

Social Media as a Communication Platform for Sustainability Reporting Enterprises

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Abstract

This research aims to identify and analyze the role of social media as a means of communication in the sustainability reporting practices Enterprises. The study seeks to understand how social media platforms are utilized to disseminate sustainability information, engage stakeholders, and enhance transparency and accountability in corporate reporting. A systematic literature review method is employed, focusing on peer-reviewed articles and academic publications from Scopus and Google Scholar. The study analyzes themes such as the effectiveness of social media as a disclosure tool, stakeholder engagement, and the quality and transparency of sustainability information shared on these platforms. Articles are selected based on inclusion criteria, including relevance to social media and sustainability reporting, and publication within the last decade. The findings reveal that social media serves as a vital tool for real-time communication and interactive engagement, enhancing the visibility and accessibility of sustainability reports. It facilitates two-way communication, allowing SOEs to build stronger relationships with stakeholders while addressing concerns and gathering feedback. Additionally, the integration of multimedia elements on social media enhances the clarity and impact of sustainability messages. However, challenges such as information credibility and the risk of misinformation require careful management. The study highlights the need for a strategic approach to social media communication to maximize its potential in promoting sustainability and building stakeholder trust.

Keywords: social media, sustainability report

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability reporting for state-owned enterprises (SOEs) is significant, as it serves as a crucial mechanism for transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement. Sustainability reports provide stakeholders, including government entities, investors, and the public, with insights into an enterprise's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices. This transparency is essential for building trust and credibility, particularly for SOEs, which are often seen as extensions of government policy and public interest. Kaur and Lodhia emphasize that stakeholder engagement is integral to the sustainability accounting and reporting process, allowing organizations to measure and communicate their sustainability performance in alignment with stakeholder aspirations (Kaur & Lodhia, 2019). This engagement is particularly vital for SOEs, as their operations directly impact public welfare and environmental sustainability.

Moreover, the governance structure of SOEs plays a significant role in shaping the quality and extent of sustainability disclosures. Research indicates that effective corporate governance mechanisms, such as the involvement of a well-structured board of directors, enhance the quality of sustainability reporting (Önder & Baimurzin, 2020). The board's commitment to ethical operations and sustainability practices can lead to improved corporate performance and greater accountability in reporting practices (Masud et al., 2018). This is particularly relevant in the context of SOEs, where governance structures often reflect broader societal values and expectations regarding sustainability.

Studies have shown that companies that prioritize sustainability reporting tend to exhibit better financial performance, as they are more likely to attract investment and enhance their reputation (Masila et al., 2024). This is especially pertinent for SOEs, which are often scrutinized for their financial efficiency and social contributions. By adopting comprehensive sustainability reporting practices, SOEs can demonstrate their commitment to sustainable development goals (SDGs) and enhance their operational effectiveness (Martínez-Ferrero & García-Meca, 2020). Furthermore, effective sustainability reporting can serve as a strategic tool for SOEs to align their objectives with national and global sustainability agendas, thereby reinforcing their role as responsible public entities.

Sustainability reporting is of paramount importance for state-owned enterprises as it fosters transparency, enhances governance, and contributes to improved organizational performance. By engaging stakeholders and adhering to robust governance frameworks, SOEs can effectively communicate their sustainability efforts and align their operations with broader societal goals. This not only bolsters public trust but also positions SOEs as leaders in the pursuit of sustainable development.

As the global landscape shifts towards greater accountability and transparency, SOEs are under pressure to effectively communicate their sustainability initiatives to a diverse range of stakeholders. Social media platforms provide a unique opportunity for these enterprises to engage with their audiences in real-time, fostering a dialogue that can enhance the credibility and impact of their sustainability reports. Baran highlights that the dynamic nature of social media allows for the promotion of cooperation and collective action, which is essential for the success of sustainability communication strategies (Baran, 2023). This interactive environment not only facilitates the dissemination of information but also encourages stakeholder participation, which is crucial for building trust and legitimacy.

