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Another definition for social media is given by Kietzmann et al. (2011, p. 241) as follows "social media could be defined as interactive web platforms via which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content".

Given these general definitions, social media can be further categorized. Kaplan & Henlein (2010) have classified social media services by two dimensions; social presence and media richness, and self-presentation and self-disclosure. According to the first dimension, collaborative applications such as Wikipedia and blogs score lowest in the social presence/ media richness category since they are mainly text based, in comparison to e.g. virtual social worlds which try to imitate dimensions of face-to-face contact. Due to the lack of current corporate use of the virtual worlds, they are not presented in further detail in this thesis.

In between of collaborative applications and virtual worlds there are content communities (e.g. YouTube) and social networking sites like Facebook. These services

allow the sharing of texts and images, as well as other forms of media. Regarding the other dimension of this classification, blogs and social networking sites score higher in self-presentation than collaborative projects and content communities. The low level of self-presentation of content communities could be slightly questioned, since e.g. YouTube, used for sharing videos, is currently in active corporate use.

Table 1: Classification of social media tools by Kaplan & Haenlain (2010, p.62)

		Social presence/ Media richness		
		Low	Medium	High
Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)	Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g., YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)

Next, some of the social media channels most commonly used for corporate communication are further explained.

2.7.1 Blogs

Blogs can be generally defined as a more dynamic version of a personal website that is regularly updated. (Walls, 2005). Herring et al (2005, p.142) define weblogs (blogs) as “frequently modified web pages in which dated entries are listed in reverse chronological sequence”. They can be anything from personal diaries to summaries of all relevant information in one specific content area. Blogging as an activity has been increasing significantly since mid-1999 (Herring et al, 2005) and many companies have

already started blogs in order to update employees, customers and shareholders on developments they consider being important. (Kaplan & Haenlain, 2010)

2.7.2 Content communities

Content communities are used to share media content online, between users. There are communities for sharing for example photos (e.g. Flickr), videos (e.g. YouTube) and PowerPoint presentations (SlideShare). The profiles containing personal information about the users are usually very limited, or even non-existent, in these communities. These communities risk hosting material that is protected by copyrights. However, the high popularity of the communities is also a good opportunity for companies to get their material diffused very fast. (Kaplan & Haenlain, 2010)

2.7.3 Social networking sites

Boyd and Ellison (2007, p. 210) define social network sites (SNSs) as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system”. Simply put, social networking sites are used to connect with other users by creating a profile of personal information, inviting friends to have access to the profile and messaging through the service. Different media content like photos, videos and audio files can be shared through social networking services. The most popular of these sites is Facebook.

2.7.3.1 Facebook

Facebook is a web-based social networking site designed to facilitate communication between family, friends and coworkers (Champoux et al, 2012). Today, it has over 900

million active users which represents almost 12 per cent of the world's entire population (Facebook, 2012). Facebook is expected to reach the one-billion-member landmark during the current year 2012 (Cohen, 2011). In addition to enabling individuals to present themselves in an online profile and accumulate friends, Facebook members can also join virtual groups based on common interests (Ellison et al, 2007).

In 2007, Facebook allowed companies to establish corporate Facebook pages on the site, thousands of whom used the opportunity to register. Companies with pages can communicate with existing and potential clients, get post sales information, and create promotions and new product announcements. Companies can e.g. educate their customers by providing information, guide them to donate for a cause or inform about upcoming events. To give an example of a company Facebook page versus corporate website, Starbucks has 21 million "likes" in Facebook whereas its corporate page has 1.8 million visitors a month (Champoux et al, 2012).

According to Champoux et al. (2012), traditional advertising and product-pushing are not in compliance with Facebook's culture and social atmosphere, hence instead of this, companies are trying to act as 'human as possible' on their page. Fans in Facebook are looking for entertainment, interesting discussions and sharing of information. Typically companies post topics that are not directly linked to their business operations in order to engage fans, conduct informal market research and increase the visibility of their page (Champoux et al, 2012).

Companies face certain risks by joining Facebook since they have to defer to Facebook's security and privacy settings instead of having full control of their page. According to Champoux et al. (2012), negative comments have more powerful impact than positive ones, and due to the social environment of Facebook, they are likely to spread widely fast.

An example of bad Facebook management is Nestlé who in 2010 suffered a fast ‘social media meltdown’ after Greenpeace released a report of illegal deforestation conducted by Nestlé’s Indonesian supplier. Nestlé censored and removed critical posts from its page and the page moderators treated ‘fans’ very rudely. This led to Nestlé’s Facebook fans feeling that the company is not only exploiting the environment but also bullying them. This can be seen as an example of the importance of a well-planned social media strategy, if the company decides to engage in these communication channels (Champoux et al, 2012).

An example of efficient crisis communication in Facebook is by Finnair, who was forced to cancel all of its flights temporarily among other European airlines in April 2010 after the eruption of the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull. They used Facebook for informing followers about the incident and answering questions 24/7. Finnair received credit for handling the conversations with their passengers and they did right in realizing that Facebook can be used as a proactive platform, by allowing the public voice concern and responding transparently. (Hallman, 2010)

Communicating in Facebook happens mainly through status updates, commenting, “liking” and sharing. All of these terms were shortly defined in the introductory chapter. The concept of a Facebook post or update was defined as a short, few sentences long text which can be enhanced with a multimedia file like a photo or video clip. Jo and Kim (2003) argue that the addition of multimedia to text-based contents might increase cognitive ability to process information, however overloading might distract the recipient and limit the information processing.

In other words, companies are encouraged to use multimedia like photos, video or music as an attachment of text in their online communication, however, overload should be avoided as it might distract the consumers’ concentration away from the actual message.

Next, some of the main limitations of social media are discussed.

2.7.4 Limitations of social media in corporate context

The use of social media in corporate context does not come without a risk. First of all, it has been argued that people are not that actively participating in the dialogue on the social web. Nielsen (2006) presents a theory of “lurkers”, according to which only 10 % of users of online social networks actually participate in the dialogue. He states that 90 % of the users are lurkers, who never contribute but only read and observe the discussions, 9 % of the users contribute from time to time and only 1 % of users are heavy participants. It can be said that technological changes are occurring at a fast pace, but the sociological changes like stakeholders adapting these new technologies are slower (Capriotti, 2011). According to Nielsen (2006), this leads to some challenges if the company is looking for customer feedback on its products or services, since they are getting an unrepresentative sample.

It is also noteworthy that social media’s dialogic nature retains some serious reputational risks. Aula (2010) argues that social media generates reputational risks for companies since the information provided by users is often unverified. In addition, reputation risk might result from company’s own communication activities such as reaction to claims that are presented in social media like in Nestlé’s case presented previously. Also, companies might fail in adopting the style of voice used in social media, which is more informal than the tone of traditional corporate communication (Etter & Fieseler, 2010).

Further it should be noted that not all company stakeholders are present in social media. There is also a large amount of users of social network sites who prefer to communicate solely with their real life network or wish not to include companies as “friends”.

This section has discussed the complex concept of social media and its limitations. In the following chapter, the three main topics of the present literature review; CSR communication, stakeholder dialogue and social media are bound together.

2.8 CSR and social media

As discussed in the earlier chapters, CSR communication has traditionally been unidirectional and asymmetrical communication between an organization and its stakeholders. Organizations have created a message and disseminated it to all of their stakeholders by informing or persuading them about e.g. the organization's identity, value or products. Typical channels for this have been annual CSR reports, CSR brochures and sections at corporate websites (Capriotti, 2011).

However, social media offers companies broader opportunities and new challenges in communicating and engaging with their stakeholders by enabling new kinds of individualized interaction between companies and its stakeholders (Etter & Plotkowiak, 2011). The overarching character of this trend is the democratization of communication. Compared to the classic model of CSR communication in which corporate communication professionals were acting as gatekeepers, the new model allows almost anyone to be heard through e.g. blogs, and social networking sites (Cornelissen, 2011).

According to Capriotti (2011), social media or Web 2.0 can change the way in which people and organizations communicate and engage in relationships, by permitting more flexible, bidirectional communication between organizations and stakeholders that enables a more balanced relationship through the exchange of information and equilibrated conditions of power. Aula (2010) agrees by stating social media is characterized by interactivity since its participants freely send, receive and process content that is produced by others. He continues that social media's main characters are

open participation, dialogue, community, networking and the fast and broad spread of information and content through a wide range of feedback and linking systems. This leads to dynamic relationships and communication with, and between, stakeholders with less corporate control. Capriotti (2011) points out that boundaries between senders and receivers, new and old media and information and communication are getting blurred due to these new technological tools. It can thus be concluded that communication between stakeholders and organizations can be said to have changed.

In chapter 2.2 of the present thesis, Morsing and Schultz's (2006) CSR communication strategies were assessed. Their stakeholder involvement strategy is based on the two-way, dialogic stakeholder-company relationships. This model suggests that companies should engage in regular dialogue with their stakeholders in order to develop mutual actions and influencing one other. (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). According to e.g. Jo and Jung (2005) there is a demand for two-way, interactive and symmetrical communication about CSR matters. Internet and especially social media are technologies allowing this, in other words facilitating the development of the communication model suggested by Morsing and Schultz.

Correspondingly Capriotti (2011) states that since the Internet is becoming increasingly important and powerful channel for corporate communication, including communication about corporate social responsibility, organizations have to adapt to a change from traditional CSR communication to interactive CSR communication. However, even if companies are increasingly using Internet as a channel to reach their stakeholders, the full potential offered by it is not yet used. Capriotti (2011) states that web technology has not significantly changed the way CSR issues are being communicated but new technologies seem to be used as simply new ways of creating and presenting the old media, e.g. e-annual reports, e-CSR reports and e-press releases. This was also one of the main findings of Rodriguez-Bolivar's (2009) study on Corporate Environmental Reporting on the Internet. He concluded that few companies are using their company websites to engage in a two-way dialogue on CSR issues with their stakeholders thus are not using the whole potential of the Internet to enhance their

social and environmental reputation (Rodriguez-Bolivar, 2009). Rodriguez-Bolivar (2009) suggests one of the reasons being that social media services offer a more unbiased platform for two-way communication as the discussion is not held at “corporate grounds”.

Du et al (2010) pointed out that consumers can act as informal, yet credible communicators for the company. They argue that online communication media in blogs, chat rooms and other social media sites like Facebook have magnified the power consumer word-of-mouth. Also Capriotti (2011) argues that social media allows stakeholders to communicate with each other without organizational control, exchange information, share opinions and compare public information about companies with information coming from other sources such as other companies, people or groups having contact with the company, without the organization in question interfering in the communication. As an example, Stonyfield Farm and Ben & Jerry's have benefited from consumer ambassadors who have been spreading the word about the companies' CSR activities online. (Du et al, 2010). Consumers can be recruited as CSR advocates as long as they actually stand behind the company's CSR initiatives. The public now has an access to different perspectives as well as critique and recommendations of the company, their products or CSR activities from “people like us” all over the world (Capriotti, 2011).

A study on consumer engagement online conducted by DEI Worldwide (2008) states consumers are affected by social media sites as much as company websites for information on products and brands. According to Capriotti (2011) it implicates a need for a new marketing and communication strategy based on a participatory, interactive and collaborative consumer. He uses the term *prosumer* of a consumer of the company's products and services, who is also producing information and opinions about the products, services or activities online. The term was originally introduced already in 1972 by McLuhan and Nevitt who suggested that with electric technology, the consumer would become a producer.

This means that social media leads to not having a unique source of information anymore, “the corporate voice”, but instead multiple voices who are joining the conversation and the company is no longer the one dictating the topics and rules. According to Capriotti (2011) companies must thus change the focus of their corporate communication towards facilitating the dialogue and interaction between the company and its stakeholders. In social media, the persuasive and informative communication models need to be changed for dialogic and conversational models (Capriotti, 2011, Morsing & Shultz, 2006). By doing this companies can enhance their stakeholder relationships (Etter & Fieseler, 2010).

