



MASTER THESIS

Impression Management Techniques
of Pharmaceutical Companies
on Instagram

Christina Willecke

COMMUNICATION SCIENCE (MSc) | Organizational Communication & Reputation
FACULTY OF BEHAVIOURAL, MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (BMS)

EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

Prof. Dr. Menno de Jong

MSc Sikke Jansma

September 2020

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

Abstract

Purpose. For a long time, pharmaceutical companies had a good reputation for being the innovators in the advancement of human health. However, scandals concerning shortcomings of industry policies and practices have overshadowed the once positive image. Therefore, making a good impression and creating a positive reputation is an essential asset for these companies to eventually rebuild their stakeholders' trust in them. For this reason, this study explores how pharmaceutical companies create their desired impression by examining to which extent and how they use impression management techniques on their corporate Instagram accounts.

Method. By conducting a qualitative content analysis, 600 Instagram posts published by 15 pharmaceutical companies were analyzed in this thesis. The dataset included both videos and photos whose visual, textual and auditory cues were examined.

Results. The results reveal that pharmaceutical companies use a variety of impression management techniques in all of their Instagram posts. On average, the most frequently used technique is exemplification, followed by ingratiation, self-promotion, emotionalization and, lastly, supplication. The content analysis has also shown that the companies frequently combine certain impression management strategies such as exemplification and self-promotion or emotionalization and supplication. The results, moreover, reveal that storytelling and content about corporate social responsibility/corporate citizenship activities are regularly used in combination with the techniques to strengthen the impression the companies want to make.

Conclusion. The study gives an insight into the impression management trends and patterns that pharmaceutical companies use on their Instagram accounts. Through implementing their strategies, the corporations aim at making and upkeeping the impression of being committed, likeable, competent and strong actors within the pharmaceutical industry and beyond. They do so by highlighting the positive aspects of their businesses and practices while not addressing any scandals or controversial topics that could potentially jeopardize the positive impression they want their stakeholders to have of them.

Keywords: Impression management, pharmaceutical companies, Instagram, corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship, digital storytelling, corporate reputation

Table of contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Theoretical Framework	4
2.1 Impression management theory.....	4
2.1.1 Defining the impression management theory.....	4
2.1.2 Corporate impression management.....	5
2.1.3 Impression management on social media.....	6
2.2 Digital visual storytelling	6
2.3 Corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship and impression management.....	7
2.3.1 Connecting CSR, CC and impression management.....	7
2.3.2 A closer look at corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship	8
2.4 The link between impression management and corporate reputation	9
2.5 Resulting theoretical framework	10
3. Methodology.....	12
3.1 Research design	12
3.2 Sample	12
3.3 Codebook.....	13
3.3.1 Creating the codebook.....	13
3.3.2 The final codebook.....	13
3.4 Intercoder Reliability.....	15
3.5 Analysis	15
4. Results.....	16
4.1 Content displayed in Instagram posts.....	16
4.2 Analysis of impression management techniques.....	18
4.2.1 Exemplification	19
4.2.2 Ingratiation	20
4.2.3 Self-promotion.....	21
4.2.4 Emotionalization.....	22
4.2.5 Supplication.....	23
4.3 Corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship.....	24
5. Discussion.....	25
5.1 Main findings	25
5.2 Theoretical implications	27
5.3 Practical implications	28
5.4 Limitations and recommendations for future research.....	29
5.5 Conclusion.....	30

References	31
Appendix A	38
Appendix B.....	39

1. Introduction

For a long time, pharmaceutical companies had a good reputation for being the drivers of innovation in the advancement of human health. The industry had strong credentials in social, technological and economic areas and was, therefore, widely respected (Parker, 2007). However, scandals concerning (shortcomings of) industry norms, policies and practices, lobbying activities and a lack of transparency in corporate activities have overshadowed the once positive connotations connected to the industry (Kessel, 2014). Even though the pharmaceutical industry makes billions of dollars of profit every year it also has to spend billions of dollars on fines and settlements (Withers, 2019). In the time frame between 1991 and 2015, pharmaceutical companies had to pay settlements for close to 400 marketing fraud cases that came to a total of \$35.7 billion (Compton, 2020). The aforementioned accusations e.g. entail the recalling of medicine with strong side effects such as a higher risk of heart attacks or strokes. Moreover, companies are also fined for failing to follow good manufacturing practices due to producing substandard and contaminated drugs (Compton, 2020; Greene, 2019). Other scandals concern the accusation of companies bribing doctors to prescribe their medications or the pharmaceutical industry's often aggressive and deceptive marketing techniques that have contributed to the over-prescription of drugs (Carreño, 2019; Singer, 2020). More recently, a number of pharmaceutical companies have been accused of being involved into the US opioid crisis - one of the causes being the misleading marketing of drugs. They are facing prosecution to determine who is taking responsibility for setting off the US opioid epidemic which has led to more than 400.000 deaths across the nation over the last two decades (Carreño, 2019; Hoffman, 2019).

The Covid-19 pandemic, however, might become a turning point for Big Pharma. The new demands arising from the pandemic push pharmaceutical companies to the center stage in the fight against the virus. Most companies take part in the race for the treatment approval for vaccines and therapeutics and mobilize their resources to start off clinical trials (Kelleher, Kumar, Patel & Schrader, 2020). Pharmaceutical companies, moreover, engage in philanthropic activities by donating supplies such as masks and medicine especially to the healthcare sector (The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry, n.d.). Companies are under public and competitive pressure to work as quickly and efficiently as possible. If they manage to act successfully, their good deeds will likely have a positive impact on their reputation (Pharmaceutical Technology, 2020).

Yet, until the companies might actually be able to accomplish these desired results, they still have to fight off the negative publicity of the past which accuses them of solely having their profits in mind. Overall, past scandals have taken a toll on the stakeholder's trust in them. The companies are being criticized severely for having self-serving ulterior motives which has fostered an overall negative perception of the industry among the public (PricewaterhouseCoopers, n.d.). That is why making a good impression and creating a positive corporate reputation is an essential asset for these companies.

To forego potential pitfalls companies strategically plan the impressions they want to make and determine how to manage them. Based on Goffman's (1959) original notion of impression management, companies thereby attempt to influence and control the perceptions of others about themselves by regulating the information they share (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Thereby, the main focus lies on the self-portrayal of their brand, goods and services in line with how they perceive their own self-image to be (Spear & Roper, 2013). Social media platforms offer an optimal setting for impression management as companies can communicate an idealized version of themselves. They provide an opportunity to strategically think about which aspects should be presented and highlighted in alignment with their other corporate strategies and practices (Ollier-Malaterre & Rothbard, 2015). Especially Instagram has become an important tool for external communication purposes of companies with more than one billion people using the platform every month and 200 million users visiting at least one business profile daily (Hutchinson, 2020). Its increasing popularity has sparked a transformation in the way companies are communicating and staying in touch with their stakeholders as the platform allows companies to directly engage with their consumers (Lee, Lee, Moon & Sung, 2015).

Selecting appropriate content to share with the stakeholders on social media is of key importance in the creation of an impression. One topic that has proven to generate favourable stakeholder attitudes is corporate social responsibility (Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2010). In industries that have a rather difficult reputation (tobacco, alcohol, pharmaceuticals, oil, etc.), companies might take on political, social or environmental responsibilities as doing so is likely to evoke positive responses from their stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Companies might take on projects with the aim of masking or concealing their behaviour and business practices. However, when doing so they might be confronted with suspicions of hypocrisy (Matten & Crane, 2005). Therefore, the way in which their actions are portrayed is of utmost importance. Through creating a sound impression on their communication channels by setting up well-designed strategies companies can strategically communicate their commitment to certain issues while also conveying trustworthiness (Lund, Cohen & Scarles, 2018).

In previous research, a variety of connections between impression management and different online environments have been explored. There are publications on how corporations use impression management on their corporate websites (e.g. Connolly-Ahern & Broadway, 2007) or on how companies use impression management strategies on Facebook to steer the dialogue between the consumers and the organization (Lillqvist & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013). Concerning impression management on Instagram, studies focusing on how individuals such as influencers use Instagram stories for impression management have been published (Sukmayadi & Yahya, 2019). Yet, the analysis of impression management strategies in connection with the mainly visual, but also textual and auditory cues of the content (pharmaceutical) corporations publish on Instagram has, so far, remained unexplored.

Therefore, this study aims at applying Goffman's impression management theory (1959) to the communication efforts of pharmaceutical companies on social media, more specifically, on Instagram. It, thereby, intends to deepen the understanding of corporate impression management strategies on Instagram by conducting a content analysis of 15 pharmaceutical companies' Instagram posts. To explore this matter, the following research question has been formulated:

To what extent and how do pharmaceutical companies use impression management techniques on their corporate Instagram accounts?

In the following chapters, this master thesis is first going to review the literature that serves as background for this research. Thereafter, the methodology of the thesis will be explained. Following that, the results of the content analysis will be presented and discussed. In the last chapter, the main findings and the theoretical as well as practical implications will be shared. Lastly, the limitations of the study will be described and recommendations for future research will be given.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the impression management theory by Goffman (1959) will be discussed. Thereafter, further developments of the theory focusing on the corporate level will be presented and the connection between impression management and social media will be explored. Furthermore, the concept of digital storytelling and visual storytelling on Instagram will be presented and its tie to impression management will be explained. Next, the theoretical framework discusses corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship and shines a light on the concepts' significance in connection with impression management. Lastly, the impact of impression management on corporate reputation will be discussed after which a visualization of the resulting theoretical framework will be shared and elaborated.

