Corporate Social Responsibility Communication in the Age of New Media: Towards the Logic of Sustainability Communication

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Abstract

The monopoly of traditional media is gradually being eroded as new media offers speedy, multiple and innovative ways in which companies can better engage with other stakeholders. It is therefore pertinent to take a look at the ways in which corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication is being reshaped by this evolving communications landscape. Also, new media is reshaping CSR communication for sustainability and effective stakeholder engagement. Effective stakeholder communication facilitates organisational success and legitimacy.

This paper's aim is to contribute to the burgeoning literature on the development of CSR concept via the lens of CSR communication by using the strategy of new media to advance this. The methodology adopted is mainly a review of literature, which parallels the conceptualisation of sustainability communication as articulated by Godemann & Michelsen (2012). The paper is essentially conceptual in scope but particularly identities how new media can be used to advance CSR communication. Thus, as this paper proposes, as the age of new media opens a plethora of channels as well as strategies to engage with stakeholders, organisations need to tap into these energies for a better corporate-stakeholder engagement. Insight and timely engagement will support the achievement of corporate objectives.

Keywords: *CSR Communication; Sustainability Communication; New media; Corporate-stakeholder Engagement; Communication Models*

JLC Classification: M14.

Introduction

Hundreds of scholarly and academic papers have been published on corporate social responsibility (CSR) exploring its meaning and definitions; however, there is no consensus on what it precisely means (Frynas, 2009, p. 12). This is why CSR is being referred to as an ''essentially contested concept'' (Okoye, 2009). The emergence of CSR has been debated as being forged by rapid growth of global communication system, more critical scrutiny of corporate activities and criticism from stakeholders (Blowfield & Murray, 2012). Other

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management scholars have seen the rise of CSR as a consequence of filling the gap when government's role in society is not sufficient (Jenkins, 2005).

It is to this end that CSR is a burgeoning concept that attracts the attention of experts in management and those interested in understanding the role of business in society (Carroll, 1979). No matter how CSR is considered, there is a thread that runs through all the definitions or explanations given to the concept. CSR is essentially about corporate actions that address issues, which are beyond the range of its narrow economic, legal and technical requirements by incorporating social and environmental factors (Visser, 2011). Further to this, according to European Commission, CSR is defined as ''the voluntary integration of social and environmental concerns in the enterprises' daily business operations and in the interaction with their stakeholders'' (DG Enterprise, Observatory of European SMEs, Report 2002/No. 4: European SMEs and Social Environmental Responsibility). Put simply, CSR is about an organisational initiative that takes into consideration social, economic and environmental concerns as they affect the society. With this definition in mind, CSR is about corporate actions that impact on economic gains as well as consider the relevance of social and environmental factors.

Consequently, communicating about CSR and corporate performance often brings strong reactions from other stakeholders, who argue that companies are not living up to expectations or that they are exaggerating what they do in society (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Stakeholders are those whose interests or stakes can be affected or can affect an organisation's business outcome (Freeman, 1984). Others have also argued that when firms focus too much on how socially responsible they are, they may be engaging in reputation management (Brown & Dacin, 1997).

Therefore, the way companies communicate their CSR commitment is critical for organisational success and legitimacy particularly in the age of new media, when information dissemination and manipulation can be hugely affected. The process via which organisations communicate their commitment to social and environmental concerns is called CSR communication. CSR communication is a concept that has two dimensions: CSR and communication.

In the age in which business survival is largely based on how stakeholders view an organisation's CSR commitment, CSR communication is fundamental as it brings to bear how stakeholders' view are taken into consideration for mutual sense-making towards sustainability (Melo & Garrido-Morgado, 2012; Bakar & Ameer, 2011; Du, Bhattacharrya & Sen, 2010). This approach to business management is beneficial to managers, organisational leaders and international business managers who face multiple issues that deal with reputation management and stakeholders' criticism of their CSR practice. Thus, as firms adjust their organisational practice to the requirements of modern business pressures occasioned by the new media, they will be positioning themselves to be competitive (Porter, 1985; Payton & Kvasny, 2012).

