

**CONSUMERS' VIEWS ON UTILIZING SOCIAL MEDIA
INFLUENCERS IN ORGANIZATION'S CSR
COMMUNICATION**

**Jyväskylä University
School of Business and Economics**

Master's Thesis

2022

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Subject: Corporate communication
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ABSTRACT

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Title Consumers' views on utilizing social media influencers in organization's CSR communication	
Subject Corporate communication	Type of work Master's thesis
Date 22.12.2022	Number of pages 77
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become a global norm to observe and there is an increasing interest in utilizing social media influencers (SMIs) in organization's CSR communication. Further research on consumer perspective of CSR communication utilizing SMIs is required to understand the challenges and possibilities in influencing perceptions of target audiences. The aim of this study is to understand how consumers perceive CSR communication that utilizes SMIs.</p> <p>The research was done with qualitative methods. In total of eight individual semi-structured interviews were conducted from April to May 2022. The participants were chosen with a snowball sampling method and the requirement for participation was following SMIs. The interviews included a method of participant-included elicitation (PIE), in which example videos of a CSR campaign were shown to awaken consumer's thoughts. The campaign had an environmental topic of reducing the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea. The campaign was a collaboration between a public sector organization Helsingin seudun ympäristöpalvelut and two Finnish SMIs. The data was analysed with thematic analysis and the findings suggest three themes to describe consumer perceptions: SMI's role in consumer's everyday life, evaluation of the CSR initiative and the organization as well as the evaluation of the SMI.</p> <p>Findings of the study align with previous research. Consumers seem to have narrow views on organization as the collaboration's manager and SMI as the CSR communication's distributor. Factors that created perceptions were related to skepticism along with SMI characteristics, such as authenticity, expertise, similarity, and brand-influencer fit. The study adds to previous research that public sector organizations in CSR collaborations are perceived the same as commercial organizations, unless the organization is well-known and appreciated by the consumer. It was also found that SMI's values and published content must align with the consumer's values for the CSR information to be perceived as credible.</p>	
Key words Social media influencer, influencer communication, commercial collaboration, skepticism, corporate social responsibility, CSR communication	
Place of storage Jyväskylä University Library	

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tekijä Ella Korpiala	
Työn nimi Kuluttajien näkemykset sosiaalisen median vaikuttajien hyödyntämisestä yrityksen vastuullisuusviestinnässä	
Oppiaine Viestinnän johtaminen	Työn laji Pro gradu -tutkielma
Päivämäärä 22.12.2022	Sivumäärä 77
<p>Tiivistelmä - Abstract</p> <p>Yhteiskuntavastuusta on tullut maailmanlaajuinen normi ja sosiaalisen median vaikuttajien hyödyntäminen vastuullisuusviestinnässä kiinnostaa yrityksiä yhä enemmän. Kuitenkin kuluttajien näkemyksiä tällaisesta vastuullisuusviestinnästä on tutkittu vähän. Näin ollen tarvitaan lisätutkimusta kuluttajanäkökulmasta, jotta ymmärretään vaikuttajien jakaman vastuullisuusviestinnän haasteet ja mahdollisuudet.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää, miten kuluttajat arvioivat ja hahmottavat yrityksen vastuullisuusviestintää, jonka jakajina ovat sosiaalisen median vaikuttajat. Laadulliseen tutkimukseen osallistui kahdeksan haastateltavaa. Haastattelut olivat puolistrukturoituja yksilöhaastatteluja, jotka toteutettiin keväällä 2022. Osallistumisen edellytyksenä oli, että haastateltava seurasi sosiaalisen median vaikuttajia. Haastatteluissa osallistujien ajatuksia heräteltiin näyttämällä esimerkkivideoita ympäristöystävällisyyteen painottuvasta vastuullisuuskampanjasta. Kampanjan toteuttajana oli julkisen sektorin organisaatio Helsingin seudun ympäristöpalvelut sekä kaksi suomalaista vaikuttajaa. Aineisto analysoitiin temaattisen analyysin avulla. Kuluttajien käsityksiä kuvaavat kolme teemaa: vaikuttajan rooli kuluttajan jokapäiväisessä elämässä, yrityksen ja informaation arviointi sekä vaikuttajan arviointi.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset tukevat aiempaa tutkimusta määrittelemällä organisaation kaupallisen yhteistyön hallinnoijaksi ja vaikuttajat viestinnän levittäjiksi. Kuluttajat arvioivat yritystä ja vaikuttajaa havainnoimalla ominaisuuksia, kuten aitoutta, asiantuntemusta ja samankaltaisuuden tunnetta. Kuluttajien näkemyksissä havaittiin skeptisyyttä vaikuttajia ja vastuullisuusviestintää kohtaan sekä yrityksen ja vaikuttajan välisen sopivuuden arviointia. Tulokset täydentävät aiempaa tutkimusta lisäämällä, että julkisen sektorin organisaatiot koetaan kaupallisissa yhteistöissä samanlaisina kuin muut kaupalliset organisaatiot. Julkisen sektorin organisaatio voidaan kokea kuitenkin positiivisemmin, jos kuluttaja tuntee ja arvostaa kyseistä organisaatiota.</p>	
Asiasanat Sosiaalisen median vaikuttaja, vaikuttajaviestintä, kaupallinen yhteistyö, vastuullisuusviestintä, yhteiskuntavastuu	
Säilytyspaikka Jyväskylän yliopiston kirjasto	

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of 2022, a Finnish non-governmental organization Eetti ry published a guide to more responsible commercial collaboration for social media influencers (Opas vastuullisempaan kaupalliseen yhteistyöhön, 2022). The association promotes fair world trade and responsible consumption (Mikä Eetti? 2020). The handbook presents guidance and tools for social media influencers (later SMI) on how to evaluate the corporate social responsibility (later CSR) of the organization. The publication of the guide reflects that SMIs have an increasing role in the organization's CSR communication. Today, CSR is seen as a valid component in commercial collaborations and SMIs can open opportunities to organizations for communicating about CSR on social media (Opas vastuullisempaan kaupalliseen yhteistyöhön, 2022.)

Furthermore, in January 2022, a Finnish influencer marketing organization PING Helsinki held a webinar about the increasing alliance between CSR communication and SMIs (PING Helsinki, 2022). In the webinar it was discussed how CSR performs on social media. More specifically, what is the role of SMIs and how can SMI communication be used to deliver consumers the message of organizations or brand's CSR communication. In the event it was also discussed that consumers have trust in main medias and organizations in Finland, however that is not the case in other parts of the world and the situation in Finland is changing too. The conclusion was that there is a need to have the communication available in medias where the organization's target groups are. The dynamic environment of social media allows organizations to have discussions with their customers and opens opportunities for organizations to create relationships with consumers, enhancing brand image and loyalty in the process. The requirement for transparent and open CSR communication as well as trust in the organization comes from the consumers. SMIs are stakeholders, who can open the discussion and interaction between the consumers and the organizations. (PING Helsinki, 2022.)

The publication of the guide and webinar are few practical examples of the increasing interest in utilizing SMIs in organization's strategic CSR communication. In general, organizations are increasingly using SMIs in their communication activities. For example, an empirical study by Zerfass et al. (2016) suggests that in Europe, organizations understand the importance of SMIs to their communication activities. The increasing need for more distinctive ways to do CSR communication through social media also demonstrates a need for guidance on how to execute the CSR communication with SMIs. This study explores consumers' views, opinions, and thoughts on utilizing SMIs in organization's CSR communication. More specifically, how the consumers perceive and evaluate the organizational CSR communication made with an SMI.

The thesis connects and defines concepts such as CSR, CSR communication, SMIs and SMI communication from the perspective of strategic communication. Currently, the concept of CSR has become a global norm to observe (Cheng et al., 2021a) and organizations are increasingly engaging with corporate social activities (Go & Bortree, 2017). The area of CSR communication has been identified as an important area of study and practice within the field of public relations (Go & Bortree, 2017) and strategic corporate communication (Cheng et al., 2021b). The concept of CSR has many definitions, but the current thesis defines CSR as the voluntary actions that take initiative towards the well-being of the society by using corporate resources (adapted from Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Kotler et al., 2012; Rim & Song, 2016). CSR is defined to be consistent with organizations' mission and goals (Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Cornelissen, 2020, p. 259) and the initiatives can include taking a stand on dimensions of social, environmental, or profitable issues in organization's area of business (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 282, Du et al., 2010; Coombs & Holladay, 2012).

Communicating CSR is a delicate matter which includes challenges such as choosing the right initiatives (Go & Bortree, 2017) and channels as well as overcoming stakeholder skepticism and generating favourable CSR attributions (Du et al., 2010). Regarding environmental dimension, greenwashing is also an addressed subject in the challenges of organization's CSR communication (Rim & Song, 2016). The thesis explores the challenges found in CSR communication to find out if they can be found while utilizing SMIs to organization's CSR communication and in what form.

CSR communication is an asset to organization's strategic communication and in addition SMI communication, has become another major topic in organizations' strategic communication (Freberg et al. 2011; Enke & Borchers, 2019). Borchers and Enke (2021) suggest that with the growing popularity of social media, SMIs are a relevant stakeholder group for organizations. Influencer marketing is an important phenomenon on social media (Ge & Gretzel, 2018) and more and more organizations are also utilizing SMIs as central actors for communicating organization's CSR actions (Cheng et al., 2021a).

Social media is full of posts from influencers who aim at sharing informative and entertaining content online. Social media and present-day social networking have affected on how people receive information about organizations (Lou & Yuan, 2019). However, researchers continue to debate whether publics receive and interpret CSR communication as anticipated by the organization. The organizations may communicate positive actions of CSR, but the public may not always react to this as the way the organization has hoped for (Go & Bortree, 2017.)

SMIs have been defined as "third-party actors that have established a significant number of relevant relationships with a specific quality to and influence on organizational stakeholders through content production, content distribution, interaction, and personal appearance on the social web" (Enke and

Borchers, 2019, p. 267). Therefore, SMIs can have multiple different beneficial roles and could be utilized for organization's CSR communication purposes as well. However, there still seems to be very little research about how consumers perceive CSR communication that utilizes SMIs, which presents the existing research problem for this thesis: further research on consumer perspective on perceived CSR communication utilizing SMIs is required. Since there is still little research on the subject the thesis is intended to fill this research gap.

1.1 Methodology and research question

This research is a qualitative study which seeks to answer the research problem on how consumers perceive the utilization of SMIs in organization's CSR communication. More specifically, how consumers experience the CSR communication of an organization made by an SMI.

The research question can be specified as:

1. How is organization's CSR communication perceived by consumers when utilizing SMIs?

The study uses qualitative methods to gather data and interpret it. The qualitative data collection method was conducting individual semi-structured interviews and the analysis process followed principles of thematic analysis presented by Braun and Clarke (2006). There was a total of eight participants in the study. The interview setting also utilized an interview-based research method called participant-included elicitation, in which there is collaboration between the researcher and the participant for evoking ideas and thoughts on studied subject (Hänninen, 2020, pp. 55-56). The results of the study indicate conclusions based on which the study makes propositions that organizations could consider when utilizing SMIs in their CSR communication.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured as follows: chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework, defining CSR and SMI communication and their relevance to organizations. The framework investigates and explains the previous research and literature found on the studied subject. Chapter 3 explains the method of qualitative research and presents details on the implementation of the study, data collection and analysis method of the process. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study and Chapter 5 discusses on the conclusions and implications. Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by elaborating on the evaluation of

the study with concepts of validity, reliability, research ethics, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The current thesis studies the use of SMIs in organization's CSR communication. Therefore, concepts of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and social media influencer (SMI) need to be defined. The concepts are both current topics on corporate communication and increasingly organizations are using SMIs in their everyday communication, including communication of CSR initiatives. First, this chapter defines CSR and presents the challenges and opportunities of CSR communication. Second, the definitions of SMI and their characteristics are explained, and the concept defined. Third, the chapter presents the connections found between CSR communication and SMIs.

2.1 Corporate social responsibility

In the society, organizations are often understood to be parts of a larger social systems, where different stakeholder groups evaluate and assess organizational goals and activities to support the system's existence (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 257). The evaluation of these goals and activities has led organizations to contribute to *corporate social responsibility (CSR)* to prove and deliver societal value beyond shareholder and market value (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 259). According to Cornelissen (2020, p. 259) many organizations have also realized that "doing business in a responsible and just manner offers strategic and reputational advantages." Therefore, CSR has become part of organizations' everyday business and CSR actions can be valuable assets for organizations to improve their placement in their business environment.

CSR is a frequently used term by organizations and researchers to describe organizations' actions concerning social responsibilities. Coombs and Holladay (2012) defined CSR as "the voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfills its perceived obligations to stakeholders, including employees, communities, the environment and society as a whole" (pp. 7-8). Similarly, other scholars have defined CSR as actions, which are demanded or expected of the organizations by the society, but which do not have strictly financial implications (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 282; Go & Bortree, 2017; Falck & Heblich, 2007). More specifically, corporate social responsibility means voluntary commitment to the society's well-being by improving practices of business and implementing these as well as making contributions to society by using corporate resources (Kotler et al., 2012, p. 5; Rim & Song, 2016). Du and Vieira (2012) found that CSR actions are seen as credible if they improve the welfare of the society and organization's stakeholders. In conclusion, CSR includes voluntary actions that take initiative towards the well-being of the society while being consistent with organizations' mission and

goals. Table 1 below assembles the different definitions found on CSR from previous literature.

Organizations' CSR information derives from their actions toward ecological and social issues (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 282). For instance, the information could involve communication about the organization's environmental initiatives, sponsorship of social causes and egalitarian employment policies (Du et al, 2010). The literature on CSR distributes CSR activities to three different dimensions: people, the environment, and profit (Coombs & Holladay, 2012, p. 8; Elkington, 1997 as cited in Cornelissen, 2020, p. 259). First, the dimension of people refers to the social issues related to the treatment of people such as employee support, compensation, gender, and ethnic diversity of workplaces. Second, the environmental dimension is related to the organizations' responsibility of integrating environmental care into its business operations and production processes. Finally, the third dimension known as profit is the base for organization to operate and generate financial returns to it by manufacturing and selling products. (Elkington, 1997 as cited in Cornelissen, 2020, pp. 259-260.) Generally, most organizations highlight and limit themselves to be involved in few CSR activities in a specific dimension (Elving, 2013). The dimensions reflect issues that CSR initiatives take a stand on, however for organizations to gain the trust of stakeholders in their CSR actions, organizations also need to communicate about their CSR initiatives.

TABLE 1 Definitions of CSR in different references

Reference	Citation	Definition	Area of research
Falck & Hebllich, 2007	"CSR is regarded as voluntary corporate commitment to exceed the explicit and implicit obligations imposed on a company by society's expectations of conventional corporate behavior" (p. 247).	Society defines expectations and CSR is defined as the voluntary actions to reach and exceed them	Management
Du et al., 2010	Reveals the organizations' identity in the form of supporting environmental initiatives, egalitarian employment policies and sponsorship to social causes	Rooted in organization's identity, more specifically CSR actions regard to environmental and social issues	Management

Coombs & Holladay, 2012	“The voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfills its perceived obligations to stakeholders, including employees, communities, the environment and society as a whole” (pp. 7-8).	Voluntary actions to reach expectations of stakeholders while pursuing organization’s mission	Communication
Kotler et al., 2012	Voluntary commitment to community well-being by making contributions and using corporate resources to improve practices	Voluntary actions and commitment to the society by using corporate resources	Marketing
Du & Vieira, 2012	Organizations’ CSR actions are seen as credible only if they improve the welfare of stakeholders and the society. CSR actions can happen in multiple domains; social issues targeting customers, environment, community, or employees.	CSR actions aim to improve the welfare of stakeholders regarding environmental and social issues.	Communication
Rim & Song, 2016	Organizations’ voluntary investment of resources to create beneficial exchanges between the organization and the community	Voluntary investment to create beneficial exchanges.	Communication
Go & Bortree, 2017	Organizations are obligated to make socially beneficial products	CSR actions and policies can be seen on different areas of the organization	Marketing

Elving 1997 as cited by Cornelissen, 2020	Triple bottom line: 1) People, social commitment 2) Planet, commitment to the environment 3) Profit, commitment to manufacturing and selling products to generate financial returns for the organization and shareholders	Organizations' actions connected to environmental and social issues that benefit the cause of society	Communication
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2.1.1 CSR communication

CSR communication is an important area of corporate communication and creates a competitive advantage for organization's CSR, when trying to differentiate from other organizations (Cheng et al., 2021b). Du et al. (2010) suggest that CSR information distinguishes the organization from others by revealing features of corporate identity, which are fundamental and enduring. To create and present organization's identity and intentions correctly in consumers' perceptions, organizations need to communicate about their CSR initiatives and information externally. CSR communication creates awareness of organization's CSR, enhances favorable stakeholder attitudes (Du et al., 2010), and has been found to affect behaviors positively by eventually leading to brand preference, loyalty, and price premium (Cheng et al., 2021b). Therefore, CSR communication can be seen as an important and beneficial focus area of strategic corporate communication.

