

CSR communication to consumers in the food delivery platform industry - A case study of consumer perceptions in Finland

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Abstract

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become increasingly important for companies and stakeholders in recent years due to the increase in legal requirements and consumer pressure for companies to partake in more sustainable practices. This has pushed companies to increasingly consider their economic, social, and environmental impact on society. While previous studies indicate that companies' participation in CSR can lead to many benefits, CSR communication to consumers has been found to pose many challenges such as consumer scepticism and low consumer awareness.

To tackle these challenges, the purpose of this research was to increase understanding of consumer perceptions about CSR and CSR communication in order to improve the awareness, trust and understanding of consumer expectations and hopes for CSR communication. The objective of this study was to explore how consumers perceive the CSR and CSR communication in the food delivery platform industry in Finland. Consideration of the industry was relevant as CSR issues related to the industry have been increasingly academically considered in the last years due to the rapid growth of the food delivery platform industry as well as because of the lack of research in smaller markets like Finland.

The empirical part of the study was done by conducting semi-structured interviews with eight consumers living in Finland. In accordance with the framework of this study, the interview questions were conducted to gain understanding of consumer perception of the industry based on experiences and on total communication of the industry platforms. Furthermore, it explored how consumers would wish companies to communicate about CSR to increase their awareness, trust, and positive responses to it. The interview data was analysed by using theoretical thematic analysis.

The findings suggest that consumers have positive perceptions of the food delivery platform industry due to satisfaction to user experience but are concerned about the platforms' social impact related to couriers due to their gig-economy business models. The participants expressed low awareness of CSR communication and instead, media is the main source of CSR information. Based on the findings, consumers wish to receive more CSR communication from food couriers and wish for more information that is based on facts and statistics as it increases transparency and trust. To raise awareness, the findings indicate that consumers wish for more visible CSR communication from companies in the industry and thus, the preferred channels include social media, website, platform application, and media. The findings of this study provide insight for the type of CSR communication that consumers wish for the food delivery platform industry and can provide information for the planning of CSR communication to consumers in other industries as well.

Keywords CSR, CSR communication, consumer perceptions, Food delivery platform industry

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Yritysten yhteiskuntavastuullisuus on noussut viime vuosina yhä tärkeämmäksi niin yrityksille kuin sidosryhmille johtuen lainsäädännön vaatimusten ja kuluttajapaineen kasvusta kestävämpien käytäntöjen suorittamiseen. Näistä johtuen, yritykset ovat ottaneet entistä enemmän huomioon taloudellisen, sosiaalisen ja ympäristöön kohdistuvan vaikutuksensa yhteiskunnassa. Vaikka aiemmat tutkimukset osoittavat, että yhteiskuntavastuullisuuden huomioiminen yritystoiminnassa voi tuoda monia hyötyjä, kuluttajille suunnattu vastuullisuusviestintä voi tuoda mukanaan erilaisia haasteita kuten kuluttajien epäluulon ja heikon tietoisuustason viestintään liittyen.

Näiden haasteiden ratkaisemiseksi, tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli lisätä ymmärrystä kuluttajien käsityksistä ja odotuksista yritysten yhteiskuntavastuullisuudesta ja sen viestinnästä, jotta yritykset voisivat viestinnällään parantaa kuluttajien tietoisuutta ja luottamusta. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli tutkia miten kuluttajat Suomessa kokevat nämä asiat ruoan kuljetuspalveluissa. Alan tutkiminen on merkityksellistä sillä siihen liittyvät vastuullisuuskysymykset ja tutkimukset ovat lisääntyneet sen nopean kasvun johdosta ja tutkimukset keskittyvät usein isoihin markkinoihin.

Tutkimuksen empiirinen osa toteutettiin tekemällä puolistrukturoituja haastatteluja kahdeksalle Suomessa asuvalle kuluttajalle, jotka olivat kiinnostuneita yritysten vastuullisuudesta. Tutkimuksen viitekehyksen mukaisesti, haastattelukysymykset keskittyivät saamaan ymmärrystä kuluttajien käsityksistä alasta heidän kokemuksiansa sekä alan viestinnän perusteella. Tämän lisäksi, tutkimus keskittyi siihen, miten kuluttajat toivoisivat alan yritysten viestivän yritys vastuullisuudestaan, jotta se tukisi kuluttajien tietoisuutta, luottamusta sekä positiivisia reaktioita viestintään. Haastattelujen data analysoitiin tekemällä teoreettinen tema-analyysi.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että kuluttajat ovat tyytyväisiä palveluiden käyttökokemukseen mutta näiden liikemallien takia, ovat huolestuneita alustojen sosiaalisesta vaikutuksesta liittyen ruokalähettiläihin. Tutkimukseen osallistuneet kuluttajat osoittivat vähäistä tietoisuutta alan vastuullisuusviestinnästä ja sen sijaan, tieto alan vastuullisuudesta tulee suurimmaksi osin medialta. Tulosten perusteella, kuluttajat toivovat enemmän viestintää ruokalähettiläihin liittyen sekä itse ruokalähettiläiltä. Jotta viestintä vaikuttaa läpinäkyvältä sekä luotettavalta, tilastoihin ja faktoihin perustuva vastuullisuusviestintä on suositeltavaa. Tämän lisäksi, lisätäkseen kuluttajien tietoisuutta alan vastuullisuusviestinnästä, tulokset osoittavat, että kuluttajat toivovat näkyvämpää viestintää. Tämän vuoksi, tälle suositellut kanavat ovat sosiaalinen media, verkkosivu, alustan sovellus sekä media. Tutkimuksen tulokset antavat näkemystä siitä, millaista vastuullisuusviestintää kuluttajat toivovat ruoan kuljetuspalveluissa ja voi tarjota tietoa myös muiden alojen vastuullisuusviestinnän suunnitteluun.

Avainsanat yritys vastuu, vastuullisuusviestintä, kuluttajanäkemykset, ruoan kuljetuspalvelut

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1. INTRODUCTION

Corporations need to increasingly consider their impact on environment and society. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a way for companies to maximize the positive impact whilst minimizing the negative impact of their operations by taking into consideration a company's economic, social, and environmental influence on society (Mohr et al., 2001 cited in Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009, p.285). The relevance of CSR has become increasingly apparent in the early 21st century due to legal requirements, expectations, and consumer pressure for companies to partake in more sustainable practices (Carroll, 2008).

Consequently, companies have begun to consider a broader range of stakeholders and are investing greater efforts in reporting mechanisms and socially conscious business practices (Carroll, 2008). Nowadays, numerous companies emphasize their CSR objectives and values, taking responsibility for actions that extend beyond mere economic impact to encompass influences on the environment and society as well (Tata & Prasad, 2015; Carroll, 2008). For instance, by 2008, approximately 90 percent of all FTSE100 companies were sharing information regarding sustainability-related issues in addition to financial data (Schmeltz, 2012).

While many companies report about their CSR aspects, receiving positive response from stakeholders to CSR communication is not easy to achieve. Especially consumers have been considered to be an important recipient of CSR communication due to their power to punish and reward companies (Du et al. 2010; Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009; Belanche, et al., 2021). Furthermore, CSR initiatives and consumer awareness of companies' CSR efforts have been found to lead to various benefits for companies. These benefits include aspects such as improvements in corporate image, competitive advantage, company reputation and higher consumer purchasing behaviour (Du et al., 2010; Kurucz et al. 2008 cited in Carroll, 2016, p.6; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004).

For companies to generate positive responses to their CSR communication, it is important to have awareness of consumers attitudes and expectations regarding CSR and CSR communication. Research suggests that majority of consumers are interested to know about companies' CSR (Schmeltz, 2012; Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009; Morsing & Schultz, 2006). However, CSR communication to consumers poses its own challenges. These challenges include, for instance, consumer scepticism, lack of knowledge about consumer expectations, and difficulty reaching consumers with CSR communication, leading to low consumer

awareness. These challenges can influence companies' willingness to communicate about their CSR initiatives. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to increase understanding of consumer perceptions about CSR and CSR communication.

In order to limit the research scope of this study, industry-specific perspective was taken, focusing on the food delivery platform industry in Finland. Considering the role of CSR communication is relevant as CSR issues related to the industry have been increasingly considered in the last years. Due to the rapid growth of the food delivery platform industry, both academic and media focus have been placed on the CSR aspects of the industry. Media criticism of the food delivery platform industry has been focused on social considerations of the platforms courier partners' wellbeing and working contracts, due to the gig-economy working model where workers sell their work via the food delivery application (Taylor et al. 2017 cited in Belanche, et al., 2021, p.65). According to Kajander & Parviainen (2020), this has caused companies in the industry to respond to media in relation to the courier partner situation. Furthermore, consideration of environmental issues related to plastic pollution from the meal packages, have been central in academic studies related to the industry (De Wei & Koh, 2020).

Due to the increased attention and focus on the food delivery platform industry, academic research has begun to consider consumer interest regarding the industry's responsibility efforts. Studies indicate that consumers may worry about the social impact of the food delivery platform industry due to working conditions of food delivery couriers (Belanche, et al., 2021). However, whether this has an influence on consumer purchasing decisions related to the industry, is not yet known. However, a study by Belanche et al. (2021), found that social considerations can have an impact on consumer purchasing decisions. For the food delivery platform industry, knowledge about consumer expectations and needs regarding their CSR communication, appears to be essential to support positive actions and image of the industry platforms.

Further research is needed to consider how consumers in smaller markets like Finland, view the CSR of food delivery platform companies. A reason why the study has been placed to consider companies that exist in the Finnish market is both due to a lack of research as well as due to the rapid growth of the industry in Finland. Academic research about food delivery platforms' sustainability has focused on environmental impact in big markets like China (De Wei & Koh, 2020), but not much research has been conducted to consider smaller markets.

Furthermore, according to a report by Statista (2020), the revenues made from Platform-to-Consumer Deliveries in Finland were expected to reach approximately 53 million euros in 2021 with an annual growth rate of 9.61% that is estimated to reach 70 million euros in 2024.

This study combines CSR communication as well as corporate identity and corporate branding concepts by exploring how social exchanges between parties, influence perceptions of a company's identity. Previously, CSR communication has been seen as a one-way communication from companies to consumers about their identities and responsibilities in society. However, recent research has emphasised the importance of two-way communication and considered that corporations' identity is made with social exchanges between parties (Alvarado-Herrera, et al., 2017; Balmer, et al., 2007). Yet, current literature lacks in the research about how consumers view the identities of the food delivery platforms. Therefore, further research is relevant to consider how consumers perceive the industry platforms as well as how communication and interaction between consumers and different agents, might influence these perceptions. Thus, this study provides companies in the industry information about how consumers perceive their identities and which aspects influence their perception.

The objective of this study is to explore how consumers perceive the CSR and CSR communication in the food delivery platform industry in Finland. The purpose is to provide understanding for management about consumer perception of the industry's CSR and how food delivery companies can improve their CSR communication. Thus, this study explores the social exchanges and visible actions that lead to consumer perception of a company's CSR.

To reach this objective, the research questions are the following:

1. How do consumers perceive food delivery platforms in terms of CSR?
2. How do consumers perceive the food delivery platforms in terms of total CSR communication?
3. How can food delivery platforms support a positive CSR perception with their CSR communication to consumers?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews previous literature related to the concepts of this study. Thus, it includes an overview of literature related to CSR, CSR communication, CSR communication and consumers, and CSR in relation to the food delivery platform industry. In addition, it looks into concepts of corporate identity, corporate image, and ethical corporate identity.

2.1 CSR

This section of the paper delves into the concept of corporate social responsibility and clarifies its significance on corporations from a business perspective.

2.1.1 Definition of CSR

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is about companies making a conscious effort to operate responsibly and to be aware of the impact they have on society. This includes consideration of economic, social, and environmental factors of their operations (Fernando, 2023). Thus, the general concept of CSR incorporates the responsibilities that companies have beyond profit maximization to their stakeholders and the society (Alvarado-Herrera, et al., 2017; Sen & Bhattacharya 2001 cited in Thomsen, 2006).

CSR is not a new theory in literature by any means. CSR has been actively studied since the 1950's (Carroll, 2016) and the literature of CSR has covered especially two perspectives: management and marketing (Berger et al. 2007 cited in Mobin & Zillur, 2015, p.195). Management literature has focused on whether companies should partake in CSR and to discover its influence on financial results whereas marketing literature has researched consumers' subjective perceptions of CSR activities (Mobin & Zillur, 2015).

Carroll's pyramid of CSR stands out as one of the most renowned models in the field of CSR research. The model by Carroll, takes into consideration stakeholder expectations and attitudes of companies' responsibilities to society (Visser, 2006 cited in Carroll, 2016, p.2). Carroll's definition of CSR consists of four key dimensions, which are economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic expectations that society places on organizations at a given time

(Carroll, 1979, 1991 cited in Carroll, 2016, p.2). Carroll’s pyramid of CSR is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1 CARROLL'S PYRAMID OF CSR (CARROLL, 2016, P.8)

Responsibilities	Company’s responsibility	Society considerations	Affected stakeholders
Philanthropic	Be a good corporate citizen	Desired by society	Involves the community and non-profit organizations. Influences employees’ morale and engagement
Ethical	Do what is fair and just, and avoid harm	Expected by society	Influences all stakeholders. Typically, assessment of business ethicality is considered by employees, consumers, and shareholders
Legal	Obey laws and regulations	Required by society	Crucial to owners, but also important to employees and consumers
Economic	Be profitable	Required by society	Considers a company’s financial viability. Has the most influence on shareholders and employees

The theory by Carroll emphasizes especially the importance of ethical responsibilities that companies have for stakeholders and society. Ethical responsibilities are seen as a factor that is expected by society and it is present in all of the categories of responsibility (Carroll, 2016). Thus, CSR is closely linked to ethical business practices and serves as a means for organizations and other entities to express their stance on what is positive and negative business behaviour (Wehmeier & Schultz, 2011 cited in Ihlen, et al., 2014, p.27; Maak, 2008).

However, defining socially responsible business behaviour poses challenges due to various perceptions and expectations about companies’ CSR. Companies face a significant challenge in relation to CSR due to the absence of a universally accepted definition in current literature. A study conducted in 2006 identified at least 37 different definitions of CSR (Dahlsrud, 2006 cited in Carroll, 2016, p.2). Due to the lack of a precise definition, CSR has become a blanket term that includes a wide range of actions, such as supporting charitable causes, investing in

community projects, and considering responsible employment practices (Marsden, 2006). Still, one definition that effectively captures the essence of CSR is provided by the Commission of the European Communities. They define CSR as “a concept whereby companies voluntarily integrate social and environmental concerns into their business operations and interactions with stakeholders” (Tencati & Perrini, 2006, p. 99).

Consideration of CSR is relevant as instances of organizational scandals have prompted discussions about the responsibilities that companies bear towards society (Tata & Prasad, 2015; Maak, 2008). Simultaneously, the absence of a consensus on social norms in business operations and a lack of clarity regarding CSR expectations have subjected companies to legal and regulatory pressures. These often focus on labour standards, human rights, and companies’ environmental responsibility (OECD, 2001 cited in Carroll, 2008, p.15; Brickson, 2007 cited in Maak, 2008, p.353). Thus, previous research indicates that consideration of industry and company specific expectations of CSR is relevant in order for companies to successfully conduct CSR and CSR communication, and to avoid scandals related to their operations.

2.1.2 Business case for CSR

The business case for CSR considers the reasons and benefits for companies to partake in CSR actions and communication (Carroll, 2016). The business case for CSR is useful to consider as according to Schmeltz (2012), some companies do not communicate about their CSR activities and this was found to be for two reasons. Firstly, companies may not be comfortable with communicating their views about CSR, or secondly, companies might be unaware of the importance of conducting such communication. However, previous studies indicate that company participation in CSR leads to variety of benefits. Therefore, it is worthy to consider the reasons for companies to partake in CSR and to communicate about it to their stakeholders.

The concept of CSR has been both criticised and justified in previous literature due to differences in views about companies’ responsibilities. Famously, according to Friedman (1970), companies’ sole responsibility is to maximize their profits. Friedman claimed that businesses do not have responsibilities and that corporations as artificial persons, can only have artificial responsibilities. Friedman considered only people, the businessmen such as

corporate executives, to have responsibilities and those are to fulfil the desires of their employers, the shareholders, to make as much profit as possible (Friedman, 1970). In contrary, stakeholder argument and stakeholder theory have been emphasised to support engagement in CSR.

According to stakeholder theory, organizations' responsibilities include not only financial, but also social and environmental responsibilities to their stakeholders. Because of this, organizations' responsibilities include the need to balance possibly conflicting benefits of their external and internal stakeholders (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). This can be seen from two perspectives that are connected to the stakeholder theory: ethical and managerial. Ethical perspective considers the responsibility of an organization to be managing the benefits of all stakeholders even if it does not lead to improved financial results. In contrary, managerial perspective considers the organization to be accountable to stakeholders that have economic power (Hasnas, 1998 cited in Fernando & Lawrence, 2014, p.159; Murray & Vogel, 1997 cited in Fernando & Lawrence, 2014, p.160).

CSR can be seen as a key to doing business in the 21st century (Altman, 1998 cited in Beckmann, 2007, p.28). According to Beckmann (2007), the stakeholder argument has been strengthened as companies have been pressured to show good corporate citizenship in both managerial and marketing terms. Thus, instead of companies being only responsible to fulfil their duties to their shareholders, companies are seen to have obligations to fulfil legal, ethical, discretionary and economic responsibilities to also stakeholders such as employees, customers and their communities (Beckmann, 2007).

