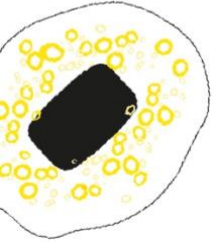
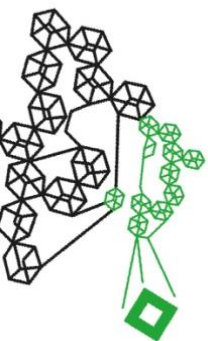


UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.



**Communicating Environmental CSR:
The Influence of Spatial Distance, Message Appeal, and
Concreteness of Message on Consumer Perception**



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Abstract

Introduction

Throughout the years, consumers' interest in the CSR of organizations has increased. However, research into CSR with a focus on the planet is still limited. Therefore, this study tries to elaborate on the current theories by exploring how different textual elements of an environmental CSR message on social media influence consumer perceptions toward the brand.

Theoretical framework

The textual elements studied in this research are spatial distance, message appeal, and concreteness of message. Past research has shown that these textual elements can influence people's perceptions, which is interesting information for organizations when communicating to consumers. However, when specifically focusing on environmental CSR communication, literature shows limited research into these textual elements. Additionally, to this researcher's knowledge, the combination these three elements together in one message has not been studied yet.

Methodology

This study uses a 2 x 2 x 2 experimental design to investigate how spatial distance (near vs far), message appeal (emotional vs rational), and concreteness of message (symbolic vs substantial) influence an environmental CSR message on Instagram by measuring attitude toward the brand, trust toward the brand, purchase interest, and online engagement. Additionally, environmental concern was added as a covariate. This study uses data collected from 217 Dutch respondents with a minimum age of 18. The respondents were gathered using convenience sampling through distribution using different social networking channels and WoM.

Results

The findings did not show significant effects of spatial distance, message appeal, and concreteness of message on the environmental CSR message. Additionally, no interaction effect between the variables was found to have a significant effect. However, a significant positive effect was found between environmental concern and purchase interest. Thus, a high environmental concern leads to an increase in purchase interest.

Conclusion

As current research into the individual variables is limited and the variables combined have, to this researcher's knowledge, not been investigated, this study broadens the current body of literature available. The findings were not significant; therefore, this study contradicts previous research and challenges current the literature available. The findings also provide some practical insights for communication professionals, as it highlights the importance of knowing the environmental concern of your target group. This study brings up new perspectives for future research and raises new questions such as whether it is necessary to focus on these variables when communicating environmental CSR messages and whether Instagram is an effective channel for this communication or not. Consequently, further research is essential to explore new perspectives and questions that arose from the findings of this study.

1. Introduction

Throughout the years, corporate social responsibility activities of organizations have become more visible and apparent. As a result of the growing interest of consumers in organizations' CSR practices, CSR activities have taken a prominent place on the corporate agenda (Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2010; Yoon, Gürhan-Canli & Schwarz, 2006). CSR is defined as “context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental performance” (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012, p. 933). According to Lunenberg, Gosselt and De Jong (2016), CSR is a non-mandatory activity that benefits humankind. Consequently, engaging in CSR activities and CSR communication can enhance the public's perception and thus the reputation of an organization (Hooghiemstra, 2000).

As Aguinis and Glavas (2012) explain, people, profit and planet are three broad subjects that constitute CSR. This study will focus on “planet” in relation to CSR communication, that is, CSR that focusses on environmentally friendly behaviour. From here on, this study will refer to the subject of planet in CSR communication as “environmental CSR communication”. Stanislavská, Pilař, Margarisová, & Kvasnička (2020) showed that environmental sustainability is the second most mentioned topic in relation to CSR on social media in developed countries, showing its importance among the population. Mubarak (2019) explains that CSR communication with a focus on the environment can build competitive advantages for organizations and can increase the trust of stakeholders, which shows the significance of the subject in CSR communication for organizations.

The positive consequences resulting from environmental CSR messages as was stated by Mubarak (2019) can be partly explained by the textual elements that construct such a message. Different constructs, such as time and place, can influence how consumers interpret the content of environmental messages (Catlin, Luchs & Phipps, 2017; Line, Hanks & Zhang, 2016). Hence, it can be argued that extensive knowledge into the different contextual elements of environmental CSR messages and the effects they have on consumers is of significance for the creation of effective communication that results in competitive advantages and increases consumer trust. Nevertheless, limited research has focused on what specific characteristics and elements of environmental CSR messages result in effective communication. Thus, this study will try and close this gap by investigating the three textual elements spatial distance, message appeal and concreteness of message, as well as the effects they might have on consumers.

