

THE INFLUENCE OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY ON CONSUMER RESPONSES: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Abstract

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Purpose – Research on corporate communication has proposed frameworks grounded within varying theories. However, there is little consensus surrounding a framework for corporate communication strategies in the social media context. A comparison of the impact of different corporate communication strategies on consumer responses has also received limited attention. This study aims to examine and enhance understanding of the relationship between corporate communication strategies and consumer responses.

Methodology/Design/Approach – This study conducted a narrative review. By reviewing previous relevant literature, this method helps identify potential research gaps in the relationship between corporate communication and consumer responses and supports the development of a conceptual model.

Findings – The study developed a framework of corporate communication strategy, and a conceptual model, presenting the relationship between corporate communication strategies (corporate ability, crisis communication, and corporate social advocacy strategy) and their implications for positive (brand co-creation) and negative consumer response (brand cancellation).

Originality of the research – This study broadens the literature by introducing a framework of corporate communication strategy. It also draws upon social exchange theory to develop a conceptual model that highlights how different corporate communication strategies impact on consumer responses. The study offers valuable insights into promoting brand co-creation while mitigating brand cancellation.

Keywords Corporate ability strategy, brand cancellation, consumer engagement, corporate social advocacy, brand identification, crisis communication

Research note

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INTRODUCTION

Corporate communication is an essential management function and addresses challenges related to efficiency and effectiveness (Cornelissen, 2020). With the rise of social media, marketers are increasingly utilising platforms to communicate brand messages and foster positive consumer responses (Dwivedi et al., 2021). In 2017, Airbnb launched the “Experiences” campaign on social media. The campaign highlighted authentic, locally guided activities that moved services offered beyond the provision of accommodation. The campaign boosted brand awareness, with an increase of 172,000 Instagram followers (Ogweng, 2018).

However, corporate communication on social media can also result in negative consumer responses. The controversial “Do Not Say Gay” bill, which was passed in Florida in 2022, was followed by a Disney statement opposing the bill. Individuals on social media initiated a call to boycott Disneyland (Ring, 2022). In August 2024, Chinese tourists used social media to call for a boycott of the Evergreen Laurel Hotel in Paris after the hotel managers removed the Chinese flag from an Olympic-themed lobby display and did not provide a satisfactory explanation for its removal on social media (Chen, 2024). These examples highlight that while practical corporate communication activities can benefit companies, some corporate communication messaging may provoke a public backlash. Marketers are required to understand consumer responses to corporate messaging, to help them maximise the benefits and mitigate risks.

While research has investigated the types, objectives, and significance of corporate communication (Asemah & Ekharefo, 2022), there remains third gaps in this field. First, while research has explored the positive influence of corporate communication on social media, such as word of mouth and purchase intention (Gistri et al., 2019), consumer satisfaction (Agyei et al., 2021), and brand reputation (Asemah & Ekharefo, 2022), limited attention has been paid to the negative impacts, especially brand cancellation. Consumers call for the withdrawal of support for a brand when they feel that some of its activities or statements violate their values or are publicly unacceptable. This is known as brand cancellation (Costa & Azevedo, 2024). As social media can amplify corporate actions and rapidly disseminate negative information, some brand cancellation messages on social media allows consumers to quietly distance themselves from a brand (Costa & Azevedo, 2024). Therefore, it is necessary for companies to understand the dynamics of brand cancellation as a way to enhance the ability to anticipate, mitigate, and respond to this phenomenon to maintain reputation and consumer trust.

Furthermore, the corporate communication strategy literature is fragmented, with strategies or categories being examined in isolation across different studies (e.g., Agyei et al., 2021; Bouzzine & Lueg, 2023; Fatma & Khan, 2023; Park et al., 2024). Therefore, there is a lack of a systematic classification of corporate communication strategies. Analysing and comparing the effects of different corporate communication strategies on consumer responses may help to fill this research gap and thus enhance the understanding of corporate communication strategies. Third, there is still a lack of theoretical frameworks to explain how corporate communication strategies influence consumer responses. Few studies have explored the interconnections between corporate communication strategies, consumer engagement, brand identification, brand co-creation, and brand cancellation. Filling these gaps will help companies to better understand and predict consumer responses to corporate communication messages. The study will address these research gaps with three objectives:

1. To propose a framework that incorporates different corporate communication strategies.
2. To develop and justify eight research questions based on the proposed framework.
3. To construct a conceptual model that outlines the relationship between corporate communication messages and consumer responses.

