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CSR Communication and Awareness

A qualitative evaluation of shared meaning between students and Karlstad Business School

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Abstract

This thesis is aimed at finding out how aware final users at Karlstad Business School are of its CSR communication message. The study discusses the concept of corporate social responsibility by providing a background knowledge of the concept. CSR communication is defined and presented in this study as an ongoing process and presents prior knowledge on the concept. The chapter outlines UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals as a global message which firms can utilize in communicating CSR. A qualitative methodology was adopted in this study using semi-structured interviews of 12 respondents who were final users at Karlstad Business School. The respondents were varied between different programs at the business school. The study uses constructivism as philosophy such that meaning is co-constructed by the researcher and the respondents. The data is analyzed using coding. The findings from this study show that awareness is low and as such the users do not share an adequate meaning with that of Karlstad Business School. The findings also show that users with prior knowledge on sustainability mainly through course related sources demonstrate an intermediary level of awareness. Discussions mainly through seminars come out as a key message channel for the business school to communicate its CSR agenda. The implications of this study are in two phases; to the business school and to the users. The business school by adopts UN Agenda 2030 as a global message for CSR communication which is novel to CSR communication. The users at the business school have a task of engaging in CSR communication to other departments at the university.
List of Abbreviations

CNN – Cable Network News
CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility
KBS – Karlstad Business School
PRME – Principles of Responsible Management Education
SDG – Sustainable Development Goals
UN – United Nations
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1. Introduction

This chapter presents a general view of the thesis and includes a background of the study, problematization, aim, objectives and research questions. It concludes with the structure of the study.

1.1. Background of the study

The planet we live in is crowded due to increasing population growth rates as explains Sachs (2015). Studies from early economist such as Adam Smith taught us that resources are scarce and wants are unlimited. In a CNN article, Gerretsen (2019) addresses challenges faced by the earth such as the disappearance of fish because of climate change. There is, therefore, a growing need to save the current resources from depletion and enable future generations to meet up with their own needs. Furthermore, the world has been in recent years plagued by challenges such as poverty and human – rights violations. These constitute only a few of the many problems faced by humanity. Modern day business organizations operate in a world where sustainability is the way forward. The business world today is faced with an obligation of adapting to the current global world changes. Sustainability is the way forward for organisations who engage in this through corporate social responsibility (Rasche et. al.,2017). As a result, businesses engage in communicating their CSR to interested parties to create awareness of their brand as a socially responsible brand. By creating awareness, organizations give room for engagement from their users which can be possible by increased dialogue and shared responsibility ((O'Riodan and Fairbrass, 2014) notably when both parties share a similar meaning.

This study identifies communication about Corporate Social Responsibility to create brand CSR awareness amongst users1 in a common social cause such as the sustainable development goals. The word users is adopted for this study to avoid the students – as – customers debate (Halbesleben et. al.,2003) by identifying students as co – creators of their own knowledge development and also making use of facilities provided by them through university services. User brand CSR awareness is defined in this study as a user’s ability to share meaning with an organization's CSR communication. This means that the meaning transmitted by the organization through CSR communication is that which the

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1 For purposes of this study, users refer to students at Karlstad Business School. They are the final users of the services provided by the business school and co – constructors of their own knowledge. This is to avoid confusion with prior literature which discusses CSR communication in relation to customers and not to refer to students as customers.
user makes sense of. This is characterized by the users’ ability to demonstrate a prior knowledge of an organization’s CSR without any assistance through recall. Another characteristic is the users’ ability to demonstrate relevance of an organization’s CSR communication to self and those considered close to the user. The third characteristic for awareness is mentions. By this the user shows how often they talk about an organization’s CSR goals. This definition is related to Morsing and Schultz (2006) sensemaking process. The user can also demonstrate awareness through a willingness to support a brand for example through increased purchases such as in the study of Du et al., (2010).

To study CSR communication and user CSR brand awareness, this study focuses on students in a university setting at a business school engaged in CSR by analysing CSR communication from UN Agenda 2030 in Karlstad Business School. The study discusses sustainable development based on UN Agenda 2030 SDGs as an illustration message for CSR communication in Karlstad Business School. It is important to note that UN Agenda 2030 is a new way through CSR communication is transmitted as a message and as such is novel to CSR communication. The theoretical framework discusses an understanding of the term corporate social responsibility and provides definition to CSR communication with a further presentation of prior literature of the concept. The study adopts a qualitative methodology by using semi-structured interviews to find out awareness levels amongst students who are users of the service provided by KBS. A qualitative methodology is suitable for this study given that the study seeks to find out awareness based on semi-structured interviews in which students described for this study as users in a business school provide their opinions which enable the researcher to carry out a manual qualitative data analysis.

By creating awareness, the organization further builds long-term relationships with its users which provides added value to the brand as discussed in the study of Du et al. (2010). The choice of students and the business school is because the academic institution is actively engaged in implementing UN Agenda 2030. Furthermore, UN Agenda 2030 is clearly implemented in the Karlstad Business School given its adherence to principles of responsible management education. This argues for the choice of empirical case. Studying awareness among students who are users of the business school’s services is important to find out if the organization’s CSR message is efficiently SDGs transmitted to students. The study can be used to find out why they chose to adhere to organizations in
relation to CSR. The study can also be used to measure the organizations CSR communication effectiveness given that increased awareness means better communication about CSR. The study is also useful in providing the level of user brand CSR awareness which can be used as a measure of the effectiveness of CSR communication.

1.2. Problematization

Prior research according to Schmeltz (2012) discussing CSR communication in relation to user awareness has shown that when users are aware of an organization's CSR, they will show a positive attitude towards the organization such as being loyal to the brand or increasing buying behavior notably with the studies of Du et. al., (2010). CSR communication should not necessarily seek to satisfy an organization but should rather serve a global purpose for which the concept of sustainability entails. Moreover, organizations have been adopting strategies which to effectively communicate about their CSR activities but as Morsing and Schultz (2006) agree, such messages face skepticism and could even be lashed out by the media (Dawkins, 2004). This view is further supported by Lim and Greenwood (2017) who identify backlashing as a major challenge faced by organizations when communicating CSR. Schmeltz (2012) identifies skepticism from users as part of the extant literature in relation to CSR. The author further adds credibility as another problem in relation thereof. Furthermore, another challenge faced is the very fact that organizations engaged in CSR communication do not need to publicize this as discussed by Morsing and Schultz (2006). The authors believe that if an organization overemphasizes its CSR through communication, it would rather be trying to hide something. Maigan and Ferrell (2001) identify users' trust as another difficulty when communicating about CSR from a company perspective. In agreement with Morsing and Schultz (2006), many users are not very knowledgeable about a CSR message communicated by an organization except for those with some degree of knowledge about CSR. Users are however according to Schmeltz (2012) very knowledgeable on the problems they face. A global message is suitable to use in CSR communication given that it considers all of humanities problems, unlike the usual CSR communication messages which organizations have used for their own benefit such as to identify behaviors such as brand loyalty or buying behavior as in Du et. al., (2010). CSR communication should adopt a global message which all firms are engaged into to guarantee legitimacy and reduce the level skepticism among users faced by the previous communication methods. Morsing and
Schultz (2006) argue that very few organizations engage in CSR incentives because it is the right thing to do. The authors agree that such sincere incentives are poised to overcome a social cause which is in line with adopting a global message for CSR communication. Organizations should strive to satisfy much more of humanities concerns and putting aside the business case for CSR as discussed in prior literature on CSR (Schmeltz, 2012). The UN Global Compact has principles in line with universal human rights declarations as such by adopting such a global partnership through shared responsibility, companies adopt a global message of communicating about CSR. It is believed thus that a global message of CSR communication can be used to create increased awareness among users by adding more meaning to an organization’s CSR communication through the user sensemaking process (Morsing & Schultz, 2006) given its wider outreach to the universe. Furthermore, given that it is a global message communicated, its importance will not need to be overemphasize to users in creating CSR brand awareness. Awareness is important as a perspective to be studied given that CSR communication will have no meaning if the receivers of such a message do not share meaning with what is communicated. The role of awareness in this study is to therefore find out if the users in this study can recall, describe and show relevance in the business school’s CSR communication based on UN Agenda 2030 sustainability goals. The choice of UN Agenda 2030 is justified by the fact that sustainability is the way forward for business. Operating in the current global world means that businesses must adopt a sustainability perspective especially in Sweden where this research is carried out. Furthermore, it is time that organizations share a similar CSR message given that the SDGs are a novel way to define sustainability. This should therefore be the focus of an organization’s CSR communication.