“Spatial distance” refers to the distance between a reference location and the location of the event. Research into the effect of spatial distance on environmental CSR messages is especially interesting as the distance of an event can influence how individuals evaluate this event. For instance, spatial distance can influence expectations and scepticism of individuals towards events (Hanks, Zhang & McGinley, 2020; Kulczycki, Mikas & Koenigstorfer, 2017). It is shown that supporting local causes result in a more favourable evaluation of the CSR message by consumers as compared to support of distant causes (Groza, Pronschinske & Walker, 2011). However, these findings mainly focus on CSR in general, which does not necessarily include the topic of the environment. Interestingly, studies have shown that sustainability is considered to be far away (McDonald et al., 2015; Spence & Pidgeon, 2010), which is not in line with near spatial distance. Therefore, investigating whether environmental

CSR messages, which focus on a topic that is considered far away, will also show a more favourable evaluation when focusing on activities that are nearby, is relevant information for organizations. Yet research into environmental CSR messages is limited, and this has not been extensively explored. Therefore, this study will investigate whether environmental CSR messages show a more favourable evaluation when combined with near spatial distance or not.

“Message appeal” is the second characteristic discussed in this study. Message appeals are strategies used to grab the attention of the consumer, often to persuade consumers to engage in purchasing behaviour (Bhasin, 2021). Specifically, this study will focus on the use of an emotional appeal versus a rational appeal in a sustainable CSR message. Extensive research has already been done regarding the use of these message appeals, for instance, in commercial and social advertisements (Casais & Pereira, 2021). Nevertheless, literature regarding the effectiveness of message appeal as a CSR characteristic is still sparse (Chae, 2020). Exploring the effect of message appeal as an element of environmental CSR messages might provide new insights in the effect environmental CSR communication has on consumers. Therefore, this research will investigate the effects of rational and emotional message appeals on environmental CSR messages.

The last characteristic discussed in this research is “concreteness of message”. More specifically, this characteristic will focus on the use of a symbolic message (messages including future actions that have not been followed up yet) versus a substantive message (messages including a combination of actions from the past that have been followed up on as well as future actions that have not been followed up on) when communicating sustainable CSR messages. Walker and Wan (2012) have researched this concept to see whether a certain way of communicating sustainable messages can reduce possible negative effects such as scepticism. This is especially of significance as consumers appear to often show scepticism toward the topic of environmental activities (Luo et al, 2020). However, it appears that limited research has been done regarding this specific way of communicating. Therefore, this study further investigates “concreteness of message” to broaden the literature currently available regarding this topic, as well as explores the effects this textual element has on an environmental CSR message. Thus, this study will explore the effects of substantive and symbolic content on environmental CSR messages.

One of the reasons for selecting these three independent variables for this study is that they are all textual elements. The communication of CSR messages can be considered as vulnerable as they often include a desired future that has not been reached yet (Christenen et al., 2013). Especially messages including the environment are vulnerable, as consumers are often sceptic toward them. However, it can be argued that textual elements influence how CSR messages are perceived by consumers. By investigating spatial distance, message appeal, and concreteness of message, this research investigates how these textual elements will influence the perception of consumers toward an environmental CSR message. Spatial distance can be considered of significance to explore as a textual element, as (environmental) CSR messages often include the location of the CSR activity in their message. Message appeal is considered of importance to explore as a textual element, as it is a primary strategy in the marketing literature, however, the literature on message appeals in CSR communication with a focus on the environment has been limitedly explored. And lastly, the variable concreteness of message investigates a way to communicate an environmental message that is positively perceived by

consumers. This variable is considered very fitting for environmental CSR messages; however, it is also an underexplored concept creating significance to further explore it as a textual element in this study. Thus, these three variables have not been investigated extensively in this context, however, are all very fitting to the concept of environmental CSR messages. Therefore, investigating the effect of spatial distance, message appeal, and concreteness of message in the context of this study is of relevance for both researchers and communication professionals. Moreover, to this researcher's knowledge, these three variables have not been explored in one research. However, as all variables are textual elements and considered fitting in the context of environmental CSR messages, they are also expected to interact with one another. Therefore, the interaction between spatial distance and message appeal, spatial distance and concreteness of message, and message appeal and concreteness of message will be further explored in this study. In addition, it is also of significance to consider the environmental concern of the consumers as the CSR message focuses on the environment. More specifically, this study added environmental concern as a covariate to investigate whether the level of concern influences how consumers perceive an environmental CSR message.

Consumer interest in the topic of corporate CSR activities, and the sustainable affairs of organizations specifically, has increased, giving the subject a prominent place on the corporate agenda's (Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2010; Yoon, Gürhan-Canli & Schwarz, 2006). This increases the importance of research into the topic. Therefore, this study tries to broaden the current body of literature available by providing new insights into environmental CSR communication. Moreover, diving into the effects that spatial distance, message appeals and concreteness of message have on environmental CSR messages, will provide more guidance toward communication professionals of organizations that are interested in the communication hereof. Thus, the following research question has been formulated:

To what extent do spatial distance, message appeal and concreteness of message of an environmental CSR message on social media influence attitude toward the brand, trust toward the brand, purchase interest, and online engagement?