In practice, organizations can present their CSR information in different digital and non-digital ways. Three of the most used channels for CSR communication are social reports, websites, and advertising practices (Birth et al., 2008). Traditionally, organization's CSR policies have been communicated through websites, annual corporate reports, and official documents (Du et al., 2010) such as codes of conduct (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 263). Some codes and guidelines are made by the organizations and others developed by business associations, multi-stakeholder coalitions or industry groups (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 263). CSR codes include recommendations of voluntary principles or standards of ethical business conducts (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 263) and CSR communication is principally concerned with what has been decided or done

for the benefit of the society. Organizations can emphasize different elements of CSR in their CSR communication, for instance their commitment or impact to a cause, why they want to engage in a particular initiative or how the cause is suitable with the organization's business (Du et al., 2010).

In addition to traditional communication channels, some organizations have used marketing channels such as TV commercials, product packaging, magazine, and billboard advertisements to communicate the CSR initiatives (Du et al., 2010). Recently, social media has also been the communication channel for organizations to communicate socially responsible behaviors externally (Rim & Song, 2013) and in addition to organic posts, some organizations have conducted CSR campaigns (Kent & Taylor, 2016; Lyes et al., 2012). Jiang and Park (2021) found that brands have even been encouraged to use social media as the communication channel for CSR communication. Digital channels such as social media help to distribute the information further, creating greater awareness and differentiating the organization's CSR communication from others.

Scholars have found that using social media as a communication channel for CSR can have benefits for the organization. Social media allows organizations to build and engage in relationships with the stakeholders (Kent & Taylor, 2016). According to Rim and Song (2016) social media also encourages people to share and discuss the issues they care about and to participate in the value creation through a two-way communication. Similarly, Lyes et al. (2012) add that while maintaining social ties and interactivity, social media appeals to consumers with entertainment value. Benefits of using social media are also targeting and connecting with specific consumer groups as well as providing relevant information (Lyes et al., 2012). Therefore, social media can act as a place of interactivity, creation, and entertainment, which allows organizations to engage with their stakeholders and develop a sense of relationships. This can make the CSR messages to be noted and perceived more positively or negatively, regarding on the relationship created between the organization and consumers.

Executing CSR communication on social media can have benefits but since it is usually an open platform it can also have negative side effects for the organization. For example, Gilpin et al. (2010) suggest that in social media there is often distrust between organizations and consumers in the form of misrepresentation and ease of performance. Organization's need to have a clear identity in social media for them to be perceived as authentic (Gilpin et al., 2010). The risk of high criticism on social media's open dialogue is valid and the mistrust could be decreased by using a third-party actor, such as an SMI, as the distributor of CSR communication.

One of the areas of CSR communication is creating CSR communication engagement between the consumers and organizations. Cheng et al. (2021b) define CSR communication engagement as consumers' participation in brand's CSR performance. CSR engagement has been described as the active and deep processing of CSR information, which usually results in high CSR awareness,

mindful reasoning, and good understanding of the organization's CSR initiatives (Cheng et al., 2021b). Since CSR engagement involves the deep and active processing of the organization's CSR communication, the investment on CSR engagement is a long-term commitment, and it has been suggested that long-term strategic approach to CSR provides more authenticity to CSR communication (Du & Vieira, 2012). Gilpin et al. (2010) also suggest that engagement in general can be related to creating authenticity.

CSR communication has other benefits for the organization as well. In the bigger picture, CSR communication is seen as a way of boosting (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 259) or enhancing the organization's reputation (Coombs & Holladay, 2012, p. 13; Falck & Hebllich, 2007; Yang et al., 2021) and corporate image (Du et al., 2010) as well as eventually attaining financial gain for the organization (Yang et al., 2021). Jiang and Park (2021) found that by incorporating CSR appeals to the organization's products and services, the CSR communication generated tangible and intangible assets to the organization, for example, in the form of increased credibility in brand messages or purchase intentions. In addition, if the organization fails to deliver actions made in the CSR promises, it could damage the organization's reputation (Lyes et al., 2012). The challenges of delivering optimal CSR communication are explained further in the next subchapter.

2.1.2 Challenges in CSR communication

There are challenges to communicating CSR initiatives successfully. For instance, strategic CSR communication starts with choosing the right initiatives, the right communication channels and then creating awareness. Phenomena of skepticism and greenwashing create risks in organization's CSR communication as well as complicates the interpretation of the information for consumers.

According to previous research, the success of CSR communication initiatives is supported by the fact that they serve the interests of target groups. By choosing relevant CSR activities to highlight, organizations can increase credibility of their CSR communication (Go & Bortree, 2017.). The challenge in choosing initiatives is focusing on the ones that correlate with organization's mission and core values. Du and Vieira (2012) also found that authentic CSR communication can be created through embedding social values to organization's mission and slogans and taking proactive role to affect changes. Therefore, organizations should pay attention to initiatives that highlight and represent social responsibilities in their area of business. For example, in the fashion industry, organizations tend to focus their CSR actions to society's social, environmental, and ethical expectations and demands for the origin of materials and manufacturing process of garments (Johnstone & Lindh, 2022). The well-being of workers in fast fashion factories or the ecological manufacturing of the fast fashion garments are topics discussed by consumers as well (McNeill & Moore, 2015).

CSR communication challenges include what and where to communicate and understanding the organization- and stakeholder-specific factors which impact the effectiveness of CSR communication (Du et al., 2010). In other words, choosing the right channels to execute the communication is important, and the effectiveness of CSR communication's content is also dependent on the characteristics of the stakeholders. Organizations can control the content of CSR communication by using their own communication channels (Du et al., 2010) such as social media accounts and websites. To some extent organizations can also have some control over third-party actors, such as SMIs and employees (Du et al., 2010). Understanding the communication context as well as defining clear communication objectives and channels for CSR communication, creates more transparency and less problems for the organization (Birth et al., 2008). Authenticity is created by building trust, which requires transparency, open and verifiable communication (Gilpin et al., 2010). Choosing appropriate communication channels for CSR can also increase awareness to organization's CSR initiatives (Lyes et al., 2012).

One of the challenges in CSR communication is stakeholders' *low awareness* of the organizations' CSR activities, which highlights the need to have more effective CSR communication for stakeholders (Du et al., 2010). To create awareness of the organization's CSR contributions, the CSR communication to consumers is essential (Lyes et al., 2012). In other words, consumers may not be aware of the CSR actions and therefore such actions do not create the desired image or behavior towards the organization. For instance, Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2009) found that consumer attitudes and purchase intentions are influenced by CSR initiatives, therefore if consumers are aware of the initiatives, their behavior towards the organizations and its CSR actions might be more positive.

Minimizing *stakeholder skepticism* towards organization's CSR communication and conveying corporate motives into organization's CSR activities are key challenges in CSR communication (Du et al., 2010). According to Du et al. (2010) CSR communication can have the backlash effect if the stakeholders become suspicious. Elving (2013) suggested that consumers are skeptical about CSR communication, when they think that the organization is only acting in its self-interest rather than supporting the welfare of the society. Therefore, skepticism towards CSR communication derives from consumers' mistrust against organization's allegations. Yang et al. (2021) also found that high levels of criticism and negative sentiment are attributes to create CSR skepticism. Simply put, the challenge with consumers' CSR skepticism is that the skepticism has a negative impact on the evaluation of CSR initiatives and reduces consumer's participation in the initiative (Cheng et al., 2021). If consumer's participation is challenged then building the CSR engagement, trust and eventually positive behavior towards the organization is at risk.

Regarding CSR communication, organizations can get accused of using CSR initiatives as marketing gimmicks or greenwashing (Rim & Song, 2016). Greenwashing is a form of skepticism, where organizations frame themselves

by promoting environmentally friendly policies although, they are not implementing the promises to their actions (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 264). Greenwashing takes the strategy of promotional CSR communication which only uses rhetorical and symbolic CSR campaigns to enhance organization's brand or reputation (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 260). In other words, something is labeled as greenwashing if the organization highlights the product or service to be environmentally friendly, even though there is no proof of the environmental sustainability or the CSR claims are made only to benefit organization's status. The skepticism derives from the consumers' mistrust and feeling of being tricked. However, Cornelissen (2020, p. 264) also presents that the term greenwashing is somewhat misleading as the phenomenon doesn't not only imply to environmental aspects of CSR but also to the social responsibilities.

Stakeholder skepticism is one of the bigger challenges among CSR communication and minimizing it is essential for organizations to receive a desired outcome. Ways for encountering skepticism and negative perceptions are transparency, honesty and taking the responsibility for the organization's negative actions (Du & Vieira, 2012; Lyes et al., 2012). Skeptical perceptions can also be tackled by posting photos of employees volunteering in the community and presenting evidence for the organizations acting on their CSR initiatives (Lyes et al., 2012). However, the rise of CSR skepticism towards organizations supports the need for new alternative ways of executing CSR communication. Yang et al. (2021) as well as other scholars have identified influencer marketing as a way of delivering credibility and sincerity for organization's CSR allegations. CSR communication endorsements made by SMIs reduce consumers' CSR skepticism through perceptions of authenticity and credibility (Cheng et al., 2021b).

2.1.3 CSR communication strategies and message appeals

To execute strategically valuable and positively effective CSR communication, the process needs plans that include strategies and ways of delivering the CSR information to the consumers. Organization's CSR communication strategy is implemented in both internal and external communication. The research on CSR communication has identified different communication approaches to CSR (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 260) and message appeals of communicating CSR actions (for example Overton et al., 2021; Kapoor et al., 2021). Determining organization's approach to CSR also helps to understand how CSR is planned and implemented in the organization. Investigating the message appeal of CSR communication shows which CSR messages attract the target audience and which have the best effectiveness towards creating positive attitude and behavior towards the organization (Kapoor et al., 2021). Therefore, studying consumers' views and opinions to organizations' CSR communication with SMIS is essential to find out if the communication actions can be beneficial for the organization.

Today, there are many ways to do CSR communication strategically. Cornelissen (2020, p. 260) presented that the transformational approach to CSR communication is the most ideal nowadays. In the transformational approach CSR actions are considered throughout the whole organization and managed by the business models. In addition to current generations, transformational approach considers future generations as primary stakeholders as well (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 260.). Similarly, Falck and Heblich (2007) argued that effective CSR actions are an investment to the organization's future and should be considered as a long-term proposition. One of the weaknesses in CSR communication is that it is often reactive rather than proactive (Du & Viriera, 2012). This suggests that for the CSR communication to be effective and for organizations to develop better communication, we need to be more proactive with CSR communication.

Scholars have been interested on how stakeholders react to CSR messages (Cheng et al., 2021a; Kapoor et al., 2021). Kapoor et al. (2021, p. 953) suggest that among sustainability messages "the most studied message appeals are rational appeal and emotional appeal." Among sustainability messages, emotional appeals are perceived as more persuasive, but guilt appeal are seen as more effective (Kapoor et al., 2021). Emotional appeal refers to hedonic experiences of guilt, fear, adventure, romance, and sex (Kapoor et al., 2021) therefore it describes the consumers' experiences of emotions while receiving information. The rational appeal, on the other hand focuses on benefits such as convenience, ease of use, reliability, comfort, and quality (Turley and Kelley, 1997), which demonstrates the sense of informational communication to fulfill needs of trust in facts. Similarly, to CSR communication studies, the research on SMIs' persuasive messages have found that SMIs content has either informational or entertainment value (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Lou and Yuan (2019) found that informative posts and components of influencer credibility can positively effect followers' trust towards influencer-generated posts and eventually support purchase intentions.

2.2 Social media influencers

Social media offers new platforms for communication, which allows new ways for organizations to communicate with consumers and deliver messages (Lyes et al., 2012). In addition to consumers and organizations, social media has third-party actors, *the social media influencers (SMIs)*. In this chapter, the phenomena of perceiving SMI communication is presented first by defining the concept of SMI and their relevant characteristics and then presenting their relevance to organizations.

In the research literature, influencers have been identified as everyday social media users, endorsers, marketers, and content creators. Broadly, an influencer is someone, who is capable of influencing the decision-making

process of other social media users or followers (Enke & Borchers, 2019). In other words, influencers share their opinions and thoughts on different digital and non-digital platforms, and usually influence the choices of social media users. Social media users act as listeners, followers, or audience members. Social media users in the current study are defined as consumers and influencers as social media influencers.

The digital age has moved influencers from physical public places to the online environment of social media. With the increasing popularity of social media, modern-day influencers have been identified as, for example, bloggers, Instagrammers and Youtubers (Archer & Harrigan, 2016). Abidin (2015) describes influencers on social media as ordinary Internet users, who accumulate a relatively large following with textual and visual narration of their personal lifestyles and lives. SMIs present their narrations on blogs and social media, engage with their following in digital and physical spaces as well as monetize their following by integrating advertorials into their posts (Abidin, 2015). SMIs post informative content about products, services and information enhanced with their personal aesthetic and create a sense of enjoyable experience for their followers (Lou & Yuan, 2019). SMIs can make a living on social media by sharing sponsored endorsements or collaborations, these collaborations are made in cooperation with an organization (Colliander & Erlandsson, 2015).

SMIs are differentiated from other type of influencers by their social platform on social media and the ability to create relationships with their followers. As opposed to Abidin's (2015) description on SMIs as ordinary Internet users, Borchers and Enke (2021) highlight that SMIs are differentiated from ordinary social media users when they establish relationships with their audiences. In practice, the interaction and engagement between audience members and influencers happens by commenting, liking, and sharing influencer's posts (Reinikainen et al., 2020). Building relationships with followers has been found to be an effective strategic communication approach in influencer communication (Borchers & Enke, 2021). Many social media users or followers return to influencer's channel more or less regularly (Enke & Borchers, 2019), which adds to the basis of creating a parasocial relationship. Parasocial relationship is coined in the experience of parasocial interaction, parasocial interaction was introduced as the "simulacrum of conversational give and take" (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p. 215, as cited in Reinikainen et al., 2020). Parasocial interaction is an illusionary experience between the viewer and media performer, where the viewer feels like they are being in an interaction with the performer even though the situation is not reciprocal (Horton & Wohl, 1956, as cited in Reinikainen et al., 2020). Yang et al. (2021) have found that parasocial relationship contributes also to creating perceived credibility and authenticity in SMI's message. Similarly, Reinikainen et al. (2020) found that the parasocial relationship between a follower and an influencer builds the perceived credibility of the influencer. In addition, Yang et al. (2021) also found that followers are more willing to take initiative in CSR

communication and engagement, distributed by an SMI, if consumer and influencer have an existing strong parasocial relationship. Parasocial relationship with an influencer can turn into trust in the brand and reduce the uncertainty towards the brand (Reininkainen et al., 2020).

Social media allows users to share stories and content and furnishes posts with visible metrics of popularity and endorsement (Khamis et al., 2017). Influencers post on their preferred social media platforms regularly gathering an audience who pays close attention to their opinions (Kim & Kim, 2020). One of the most emphasized definitions of SMIs in the research literature is that they are independent third-party endorsers, who shape the audience's attitudes by tweeting, publishing on a blog or using other social media channels (Freberg et al., 2011), such as Instagram, Facebook, or YouTube (Enke & Borchers, 2019). In addition to shaping attitudes, research literature emphasizes that influencers are commercial endorsers, who have the ability to influence the knowledge and behavior of their followers (Borchers & Enke, 2021). According to Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) the purpose of an endorsement is to add value to a brand's name, product, or service offerings.