Previously, engaging in CSR has been considered to be a voluntary corporate initiative, but the voluntariness of CSR is questionable in some cases and countries where CSR has become legally mandatory (Schmeltz, 2012). For instance, in Denmark, it is required for the largest 1,100 companies to report in their annual reports about their CSR efforts and actions (CSRgov.dk, 2010 cited in Schmeltz, 2012, p.30). Thus, it is questionable whether companies can choose for themselves much longer, whether or not they should communicate about CSR.

Several benefits for companies to partake in CSR and CSR communication have been identified by various researchers. Such motivators include improvements in companies' image, investor attraction, appealing to potential employees and improving relationships with stakeholders (Gray et al. 1996, Deegan 2009 cited in Fernando & Lawrence, 2014,

p.162; Du et al., 2010). Furthermore, communication about CSR has been found to lead to improvements in competitive advantage and company reputation (Kurucz et al. 2008 cited in Carroll, 2016, p.6). Reputation is considered as the reflection of companies' responsible behaviour (Dospinescu, et al., 2020). Consequently, it is considered as an important factor that influences consumer perceptions of companies as well as their trust to companies' actions and communications. In addition, benefits of CSR have been linked to brand building and it is considered to lead to positive brand relations, brand loyalty, trust and recommending a brand to others (Tencati & Perrini, 2006; Ramesh, et al., 2019).

Partaking and reporting about CSR has also been found to lead to greater consumer profits for companies. According to Bhattacharya & Sen (2004), consumers are amongst the most influenced stakeholders by companies' CSR actions. Because of this, it is believed that partaking in CSR and communicating about it, can lead to positive consumer responses to the company and its offerings. Thus, CSR has been considered to have a great impact on consumers' purchasing decisions (Ramesh, et al., 2019). The possibility for companies to gain greater consumer profits has influenced the growth of the business case for CSR. It has placed the focus on figuring out how CSR should be done rather than whether companies should partake in it (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004).

In order for companies to maximize the business benefits of investing in CSR, further understanding of how to tackle its key challenges is needed. According to Du et al. (2010), while CSR can lead to great benefits for companies if communicated well, the key obstacles for its success are stakeholders' low awareness and scepticism of companies' CSR actions. Thus, further research is needed to explore, which aspects of CSR should be considered when designing a CSR communication strategy and how companies can communicate CSR more successfully to consumers.

2.2 CSR communication

While companies are increasingly communicating their CSR efforts, previous literature emphasises that both implementation of CSR as well as CSR communication to relevant stakeholders, is a challenging process for companies to manage (Maon et al., 2009 cited in Schmeltz, 2012, p.30). As the purpose of CSR communication is to foster positive relationships with a company's stakeholders, understanding their needs and expectations for

CSR is crucial for the success of CSR communication. Consequently, conducting CSR communication is a very delicate matter in an attempt to support positive relationships with key stakeholders and therefore, it is recommended that stakeholder expectations should be carefully considered frequently (Du et al., 2010; Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

Due to the differences in stakeholder relationships with companies, CSR communication should be carefully designed to suit the various stakeholder groups. Du et al. (2010) emphasise the need for future research to explore how companies can communicate their CSR actions to given target audiences such as consumers. Furthermore, Schmetzl (2012), highlights the lack of research about the discursive challenges of CSR communication. Therefore, further research regarding CSR communication challenges to consumers as stakeholders, is relevant.

2.2.1 CSR communication and consumers

Previous literature suggests that CSR is important to consumers and they are interested to know about companies' CSR efforts (Schmetzl, 2012; Dawkins, 2004 cited in Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009, p.288; Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Meanwhile, particularly consumers have been overlooked in previous research in comparison to other stakeholders. This is possibly due to the challenges of working with this target group that can be characterised in various ways based on their many characteristics, which makes them challenging to understand (Gabriel and Lang, 2006 cited in Schmetzl, 2012, p.31). Consequently, CSR research in both academic and corporate world has been focusing more on investors, government and business partners, when certain stakeholders are specifically considered (Schmetzl, 2012).

Gaining understanding of consumer reactions and needs related to CSR, helps companies to develop their CSR strategies. According to Bhattacharya & Sen (2004), understanding consumers is connected to three central ideas. Firstly, consumers, as voiced previously, are different from one another and thus, CSR should be thought from consumers' perspective. Secondly, when considering consumer-specific results of CSR, companies should consider both external outcomes (e.g., purchase and loyalty) as well as internal outcomes (e.g., consumer attitudes, awareness and attributions to a company's CSR motives). The latter being the focal point of this study. Bhattacharya & Sen (2004) emphasise that understanding internal outcomes is important as CSR is a way to strengthen customer relationships. This is particularly important when there is less product differentiation and strong competition

within a market such as currently in the food delivery platform industry. Finally, CSR can influence both a company's brand and image as well as have secondary impact for partner organizations such as nonprofits, and the social issue or cause at the centre of a company's CSR activities (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004).

As previous literature often considers stakeholders as one, not enough focus has been put on the different recipients of CSR communication. According to Dawkins (2004), CSR communication is characterized by its uniform communication style where the same messages are directed to all audiences. Thus, there is a lack of understanding about different stakeholders' needs and expectations for CSR, which makes CSR communication less effective (Dawkins, 2004). Previous studies about CSR communication to consumers have been exploring mainly its external outcomes. Schmeltz (2012) expresses that studies researching consumers' reactions and perceptions of CSR is limited as studies about consumer attitudes to companies' CSR, are mostly related to buying behaviour and future purchase intention, as achieving brand-loyalty is a key aspiration for companies. Thus, indicating that more research regarding consumer attitudes is needed to define how consumers create a perception of companies' CSR and how companies can better support consumer relationships through their CSR communication.

2.2.2 Navigating the challenges of CSR communication to consumers

Conducting CSR communication is considered to be a very delicate matter as companies often face scrutiny over their CSR activities (Du et al., 2010). CSR communication can attract attention of various interest groups and activists that pursue to expose companies that fail to keep their promises or appear to exaggerate their CSR efforts (Maignon & Ferrell, 2004 cited in Karaosmanoglu, et al., 2016, p.3). Furthermore, companies need to continuously make "trade-offs" between the various aspects of CSR (Crifo et al., 2016 cited in Karaosmanoglu, et al., 2016, p.2), which if managed and communicated badly, can get backlash from stakeholders. Thus, in order for companies to manage their CSR in a way that creates positive response from consumers, they must understand the factors that impact consumer assessment of companies' CSR activities (Boehe & Cruz, 2010 cited in Karaosmanoglu, et al., 2016, p.1). Previous literature suggests that CSR communication to consumers has especially three key challenges. These are consumer scepticism, low consumer awareness of CSR initiatives, and understanding consumer expectations.

2.2.2.1 Consumer scepticism

Overcoming consumer scepticism is one of the key challenges of conducting CSR communication. As expressed earlier, stakeholder perceptions of CSR communication being ingenuine, can lead to backlash and negatively influence a company's reputation. While consumers are found to be interested to know about companies' CSR efforts, previous research indicates that consumers are often sceptical about companies' motives to communicate about CSR.

Attribution theory is used in various studies as a tool to help consider how consumer perceptions of the motives of companies to partake in CSR, influence their responses to these activities (Anderson & Weiner, 1992; Kelley, 1967 cited in Karaosmanoglu, et al., 2016, p.2; Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006 cited in Karaosmanoglu, et al., 2016, p.2). CSR activity motivations have been categorized into two elements: social (public-serving) and economic (firm-serving). Social motivations have been considered to be a way for companies to act out of genuine concern for social issues whereas economic motivations raise more questions from consumers about the sincerity of the CSR activities (Rifon, Choi, Trimble, & Li, 2004 cited in Karaosmanoglu, et al., 2016, p.3). While both types of motivations for companies to engage in CSR might be needed in order to ensure the overall wellbeing of a company, the response from stakeholders to motivations that appear to be economically based, can lead to more scepticism if they are considered to be done to improve company image (Karaosmanoglu, et al., 2016).

According to the attribution theory, a benefit of consumers considering companies' motivations to be genuine about CSR, can lead to more firm-serving and extra-role behaviours. Extra-role behaviours being voluntary customer behaviours that are not expected or rewarded by a company (Groth, 2005 cited in Karaosmanoglu et al., 2016, p.2). The benefits of these behaviours include, for instance, defending a company and recommending it to others (Anderson, Fornell, & Mazvancheryl, 2004 in Karaosmanoglu, et al., 2016, p.2).

Bhattacharya and Sen (2004), conducted a contingent framework of CSR. Their study explored how, why, and when CSR and CSR communication lead to positive outcomes. Therefore, their framework helps companies to consider aspects to take into consideration when designing CSR communication to consumers. According to their study, CSR communication was considered to lead to positive outcomes when a company had a positive

reputation, the opposite being the case when a company had a negative reputation. Similar findings were indicated by Morsing and Schultz (2006) who expressed that a company can receive more scepticisms for their CSR initiatives when their reputation is affected by a scandal. As the food delivery platform industry has been criticized in media for their gig-economy working model, consideration about whether this has had an influence on the industry companies' reputations and consequently, influenced consumers' perceptions of their CSR, is relevant for this study.

The other aspects of successful CSR communication included whether there was a perception of a good fit between a company and the cause, and when consumers had a personal connection to the particular cause. Furthermore, companies working proactively for a cause, are more positively viewed by consumers (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004). Thus, being a pioneer in CSR can lead to a competitive advantage for companies, especially in industries where product differentiation is otherwise minimal. Finally, consumers were found to have more positive attitudes to CSR when companies were small and local as well as privately owned (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004).

2.2.2.2 Lack of consumer awareness

Consumer awareness of CSR is considered to lead to many benefits as discussed previously. These are, for instance, increase in consumer profits, improvement in stakeholder relationships and improvements in company reputation. Furthermore, consumer awareness of a company's CSR efforts has been found to lead to increase in consumer wellbeing. According to the study by Bhattacharya & Sen (2004), consumers that participated in their focus group interviews, voiced that awareness of a company's CSR efforts and activities, increased their wellbeing. While this was not directly connected to increase in company-specific benefits, this was considered to possibly lead to financial benefits in the long-run due to customer loyalty.

As benefits of CSR communication for both companies and consumers are dependent on consumer awareness of such initiatives, it is highly important that companies reach consumers with their CSR communication. However, previous studies indicate that consumer awareness of companies' CSR engagement and CSR communication is low (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Du et al., 2010; Beckmann, 2007; Pomeroy & Dolnicar,

2009), which is considered to be a very limiting factor for the success of CSR communication (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Therefore, in order for companies to gain the benefits of CSR communication, they must carefully consider how to best reach consumers. Thus, considerations of CSR communication channels and message considerations are essential in order to increase consumer awareness while minimizing negative attributions (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Hence, a proper CSR communication strategy to reach consumers and to raise the awareness to such initiatives is highly important. This will be further discussed in chapter 2.4.

2.2.2.3 Understanding and managing consumer expectations

Consumers can have various expectations related to companies, their products as well as their CSR activities. These expectations and whether they are met are thought to determine consumers' level of satisfaction (Creyer & Ross, 1997). Related to the stakeholder theory, which was discussed previously, companies need to meet different stakeholder groups' expectations that go beyond companies' accountability in economic and financial performance as well as to participate and report about activities that stakeholders consider important (Guthrie et al. 2006 cited in Fernando & Lawrence, 2014, p.157; Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). Thus, knowledge about stakeholders' expectations, desires, and attitudes is vital for the success of CSR communication.

Stakeholder involvement can ensure better understanding of consumer expectations. According to Morsing & Schultz (2006), stakeholder expectations for CSR are continuously changing and therefore, it is crucial for companies to continuously adapt and change in accordance to them as well as to pursue to influence them. The authors support the theory of sensemaking (making sense of things in organization through social exchanges of information) and sensegiving (pursuit to impact the way that another party understands information). It is recommended to include consumers as well as other external stakeholders to engage in the process of sensemaking and sensegiving to improve understanding of shared expectations (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Thus, the theory suggests that communication should not be one-way, but instead, two-way communication is more beneficial for companies.

Consumer beliefs are related to the expectations that they have for the ethicality of corporate behaviour (Creyer & Ross, 1997). These beliefs are formed in three fundamental ways. Firstly, via direct experience with a company. Secondly, from the information given by outside sources such as word-of mouth and media. Finally, by consumers going further than the information that they have gained through their experiences or by the outside information source (Creyer & Ross, 1997). Some of the information that consumers are exposed to is controlled by the companies themselves while a big part of it is not. Especially non-controllable communication from media that influences consumers' beliefs and expectations, can be a challenge for companies to manage. Consequently, the role of total communication is considered in this study and discussed further in the upcoming part 2.3.4 about ethical corporate identity.

2.3 CSR influence on corporate identity and corporate image

It is increasingly acknowledged that the actions and communication of companies in regard to CSR can significantly impact both their image and identity. Therefore, for successful CSR communication, it is crucial for organizations to consider the perceptions of stakeholders and engage with them in meaningful ways to foster positive relationships and to build trust. By doing so, companies can enhance their reputation and demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility, ultimately benefiting both themselves and the wider community, including consumers.

In the current discussions surrounding CSR and CSR communication, there is an increasing emphasis on stakeholder involvement and participation. This is due to the recognition of the importance that stakeholders have in the success of CSR initiatives. The importance of stakeholders is particularly evident in the concepts of corporate identity, corporate brand, and ethical corporate identity.

2.3.1 Corporate identity

Corporate identity encompasses an organization's unique personality and essence. It is shaped by the organization's business strategy, values, philosophy, organizational culture, and structure (Gray and Balmer, 1998 cited in Balmer et al., 2007, p.5). As a fundamental

aspect of an organization, it demands continual upkeep and direction across all operations and communication channels (Balmer, et al., 2007).

The concept of corporate identity was originally used by identity and image consultants to refer to the image that an organization wanted to project to its stakeholders. It considered how it presented itself to stakeholders through logos, graphics, and other visual elements (Van Reil, 1995 cited in Balmer et al., 2007, p.5). However, the definition has evolved over time to include a more comprehensive view of communication. This includes oral and written communication, symbols, behaviour, and actions (Van Reil, 1995 cited in Balmer et al., 2007, p.5). In addition, contemporary corporate identity scholars have expanded the definition to include a mix of factors that distinguish an organization from others such as its mission, values, and activities (Balmer and Greyser, 2002 cited in Fukukawa et al., 2007, p.1).

2.3.2 Corporate brand

A corporate brand represents the overall image and reputation of a company as a whole. It is the perception and understanding that consumers and other stakeholders have of the company and its products or services (Balmer, et al., 2007). In corporate branding, the focus is being placed on the entire organization, which is considered to be especially relevant when companies are going for globalization and when markets where they operate in, become more complex (Hatch & Schultz, 2003). A corporate brand is typically created through a combination of visual and non-visual elements. This includes logos, slogans, advertising, customer service, and reputation management efforts (Hatch & Schultz, 2003).

Benefits of a strong corporate brand are numerous. These are considered to be, for instance, creation of a common understanding of meanings that are connected to the brand, acceptance of a company's actions as well as improvements in reputation (Hatch & Schultz, 2001). A strong corporate brand has three elements that align together (Hatch & Schultz, 2001). The three elements are introduced in table 2.

TABLE 2 FOUNDATION OF A SUCCESSFUL CORPORATE BRAND (HATCH & SCHULTZ, 2001, P.18)

Vision	Top management's objectives for the organization
Culture	Values, behaviours, and attitudes within a company. Includes employee perception of the organization
Image	External stakeholders' perception of the organization

As seen above, a corporate brand comprises three key elements, of which image is one. The image reflects the unique perception that consumers have of a company, which is built on their trust and confidence in the brand (Keller, 1993 cited in Ramesh et al., 2019, p.380; Howard & Sheth, 1969 cited in Ramesh et al., 2019, p.380). It is the impression that people have of a company based on its products, services, employees, management, reputation, and communication (Balmer, et al., 2007; Balmer, 2001). Furthermore, CSR perception is considered to play a crucial role in brand image building (Ramesh et al., 2019). Thus, communication and CSR considerations have a profound influence on how consumers perceive a company.

To achieve a strong corporate brand, a corporate branding toolkit was created. The corporate branding toolkit helps to identify possible areas where key stakeholders perceive a company's brand in different ways. The purpose is to find solutions to align these perspectives (Hatch & Schultz, 2001). The corporate branding toolkit, presented in table 3, identifies possible gaps in brand perceptions.

TABLE 3 THE CORPORATE BRANDING TOOLKIT (HATCH & SCHULTZ, 2001, P.5)

Vision-Culture gap	Management and employees	Considers the alignment of internal stakeholders
Culture-Image gap	Employees and external stakeholders	Considers possible gap in the attitudes of employees and the perception of the external stakeholders
Vision-Image gap	External stakeholders and management	Considers whether the organization is heading to a direction that is approved by external stakeholders

Vision-image gap is one of the factors that influences the success of a strong corporate brand, as seen above. Consideration of the vision-image gap is relevant for this study as well. This study pursues to gain understanding about how consumers perceive the food delivery platforms in Finland, and thus, whether the companies are considered to operate in ways that consumers agree with. Furthermore, this study pursues to gain knowledge about, which factors have the most influence in image building of the food delivery platforms and whether there are certain aspects of CSR that companies should address to improve consumer perceptions of their CSR.

The challenges of establishing a positive image are similar to those of CSR communication. Previous studies indicate that organizations often feel that their CSR initiatives do not receive the recognition they deserve, and external stakeholders may criticize them for actions that they believe should be more highly regarded (Gardner and Martinko, 1988 cited in Tata & Prasad, 2015, p.772; Kramer, 2018). Negative perceptions can arise from image-enhancing situations where companies with unfavourable CSR images take steps to close the gap between their desired and current CSR image (Tata & Prasad, 2015). Moreover, companies can get backlash for their CSR activities when they are believed to be conducted solely to improve the company's image and to divert attention from negative behaviour. This can lead to questions about the company's overall credibility (Fukukawa et al. 2007; Tata & Prasad, 2015).