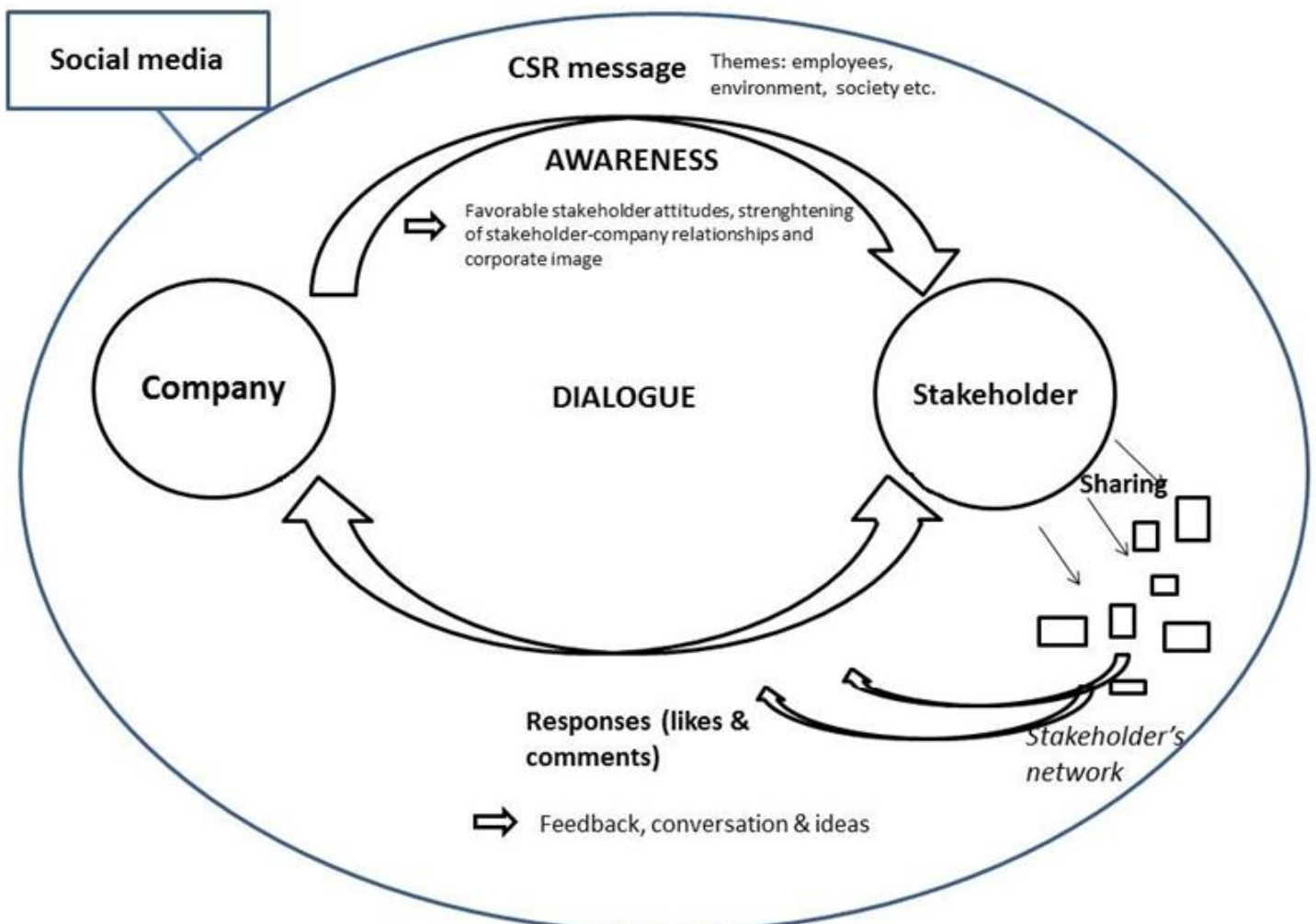
Capriotti (2011) argues that due to the loss of information control, companies should pay more attention to “doing well” since it is increasingly difficult to hide mistakes and irresponsible behavior. Transparency in operations, future goals and social issues becomes a necessity in this changing environment. If a company is proven to have acted in an irresponsible manner, they are likely to get punished in the ‘digital public arena’ leading to an even worse reputation. Trust, transparency and credibility are extremely important factors in CSR communication. Social media can be seen as a trustworthy channel for CSR communication, due to the constant peer review and lack of gatekeeping or corporate control. (Johnson & Kaye, 2004)

Du et al (2010) illustrate the possibilities of social media for CSR communication through a case of Timberland, who launched the Earth Keeper campaign in 2008 to recruit 1 million people to become a part of an online network designed to inspire real environmental change. As a part of the campaign, Timberland created a global network of social networking tools including YouTube, Facebook and a blog as well as a product line serving as the culmination of the company's environmental commitment. With this campaign, Timberland was able to communicate its sustainability initiative effectively and in addition, engage consumers in spreading the word about the initiative and most importantly, the company's involvement in the initiative (Du et al, 2010).

2.9 Theoretical framework

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework for the present thesis based on the previous literature. The framework defines the link between CSR communication, stakeholder dialogue and social media. Figure 2 below illustrates the theoretical framework for this study.

**Figure 2: Theoretical framework:
CSR dialogue in social media**



The aim of the theoretical framework is to represent the dialogical aspect of CSR communication in Facebook, or social media in general, suggested by many scholars e.g. Du et al, (2010), Morsing & Schultz (2008), Capriotti (2011). According to Du et al. (2010) and Dawkins (2004) key requirements for obtaining strategic benefits from CSR communication are creating stakeholder awareness and responding to stakeholder concerns. These benefits may include e.g. the creation of favorable stakeholder attitudes, building corporate image and strengthening stakeholder-company relationships (Due et al., 2010).

In Figure 2, the two-way communication suggested by Morsing and Schultz's (2006) stakeholder involvement strategy is pictured with an arrow leaving from the company (CSR message) to the consumer creating awareness of the CSR themes which further leads to the above mentioned strategic benefits. Stakeholder reactions to these messages are then going back to the company in the form of stakeholder feedback (likes or comments in Facebook) and the company is able to react to them which represents the dialogue enabled by the communication channel in question. When a CSR message is especially noteworthy to a stakeholder, the message can be spread further to the consumer's own network through the sharing activity. The network of the stakeholder is visualized as a group of squares, different sizes and forms, in order to represent the various multifaceted networks that each individual has in social media. All of this previously mentioned activity is taking place in social media (e.g. Facebook), which is the surrounding environment.

This study has thus far created a theoretical framework for the upcoming analysis and discussion based on the literature review. Next the empirical part of this study is discussed.

3 METHODOLOGY AND DATA

In this chapter, the industry at issue and the industry partner are presented. In addition, this chapter includes the research design and methods used for the empirical part of the thesis, followed by a part on the trustworthiness and validity of the study.

The research methods for the present thesis are two-fold. First, qualitative, semi-structured interviews with two Finnair employees were conducted in order to understand the industry perspective to the issue, communicating CSR in Facebook. In addition, some written documents such as Corporate Responsibility Report 2012 and social media strategy from Finnair were investigated. Second, a quantitative study was conducted by applying the content analysis method to analyze airlines' CSR communication in Facebook. These qualitative and quantitative methods aim at answering the research questions: 'What is Finnair's perspective to communicating about CSR in Facebook?', 'Which CSR themes airlines communicate in Facebook?' and 'Which CSR related themes are airlines' Facebook fans reacting to?' The data and chosen methodology will be discussed further in the following sections.

3.1 Airlines as the object of the study

In order to limit the scope of the study, a decision to concentrate on one specific industry was made. The airline industry was chosen for various reasons. First, due to the controversial nature of their operations resulting from high carbon dioxide emissions and second, because the travel industry represents a large sector of global e-commerce and airlines are pioneers in online business (Buckfelder, 2012). Third, after a closer look at the CSR communication of some of the world's major airlines', it was concluded that corporate social responsibility is ranked high in their overall corporate strategy according to their websites. Fourth, their communication through Facebook was

investigated and it was noted that to some extent, many of them were communicating about CSR also in Facebook. Methodology

3.2. Methodology

In this section the methodology of the present study is presented.

3.2.1 Qualitative interviews with Finnair employees

Since the first research question aimed to investigate an airline's perspective to communicating CSR in Facebook, an industry partner was asked to participate in the study. Finnair Group (from here on Finnair) was chosen as the industry partner since it is Finland's largest airline.

For this thesis, the Vice President of Sustainability and the Social Media Manager from Finnair were interviewed using the semi-structured interview approach. The interview method was chosen since it helps generate a deep understanding of Finnair's CSR and social media strategy (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). The interviews were conducted to find out information about Finnair's CSR and social media strategies in order to answer the first research question.

Both interviews were held on April 4th, 2012. The interviews lasted approximately one hour each, and were structured by the following questions:

“What is the meaning of CSR to Finnair?”

“What does Finnair's CSR strategy include?”

“What are Finnair's strategic goals in CSR”

“What are the most important stakeholder groups for Finnair?”

“Which channels are used to communicate about CSR?”

“What does Finnair’s social media strategy include?”

“Why is Finnair present in social media?”

“Which social media channels are in use?”

“Does Finnair see social media as a suitable channel for communicating CSR?”

“What are the challenges and opportunities of communicating CSR in Facebook?”

The interviews were conducted in Finnish and the interview framework can be found in Appendix 1. Next, the methodology for the quantitative part of the study is presented.

3.2.2 Content analysis of Facebook status updates

Quantitative content analysis was used as the second research method in order to answer the remaining two research questions: ‘Which CSR themes airlines communicate in Facebook?’ and ‘Which CSR related themes are airlines’ Facebook fans reacting to?’

Quantitative methods focus attention on measurement of characteristics whereas qualitative research is more focused on describing varieties or characteristics of e.g. people or events (Thomas, 2003). According to Bryman and Bell (2003), content analysis refers to an analysis of documents and texts that seeks to quantify content, in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner. They continue that this research method is applicable to a variety of media and that it is rather an approach to the analysis than a method for generating data.

Krippendorff (2004) continues that content analysis is a technique used for compressing many units (e.g. words of text) into fewer content categories based on distinct coding schemes. According to Krippendorff (2004), quantitative content analysis is

increasingly used to conduct surface level analyses in computer-mediated communication – in this case Facebook – by for example counting messages.

Bryman and Bell (2003) argue that two qualities are significant in content analysis: objectivity and being systematic. They further clarify that objectivity refers to the fact that there is transparency in the procedures for assigning the data into categories with the least personal bias from the analyst. Being systematic then refers to the application of the rules in a consistent manner in order to again inhibit the analyst's bias. As a result of these qualities, anyone should be able to duplicate the study and in theory come up with the same results. Most often content analysis is applied to examine mass media items and texts and documents produced by companies (e.g. annual reports) (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

According to Krippendorff (2004), there are six questions which have to be assessed in every content analysis.

1. Which data are analysed?
2. How are they defined?
3. What is the population from which they are drawn?
4. What is the context relative to which the data are analysed?
5. What are the boundaries of the analysis?
6. What is the aim of the inferences?

The simplest way of doing content analysis is doing a word-frequency-count, the assumption being that words that are mentioned most often are most significant (Weber, 1990). However, this is not the only technique, as content analysis can go beyond with coding and categorization of data (Stemler, 2001). In this present study, airlines'

Facebook status updates related to CSR matters are analyzed after dividing them into categories.

According to Weber (1990), texts belonging to categories can consist of one or many words, phrases, or other units of text which are presumed to have a similar meaning. Depending on the researcher's purposes, similarity can evolve from the precise meaning of words or be based on words sharing similar connotations. However, it is important that the classification procedure is reliable, in other words that different people would end up coding the same text the same way (Weber, 1990). Stemler (2001) continues that the classification categories have to be mutually exclusive, meaning no unit can fall between two categories and each unit is only presented by one category.

There are different ways for defining the coding units. One method is to define the units physically, in terms of their boundaries (Stemler, 2001). A physical boundary can be e.g. sentences starting with a capital letter and ending with a full stop. This is the method used in the present study, since the data (status updates) are further divided into comments, likes and shares (each representing a unit or sub-unit) that have clear physical boundaries. Status update's and comment's boundaries are the text fields provided by Facebook whereas likes and shares are represented by numbers.

To assess two research questions of the present study - 'Which CSR themes airlines communicate in Facebook?' and 'Which CSR related themes are airlines' Facebook fans reacting to?' - a content analysis of CSR related posts of the Facebook communities' of 11 airlines is conducted. The main aim is to analyze the content of the companies' statuses related to different areas of corporate social responsibility as well as the number of reactions in the form of likes, comments and shares that these statuses evoked. The content was analyzed from two perspectives, on the other hand the actual theme of the status update was categorized and on the other hand, the number of likes, comments and shares evoked by the status update were calculated. The concepts of Facebook likes, comments and shares were defined in section 1.3. of the present study.