2.2.1 Characteristics of an SMI

Previous research has found that SMIs have different characteristics, which attract consumers to follow them and their endorsements (for example Reininkainen et al., 2020; Pöyry et al., 2019; Lou & Yuan, 2019). One of the characteristics that is highlighted in the research literature is influencer's *credibility*. It is a concept, which includes different dimensions such as *trust*, *similarity*, and *expertise* (Munnukka et al., 2019) and *attractiveness* (Chu & Kamal, 2008). SMIs usually have an expertise in specific areas or topics such as travel, food, fashion, beauty, healthy living, or other lifestyle (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Borchers & Enke, 2021). Because most influencers are experts on their own area, they can be utilized to spread brand messages directed to a desired niche (Pittman & Abell, 2021). Besides trustworthiness and expertise Cheng et al. (2021a) add uniqueness and originality also to the list of characteristics identified in SMIs. In addition to intangible characteristics, influencer characteristics can also be tangible. For instance, Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) found that the attractiveness of the influencer and quality as well as order of the influencer's images on social media are also key attributes for consumers to decide on whether they want to follow the influencer. Therefore, the external appearance of an influencer also takes part in creating a perception about the influencer.

Trust is related to creating the credibility of an influencer (Munnukka et al., 2019), but *authenticity* has been associated to building trust, in which it requires a perception of open and verifiable communication as well as transparency (Gilpin et al., 2010). Part of SMIs authenticity is sharing their everyday lives on social media, which is a form of open and transparent communication they can provide for their followers. Yang et al. (2021) found

that intimacy and perceived similarity added trustworthiness and authenticity to influencer’s messages, organization-distributed messages are often lacking trustworthiness and intimacy. However, regarding CSR communication if there is no explicit disclosure on the sponsorship of the post, the influencer’s sponsored content may rise the suspicions of stakeholders towards the authenticity and integrity of the organization (Jiang & Park, 2021).

The authenticity of an influencer helps influencers to create their own social brand and differentiate from other SMIs by being honest, transparent, and true to oneself. Moulard et al., (2015) define celebrity authenticity as the perception of one behaving true to oneself. Similarly, Gilmore and Pine (2007, p. 96) find that being authentic is being true to oneself as well as being who you say you are to others. Audrezet et al. (2017) add to this by explaining that it is essential that an SMI produces content that follows their inspirations by promoting things the SMI personally believes in. Similarly, Khamis et al (2017) found that SMIs can monetize their personal image through self-branding and authentic public identity. Hearn and Schoenhoff (2015) suggest that after establishing relationships with their followers, SMIs were perceived as authentic even though most of them collaborate with organizations to monetize their influence. There are many aspects to influencer characteristics in the previous literature as well as views on how influencer create an authentic and credible perception of themselves to the consumers. Figure 1 below summarizes the concepts taken into consideration in the current study and connections between influencer characteristics found in previous literature. More specifically, the current study focuses on whether the characteristics are included in consumers’ perception of CSR communication with SMIs and what is their function in the consumer’s evaluation process.

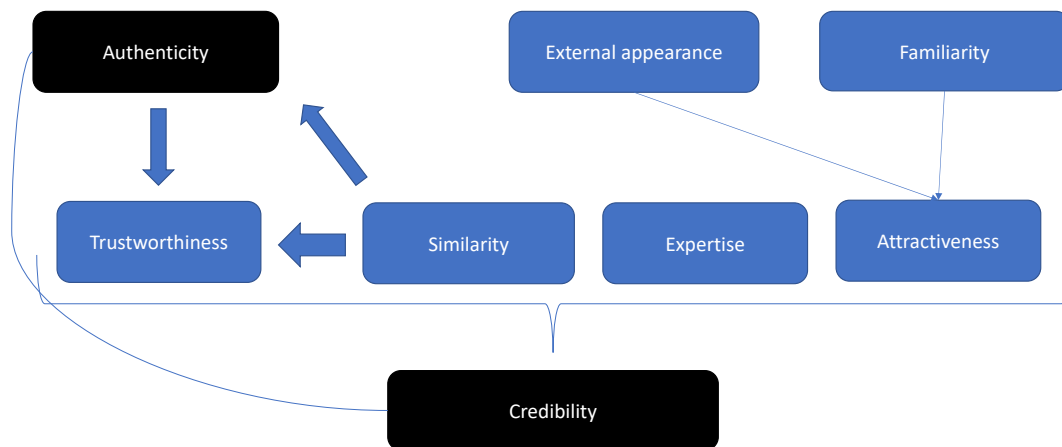


FIGURE 1 Characteristics of an SMI and their connections found in previous research (adapted from Munnukka et al, 2019; Pöyry et al., 2019; Lyes et al., 2012; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Cheng et al., 2021; Gilpin et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2021).

Influencers and their unique characteristics can generate assets to the organization. Generally, influencers cultivate credible and appealing online personas, which have been found to affect positively the followers' trust in sponsored content as well as the brand (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Similarly, Reinikainen et al. (2020) found that influencer credibility can affect brand trust and purchase intentions positively. Lou and Yuan (2019) specify that from a marketing point of view, informative posts and components of influencer credibility can positively effect followers' trust towards influencer-generated posts and eventually supporting purchase intentions. Influencers with less followers have been found to be more influential and credible than those with more popularity (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Pittman & Abell, 2021). This is because lower-scale influencers are found to be more relatable (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

2.3 Connecting SMI and organization's CSR communication

2.3.1 Brand-influencer fit

Regarding SMI and CSR communication, the previous research literature mentions *brand-influencer fit* (Cha et al., 2015) as an important aspect to consider. Cha et al. (2015) suggest that the positive impact of CSR initiatives depends on how the consumers evaluate the initiative in relation to an organization. While conducting CSR communication with SMIs, SMIs act as a messenger and are in between the evaluation process of CSR initiative's message and organization. Therefore, the concept of brand-influencer fit should be taken into consideration while involving SMIs with organization's CSR communication actions. Similarly, Cheng et al. (2021b) suggest that organizations should evaluate influencers and select them by their fit for their brand's CSR initiative. Consumers have perceived a good brand-influencer fit when the endorser has been well-matched with the brand (Qian & Park, 2021). For example, while promoting knowledge on sustainable consumption of clothing, someone who has knowledge on clothing and its circular economy could be a better fit to promote the message compared to an influencer whose interests somewhere else, for example, in reality television. SMI-generated content gathers more attention in likes, comments, engagement, and empathy from the consumers compared to the brand's own communication (Yang et al., 2021).

2.3.2 SMIs in organization's CSR communication

In the era of social media communication, it has been presented that SMIs have become important actors in implementing organizations' CSR communication (Cheng et al., 2021a). Cornelissen (2020, p. 266) and Du et al. (2010) have suggested that CSR communication and assurance through third-party actors have increased in the previous years. When using a third-party actor, the CSR communication is not entirely in the control of the organization (Du et al., 2010). However, SMIs can endorse organizational CSR initiatives through self-generated messages that connect organizations and its stakeholders (Cheng et al., 2021a). In their study Cheng et al. (2021a) found that the content created by SMIs can increase consumers' attribution to altruistic motives for the desired initiative and create positive reaction towards the organization itself. SMIs have persuasive power through endorsements and using SMIs to distribute organization's CSR communication could also help improve brand equity (Yang et al., 2021). Consumers are also looking for authenticity and humanity in organizations' CSR communication (Lyes et al., 2012). This could be delivered through the authenticity of an SMI, since brands can gain authenticity and organic reach through influencer communication, and SMIs can further propagate organization's values and influence (Yang et al., 2021).

Consequently, Enke and Borchers (2019) suggest that SMIs can fulfil specific functions for organizations' strategic communication and are therefore important organizational stakeholders. Cheng et al. (2021a) also highlighted that regarding CSR communication, organizations should see SMIs as type of a stakeholder group instead of only as a communication or marketing tool. The previous research results on the effects of influencer communication suggests that eventually influencer-generated communication can lead to consumers building trust with the organizations (Reinikainen et al., 2020), increasing brand awareness (Lou & Yuan, 2019) and increasing purchase intentions (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Kapoor et al., 2021).

There are benefits to utilizing SMIs in organization's CSR communication. By cooperating with influencers organizations can gain access to different audiences and address them in specific ways (Enke & Borchers, 2021). According to Enke and Borchers (2021) partnering with influencers can provide valuable assets in three ways: content production, distribution, and interaction on social media for the organization. Usually, the content in sponsored posts or partnerships is produced by the influencer but SMIs can be contracted to distribute content made by the organization (Borchers & Enke, 2021). SMIs ability to initiate conversation about the organization and establish long-term post-processing of these conversations, generates advantage to utilizing SMI communication (Borchers & Enke, 2021). SMIs help to deliver organization's valuable messages to the audiences by creating content that resonates with the audience (Davies & Hobbs, 2020). In addition, the benefits of using influencers to communicate marketing messages is that their endorsements are found to be more relatable and credible (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017) than, for example,

if the organization was to communicate the messages themselves. SMIs can promote a brand or organization (Freberg et al., 2011), which can be done, for example, through techniques of self-branding to associate the brand, organization, or products with a specific kind of an influencer (Enke & Borchers, 2021). For example, if an influencer wants to identify with sustainability, they could choose collaborations that drive this requirement forward, such as sustainable clothing brand.

SMIs have value in driving the CSR communication forward with ways of social media marketing. Enke and Borchers (2019, p. 261) present that “strategic SMI communication is the purposeful use of communication by organizations or social media influencers in which social media influencers are addressed or perform activities with strategic significance to organizational goals.” In practice, strategic influencer communication is designed for organizations to pursue marketing objectives through campaigns (Borchers & Enke, 2021). SMIs provide channels for organizations to deliver strategic communication messages that reach the desired audiences (Enke & Borchers, 2019) and give the opportunity to interact with target customers (Kim & Kim, 2020). SMIs can be valuable content generators, who have an expertise in a specific area and cultivate followers interested in those topics, they help to create value to the brands via social media (Lou & Yuan, 2019). In conclusion, SMIs act as marketers for organizations through content creation and distribution (Ge & Gretzel, 2018).

2.4 CSR goals and SMI characteristics

The theoretical framework of the study consists of the concepts presented and defined in Chapter 2. The theoretical framework is assembled below in Figure 2. The study seeks to find out how consumers perceive the organization’s CSR communication distributed with SMIs, more specifically what features they evaluate and what is the target of the evaluation. For example, consumers can be focused on evaluating the CSR information itself, the organization or SMI’s characteristics.

Goals of CSR communication are related to the challenges found usually in CSR communication such as minimizing stakeholder skepticism and creating more awareness (Du et al., 2010). CSR engagement is a long-term goal, which is related to creating authenticity (Du & Vieira, 2012; Gilpin et al., 2010). In addition, brand-influencer-fit is a factor in evaluating the communication as there can be a positive impact on views, which are dependent on how consumers evaluate the CSR initiative in relation to the organization (Cha et al., 2015). Therefore, consumers may evaluate how successfully the organization and the SMI match together.

The SMI characteristics highlighted in the current study are key characteristics found in previous literature such as SMI’s credibility,

authenticity, similarity, trust, and expertise (for example Munnukka et al., 2019; Cheng et al., 2021a; Gilpin et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2021; Jiang & Park, 2021). The SMI characteristics have significance to the current study because in addition to CSR aspects, consumers may evaluate the SMI communication as well. Consumers may perceive SMIs as authentic and credible, which in turn reduces consumers' CSR skepticism (Cheng et al., 2021b).

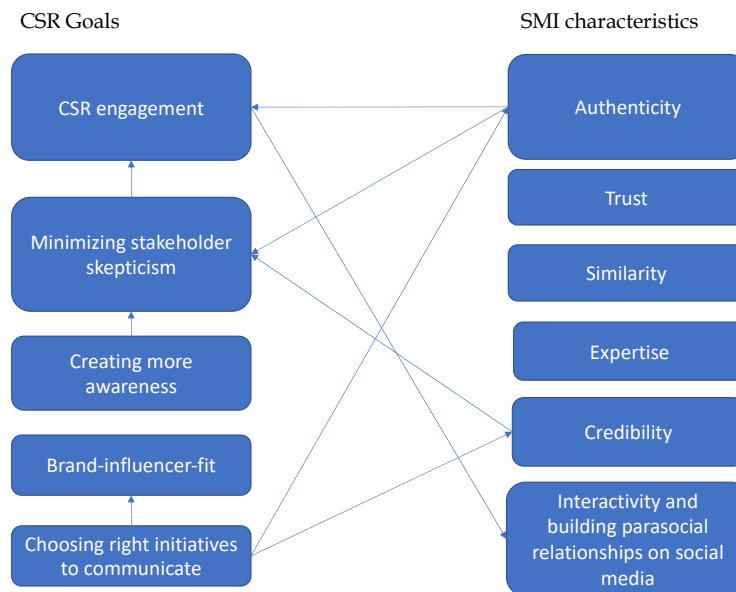


FIGURE 2 Theoretical framework

3 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The following chapter presents the research methodology of this study. The study was conducted as individual interviews in face-to-face or remote meetings. The interviews followed a model of a semi-structured interview with open questions. The chapter continues as follows: first the fit of qualitative research to the research question will be discussed. Second, the interviews and technique of PIE will be explained. Third, the data gathering, and interview process will be presented and finally, the analysis method used will be presented in more detail.

3.1 Qualitative research and research question

The research method for the current study is qualitative research. Qualitative research aims to the understanding of actions, describing phenomena or events or giving theoretically meaningful interpretations to a phenomenon (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 98). Similarly, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, p. 5) find that qualitative approaches search for interpretation and understanding whereas quantitative approaches focus on statistical analysis, explanations and testing the hypotheses. Puusa et al. (2020) add that the qualitative research aims to understand the phenomena from the viewpoint of the subjects of the study, which in the current study are consumers. Qualitative research may be able to discover new interesting undiscovered things (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 104) as well as studying things that have been left unclear in quantitative studies (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 5). Since the aim is to understand consumer's actions and thought process as well as explain the phenomena in-depth, qualitative research was seen as a more appropriate research method for the study.

This research aims to understand how consumers perceive CSR communication distributed by SMIs and what kind of meanings consumers find in that CSR communication. In the beginning of the research defining the topic and research question are an essential part of the research process (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 6). Research questions define the choice of methods and research setting chosen for the research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 27). The research question seeks to answer how consumers experience the CSR communication made by an SMI and how they interpret the CSR communication.

The research question can be specified as:

1. How is organization's CSR communication perceived by consumers when utilizing SMIs?

3.2 Individual semi-structured interviews

The qualitative data collection method chosen for this study is conducting individual interviews. The total of the participants in the study was eight. Conducting individual interviews is a long-established qualitative data collection method (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, p. 118) and especially convenient for studying opinions, attitudes, or behavior (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 84). The emotionalist research approach considers interviews as a way to discover participants’ authentic experiences and is interested in questions such as what and how (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 79-80). An interview is simply put a dialogue or discussion between the researcher and the subject, in which the goal is for the researcher to find understanding for the central themes and research questions (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, pp. 118-119). More specifically, the interview type used in the current study was semi-structured interviews, which can be used to study different kinds of phenomena and seeking answers to issues (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 87). The data collection in this study was done by the researcher, therefore the study uses primary data in finding answers to the research questions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 77).

Interviews are discussions that are organized in series of questions and answers (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 78). The interview in this study was semi-structured including open-ended questions and questions that were prepared in advance (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, pp. 118-120). Semi-structured interviews include pre-prepared outline of topics, themes, or issues (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 82). Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018, p. 87) equate semi-structured interviews as thematic interviews. Thematic interviews are similarly described to include themes that are set beforehand and related to specific questions (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 87). Similarly, Adams et al. (2007, p. 145) states that the semi-structured interview gives a road map of questions, which guides the interviewer through the interviews. Often a question is asked and then more questions are presented when replying to the interviewee (Adams et al., 2007, p. 145; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 88). In-depth interviews such as these help the researcher to gain a big amount of rich information (Adams et al., 2007, p. 145).

As O’Gorman and MacIntosh (2015, p. 120) suggest one of the most important considerations while conducting interviews is deciding on what to ask from the participants. The intention is to find meaningful answers according to the purpose, problem setting and mission of the study (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 88). The interview questions for this study are presented in appendix 1, they were drawn by the researcher from the previous research on the topic and phenomenon as suggested by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018, p. 88). The questions were kept simple so that they would not lead the participants to certain answers and the participants could describe their own experiences without judgement (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, p. 120). According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, p. 83) simple questions are also easier to

understand and answer. Open-ended questions encourage the participant to speak more freely and give more control over the topic, therefore open-ended questions generally produce more detailed answers (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 83-84). The interview also included primary and secondary questions meaning the participants were asked a question and after giving the answer, the discussion was followed by another question considering the participant's answer (Eriksson & Kovalainen, p. 84). For example, question six asked the participants to describe what they had just seen in the videos, based on their experiences and interpretations the interviewer continued to ask why they had felt or thought something in a certain way (appendix 1).

