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Original Articles – Management Studies

Navigating the challenges of ESG communication on social media

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Abstract. The paper investigates the challenges for effectively communicating corporate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiatives on social media. As stakeholder expectations regarding ESG transparency increase, it has become critical to communicate these efforts to various stakeholders, including investors, consumers, employees, and regulators. The study emphasises the challenge of finding the right balance in corporate sustainability communication, as under and over-communication can have negative consequences. Over-communication can lead to accusations of greenwashing, while under-communication can create perceptions of negligence. This research uses a multiple case study approach to analyse the ESG communication practices of top global brands listed in the 2024 Global RepTrak® 100, employing Leximancer, a content analysis tool, to identify key themes and insights. The findings highlight successful communication strategies for promoting stakeholder engagement and upholding corporate reputation in an increasingly digital and interconnected environment. The study contributes to the literature on sustainability communication by offering updated strategies for effective ESG communication, aiding companies in navigating the challenges posed by the digital age.

Keywords: ESG, corporate communication, social media, community, impact.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most pressing challenges for businesses today lies in adapting to evolving environmental, social, and governance (ESG) expectations while communicating these efforts effectively. In an increasingly interconnected world, companies must use global and local strategies to emphasise their social and environmental impacts (Cornelissen, 2023; Watson & Kitchen, 2008). The rise of ESG as a critical metric for evaluating corporate responsibility has shifted how companies define success – not only in terms of financial returns but also in terms of their impact on stakeholders and the environment (Khan et al., 2016). This broader approach to value creation requires firms to align their

operations with the growing expectations for transparency, accountability, and ethical behaviour.

As firms integrate ESG into their strategic outlook, they must also consider how best to communicate these efforts to diverse stakeholders, including investors, consumers, employees, and regulators (Perrini & Vurro, 2013 El-Bassiouny et al., 2018). Corporate communication, once seen primarily as a tool for managing brand reputation, is now crucial in fostering long-term relationships and maintaining trust among these groups (Kitchen & Watson, 2010; Palazzo et al., 2020). The challenge, however, lies in balancing the communication of sustainability initiatives – avoiding both the traps of over-communication, which can lead to accusations of greenwashing, and under-communication, which can make the company's efforts seem disingenuous or invisible (Pezet & Casalegno, 2017; Casalegno & Civera, 2016).

Effective sustainability communication requires companies to provide evidence of their social and environmental commitments transparently and consistently. Literature (Casalegno & Civera, 2016; Pezet & Casalegno, 2017; Brondoni & Bosetti, 2018) has highlighted that organisations often struggle to strike this balance. Over-communication, where firms emphasise sustainability efforts that could be better-founded or sufficiently impactful, can damage corporate reputation, especially as stakeholders now have the tools to fact-check and challenge such claims. Conversely, companies that under-communicate their sustainability initiatives risk being seen as negligent or apathetic toward social and environmental issues, even when substantial efforts are made. Both scenarios have critical implications for corporate reputation, which is increasingly shaped by perceptions of authenticity (Hur et al., 2014).

Adding to these complexities, the rise of digital communication platforms has transformed how companies engage with stakeholders. Traditional one-way communication methods, such as press releases and annual reports, are now supplemented by multi-directional, real-time dialogue on social media and other digital platforms (Matten & Moon, 2008). This shift enables companies to interact with stakeholders more responsively and transparently, but it also increases the risk of rapid reputational damage if such communication is not handled carefully. Misinformation or exaggerated claims about sustainability can quickly spread across digital networks, negatively affecting a company's public image (Delmas & Burbano, 2011).

Incorporating ESG considerations into corporate communication strategies requires a nuanced approach that aligns with the broader goals of the business and addresses the specific concerns of different stakeholder groups. ESG frameworks emphasise the need for companies to mitigate their negative impacts and proactively contribute to societal well-being and environmental sustainability (Eccles et al., 2014). Firms that succeed in aligning their ESG strategies with transparent communication practices are better positioned to build trust and secure long-term stakeholder support (Reptrak Company, 2024).

