

CORPORATE ABILITY OR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:  
TWITTER ENGAGEMENT

By

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To my Mom, Hui Qiu, my Dad, Yong Jiang

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Recently, corporations have increasingly used social media, such as Twitter, as an effective tool to communicate and build relationships with stakeholders. Social media generally, and Twitter in particular, is becoming a popular option for communication professionals to improve stakeholders' awareness of and engagement with companies. Moreover, it has become necessary for those corporations to promote corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate ability (CA) via social media. Therefore, it is important for both practitioners and scholars to understand how online CSR and CA communication strategies can be utilized on Twitter. In addition, it is well worth exploring how corporations with different revenues utilize different communication strategies and how effective those strategies are.

In this study, 42 Twitter accounts managed by 42 companies were examined. The companies were selected from the Fortune 1000 list from 2015 and include the 21 top-ranked companies in each industry and the 21 bottom-ranked companies in each industry. The chosen analytical methodologies allowed the researcher to compare the communications strategies used by different corporations, as well as companies' levels

of attention to CSR and CA communications. This study found that the top-ranked corporations were more likely than the bottom-ranked corporations to conduct CSR communication. However, when it came to CA communication, the bottom-ranked corporations put in more effort than the top-ranked ones. As to the tactics provided by Twitter, the top-ranked corporations often used hashtags in their CSR communications, whereas the bottom-ranked corporations preferred to use hyperlinks.

All the sampled corporations have, to a large extent, engaged in CSR and CA communication via Twitter. However, the stockholder engagement this communication produced differed across corporations as well as across the strategies used. In other words, whether the communication had a desirable effect on stakeholders depended on the type of corporation and the chosen strategies (CSR or CA). For the top-ranked corporations, CSR-related tweets generated more interactions. However, the lowest-ranked corporations benefited more from CA-related tweets.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Social media are well known for their effectiveness to reinforce social interactions and bring social communications into a virtual world. This progress is stepping forward with a social media revolution changing every corner of life. Nowadays, for example, each among the 1.59 billion Facebook users is connected to every other person by an average of three and a half other people (Edunov et al., 2016). Social media is referred as “the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue” by the previous literature (Baruah, 2012, pp.1). Also, it presents a wide variety of strategies including “magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking” (Baruah, 2012, pp.1).

Companies have grasped opportunities presented by social media to intensify their communication with their target markets. This trend generates the term “social media marketing” which refers to launching various promotion campaigns on social media platforms (Bernoff & Li, 2011). Due to enhancement of social interactions and communications, social media marketing has expanded in recent years. According to surveys in the social media marketing industry, 94% of business professionals who are using social media for marketing purposes admit the benefits of social media in generating more business exposure. In addition, 83% of professionals said that social media was important to their businesses (Stelzner, 2012). This means that many companies are aware of the importance of social media. Based on the importance of social media in marketing, it is not hard to image that how to make use of various tools in the most effective and efficient ways is becoming important to corporations.

In 2012, Twitter was the third most commonly used social media tool, following behind YouTube and Facebook (Stelzner, 2012). Founded in 2006 as a free micro-blogging service it enables users to input 140 characters of text called a tweet. From 2010 to 2015, the number of Twitter's users rose from 30 million to 305 million (Statista, n.d.). This large number of Twitter users provides a platform for individuals or organizations to reach out to many people. In 2013, 77% of Fortune 500 enterprises possessed active Twitter accounts, playing an important role among all other social media platforms (Slegg, 2013). This means that the majority of enterprises, especially the large ones, have started to use Twitter as an important tool for marketing purposes.

There are three different kinds of communication strategies currently used in studies by scholars: corporate ability (CA) strategy, corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy and hybrid strategy (Kim & Rader, 2010). CA strategy attempts to create a cognitive association with customers regarding its expertise in terms of its product and service quality (Kim, Kim, & Sung, 2014). CSR strategy refers to the objective of building associations related to social and environmental efforts (Kim & Rader, 2010). Last, but not least, hybrid strategy is identified as when CA strategy and CSR strategy co-exist.

Presently, it is a trend for corporations to put more effort on public relations, and as discussed before, it is inevitable to integrate this effort into the prevailing trend of social media marketing, because social media plays an increasingly important role in public relations. Particularly in recent decades, businesses are growing aware of sustainability and CSR. Contemporary businesses are under dual pressure to maximize profits as well as being socially responsible sources (Campbell, 2007).

However, little is known regarding how corporations use social media platforms to cultivate public relations by communicating information about CSR practices. Though researchers have studied usage of some social media tools such as Facebook or websites in public relations (Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009; Kim et al., 2014), few are specific to the use of Twitter. For example, it is not clear whether contemporary business has initiated social media platforms, such as Twitter, to highlight their CSR policies and practices nor how companies leverage features of Twitter to realize their CA goals. For instance, a study of Fortune 100 companies' Facebook strategies concluded that while customers' needs are prioritized on Facebook, corporations' engagement efforts on CSR-related issues are not great or diverse (Kim et al., 2014).

Since corporations have become more open to the public and customer by using social media tools like Twitter, it is important to ask: whether corporations prioritize customers' needs while neglecting other stakeholders' common is for Twitter. Meanwhile, since different companies give different consideration to different stakeholders, would the top-ranked corporates versus the bottom-ranked corporates in Fortune 1000 list be different on how they prioritize the customers' needs for Twitter?

To answer the questions above, this study asks and answers the following three questions: 1). What are the most frequent communication content strategies corporations are using: CSR, CA or hybrid strategies? 2). What interactive strategies are found in these corporate tweets?

The focus of this thesis is to analyze contemporary companies' Twitter content strategies in terms of corporate ability and corporate social responsibility. The goal is to make comparatives on important variables such as size, reputation, industry, etc. In this

way, new insights can be acquired about how enterprises use social media to communicate CSR and CA information with Twitter users. Understanding how current content communication strategies and engagement strategies about CSR and CA practices are adopted, should allow other enterprises to make improvements in the usage of the suitable strategy. Furthermore, this study contributes to understanding the needs of different Twitter users' groups, and provides in-depth insight into how companies use social media tools to interact with stakeholders. From a practical perspective, these findings will also provide valuable information for academics and practitioners about the current status of contemporary corporations' communication strategy.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**

#### **Overview of CSR**

Corporate social responsibility, is a common part of businesses' strategic programming, usually falling under the public relations function due to its direct relation to reputation and corporate identity. Although there is no specific regulation mandating CSR in most countries, publics and stakeholders have the expectation that corporations will give back to society to some extent.

In general, CSR refers to transparent business strategies that are based on ethical values and go beyond compliance with legal requirements to show respect for people, community, and the environment (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). Many other labels have become associated with CSR, such as corporate citizenship, social responsibility, strategic philanthropy, etc. (Rangan, Chase, & Karim, 2012). The basic idea behind all these terms is that a corporation should contribute to creating shared value for a wider population rather than for its initial stockholders alone (Utting, 2005). Thus, businesses' responsibilities extend beyond the world of commerce to the entire society. A particularly prominent form of CSR today is sustainable development, which is premised on business practices that are more environmentally friendly and thus build value for society by helping to preserve the ecological systems on which it depends (Tebo, 2005).

"Doing well by doing good" has become the slogan for CSR efforts, emphasizing that CSR can benefit not only society but also a business's bottom line. Though businesses are increasingly expected to initiate and maintain relationships with publics as a matter of course, this also presents new opportunities to maximize profits.

Basically, corporations, by looking at their own good as intertwined with that of society, can create a win-win situation.

### **Why is CSR Emphasized?**

In the world of business and capitalism, corporations' original responsibility was the maximization of wealth for the benefit of its stockholders alone (Selsky & Parker, 2005). Fulfilling this financial responsibility is the baseline for businesses. However, the primacy of this imperative has been challenged since the 1990s, when economic development was definitively shown to cause damage to the environment and society (Bendell, 2005). Though a small number of people in the uppermost class achieved great wealth, the majority of the population, as well as nature, were suffering. In the 21st century, more and more importance has been attached to CSR, the concept of which has been extended from the purely financial to include social and environmental aspects as well (Campbell, 2007). This complex of concerns is often described as the triple bottom line, that is, the totality of a corporation's financial, social, and environmental performance (Elkington, 1994).

Increasingly, CSR is linked with stakeholder value, which means that corporations need to create value not only for investors but for other stakeholders, including employees, clients or customers, partners, suppliers, distributors, the government, local communities, etc. (Rangan et al., 2012). When taking the whole group of stakeholders into consideration, corporations are likelier to behave responsibly toward the entire society, for instance taking the initiative to stop harming the environment and to develop ecologically sound practices. This idea of stakeholder value is closely aligned with the utilitarian perspective, which states that it is morally right to pursue the greatest happiness for the greatest number (Aras & Crowther, 2008) and

would thus advocate that civil society require corporations to be subject to a social contract that includes all stakeholders. Furthermore, social responsibility should take into account even future members of the society (Boutilier, 2007).

### **Drivers of CSR**

Corporations may be compelled to undertake CSR practices for a variety of reasons, which can be categorized as either internal or external driving forces.

As regards external forces, corporations that enact CSR tend to be driven less by government pressure than by other stakeholders in the society. Graafland (2006) suggest government's role in regulating environmental protection and creating common goods for citizens is shrinking. In some countries, particularly the emerging markets, governments are unwilling to make such regulations for the sake of economic growth. However, in many countries, corporations are influenced by a cultural tradition of philanthropy, business ethics, and community embeddedness (Fischer, 2004), a tradition in accord with utilitarian philosophy, which has gradually spread across the globe. Another driving force is the trend for corporations to take the initiative in responding to social and environment crises closely related to their own industries (Ghasemi & Nejati, 2013). This trend not only makes it more difficult, in terms of public relations, for corporations to abstain from CSR, but also influences the expectations of stakeholders, who then apply additional pressure to corporations to be socially responsible.

As for internal forces, adopting CSR has been found to benefit corporations in many ways. For instance, CSR codes have gradually been adopted as international standards, indicating that corporations need to conform to these standards when operating as a global player (Visser, 2008). This is particularly true for large enterprises

entering overseas markets, where they need to focus on brand reputation. Since CSR practices emphasize stakeholder values, these practices can motivate activism on the part of stakeholders and make them more engaged in business activities (Bendixen & Abratt, 2007). In this way, CSR contributes to corporations' marketing strategies and strengthens relationships with customers, suppliers, partners, etc. Many businesses claim that promotion of their CSR practices boosts their profile with the public and hence increases customer interest in their company (Bendixen & Abratt, 2007). This effect can be demonstrated by the many enterprises, large and small, that utilize CSR to earn affection from customers and thus enhance their brand image as well as customer loyalty (Ghasemi & Nejati, 2013). As customers become more concerned about environmental and social issues, enterprises that promote themselves as working on such issues can more easily win over customers' trust. Some new enterprises even promote CSR as their distinctive strategy for entering a competitive market (Barnett & Salomon, 2012). Thus, more and more businesses find that CSR can enhance their financial performance.

However, the relationship between the CSR and corporate's performance is not very straightforward. On the one hand, social performance may raise the level of demand for a company's products and lower its price sensitivity to advertise the company (Dorfman & Steiner, 1954; Navarro, 1988; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). On the other hand, increasing direct costs are often required when making progress for social responsibility (Brammer & Millington 2008), and this cost increase may prevent corporate from improving products themselves. Therefore, corporates with both high and low CSR initiative have better financial performance than other corporates.

Specifically, companies that do not value CSR would have best financial performance in the short run and companies that highly value CSR would have best financial performance in the long run (Brammer & Millington 2008).

### **How Corporations Practice CSR?**

Three basic principles may be seen as encompassing almost all of corporations' CSR activities: sustainability, accountability, and transparency (Carroll, 1979).