Moreover, the integration of social media into sustainability reporting practices enables SOEs to reach a broader audience and tailor their messages to specific stakeholder groups. Manetti and Bellucci argue that social media has become one of the primary channels through which organizations communicate their sustainability efforts, allowing for enhanced stakeholder engagement (Manetti & Bellucci, 2016). This engagement is particularly important for SOEs, as they often operate in sectors that directly affect public welfare and environmental sustainability. By utilizing social media, these enterprises can effectively convey their sustainability goals, achievements, and challenges, thereby fostering a sense of accountability among stakeholders. Furthermore, the dialogic nature of social media communication allows for two-way interactions, enabling stakeholders to voice their opinions and concerns, which can lead to improved sustainability practices (Bellucci & Manetti, 2017).

The potential of social media to enhance the visibility and impact of sustainability reporting is further supported by the findings of Elalfy et al., who emphasize that social media platforms enrich communication by allowing stakeholders to participate in the dialogue surrounding corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives (Elalfy et al., 2020). This participatory approach not only enhances public perception of an organization's sustainability performance but also encourages SOEs to be more responsive to stakeholder feedback. Additionally, the use of social media can help SOEs to align their sustainability reporting with global sustainability goals, as it provides a platform for sharing best practices and collaborating with other organizations. However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of social media in this context can vary based on how organizations implement their communication strategies (Shen et al., 2024).

Social media serves as a vital communication platform for state-owned enterprises to enhance their sustainability reporting. By leveraging the interactive and participatory nature of social media, enterprises can effectively engage with stakeholders, improve transparency, and foster a culture of accountability. As the importance of sustainability communication continues to grow, the strategic use of social media will be essential for firms to navigate the complexities of stakeholder expectations and contribute to sustainable development. The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the role of social media as a means of communication in the sustainability reporting practices of enterprises. This study aims to explore how social media platforms are utilized to disseminate sustainability information, engage stakeholders, and enhance transparency in corporate reporting.

Sustainability Report

Sustainability reporting has emerged as a critical practice for organizations seeking to communicate their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance to stakeholders. Defined broadly, sustainability reports serve as comprehensive documents that disclose an organization's impacts on sustainable development, encompassing economic, environmental, and social dimensions (Amoako et al., 2017). This multifaceted approach to reporting allows organizations to convey their commitment to sustainable practices and their contributions toward achieving broader societal goals, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Wahyuningrum et al., 2022). As such, sustainability reports not only provide transparency but also serve as tools for stakeholder engagement and accountability. The evolution of sustainability reporting has been influenced by various frameworks and standards, most notably the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), which has played a pivotal role in standardizing reporting practices across different sectors (Marimon et al., 2012). The GRI framework emphasizes the importance of materiality, stakeholder inclusiveness, and sustainability context, guiding organizations in identifying and reporting on the most relevant issues to their stakeholders (Adams et al., 2022). This structured approach enhances the credibility and comparability of sustainability reports, allowing stakeholders to assess an organization's performance against established benchmarks. Furthermore, the adoption of such standards has been linked to improved reporting quality and organizational practices, as firms increasingly recognize the value of transparent communication in building trust with stakeholders (Burritt & Schaltegger, 2010).

Research indicates that the motivations behind sustainability reporting can vary significantly among organizations. For some, the primary driver may be compliance with regulatory requirements or industry standards, while for others, it may stem from a genuine commitment to sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Farooq et al., 2018). Legitimacy theory suggests that organizations may engage in sustainability reporting to maintain or enhance their legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders, particularly when facing scrutiny or criticism (Farooq et al., 2018). This perspective highlights the strategic nature of sustainability reporting, as organizations seek to align their reported practices with stakeholder expectations and societal norms. Moreover, the quality of sustainability reports can significantly impact stakeholder perceptions and organizational reputation. Studies have shown that organizations that produce high-quality sustainability reports tend to experience better financial performance and enhanced stakeholder relationships (Kowsana & Muraleethran, 2021). Conversely, poor-quality reports may lead to skepticism and distrust among stakeholders, undermining the organization's credibility (Calabrese et al., 2020). Therefore, the emphasis on report completeness, accuracy, and relevance is paramount in ensuring that sustainability reporting serves its intended purpose of fostering transparency and accountability (Coster et al., 2020).

Social Media Disclosure

Social media disclosure as part of corporate sustainability reporting represents a transformative approach for organizations to communicate their sustainability efforts and engage with stakeholders. This form of disclosure utilizes various social media platforms to share information about corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, sustainability goals, and performance metrics. The integration of social media into sustainability reporting enhances transparency and fosters a more interactive dialogue between corporations and their stakeholders, including customers, investors, and the community at large (Alsehani et al., 2023).