In transcending an organisation's poor corporate image, communication is important as it is a fundamental vehicle that brings mutual sense-making and sense-

giving amongst stakeholders (Morsing and Schultz, 2006). It is also an effective platform for defusing conflict, as well as dealing with reputation management (Venton, 2011). Given this landscape, communication is vital as business trends move from period of conceptualising firms as essentially for profit-making (Friedman, 1979) to a period when firms have social soul (Freeman, 1984).

The coming of new media has brought about a re-conceptualisation of the role of business in society given its scope and reach (Rosenbloom and Larsen, 2003). Given that corporations are being stereotyped in the popular press and media in view of their ostensible indifference to, and abuse of, basic human rights, as well as unsustainable business culture, there is need to reinvent communications strategies that will help address stakeholders' concerns (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

This backdrop has brought to the fore two contrasting schools of thought in theorising the business and society interface: the shareholder perspective and the stakeholder view of business-society interface (Hartman & Desjardins, 2008; Ferrell, Thorne & Ferrell, 2011; Porter & Krammer, 2006). The first school of thought sees profitability as the dominant issue in business (Friedman, 1970; Jensen, 2002); while the stakeholder view considers firms as social entities that have benefits as well as contributions to make to society (Freeman, 1984; Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2010). The stakeholders are those benefiting as well as harmed by corporations' business dealings (D'Amato, Hendersen & Florence, 2009). To this end, organisations owe a duty to the general public – other stakeholders – to communicate their corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda for ethical and transparent practice. In the wake of this new reality, some countries have started to make sustainability rating a major precondition for organisations to operate (Melo & Garrido-Morgado, 2012).

One of the major ways organisations can leverage on their business investments, manage reputation and create market/opportunities is through the credibility of channels and strategies they communicate their CSR efforts (Ihlen, Bartlett & May, 2011). This process resounds with sustainable CSR communication, which parallels Godemann & Michelsen's (2012) view on sustainability communication.

This paper is structured as thus: the first section introduces our aim and methodological approach; the second section deals with how a transition from mere CSR information transmission to stakeholder engagement via sustainability communication can frame sustainable CSR communication or better corporate-stakeholder relations. The third part of the paper explores the theoretical framework adopted; fourth aspect of the paper focuses on CSR communication in the age of new media; while the next part considers CSR communication, sustainability and stakeholder interaction; and the final section of the paper deals with conclusion.

It is expected that insight shared in this paper will be relevant to CSR communicators and MNCs in dealing with effective stakeholder engagement. In the age of increased criticisms of multinationals' CSR communication and records, which is precipitated by more demand by stakeholders for accountability, new

media can be used for better stakeholder engagement and sustainable communication. This is because new media diversifies as well as democratises CSR communication and engagement processes for legitimacy and credibility, which shapes sustainability communication. The literature reviewed in the light of our methodology informs how new media can facilitate sustainability communication.

1. Between Transmission and Engagement – Towards the Logic of Sustainability Communication

Since the 1930's, communication practitioners and management experts have engaged in ways to better explain the intricate process of human communication with the aid of models/theories of communication (Seitel, 2007; Smith & Taylor, 2006; Smith, Berry & Pulford, 2002). This led two American researchers, Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver to conceptualise a model for identifying the main processes/channels of communication in explaining their impact on telephone as well as radio telecommunications. Thus, the current models/theories of communication – even CSR communication – came in the wake of this path-finding attempt to theorise communications models.

In the view of Shannon & Weaver (1948), information flows from the sender/speaker to the hearer/receiver in one-directional, mechanistic and unilateral manner. Since Shannon & Weaver (1948), as telecommunications researchers wanted to ascertain how electric signal was transmitted via wire or radio wave, the ultimate aim, was to know what happens during this process. Thus, although this experiment gave birth to theory of communication, it is however, not a mutual way of communication for inclusiveness and reciprocity (Seitel, 2007). Historically, other attempts had been made to theorise communication model before Shannon & Weaver's (1948) model came on the radar, however their work is widely known in communication studies as pioneer communication theory.