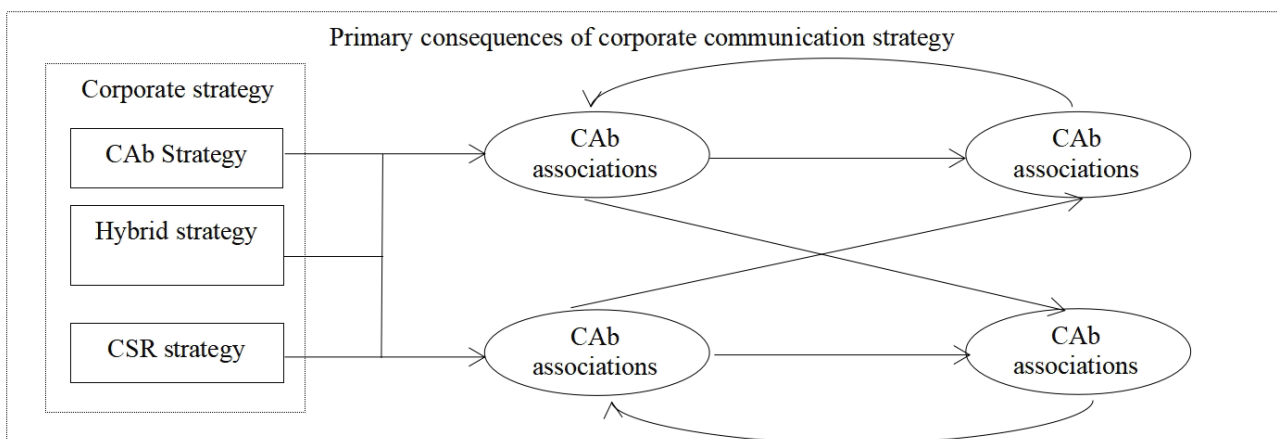
This study will deepen the understanding of corporate communication messages on social media, enabling companies to make informed decisions when selecting communication strategies. The study will also highlight potential negative and positive outcomes associated with different strategies, providing valuable insights for the management of consumer engagement, brand co-creation, brand identification, and brand cancellation. The structure of this study is as follows: literature review and research questions, hypothesis development, and a conclusion that discusses the study's theoretical and practical implications, along with its limitations and directions for future research.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.1. Corporate communication strategy framework

Corporate communication is a management tool that includes internal and external communication (Riel, 1995). Companies can manage relationships with internal and external stakeholders and build a positive image through effective communication (Asemah & Ekharefo, 2022). Figure 1 presents the classification of the three corporate communication strategies proposed by Kim and Rader's (2010) framework. The framework identified three corporate communication strategies: (1) CAb strategy, which centres on developing cognitive associations related to a company's expertise in its products and services; (2) CSR strategy, which aims to shape how the public views the company's commitment to social responsibility; and (3) Hybrid strategy, which combines both CAb and CSR strategies, thereby communicating the company's competence while also highlighting its social responsibility initiatives (S. Kim & Rader, 2010). The categorisation has been utilised in a number of studies (e.g., Fatma & Khan, 2023; Kim, 2011; Kim et al., 2014).