The relevance of social media in corporate sustainability reporting can be attributed to its ability to reach a broader audience and facilitate real-time engagement. Organizations leverage social media to disseminate sustainability-related content, which can significantly influence consumer behavior and perceptions (Saeed et al., 2019). For instance, studies have shown that effective communication of sustainability efforts on social media can enhance customer trust and encourage sustainable purchasing behaviors. Furthermore, social media platforms allow companies to showcase their commitment to sustainability through storytelling, thereby humanizing their brand and making their sustainability efforts more relatable to the public (Lodhia et al., 2020; Tan & Trang, 2023).

Moreover, social media disclosure serves as a tool for impression management, where companies strategically curate their sustainability narratives to project a positive image (Caliskan & Esen, 2018). This approach not only helps in building a favorable corporate reputation but also aligns with the growing expectations of stakeholders for accountability and transparency in corporate practices (Amran et al., 2015) (Amran et al., 2013). By actively engaging with stakeholders on social media, companies can gather feedback, address concerns, and adapt their sustainability strategies accordingly, thus fostering a collaborative environment (Jha & Verma, 2023).

In addition to enhancing stakeholder engagement, social media disclosure can also complement traditional sustainability reports. Research indicates that while conventional sustainability reports provide comprehensive insights into a company's sustainability performance, social media allows for more dynamic and frequent updates (Reilly & Larya, 2018; Zhong & Wang, 2023). This dual approach ensures that stakeholders receive timely information, thereby improving their understanding of the company's sustainability initiatives and performance (Al-Sartawi & Hamdan, 2019). Ultimately, the integration of social media into sustainability reporting not only enriches the communication process but also aligns corporate practices with the principles of sustainability and stakeholder engagement.

METHODS

This study employs a systematic literature review method to examine the role of social media in sustainability reporting by State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange. The review focuses on peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, and other academic publications from reputable databases, primarily Scopus and Google Scholar. The research method involves the following steps:

1. Database Selection: Scopus and Google Scholar are chosen for their extensive coverage of high-quality academic literature across various disciplines.
2. Search Strategy: Keywords such as "social media," "sustainability reporting," "corporate disclosure," "stakeholder engagement," and "State-Owned Enterprises" are used, along with Boolean operators (e.g., AND, OR) to refine searches.
3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: Inclusion: Publications from 2013 onwards, written in English, focusing on the role of social media in corporate sustainability reporting.
4. Exclusion: Non-academic sources, articles unrelated to social media or sustainability reporting, and studies outside the scope of SOEs or emerging markets.
5. Data Extraction and Analysis: Relevant articles are reviewed to extract data on key themes, such as:
 - a. Effectiveness of social media as a disclosure tool.
 - b. Stakeholder engagement and interaction through social media platforms.
 - c. The quality, transparency, and impact of sustainability information shared via social media.
6. Synthesis of Findings: The extracted data is analyzed to identify trends, recurring themes, gaps in the existing literature, and potential directions for future research.

This method ensures a comprehensive understanding of the topic by integrating insights from a wide range of high-quality academic sources, providing a robust foundation for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of social media as a disclosure tool

One of the primary advantages of social media as a disclosure tool is its ability to facilitate timely and relevant communication. Lardo et al. emphasize that the emergence of social media has transformed the landscape of information disclosure, allowing companies to share updates and engage with stakeholders in real-time (Lardo et al., 2017). This immediacy is particularly beneficial in crisis situations, where timely communication can mitigate negative perceptions and enhance corporate reputation. For instance, Jung et al. found that firms strategically use social media to manage market reactions during product recalls, demonstrating the platform's potential to influence stakeholder perceptions positively (Jung et al., 2017). This highlights the role of social media not only as a medium for disclosure but also as a strategic tool for managing corporate image.

Moreover, social media enhances stakeholder engagement by providing a platform for dialogue and interaction. Hameed et al. discuss how social media fosters social capital among users, suggesting that organizations can leverage these platforms to build relationships with stakeholders through meaningful interactions (Hameed et al., 2021). This engagement is crucial for sustainability reporting, as it allows companies to gather feedback, address concerns, and adapt their strategies based on stakeholder input. The interactive nature of social media encourages a two-way communication flow, which is essential for fostering trust and accountability in sustainability practices.