This paper explores the evolving landscape of sustainability communication, particularly within ESG integration. It extends discussion over the balance of under- and over-communication in corporate sustainability by including contemporary communication challenges brought about by the digital age. By examining recent case studies of global leaders in sustainability, this paper aims to provide updated strategies for effective sustainability communication that can help firms navigate the complexities of the modern ESG-driven landscape.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Traditional approaches to sustainability communication

Historically, sustainability communication has been viewed as a strategic tool for reputation management, allowing organisations to showcase their commitment to social and environmental issues while enhancing their corporate image. This perspective is grounded in managerial theories, which emphasise the importance of addressing the diverse interests of all parties involved in or affected by a company's operations (Freeman et al., 2010). The integration of sustainability into corporate communications has been widely studied, with many scholars highlighting the need for consistency across various channels and stakeholders (Watson & Kitchen, 2008; Brondoni, 2014; Siano et al., 2015; Romoli Venturi et al., 2022). However, achieving this consistency has proven difficult due to the varying expectations of diverse stakeholder groups, the dynamic nature of sustainability issues, and challenges associated with aligning corporate actions across different departments and communication channels. Each stakeholder group – from investors to local communities – has unique concerns, which require tailored communication strategies that can lead to fragmented messaging if not carefully managed. Additionally, sustainability goals often evolve in response to emerging environmental, social, and regulatory developments, making it challenging for organisations to maintain coherence and continuity in their messaging across platforms and over time (Watson & Kitchen, 2008; Romoli Venturi et al., 2022). The literature discusses how failing to align sustain-

ability communication with actual corporate behaviour can lead to significant reputational risk (Pérez, 2015). When companies over-communicate their CSR efforts – by making grandiose claims not backed by tangible actions – they risk being accused of greenwashing (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). Greenwashing can severely damage a company's reputation and erode stakeholder trust, particularly in an age where access to information is widespread and stakeholders can easily verify corporate claims. On the other hand, under-communication of sustainability, where companies fail to promote their sustainability initiatives adequately, can lead to missed opportunities to build a positive reputation and engage meaningfully with stakeholders. Furthermore, a company's decision to remain silent on sustainability activities could be seen as an attempt to hide unethical practices or unfulfilled promises, potentially resulting in a loss of consumer trust. To address the imbalance between over- and under-communication of CSR practices, traditional communication models emphasised the importance of transparency and the need to communicate a company's sustainability efforts as part of an integrated business strategy (Perrini, 2005; Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). This approach highlights connections between corporate identity, reputation, and long-term competitive advantage, positioning sustainability as a moral imperative and a strategic business function. However, these models relied on formal communication channels such as sustainability reports, press releases, and corporate websites. While effective in providing detailed information to specific audiences, these static forms of communication often failed to engage a broader, more dynamic set of stakeholders.

2.2. New developments in ESG communication

In contrast to traditional approaches, contemporary ESG communication must navigate a more complex and dynamic environment. The rise of digital platforms and the growing influence of social media have transformed how companies connect with their stakeholders. Scholars and marketing experts widely acknowledge that the online environment offers a powerful avenue for delivering engaging sustainability messages (Mosca & Civera, 2017). The presence of brands on websites and social media enhances the dissemination of information and improves distinct sustainability communication (Eberle et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2013; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Mosca & Civera, 2017). Unlike traditional methods, online platforms significantly enhance interaction between businesses and stakeholders by providing an "inexpensive, simple, and fast way" for audiences

apparently to connect with and influence brands (Jose & Lee, 2007, p. 308). Social media, in particular, serves as a vital tool for brands to develop content strategies that effectively increase engagement with all stakeholders (Lim & Rasul, 2022). This shift enables a transition from one-way communication – where companies merely broadcast their ESG initiatives – to multi-directional communication that fosters stakeholder dialogue and collaboration. As a result, stakeholders are not just passive recipients of information; they become active participants in the sustainability conversations (Coviello & Brodie, 1998).

However, while social media allow for real-time communication and increased transparency, enabling organisations to respond to stakeholder concerns, these platforms also increase the risk of reputational damage, as misinformation or negative feedback can spread rapidly, often before a company can react effectively (Romoli Venturi et al., 2022). Despite the increasing recognition of the complexities associated with ESG communication in digital environments, a significant gap exists in understanding how companies can effectively navigate the challenges posed by over and under-communication in the context of rapid digital transformation. While previous studies highlighted the balance required in communicating sustainability efforts, there is limited empirical research on strategies organisations can employ to effectively manage this balance in a digital landscape characterised by multi-directional communication. There is a need for more contemporary examples and case studies that illustrate successful communication practices among companies actively integrating ESG principles into their strategies (Singhania, & Saini, 2022). To fill these gaps, this paper contributes to the existing literature on sustainability and communication by tackling to the following research question: *"How can companies effectively communicate their sustainability initiatives in the context of ESG integration, while navigating the challenges of over and under-communication in an increasingly digital and interconnected world?"*

