

Review Article

Role of Social Media in CSR Communication: A Study From Bangladesh Perspective

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Abstract - This is the age of technology and more connected social media, which has shortened the distance between marketers, customers, and other stakeholders. For a business that wants to understand how it is performing, social media would analyze its reach, engagement, and sales with an analytics tool (social media analytics). Social media platforms are always evolving. The current paper examines the role of social media in CSR in Bangladesh. The current study results from the collection of authentic, reliable, and valid data from both primary and secondary sources. Relevant websites, newspapers, and various research papers published in reputed journals have been studied for secondary data. In contrast, the primary data have been collected from 120 representative samples through a convenient sampling method. In light of the identified factors, the current study recommends adopting social media to increase the positive image to maintain sustainable marketing or development via CSR tools.

Keywords - Social Media, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

1. Introduction

The effectiveness of social media platforms is tremendously contributing to marketing activities bringing opportunities and challenges for CSR communication (Matel, D. 2013). During this global era, digital marketing tools have already become the core strategic concern for companies, especially for executing the activities of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Companies having social, environmental, and economic concerns can build and enhance their positive corporate image among consumers in the long run (Aguilar, M.T.J, et al.,2017). Social media is the most connected, faster, and widespread medium of communication right now that can build the brand, increase sales, drive website traffic, etc. The major social media platforms (at the moment) are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, and Snapchat, which have the significance in creating buzz and excitement about a product or service within a short period of time (Mohamed, N.A. and Curly, B.C. 2014). There has been a clear progression in the amount of information about sustainability and CSR in recent years (Cortado & Chalmeta, 2016). The growth of CSR practices via different mediums encourages service providers to do more than their competitors to build a positive brand image (Liu T.M., 2014).

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Social Media

Social media, the most used medium of communication in recent times in the context of Bangladesh, has an immense impact on the mindset of mass people rather than the mainstream media. People follow every trend generated by social media platforms and engage themselves by putting their opinions within a very

few moments. Along with the social issues, many of the audience emphasized the activities of socially and environmentally responsible companies to their stakeholders through CSR activities. According to the latest report of BRTC, the total number of Internet Subscribers reached 112.715 million at the end of February 2021; among them, 103.193 million are mobile internet users. Other statistics show that there were 45.00 million social media users in Bangladesh in January 2021, 27.2% of the total population, and it has increased by 9.0 million between 2020 and 2021. Nowadays, the online media environment provides low-cost methods for an organization to reach its stakeholders, avoiding mainstream media and, thus, connecting and discussing with its customers directly (Matei, D.2013).

2.2. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

CSR involves a commitment to improving community well-being through discretionary business practices and corporate resource contributions (Kotler and Lee, 2005). CSR concerns the ethical and transparent relationship between a company and its public audiences, the establishment of goals in line with the sustainable development of society, the conservation of natural and environmental resources for future generations, respect for diversity, and support for the reduction of social inequality (Ethos, 2016). CSR involves a new way of doing business whereby companies sustainably manage their operations economically, socially, and environmentally while recognizing the interests of different public audiences they relate to (i.e., shareholders, employees, the community, suppliers, and customers) in consideration of the environment and sustainable development(Forum Empresa,2016). A company does CSR for its long-term



good with assured returns, like public relations, including a series of initiatives taken by a company in its enlightened self-interest (Porag, S.R.,2014). A key function of the CSR management approach is the adequate communication of CSR activities to the interested public to achieve credibility. They inform and integrate stakeholders into the CSR progress and all related processes (Meixner et al., 2015). Firms should listen to and understand both the positive and negative perceptions of their stakeholders about the firm to tackle the problems by strengthening CSR performance by giving a corporate philanthropic contribution (Jin-goo Kang, J & Kim, H,2013)