Figure 1: A model of corporate communication strategy

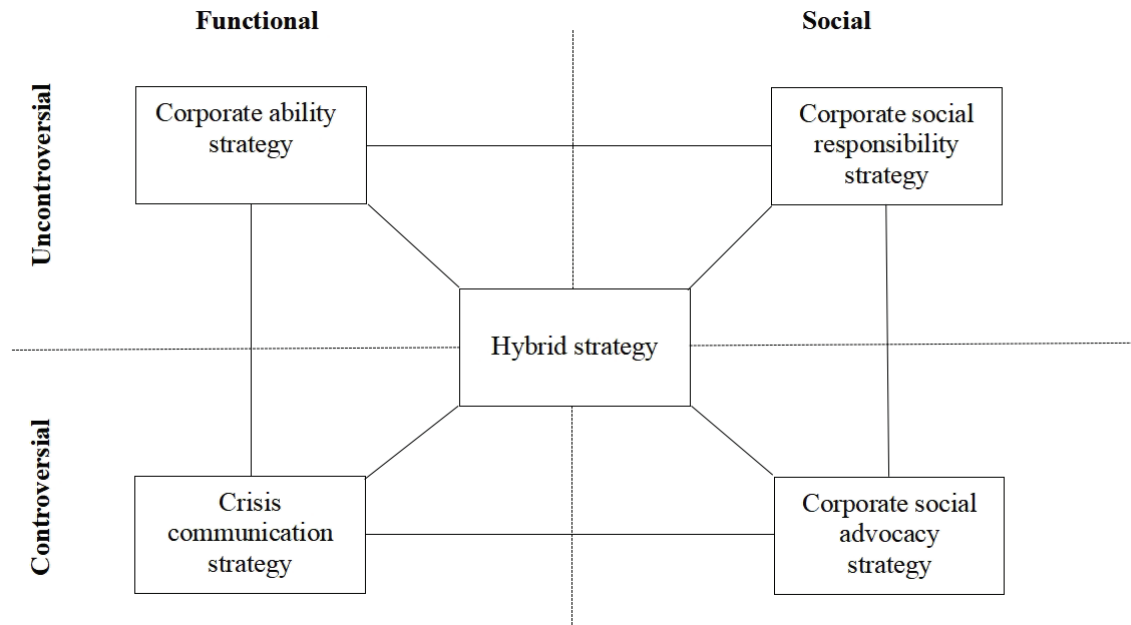


Building on previous classifications, this study proposes two additional corporate communication strategies specific to social media: (1) Crisis communication, defined broadly as the collection, processing, and dissemination of information required to address a crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2010); and (2) Corporate social advocacy, where a company takes a public stance on a controversial or contemporary social issue (Dodd & Supa, 2014). These positions may be part of a planned communication strategy or may arise from spontaneous remarks by senior figures, such as a CEO, in an informal setting (Park & Berger, 2004).

There are two reasons for including these strategies within a corporate communication strategy framework. Firstly, companies face many internal and external risks that can quickly develop into crises (Coombs & Holladay, 2010). Negative information can also spread rapidly via the internet and social media, posing a significant threat to a company's reputation (Gulnerman et al., 2021; Saroj & Pal, 2020; Zheng et al., 2020). Effective corporate communication during a crisis is crucial. Internal communication

ensures everyone within the company understands the situation, while external communication delivers the public messages (Asemah & Ekharefo, 2022). This makes crisis management especially relevant. Secondly, unlike the CSR strategy, which tends to address issues with broad societal agreement, corporate social advocacy tackles divisive sociopolitical issues. These tend to be unresolved social matters, where there is significant public and institutional disagreement (Bhagwat et al., 2020). A survey from the 23rd Edelman Trust Barometer revealed that 85% of respondents expect CEOs to speak out on societal issues (Dhanesh, 2024). Therefore, corporate social advocacy should be considered within a framework of corporate communication strategy.

Figure 2: A framework of corporate communication strategy



This study proposes a framework for corporate communication strategies (Figure 2). The framework differentiates between strategies in terms of their functional, social, controversial, and non-controversial dimensions. The functional dimension emphasises strategy functional and goal attributes. For example, corporate ability strategy aims to demonstrate a company's expertise in areas such as product quality, service, global success, industry leadership, innovation, and research and development (Fraustino & Connolly-Ahern, 2015; Tao & Wilson, 2015). Crisis communication strategy focuses on what companies do and say after a crisis to shape how stakeholders view the crisis and to restore the company's reputation (Coombs & Holladay, 2010). The social dimension concentrates on strategies directed towards societal issues. Corporate social responsibility and corporate social advocacy strategies showcase how an organisation addresses social concerns (Dhanesh, 2024; Park et al., 2024). Of the four strategy typologies, crisis communication and corporate social advocacy often tackle diverse or controversial topics that may split public opinion. Therefore, these strategies sit within a controversial designation and corporate ability and corporate social responsibility strategy typologies are designated as uncontroversial. The hybrid strategy typology refers to the existence of the four strategies.