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a multiple case study methodology to investigate best practices in sustainability communication by examining a selection of leading global companies recognised for their sustainable initiatives. The multiple case study approach is particularly well-suited for this research, as it facilitates an in-depth examination of how leading organisations perform ESG communication on social media while identifying key

factors contributing to effective stakeholder engagement and reputation management. The 2024 Global RepTrak® 100 guided the researchers in selecting cases for the analysis. This ranking is particularly relevant for this study, as it not only highlights the reputation of each brand but also evaluates its performance against environmental, social, and governance criteria when calculating reputation scores. The focus was placed on the top five companies featured in the 2024 Global RepTrak® 100 list: Lego, Mercedes-Benz Group, Rolex, Sony, and Canon. Except for Mercedes, which entered the ranking for the first time in 2022, all of these companies have consistently been ranked among the top performers in global sustainability and corporate reputation rankings (Reputation Institute, 2017-2024). Therefore, examining these companies' social media communication strategies offers an overview of the common elements of successful ESG communication, offering valuable insights applicable to organisations seeking to enhance their sustainability narratives (Dolan et al., 2018).

To conduct the analysis, two researchers meticulously collected captions from the selected companies' Facebook and Instagram profiles over a specified period, from February 28, 2023, to September 28, 2024. For this data collection process, the researchers employed Python, resulting in 9,658 captions (as shown in Table 1).

Following the data collection, a team of three researchers employed ChatGPT to filter out any captions deemed irrelevant to the three pillars of sustainability such as environmental, social, and governance. Specific sustainability-related keywords within each caption guided this filtering process. The keywords were carefully selected based on five categories: diversity, environment, employee support, product quality, and community. This systematic approach ensured the analysis focused on relevant content, enhancing the robustness of the findings.

This filtering process resulted in 294 captions being selected for the content analysis.

Then the researchers have employed Leximancer, an advanced software tool, to conduct qualitative data analysis with minimal bias, addressing a standard limitation of traditional manual approaches. By automating the identification and categorisation of concepts within the dataset, Leximancer has enabled systematic analysis of large volumes of text, reducing the subjectivity often associated with human interpretation. The software operates through an algorithmic, iterative process that examines word frequencies and co-occurrences within blocks of text, helping the researchers to uncover patterns and relationships that might not have been immediately apparent. This approach provided an objective, data-driv-

Table 1. Number of posts extracted by platform.

Brands	Posts on Instagram	Posts on Facebook
Canon	960	795
Lego	950	968
Mercedes	2975	607
Rolex	208	643
Sony	652	900
Total	*5745*	*3913*

en method of analysing the texts explored herein. In the analysis, Leximancer® extracted "concepts" critical terms based on their frequency and contextual relevance in the data (Sazon et al., 2024; Wilk et al., 2021). These concepts were then grouped into broader "themes," allowing the researchers to observance of clusters of related ideas and to trace the connections between different elements of ESG communication. This has been particularly useful here, as it has facilitated the identification of recurring themes, such as "sustainability" or "stakeholders," and provided a clearer understanding of how these concepts interrelate within the broader ESG discourse. One of the most valuable outputs of using Leximancer has been the generation of a Concept Map, a visual representation that illustrates the relationships between themes and concepts. This map has enabled to quickly identify dominant narratives within the data and more comprehensively explore the underlying structure of ESG communication. Additionally, the iterative nature of Leximancer's process ensured that the analysis remains robust, with the data being continually reprocessed to refine and enhance the accuracy of the identified concepts. Through this software, the researchers have gained more profound insights into the patterns and themes present in ESG communication allowing the development of a more nuanced understanding of how organisations articulate their responsibilities and engage with stakeholders.

4. RESULTS

After removing 9,364 posts from the initial dataset, which included 5,745 Instagram posts and 3,913 Facebook posts, the researchers analysed the resulting database of 294 posts using Leximancer software. This analysis revealed three interconnected clusters, as shown in Figure 1: Community, Renewable, and Impact, with 267, 90, and 19 mentions, respectively, as illustrated in Table 2. The Leximancer Concept Map provides valuable insights into how top-reputational brands, as ranked by Reptrak, communicate their ESG initiatives on social

Table 2. Keywords co-occurrences.

