

Corporate Communication and the Promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives: Evidence from the Communications Authority of Kenya

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Abstract: This study examined the role of corporate communication in promoting Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives at the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA). The study drew on Framing Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Reputational Management Theory. A mixed-methods descriptive research design was adopted. The target population comprised 369 CA staff, from which a sample of 79 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula. The study used proportionate stratified random sampling for quantitative respondents, while purposive sampling was used to select key informants. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Quantitative data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. A total of 72 questionnaires were returned, representing a 91.1% response rate. The findings showed that respondents generally understood the Authority's CSR activities and received regular communication about its initiatives. CSR communication was also perceived to enhance the Authority's credibility and stakeholder involvement in CSR planning. The findings further revealed positive relationships between corporate communication practices and CSR-related outcomes. Strategic CSR communication content had the strongest influence, while stakeholder engagement also made a significant contribution. The study concluded that effective corporate communication promotes CSR by enhancing stakeholder awareness, participation, credibility and positive perceptions. The study recommended strengthening clear, consistent and transparent CSR communication, increasing stakeholder participation, improving communication content, integrating digital and traditional channels, and continuously monitoring and evaluating CSR communication effectiveness.

Keywords: Corporate communication, Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR communication, stakeholder engagement, stakeholder awareness, Communications Authority of Kenya.

1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate communication has increasingly become a strategic organizational function through which institutions communicate their identity, values, activities and responsibilities to internal and external stakeholders. The growing complexity of organizations, changing stakeholder expectations and expansion of digital communication have increased the importance of strategic communication in fostering stakeholder engagement, accountability and organizational legitimacy. Cornelissen (2023) observes that corporate communication contributes to shaping organizational reputation, promoting ethical and sustainable practices, and aligning institutional identity with stakeholder expectations. Within this context, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved beyond philanthropy to become an important component of

organizational communication through which institutions demonstrate their social, environmental and economic responsibilities. The effectiveness of CSR initiatives therefore depends not only on their implementation but also on how they are framed, communicated and understood by stakeholders.

Effective communication is particularly important in promoting CSR initiatives because it can increase stakeholder awareness, participation, trust and acceptance of organizational programmes. Ajayi and Mmutle (2021) found that transparent corporate communication strengthens accountability and stakeholder trust, while Araújo, Pereira and Santos (2023) established that strategically communicated CSR initiatives contribute to positive organizational perceptions and stakeholder engagement. Similarly, Singh and Misra (2021) and Battisti et al. (2023) demonstrate the importance of communication platforms such as sustainability reports, press releases, social media and corporate websites in communicating organizational responsibility and strengthening credibility. These studies suggest that CSR initiatives are more likely to achieve stakeholder recognition and support when communication is clear, transparent and strategically coordinated.

Within the African context, however, organizations continue to experience challenges in strategically communicating their CSR activities. Ajayi and Mmutle (2021), in South Africa, found that online corporate communication tools, including websites, social media and CSR reports, significantly influence corporate reputation and stakeholder engagement. In Ghana, Bimpong and David (2024) reported that transparent and consistent CSR communication strengthens stakeholder relationships and organizational credibility. In Rwanda, Nahimana (2024) similarly found that effective CSR communication enhances stakeholder trust and loyalty, particularly where CSR initiatives correspond with stakeholder expectations and community values. These findings demonstrate that communication is not merely a means of publicizing CSR activities but an important mechanism for creating awareness, building credibility and encouraging stakeholder participation.

Evidence from Kenya also demonstrates the importance of communication in the promotion of CSR initiatives. Mogambi (2025) reported that weak communication strategies contributed to limited awareness of CSR initiatives among beneficiary groups and recommended targeted awareness campaigns and consistent feedback mechanisms. Kemunto and Mugambi (2015) similarly established that effective project communication significantly predicts CSR project performance, particularly where communication is personalized to different stakeholder groups. Mbithe et al. (2024), in Kenyan private universities, further demonstrated that interactive CSR communication through platforms such as Instagram fosters community engagement and strengthens stakeholder trust. Their findings indicate that transparent messaging and two-way communication can improve CSR effectiveness and stakeholder collaboration.