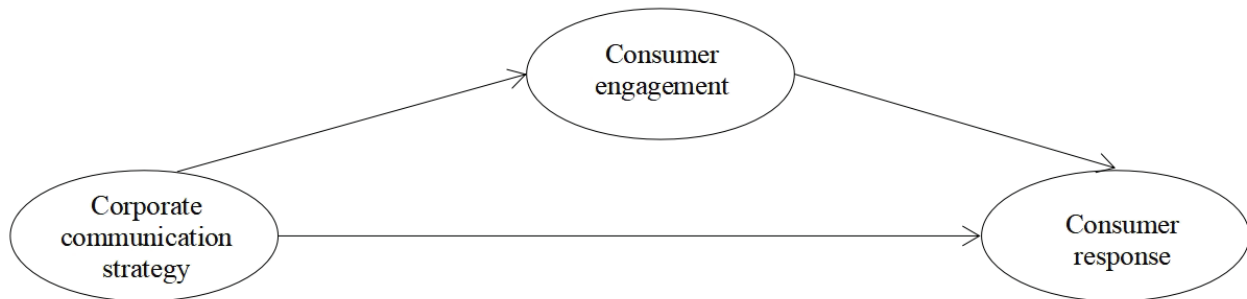
1.2. Theoretical framework

The corporate communication strategy literature is highly fragmented and relies upon different theories. For example, based on stakeholder theory, Uddin (2018) examined the relationship between corporate ability strategy and customer satisfaction. Applying attribution theory, Gupta et al. (2021) examined how corporate social responsibility strategy influences purchase intention. Based on situational crisis communication theory, Leung et al. (2023) analysed how individuals attribute and respond to crisis management activities. Applying the theory of planned behaviour, Kim et al. (2023) explored the psychological factors that drive individual intentions to engage in word-of-mouth to support corporate social advocacy.

Various theories make it challenging to understand how communication strategies affect consumer responses. Therefore, this study intends to apply social exchange theory to explain the holistic relationship between corporate communication strategy and consumer responses. The theory suggests that interactions between individuals or groups are voluntary exchanges. This exchange relies on a cost-benefit analysis: individuals aim to maximise benefits while reducing costs (Blau, 2017). The concept of exchange is crucial in marketing, particularly when it comes to the relationship between companies and consumers (Lotti & Lehmann, 2007). Therefore, social exchange theory has been widely applied in marketing research (Ahmad et al., 2023; Farhana, 2021; Gawuna & Dasuki, 2022; Lin & Chang, 2018).

According to Ahmad et al. (2023), the nature of the relationship between the parties involved in the exchange process affects psychological exchange, such as engagement. Positive psychological exchanges result in the transfer of beneficial psychological resources, which affects subsequent responses (Ahmad et al., 2023). In this study, corporate communication strategies convey to consumers the benefits of the company. Consumers may react to corporate communication messages by commenting, sharing, and forwarding messages within social media platforms (Wallace et al., 2014). Brand posts can also be recreated (Muntinga et al., 2011), which is an effective way to develop strong consumer engagement (Van Doorn et al., 2010). These positive psychological exchanges contribute to positive behavioural responses, such as brand loyalty or brand co-creation (Cheung et al., 2021). Negative psychological exchanges, however, destroy trust, leading to adverse reactions (Makarem & Jae, 2016). The theoretical framework of this study is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3: The theoretical framework



1.3. Research questions

Given that (1) corporate communication strategy covers a broad scope (Cornelissen, 2020), (2) the existing literature on corporate social responsibility is extensive (Akbari et al., 2021; Fatma & Khan, 2023; Ferrés & Marcet, 2021), and (3) a hybrid strategy is too complex to pinpoint specific elements (Tao & Wilson, 2016), this study concentrates on the relationship between other three corporate communication strategies (corporate ability strategy, corporate social advocacy, and crisis communication strategy) and consumer responses.

This approach will provide greater insight for future research. To explore corporate ability strategy, this study focused on strategy association, which relates to the cognitive connection consumers have with company competence, including the delivery of high-quality products and services (Kim & Rader, 2010). The study explores crisis communication through communication authenticity, defined as the degree to which consumers view a crisis response as being genuine. The study also suggests that to explore corporate social advocacy, advocacy fit is a critical element. Advocacy fit describes how well a company's actions align with a controversial social issue that it endorses (Parcha, 2018).

The study also examines consumer responses through positive (brand co-creation) and negative responses (brand cancellation). Lusch and Vargo (2014) described co-creation as a process where two or more parties work together to create value. In branding, co-creation highlights the change in the consumers' role, from passive value receivers to active contributors who shape experiences (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Co-creation has gained increasing importance in marketing literature since the early 2000s. Brand cancellation refers to consumer action on social media to boycott a brand due to perceived wrongdoings with the aim to drive change in the market (Demsar et al., 2023). This consumer activism includes withdrawal of support, the boycotting of products, publicly criticising the brand online, and encouraging others to stop endorsing it (Zhang et al., 2024). Brand cancellation has attracted considerable scholarly and marketing professional interest (Costa & Azevedo, 2024; Demsar et al., 2023; Kyriakou et al., 2023; Saldanha et al., 2023). There remains a significant gap in a broader understanding of brand cancellation from a corporate communication perspective (Saldanha et al., 2023). The study will investigate the following research questions.