Sustainability recognizes that a business's present actions influence the future. For example, natural resources such as coal, oil, or ore that are consumed in the present will not be available in the future. Therefore, sustainability would demand that a society carefully plan the use of resources that cannot quickly be regenerated. Next,

accountability means that corporations should recognize their effects on the external environment and take the initiative to bear responsibility (Sweeney & Coughlan, 2008).

This principle is foundational to CSR, which is premised on corporations voluntarily taking responsibility in society rather than being compelled to do so. Lastly,

transparency is particularly important to external stakeholders, who should be well informed of corporations' CSR practices and policies (Sweeney & Coughlan, 2008). In the contemporary business world, companies often use diverse reporting mechanisms to communicate about CSR with stakeholders, including, for instance, social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter (Werther Jr & Chandler, 2005). It can be assumed that corporations can deliver their CSR information more transparently via multiple channels, since the varied features of each channel can be utilized.

### **Barriers to Implementing CSR**

Though implementing CSR is considered more and more important in business, scholar and practitioners have also written about the barriers and challenges that

corporations face in this area. For instance, corporations that expect a CSR strategy to improve their brand reputation might mispend resources if the strategy is poorly implemented (Zwetsloot, 2003). This means that there is no guarantee that implementing CSR will improve corporations' financial performance, a concern especially applicable to small- or medium-sized enterprises with limited resources. Shen, Govindan, and Shankar (2015) identify several core obstacles in CSR implementation, including organizational governance, customer issues, community involvement, and development, all of which influence or are influenced by stakeholder perceptions of corporations' CSR practices. More specifically, Sweeney and Coughlan (2008) suggest that customers may show awareness of the issue of environmental protection without such awareness mattering much in their actual purchasing decisions. Furthermore, Boutilier (2007) notes that customers show little willingness to pay premium prices for socially responsible products. These findings illustrate that corporations' CSR strategies may not always achieve the hoped-for effect of increased profits.

## **Communication Strategy**

### **Brief Introduction of Strategy**

Strategy, at its simplest, refers to an organization's policies, objectives, tactics, goals, and programs (Dess Gregory et al., 2007), and it is seen as paramount in today's dynamic business environment. With explicit objectives and plans that are carefully thought out, businesses can perform better and in a more targeted fashion, especially given the complexity of business activities and organizational structures, which require ever-greater capacities for creating and managing strategies (Porter, 1996). In other

words, changes to business environments place pressure on firms to use strategies in order to adapt.

However, some scholars have also criticized strategy. One problem is that the very concept of strategy is always in flux, sometimes rendering it hard to grasp (Mainardes, Ferreira, & Raposo 2014). Furthermore, strategy is sometimes said to minimize an organization's freedom and flexibility (Mintzberg & Quinn, 1988), since strategy proposes firm objectives and plans. Although strategy is generally considered necessary to guide a firm's business activities and performance, each organization needs to remain flexible when adopting strategies, since it is often necessary to adjust and modify strategies according to changes in the business environment.

Criticisms aside, strategies have been widely applied and integrated into almost every aspect of business operations and management, at every level. Previous literature proposes three levels of strategy, corporate-level strategy, business-level strategy and functional-level strategy (Salimian, Khalili, Nazemi, & Alborzi, 2012). To be more specific, corporate-level strategy represents a firm's overall direction, concerned with managing multiple businesses and product lines so as to achieve stability, growth, and retrenchment for the organization as a whole. Business-level strategy focuses on improving a firm's competitiveness by managing a single business unit. And functional-level strategy focuses on one functional area within a business unit to achieve corporate and business unit objectives by fully utilizing various resources. The success of a functional strategy contributes to a firm's competitive edge.

Thus, strategy management may penetrate almost every area and every level within an organization, each lower-level strategy supporting the effectiveness and

efficiency of the next level up and so assisting firms in achieving their goals. At each level, different kinds of employees or managers are involved. The overall corporate strategy involves the corporate-level managers such as the CEO and board of directors, while the business-level strategy depends on general managers, and functional strategies focusing on individual areas such as research and development, manufacturing, marketing, human resources, etc., require the involvement of managers in a business unit or division. Operating strategies for regions and districts, plants, departments, etc., need the cooperation of lower-level supervisors (Kibicho, 2015). Of course, in addition to the involvement of leaders and managers, all these strategies call for the collaboration and participation of all relevant employees in order to meet or exceed the intended goals.

### **Brief Introduction of Communication Strategy**

Since strategy enables firms to adapt to changing business environments better, it has become increasingly important for firms to strategize their organizational communication as information and communication technologies have evolved dramatically. To stay competitive, firms need objectives and plans to guide operations and management so as to handle increasingly complex situations. Communicating strategically is also of great importance as organizations expand in scale and scope, which makes it increasingly difficult for customers to easily understand and interact with them (Lurati & Eppler, 2006). In response, the content of corporate communication has become more specific and detailed in order to target specific customers, a necessary part of building relationships (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, Van Ruler, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2007). For instance, corporations may now prepare a financial statement for investors and a sustainability report for the general public.

Increasingly important in contemporary business is the concept of corporate communication. According to Grunig (1992), corporate communication is the management function related to public relations. However, Argenti and Forman (2002) write that, when used in connection to public relations, corporate communication mainly refers to a corporation's external communication and is emphasized by a company because of the belief that it depends on how it is viewed by key stakeholders such as customers and investors. This emphasis has been challenged by Hallahan, Holtzhausen, Van Ruler, Verčič and Sriramesh (2007). They state that companies need to construct and maintain beneficial relationships, with both external stakeholders and internal stakeholders such as employees and suppliers. This demonstrates the trend to take account of all stakeholders in corporate management, which is one reason for the appeal of CSR. In line with this view, Johan and Noor (2013) explain corporate communication as a framework for effective coordination of both internal and external communication with the purpose of constructing and maintaining favorable relationships with stakeholders who include employees, clients, suppliers, local communities, and more.

Every organization needs to communicate with its various stakeholders, such as employees, customers, suppliers, etc., so they also need strategies about how to best deliver information to these stakeholders, strategies that have gone by different names. For instance, the term "strategic communication" is used by organizations in reference to communicating so as to advance their organizational mission (Argenti, Howell, & Beck, 2005) and consists in policy-making and guidance that allows organizations to

conduct information activities consistently within the organization or across organizations (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2015).

“Strategic communication management” has been used to refer to the long-term, systematic planning and realization of information flow, communication, media development, and image care (Grigorescu & Lupu, 2015). This definition differs in emphasis but is generally consistent with the definition of strategic communication.

The concept of communication management has emerged and converged across disciplines (Hallahan et al., 2007), and strategic communication is seen to be inherently multidisciplinary, given the involvement of fields such as public relations, marketing, advertising, and management (Zerfaß & Huck, 2007). This makes sense because the fundamental task of communication strategy is to promote understanding of an organization’s mission, vision, and goals and to supply information desired for day-to-day operations, which encompasses such different areas as customer and supplier management as well as staff training (Hallahan et al, 2007). Other scholars have pointed out that strategic communication involves the promotion of an organization’s brand, motivation of its people to complete specific tasks, and even the advocacy of particular legislation (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2015). Thus, it can be seen that communication strategies can be included in a wide scope of business activities in different departments and so strategic communication must involve the entire organization as a whole. In fact, the core of communication strategy is achieving organizational goals by coordinating communications among all parts of an organization.

More specifically, Knudsen and Lemmergaard (2014) found that being strategic means the organization should communicate the best message in the most appropriate channels and measure performance against carefully considered organizational and communication goals. Furthermore, they wrote that communication management is a process of creation, which should take a balanced consideration of three elements: message, media channels, and audiences. The intended message, of course, will be based on organizational goals, the media channels are determined by the organizations' operations, and the audiences are intended recipients of information both internal and external to the organization.

### **Corporate Ability (CA)**

#### **Corporate Associations**

Corporate associations reflect the total information that a customer has about a company, based on which the customer forms his or her images of the company (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006). Thus, corporate association is critical because it influences how customers respond to a firm's product and so influences customers' purchase desires and behaviors (Pérez, del Mar García de los Salmones, & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2013). In fact, as an overall or comprehensive response, attitude, or opinion on the part of a customer toward a brand, corporate association will determine not only whether customers repeatedly consume a product or service but also whether they will help or harm the brand through word-of-mouth. From the corporations' perspectives, corporate associations reflect multiple corporate outcomes, including reputation, brand image, product, customers' acceptance or awareness, intent, and the public's recognition of the corporations (Chang & Rizal, 2011). Clearly, firms want to develop favorable corporate associations for the sake of both individual customers' business and of long-term brand

growth. Corporate associations grow from two main sources: corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate ability (CA) (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Chang & Rizal, 2011). Corporate social responsibility associations (CSR association) refer to consumer's cognition regarding a company's commitment and action to society, while corporate ability associations (CA association) are on the basis of consumer's view of a company's expertise in its product and service quality on the market (Brown and Dacin, 1997; Madrigal, 2000). CSR has been discussed above at length, and an introduction to corporate ability is presented below.

### **Brief Introduction of Corporate Ability**

Corporate ability (CA) is the aspect of corporate association driven by customers' understanding of a firm's products or services, which in turn generates differences in customers' evaluations of the products (Piriyakul & Wingwon, 2013). Thus, corporate ability depends on a firm's overall actions in terms of delivery of products or services, which are evaluated by customers.

More specifically, when firms focus on their CA positioning strategy, they need to develop the expertise of employees, improve internal research and development, and strive for technological innovation, manufacturing expertise, customer orientation, and industry leadership (Berens, van Riel, & van Bruggen, 2005). Since customers may acquire CA associations not only from prior experiences with a firm but also from word-of-mouth communication and media reports (Berens et al., 2005), firms need to attach importance not only to satisfying customers, but also to WOM effect and media promotion in order to generate positive CA associations among customers. As with previous kinds of strategy, CA strategies should ideally be systematic and complex

enough to involve almost all employees and all business activities within an organization.

### **Distinguishing CA and CSR**

Since corporate associations in this model result primarily from CSR and CA (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Cornelius, Todres, Janjuha-Jivraj, Woods, & Wallace, 2008), both will clearly have a great impact on a corporate's relationships with its customers. The importance of CA and CSR is underlined by the fact that the social performance and organizational effectiveness of a company are two major indicators looked at by firms seek to establish a good reputation (Marin & Ruiz, 2007). It is important firms understand the different roles of CA and CSR so as to select appropriate positioning strategies with regard to the public. Just as developing a good CSR strategy depends on taking societal issues into consideration, firms adopting CA strategies need to develop expertise in producing and delivering product or service offerings.

Of course, the two strategies can be used separately or concurrently, depending on a particular firm's goals, context, and current standing in its field, and one strategy may even have counterintuitive effects on the other. For instance, Cornelius et al. (2008) noted that positive CA associations contribute to favorable CSR associations, even though these would seem to be very different realms of public perceptions of a firm. Given the importance and complexities of CA and CSR strategies, this study will focus on the companies' strategies on communicating those two messages with the public. By finding the different strategy used by different firms, this study can provide the evidence on how different firms use the appropriate content strategy to increase the CA association or CSR associations.

## **Stakeholder Engagement and Social Media**

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

Stakeholders are defined as those who have a stake or an interest in a company, whether they impact or are impacted by a company, including employees, suppliers, customers, the local community, and the environment (Post, Preston, & Sachs, 2002). Thus, stakeholders may be either internal or external to a firm. All stakeholders are critical in determining the growth, success, or even the survival of a firm, so creating and maintaining good stakeholder relationships is vital for corporations.

Stakeholder engagement has risen on firms' public relations agendas in recent years, encouraged by the increasing importance of social media and other forms of interactive media (Luoma-aho, 2015). Defined as a relationship between the organization and its stakeholders "with a focus on dialogue, consultation and participation" (Amaeshi & Crane, 2006), stakeholder engagement matters for firms because it creates an environment in which people, specifically "people sharing interests" with the company, develop enough trust to exchange information and experiences (Grigore, Theofilou, Watson, & Sthapitanonda, 2015). Ideally, this is a two-way street where the distance between stakeholders and firms is shortened by mutual understanding. From the corporate perspective, stakeholder engagement is of great importance in understanding customers' needs and feedback so as to reach them more effectively. From the point of view of customers, it helps firms deliver products or brand information as instantly as possible.