3.3 Data collection

Self-evidently, empirical research is always based on data. Krippendorff (2004) states that most content analyses have naturally occurring data that are not intended to be analyzed for specific research in comparison to e.g. conducting a survey for a defined purpose. He continues that data in this type of research are texts which are meant to be read, interpreted and understood by people other than the researcher. It can be assumed that in social context all authors (in this case Facebook page admins and followers) write in expectation of being understood by others.

According to Krippendorff (2004), the best guarantee for content analysts to have “uncontaminated” texts, meaning texts that are written genuinely, is to focus on texts which are written unconscious of being observed. Therefore the data used in the present thesis is very suitable for content analyses due to the Facebook authors’ and commenters’ unawareness of being researched.

The data of this present thesis are CSR related status updates issues by 11 airlines in Facebook. The selection of companies for the analysis is based on the IATA’s (The International Transport Association) listing of the world’s biggest airlines according to the scheduled international passenger-kilometers flown in 2011. Some airlines were excluded or included in this study due to the interests of the researcher and industry partner Finnair.

First of all, American airlines were excluded from the present study due to the different views about CSR from the company perspective, discussed in more detail in chapter 2.1. American companies tend to see CSR as mainly charity i.e. donating a share of profits to charities (Kampf, 2007). Including them in the current study might have altered the

results excessively towards philanthropic side. Secondly, only airlines with active, official Facebook communities were qualified as participants of the present study. Companies without active Facebook pages were outside the scope of this study due to the research question. Thirdly, low-cost airlines were excluded from the study due to their different market approach compared to the industry partner Finnair.

The following table lists the top 10 airlines (in June 2011) by IATA. The reasons for exclusion are listed in the second column.

Table 2: IATA’s listing of Global Top 10 Airlines by scheduled international passenger-kilometers flown, 2011

Airline	Inclusion	Reason for exclusion
Emirates	Yes	
Lufthansa	Yes	
Delta Air Lines	No	No Facebook community
Air France	Yes	
British Airways	Yes	
Cathay Pacific Airways	No	No official community.
Singapore Airlines	Yes	
Ryanair	No	Different market, low-cost airline
American Airlines	No	American
KLM	Yes	

In addition, some Facebook communities of smaller airlines were included although they do not figure on IATA’s listing due to the industry partner Finnair’s biggest target

market, Asia, and their other preferences of benchmarking. These companies were SAS, Finnair, Blue1, Korean Air and Asiana Airlines.

Since Facebook is a constantly changing online social platform, a certain time span was set for the data gathering. As discussed in the literature review section of this thesis, Facebook is constantly gaining popularity. This leads to a constantly increasing amount of followers for corporate Facebook pages. In Facebook, users show their interest in companies through the use of the “like” button and become members of the community. By “liking”, followers can express their interest in a company or brand for reasons that may include self-expression, communicating positive associations of that brand to others, staying in communication with that brand, or receiving deals and promotions (Lipsman, et al. 2012).

In order to gather comparable data, only posts in company Facebook pages during a set time period of three months (1st of February – 30th of April, 2012) were researched. It was crucial for the success of this study that the researcher was aware of the number of followers in a community at the moment of posting since that number represents directly the potential audience of the message.

In addition, in order to make these communities comparable, each community was given a coefficient. The coefficient was determined by the number of followers in each community on 2nd of May, 2012. The amount of followers on this specific date was divided by 10.000 and the number was then rounded to the closest whole number. Assigning coefficients was necessary due to the fact that when users follow (have pressed the like button in the community) companies in Facebook, they will receive the company posts in their news feed. This further implies that each member (i.e. follower) of the company community has in principle had the chance to see the post, in other words, a possibility to comment, like or share it.

In other words, the number of followers or members of the company community directly affects the size of the potential audience of a message. Further, out of the

potential audience, the number of followers leaving a trace – like, comment or share (terms explained in section 1.3.) – can be interpreted as being interested in the topic. In theory, the number of community members could have been divided by any number, but 10,000 was used since the smallest community had around 10,000 followers and keeping with whole numbers made the data and results more observable.

In the following table, the Facebook communities studied are briefly presented, ranked by the number of Facebook fans on 2nd of May, 2012. From these numbers each participant company is given a related coefficient.

Table 3: Companies analyzed in the study

Company	Headquarters	Revenue (2011) 1) Billion €	No. of Facebook fans on 2nd May 2012	Coefficient
KLM	Netherlands	24.36 (AirFrance-KLM)	1,450,052	145
Lufthansa	Germany	22.1	1,047,928	105
Air France	France	24.36 (AirFrance-KLM)	760,525	76
Emirates	Dubai	12.24 2)	413,783	41
British Airways	England	16.34 (BA-Iberia)	336,414	34

SAS	Denmark	4.54	181,823	18
Singapore Airlines	Singapore	8.92	157,133	16
Finnair	Finland	2.26	94,777	9
Blue1	Finland	0.181	61,046	6
Korean Air	South-Korea	n/a	51,105	5
Asiana Airlines	South-Korea	3.55	9,564	1

1) The revenue information is collected from company annual reports and financial statements, further information provided in references. Currencies are converted 20th May, 2012 by [finance.yahoo.com](http://finance.yahoo.com/converter) converter.

2) 2010-2011, different reporting cycle

In this present study, the assumption is made that the more a post is commented, liked or shared further, the more valuable it has been since it can be interpreted as being of interest to the Facebook users. The basis for stakeholder dialogue is openness, and companies often state encouragement of dialogue with stakeholders as one of the main reasons for being present in Facebook (Aula, 2010; Parsons, 2011) the nature of the commenting has been excluded in this study. I argue that the presence of discussion is more relevant than the tone of the comments. The commenting, likes and shares evoked by CSR posts enables companies to adjust their CSR initiatives according to their stakeholder expectations and concerns.

As previously mentioned, two perspectives were taken into account when coding a CSR status update of an airline. First of all, the general CSR category of the update was determined, which will be further explained in the following sub-chapter, and secondly

the amount of likes, comments and shares evoked by the post were coded according to the coefficient determined for the company respectively.

3.4 Data analysis

The data, 728 Facebook posts from 11 airlines during the set 3 month time period, were coded manually in two different phases. First, each post was categorized as either being or not being CSR related. If the post was CSR related, it was further categorized according to set themes (see section 3.4.1), and if not, it was not included in the data. Then the number of likes, shares and comments the CSR related post had received were divided by the company coefficient in order to produce comparable data. Next, a concrete example of the coding is provided.

The following image represents a status update by KLM from 29th April 2012 announcing that the first ever female captain is retiring. In the image, the status update written by the KLM admins is marked by the researcher in a big red box. In addition, the number of likes, comments and shares has been highlighted with red color.

Figure 3: KLM status update

KLM
April 29

Just became KLM's first female captain to retire.
An all ladies crew accompanied captain Rusch on her last flight from Shanghai. Thanks for many years of dedication!

Like · Comment · Share

4,905 people like this.

View all 405 comments

Write a comment...

253

Status written by the company

No. of likes

No. of comments

No. of shares

From Table 2 on page 53 it can be noted that the coefficient given to KLM was 145 (no. of followers 1,450,052 divided by 10,000). This means that in the coding system the number of likes, comments and shares will be divided with the coefficient.

The coding system for the example in Figure 1 is as follows:

No. of likes: $(4905) / (145) = 33.8$

No. of comments: $(405) / (145) = 2.8$

No. of shares: $(253) / (145) = 1.7$

The overall value for this specific Facebook post comes from adding the previous values together, resulting in 38.3. This value was then further used to compare the popularity of CSR themes. The analysis of data was done first manually in Facebook, and then using Microsoft Excel to calculate the values.

The same coding procedure was applied to all 40 of the CSR related posts from the set time period.

3.4.1 Categorization of themes

Categorization can be seen as the second phase of coding in the present thesis as it was done to all posts categorized as CSR related in the first phase. According to Bryman and Bell (2003), it is common in content analysis that the researcher codes text in terms of certain subjects or themes. The categorization of themes requires a more interpretative approach than the simple categorization of specific words since in this stage the researcher is not only looking for the actual meanings but also the hidden meanings in the data. Hence it becomes essential to investigate beneath the surface (Bryman & Bell, 2003, p. 200). Since the second research question of the present thesis examines which CSR themes the Facebook fans are reacting to it is necessary to first identify potential CSR themes.

Nielsen and Thomsen's (2007) original division of CSR themes was introduced in section 2.1. Out of the seven categories, five were chosen to be used in the present study:

- Employees (responsibility towards employees, employee relations)
- Local community (partnerships with local institutions and influential individuals)
- Environment (sustainability, reduction of pollution etc.)
- Society (social commitment, human rights)
- Corporate governance and accountability (doing business ethically, reporting).

These themes will act as the preliminary framework in the categorization of topics of the present thesis, but will be slightly altered to better fit the current case from the airline industry. In the interview, the Sustainability Vice President from Finnair mentioned emissions as one of the most intriguing topics for their stakeholders. Thus in this thesis, emissions are treated as a separate category and all other environmental issues are included in the environment category. In addition, in order to provide more specific results, the society category (Nielsen and Thomsen, 2007) will be divided into two parts: (1) philanthropy, and (2) social commitment and human rights. In this categorization, philanthropy is understood as supporting a certain charitable cause, whereas society category hosts more general statements about human rights and social commitment. This division was made to provide more detailed information whether the airlines were encouraging passengers to donate money for a certain cause or whether they were simply disseminating information. From the following table (Table 4) an example of each category is provided.

Table 4: Categorization of analyzed themes

Category (code)	Topics	Example from data
Employees (E)	Responsibility towards employees, employee relations	Just became KLM's first female captain to retire. An all ladies crew accompanied captain Rusch on her last flight from Shanghai. Thanks for many years of dedication! <i>KLM 29 April 2012</i>
Local community (L)	Partnerships with local institutions and influential individuals	We were happy to welcome Signmark and his band on the New York flight today. To celebrate the start of their East coast tour, Signmark and Brandon (center and left) surprised the passengers by performing a song at the gate before the departure of the flight. Signmark is a Finnish deaf rapper and first ever deaf artist to sign an international record deal. <i>Finnair 12 April, 2012</i>
Environment (EN)	Sustainability	It's Arbor Day in Germany today - the day of the tree. With the aid of Lufthansa's environmental sponsorship program, the German sustainability foundation NatureLife-International is championing the renaturation of the rainforests in southwest China. Find out more: http://f.lh.com/c6vQ <i>Lufthansa 25 April, 2012</i>
Emissions (EM)	Reduction of emissions, biofuel	The future of aviation? The US Space Agency, NASA, commissioned three airlines to design an aircraft of the future. The essential criteria: less noise, fewer emissions and lower fuel consumption. Which one is your favourite? <i>Lufthansa, 15 March, 2012</i>
Society (S)	Social commitment, human rights	"The air is the only place free from prejudices". Today we remember Bessie Coleman, the first African-American woman to become an airplane pilot, in 1921: "I refused to take no for an answer". <i>Lufthansa 30 April, 2012</i>
Philanthropy (P)	Donations, charity	Pop sensation One Direction lent their support to our Flying Start charity at Terminal 5 last week. They're pictured here with our new on-board collection envelopes. Flying Start is our charity partnership with Comic Relief. It aims to transform the lives of some of the most

		<p>disadvantaged children around the world.</p> <p>Our passengers have so far given £1.5m on board. You can also make a donation here http://on.fb.me/dPldrQ</p> <p><i>British Airways, February 1st, 2012</i></p>
Corporate governance and accountability (G)	Doing business ethically, reporting	<p>Fortune has released its 2012 World's Most Admired Companies list and we are delighted to have made it once again, ranking 23rd in a survey of business people across industries. We are truly grateful and humbled by this recognition!</p> <p><i>Singapore Airlines 19 March, 2012</i></p> <p>(Researcher's note: responsibility was one of the factors taken into account in the ranking)</p>

According to this categorization the previous example from KLM in Figure 1, would be categorized under "Employees" since the status update announced the retirement of KLM's first female pilot. Table 4 provides examples from the data for each category. This categorization was done to all the 40 CSR updates analyzed.

Next, the trustworthiness of the study is analyzed.

3.4.2 Trustworthiness of the study

This section provides an assessment of the validity and reliability of the empirical part of the study. According to Saunders et al. (2003) reliability and validity are crucial in order to produce descriptions of the social world that in a controllable manner

contribute to the knowledge of social phenomena. Reliability refers to the expectation that any researcher should be able to come up with the same findings in the research was re-conducted and due to this, careful documentation during the research process is required (Saunders et al., 2003). The present chapter has guided the researcher through the research methodology and data analysis used and therefore ensures the repeatability of the study.