1.3. Aim and objectives

Prior literature has demonstrated numerous problems faced by users from traditional communication messages such as skepticism, trust and backlashing as identified in the problematization of this study. To minimize these challenges and create positive awareness of users about a brand's CSR, it is important to adopt a global message. The wider perspective of this message and the global adherence to this perspective of CSR communication is hoped to make more meaning to users about a brand's CSR awareness. The main objective of this study is to find out how if adopting UN Agenda 2030 as a message for CSR communication will bring about more awareness from users defined according
to this study. This thesis adds to the existing literature on CSR communication which has stressed the monological approach to CSR communication and the lack of a global message in communicating about CSR to users. It also adds to the existing literature on user brand CSR awareness.

1.4. Research question.

Based on the above aims and objectives of the study, two research questions are raised;

How aware are the final users in KBS of its CSR communication message; Do they share a similar meaning?

1.5. Structure of Study

The study will proceed in this order. Chapter two will cover the theoretical framework. Next comes chapter three which will cover the methodology used in the study. Chapter four will present the results of the empirical study and chapter five will make a discussion of these results. The last chapter will conclude the study, bring out the study implications and limitations. It will also make suggestions for further research.
2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents an overview of CSR communication literature and makes a brief discussion on what Corporate Social Responsibility is. This includes the link between CSR and CSR communication. The chapter discusses user awareness. It also discusses the global message for CSR communication.

2.1. An Understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development.

The term corporate social responsibility has always been an issue surrounded by numerous debates. Earlier studies referred to it as social responsibility such as in Carroll (1999) who argues that businesses have grown so powerful today than they were in previous years leading to a belief among the top companies that they are too big to fail (Schwartz, 2017). In Sehbatu (2010), the author notes that CSR has no fixed definition. Carroll (1999) quoting Bowen defines CSR as those obligations which businesses must meet or actions and policies on which they base their decisions in accordance with societal guidelines. Du et al., (2010) quotes Kotler and Lee (2005) who refer to CSR as an engagement to improve the wellbeing of society through involuntary business initiatives and corporate resource contribution. For McWilliams and Siegel (2001), it is defined as those actions which bring good to society beyond that which businesses are by law required to do. By carrying out CSR, organizations communicate these to users who generate attitudes and behaviors given their awareness level as notes Du et al., (2010). CSR is an aspect of sustainable development as discussed by Rasche et al., (2017) For the authors, they view CSR as corporation’s contribution to sustainable development. This on its part defined according to Brundtland (1987, p. 41) as "development that meets the needs of the future without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Sustainable development in the business world is usually discussed across three dimensions known as the triple bottom line (Milne & Gray, 2013). These dimensions include economic, environmental and social perspectives. However, Sachs (2015) suggests that fourth term governance is required to ensure efficiency in the implementation of all three dimensions. This view is supported by Surowiecki (2016) who writes that despite the existence of regulations in the business world, numerous scandals still plague the business world. For Newton (2003) business is sustainable if it can be effectively managed and generate profits without diminishing the systems on which it relies. However, this is not achieved automatically in business given that several stakeholders are involved.
to whom businesses are answerable to. Rasche et al., (2017, p.9), define CSR as "the integration of an enterprise’s social, environmental, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities towards society into its operations, processes and core business strategy in cooperation with relevant stakeholders." This definition is particularly relevant to this study given that it gives a perspective of CSR as central to the practice of business. In other words, doing business means being ethical (Dawkins, 2004). According to Friedman (1970), businesses have the responsibility of making returns for their shareholders, unlike Waddock et al., (2002) who think that the responsibility of businesses lies towards all its stakeholders. This means that ethical and responsible leadership is key to a successful corporate strategy (Johnson, 2015). A business must have an ethical perspective for its CSR engagements to be meaningful. Leaders and followers are the drivers for ethics in the organization. They are the actors who are key to successful corporate responsibility performance. Transparency reflects trust, reputation, and integrity (Council on Business & Society, 2013). Such is required for CSR practices to be meaningful in corporate strategy. Ignoring ethical standards will mean that CSR practices are merely greenwashing. Communicating about CSR efforts is thus what we define as CSR Communication.

2.2. CSR Communication. An ongoing process

As the name implies, CSR communication means informing opinion holders about your Corporate Social Responsibility activities. Podnar et. al., (2013) classify three main ways of thinking about CSR Communication based on a review of the CSR Communication literature. These include disclosure, accountability, and outcomes. According to these authors, when looking at CSR communication from a disclosure point of view, several characteristics are taken into consideration. Such include the characteristics of CSR communication media types for example advertising, web – based, annual reports, a combination of these or other genres. Disclosure in this analysis is sub-classified further as strategies which analyze stakeholder expectations and beliefs. They discuss that disclosure as a strategy point of view symbolizes how an organization ought to communicate about its CSR. Another way of looking at CSR communication according to Podnar et. al., (2013) is as a process. Based on this view, CSR communication is based on a stakeholder approach to communication. This view discusses models or frameworks for communicating about CSR. Finally, CSR communication has been classified by Podnar et. Al., (2013) as an outcome which relates to users or the business. Rasche et. al., (2017) discusses that CSR
communication expresses issues about a company's involvement and action in corporate social responsibility. It is therefore considered as strategic and integral to both for an organization and for society. This is because CSR communication portrays how an organization contributes to societal development from a social, economic and environmental point of views. These issues are raised and debated by engaging and creating user awareness. From this, it is clearly visible that CSR communication is an ongoing process and is characterized by constant evolution due to the dynamism of today’s users which is the focal point of creating awareness in this study. This view is supported by Morsing and Schultz (2006) who agree to sophisticated strategies in engaging and creating awareness amongst users through CSR communication. Moreover, the users has evolved greatly with the availability of information from social media and the internet which foster discussions about CSR without organizations' being present as beliefs Rasche et. al., (2017). CSR communication is an ongoing process and cannot be defined at a point in time. However, Rasche et. Al., (2017) provides a basis for what a modern definition of CSR communication should include. According to the authors, it is based on an organization's communication to its users about its involvement in corporate social responsibility from social, economic and environmental points of view which are crucial for societal well-being and development. CSR communication is different from other forms of corporate communication because it doesn't have an economic or technical message but rather it seeks to show companies ethical values to society (Rasche et. al., 2017). It also varies according to industry size, type, and activities as explains Rasche et. Al., (2017). The authors discuss three features of CSR communication which include corporate morality, sincerity, and transparency. Corporate morality is discussed as the extent to which the organization cares about society. The author stresses on the fact that the important aspect of a CSR message lies not in the message itself but in the company's daily implementation of its CSR message. The old adage "talk the talk and walk the talk" can be used here. To demonstrate this, an organization must be perceived as doing something for society both local and global. Sincerity is discussed as consistency with regards to a company's CSR message. The author means here that the message communicated must be reflected in the company's practices. This further means that all aspects of the company must carry a similar CSR message. This means for example that the message must be reflected in its employees, shareholders, managers and in the way it deals with stakeholders external to the organization. The third characteristic discussed in Rasche et. al., (2017) is transparency. The author discusses transparency to reflect an openness in
organizational practices and a demonstrated willingness to partake in issues crucial to the company's sustainability practice. One of such ways of being transparent has been demonstrated by the Global Reporting Initiative. According to Milne and Gray (2013), the GRI reports on economic, social, environmental, and governmental issues. Furthermore, it aims to provide transparency in reports (Enquist et al., 2006). Through these, organizations provide relevant data on the present state of their activity’s vis a vis sustainability. A much critical view quoted in Milne and Gray (2013) argues that organizations could as well provide unsustainability reporting so that the public is not only left aware of the brighter side of it but also the gap that may exist described here as a sustainability gap. Another distinctive view is a global compact. An idea pioneered by the UN to bring organizations together on issues such as human rights, labor, anti-corruption, and the environment in the decision-making process. (Enquist et al., 2006).