Cluster	Hits	Co-Occurrences
Community	267	community, world, inspiring, proud, people, support, people, proud, work, sustainable, share, culture, products, culture, story, future, LGBTQ, space, women, design, family, LGBTQIA, inclusive, partnership, technology, art, materials, inspiring, art, society, inclusive, materials, respect, environment, donations, employees, pride, creativity, mentoring, change, project, power, organisations, partner, worldwide, kids, accessibility, natural, Sustainability, award, earth, skills, ecosystems, spirit, groundbreaking, acceptance
Renewable	90	renewable, conservation, energy, humans, quality, packaging, battery, plastic, all-electric, campaign, wildlife, reuse
Impact	19	impact, oceans, woman, young, bio

media. In the following section, a detailed explanation is given including examples of captions related to the main topics within each cluster.

4.1. Cluster "Community"

The prominence of the "*Community*" cluster, which includes 267 hits, highlights a significant shift from an environment-centric ESG communication strategy to a more holistic approach that addresses emerging social issues such as social justice, diversity, and preservation of cultural identity. Posts within this cluster provide examples of how companies foster an inclusive culture that prioritises the well-being of all individuals and promotes diversity and inclusion by supporting low-power groups of stakeholders or social causes.
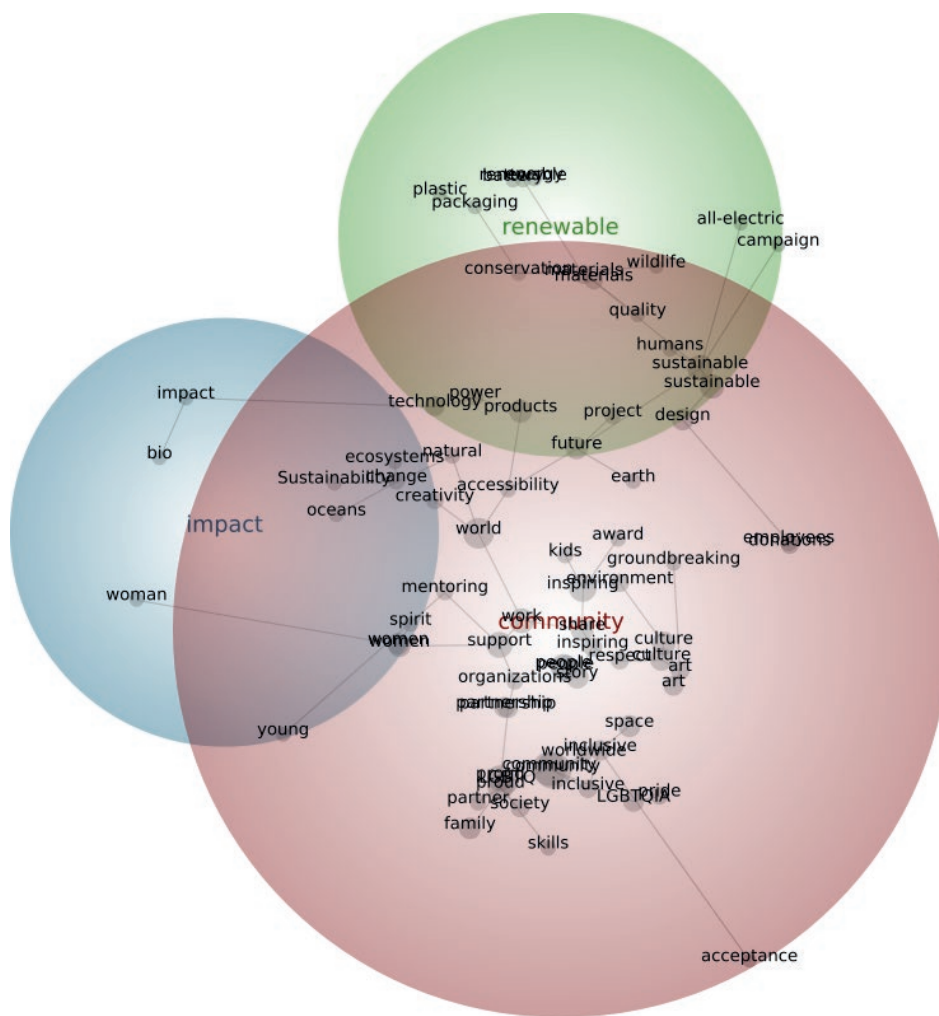

Figure 1. Leximancer concept map for association of sustainable themes and concepts.