In addition to enhancing engagement, social media can also improve the quality of sustainability disclosures. The importance of presentation format in corporate disclosures, noting that social media allows for more engaging and understandable content (Basuony et al., 2020). This is particularly relevant for sustainability reporting, where complex information needs to be communicated effectively to diverse audiences. The use of multimedia elements, such as videos and infographics, can enhance the clarity and impact of sustainability messages, making them more accessible to stakeholders.

However, the effectiveness of social media as a disclosure tool is not without challenges. The quality and credibility of information shared on social media can vary significantly, raising concerns about misinformation and superficial disclosures. The disclosure of sustainability information can influence public trust and corporate value, emphasizing the need for high-quality, reliable content (Tangke et al., 2022). Organizations must be mindful of the potential pitfalls of social media, including the risk of losing control over the narrative if negative information spreads uncontrollably (Jung et al., 2017). This necessitates a strategic approach to social media disclosure, where companies carefully curate their messages and actively manage stakeholder interactions.

Social media serves as an effective disclosure tool for corporate sustainability reporting, offering numerous benefits such as real-time communication, enhanced stakeholder engagement, and improved content presentation. However, organizations must navigate the challenges associated with information credibility and narrative control to maximize the effectiveness of their social media disclosures. Future research should explore

best practices for leveraging social media in sustainability reporting, ensuring that organizations can effectively communicate their sustainability efforts while building trust and accountability with stakeholders.

Stakeholder engagement and interaction through social media platforms

One of the primary advantages of using social media for stakeholder engagement is the ability to establish two-way communication channels. According to Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook enable organizations to interact directly with their stakeholders, allowing for real-time feedback and dialogue (Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2016). This interactive nature of social media not only enhances transparency but also empowers stakeholders by giving them a voice in the conversation. Similarly, Ponte et al. emphasize that social media facilitates greater stakeholder engagement by allowing organizations to create a dialogic communication environment, where stakeholders can actively participate in discussions and contribute to the narrative surrounding corporate initiatives (Ponte et al., 2015). This shift from one-way communication to a more collaborative approach is essential for building trust and fostering long-term relationships with stakeholders.

Moreover, the effectiveness of social media as a tool for stakeholder engagement is underscored by its ability to reach diverse audiences. Duoje and Liu highlight that platforms like Facebook are particularly effective in engaging various stakeholder groups, including community members, media, and government entities (Duoje & Liu, 2023). This broad reach is crucial for organizations aiming to secure their social license to operate (SLO) and meet environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria. By leveraging social media, organizations can tailor their messages to resonate with different stakeholder segments, thereby enhancing engagement and fostering a sense of community.

Furthermore, the content shared on social media plays a crucial role in facilitating stakeholder engagement. Shan et al. argue that organizations must customize their content to align with the unique characteristics of each social media platform, ensuring that the information is relevant and engaging for their audience (Shan et al., 2015). This customization enhances the likelihood of stakeholder interaction and participation, ultimately leading to more meaningful engagement. Additionally, Momin et al. highlight the significance of emotional considerations in social media communication, suggesting that organizations should be mindful of the emotional tone of their messages to foster stronger connections with stakeholders (Momin et al., 2022).

Stakeholder engagement through social media platforms offers organizations a powerful means to enhance communication, build relationships, and foster collaboration with their stakeholders. The two-way communication facilitated by social media, coupled with its ability to reach diverse audiences, positions it as an essential tool for modern stakeholder engagement strategies. However, organizations must navigate the challenges associated with managing stakeholder expectations and crafting relevant content to maximize the effectiveness of their social media interactions. Future research should continue to explore best practices for leveraging social media in stakeholder engagement, ensuring that organizations can effectively harness its potential to foster meaningful connections.

The quality, transparency, and impact of sustainability information shared via social media

The quality of sustainability information shared on social media is a significant determinant of stakeholder trust and engagement. The consumers are often skeptical of corporate sustainability claims, particularly in the context of greenwashing (Knight et al., 2021). However, when organizations are perceived as trustworthy and knowledgeable, stakeholders are more likely to engage with and share sustainability messages. This suggests that the credibility of the source plays a crucial role in determining how sustainability information is received and acted upon by the audience. The users with higher social media self-efficacy are more likely to trust information shared by credible sources, highlighting the importance of quality in fostering trust and engagement (Hocevar et al., 2014). Therefore, organizations must prioritize the accuracy and reliability of the sustainability information they disseminate on social media to enhance stakeholder confidence.