2.2.1. Prior literature on CSR communication in relation to users.

Crane and Glozer (2016) argue that most of the literature on CSR Communication has been analyzed from a Corporate Social Responsibility perspective, Organization, Corporate Communication, Social Accounting, and Marketing perspectives. The authors further argue that communication on CSR has been from organizations to their users rather than with them. In support of these arguments, Du et al., (2010) agree that socially responsible organizations should actively involve their users in CSR issues by communicating about their practices in order to have an impact on them. Schmeltz (2012) believes that such ways of communicating about CSR are a shift from the classical one-way communication to a more symmetrical communication which fosters organization to consumer relationship. CSR communication has changed phase and now involves a two-way communication process where an organization takes into account its users’ concerns (Lim & Greenwood, 2017). Crane and Glozer (2016) further discuss that empirical advances rather engaged in making meaning of CSR communication (quoting Ziek, 2009) with modern technological developments and global threats that affect the outcome of business practice. Moreover, organizations have been adopting strategies which in order to effectively communicate about their CSR activities but as Morsing and Schultz (2006) agree, such messages face skepticism and could even be lashed out by the media (Dawkins, 2004). This view is further supported by Lim and Greenwood (2017) who identify backlashing as a major challenge faced by organizations when communicating CSR. Schmeltz (2012) identifies skepticism
as part of the extant literature in relation to CSR. The author further adds credibility as another problem in relation thereof. Furthermore, another challenge faced is the very fact that organizations engaged in CSR communication do not need to publicize as discuss Morsing and Schultz (2006) who believe that if an organization overemphasizes its CSR through communication, it would rather be seen as trying to hide something. This is described in Pomering and Dolnicar (2009) as the promoter's paradox. Such messages about Corporate Social Responsibility by an organization are bound to evoke mixed fillings among users. It could be positive for some (Morsing & Schultz, 2006) it could as well bring about user skepticism defined in Schmeltz (2012) as a sense of disbelief in an organization's CSR communication message. Maigan and Ferrell (2001) identify users' trust as another difficulty when communicating about CSR.

2.2.2. A global message for CSR Communication: UN Agenda 2030

According to United Nations (2019), Agenda 2030 is a long-term UN objective which includes different agendas with the main aim of addressing key humane problems faced in the various areas notably People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership. Agenda 2030 is based on 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) adopted by world leaders in 2015 (United Nations, 2019). These goals call on joint action by all countries through various platforms and initiatives to tackle the problems faced by humanity today. The People's agenda aims at reducing poverty, fostering equality among people of all nations and ensuring conducive living standards. The Planet agenda focuses on sustainable production and consumption while taking into consideration the effects of our activities on climate change. With regards to the Peace agenda, the UN aims to ensure that people of all nations live without fear of oppression and tyranny from dictatorships. Finally, the Partnership agenda aims at creating a platform for mobilizing all stakeholders such as companies and their users to create reinforced global solidarity and joint action targeting the changing needs of society.

To achieve this, the United Nations through the UN Global Compact integrates strategies with businesses and its users thus to achieve a better world through shared responsibility (UN Global Compact, 2019). These strategies are aligned with respect to universal principles on human – rights, labor, environment, anti-corruption. (UN Global Compact, 2019). According to Rasche et. al., (2017) the UN Global Compact outlines a structure which firms can match with their
strategies based on the SDGs and 10 principles. The authors, however, argue that this does not monitor the behavior of corporations but rather serves as a guideline for implementing sustainability practices. This framework can be justified as corporation’s contribution to sustainable development given the wide effects of their activities on society and the environment as argue Rasche et. al., (2017). Furthermore, governments cannot act as a regulator for all corporations due to the fact that these have grown so influential due to globalization which fosters multinational corporations influence beyond national boundaries (Rasche et. al., 2017). In this way, global principles are required to serve as a kind of regulation which will guide corporations CSR activities and implementation. The UN Global compact originates from the UN and as such has a worldwide jurisdiction. Such global principles, therefore, need to be integrated into firms practices and be communicated as a global language to relevant stakeholders in the process of CSR communication. The UN Global Compact has two main missions; these include helping corporations to carry out good business by fostering good as argues Dawkins (2004) with respect for human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption (UN Global Compact, 2019). The second mission is to foster collaboration and innovation to achieve SDGs. One of such initiatives which the UN Global Compact embarks on is the Principles of Responsible Management (PRME). According to the UN Secretary-General,

"The PRME initiative was launched to nurture responsible leaders of the future. Never has this task been more important. Bold leadership and innovative thinking are needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals." (UN Global Compact, 2019).

The PRME is an UN-led initiative which aims at training business students as leaders of tomorrow by integrating sustainability skills into their curriculums which will provide a leader for sustainable development (UN Global Compact, 2019). The PRME identify education as a suitable means of impacting the future. It is based on six principles which can be summarized as follows as adapted from UN PRME (2019). The first principle which explains the PRME purpose is to expand the capabilities of students to be future sources of sustainable value for corporations and society by fostering inclusion and a sustainable global economy. The second principle which is the values aims at including globally shared sustainability values into university activities and curriculums. The third principle of methods aims at creating suitable environments that facilitate effective training and experiences for responsible leadership. The fourth principle on research aims at carrying out research that
will provide the role of corporations in creating sustainable social, economic and environmental value. The fifth principle on partnership aims at creating networks with business managers to gain knowledge on difficulties encountered in achieving sustainability goals. Finally, the sixth principle on dialogue aims at creating opportunities for dialogue on issues of sustainability between students, researchers, managers, users, and other interested actors.

2.3. User Awareness

Users in this study refers to students who are co–constructors of their very own knowledge obtained through studies at the university. The word “users” is adopted for this study in relation to Halbesleben et. al., (2003) to give students an image of contributors in their own development and not to view them as customers. Awareness is defined in this study as a users' ability to share meaning with an organization's CSR communication. This means that the meaning transmitted by the organization through CSR communication is that which the user makes sense of. This is characterized by the users’ ability to demonstrate a prior knowledge of an organization’s CSR without assistance through recall. Another characteristic is the users’ ability to demonstrate relevance of an organization’s CSR communication to self and those considered close to the user. Another characteristic for awareness is mentions. By this the user shows how often they talk about an organization’s CSR goals. This definition is related to Morsing and Schultz (2006) sensemaking process. The user can also demonstrate awareness willingness to purchase a CSR related product such as in the study of Du et al., (2010). Users play a vital role in determining an organization's fate. These have diverse needs in a changing global landscape. For Schmeltz (2012), today's users grow in a global world with fast information travels due to increased social media use especially within the younger user group giving rise to faster information travels and as such organizations are left with an obligation to continually review their CSR communication process. Moreover, users constantly exert pressure on organizations for increased sustainability practices (Waddock et. al.,2002). Therefore communicating CSR to users will require more sophisticated CSR communication.

Morsing and Schultz (2006) discuss how users can be made aware of an organization's CSR strategy development and implementation which involves sensemaking and sense giving processes of communication. They describe sensemaking as a social process where we make meaning while engaging in dialogue with others through idea exchange. This means an organization
identifies a complex vision which it portrays to its users in a process described as sense giving which they describe as an attempt by an organization to influence users’ meanings. The authors discuss CSR communication as a reciprocal process of communication involving both processes. Users as discussed by Pomering (2005), need to be able to make meaning out of an organization’s CSR which is transmitted through CSR communication such that they can either chose to be loyal by perhaps increasing purchases from the brand or rather chose to ignore it if they deem its CSR message not in congruence with organizational activities and policies. By creating awareness, the organization further builds long-term relationships with its users which provides added value to the brand as discussed in the study of Du et. al., (2010).
3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design which includes the research strategy, research design, data collection method, data analysis, trustworthiness and empirical case description.