Impression management theory provides insight into how companies strategically shape their public perception by carefully selecting and presenting specific aspects of themselves in different situations (Tata & Prasad, 2015). For instance, companies often utilize impression management to address threats from events or campaigns by, for instance, strategically timing the release of positive information (Cole & Chandler, 2019). According to Tata & Prasad's (2015) study, companies employ impression management techniques to cultivate a socially responsible image among consumers. When consumers embrace the CSR communication, it can reduce the gap between the company's current and desired CSR image. However, inefficiently executed impression management strategies can backfire, as they may be perceived as an attempt to manipulate audiences.

2.3.3 Relationship between corporate identity and corporate image

While corporate identity and corporate image are distinct concepts, they are closely related and influence each other. A company's corporate identity, including its values and visual identity elements, can shape its corporate image by communicating a consistent and compelling brand message to its stakeholders. According to Tata and Prasad (2015), companies that partake in CSR communication can view CSR as a big part of their identity and aim to guarantee that it is accurately presented to their audiences.

At the same time, a company's corporate image, including its reputation and public perception, can influence its corporate identity. Corporate image can highlight areas where the company needs to improve or adjust its brand messaging to better align with stakeholder expectations. This stresses the importance of communicating about CSR to stakeholders in a way that ensures that a company's identity, which is also the desired image, and consumers' current image, align (Tata & Prasad, 2015).

2.3.4 Ethical corporate identity

Scholars have challenged the notion that corporations have exclusive ownership over their identities. This has caused re-evaluation of traditional economic and stakeholder theories in the context of CSR and ethical identity (Balmer et al., 2007). Recent research emphasizes the collaborative nature of CSR, recognizing that ethical identity emerges through social and business exchanges with diverse stakeholders. Consequently, companies must actively manage and align the multiple perceptions of their corporate identity. Ethical corporate identity adopts a holistic approach by bridging internal and external perspectives, striving to align internal company values with external perceptions of ethicality and identity (Balmer et al., 2007). Hence, effective communication among stakeholders plays a pivotal role in achieving this alignment.

The AC21D model of corporate identity, developed by Balmer and Soenen (1999), serves as a management tool that considers multiple aspects of corporate identity and their alignment (Balmer et al., 2007; Fukukawa et al., 2007). The model includes five types of identities that account for the coexistence of diverse perspectives while reflecting a company's strategy and activities (Balmer et al., 2007; Balmer, 2001) presented in table 4.

TABLE 4 THE AC21D MODEL OF CORPORATE IDENTITY (BALMER, 2001, P.16)

Actual identity	Encompasses existing structural, philosophical, and organizational elements such as ownership, business activities, product quality, and leadership style
Communicated identity	A company's communication to stakeholders. This includes controllable (e.g., sponsorships and public relations) and non-controllable (e.g., word-of-mouth and media). Together they make total communication
Conceived identity	Represents stakeholders' perceptions of a company. This includes corporate image (individuals' mental picture of an organization), reputation (perception influenced by total communication), and branding (expectations based on corporate identity and controlled communication)
Desired identity	The vision and ideal image that is envisioned by corporate management and leaders. It reflects their aspirations for the organization's identity
Ideal identity	Refers to the ideal positioning of a company, which is evaluated by external objective analysts. It considers how the company responds to external pressures and factors

These five identity types lead to four overarching themes in the concept of ethical corporate identity. They consider both external and internal dimensions of identity (Balmer et al., 2007, p.7) as displayed in table 5.

TABLE 5 FOUR THEMES OF ETHICAL CORPORATE IDENTITY (BALMER ET AL., 2007, P.7)

1. Who are we?
2. How do we communicate our identity?
3. How is our identity perceived by others?
4. How can we understand identity as a holistic phenomenon?

This study aims to give answers about the conceived identity of the food delivery platforms. Thus, this study explores how consumers perceive the industry companies' corporate image, reputation, and branding. It should be noted that this study does not pursue to give

information about the other aspects of identity, which are presented in the AC21D model of corporate identity. Instead, the focus is on answering the third question from the list above, which considers perception of identity.

2.4. Designing CSR communication to consumers

As expressed previously, communication about CSR to consumers and other stakeholders is a delicate matter that should be carefully designed. As discussed in chapter 2.2 about CSR communication, companies face especially three challenges related to conducting CSR communication to consumers. These challenges are overcoming consumer scepticism, low consumers awareness, and uncertainty about consumer expectations. In order to achieve positive results with CSR communication, prior research underscores the significance of carefully managing what, where, and how CSR information is communicated to consumers. This should be done while also considering consumer involvement and their role in relation to companies' CSR communication.

Du et al. (2010) developed a conceptual framework for CSR communication, which is aimed at enhancing its effectiveness. Their framework addresses the challenges of CSR communication and assists companies in fostering positive consumer perceptions of their CSR. The framework takes into consideration the factors that influence stakeholder perceptions and the outcomes of CSR communication. Thus, the next part of the paper considers the existing research about the CSR information that companies can highlight in their CSR communication as well as considers the preferred channels for CSR communication. CSR communication considerations are linked to especially two aspects of communication: message content and message channel.

2.4.1 Message content considerations

According to Du et al. (2010), CSR message content can be related to a social cause or to a company's involvement with a specific social cause. Most often, companies' CSR communication is focused on the latter. Thus, there are certain aspects that companies can emphasise in messages of their CSR communication. These are CSR commitment and impact, CSR motives, and CSR fit.

Firstly, companies can emphasise their commitment to a social cause in their CSR communication in numerous ways. For instance, through donations, by offering company expertise, human resources such as employee volunteering, and R&D resources (Du et al., 2010). In addition, there are various aspects of commitment that companies can emphasise such as the extent of input, the length of the relationship between a company and a cause, and the consistency of this contribution (Dwyer et al. 1987 cited in Du, et al., 2010, p.11). As it is considered that CSR pursues to maximize companies' positive impact in society, companies can highlight their societal impact to their target audiences. This is deemed to be an efficient way to communicate to stakeholders about a company's commitment to a cause. For instance, long-term commitments to a particular cause have been found to be thought as more genuine and public serving, which can lead to better consumer attributions (Du et al., 2010).

Secondly, CSR motives are recommended to be emphasised in CSR communication to lessen the scepticism of consumers to a company's CSR. As discussed earlier, consumer scepticism about the genuinity of companies' CSR motives, is one of the key challenges for companies to manage and overcome. This relates to the attribution theory discussed in chapter 2.2.2.1 about consumer scepticism of CSR communication, which described that CSR motivations have been categorized into two elements: social (public-serving) and economic (firm-serving). Previous literature suggests that it is better for companies to also acknowledge their firm-serving motives as this is considered to appear more credible and consequently, to lessen consumer scepticism (Forehand & Grier, 2003 cited in Du, et al., 2010, p.12; Porter & Kramer, 2006 cited in Du, et al., 2010, p.12).

Finally, related to CSR messaging, Du et al. (2010) highlight the pivotal role of CSR fit. CSR fit refers to the perceived alignment between a company's core business and the social cause it supports through its CSR initiatives. Assessing CSR fit can be accomplished through brand-cause associations such as by considering the relevance to a specific target segment or by reflecting on a company's corporate image, which is influenced by past brand actions (Du et al., 2010). Effectively showcasing the alignment between the core business and the chosen cause, is considered to elicit more positive responses from stakeholders (Du et al., 2010).

Knowledge about consumer needs and expectations regarding CSR fit is crucial. Du et al. (2010) underscore the significance of understanding and communicating about issues that

key stakeholders deem important. Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) and Morsing & Schultz (2006), further support this notion by highlighting the importance for managers to explore diverse CSR ideas and select those that garner the most consumer support in order to communicate to stakeholders about information that aligns with their interests. Hence, collaborations with stakeholders to determine the CSR issues and reports that companies generate is believed to enhance consumer awareness and to yield positive outcomes in terms of corporate legitimacy and reputation. This collaborative approach fosters consumer identification with the chosen CSR issue, ultimately strengthening the company's connection with its target audience (Du et al., 2010; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

2.4.2 Channel considerations

Consideration about where to communicate about CSR is crucial for the success of CSR communication. Decision of, which channels to use to communicate about CSR can determine consumer awareness and response to the CSR messages. As discussed earlier, prior studies indicate low consumer awareness of companies' CSR communication and therefore, it is essential to consider channels that consumers consider the most prevalent for them.

Previous research has found various results for the preferred channels of CSR communication. Findings from some researchers report that stakeholders prefer CSR communication to be done on minimal releases like annual reports and websites (Morsing and Schultz, 2006; Schmeltz, 2012). Thus, these are some of the most common channels to inform stakeholders about CSR. However, studies have also found that instead of subtle communication on websites, consumers prefer easily visible communication on magazines, sponsorships, and advertisements (Schmeltz, 2012; Du et al., 2010). Therefore, decision about how subtly CSR communication is conducted, is important to consider.

CSR communication can also be done via multiple channels with different levels of company control. According to Du et al. (2010), the less controllable a communication source is, the more credible the information appears to consumers. This highlights the perception that companies are seen to communicate about aspects that are mostly in their self-interest and other sources of information are seen as more neutral and trustworthy. As

mentioned previously, other stakeholders have also a big part in the total communication of companies' CSR information (Balmer and Soenen, 1999; Du et al., 2010). Stakeholders such as other consumers, media, and monitoring groups, which are not controlled by companies, are also communicators of companies' CSR efforts and motivations. Thus, they have an influence on shaping consumer knowledge and perceptions of companies' CSR.

Especially the role of media has been emphasized as a key factor shaping consumer perceptions. Du et al. (2010) encourage companies to focus on receiving positive media news from independent and neutral sources on television and in the newspapers. Moreover, encouraging word-of-mouth by other stakeholders such as employees and consumers is encouraged to create a positive perception of a company and to raise other consumer awareness of its CSR actions (Du et al., 2010; Pang et al., 2018; Schmeltz, 2012).

Interestingly, especially employees have been found to be in a key role for achieving credibility with external stakeholders. Pang et al. (2018) conducted a study where they interviewed companies to research the connection between CSR communication and corporate image. Their study found that engaging employees in CSR was helpful to create a meaningful relationship with consumers and to make them see the companies more positively. The importance of employees in relation to consumers will be discussed further in the upcoming section 2.6.

2.5 Factors that influence CSR communication effectiveness

This part of the paper considers the factors that have been found to influence CSR communication effectiveness. It provides insight into company and stakeholder factors that should be kept in mind when designing CSR communication to consumers.

2.5.1 Company factors

Company factors that are considered to influence CSR communication effectiveness are related to corporate reputation and CSR positioning. These aspects were also present in the discussions about corporate identity and corporate image in chapter 2.3. Furthermore, they are considered to influence the design of CSR communication to consumers.

Firstly, corporate reputation is considered to have an influence on the effectiveness of CSR communication (Du et al.,2010). In situations where companies' reputations have been compromised, communication about CSR efforts can backfire as they can be seen as publicity stunts, leading to increased scepticism (Yoon et al.,2006 cited in Du et al., 2010, p.14; Guardian, 2006 cited in Du et al.,2010, p.15; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004). Thus, in order for CSR communication to be successful, it is important for companies to understand their current reputation.

Corporate reputation is defined as the representation of a company's ability to produce results that are valued by different stakeholders. It is based on the company's previous actions and their outcomes (Gardberg and Fombrun, 2002 cited in Du et al.,2010, p.14). Corporate reputation includes various aspects such as innovation, people management, product quality and CSR. Also, the industry that a company operates in, can influence its reputation as some industries such as tobacco, are considered to be more suspicious by stakeholders (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004).

This study helps to identify how consumers consider the reputation of companies in the food delivery platform industry in Finland. In addition, how the industry's reputation influences the effectiveness of the possible CSR communication that consumers have seen or have knowledge about. Moreover, helping to assess the various channels that consumers get information about the industry's CSR, which assists to understand how consumers form their perceptions about the companies' CSR.

Secondly, CSR positioning considers how much companies rely on their CSR efforts to position themselves in consumers' minds as socially responsible, in comparison to competitors (Du et al., 2010). Hence, it is connected to the business model of a company or a brand, and the role of CSR in it. However, it not only considers the values of a company and the importance of CSR to it, but it also considers consumer perceptions of a company's CSR values. Therefore, CSR positioning can be linked to the previously explored concept of ethical corporate identity that was discussed in chapter 2.3.4. Ethical corporate identity considers aspects of actual and conceived identity and pursues to align them.

Much like corporate reputation, CSR positioning is considered to influence the effectiveness of CSR communication. CSR positioning can increase the effectiveness of CSR communication as stakeholders are more likely to believe the authenticity and pay attention to companies' CSR efforts, when a company has taken a greater stance on CSR (Du et al.,

2010). The positioning of CSR seems important especially in industries where companies' offerings are similar. Thus, CSR positioning can be a way for companies that otherwise appear quite identical to consumers, to not only increase the effectiveness of their CSR communication, but also to stand out from competition. Considering the food delivery platform industry where companies in the industry have very similar business models, it is interesting to consider how consumers consider the differences between the different platforms and whether CSR is a competitive advantage for some of them.

2.5.2 Stakeholder factors

2.5.2.1 Stakeholder type

CSR communication is considered to be unique as it has various potential audiences. Due to this, CSR communication should be carefully designed to target each relevant stakeholder group. These include, for instance, investors, non-governmental organizations, consumers and employees (Dawkins, 2004 cited in Du et al., 2010, p.15). Previous research emphasises that each stakeholder group has different needs and expectations for CSR communication and therefore, responds differently to the diverse information channels (Du et al., 2010).

A study by Dawkins (2004 cited in Du et al., 2010, p.15) recognised two types of stakeholder groups: opinion leaders and the general public. Opinion leader audiences that include stakeholders such as investors, business press and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), were found to be more probable to search for information about companies' CSR and to look into companies' CSR reports. In contrary, the general public such as consumers, were more likely to come across information about companies' CSR from channels that do not require proactively searching for such information. These channels include TV and the press, stakeholder word-of-mouth, company advertising and Point-of-Purchase communication (Du et al., 2010). Therefore, it is recommended that companies use several communication channels or focus on one or two relevant channels. However, what those channels might be to best reach consumers, is not easy to determine, as recognized by prior research.

As mentioned previously in chapter 2.2.1, the complexity within consumers as target audience makes them difficult for companies to manage and to understand in relation to CSR communication. In the study by Morsing & Schultz (2006), the authors conducted reputation surveys with in total of 58 respondents in three Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Denmark

and Norway) to explore the reputation of the most visible companies within the general public such as Lego, Varlsberg, IKEA and Microsoft. Their study found that people are unsure about how and where companies should communicate about their CSR efforts. The findings concluded that some consumers prefer open and proactive publications about CSR whilst others wish for more minimal communication on websites and annual reports. Few wishing that companies would not communicate about CSR at all.

In a study by Schmeltz (2012), the author explored the attitudes and values that guide young consumers' perceptions and assessments of companies' CSR participation and CSR communication. The study was done with a survey to Danish students that took part in eight types of further and higher education. The study results supported the findings by Du et al. (2010) that consumers notice CSR communication on television, websites and packaging as well as through word-of-mouth and sponsorships. Furthermore, the study indicated that young consumers prefer to see CSR information on magazines and packaging as well as on websites, sponsorships and advertisements (Schmeltz, 2012).

2.5.2.2 Issue support

Another factor that impacts the effectiveness of CSR communication considers stakeholder support for companies' CSR initiatives. This is considered to impact stakeholder motivations to process related CSR information (Du et al., 2010). It is considered that issue support reflects stakeholders' own needs and values. Thus, CSR information about initiatives that are considered as personally relevant or important, is more likely to be more effective. In order for companies to increase the issue support about a cause, companies should communicate and explain well its importance (Du et al., 2010).

Engaging stakeholders to give input and to choose which social issue or non-profit organization a company supports, is another way for companies to increase the effectiveness of their CSR communication. Du et al. (2010) gave an example of GAP that has been successful in engaging consumers to their CSR efforts and communication. GAP is an American clothing company, which for a limited time, gave a 30% discount to each customer purchase of their products as well as donated 5% of the revenue from each customers' purchase to an NGO that a customer picked from a list of six NGOs (Du et al., 2010).

Involving stakeholders in CSR communication is also supported in a study by Morsing and Schultz (2006). They looked into previous studies about stakeholder management for the development of three strategies for CSR communication. The purpose was to improve in informing, engaging, and involving key stakeholders. The authors discuss three strategies of CSR communication, which have different levels of stakeholder engagement: stakeholder information strategy, stakeholder response strategy and stakeholder involvement strategy. Stakeholder information strategy is considered as a one-way communication, from company to stakeholders, which aims to merely inform stakeholders without persuasive intent. In contrary, stakeholder involvement strategy relies on dialogue with stakeholders. By engaging with stakeholders, companies can stay aware about the changing expectations of stakeholders and have a potential to change or influence those expectations. Moreover, it allows stakeholder expectations to influence and change the company as well (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). The goal is to assure mutual understanding and agreement between different parties as well as to stay aware about, which issues key stakeholders consider important for companies to address.

2.5.2.3 Social value orientation

Social value orientation is a person's preference for specific patterns of results for themselves and others. It is considered to impact the effectiveness of CSR communication as it relates to stakeholder motivations to process the given information (Van Lange et al., 1997 cited in Du et al., 2010, p.16; Du et al., 2010). Dawkins (2004 cited in Du et al.,2010, p.17) discusses types of individuals in relation to social value orientation. The first group, CSR activists, are consumers that are more likely to make purchases based on ethical factors and assessments, to be more aware about companies' CSR actions as well as to proactively look into companies' CSR behaviour. Activists and advocates consider companies' responsibility to be to support changes in bigger social and environmental issues. Another group is disbelievers who consider companies' sole purpose to be shareholder return maximization. CSR communication is expected to be most effective to CSR activists and advocates, and the least to disbelievers (Du et al.,2010).