3. Literature Review

Social media is a trustworthy tool for CSR communication through active engagement among companies and their stakeholders. Social media communication of CSR activities can positively influence customers' buying behavior and build a strong intention among employees to work for socially responsible corporations (Abbas J et al., 2019). Imran Ali et al. (2013) explained that social media is a trustworthy tool for communicating CSR activities and engaging stakeholders. Customers believe that communication of CSR activities through social media influences their buying behavior positively. The CSR actions can yield satisfactory results if they are effectively communicated to all stakeholders. Tench, R, and Jones, B (2011) considered Social media a transformed nature of communication facilitating the relationship between organizations and their stakeholders in Communicating CSR for sustainable development. Liu T.M (2014) find out a positive relationship between CSR and the consumer's brand preference. In practice, a socially responsible brand image may enhance consumers' preferences toward the brand. Aguilar, M.T.J et al. (2017) identified that effective CSR results in a positive brand image and consumer preference to purchase a good or service. Javier F. et al. (2016) examined that companies have to interact with stakeholders in CSR issues through online social networks as these are the best media to do it in recent times. Their suggestion toward the companies to use the full potential of online social networks to improve dialogue and engagement with their stakeholders needed to change the management model by playing a relevant role in the CSR strategy adopted by the company. In their studies, Cortado & Chalmeta (2016) explained that there had been a clear progression in the amount of information about sustainability and CSR companies on social networks in recent years. One explanation could be that they are business-to-consumer (B2C) companies under more pressure from their stakeholders than business-to-business (B2-B) companies. Online social networks offer companies a good solution for CSR communication. They allow interaction with stakeholders in CSR issues in a two-way communication approach. Online social networks offer companies a good solution for CSR communication. They allow interaction with stakeholders in CSR issues in a two-way communication approach. However, companies had little interest in interacting with stakeholders on CSR issues in the past.

Therefore, it becomes necessary to analyze whether today's companies are addressing CSR communication through online social networks or not and, if so, whether they are doing it correctly using an interactive approach. Management of online social networks should play a relevant role in the CSR strategy adopted by the company. Grzesiuk K. (2017) explained that the appropriate management of a company must connect with its stakeholders, building a positive image and reputation. CSR's primary purpose should be enhancing value for its stakeholders, including improving social conditions through education and care about the environment. Curly, C and Noormohamed, N. A (2013) emphasized using social media to create buzz and excitement about CSR activities by companies both internally and externally. A study by IBM (2017) titled "How CSR social media sentiment affects the brand reputation" showed that there is a significant for companies to frame and execute their CSR efforts online, which can improve the brand image and company reputation. Ganescu, M.C. (2012) examined that a careful selection of corporate social responsibility strategies could ensure business sustainability by delivering benefits to the organization (improving corporate image and reputation, increasing operational efficiency, sales, and customer loyalty, gaining competitive advantage, providing benefits to shareholders, increasing financial performance), to the employees (increased motivation, improvements in team unity, reduced internal conflicts, elimination of unethical practices, more developed social solidarity), to society (promoting social inclusion, improving cooperation with non-governmental organizations, state institutions, customers, suppliers, competitors) and benefits to the environment (reducing the impact of economic activity on air, water, soil, nonrenewable natural resources, reducing energy consumption, promoting recycling and reuse). Corporate social responsibility practices are useful for business firms in enhancing sales growth and social good, as customers prefer to purchase the products or services of socially responsible companies; these customers critically contribute to firms' enhanced performance. Rodríguez, M.D et al.(2019) explained that CSR facilitates a firm's image through social networks. Jones, P et al. (2008) examined that an increasing number of companies are committed to the sustainable development of a marketing mix of sustainable goods and services, increasing superior value performance. Meixner et al. (2015), "A key function of the CSR management approach is the adequate communication of CSR activities to the interested public. Companies want to achieve credibility. They inform transparency about CSR activities and integrate stakeholders into the CSR progress and all related processes. Social media ensures two-way communication having a wider reach toward the target audience and the critical public at a low cost, ultimately facilitating the company's image by increasing brand awareness. Rolland, D. & Bazzoni, O.J. (2009) experimented that the use of online media like social platforms for CSR will improve the way of engaging with stakeholders by the companies to enhance the relationship with society as online media is the

most targeted media of communication for a large number of audience within a very short time.