Another criterion to be taken into account is the validity of research. According to Saunders et al., (2003) validity means the integrity of the conclusions of a research. The multi-method approach chosen for this study combined two methods in order to allow the exploremment of the phenomenon from different perspectives. The study consisted of semi-structured interviews with Finnair employees and of a quantitative content analysis of airlines' CSR related Facebook status updates. Discussing the trustworthiness of the study, triangulation i.e. the use of multiple research methods, enhances the trustworthiness of investigations (Greene 2007).

According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2001) in order to improve the trustworthiness of interview data, accurate interview frameworks should be developed and the interviews should be transcribed as soon as possible. The interviews of the present study followed a framework that is provided in the Appendix and the interview was transcribed 3 days after taking place.

The two types of research methods used, interviews and content analysis, complement each other. The trustworthiness of the study is higher, as the interviews can be used as the background data for the content analysis. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2001) state that using multiple research methods in data collection reduces inappropriate uncertainty. In addition, to ensure the credibility of the study, the companies for the content analysis were carefully selected upon a specific set of criteria that was presented in section 3.3.

To summarize this chapter, the methodology and data used in the present study were presented. The data that consisted of interviews and airlines' CSR related status updates in Facebook were analyzed through multi-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods. It was argued that this multi-method approach increased the trustworthiness of the study. The following chapter will discuss the findings of the study.

4 FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings of the present study are presented. The chapter is divided into three sections, all of which focus on one of the three research questions. The first section focuses on the findings for the first research question, the company perspective for communicating CSR in Facebook. The second part reports the findings concerning the second research question, the CSR themes that airlines communicate in Facebook. In the final section, findings about the third research question on airlines' Facebook fans' reactions concerning CSR themes are discussed.

4.1

4.2 Company perspective to communicating CSR in Facebook

In order to gain an industry perspective on the topic of communicating CSR in Facebook, relevant representatives from Finnair, the Social Media Manager (SMM) Anna-Kaisa Varamäki and the Vice President of Sustainability (VPS) Kati Ihamäki, were interviewed. In addition, written documents such as Finnair's Corporate Responsibility Report 2012 and social media strategy were investigated. In this chapter, the main findings from these interviews and documents are discussed.

Finnair's core mission is flying passengers and cargo and providing travel services. Since 2008 Finnair has reported about its financial, social and environmental sustainability according to the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), which is the most widely recognized international authority on sustainability reporting (Christofi et al., 2012). The main motive behind their reporting is to produce data which is comparable from year to year which helps in target-setting. A concrete example of this ideology is the reduction of CO2 emissions per seat, which have fallen a quarter since 1999, and the fall is continuing (Finnair Group's CR Report, 2012).

At Finnair corporate responsibility (CR), further divided into environmental and social responsibility, is an essential part of the corporate strategy (VPS). Due to the characteristics of the field of business, they are constantly facing environmental challenges considering the environmental, impact and the noise pollution of their operations. From the point of view of social responsibility, the wellbeing of Finnair's employees and responsible travel industry supply chain are at the core (Finnair Group's CR Report, 2012).

Finnair's vision for 2020 is to become the number one airline in the Nordic countries, double their Asian traffic and to become the most desired option in travel between Europe and Asia. Simultaneously, Finnair wishes to be the choice of an environmental and quality conscious consumer. All social media efforts are subject to this overall strategy presented above. (VPS & SMM)

Finnair communicates corporate responsibility through multiple channels to various stakeholders. VPS mentioned NGOs and environmental organizations, the general public, political decision makers and media as the most significant stakeholder groups with regard to CR. Main channels for targeting these stakeholders include reporting annually according to the GRI, corporate websites, blog, inflight magazine, events, PR activities and also social media. At the moment, Finnair's main social media channels are Facebook, Twitter, blog, Foursquare, Youtube and Chinese social media services

Youku and Sina Weibo. Finnair wishes to be a pioneer in both CR initiatives and social media, and both of these activities support their corporate strategy. (VPS & SMM)

Finnair's aims in social media include strengthening their brand, creating customer loyalty, finding new business opportunities and participating in discussions related to their field. They have created a customer-oriented six-step social media strategy to target these aims. The six steps are as follows:

1) LISTEN AND LEARN

- Finnair wants to increase understanding of its customers and their wants and needs by listening to what people are saying and collect ideas and feedback

2) ENGAGE

- By engaging people, Finnair wants to create customer loyalty.
- Finnair engages in conversations in order to offer Finnair's point of view and expertise into conversations
- Finnair collaborates with its customers in order to improve its services
- Finnair rewards engaging customers by offering sneak peeks, insights, discounts, support and interesting content

3) DEVELOP

- Finnair wants to develop services together with customers
- Customer surveys and research
- Find focus groups via social media
- Crowdsourcing

4) INCREASE SALES

- Social media activities should direct traffic to Finnair's own websites and activate customers to buy Finnair's products

5) CREATE AND IMPROVE AWARENESS

- Finnair wants to increase brand awareness, especially in Asia
- Create interest in Finnair as an airline
- Support a strong employer image
- Increased digital footprint results in greater brand awareness and boosts SEO ranking

6) SOLVE PROBLEMS

- Finnair wants to solve its customers' problems online proactively. This is a cost-efficient way to serve customers and is the best possible PR.
- Exploit social media especially during crisis or in irregular situations.

(Finnair's Social media strategy)

Even though CR is not mentioned in any of these six steps, it could be seen to be related to the first step, listen and learn, which underlines the importance of understanding customer's wants and collecting feedback. In the second step of the strategy engaging in conversations and offering Finnair's point of view and expertise is mentioned. These conversations that Finnair wants to participate in might be also related to CR since the topic is ranked high in their strategy. The sixth step mentions the use of social media for crisis communication.

The social media strategy also lists topics that are brought up by Finnair in social media. These topics are divided under three categories; information (news about Finnair and its services; customer service, industry news and trends, polls, infographs), entertainment (photos and videos that tell a story and evoke feelings; contests; polls), opinions (anything that reflects Finnair's thought leadership in selected topics like corporate responsibility, quality, safety). In other words, in Finnair's social media strategy, corporate responsibility can be seen to fall under the opinion category as one of the topics in which Finnair wishes to act as a thought leader.

Both of the interviewees agreed that social media, in this case Facebook, is a relevant channel for communicating CR issues. Finnair believes that only specialists currently read their CSR reports and that customers need to be reached through different channels. These views correspond with the literature review of the present study. Digital channels

such as the company website and social media were seen as the main channels for targeting the general public along with point-of-sales promotion.

The interviewees saw that social media can be used in CSR communication by highlighting short notifications and news quickly and that it can be used for spreading awareness about CSR activities also internally. As the risks of communicating CSR in social media, the interviewees mentioned the risk of messages getting lost in the mainstream communication, in other words the risk of messages staying unnoticed in the flood of information. To avoid this, it was suggested that there could be regularity in communicating about CSR e.g. once a week or every two weeks. Another risk that was brought up was the risk of inadequate timing, regarding other major issues occurring simultaneously e.g. a strike or an ash cloud. It was said the company might seem ignorant of these current major issues if it was communicating about irrelevant CR matters at the same time. As the main opportunity of social media both of the interviewees regarded the two-way nature of social media channels, as they enable feedback.

As a conclusion and answer to the first research question it can be stated that the industry partner Finnair sees social media as a communication channel for reaching the general public regarding CSR issues. They see social media as a channel that will gain more and more relevance in the future.

4.3 CSR themes communicated by airlines in Facebook

The second research question of the present thesis was related to the themes airlines communicate in Facebook. Companies chosen for the study were introduced in more detail in Table 2 on page 53. Their communication in Facebook during the set time period 1st of February – 30th of April 2012 was studied and during this time period the airlines posted altogether 40 times about issues that were categorized as CSR.

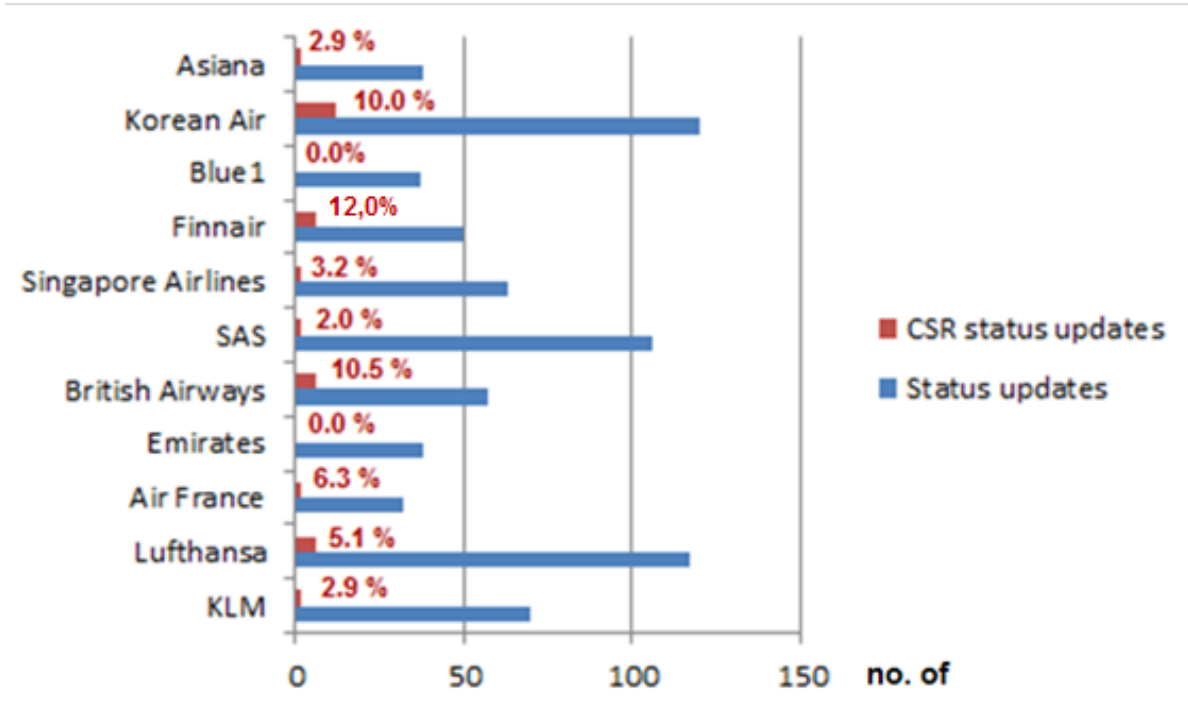
In the following table (Table 4), the posts are displayed according to the month of publication. In addition, the number of CSR posts per company along with the percentage of CSR posts can be observed.

Table 5: All posts and CSR related posts during the observation period

Company	February	March	April	Total	CSR posts	% of CSR posts
KLM	25	27	18	70	2	2.9%
Lufthansa	51	36	30	117	6	5.1%
Air France	7	14	11	32	2	6.3%
Emirates	0	20	18	38	0	0
British Airways	22	24	11	57	6	10.5%
SAS	31	50	25	106	2	2.0%
Singapore Airlines	16	27	20	63	2	3.2%
Finnair	22	14	14	50	6	12,0%
Blue1	14	14	9	37	0	0
Korean Air	30	55	35	120	12	10%
Asiana Airlines	13	16	9	38	2	5.3%

In the following bar chart (Figure 4), the same results are displayed in a more comparable way.

Figure 4: Posts by airlines during the observation period



As mentioned, there were a total of 728 status updates written by the airline Facebook administrators in their own communities during the researched time period. Out of these 728 posts, 40 were classified as concerning CSR matters by the researcher. This represents a share of only 5.5 % of all the posts published by the community admins during the set time period.