2.1 Impression management theory

2.1.1 Defining the impression management theory

First conceptualized by Erving Goffman in 1959, impression management describes the conscious or subconscious process in which individuals attempt to influence and control the perceptions of others about themselves, other persons, objects or events by regulating information in social interactions (Jones & Pittman, 1982). The theory is rooted in the field of social psychology and provides a way of studying and analyzing everyday social interactions. In his work, Goffman (1959) illustrated how individuals both negotiate and validate their identities in face-to-face interactions to carefully construct and craft their public perception. In social encounters, individuals attempt to control and guide their impression by fixing or changing the setting, their appearance or their manners as it has implications on how they are perceived, evaluated and treated (Tashmin, 2016). Furthermore, the theory explains that the individual's appearance, actions and involvement intentionally or unwittingly give away parts of their intent and purpose. Yet, people have control over facilitating this revelation, blocking it or misdirecting the audience and therefore have the power over the way they are perceived (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Picone, 2015).

Goffman uses a dramaturgical metaphor as an analogy by comparing individuals to actors who present a particular version of reality while obscuring any contradictions. He views human interaction as a drama in which the actors perform roles and convey a certain presentation of self in front of their audience to create a specific impression (Lillqvist & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013). Through their theatrical performance they control what the public sees by separating their environment into a front-stage and a back-stage (Richey, Ravishankar

& Coupland, 2016). In the front, the individuals (actors) are acting in front of the observers (audience) who then analyze how they behave, look or speak, as well as their gender, age, clothing or facial expressions. The desired impression and the positive self are accentuated and define the situation for the observer while aspects that might discredit the impression are suppressed. In contrast, on the back-stage, individuals act as themselves and shed the role they play for society (Picone, 2015; Tashmin, 2016).

According to Jones and Pittman (1982), impression management techniques can be grouped into five umbrella categories: ingratiation (appearing likeable) which includes tactics such as complementing, helping others or being compassionate, intimidation (appearing threatening) to construct an identity of authority, self-promotion (appearing competent) which focuses on appearing knowledgeable or boasting about abilities and accomplishments, supplication (appearing weak) which includes acting humble, modest and dependent on others and, lastly, exemplification (appearing virtuous) by showing commitment to a cause or presenting oneself as a role model. To create the desired impression, people might make use of only one or multiple of these strategies at the same time.

2.1.2 Corporate impression management

As described above, impression management is a concept of self-expression whose theory originally only applied to individuals. However, there are various publications in which the theory has also been applied to corporations (e.g. Cho, Roberts & Patten, 2010; Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Laroche, Habibi, Richard & Sankaranarayanan, 2012; Lillqvist & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013). For companies, the main focus of impression management lies on the self-portrayal of their brand, goods and services in line with how they perceive their own self-image to be. Corporations attempt to build a favourable image among their stakeholders through personalized communication practices on different channels by employing tools such as corporate storytelling (Feaster, 2010; Spear & Roper, 2013; Tedeschi, 1984). Additionally, they might use certain language characteristics to positively shape their environment's perceptions of the corporation by emphasizing the good and concealing the bad as well as sharing their commitment and obligation to society by portraying themselves as good citizens (Cho et. al, 2010; Laroche et. al, 2012). The staging of the self follows economic rules as the ultimate goal is to create a sustainable development which maximizes the profits and creates a competitive advantage through building up the audience's loyalty (Laroche et. al, 2012). However, if not well managed, there can potentially be negative effects which, ultimately, not only damage the companies' reputation but might even have economic consequences (Ebert & Piewinger, 2007).

According to the theory, successful self-presentation and impression control are achieved when companies have a high degree of self-control and can precisely analyze and control their social environment (Ebert & Piewinger, 2007).

2.1.3 Impression management on social media

Goffman's impression management theory originally only applied to face-to-face interactions. However, throughout the years, researchers have reinterpreted Goffman's notion and applied it to technologically mediated social interactions (Krämer & Winter, 2008; Meyrowitz, 1990; Papacharissi, 2010; Tashmin, 2016). At first glance, the online environment seems to be more limited and less rich than face-to-face-interactions. However, the authors detected parallels between offline and online interactions such as the need for communication, affiliation, approval or belonging stating that even though the online environment offers a different expression equipment, the fundamental issues and processes stay the same (Connolly-Ahern & Broadway, 2007; Meyrowitz, 1990; Papacharissi, 2010; Tashmin, 2016).

Over the last decade, social media have become a very important tool not only for individuals but also for corporations. Companies can use the platforms for creating an online presence and for presentational purposes to advertise and promote their goods and services. Social media platforms offer a useful setting for impression management as companies can communicate an idealized version of themselves. It can be seen as a complementing channel through which organizations can deploy impression management to strategically control which aspects should be presented and highlighted as the company's behaviour online results in how they are perceived by their environment (Benthaus, Risius & Beck, 2016; Ollier-Malaterre & Rothbard, 2015). These days, it is a common practice for a company to communicate a favourable impression of its operations to its external stakeholders online which potentially helps the company achieve strategic objectives. Therefore, companies invest time and resources to ensure that their messages are carefully constructed and communicated online (Richey, Ravishankar & Coupland, 2016).

2.2 Digital visual storytelling

To convey their desired impression on social media, companies often use storytelling when creating content (Miller, 2004). Over the last decades, organizations have discovered that sharing anecdotal information and narratives through stories are of great value and importance as the human brain is more engaged in processing stories than hard facts (Pulizzi, 2012; Soule & Wilson, 1999). For that reason, the use of corporate storytelling as a communication

technique has been incorporated by companies because stories are easy to understand and accepted as a means of communication both within and outside of organizations (Couldry, 2008). By conveying authentic stories which target the informational as well as emotional level the companies' social media content strategies aim at building a positive and strong impression (Lim & Childs, 2016; Lim & Childs, 2020; Volker, Philipps & Anderson, 2011). They do so by producing conversational media that not only focus on spreading information but on building a collective and collaborative two-way relationship with the audience (Couldry, 2008).

As Instagram is a visually oriented social media platform, corporations use their accounts to publish imagery with narrative elements that “provide a sense of interactivity and connectedness so that consumers can fully immerse themselves into a brand’s visual storytelling” (Lim & Childs, 2020, p. 9). Visual storytelling extends the options for companies to communicate subliminal messages with nonverbal cues. In comparison to verbal messages which, at times, can be rather complex and confusing, studies have shown that audiences have less difficulty interpreting nonverbal messages (Page & Duffy, 2016). A visual narrative can convey information on the content level but also make symbolic references which can influence the recipient’s cognitive and affective attitude towards the company and the content it produces (Lim & Childs, 2020; Page & Duffy, 2016). Consequently, utilizing meaningful stories to engage with stakeholders can not only build strong ties but can eventually benefit the corporation’s brand and reputation as it can present itself as caring and trustworthy (Gill, 2015; Martinus & Chaniago, 2017). Therefore, visual storytelling is a powerful and effective tool for corporations’ impression management.

2.3 Corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship and impression management

2.3.1 Connecting CSR, CC and impression management

An example of the type of content companies share in the form of stories are posts about their corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate citizenship (CC) activities. Literature suggests that embedding CSR/CC into a corporate strategy makes it a very useful tool to foster relationships between organizations and its stakeholders which likely has a positive impact on the impression the stakeholders have of the organizations (Maignan & Ferrell, 2001). From a company’s point of view, CSR/CC topics help to directly engage with their stakeholders, to create ties on the basis of shared values and, ultimately, gain their support and patronage (Williams, n.d.). By sharing content about their CSR and CC activities, companies therefore follow the primary motive of being viewed in a favourable light by others which, ultimately,

has an impact on the impression others have of them (Bolino, 1999). Therefore, taking on social responsibility and executing good citizenship behaviour can ultimately help with building and securing a positive image and a good reputation (Dubielzig & Schaltegger, 2005). Yet, companies are at risk for being criticized for having ulterior motives when engaging in CSR/CC activities (Bolino, 1999). If companies, for example, practice self-serving behaviour and have strong impression management motives they are very careful in the avoidance of creating negative images in the eyes of their stakeholders. Therefore, they will engage in and talk about their citizenship activities while making sure that they are not jeopardizing their own reputation (Grant & Mayer, 2009).

2.3.2 A closer look at corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship

Although there is no specific definition of CSR, it can be described as the social or civic involvement of companies that holds them accountable to their social, environmental or economic impact on society (Matten & Crane, 2005). CSR is a corporation's commitment to minimize or even eliminate any harmful effects on those who are affected by its corporate policies and practices while maximizing its long-term beneficial impact on communities in which it operates (Dean, 2003; Hsu, 2011). A corporation's social responsibility is seen as both an obligation and an investment and includes legislated responsibilities as well as voluntary actions (Dean, 2003). Next to CSR, corporate citizenship (CC) is a related concept in the same field (Gardberg & Fombrun, 2006). Depending on the school of thought, CC is defined differently in the literature. On the one hand, CC is characterized by the fact that it encompasses various forms of charitable activities of a company, also known as philanthropy. Activities such as donations, corporate volunteering or cause promotion are ways in which companies express their citizenship behaviour (Williams, n.d.). This view is also laid down in Carroll's (1991) pyramid of CSR. According to this model, CSR comprises the economic responsibility to be profitable, the legal responsibility to obey the law, the ethical responsibility to behave in a way that is right, just and fair and, lastly, the philanthropic responsibility to be a good citizen (Matten & Crane, 2005). Following this thought, corporate citizenship is categorized as a subset of CSR. On the other hand, representatives of the second group consider corporate citizenship and corporate social responsibility to be interchangeable concepts. They suggest that the concept of CSR was only given a new disguise by renaming it, basing it on the observation that no new aspects have been added (Dubielzig & Schaltegger, 2005).