Given the limitations of Shannon & Weaver's (1948) model, other communication theorists have emphasised the need for two-way and shared communication models premised on feedback, dialogue and mutual sense-making. This gave rise to Schramm's (1955) model of communication that is context specific as well as culture-oriented. Although this model of communication is less linear, it is however bi-directional (bilateral communication) in scope and reach as two people in such communication setting might have different views or understanding as a result of cultural bias.

Another model was propounded by Katz & Lazarfeld (1955) in their book, *Personal Influence*. This communication model is similar to Schramm's (1955) model, but a major way it distinguishes itself is that it reduces mass indoctrination of communicators. Talking about the same communication model, which is essentially about transmitting and receiving information, is Roger's (1962) communication diffusion model. It deals with how information can be diffused to different areas for mass communication. The above models of communication belong to what is characterised in communication studies as traditional communication models. Thus, communication models have evolved from the

traditional era to the modern period particularly in the context of social media and new technologies. This has impacted profoundly on methods of engagement as well as dialoguing with stakeholders within the context of CSR communication.

In the contemporary era, there are models such as communication constructionism by Jesse Delia et al (1975), Pearce & Cronen's (1980) co-ordinated management of meaning communication model, Grunig & Hunt's (1984) model, Habermas' (1984) communicative action model, and Morsing & Schultz's (2006) stakeholder engagement model among others. It is noteworthy to say that the models of communication mentioned are the landmark models of communication in communication studies and management; other models are built around the models articulated here.

Despite the model of communication conceived, managers and corporate organisations need to ensure that communication is about sense-making and sense-giving (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). To this end, it is therefore imperative for organisations to put into consideration internal and external contexts during (CSR) communication in order to avoid stakeholder criticism as well as to foreground sustainability communication.

Therefore, a model of CSR communication that will have positive impact on sustainability is vital. This is redoubled in the age of new media. The emergence of Facebook in 2004, YouTube in 2005 and Twitter in 2006, as well as other social networking applications have brought extraordinary way of re-conceptualising communication models particularly CSR communication. Social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, My-Space have democratised CSR communication (Morsing & Schultz, 2006) in ways that connectivity based on stakeholder interaction and plurality of views are espoused.

This will in the final analysis impacts sustainability communication; hence the process of stakeholder engagement is diversified and unrestricted. In exemplifying this, in his study of nine corporate leaders, Aula (2010) demonstrated how social media – new technology – can be used as a strategic tool by organisations to boost sustainability as well as to manage risks associated with CSR communication and reputation management.

As the business world experiences fast changing business culture, rapid acceleration of technological development and mutative pressures of globalisation, organisational success essentially depends on rethinking CSR communication and strategies of stakeholder communication (Morsing & Schultz, 2006; Lindgreen & Swaen, 2010; Venton, 2011). Trends in management science today are the advent of new technologies and wave of innovation and globalisation, which have impacted business in diverse areas.

These factors have essentially impacted hugely on how organisations structure their communications strategies and information channels through which they engage other stakeholders (the public) for sustainable business practice (Barrett, 2002). Put differently, for firms to be competitive, their CSR communication strategy needs to reflect their commitment to sustainability. In corroborating this, Gurhan-Canli (2010) stated that ''… it is necessary to communicate CSR efforts to consumers in order to improve brand-related

outcomes. Clear and credible communication can enhance consumers' attitude towards a company embracing CSR'' (p. 100).

Thus, firms' CSR communication strategies could be a potent means to build confidence in the minds of stakeholders as well as a platform to maximise sustainability efforts (Tench & Yeoman, 2006). In this direction, organisations are rethinking management strategies according to stakeholders' views and pressures in order to be competitive (Barrett, 2002). The preceding argument brings to light the need to theorise a model of CSR communication in the age of new media that will advance CSR communication in a sustainable way. This is the motive of this paper, which has been done via sustainability communication. It takes into consideration a model of CSR communication that advances a re-conceptualised communication model informed by new media realities and stakeholder concerns for sustainability. The next section of this paper looks at this approach. We have stated a model of CSR communication, which parallels sustainability communication as articulated by Godemann & Michelsen (2012). This model of communicating CSR for sustainability will be considered in detail shortly by looking at the variables that frame such model of CSR communication.