Even though the goal of this present study was not actually the comparison of airlines, it can be noted that some airlines stood up from the data as active CSR posters. Finnair, British Airways and Korean Air scored highest in the percentage of CSR posts from all Facebook postings with more than 10 per cent of postings concerning CSR. This scope represents double of the overall 5.5 per cent average. Finnair was not among the most active posters with their 50 postings during the time period, but their percentage of CSR

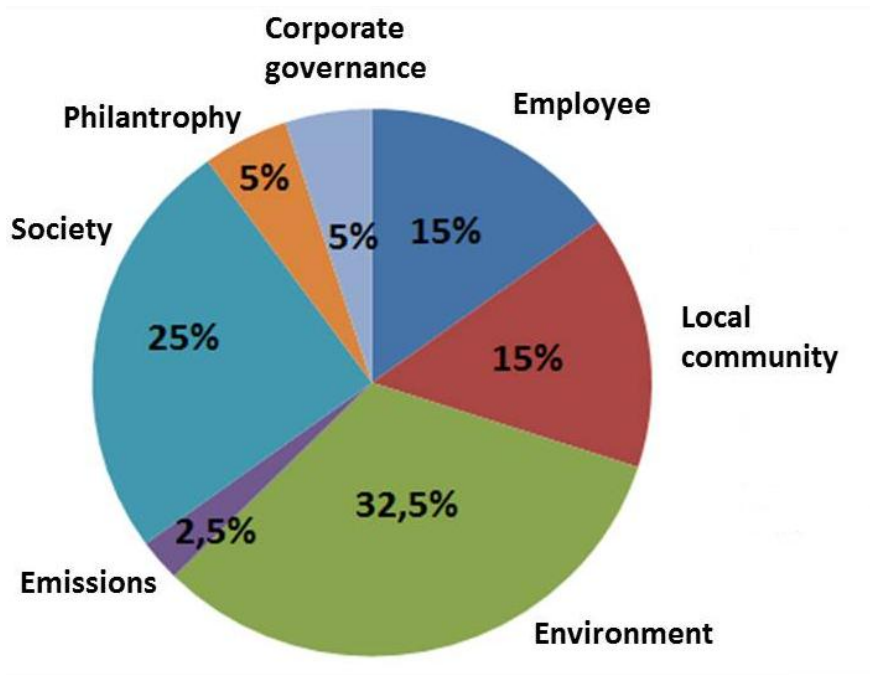
postings is highest with 12 %. Korean Air was generally the most active poster in the present study. During the researched time period, they wrote 120 postings out of which 12 were related to CSR. Lufthansa was second with 117 postings but had notably fewer CSR postings during the time, only 6, representing 5.1% of all postings.

There were two companies who posted nothing that could be categorized as CSR: Emirates and Blue 1. It could be argued that CSR is probably not at the core of Blue1's business, since it is mainly a packaged holiday operator competing with price. In addition, Blue1 does not seem to have other kind of online CSR communication either, thus the result is not surprising. However, according to the Emirates' website, they place great value on environment and corporate citizenship but it did not come across in their Facebook communication. It is noteworthy that Emirates has only recently joined Facebook in, January 2012, and the page is thus the youngest of all communities studied. This might be seen as a reason for few CSR postings, if the company is still learning its way in this new environment.

As discussed earlier in chapter 3, the status updates were coded in Excel according to the categorization system presented in Table 2 and amounts were rendered comparable using the coefficients given to the companies in Table 3.

The results of the categorization of the 40 samples are presented in the following pie chart, (Figure 5):

Figure 5: Division of CSR related posts by themes



As the chart (Figure 5) shows, the largest category that CSR status updates related to other environmental matters than emissions were the most common (32.5%, n= 13). Emissions, on the other hand, were the least discussed topic in company status updates representing only 2.5%. In the light of the results, emissions might have been included in the environment category as they represent such small number. However, as explained in the section about categorization (3.4.1) Finnair’s Vice President of Sustainability argued that this topic is of most interest to their stakeholders. In the view of this statement it can be said that it is surprising how few postings were made about emissions during the researched time period taking into account their relevance to the airline industry.

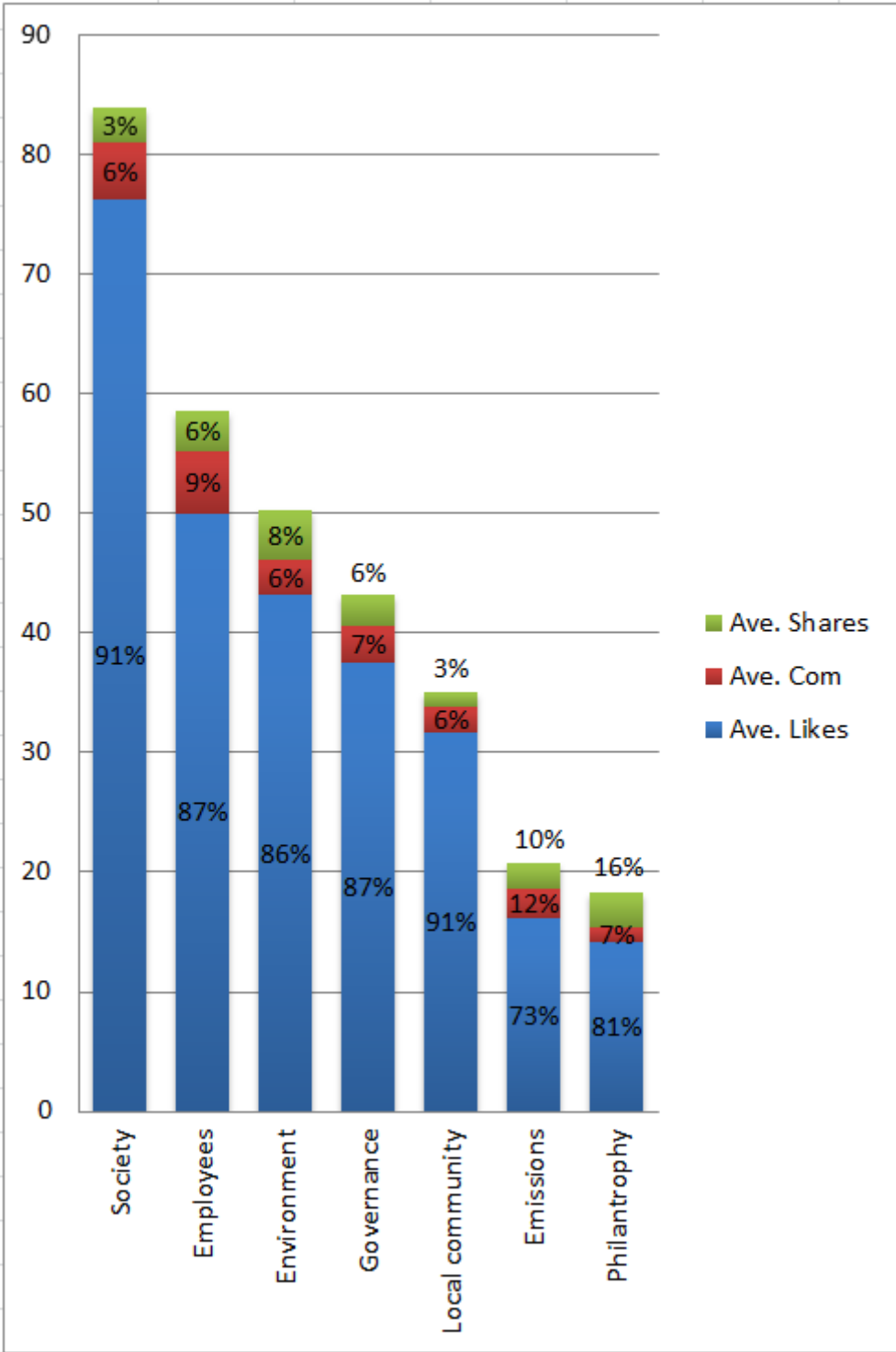
If these results are measured against Elkington's (1997) famous 'triple bottom line' it is obvious that the social responsibility category 'people' is dominating in the postings. It would cover society, philanthropy, employee and local community categories representing a noteworthy share of 60%. Economic responsibility, 'profits', would include corporate governance and equal 5 %. Emissions and environment would represent environmental responsibility 'planet' with 35%.

4.4 Most popular CSR themes among consumers

The previous chapters discussed the company view on communicating CSR in social media and the themes that are currently communicated by the airlines. However, in the light of the purpose of the present study, the third and last research question could be seen as the most important. Since the present study investigates stakeholder dialogue and the possibilities for two-way CSR communication between the general public and the company through social media, the CSR themes which triggered most reactions from consumers are discussed next.

The number of likes, comments and shares per posting were divided by the company coefficient from Table 3 and each posting was categorized. Averages of likes, comments and shares (divided by company coefficients) were then calculated for each theme. This way the themes could be ranked according to their "popularity" i.e. the number of reactions they received from members of the community. The following bar chart represents the overall distribution of consumer reactions (Figure 6).

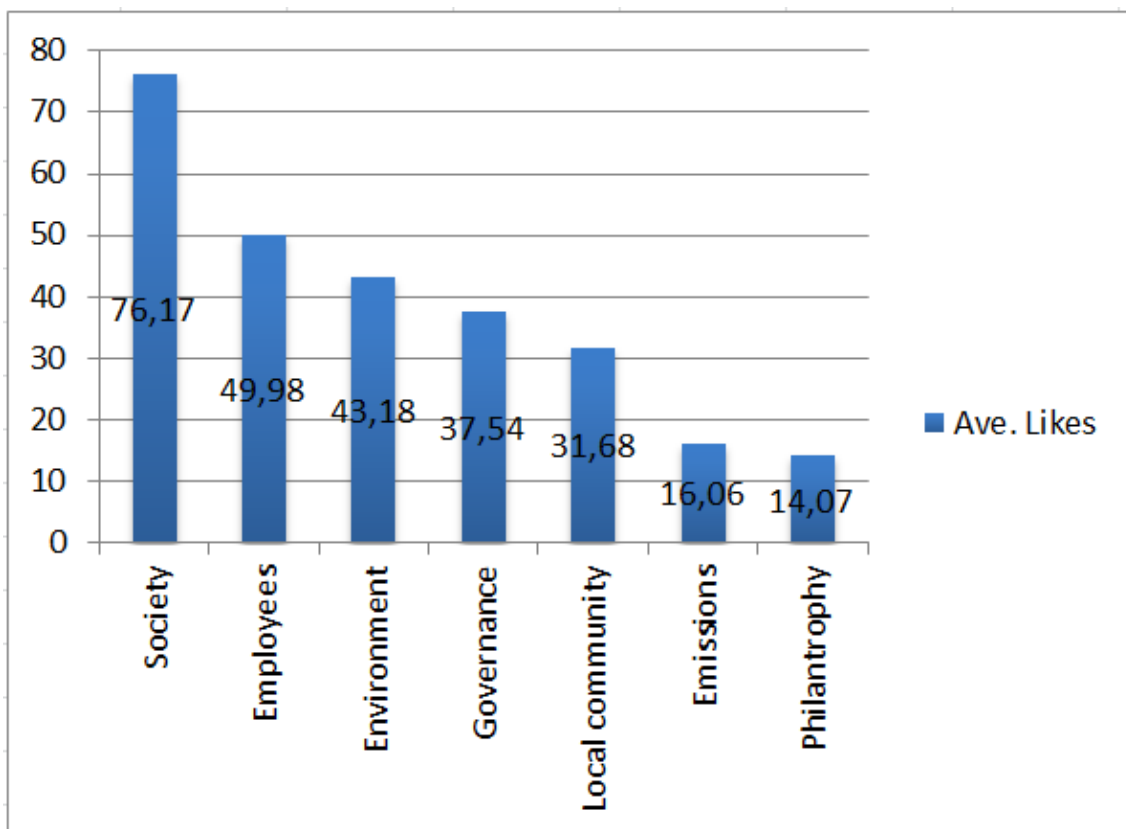
Figure 6: Distribution of consumer reactions by CSR category (divided by company coefficients)



From Figure 6, it can be seen that postings categorized as society were the most popular among Facebook community members. This category included topics such as gender equality, human rights, children's rights and uneven distribution of resources. It is interesting that this category is ranked as the most interesting among consumers since it is not close to the airlines' core business and according to Finnair, is not ranked highest in CSR strategies either. The two following topics, employees and environment were mentioned as the key priorities of CSR by the industry partner Finnair. It is noteworthy that if emissions were included in the environment category, it would become the second category in the ranking passing employees.

Next, a more detailed division of consumer reactions is presented by each variable: likes, comments and shares.