2. Theoretical Framework

Consumers' social concerns towards society have increased, hence sustainable and responsible behaviour is considered of significance (Ettinger et al., 2021; Yoon et al., 2006). Thereupon, CSR communication has increased in significance for organizations and consumers. To further explore the effects that environmental CSR messages have on consumers, the following paragraphs will first provide a more in-depth explanation regarding consumer perceptions towards a brand and the three textual elements spatial distance, message appeal, and concreteness of message.

2.1 Consumer Perceptions toward a Brand

Previous research explains that engaging in CSR activities can bring opportunities and benefits for the organizations such as positive consumer attitudes (Chae, 2020), purchase intention (Wang & Huang, 2018), increased consumer trust and a more positive reputation (Lunenberget al., 2016). Therefore, it can be argued that an effective CSR message will positively influence the perceptions consumers have toward the brand, thus resulting in more favourable consumer attitude, trust toward brand, and purchase interest. Hence, these dependent variables have been selected to measure the consumer perceptions toward the brand. Additionally, online engagement has been selected as a fourth independent variable as the message will be communicated on social media. The following paragraphs will provide an explanation regarding the dependent variables of this study.

The first dependent variable that measures consumer perception toward a brand is *consumer attitude*. Consumer attitude improves based on whether the organization communicates CSR messages (Wang & Huang, 2018), as those organizations are viewed as socially responsible, which in turn heightens the overall image of the organization (Nan & Heo, 2007). Thus, a proficient environmental CSR message should increase consumer attitude.

The second dependent variable focuses on the *purchase interest* of consumers. Research has shown that the communication of CSR activities generally has an influence on peoples' purchase interest (Chae, 2020; Wang & Huang, 2018). With the increasing awareness regarding the environment, consumers are more willing to purchase environmentally friendly products (Chen, 2010). Thus, effective CSR communication can result in a positive purchase interest (Wang & Huang, 2018). Therefore, it is argued that a proficient environmental CSR message will increase consumers' purchase interest.

The third dependent variable chosen to measure consumer perception is *trust toward a brand*. According to Chen and Chang (2013), environmental sustainability of an organization increases consumer trust if the brand is perceived to be of high environmental quality. Moreover, Mubarak (2019) explains that consumer trust increases when organizations communicate with their stakeholders and stay true to their CSR promises. Thus, it can be argued that a proficient environmental CSR message increases consumer trust.

The last variable that measures consumer perception toward a brand is *online engagement*. Online engagement is the interaction and engagement between the brand and consumer, which is measured through likes, comments and follows (Dolan et al., 2019). Online engagement is an indication of attitude towards the brand, as a positive attitude leads to a higher

online engagement, whereas a less positive attitude towards the brand leads to a lower online engagement (Dolan et al., 2019). As the medium of the environmental CSR message in this study will be social media, it is expected that a proficient environmental CSR message on social media will result in high online engagement.

2.2 Spatial Distance

As has been established in the previous, effective environmental CSR communication can result in positive consumer perceptions toward a brand. Researchers explain that different textual elements play a role in the way consumers perceive the message. Therefore, this study tries to investigate how the textual elements of spatial distance, message appeal, and concreteness of message might influence consumer perception and thus the effectiveness of an environmental CSR message. To explore the effects, a more in-depth explanation of these textual elements will be provided. The first textual element discussed is spatial distance. Spatial distance can be defined as “the actual distance between a reference location (e.g. the place where the observer lives) and the location where the event occurs (e.g. a place closer to the observer or 2000 miles away)” (Lii, Wu & Ding, 2013, p. 18). Spatial distance (near distance versus far distance) is one of the four dimensions that together form psychological distance (Trope, Liberman & Wakslak, 2007). The other three dimensions are temporal distance (short-term horizon versus long-term horizon), social distance (in-group versus out-group), and hypothetical distance (likely versus unlikely) (Hanks et al., 2020; Trope, et al., 2007).

Psychological distance is of significance in messages as it can influence people’s “cognitions, decision-making and behaviors” (Lii et al., 2013, p. 16) such as the purchase intention of consumers (Kim, Kim & Ahn, 2017). Hence, it is argued that spatial distance, as a component of psychological distance, also influences consumers’ evaluation of environmental CSR messages (Kulczycki et al., 2017; Lii et al., 2013). How distance can influence consumers’ evaluation of events can be explained by the different construals that are connected to far and near distance. The following paragraphs will provide a more in-depth explanation into the interplay between construals and distance.