Among the brands analysed, Mercedes-Benz exemplifies a solid commitment to inclusivity and diversity by supporting the *LGBTQIA+* community. Mercedes Group's Instagram and Facebook accounts reveal the company's attention to the LGBTQIA+ community by sharing personal stories of self-acceptance. "*We will share stories of people from the LGBTQIA+ community and their inspiring journeys to their true selves. At Mercedes-Benz, we celebrate every road you take and foster a culture of appreciation and respect.*" Further reinforcing its commitment to the LGBTQ+ community, Mercedes-Benz announced on its social media the partnership with SAGE, an organisation dedicated to improving the lives of elderly LGBTQ+ individuals. This partnership aligns the brand with LGBTQIA+ advocacy, demonstrating that Mercedes's attention to the cause extends beyond mere promises and is reinforced by tangible actions. The "Community" cluster also highlights the critical role of collaboration and shared responsibility in achieving sustainable development. Keywords such as "support," "partnership," and "culture" suggest that collective efforts are essential for progress, requiring individuals, communities, and organisations to work together toward common goals. This underscores the idea that sustainability extends beyond individual actions and requires systemic change driven by collective responsibility. Canon's "Visa Female Grant," shared on its social profiles, aligns the brand with broader societal efforts to support women in the arts and media, positioning the company as an advocate for social change: "*Every year we award the most inspiring stories told by female photographers with the Canon Visa Female Grant. In 2020, self-taught photographer Sabiha Çimen wowed us with her stories about women in Islamic culture.*" This initiative reflects central themes of empowerment, gender diversity, and cultural representation while promoting more significant gender equity in a field traditionally dominated by men. By honouring Çimen's work, Canon emphasises the importance of amplifying underrepresented voices, particularly those that shed light on nuanced cultural experiences. Moreover, by posting stories that challenge stereotypes and provide insights into diverse cultural identities, Canon recognises the power of visual storytelling through social media to foster social change.

4.2. Cluster "Renewable"

In addition to the "*Community*" cluster, the "*Renewable*" cluster stands out with 90 hits by showing, among the 5 top brands for reputation, a strong focus on communicating about technological innovation as a critical driver of environmental sustainability. This cluster includes all posts highlighting brands' efforts toward environmental sustainability, particularly the transitions to renewable energy and reductions in carbon emissions. Keywords such as "renewable energy", "battery," "all-electric", "packaging", and "plastic" underline the commitment to transitioning from fossil fuels to cleaner energy sources. For instance, the Sony Group articulates its commitment to ecological conservation, stating, "*Sony Group is involved in a variety of environmental conservation activities, one of them being the use of paper-based product packaging instead of relying on plastic packaging, which was released on 6 September.*" This initiative reflects Sony's broader strategy to reduce its environmental impact and concrete action to align the brand with the increasing global emphasis on environmental sustainability and plastic waste reduction. Moreover, among the top 5 brands for reputation, Mercedes Group promotes the theme of animal welfare on its social media account, stating, "*Mercedes-Benz has ensured the well-being of the dogs in this campaign. We have spent decades of research and development to build cars that are all about us humans…*". By emphasising the prioritisation of dogs' well-being in their campaign, Mercedes-Benz appeals to animal lovers and advocates, reinforcing its image as a socially responsible company that extends care to all living beings. Another interesting theme of this cluster linked to environmental sustainability includes the topic of reuse. For example, LEGO posted, "*If bricks could talk, they'd have some seriously awesome stories to tell! Pass them on to continue their adventure and keep them in play for generations to come* 🌍 💡 #MadeToBePlayed #Sustainability #Reuse". This social media caption positions LEGO as a promoter of sustainable behaviour, encouraging consumers to embrace the reuse of its products as part of a broader commitment to sustainability.