2.6 CSR in the food delivery platform industry

This chapter discusses previous research regarding CSR and the food delivery platform industry. It provides an overview of the industry, factors that influence consumer perceptions of the industry, and CSR concerns related to the food delivery platform industry.

2.6.1 Overview of the food delivery platform industry

Online food ordering and delivery platforms have been considered to have changed the traditional market of food deliveries. In the past, deliveries were mostly done between a consumer and a restaurant, but the rise of digital technology has continued to reform the market with applications that have increased the convenience of food ordering and deliveries (Hirschberg, et al., 2016). The existing online platforms like Deliveroo, Foodora, Wolt and Uber Eats, make it possible for consumers to search offerings and restaurants from an application while providing logistics to the restaurants. This has allowed more restaurants to open a segment for home deliveries with a fixed margin of the order to the platform and a small flat fee for the customer (Hirschberg, et al., 2016). Furthermore, food delivery platforms have answered to the consumer demand of having a substitution of dining in a restaurant as well as substituting for meals cooked at home (Hirschberg, et al., 2016).

The growth of the food delivery platform market has been considerable in recent years. Covid-19 was estimated to further increase consumer demand for food deliveries. Even before Covid-19, the new types of food deliveries that are done via apps were estimated to reach over 20 billion euros in 2025 (Hirschberg, et al., 2016), the overall meal delivery industry being worth USD 270 billion in 2019 (approximately 240 billion euros) (De Wei & Koh, 2020).

2.6.2 Consumers and the food delivery platform industry

Previous studies have considered factors that influence consumer satisfaction during the use of food delivery platforms. According to an article by Hirschberg et al. (2016), speed of delivery was considered as the biggest factor for customer satisfaction. Their study indicated that the ideal time for deliveries is no longer than an hour. Similarly, a study by Dospinescu et al. (2020) found that duration of the ordering process, which includes the delivery speed

and waiting time, has an influence on customer satisfaction and the reputation of the food delivery platforms.

A company's reputation has been considered to be an important factor for successful CSR communication. As discussed earlier, reputation has been found to influence consumer trust to CSR communication and has been considered to influence the conceived identity of a company. A study by Dospinescu et al. (2020, p.10) explored factors that influence the reputation of the food delivery platforms in Romania. They discovered that especially six factors influence food delivery platforms' reputations. These are shown in table 6.

TABLE 6 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE REPUTATION OF FOOD DELIVERY PLATFORM COMPANIES (DOSPINESCU ET AL., 2020, P.10)

Quality of food
Price of food
Menu variety
Food taste
Perception of companion
The quality of the electronic application

While majority of the factors identified in the study by Dospinescu et al. (2020) involve user experience, food quality, and price, the perception of companions is a noteworthy communicational factor significantly influencing consumer perceptions. Perception of companions is related to the word-of-mouth influence on company reputation. This finding is supported by Du et al. (2010) who express that the influence of consumer word-of-mouth has grown significantly. This is due to the internet's considerable reach. Internet has made it possible for consumers to communicate effortlessly via social media sites and chat rooms. Furthermore, consumers are considered to be a dependable information source, which companies should be aware of (Du et al., 2010). This underscores the significance of consumer influence on shaping others' perceptions.

Similar studies about the food ordering platforms emphasise the importance of user experience on customer satisfaction. According to a study by Law & Zhao (2004), customer satisfaction is especially impacted by service factors such as employee attitudes, which influence consumers' willingness to repurchase from a company. In addition, their study found that waiting time, food quality and variety of food, have an influence on customer satisfaction, which is mostly in line with the study by Dospinescu, et al., (2020).

In addition, Hirschberg et al. (2016), highlight the intense competitive nature of the industry. Their study found that 80 percent of customers that sign up for one platform, rarely or never leave that platform for another (Hirschberg et al., 2016). As the studies from other researchers indicate that user experience, time estimations and customer service have an influence on customer satisfaction in addition to food and price related considerations, it appears that without a significantly bad experience, customers might not see a reason to leave one platform for another.

Regarding the CSR studies related to the food delivery platform industry and consumers, prior research about the industry indicates that consumers may worry about the responsibility impact of the food delivery platform companies. Especially working conditions of the food delivery couriers have been found to cause concern for consumers (Belanche, et al., 2021). According to a study by Belanche et al. (2021), especially socially conscious consumers have been found to be affected by the food delivery service couriers' labour conditions, which can impact their level of usage and willingness to recommend a food ordering platform to others. This contradicts service and marketing studies of platform-based services that often underline consumer perceptions of the platforms' advantages. The studies suggest that the platforms are used mostly due to practical and hedonic reasons without further consideration about sustainable impact (Cho et al., 2019, Lee et al., 2019, Ray et al., 2019, Yeo et al., 2017 cited in Belanche, et al., 2021, p.47).

The study by Belanche et al. (2021), considered how labour practices in the food delivery platforms influence consumer intentions to recommend and use the services. The findings of the study suggest that while consumers' main consideration connected to the industry is related to its service quality, they also consider companies' sustainable impact when deciding to use and recommend the platforms to others. Furthermore, favouring companies that are working to improve the contracts and wellbeing of their couriers and employees, instead of maintaining the current gig-economy working model. Thus, they recommend companies in the industry to either change the gig-economy working model or to take on a new business model that includes more socially responsible considerations (Belanche et al., 2021).

2.6.3 CSR considerations related to the food delivery platform industry

Majority of previous CSR studies focus on companies operating in traditional markets, but both regulatory pressure and media criticism is relevant in the food delivery platform industry. Prior research about the food delivery platform industry has been mostly conducted in big markets and focused on two sustainability aspects: environmental and social. Academic research about the food delivery platforms' sustainability has focused especially on the environmental impact in big markets like China, due to concerns about plastic pollution from meal packages (De Wei & Koh, 2020). Academic studies about the industry have also discussed the social aspects of the companies' responsibility. Concerns about labour conditions in the gig-economy where workers sell their work via the food delivery application (Taylor et al. 2017 cited in Belanche, et al., 2021, p.65), has been considered controversial due to factors such as possibly unsafe working conditions and asymmetries in information between the food couriers and the company (Veen et al. 2019, Garijo et al, 2016 cited in Belanche, et al., 2021, p.46).

With the market growth of platform food ordering and deliveries, controversies and discussions have risen about the responsibility and sustainability impact of these companies. Due to this, media is considered to be in a big role in relation to CSR information about the food delivery platform industry. Media news about the food delivery platform industry in Finland have become significantly more common in recent years and especially during Covid-19, news outlets in Finland increasingly made news about the industry. Several food delivery platforms have been criticised for the labour conditions of their courier partners in media and regulatory steps have been taken to determine whether couriers should become employees. Thus, moving from gig-working to full employment (Parviainen, 2020; Le Breton, 2020)

However, differences exist in how the companies in the industry are discussed in the Finnish media. A food delivery platform called Wolt has been the most discussed platform in Finland. Thus, Wolt has responded in media about the food courier situation in addition to having their own communication on their website about the company's responsibility (Kajander & Parviainen, 2020; Wolt, 2021). However, consumer perceptions and awareness of this communication nor their perception of the CSR of the food delivery platforms has not yet been studied in Finland, which makes this an intriguing area for further research.

Regarding the food delivery platform industry, consumers have traditionally had the most contact with the food couriers, who are not technically employees. This is due to the gig-economy working model in the food delivery platform industry (Belanche, et al., 2021). Whether the gig-economy model has an influence on the perceptions that consumers have of the industry platforms' CSR is yet to be known, but previous research has emphasized the crucial role of employees in communicating CSR to consumers (Pang et al., 2018; Hatch & Schultz, 2003). For instance, employees are considered to be a reliable source of CSR information (Du et al., 2010). As courier concerns have been especially considered in the media, it is worthy to explore whether the news related to the courier situation have had an impact on consumer perceptions about the companies and their CSR.

Both media news about the industry and academic studies have focused on the social aspects of companies' corporate responsibility. However, the industry's environmental impact has not yet been actively discussed in media. Therefore, it is important to consider whether consumers in Finland have considered the environmental aspects of the industry and whether environmental considerations have had an impact on consumer perceptions or usage of the platforms' offerings.

Considerable knowledge gaps exist regarding consumer awareness, attitudes, and expectations about the CSR efforts and communication of food delivery platforms. As previously discussed, CSR serves as a means for companies to enhance their relationships with consumers, which is particularly important in industries with limited product differentiation and intense market competition. Thus, it is crucial to explore how consumers in Finland perceive the CSR of the industry platforms and which factors influence consumers' perceptions of the industry and its CSR initiatives.

2.7 Theoretical framework

Based on the reviewed literature throughout this chapter, a theoretical framework was created. This is shown in the attached figure 1.

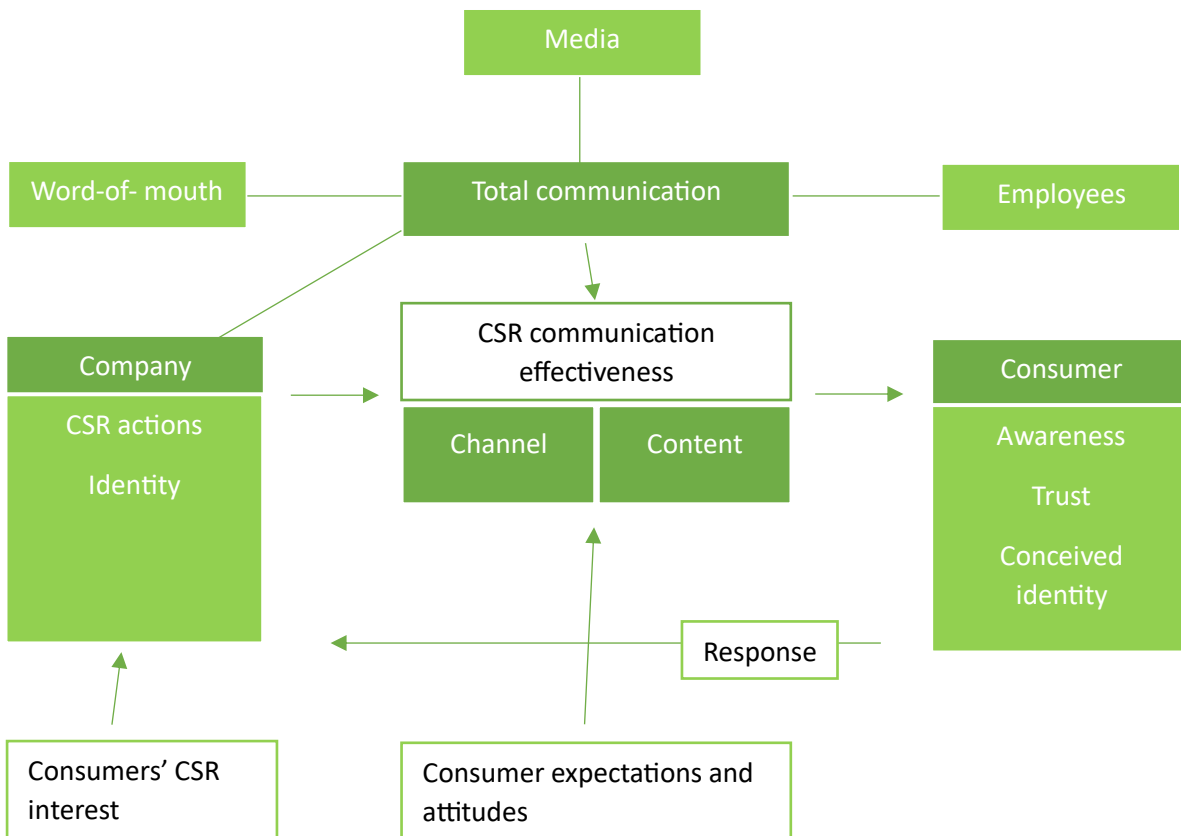


FIGURE 1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Included in the theoretical framework in Figure 1, the effectiveness of CSR communication to consumers is considered by three factors: type of communicator, communication channel and content. Firstly, the total CSR communication is comprised of company, word-of-mouth from other people such as other consumers, media, and employees. The main source of CSR communication is considered to be the companies themselves. Companies are considered to make decisions regarding their CSR communication by especially three factors. Firstly, consumer interest in their CSR communication is considered to be a factor that influences companies' decisions to conduct communication about their CSR aspects. Secondly, the type of CSR actions and the amount of them is considered to influence companies' CSR communication. Thirdly, CSR in relation to the company's identity i.e., CSR positioning, is considered to impact companies' level of CSR communication.

To ensure the effectiveness of CSR communication, companies need to choose the appropriate channels and content for their communication. Channels and content of information are considered to influence consumer awareness and trust to the companies' communication. Furthermore, conceived identity considers consumers' mental picture of an organization. Conceived identity includes reputation based on total communication as well

as considers the expectations and attitudes arising from corporate identity and controlled communication by the company. Consumer attributions of the CSR communication motive, influence their responses to the company. If positive, these can include, for instance, recommending the company to others and increase in purchases.

The purpose of this study is to consider how companies can conduct CSR communication in a way that leads to positive responses from consumers. Therefore, it explores consumer preferences for CSR communication. This research considers especially three aspects. Firstly, it considers how consumers perceive the food delivery platforms based on their CSR actions. This includes consideration of consumers' overall perceptions of the industry based on their experiences. Secondly, the focus is on exploring how consumers perceive the industry platforms based on total communication of the industry. Moreover, whether communication from external stakeholders has an influence on consumer perceptions of the platforms' own CSR communication. Thirdly, the consideration is on making recommendations about how companies can generate positive responses from consumers by focusing on the aspects that create effectiveness to CSR communication.

3. DATA AND METHODS

This chapter provides an overview of the data collection, interview design and data analysis that were used for this study. In addition, this chapter considers the ethicality of the research process.

3.1 Data collection

The primary data was gathered by conducting semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, which are the main source of information for the study. Reason why this data collection method was chosen, is in accordance with the benefits of semi-structured interviews as expressed by Adams (2015). Semi-structured interviews are considered to be beneficial when insight about individual thoughts of participants is of interest, when exploring an unfamiliar territory as well as when in-depth understanding of a topic is needed before constructing a complete research strategy (Adams, 2015), which all applied for this study. The planned topics and questions were related to consumers' ideas of responsible companies as well as their usage of online food delivery platform companies' services, and their views on the CSR actions and communication of these companies. These aspects provided some form of structure for the interviews.

The sample of the interviews was quite small as the goal was not to make generalizations for a larger population. The participants of this study were Finnish people, interested in sustainability and corporate responsibility, under 35 years-old. Interviews were conducted with eight participants of which some were students of Aalto university and others were personal contacts that expressed their interest to join the study. The number of participants was determined by whether the interviews brought new insight.

As the study built on the interaction and relationship between the researcher and the participant, the ethical considerations that were relevant for this study were related to especially on the informed consent of participants and the privacy of participants' anonymity (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). Firstly, the voluntary and consensual participation of individuals for this study was ensured by, for instance, explaining the purpose of the study and why they were approached to join the study. After that, a potential participant received an email with a participation form to sign. This form gave further information about the study as well as informed the participant that they can withdraw from the study at any time.

Furthermore, it provided information about the timeframe for the storage of interview data. This was informed to be until the end of the thesis making process and promised to protect anonymity of the participant throughout the research process. Thus, personal information about the participants is not provided in this study as well as it is not disclosed in any of the related documents, supporting the participants' full anonymity.

3.2 Interview design

To get answers for the objective and research questions of the study, qualitative research method was used. According to Creswell (2007, p.38), qualitative research draws information from individual's perceptions and allows a holistic understanding of "social phenomena". Similarly, Eriksson & Kovalainen (2015) explain that the interest in qualitative research is to understand how reality is constructed, produced and interpreted. Therefore, qualitative method was suitable to provide understanding about subjective perspectives, experiences, and to provide explanations for the way that consumers construct their reality (Lanka, et al., 2021), which was the purpose of this study.

Exploratory case study was conducted for the research. Qualitative case studies help to consider a phenomenon in a particular context with the use of various data sources to provide an understanding through several perspectives of the phenomenon, focusing on a current phenomenon as the topic (Yin, 2014 cited in Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2015, p.130; Baxter & Jack, 2008 cited in Rashid, et al., 2019, p.2). Case study was suitable for this research as the focus was to give information about a real phenomena, which in this case was communication and interaction about CSR activities, in the context of the food delivery platform industry in Finland. Moreover, it made it possible to focus the research on consumers' actions and interactions (Brewer & Hunter, 1989 cited in Rashid, et al., 2019, p.5).

Regarding the type of qualitative research, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015), introduced two types of case study research: intensive and extensive. For this study, intensive case study was to be conducted, as it considers in-depth the perceptions of CSR practices and communication in the field of food delivery platform industry rather than aims to create patterns with several cases to cover for instance, various industries. Furthermore, an intensive case can be used to help interpret and understand sense-making processes and the

perspectives of consumers about the CSR perception creation regarding the food delivery platform industry (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). In addition, intensive case study helped to address the objective of the study, which was to be able to give managerial advice to online food delivery platform companies about how to communicate to consumers about their CSR for positive responses. This is connected to methodology of case studies that are considered to pursue to be both practical and normative. In other words, to present complex business problems in understandable ways and to give information about different practices (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).