The advantage of interviews is flexibility in discussion, meaning the researcher can repeat questions, correct misunderstandings, clarify phrases or have a discussion with the interviewee (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 85; Puusa et al., 2020, p. 102). Part of the flexibility is also varying the wording of questions or the order in each interview (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 82). Another benefit of interviews is also that the order of the interview questions can be modified accordingly to the participants answers (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 85). For example, if the participant mentions commercial collaborations and their authenticity in the beginning of the interview, they were asked how they experience social media influencers' authenticity in general which was officially placed in the end of the interview structure. The flexibility gives more discussion-like features to the data collection method.

To guide the interview structure, the questions were divided into three themes consisting of social media use and attitude towards social media influencers in general (theme 1), experiences on CSR communication or content made by SMI (theme 2) and experience on credibility and authenticity of the SMI (theme 3). More specifically, with the first theme, the intention was to find out about the participant's knowledge of SMIs in general. Theme 2 focused on participants describing their experience of the visual material presented and the organization's role behind commercial collaborations. The interview questions under theme 3 were focused on the characteristic perceptions of SMIs and whether SMIs could be used as a relevant source of information in the field of CSR communication (Go & Bortree, 2017).

3.2.1 Participant-included elicitation

A technique of *participant-included elicitation* (PIE) was used when conducting the interviews. The interviewees were shown examples of CSR communication made by SMIs. However, the participants were not aware of the type of communication shown and they were asked to describe the videos in general, the researcher then, for example, interpreted whether there are elements of CSR communication found in their descriptions. The method allows researchers to have insights on things that are not accessible with verbal-only methods and offers a more detailed understanding on sensitive and less-tangible subjects (Padgett et al., 2013).

PIE is an interview-based method to highlight some of the characteristics of elicitation (Hänninen, 2020, p. 55). According to Cambridge Dictionary eliciting refers to the process of getting or producing something to get a response or answer drawn out from the participant (CD, 2022). The elicitation can be done by the participant if they bring in the material to the interview (Hänninen, p. 56) or the researcher can control the visual material shown (Padgett et al., 2013). PIE allows to deepen the interview to gain better understanding of the subject (Hänninen, 2020, p. 58).

In this study the visual material was introduced by the researcher and the participants were shown examples of CSR communication campaign made with SMIs. The videos were commercial collaborations between the organization HSY (Helsingin seudun ympäristöpalvelut or Helsinki Region Environmental Services) and SMIs @Jasmin.Ngo and @Dokketas. HSY is a municipal federation (HSYa) or in other words, public sector organization for municipal water management and the SMIs are Finnish influencers. The videos were part of #protskuraja campaign for reaching consumers and informing them about HSY's research findings regarding the increasing amount of nitrogen in sewage. The researcher chose these videos to awaken the participants' thoughts, attitudes and emotions related to the interview questions and topic.

3.3 Participants and data collection

A pilot interview was conducted before the actual interviews to ensure that the interview questions and their arrangement are designed correctly (O'Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, p. 121). The result of the pilot study was for the researcher to diminish the number of questions and framing some of the questions differently. After conducting the pilot interview, the participant gathering began with the sampling technique known as the snowball method. By using the snowball method, the first two participants were gathered from the contacts of the researcher with the requirement that the person had to be someone following SMIs. The participants had to be familiar with SMI communication, to give proper insight to the studied subject. After the first interviews, these participants were asked to recommend the next participant for the study who share the same similar interest in following SMIs (Voice & Babonea, 1997; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 99). It is common in qualitative research to choose participants from previous contacts or other convenient sampling techniques (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 51). More specifically, the snowball method chosen was discriminative exponential method, in which the researcher can also randomly decide the certain number of participants referred to by the former participant of the study (Voicu & Babonea, 1997). This method is described below in Figure 3. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018, p. 86) suggest that the benefit of interviews is choosing the participants, who have knowledge about the studied phenomenon. Therefore, the sampling method of discriminative exponential

snowball method chosen for this study fits the qualitative data collection method.

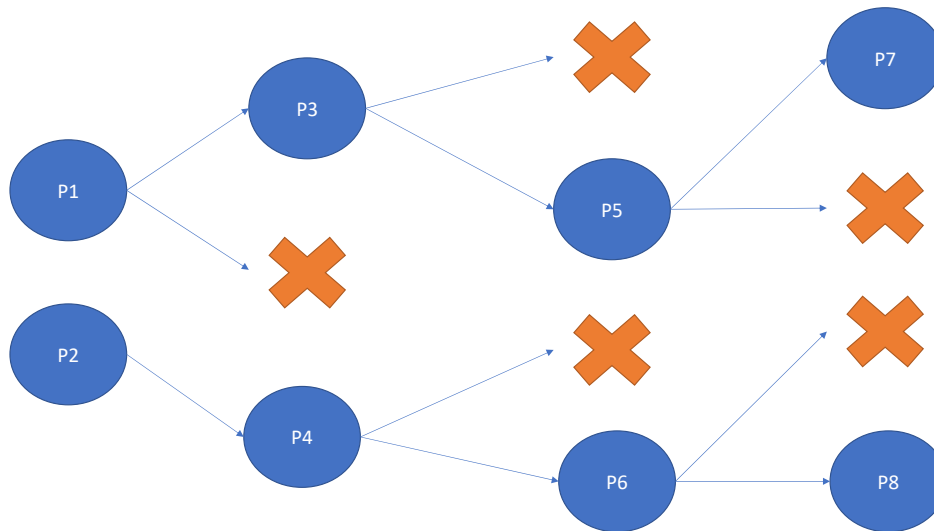


FIGURE 3 Sampling method adapted from Voicu and Babonea (1997).

The data consists of eight interviews that took place in April and May of 2022. One of the interviews was conducted as a face-to-face meeting in a café and seven of them as remote meetings via the video conferencing application called Zoom. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018, p. 85) recommend that the participants should get to know the interview material or themes beforehand, however the participants were asked not to prepare for the interview and the only requirement presented for participating was that the participant had to be someone following SMIs. The research was conducted as a non-follower study, meaning the participants did not know the influencers of PIE example videos beforehand. However, the participants knew that the topic of the interview was “consumers’ views on social media influencers” and two out of the eight stated that they had checked whether they follow meaningful SMIs or not. It is ethically justified that to tell the participants what the interview is about (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 86).

The interviews were conducted in Finnish and some demographic information such as gender, age, education, and hometown were gathered in order to formulate a short profile of the participants to guide the interview. An email was gathered to contact the participants. In the beginning of the interview the interviewees were presented the handout of the research (appendix 2) and the privacy notice also known as GDPR. These appendixes were also sent to the interviewees for them to be aware of their rights and participation in the study. The briefing of the interview followed elements presented by O’Gorman and MacIntosh (2015, p. 121):

- “What the data generated from the study will be used for
- Reassurances of confidentiality

- How data will be recorded
- Length of the proposed interviews
- How many interviews the participant is committing to undertake.
- Reassurance that the researcher’s role is non-judgmental but evaluative.”

The durations of the interviews were from 45 to 60 minutes including the initial explanations of handout of the research (appendix 2) and GDPR. The participants were made aware that the interviews were recorded for the purposes of further analysis of their answers. The researcher recorded the interviews by audiotaping and taking hand-written notes as suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2018, p. 190). After gathering their names, emails and demographic information, the participants were asked 13 questions with adaptations presented in appendix 1 to gain full understanding of their experience on SMIs and CSR communication. The definition of an SMI was explained but the concept of CSR communication was left unmentioned. Puusa et al. (2020, p. 102) suggest that giving information in advance can direct, limit, or chain the subject’s thoughts in advance and thus might influence the interview answers in an undesirable way. Therefore, the definition of CSR communication was left out for the interviewees to observe the visual material of the interview objectively. In the middle of the interview the participants were shown visual material in the form of TikTok campaign videos to elicit their perception of this kind of SMI communication. The interviews were held in the way of mimicking a normal conversation. Finally, in the end the participants were asked if there was anything else they wanted to explain about their thoughts and opinions, reminded about their rights, how to contact the researcher as well as asked to recommend the next participants for the study. The interview sessions are presented below in Table 2.

TABLE 2 Interview sessions

Participant	Age	Date of the interview	Duration	Place of the interview
P1	25	15.4.2022	52 min	Face-to-face
P2	25	21.4.2022	71 min	Zoom
P3	23	21.4.2022	56 min	Zoom
P4	24	22.4.2022	69 min	Zoom
P5	27	24.4.2022	45 min	Zoom
P6	21	28.4.2022	69 min	Zoom
P7	24	18.5.2022	42 min	Zoom
P8	24	20.5.2022	31 min	Zoom

3.4 Thematic analysis

The data analysis in this study was done with thematic analysis, which can have theoretical starting points (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 103). Thematic analysis is widely used in analyzing qualitative data especially among psychology (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 77) thematic analysis is a qualitative method for “identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.” Thematic analysis can provide a detailed and rich descriptions of data by identifying and examining the underlying assumptions, ideas, ideologies, and conceptualizations that shape the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, thematic analysis fits the research agenda since the aim of this study is to understand consumers views, thoughts and opinions related to CSR communication and SMIs. This analysis method fits the research also because thematic analysis does not require a set theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and the framework for this research is based on concepts and features around them. The analysis of the data follows the essentialist or realist method of thematic analysis, which reports experiences, meanings, and reality of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis includes searching for repeated patterns of meaning across the data set, which later form into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A theme is topic, which captures an important notion of the data related to the research questions and represents a meaning in the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Creating themes is much like coding but the emphasis is put on what has been told from each theme, instead of just gathering the amount of the times (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 105). The mission is to break down and classify the data according to different themes (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 105) and the idea is to look for views in the material that describe the theme, and to look for similarities or differences (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 107). The process of thematic analysis is done in six phases by Braun and Clarke (2006) as presented below in Table 3. The phases of analysis do not follow a linear process, but a more recursive one, which means moving back and forth with the phases as needed (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

TABLE 3 Six phases of thematical analysis adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006).

Phase	Description	Actions in the study's analysis
1. Familiarizing yourself with the data	Transcribing the data, reading and re-reading the data, writing down initial ideas	Listening the audio recordings and transcribing the interviews to text in a word document. Reading through the material several times.

2. Generating initial codes	Coding the interesting features of data systematically, collating data relevant to each code	Highlighting different topics and interesting findings by bolding, using highlight colors in Word, and making comments in the transcript.
3. Searching for the themes	Collating codes into potential themes	Searching for similarities and differences in codes and connecting them under a larger theme. Creating a table where the codes and themes are presented in four columns: quotation, code, category, and theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if themes work in relation to coded extracts, generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis	Reviewing the codes and themes. Creating thematic maps.
5. Defining and naming the themes	Refining the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis explains, generating clear definitions and names for each theme	Writing the findings open in the thesis report under Chapter 4 "results." Defining the names of the themes.
6. Producing the report	Selecting the extract examples, final analysis of these extracts and relating back to the research questions and literature	Editing the final report, reviewing research results from previous literature, and writing the implications.

Phase one consists of familiarizing yourself with the data set by reading through the entire data set and beginning the coding process (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In this phase, the interviews were transcribed from recordings into text format in a Microsoft word document. The transcript document included 52 pages of transcript interviews, written in Book Antiqua and with a 1.5 line spacing. After the transcriptions the audio recordings were deleted and the transcripts of interviews anonymized by presenting interviews in the document as P1, P2, P3 and so forth.

To conceptualize the background data of the participants, the first five questions were collected in an excel file, and the rest of the answers to questions were commented on using the features of a word document. This is supported

by other researchers who have found that it is ideal in the beginning to start making notes of the emerging ideas for coding the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015). The emerged ideas describe what the data was about and mostly consisted of recurring keywords, possible differences, or similarities. The development and definitions of codes continued throughout the entire analysis. (Braun & Clarke, 2006.)

After phase one, phase two includes producing the initial codes from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data was organized by coding the participants’ answers with different colors and eventually matching different codes under themes. Coding is the simplest form of organizing and can be presented as a table (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 105). Belk (2013, p. 139) states that coding data is the fundamental step of any qualitative analysis. Coding implies to reducing the qualitative data to more manageable pieces of information for the analysis (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, p. 141). Codes are illustrations of identifying the meaningful units of the data (Belk, 2013, p. 141; Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Belk (2013, pp. 141-143) codes can be assigned to words, sentences, paragraphs or other varying lengths of text, and the research questions usually influence on how the researcher codes the data. For this study the codes included explanations told by the participants of the interviews, mostly described in sentences or paragraphs. Some recurring keywords were also noted from the data. The coding for this study was more theory-driven as the data was approached with a specific research questions and problem in mind to code around. This approach is called deductive coding and it is driven by the researcher’s analytical interest in a specific area (Braun & Clarke, 2006.)

Generally, themes are a broader concept than codes. Phase three’s mission is sorting different codes into potential themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Basically, the actions in this phase are to collate all the relevant coded extracts under identified themes and start to analyze the codes in a way to combine them into a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes form in three different ways as main themes, subthemes or discarded (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In phase three interesting extracts were collected to a table of quotations, codes, categories, and themes. Similar examples of meanings were grouped together by codes and codes’ meanings were defined more in categories. Eventually categories were collected under a theme, which describes and defines the grouped findings closer to a broader concept. An example of data analysis with codes and themes is presented below in Table 4.

Phase four comes after you have a set of themes and includes refining those themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this phase the thematic maps of the research are created, some themes are found to be evident whereas others do not have enough data to be created as a theme and some might be combined to or separated from another theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In phase four the themes were reviewed by searching for coherent patterns and the individual themes were evaluated with the whole data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

TABLE 4 An example of generating codes to themes by thematical analysis.

Quotation	Code	Category	Theme
<i>P4 "I use Instagram for following all of my friends and people I know, and I kind of want to know about their everyday life, what they are doing and what's going on with them. But I also follow some influencers there and for the same reason that I want to know what is going on in their lives."</i>	Instagram for everyday use	Instagram is the most popular social media application among participants	SMI's role in consumers' everyday life
<i>P6 "I like their posts and comment and sometimes I want to hear more on their thoughts and have a conversation if they are talking about an interesting and meaningful subject on a post."</i>	Activity on social media with influencers	The experienced relationship with SMIs	

In phase five the resulted themes were defined and refined by identifying what each theme is about and what aspect of data it captures (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic map was used to identifying and defining what is the larger main theme and does it have a connection to sub-themes. It was also identified on how the themes fit into the study and research questions overall (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015). The analysis of each theme was written down as results and presented in Chapter 4. Lastly, in phase six the report for this study was edited (Braun & Clarke, 2006), while writing the report the researcher also investigated previous research done on the topic to find similarities and differences between the study and previous literature. The connections between results, research question and previous research are presented in Chapter 5.

4 RESULTS

This chapter presents the results found in research data. The results highlight quotations found important to understanding and explaining the data. The interview answers were analysed with thematic analysis presented by Braun and Clarke (2006) in six phases. Following thematic analysis, three main themes were found in the data. The first theme defines the SMI's role and social media use of the participants. The second theme includes aspects of CSR communication goals on evaluation of the organization. Lastly, the third theme focuses on the evaluation of the SMI.

4.1 Theme 1: SMI's role in consumers' everyday life

The participants' use of social media guides the research's understanding of their opinions on the studied aspects of social media. More specifically, the use of social media first introduces participants' involvement, knowledge, and interest in that specific social environment. To understand the participants' use of social media and general knowledge on SMIs acting as organizations' communicators, they were first asked about their most used social media application, how often they use it and for what reason. Second, they were asked to specify what kind of SMIs or content they follow and lastly about their general opinions on commercial collaborations.

4.1.1 Instagram is the most popular social media application

All the participants stated that they use social media frequently every day. The participants' most used social media application was unanimously Instagram. Instagram was mentioned to be used for connecting with friends, finding information, following SMIs, and searching for humoristic videos. Along with Instagram a few of the participants also mentioned TikTok to be one of their most used social media, which was mainly described to be used for searching entertainment and consuming time by scrolling through videos. Applications such as Instagram and TikTok fascinate the participants because they are easy to use and have selective algorithms, in other words the feed brings in front of you posts that you might already be interested in. This application platform also allows the viewer to choose what they would be interested in, for example, a participant explained you can skip stories or posts that are not necessarily relevant to you. Two of the participants also said that they do not regularly use applications such as YouTube or Facebook anymore, but sometimes they find their ways to YouTube through Instagram posts. Therefore, Instagram's popularity is also based as a gateway to other social media platforms and websites, and the application is used as an inspirational source of information.