2. Theoretical Framework

Given the plethora of criticism that organisations face in modern business environment regarding their CSR communication and commitment, this paper conceptualises transcending this dilemma via sustainability communication. It deals with arriving at mutual sense-making between organisations and their diverse stakeholders through sustainable business/communication practice (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Given the pressures of management strategies that resonate with increased demand by stakeholders for organisations to engage in sustainable culture, organisations can appropriate this framework to arrive at less criticism of their CSR commitment, which will facilitate sustainability (Visser, 2011).

Thus, in the age of new media that has the capacity to accelerate information dissemination and sharing as well as storage and retrieval of information, firms can advance their sustainability efforts via this platform for more visibility of their CSR commitment. In the new media age, social technologies have brought an unprecedented wave of sustainability campaign and stakeholder pressure on firms. In their recent report Mckinsey shows how companies such as BP and others used the Internet and social media to ''engage radically'' (Browne & Nuttal, 2013, p. 4) with other stakeholders for effective internal and external stakeholder engagement that impact sustainability. Engaging radically here resonates with measuring outcomes consequent on factoring in CSR issues, observing externalities, appraising their capabilities and gains as well as considering reputation risks.

Beyond mere corporate visibility, sustainability communication is an essential management tool for managing stakeholders' expectations regarding CSR; it is also a potent tool for measuring how sustainable firms' commitment to socio-environmental issues is. This is because it affords other stakeholders hitch-free access and less cost (compared to traditional media) to express their views

about CSR. Lumped together, sustainability communication deals with communicating a company's CSR issues by taking cognisance of economic, social and environmental concerns, as well as considering the inputs of diverse stakeholders in the process. This process is crucial for reputation management, maximum return to capital invested and harmonious corporate-stakeholder relations.

However, central to this debate is the means via which CSR is communicated. This begs the question: what is the nature and strategies of communicating CSR for sustainability? In the age of new media, when information dissemination and sharing is democratised, the new media can be used to advance this process. Thus, in corroborating this assertion, ''[S]ustainability communication is strongly influenced by mass media, which is needed to give it resonance …'' (Godemann & Michelsen, 2012, p. 7). This is mainly the case in the mediated forms of communication (for example social media and web 2.0), which relies on social networks and processes to be effective. Therefore, essential to this strategy is for organisations to be viewed socially responsible by stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). The emergence of the internet (new media) has redoubled this reality. To this end, ''… the magic of the Internet is that it is a technology that puts cultural symbolisations in all forms in the hands of all participants'' (Payton & Kvasny, 2012, 83). The participants in this sense are the stakeholders, whose views are critical for organisational survival (Dunne, 2007).

Figure 1 (sustainable communication schemata) is a diagrammatic representation of envisioned model of CSR communication via which organisations (MNCs) can engage with other stakeholders for sustainability. This model of CSR communication resonates with sustainability communication as identified by Godemann & Michelsen (2012).
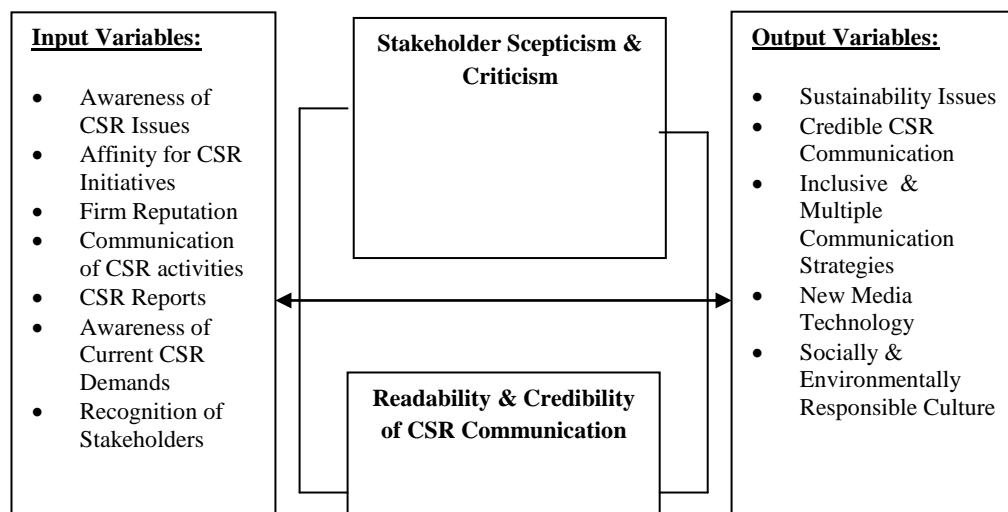