Crucial aspects related to CSR communication to consumers were considered in the literature review, which was the basis for the questions in the interviews. Firstly, participants were asked about their food delivery platform usage and factors that influenced their decisions to order from them as well as the overall image that they had of the industry. Secondly, the interview aimed to get knowledge about consumer awareness and trust to the CSR efforts and communication of the industry's companies as well as to the other sources of information. The purpose was to gain understanding about whether consumers create a perception of the companies' CSR based on the companies' own CSR communication or if other sources of information are more central to consumers. Thirdly, consumers were asked about examples of a responsible company to gain further understanding about factors that influence consumers' knowledge and perceptions of companies' CSR. Finally, the participants were asked about how they felt that companies in the food delivery platform industry should communicate about their CSR efforts to consumers.

3.3 Thematic analysis

The data analysis was conducted as a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is considered to be suitable for a study when the aim is not to look for numeric frequencies of themes or codes, but rather interpretation of the researcher plays a key role to consider relevant themes that arise from the examined data (Neuendorf, 2019). The thematic analysis process suited the purpose of this study as it takes into consideration various perspectives and experiences that consumers have, looking for commonalities. These worked as the main base for the case (Neuendorf, 2019).

Yin (2014, cited in Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015) considered two strategies for analysing case study data. The first one was based on “pre-formulated theoretical propositions” (p.138) and a formal coding system (Theoretical thematic analysis), and the second one began by “developing a case description” (p.138) that was used as a basis for the research questions and for the framework to arrange the study (inductive thematic analysis). This relied on the interpretation of the researcher of the materials and data (Stake, 1995 cited in Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016, p.142). This case study was conducted with the former strategy as the study is driven by specific research questions, and relates to the studies and their findings discussed in the literature review (Braun & Clarke, 2006 cited in Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p.3354)

The analysis process considered the data from the semi-structured interviews with consumers. The process of analysing the data was conducted with a guide made by Clarke and Braun (2014 in Neuendorf, 2019, p.213). The analysis process in simplicity followed six steps, which are presented below.

TABLE 7 BRAUN & CLARKE'S SIX-PHASE FRAMEWORK FOR DOING A THEMATIC ANALYSIS (NEUENDORF, 2019, P.213)

Step 1: Becoming familiar with the data	Step 4: Reviewing of the themes
Step 2: Generating preliminary codes	Step 5: Defining and naming themes
Step 3: Searching for themes	Step 6: Writing the report

The answers from all of the interview questions were analysed by using theoretical thematic analysis. As an example, the interview question number five was “How do you get information about the environmental and social responsibility aspects of companies in the industry?”. The purpose of the question was to identify, which sources of information consumers are exposed to regarding CSR information as well as whether or not they actively look for information about companies’ CSR initiatives.

The focus of the analysis was to address the following research questions:

1. How do consumers perceive food delivery platforms in terms of CSR?
2. How do consumers perceive the food delivery platforms in terms of total CSR communication?
3. How can food delivery platforms support a positive CSR perception with their CSR communication to consumers?

The analysis was conducted with these questions in mind. Each segment of the interview data that was considered to be relevant for the study, was coded. Also, aspects of the data that were not directly connected to the research questions, but gave further insight to them and for the objective of the study, were also coded as they provided more understanding of consumer perceptions. Each piece of text was transcribed in order to find the most relevant aspects for the study. Thus, line-by-line transcribing was conducted. Furthermore, open coding was used, which meant that instead of using pre-set codes for the study, the codes were developed and altered throughout the coding process.

Below, in table 8, is an example of the first theme in this study, its subthemes and codes that have been allocated to the relevant theme. Theme “use of food delivery platforms” answers to the first research question and is used to understand aspects that influence reasons to use the platforms, customer experiences and the general perception that consumers have of the food delivery platforms. Furthermore, the theme “use of food delivery platforms” answers to the interview question number two. All interview questions can be found in the appendix 8.1 and themes can be found at the end of the study in appendix 8.2.

TABLE 8 A THEME WITH ITS SUBTHEMES AND ALLOCATED CODES

Theme: Use of Food delivery platforms
<p><i>Subtheme: Reasons for using or not using FDPI</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restaurants being closed during Covid When socializing with friends When don't feel like cooking Likes that food is delivered home Price considerations Considers sustainability in consumption, and wouldn't go against own ethicality CSR consideration do not often influence usage FDPI companies' selection & environmental values influence usage <p><i>Subtheme: Experience of using FDPI</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convenient Quick to order food Easy to use Accurate time estimations Good customer service <p><i>Subtheme: General perception of the FDPI</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive image based on customer experience Positive image due to customer service at Wolt Big companies that do well and have become more popular

4. FINDINGS

This chapter presents findings from the empirical part of the study. The findings are divided into three sections, which based on the research questions: consumer perceptions of the industry's CSR, consumer perceptions of CSR communication, and consideration of consumers' hopes for CSR and CSR communication. Thus, it provides an exploration of factors that support positive image of CSR in the food delivery platform industry.

The findings from the interviews are discussed below in relation to each research question. Furthermore, the findings are summarised in the appendix 8.2, which shows the findings in themes with allocated codes. It should be noted that in the upcoming parts, the quotations from the interviews are translated from Finnish to English for the sake of clarifying the research findings.

4.1 Consumer perception of the CSR of the food delivery platform industry

The first research question of this study was: "How do consumers perceive food delivery platforms in terms of CSR?". During the interviews, the perception of food delivery platforms was considered by exploring consumer usage and overall perception of the food delivery platforms and the industry as well as whether CSR factors impacted these aspects. After this, the perception of CSR was considered specifically.

The purpose of the first interview questions was to gather information about consumers' usage of the food delivery platforms as well as the factors that influence consumer decision making about, which platforms to order food from. The main purpose of these questions was to get insight about whether CSR considerations impacted consumers' decisions to order from specific platforms or the decision to not use these platforms altogether. The food delivery platforms that were mentioned during the interviews were Wolt and Foodora. In addition, ResQ was mentioned as a food ordering platform, which does not deliver food.

4.1.1 CSR concerns related to the food delivery platform industry

Based on stakeholder theory, organizations have financial, social, and environmental responsibilities to various stakeholders (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). These aspects of CSR responsibilities were considered during the interviews as well and the participants were asked “How do you think that companies in the industry take into consideration their social and environmental impact?”. The findings from the interviews suggest that social considerations are the most prominent CSR issue, which influences the participants’ perceptions of the industry. This supports previous studies that indicate that consumers have been found to be concerned about the working conditions of the industry’s food couriers (Taylor et al. 2017 cited in Belanche, et al., 2021, p.65; Belanche, et al., 2021).

The overall perception was that couriers are not treated well, and this was the biggest factor influencing consumers’ perceptions of the industry’s CSR. Issues related to couriers were connected to courier pay, treatment and many of them being of foreign origin. It was expressed during the interviews that the participants were concerned about couriers that appear to be mostly of non-Finnish origin, to be taken advantage of due to the intense nature of the work as well as due to the industry’s gig-contracts.

“Social is the biggest [concern]”

“Courier considerations have an impact...nothing else does”

“Maybe the biggest thing is the couriers”

“Regarding couriers, if it is so that they are not considered as employees, the companies are able to cut on benefits and salaries and on everything else that they offer”

“I notice that for the most part, all couriers are of foreign background, who most likely have a hard time finding another job in Finland, so it makes me wonder the business model aspect of these companies”

“I suspect that the working hours are not very responsible maybe. I don’t have any facts, but that’s what I suspect”

“I don’t know what one can think of them other than that they exploit their couriers. I don’t know anything else about them”

“It is for certain that if you look at Foodora’s couriers, they’re always of foreign origin. Makes me wonder if the salary is so small that it attracts only immigrants”

“They [platforms] only save money and you could think that they are in a way, exploiting immigrants that might struggle getting other jobs, so they go for such low paying jobs”

“I am concerned about whether couriers have access to work provided health care and can they have vacation days. With such contracts, they only get pay for the work they do”

The other aspects of CSR that influence perceptions of the responsible impact of the industry were about restaurants, excess use of plastic, and no-contact deliveries. Firstly, some of the interviewees expressed concern about restaurants that partner with the food delivery platforms. It was expressed that the platforms take money away from restaurants that during Covid-19 were seen to be already struggling. Moreover, due to the nature of the industry, which is highly competitive, it was considered to be difficult for restaurants to make money on these platforms.

“What kind of firms they are to restaurants or for the couriers. I’ve noticed myself thinking about those maybe a bit more negatively. Like the companies take a portion of the restaurant’s sales and especially during Covid-19, when companies are already struggling, I don’t know if that was a good policy”

However, it was also expressed that restaurants have benefitted from the existence of these platforms. This was due to the increase in visibility to potential customers, and it was considered to be a way for restaurants to stay in business during Covid-19 restrictions.

“Restaurants probably gain many benefits. It probably costs them some money, but already the fact that they have their name on the platform list, they get a customer base of many hundred thousand of people for free or essentially for close to nothing”

“For restaurants to be able to continue their operations has generally been positive”

“[Being on the platforms] makes it possible for restaurants to serve a wider customer base”

“Probably restaurants on Wolt and Foodora’s platforms have been doing better than restaurants that are not on there or for ones that have not wanted to work together with the platforms. I could imagine that already having your restaurant there gives them visibility”

Secondly, in terms of the participants’ perceptions related to environmental considerations, consumers mentioned the use of plastic as a concern. The use of plastic has also been found to be a concern to consumers in previous research related to the industry (De Wei & Koh, 2020). However, compared to the studies in bigger markets, it appears that consideration of the industry’s environmental impact is not as prevalent in Finland due to the focus on the industry’s social impact.

“I remember a few times that I’ve ordered food and gone to sit at some park, and I open the plastic bag that contains plastic upon plastic. Everything is wrapped in plastic”

“Some restaurants deliver each sauce in different package, and they’re put in some aluminium, and that’s been put in some plastic bag that contains 10 napkins as well as straws and plastic spoons even though you’re at home”

Finally, a positive CSR factor that was mentioned was related to non-contact deliveries. These were made possible during Covid-19 when contact with people was suggested to be avoided and thus, it was made possible to order food without contact with the food courier. It was expressed that some of interviewees felt better about ordering food rather than going out to get the food themselves due to health considerations. Thus, they were happy with the food delivery platforms’ consideration of helping consumers avoid contact with the food couriers.

“I really like that last spring, they changed their strategy right away so that instead of couriers ringing the doorbell and waiting to give the deliveries, it’s now possible to order the deliveries without seeing anyone. Considering health, that’s pretty good”

“Their decision to make the deliveries so that you don’t need to see the courier and have that contact, was very smart and I think that was a positive solution”

“Because of Covid-19, they said that they will deliver food to people without contact. That was responsible”

4.1.2 Business model influence on the perception of the industry’s CSR

CSR has been considered to lead to many benefits for companies. For instance, it has been considered to improve companies’ competitive advantage. According to Bhattacharya & Sen (2004), CSR is a way for companies to improve their relationships with customers. They considered the benefits of CSR to be emphasised when there is higher competition in a market and less product differentiation between companies. Thus, to gain understanding about consumers’ perceptions of the differences of CSR between the industry platforms, they were asked “Are there factors that make some companies more responsible than others in the industry?”.

Based on the interviews, the participants of this study consider the food delivery platforms to be alike. This is quite interesting, because usually companies in the same market pursue to differentiate themselves in consumers’ minds to gain competitive advantage. It was expressed by the interviewees that they view the responsibility aspects of the companies to be the same. This is due to the lack of awareness of possible differences between them as their business models appear very similar. Furthermore, both food delivery platforms, Wolt and Foodora, are seen to be focused on maximizing profits rather than focused on CSR.

“There are no facts about what the differences are, or in image either, so that I would only use one or the other. I probably consider them the same. Due to Wolt being Finnish, it probably feels a bit better”

“From my experience there are no differences. I haven’t noticed any or heard that one company would do things better”

“I guess they are pretty much the same. The work is mostly the same with all of them, so I don’t believe that there is any drastic difference. I don’t know, but I guess”

“I consider them to be the same regarding responsibility”

“Don’t they have the same business models anyway...or I don’t actually know”

“I look at them the same. I’m not aware that some companies do things better in the industry than others”

It was expressed that the participants had seen the platforms become more popular in the recent years, especially since the beginning of Covid-19. Therefore, they are seen as companies that mainly consider their financial success and growth. Consequently, due to the platforms’ business models, many of the participants mentioned that they rarely consider environmental aspects of the industry. Instead, social aspects are more prominent since the platforms do not sell anything tangible.

“My own image of this kind of industry is that the platform’s purpose at this point is to have as many users as possible”

“The couriers ride with e-scooters and you can see so many of them nowadays. So, they [platforms] have become common very quickly and the companies have grown”

“All the companies [in the industry] have grown and well, they haven’t been that popular for very long”

“From environmental point of view, I haven’t considered that [responsibility] before”

“In platform industry, the companies don’t sell any product per say, so they don’t have to decide if the toy is made in Taiwan or in Sweden. So, there’s nothing like that....that’s how I see it from the environmental perspective”

“Maybe environmental things are not the first ones to come to mind”

Previous studies have indicated the importance that a company’s business model has on consumer perceptions of their CSR. It has been discovered that consumers prefer companies that are small, local, and privately owned (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004), and the discoveries from this study support those findings as well. Finnish companies are seen as the most responsible due to factors such as country regulations and EU controls over responsible business behaviour. Furthermore, it was expressed that small companies are seen as the most

ethical and responsible whereas when companies grow, money considerations are seen to become more emphasised.

“Probably if some company is responsible, it would be Finnish or a company producing from domestic raw materials, avoiding food waste, protecting their employees and so forth”

“I consider Pirkka to be quite responsible, because it’s Finnish”

“All Finnish food producers are most likely responsible”

“I wonder if Wolt is Finnish. If so, I could assume that Wolt is more responsible [than Foodora]”

“They [companies] must sacrifice on certain things in order to become that big, which makes it responsible until a certain point, but not a 100 percent. So, I think that smaller companies have better chances for those”

“Probably those small businesses are ones that operate the most ethically. If you think about some vegan small cafés or something of that sort, there’s nothing bad to say about them. As soon as their operations grow, they have to start to think about viability in a different way”

CSR positioning is considered to influence consumer perceptions of the responsibility factors of a company in comparison to competitors (Du et al., 2010). This was evident from the interviews as well. The findings indicate that there is a lack of differentiation regarding CSR positioning between the industry’s platforms. Due to the gig economy business model, the participants view the companies as profit and growth oriented. Moreover, it was discovered that when a company is inherently sustainable or a company’s actions have visible social or environmental impact, the participants perceive the companies responsible without further consideration.

“[About Anton&Anton] I think that their actions speak for themselves”

“[About Marimekko] it’s the quality. You know that the company has been around for a long time and people still have nightgowns from the 1950s that they use”

“[About ResQ] It’s mostly the concept and that one goes to get the food themselves whilst with Wolt and others, it’s the thought that you don’t need to go to get the food yourself, but it’s delivered... but all the excess packaging of food that’s involved, it does affect the perception”

“At times I’m like, okay it’s inherently sustainable so let’s go, let’s not think any further”

“Like with ResQ, environmental impact is more prevalent, so I don’t even think about their social impact”

ResQ was mentioned as a food ordering platform that is considered to be more responsible than Foodora and Wolt. This was expressed to be due to its business model that is focused on selling leftovers and therefore, focuses on reducing food waste. Indicating that visible evidence of a company’s CSR positioning improves perception of a company’s CSR.

“The main thing is that ResQ sells leftovers. In my mind, the food that would go to waste gets another chance and I legit think that’s how they do it instead of making more food”

“ResQ puts effort into tackling food waste, which I think is really clever that food that would otherwise be going to the trash, gets eaten. For people with smaller budgets, like students and other people that want to buy restaurant food, but that don’t have too much money to spend. In that sense, I think it’s a really good idea and the business model itself, there’s nothing suspicious about it, because restaurants have buffets and due to that, a lot of food is made that ends up as extra, and that gets eaten”

4.1.3 Influence of CSR considerations on the food delivery platform usage

Previous research gave varying results regarding consumer considerations of CSR in their purchasing decisions. Some of the previous research has indicated that especially socially conscious consumers can be impacted by CSR issues such as couriers’ labour conditions (Belanche et al., 2010), and these have been found to impact their willingness to use the

companies' services and to make purchases from them (Ramesh et al., 2019). In contrary, studies have also shown that consumers use food delivery platforms for mostly hedonic reasons and user experience is a driving factor for future purchasing decisions (Cho et al., 2019, Lee et al., 2019, Ray et al., 2019, Yeo et al., 2017 cited in Belanche et al., 2021, p.47; Law & Zhao, 2004). Thus, this study aimed to give more insight about whether CSR considerations influence consumers' purchasing decisions specifically in the food delivery platform industry.

The findings indicate that CSR considerations generally do not influence the usage of food delivery platforms. As the interviews were conducted during Covid-19, restaurants being closed was mentioned often as one of the reasons for ordering food from food delivery platforms as well as a reason for the increase in the usage of the platforms. The delivery of food was considered to make life easier as people were spending more time at home and thus, the need to cook for each meal was increased. Therefore, it was expressed that it is nice to have food delivered home when people do not feel like cooking or in social situations with friends. Thus, the deliveries were expressed to bring relief to consumers.

“Especially now during the Covid-19 pandemic, I’ve used them pretty often...what should I say... probably even weekly”

“I’ve worked remotely and after a certain time, cooking food has become incredibly boring. After a certain time, the restaurants obviously were closed and there was only the delivery option”

“Ordering food is not how it used to be, ordering only during the weekends with friends, as nowadays it can be a lunch on a weekday if there is no time to prep for food or something like that. It has become more common now during the Covid-19 pandemic”

A reason for not ordering food from the food delivery platforms was mostly related to price considerations. It should be noted that the interviewees that did not order from the food delivery platforms due to price, also mentioned that they rarely dine outside due to price considerations as well as due to preference of dining at home. Due to this, price considerations impacting food delivery platform usage, relates also to general eating habits at restaurants.