P3 "I use Instagram for following friends and companies, searching for information and to entertain myself"

P4 "I use Instagram for following all of my friends and people I know, and I kind of want to know about their everyday life, what they are doing and what's going on with them. But I also follow some influencers there and for the same reason that I want to know what is going on in their lives."

Instagram is a versatile application and other applications have their own specific purposes. Communication applications such as Snapchat and WhatsApp were mentioned to be used as the main communication channels for connecting with friends and family. One participant also mentioned Jodel as the platform for finding product recommendations. YouTube was mentioned occasionally and according to the interviews it is used for searching information on vacation locations, following podcasts, or seeing the everyday life of YouTube influencers, YouTubers. Spotify, more specifically the podcasts in the application were also mentioned as a source of information and to follow influencers and their everyday life. One of the participants also mentioned Twitter as a source of information about social issues and events, which are more related to the areas of CSR communication.

P2 "I also use Twitter for following how people argue about the situation during the crisis of Ukraine and nurses going on strike, so mostly for following social happenings and searching for information to keep up with the world."

Table 5 below describes the popularity of social media application and what the participants were interested in. The Table also presents if they felt like they had created a connection with influencers they are following or what kind of approach the participants have on commercial collaboration in general.

TABLE 5 Participants' social media use and interest in SMIs

Participant	Most used social media	Why uses social media?	Interest and type of SMIs following	Relationship with SMIs & attitude towards commercial collaborations
P1	Instagram	Everyday life is interesting, find recommendations and information on relevant subjects, entertainment	Lifestyle, wellness, sports, food	Observer and neutral attitude

P2	Instagram	SIMs have an interesting life, information and humor also interests me	Lifestyle, clothing/style, food	I feel like I know the followed SIMs on some level, liking but no commenting and negative attitude
P3	Instagram and TikTok	The person or influencer must be interesting or then they have an interesting hobby or a job	Lifestyle, decorating, wellness and every-day life	Interactive relationship, neutral attitude
P4	Instagram and TikTok	Everyday life and hobbies are interesting also some tips can be handy	Lifestyle, fitness, hobbies	Observer, negative attitude
P5	Instagram	To find interesting things	Lifestyle, make-up	Observer and neutral attitude
P6	Instagram	Interesting content, something to relate to, positive feelings	Lifestyle, fashion, community, and social issues	Interactive relationship and positive attitude
P7	Instagram and TikTok	Time consumption and interesting things	Lifestyle, celebrities	Observer and positive attitude
P8	WhatsApp and Instagram	Joy and entertainment	Lifestyle, podcast hosts	Observer and positive attitude

4.1.2 The experienced relationship with SIMs

The participants were asked about the type of content they are following on social media. More specifically, they were asked to describe and classify the type of SIMs content they were interested in. The most mentioned type of content was lifestyle, which then was more specifically described to include wellness, sports or fitness, food, and make-up. The content of the SIMs was always mentioned to be consistent with the participant's interests or hobbies. The top purposes for following SIMs were found to be:

- 1) The SMI has an interesting life - Because their everyday life and what they do are interesting
- 2) The SMI is an interesting person
- 3) They share things that are easy to relate to or do entertaining content

Three types of relationships between the participants and the SMIs were found. The first and most common type was the role of an observer, which was explained as not commenting, liking, or having conversations with the influencers. Even though the observers explained that they liked following influencers' content, they would not interact with the SMI. The second type in the middle included the feel of knowing the influencer and actively liking content but not necessarily having active relationship in the form of comments and discussions. Lastly, three participants felt like they have relationship formed through commenting, liking, and having conversations with the SMIs. However, it was pointed out that having a connection and interactive relationship with an influencer does not necessarily mean having a trustful relationship with the influencer. Figure 4 below describes the spectrum of relationship types found between participants and influencers in this study.

P6 "I like their (SMIs') posts and comment and sometimes I want to hear more on their thoughts and have a conversation if they are talking about an interesting and meaningful subject on a post. - I wouldn't say it is the same as talking to a friend - because I don't feel like we have that kind of a two-way-trust and direct connection. I feel like it is just that two people who are like-minded having a conversation."

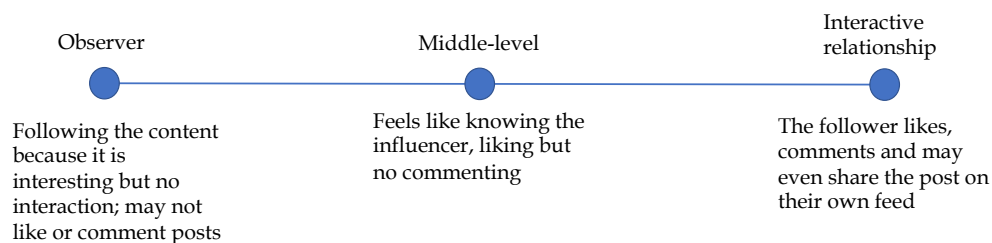


FIGURE 4 The types of relationships found between participants and SMIs they follow

4.2 Theme 2: Evaluation of the CSR initiative and the organization

To find out more about consumers' opinions on the specific type of collaboration related to CSR communication, the study utilized the method of PIE, and the participants were shown two different collaboration videos from a campaign called #protskuraja by the organization HSY. The full explanation of utilized PIE technique was explained in previous Chapter 3.3. After showing the videos, the participants were asked to describe what they saw in the collaboration videos and what kind of thoughts, feelings, or opinions these videos raised. The answers demonstrate the highlighted features and describe what the participants learnt from this experience. Theme 2 is divided into three sub-themes consisting of identification of CSR communication, skepticism and perceived organization's role in the communication delivered by SMIs.

4.2.1 Topic defined as CSR communication

The participants described the content of PIE example videos to be unfamiliar, informational, surprising, irritative, humoristic and environmentally involved. The identified and learned message was that you should not eat too much protein, because it goes through the sewage as nitrogen and eventually causes eutrophication on the Baltic Sea. The topic was recognized to be related to the protection of the environment, which is a subject category that is part of the classification of CSR as presented before by Cornelissen (2020, p. 282). Therefore, the participants identified the SMI communication's connection to organization's CSR communication. The participants also described that this topic involves a shared meaning and actions should be done for the common good. Therefore, the topic was also identified as CSR communication through the perception of common good in the CSR message.

P3 "The purpose has been to protect the Baltic Sea, not only by eating protein but in general to remember to protect the Baltic Sea and then to get young people interested, it has been connected to a trend for example TikTok and protein consumption and bulking culture."

P6 "I learned that the Baltic Sea is getting eutrophic, and you shouldn't eat too much protein. The purpose of the videos was to spread useful information and facts to the public. And to make them aware of the bad things happening in the environment. Because in a way, each one of us can have an impact on the environment and its state."

The participants said they had encountered this kind of communication before. Some connected this type of communication to be about the Baltic Sea or sustainability, others mentioned to have seen organizations as the general

communicators of CSR and one described to have seen SMIs as organization's CSR communicators. CSR communication is recognized in the platform of social media and the use of SMIs in it is increasing.

The participants expressed that the content made them feel emotions such as irritation, surprise, joy, and encouragement. Some were surprised that the topic was related to an environmental issue. Participants felt familiar with information about the food circle, but the new addition was that protein turns to nitrogen and causes the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea.

P1 " (It is) just a funny clip talking about protein consumption, so I was surprised when the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea came up."

The participants expressed the feeling of irritation to be related to advertisement features of sharing information and SMI's physical characteristics. An example of physical characteristics was the style of speaking. However, one participant mentioned feeling joy out of the fact that this subject was advertised and shared with others, it was explained by the participant that these kinds of topics are important, and they should be talked more about. It was also mentioned that this kind of communication raises awareness to one's self-consciousness but according to the participants, the given information in the videos will not change their behavior. Therefore, becoming aware and sharing the information was seen as to influence the participant's thought-process but did not lead to change in behavior.

P5 "the way it was presented was a bit annoying to me personally, it was the style of speaking and the kind of advertising that they had tried to put in such an informative form. I would say that it was too fake for me, so I got that feeling from it."

P6 "Well, eutrophication is not a cool thing. I'm glad they're getting into the fight."

P1" But I did get the feeling that maybe you have to pay attention when even those choices have an effect and not just eat meat etc. This is just a tidbit of information."

4.2.2 Skepticism

All the participants said they learned something new, but that this information will probably not affect their lives a lot. Part of the information in the videos was familiar and part of it was unfamiliar. The information connected new and old trying to convey viewers to have a new aspect on something to create interest in the CSR-related issue.

The known information was described to be the food circle and how to eat healthy, the new unknown information was that by eating too much protein, people are exacerbating the pollution of the Baltic Sea. This however, raised a lot of questions to the consumers mind; why we have not heard of this before

through other news, why isn't the excess nitrogen cleaned from the sewage and how can such a small thing as protein intake be part of a bigger issue. The participants experienced skepticism towards the information when the specific information in the content was unfamiliar. It seems that Finnish consumers are looking for reliable sources and researched information. The communication in the collaboration did not point to any other sources of information. The organization itself was also unknown to most of the participants; thus, the organization was not seen clearly as a public authority.

P1 "I already knew about the excess protein, but I hadn't realized that it would go into the Baltic Sea. So yes, new information so to speak, it's interesting but somehow it also seems a bit far-fetched."

P3 "I had never heard about the content that eating too much protein would go to the Baltic Sea, so I'm not sure whether I believe it or not. It sounds strange, why don't they make the waters that go to the sea more appropriate and how can one protein bar affect that, so I don't quite believe it. – Just out of curiosity I want to find out if it's true that excess protein is excreted in urine and pollutes the Baltic Sea. Sounds like a real fiction to put protein and the Baltic Sea together. I thought that all urine and water was purified, so I didn't know that some nitrogen could get into it. That did pique my interest though."

The general opinions when asked about participants' thoughts on commercial collaboration were mainly neutral or positive (Table 5). The ones that had a neutral or positive attitude towards collaborations also mentioned that the brand should be something they are interested in as well, otherwise the post gets lost in the feed and does not raise interest. Even though the participants had a neutral or positive attitude towards collaborations, all the participants mentioned that if the post is a commercial collaboration, they approach the information on the post with reservation. This suggests that there is a general level of skepticism when approaching SMI communication.

P1 "All social media influencers have specific collaborations. The collaborations must be with the brands that interest me (in order for me to like them). The influencer must also like the brand they are promoting and it's nicer if it's a long collaboration that fits their imago"

P6 "Well I think generally they are a good thing, because it is a way for the influencer to make a living. Yes, it affects my judgment on the post, it depends on what kind of the collaboration it is. "

A few of the participants also pointed out the involvement of money in SMI communication. These participants were concerned that since the SMIs get paid from the collaborations, the information might not be as authentic and trustworthy. However, it was also mentioned that the collaborations that are

only made for money stand out of the influencer's normal content by not fitting to the influencer's image and being more sale-oriented by only promoting the same thing every week. This phenomenon was mentioned as pushing the information without a meaningful message behind it. Another negative attitude towards commercial collaborations was also brought up from being irritated and frustrated, because some commercial collaborations have taken the value out of the communication by forcing viewers to take sales-oriented action or doing a collaboration that was described as poorly made.

P3 "My first thought they are done only for money. If it is executed well then it could be a win-win situation for all, but if you try to force the commercial collaboration and there are no entertaining elements on the post then it is just unnecessary."

P4 "I hate them (commercial collaborations). My first thoughts were irritation and frustration. -- They don't usually have the same authenticity and mostly purely made for the sake of money. I don't mean that everyone does it, but I feel like people who do it often have ruined it for people who know how to do it well."

The quality of commercial collaborations matters to the consumers, if a collaboration is done well, it draws more attention and shows that there is an effort for the cause:

P2 "A better collaboration is more refined – I like posts where people present how to use things but in stories you can go with the flow. It draws more attention and pops up more and then I have the strength to watch it until the end."

4.2.3 Organization's role in CSR communication with SMIs

The organization's role in PIE example was present as a provider and manager of the campaign, collaboration, and communication. Few of the participants suggested that the video would not have been done without the organization. Therefore, the videos were identified as commercial collaborations, even though the organization was not clearly presented in the videos. The phrase of commercial collaboration or the organization was not visible in the video, only in the captions of the videos.

P6 "The role of the company in this is to work with the influencer to develop how we get that information across to the viewer or follower. They are behind the scenes supporting the delivery of the message. – Well, because they would not otherwise go along with it, the partner always has some information that they want to convey to the viewer without any financial goal, just to facilitate their own work and benefit society."

P7 "If I had seen only the video, there was nothing about HSY, but it must be brought up in the text. It seemed more relaxed when the focus was on the topic and not just the organization."

P8 "Without that cooperation, the information would not necessarily be shared, unless someone is really interested in environmental issues. I didn't know either of those influencers, so I had the feeling that they wouldn't share such content if it weren't for commercial collaboration"

The organization was described as a material provider and approving officer for the campaign. Besides the topic being unanimously identified as related to environmental subject, one of the recurring keywords for interview question six (Appendix 1) was that the videos are made for the 'same campaign'. The participants identified that the videos had same facts and core messages in them. From the similar content of the videos the participants figured that the SMIs were given the same instructions and asked to deliver a collaboration video with the information of the campaign. It was recognized that both videos belonged to same campaign and had the same core message that eating protein leads to increased amount of nitrogen in the sewage which then increases the water pollution in the Baltic Sea.

Even though the organization was the provider and manager of information, the participants felt that while watching the videos the subject was more emphasized than the actual organization. The participants compared these videos to other SMI campaigns they have seen online. It was explained that this campaign was not trying to sell a specific product or service, and therefore it felt more like raising awareness to a new idea and thought process.

P1 "The attention in the video was on eutrophication and the Baltic Sea issue, not on the content of the video about everyday life and the plate pattern etc."

P5 "I trusted what they were talking about. I believe it, especially if the information has come from HSY, but I question the motives behind their involvement."

P7 "I really hope and would like to believe that this is based on some information. I don't think the influencers themselves made it up."

Some of the participants started to consider what was the organization aiming for with this kind of communication. The participants explained varying answers to finding a purpose of the campaign. The answers included that the organization and SMIs were trying to share information and raise awareness as well as specify that environmental sustainability through consumers' actions is important. The PIE examples were successful in making the participants think about what they see in social media. The participants learned about how excess

protein works and what happens to it as well as what has been found out about the cycle so far.

P1 "To attract attention and awareness – The big reasons are that they want to stop eutrophication and that the climate, and the environment are bigger goals, not perhaps concrete ones, because they (the organization) don't get any money directly from it, so it's not a sales purpose."

The SMIs were identified as actors for bringing the information among certain target group or attracting attention to the subject in general. However, the participants had different opinions on the target group of the campaign, on one hand the target group could have been athletes and on the other hand it could have been people interested in the environment's sustainability. Most descriptions of target group included the term young adults. Reasons for the target group identified as young adults were mentioned to be that the platform was TikTok which most young adults use, and the topics were related to trends among young adult consumers such as health, protein consumption and bulking culture. The younger consumers were also described to be more open to this kind of communication as sustainability and environmental issues are also trends in today's media landscape.

P4 "And I think that the purpose of the post was to reach their own target group and other young people. Tell them what they want from the content and make it more approachable. Because none of us would probably wander over to HSY's website to read that article. So that was the goal, to make it more approachable."

P5 "They were probably trying to reduce the amount of waste we produce and approaching it through a healthy approach is a good idea. Now there's been quite a lot of talk about food and the pollution. They probably want to target a younger age group who might be more open to this kind of information influence so that's the way to reach them, and then maybe young people might be interested in that kind of thing at the moment."

4.3 Theme 3: Evaluation of the SMI

The study uses the concepts of SMI characteristics to establish whether consumers evaluate the communication based on the features related to SMI communication. SMI characteristics presented in the literature review included credibility, authenticity, trust, expertise, similarity, familiarity, and external appearance. In this study the SMI characteristics of trust, authenticity, expertise, external attractiveness, and credibility emerged from interviewing the participants. In addition to these characteristics, preferences related to CSR

communication such as information-based and value-based communication were found as valid features to consider while evaluating the SMI.