Stakeholder engagement results in value creation, which signifies a change from corporations' traditional focus on profit maximization alone (Gould, 2012). There is the consensus that, in order to reach this ideal, good communication is needed to build

quality organization-stakeholder relationships (Jamali, 2008). Thus, stakeholder engagement is closely aligned with communication. Social media have created a favorable environment for this sort of engagement as customers and communication professionals can now communicate instantly online (Missonier & Loufrani-Fedida, 2014). In other words, social media creates a platform for stakeholders and firms to have two-way communication more efficiently and effectively. It is worthwhile to notice that the social media can act to broadcast, and the stakeholders can directly see the messages posted by the company without gatekeepers. Therefore, how to communicate with those stakeholders can directly influence their engagement with the corporation. To be more specific, different stakeholders represent different types of interests. For example, on the one hand, the product buyers are more willing to get more information on corporate ability and leading to a higher level of confidence in the product or service. On the other hand, NGOs are more willing to see the corporation post content on social responsibility. As it is clear that the audiences or stakeholders of the company vary, especially for the companies in different sizes, so it is likely that it may use different communication strategies.

### **Social Media and Social Networking Communication Strategies**

One of the most notable advancements in information and communication technology (ICT) is, of course, the Internet, which allows us to speak to each other without gatekeepers, inform ourselves, and be entertained (Jothi, Neelamalar, & Prasad, 2011). Due to ICTs' high penetration among the general public, internet-based technologies have been widely used by communication professionals to communicate with customers. Now, social networking websites have created an online community for people to share or explore interests and activities, enabling users to interact with an

audience via chatting, messaging, emailing, video, or audio calls, file-sharing, and discussion (Mauroner & Fauck, 2014). Thus, social media platforms enable both communication professionals and target markets to interact with and understand each other better. Many types of business, large and small, favor social networking websites that enable communication professionals to gather users' feedback. Hosseinali-Mirza, de Marcellis-Warin, and Warin (2015) summarize the benefits of social media marketing in five points: 1) Popularizing the brand, product or services with a target market more accurately; 2) Informing target customers about brand presence and product information instantly; 3) Encouraging healthy competition in the market; 4) Facilitating social benefits for the brand; 5) Persuading audiences to interact with the brand (Jothi et al, 2011). Baruah (2012) added that social media are tools of communication, sources of information, important customer interaction tools as well as crisis communication tools, while also being cost-effective, sharing ideas, bridging communication gaps, and more. It is difficult to achieve such benefits via traditional marketing tactics, so communication professionals have been rushing to use social media as effectively as possible.

Nowadays, many communication practitioners present their ads in an interactive form, which enables users to engage in the advertisement by participating in business activities through commenting or sharing or spreading the ad's content (Vukasović & Strasek, 2014). Interactivity makes the ad more interesting for users, while giving communication practitioners more efficient channels to acquire instant feedback from target markets about their advertisements' effects or promoting brands or products. Since the primary feature of social networking websites is user-generated content (Vukasović & Strasek, 2014), advertisers can now motivate target markets to generate

brand- or product-related content on social media platforms, serving as digital word-of-mouth to promote the brand or product.

Currently, it is a trend for firms, regardless of their size, to utilize social media to promote their brand equity among the target market (Ferguson, 2008). Social media advertising can facilitate creating and maintaining a favorable brand image among a target market cheaply and efficiently (Hill, Provost, & Volinsky, 2006). In fact, Muñiz and Schau (2007) pointed out that social media marketing is actually customer-centric in nature. This means that customers are expected to play a critical role in the communication facilitated by these platforms, exactly the sort of involvement and participation communication professionals crave, since customers determine their fate.

Currently, the social media most exploited by businesses are Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Google, and location-based social media tools. It is reported that the number of monthly active users of Facebook has reached 1.59 billion, that of Instagram 400 million, that of Twitter 320 million, and that of Google 300 million (Social Times, 2016). Clearly, Facebook has the largest number of active users at the moment, suggesting that Facebook could be the ideal social media platform for businesses looking to initiate social media marketing. In fact, the research results demonstrate that 99% of the top brands adopt Facebook, with 97% adopting Twitter, 70% Google, and 69% Pinterest (Social Times, 2016). Meanwhile, 81% of small and medium-sized businesses use social media (Wagner, 2014). In the US, it is estimated that 88% of firms are using social media for marketing purposes (Bennett, 2014).

Limited research has been conducted to analyze the dominant corporate strategies applied on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Though many studies have been conducted to analyze the usage of Facebook and Twitter, it is not certain how the use of Twitter as part of communication strategies has contributed to the actual improvement of firms' performances. Thus, to investigate the dominant corporate communication strategies used on corporations' Twitter pages as well as their success, the following section proposes the research questions.

### **Interactive Tactics on Social Media**

Social media significantly differs from traditional media (Marchese, 2007). Social media does not only consist the original content created by users, but also contain the refined or transcriptional content involving comments and replies to others' messages (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Moreover, users have more abilities to participate in the online dialogic communication and create community values rather than passively receiving media messages. Therefore, the interactive tactics used in social media are important to understand how corporates communicate with publics via different communication strategies.

Users can send and read no more than 140-character messages on Twitter, which are called "tweets" (Twitter, 2014). The 140-character limitation has resulted in the usage of hyperlinks, which can help readers to link to other website pages. Moreover, users can classify Twitter posts by topics or types with hashtags – words or phrases started with a "#" sign. Users can include text, Images, videos, and hyperlinks within the tweets. In this study, tactics refer to how corporates interact with the publics with the techniques provided by Twitter. In addition, Twitter's registered users can read and post tweets and follow other users via updating their accounts' feeds. According to Statista, the number of monthly active users reached 271 million in the second quarter of 2014 (Statista, 2014). Twitter provides possibilities for users, both individuals and

corporations, with various ways to become interactive. Basically, users can follow other users, who are shown in the 'following friends' list. Then, the information updated by the 'following' accounts can be seen on their updated feeds. Furthermore, users can interact with others by directing a message to another user with the @-sign (Honeycutt & Herring, 2009). The user who receives the message can reply to the message sender with additional comments, which generates a conversation showing in the "extended exchange" section. Moreover, users can share and rebroadcast a Twitter message that someone else has posted by retweeting it.

### **The Research Questions**

From the many previous studies on corporate communication strategies, a key finding is that communication strategies are critical for firms to establish favorable stakeholder relationships and to facilitate stakeholder engagement. More specifically, communication strategies can be implemented at different levels and included in almost every business activity in order to create favorable communication channels. Such strategies are paramount if a company wishes to adapt to rapidly changing business environments. It is also clear that firms need to manage corporate associations so that customers form positive attitudes and behaviors toward the brand and its products or services. While CA focuses on creating or improving products or services, CSR communication focuses on the company and societal issues. Based on the importance of comprehensive communication strategies as well as CSR and CA in the new social media environment, this study aims to fill a gap in the scholarly literature by investigating how Fortune 1000 firms use Twitter to facilitate positive CA associations, or positive CSR associations, or both.

RQ1: To what extent do the corporations engage in online CSR communication and CA communication via Twitter? In other words, what number of total and what proportion of total Twitter tweets are CSR-related, and CA-related?

This thesis focuses in particular on investigating the differences in strategies employed by various companies, because different businesses will have distinct goals, mission statements, and marketing objectives. This research attempts to answer the following research questions by making cross comparisons between the corporation's Twitter messages within and across corporate categories. The corporations used in this study are from Fortune 1000 list, and both the top-ranked and the bottom-ranked corporation groups are analyzed.

Furthermore, the Twitter is broadly utilized to cultivate a potential environment for open dialogue and also to foster two-way communication with online users. Twitter provides an efficient way to reach more targeted publics (Wright & Hinson, 2013) by using interactive tactics of communication, and corporations can use different tactics to interact with stakeholders and the tactics used between each group and within the groups become one of the research areas. The detailed standards will be elaborated in Chapter 3.

#### Comparison Between the Corporation Groups

RQ2a: Do the top-ranking corporates' accounts post a higher ratio of CA tweets to total tweets than the bottom-ranking corporates' accounts do?

RQ2b: Do the top-ranking corporates' accounts post a higher ratio of CSR tweets to total tweets than the bottom-ranking corporates' accounts do?

RQ3a: What are the tactics used most frequently in CSR-related tweets posted by the top-ranking compared to bottom-ranking corporates' accounts?

RQ3b: What are the tactics used most frequently in CA-related tweets posted by the top-ranking compared to bottom-ranking corporates' accounts?

#### Comparison Within the Corporation Group

RQ4a: For the top-ranking corporates' accounts, is the ratio of CA tweets to total tweets higher than, equal to, or less than the ratio of CSR tweets to total tweets?

RQ4b: For the bottom-ranking corporates' accounts, is the ratio of CA tweets to total tweets higher than, equal to, or less than the ratio of CSR tweets to total tweets?

RQ5a: What are the most frequently used tactics posted by the top-ranking corporates' accounts?

RQ5b: What are the most frequently used tactics posted by the bottom-ranking corporates' accounts?

In the current business world, competitive strategies are vital, and a corporation may adopt both CA strategy and CSR strategy at the similar strength (a hybrid strategy), and Kim and Rader (2010) discussed a detailed method to determine whether the corporate is using hybrid strategy. In specific, the account will be treated as using hybrid strategy when the ratio of CA tweets to total tweets is similar to the ratio of CSR tweets to total tweets. For such businesses, their social media accounts often serve mixed purposes, and it is therefore worthwhile to check how often different group of corporations adapt the hybrid strategy. This then leads to another question this study will explore:

RQ6: Are the top-ranking corporates' accounts more likely to conduct a hybrid strategy than the bottom-ranking corporates' accounts?

Finally, the research on stakeholder engagement and social media illustrates that communication is necessary to facilitate successful stakeholder engagement, which benefits firms by letting them understand target markets and receive feedback more effectively. In particular, the findings show that social media platforms are effective in improving stakeholder engagement.

RQ7: Will different communication strategies have different results on stakeholder engagement for top-ranking and bottom-ranking corporates' accounts?

All in all, the findings of this study can have many practical implications for firms trying to understand the most effective way of improving their corporate associations and to strategize about communication in contemporary media platforms.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

As one of the biggest micro-blogging services, Twitter has experienced dramatic growth since its inception. Twitter is widely used by corporations to communicate with their stakeholders (Slegg, 2013). The research conducted in this study aimed to describe and analyze how the targeted corporations used Twitter to communicate with different stakeholders in order to improve corporate ability (CA) and to promote corporate social responsibility (CSR). A content analysis of corporations that were selected in this research was performed in both a quantitative and qualitative way, which provides a clear and unique opportunity to understand the role that Twitter plays in allowing corporations to effectively communicate with stakeholders.

### **Selecting Cases**

To get a better understanding of how differently companies have participated in the CA and CSR communication standards with Twitter in terms of their revenue, the researcher selected companies from the Fortune 1000 list of the most recent available list as research subjects. There were 21 industry sectors in the Fortune 1000 list in total, so the companies were divided into two groups by revenue: 21 companies from the top of each industry were sorted into the top-ranking companies group, and the other 21 companies from the bottom of each industry sector were divided into the bottom-ranking companies group.

After selecting the companies, the researcher confirmed that these businesses did not fall into the “medium” ranking, or the ranks between 334 and 667. The criteria of Fortune 1000 companies were based on the total revenue for the companies’ respective fiscal year (2015). Those companies were selected for this study because they can

clearly illustrate how Twitter communication strategies used by companies differ across high and low revenue ranges. Moreover, this selection strategy was able to control for industry variance, as all companies are separated in each industry sector.