Transparency in sustainability disclosures is another critical aspect that influences stakeholder perceptions. Social media serves as a platform for various stakeholders, including consumers, organizations, and policymakers, to engage in discussions about sustainable practices (Jabeen & Gul, 2023). This transparency not only allows organizations to showcase their sustainability efforts but also enables stakeholders to hold them accountable for their claims. The interactive nature of social media facilitates a dialogic communication environment, where stakeholders can ask questions, provide feedback, and engage in discussions about sustainability initiatives. This two-way communication fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility, ultimately enhancing the organization's reputation and stakeholder trust.

The impact of sustainability information shared via social media extends beyond immediate stakeholder engagement; it also influences broader societal perceptions of sustainability issues. Barrera-Verdugo and Villarreal argue that social media platforms have become vital spaces for the co-construction of values related to sustainability, where diverse voices contribute to the discourse (Barrera-Verdugo & Villarreal, 2021). This democratization of information allows for a more inclusive conversation about sustainability, enabling organizations to reach and engage with a wider audience. Additionally, Yıldırım's research on green influencers indicates that social media influencers can significantly shape sustainable consumption patterns among their

followers, demonstrating the potential of social media to drive behavioral change (Uğuz et al., 2022). This underscores the importance of leveraging social media as a tool for promoting sustainability and influencing public attitudes toward environmental responsibility.

The quality, transparency, and impact of sustainability information shared via social media are interrelated dimensions that significantly influence stakeholder engagement and corporate reputation. Organizations must prioritize the accuracy and credibility of their sustainability communications while fostering transparency and dialogue with stakeholders. By doing so, they can enhance trust, drive engagement, and contribute to a more informed and responsible discourse on sustainability issues. Future research should continue to explore best practices for leveraging social media in sustainability communications, ensuring that organizations can effectively navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by these platforms.

CONCLUSION

The literature review on the role of social media in corporate sustainability reporting reveals a multifaceted landscape characterized by the effectiveness of social media as a disclosure tool, the dynamics of stakeholder engagement, and the quality, transparency, and impact of sustainability information shared via these platforms. Firstly, the effectiveness of social media as a disclosure tool is underscored by its ability to facilitate real-time communication and foster two-way interactions between organizations and stakeholders. Studies indicate that organizations can strategically utilize social media to manage their reputations, particularly during crises, by disseminating timely and credible information. This immediacy not only enhances transparency but also empowers stakeholders to engage actively in discussions surrounding corporate sustainability initiatives. The interactive nature of social media allows for a more collaborative approach to communication, which is essential for building trust and fostering long-term relationships with stakeholders. Secondly, stakeholder engagement through social media platforms is enhanced by the ability to reach diverse audiences and create dialogic communication environments. The literature emphasizes that organizations can leverage social media to engage various stakeholder groups, including consumers, investors, and regulatory bodies. However, challenges such as managing stakeholder expectations and addressing misinformation must be navigated carefully. The content shared on social media plays a crucial role in facilitating engagement, necessitating organizations to customize their messages to resonate with different audiences and encourage meaningful interactions.

Lastly, the quality, transparency, and impact of sustainability information shared via social media are critical dimensions that influence stakeholder perceptions and corporate reputation. High-quality, credible information fosters trust and engagement, while transparency in disclosures enables stakeholders to hold organizations accountable for their sustainability claims. The democratization of information through social media platforms allows for a more inclusive conversation about sustainability, ultimately driving behavioral change and influencing public attitudes toward environmental responsibility. However, the inconsistency in the quality of information shared poses challenges that organizations must address to maintain credibility and trust.

Overall, the integration of social media into corporate sustainability reporting presents both opportunities and challenges for organizations. By prioritizing the quality and transparency of their sustainability communications and fostering genuine stakeholder engagement, organizations can effectively leverage social media to enhance their sustainability efforts and build stronger relationships with their stakeholders. Future research should continue to explore best practices for utilizing social media in sustainability reporting, ensuring that organizations can navigate the complexities of these platforms while maximizing their potential for positive impact.

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