4.3.1 Humor versus informative

Jasmin was described as a fitness lifestyle influencer, who shares her everyday-life and Dokketas as a humorous fun influencer, who focuses more on creating entertaining content. Generally, the participants described them as young and appealing adults, who could probably do good content. The video made by Dokketas was described to be a humoristic sketch. The humor was somewhat appealing but not seriously taken by the participants. It was also mentioned that the humoristic one was poorly made and not a quality video. The impression of poorly made raised from the idea that it looked like it had been made with small effort. However, in this case the participants did not know the influencers of the study, so the impression of poorly executed might be that they did not know what to expect from the influencer's regular content.

P2 "The latter one was funny, and, in the end, it wasn't as funny as it seemed -- The funny one was poorly executed so I didn't take it that seriously."

P6 "I'm not sure about Doke, humor is really hard to produce in content production. You could tell that this is a video that makes a statement. For some, it may lower the quality level of the content a bit."

P7 "The first video was a kind of video on the subject, it was more of a factual video and there was a person who was talking about eutrophication of the sea and what too much protein can do. And there were pictures and texts on the subject. The other one was humorously done, if I had seen it first, I would have gotten a kind of hah feeling from it, but when I saw both, I got a good idea of the issue."

On the other hand, the video by Jasmin was described as informative, formal and the message was presented more clearly. The communication included facts the participants did not know about, which raised some suspicions but also made the videos informative piece of knowledge to be shared. Participants described that facts-based information and using topic-related concepts such as eutrophication and nitrogen made the content informative. All in all, Jasmin's video was explained to be more appealing as she presented the information clearly with a cheerful attitude and the video was well-made with more effort.

The participants also mentioned that information that includes familiar subjects with a new point-of-view and own experiences, add trust in the commercial collaboration. However, there should not be too many commercial collaborations. This was seen as decreasing the credibility of the SMI, if the SMI "tucks" the information multiple times in a short period of time.

P2 *"The other one (Jasmin's video) was more formal or official and the message was clearer, I think the woman was more credible because the message was more present. – an informative talk, quite good and functional."*

P4 *"The woman was quite informative, so kind of a cheerful and reserved person who goes according to the brief and not to get the money (of a commercial collaboration)."*

P6 *"Yes, both explained a lot of things and got the information played through. The precise facts-based information and the eutrophication made it informative."*

P8 *"The second one (Jasmin) seemed clearer, jerkier, and easier to believe. And the first one (Dokketas) was more entertaining, it was more of a fun video and not so informative."*

4.3.2 Brand-influencer-fit

One of the dimensions of creating authenticity and credibility is trust. Key factor in creating trust in the SMI, content and organization was highlighted by the participants to be the perceived brand-influencer-fit. In other words, if the collaboration with brand or organization matches the influencers other daily content then the SMI is seen more trustworthy. Another thing to consider, was pointed out below by P4, that the collaboration between a brand or an organization and an SMI is usually a choice, one which the SMIs themselves can make. Strange brand-influencer fits draw attention, because they make consumers skeptical on the information shared and confuse consumers about the beliefs they have had on a particular SMI.

P2 *The (post's) content must resonate with the influencer you're following, I also don't follow if it's not interesting or relatable, it must bring some meaning to life, if that changes, I cut them (the influencers) out. If the content does not match the original content or something that does not interest me, I will not continue to follow you.*

P4 *"I've noticed that commercial collaborations sometimes have strange pairings, where the company and the influencer don't meet. Then I always wonder why they (the influencers) have taken it (commercial collaboration) or if there is a new company that I didn't think would do commercial collaborations, so I pay attention to them."*

The importance of brand-influencer and influencer-follower fits gained a particular interest in this study. First, it was questioned on why these influencers were involved in the campaign, since they did not seem like people who would have expertise on environmental aspects. Second, participants explained that if this information was shown among people that were already

interested in ecological things it might have more effect on them. The campaign's content must be in line with influencer's other content and the followers are more interested in SMI's content which includes key aspects to the followers' interests.

P5 "I don't know these people or their content, I don't know if I really care about it. Maybe if they were genuinely climate-oriented and did a lot of that kind of stuff, then I could believe them, but now it's just a question of why they're involved, whether they're just getting paid or not. The style of the videos suggests that they don't necessarily have any more information on the subject. Neither one of them has shown in this video that they are somehow climate change activists."

P4 "If an influencer makes five posts of his own and one is commercial collaboration, then during those five you can easily see what kind of brand the influencer is building for himself as a person, the free content should first make the audience that it is its own value and then when it makes commercial collaboration so then it is a logical continuum. But if it comes out of the blue, it creates such confusion that it is not as credible and authentic."

4.3.3 Authenticity

Authenticity is a key factor also in CSR communication with SMIs. Authenticity was something that participants mentioned to appreciate in SMI communication. In general, the meaning of authenticity was associated to the SMI's presence of being genuine to their followers. According to the participants, authenticity in practice meant sharing both good and bad situations of influencer's life. It was explained that influencer sharing their own experiences makes the influencer feel more humane, credible, approachable, and informative. Authenticity, more specifically normal every-day life was seen as attribute in increasing the credibility of an influencer.

P1 "More credibility, a lot of people on social media nowadays also share bad stuff. The trend is to share everything and to try to get more followers by being authentic, including the bad stuff."

P2 "I prefer authentic posts, chattering videos and normal life. Can't be glossy, just a perfect life, bad days also bring out e.g., dentist visit gone badly, some influencers have just a normal life. They seem more real through their normal life, if they don't have that, they don't seem real. – Sharing own experiences makes the influencer more humane, credible, and informative for sure."

P5 "Genuine content is nicer to follow than obviously fake content, you can identify with it better. It makes it more authentic that they share their real life – Makes you more approachable, definitely."

Authenticity is a valuable characteristic, however when combining it to a commercial collaboration the feeling of inauthenticity was more prominent. Authenticity of the SMI was questioned because according to the participants the message clearly came from the organization and there are doubts of intentions when the collaboration is seen as the SMIs' source of income. The issue with the content was described that even though the SMIs tried to make it look like their other content, the information was so specific and commercial-like that it did not feel like something the SMIs would do in their normal life. However, it was also brought up that the participants did not know the influencers' other content, so they did not have much to compare to. This suggests that influencer's authenticity is built long-term, and consumers appreciate if the influencers stay true to their type of content even if they have commercial collaborations.

P3 "Well, yes, but in commercial collaborations you always get the feeling whether this person is in it or just making money with it. For example, in the case of these people, it felt more like they have received money than that they genuinely want to protect the Baltic Sea."

P4 "Not authentic. It came from a company. – because it didn't fit in with what they usually do, the message was like a commercial. That's not a fact you're throwing in there."

P5 "It gave me a bit of an inauthentic feeling, but this is just this one video, so I don't know what type of videos they have. – It may not be my own humor perhaps and I don't know I don't have enough trust in their own authority or expertise to talk about such a thing."

The authenticity of the SMI was questioned because of their line of profession and unfamiliarity towards them. However, some participants felt that the CSR message was authentic as the information provider was an organization related closely to the meaning of the message:

P6 "I felt it. First of all, working with HSY, so as if they have probably been offered much more lucrative collaborations but chose this one so (the influencer has) more authenticity."

4.3.4 Credibility

The participants put a significant amount of value to concepts such as authenticity, trust, similarity, expertise, and humanity, and these were the concepts for creating credibility towards the influencer. Jasmin was perceived as a more impressive one and was less questioned, because she looked externally neat, and the first impression was that she knew what she was talking about by talking about the subject whole-heartedly. In this case the voice and perceived clarity were factors mentioned to have a significance when interpreting the communication. It was explained that expertise creates the

sense of credibility and trust. The participants perceived the communication of SMIs' CSR campaign videos to be humane as the influencers talked to followers directly and the information was presented in an understandable and practical way.

P3 "The guy's video was a bit more confusing; the speech was harder to understand."

P2 "I prefer to watch the ones that are funny but the ones that are more relevant are more believable - maybe it's that if you're doing fitness and the subject is protein then it makes the feeling that you have some touch on the subject matter. The (influencer's) image and what they do in life makes them more credible."

P6 "Yes, it was (credible). Both spoke to the viewer about consumption habits and wanted to tell the story of development. I don't know, I got that feeling."

P8 "Yes, (this was) easy to understand, told in plain language and information put information in a nice and interesting format."

Expertise was a characteristic that emerged in the data on multiple occasions. Expertise was described as a valuable characteristic that is based on education and professionalism. Expertise was seen as influencer's characteristic to build trust and credibility. According to the participants, the SMIs would also have credibility by showing concrete results and having their own interests of the subject or education on the background. Opinions of the SMIs are seen as valuable, but the content cannot be all that, meaning you must have researched data or concrete results to tell consumers about the situation. The participants also mentioned that including multiple views and opinions on the discussion adds credibility. This emerges from the belief that is behind organization's decisions on CSR as well, there is proven evidence of the existence of an issue and its solution.

P3 "If I know he has an education, I trust him more. - And if I know the person, then they are trustworthy - The big thing is if you have the qualifications and professionalism for what you're talking about."

P4 "What makes it credible is that it meshes with the rest of the content and kind of adds something of its own and brings it through your own experience so it's not too promotional. - So that it is clear that he is also a consumer and has thought it through cautiously because you cannot love a brand at first glance. Because you form a relationship with a brand little by little, it may be that the influencer has followed the same path as the consumer should. "

P6 "Education makes a difference - Also if they try to present the information in a calm way and without blaming anyone. Multiple

perspectives or factors adds credibility (diversity), daring to start a discussion (post a message etc.) and responding factually and comprehensively adds credibility. Transparency is important. "

4.3.5 Value-based communication

The participants explained that from this one video they cannot fully judge the SMI's style and content. It was also pointed out that these influencers can reach out to some consumers. Participants look for similarity in values with the SMIs and this was highlighted especially when the collaboration is connected to CSR communication. The participants described that non-value-based content is irrelevant to them, so it seems that following an SMI is also determined by the fact that the SMI's values are perceived as corresponding to consumer's own values. As mentioned below sustainability and responsibility communication may not be valuable or relevant information for some consumers, and the information doesn't reach this type of a consumer as well as those who are already interested in sustainability and responsibility.

P3 "Content that is racist or offensive is something that doesn't reflect my own values and offends others, so I don't like it. I wouldn't follow topics that I'm not interested in e.g. I wouldn't follow hunters or makeup bloggers because I'm not interested in those things."

P4 "I am not the most sustainable aware person in the world, sustainability is not my core values. I appreciate people who put effort into it, but it does not come naturally to me. So, this campaign has no change in my behavior, but maybe next time I eat a bar of protein I'll think about whether it will go with my urine into the Baltic Sea."

Credible CSR communication with SMIs was seen as to be created with value-based actions and communication. In CSR communication the SMI should have character traits such as being respectful of other cultures, being true to their own values while accepting CSR collaborations, as well as willingness and capability to take part on the discussion afterwards. It seems that the dimension of people, where the focus is on egalitarian rights and ethnic diversity, was most valued. Participants highlight values such as antiracism, human rights, fellowship with others and honesty. Appreciating sustainability or environmental values did not come up in the interviews, however these were regarded as highly important subjects to discuss about.

P1 If there is cooperation, it must be in line with the values of the influencer's story. If you are promoting a brand/issue, you should also use the brand or live up to it. -- confusing content all over the place kind of thing is not nice to look at. I wouldn't follow something that was racist, you can disagree but not offensive. Racism, women's rights. As a matter of principle, I don't want to support someone who

doesn't fit my values. I'd just get annoyed that how can that person have that opinion."

P2 "I used to follow an influencer who had great travel photos, but then perhaps I became more aware of environmental issues for fashion and travelling and she/he traveled every week. So, then it was not suitable for me, and I stopped following she/he and I prefer to follow people who have perhaps more suitable values for me."

P7 "It's a good thing that people are being informed about something like (Baltic Sea eutrophication and environmental subjects) this, maybe it seems like a small thing, but I guess it can be a big thing. Of course, if many people get involved, it is always good. But this didn't really raise more thoughts in me because I'm not really interested in the portion sizes and so on, but it's a new thing, so it makes me wonder about things in that sense. I think it's good to use influencers in environmental issues, because they can get a lot of visibility."

5 DISCUSSION

Chapter 5 discusses the conclusions and implications of the study seeking to find answers to the research question. The chapter provides confirmations to previous research as well as some new content (Puusa et al., 2020, p. 9) to consumer views on CSR communication utilizing SMIs. Theoretical implications focus on finding the impact the study has for previous research presented in Chapter 2. Practical implications focus on finding the impact the study has for the practicality in doing organization's CSR communication in collaborations with SMIs. The aim is to understand how consumers perceive organization's CSR communication made in collaboration with SMIs.

5.1 Conclusions

The results reveal consumer perceptions on CSR communication with SMIs. To understand what was found, understanding the process of consumer perceiving the communication is important. Consumers evaluate the CSR communication of SMIs by focusing on the organization's role and expertise as well as SMI's ability to present the information with credibility and authenticity. Consumers evaluate the communication based on three different areas.

Prejudices and expectations. Consumers have general prejudices and expectations on SMIs and commercial collaborations, which influences the perception of an SMI in CSR communication as well. Most consumers seem to approach SMI collaborations in a neutral or positive way (Table 5, column 5), but negative approaches also occur. More specifically, if the attitude towards the collaboration is highly negative to begin with, there seems to be higher probability for skepticism. Consumers also have prejudices and expectations towards the CSR communication and evaluate the organization and CSR message based on those. The attitude towards CSR communication seems to define whether consumers want to contribute to the CSR initiative at all. For example, if the consumer is not interested in environmental issues, they most likely will not find meaning and interest in CSR communication related to environmental protection. The consumer's approach on CSR communication is evaluated on levels of skepticism and awareness, if the information is new and the consumer has not been aware of it, the approach seems to be more negative and skeptical.

Organization in CSR communication with SMIs. Perceptions on how well organization's role, trustworthiness, expertise, authority, and credibility are presented. Familiarity towards the organization seems to increase the likelihood of seeing the organization as credible. Credibility and skepticism can be seen as interacting factors, when there is less skepticism, then there is more credibility

and vice versa. Skepticism towards the information and the organization seems to decrease credibility and the likelihood of taking an action towards the CSR initiative.

SMI characteristics in CSR communication. SMI characteristics can enhance the perception of the CSR message. The evaluation of SMIs in CSR communication is defined with evaluating authenticity, expertise, trustworthiness, credibility, and the brand-influencer fit. Consumers have a narrow view on seeing the SMI as only the distributor of content, since the information was seen as scientifically specific and coming from the organization. SMIs were not perceived as the expertise in the organization’s area of business. Skepticism towards the authenticity and trust of the SMI was also presented as previous knowledge and thoughts on SMI collaborations influence the current perception.

In the perception process consumers evaluate the CSR message of the organization and SMI on the levels of awareness, skepticism and brand-influencer fit. Brand-influencer fit seems to contribute to consumer’s perception through creating the feelings of authenticity, trust, and credibility. Figure 5 below describes the overall process of perceiving CSR communication distributed by SMIs.

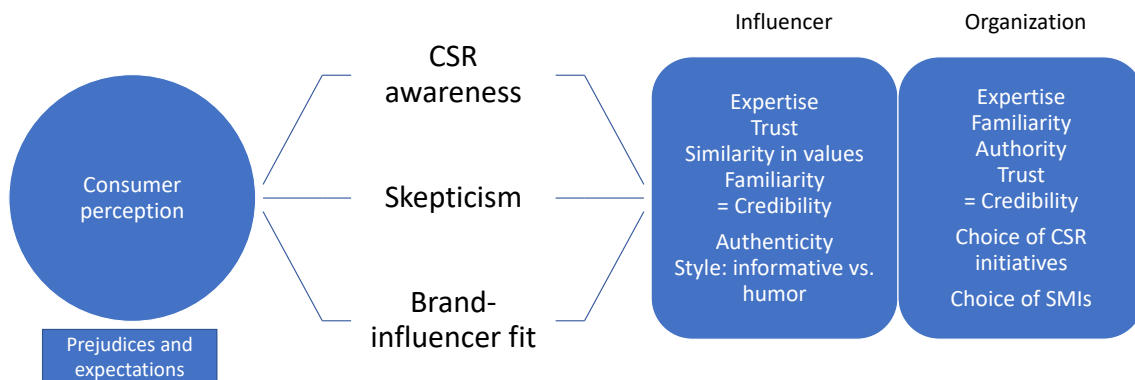


FIGURE 5 Consumer's perception process of CSR communication utilizing SMIs

5.2 Theoretical implications

Organization’s role in CSR communication collaboration with SMIs was seen as the provider and manager of the information. The scenario is similar to one presented in Borchers & Enke’s (2021) research, where the organization is the content producer. In the current study the information was seen to be provided

by the organization. The organization's role at the background was perceived strong as the SMIs had little room to be effective in the study due to consumers perceiving the SMIs' role as only a distributor and not being able to evaluate the SMIs' whole content. It is expected in commercial collaborations that the organization is promoted. However, in CSR communication the organization was not perceived as emphasized, which created confusion and skepticism in the perceptions.