In order to verify the authenticity of corporate Twitter accounts, the researcher first searched the company's official website. If a business's Twitter account could not be found on the website, then related Twitter accounts were checked to see whether they were verified with a badge by Twitter. See the table 3-1 and table 3-2 for a full description of all the selected companies with their Twitter accounts.

### **Selecting Tweets**

To increase the strength of the study and perform a more thorough analysis of CA and CSR communication strategies via Twitter, tweets from the Twitter accounts of 42 companies were analyzed. Twitter itself provides a service of authenticating celebrity user or corporate accounts with a badge, and this badge was then used by the researcher to gather data from the official public Twitter timelines of the selected companies. As described in Chapter 1, companies are becoming more and more likely to use Twitter as a way of communicating with the general public. In order to conduct a more holistic analysis, corporations across all 21 industries were selected from the Fortune 1000 list of companies in 2015.

Finally, tweets from randomly selected weeks were chosen from each company's Twitter feed. Two time frames were selected at random by random number table: March 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017 as week 1, and June 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017 as week 2. The researcher analyzed the tweets only on weekdays of selected weeks separately, to make sure they were on normal business operations. Because the research focuses are on the corporates' communication strategies in ordinary times.

## **Content Analysis**

Content analysis is a research technique used to acquire and analyze information. It has been acknowledged that content analysis is related to three distinct methods, which, respectively, are conventional, directed, and summative (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Content analysis also systematically classifies and describes communication content on the basis of concrete, predestined types (Wright & Page, 1959).

The analysis includes several comparisons among 42 different companies. The first part of the study examined CSR strategy-related tweets posted by different corporations, which primarily consisted of the posted messages and the ensuing dialogue (i.e. retweets) generated by these tweets. The latter half of the study evaluated CA strategy-related tweets. Moreover, how stakeholders' communication reacted to the corporate's strategy is also investigated by checking the number of retweets, likes, and comments for the CA or CSR related tweets.

This research primarily focused on Twitter, and the selected companies normally have at least one officially verified Twitter account readily accessible on their websites. In this study, the majority of the selected companies have Twitter accounts. When it came to communication strategies promoted via Twitter, different companies tend to adopt different methods, which gave this study a unique chance to make comparative studies.

### **Existence of CSR-Related Content**

It is now general knowledge that once information has been posted online, it is almost impossible for such data to ever be permanently deleted. Often such information

can be available for a very long time, especially when it is posted publicly. Content analysis was therefore easily feasible for this study.

### **CSR-Related Content**

CSR is a process that first and foremost focuses on social activities, but can also characterize outcomes resulting from such social activities.

According to Coombs and Holladay (2011), CSR is the voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfills its perceived obligations to stakeholders, including employee, communities, the environment, and society as a whole. Therefore, the organizations need to communicate with society to meet those expectations, and CSR communication strategy can be treated as any attempt to create corporate social responsibility associations that emphasize an organization's contribution to society in terms of social concerns (Kim & Rader 2010). From the broad perspective of free market liberalists, organizations and enterprises have the obligation to consider environmental and social issues in addition to pursuing profits (Ihlen, 2011). For content to be considered pertinent to CSR then, it must demonstrate a number of qualities.

The tweets should include elements of organizational governance, human rights, labor practices, fair operating practices, consumer issues, environment, or community involvement (ISO, 2009), which meet the goals of upholding social and corporate responsibility to the public as well as key stakeholders. Table 3-3 lists the detailed definition of those elements related to CSR communication.

### **Corporate Ability-Related Content**

Unlike CSR, CA pays attention to corporate competence. In a more specific sense, Kim and Rader (2010) illustrate that CA "emphasizes building reputation related

to the company' s capabilities to deliver high-quality products or services". The requirements for being considered CA content then includes another set of standards.

CA mainly focuses on the development and performance of the business. CA-related content includes expertise in product or service quality, global business, implementation of quality control programs, industry leadership, market orientation, and innovation or research and development (R&D) efforts (Kim et al., 2014). Table 3-4 lists the detailed definition of those elements related to CA communication.

### **Twitter Tactics and Stakeholder Engagement**

Twitter is a social media platform that provides messaging services to users. Each individual posted message, or "tweet," is limited to 140 characters. In the modern business world, many corporations communicate with the public through media like Twitter. Studies have shown that most of Fortune 1000 companies tend to use Twitter, which gives Twitter a leading position among social media platforms (Schaefer, 2013). This paper aims to analyze different communication strategies employed on Twitter and the corresponding Twitter tactics used in the communication strategies. Specifically, how corporates use text, emojis, images, hyperlinks, video, "hashtags", and "mentions" in different communication strategies. Table 3-5 lists the detailed description of the Twitter tactics.

In addition, how public reacts to the corporate's communication strategies is quantified as how audience responds to the tweets. As discussed before, users can react to the tweets by commenting, retweeting, and liking the corresponding tweets. And those activities can represent the stakeholder's engagement to the corporates' accounts. Table 3-6 lists the detailed description on the information used to quantify the interactions.

## **Coding Sheet Construction**

The coding guide of this paper was built on the basis of previous analysis (Kim, Kim, & Sung, 2014; Kim & Rader, 2010), so as to perform the content analysis of selected Twitter accounts. The information of CSR and CA and corresponding tweet tactics were composed of the published data of the selected accounts.

Table 3-1. Classification of the corporations and their Twitter accounts.

Sector	Company Name	Rank	Twitter Account	Revenue (\$Million)
<b>Group 1. Top-ranked Corporates</b>				
Aerospace & Defense	Boeing	27	@Boeing	\$90,762
Apparel	Nike	106	@Nike	\$27,799
Business Services	ManpowerGroup	144	@ManpowerGroup	\$20,763
Chemical	Dow Chemicals	48	@DowChemical	\$58,167
Energy	Exxon Mobil	2	@exxonmobil	\$382,597
Engineering & Construction	Fluor	136	@FluorCorp	\$21,532
Financials	General Electric	8	@generalelectric	\$148,321
Food & Drug Stores	CVS Health	10	@CVSHealth	\$139,367
Food, Beverages & Tobacco	PepsiCo	44	@PepsiCo	\$66,683
Health Care	UnitedHealth Group	14	@UnitedHealthGrp	\$130,474
Hotels, Restaurants & Leisure	McDonald's	110	@McDonaldsCorp	\$27,441
Household Products	Procter & Gamble	32	@ProcterGamble	\$84,537
Industrials	Caterpillar	54	@CaterpillarInc	\$55,184
Materials	International Paper	114	@IntlPaperCo	\$26,221
Media	Walt Disney	57	@Disney	\$48,813
Motor Vehicles & Parts	General Motors	6	@GM	\$155,929
Retailing	Walmart	1	@Walmart	\$482,130
Technology	HP	19	@HP	\$111,454
Telecommunications	AT&T	12	@ATT	\$132,447
Transportation	UPS	47	@UPS	\$58,232
Wholesalers	McKesson	11	@McKesson	\$138,030
<b>Group 2. Bottom-ranked Corporates</b>				
Aerospace & Defense	AAR	997	@AARCORP	\$2,035
Apparel	Columbia Sportswear	982	@Columbia1938	\$2,101
Business Services	TrueBlue	960	@TBStaffing	\$2,174
Chemical	H.B. Fuller	979	@GlueTalk	\$2,105
Energy	Willbros Group	992	@willbros	\$2,063
Engineering & Construction	Hovnanian Enterprises	991	@khov	\$2,063
Financials	E*Trade Financial	1000	@etrade	\$2,019

Table 3-1. Continued

Sector	Company Name	Rank	Twitter Account	Revenue (\$Million)
Food & Drug Stores	Diplomat Pharmacy	946	@DiplomatRx	\$2,215
Food, Beverages & Tobacco	Brown-Forman	756	@BrownFormanJobs	\$2,991
Health Care	Intuitive Surgical	973	@IntuitiveSurg	\$2,132
Hotels, Restaurants & Leisure	Wendy's	993	@Wendys	\$2,061
Household Products	Nu Skin Enterprises	845	@nuskin	\$2,570
Industrials	International Game Technology	994	@IGTNews	\$2,058
Materials	Carpenter Technology	962	@CarpenterTech	\$2,173
Media	Cinemark Holdings	827	@Cinemark	\$2,627
Motor Vehicles & Parts	Allison Transmission Holdings	974	@AllisonTrans	\$2,127
Retailing	Pep Boys-Manny, Moe & Jack	989	@pepboysauto	\$2,078
Technology	Synopsys	995	@synopsys	\$2,058
Telecommunications	Equinix	884	@Equinix	\$2,444
Transportation	Werner Enterprises	971	@One_Werner	\$2,139
Wholesalers	Applied Industrial Technologies	880	@Applied_Ind	\$2,228

The following companies either do not have an official account, or tweets during research time frames can not be obtained: Apple (rank 5), Gartner (rank 999) from sector Technology, Pinnacle Foods (rank 839) from sector Food, Beverages & Tobacco sector, and Pool (rank 937) from sector Wholesalers. So they are replaced by the following accounts according to the order in Fortune 1000 List: HP (rank 19), Synopsys (995) from sector Technology, Brown-Forman (rank 756) from sector Food, Beverages & Tobacco sector, and Applied Industrial Technologies (rank 880) from sector Wholesalers.

Table 3-2. General information of the selected accounts.

Account	Total Tweets	Following	Followers	Total Likes	Joined Date
<b>Group 1. Top-ranked Corporates</b>					
@Boeing	4,483	229	393K	631	Mar-09
@Nike	32.8K	155	7.18M	5,582	Nov-11
@ManpowerGroup	2,618	559	5,340	819	Mar-11
@DowChemical	13.5K	1,870	53.4K	3,775	Aug-08
@exxonmobil	6,419	272	264K	79	Apr-09
@FluorCorp	2,873	533	9,756	1,137	Aug-10
@generalelectric	82.7K	14.5K	446K	1,654	Mar-11
@CVSHealth	7,923	4,824	32K	9,246	Mar-10
@PepsiCo	23.9K	15.1K	322K	475	Feb-09
@UnitedHealthGrp	1,300	187	11.3K	84	Oct-12
@McDonaldsCorp	237K	11.6K	161K	4,715	Feb-10
@ProcterGamble	6,982	901	176K	6,074	Mar-09
@CaterpillarInc	7,669	191	112K	401	Jun-08
@IntlPaperCo	1,330	71	4,558	567	May-13
@Disney	8,612	47	5.57M	11	Aug-09
@GM	13.4K	6,325	611K	612	Dec-07
@Walmart	487K	4,116	891K	2,023	Nov-08
@HP	38.1K	2,640	1.06M	6,862	Nov-08
@ATT	89.4K	8,324	828K	6,723	May-08
@UPS	27.7K	10.9K	186K	27.4K	Jun-10
@McKesson	4,055	989	17.2K	1,271	May-10
<b>Group 2. Bottom-ranked Corporates</b>					
@AARCORP	3,928	1,671	2,573	1,685	Nov-12
@Columbia1938	20.2K	4,021	114K	17.6K	Apr-11
@TBStaffing	3,051	755	832	35	Jul-13
@GlueTalk	3,090	162	1,854	75	Nov-09
@willbros	300	184	989	18	Jul-11
@khov	6,727	219	7,612	1,096	Sep-09
@etrade	11.6K	555	56.9K	1,642	Apr-09
@DiplomatRx	5,484	1,308	4,752	444	Nov-08
@BrownFormanJobs	2,192	452	2,146	968	Oct-13
@IntuitiveSurg	329	68	3,142	32	Jun-12
@Wendys	107K	1,249	2.03M	24.7K	Jul-09
@nuskin	7,125	236	32.7K	161	Sep-08
@IGTNews	4,635	822	12.6K	608	Oct-10
@CarpenterTech	1,087	317	1,431	139	Jun-10

Table 3-2. Continued

Account	Total Tweets	Following	Followers	Total Likes	Joined Date
@Cinemark	16.3K	1,072	50.7K	13.4K	Sep-11
@AllisonTrans	239	155	1,635	171	Jun-09
@pepboysauto	28.7K	2,750	22.1K	766	Oct-08
@synopsys	3,433	2,686	11.8k	165	Nov-08
@Equinix	8,073	1,071	20.5K	562	Apr-09
@One_Werner	5,285	810	6,238	1,237	Jul-09
@Applied_Ind	97	10	520	1	Jul-11

Table 3-3. CSR-related tweets categories.