“Being a student has the most influence. The cost of 10€/15€ for the food to be delivered, doesn’t really inspire, because I know that I can walk or use the public transportation or a bike, for instance, to get food”

“I have never, even when I was a child, eaten at restaurants with my family, so I don’t miss that kind of restaurant food”

“I don’t really dine at restaurants. Obviously sometimes I have dinner dates with my friends, but otherwise not really”

However, CSR considerations were found to influence one participants’ decision to not use food delivery platforms in everyday life. According to the participant, their overall consumption choices are influenced by sustainability considerations and environmental values and therefore, food delivery platforms were not used. Instead, the previously mentioned platform called ResQ was mentioned as a platform where the participant has ordered food due to it being responsibly sold. Furthermore, it was mentioned by most of the participants that they consider sustainability in consumption with varying degrees. Generally, it was voiced that the participants would not go against their own ethics in purchasing decisions and that they consider the responsibility of consumers to be following their own ethical codes. However, this does not reflect most of the participants usage of the food delivery platforms.

”Regarding consumption decisions, I pursue that I don’t buy anything that is clearly against my values. But maybe responsibility considerations don’t show in all of my consumption decisions”

“I have a strong background in scouting activities and due to that, I have a strong value base regarding responsibility, so it almost feels self-evident. It’s present in everyday decisions”

4.1.4 Influence of user experience on the perception of the industry

The interviewees expressed overall positive experiences of using food delivery platforms. According to them, the usage of these applications was easy, the food ordering and delivery

process was quick as well as the time estimations were often accurate. In addition, it was stated that the applications are very convenient.

“For the most part, I’m happy with the food ordering process, ability to find restaurants, pick the foods, and how they’ve been delivered. For the most part, the orders have come on time”

“The platforms are easy to use. There are no bad experiences like getting a wrong food or pizza with wrong toppings. The orders have always been what I’ve ordered and on the time frames that have been promised. So, they’ve been successful in my opinion and ensured a good customer experience”

“For the most part, I’ve had positive user experiences, so I don’t really have anything to complain about”

“Generally, what comes to mind is that it’s convenient and saves time for many people”

“Considering the Covid-19 situation, it was a real rescue that people got to have food delivered home and it was really convenient and it’s certainly convenient during social situations”

“If one is sick with Covid, you’re not allowed to go anywhere, or a person is old or injured and it’s hard to get around, having something like this is really convenient”

Due to the positive user experiences, the interviewees expressed that they had an overall positive image of the food delivery platform industry. This is line with previous studies that emphasised the importance of user experience as well as factors such as delivery time and employee attitudes, on the overall customer satisfaction (Belanche, et al., 2021; Dospinescu, et al., 2020; Law & Zhao, 2004). Furthermore, interviewees’ experiences with the customer service at Wolt was expressed to have led to good perceptions of the platform. The findings from the interviews suggest that good customer service experiences have a great impact on consumers’ perceptions of the food delivery platforms as well as influence their eagerness to consider the platforms’ negative responsibility aspects.

“Overall, a positive image of the industry”

“For the consumer, it’s often pretty positive because they [platforms] pursue to make the whole experience very easy, and they have good customer service”

”If anything has gone wrong with Wolt as a customer, I’ve thought that they have fixed the situation well or there’s been some credit or something of that sort that they give if the delivery is very late”

“If there’s been any mistakes, they’ve been fixed pretty quickly”

“I feel like if one’s experience is good, you don’t really start digging into what kind of skeletons you can find”

To summarise the findings thus far, consumers described positive experiences both in the usage and image of the food delivery platforms. These aspects appear to correlate with each other as the overall positive image of the companies seems to be the result of good customer experiences and customer service experiences related to the industry. Furthermore, the results indicate that due to positive experiences with the food delivery platforms, consumers do not consider CSR factors in their purchasing decisions even though they voiced concern over the industry’s social impact on couriers. Rather, the decision to order food from the food delivery platforms is mainly influenced by their benefits for the customer. This is in line with findings from previous studies that have found that consumers make consumption decisions based on mostly hedonic reasons (Cho et al., 2019, Lee et al., 2019, Ray et al., 2019, Yeo et al., 2017 cited in Belanche, et al., 2021, p.47; Law & Zhao, 2004).

4.2 Consumer perceptions of the food delivery platforms in terms of total CSR communication

The second research question of this study was: “How do consumers perceive the food delivery platforms in terms of total CSR communication?”. Consumer perceptions of the CSR communication were explored by asking questions related to how they get information about the food delivery platform industry’s CSR and their feelings related to the CSR information that they are aware of. Based on previous research, companies face especially three challenges regarding CSR communication: increasing consumer awareness, overcoming consumer scepticism, and understanding consumer expectations.

4.2.1 Consumer awareness of CSR communication

Lack of consumer awareness of CSR communication has been identified as one of the biggest hurdles for companies to overcome. Thus, it was important to consider this aspect in the interviews as well (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Du et al., 2010; Beckmann, 2007; Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009). The participants of this study were asked “How do you get information about the environmental and social responsibility aspects of the companies in the industry?”.

Similarly with other researchers’ findings about low consumer awareness of CSR communication, the participants expressed that are not aware of the food delivery platforms’ own CSR communication (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). All of the participants expressed that they had not seen or looked for CSR information about the food delivery platforms. This was the case regarding both Wolt and Foodora.

“When I read Helsingin Sanomat from cover to cover, that’s when I encounter information. I don’t go looking”

“I don’t look for information if I don’t encounter it”

“I haven’t read anything about the platforms’ responsibility. They don’t advertise about anything besides their sales, so I haven’t encountered any responsibility advertisements anywhere in the city”

“I haven’t looked for information since I haven’t used them, and I haven’t encountered any communication from them about their responsibility. About Wolt, the only thing I’ve read is regarding whether the couriers are employees or not”

“They don’t talk about responsibility. When I think about it, the only way I get advertisements from them is on YouTube. They’re only focused on the food, and they don’t consider the possibility of giving a few extra euros to the courier, even though it would be dumb. They could focus more on how they consider couriers”

Previous research has indicated that media has an influence on consumer perceptions of companies’ CSR. According to Creyer & Ross (1997), consumers form their beliefs about companies’ CSR in three fundamental ways, which include media and word-of-mouth. Furthermore, according to Dawkins (2004), consumers are likely to see information about

companies' CSR from channels that do not require proactively searching for such information. Similarly, according to the interviews, the participants get information about the industry's CSR from two places: media and conversations with others. Especially media news and social media were mentioned as channels to get information about the industry and to come across information about its CSR.

"It's primarily media. I read from Helsingin Sanomat. On the other hand, social media as well. On Twitter I follow different people and sometimes those questions arise from there as well, but I would say that Helsingin Sanomat is a better source"

"It's not based on any facts since I don't have any numbers or any real statistics, but it's like, when I have encountered some conversations about the topic from Naisten huone [a group on Facebook] or from Jodel, haven't seen anything positive"

"It's primarily from news and newspapers"

"Originally from media I have encountered information about the problems related to the industry and its couriers. I probably wouldn't know about them otherwise."

"From internet forums and people expressing their opinion online"

"From Naisten huone"

Interestingly, it came apparent from the interviews that the participants had only seen media news related to couriers and courier contracts. It was described that these articles gave a negative image about the platforms, especially Wolt, and their treatment of food couriers. As described earlier, couriers were the main CSR concern of the participants, which appears to have stem from the news that they had seen.

"There's been a lot of news about couriers on news. That sometimes they work a lot and don't get compensated well. But no other negative thoughts about the industry"

"When I read about the couriers' working conditions and about those long working hours, human rights and employee rights were the main considerations. It doesn't warm my heart when I hear that someone works all day long and is still underpaid. I think Wolt was on the news about that and it made me feel like I didn't want to order from them anymore"

“I have a more negative image of Wolt, because it’s been on the news more”

“I’ve only seen some news article about those apps and that the couriers have awful working conditions”

In addition, it was expressed that having conversations with other people has impacted the participants’ image of the industry platforms’ CSR. Similarly, the role of word-of-mouth on positive perceptions of a company was emphasized in the study by Du et al. (2010). They advised companies to encourage word-of-mouth as it leads to better awareness of companies’ CSR.

“I’ve talked about these things with my friends”

“I’ve only talked with people about this, or I’ve heard that someone has said that there’s been news articles about couriers”

4.2.2 Consumer scepticism to CSR communication

Consumer scepticism was considered to be another considerable challenge for companies to overcome in relation to CSR communication. Similarly, findings of this research suggest that consumers are sceptical about companies’ own CSR communication. It is considered to be mainly greenwashing.

“The primary goal of companies is to make profit to shareholders, so often responsibility aspects are more about greenwashing. They talk about responsibility and following certain things and the need to take part in discussions and that they are so responsible and so forth. How many companies truly are responsible is another thing”

“If that [CSR information] comes from companies themselves and it would be related to marketing, it would be pure greenwashing”

Especially two factors were found to influence the participants’ trust to companies’ CSR communication: communication solely about positive things and business model. Firstly,

companies communicating only about their positive aspects was found to decrease trust to their CSR communication. While the participants expect that companies highlight their positive aspects, it hinders their trust to companies' communication. This is in accordance with the findings from previous research, which found that perception of companies concealing their negative aspects and highlighting their positive ones leads to negative response from consumers (Tata & Prasad, 2015).

“All information is carefully considered, all wording and everything, to make it as positive as possible”

“It's greenwashing everywhere. Really what influenced that perception is that the newsletter [ResQ's] was only about positive things and that made me a little doubtful. If they were an environmentally critical company, that they don't bring any aspects about their negative impact forward”

Secondly, business model was found to influence trust to CSR communication. The findings indicate that consumers trust CSR communication when it is conducted by a company that's purpose is to be sustainable. This supports previous findings that CSR communication is considered to be more reliable when there is a good fit between a company and the cause (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Du et al., 2010). In contrary, when a company is not considered to be focused on CSR, their communication about CSR can raise more scepticism.

“I do trust ResQ [CSR communication] because I solely think about what happens to the food if no one picks it up from there. The food from a restaurant is visible on the app for a certain amount of time and they also have breads from stores...so I do trust their communication”

“I don't know if it's hard to trust [companies' CSR communication], but it's not as believable when the leadership is behind it”

Unlike trust to companies' own CSR communication, it came apparent in the interviews that media is a trusted source of CSR information. This is considered to be for two reasons. Firstly, media's responsibility is seen to be revealing negative aspects about companies. As expressed earlier, it was found that consumers do not expect companies to share information

about their negative aspects, and it was found that the role of exposing those things is considered to be the responsibility of media. Thus, media does the detective work and provides more transparency. Secondly, it was expressed that it is easiest to trust third-party information. This is due to the perception that media as a third-party, has nothing to gain.

“Maybe it’s media’s job to bring forward the failings of companies”

“I think there’s always the fear present that it’s going to make some social media news regardless of how companies try to operate in accordance with their own values, there’s going to be some group that’s going to disagree about something”

“I think media has a big role [bringing up grievance]”

“Mainly, if it’s some third-party, they don’t have vested interest”

“If the [CSR communication] comes from media or if it’s a media interviewing this courier and the courier has told their side, it appears that the person has, from their own free will, told this story about their life and media as a third-party has reported it”

As discussed above, media was found to have a big influence on consumers’ perceptions of the CSR of the food delivery platform industry. Thus, it was important to consider whether consumers had encountered news about the platforms responding to the media critique and how they felt about the responses. This was crucial to explore in order to gain knowledge about how consumers prefer companies in the industry to handle the critique from media. Thus, the participants were asked “How do you feel about the way that companies in the industry have publicly responded to these conversations?”

It was discovered that company replies to media lead to positive responses from consumers. Moreover, the participants considered it necessary for companies to partake in media conversation when a company’s CSR aspects are discussed negatively in media. It was stated that it shows that the company cares and it would be suspicious if they did not respond to media. Interestingly, while the respondents voiced that they are sceptical about the truthfulness of the responses from companies, responses were expressed to influence positively the CSR perceptions of a company. Thus, a situation that could otherwise be

perceived as image-enhancing, can receive better response from consumers if it is communicated by media or another trusted third-party source.

“It brought reliability that Wolt responded to the media news”

“I think it’s good if companies respond to those questions, it’s better than silence”

“I wouldn’t say that I 100% trust that the responses are truthful, but it’s a positive thing that they have responded”

“I can’t be sure [about the responses to media], but it brings a little reliability that Wolt answered to those articles that were written about the couriers”

“I think media has a big role, but that companies can, and they should, take part in the discussion when something negative is brought forward or during a crisis, and when they know that they’ve been ethical”

“If they don’t respond, it doesn’t seem responsible at all and seems like they don’t care”

“It would’ve been very suspicious if they [Wolt] didn’t respond”

“If it’s a big enough thing that it should be breaking news, and it’s something so important especially nowadays, responsibility especially...it’s something that needs to be at least commented by a company”

However, while company responses were considered to be necessary to negative media news, vague responses can increase consumer scepticism and dissatisfaction. A few of the respondents expressed that they had seen Wolt’s responses to media news about their food courier treatment, and while they were glad that Wolt responded, they were not satisfied with the company’s responses. Interestingly, as responses to media news were seen as a positive and necessary thing by the participants, a few of them voiced that visible changes are sometimes enough of a response to media critique. Thus, it is better for companies to answer to critique with their actions rather than with vague responses.

“It was [Wolt’s response to media] quite generic that the couriers are entrepreneurs and not employees. It was a pretty vague response. My opinion about it has stayed quite uncertain because of it and I haven’t reached any conclusion with it”

“If they give some vague sentences about how they care, it can be pretty hard to take it seriously if it comes from the company itself”

“I haven’t seen any formal media response. It felt more like they changed things inside the company [Wolt]. I thought that was a good and sufficient answer as I’ve seen the changes with my own eyes. They did not need to respond any further”

4.2.3 Consumer expectations for CSR communication

Understanding and managing consumer expectations was considered as a third challenge for CSR communication. Previous research emphasized the need for companies to frequently consider the changing expectations of consumers as well as to carefully design their CSR communication to fit the needs of specific stakeholder groups such as consumers (Du et al., 2010; Morsing & Schultz, 2006; Schmetzl, 2012). Similarly, it came apparent from the interviews that the participants have certain expectations regarding CSR communication. Especially four expectations came apparent: information on company website about CSR, business model related expectations, expectation regarding CSR communication transparency, and responses to media pressure.

Firstly, majority of the respondents voiced that they expect to find information about CSR on the platforms’ websites. This was surprising, considering that the participants had voiced that they do not actively look for information about companies’ CSR as well as had never visited the food delivery platforms’ websites. However, it correlates with the findings from previous research about consumer preference to find CSR information on companies’ websites (Schmetzl, 2012; Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

“I think it’s something that needs to be included on the website”

“If a company has nothing on their website about responsibility, it makes me feel that they lack behind and they’re not keeping up with the market as nowadays, environmental impact is considered a lot”

“I wouldn’t go looking if they have information on their website about responsibility but if not, I boycott them”

Secondly, it came apparent from the interviews that business model has an impact on consumers' expectations for the visibility of CSR communication. In other words, where the companies' competitive advantage is, that is expected to be communicated about. Thus, it came apparent that the participants do not expect food delivery platforms to continuously inform about their CSR initiatives, because it is not in their competitive advantage.

“Maybe I feel it's the concept that the company is based on. Foodora and Wolt are more about getting food conveniently and quickly delivered home, whereas ResQ is about doing something good when you get the remaining food from this and this place. Of course, both concentrate on what best sells their concept so with ResQ, it's about giving a message that you're doing something good”

“The whole idea of ResQ is that when you open the app, there's 'why let food go to waste, save your local bakery's buns and they still taste good', it's what their concept is about, so obviously, they mention it”

“It's a bit tricky that the current company standard is that they don't need to communicate about responsibility much when it's not in their competitive advantage”

Thirdly, an interesting finding was that consumers do not expect companies to be fully transparent in their communication. Thus, companies are not expected to share negative information about themselves that has not yet been discovered. Instead, that was considered to be the responsibility of media. However, companies are expected to share truthful information about the aspects that they choose to communicate about.

“Companies need to give correct information about themselves, so what is communicated to consumers, shouldn't be significantly misleading. But obviously companies are not going to communicate about things that they don't want to”

“Everyone has skeletons in the closet”

Finally, it came apparent in the interviews that media is considered to have a positive influence on food delivery platform companies' CSR. It was expressed that increased media pressure and consumer awareness related to the industry's food couriers was considered to

lead to improvements. This correlates with previous findings that have indicated that stakeholder pressure has pushed companies to consider their impact on society, and it appears that the participants of this study, share this notion as well (Carroll, 2008).

“I’ve only seen an article about those couriers having really horrible working conditions. Someone was sitting in some wet gateway and was waiting for something. It has been a media news, and the company [Wolt], got involved and made better waiting spaces for couriers”

“That’s the image that I have, that when a company grows, things don’t get worse. Probably that’s influenced the most by media attention and so forth”

“Companies’ growth might influence their responsibility since when they get bigger, they get more attention, and they have more customers. Media and customers are obviously interested in responsibility aspects”

To summarise, consumers’ knowledge and feelings related to the CSR of the food delivery industry, relied fully on the visible aspects that they had seen as well as on media news and word-of-mouth. The participants expressed that they had not seen nor looked for information about the industry’s CSR. Instead, they vocalised that their perceptions and knowledge related to the industry’ CSR, came mainly from media sources that they had come across as well as from conversations with other people. It is evident that consumers rarely look for information about companies’ CSR themselves, but rather expect and prefer for that information to be easily visible to them.