The relevance of corporate communication is particularly significant within public regulatory institutions, where CSR initiatives are implemented alongside expectations of transparency, accountability and public service. The Communications Authority of Kenya (CA), established under the Kenya Information and Communications Act (1998), undertakes CSR activities in areas including ICT uptake, education, community relations, disaster mitigation and sports. Its initiatives include provision of ICT tools to institutions for persons with disabilities, support for youth talent through Talanta Football Club, and consumer awareness campaigns such as “Chukua Hatua” and “Kaa Macho.” The Authority also promotes online child safety and digital literacy through initiatives such as “Be the COP” and “Huwezi Tucheza Tuko” Cyber Smart. These activities demonstrate the importance of communicating CSR initiatives to diverse stakeholders in order to enhance awareness, participation and understanding of the Authority's social responsibilities.

Despite the growing recognition of communication as a critical component of CSR, the communication of CSR initiatives within Kenyan public institutions remains fragmented and inconsistently integrated. Existing evidence indicates that CSR communication in public institutions may rely excessively on traditional media, lack strategic coordination and fail to adequately engage stakeholders, thereby limiting awareness and the perceived impact of CSR activities (Mbithe et al., 2024). At the Communications Authority of Kenya, the study background identifies a disconnect between CSR implementation and strategic corporate communication, creating a need to understand how communication can more effectively support the promotion of CSR initiatives.

Although previous studies have established that effective CSR communication enhances awareness, stakeholder participation, credibility and trust, much of the existing research has focused on private-sector organizations, with limited empirical attention to public regulatory institutions. The literature therefore provides insufficient context-specific evidence on how corporate communication promotes CSR initiatives within regulatory institutions in Kenya and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The present study addresses this gap by examining the role of corporate communication in promoting CSR initiatives at the Communications Authority of Kenya. Specifically, the study focuses on how communication practices facilitate stakeholder awareness, engagement, participation and positive perceptions of CSR initiatives.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviewed the theoretical and empirical literature

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was grounded on three theoretical frameworks: Framing Theory, Stakeholder Theory and Reputational Management Theory

Framing Theory, developed by Goffman (1974) and refined by Entman (1993), explains how communicators select and emphasize information to shape how audiences interpret organizational activities. In this study, the theory explains how the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) uses corporate communication to present and promote its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. By framing CSR as community empowerment, ethical responsibility, innovation, or sustainable development, CA can influence how stakeholders understand and value its initiatives. Effective and consistent framing can strengthen CSR visibility, credibility, and stakeholder trust (Cornelissen, 2023). The theory is therefore relevant to examining how CA's communication approaches influence the promotion and public understanding of its CSR initiatives.

Stakeholder Theory, proposed by Freeman (1984), emphasizes the importance of managing relationships with groups that affect or are affected by an organization. In this study, the theory explains how CA communicates its CSR initiatives to stakeholders, including government, consumers, industry players, employees, and communities. Corporate communication provides a mechanism demonstrates institutional accountability. Effective stakeholder communication can therefore strengthen trust, legitimacy, and support for CSR initiatives. The theory is relevant to the study because it links corporate communication with stakeholder engagement and the effective promotion of CSR initiatives at CA.

Reputational Management Theory, associated with Fombrun (1996), views organizational reputation as stakeholders' collective assessment of an institution's actions and performance. In this study, the theory explains how CA uses corporate communication to promote CSR initiatives and build a positive institutional reputation. Clear, transparent, and consistent communication of CSR activities can demonstrate CA's social responsibility, accountability, and contribution to national development, thereby strengthening stakeholder confidence and institutional visibility. The theory is therefore relevant because it explains how effective corporate communication of CSR initiatives can enhance CA's reputation and reinforce its public image.

2.2 Empirical Review

Empirical evidence demonstrates that corporate communication significantly influences the promotion and effectiveness of CSR initiatives. Salman and Ishak (2023) examined CSR communication and stakeholder engagement in modern business contexts and found that limited CSR knowledge, inadequate communication skills, and public skepticism weaken CSR implementation. Their findings highlight that effective communication strategies are essential to overcome stakeholder doubt and increase participation in CSR programs.

Similarly, Bonuedi et al. (2020), in a qualitative study of firms in Ghana, found that CSR reporting plays a critical role in correcting negative stakeholder perceptions and reinforcing credibility. Their research emphasized that structured and transparent communication strengthens stakeholder confidence in CSR initiatives. In Rwanda, Nahimana (2024) observed that effective CSR communication enhances stakeholder trust and loyalty, particularly when initiatives align with stakeholder expectations and community values.