Input Variables:

- Awareness of CSR Issues
- Affinity for CSR Initiatives
- Firm Reputation
- Communication of CSR activities
- CSR Reports
- Awareness of Current CSR Demands
- Recognition of Stakeholders

Stakeholder Scepticism & Criticism

Readability & Credibility of CSR Communication

Output Variables:

- Sustainability Issues
- Credible CSR Communication
- Inclusive & Multiple Communication Strategies
- New Media Technology
- Socially & Environmentally Responsible Culture

Figure 1 The Authors, Sustainable Communication Schemata (SCS)

In the diagram above, the transition from Input Variable (IV) to Output Variable (OV) is predicated on the interaction of stakeholder scepticism or criticism of organisations' CSR practice and the readability and credibility of their CSR commitment. Thus, in the era of new media which is correlative of democratic communication channels and strategies as well as diversified platforms for corporate-stakeholder engagement, sustainability communication can be advanced as illustrated in our ''Sustainable Communication Schemata'' (figure 1). Thus, both IV and OV impact each other in a reciprocal way that resonates with sustainability communication.

Apparently, this approximation will not be feasible in the era of traditional media, which builds silos between companies and other stakeholders. Traditional media shies away from democratised, diversified and ''social intelligent'' (Harryson, Metayer & Sarrazin, 2012) communication strategies, which detracts from inclusive stakeholder engagement about CSR.

3. CSR Communication in the Age of New Media

A major part of this paper borders on communications channels and strategies that firms can utilise in order to take all stakeholders (primary and secondary) on board. Our CSR communication schema above illustrates this. In this direction, a major way in which communications strategies or channels can affect CSR is by opening up multiple ways/media in which organisations could advance their CSR agenda for sustainability. The strategies and channels of corporate communications are vital in building relationships between firms and the public – other stakeholders. For the public – other stakeholders – to see firms as socially responsible, their communications strategies need to factor in shared views, ideals and interests of all stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

In this vein, Grunig & Repper consider communication involving stakeholders as facilitating development of lasting and stable relationship that organisations need for advancing business gains, as well as capable of deflecting stakeholder criticisms. In consonance with this line of argument, Van Riel in his *Principles of Corporate Communication* (1995) stated that

> corporate communication is an instrument of management by
> means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external
> communication are harmonised as effectively as possible, so as to
> create a favourable basis for relationships with groups, upon which
> the organisation is dependent (p. 26).

According to Tench & Yeomans (2006, p. 255), organisations can manage their image through CSR communication by incorporating diverse channels via which stakeholders can read, understand and interpret organisational sustainability communication. This process also affects issues that border on corporate social responsibility.

Since corporate communication essentially deals with external communication, the points below should be considered for sustainable communication practice.

- Stakeholder engagement via social media – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc
- Electronic surveys/focus group
- Electronically mediated conferences
- Blogging
- Maintenance of hotlines
- RSS feeds
- Webcasting/Internet streaming

The above technology-enabled channels have been considered beneficial to organisations in recent time because of their high diffusion of information, as well as their capacities to create more forceful awareness and increase the acceleration of information dissemination/sharing. Apart from these factors, the new technology impact CSR communication by expanding the discursive space for shared stakeholder engagement and CSR communication.

This process democratises stakeholder engagement. As statistics show, firms are rethinking ways to make their CSR communication sustainable. A recent survey conducted by the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth demonstrated a continued uptake of these new media strategies by Fortune 500 in their CSR communication, with significant activity across social media channels (Barnes et al. 2012). In addition, Cisco has estimated that global mobile data traffic will increase some 18 fold between 2011 and 2016, with the number of mobile connected devices exceeding the world's population in 2012 (Cisco, 2012). These statistics are essential for organisations to re-think their CSR communication model for sustainability via the lens of new media.

