

Lost in Communication: The Case of Austrian CSR Communication

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Abstract

CSR can positively affect brand image, corporate reputation, brand preference, purchase intention and word of mouth, but how do respondents process the CSR information. Not enough attention has been paid to the source of media during the CSR communication process.

In this poster a theoretical model is presented that assumes that there is a direct link between the attitude toward the ad and the attitude toward the brand. In addition this link is moderated by media and tested under two different conditions. A 2 x 2 experimental design was the base for a non-student sample questionnaire.

The results show an effect of the media independently form the selected sector.

Theoretical basis and model

„Corporate social responsibility is a commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources.” (Kotler / Lee 2008, p. 3)

The following theoretical model is based on ideas of two existing models (Carroll 1991, p. 42; Hansen / Schrader 2005, p. 377) Two moderators are assumed to influence the effect from ad to brand. The first moderator is the type of communication which is ad vs. advertorial. The second type is the CSR reference. That is a partnership between a non-profit organisation and a for profit organisation communicated via a logo. In Figure 1 the model is presented.

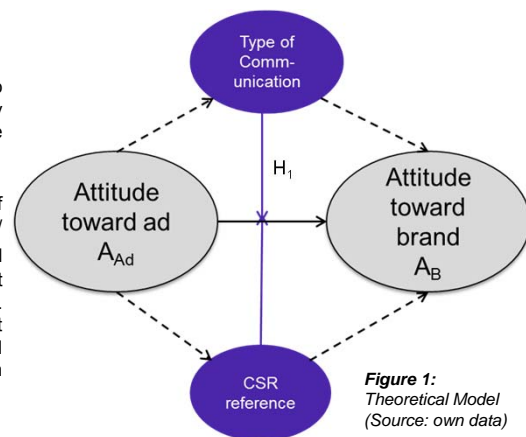


Figure 1:
Theoretical Model
(Source: own data)

Hypothesis and method

It is assumed that with the help of the theory of attitudes changes in a person's attitude can be directly traced back to information presented in communication (Kroeber-Riel et al. 2009).

Hypothesis 1: The influence of the brand on the CSR partnership is moderated by the type of communication.

The findings of Du et al. (2010) of different effects in different media are supported by results found by Mayerhofer et al. (2008) reporting differences in awareness of CSR dispatches in several media and the credibility of those media. Due to two preliminary studies the selected research objects are the retail sector and

the private banking sector in Austria. The varied media is advertisement and advertorial. To test this hypothesis a 2 x 2 experimental between subject design (see Figure 2) was conducted. The four different groups were randomly accessed. The respondents saw different test material. The sample consists of 480 Austrian non-students (50 % females, median age = 41 years, median net income = up to € 2,500).



Figure 2:
Experimental design
(Source: own data)

Figure 3 shows an example of study material for the Austrian retailer Hofer.



Figure 3:
(Test material, adapted from original)

Results H1

A scale of Austrian school marks (1=best to 5=worst) measured the attitude toward the ad. The attitude toward the brand was measured with 15 items (6-point scales, 1= very unlikely to 6= very likely) based on Mitchell 1986; MacKenzie, Lutz, Blech 1986) which combined into three different brand factors (emotional, cognitive, CSR) by factor analysis ($\alpha \geq .85$).

A linear regression was conducted. In the case of the retail sector Hofer and Spar show an effect from the overall assessment of the communication via the advertorial. The same effect can be reported from the private banking sector. The media advertorial explains more than 10 % of the variance. For detailed numbers see Table 1.

| | | Advertisement | Advertoria l | R ² _{adjusted} | B | p | n |
|--------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|
| Retail | Hofer | ✗ | ✓ | 0.222 | 1.346 | 0.000 | 107 |
| | Spar | ✗ | ✓ | 0.148 | 1.194 | 0.000 | 92 |
| Bank | Bank Austria | ✗ | ✓ | 0.100 | 0.740 | 0.001 | 106 |
| | Raiffeisen Bank | ✗ | ✓ | 0.194 | 1.233 | 0.000 | 111 |

Table 1:
Results H1 (Source: own data)

Conclusion

Hypothesis 1 can be confirmed as the results of the regression analysis show. The media advertorial influences effect from attitude toward the ad to the attitude toward the brand. The results of all tested groups indicate a significant influence of the advertorial.

It seems that the advertorial is seen more credible by the consumers as it provides much more information than an advertisement. To attract potential readers of magazines or newspapers balancing information and layout of the advertorial is crucial.

The findings are limited to Austrian consumers and the two mentioned sectors of the experimental design.

Literature

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