CSR Type	Definition	Strength
Organizational Governance	“The system by which an organizations make and implements decision in pursuit of its objectives” (ISO, 2009, p.21)	Limited Compensation Ownership Transparency (new 2005) Political Accountability (new 2005) Other Strength
Human Rights	“The basic rights to which all human beings are entitled because they are human beings” (ISO, 2009, p.22)	Indigenous Peoples Relations (new 2002) Labor Rights Strength (added 2002) Other Strength
Labor Practices	“Encompass all policies and practices relating to work performed within, by or on behalf of the organization” (ISO, 2009, p.32)	Union Relations Cash Profit Sharing Employee Involvement Retirement Benefits Health and Safety Other Strength
Fair Operating Practices	“Concern ethical conduct in an organization’s dealing with other organizations and individuals” (ISO, 2009, p.46)	CEO Promotion Board of Directors Work/Life Benefits Women & Minority Contracting Employment of the Disabled Gay & Lesbian Policies Other Strength

Table 3-3. Continued

CSR Type	Definition	Strength
Consumer Issues	“Include providing education and accurate information, using fair, transparent and helpful marketing [of] information and contractual processes and promoting sustainable consumption” (p.50)	Quality R&D Innovation Benefits to Economically Disadvantaged Other Strength
Environment	“Environmental responsibility is a precondition for the survival and prosperity of human beings.” (ISO 2010, p. 41) “The organization’s use of living and non-living resources, the location of the activities of the organization, the generation of pollution and waste, and the implications of the organization’s activities products. And services for natural habitats” (ISO 2010, p. 40)	Beneficial Products and Services Pollution Prevention Recycling Clean Energy Communications Management Systems Other Strength
Community Involvement and Development	“Enhance the public good – helps to strengthen civil society and encompass support for and identification within the community” (ISO, 2009, p.59)	Charitable Giving, Innovative giving Non-U.S. Charitable Giving Support for Housing Support for Education Indigenous Peoples Relations (moved 2002) Volunteer Programs (new 2005) Other Strength

Source from Henriques, 2011.

Table 3-4. CA-related tweets categories.

CA Categories	Definition
Expertise in Product or Service Quality	The content that discuss how corporate's product or service has high quality.
Global Success	The information on how corporate deliver products or services worldwide.
Implementation of Quality Control Program	The content about how corporate focus on the quality.
Industry Leadership	The content that is related to how corporate's product or service is one of the best within the industry.
Market Orientation	A company philosophy focused on discovering and meeting the needs and desires of its customers through its product mix.
Innovation and R&D Efforts	The investigative activities a business conducts to improve existing products and procedures or to lead to the development of new products and procedures.

Source from Kim & Rader, 2010.

Table 3-5. Explanation of Twitter tactics.

Tactic	Description
Text	The tweet includes words within 140 characters.
Image	The tweet includes a picture/graphic/gif attachment.
Video	The tweet includes a video attachment.
Emoji	A small image in the tweet sentence, either static or animated, that represents a facial expression, an entity or a concept in digital communications.
Hyperlink	Embed the original URL (or shortened version of the original URL) into the tweet, providing tweet receiver with access to extra information by clicking on links embedded within tweets.
Hashtag	Hashtags assign a topic to a tweet. For example, tweets that contain #WorldCup are about just that. Click on a hashtag to see tweets related to a topic.
Mention others	The tweet directly refers to others by using @-sign.

Table 3-6. Explanation of Twitter interactions elements.

Interactions	Description
Comments	The number of comments made by other users except for message senders.
Retweets	The number of users who repeat the original tweet sent by message sender usually preceded by RT@Twitteruser or followed by (via @Twitteruser) on the user's own Twitter feed.
Likes	The number of users who like the tweet.

## CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

First, 42 companies from the Fortune 1000 list were selected as cases for study. Then, the researchers chose the Twitter account listed on each corporation's official website, and these Twitter accounts were analyzed for content across two time periods: March 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017, and June 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The corporations were divided into two groups: 1) the 21 companies at the top of their industry sectors in terms of revenue, and 2) the 21 companies at the bottom of their industry sectors. During the 10 days when data was collected, these 42 accounts posted a total of 871 tweets, 730 (83.81%) of which were related to CSR initiatives, 544 (62.46%) of which were related to CA initiatives, and 473 (54.31%) of which were related to both CSR and CA. CSR-related and CA-related tweets were reviewed and analyzed in terms of the categories of CSR-related or CA-related content, the Twitter tactics used in the tweets, and the level of interactivity of the tweets. To effectively answer the research questions, the frequencies and descriptive statistics of the indices in the coding sheet were recorded.

Moreover, to check whether the research results were consistent and reliable, the researcher utilized an intercoder reliability test by asking the two coders, who were trained to analyze and code tweets, to perform content analysis on the same sample. Seven companies and their tweets were randomly selected by computer and double coded to ensure intercoder reliability in the analysis process. In all, 143 tweets were double coded, which was 16.42% of the total selected tweets. The resulting intercoder reliability coefficient was an acceptable 0.89, as calculated with Holsti's (1969) formula.

## **Corporations' CSR Communication and CA Communication via Twitter**

One of the key questions is how often the corporations issue CSR and CA communications on Twitter, leading to RQ1: To what extent do the corporations engage in online CSR communication and CA communication via Twitter? In other words, what was the number and proportion of CSR-related and of CA-related tweets out of the total tweets? To answer this research question regarding the extent to which corporations engage in online CSR communication and CA communication via Twitter, the research question was reframed more specifically into two separate questions: 1) What is the percentage of CSR-related content out of all the Twitter messages issued by the accounts of the two groups together making up the 42 companies, and 2) What is the percentage of CA-related content out of all the Twitter messages issued by the accounts of the two groups together making up the 42 companies?

To address the second research question, each tweet sent by one of the 42 companies during the study period was reviewed and classified based on the classification standards discussed in Chapter 3. The tweets containing the CSR-related information listed in Table 3-3 were classified as CSR-related, and the tweets containing the CA-related information in Table 3-4 were categorized as CA-related. Those tweets containing both kinds of content were categorized as both-related.

According to Table 4-1, the total number of tweets posted in the study period by the accounts of the 42 companies was 871 for the two weeks period, of which CSR-related tweets made up 83.81% (n=730), while the number of CA-related tweets was 544, 62.46% of the total tweets. Thus, it is clear that the selected companies were more likely to post CSR-related content than CA-related content on Twitter.

## **Comparison Between the Corporation Groups**

Another focus of this study is on the differences in strategies employed by different kinds of companies, since different businesses will have distinct goals, mission statements, and marketing objectives. This study attempted to explore that question by making cross comparisons between CA-related and CSR-related tweets from companies in the top-ranked group and companies in the bottom-ranked group. Specifically, the research questions were: 1) RQ2a: Do the top-ranking corporations' accounts post a higher ratio of CA tweets to total tweets than the bottom-ranking corporations' accounts do? 2) RQ2b: Do the top-ranking corporations' accounts post a higher ratio of CSR tweets to total tweets than the bottom-ranking corporations' accounts do?

Taking the types of corporations into consideration revealed how the CSR-related tweets and the CA-related tweets were emphasized differently by corporations in different echelons (see Table 4-2 and Figure 4-1). Specifically, the selected companies in Group 1 (top-ranked companies) generated 514 tweets all together, of which 279 were CA-related, accounting for 54.28% of the total Group 1 tweets. In contrast, the selected corporations in Group 2 (bottom-ranked companies) generated 357 tweets in total, of which 74.23% were CA-related. It is clear that the bottom-ranked companies were more likely than the top-ranked companies to produce CA-related content. To confirm this result, a test for two proportions was utilized to compare the proportion of CA-related content between the two groups of corporations, for which the null hypothesis was that the proportion of CA-related content of the 21 top-ranked companies was not different from the proportion of CA-related content of the 21 bottom-ranked companies. The test for comparing two proportions showed that the z-value was

-5.98 and the p-value was less than 0.001, meaning that there was sufficient evidence at the 0.05 level to indicate that the top-ranked companies posted a significantly lower proportion of CA-related tweets than the bottom-ranked companies.

However, the corporation's production of CSR-related tweets revealed a different pattern. To be specific, during the study period, the top-ranked corporations posted 478 CSR-related tweets, which accounted for 93% of the total tweets produced by those companies. However, only 70.59% (n=252) of the bottom-ranked companies' total tweets were related to CSR. This result indicates that the top-ranked corporations are likely to produce more CSR-related content. To confirm this result, a test for two proportions was utilized to compare the proportion of CSR-related content in the two groups, for which the null hypothesis was that the proportion of CSR-related content of the 21 top-ranked companies was not different from the proportion of CSR-related content of the 21 bottom-ranked companies. The test for comparing two proportions showed that the z-value was 8.83 and the p-value less than 0.001, meaning that there was sufficient evidence at the 0.05 level to indicate that the top-ranked companies posted a significantly higher proportion of CSR-related tweets than the bottom-ranked companies.

Another question concerned which tactics are commonly used by companies when they conduct CSR communication and CA communication tactics including elements such as text, emojis, images, videos, hyperlinks (URLs), hashtags (#-sign), and mentions of others (@-sign). To be specific, two more research questions were asked: 1) RQ3a: What are the tactics used most frequently in CSR-related tweets posted by the accounts of the top-ranked companies as compared to those of the

bottom-ranked corporations? 2) RQ3b: What are the tactics used most frequently in CA-related tweets posted by accounts of the top-ranked companies as compared to those of the bottom-ranked corporations? These questions are concerned with the tactics used in Twitter-based online CSR communication and CA communication, and how the tactics used differ between the two different groups of corporations.

Table 4-3 and Figure 4-2 show how the 42 companies used different tactics in their CSR-related tweets. To better compare the difference between the top-ranked companies and the bottom-ranked companies, the usage of tactics is shown separately for each group of corporations. For both the top-ranked and bottom-ranked corporations, the most frequently used tactic was the inclusion of text, which is unsurprising because Twitter users normally use textual content to express ideas. However, leaving text aside, the top-ranked corporations were more likely to use hashtags (65.69% of CSR-related tweets) than the bottom-ranked corporations (56.35%). Furthermore, the bottom-ranked corporations used hyperlinks (60.71%) more than the top-ranked corporations (51.67%). A hashtag is used to refer a hot topic or popular trend, while a hyperlink is used to refer to an external resource, meaning that top-ranked corporations were more likely to use hashtags to connect their discussion to a trending Twitter topic. Moreover, the top-ranked companies were more likely to include images (60.46%) than the bottom-ranked corporations (53.17%), a more concrete method of conveying an idea. Similarly, top-ranked corporations used more emojis in their CSR communication (9.41%) than bottom-ranked corporations did (2.38%). A series of proportion tests were utilized to compare the proportions of

different tactics used in CSR-related content across the two groups (see Table 4-3), confirming these results.

Table 4-4 and Figure 4-3 indicate how the 42 companies used different tactics in their CA-related tweets. Again, the usage of tactics is shown separately for each group of corporations. Apart from text, the 21 top-ranked corporations were more likely to use an image (picture, graphic, or gif) in their CA communications (68.82%), as compared to the bottom-ranked corporations (50.57%). However, among the CA-related tweets, the bottom-ranked corporations used video more (15.09%) than the top-ranked corporations did. This result indicates that for CA communication, the bottom-ranked companies tended to utilize more vivid resources (videos) to demonstrate their corporate ability than the top-ranked companies, which tended to use images.