4. CSR Communication, Sustainability and Stakeholders

This section of the paper stresses the centrality of CSR communication model that takes the views of stakeholders into consideration via new media to sustainability. The discussion above relates with this section as it endorses the importance of new media (social media) to CSR communication for sustainability. Before attempting trends in sustainability, it is pertinent to define sustainability. This will give better insights into how this trend has evolved. Sustainability means so many things to different disciplines. However, no matter how sustainability is considered by different fields, there is an underlying framework to understanding its essence. Sustainability rests on a three-legged framework that is being popularised by John Elkington in his *Cannibals with Folk: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business* (1997). Thus, sustainability revolves around these tripartite variables: the economic, environmental and social for any business to be deemed sustainable (Ferrell, Thorne & Ferrell, 2011).

Sustainability brings together the three P's: planet (environment), people (social) and profit (economic) and makes them to function in a way that brings sustainable business practice. The three P's or E's (the economic, environmental and equity) have to function in a manner that recognises interdependence and interconnectedness for sustainable development. This is the logic of sustainability.

CSR is about social responsibilities (voluntary or philanthropic) that firms take into consideration, while sustainability goes a step further in appraising how firms have been able to achieve this commitment in a way that sustains the environment and society apart from economic gains (Carroll, 1979; Frederick, 1978, 1994; Dunne, 2007).

Broadly, sustainability means a business culture in which business or CSR issues are carried out in a way that supports long-term viability. In the modern era, businesses are challenged to be socially responsible; so, pressures of modern business realities have thrown up the challenge of incorporating sustainability ideals into business model for organisations to be competitive. Such pressures find expression in new media challenges that affect sustainable CSR communication (Wood, 2010; Lindgreen & Swaen, 2010). In the millennial era, organisations are rather challenged to be ethical in their business dealings, as well as to make their presence wear the toga of social conscience (Freeman, 1984).

Linear information distribution and processing model of communications is better suitable to organisational culture that advances managerialism, rhetoric and brand management rather than relational or shared communication and stakeholder engagement (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). The new media age detracts from this thinking since it democratises stakeholder engagement processes. Thus, Morsing & Schultz's (2006) offer is a theorisation of CSR communication based on ''… concurrent negotiation with its stakeholders to explore their concerns vis-à-vis the company, while also accepting changes when they are necessary'' (p. 328). This envisioned process of communication adumbrates a communication system that is sustainable. The question of sustainability here means that there is a relational exchange amongst stakeholders given the imperative of new media that brings about more democratised way of engagement. As stakeholders' views on CSR is enabled in this process, it brings about sustainability communication, which factors in multiple point of views on CSR commitment for social and environmental responsibility of firms apart from the narrow economic perspective.

Thus, this re-invented CSR communication offers a method for companies to engage in public dialogue, advance legitimacy claims and facilitate positive relationships with stakeholders (the public), which can influence economic and corporate operating environment, as well as delineates a firm's rights, privileges and responsibilities (O'Connor and Shumate, 2010, p. 530; Bostdorff and Vibbert, 1994). This is the heartbeat of sustainability, a metonym for Godemann & Michelsen's (2012) sustainability communication. In a similar vein, as Podnar (2008) argued, CSR communication is a process of

> … anticipating stakeholders' expectations, articulation of CSR
> policy and managing of different organisations communication
> tools designed to provide true and transparent information about

a company's or brand's integration of its business operations, social and environmental concerns, and interactions with stakeholders (p. 75).

This type of stakeholder interaction and communications strategies in the era of new media makes CSR communication an important strategic tool for business success. The visibility and enhanced stakeholder engagement that new media technology affords brings decentralises source of communication by empowering all stakeholders to be participants. To this end, the ''magic'' of the Internet is that it is a technology that puts organisation's symbolisations in virtually all forms in the hands of participants in information dissemination and sharing (that is stakeholders) thereby decentralising the locus of communication (Payton and Kvasny, 2012).