- RQ 1: Does corporate ability association influence brand co-creation?
- RQ 2: Does corporate ability association influence brand cancellation?
- RQ 3: Does crisis communication authenticity influence brand co-creation?
- RQ 4: Does crisis communication authenticity influence brand cancellation?
- RQ 5: Does corporate social advocacy fit influence brand co-creation?
- RQ 6: Does corporate social advocacy fit influence brand cancellation?
- RQ 7: Does consumer engagement mediate the relationship between corporate communication strategy and consumer responses?
- RQ 8: Does brand identification moderate the relationship between corporate communication strategy and consumer responses?

2. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Corporate ability association and brand co-creation

France et al. (2018) observed that consumer brand co-creation behaviour is driven by interactivity, where multiple parties directly and indirectly contribute to brand value. Strong brands also rely on ongoing marketing communication with all stakeholders, which is crucial to promote engagement and co-creation (Hatch & Schultz, 2010). Consumers' willingness to co-create brand value leads to the formation of unique brand experiences through the exchange of information and knowledge (Wang & Griskevicius, 2014).

Corporate associations refer to consumers' memory-based perceptions and beliefs about a company (Brown & Dacin, 1997). These associations may include beliefs, perceptions, emotions, past experiences, and the evaluation of company attributes, along with other related knowledge (Dacin & Brown, 2002). Corporate ability (CA) association relates to consumers' perception of a company's core competitiveness, such as delivering high-quality products and services, and leadership and innovation within the industry (Tao & Wilson, 2016). The emotional and functional elements of CA association are essential for the brand co-creation process (Lin & Siu, 2020). Specially, Fatma et al. (2016) found CA association have positive impact on purchase intention. High CA association leads to positive emotional responses from consumers, such as delight, joy, and satisfaction. These emotional elements further encourages brand value co-creation in social networks (Cheung et al., 2021). High CA association also be associated with high-quality product and service. These functional elements can foster greater participation in the value co-creation process (Carlson et al., 2019). Thus, this study offers the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: High levels of CA association increase brand co-creation.

2.2. Corporate ability association and brand cancellation

Where CA associations are weak, consumers are more likely to react to emotional cues and less likely to critically evaluate negative information (Dean, 2004). This emotional response could lead to brand hate, characterised by intense negative feelings towards a brand, often stemming from a sense of betrayal, disappointment, or as a response to unethical conduct (Hegner et al., 2017). Brand hate can become a driver for brand cancellation (Costa, 2022). However, with high levels of CA association, consumers are less likely to be swayed by negative information (Lin et al., 2011). Instead they may be more inclined to refute negative messages and look for relevant evidence (Dean, 2004). This is because a strong CA association impact trust perceptions (Ebrahim, 2020). When a company is successful in providing quality products/services, developing innovative products/services, demonstrating industry leadership and global success, and/or demonstrating manufacturing expertise, consumers tend to associate it with high levels of CA association, increasing their trust in the company (Kim, 2011). Hence, this study proposes:

Hypothesis 2: High levels of CA association decrease brand cancellation.

2.3. Crisis communication authenticity and brand co-creation

Consumers on social media will assess the authenticity of organisation crisis management efforts. Credibility and authenticity are vital aspects that safeguard an organisation against reputation-related challenges (Claeys & De Waele, 2022). Authenticity refers to the genuine and truthful nature of communications, where authentic messages are perceived to have greater impact (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). In this study, crisis communication authenticity refers to the degree to which individuals view a message as being authentic. There is a strong link between perceived authenticity and a positive brand reputation during a brand crisis (Greyser, 2009). Messages perceived as highly authentic tend to be regarded as more substantial and credible, thereby providing reliable information to the market that can help reduce information asymmetry (Lee & Johnson, 2022). In contrast, messages that lack authenticity may be less effective, as the market may perceive the messages to be more symbolic and less credible (Lee & Johnson, 2022).