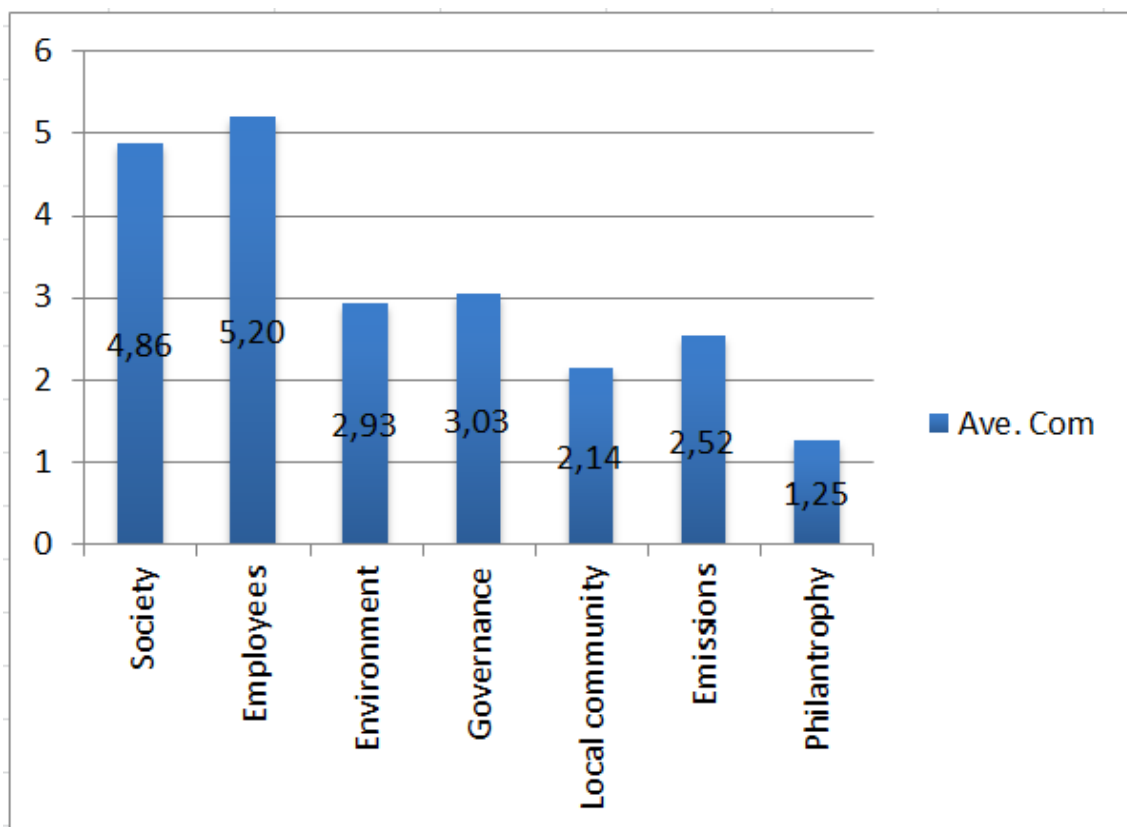
Figure 7: Average of likes per category (divided by company coefficient)



If reactions in Facebook were to be ranked according to the level of commitment and support, or the effort required from the person leaving a response, liking would be the least demanding technique of responding to a message since the user only presses the like button under the status update and thus shows support for the topic. It requires very little effort or commitment from the user and thus the majority of reactions in Facebook are likes. This is why it was assumable that the numbers of likes determines the overall popularity i.e. that average of likes corresponds to the average of overall reactions. As can be seen from the previous charts (Figure 6 & 7), this is the case in the present study. The ranking of CSR themes is identical in the distribution of all reactions and distribution of likes meaning that the society category is the forerunner again.

Next, the average of comments is visualized through a bar chart (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Average of comments per category (divided by company coefficient)

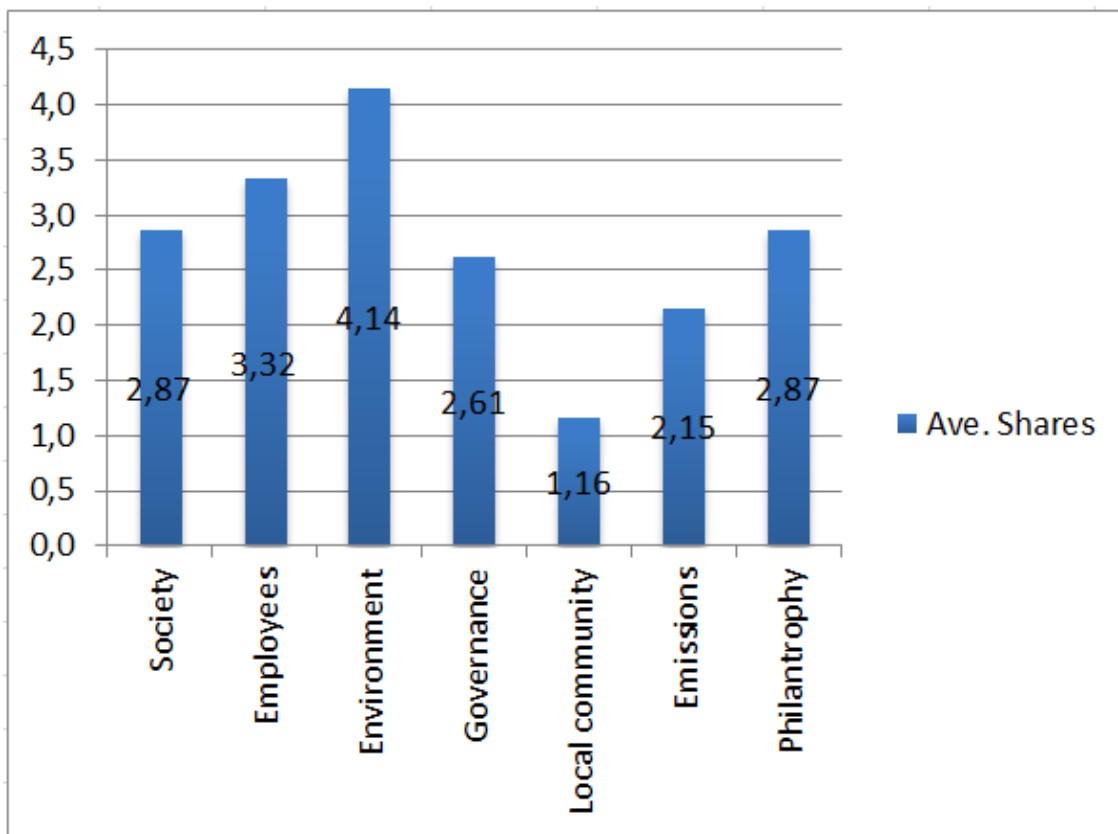


As can be seen from Figure 8, employees is the category that received the most comments in Facebook. Society, which was the forerunner in the “likes” category, is here second and the philanthropy category received the least comments.

I would rank commenting as the second response technique in terms of commitment, support or required effort. When commenting on a status update, the user is actually engaging in a dialogue with the company concerning CSR issues sharing opinions and concerns. Comments can be seen as extremely valuable to the company since comments are actual feedback on their CSR activities from an important stakeholder group, consumers. Also through the commenting function, both negative and positive feedback can be given, contrary to likes and shares.

Ranking shares over comments is the researcher’s personal view and might be disagreed with. However, when a user shares a company update, this shows that the topic has been meaningful enough for the user to want to share it further to his or her own network. Even though in terms of dialogue, commenting is worth more to the company since they receive verbal thoughts from the users, both negative and positive, a share can be seen as an extreme expression of support for the issue that is under discussion. In addition, through the sharing function the company message is disseminated further to a group of people that might not have seen the message otherwise.

Figure 9: Average of shares per category (divided by company coefficient)



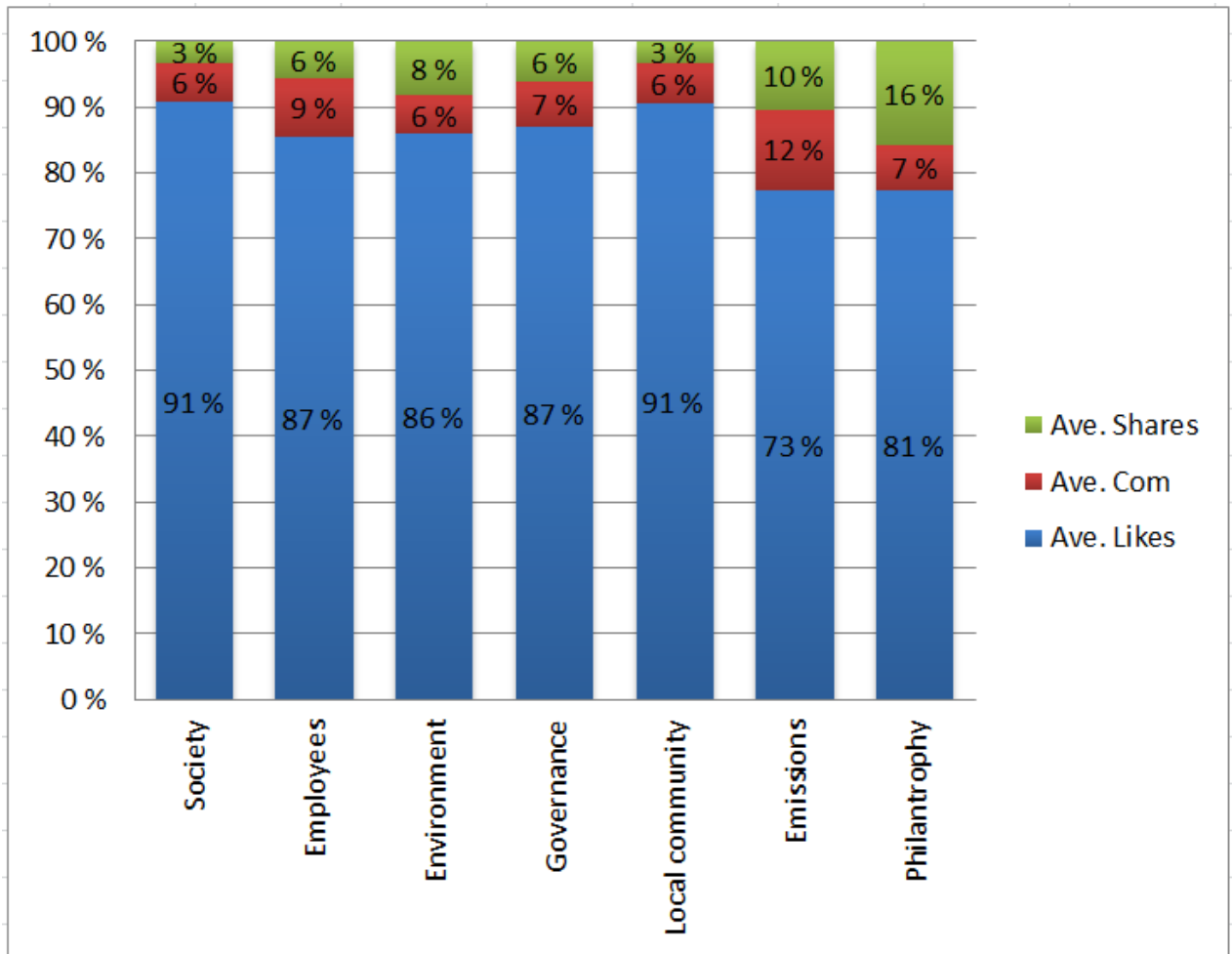
As can be noted from Figure 9, the environment category received the most shares. If emissions were to be added to the category, its lead would become overwhelming. The second category is employees and the forerunner of overall reactions, society, is only third in this ranking. The result is interesting since environment has been stated as the most important CSR issue for the airlines by the Sustainability Vice President of Finnair. Perhaps, if this topic is seen as the most important from the point of view of airlines, these messages are better prepared and more thoughtful than messages concerning other CSR issues. In this case, it could be stated that the company objectives are being met as these message is being shared further by their own stakeholders. Naturally, another

possible reason for the topic's popularity is that the audience considers environmental issues important.

In summary, according to this study, postings related to society, e.g. human rights and gender equality evoked most reactions from Facebook users in terms of likes. Postings related to employees received most comments, in other words employee postings generated most dialogue. Environment was the theme that resulted in most shares among Facebook users.

In the following chart (Figure 10), the percentages of reaction types for each category are represented, meaning that it shows how many percentages of overall reactions are likes, comments and shares representing. The difference between Figure 6 is that in this chart the number of reactions is left out i.e. the chart presents the division of likes, shares and comments per each category when the set value is 100% for each.

Figure 10: Percentual distribution of reactions per category.