3.1. Research Strategy

The research strategy for a given study must correspond to the research question under investigation as argues Bryman et al., (2011). To find out how aware users are of CSR communication, a qualitative research strategy is used in this study. According to Gray (2017), the use of qualitative methodology is favorable in a situation where opinions and attitudes of persons are to be questioned in real life context. It is also useful as Gray (2017) further explains to understand the "How" aware users are of CSR communication from an Agenda 2030 perspective. A qualitative research methodology is suitable to use in studying a shared meaning through UN Agenda 2030 because words are more concrete and provide a striking picture which is more convincing to the reader than figures used in quantitative approaches. Gray (2017) argues for the use of words in explaining such opinion based data over statistical analysis. Furthermore, the Agenda 2030 imperative is suitable to analyzed based on how users feel through expressed opinions which carries more meaning and is better suited to a qualitative study. This study uses a qualitative research based on open questions through which respondents express their awareness levels. Such a perspective cannot be quantified through numerical values but rather as agrees Gray (2017), qualitative data analysis is suitable to bring out such behaviors which are valuable for research but cannot be obtained from numerical analysis.

To carry out a qualitative study, semi – structured interviews were used as a method of data collection. Gray (2017) describes semi – structured interviews as non – standardized in nature commonly used for qualitative data analysis. Gray (2017) further argues that interviews are suitable for use in research when the aim of the researcher is to obtain an in – depth meaning of a phenomenon which can involve experiences, attitudes and opinions such as awareness in this study. The author believes through this method, subjective opinions of respondents can be obtained. Awareness through shared meaning is studied here from a qualitative methodology given that meaning is subjective and can best be analyzed qualitatively through interviews. As such semi – structured interviews allow for this study to obtain required data for studying awareness
based on CSR communication of a UN Agenda 2030 message. The interview process is as well suitable especially in a case study as this where a small sample size was used to obtain deep understanding of the phenomenon under study (Gray, 2017). The research philosophy employed in this study is constructivism (Roulston, 2010). Through this, the author discusses that research interviews are a means of making sense when people discuss with one another. To find out a shared meaning of CSR communication of UN Agenda 2030, constructivism is used such that the respondents in the interview make sense through discussions by co-constructing meaning (Roulston, 2010) based of the main themes in this study.

### 3.2. Research Design

This section seeks to explain how the data will be collected, measured and finally analyzed as discusses Gray (2017). The researcher carried out the interview at sections of the business school where the SDGs were displayed. The group of students was randomly selected from first year students in the business school and final year students such as those doing a master’s program for example. This provided a suitable means to ensure random variation of the data (Gray, 2017). The respondents were given a questionnaire in which they could note down key responses which expressed personal opinions. This was used by the researcher for simplification purposes. To do this, a questionnaire was developed based on questions in line with the key themes in this study. The questions were open ended and the respondents had the opportunity to further discuss the questions with the researcher to co-construct meaning of the questions. As Gray (2017) explains, further questions often emerged which were noted down by the researcher as well. The interview process was straight-forward (Gray, 2017) and went along until data saturation was attained. Kolb (2012) describes this as a situation where data is collected, and the researcher no longer receives information which was previously obtained.

### 3.3. Data Collection

The data for this study were collected both from primary and secondary sources. The primary source of data was from the semi-structured interview based on an open question’s discussion with respondents who students of KBS were mainly. In total 12 students were interviewed for a duration of 30 minutes. There were no major events during the interview and the interviews were carried out in study rooms at the university library and some at the business school premises. Through this method, the respondents were fully allowed to express
their opinions and permit the researcher to find out their awareness through shared meaning with CSR communication of SDGs based on UN Agenda 2030. This study identified the fact that semi-structured interviews are a useful method for data collection because, through this, the quality of participant information on beliefs and values stands high as discusses Gray (2017). The choice of students to study awareness is justified by the fact that Karlstad Business School aims at creating responsible leaders for the future who can conduct research with an impact on society (PRME, 2018). As a signatory to the UN Global Compact, it is clearly evident that UN Agenda 2030 goals are communicated in this setting. As such it is important to find out through this method if students are similar meaning with KBS communication message. The sampling technique used was convenience sampling as discussed in Gray (2017). The author describes this as a simple technique for data collection and for this study, respondents were selected on a convenience basis. The secondary data for this study was obtained from a range of sources including books, reports and scientific journals. Gray (2017) describes secondary data as data collected from prior uses for use in an existing study usually different from the original work. The authors discuss that secondary data is analyzed in line with primary data such as group discussions in the case of this study. The use of secondary data for this study is justified by the fact that the researcher used this as a source of personal awareness of the business schools CSR practices and communication.

3.3.1. Questions

This study used open ended questions to discuss about the main themes in this study through semi-structured interviews. Open questions are suitable given the value of the responses and the possibility to develop further questioning through probing questions such that the researcher could develop deeper understanding of the responses (Gray, 2017). Through this method, the respondents and the researcher co-constructed meaning of the terms and as such this gave the respondents the opportunity to share their opinions on the key themes in this study. Based on this, questions were centered around awareness and communication. Awareness is defined in this study as the ability of the users to share similar meaning with the business school’s CSR communication message centered on UN Agenda 2030 SDGs. Awareness is thus a cognitive process in this study with the main characteristics such as ”recall”. By recall, the respondents were required to demonstrate if they had prior knowledge about the goals displayed. Another characteristic of awareness
is” relevance”. Through this the respondents demonstrated how they considered the given goals important to them as well those close to them. The last characteristics used on awareness for this study was” mention”. Through this, the respondents were required to demonstrate how often they mentioned the goals practiced by the business school. Communication in this study is based on UN Agenda 2030 as a global message for CSR communication. The characteristics used for this theme for analytical purposes. Visual display was used as a characteristic given that the SDGs are displayed along the corridors of the business school. Another characteristic which the respondents were required to discuss was credibility. This is based on the message source. The final characteristics used in this theme was discussions which required respondents to demonstrate situations where the business school carried out knowledge exchange and interaction of the SDGs.

3.3.2. Respondents

The respondents for this study were mainly students of KBS ranging from first year students to final year bachelor or master’s students selected based on a purposive sampling technique. According to Gray (2017), purposeful sampling is common in qualitative research methodology such as these with the argument that every member of the sample is a single case. This explains why students in the business school engaged in implementing UN Agenda 2030 as their CSR communication were selected. These participants are suitable to provide opinions of KBS Agenda 2030 perspective. The study had a total of 12 respondents interviewed for 30 minutes. Furthermore, the variation in respondents was to facilitate data comparison among the various student levels.

3.4. Data Analysis

Kolb (2012) defines describes data analysis as an organized process of filtering and classifying data obtained from the data collection process to gain a deeper understanding of it and to further facilitate the presentation of the findings. The data obtained from the interview was manually transcribed by the researcher to give the results meaning. This study adopted a constructivist philosophy where sense is made in the interview process through interaction and discussion with the respondents (Roulston, 2010). The analysis as such included elements of personal reflexivity which according to Gray (2017), is the link between the researcher and the purpose of the aim. Personal reflexivity for Gray (2017), includes the researcher’s personal beliefs, values, and attitudes which are employed in the study to give it meaning. In line with Onwuegbuzie et. al,
(2009) this study, therefore, uses the constant comparison analysis as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

To analyze data coding was used (Gray, 2017). This involved three levels of coding which include open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Gray (2017) quotes Strauss and Corbin (1998) who define open coding as a process which entails a breakdown, an examination and a conceptualization of data. This according to the authors has two phases including the comparison of the data and the asking of questions which facilitate the classification of the key terms into various categories. Through open coding, the data took into account specific characteristics of data questions as discussed in Gray (2017) to include similar questions for each group to ensure consistency in line with the main concepts of the study and its objectives. The data was periodically analyzed and the process of coding was held up to take down new accounts. Using open coding the data was classified according to properties and dimensions (Gray, 2017) as shown in table 1.0 and 2.0 respectively based on the two keywords communication and awareness. These enabled the research to have comparisons across the various respondents. The properties used to discuss communication were visual display, credibility, discussions. These properties were developed by the researcher based on key features of CSR communication and awareness as explained in the theory and also drawing inspiration from previous studies such as Schmeltz (2012). The respondents discussed on the” visual display” as a category to label the images of the SDGs advertised in the KBS premises. The dimension "eye-catching" was used by the researcher to denote the visual power of the CSR image displayed. Discussions represented if the respondents had possibilities for dialogue and exchange on these goals. The dimension for discussions used was "meaningful" which denoted the impact of the discussions.” Credibility” signified what the participants considered as a reliable CSR communication message. The dimension for this was "message source". In other words do the participants consider the business school to be implementing what it is preaching? The second keyword awareness had three properties. These included recall, implementation, relevance, and mention. "Recall” was used as a property to analyze if the participants could recall KBS UN Agenda 2030 goals prior to visualizing them. The dimension used for this property was "prior knowledge" which aimed at finding out if the students had some existing knowledge about the subject. ”Relevance” was used to mean how important the goals were to the respondents. The dimension for relevance used was ”perceived proximity” which means how the respondents considered UN Agenda 2030 message important to those closest to them such as friends and
family. Finally, “mentions” was used to find out how often the respondents mentioned either formally or informally the SDGs. The dimension for this was “external sources” which was used to find out if the students had some external knowledge about KBS involvement in CSR.