Le et al. (2022) found that consumers expect to receive multiple benefits in exchange for engaging in brand co-creation on social media, including social benefits (e.g., relationship building and belonging) and personal values (e.g., personal status and self-concept). In this context, authenticity in crisis management can drive consumers to seek further brand information and develop an awareness of brand co-creation benefits, especially for loyal customers. When they perceive a firm's crisis management strategy to be authentic, they are more likely to share this information with their peers to demonstrate brand competence and that the brand is trustworthy. On this basis, this study hypothesises that:

Hypothesis 3: High levels of crisis communication authenticity increase brand co-creation.

2.4. Crisis communication authenticity and brand cancellation

Not all crises have a negative impact on brands (Purkis et al., 2015). A survey showed that 65% of consumers worldwide believe that a brand's response to a crisis will influence their future purchasing decisions (Rogers, 2020). Therefore, crisis communication makes a difference. One of the main objectives of crisis communication is to respond effectively to crises, maintain trust and confidence among stakeholders, and to mitigate adverse effects on brand reputation and financial performance (Bhasin et al., 2024). Appropriate and effective crisis management is expected to build positive brand relationships by fostering

positive consumer attitudes towards the organisation while buffering negative brand relationships during a crisis (Nwogwugwu, 2018). In this process, crisis communication authenticity is expected to positively influence consumer attitudes towards the information conveyed (Pérez et al., 2020). Consumers typically associate authenticity with honesty, profit orientation, and consistent truthfulness (Kuncoro, 2022). Authenticity enhances consumers' attitudes towards the information communicated by firms, which in turn indirectly contributes to consumers' favourable feelings towards the firms behind these messages (Chiu et al., 2005). Consequently, crisis communication authenticity is anticipated to cultivate a positive attitude among consumers towards the organisation during a crisis, thereby mitigating brand cancellation.

Hypothesis 4: High levels of crisis communication authenticity decrease brand cancellation.

2.5. Corporate social advocacy fit and brand co-creation

Advocacy fit refers to the perceived alignment between a corporation's commercial activities and the contentious social issue it supports (Parcha, 2018). In this study, corporate social advocacy (CSA) fit describes the alignment between a corporation's commercial activities, core values, or culture, and the stance highlighted in its corporate social advocacy messages. The high fit means that the social issues advocated by a company are closely related to its business activities or culture (Parcha, 2018). For example, as a global leader in technology and artificial intelligence (AI), Microsoft publicly advocates for the establishment of international standards and ethical guidelines for AI technology. Dodd and Supa (2014) suggested that CSA positively affects purchase intentions, especially when consumers' perspectives are aligned with the issues that the brand advocates. Austin et al. (2019) argued that high CSA fit can increase brand loyalty and strengthen the firm-consumer relationship, especially when both parties have the same stance on major issues. Park and Jiang (2023) also supported that CSA fit positively affects brand loyalty. In summary, high CSA fit not only creates a favourable social environment for the companies, but also enhances cooperative behaviour and positive word-of-mouth among stakeholders (Zhang & Borden, 2024). Thus, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5: Strong CSA fit increases brand co-creation.

2.6. Corporate social advocacy fit and brand cancellation

Low CSA fit damage a company's reputation as stakeholders may feel insincere or alienated when they perceive that a company's social advocacy is not aligned with their values (Dodd, 2018). This alienation can trigger criticism, boycotts, and protests (Liu & Getz, 2024). In contrast, high CSA fit requires companies to adapt their social advocacy activities to the values of their key stakeholders (Lim & Young, 2021). As a result, high-fit CSA activities tend to be more popular with the public and increase positive consumer responses. Therefore, this study proposes that:

Hypothesis 6: Strong CSA fit decreases brand cancellation.

2.7. The mediating role of consumer engagement

Consumer engagement is characterised as the positive cognitive, affective, and behavioural involvement of a consumer during brand interaction (Hollebeek et al., 2014). The interaction is recognised as a fundamental dimension of engagement (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Consumers interact with brands on social media by commenting on issues, sharing brand-related experiences, and keeping informed with the latest brand updates (Carlson et al., 2021). Hence, consumer engagement on social media has become increasingly crucial to companies (Santos et al., 2022).

This study proposes that corporate communication strategy can influence consumer engagement. Corporate ability messages demonstrate a brand's expertise; corporate social advocacy messages reflect a brand's dedication to social issues; and crisis communication messages show a brand's response to a crisis, which is crucial to maintain a brand's reputation. After looking through these corporate communication messages on social media, consumers engage with them differently. Some consumers may like, comment and share (Wallace et al., 2014), and some even re-create brand posts (Muntinga et al., 2011). These are effective ways to develop consumer engagement (Van Doorn et al., 2010).