There is an ongoing debate about whether CSR/CC activities are either serving self-interest and follow egoistic motives or whether they are altruistically motivated and serving others (Grant & Mayer, 2009). Matten and Crane (2005) suggest that the concept presents a case for strategic philanthropy as it is fueled by the self-interest of creating a stable environment socially, environmentally and politically so that the profitability of the business is ensured. Following this idea, CC can be rationalized as “social investing” building up both social and reputational capital which, ultimately, helps to enhance the corporation’s economic performance (Matten & Crane, 2005). Opposite to that, CSR might also be driven by prosocial motives as Grant and Mayer (2009) argue. In that case, the organization sees itself as a good soldier fueled by the concern for others and acts in an empathetic, conscientious and benevolent manner. Finding a balance between self-serving and prosocial motives and finding a way to display them to the outside environment does not only have an effect on the impressions companies make but, ultimately, also on the reputation they have.

2.4 The link between impression management and corporate reputation

By establishing a positive impression amongst their stakeholders companies aim at fulfilling their desire of having a favourable reputation. The reputation of a company reflects the sum of favourable and unfavourable perceptions and collectively held beliefs that stakeholders have of a corporation’s performance and behaviour (Gabbioneta, Ravasi & Mazzola, 2007; Hillenbrand & Money, 2007; Langham, 2018). Highhouse, Brooks, and Gregarus (2009) suggest that “specific impressions precede people’s general evaluations of a company” (p.157). They state that producing a variety of corporate images is essential for the development of impressions and that a corporation’s reputation is either fully or partially mediated by the aggregate impressions the company makes on its environment (Highhouse, Brooks, and Gregarus, 2009).

To achieve the goal of being perceived in a favourable way, companies use impression management techniques for presenting themselves in a positive light which helps them maintain the desired public perception (Benthaus, Risius & Beck, 2016). The management of a reputation is realized through a conscious, planned, dynamic as well as continuous process that the company is committed to. To build a positive reputation, the organization’s goal is to appear transparent, authentic and ethical, to establish a feeling of integrity and to gain trust (Gray & Balmer, 1998; Langham, 2018). In that regard, companies cater to their stakeholders’ opinions as they make inferences about corporations’ dispositions such as their reliability, their (social) responsibility or their trustworthiness based on actions they have observed and interpreted

according to their values (Gabbioneta, Ravasi & Mazzola, 2007). Therefore, some elements of a corporation’s social responsibility are viewed as essential drivers concerning the impression they make and the reputation they have. To establish a good reputation, antecedent actions such as embracing CSR standards and philanthropy have turned out to be very persuasive and important for influencing the public perception (Hillenbrand & Money, 2007; Hsu, 2011; Peterson, 2018).

2.5 Resulting theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis introduced and discussed the theories and concepts of impression management, corporate storytelling, corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship as well as corporate reputation. This chapter aimed at showing the interconnectedness of the different concepts presented above. It elaborated on the aspects that corporations might take into consideration when planning and executing communication strategies that not only aim at making and sustaining a positive impression but a good reputation overall. Below, Figure 1 visualizes the theoretical framework:

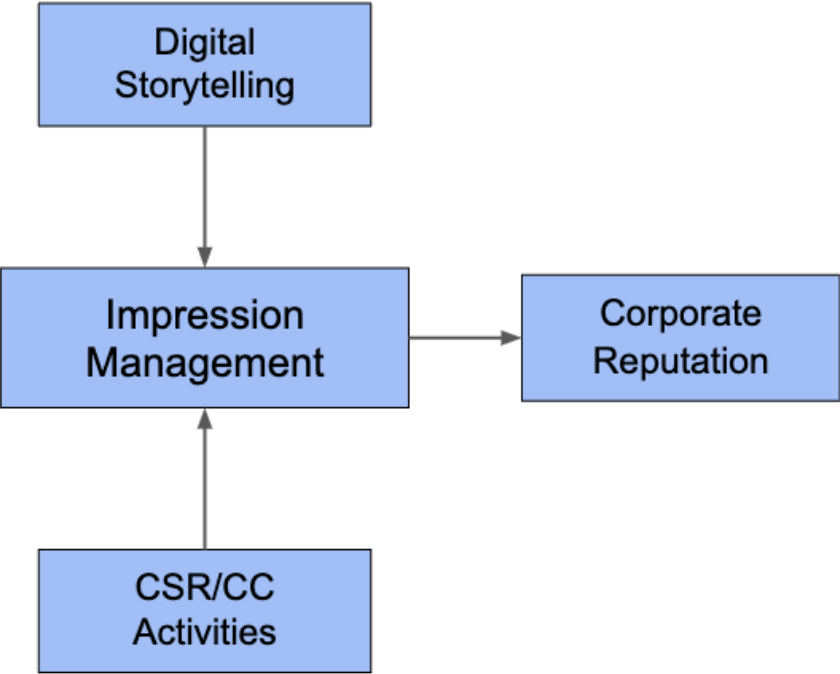


Figure 1. Visualization of the resulting theoretical framework.

The figure shows that both digital storytelling and CSR/CC activities are building blocks used by companies to create the desired impression they want others to have of them. By using (visual) digital stories, companies aim at creating a collective and collaborative two-way relationship with the audience through connecting with them on an emotional level. These strong ties between the company and its stakeholders help with positively influencing and managing the company's impression as it appears relatable and trustworthy to them. The same dynamic applies to highlighting CSR and CC activities. When shining a light on these positively connotated topics the companies have more control over managing their impressions by both drawing the focus to desired aspects and diverting the focus from difficult topics. These processes, ultimately, help companies to strategically build and maintain their impressions which, in the long run, benefit the corporations' overall reputation.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, the research design and the sample selection will be described first. Thereafter, the process of creating the codebook and the final codebook will be presented and explained. Moreover, the intercoder reliability test results that ensure the reliability of the study will be shared. Lastly, the analysis of the collected data will be explained.

3.1 Research design

This study examined to what extent and how pharmaceutical companies used impression management techniques on Instagram. To answer the exploratory research question, a qualitative content analysis was conducted. The collected data included all content visible in the company's Instagram feed which comprised both photos and videos. The posts were analyzed by taking into account the visual, textual and auditory cues of the respective post. The focus, therefore, lied on how the post as a whole fit into the categories.

3.2 Sample

This master thesis analyzed the Instagram posts of 15 pharmaceutical companies following a ranking according to their turnover established by EY in 2018 (Ernst & Young, 2018). The list included the following companies: *Pfizer, Roche, Johnson & Johnson, Merck & Co. Inc., Sanofi, Novartis, GlaxoSmithKline plc, AbbVie Inc, Amgen Inc., AstraZeneca plc, Bristol-Myers, Eli Lilly and Co, Bayer, Novo Nordisk* and *Boehringer Ingelheim*. For brands that maintain both global and nation-specific Instagram accounts, the global account was taken as a basis for the sample. That is why *Gilead Sciences, Inc.* and *Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited* were excluded from the sample as both companies do not have global Instagram accounts. More in-depth information about the companies' accounts can be found in Appendix A.

A total of 600 posts were analyzed. As the companies differed in how many posts they published weekly or monthly, no time frame was set. Instead, the sample included 40 posts from each company that were published the latest on May 31st, 2020 and then counted backwards from that post. In the end, the earliest post included in the sample was published on May 21st, 2019 and the latest post included was published on May 31st, 2020. Thus, the sample comprised a time span of approximately one year.

3.3 Codebook

3.3.1 Creating the codebook

As there was no existing codebook in previously published works that fit the scope of this thesis, a new codebook was created based on a test sample of posts ($N=100$). This test sample was also included in the final sample of 600 Instagram posts. By coding manually, new categories were added in an iterative process. While setting up the codebook both inductive as well as deductive codes were used. The deductive codes comprised the impression management techniques by Jones and Pittman (1982). Based on the literature, they were further subdivided into several categories to specify the coded content. The inductive codes added to the codebook integrated categories regarding the form, the content topics and the style in which the posts were presented. Additionally, they also included a number of corporate social responsibility/corporate citizenship categories. Lastly, the emotionalization code was added next to the other four impression management technique categories and the ingratiation category was refined through adding two sub-categories, namely offering guidance and exuding trustworthiness. With these additions, the codebook was completed.

3.3.2 The final codebook

The final codebook consisted of three tables. Simplified versions of these tables are presented over the next few pages. An overview of the complete codebook including the definitions of each code can be found in Appendix B. The first table included the form in which the content was displayed. Moreover, it covered the content displayed as well as the style in which it was presented.

Table 1

Codes for the content displayed in the Instagram posts.

Category	Code
Form	Photo, video, both
Content displayed	Company employees, science, company, disease, educational content, awareness days or months/holidays, other occupational groups/collaborators, events, personal stories, campaigns/projects
Style	Storytelling

The codebook also included a table containing four out of five impression management techniques according to Jones and Pittman (1982): ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, and supplication. The intimidation technique was excluded as it was not used in the sample that was analyzed. The remaining four techniques were further subdivided into more sub-categories to investigate the strategies used. The sample showed that the companies used additional impression management techniques beyond the scope of what literature had covered so far namely emotionalization, offering guidance, and exuding trustworthiness. For this reason, these codes were included in the final codebook as can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Impression management technique codes.