In Kenya, Mogambi (2025) reported limited awareness of CSR initiatives among beneficiary groups due to weak communication strategies. The study recommended targeted awareness campaigns and consistent feedback mechanisms to improve stakeholder understanding of CSR projects. Likewise, Kemunto and Mugambi (2015) found that effective project communication significantly predicts CSR project performance, noting that personalized communication tailored to different stakeholder groups enhances participation and project sustainability.

Further, Mbithe et al. (2024), in their study of Kenyan private universities, showed that interactive CSR communication through platforms such as Instagram fosters community engagement and strengthens stakeholder trust. Transparent messaging and two-way engagement were shown to enhance CSR effectiveness and stakeholder collaboration.

Collectively, these studies confirm that corporate communication is central to promoting CSR initiatives by increasing awareness, enhancing stakeholder participation, and reinforcing trust. However, most studies focus on private-sector institutions, leaving regulatory and public-sector organizations comparatively underexplored.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section presents the procedures used to collect, process, and analyse data for the study

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods descriptive research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The design examined how corporate communication promoted Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and enhanced brand visibility at the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA).

3.2 Study Population and Sample Size

The study population comprised 369 CA staff, including Corporate Communication staff, senior managers and policy-level decision-makers, and other staff involved in CSR-related functions. Using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 10% margin of error, the study obtained a sample of 79 respondents and distributed it proportionately across the strata.

3.3 Sampling Technique

Proportionate stratified random sampling was used for quantitative respondents, while purposive sampling selected key informants with relevant knowledge of corporate communication and CSR practices.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The documents reviewed included CA CSR reports, communication plans, newsletters and press releases covering 2018–2024.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 or above considered acceptable.

3.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS Version 27. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were used for descriptive analysis, while Pearson correlation and multiple regression assessed relationships between the study variables. Qualitative data were analysed thematically.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the field findings on Corporate Communication and the Promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives: Evidence from the Communications Authority of Kenya

Response Rate

Table 1: Response Rate

Response	frequency	Percent
Return questionnaires	72	91.1%
Unreturned questionnaires	7	8.9%
Total	90	100%

Out of the 90 questionnaires administered, 72 were returned, representing 80%, while 18 questionnaires were not returned, representing 20%. The overall response rate was therefore 80%, based on the total 90 questionnaires administered.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: CSR Communication tools and channels

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The organization uses appropriate communication channels to share its CSR activities.	72	1.00	5.00	4.0000	.90383
The organization's communication channels strengthen my trust in its brand.	72	1.00	5.00	3.9722	.85534
Social media platforms effectively communicate the organization's CSR efforts.	72	1.00	5.00	3.9306	.98333
I regularly receive CSR information through the organization's communication platforms.	72	1.00	5.00	3.7639	1.08112
Valid N (listwise)	72				

Table 2 shows that respondents generally held positive perceptions regarding stakeholder engagement in the Communications Authority of Kenya's CSR initiatives, as all the statements recorded mean scores above the benchmark of 2.5. The highest mean score was recorded for the statement, *"I clearly understand the organization's CSR activities"* (M = 4.10, SD = 0.94), indicating that respondents were well informed about the Authority's CSR programmes. Similarly, respondents agreed that the Authority's CSR efforts enhanced its credibility (M = 3.96, SD = 0.94) and that they regularly received communication concerning CSR initiatives (M = 3.88, SD = 1.07). These findings suggest that the Authority has established effective communication mechanisms that create awareness and strengthen stakeholder confidence in its CSR programmes.

The findings further indicate that respondents agreed that the organization engages stakeholders during the planning of CSR initiatives (M = 3.71, SD = 1.16) and values stakeholder participation in CSR activities (M = 3.43, SD = 1.21). Although these two statements recorded comparatively lower mean scores, they remained above the agreement threshold, indicating generally positive perceptions of stakeholder involvement. The relatively low standard deviation values across all statements suggest that respondents expressed reasonably consistent views regarding stakeholder engagement.