Highly engaged consumers are more likely to demonstrate brand co-creation (Payne et al., 2008). Engaged consumers have strong emotional bond and passion for a brand (France et al., 2015), which creates a strong psychological connection with the brand and encourages them actively join brand communities and ongoing interactions (Hamzah et al., 2021; Santos et al., 2022; Zailskaitė-Jakstė & Minelgaite, 2021). Furthermore, highly engaged consumers are less likely to cancel a brand because they are more likely to ignore negative brand information (Yuan et al., 2020) or forgive brand misconducts (Shimul et al., 2024). Thus, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 7: Consumer engagement mediates the relationship between corporate communication strategy and consumer responses. A higher level of consumer engagement driven by corporate communication strategy leads to greater brand co-creation and reduces brand cancellation intention.

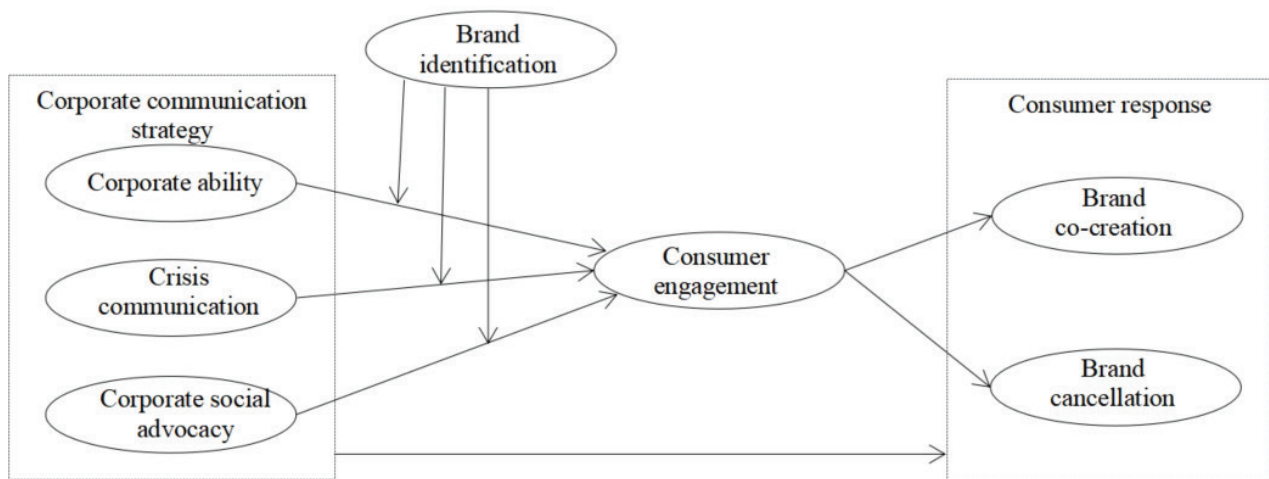
2.8. The moderating role of brand identification

Brand identification refers to a customer's psychological state in which they perceive and value a sense of belonging to a brand (Ahearne et al., 2005). This identification process involves integrating brand attributes into one's self-concept, leading to more meaningful and sustained engagement (Rather et al., 2018). Therefore, brand identification is regarded as a critical antecedent of engagement (Aziz & Ahmed, 2023; Tuškej & Podnar, 2018). Strong brand identification leads to a higher alignment of values between consumers and the brand, which promotes deeper commitment to the ongoing relationship (Su et al., 2016). With strong brand identification, consumers tend to exhibit increased engagement behaviours, such as interacting, advocating, and connecting with the brand (Aziz & Ahmed, 2023).

This study posits that brand identification may play a moderating role in the relationship between corporate communication strategy and consumer response. Consumers with strong brand identification may favourably response to corporate ability messages and enhance engagement. This suggests that brand identification amplifies the effect of corporate ability on engagement, thereby serving as a critical moderator for the shaping of consumer response to corporate communication strategy. The following hypothesis is offered, and a conceptual model (Figure 4) presents a conceptualisation of the relationship between corporate communication strategy and consumer response.

Hypothesis 8: When the level of brand identification is high, the effect of corporate communication strategy on consumer engagement will be stronger.