Table 1: Coding of properties for communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Dimensional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Visual Display</td>
<td>Eye Catching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Message Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Coding of properties for user awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Dimensional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Recall</td>
<td>Extent of prior knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mention</td>
<td>External Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Perceived proximity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Coding of core categories for communication and user awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Core Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual display $\Leftrightarrow$ Recall</td>
<td>Prior knowledge on SDGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentions $\Leftrightarrow$ Discussions</td>
<td>Engagement in SDGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility $\Leftrightarrow$ Relevance</td>
<td>Importance in SDGs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next stage involved axial coding. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), axial coding relates subcategories together and looks for relationships amongst these in the data. According to Gray (2017), this procedure involves linking categories together by observing phenomenon’s in terms of properties,
dimensions and casual conditions which are interactions and actions. Finally, the consequences of these are taken note of as explains Gray (2017). Through this process, the various subcategories identified were grouped amongst each other were relationships were found. Through this,” visual display” and” recall” were grouped together. Thus, the statement,” can you recall what you saw?” Visual display of SDGs goals in an action done by KBS which interacts with the mindset of onlookers mostly students here. The consequence of this is to remind them of a humane perspective of business (Giacallone & Thompson, 2006). Credibility and Relevance were linked together given that both properties could be identified occurring in a similar context. The message communicated is based on UN Agenda 2030 which is a global message. It stresses on joint societal action to solve humanity problems as such the statement” how important is the message source?” Mention” was linked up with” discussions”. This is because both properties occur in a similar context. Through discussions can the respondents have the possibility to mention SDGs. Finally, selective coding was used to develop the core categories in the data to come out with a theory (Gray, 2017). Through selective coding, the core categories were integrated together and unified around a "core" category (Strauss and Corbin, 1998 p. 14). The core categories included prior knowledge, Importance and Engagement in SDGs.

3.5 Trustworthiness

This section according to Gray (2017) shows the quality of the study. It defines how credible the method used for this study answers the research question. Trustworthiness is a key section in qualitative research methodology because it gives readers the opportunity to evaluate consistency and truthfulness of the analysis as discusses Sebhatu (2010). This study employed a qualitative methodology using the opinions of selected respondents to make an analysis of users brand CSR awareness. To ensure ethics, the respondents were kept anonymous and provided anonymous responses (Gray, 2017). Furthermore, this study used triangulation by using other researchers for multiple data analysis (Lietz et. al, 2006). The multiple sources of data collection in this study also give it quality. The various databases and empirics helped to bring out concrete evidence needed for this study (Gray, 2017). Given that semi – structured were used, the researcher ensured ethics by seeking the consent of all respondents to the study from whom data were obtained for the study in line with data privacy policies and information disclosure in the European Union which covers the jurisdiction of the study's setting. Through interviews as explains Gray (2017),
validity is achieved by focusing on the main themes of research. The author notes that through induction, the subject under study emerges from the interview given that the respondents had sufficient time to provide more data where relevant in order to obtain a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study. Finally, to distinguish the researcher's voice from that of other researchers, the study used referencing (Sebhatu, 2010).

3.6 Empirical Case Description

The UN Global Compact in 2007 came up with a framework designed to train future leaders. This framework is known as Principles of Responsible Management Education to which Karlstad Business School which is part of Karlstad University is a signatory. Through this, the business school aims at training future leaders to conduct research with an impact (PRME, 2018). According to this report, Karlstad Business School has since January 2019 adopted four goals voted by students as the most relevant goals. These constitute the focus of this study on awareness. These include Quality Education, Gender Equality, Responsible Consumption and Production and finally Climate Action. KBS is fully committed to achieving the SDGs. According to (PRME, 2018), the KBS is fully committed to implementing UN Agenda 2030 by focusing on these objectives. According to Du et. Al., (2010), KBS integration of PRME is a clear CSR fit. This is because the institution engages in training responsible managers which is a virtue for society. KBS joined the PRME in February 2017 by taking a commission of information sharing with other stakeholders on their involvement in the PRME progress report. This entails adopting a humane perspective of education as discussed by Giacallone and Thompson (2006). A humane view of education is described in Giacallone and Thompson (2006) as a curriculum aimed at transmitting positive values and beliefs to business students. It teaches well – being aimed at doing good to society on whole in a business context. Such a view according to the authors does not have profitability at the center of business. It is unlike an organizational centered view which is a curriculum aimed at teaching students to do good business and provide returns for organizations (Giacallone & Thompson, 2006). According to the authors, personal, organizational interest form the core of business and society's interest less regarded. KBS thus adopting a humane perspective and trains students in line with the PRME which is for a great part an inspiration for this study to foster CSR discourse through communication in line with sustainable development goals. The very fact that KBS is engaged in a humane perspective of education and adopts the UN
Agenda 2030 to instill in business students a sustainability mindset is a suitable example of CSR communication and awareness.

To meet up with the 6 principles of the PRME initiative, KBS leads the journey in the implementation of Karlstad University's Vision and Strategy 2030 as quoted in (PRME,2018, p. 11) as follows "we challenge the known and explore the unknown. Our students and staff develop knowledge and skills for individual enrichment and to contribute to a sustainable society. Our creative academic environments are characterized by curiosity, courage, and persistence. By taking a critical approach, we safeguard the scholarly and artistic foundations of our operations. Karlstad University is characterized by welcoming proximity and trust. We always promote democratic values, equality, and diversity." KBS through the annual sustainability day and attended by students of the course Sustainable Business and Leadership, create a platform for knowledge exchange and experience on matters of sustainability (PRME,2018). According to this report, the seminar is attended by speakers from popular companies which is an opportunity for value transmission between the business world and the business school.

The method of implementation of the PRME is notably through a rich curriculum in which sustainability and ethical values are transmitted to business students at both undergraduate and graduate levels (PRME,2018). The main courses taught at the undergraduate level in this respect are Business Ethics and Sustainable Business, Design for Sustainable Development 1 & 2, Sustainable Development for Engineering, Environmental and Natural Resource Economics, Labor Economics (PRME,2018). At the graduate level, the main course thought across the various master's programs affiliated to the business school is Sustainable Business and Leadership (PRME,2018). A detailed description of all these courses is found on the KBS page at Karlstad University's website. The training has both written and oral examinations through seminars where students gain and exchange knowledge with one another.

According to (PRME,2018), the business school has good exchange links between curriculum and research. A key example of this is the presence of the Service Research Centre (CTF) which is a well – known center in the domain of value creation through service (PRME,2018). The research focuses on four main multidisciplinary disciplines which include Service Innovation, Service Experience, Service Management, and Transformative Service Research (PRME,2018).
At the level of partnerships, KBS has partnerships with the Service and Market-Oriented Research Group (SAMOT). This according to (PRME, 2018) is a partnership in public transport established between 2006 and 2017. Other partnerships include users with benefits such as the #Me – too, power and gender in customer-centric service work (PRME, 2018). This according to the report is to focus on user’s sexual harassment in the working milieu.