Impression management techniques	Sub-categories
Ingratiation	Complementing, praising, thanking others, helping others, being compassionate, acting cheerful, addressing the audience, seeking affinity, offering guidance, exuding trustworthiness
Supplication	Depending on others, appearing humble, appearing modest
Exemplification	Committing to a cause, having high moral standards, presenting oneself as a role model, dedicating oneself
Self-promotion	Competence, knowledge, abilities and accomplishments, boasting, name dropping, playing an important role in society
Emotionalization	-

Lastly, the codebook contained a table of five corporate social responsibility/corporate citizenship sub-categories as the sample had revealed that companies mentioned different kinds of CSR/CC activities in a substantial number of posts.

Table 3

Corporate social responsibility/corporate citizenship codes.

Variable	Sub-categories
CSR/CC	Philanthropy, corporate volunteering, cause promotion, environmental, ethical

3.4 Intercoder Reliability

A pretest was conducted to ensure the suitability of the chosen categories and the reliability of the coded variables. Intercoder reliability was tested by handing out a test sample of 10% ($N=60$) of the total number of posts to a second rater who then independently coded the posts. An online meeting was set up during which the researcher gave an introduction as well as an explanation of the codebook to the second coder. During the meeting, the second rater was able to pose questions about the codebook to clarify its definitions and give feedback on the comprehensibility of the codebook. The calculation of Cohen's Kappa showed a result of $K=0.78$ which indicates a substantial strength of agreement between the two coders. For the sub-categories, Cohen's Kappa ranged from $K=0.57$ (appearing modest) to $K=1.00$ (acting cheerful, corporate volunteering, etc.). After having discussed the definitions of the categories that scored lower than the average level of agreement the researcher made slight modifications to the codebook by taking into account the feedback of the second coder. Due to the feasibility, the coding of the remaining posts was performed by only one researcher.

3.5 Analysis

To analyze the collected data, the percentage share of each category was calculated to get an overview of what type and kind of content the companies posted as well as to what extent each impression management technique was used. The results of the content analysis were examined to identify potential underlying themes, patterns and concepts. Moreover, possible connections between the different categories were detected and analyzed. As more techniques were added to the five strategies established by Jones and Pittman (1982) during the course of coding, their significance for the Instagram strategies of pharmaceutical companies was evaluated to potentially expand the current theoretical framework.

4. Results

This chapter presents the results of the content analysis. First, the findings of the form, the content topics displayed on Instagram and the style the posts were presented in will be discussed. Thereafter, the results of the coded impression management techniques and the CSR categories will be analyzed.

4.1 Content displayed in Instagram posts

Below, Table 4 gives an overview of the results that show how often each form, content category and style was used in the examined Instagram posts.

Table 4
Results of content displayed in Instagram posts.

Categories	<i>n</i> (=600)	(%)
Photos	266	55
Videos	332	44
Both photos and videos	2	0
Company	447	75
Company employees	353	58
Diseases	298	50
Campaigns/projects	291	49
Other occupational groups/collaborators	240	40
Educational content	233	39
Science	171	29
Awareness days or months/holidays	153	26
Personal stories	132	22
Events	84	14
Storytelling	175	29

Results show that companies used photos (55%) and videos (44%) to an almost equal extent. However, the use of photos and videos varied significantly from company to company as some relied on only using photos while others almost exclusively used videos to share their messages.

As far as the published content is concerned companies often included information about themselves, gave updates, shared their opinions or referred to their actions and plans (75%). In half of their posts (50%), the companies mentioned diseases to raise awareness, inform the audience, share progress or introduce the viewer to ongoing projects. Again, the number of posts mentioning diseases varied greatly from company to company and increased towards the end of the examined time frame. This can be connected to the Covid-19 pandemic which became a focal point on the accounts of some companies around mid-March. Connected to the pandemic, the number of posts mentioning campaigns related to Covid-19 increased significantly towards the end of March. Some companies started using hashtags such as “#backthefrontline” to mark the post as a campaign and encourage the viewer to act according to the regulations and guidelines. The situation also explains the rather high percentage of posts regarding other occupational groups or collaborators (40%) which mainly focused on healthcare workers. The category least used was events (14%) not only because from March on they were not allowed to take place anymore, but they also hardly ever occurred in posts before that.

The companies that mostly shared videos as their chosen type of content often conveyed their messages using storytelling as a tool (29%). This technique can be found in posts about personal stories or fates of patients that are battling or have overcome diseases. Likewise, it can be found when the companies displayed their CSR/CC activities to report about philanthropic projects they are involved in. In that context, storytelling also noticeably co-occurred with companies using the emotionalization technique for the respective posts. Companies also told stories in textual form by writing captions about their history or remarkable employees, so that their followers are able to connect more easily with the company. Overall, most posts combined a variety of categories. Even though the nuances of the categories varied from company to company such as specific awareness days they mentioned or the different projects they were working on, they all connected to the ten categories mentioned below in one way or the other.

4.2 Analysis of impression management techniques

In Table 5, the results of the impression management techniques and their sub-categories are displayed. The content analysis results reveal that the companies use a combination of different impression management techniques in all of their Instagram posts.

Table 5
Impression management techniques results.

Impression management technique	<i>n</i> (=600)	(%)
Exemplification		
Committing to a cause	432	72
Dedicating oneself	363	61
Presenting oneself as a role model	302	50
Having high moral standards	133	22
Ingratiation		
Seeking affinity	439	73
Exuding trustworthiness	352	59
Helping others	331	55
Addressing the audience	283	47
Acting cheerful	246	41
Being compassionate	230	38
Complementing	109	18
Offering guidance	106	18
Praising	86	14
Thanking others	70	12
Self-promotion		
Competence	309	52
Knowledge	258	43
Playing an important role in society	192	32
Abilities and accomplishments	176	29
Boasting	131	22
Name-dropping	90	15
Emotionalization	137	
Supplication		
Depending on others	62	10
Appearing humble	23	4
Appearing modest	19	3

4.2.1 Exemplification

The sample shows that on average the strategy most frequently used by pharmaceutical companies on Instagram in the underlying time span was exemplification. In 72% of the posts, the companies wanted to convey that they are committed to a cause such as curing diseases, supporting philanthropic projects or standing up for equality. The use of the exemplification strategy thereby often coincided with the choice of highlighting CSR activities. Beyond that, companies displayed that they also dedicate themselves to these causes (61%) by showing how they are devoted to the task or working tirelessly to help. In half of the posts (50%), companies presented themselves as role models, signaling that people can orient themselves towards their behaviour and suggestions. The results of the data collection also show that the exemplification and the self-promotion techniques were used on the same posts quite frequently. When doing so, the companies not only showed their expertise on but also their commitment to different issues to create an overall coherent impression. In the figure pictured below, Novartis shows its commitment and dedication to fulfill its “company purpose” by introducing a “global minimum 14 week paid parental leave policy” for its employees (Novartis, 2020).



Figure 2. Instagram post by Novartis using the exemplification technique (Novartis, 2020).

4.2.2 Ingratiation

In about three quarters of their Instagram posts (73%), companies sought affinity with their followers. They wanted to reach this goal by, for example, displaying that they are helping others (55%) or being compassionate (38%). Another strategy used very frequently was “exuding trustworthiness” (59%) which aims at the company appearing dependable and reliable. Generally, the companies managed to create this impression by letting the viewer catch a glimpse at their business practices such as showing their employees working in the company’s facilities which strengthens the feeling that they are honest and caring. Particularly in crisis situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the population depends on pharmaceutical corporations to develop a vaccine. Therefore, the companies portrayed themselves as strong institutions that tackle the challenge head on which builds the impression of them being trustworthy institutions. The companies were also directly addressing the audience in almost half of their posts (47%). This strategy can be seen as an attempt to build a connection with the viewer and engage with them to eventually form a friendly and close relationship. Complimenting (18%), praising (14%) and thanking others (12%) scored the lowest in the ingratiation category. The numbers would probably have been even lower if the Coronavirus had not happened, as the sample shows that the posts including these strategies exponentially increased once the pandemic had reached a global level. In the example below, GlaxoSmithKline are using the ingratiation technique by complimenting and thanking both front line health workers and their own staff for working in the fight against Covid-19 (GlaxoSmithKline, 2020).



Figure 3. Instagram post by GSK using the ingratiation strategy (GlaxoSmithKline, 2020).

4.2.3 Self-promotion

On average, the companies used the self-promotion technique in about one third of their Instagram posts. The sub-categories used the most when pursuing this strategy were competence (52%) and knowledge (43%) which were, for example, presented in informative posts about science and diseases but also in posts with a focus on conveying educational content. By referring to their abilities and accomplishments (29%) among other things companies showed that they are “playing an important role in society” which was a strategy used in 32% of the posts. In 22% of the posts, the companies boasted about their abilities and accomplishments (29%) or dropped names of important actors both within and beyond the pharmaceutical sector they collaborate with (15%). AstraZeneca, for example, presented their competence and knowledge in the following Instagram post by mentioning that they are “finding ways to speed up diagnosis” and name-drop their “partnership with governments” (AstraZeneca, 2020).



Figure 4. Instagram post by AstraZeneca using the self-promotion technique (AstraZeneca, 2020).