### **Comparison Within the Corporation Groups**

The results in the last section indicate that, because of their different business goals and stages of development, different corporations put different levels of effort into CSR and CA communications. This study also investigated whether the extent of CSR communication differed from that of CA communication even within corporation groups, by making cross comparisons of corporations' CA-related tweets and CSR-related tweets within each group. This was done in order to answer the following research questions: 1) RQ4a: For the top-ranking corporations' accounts, is the ratio of CA tweets to total tweets higher than, equal to, or less than the ratio of CSR tweets to total tweets? 2) RQ4b: For the bottom-ranking corporations' accounts, is the ratio of CA tweets to total tweets higher than, equal to, or less than the ratio of CSR tweets to total tweets? The results showed that the relative proportions did indeed differ within corporation groups.

For example, Table 4-2 shows how CSR-related tweets and CA-related tweets were emphasized differently by the top-ranked corporations. Specifically, the top-ranked companies generated 514 tweets in total, of which 279 were related to CA, or 54.28% of the total tweets. In contrast, 93% of the tweets generated by the top-ranked companies were related to CSR. Thus it is obvious that the top-ranked companies were more likely to produce CSR-related than CA-related content. To confirm this result, a test for two proportions was utilized to compare the proportions of CSR-related and CA-related content produced by the top-ranked corporations, for which the null hypothesis was that the proportion of CA-related content was not different from the proportion of CSR-related content produced by the 21 top-ranked companies. The test for comparing two proportions showed that the z-value was -10.18 and the p-value less than 0.001, meaning there was sufficient evidence at the 0.05 level to indicate that the top-ranked companies posted a significantly lower proportion of CA-related tweets than of CSR-related tweets.

However, the bottom-ranked corporations' production of CSR-related and CA-related tweets revealed a different pattern. Specifically, during the study period, the bottom-ranked corporations posted 252 CSR-related tweets, or 70.59% of the total tweets. On the other hand, 74.23% (n=265) of the total tweets were related to CA. This result indicates that the bottom-ranked corporations exert similar levels of effort in producing both CSR-related and CA-related content. To confirm this result, a test for two proportions was utilized to compare the proportions of CSR-related and CA-related content produced by the bottom-ranked corporations, for which the null hypothesis was that the proportion of CA-related content did not differ from the proportion of CSR-

related content produced by the 21 bottom-ranked companies. The test for comparing two proportions show that the z-value was -0.937 and the p-value was 0.349, which is not significant, and therefore the null hypothesis could not be rejected, indicating that the bottom-ranked companies posted similar proportions of CA-related tweets and CSR-related tweets.

Another topic of interest was whether different tactics are used in CSR and in CA communication by the companies within each group. To be specific, two more research questions were asked: 1) RQ5a: What tactics are the most frequently used by the top-ranked corporations' accounts? 2) RQ5b: What tactics are the most frequently used by the bottom-ranked corporations' accounts?

Table 4-3 and Table 4-4 show how the 42 companies used different tactics in their CSR-related tweets than in their CA-related tweets. As indicated in the last section, the hashtag (65.69%) was the tactic most frequently used by top-ranked corporations in their CSR-related tweets. However, when these top-ranked corporations conducted CA-related communications, they were more likely to use images (68.82%). On the other hand, the 21 bottom-ranked corporations utilized the hyperlink most frequently in both CSR-related and CA-related communications.

### **Corporations' Hybrid Strategy**

As discussed in the literature review section, corporations utilize different communication strategies to help them achieve different goals. Some corporations may have their preference when they generate the tweets. More interestingly, corporations may use a hybrid strategy, concentrating equally on CSR and CA communication. This naturally leads to another question: RQ6: Are the top-ranking corporations' accounts more likely to conduct a hybrid strategy than the bottom-ranking corporations'

accounts? In this study, a test for two proportions was utilized to compare the proportion of CSR-related and CA-related content produced by the top-ranked corporations, for which the null hypothesis was that the proportion of CA-related content was not different from the proportion of CSR-related content produced by the 42 selected companies. A corporation was considered to concentrate equally on CSR and CA communication when the p-value was higher than 0.05.

Table 4-5 shows there were 5 top-ranked companies that equally emphasized CSR and CA. However, 14 bottom-ranked companies generated similar proportions of CSR-related and CA-related tweets. Compared to the top-ranked corporations, the bottom-ranked companies were thus much more likely to post similar proportions of CA-related tweets and CSR-related tweets.

### **Results of Different Communication Strategies on Stakeholder Engagement**

To address the relationship between the communication strategies used and the resulting stakeholder engagement, an important question was asked: RQ7: Will different communication strategies have different results on stakeholder engagement for top-ranking and bottom-ranking corporations' accounts? This study investigated whether and how the selected companies conducted CSR or CA communication on Twitter in a two-way or interactive communication manner, answering two specific questions: 1) To what degree do the tweets disseminated by the corporations' Twitter accounts result in online interaction? 2) To what degree do the CSR-related and CA-related tweets disseminated by the Twitter accounts of the different company groups result in different levels of online interaction? Specifically, the level of stakeholder engagement with the corporations' Twitter accounts were measured by the number of replies, retweets, and likes which the tweets received. In addition, the researchers measured how the

message receivers responded differently to CSR-related tweets and to CA-related tweets.

As Table 4-6 shows, there were a total of 67,397 Twitter interactions generated by the total sample of 871 tweets, including 5,974 (8.86% of total interactions) comments by other users, 26,364 (39.12%) retweets, and 35,059 (52.02%) likes of the tweets. On average, each tweet received 6.86 comments, 30.27 retweets, and 40.25 likes. These results indicate that the studied accounts did, to a certain degree, succeed in engaging online users. However, this result refers only to how the stakeholders responded to the selected corporations in general. Results regarding the different company groups and different communication strategies are shown next.

Interactions with the CSR-related tweets generated by top-ranked corporations' Twitter accounts may be seen in Table 4-8. Those companies generated 478 CSR-related tweets, which in turn attracted 54,851 interactions. About 93.59% of the total interactions consisted of retweets (40.14% of CSR-related tweets' interactions from top-ranked accounts) and likes (53.45%), meaning that each tweet on average was retweeted by 46.06 other users and liked by about 61.33 other users. Comparatively, only 7.35% (n=3,513) of the interactions consisted of comments by other users.

CA-related original tweets from the Twitter accounts of the top-ranked companies numbered 279 during the study period. In total, those tweets attracted 16,398 interactions. According to Table 4-10, 854 comments were made by other users to the tweets, which is 5.20% of CA-related tweets' interactions from top-ranked accounts. It also meant each tweet on average had 3.06 comments. The number of retweets and

likes were 4,865 (29.67%) and 10,679 (65.12%) respectively, with averages of 17.44 retweets per tweet and 38.28 likes per tweet.

Stakeholders' engagement with CA-related tweets from the Twitter accounts of top-ranked companies may be seen in Table 4-12. It is seen that 352 CSR-related tweets were generated by top-ranked companies during the study period, attracting 6,845 interactions. About 38% of the interactions consisted of retweets and about 32% were likes, meaning that each tweet, on average, was retweeted by about ten other users and favored by about nine other users. Comparatively, only 30.37% (n=2,079) of interactions were comments by other users.

Meanwhile, the 21 bottom-ranked corporations generated 265 tweets related to CA initiatives during the study period, which in turn attracted 7,695 interactions in total. As shown by Table 4-14, 2,123 comments were made by other users to those tweets, which is 27.59% of CA initiatives from bottom-ranked accounts. It indicated each tweet generated 8.01 comments on average. The number of retweets and likes were 2,809 (36.50%) and 2,763 (35.91%) respectively, with averages of 10.60 retweets per tweet and 10.43 likes per tweet.

Looking at the results by corporation groups and communication strategies (as seen in Tables 4-8, 4-10, 4-12, and 4-14) yields the following general results. First, the top-ranked companies generated much more stakeholder engagement than the bottom-ranked companies did, unsurprising since, as shown in Table 3-2, the top-ranked companies' Twitter accounts generally have many more followers. Second, in terms of the indices of stakeholder engagement, the bottom-ranked companies received more balanced interactions, meaning that their tweets received roughly similar numbers of

comments, retweets, and likes. On the other hand, the top-ranked companies' tweets generally received high numbers of retweets and likes but lesser numbers of comments. Third, for the top-ranked companies, the CSR-related tweets generated a much higher number of interactions than the CA-related tweets. However, the bottom-ranked companies generated nearly equal numbers of interactions with CSR and with CA tweets.

Finally, all the z-values and p-values generated by the difference proportion test (see Tables 4-7, 4-9, 4-11, 4-13, and 4-15) demonstrate that the results shown in Tables 4-6, 4-8, 4-10, 4-12, and 4-14 are significant.

Table 4-1. The percentage of CSR-related and CA-related tweets in selected tweets.

Account Type	Twitter Account Name	Total number of tweets	Number of CSR-related tweets	Percentage of CSR-related tweets	Number of CA-related tweets	Percentage of CA-related tweets	Number of Both-related tweets	Percentage of Both-related tweets
Top	@DowChemical	62	55	88.71%	42	67.74%	38	61.29%
Top	@ProcterGamble	55	55	100.00%	10	18.18%	10	18.18%
Bottom	@Cinemark	50	37	74.00%	45	90.00%	34	68.00%
Top	@ATT	46	46	100.00%	1	2.17%	1	2.17%
Top	@CVSHealth	40	40	100.00%	33	82.50%	33	82.50%
Top	@Disney	40	38	95.00%	4	10.00%	4	10.00%
Bottom	@BrownFormanJobs	39	36	92.31%	37	94.87%	35	89.74%
Top	@McKesson	33	25	75.76%	31	93.94%	24	72.73%
Top	@CaterpillarInc	32	32	100.00%	21	65.63%	21	65.63%
Bottom	@AARCORP	32	26	81.25%	26	81.25%	22	68.75%
Top	@IntlPaperCo	31	30	96.77%	11	35.48%	11	35.48%
Bottom	@Columbia1938	30	18	60.00%	19	63.33%	14	46.67%
Bottom	@GlueTalk	28	19	67.86%	23	82.14%	18	64.29%
Bottom	@OneWerner	28	25	89.29%	17	60.71%	15	53.57%
Top	@FluorCorp	25	24	96.00%	23	92.00%	22	88.00%
Bottom	@TBStaffing	25	2	8.00%	2	8.00%	2	8.00%
Top	@generalElectric	22	22	100.00%	18	81.82%	18	81.82%
Top	@Walmart	21	21	100.00%	11	52.38%	11	52.38%
Bottom	@synopsis	19	9	47.37%	11	57.89%	7	36.84%
Top	@GM	17	17	100.00%	14	82.35%	14	82.35%
Top	@UPS	17	12	70.59%	13	76.47%	10	58.82%

Table 4-1. Continued

Account Type	Twitter Account Name	Total number of tweets	Number of CSR-related tweets	Percentage of CSR-related tweets	Number of CA-related tweets	Percentage of CA-related tweets	Number of Both-related tweets	Percentage of Both-related tweets
Top	@McDonaldsCorp	16	15	93.75%	11	68.75%	10	62.50%
Bottom	@Equinix	16	16	100.00%	14	87.50%	14	87.50%
Bottom	@etrade	15	9	60.00%	9	60.00%	9	60.00%
Top	@exxonmobil	13	10	76.92%	9	69.23%	6	46.15%
Top	@UnitedHealthGroup	11	11	100.00%	6	54.55%	6	54.55%
Bottom	@khov	10	10	100.00%	10	100.00%	10	100.00%
Bottom	@nuskin	10	6	60.00%	5	50.00%	1	10.00%
Top	@ManpowerGroup	9	4	44.44%	5	55.56%	3	33.33%
Top	@PepsiCo	9	7	77.78%	6	66.67%	5	55.56%
Bottom	@IntuitiveSurg	9	3	33.33%	7	77.78%	3	33.33%
Bottom	@Wendys	9	7	77.78%	8	88.89%	7	77.78%
Top	@HP	8	8	100.00%	5	62.50%	5	62.50%
Bottom	@IGTNews	7	6	85.71%	6	85.71%	5	71.43%
Top	@Boeing	6	5	83.33%	4	66.67%	3	50.00%
Bottom	@AllisonTrans	6	6	100.00%	5	83.33%	5	83.33%
Bottom	@DiplomatRx	6	5	83.33%	6	100.00%	5	83.33%
Bottom	@willbros	6	3	50.00%	6	100.00%	3	50.00%
Bottom	@pepboysauto	5	5	100.00%	4	80.00%	4	80.00%
Bottom	@AppliedInd	4	2	50.00%	2	50.00%	2	50.00%
Bottom	@CarpenTerTech	3	2	66.67%	3	100.00%	2	66.67%

Table 4-1. Continued

Account Type	Twitter Account Name	Total number of tweets	Number of CSR-related tweets	Percentage of CSR-related tweets	Number of CA-related tweets	Percentage of CA-related tweets	Number of Both-related tweets	Percentage of Both-related tweets
Top	@Nike	1	1	100.00%	1	100.00%	1	100.00%
	Total	871	730	83.81%	544	62.46%	473	54.31%

Table 4-2. The percentage of CSR-related and CA-related tweets in top-ranking and bottom-ranking companies' accounts.