4.3. Cluster "Impact"

The "*Impact*" cluster albeit comprising just 19 entries, features posts that explore the broader societal and environmental implications of a company's actions. These discussions include community development, cultural enrichment, and the outcomes of projects that profoundly influence society and the environment by aligning strategies with sustainable development goals. For example, by declaring, "*Support for young artists is integral to the Perpetual Arts Initiative*" Rolex shares its commitment to nurturing young artistic talent through a program that supports emerging artists. By fostering the growth and development of young creatives, Rolex positions itself as a patron of the arts, demonstrating a long-term investment in cultural enrichment and the

future of artistic expression. The initiative aligns with Rolex's brand identity, built on notions of excellence, legacy, and timelessness. By supporting young artists, Rolex ensures that the arts thrive across generations, reinforcing the brand's association with enduring craftsmanship and creativity. The hashtag #PerpetualArts further ties this initiative to the brand's mission of sustained excellence, suggesting that just as Rolex watches are built to last, the company's support for the arts is equally enduring and impactful. By aligning itself with the arts, Rolex cultivates a sophisticated image, demonstrating that its commitment goes beyond luxury goods to fostering creativity and contributing to the global cultural landscape. Similarly, Canon demonstrates its alignment with impactful communication through initiatives like #ShotOnCanon, highlighting products and deeper narratives. One powerful example comes from an underwater photographer who stated: "*Embark on a journey with me as we dive into some of my most cherished photographs captured during my career as an underwater photographer. These images are not just pictures but a testament to the unwavering passion, countless hours, and unyielding commitment dedicated to immortalising the extraordinary beings that inhabit our oceans.*"

Through this kind of storytelling, Canon transcends its role as a camera manufacturer to become a facilitator of environmental and cultural preservation. The brand showcases a strong alignment with sustainability by elevating photography as a medium for environmental awareness, where each image captured under the #ShotOnCanon campaign becomes a window into the world of natural wonders. Through visual storytelling, Canon amplifies the voices of artists and photographers, much like Rolex does with emerging creatives, positioning itself not just as a purveyor of high-quality products but as an advocate for the conservation of cultural and environmental heritage. By supporting creators and initiatives focusing on preservation, Canon adds depth to its brand image, connecting technology with purpose and art with advocacy.

5. EMERGING ISSUES FOR COMMUNICATION MANAGERS

In today's rapidly changing business landscape, communication managers need to fully comprehend the strategic use of digital platforms and social media to effectively convey Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) messages. An analysis of the social media activities of the top five brands, as ranked in the 2024 RepTrak 100, reveals best practices for effective ESG

communication. The best practices are explained in the following section.

5.1. The importance of digital platforms and social media in ESG communication

In today's rapidly evolving landscape, communication managers must recognise digital platforms and social media's critical role in effective ESG communication. Companies like Mercedes-Benz, Lego and Sony leverage these channels to engage stakeholders and demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) through concrete actions. For example, Mercedes-Benz effectively uses social media to highlight advancements in electric vehicle technology and sustainable manufacturing practices. By showcasing these initiatives, the brand reinforces its identity as an environmentally responsible leader in the automotive industry (Vallaster et al., 2012). Similarly, Lego employs its Instagram and Facebook presence to share compelling stories about its sustainability initiatives, focusing on its commitment to sustainable materials and reducing carbon emissions. Sony's posts on social media show the decision to change packaging from plastic to renewable paper. This storytelling approach engages a younger, environmentally conscious audience, fostering a deeper emotional connection with the brand (Pomering & Dolnicar, 2009). The example above shows that digital platforms allow brands to disseminate information and facilitate two-way communication, enabling companies to gather feedback and engage with their stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Moreover, this interaction builds trust and credibility as stakeholders increasingly demand brand transparency regarding sustainability actions, not just promises (Pérez, 2015).

5.2. Integrating ESG communication with corporate strategy

A significant finding from this study is the critical role of integrating sustainability communication into overall corporate strategy. This integration ensures that sustainability messages align with broader strategic objectives, enhancing communication's credibility and effectiveness. Sony and Canon exemplify how embedding ESG considerations into core operations can drive corporate strategy. Sony's transition to paper-based packaging highlights its commitment to responsible business practices while reinforcing its brand identity as a forward-thinking organisation (Reputation Institute, 2017). Canon aligns its corporate strategy with ESG principles by promoting initiatives that support gender

equity and the arts. This alignment strengthens their corporate narratives and resonates with consumers who value inclusivity and representation (Lambin, 2009). Integrating ESG communication with corporate strategy fosters authenticity and credibility in sustainability messaging. Research indicates that companies with aligned strategies experience higher stakeholder trust and loyalty (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). By embedding sustainability into their core practices, companies like Sony and Canon ensure that their CSR efforts are relevant and resonate deeply with stakeholders.