In addition, new media offers greater visibility and an opportunity for stakeholders to connect as well as engage in direct communication that impacts social issues; this is also vital for organisations to widen their business potentials by connecting with other stakeholders thereby deflecting criticism and unsustainable practice. In view of the above, the ways new media can impact (CSR) communication for sustainability are illustrated in Table 1. There are three sections on ''New Media Impact on CSR Communication'' (Table 1). They are communication impact, corporate impact and how CSR communication can be achieved. These sections address how to gauge CSR communication, which is necessary for firms to ascertain how their (CSR) communication model affects stakeholder engagement and sustainability in the light of new media technology development.

Table 1 The Authors, New media impacts on CSR Communication

Communication Impact	Achieved by	Corporate Impact
Insight	Monitoring of communications channels & strategies used by stakeholders	Detailed profile of stakeholders & firms as well as ability to form social networks and groups
Acceleration	Access to channels offering immediate & instantaneous communication on CSR at minimal costs	Ability to accelerate impact and deliver, especially timely and rich information on CSR & sustainability
Depth	Multiple channels offering different media options across diverse stakeholders & platforms	Need to create and deploy multiple processes to simultaneously meet needs of diverse stakeholders on CSR communication
Issue Management	Immediate feedback from stakeholders	Need to be able to proactively respond and manage as and when needed, recognising CSR regulations & requirements
Democratisation	Merge of formal and informal communications via social media, as well as breaking of monopoly of traditional media	Stakeholders interact across media diverse channels with stakeholders, requiring clear guidelines and procedures on CSR & sustainability communication

Thus, given that firms appreciate how information is ''boundaryless'' (Holmes, 2002) in view of new technologies, they are more circumspect with what they do in terms of CSR since the world is a global village.

In the volatile and constantly evolving environment in which organisations operate, it is crucial for organisations to rethink the significance of CSR communication for sustainable business. To this end,

> corporations have increasingly become conscious of their social responsibilities … This is in stark contrast to the predominant viewpoint of the 1970s and 1980s that businesses that have social conscience … are preaching pure and unadulterated socialism… This shift in business paradigm has been both chronicled and analysed (Dutta, Lawson and Marcinko (2012, p. 1)

This awareness is heightened in the age Fairclough (1992) called ''linguistic turn'' in management practice, a period organisations need to rethink their (CSR) communication strategies for business advantage and less criticism. This communication/management strategy finds resonance in what Goodman (2009) called ''a reinvented media landscape – greater access to the creation of information, fewer traditional outlets …'' (p. 227), less emphasis on strategic communication and stress on multi-layered information dissemination and sharing. These factors are fundamental to a model of CSR communication that feeds sustainability communication.

Conclusion

In concluding this paper, we have argued that the wave of new media can be a potent strategic instrument to facilitate CSR communication and commitment as well as sustainability, which is vitally needed for smooth corporate-stakeholder engagement. To achieve this, this paper conceptualises sustainable communication schemata as a gateway to this. This model parallels Godemann & Michelsen's (2012) sustainability communication framework. Also, CSR communication, which supplies acceptance of an organisation within society in the age when corporate citizenship is in retreat, needs to address stakeholders' interests and CSR.

This can be advanced through new media that democratises stakeholder engagement, the fountain of sustainable communication. In modern time, organisations that want to be relevant and successful need to take seriously the opportunities offered by new media (social media) for sustainable business practice.

Therefore, those involved with corporate communications particularly in the CSR circuit need to prepare themselves in a fast changing world across multiple channels with a clear, consistent and CSR-sensitive message that will impact sustainable stakeholder engagement. To achieve this target, firms need to appropriate the energies new media technology affords in terms of its instantaneous CSR communication strategy as well as multiple, inclusive and democratised platforms of

engagement. This is crucial in the modern business era for organisational success and less criticism from stakeholders in relation to social and environmental concerns. Moving forward, this paper hopes that further discussions can be galvanised by the insights shared here for better corporate-stakeholder engagement, sustainability and CSR communication. Also, future research can be advanced in this area by taking into perspective quantitative approaches that will possibly offer empirical insights into how sustainable (CSR) communication can be measured. In justifying our position in this paper, it is apparent from extant literature reviewed as well as our methodology that new media is restructuring CSR communication landscape for effective stakeholder engagement and sustainability.

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