Furthermore, from the findings related to media influence on consumers’ CSR perception of the food delivery platform industry, it came apparent that the participants view media as a trusted source of information. This is due to media’s responsibility to share negative information about companies. Furthermore, media is seen as a third-party that has nothing to gain in relation to companies’ CSR. In addition, media’s pressure on companies is believed to lead to improvement in their CSR. Finally, company responses to media news are found to lead to positive responses from consumers. It was discovered that the participants expect companies to respond to negative media news with either through communication or with visible changes in action. However, while responses are seen

necessary to negative media news, generic responses can increase consumer scepticism and dissatisfaction towards a company.

4.3 CSR communication factors that support positive consumer perceptions

The third research question of this study was: “How can food delivery platforms support a positive CSR perception with their CSR communication to consumers?”. The final part of the interviews focused on exploring aspects of CSR that consumers preferred for food delivery platforms to address in the future as well as how they felt that companies in the industry could best communicate to them about CSR. Thus, it explored consumer preferences and desires related to the industry’s CSR and CSR communication.

4.3.1 Improvements to CSR

In order to gain understanding about, which aspects of CSR consumers wish the industry platforms to make improvements on, they were asked “How should companies in the food delivery industry communicate and consider CSR?”. According to the interviews, improvements related to the food couriers are hoped for. It was expressed that the participants wish for better consideration of courier wellbeing through fair pay, better contracts, and a possibility to give money straight to couriers when ordering food from the food delivery applications.

“Having no zero-hour contracts [is hoped for]”

“Of course, all companies want to make as much profit as possible, but it’s a bit questionable what I’ve heard that they need to work really long days, almost every day, so that they can reach 3000€ per month. It’s really low salaries”

Regarding environmental considerations, few of the participants mentioned the wish for more ecological packaging. Food being delivered in multiple plastics was one of the concerns that was mentioned, and it was hoped that the companies would create more ecological packaging or encourage restaurants on their platform to use more ecological packaging for the deliveries.

“They could demand certain things from the restaurants that they work with. These could be, for instance, related to the food packaging, because that’s clearly not standardised in any way or thought about. So, if a restaurant wanted to work with Wolt, the restaurants must pack the foods in a certain way”

4.3.2 Message channels to increase consumer awareness of CSR communication

Previous research indicated that consumers are interested to know about companies’ CSR efforts (Schmeltz, 2012; Dawkins, 2004 in Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009; Morsing & Schultz, 2006). However, both previous research and findings from this study have discovered that consumers have low awareness of companies’ CSR communication. Therefore, according to Du et al. (2010), companies should consider especially two factors related to communication: information content and information channel.

Firstly, it was important for this research to gain understanding about whether consumers would be interested to hear about CSR communication from companies in the food delivery platform industry. It was expressed that it would be nice to hear about the CSR of the food delivery platforms from the companies themselves.

“I haven’t visited either of the platforms’ [Wolt and Foodora] websites, but if I did, I hope that there would be sections about ‘how we operate’ and ‘about us’. In general, something like that”

“If I think between two companies and I visit their websites, and the other has some information on there about their responsibility or sustainability actions, I immediately feel that they are more responsible than if I go on a competitors’ website and they don’t have anything about that”

“I would like for them to change the talk about how they became a big company, because that’s what they talk about more and not so much about sustainable factors. On the other hand, I don’t really look into their keynotes, because I’m not that interested in the company or I’m interested, but not to hear about their success stories”

“Personally, it would make me gladder to see a banner that says something about their employees getting a raise than about new customers getting 7€ off from their pizza order”

Previous research has discovered that consumers rarely search for information themselves and therefore, channels such as TV and the press, stakeholder word-of-mouth and company advertising, are preferred (Du et al., 2010; Dawkins, 2004). Findings from this study support this as well and therefore, easy exposure to CSR communication was hoped for. The participants were quite unanimous about their opinions that it is not consumers’ responsibility to look for information about companies’ CSR. Thus, it is not good if consumers are expected to look for information themselves and to go on companies’ websites to find information about their CSR initiatives.

”It can’t be expected that all people investigate these things, and I don’t look for information about everything either”

“I don’t assume that everyone uses the same energy as I do on checking quality. Like if I want something, I research about it for a few hours. I definitely don’t assume that everyone does that and because of that, it would be good if companies made it easier regarding what information is available and transparency would be made clear”

“I assume that if companies are truly responsible, they’re going to advertise it”

As the participants expressed interest to know about the CSR aspects of the food delivery platforms and hoped for easy exposure to CSR communication, channels to reach consumers were discussed. According to the interviews, especially three platforms were suggested: social media, company website, and platform application. Firstly, social media was seen as a way to reach consumers easily, which supports previous findings about consumers preference of visible information on mainstream channels (Dawkins, 2004 in Du et al., 2010; Schmeltz, 2012).

“Social media is always good, because on Instagram I see a lot of advertisements, so when talking with friends about food, they advertise to me the food delivery platforms on Instagram”

“Social media is always an efficient way to impact people’s opinions and it would be constantly visible. So, if the companies knew how to advertise, they had something about working at the company and an employee or a courier tells what it’s like to work there daily, why people should apply to work there. Maybe that kind of everyday advertising would bring more visibility”

“People use social media everyday nowadays so that’s almost the best way to reach people. It’s an easy way to reach people and to have more visibility”

Secondly, companies’ websites were hoped to include information about the food delivery platforms’ CSR. Moreover, they were a preferred channel to find information about CSR aspects that have been discussed in media. This contradicts with the findings that consumers prefer easily visible communication, but as expressed earlier, communication on website about companies’ CSR is expected and considered to be necessary by the participants.

“If the websites don’t have information about responsibility, it needs to be there quickly”

“Having a place on their website where a person can read the employees’ own interviews and about something, that would shed light on the situation if there’s a lot of negative discussion about it on media”

“I saw a negative story about the couriers, so it would be nice to hear... since some companies have...or many companies have employee stories on social media and on their websites, it would be nice, if the couriers are actually treated better, to have courier stories where a courier tells what it’s like to be a courier at Wolt”

Thirdly, the applications were seen as a convenient way for consumers to easily get CSR information while placing their orders. Therefore, it was recommended that the applications could be utilized to help consumers make more responsible orders by giving recommendations based on CSR factors as well as by providing information about the sustainability facts of their purchases. This supports the previous findings that consumers prefer easily visible CSR communication, including Point-of-Purchase communication (Du et al., 2010).

“Many food delivery companies have an app, so I think there could be something about responsibility when you open the app”

“Some tab on the app about information of the company. Or if they really wanted to go all in, they could have information connected to each order about the commissions and how much it has put a strain on the environment”

“The app itself could be used to highlight more sustainably made foods. They could also have information about social and environmental aspects when ordering the food”

“I think it would be dumb to have information about responsible impact on each transaction so instead, consumers could have the option to pay a certain sum each month to support the responsibility aspects”

Communication from couriers was hoped for to increase trust. This is in accordance with the findings by Du et al. (2010) and Pang et al. (2018), who emphasised the importance of employees as communicators of CSR communication. As consumers were mostly concerned about courier wellbeing, this is quite understandable. Thus, the participants expressed that they would be interested to hear about food couriers' experiences directly from the couriers themselves.

“If an employee films themselves or talks about their work, it's better and more approachable than a company describing what a great place they are to work at, and how people should apply to work there. Hearing from employees brings more credibility”

“It would be nice to hear courier stories from the couriers on social media about what it's like to work at Wolt and how nice it is to walk in the city and see different sceneries, and to be outside due to work. That would do good”

“I would like to hear [about responsibility aspects] from the company and the employeesthey're the ones at the centre”

4.3.3 Message content to increase trust to CSR communication

Several factors were mentioned that can lead to better consumer trust to companies' own CSR communication in the food delivery platform industry. These were proactive communication about negative aspects, factual information about statistics and data as well as information from couriers. It was communicated that generic responses are not preferred, and that they lead to scepticism.

"If companies bring negative information forward about responsibility, it's possible for them to control the conversation in some way or to highlight things. If they bring things forward, they can first think about how to respond to things and they can already then respond how they are going to take care of it. It's better than someone else communicating about it and the company not knowing how to answer, because they thought that it would never be considered. That looks really bad"

"If they [companies] have some hard facts or clear actions or plans, that's always better than vaguely saying that they care about something"

"Responsibility is good only if it's based on facts and not on perception"

"When thinking about consumers in relation to responsibility, it's always good to be as transparent as possible"

"The communication should be really transparent, because otherwise, it doesn't do any good"

"Knowledge about how much food waste there is and how it's handled, would be interesting to know"

Transparency about negative aspects was also hoped for. The participants expressed that it would be interesting to hear about CSR aspects that companies were not fully satisfied with, and this would increase their trust to the companies' communication. Based on attribution theory, consumers respond to CSR communication better when it is considered to be conducted due to social motivations instead of economic as economic motivations are often considered to be done due to image-enhancing purposes (Karaosmanoglu, et al., 2016).

Thus, for CSR communication to appear as more genuine, information about negative CSR aspects was suggested.

”Proactive approach is better than reactive and anyways, in some crisis communication, it’s a lot better to be involved straight away”

“I would probably follow them with interest if they informed about whether the order that I made from them had negative or positive environmental impact”

“I would probably have a positive reaction if some company communicated about their negative aspects and told how they are going to tackle them. I would see that as a positive thing”

In addition, media was highlighted as an important channel for also future CSR information. Consumers hoped to hear about positive courier experiences from media and thus, recommended that companies would pursue to build a relationship with media. This was discovered by Du et al. (2010) as well, who encouraged companies to pursue for positive media news from neutral sources, emphasising the role of media in shaping consumer perceptions.

“I think it’s good if they somehow get media to write about things related to the couriers in a spontaneous way, so that the company is not there to influence the discussion between media and the couriers”

“If they could somehow influence the media to write more neutrally about them, it would be better than the companies bringing things forward themselves”

“If I tried to look into some companies’ ethical actions, I would think that it’s only been done by some team and some positive things are considered, and those are written down. It’s better if the information comes from media or social media, or from someone else, so that it’s not as obvious marketing”

To summarise the participants’ hopes for the CSR and CSR communication in the food delivery platform industry, consumers wish for more improvements related to couriers. These are especially related to their pay, contracts and being able to tip the couriers directly. Also, improvements in more ecological packaging were hoped for. Regarding the preferred

channels to find information about CSR, consumers preferred social media, company website, and platform application. It was emphasised during the interviews that consumers prefer CSR communication to be easily noticeable and accessible. Furthermore, the content of CSR information that consumers hoped for was proactive communication about negative aspects, transparent and factual information about statistics and data as well as information about couriers. These were considered to increase trust to CSR communication.

5. DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the key findings from the research. The findings of this study are reflected on the literature that was discussed in chapter 2, reviewing previous literature.

5.1 Business model influences CSR perception

Previous research has considered that a company's business model and CSR positioning can have an influence on the CSR image of a company. CSR positioning is the consideration of how much companies consider CSR as a factor to position themselves as socially responsible in relation to competitors (Du et al.,2010). Thus, it reflects the influence and importance of CSR to the company's business model.

Interestingly, it was discovered that there is a lack of differentiation within the food delivery industry platforms', Wolt and Foodora, as they are seen to have identical business models and approaches to corporate responsibility. Furthermore, this study found that consumers have not previously considered the CSR aspects of the food delivery platforms. Therefore, CSR was not generally something that consumers considered when making choices about, which delivery platforms to order food from. Consequently, CSR was not seen as a factor that sets the food delivery platforms apart from each other and it was not a competitive advantage or a factor for either of the food delivery platform companies that were considered by consumers, Wolt and Foodora.

However, CSR positioning was found to be a factor for some consumers to order food from a food ordering platform called ResQ. ResQ was mentioned to be used by the participants due to it selling restaurant leftovers and therefore, reducing food waste from restaurants. Because of this, its business model was considered to be inherently responsible, and this was considered to be its competitive advantage compared to the food delivery platforms in the market.

5.2 CSR communication expectations and attitudes

Previous research has emphasised the challenges of meeting various stakeholders' needs and expectations for CSR communication. Companies' responsibilities have been considered to

be understanding these changing expectations for CSR as well as to report about aspects that stakeholders consider important (Du et al., 2010; Guthrie et al. 2006 cited in Fernando & Lawrence, 2014, p.157; Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). However, understanding consumer expectations for CSR communication, was considered to be a great challenge for companies to manage (Du et al., 2010; Dawkins, 2004 cited in Du et al., 2010, p.15).

Regarding the food delivery platform industry, the participants' main expectation was that the companies do not visibly communicate about their CSR, because it is not their competitive advantage. As the companies were perceived to be growth oriented, rather than focused on responsibility aspects, their communication was expected to reflect that. Due to the lack of expectations related to the CSR aspects of the industry, lack of CSR communication did not have a great influence on consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction associated with the platforms. However, according to the findings, consumers expect to be able to find information about the industry companies' CSR on their websites. Furthermore, the information was anticipated to be accurate about the CSR aspects that the companies have chosen to communicate about.

5.3 Media is a preferred source of CSR information

Prior research has emphasised the role of media in shaping consumers' perceptions of companies' CSR initiatives (Balmer and Soenen, 1999; Du et al., 2010). Researchers have found that consumers form their beliefs about CSR behaviour from two aspects: from direct experiences with a company and from the information given by outside sources such as media (Creyer & Ross, 1997). These were identified as the primary sources of information influencing consumers' perceptions of the food delivery platform industry as well.

Empirical findings revealed that media has the most significant influence on consumers' perceptions of the CSR in the food delivery platform industry. For example, the participants voiced concern about the food couriers' working conditions and contracts with the food delivery platforms due to media news that they had seen about the treatment of food couriers. This study found that one of media's strengths in communication to consumers is its visibility. Consumers come across media news about food delivery platform industry without searching for such information or considering channels where to find information about CSR.

Previous research has found that media influence on consumer perception is due to the awareness of it being more neutral and trustworthy source of information than companies themselves (Du et al., 2010). Similarly, this study found that consumers trust media due to viewing it as a neutral source of information that has nothing to gain. Additionally, media's role was seen to be a detective that brings forward negative aspects of companies' CSR. Thus, highlighting CSR aspects that companies are not fully transparent about.

Previous studies indicated that consumers may worry about the social aspects of CSR in relation to the food delivery platform industry. Issues such as courier working conditions had been found to impact especially socially conscious consumers' level of usage of food delivery platforms (Belanche, et al., 2021). Similarly, the biggest concern for consumers in this study, was couriers and their wellbeing. Consumers were concerned about factors such as courier working hours, pay and possibility to access medical care. This study found that the source of information and concern for couriers had come from media news, which had influenced the CSR perception that consumers had about the industry. However, concerns about couriers did not impact most of the participants' usage of the food delivery platforms', which contradicts with the findings from the study by Belanche et al. (2021).

Previous research has suggested companies to aim for positive media news (Du et al., 2010) in order to improve their CSR image and reputation. This was also apparent in the findings of this study. The participating consumers suggested that food delivery platforms should work with media and to aim for more neutral news about them. This would improve consumer perception of the industry. As the concern that consumers had about the industry was related to courier wellbeing and contracts, it was recommended that the information to the media would come from the couriers themselves.

5.4 Lack of consumer awareness of CSR communication

Lack of consumer awareness of CSR communication was considered to be another challenge for its effectiveness. Previous studies found that consumer awareness of CSR communication is generally low (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Du et al., 2010; Beckmann, 2007; Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009) and consumers are likely to come across information about companies' CSR from channels that don't require proactively searching for such information (Du et al., 2010). The findings of this study are similar. Consumers that

participated in this study, reported that they had not seen food delivery platform companies' CSR communication nor looked for information about their CSR. Instead, they have found information from visible channels, mainly media, which are easily noticeable.

According to the study by Bhattacharya and Sen (2004), consumer awareness of companies' CSR efforts, increases their wellbeing. Similar results were found in relation to knowledge about ResQ's responsibility aspects. The consumers that participated in this study, vocalised that they feel better when ordering food from ResQ due to its environmental impact. Similar results were not found in relation to the food delivery platform industry, possibly due to the lack of consumer awareness of their CSR efforts. However, consumers vocalised that they would be interested to hear about the food delivery platform industry's CSR if it came from the companies. This is inline with previous studies, which suggested that consumers are interested to know about companies' CSR and CSR initiatives are important to them (Schmeltz, 2012; Dawkins, 2004 cited in Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009, p.288; Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

5.5 Scepticism about CSR communication motives and credibility

Overcoming scepticism was considered to be one of the biggest challenges in CSR communication. According to Bhattacharya and Sen (2004), consumers are usually sceptical about companies' CSR and CSR communication, and therefore, a key challenge for companies is to lessen consumer scepticism for positive CSR attributions (Du et al., 2010). Previous studies indicated that there are several factors that can influence consumer trust to companies' CSR communication.

Firstly, Du et al. (2010), found that the less controllable that communication is, the more credible it appears. Findings of this study also suggest that consumers prefer CSR communication to come from sources that they consider to be less controlled by companies. These were found to be media and food couriers. As expressed earlier, media was considered to be a trusted source of information due to its neutral nature. The importance of couriers has been considered in previous research as well. According to Du et al. (2010), encouraging employees to speak about a company, can raise awareness and help to create a positive perception of a company. Similar findings were found by Pang et al. (2018) that considered

employees to be in a key role of achieving CSR credibility and to creating a meaningful relationship with stakeholders such as consumers.

Secondly, motivations behind the communication have been found to impact the trustworthiness of CSR communication. Companies have been seen to communicate about aspects that are mostly in their self-interest, which can appear suspicious (Du et al., 2010). The findings of this research also indicate that consumers are sceptical of companies' own CSR communication as it is often considered to be greenwashing and about companies highlighting their positive aspects. Thus, motivations for CSR can appear as firm-serving rather than acting out of genuine concern. Therefore, it is recommended that companies increase the transparency of their CSR communication to include also negative aspects that they aim to make improvements in as well as support their CSR information with statistics and data.