Finally, principle 6 on dialogue is met through conferences such as the Mobile Communication Technologies for Development (M4D 2008) A Karlstad Conference in Uganda. (PRME, 2018).
4. Results

The aim of this study was to find out how aware final users at Karlstad Business School are of its CSR Communication. The results of this study are therefore based on the coding process which was used for the data analysis.

4.1. Sharing a meaning of Sustainable Development.

This section discusses the results in relation to the effectiveness of CSR communication. It is labelled shared meaning of sustainable development to bring out what the students recognize as sustainable development as communicated by the business school. The students were able to identify the Sustainable Development Goals displayed at Karlstad Business School. This was mainly because for most of the users, they had prior knowledge on the concept of Sustainable Development. It is a known concept among the users and as such most could identify that the image which the university displayed was the sustainable development goals. However, this was possible only with some users. For others it was not the case. The latter are not able to make meaning out of the image displayed because they do not have any idea of what the business school is trying to explain. The first two respondents are a clear demonstration of these assertion.

Respondent 1 was a student of business administration at the business school made the following comments.

”Karlstad Business School more than gladly wants to communicate and promote sustainable development and sustainable development goals to their students and their surrounding environment for example through seminars”

The second respondent however was not a student of business administration at the business school and was from another program. Such users have a more general knowledge about sustainability based on an environmental perspective. For them, talks about sustainability are mostly environmental and as such these users do not talk about the other aspects of sustainability which are economic and social. Sustainability is a term known by most of the users is linked to caring for the environment This user made the following comment.

”A sustainable environment, the word recycling comes to mind”

Having demonstrated prior knowledge, the users were questioned on the goals displayed at the business school’s premises. The users with prior knowledge
such as that of the first respondent were able to identify the goals displayed as the sustainable development goals. However, they were not able to provide reasons for the display of these goals. These users have attended seminars and discussed about sustainability mainly from course participation during lectures. The other users however, who see sustainability as linked only to environmental aspects have seen the goals displayed but do not really know what these are. They could describe what these looks like but not what they talk about. They could however base upon their general knowledge of current societal issues “guess” what sustainable development goals could be. These users provided examples such as caring for the environment, respect for gender equality and reducing inequality between developed and developing countries. The same respondents made the following comments.

Respondent 1. “I had seen these displayed and I did not know what they were until I attended the course sustainable business and leadership. This was the first time I heard about sustainable development goals and I was able to figure out what was displayed.”

Respondent 2. “When I was on my way to a lecture, I saw cubes in front of a classroom”

4.2. Importance and awareness of Agenda 2030 goals

This section demonstrates awareness in relation to how it is important. The results are based on the view that sustainability is an important aspect for the business school’s engagement in corporate social responsibility. The users generally believe that today’s organizations should focus on sustainability. They all agree that it is important for the business school to discuss about the SDGs. Most of the users were able to identify that through education can the business school create more knowledge on sustainability. It is for this reason that the users consider important to implement sustainable development. The users showed how important sustainability was based. The users who demonstrated an environmental based knowledge of sustainability agreed that it is important to care for the environment given the present climate change challenges. Other users discussed gender equality as an important goal to be achieved. The latter however had no prior knowledge from course related information but to them it is important for equality to be a goal at Karlstad Business School. This result is reflected in respondent 3 comments who was a student of business administration at the business school. The comments were as follows.
”It is good that any institution especially concerning business which is a huge actor in political and economic decisions is engaged in helping the world to be more sustainable. The university is our role model, so I think if they do it well, students are going to do the same”

This user clearly illustrates knowledge of the importance of sustainability both for the university and the students. The user identifies that sustainability is needed across other dimensions of life such as political and economic. The user further lays the burden of creating awareness on the university which is a role model. The user believes that sustainability is important to be implemented by the business school so that it can influence decisions across other departments to engage in similar action. Some of the users were able to identify that sustainability is an important objective to be implemented at the business school given the present environmental concerns the world faces. However, they are not aware of what the university is doing in this aspect. The users insist that every action taken for a sustainable future is welcomed. This was the case with respondent 4 who commented as follows.

”Every step towards achieving a sustainable environment is good as well as maintaining gender equality. However, I will like to know more about what the university is doing in this aspect. Now I do not have knowledge about this.”

4.3. Engagement and communication of Agenda 2030 goals.

This category was used to demonstrate the user’s participation in sustainability mainly through discussions such as seminars at the business school and talks with friends, family or others about sustainability.

Sustainability is a widely discussed concept among the users. For some, they engage in discussions with family and friends. Such discussions occur when the users revisit current world issues. For most with the environmental view on sustainability, the talks were linked to climate change. Such was the case for respondent 5 with the following comments which were of a similar view to respondent 11 and 12.

”Yes, I talk about it with family and friends. I think it is important to discuss about sustainability aspects in everyday life. To make a difference we need to be open for conversations. Sometimes but not always specifically about all UN Agenda 2030 goals but more about being conscious about the environment”
Others also mentioned gender equality and the need for much more quality education at the business school that will enable other users gain knowledge on the concept and its practice at the business school. The users further demonstrated that they have heard about the term sustainability on diverse platforms but however, they do not know about the business school’s involvement in sustainability or if at all the business school is involved in implementing sustainability. Such a result is reflected in the following comments by respondent 6.

”Yes, I have heard about the sustainable development goals on Facebook and other social media platforms, but I had no clue that Karlstad Business School was implementing them.”

Other users know about the term and the universities involvement across other platforms. They are both conscious of the availability of this information through the university’s website and through engagement with external stakeholders to the university. This is identified through the following comment by respondent 7 who is a student of business administration at a master’s level.

”I have read about the sustainable development goals on other platforms. I once read on the newspapers about a collaboration between Karlstad University and Stora Enso which made me very proud of the university I attend.”

This user is clearly conscious and aware of the fact that sustainability is mentioned at the business school and through external sources. The user also makes a remark of its university having a positive image by its involvement in sustainability.

Another user was quick to identify that KBS has a relationship with the SDGs which it tries to communicate to its user. This user as well believes that more can be done to improve the overall impression about the business school's involvement in sustainability. This was respondent 10 whose comments were like respondent 8 and 9:

”Actually, I have too little insights about how well Karlstad Business School is engaged in the sustainable development goals and how well they are related to these goals. Therefore, I lack insights to be able to provide a good answer on this question. The lack of insights on how well the business school is engaged in sustainable development goals might be because they are not actually performing well in this issue. I mean their communication level about their engagement in could be better”
The users overall demonstrated some level of skepticism about the whole concept of sustainability given that they were not able to really appreciate if an organization means good when it practices sustainability. For some sustainability is an umbrella for businesses given that it’s a world trend, for others it is a means of appearing good before society. The users demonstrated an interest in knowing why KBS engages in sustainability. However, the users didn’t disapprove of KBS sustainability practices and rather were from the discussions during the interview make meaning with the researcher based on the fact that KBS is an actor of sustainability.
5. Discussion

The results from the qualitative study show that awareness is generally low and that students will support sustainable development goals in line with their personal values. The aim of this chapter is to provide an interpretation of the results in accordance with prior research.

The results of this study tie with mainstream research on CSR communication and awareness. The findings from the study identify two groups of users. The users with prior knowledge on sustainability mainly through course related information at the business school and those without any prior knowledge and studying at different departments at the university but with links to the business school. Prior literature in relation to Morsing and Schultz (2006) are of this view and agree that many users are not knowledgeable about an organization’s CSR communication except for those with some prior knowledge on the subject which is the case for this study of user’s awareness. The findings show that all users believe sustainability is an important aspect of today’s world and organizations cannot do without sustainability. This confirms with Du et al., (2010) who agree that CSR is integral to organizational practice and as such must be included in every organizations’ corporate agenda given modern day sustainability challenges. However, the ability of a user to interpret the business school’s message about sustainability is highly related to the user’s personal values. This is in accordance with the user’s social value orientation in line with Du et al., (2010). The authors argue that for a CSR communication message to be effective, the users’ social value will serve as a motivating factor. It is for this reasons that most of the users responded that they are not aware. They simply do not have interest in this or don’t find it related to their personal life. However, they have heard of the term sustainable development goals but have little focus on it. Personal interest and believes therefore has a role to play in a users’ processing of CSR communication messages such as UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Awareness about sustainable development goals has links with personal interest of the users. If it goes in line with their personal values and beliefs. In relation to this, there were respondents who said they attend seminars because it is a course requirement. They rely on the business school to give them knowledge about sustainability. That is why there were respondents who said they heard it first during seminars. This is in agreement with Poomering and Dolnicar (2009) who state that users are not only concerned about an organization’s CSR but want to be informed about it. The congruence of personal beliefs and interest in particular goals as a factor
which influences an organization’s CSR success has been proven true in the study of Sen and Bhattacharya (2001). Users who identified sustainability goals as present in KBS and important for them were those that were in line with their personal interest.