4.2.4 Emotionalization

For 23% of the posts, the companies presented their Instagram posts in an emotional way by using effective authentic visual, audio or textual contents to elicit emotional responses from their viewers. In highly produced videos, they interviewed patients or used a voice over with piano music to draw their viewers in and keep them watching. Emotionalization also connected to a number of other categories which reinforced the companies' message of being committed, dedicated and compassionate. Specifically, the data collection revealed that companies used the emotionalization and supplication strategies on the same posts. This can be deducted from videos revolving around the Covid-19 pandemic in which the companies stated that they depend on healthcare workers in the fight against the virus. These videos were oftentimes edited in an emotional way to evoke an emotional response, more specifically empathy, from the viewer. The screenshot below shows a video published by Merck of a man talking about his experience when his wife was diagnosed with lung cancer. When he reads out the letter he wrote to himself, the man gets emotional and piano music starts playing in the background (Merck, 2020).



Figure 5. Instagram post by Merck using the emotionalization strategy (Merck, 2020).

4.2.5 Supplication

The supplication techniques, even though used the least by far, can be strongly connected to Covid-19. Content-wise the strategies were mostly used when acknowledging that the pandemic could not be tackled without healthcare workers. Apart from that, the strategy was only used when announcing that a company joined forces with another company or NGO in the context of tackling major issues connected to the pandemic. Pfizer, for example, published a video in which the company appears modest by stating that they depend on essential workers who are important for the “manufacturing, packaging, distribution and supply” of vaccines (Pfizer, 2020).

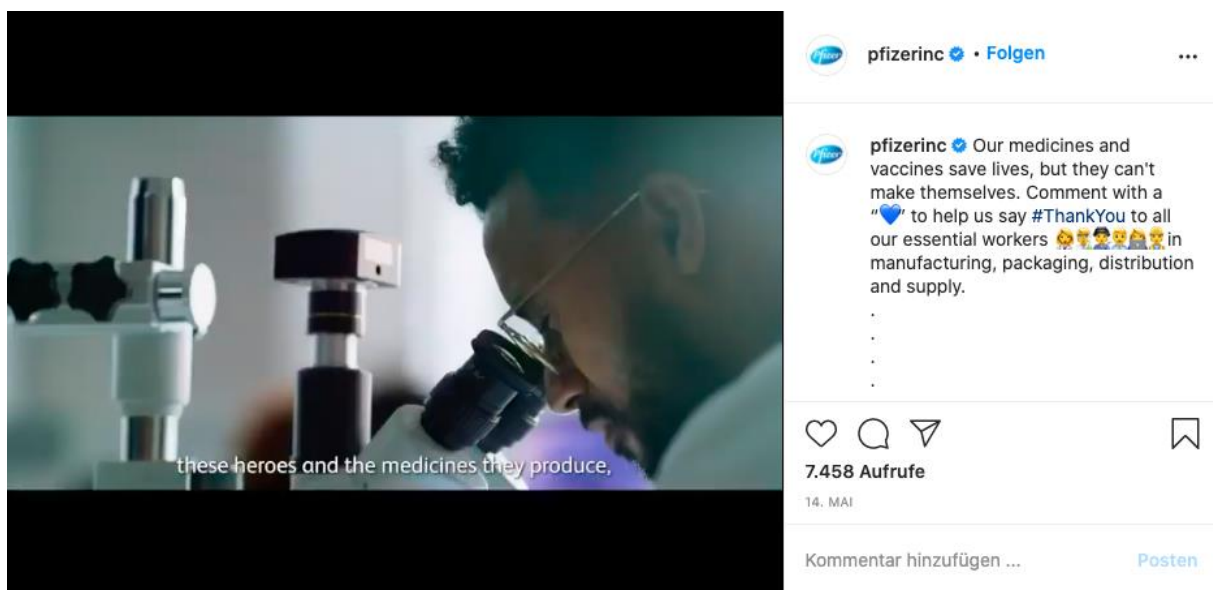


Figure 6. Instagram post by Pfizer using the supplication technique (Pfizer, 2020).

4.3 Corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship

Table 6 presents an overview of the results of the corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship categories that have been added to the codebook.

Table 6
Corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship results.

Categories	<i>n</i> (=600)	(%)
CSR and CC		
Cause promotion	268	45
Philanthropy	128	21
Ethical	109	18
Corporate volunteering	69	12
Environmental	25	4

On average, in about one fifth of the posts, the pharmaceutical companies thematized a form of corporate social responsibility or corporate citizenship. They mostly focused on cause promotion (45%) and covered topics such as specific diseases, awareness days or social causes as well as projects and campaigns they are supporting. As far as their ethical responsibility (18%) is concerned, most companies showed their commitment by participating in campaigns such as “#EachforEqual” which advocates for women’s equal rights not only at their place of work but in all areas of life. Additionally, they also used their platform to shine a light on minorities and celebrate their heritage or talk about their various corporate associations employees can get involved in. In about 12% of the posts a form of corporate volunteering was displayed. Some of the posts showed events or projects set up by the company in which groups of employees work in their free time to build bikes for a children’s organization or go for a run to raise awareness and collect money for a good cause. Other posts also pictured individuals engaging in philanthropic activities such as traveling to refugee camps to bring goods and help at the site or volunteering in hospitals to aid Covid-19 testing. Only a few companies brought up their environmental responsibility (4%) and in case they did, the majority then nevertheless dedicated only one out of 40 posts to an environmental topic. The companies, moreover, often used CSR/CC projects in combination with the exemplification strategies in which they portrayed themselves as committed and dedicated role models.

5. Discussion

The main objective of this study was to find an answer to the following research question: *To what extent and how do pharmaceutical companies use impression management techniques on their corporate Instagram accounts?* To answer this question, the results obtained through the content analysis will be discussed in this chapter. To start off, the main findings will be presented. Thereafter, both the theoretical and the practical implications will be analyzed through an interpretation of the results. Furthermore, the limitations of this thesis as well as the opportunities for future research will be discussed after which the thesis will be completed with a conclusion.

5.1 Main findings

The results of this study show that pharmaceutical companies use (a combination of) impression management strategies in every single post on their corporate Instagram accounts. The content analysis reveals that the selected pharmaceutical companies use exemplification as an impression management technique the most, followed by ingratiation, self-promotion, emotionalization and, lastly, supplication. This ranking is similar, yet not completely identical, to the ones that can be found in literature as it also names ingratiation, self-promotion and exemplification as the most frequently used strategies. However, in most studies, ingratiation scores the highest whereas within the framework of this study it, on average, was used less than exemplification (Connolly-Ahern & Broadway, 2007; Young et. al, 1994). The dataset, furthermore, shows that companies tend to use the emotionalization strategies in combination with the supplication strategies in the same posts. When doing so, the companies connect it to content thematizing the Covid-19 pandemic in which they state that they depend on the tireless work of essential workers in the fight against the virus. These videos are generally presented in a way that evokes an emotional response from their viewers which, in turn, gains the companies sympathy and empathy. The data collection results also reveal that the exemplification and the self-promotion techniques are used in combination quite frequently. In these cases, the companies not only show their expertise on but also their commitment to different issues to create an overall coherent impression.

A common pattern that can be found across most companies' accounts is that they use storytelling as a tool when posting certain types of content. As described in the theoretical framework of this thesis there is an interconnectedness between storytelling and impression management techniques (Miller, 2004). The data collection results show that storytelling in

combination with the emotionalization and self-promotion techniques co-occur in the same posts quite frequently. The concepts also connect in practice because the companies' stories target both the informational and the emotional level as they help build strong relationships between the company and the stakeholders which, in turn, helps establish a positive and strong impression (Lim & Childs, 2016; Lim & Childs, 2020; Volker, Philipps & Anderson, 2011).

The study also shows that the companies form their Instagram presence without responding to the criticism surrounding their industry. Instead of addressing scandals or controversial topics they highlight the good work they do, especially with regard to their corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship activities. Companies, for example, use CSR/CC projects for their exemplification strategies in which they portray themselves as committed and dedicated role models. This result is congruent with literature that reports corporations aiming at positively shaping their environment's perceptions by emphasizing the good and concealing the bad by portraying themselves as good citizens (Cho et. al, 2010; Laroche et. al, 2012).

Moreover, the companies stay away from using the intimidation technique even though the pharmaceutical industry is a very important player in the global arena. The lack of use of this technique confirms previous findings in the literature on impression management techniques that found this strategy to be used very scarcely if even at all (Connolly-Ahern & Broadway, 2007; Lillqvist & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013; Sukmayadi & Yahya, 2019). Nonetheless, the companies want their stakeholders to know that they are playing an important role in society. Yet, the companies do not communicate that through appearing threatening but instead present themselves as strong and powerful actors conducting groundbreaking work that advances the human health sector. Especially now, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the population depends on pharmaceutical companies to develop a cure. This circumstance gives the corporations the opportunity to tackle the challenge head on to not only shed the negative publicity but to build the impression of being a strong and trustworthy institution. In fact, Covid-19 changed the content strategies of some companies noticeably. Their focus shifted towards different aspects, for example to how the companies are helping in times of crisis or to how they are informing the public about actions they can take to follow the stipulated rules and guidelines.

5.2 Theoretical implications

Even though the original impression management theory conceptualized by Goffman was already published in the 1950s, his theory has aged well throughout the years. Scholars still add new developments and findings to the original theory to apply it to the different channels of modern-day communication. This thesis also contributes new additions to adapt the theory in order to fit the area of corporate social media communication.