From Figure 10 it can be noted that the categories that were ranked low in the overall reactions, emissions and philanthropy, were percentually strong in shares and comments. Philanthropy ranked first in shares suggesting that followers wish to encourage their own network to donate for a cause. However these categories were also among the lowest in number of postings in the data, thus it should be noted the percentual numbers are strongly guided by only a a small number of reactions.

5 DISCUSSION

In this chapter the findings of the study are further discussed and reflected them against the research literature.

From the literature review it was concluded that CSR is currently not efficiently communicated to all stakeholder groups such as consumers. CSR is however becoming increasingly relevant to organizations as consumers are rewarding good companies and punishing bad ones. At the same time, social media is creating opportunities for interpersonal engagement and dialogue that differ significantly from the traditional websites and the channel carries considerable potential as a tool for corporate communication. (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Etter and Plotkowiak (2011) supported this by stating that Facebook creates new ways of interaction with stakeholders regarding CSR matters contrasting to traditional, static corporate websites or reports, which only target a broad public audience through unidirectional communication. Also Jo and Kim (2003) argue that the main purpose for organizations to facilitate dialogue online with stakeholders is the expected feedback or reactions from visitors.

It was concluded that multiple characteristics bring CSR communication and social media closer to each other: trust and transparency, controllability of the communication channel, dialogue and awareness as well as targeting the consumer were all recurring themes appearing in the literature.

Interviews with Finnair representatives were consistent with this point of view, since interviewees believed social media is the future channel for reaching the general public regarding CSR matters. As the most important opportunity of social media the interviewees saw the strengths of a two-way communication channel in terms of feedback. This also supports Morsing and Schultz's (2006) statement of there being an increasing need for the development of advanced two-way communication processes when companies are communicating about their CSR initiatives.

The cornerstones of CSR communication strategy are identification of stakeholders and their expectations, followed by a continuous dialogue with them (Maon, Lindgreen & Swaen, 2009). It could be stated that social media is an answer to both of the cornerstones mentioned by Maon et al. (2009) since it allows the companies to learn about stakeholder expectations and concerns as well as to establish a continuous dialogue. In order to gain insight to the stakeholder perspective on CSR, this study investigated preferable CSR topics to the general public.

In the present study, the assumption was made that the more reactions a Facebook posting evoked, the more interesting it was to the audience. It can however be discussed whether not commenting, liking or sharing a company post means that the consumer did not find it interesting. The post might still have been noticed and found interesting, but the reader might not want to leave a trace. In addition, according to a study conducted by Visibli (2011), Facebook posts receive 95 % of their likes during the first 22 hours. It could then be asked, whether Facebook users who see a post after a day or more after its publication are liking, commenting or sharing it even though they would find it interesting. If a post has already reached thousands of likes, the user might feel his or her contribution insignificant. Another noteworthy point is that status updates appear in the user news feed quickly after posting, and are then overrun by new postings. Old postings are only noted if the user navigates to the company community.

According to Champoux (2012), fans in Facebook are looking for entertainment, interesting discussions and sharing of information. She stated that companies typically post about topics that are not directly linked to their business operations in order to engage fans and increase the visibility of their page. According to the present study, CSR issues related to environmental responsibility and society including topics such as gender equality, human rights, children's rights and uneven distribution of resources were posted the most. The category "society" evoked most reactions from Facebook fans, which corresponds to Champoux's (2012) statement, since these topics are not

close to the airlines' core business. The second and third topic in the ranking, employees and environment, on the other hand were mentioned as the key priorities of CSR by the industry partner Finnair. It can be speculated whether companies are posting about issues related to human rights and uneven distribution of resources since these topics are easy to relate to and there is little controversiality or room for opinions in comparison to e.g. environmental issues.

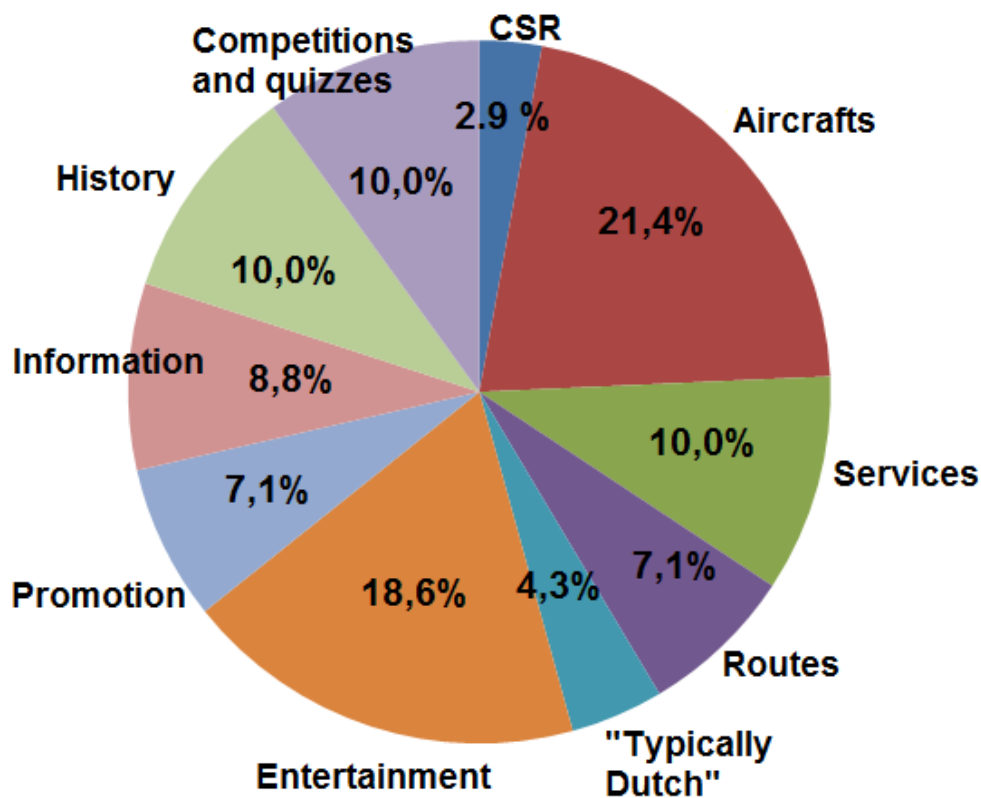
Finnair's Vice President of Sustainability mentioned that emissions are of most interest to different stakeholder groups with regards to airlines' CSR issues. Reflecting this statement it can be said that surprisingly few postings were made about emissions during the researched time period taking into account their relevance to the airline industry. It is however noteworthy that if emissions would not have been a category of their own, but included in the environment category as suggested by the original division by Nielsen and Thomsen (2007), environment would have been the second category in overall reactions passing employees. With regards to comments, adding emissions and environment together would rank the category first, only just passing the current forerunner employees. In shares, environment already held the first position, and adding emissions would only increase its lead.

It could be said that the overall percentage of identified CSR posts, 5.5 %, was very low. This indicates that CSR themes are not primary topics initiated by airlines in Facebook. Due to this notion I was left with a question of what is instead communicated through Facebook, and the data was revisited with regard to two companies. KLM was chosen as the first company, since it is the holder of the biggest Facebook community in the present study and their percentage of CSR posts was among the lowest, with only 2.9%. Finnair was chosen since the company has already played a major role in the present study and their social media strategy was available to the researcher.

With a brief observation of KLM's Facebook community, 9 categories of messages initiated by KLM administrators emerged: aircraft, services (e.g. mobile apps), routes

and destinations, “Typically Dutch” series (a series where KLM presents things that are typically Dutch), entertainment (e.g. jokes and games), promotion (flights and products sold on flights), other information (simple informative postings, like the current no. of followers etc.), competitions and quizzes and history. KLM posted 70 times during the time period observed and 2 posts were identified as CSR.

Figure 11: KLM's Facebook posts between 1st February- 30th April, 2012

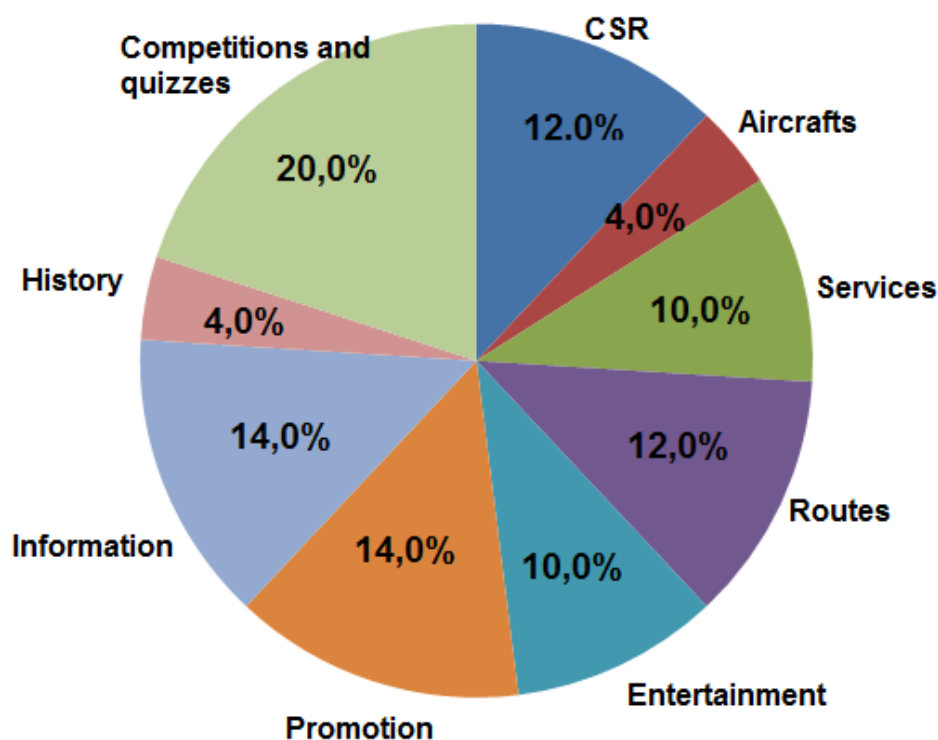


From Figure 11 it can be seen that the company under observation, KLM, posted mainly about its aircrafts and posts categorized as entertainment. KLM added frequently pictures of their aircrafts for airplane fans and updated facts about different planes. In addition they post many messages that can be categorized as entertainment including jokes, videos or games they wish their members to join. There were only a few posts categorized as promotion. This is in line with Champoux et al.'s (2012), statement about

traditional advertising and product-pushing not being in compliance with Facebook’s culture. Services, history and competition categories represented together almost one third of all postings. Posts that were presenting KLM's service portfolio e.g. mobile applications are included in the services category. During the time period observed there were also many competitions through which KLM activates their members. They also regularly provided photos and small stories from the history of the company. It could thus be concluded that KLM’s postings were following Champoux et al.’s (2012) recommendation that fans in Facebook are looking for entertainment, interesting discussions and sharing of information.

The same topics emerged from Finnair's postings thus the same categorization was used to observe Finnair's Facebook communication, with the logical exclusion of the "Typically Dutch" series. In other words the 8 categories identified for Finnair postings were aircrafts, services, routes and destinations, entertainment, promotion, information, competitions and quizzes, and history. During the observation period Finnair posted 50 times, out of which 6 posts were categorized as CSR.

Figure 12: Finnair’s Facebook posts between 1st February- 30th April, 2012



A set of differences between Finnair's and KLM's postings can be noted. According to this categorization Finnair was very active in organizing competitions. They also promoted their products and services almost twice as much as KLM. KLM's biggest category was aircrafts and among Finnair's categories it ranks as the last. Finnair also communicated about their routes and destinations much more than KLM.

From both of these charts (Figure 11 & 12) it can be noted that competitions are presenting a fairly big share of the Facebook communication of these two airlines. It can be interpreted that companies want their community members to participate and interact with the company, since organizing a competition with a prize is a guaranteed way to activate people. Finnair was more often raffling flight tickets among participants whereas KLM's competitions were mainly “Guess which plane type this is” or “How many M&M's are in this jar” type of quizzes. Either way, both companies ensured a great amount of reactions by organizing competitions.