Previous research on CSR communication utilizing SMIs has been focused on the viewpoint of commercial organizations (for example Cheng et al., 2021a; Cheng et al., 2021b). The organization in the current study was a public sector organization HSY for municipal water management services and information about the environment in the Helsinki metropolitan area (HSYb). There were variations on whether the organization was perceived and evaluated as an organization working for the shared good. Some evaluated the organization's role in the collaboration the same as other commercial organizations and others recognized the organization as a public sector authority. The perception as public sector organization was based on knowing the organization from before. Nevertheless, even though the organization was seen as a public sector organization, the CSR communication was perceived commercial-like by consumers. However, the communication was perceived more positively than in collaborations that are pushing the information with the focus on selling a product or service.

Consumers perceive that there is always some agenda in the collaborations between SMIs and organizations. In the current study, the idea was not selling a product, service, or the organization itself but to present information or an idea and create awareness for the CSR initiative among target audience. An unknown public sector organization is approached the same as other commercial organizations, even though they are not trying to sell a product or service.

Skepticism towards CSR communication with SMIs was present in the prejudices towards the communication. It seems that overall skepticism towards collaborations has increased as they are always approached with suspicions by consumers. Some were skeptical of the information presented and wanted to fact-check the information from the organization's website themselves. Consumers had a skeptic attitude towards the information because the SMI was not perceived as an expert of the topic and perceived that an SMI always has bias of being paid to say or do something. This reinforces that brand-influencer fit, and SMI's presentation of authenticity are important in CSR communication with SMIs as well.

The study supports that in general consumers seem to be skeptical about the CSR initiatives of organizations (Elving, 2013). The communication was perceived as informative, but the results indicate that there was skepticism towards the new information. The information felt too far-fetched and was presented unclearly in the collaboration. The pairing of the food circle and nitrogen in the Baltic Sea created skeptical perceptions. This supports Lyes et al.

(2012) research on the attribute of insatiability, where frustration and confusion was expressed, because the information of the message was unclear or unfamiliar. The message in this communication felt unfamiliar and the motives of the collaboration were missing as it was questioned why the SMIs had chosen this collaboration. Elving (2013) also suggested that consumer's skepticism arises, when the organization is perceived to be only acting in its self-interest rather than supporting the welfare of the society. In this case, the organization suggested for consumers to stop eating excess protein, the participants perceived this as weird as the organization's main job is wastewater treatment. Therefore, the consumers did not recognize the organization or that they are working for shared good. On the contrary, consumers perceived that the organization is acting for self-interest and questioned why they should act if it is the organization's job to purify the wastewater.

There was skepticism towards the collaboration because of the involvement of money. The CSR communication was distributed by an SMI. The finding supports Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2009) research that communicating CSR initiatives through advertising can lead to skepticism toward the organization. The presence of skepticism towards collaborations also supports the finding by Pöyry et al. (2019) as they found that sponsored posts are less favorably perceived from the viewpoint of authenticity. Some participants suspected the SMI's post to be commercial collaboration even though they did not find a clear disclosure about the sponsorship. Therefore, the SMI's authenticity and credibility were found to be questioned. This supports Jiang and Park's (2021) study, where they found that consumers are generally skeptic about the authenticity and integrity of the influencer. They suggested that marketers and influencers could avoid consumers' skepticism by finding ways to be clear about the integrity and purpose of having a certain CSR campaign.

The perceived skepticism was principally based on the prejudices and expectations consumers had for SMI and CSR communication, such as attitude towards the nature of SMIs' profession. However, the organization and SMI were also evaluated separately. The consumer first evaluates organization and whether there are clues to indicate believing the CSR message. Second, the consumer evaluates the SMI and whether there are features to indicate the SMI as credible. In addition, if the consumer is not interested in the CSR message, then they do not seem to care about the meaning of it. To reduce the consumer's skepticism, the collaboration needs to have credibility, based on either provided research and data by the organization or the perceived credibility of an SMI. The perceived skepticism is described in a form of a pyramid in Figure 6 below. Attitudes and expectations seem to influence the perceptions the most, which is why they are the foundation of the pyramid.

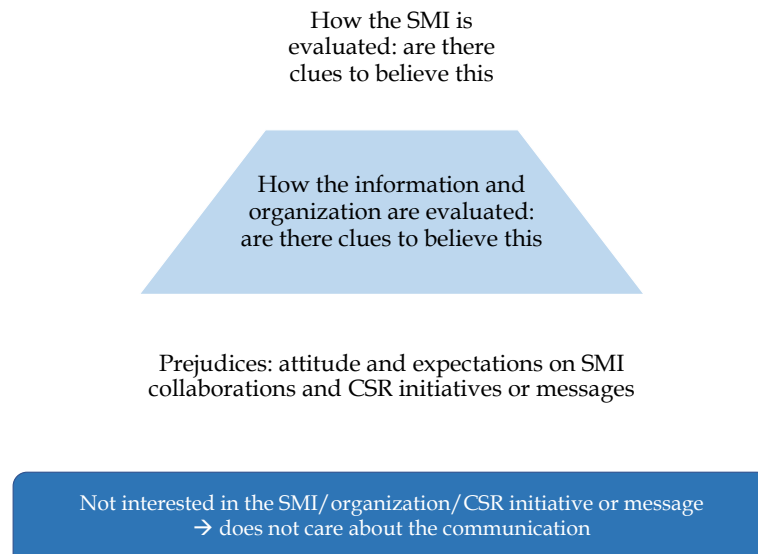


FIGURE 6 Pyramid of perceived skepticism

Consumers have narrow view on SMIs as only endorsers of products and services as well as distributing information. Research has found that SMIs create self-generated messages (Cheng et al., 2021a) and act as content producers (Borchers & Enke, 2021), but the SMIs in the study were only seen as distributors of the information. The information and environmental issue presented was perceived as surprising, because the expectation for commercial collaboration is to sell a product or service. The study supports the idea that SMIs have quite a narrow role and are seen as the distributor of messages (Borchers & Enke, 2021). The perceptions on the role of distributor are similar to previous research on SMI communication and seem to be reflected in CSR communication utilizing SMIs as well. SMIs can be used to distributing information and awareness on CSR messages and initiatives, but in comparison to other collaborations SMIs are not seen as the creators of the CSR communication.

When evaluating the SMI, the consumers focus on evaluating SMI’s key characteristics, such as authenticity, expertise, similarity, trust, and credibility. Previous research has found that authenticity is key characteristic when consumers evaluate SMI communication (Borchers & Enke, 2021; Hearn & Shoenhoff, 2015), this was also found in CSR communication utilizing SMIs. In addition, the consumers are looking for authenticity and humanity in CSR communication (Lyes et al., 2012) by evaluating how the CSR actions relate to the SMIs everyday life and social media discussion. Regarding authenticity the study supports previous literature on the perceptions of how SMI’s authenticity is built and perceived by consumers (for example Borchers & Enke, 2021; Gilpin et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2021). Similarity adds authenticity (Yang et al., 2021) and regularly in SMI communication, consumers relate and try to find similarities to their own life from SMIs regular life. When evaluating CSR collaborations of

SMI, the consumers seem to be seeking similarity in the values the collaboration represents.

SMI's authenticity seems to increase the credibility of the message in CSR communication. In the current study, consumers expressed that the CSR communication felt more inauthentic and that it was just information glued on the SMI. This could be because the SMI's other content was unknown, it was a difficult unfamiliar subject or these SMIs were not perceived to be the experts of the topic. The SMIs did not seem like experts, because they did not have the essence of regular sustainability influencer. In other words, the SMI's expertise was defined by their line of profession, education, interests and if they promote that expertise on social media.

Consumers in the study perceived the informative post to be more appealing in CSR communication than a humoristic one. The humoristic videos are entertaining, but they are not perceived as informative enough to convince the consumers of the importance of CSR communication's meaning. The study supports Lou & Yuan (2019) finding that informative posts create more trust in the content rather than posts which have more humoristic entertainment value. Information and facts-based communication presents clearer and more formal message to the audience, which was seen preferable with CSR communication. However, even though the informative communication was seen as more appealing, it did not seem to influence consumer's behavior. This might be because the idea in CSR communication is to sell an idea, accepting or processing this information takes time and cannot be evaluated entirely in one short campaign. Processing the information has been found to build CSR engagement (Cheng et al., 2021b), which suggests that for the CSR communication to be effective with SMIs there needs to be long-term approach to the collaboration. The consumers also request more information in other forms of communication, the information needs to be visible in organization's other communication channels for it to be perceived as credible.

It seems that the evaluation of the SMI characteristics can be applied for the organization in CSR communication. Even though there were skeptical perceptions on SMI's expertise, the organization was perceived as expert and an authority. Gilpin et al. (2010) found that in SMI communication authority refers to level of knowledge and expertise, in other words the level of expertise needs to be high for something to be seen as authority. The expertise of the topic was perceived to be coming from the organization instead of the SMI. Expertise is part of how credible an SMI is perceived, but the credibility of the content can also be built by the collaboration partner. In CSR communication the organization and data build the credibility of the content by providing easy-to-understand and researched information on the topic.

Feeling of similarity also enhances perceived credibility. In the current study, consumers were looking for similarity in values. Cha et al. (2015) found that consumers who participate in firm's CSR activities, identify with the brand more and can express their own value system and enhance self-esteem by reducing the psychological distance between self and the brand this way. This

is supported by feeling of similarity and can be found as an attribute also with SMIs. Consumers often follow SMIs who have the same values as them and expect these SMIs to choose collaborations with organizations that the followers could also be interested in.

The consumer's values must match the values of the SMI, which increases attractiveness, trust, and credibility of the SMI. If there is collaboration, it must also be in line with the values of the SMI, which creates a favorable brand-influencer fit. For example, if an SMI is promoting a brand or CSR initiative, then he or she should also use that brand or live by its suggestions. In the studied campaign material, the organization's set values on the CSR initiative were focusing on environmental sustainability and protecting the environment. In this case, it was not perceived clearly that the SMIs lived according to the organization's guidelines and set values in the CSR initiative, which reduced credibility of the SMI and increased skepticism towards them.

The CSR communication of SMIs in the studied campaign material was not perceived as credible. Negative or skeptic approach on commercial collaboration seems to increase the possibility of not perceiving the SMI as credible. The SMIs were also not perceived as experts, trustworthy or similar to the consumers, because they did not fit the organization's area of business and SMIs were perceived as superficial people who would not take a part in these kinds of issues. SMIs tried to link the information to their everyday life. On one hand, this gives more credibility to the SMI's content by linking the big issues to everyday life. On the other hand, it also makes consumers wonder why this is being linked to everyday life when it is a bigger issue. In this kind of communication, the consumers also perceived that the collaborations represent the topic rather than the organization or the SMI, which is why the general approach on CSR communication seems to influence the perceptions. Therefore, the focus is on evaluating the topic and the organization after evaluating the SMI did not give authentic view. The SMIs were unable to create a sense of credibility as participants were not followers of the influencers and the subject seemed to be unconnected with the SMI's type.

The SMI must be someone the consumer is interested in. Cheng et al. (2021a) found that brands should select SMIs for campaigns, who are a credible and attractive online persona but also inspires the consumer to mimic the influencer. This is supported by the current study as the SMIs presented in the study were not found to be relatable or credible enough to have an influence, most likely because most of the participants did not know the SMIs and therefore could not evaluate the SMI entirely. However, this demonstrates the strength and benefits of SMIs creating a connection and parasocial relationship with the consumers. An endorsement from a random influencer is not enough to convince the consumer to act, but an endorsement from an influencer of their interest might be seen as more favorable. Therefore, the study also supports the finding that to create awareness the consumers look for SMIs who have an attractive presentation and expertise status that aligns with certain organization's business offerings (Lou and Yuan, 2019).

The consumers perceived that long-term quality content creates authenticity and therefore the study supports the research by Du and Vieira (2012) in which they found similar results. Organization's strategical approach to CSR communication must be long-term also because the study did not have support for creating CSR engagement in short period of time of one campaign. Good commercial collaborations of an influencer were described to include long-lasting relationship between the SMI and the brand as well as for the brand to fit into the SMI's image and other content. This supports Borchers & Enke (2021) that consumers evaluate the fit and profile carefully. Pöyry et al. (2019) suggest that organizations should seek authentic matches between the endorsing SMI and their messages, the content should be aligned with the SMI's usual style. This is partially supported in the current study, as some consumers suggested the SMIs content in studied campaign material to be consistent with the influencers' other content and style. Similarly, to Qian & Park (2021) it was found that the consumers perceive a good fit when the influencer is similar to the follower and fits with the endorsed brand. In the current study the brand-influencer match was perceived poor, due to the SMIs not perceived as the experts of the topic and perceived more skepticism towards the communication.

5.3 Practical implications

Social media and SMIs can be used for distributing CSR communication, but consumers were also looking for additional information such as information on the website. This supports that social media has value, but other CSR communication channels should not be excluded. The SMIs in the studied social media posts did not provide a link to HSY's or other websites to learn additional information, which increased skepticism towards the communication. The organization should provide information, an article or post on their own page to support the SMI communication and to increase credibility. According to Du et al (2010) organizations can control the content of CSR communication by using websites and reports, they suggest that organizations use the website or report as a basis and use advertising channels to promote the CSR activities.

To minimize stakeholder skepticism, organizations can try to have more practical information available. Lyes et al. (2012) suggest that CSR messages should be short and contain a link for further information. After distributing the content, the consumers want to know more about it and to fact-check the information. In the current study, no further information on the subject could be found from the organization or the SMI. Similarly, it has been found that if organizations do not provide enough visible information about the topic related to their CSR communication, the consumers feel more skeptical about the responsibility of the organization (Lyes et al., 2012). Even though influencers

have attributes to make content more credible and present the content in a more favorable way, the organization needs to create genuine and honest communication as found by Lyes et al. (2012) and Du et al. (2010).

Previous research suggests that organizations should take the target audiences and groups of the communication into consideration (for example Pittman & Abell, 2021; Khamis et al., 2017; Lyes et al., 2012; Pöyry et al., 2019). In addition, Pöyry et al. (2019) found that organizations need to collaborate with different influencers to reach a bigger audience. Different influencers may have different kind of followers and to reach a larger target audience, the organization could involve multiple SMIs in the campaign. However, involving multiple influencers might also create risks for the campaign. The current study found that consumers notice if the information is part of a campaign and information is coming directly from the organization. This creates less trust and credibility for the SMIs' involvement in the campaign. The consumer's attitude turns to more negative, as they might feel that the SMIs are repeating organization's lines and do not bring the SMIs own opinions or thought into the collaboration. This also creates the sense of information being glued on through feeling of inauthenticity. The collaboration is discarded as just another commercial collaboration with no deeper meaning in it. Therefore, using similar type of SMIs in CSR communication might be more effective. The goal of the campaign and the collaborations need to be clear and transparent to consumers.

Creating awareness is a challenge in CSR communication, as organizations are introducing new information to the consumers. Low CSR awareness has been identified as a challenge in previous research too (for example Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009). In the current study the consumers learnt something new which meant that they became aware of the issue. To create awareness, organizations need to focus on choosing the right channels and means for distributing and reaching the audience, which relates to also choosing a correct SMI that fits the organization's area of business. Investing on CSR engagement long-term may result in high CSR awareness (Cheng et al., 2021b) and is valuable for creating authenticity as well (Gilpin et al., 2010). In addition, SMI's expertise and attractiveness may boost the brand awareness (Lou & Yuan, 2019). CSR communication is hard to recognize as commercial collaboration because they are meant to share information, an idea or image about the topic instead of products or services. However, creating awareness must start from somewhere and SMIs could be used as the initial elicitation of CSR initiative awareness.