The results of the content analysis show that the emotionalization of content is a common strategy used by the corporations. For that reason, it was added to the codebook next to the impression management categories that Jones and Pittman established in 1982. When emotionalization applies to the respective post, the companies use effective authentic visual, audio or textual contents to elicit emotional responses from the viewer. They do so by adding happy, motivational or dramatic background music or by recording captivating voice overs to accompany the videos. Additionally, companies also show video sequences in slow motion or share heartfelt stories both written in text or as visual cues in photos and videos. Furthermore, the ingratiation category by Jones and Pittman (1982) was refined by adding two new subcategories: offering guidance and exuding trustworthiness. The former applies when the companies offer guidance to the viewers by thematizing, explaining and giving advice on different topics, facts and issues. The latter is marked as present when companies aim at appearing trustworthy through exuding dependability and reliability towards the viewer through sharing their values and business practices.

Besides adding new aspects to the theory, the results also reflect some of those of previous literature. Generally, the companies in the pharmaceutical industry tend to employ impression management strategies that aim at highlighting their positive attributes such as their moral worthiness (exemplification), their likeability (ingratiation) or their competence and abilities (self-promotion). Their weaknesses (supplication) or negatively connotated behaviour (intimidation) are, however, portrayed rarely or not at all (Connolly-Ahern & Broadway, 2007; Young et. al, 1994). Also, the resulting theoretical framework of this thesis which focuses on the connection between storytelling and impression management as well as CSR/CC activities and impression management is reflected in the findings of this research. The data collection results show that the use of storytelling often co-occurs with the use of the emotionalization and self-promotion techniques. The same applies to the display of the companies' CSR and CC activities for which the results show that they are often used in combination with the emotionalization or the exemplification techniques.

5.3 Practical implications

The results of this study show that pharmaceutical companies use their corporate Instagram accounts for employing impression management techniques with the intention of communicating an idealized version of themselves. They mainly do so by exemplifying themselves, ingratiating and self-promoting as the results of the content analysis show. This finding gives an insight into how the companies manage their social media presence to counteract the consequences of having a rather difficult reputation as indicated in the introduction of this paper.

A challenge of developing an effective social media strategy can be finding the right balance between presenting the company in the best way possible, e.g. through exemplification or self-promotion while still coming across authentic. The pharmaceutical companies whose content strategies were the subject matter of this thesis currently seem to focus on highlighting the positive aspects and not thematizing the negative aspects surrounding their work and industry in general at all. Even though they manage to create a sound picture of the company on their accounts, this strategy does not come without risks. Through social media, companies can easily be held accountable for their business practices by all of their stakeholders. Therefore, not reacting to criticism at all, as the 15 companies are doing right now, might be risky in the long run as social media dynamics can be very powerful and can easily damage a carefully built reputation. Hence, addressing current events or potentially even criticism might be a strategy that will be received in a positive way by the stakeholders as it shows that the company cares and is open to showing itself vulnerable. Moreover, using the supplication strategy's sub-categories "depending on someone" or "being humble" and "being modest" more often than the companies of this study do would possibly make them appear more humane and relatable.

Generally, Instagram gives companies the chance to become more transparent as it allows an insight into what the companies are doing in their day-to-day business. When looking at the results of the content categories, pharmaceutical companies seem to focus on sharing information about their organization, their employees or their projects. This, not only, is helpful for shining a light on topics that might otherwise not get a lot of attention, but it also offers the chance to make the companies more tangible for the viewer. When getting an insight into these parts of a company, people can more easily identify themselves with it without having any connection or specific knowledge in the pharmaceutical field. Instead, people connect their own experiences from their personal lives with the ones the corporation shares.

Overall, in line with the findings of this study, the ultimate goal for these companies should be building an impression of authenticity and trust. Only when people feel connected to a company and are actually loyal to it, the company can overcome the aftermath of receiving negative publicity while building a long-lasting, positive impression among its stakeholders.

5.4 Limitations and recommendations for future research

Even though this study is able to contribute to the theoretical and practical knowledge of impression management there are limitations that have to be acknowledged. This research focuses on the implementation of impression management techniques of pharmaceutical companies. It does, however, not regard the effects the published content has on the company's Instagram followers. It still is uncertain whether posts that e.g. intend to appear likeable to the viewership are actually perceived in that way and are, in fact, successful attempts in creating the intended impression. To examine the effect of the corporations' strategies, a content analysis examining the likes and comments of their Instagram followers would have to be conducted.

Another limitation concerning the thesis is the use of manual coding which is highly dependent on the coder's subjective interpretative schemes. This type of coding might lead to a bias for not being connected to a norm based standard. To ensure the suitability of the chosen categories and the reliability of the coded variables, a sample of ten percent of the posts ($N=60$) was given to a second coder who analyzed the sample independently. However, due to feasibility, the coding of the full sample was only performed by one researcher. For future research, it would be recommendable if two coders were both able to code the full sample to strengthen the study's reliability.

Moreover, as indicated in the results section of this paper the data collection results show patterns regarding the repeated use of certain categories in combination with others. To examine the relationships of these categories and check for a possible correlation a cross-tabulation analysis could be conducted.

Lastly, the Covid-19 pandemic happened about halfway through the time frame this paper's coding sample takes into consideration. This study tried to include noticeable differences concerning the content the companies published in connection to Covid-19, yet the scope of this master thesis does not allow for an in-depth analysis of the changes the pandemic has triggered. Thus, for future research it might be interesting to conduct research on how companies use impression management strategies when the state of the world is not in a crisis versus how the companies adapt to and handle the new circumstances to find out if and to what extent it makes them change their strategies.

5.5 Conclusion

The objective of this study was to explore the extent to which pharmaceutical companies use impression management techniques on their corporate Instagram accounts and how they do it. According to the results of the content analysis, the most frequently used impression management technique of pharmaceutical corporations on Instagram is exemplification, followed by ingratiation, self-promotion, emotionalization and, lastly, supplication. Overall, by incorporating a combination of these strategies on their Instagram accounts pharmaceutical companies try to make a favourable impression through highlighting the positive aspects of their business and its practices. Thereby, they divert their stakeholder's attention from negative publicity towards the impression of being committed, likeable, competent and strong actors within the pharmaceutical industry and beyond.

Moreover, the study expands the theoretical framework with additions to the impression management theory. Emotionalization was added as a category next to the impression management techniques proposed by Jones and Pittman (1982). Additionally, two sub-categories were added to the ingratiation strategy: offering guidance and exuding trustworthiness. The study, furthermore, found that the proposed resulting theoretical framework showing the interconnectedness of corporate storytelling, corporate social responsibility/corporate citizenship, impression management and corporate reputation is reflected in the practical undertakings of the companies. Specifically, the results show that storytelling and CSR/CC activities are building blocks the companies use when implementing their impression management strategies.

Overall, the paper gave an overview on the current impression management trends and patterns that pharmaceutical companies use on their Instagram accounts. As the Covid-19 pandemic forces pharmaceutical corporations to take the center stage in the fight against the virus they are under public pressure to work as quickly and efficiently as possible. If they manage to be successful, their accomplishments will likely make a good impression on their stakeholders and will therefore have a positive impact on their reputation. In that case, the companies might change their impression management strategies to adapt to the new circumstances. The results of the study are an indication that the companies might do so in the future as the data collection which overlapped with the beginning of the pandemic was able to detect some changes in the content the companies posted. They suggest that the companies have already started to adapt their impression management strategies to the new situation. Future research could build on that observation to detect and assess potential short-term and long-term effects the Covid-19 pandemic has on the companies' impression management techniques.

References

- AstraZeneca [@astrazeneca]. (2020, March 24). To support healthcare workers around the world fighting the Covid-19 global pandemic, ... [Instagram photo]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/B-H47bRDF6z/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Benthaus, J., Risius, M., & Beck, R. (2016). Social media management strategies for organizational impression management and their effect on public perception. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 25(2), 127-139.
doi:10.1016/j.jsis.2015.12.001
- Bolino, M. C. (1999). Citizenship and impression management: Good soldiers or good actors? *The Academy of Management Review*, 24(1), 82. doi: 10.2307/259038
- Carreño, S. (2019, August 6). Pharmaceutical industry in trouble: Two large companies face lawsuits. Retrieved from <https://latinamericanpost.com/27445-pharmaceutical-industry-in-trouble-two-large-companies-face-lawsuits>
- Carroll, A. B. (1991). The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders. *Business Horizons*, 34(4), 39-48.
doi:10.1016/0007-6813(91)90005-g
- Cho, C. H., Roberts, R. W., & Patten, D. M. (2010). The language of US corporate environmental disclosure. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 35(4), 431-443.
doi: 10.1016/j.aos.2009.10.002
- Compton, K. (2020, April 20). Big Pharma and medical device manufacturers. Retrieved from <https://www.drugwatch.com/manufacturers/>
- Connolly-Ahern, C., & Broadway, S. C. (2007). The importance of appearing competent: An analysis of corporate impression management strategies on the World Wide Web. *Public Relations Review*, 33(3), 343-345. doi: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2007.05.017
- Couldry, N. (2008). Mediatization or mediation? Alternative understandings of the emergent space of digital storytelling. *New Media & Society*, 10(3), 373-391. doi: 10.1177/1461444808089414
- Dean, D. H. (2003). Consumer perception of corporate donations: Effects of company reputation for social responsibility and type of donation. *Journal of Advertising*, 32(4), 91-102. doi:10.1080/00913367.2003.10639149
- Du, S., Bhattacharya, C. B., & Sen, S. (2010). Maximizing business returns to corporate social responsibility (CSR): The role of CSR communication. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 12, 8-19