With regards to a shared meaning of sustainability, the users perceive sustainability from an environmental perspective, they quickly identified recycling units. Their specific recall about KBS and sustainability is environmental aspects. However, they know about the sustainable development goals but only those with course related information will be quick to identify KBS involvement on other platforms. This was the case with one of the respondents who is a student of business administration. There is general awareness on the importance of sustainability. Students were able to see the need for satisfying the some of the goals. The pattern for satisfaction still showed that respondents identified the goals which mattered most for them such as gender equality, good education and proper waste disposal. The business school obtained this information and decided to focus on some of these goals as noted in the (PRME,2018). This shows that UN Agenda 2030 can be a credible source for communication CSR given that the students were able to identify its relevance. In agreement with a Du et. al., (2010), an organization’s CSR message can be linked to a social cause and the organization’s involvement in that social cause. This is the case with KBS involvement in UN Agenda 2030.

On communicating these goals, the students believe that more can be done. The data shows acceptance in talking about sustainability as important for society. This means that with more communication from the business school, the level of awareness will increase. In agreement with Morsing and Schultz (2006), modern day CSR communication requires sophisticated means of communication to influence users. However, in the case of a business school, education is an adequate means to communicate CSR to users. The visual display of the goals received a positive result with many students being able to see it. On the reasons why, these are displayed the respondents did not figure out which is a possible avenue for future research from the company perspective. Prior research however shows that this is to create an awareness. This is identified in Du et. Al., (2010) as a message channel which is advertising. However, users believe that the business school needs to put more emphasis on its advertisement such that users can make meaning out of it and not merely perceive it as a decoration to the corridors of the business school or rather to give a positive image to pressure groups with interest in a business school’s CSR.
performance such as the Global Compact Initiative. According to Dawkins (2004), most users show interest in CSR initiatives and as such organizations must actively engage in communication about their initiatives which is an opportunity to create meaning with users. In this regard from a user perspective, they see the goals and can describe what they look like, but the content of the information is unknown except for users who have an interest in knowing about the Sustainable development goals such as course related interest. The students with such knowledge are mainly those who have attended the seminars and discussed about these goals. This was the case with the users from business administration courses. Discussions on sustainability are meaningful to the users because they believe through this they can obtain more information. Thus, a possible key finding is that through seminars and discussions can the university create more awareness. In agreement with Mette Morsing (in Rasche et. al., 2017), it is through communicating CSR that salient points are raised and challenged to make meaning. This means that seminars and discussions are a good opportunity for the business school to create awareness among users. Furthermore, such a view goes in line with prior literature which embarks on a two-way communication process (Lim & Greenwood, 2017). For Schmeltz (2012), this means shifting away from the old classical one-way communication strategy which was mainly from organization to users. Discussions have shown favorable results among business students and in line with (PRME, 2018), the university meets the principles of responsible management education objectives of creating an arena for effective learning. Through discussions, users who responded to the interview questions showed some degree of awareness about the university’s CSR commitment based on course related information. However, this awareness is considerable low given that as Morsing and Schultz (2006) explain, it is merely informative. Users are given knowledge on sustainability through courses, but user action is low which gives reason for the low level of awareness in this study. According to Pomering (2005) users need information on where the business school is engaging in CSR and the polices and activities of the business school in this respect such that they can be aware and respond positively by supporting the business school’s initiatives and being brand ambassadors. As explained by Morsing and Schultz (2006), scepticism is a significant aspect of CSR communication messages given that most users are not able to know an organization’s intrinsic motive (Du et. al., 2010) for engaging in CSR.

Conclusively, users with prior knowledge on KBS involvement in CSR can demonstrate some aspects of this based on the extent of their course related
information and personal beliefs and interest in study. As concerns other users who have no links with the business school in terms of educational requirements, they are aware of sustainability at a more generalist level but are very much interested in having more knowledge on this field through involvement in discussions. This means that the business school must exercise a continuous process of communication which is what Podnar et al., (2013) perceives as a feature of CSR communication.
6. Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the results and discussion chapters. The focus of this chapter is on the research question and the contributions of this study to prior literature. In this chapter, the practical implications of the study will be presented. Finally, the chapter will end with the limitations of this study and suggestions for further research.

6.1. Significant findings of low user awareness.

The previous results of this study have been analyzed and the findings have been discussed to show that awareness levels are low among users especially those without prior knowledge on CSR. The users with some intermediate awareness levels are based on course related information obtained through discussions in seminars. This therefore means that KBS and its users do not share similar meaning given that what is communicate is not exactly what the students reported in this study. These students obtained such knowledge from discussions and seminars. The students with prior knowledge and those without prior knowledge however share similar characteristics in that their social beliefs and interest will affect their responses to KBS corporate social responsibility communication.

Another key finding in this study is that discussions mainly in the form of seminars at the business school are a huge channel for communicating CSR messages to users. Most of the users who have prior knowledge on the UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals noted seminars and discussions as a platform where they obtained knowledge. The university however, is actively engaged in this in line with the PRME (PRME, 2018) and creates discussions for knowledge exchange and interaction. The key focus therefore will be to raise the knowledge level of those with existing knowledge which are the users of registered to courses at the business school notably the course Sustainable Business and Leadership. Therefore, through Kurt Lewin’s Group Dynamics, the group process has identified a behavior among students which is closely associated to their personal beliefs. To change the individual beliefs then, the university through discussions and seminars can target the group of students studying the course Sustainable Business and Leadership and change their beliefs. Through this the business school can raise awareness levels of students in business administration. By so doing, the business school can see how changes in mindset of users within the group occur as a result of communicating
to a small group. By changing user beliefs to be in line with that of the business schools, CSR communication based on UN Agenda 2030 will have a similar meaning. To change beliefs, the business school needs to actively engage its users in communication. However, it is important to note therefore that UN Agenda 2030 does not change the process of CSR communication but rather is a novel way of communicating CSR. More light is therefore needed on this novelty such that it can be made known as a way of communicating CSR.

6.2. Practical Implications of the study.

The practical implications of this study are two sided and apply to the business school and to the users.

With regards to the business school, their engagement in UN Agenda 2030 is a huge contribution to adopting a global message for CSR communication. It is an example for other organizations to employ given that sustainability is the way forward in today’s dynamic and globalized world. However, they have a responsibility of ensuring that the meaning they carry is shared with all users at the business school who here are students. This study suggests that course curriculums on sustainability should have a communication focus to users. This study identified that through education in the form of seminars and discussions can the users obtain more awareness about the UN Agenda 2030 goals. The courses should not merely inform but engage students in meaningful dialogue that can change the existing beliefs of students such that they go in line with that of the senders of such CSR messages. The courses therefore need to be aligned with university objectives to foster awareness. The belief among users that these courses are a requirement for completion of this needs to be changed to the users seeing this on a platform for change.

The business administration students on their part have a main role of being flag bearers of the business school’s message. These students can actively engage in raising awareness among other non-business program users who have demonstrated low awareness levels according to this study. Furthermore, the business school can suggest a possible inclusion of sustainability related courses across other departments at the university given that not only are businesses affected by sustainability, but the UN Agenda 2030 goals cut across all aspects of life ranging from social, economic, environmental and governmental.
6.3. Limitations of the study.