Choosing the right SMI for the CSR communication is important. In the study it was found that the match between the topic and SMIs was not entirely consistent, and the collaboration raised suspicions on whether the SMIs were doing it for the money. Also, the trust in the information was questioned as the connection between eating more protein and nitrogen going to the Baltic Sea was found unfamiliar and strange. This supports the study by Pittman and Abell (2021), in which they compared the efficiency of SMIs in green advertising by popularity metrics. They found that organizations might find bigger non-

green influencers to be less efficient than smaller micro-greenfluencers. Involving a smaller greenfluencer to CSR communication campaign could be more effective for CSR communication as the match between brand-influencer and the influencer expertise would be taken more seriously by the consumers already interested in the SMI's content. The popularity is suboptimal for green influencers and consumers trust green influencers who have low popularity more than bigger regular influencers (Pittman & Abell, 2021).

The campaign was seen as odd in the sense that it used SMIs from outside the organization's own area of business in sustainability. However, these SMIs were probably chosen to reach all kinds of young consumers. The problem with evaluating SMIs is that they were not seen as experts because they are not sustainability influencers but perceived as lifestyle and entertainment influencers. Therefore, consumers put the SMI in a certain category and based on that they assess what kind of content and information this kind of SMIs should distribute. This could be seen as a narrow view from consumers that SMIs other than those who are involved in an area of the organization's activities, such as sustainability, should not be able to communicate and promote things related to sustainability. Therefore, if organization is using SMIs outside the business' area of expertise, it is important for the organization to ensure that CSR communication remains understandable at the consumer level and that the objective is genuine and clearly stated.

When consumers find organizations motives to be profit-driven they tend to be more skeptical about the sincerity of the communication (Elving, 2013). The study found that this can also be applied to CSR communication with SMIs. Therefore, the organizations should aim for motives to be driven by actual CSR initiatives beneficial for people and to have the meaning of common good imbedded. In addition, by choosing the right motives and CSR activities, the organizations may increase the credibility of CSR communication (Go & Bortree, 2017). Du et al. (2010) have also found that consumer perceptions of CSR depend on how the consumers view the organization's motives. In addition to promoting through SMIs, the organizations should also bring their motives up on their own.

The study found definitions of the roles of the organization as the manager and SMI as the distributor in CSR communication. Consumers evaluate the CSR communication in terms of these roles and with their associated characteristics. The consumer evaluation consists of evaluating the organization and the CSR initiative as well as evaluating the SMI's input to enhance the communication. The evaluation was focused on the level of perceived skepticism and credibility. The study adds to research that public sector organizations are mostly evaluated and perceived the same as commercial organizations, depending on whether the consumer is familiar with the organization and if the CSR communication has information on the organization's other communication channels. However, in cases where the public sector organization is known, the communication is evaluated and perceived more positively, and the consumer approaches it with more interest.

The study was successful on creating awareness to the CSR initiative and information. However, the SMIs were not perceived authentic or credible which then contributes to the perception towards information as not believable. SMIs can be utilized for CSR communication under the right circumstances, but preparations need to be made in the planning of the communication such as evaluating the SMI fit for the brand and topic, what actions to promote and how should the organization support the increasing awareness after the initial creation of it.

6 EVALUATION OF THE STUDY

It is important for a researcher to consider the trustworthiness of the study and evaluate the research process. The evaluation of this study includes assessing the *reliability*, *validity*, and *research ethics* of the study. The evaluation focuses on the viewpoint of evaluating qualitative research.

Reliability means that the results are consistent even though there are other investigations with different investigators in different circumstances (Gibbs, 2018, p. 128). Similarly, Puusa et al. (2020, p. 171) explain that reliability can also be increased, if two different studies or researchers find similar results in the study. The thesis has compared findings and conclusions to previous studies done on the same subject, providing evidence that the results can be reliable. In addition, the reliability of the study means that the researcher can assure the audience that the chosen approaches and methods are suitable for resolving the research problem and conducting the study (Puusa et al., 2020, p. 167). The research approach, method and practices of qualitative research were found to apply to the research accordingly in chapter 3.

The reliability of the study was ensured in two ways presented by Gibbs (2018, pp. 136-137) transcription checking and definitional drift in coding. First, the transcriptions of recordings were checked repeatedly, to ensure the meaning behind what was explained and translated to English was appropriate. The transcriptions were made manually by the researcher. Checking the transcriptions helped with getting familiar with the data (Gibbs, 2018, p. 136). Second, the definitional drift in coding the data was avoided by describing the code and findings in more details by using the comment section of Word document. This was to ensure that the researcher remembers the thinking done behind the code later in the coding process as well (Gibbs, 2018, p.137).

Validity means that results and used research method adhere to the integrity of the studied phenomenon. The research can consider the diversity of the phenomena and highlight the essential meanings in understanding the event (Puusa et al., 2020, p. 171.). This research explains and exemplifies the research process in detail and provides evidence on the results as well as suggests conclusions and implications based on the results. Therefore, the research could be seen as having validity.

More specifically, validity in qualitative research means explaining and clarifying the argumentation behind different parts of the study (Puusa et al., 2020, p. 171). As presented by Gibbs (2018, p. 128) a study has validity when its explanations are accurate or true and capture the reality of what is happening. Validity in practice means eliminating the obvious mistakes and generating a rich set of explanations of the data (Gibbs, 2018, p. 131). In the thesis, the researcher has aimed for describing the process, results, and research accurately and in detail. Validity can also be assessed with transparent descriptions and evidence, which will be explained further.

According to Gibbs (2018, p. 135) “a good, reflexive research report will demonstrate clearly how it is grounded in data collected and interpreted.” The researcher has explained in this thesis report the steps of conducting the study, for example what was studied, where and when the data collection took place and how was the data interpreted. In addition, appendixes are provided to show the interview guidelines in practice. A way for providing validity to the study is providing evidence and a rich description for the reader. Creswell and Cresswell (2018, p. 200) suggest that by providing rich descriptions the results of the study become more realistic and richer. This was done by providing transparent descriptions on the interview setting and how the study was conducted in practise. One keyway to showing the reader evidence of the process is providing quotations from the data collection (Gibbs, 2018, p. 135), which in this thesis are presented as examples of participants’ interview answers in the chapter of results. It was also taken into consideration that quotations should not be too long or too short (Gibbs, 2018, p. 135).

Research ethics can be evaluated by seeing whether the researcher has followed the research ethics throughout the whole process (Puusa et al., 2020, p.167). According to Gibbs (2018, p. 139) ethical practices can add to the quality of the study and analysis. The key in research ethics is minimizing harms and maximizing the benefits of the study (Gibbs, 2018, p. 139). The study followed research ethics by minimizing the possibility of causing harm to the study’s participants. For example, the participants were informed about their participation and rights in the beginning and end of the interviews with the handout of the research and explanation of GDPR. The minimal harm that was caused was the time participants had to contribute to give an interview and insight to their thoughts in the study (Gibbs, 2018, p. 139). To protect the interviewees’ anonymity in the report, the interviewees’ quotations and identification labels are presented as P1, P2 and so forth. It was ensured by user and password that unauthorized people do not have access to the anonymous data (Gibbs, 2018, p. 141).

6.1 Limitations and future studies

This study has some limitations. Some limitations are wider and some a more specific for the current study. The study is limited by the practices and character of qualitative research, meaning the results cannot be generalizable as it could be in quantitative research. However, the results are appropriate additions for qualitative research on the subject and future studies could focus on also approaching the subject with quantitative methods based on the study’s results. More specifically, focusing on the connections between different characteristics or roles creating skepticism as well as higher awareness in CSR communication with SMIs.

The studied concepts were limited to the presented theoretical framework in Chapter 2. The study did not define if the CSR actions and communication could benefit the organization on an organizational level. This could be studied by focusing more on what effects does SMI characteristic abilities or endorsements on CSR communication have for organization's brand credibility, reputation, image, corporate identity, or financial gain. Further studies could also elaborate more on what kind of results the organization gets with different SMIs and target groups. Further studies around SMIs and CSR communication could also focus on CSR engagement and on parasocial relationship, whether these concepts have more value in creating effective CSR communication and benefitting the organization. In addition, informative communication was found to be more favourable but what kind informative communication on SMI level would be effective if the consumers doubt the organization or CSR communication in general.

The participants for the study were chosen at random from suggestion given by another participant. The only requirement was that they had to be someone following SMI. Consequently, it was not guaranteed that the participants knew the campaign organization, SMIs or the type of communication they had to comment on. Therefore, the data collection method and nature of participants' requirement placed limitations to the study. Future studies could also focus on how the CSR communication with SMIs is seen from the viewpoint of supporters, followers, haters, or other stakeholder groups.

This study was conducted as a non-follower study. The participants expressed that they had difficulties evaluating the SMI communication since they did not know the SMIs. It was suggested that if they had known the SMIs who distributed the CSR communication, their attitude towards the information might have been different. Therefore, for future studies it would be interesting to conduct a similar study to consumers that are highly attached to a certain SMI or an organization. Is their understanding of CSR communication through an SMI seen as credible, influential, authentic, believable, and positive? Or is the attitude of skepticism unbeatable when it comes to CSR communication introduced by means of commercial collaborations and SMI communication.

The participants mentioned several times that there can be good and bad collaborations, which raises the question on the quality of commercial collaborations; what makes a good collaboration and what are the further reasons why a collaboration might have no value to the consumer. Therefore, it would be ideal to have more data on what is seen as a favourable CSR communication and what can be seen as bad quality. This could be done by for example comparing the results of different studies on consumer perceptions on CSR communication. A study about the effectiveness of long-term SMI collaborations would also be interesting. Long-term communication was desired by the participants of the current study, and it would be interesting for future studies also to do a longitudinal study on whether the long-term partnership produces more favourable results in CSR communication with SMIs. Part of this would also be studying whether these kinds of collaborations

would be able to change consumer perspective or attitude towards a certain brand or an organization.

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APPENDIX 1 Interview questions

Name:

E-mail:

Tässä tutkimuksessa sosiaalisen median vaikuttajalla tarkoitetaan sosiaalisessa mediassa toimivaa yksilöä, joka jakaa mielipiteitään ja asioita elämästään seuraajilleen tekstin ja/tai visuaalisen materiaalin avulla. Sosiaalisen median vaikuttajalla on yleensä suuri määrä seuraajia. (Sosiaalisen median vaikuttajat toimivat myös suosittelijoina, joiden kautta voidaan muokata kuluttajan asennetta ja käyttäytymistä).

Haastattelun toteutus

Lähi _____

Etä _____

Demografiset tiedot

Sukupuoli _____

Ikä _____

Asuinpaikka _____

Koulutustausta _____

1. Mitä sosiaalisen median alustoja käytät ja mihin tarkoitukseen? Mikä on eniten käytetty kanava?
2. Kuinka usein käytät sosiaalisen media alustoja?
 - a) Päivittäin
 - b) Viikoittain
 - c) Kuukausittain
 - d) Harvemmin
 - e) En ollenkaan
3. Minkälaisia sosiaalisen median vaikuttajia seuraat? Seuraatko tietynlaista sisältöä, miksi?
4. Miten kuvailisit suhdettasi seuraamiisi sosiaalisen median vaikuttajiin?
5. Mitä ajatuksia tulee mieleen sanasta "kaupallinen yhteistyö"? Koetko että sana "kaupallinen yhteistyö" vaikuttaa sosiaalisen median vaikuttajan postaaman sisällön arviointiin?

CASE #protskuraja -kampanja

Video 1: <https://www.tiktok.com/@dokketas/video/7034874222056967429>

Video 2: <https://www.tiktok.com/@jasmin.ngo/video/7034119462404033797>

6. Kerro mitä näet tässä videossa - Mitä ajatuksia/tuntemuksia/mielipiteitä tämä herättää?
7. Kuvaile näkemääsi videota:
Mitä video sisältää
Mitä opit
Mikä oli videon tarkoitus
8. Millaisena koet yrityksen roolin tässä videossa? Miksi?
9. Mikä on yrityksen tarkoitus tässä videon viestinnässä? Miksi?
10. Miltä näkemäsi vaikuttaja vaikuttaa? / Miten - millaisena koet näkemäsi vaikuttajan viestinnän?
- Miksi näin?
11. Kuvaile mikä tekee sosiaalisen median vaikuttajasta uskottavan informaation lähteen? Esim. Mitä piirteitä saisi olla/ei saisi olla?
12. Millainen merkitys sosiaalisen median vaikuttajien julkaisemalla sisällöllä on sinulle? (mikä merkitys esim. autenttisuudella on kuluttajille?)
13. Onko jotain mitä ei kysytty?



JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

TIEDOTE TUTKIMUKSESTA

1. Ella Korpialan Pro gradu-tutkielma ja pyyntö osallistua tutkimukseen

Sinua pyydetään mukaan Ella Korpialan Pro gradu-tutkielmaan, jossa tutkitaan kuluttajien näkemyksiä sosiaalisen median vaikuttajien yritysvastuullisuuden viestinnästä, tuloksia käytetään johtopäätösten tekemiseen ja Pro gradu -tutkielman suorittamiseen. Sinua pyydetään tutkimukseen, koska kuulut tutkielmassa määriteltyyn kohderyhmään. Tämä tiedote kuvaa tutkimusta ja siihen osallistumista. Liitteessä on kerrottu henkilötietojesi käsittelystä.

Tutkimukseen osallistuu *noin* 10 tutkittavaa 1 maassa.

2. Vapaaehtoisuus

Tähän tutkimukseen osallistuminen on vapaaehtoista. Voit kieltäytyä osallistumasta tutkimukseen, keskeyttää osallistumisen tai peruuttaa jo antamasi suostumuksen syytä ilmoittamatta, milloin tahansa tutkimuksen aikana. Tästä ei aiheudu sinulle kielteisiä seurauksia.

Keskeyttäessäsi tutkimukseen osallistumisesi tai peruuttaessasi antamasi suostumuksen, sinusta siihen mennessä kerättyjä henkilötietoja käytetään osana tutkimusaineistoa, kun se on välttämätöntä tutkimustulosten varmistamiseksi.

3. Tutkimuksen kulku

Tutkimukseen osallistuminen kestää noin 45–60 minuuttia.

Tutkimus toteutetaan siten, että tutkittaville tehdään yksilöhaastattelut tutkimusaineiston keräämiseksi. Tutkimuksen aikana sinulle esitetään haastattelukysymyksiä, joiden avulla selvitetään kuluttajien näkemystä yritysvastuullisuuden viestinnästä sosiaalisen median vaikuttajien kautta.

Tutkimukseen sisältyy 1 käynti haastattelussa joko etä- tai lähiyhteydellä. Tutkijat voivat olla sinuun yhteydessä myös sähköpostitse.

Tutkimuksen alkamisesta sen tulosten julkaisuun on arvioitu kestävän kokonaisuudessa 1 vuosi, mistä ajasta tutkittavien osuuden arvioidaan kestävän 1 haastattelukerta.

4. Tutkimuksesta mahdollisesti aiheutuvat hyödyt, haitat ja epämukavuudet

On mahdollista, ettei tähän tutkimukseen osallistumista ole sinulle itsellesi hyötyä.

Tutkimukseen osallistumisesta ei odoteta aiheutuvan sinulle haittaa tai epämukavuuksia.

5. Tutkimuksen kustannukset ja korvaukset tutkittavalle sekä tutkimuksen rahoitus

Tutkimukseen osallistumisesta ei makseta palkkiota. Tutkimuksella ei ole rahoitusta.

6. Tutkimustuloksista tiedottaminen ja tutkimustulokset

Tutkimuksesta valmistuu opinnäytetyö. Tutkittaville jaetaan tiedote tutkimuksesta sekä sen tietosuojailmoituksesta. Tutkittava voi halutessaan saada kopion valmiista opinnäytetyöstä, johon tuloksia on kirjattu. Yksittäisiä tutkittavia ei voida tunnistaa julkaisussa käytettävistä tutkimustuloksista.

7. Tutkittavien vakuutusturva

Tutkittavan on hyvä olla tietoinen siitä, että Jyväskylän yliopiston henkilökunta ja toiminta on vakuutettu. Vakuutus sisältää potilasvakuutuksen, toiminnanvastuuvakuutuksen ja vapaaehtoisen tapaturmavakuutuksen. Tutkimuksissa tutkittavat (koehenkilöt) on vakuutettu tutkimuksen ajan ulkoisen syyn aiheuttamien tapaturmien, vahinkojen ja vammojen varalta. Tapaturmavakuutus on voimassa mittauksissa ja niihin välittömästi liittyvillä matkoilla.

8. Lisätietojen antajan yhteystiedot

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