Diagnostic Results

Regression Analysis

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Correlations						
		Brand Visibility	Stakeholder Engagement	CSR communication	Strategic CSR Communication content	Stakeholder perception CSR initiatives
Brand Visibility	Pearson Correlation	1	.759**	.800**	.864**	.883**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	72	72	72	72	72
Stakeholder Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.759**	1	.778**	.754**	.733**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	72	72	72	72	72
CSR communication	Pearson Correlation	.800**	.778**	1	.836**	.790**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000

	N	72	72	72	72	72
Strategic CSR Communication content	Pearson Correlation	.864**	.754**	.836**	1	.829**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	72	72	72	72	72
Stakeholder perception of CSR initiatives	Pearson Correlation	.883**	.733**	.790**	.829**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	72	72	72	72	72
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Table 3 shows that all the independent variables were positively and significantly correlated with the brand's visibility at 0.01 significance level ($p < 0.01$). The overall positive relationship between stakeholder perception of CSR initiatives and brand visibility was found to be the highest ($r = 0.883$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that positive stakeholder perceptions are associated with increased brand visibility. This was followed by strategic CSR communication content ($r = 0.864$, $p = 0.000$), which means that CSR communication content that is strategically aligned to the organization's communication purpose will greatly support the brand visibility of the organization.

The findings also show that CSR communication tools and channels had a strong positive correlation with brand visibility ($r = 0.800$, $p = 0.000$), suggesting that effective communication platforms enhance stakeholders' awareness and perception of the organization's brand. Likewise, there was a positive and significant correlation between stakeholder engagement and brand visibility ($r = 0.759$, $p = 0.000$) indicating that greater stakeholder involvement in CSR is correlated with better brand visibility.

The correlation matrix also indicates that the independent variables are highly positively and statistically significantly inter-related, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.733 to 0.836 (all $p = 0.000$). Specifically, stakeholder engagement was correlated positively with CSR communication tools and channels ($r = 0.778$), strategic CSR communication content ($r = 0.754$) and stakeholder perception of CSR initiatives ($r = 0.733$). Similarly, CSR communication tools and channels were positively and significantly correlated with strategic CSR communication content ($r = 0.836$) and stakeholder perception of CSR initiatives ($r = 0.790$), and strategic CSR communication content was positively and significantly correlated with stakeholder perception of CSR initiatives ($r = 0.829$).

Table 4: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.883a	0.78	0.771	0.45361
Predictors: (Constant), Strategic CSR Communication content, stakeholder Engagement, CSR Communication tools and channels				

The results in Table 4 indicate that the regression model produced a strong positive correlation between the predictor variables and brand visibility ($R = 0.883$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.78$) shows that 78% of the total variation in brand visibility can be explained by the combination of the factors of stakeholder engagement, CSR communication tools and channels, strategic CSR communication content and stakeholder perception of CSR initiatives. When adjusted for the number of predictors in the model, the Adjusted R^2 value is 0.78, indicating that 78% of the variance in brand visibility is accounted for by the independent variables. The remaining 22% of the variation is attributable to other factors not included in the model. A relatively low standard error of the estimate (0.45361) also suggests that the regression model fits well with the observed data.

ANOVA

Table 5: ANOVA

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	53.706	4	13.427	89.844	.000 ^b
	Residual	10.013	67	.149		
	Total	63.719	71			
a. Dependent Variable: Brand Visibility						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder perception of CSR initiatives, stakeholder engagement, CSR Communication tools and channels, Strategic CSR Communication content						

Table 5 shows that the overall regression model was statistically significant ($F(4,67) = 80.556, p = 0.000$).

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes the major findings and presents the conclusion and recommendations based on the study results

5.1 Summary of Findings

The findings revealed that corporate communication plays a significant role in promoting CSR initiatives at the Communications Authority of Kenya. Respondents agreed that they understood the Authority's CSR programmes, regularly received information regarding CSR activities, and believed that the organization actively engaged stakeholders during the planning and implementation of CSR initiatives. The findings further showed that the Authority communicates CSR messages that are clear, consistent, aligned with organizational goals, and responsive to community needs. These communication practices have strengthened stakeholder awareness, increased credibility, and enhanced positive perceptions of the Authority's CSR programmes. Overall, the findings demonstrate that effective corporate communication promotes stakeholder participation and supports successful implementation of CSR initiatives.

5.2 Conclusion

Corporate communication plays a fundamental role in promoting CSR initiatives and enhancing brand visibility at the Communications Authority of Kenya.

5.3 Recommendations

1. Strengthen corporate communication strategies by ensuring CSR messages are clear, consistent and transparent.
2. Increase stakeholder participation throughout CSR planning, implementation and evaluation.
3. Improve the quality and relevance of CSR communication content.
4. Integrate digital platforms, traditional media and community forums into a coordinated communication strategy.
5. Establish continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for CSR communication effectiveness.

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