- Dubielzig, F., & Schaltegger, S. (2005). Corporate citizenship. In M. Althaus, M. Geffken, S. Rawe (Eds.), *Handlexikon Public Affairs* (pp. 235–238). Münster, DE: Lit Verlag.
- Ebert, H., & Piwinger, M. (2007). *Impression Management: Die Notwendigkeit der Selbstdarstellung*. In *Handbuch Unternehmenskommunikation* (pp. 205–225). Wiesbaden: Gabler Verlag. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-8349-9164-5_10
- Elsbach, K. D., & Kramer, R. M. (1996). Members responses to organizational identity threats: Encountering and Countering the Business Week Rankings. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *41*(3), 442–476. doi: 10.2307/2393938
- Ernst & Young. (2018). Die größten Pharmafirmen weltweit: Analyse der wichtigsten Finanzkennzahlen der Geschäftsjahre 2015, 2016 und 2017. Retrieved from [https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/ey-die-goessten-pharmafirmen-weltweit/\\$FILE/ey-die-goessten-pharmafirmen-weltweit.pdf](https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/ey-die-goessten-pharmafirmen-weltweit/$FILE/ey-die-goessten-pharmafirmen-weltweit.pdf)
- Feaster, J. C. (2010). Expanding the impression management model of communication channels: An information control scale. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *16*(1), 115–138. doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2010.01535.x
- Gabbioneta, C., Ravasi, D., & Mazzola, P. (2007). Exploring the drivers of corporate reputation: A study of Italian securities analysts. *Corporate Reputation Review*, *10*(2), 99-123. doi:10.1057/palgrave.crr.1550048
- Gardberg, N. A., & Fombrun, C. J. (2006). Corporate citizenship: Creating intangible assets across institutional environments. *Academy of Management Review*, *31*(2), 329–346. doi: 10.5465/amr.2006.20208684
- Gill, R. (2015). Why the PR strategy of storytelling improves employee engagement and adds value to CSR: An integrated literature review. *Public Relations Review*, *41*(5), 662–674. doi: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.02.012
- GlaxoSmithKline [@gsk]. (2020, April 16). Thank you to all the amazing front line health workers fighting ... [Instagram video]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/B_C0wgfFREC/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.
- Grant, A. M., & Mayer, D. M. (2009). Good soldiers and good actors: Prosocial and impression management motives as interactive predictors of affiliative citizenship behaviors. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *94*(4), 900–912. doi: 10.1037/a0013770
- Gray, E. R., & Balmer, J. M. (1998). Managing corporate image and corporate reputation. *Long Range Planning*, *31*(5), 695-702. doi:10.1016/s0024-6301(98)00074-0

- Greene, J. (2019, September 13). After a scandal, a one-sided warning against generic drugs. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/after-a-scandal-a-one-sided-warning-against-generic-drugs/2019/09/12/6a755e48-c50a-11e9-b5e4-54aa56d5b7ce_story.html
- Highhouse, S., Brooks, M. E., & Gregarus, G. (2009). An organizational impression management perspective on the formation of corporate reputations. *Journal of Management*, 35(6), 1481-1493. doi:10.1177/0149206309348788
- Hillenbrand, C., & Money, K. (2007). Corporate responsibility and corporate reputation: Two separate concepts or two sides of the same coin? *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10(4), 261-277. doi:10.1057/palgrave.crr.1550057
- Hoffman, J. (2019, October 16). Drug giants close in on a \$50 billion settlement of opioid cases. Retrieved August, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/16/health/opioids-settlement-distributors.html>
- Hsu, K. (2011). The advertising effects of corporate social responsibility on corporate reputation and brand equity: Evidence from the life insurance industry in Taiwan. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 109(2), 189-201. doi:10.1007/s10551-011-1118-0
- Hutchinson, A. (2020). Top 10 Instagram stats for 2020 [Infographic]. Retrieved from <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/top-10-instagram-stats-for-2020-infographic/569641/>
- Jones, E. E., & Pittman, T. S. (1982). Toward a general theory of strategic self presentation. In *Psychological perspectives on the Self* (Vol. 1, pp. 231–262). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Jones, E. E. (1990). *Interpersonal perception*. New York, NY: Freeman.
- Kelleher, K., Kumar, K., Patel, P., & Schrader, U. (2020, May 12). Pharma operations: The path to recovery and the next normal. Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/pharmaceuticals-and-medical-products/our-insights/pharma-operations-the-path-to-recovery-and-the-next-normal>
- Kessel, M. (2014, October 09). Restoring the pharmaceutical industry's reputation. Retrieved from <https://www.nature.com/articles/nbt.3036>
- Krämer, N. C., & Winter, S. (2008). Impression management 2.0: The relationship of self-esteem, extraversion, self-efficacy, and self-presentation within social networking sites. *Journal of Media Psychology*, 20(3), 106–116. doi: 10.1027/1864-1105.20.3.106
- Langham, T. (2018). *Reputation management: The future of corporate communications and public relations*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited.

- Laroche, M., Habibi, M. R., Richard, M.-O., & Sankaranarayanan, R. (2012). The effects of social media based brand communities on brand community markers, value creation practices, brand trust and brand loyalty. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(5), 1755–1767. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2012.04.016
- Leary, M. R., & Kowalski, R. M. (1990). Impression management: A literature review and two-component model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 107(1), 34–47. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.107.1.34>
- Lee, E., Lee, J.-A., Moon, J. H., & Sung, Y. (2015). Pictures speak louder than words: Motivations for using Instagram. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 18(9), 552–556. doi: 10.1089/cyber.2015.0157
- Lillqvist, E., & Louhiala-Salminen, L. (2013). Facing Facebook: Impression management strategies in company–consumer interactions. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 28(1), 3–30. doi: 10.1177/1050651913502359
- Lim, H., & Childs, M. (2016). Brand storytelling on Instagram: How do pictures travel to millennial consumers' minds? *International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) Annual Conference Proceedings*, 96. Retrieved from https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/itaa_proceedings/2016/presentations/96
- Lim, H., & Childs, M. (2020). Visual storytelling on Instagram: branded photo narrative and the role of telepresence. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 14(1). doi: 10.1108/jrim-09-2018-0115
- Lund, N. F., Cohen, S. A., & Scarles, C. (2018). The power of social media storytelling in destination branding. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 8, 271–280. doi: 10.1016/j.jdmm.2017.05.003
- Maignan, I., & Ferrell, O. (2001). Corporate citizenship as a marketing instrument - Concepts, evidence and research directions. *European Journal of Marketing*, 35(3/4), 457–484. doi: 10.1108/03090560110382110
- Martinus, H., & Chaniago, F. (2017). Analysis of branding strategy through Instagram with storytelling in creating brand image on Proud Project. *Humaniora*, 8(3), 201. doi: 10.21512/humaniora.v8i3.3678
- Matten, D., & Crane, A. (2005). Corporate citizenship: Toward an extended theoretical conceptualization. *Academy of Management Review*, 30(1), 166–179. doi: 10.5465/amr.2005.15281448

- Merck [@merck]. (2020, February 18). “Dear Ken: Caring for someone in inconsolable pain ... [Instagram video]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/B8tm9RJYPI/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Meyrowitz, J. (1990). Redefining the situation: Extending dramaturgy into a theory of social change and media effects. In S. H. Riggins (Ed.), *Beyond Goffman: Studies on communication, institution and social interaction* (pp. 65–98). Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter.
- Miller, C. (2004). *Digital storytelling: a creator's guide to interactive entertainment* (Eds). Burlington, MA: Focal Press/Elsevier.
- Morsing, M., & Schultz, M. (2006). Corporate social responsibility communication: Stakeholder information, response and involvement strategies. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 15, 323–338.
- Novartis [@novartis]. (2020, February 3). Last year we continued to change the way we work to unleash the power of our people ... [Instagram photo]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/B8GOS0qgyYd/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Ollier-Malaterre, A., & Rothbard, N. P. (2015). Social media or social minefield? Surviving in the new cyberspace era. *Organizational Dynamics*, 44(1), 26–34. doi: 10.1016/j.orgdyn.2014.11.004
- Page, J. T., & Duffy, M. E. (2016). What Does Credibility Look like? Tweets and Walls in U.S. Presidential Candidates’ Visual Storytelling. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 17(1), 3-31. doi:10.1080/15377857.2016.1171819
- Papacharissi, Z. (2011). *A networked self: identity, community and culture on social network sites* (Eds). New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Parker, J. (2007). The reputation, image and influence of the pharmaceutical industry: Regaining credibility. *Journal of Medical Marketing*, 7(4), 309-313. doi:10.1057/palgrave.jmm.5050098
- Peterson, D. K. (2018). Enhancing corporate reputation through corporate philanthropy. *Journal of Strategy and Management*, 11(1), 18-32. doi:10.1108/jsma-10-2016-0068
- Pfizer [@pfizerinc]. (2020, May 14). Our medicines and vaccines save lives, ... [Instagram video]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/CALR6qLJC9Z/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Pharmaceutical Technology. (2020, April 23). The impact Covid-19 on pharmaceutical companies worldwide. Retrieved from <https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/comment/covid-19-pharmaceutical-companies-impact/>