Account Type	Total number of tweets	Total Number of CSR-related tweets	Percentage of CSR-related tweets	Total Number of CA-related tweets	Percentage of CA-related tweets	Total Number of Both-related tweets	Percentage of Both-related tweets
Top	514	478	93.00%	279	54.28%	256	49.81%
Bottom	357	252	70.59%	265	74.23%	217	60.78%

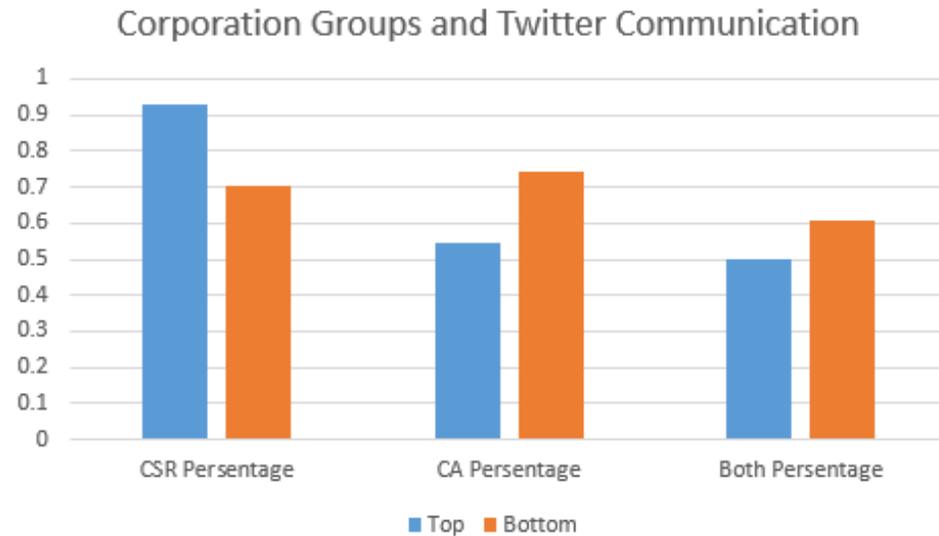


Figure 4-1. The percentage of CSR-related and CA-related tweets in top-ranking and bottom-ranking companies' accounts.

Table 4-3. Corporations' CSR communication and the corresponding tactics.

Tactic	Group 1		Group 2		Proportions Test	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	z-value	p-value
Text	477	99.79%	249	98.81%	1.71	0.089
Emoji	45	9.41%	6	2.38%	3.28	0.001
Image	289	60.46%	134	53.17%	1.90	0.058
Video	65	13.60%	36	14.29%	-0.26	0.798
Hyperlink	247	51.67%	153	60.71%	-2.33	0.020
Mention	195	40.80%	93	36.90%	1.03	0.306
Hashtag	314	65.69%	142	56.35%	2.48	0.014
Total CSR Tweets	478	100.00%	252	100.00%	-	-

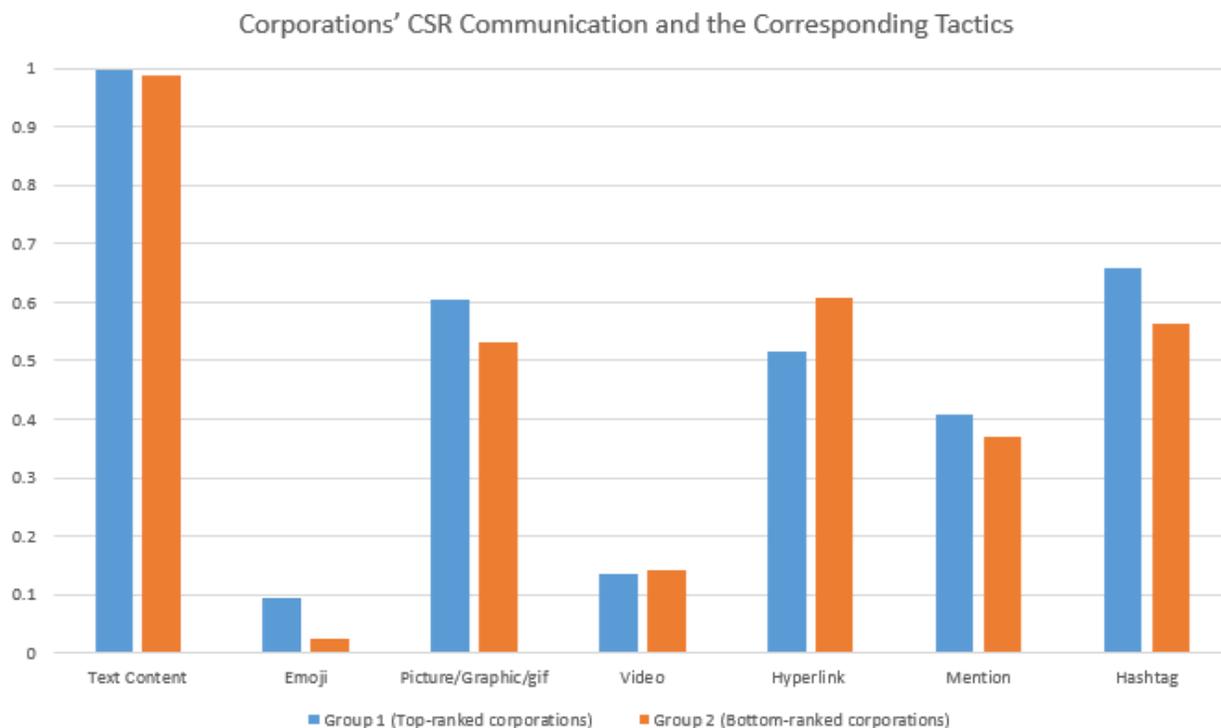


Figure 4-2. Corporations' CSR communication and the corresponding tactics.

Table 4-4. Corporations' CA communication and the corresponding tactics.

Tactic	Group 1		Group 2		Proportions Test	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	z-value	p-value
Text	279	100.00%	261	98.49%	2.06	0.040
Emoji	14	5.02%	10	3.77%	0.74	0.459
Image	192	68.82%	134	50.57%	4.34	0.000
Video	24	8.60%	40	15.09%	-10.97	0.000
Hyperlink	182	65.23%	164	61.89%	0.81	0.419
Mention	105	37.63%	96	36.23%	0.34	0.735
Hashtag	149	53.41%	153	57.74%	-1.02	0.311
Total CA Tweets	279	100.00%	265	100.00%	-	-

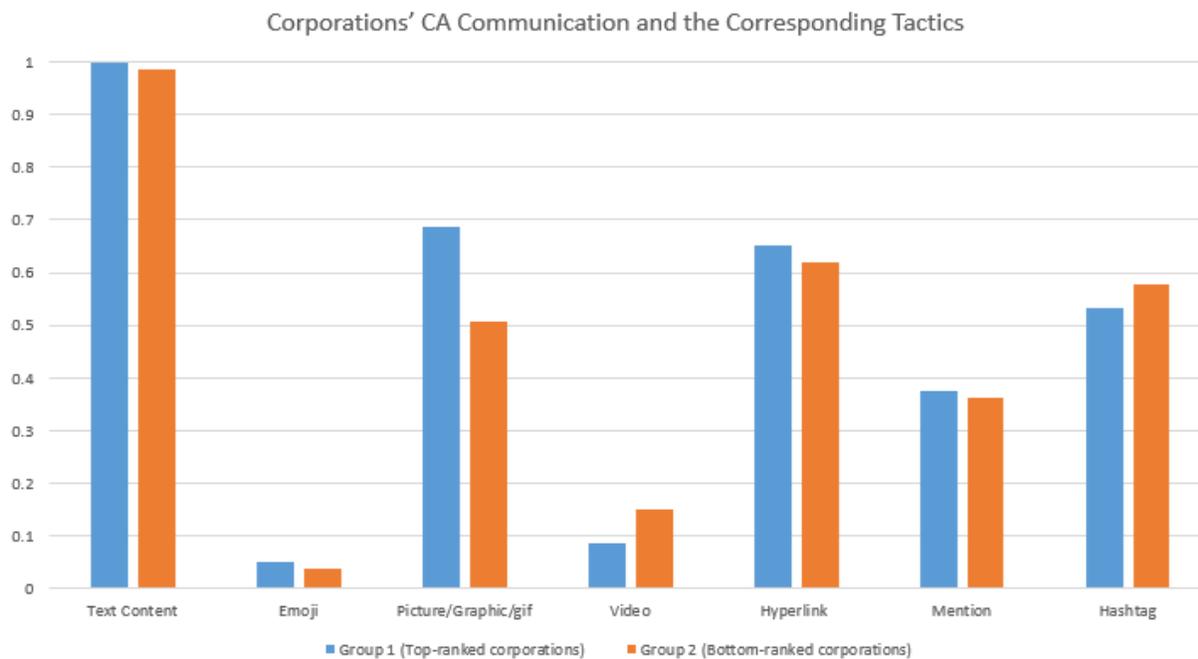


Figure 4-3. Corporations' CA communication and the corresponding tactics.

Table 4-5. The corporations that utilized the hybrid strategy.

Account Type	Twitter Account Name	Total number of tweets	Percentage of CSR-related tweets	Percentage of CA-related tweets	Percentage difference	z-value	p-value
Top	@Boeing	6	83.33%	66.67%	16.67%	0.67	0.535
	@exxonmobil	13	76.92%	69.23%	7.69%	0.44	0.666
	@FluorCorp	25	96.00%	92.00%	4.00%	0.60	0.557
	@ManpowerGroup	9	44.44%	55.56%	11.12%	-0.47	0.650
	@PepsiCo	9	77.78%	66.67%	11.11%	0.53	0.613
Bottom	@AARCORP	32	81.25%	81.25%	0.00%	0.00	1.000
	@AllisonTran	6	100.00%	83.33%	16.67%	1.04	0.344
	@CarpenterTech	3	66.67%	100.00%	-33.33%	-1.10	0.388
	@DiplomatRx	6	83.33%	100.00%	-16.67%	-1.04	0.344
	@Applied_Ind	4	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00	1.000
	@BrownFormanJobs	39	92.31%	94.87%	-2.56%	-0.46	0.646
	@etrade	15	60.00%	60.00%	0.00%	0.00	1.000
	@Columbia1938	30	60.00%	63.33%	3.33%	-0.27	0.792
	@IGTNews	7	85.71%	85.71	0.00%	0.00	1.000
	@etrade	15	60.00%	60.00%	0.00%	0.00	1.000
	@pepboysauto	5	100.00%	80.00%	20.00%	1.05	0.351
	@nuskin	10	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.45	0.664
	@TBStaffing	25	8.00%	8.00%	0.00%	0.00	1.000

Table 4-6. Stakeholder engagement from total selected tweets.