The perception of the motives was found to be further influenced by a company's business model. The findings suggest that consumers trust CSR communication when a company's business model is based on confronting sustainability issues. In contrary, when a company is not considered to be focused on CSR, their communication about CSR can raise more scepticism, and feel like firm-serving rather than genuine.

5.6 Preferred information content and channels for CSR communication

Previous research has found different results about consumer preference for the type of information about CSR. Some research has indicated that consumers prefer information that is based on facts as this has been considered to increase its credibility (Sen et al. 2009 cited in Du et al., 2010, p.12; Schmeltz, 2012). Likewise, to improve consumers' trust in CSR communication, the findings of this study indicate a preference for factual and transparent messaging. This includes communication about negative sustainability aspects.

Issue support was considered by Du et al. (2010), as an important stakeholder factor that influenced consumer motivations to process CSR information. The findings of this study suggest that consumers are especially concerned about CSR issues related to the industry's treatment of food couriers. Thus, communication about food couriers and their treatment, is deemed important and hoped for. This is suggested to be done via courier stories on the

platforms' social media as well on media articles to increase consumer awareness and trust to the communication.

Prior studies also gave varying results about the preferred channels of CSR communication. Studies from Morsing and Shultz (2006) and Schmeltz (2012) indicates that stakeholders prefer to have CSR information on company websites and annual reports. Additional preferred channels also included sponsorships, advertisements, and other mainstream channels (Schmeltz, 2012; Dawkins, 2004). These go against the findings of Morsing and Schultz (2006), whose study found that consumers do not wish to see CSR communication on advertisements.

The findings of this study indicate that consumers prefer to receive CSR communication through channels where they are easily exposed to the communication. Hence, channels such as social media and the platform's application were suggested channels for CSR information. According to the interviews, especially media has been considered to be an effective source of information. It was expressed that neutral media articles as well as media articles involving positive courier stories, would improve consumer perception of the companies' CSR and their reputation.

Furthermore, company websites were hoped to include information about CSR in the future as well as they were considered as good channels for formal communication. The findings indicate that consumers are not aware whether companies have information on their website about their responsibility aspects. This is line with study by Dawkins (2004), which suggested that consumers rarely look for information about companies' CSR. Nevertheless, the food delivery platforms' websites remain as a preferred channel for CSR communication and are deemed as platforms where CSR information needs to be included.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the research, and its findings as well provides information about the limitations of the study. In addition, suggestions for future research are considered.

6.1 Research summary

The purpose of this study was to explore consumer perceptions of CSR and CSR communication in the food delivery platform industry, in order to gain understanding of how companies can improve their ability to effectively communicate to consumers. As ethical considerations have been growingly present in the food delivery platform industry, it has become an increasingly popular industry for academic research. However, prior studies related to the industry's CSR communication efforts, have been limited so far.

The primary part of the research was done by conducting semi-structured interviews with consumers. The participants of this study were Finnish people who were interested in sustainability and corporate responsibility, under 35 years-old. Eight interviews were done for this study and they aimed to give answers to the following aspects of CSR.

Firstly, the study aimed to give answers about consumer perceptions of the CSR of the food delivery platform industry. It was discovered that consumers' perceptions of the food delivery platform industry's CSR are mainly influenced by their concerns about food couriers. The participants were found to rarely consider the industry's environmental impact and instead, social considerations were the most prevalent to them. However, CSR considerations generally did not influence the participants' usage or user experiences with the industry platforms as consumers expressed that the overall image of the industry is positive due to their customer satisfaction to the delivery process and customer service.

Secondly, the influence of total communication on consumer perceptions of the industry platforms' CSR was explored. Consumers' perceptions of the food delivery platforms were found to be most strongly influenced by media news related to the food couriers. The participants expressed that they consider media as a trustworthy source of CSR information, and they come across information about the industry's CSR from media sources. Surprisingly, none of the participants of this study had seen or looked into the platforms'

own CSR communication. Thus, they had no knowledge of any CSR communication conducted by the companies themselves. Due to this, there was scepticism about whether CSR is considered in the industry, but as CSR is not considered to be a competitive advantage to the industry companies, the participants' lack of CSR communication awareness did not influence their overall perception of the industry. However, consumers voiced that it is expected that the platforms conduct CSR communication on their websites.

Finally, the study considered consumer preferences for the industry platforms' CSR efforts and CSR communication. Firstly, regarding the preferred channels for CSR communication, the findings indicate that consumers wish CSR communication to be conducted on social media, platform application and website. Moreover, media information about the industry's CSR is hoped for in the future as well and therefore, companies are encouraged to aim for more positive media news. Furthermore, it is recommended that companies in the industry choose channels for their CSR communication where information is easily noticeable without consumers' own research as the studies indicate that consumers rarely look for information about the industry platforms' CSR.

In addition, it was discovered that consumers hope CSR communication to be more transparent and factual. Therefore, information about negative CSR aspects as well as data and statistics, was hoped for. Furthermore, it was hoped that the companies would include information about their food couriers as they were the biggest concern for consumers. Thus, CSR actions that consumers hope the industry platforms to focus more on in the future are related to courier contracts and in the companies' ability to pay to couriers. In addition, further consideration of reducing plastic usage is hoped for.

To summarise, the study indicates that consumers are generally susceptible of companies' motivations for CSR communication, and thus prefer factual and easily visible CSR communication. In the industry of food delivery platforms, increase of more visible CSR communication is hoped for as the general image of the industry is positive due to customer service and usage reasons, but concern about the industry's social impact is prevalent. This study adds to the understanding of consumer expectations and attitudes in relation to CSR and CSR communication. The findings of this study help companies in the food delivery platform industry to consider aspects of their CSR communication in order to increase consumer awareness and trust to their communication efforts to consumers.

6.2 Limitations of the study

The ensuing limitations should be considered in regard to the findings of this study. Mainly, the sample of the interviews included some demographic limitations. Firstly, the interviews were conducted with people born in Finland and thus, it did not include people that have moved to Finland from other countries. Secondly, the interviews were conducted with a disproportionate number of male and female respondents as the interviews were conducted with one male and seven female participants. Thus, the study does not take into consideration possible differences in perception between male and female consumers as this was not a relevant factor for the study. Finally, majority of the participants were people living in Uusimaa region. Thus, the results might differ noticeably if other parts of Finland are considered more as food delivery platforms are the most prevalent in Uusimaa region. As the study included consumers interested in corporate responsibility and ethicality of the industry, the study fails to consider consumers that are not as interested in corporations' responsibility aspects.

6.3 Suggestions for future research

This section considers the suggestions for future research that came apparent during this study. As the studies regarding corporate social responsibility, CSR communication and identity studies include a broad range of theories and concepts, this study gives a very narrow description of them. Because of this, there are certain aspects that could be considered in future research.

Firstly, this study considered only one aspect of corporate identity. This was the perceived identity as the focus was on consumer perception. Thus, it does not take into consideration companies' own perception of their identity and does not consider employees' point of view. Therefore, future research could consider the company and employee perspectives more. This could be done by conducting interviews with the companies' employees and leadership as well as through investigating their CSR communication to consumers and other stakeholders.

Secondly, the study was limited as all the participants were under 35 years old. Thus, their responses to the preferred channels of communication might be influenced by their age as

they have access to online media sites and social media, which makes information easily available and visible to them. Thus, further research could be conducted to consider consumers of wider age range. For instance, focusing on older consumers could be beneficial in order to gain understanding about what channels would be preferred by a wider consumer base.

Finally, as the primary research was conducted as interviews, the study provides very limited information about the factors that influence consumer awareness and trust to CSR communication. While the interviews in this study provided very similar findings from the participants, the findings cannot be generalized to include majority of consumer perceptions. Therefore, a quantitative study or a combination of quantitative and qualitative studies could be conducted to explore the most critical aspects of CSR and CSR communication to consumers. This could give a more generalisable understanding of this stakeholder group's perceptions.

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8. APPENDICES

8.1 Interview questions

8.1.1 Interview questions in English

Food delivery usage

1. Could you describe your food delivery platform usage? (e.g., does/does not use, which companies uses, how often etc.)
2. How do you make decisions about which food delivery platform company to order food from? / Why do you not order food from food delivery platform services?

CSR Image of food delivery platform companies

3. What is your overall perception of the industry?
4. How do you think that companies in the industry take into consideration their social and environmental impact?
 - a. Are there factors that make some companies to be more responsible than others in the industry? Why yes/why not?

CSR Communication awareness and trust

5. How do you get information about the environmental and social responsibility aspects of companies in the industry? (e.g., companies' own websites, media, friends etc.)
6. How do you feel about the responsibility communication that companies in the industry do?
 - a. How do you perceive the transparency of food delivery companies' responsibility communication?
 - b. How do you perceive the trustworthiness of the companies' own communication?
 - c. Why do you think that companies in the industry communicate their responsible actions?
7. How do you feel about companies that do not communicate about their responsibility activities or goals?
8. How do you feel about the media coverage of the industry?
 - a. How do you feel about the way that companies in the industry have addressed/responded these conversations publicly? (Relating to e.g., criticism, negative media cover etc.?)
9. How has your perception of the companies in the industry changed with time regarding their responsibility?

Good CSR example and suggestions

10. Can you think of an example of a responsible company (can be in the food delivery platform industry or any other)?
 - a. Which aspects make this a responsible company?
 - b. How have you received information about the responsibility of this company?
 - c. How have they communicated about their responsibility considerations?
 - d. How do you feel about the company addressing the public regarding e.g., negative news, criticism etc.?
11. (Reflecting on this) How should companies in the food delivery industry communicate and consider CSR (their responsibility financially as well as towards environment and society)?
12. Is there anything you would like to add?

8.1.2 Interview questions in Finnish

Haluisitko kertoa alkuun vähän itsestäsi ja suhteestasi ihmisiin tai ympäristöön liittyviin vastuu asioihin?

1. Kuka on?
2. Mitä tekee?
3. Mitä vastuullisuus merkitsee? Onko tärkeä osa arkea tai elämää?

Ruokatilaus tottumukset

1. Tilaatko koskaan ruokaa alustatalousryityksiltä?
 - a. Jos kyllä, kerro lisää.
 - i. Mitä alustoja olet käyttänyt ja miksi?
 - ii. Millainen kokemuksesi niiden käytöstä on ollut?
 - iii. Kuinka usein yleensä tilaat ruokaa kotiinkuljetuksella?
 - iv. Mitä syitä näet sille, että kuluttajat käyttävät näitä palveluita? Käytätkö itse näitä myös noiden syiden vuoksi?
 - b. Mikäli ei, voitko kertoa miksi et käytä ruokatilaus palveluita?

Ideaali esimerkki vastuullisesta yrityksestä

1. Voitko ajatella esimerkkiä vastuullisesta yrityksestä (voi olla joko ruoka-alustatalouden tai muun alan yritys)
 - a. Millainen yritys on? Mitkä tekijät tekevät tästä vastuullisen yrityksen?
 - b. Miten olet saanut tietoa yrityksen vastuullisuudesta?

- c. Miten yritys on viestinyt vastuullisuudestaan?
- d. Miten koet yrityksen vastanneen julkisuudessa kommentteihin tai uutisiin vastuullisuuteen liittyen?

Vastuullisuuskuva ja ruoka alustatalousyritykset

1. Mitä ajatuksia sinulle tulee mieleen kun ajattelet ruoka alustatalousalaa yleisesti?
2. Ajatteletko koskaan näiden yritysten sosiaalista ihmisiin tai ympäristöön liittyvää vaikutusta/vastuuta?
 - a. Miten voit tunnistaa, että alan yritys on vastuullinen?
 - b. Ovatko mielestäsi jotkut alan yritykset vastuullisempia kuin toiset?
 - i. Miksi koet näin?

Vastuullisuusviestintä tietoisuus ja luotto

1. Yritätkö koskaan löytää tietoa siitä miten alan yritykset ottavat sosiaalisen ja ympäristöön liittyvän vastuunsa huomioon?
2. Millaiseksi koet alan yritysten vastuullisuusviestinnän?
 - a. Voitko luottaa siihen mitä yritykset sanovat vastuullisuksiensa pitämisestä?
 - b. Miksi yritykset alalla viestivät mielestäsi vastuullisuudestaan?
3. Mitä mieltä olet yrityksistä jotka eivät viesti vastuullisuus teoistaan tai tavoitteistaan?
4. Mitä tunteita median viestit alan yrityksistä herättävät sinussa?
 - a. Mitä mieltä olet siitä miten alan yritykset ovat vastanneet tai viestineet mediassa uutisiin yms.?
5. Ovatko näkemyksesi alan yrityksistä jai heidän vastuullisuudestaan muuttunut ajan kuluessa?

Jos reflektoidaan takaisin siihen yritykseen jonka mainitsit vastuulliseksi ja miten se yritys hoitaa asioita:

1. Miten ruoka alustatalouksien yritysten pitäisi ottaa huomioon vastuullisuus toiminnassaan?
2. Miten heidän pitäisi viestiä vastuullisuudestaan kuluttajille?
3. Onko jotain mitä haluaisit vielä mainita tai lisätä mistä emme ole vielä keskustelleet? Tai haluatko palata vielä keskustelemaan jostakin aiheesta?

8.2 Themes and codes allocated to each research question

RQ 1: 1. How do consumers perceive food delivery platforms in terms of CSR?

Theme: Use of Food delivery platforms
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<i>Subtheme: Reasons for using or not using FDPI</i>
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Restaurants being closed during Covid When socializing with friends When don't feel like cooking Likes that food is delivered home Price considerations Considers sustainability in consumption, and wouldn't go against own ethicality CSR consideration do not often influence usage FDPI companies' selection & environmental values influence usage
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<i>Subtheme: Experience of using FDPI</i>

Convenient Quick to order food Easy to use Accurate time estimations Good customer service
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<i>Subtheme: General perception of the FDPI</i>

Positive image based on customer experience Positive image due to customer service at Wolt Big companies that do well and have become more popular
--

Theme: CSR context

<i>Subtheme: Perception of the CSR of FDPI</i>
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No-contact deliveries is responsible Biggest FDPI CSR concern is couriers (2) Take money from restaurants (1) Benefited restaurants during Covid-19 Use of plastic not responsible Environmental impact rarely considered
--

<i>Subtheme: Courier considerations</i>

Worry about working hours and wellbeing No exposure to Finnish Wolt couriers Image that couriers work for a short time until better jobs Gig-contracts seen to split poor and rich Courier situation is close to heart, because could impact that person Worry that companies take advantage of people with foreign origin

Subtheme: CSR perception differences between FDPI companies

FDPI companies seen equally sustainable

ResQ seen as more sustainable than other FDPI, due to business model

General companies not seen as ideally sustainable when it feels that money is driving force

Subtheme: Factors that influence overall perception of CSR

Finnish brands and companies most sustainable

Small companies are most sustainable

Business model

Media coverage

RQ 2: How do consumers perceive the food delivery companies in terms of total CSR communication?

Theme: FDPI CSR communication awareness

Subtheme: Creation of CSR image

Conversation with friends

Conversations with others

Concerns about couriers due to media news about Wolt

Has seen media news about Wolt, not about

Foodora

Image of FDPI comes from social media

Media is generally a place to find information about companies

Subtheme: Awareness of FDPI CSR

communication

FDPI CSR not considered

before

Has not looked for information about FDPI CSR

Uncertainty whether FDPI companies have websites

No exposure to FDPI CSR

communication

No intention to look for information about FDPI

CSR

Does not feel that it's good if has to go to company's website to find information about CSR

Theme: CSR communication importance to consumers regarding FDPI

Subtheme: Interest to hear about CSR

Would like to hear more about CSR

Interest to hear about CSR from couriers

Hope to be able to find information on website about responsibility

Subtheme: CSR communication expectations

Expectation to find information about CSR on websites

Expectation that competitive advantage influences CSR communication

Expectation that companies communicate CSR if they are responsible

Not expected to share negative information

Expected to share accurate information about CSR

Subtheme: Lack of trust to companies' own CSR communication

CSR communication from companies is greenwashing

Highlight only easiest CSR aspects

Not transparent enough

Business model influences trust, profit maximization

Theme: The power of media over consumer CSR perception

Subtheme: Media is a trusted source of CSR information

Easiest to trust third party information, not companies

Media's responsibility to inform about companies' negative aspects

Media is trusted to give correct information

Subtheme: Media influence on companies' CSR

Increased media pressure can improve CSR

Increased consumer knowledge can improve CSR

Subtheme: Responses to media improve perception of CSR

Responses to media not fully trusted

Responses influence company image, indicates caring

Responses to media critic seen as necessary to not seem suspicious
generic responses increase scepticism

visible changes based on media critique are a positive thing

RQ 3: How can food delivery platform companies support a positive CSR perception with their CSR communication to consumers?

Theme: What consumers want from FDPI CSR

Subtheme: CSR improvements mainly relate to couriers

Hope for better consideration of courier wellness

Preference to not have gig-contract

Fair pay to couriers

Better contracts to couriers

Ability to give money straight to couriers

More ecological packaging

Theme: what consumers want from CSR communication

Subtheme: channels for CSR communication to increase awareness

Social media

Media

Website

Application

Flexibility between channels based on issue

Easy exposure to communication hoped

Communication from couriers

Subtheme: Preferred CSR message content to increase trust

Proactive communication

Transparent and factual information

Statistics and data

Information about negative aspects

Courier stories

Subtheme: Couriers in key role to communicate to consumers

Courier stories hoped for

Articles about couriers in media influence FDPI image positively

Interest to know about courier experiences