- Picone, I. (2015). Impression management in social media. *The International Encyclopedia of Digital Communication and Society*, 1–7. doi: 10.1002/9781118767771.wbiedcs071
- PricewaterhouseCoopers. (n.d.). Reputation Management. Retrieved from <https://www.pwc.com/il/en/pharmaceuticals/reputation-management.html>
- Pulizzi, J. (2012). The rise of storytelling as the new marketing. *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 28(2), 116–123. doi: 10.1007/s12109-012-9264-5
- Richey, M., Ravishankar, M., & Coupland, C. (2016). Exploring situationally inappropriate social media posts. *Information Technology & People*, 29(3), 597–617. doi: 10.1108/itp-03-2015-0045
- Rosenfeld, P., Giacalone, R. A., & Riordan, C. A. (1995). *Impression management in organizations: theory, measurement, practice*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Singer, N. (2020, March 12). How Big Pharma grew addicted to big profits. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/books/pharma-gerald-posner.html>
- Soule, D., & Wilson, D. G. (1999). Storytelling in organizations: The power and traps of using stories to share knowledge in organizations. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 53, 44–52.
- Spear, S., & Roper, S. (2013). Using corporate stories to build the corporate brand: an impression management perspective. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22(7), 491–501. doi: 10.1108/jpbm-09-2013-0387
- Sukmayadi, V., & Yahya, A. H. (2019). Impression management within Instagram stories: A phenomenological study. *The Open Psychology Journal*, 12(1), 216-224. doi:10.2174/1874350101912010216
- Tashmin, N. (2016). Art of impression management on social media. Retrieved March 8, 2020, from <http://www.worldscientificnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/WSN-30-2016-89-102.pdf>
- Tedeschi, J. T. (1984). *Impression management theory and social psychological research*. New York, NY: Academic Press.
- The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry. (n.d.). What are pharmaceutical companies doing to tackle COVID-19? Retrieved from <https://www.abpi.org.uk/medicine-discovery/covid-19/what-are-pharmaceutical-companies-doing-to-tackle-the-disease/>
- Turnley, W. H., & Bolino, M. C. (2001). Achieving desired images while avoiding undesired images: Exploring the role of self-monitoring in impression management. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(2), 351–360. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.2.351>

- Volker, J. X., Philipps, M., & Anderson, S. J. (2011). Storytelling: A portal to understanding entrepreneurial organizations. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness*, 5(3), 104–109.
- Williams, T. (n.d.). Corporate citizenship: Your company's role in society. Retrieved from <https://execed.economist.com/blog/industry-trends/corporate-citizenship-your-companys-role-society>
- Withers, N. (2019, January 14). Further scandal for China's pharmaceutical industry -. Retrieved from <https://www.europeanpharmaceuticalreview.com/news/82962/scandal-china-pharmaceutical/>
- Young, J. A., Gardner, W. L., & Gilbert, F. W. (1994). Impression management techniques in marketing channels: A theoretical perspective and research agenda. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 2(4), 29-38. doi:10.1080/10696679.1994.11501667

Appendix A

Table A
List of companies

No.	Company name	User name	No. of followers June 2020 (in k)	No. of posts June 2020
1	Pfizer Inc.	@pfizerinc	32.6	353
2	F. Hoffmann-La Roche AG	@roche	20.8	122
3	Johnson & Johnson	@jnjglobalhealth	4.9	377
4	Merck KGaA	@merck	30.4	191
5	Sanofi	@sanofi	33.4	294
6	Novartis AG	@novartis	72.4	650
7	GlaxoSmithKline plc	@gsk	52.3	321
8	AbbVie	@abbvie	11.9	182
9	Gilead Sciences, Inc.	Is not on Instagram		
10	Amgen	@amgenbiotech	4.1	85
11	AstraZeneca plc	@astrazeneca	14.6	1.285
12	Bristol-Myers Squibb	@bristolmyerssquibb	6.6	89
13	Eli Lilly and Company	@elilillyco	18.0	571
14	Bayer AG	@bayerofficial	74.0	531
15	Novo Nordisk A/S	@novonordisk	43.5	545
16	Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited	Only has an account dedicated to oncology but no global account		
17	Boehringer Ingelheim	@boehringer ingelheim	28.0	591

Reference. Ernst & Young (2018).

Appendix B

To code, please use 1 = yes and 0 = no. One post can be assigned to multiple categories. Please take into consideration the textual, visual and auditory components of the post when coding.

Table B

Definitions of the categories of the content displayed in the Instagram posts.

Code	Definition
Video/Photo	Is the content displayed in the form of a video or a photo?
Company employees	Does the post refer to, mention or show the respective company's own employees?
Science	Does the post show people working in a laboratory, scientific processes or mention scientific progress or breakthroughs?
Company	Does the post include information about the company (history)? Does the company talk about itself in the post (e.g. saying "we" or "our")? Does the post show the facilities of the company? Excluding logos that are included e.g. at the end of videos or on photos.
Disease	Does the company thematize and shine a light on different diseases in their post?
Educational content	Does the post aim at teaching the viewer about a topic or give advice about different matters?
Awareness days or months/Holidays	Does the post refer to awareness days or months? Does the post revolve around holidays?
Other occupational groups/Collaborations	Does the post show or mention other occupational groups or refer to other companies, NGOs or collaborators?
Events	Does the post display content about gatherings or give information concerning events or anniversaries?
Personal stories	Does the post contain personal stories of people, employees, patients or recipients of the respective company's products and services?
Campaigns/Projects	Does the post contain information about ongoing campaigns or projects the respective company organizes or supports (e.g. through using hashtags)?
Storytelling	Does the company use stories to convey values and information or deliver ideas or messages in a captivating way?

Table C

Definitions of impression management techniques codes.

Code	Definition
Ingratiation	<p>Does the company try to create an impression of likeability? Through conformity and favours companies are trying to gain acceptance as well as the audience's approval. This assertive tactic aims at making oneself popular and encourages positive feelings (Jones, 1990; Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 1995). This can be achieved through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complementing - e.g. being proud of or saying something nice about s.o. or their achievements - Praising - e.g. highlighting that someone is doing a great job - Thanking others - e.g. expressing gratitude towards s.o. - Helping others - e.g. supporting a cause to improve a situation - Being compassionate - e.g. sympathizing with someone; being empathetic - Acting cheerful - e.g. the post is displayed in an overall happy tone - Addressing the audience - e.g. posing a question towards the viewer; requesting them to do something (e.g. check out, read, click, etc.)? - Seeking affinity - e.g. the company is attempting to get others to like and feel positive towards them - Offering guidance - e.g. company offers guidance to the viewers by thematizing, explaining and giving advice on different topics, facts and issues - Exuding trustworthiness - e.g. the company aims at appearing trustworthy and exudes dependability and reliability towards the viewer through sharing its values and business practices
Intimidation (will not be included as a category as the sample has shown that it is not used as a strategy)	<p>Does the post aim at making the respective company appear powerful and threatening? Intimidation is a power-oriented impression management technique to construct an identity of authority. The company wants to project attributes of danger and anger and elicit fearful respect from their audience (Turnley & Bolino, 2001).</p>
Supplication	<p>Through supplication, actors aim at gaining sympathy from the audience or make them feel more kindly and forgiving towards them (Jones, 1990).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depending on others - e.g. the company needs help from s.o. or collaborates with s.o. to achieve a greater goal and to guarantee a positive outcome - Appearing humble - e.g. acknowledging that some things are bigger than them and not overestimating their level of importance - Appearing modest - e.g. referring to having a realistic view of their own abilities and behaviour; not bragging about accomplishments

Exemplification Does the company aim at appearing virtuous and being perceived as going beyond the call of duty? Categorized as a power-oriented technique, companies attempt to create an impression of moral worthiness by showing their dedication, sacrifice and selfless acts, sometimes with the aim of inducing guilt (Jones, 1990).

- Committing to a cause
 - Having high moral standards
 - Presenting oneself as a role model
 - Dedicating oneself
- e.g. the company's obligation and loyalty to a cause, activity or job
 - e.g. believing in fairness, honesty, politeness, respect, courage, perseverance, equality etc.
 - e.g. setting a good example to follow and inspiring others to imitate their good behavior
 - e.g. a company's passion and wholehearted devotion to the performance of an obligation

Self-promotion With this technique, the actor aims at persuading the audience that they are knowledgeable and competent by giving positive performance accounts of themselves (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Turnley & Bolino, 2001). The actor does so by, for example, calling attention to their

- Competence
 - Knowledge
 - Abilities and accomplishments
 - Boasting
 - Name dropping
 - Playing an important role in society
- e.g. the company shows that it is an expert within its industry and beyond
 - e.g. the company is knowledgeable not only about science and its industry but also about other, unrelated matters
 - e.g. the company talks about milestones that it has hit or about things or actions it is able to do
 - e.g. the company is bragging about its accomplishments such as helping a lot of people or about being a pioneer in its field
 - e.g. the company mentions (a collaboration with) another (important/major) company, NGO, etc.
 - e.g. the company mentions that its work is essential for the well-being of society and that it changes the status quo for the better with the work it is doing

Emotionalization Does the company present the Instagram posts in an emotional way by using effective authentic visual, audio or textual content to elicit emotional responses from the viewer?

References. Jones (1990), Jones & Pittman (1982), Rosenfeld, Giacalone & Riordan (1995), Turnley & Bolino (2001).

Table D

Definitions of corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship codes.

Code	Definition
Corporate social responsibility & corporate citizenship	<p>Does the company present itself as a good citizen by referring to projects and campaigns that show its corporate social responsibility through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Philanthropy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - e.g. providing charitable donations, goods and services by partnering closely with a cause with the long-term goal of bringing social change - Corporate volunteering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - e.g. using a company's human resources for charitable purposes by investing the time, know-how and knowledge of their employees; comprises the deployment of company employees in various projects of a non-profit nature - Cause promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - e.g. increasing awareness and concern for a certain issue/social cause - Environmental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - e.g. mentioning sustainable measures the company is taking such as reducing its energy use or recycling - Ethical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - e.g. referring to anti-discrimination policies and a fair behaviour within and outside the company (e.g. advocating for minorities) or to the company's overall ethical business practices