4. Research Problem

There were **52.58** million internet users in Bangladesh in January 2022. Bangladesh's internet penetration rate stood at 31.5 percent of the total population in 2022. This growth also leads to more business expansion online, especially on social media like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. The growth of the internet and social networks may influence the changes in behavioral patterns towards socially responsible companies. According to BRTC, Internet Subscribers have increased by 5.5 million (of +11.6percent) between 2021 and 2022. This tremendous growth of internet users is the most lucrative and potential consumers for the marketers in offering their goods and services online using social media...58

5. Research Gap

The findings of the reviewed literature represent the influence of eleven (11) factors in the role of social media in communicating CSR. However, each study focuses on its unique findings related to the role of social media in CSR in Bangladesh. Moreover, these studies focused on either one or some aspects other than the complete subject matter of the current study. This means that the past studies have not concluded with a concrete and exhaustive list of necessary factors that could positively affect and ensure the role of social media in CSR in Bangladesh. So, a research gap can be mitigated by undertaking an extensive primary survey.

6. Research Question

To mitigate the research gap, it is very significant in the present study to investigate the research question: "Is there any factor affecting the role of social media in communicating CSR in Bangladesh or not?"

7. Research Hypothesis

To find the answer to the research question, the current study has endeavored with the following hypothesis:

H₀: There is no factor affecting the role of social media in communicating CSR in Bangladesh.

H_a: There are influencing factors behind the role of social media in communicating CSR in Bangladesh.

8. Methodology of the Study

The current study results from collecting authentic, reliable, and valid data from both primary and secondary sources. For secondary data, relevant websites, banks' annual reports, newspapers, and various research papers published in reputed journals have been studied. In contrast, the primary data have been collected from 120 representative samples through convenient sampling methods of different ages and professions having a presence on social media. Among the respondents, we focused on the responses over eighteen (18) years of age, including students, service holders, other professionals,

etc. From the literature review, 11 factors of the role of social media in sustainable development in Bangladesh have been identified as variables exhibited in **Table 1** from v1 to v11.

Table 1. Identification of Variables

V1	Two-way communication	Meixner et al. (2015); Rolland, D. & Bazzoni, O.J. (2009); Matei, D. (2013)
V2	Trustworthy tool	Imran Ali et al.(2013); Mohamed, N.A. and Curly, B.C. (2014); Abbas, J et al. (2019)
V3	less costly	Meixner et al. (2015); Matei, D. (2013)
V4	Wider reach	Rolland, D. & Bazzoni, O.J. (2009); Meixner et al. (2015)
V5	stakeholders Interaction	Cortado, F.J. et al. (2016); Abbas, J et al (2019)
V6	Stakeholders engagement	Cortado, F.J. et al. (2016); Abbas, J et al. (2019);, Imran Ali et al. (2013); Javier, F et al. (2016); Rolland, D. & Bazzoni, O.J. (2009); Matei, D. (2013)
V7	Create buzz and excitement	Mohamed, N.A. and Curly, B.C. (2014)
V8	Brand awareness	Meixner et al. (2015)
V9	Positive image and reputation.	Liu, T.M (2014); Grzesiuk, K. (2017);, Abbas, J et al (2019); Ganesu, M.C. (2012); Aguilar, M.T.J et al. (2017)
V10	Customer preference to purchase	Liu T.M (2014); Ganesu, M.C. (2012); Imran Ali et al. (2013); Aguilar, M.T.J et al (2017)
V11	Corporate image	Ganesu, M.C. (2012); Rodríguez, M.D et al. (2019)

Source: Literature Survey

9. Analysis and Findings

9.1. Reliability Analysis:

In **Table 2**, all the 11 factors studied in the current paper exhibit an alpha value of .671, greater than 0.6, a value between 6.0 to 7.0 recommended as acceptable (Cooper and Schindler, 2006; Malhotra and Birks, 2007). This justifies the reliability of the study.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