Indices	Percentage	The average number per tweet
Comments	8.86% (N=5974)	6.86
Retweets	39.12%(N=26364)	30.27
Likes	52.02%(N=35059)	40.25
Total	100.00%(N=67397)	77.38

Table 4-7. Z-values and p-values of stakeholder engagement from total selected tweets.

	Comments		Retweets	
	z-value	p-value	z-value	p-value
Comments	-	-	-130.084	0.00000
Likes	-172.181	0.00000	47.548	0.00000

Table 4-8. Stakeholder engagement from top-ranked corporations' CSR-related tweets.

Indices	Percentage	The average number per tweet
Comments	6.40% (N=3513)	7.35
Retweets	40.14%(N=22019)	46.06
Likes	53.45%(N=29319)	61.33
Total	100.00%(N=54851)	114.75

Table 4-9. Z-values and p-values of stakeholder engagement from top-ranked corporations' CSR-related tweets.

	Comments		Retweets	
	z-value	p-value	z-value	p-value
Comments	-	-	132.234	0.00000
Likes	170.152	0.00000	44.175	0.00000

Table 4-10. Stakeholder engagement from top-ranked corporations' CA-related tweets.

Indices	Percentage	The average number per tweet
Comments	5.20% (N=854)	3.06
Retweets	29.67%(N=4865)	17.44
Likes	65.12%(N=10679)	38.28
Total	100.00%(N=16398)	58.77

Table 4-11. Z-values and p-values of stakeholder engagement from top-ranked corporations' CA-related tweets.

	Comments		Retweets	
	z-value	p-value	z-value	p-value
Comments	-	-	58.399	0.00000
Likes	113.633	0.00000	64.286	0.00000

Table 4-12. Stakeholder engagement from bottom-ranked corporations' CSR-related tweets.

Indices	Percentage	The average number per tweet
Comments	30.37% (N=2079)	8.25
Retweets	37.84%(N=2590)	10.28
Likes	31.79%(N=2176)	8.63
Total	100.00%(N=6845)	27.16

Table 4-13. Z-values and p-values of stakeholder engagement from bottom-ranked corporations' CSR-related tweets.

	Comments		Retweets	
	z-value	p-value	z-value	p-value
Comments	-	-	9.218	0.00000
Likes	1.795	0.07271	7.430	0.00000

Table 4-14. Stakeholder engagement from bottom-ranked corporations' CA-related tweets.

Indices	Percentage	The average number per tweet
Comments	27.59% (N=2123)	8.01
Retweets	36.50%(N=2809)	10.60
Likes	35.91%(N=2763)	10.43
Total	100.00%(N=7695)	29.04

Table 4-15. Z-values and p-values of stakeholder engagement from bottom-ranked corporations' CA-related tweets.

	Comments		Retweets	
	z-value	p-value	z-value	p-value
Comments	-	-	11.843	0.00000
Likes	11.086	0.00000	-0.761	0.44639

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The widespread use of social media is replacing traditional communication platforms. This has led public relations practitioners to seek both theoretical and practical insights into the best ways to utilize social media, especially Twitter, a popular, representative platform that allows corporations to communicate and interact with audiences instantly. At the same time, CSR is an increasingly important way for corporations to show they care about the whole society, while CA emphasizes corporations' capacity to deliver high-quality services and products. Thus it is necessary for corporations to learn how to conduct CSR and CA communications through social media as effectively and efficiently as possible. In the context of Twitter, companies can choose to emphasize either CSR or CA more, or else to utilize a hybrid strategy that emphasizes both equally. However, many companies are unaware of how best to allocate their resources to such communications and what results they may have on stakeholder engagement. For this reason, this study aimed to investigate how different types of corporations conducted CSR communication and CA communication with stakeholders on Twitter, and what results their practices yielded.

As such, 42 companies were selected from the 2015 Fortune 1000 list for analysis of their corporate Twitter accounts. These accounts were divided into two groups: 1) Group 1 consisted of the accounts run by the top-ranked companies in each industry sector, namely @McDonaldsCorp, @ATT, @Boeing, @CaterpillarInc, @CVSHealth, @Disney, @DowChemical, @exxonmobil, @FluorCorp, @generalelectric, @GM, @HP, @IntlPaperCo, @ManpowerGroup, @McKesson, @Nike, @PepsiCo, @ProcterGamble, @UnitedHealthGrp, @UPS, and @Walmart; 2)

Group 2 consisted of the accounts run by the bottom-ranked companies in each industry sector, namely @AARCORP, @AllisonTrans, @Applied\_Ind, @BrownFormanJobs, @CarpenterTech, @Cinemark, @Columbia1938, @DiplomatRx, @Equinix, @etrade, @GlueTalk, @IGTNews, @IntuitiveSurg, @khov, @nuskin, @One\_Werner, @pepboysauto, @synopsys, @TBStaffing, @Wendys, and @willbros. Both groups' tweets were analyzed (and compared between groups) to discover how corporations conduct CA and CSR communications differently, how different corporations emphasize different communication strategies, and how the different strategies result in differential stakeholder engagement.

### **Corporations' CSR and CA Communication on Twitter**

To answer Research Questions 1-6, a series of detailed analyses were conducted on the corporations' CSR and CA communications. Although nearly all the selected companies engaged in both CSR and CA communications, different groups exerted very different levels of effort on generating CSR- and CA-related tweets. While the bottom-ranked companies generated only 252 CSR-related tweets during the study period, the top-ranked companies put much more effort into emphasizing CSR, generating 478 CSR-related tweets, which accounted for 93% of their total tweets. The bottom-ranked companies, however, were more likely to produce CA-related messages, generating 265 CA-related tweets, 74.23% of their total tweets. Moreover, while the top-ranked companies produced many more tweets mentioning CSR initiatives without mentioning CA, bottom-ranked corporations were more likely to emphasize those two communication strategies in a balanced manner, meaning the numbers of CA- and CSR-related tweets were closer and that more of the bottom-ranked companies adopted the hybrid strategy of emphasizing both CSR and CA.

Corporations utilize different communication strategies to reach different results. CSR communication is especially important for top-ranked corporations because publics pay more attention to their activities and how they impact society. Meanwhile, their prominence means their corporate abilities are already well-known from media coverage. Given publics' needs and expectations, it is necessary for top-ranked corporations to invest more in CSR communication than in CA communication. However, lower-ranked companies' corporate abilities are not much emphasized by the media, and these companies generally face more intense competition, their position being less secure. For this reason, CA communication is essential to lower-ranked corporations, who should ideally balance their CSR and their CA communication to emphasize both their social responsibility and their ability.

As regards communication tactics, top-ranked corporations are more likely to use images, such as pictures, graphics, or gifs (68.82%), in their CA communications than bottom-ranked corporations are (50.57%). However, in their CA-related tweets, the bottom-ranked corporations used videos more (15.09%) than the top-ranked corporations did. This result indicates that the bottom-ranked companies tend to utilize more vivid resources to demonstrate their corporate ability than top-ranked corporations do, since video attachments generally convey messages more vividly than pictures. These differing uses of communication tactics confirm that lower-ranked corporations invest more in CA communications.

### **Stakeholder Engagement for Different Communications Strategies**

This study also explored the success of different communication strategies, specifically how stakeholders reacted differently to CSR and to CA communications (Research Question 7). Analysis revealed that the top-ranked companies generated

much higher numbers of interactions with their CSR-related tweets than with CA-related tweets, while the bottom-ranked companies generated nearly equal numbers of interactions with their CSR and their CA communications. Moreover, the bottom-ranked companies' tweets received more balanced numbers of comments, retweets, and likes, while the top-ranked companies' tweets normally generated high numbers of retweets and likes, but only a small number of comments.

More and more companies are utilizing social media such as Twitter to communicate CSR and CA information with the public, so this study has important and interesting implications for corporations. First, corporations nearer the bottom of their sector can generate more stakeholder engagement through CA communication, especially in the form of replies to tweets. Second, given that the bottom-ranked corporations' CA communications generated good stakeholder engagement, these companies' tactics should be used by other corporations, tactics such as embedding more videos and posting more pictures to display their corporate abilities more vividly. Third, the top-ranked corporations are more likely to emphasize CSR, which in turn generates good stakeholder engagement, indicating that top-ranked corporations generally should put more effort into emphasizing their CSR.

It should be noted that this study has several weaknesses and should be replicated to understand more clearly the relationship between stakeholder engagement and CSR vs. CA tweets. First, the study while it selected 21 companies at the top the revenue range in the Fortune 1000 list and 21 companies at the bottom of that range, it must be recognized that these are all large corporations. Second, 42 companies' tweets from 1000 companies is too small a sample of companies to make generalizations to

companies overall. While the number of tweets coded is large, and it may be safe to argue that these two weeks of tweets represent the tweets of these 42 companies, again a random sample of tweets would allow for generalizations to tweets. Third, only two weeks were represented in this tweet data set and generalizing to all 52 weeks of these tweets is not possible.

The major finding in this study that CSR tweets result in more engagement by replies, retweets and comments deserves to be examined further with a larger and more representative twitter data base. Moreover, some other factors, which can also affect the stakeholder engagement, should be further discussed and investigated. Despite the limitations, this study demonstrates important corporate communication strategies, tactics, and their results on social media, and the implications are important for the scholars and practitioners.

APPENDIX  
CODING SHEET

Number	Variable Name	Content	Code
1	Account	Name of the Twitter Account	@AccountName
2	Group	The company is top-ranked or bottom-ranked company	1 = top-ranked company
			2 = bottom-ranked company
3	Tweet	Content of the Tweet in Text Version	Text
4	Date	Date of the Posted Tweet	MM/DD
5	Retweeted	Retweeted Other's Tweet Message	1 = yes
			0 = no
6	CSR sector 1	Organizational Governance	1 = yes
			0 = no
7	CSR sector 2	Human Rights	1 = yes
			0 = no
8	CSR sector 3	Labor Practices	1 = yes
			0 = no
9	CSR sector 4	Fair Operating Practices	1 = yes
			0 = no
10	CSR sector 5	Consumer Issues	1 = yes
			0 = no
11	CSR sector 6	Environment	1 = yes
			0 = no
12	CSR sector 7	Community Involvement and Development	1 = yes
			0 = no
13	CSR sector 8	Other	1 = yes
			0 = no
14	CA sector 1	Expertise in Product or Service Quality	1 = yes
			0 = no
15	CA sector 2	Global Success	1 = yes
			0 = no
16	CA sector 3	Implementation of Quality Control Program	1 = yes
			0 = no
17	CA sector 4	Industry Leadership	1 = yes
			0 = no
18	CA sector 5	Market Orientation	1 = yes
			0 = no
19	CA sector 6	Innovation and R&D Efforts	1 = yes
			0 = no

20	CA sector 7	Other	1 = yes
			0 = no
21	Other	Neither CSR nor CA issues	1 = yes
			0 = no
22	Tactics - Content	Text	1 = yes
			0 = no
23	Tactic - Media Vividness 1	Emoji	1 = yes
			0 = no
24	Tactics - Media Vividness 2	Image	1 = yes
			0 = no
25	Tactics - Media Vividness 3	Video	1 = yes
			0 = no
26	Tactics - Internal Reference 1	Hashtag	1 = yes
			0 = no
27	Tactics - Internal Reference 2	Mention	1 = yes
			0 = no
28	Tactics - Internal Reference 3	Hyperlink	1 = yes
			0 = no
29	Interaction 1	Amount of Replies from Stakeholders to the Tweet	000-999
30	Interaction 2	Amount of Tweet's Retweets	000-999
31	Interaction 3	Amount of Tweet's Likes	000-999
32	Interaction 4	Amount of Replies from Official Account to Stakeholders	1 = yes
			0 = no

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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