Figure 4: **Proposed conceptual model**



CONCLUSION

This study introduced a framework for corporate communication strategies, formulated eight research questions, and developed eight propositions related to these questions based on a review of the literature. Although this is a conceptual paper, it offers a theoretical foundation and perspective for future research, as well as practical guidance for brand managers.

Theoretical implications

Studies have explored corporate social media communication strategies, yet these studies are fragmented and lack a holistic framework to describe various corporate communication strategies. This study proposes a corporate communication framework by integrating five corporate communication strategies: corporate competence, crisis communication, corporate social responsibility, corporate social advocacy, and hybrid strategies. These five strategies can be understood in terms of functional/social or controversial/non-controversial dimensions. The framework provides a new perspective for understanding corporate communication strategies.

Based on social exchange theory, this study also explored three corporate communication strategies simultaneously for the first time. This facilitates a cross-sectional comparison of the impact of the different strategies. This study also contributes to corporate communication by emphasising the importance of CA association, crisis communication authenticity and CSA fit. These concepts are more measurable, concrete and practical for future experimental studies and marketing practitioners.

In addition, this study is one of the first to identify a standard mechanism for understanding how consumers respond to different corporate communication strategies. In this study, brand cancellation was viewed as a negative consumer response, while brand co-creation was viewed as a positive response, thus providing a new perspective on consumer responses. This perspective helps

to understand how brand co-creation can be enhanced while buffering brand cancellation. Based on the literature review, this study also suggests that consumer engagement on social media may enhance brand co-creation while reducing the likelihood of brand cancellation. In addition, brand identification may reinforce this effect. These propositions provide insights into the antecedents of consumer responses and the boundary conditions for firms to communicate informational stimuli.

Practical implications

Corporate communication messages on social media significantly influence consumers' response to a brand (Agusiady et al., 2024). This study offers practical guidance to leverage corporate communication strategies to enhance positive consumer responses while minimising the negative ones. For example, hotel sector emphasises on environmental and social well-being (Enser & Günlü Küçükaltan, 2024). Hotel brand managers may be able to utilise corporate social responsibility and corporate social advocacy strategies to highlight corporate contributions to environmental and social causes. The hospitality sector is also vulnerable to consumers voicing dissatisfaction with poor service on social media. This intensifies public scrutiny and threatens brand reputation (Su et al., 2019). Hotel brand managers, therefore, can employ corporate ability strategy to emphasise the brand's professionalism and reliability, strengthening associations with service quality.

The study also sheds light on brand co-creation, which is increasingly significant in hospitality and tourism (Rubio et al., 2020). For luxury hotels, customers are often drawn to the purpose behind the offering, not just the product itself (Shahid & Paul, 2022). To engage these customers, brand managers should highlight elements such as hedonism, escapism, and an adventurous atmosphere. High-quality images and videos shared on social media can make these features more appealing. Destination managers can use social media campaigns to connect with visitors, gathering feedback through their stories, comments, advice, and photos (Huerta-Álvarez et al., 2020). Engagement of this kind fosters deeper connections and motivates consumers to actively participate in brand co-creation.

Brand cancellation has become a prominent topic in public discourse across politics, culture, and the media since 2020 (Mohsen, 2022). This study may help companies to understand the link between corporate communication strategies and brand cancellation. A well-executed crisis communication strategy can address some of the negative impacts caused by brand misconduct. Strategies and messaging must be consistent, timely, proactive, and demonstrate authenticity. Employees should also be recognised as key contributors, particularly through their role on external social media platforms (Patafta & Milohnić, 2022).

Limitations and directions for further research

This study acknowledges several limitations. Firstly, this study chiefly considered five external corporate communication strategies, based on Podnar's work (Podnar, 2015). Therefore, it mainly focuses on an explanation of the concepts of corporate communication strategy, presented supporting propositions, and developed a conceptual framework. Future research could validate the model with empirical studies using experiments or large-scale surveys, or could consider the impact of internal communication strategies, as corporate communication also plays a role in shaping consumer responses (Kalogiannidis, 2020; Varner, 2000). Additionally, although the study proposed brand identity as a moderator, other factors, such as attributional motivation (Groza et al., 2011) and culture (Walker et al., 2010), may also influence the relationship between corporate communication strategies and consumer response. Therefore, future research could explore more factors that influence consumer response to corporate communication messages to provide a more comprehensive understanding of corporate communication.

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