This study has a number of limitations which are worth noting. The study is limited to Karlstad Business School. This means generalizations cannot be made about all other business schools in Sweden. This research as noted by Gray (2017) is limited to one context and as such lacks generalizability. The fact that only 12 students were interviewed shows a very little number of opinions which in itself is a limitation. It will be interesting to take a larger study which will find out the opinions of a larger number of respondents. The study is subjective as discussed in Bryman and Bell (2011) given that the data was collected and analyzed based on the researcher’s ideology.

6.4. Suggestions for further research

This study adopted a qualitative methodology to find out how aware users are of CSR communication from a UN Agenda 2030 perspective using a small sample of 12 respondents. Future research can conduct a quantitative study based on same ideology and find out awareness using a larger sample size. Furthermore, this study has investigated UN Agenda 2030 from a user perspective using awareness. It is interesting to see how organizations are implementing UN Agenda 2030 into their corporate frameworks. This is a possible arena for future research. The findings from this study suggests that user personal beliefs contribute to awareness about CSR initiatives carried out by organizations. Future research can focus on the mechanisms which account for user social beliefs given that this is a cognitive process. The study concluded that by focusing on a small group, the university can apply Kurt Lewin’s group dynamics ideology in communicating CSR initiatives at the business school. Future research can also investigate the efforts made by students of such courses to CSR communication at the business school.
References


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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

I am Javis Fongha Ngu who is conducting a master’s thesis study in Business Administration (30 ECTS) at Karlstad University. The thesis aims at finding out user awareness at Karlstad Business School of UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals communicated by the business school.

These questions are the main source of data for this thesis and as such your response is considered very important to the researcher and will be grateful for taking your time to respond. The questionnaire gives you the opportunity to give a detailed response as much as you can to demonstrate awareness as a user at Karlstad Business School.

Thank you for your response.

Questions

1. Have you read about or heard discussions about the Sustainable Development Goals and Karlstad Business School’s involvement on other platforms apart from the university’s?

2. Apart from discussions organized by Karlstad Business School, do you personally engage in debates with your family, friends or others about Sustainable Development Goals?

3. What is your overall impression about Karlstad Business School and its engagement in the Sustainable Development Goals?

4. Can you explain why it will matter to you or not if Karlstad Business School implements the Sustainable Development Goals?

5. Why will/won’t you consider these goals as an important objective for Karlstad Business School to implement?
6. What is your impression about seminars where discussions about Sustainable Development Goals occur?

7. Why will/won’t you attend a seminar organised at Karlstad Business School if it were not a course requirement?

8. Can you provide examples of Sustainable Development Goals implemented at Karlstad Business School?

9. Can you describe a situation you have experienced where you think Karlstad Business School is implementing the Sustainable Development Goals?

10. What comes to your mind when you think about Sustainable Development Goals and Karlstad Business School?

11. Why do you think Karlstad Business school implements Sustainable Development Goals?

12. Can you tell me about the first time you saw the Sustainable Development Goals at Karlstad Business School?

13. Can you list what some of these goals talk about?
## Appendix 2: Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Number</th>
<th>Description of respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student of business administration with a background in service management. Respondent is aged 23 and is a female.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Engineering master’s students taking business courses. Has connection with the business school through business marketing course. Respondent is aged 22 and is a female.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Studies a four-year Accounting and control program. Aged 22 and is a male.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Studies engineering and has connection with the business school through business marketing course. Female student and aged 24.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Studies engineering and has connection with the business school through business marketing course. Male student and aged 27.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Studying a bachelor program in international business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Studying a bachelor program in international business. Aged 20 and is a female.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Studying a bachelor program in international business. Aged 19 and is a male.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Studies a master’s in marketing at the business school. Aged 26 and is a male.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Student of business administration master's in service management. Aged 30 and is a male.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Studies engineering and has connection with the business school through business marketing course. Female student aged 25.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Studies engineering and has connection with the business school through business marketing course. Male student aged 30.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3: Coding

The coding was done using properties developed by the researcher during the study. The properties used were developed in relation to the keywords in this study which are awareness and CSR communication. Awareness had three properties which include recall, mentions and relevance. Communication had three properties which include visual display, discussions and credibility. The results of this codes can be presented below.

**Mention:** This code was developed because the students were asked about how often they had discussions with their friends, family and/or others where the term sustainable development goals was mentioned. It is related to awareness given that talking about something crate awareness. The students were able to identify then that they had discussions sometimes when discussing current world issues. Others also mentioned that they do not discuss the term at all and don’t know what it is about. Based on this question and responses, the researcher branded this property as mentions with a dimension external source. This dimension was used to find out how often the students heard about the business school’s involvement in sustainability from sources external to the business school. In relation to discussing it with friends and family, did the media and other platforms discuss it?

**Recall:** This code was developed because the students were initially asked about what they knew about the term sustainable development goals. This question permitted the researcher to distinguish between the two groups of students which were identified in results of the study. The students recall ability was linked to what believes they have of sustainable development and the business school’s involvement in this. The dimension to measure this was extent of prior knowledge. However, given that two groups were identified in this study that is student with some prior knowledge mainly through business administration courses and those without any involvement with course related information. As such, only students who had prior knowledge could demonstrate some high level of recall during the interviews. However, the finding on personal beliefs emerged here given that students without prior knowledge through courses in line with those with prior knowledge showed some level of interest in the term in line with their personal values. Most of these thought that involvement in sustainability by the business school is a good thing. They went on to say why they thought so which was mainly in line with goals that worked for them.
**Relevance**: In line with the above property, the researcher then developed the code relevance to show how important the goals were for the students. Perceived proximity was used as a dimension to describe the level of importance. This was related to the students, those close to them and if it matters to them that the business school is a sustainable brand. The students believe sustainability is important with present day challenges. Those without prior knowledge from course related information discussed the importance of sustainable development goals in line with environmental goals such as climate change. This was what mattered for them as a personal interest and value. Caring for the environment. The students with prior knowledge were able to identify that sustainability is important across other dimensions and not limited to environmental. Interestingly, those without course related prior knowledge could identify other non–environmental goals which mattered for them such as gender equality and poverty reduction.

**Visual Display**: This property was developed because of the communication channel identified by the researcher at the business school. The sustainable development goals are displayed at the business school’s premises. The students were asked if they saw these goals. If they could describe what they looked like and if they knew what they were. The students were asked further if they understood why these goals were displayed. Eye catching was used as a dimension to see how perceptible the goals were on sight. Most of the students have seen the goals displayed. However most of them don’t understand why it is displayed. Some feel it’s a decoration. Others think it's for external stakeholders which was noted by the researcher as skepticism given that these students took a critical stand. The students who had attended courses on sustainability mentioned that they identified the goals after knowledge from the course. The visual display enabled the researcher to see if the communication channel was effective. The low level of responses to it showed that this channel is less appealing to students without prior knowledge.

**Credibility**: This property was used to see how reliable the message communicated was. The questions asked sought to find out if the business school practices what it preaches. The students were generally able to identify the practices. For most without prior knowledge, they quickly identified environmental aspects such as recycling. Gender equality emerged as a typical example as well as quality education. The credibility was based on the message source.
Discussions: This property was used to represent interactions mainly through seminars were knowledge about sustainable development goals are exchanged and debated. The dimension for this was meaningful to find out if the student could make meaning out if this in other words share meaning with the business school. The interviews showed that this is the primary and main source of information to the students. Most of them identified this means of communication as favorable in creating awareness about sustainable development goals. Even those without prior knowledge showed interest in discussions if they knew about these. The students who demonstrated prior knowledge were a typical proof of the success of this property.

Prior Knowledge on SDGs: This was a core category based on selective coding. The researcher identified that visual display would be more effective in creating awareness if the students can recall what knowledge they have when they see the SDGs displayed. This category is linked to prior knowledge given that it is a cognitive process and the facts that come to the student’s mind are subjective to every student and go in line with the student’s beliefs and interest. Two properties recall, and visual display were linked to form this.

Engagement in SDGs: This core category emerged because through discussions can the term be mentioned. As such enabling discussions on SDGs will increase mentions and hence increase awareness. By linking discussions and mentions, engagement emerged as a core category to describe the respondent’s action.

Importance of SDGs: Finally, the importance of SDGs was labelled as a core category to demonstrate how relevant and credible the message was. If the students consider the message is reliable then its it important for them.