Number of variables	Cronbach's Alpha
11	.652

9.2. Multiple Regression Analysis:

Multiple regression analysis has been used to examine whether there is any role of social media in communicating CSR in Bangladesh or not. The dependent variable (role of social media in CSR: a study from Bangladesh perspective) has been regressed against each of the 11 identified independent variables in Table 1. The following Table 3 exhibits the results of the regression analysis. To

predict the goodness-of-fit of the regression model, the Multiple Correlation Coefficient (R), Coefficient of Determination or Square Multiple Correlation Coefficients (R^2), Adjusted R^2 , F ratio, and t-values with significance have been examined.

In the Table 3a:

Firstly, the multiple correlation coefficients (R) of 11 independent variables (v1 to v11) on the dependent variable (role of social media in communicating CSR in Bangladesh, or Y_{CCT}) is 0.702, which showed that the role of social media in sustainable development in Bangladesh (i.e., CCT) has positive input from the 11 independent variables or factors. In other words, the R-value of 0.702 shows 70.2% multiple correlation coefficients, which means that there is a 70.2% correlation between the predictors or 11 independent variables and the dependent variable (CCT). Secondly, the Square multiple correlation coefficient (R^2) is 0.492, suggesting that more than 49% of the variation or variance in the dependent variable (CCT) has been explained by the 11 predictors or independent variables. Thirdly, the adjusted R^2 value of 0.408 is ideal for generalizing the model well because this value is close to R^2 with a small difference of 0.084 (0.492–0.408).

Table 3(a). Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. The error in the Estimate
1	.702 ^a	.492	.408	.32013
a. Predictors: (Constant), corporate image, brand awareness, less costly, two-way communication, trustworthy tool, create buzz and excitement, consumer preference to purchase, positive image and reputation, stakeholders engagement, wider reach, stakeholder interaction.				

Table 3b shows the p-value as 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicating that the model is a significant fit for the overall data. This means that social media plays a role in communicating CSR in Bangladesh.

Table 3(b). ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.139	17	.596	5.819	.000 ^a
	Residual	10.453	102	.102		
	Total	20.592	119			
a. Predictors: (Constant), corporate image, brand awareness, less costly, two-way communication, trustworthy tool, create buzz and excitement, consumer preference to purchase, positive image and reputation, stakeholders engagement, wider reach, stakeholder interaction.						
b. Dependent Variable: CSR						

The results indicated in Table 3c that almost all variables have a statistically significant relationship at ($p < 0.001$). The independent variables have a moderate to high positive relation with the dependent variable (CSR). So, it is proved that all the above-analyzed factors have statistical significance in online impulse buying behavior.

Table 3(c). Coefficients

Coefficients					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	1.927	.566		3.406
	Two-way communication	.181	.074	.200	2.449
	Trustworthy tool	.024	.033	.061	.722
	Less costly	.023	.049	.044	.467
	Wider reach	.078	.031	.191	2.484
	Stakeholders interaction	-.013	.033	-.037	.401
	Stakeholders engagement	.056	.032	.149	1.728
	Create buzz and excitement	-.114	.060	-.153	1.907
	Brand awareness	.115	.043	.215	2.647
	Positive image and reputation	.041	.031	.104	1.322
	Consumer preference to purchase	.008	.036	.020	.224
	Corporate image	.283	.058	.423	4.904
a. Dependent Variable: CSR					

10. Conclusion and Implications

The present study revealed a necessity to improve the use of social media so CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) can be communicated through social media. The study allows us to show that organizations aware of the role of social responsibility have opportunities for sustainable growth. According to IBM reports, there is a positive impact on a company's brand and reputation through the effective use of social media for their CSR activities; this report gives companies compelling evidence for doing even more good in their communities. Several corporate social responsibility strategies are involved in building a sustainable business, like social and societal strategies, ecological and environmental strategies, strategies responsible for distribution and supply chain, strategies for building corporate image, strategies for creating competitive advantage, and strategies for obtaining added value.

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