Finnair lists three categories of topics initiated by them in social media in their social media strategy that was presented in section 4.1. Those categories were information, entertainment and opinions. The 6 postings (12%) about CSR would be categorized as opinions and the rest of the categories could then be seen to belong in the information and entertainment groups. I would consider routes, information, history, promotion, aircraft and services belonging in the information category and respectively competition and entertainment in the entertainment category. This division would then lead strongly towards the information category with 65.9% versus 34.1% for entertainment. It can thus be concluded in the light of Finnair's social media strategy that as some of their main goals of using social media are improving awareness, increasing sales and solving problems the use of the information tactic might be recommendable. Finnair also wishes to engage and collaborate with people in order to create customer loyalty through social media and they reward the engaging customers with interesting content and insights. The entertainment category including competitions could be seen as the category

targeting these goals. Even though in the “duel” of the two categories information seems to be winning at the moment, it should be kept in mind that competitions was the largest single group of postings. In addition, organizing competitions is certainly not the only way to engage customers, informative and interesting content should work too.

Capriotti (2011) argues that the use of social media for communicating CSR is not yet common practice among companies. From what was found in this study, this assertion seems not to be completely valid in the case of the airline industry. It could be said that according to the data of the present study, a vast majority of the world’s biggest airlines are already communicating CSR in Facebook. Only two airlines from IATA’s listing were excluded from the study due to the lack of an active Facebook community and only 2 of the 11 airlines observed for the present study were not communicating CSR at all during the time period studied.

To conclude this discussion, the findings of the present study suggest that social media, at least Facebook, seems to suit well for communicating CSR. Social media enables the two-way communication of CSR recommended by many scholars (eg. Insch, 2008; Moreno & Capriotti, 2009). However, currently CSR is not among the primary topics that airlines are communicating to their stakeholders in Facebook. Most common topics (for sample companies KLM & Finnair) include competitions, through which members are activated to participate, information about aircrafts, promotion of products and services and disseminating general information.

On the other hand, CSR themes that Facebook users react most to in this channel include topics related to the society, employees and environment. If an airline wishes to disseminate CSR messages to a larger audience, environmental topics might be recommendable as according to the present study, they are shared the most. On the other hand, if the company’s aim is to create dialogue with its stakeholders, messages related to employees might be appropriate. All in all, Facebook users seem to respond most favorably to messages that are related to the society like gender equality or human

rights. However, it has to be kept in mind that social media channels only reach one part of stakeholders and other methods of CSR communication are still needed. As Capriotti (2011) argues, new technologies should be integrated to the traditional tools of communication.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the research conducted in the study as well as its main findings. In addition, the practical implications and limitations of the study along with potential subjects for further research are discussed.

6.1 Research summary

The aim of this study was to investigate airlines' CSR communication through Facebook. The main motivation for the study was the lack of previous research about CSR communication through social media as well as the increasing importance of social media tools in corporate communication. The study focused on three research questions:

- 1) What is Finnair's perspective to communicating about CSR in Facebook?
- 2) Which CSR themes airlines communicate in Facebook?
- 3) Which CSR related themes are airlines' Facebook fans reacting to?

The literature review of the study aimed to indicate the link between CSR communication, stakeholder involvement and social media. The review consisted of an

overview of three main topics: corporate social responsibility and communicating CSR including an overview of how this practice is carried out currently. In addition some stakeholder theory including stakeholder involvement strategy and stakeholder dialogue were discussed. Lastly, the complex concept of social media was explained. From the content of literature review, a theoretical framework visualizing the link established through literature was created.

The research questions were addressed through a two-fold study. The first question which aimed to observe the company perspective for communicating CSR in social media was answered through conducting semi-structured interviews with industry representatives. The second and third research questions were approached through a quantitative content analysis of airlines' CSR postings in Facebook. A total of 728 Facebook postings were analyzed out of which 40 were classified as CSR. These postings were further categorized according to themes and were manually coded in Excel divided by assigned company coefficients which assured the comparability of the data.

The main findings of the interview part of study indicated that social media is gaining importance in communicating about CSR issues to the general public from the company point of view. In addition, according to the data of the study, 5,5 % of airlines' Facebook postings are currently related to CSR. Most commonly posted topics include environment, employees and society. The results were further assessed by investigating the reactions of the general public to airlines' CSR postings in Facebook. The aim of the research was to find out which CSR topics evoke the most reactions in terms of likes, comments and shares. The findings indicated that postings related to social responsibility ranked highest in likes and the overall reactions which was expected, since likes are most common technique of reaction in Facebook. In addition, CSR postings about employees were receiving the most comments out of all themes. Respectively messages related to environmental issues were subject to most shares by Facebook users.

6.2 Practical implications

The findings of this study imply that companies can communicate corporate social responsibility through social media channels such as Facebook if they wish to engage in a dialogue with consumers, practice recommended by e.g. Morsing and Schultz (2006).

The results of the content analysis provided more specific practical implications. Currently, airlines are communicating CSR in Facebook mainly in updates related to environmental responsibility and society. According to the results, members of airlines' Facebook communities are most likely to react to updates that concern society, e.g. human rights or gender equality. On the other hand updates related to employees are most likely to be commented whereas updates about environmental responsibility are most likely to be shared further to the fans' own networks. In other words, companies willing to receive feedback from their community members in Facebook are encouraged to communicate about responsibility related to employees according to the results. Alternatively, if the company wishes to disseminate a CSR message as widely as possible, according to the study, environmental responsibility is the best topic to choose.

However, it should be kept in mind that in CSR communication the consistency of the message throughout multiple channels of communication is essential (Du et al, 2010). Both channel and message have to be carefully designed for each stakeholder group, in this case consumers. In other words when communicating CSR in social media, the company CSR strategy and goals together with the stakeholder audience need to be taken into account.

In short, the present study supports the notion that social media are communication channels with a lot of potential in corporate communication, also for communicating

CSR related issues even though according to this study it is not yet a commonly spread practice, as only one in 20 Facebook posts by airlines was CSR related.

6.3 Limitations of the study

There are some limitations to the study that have to be taken into consideration. First of all, since the academic cycle for getting articles published is fairly slow and social media is still currently a fresh topic, research is automatically slightly outdated once published. Due to the fast pace of technological development it is challenging to find current topics from the academic discussions. Especially the use of social media for CSR communication has not been researched almost at all, which resulted in scarcity of sources at times.

In addition to the challenges regarding the theoretical part of the study, there were also limitations in choosing the data. First of all the industry partner Finnair had a say in the companies that were chosen for observation. Since they are naturally interested in their competitors, they wished to include airlines that they use for benchmarking. American airlines were excluded and the companies chosen were slightly concentrated in the North European market. This limitation should thus be taken into account when interpreting the results.

Secondly, analyzing Facebook users' interest through reactions is challenging as the assumption in the study was that if the user is interested, he or she leaves a trace (like, comment or share). However, Facebook users are constantly bombarded with messages and companies have to fight to get their attention. It could be argued whether not leaving a trace necessarily means that a user is not interested. Thirdly, it was assumed in the study that the number of followers per community was the potential audience for a posting. However, there is a function in Facebook that allows the user to stop receiving messages in their news feed from a certain user or community. In other words the person still remains as a member of the community, but the messages are blocked from

their view. The number of these users is unavailable to even the company itself, and exact number of people doing this is out of reach. Fourthly, due to the characteristics of Facebook as a constantly changing platform, in order to keep the data comparable the time period for chosen postings was kept short. This led to a small sample size which might affect the results. It should however be noted that as many of the world's largest airlines were included the sample can be seen as extensive for this time period.

It is also noteworthy that all the counting, coding and categorization of CSR postings was done by one researcher. There is thus a possibility for personal bias in the categorization. In addition, the study was conducted with a case approach to a specific industry meaning that the findings are not fully generalizable to other industries.

6.4. Suggestions for further research

As the topic of the present thesis, communicating CSR to consumers in social media is fairly new and has thus not been studied to a great extent, there are many possible avenues for further research. In this section, four possible topics for further research are presented: the nature of commenting in Facebook updates related to CSR, a comparison of traditional CSR communication to CSR communication in social media, a study of CSR communication in social media from a different field, and broader study of corporate communication in Facebook.

First, the present thesis provided a quantitative content analysis of consumer reactions to CSR related status updates in Facebook. Only the number of comments was calculated and the content of comments was not closely inspected. A suggestion for further research would be to analyze the content of the comments by categorizing them by their nature, whether they are positive, negative or neutral in order to provide more detailed information on which CSR topics are evoking the most positive feelings from consumers. The study could alternatively go beyond this, if e.g. a discourse analysis on the comments was to be conducted.

Second, an interesting topic of research would be a comparison between traditional CSR communication published by companies on their websites or in CSR reports to their CSR communication in social media. It would be interesting to see, whether the formality of language, vocabulary used or the actual topics are different in these channels. In the present thesis there was some discussion of Finnair's CSR communication in general as well as its CSR strategy, but a more detailed analysis was not conducted.

Third and fourth, there is an endless amount of possibilities for duplicating the present study. The study could be conducted in the same manner for other fields of business in order to investigate differences between industries' CSR communication in Facebook. On the other hand, studies widening the scope from CSR communication to all corporate communication analyzing and categorizing the content of status updates similarly to the present study could be suggested.

As presented in this study, CSR is gaining more and more attention from companies simultaneously with social media channels' increasing role in corporate communication. Thus the central theme discussed in the present study, i.e. communicating CSR in social media, will probably serve as a good topic for upcoming studies related to CSR communication.

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FACEBOOK COMMUNITIES CONSULTED FOR DATA ANALYSIS

Air France Facebook community <https://www.facebook.com/airfrance>

Asiana Facebook community <https://www.facebook.com/FlyAsiana>

Blue1 Facebook community <https://www.facebook.com/blue1.fi>

British Airways Facebook community <https://www.facebook.com/britishairways>

Emirates Facebook community <https://www.facebook.com/Emirates>

Finnair Facebook community <https://www.facebook.com/Finnair>

KLM Facebook community <https://www.facebook.com/KLM>

Korean Air Facebook community <https://www.facebook.com/KoreanAir>

Lufthansa Facebook community <https://www.facebook.com/lufthansa>

SAS Facebook community <https://www.facebook.com/SAS>

Singapore Airlines Facebook community <https://www.facebook.com/singaporeair>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview structure (in Finnish)

Haastattelurunko

Yhteishaastattelussa 4.4. haastatellaan Finnairin Ympäristöjohtajaa **Kati Ihamäkeä** sekä Social Media Manageria **Anna-Kaisa Varamäkeä**.

Haastattelun tarkoituksena on tutkia Finnairin yritys vastuun ja sosiaalisen median strategioita, sekä selvittää näiden strategioiden yhteensopivuutta

1) Yritys- ja yhteiskuntavastuu (CSR, mitä termiä Finnair käyttää ja kuinka aihealue määritellään?)

Mikä on CSR:n merkitys Finnairille?

Finnairin CSR-strategia?

Strategian tärkeimmät teemat ja painopisteet?

Tavoitteet?

Tärkeimmät sidosryhmät?

- Mitkä aiheet tuntuvat kiinnostavan? Keitä?
- Viestitäänkö myös negatiivisista aiheista?
- Mitataanko tai tutkitaanko kiinnostusta jotenkin?
- Kuluttajan rooli CSR:ssä Finnairin näkökulmasta?

Miten CSR:stä viestitään? Kanavat?

- sosiaalisen median kanavia käytössä?
- pääasialliset kanavat kuluttajille viestimisessä?

Onko Finnair saanut palautetta/ kritiikkiä nykyisistä kanavistaan? Entä sisällöstä? Ympäristöjohtajan näkemys CSR-aiheisesta viestinnästä kuluttajille sosiaalisessa mediassa?

2) Sosiaalinen media

Finnairin sosiaalisen median strategia,

- strategian tavoitteet?

Miksi Some?

- Some-viestinnän tärkeimmät teemat ja painopisteet?
- Kuka päättää mitä kirjoitetaan?
- Miten some istuu yleiseen viestinnän strategiaan?
 - o elääkö ns. omaa elämäänsä?

Kanavat, missä?

- Mistä lähtien, kuinka usein?
- Käytäntö, sisäinen hallinta?
- Kuinka suunnitelmallista?
- Kohderyhmät per kanava
- Miten mainostatte kanavia?

Mitkä ovat somen mahdolliset riskit Finnairin näkökulmasta?

Miksi luulette sidosryhmienne seuraavan teitä sosiaalisessa mediassa?

Social media managerin näkemys CSR:n sopivuudesta sosiaaliseen mediaan?

3) Yleisesti

Haasteet CSR:stä viestimisessä sosiaalisessa mediassa?

Mahdollisuudet?

Kanavan, kohderyhmän ja viestin yhteensopivuus?

Yhteistä keskustelua