5.3. Balancing ESG & sustainability promises and performance

A core challenge in sustainability communication is ensuring that ESG promises to align with actual performance. Stakeholders, consumers, and investors are increasingly discerning in identifying genuine initiatives versus sustainable campaigns that are pure marketing tactics to improve consumers' perceptions about a specific company or brand. Mercedes-Benz, Lego, Sony, Canon, and Rolex all illustrate the importance of balancing ESG commitments with tangible actions. This balance is critical for communication managers; conveying intentions alongside measurable achievements strengthens credibility and fosters stakeholder trust. By focusing on concrete actions, these organisations position themselves as leaders in corporate sustainability and demonstrate their commitment to addressing social and environmental challenges (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). Studies show that transparency in sustainability efforts can significantly enhance a company's reputation and stakeholder relationships (Lyon & Montgomery, 2015).

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, effective sustainability communication in today's complex business environment requires a delicate balance between spreading and promoting ESG achievements and ensuring these claims are grounded in measurable, verifiable outcomes. Companies must engage in transparent, multi-directional communication that informs and engages stakeholders in meaningful dialogue (Watson & Kitchen, 2008). By leveraging digital platforms, companies can enhance the effectiveness of their sustainability messaging, reach a broader audience, and build a more substantial, resilient reputation. The implications for managers are clear: ESG com-

munication cannot be treated as an afterthought or a superficial marketing strategy. Instead, it must be integrated into the core of the company's business strategy and aligned with its values (Casalegno & Civera, 2016). Therefore, managers must orient their business choices towards ESG and sustainability-focused procedures, policies, products, and vision. This orientation can be effectively communicated to stakeholders through inspirational, educational, and inclusive social communication campaigns. Care must be taken in these communications, as it is pivotal to avoid over- and under-communication (Pezet & Casalegno, 2017) and especially to refrain from making unsustainable promises. In this regard, RepTrak ranking becomes a vital benchmark for comparing brands based on reputation and a key driver for fostering corporate renewal and transformation.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

Like any academic investigation, this research is subject to certain limitations that future studies could address through more focused and comprehensive analysis. It is essential to recognise these constraints not as flaws but as opportunities for further exploration and refinement of the research field. Emphasising the need for more comprehensive analysis can instil a sense of urgency in the audience about addressing these limitations.

One notable limitation is the time frame selected for the sample. While this analysis is robust within the chosen period, extending the temporal scope in future research could provide a more longitudinal perspective. A more extended historical dataset might reveal trends or fluctuations in brand perception and communication strategies that are not visible in shorter timeframes, offering more profound insights into long-term brand positioning and stakeholder engagement. Stressing the potential for deeper insights can make the audience feel the excitement of discovering new knowledge.

In addition, the selection of brands used in this study was limited to the top five performers in the 2024 RepTrak report. Although this allows for a focused examination of the most successful brands in terms of reputation, it excludes other potentially significant brands that have been prominent in previous years or might represent different industry sectors, geographical regions, or strategic approaches. Future research could broaden the sample to include a more diverse range of brands, allowing for comparisons between industry leaders and challengers or between brands in different stages of their reputational development.

Furthermore, this analysis focused exclusively on two social media platforms – Facebook and Instagram – both in the Meta ecosystem. While these platforms influence brand communication, they represent only a subset of the broader social media landscape. Expanding the analysis to include additional platforms such as LinkedIn, X (formerly known as Twitter), and TikTok could yield valuable insights into how communication strategies differ across platforms. These platforms may cater to different audiences and foster distinct forms of interaction, which could lead to variations in messaging, user engagement, and brand perception. Including these platforms would allow for more holistic understanding of cross-platform communication dynamics. Additionally, future research could enrich the analytical framework by incorporating more diverse data points, such as user comments, reactions, shares, and other relevant engagement metrics. These factors could offer a more nuanced view of how audiences respond to brand messaging, providing a richer context for interpreting the effectiveness of various communication strategies. Future studies could uncover more detailed digital interaction patterns and reputation management across different social media ecosystems by broadening the scope of both platforms and metrics.

In summary, while this research offers valuable insights into brand communication strategies within the given scope, numerous avenues remain for further exploration. Addressing these limitations in future research would enhance the robustness of the findings and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of brand management in an increasingly digital and dynamic marketplace.

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