The Construal Level Theory (CLT) proposes that people form mental construals about objects by using memories of the past and predictions of the future (Trope & Liberman, 2010). These mental construals consists of concepts of abstraction and distance (Trope et al., 2007). Psychological distance is a relevant factor that influences how individuals perceive objects or events (Hanks et al., 2020), as the physical distance tends to affect our mental evaluation (Schill & Shaw, 2016). The CLT connects the level of abstractness of objects and events to the psychological distance by explaining that psychologically close events are identified by concrete, low-level construals, whereas psychologically distant events are identified by more abstract, high-level construals (Trope et al., 2007). For instance, distant, high-level construals are abstract and more likely to use general features that are vaguer, such as ‘pet’, whereas near, low-level construals are more concrete and likely to use specific features including more context, such as ‘dog’. Thus, it can help consumers understand whether something is close or distant by using the correct construal when describing the event.

The CLT explains the correlation between psychological distance and the level of construals used when describing objects and events. Construals used in relation to spatial

distance tend to influence how individuals think about certain concepts as well. Thus, when looking at environmental CSR activities, the distance between the reference location and the location of the environmental CSR activity can influence expectations and scepticism of the activity (Kulczycki et al., 2017). More specifically, CSR activities nearby the consumers tend to have stronger effects as compared to activities further away (Lii et al., 2013). Reed, Aquino, and Levy (2007) provide an explanation by arguing that local consumers perceive direct benefits of the CSR activity and therefore will support the organization. This is also in line with the concept of egocentrism, which explains that people are more likely to assign assets to themselves because of the self-serving behaviour humans are inclined to engage in (Kulczycki et al., 2017). Thus, the support of local or near causes results in a more favourable evaluation of the environmental CSR message by consumers as compared to support of distant causes (Groza et al., 2011).

The CLT explains that the distance between the reference location and the location of the CSR activity can influence how consumers evaluate the event. More specifically, it can be argued that activities close to the reference location will result in more positive consumer evaluations as compared to activities that are considered farther away (Lii et al., 2013). Thus, it is proposed that environmental CSR messages including a location near the consumer will result in more positive outcomes as compared to an environmental CSR message including a location that is far away from the consumer.

H1: The use of near spatial distance in an environmental CSR message on social media will result in a more positive a) consumer attitude, b) consumer trust, c) purchase interest, and d) online engagement as compared to the use of far spatial distance.

2.3 Message Appeal

Message appeal is the second textual element of an environmental CSR message that will be explored in this study. Bhasin (2021) explains message appeals as strategies that can be used to captivate the attention of consumers. Emotional and rational appeals are two strategies of message appeals. Emotional appeals are defined as designs that “appeal to emotions by using mood, music, and other emotion-eliciting strategies” (Akpınar & Berger, 2017, p. 319). Rational appeals, on the other hand, are defined as designs that “appeal to cognition by using objective information describing a brand’s attributes or benefits” (Akpınar & Berger, 2017, p. 319). Research into emotional and rational appeals in environmental CSR communication is still limited, which is why these two appeals are further explored in this study.

Whether an emotional or rational message appeal is more effective depends on the level of involvement of the consumer with the message (Andreu, Casado-Díaz & Mattila, 2015; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). The underlying concept of involvement can be explained using the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Petty and Cacioppo (1984). The ELM explains that if someone is highly involved, they will take the central route and process the information more consciously; thus, rational appeals including factual information are more effective. When the level of involvement or elaboration is low, the amount of time a person thinks about the message is little, thus the peripheral route is taken, and the cognitive processing involved is

low. Consequently, emotional appeals tend to be a more effective communication strategy (Andreu et al., 2015; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984).

Rational appeals are used to elicit certain cognitive processes by consumers. These appeals are often formulated as information regarding the benefits and advantages of the brand (MacInnis, Rao, & Weiss, 2002). Rational appeals exist in visual elements (e.g., logos of brands) and textual elements (e.g., brand name, price, the product or segment of product mentioned) (Lee, Hosanagar & Nair, 2018; Resnik & Stern, 1977; Rietveld et al., 2020). Previous studies have shown that rational appeals can trigger both positive and negative reactions, depending on the context of the message (Chandy et al., 2001; Rietveld et al., 2020). For instance, when contemplating about buying a product, rational appeals provide relevant information and reduce uncertainty by expressing the benefits and usefulness of the brand or product (Stafford & Day, 1995; Yoo & MacInnis, 2005). Additionally, rational appeals tend to result in positive effects in combination with new brands or products. When consumers have little knowledge about a brand or product, they are more motivated to process the rational appeals of the message (Chandy et al., 2001).

However, rational appeals can also result in unfavourable results. For instance, when consumers are highly involved with the topic, they will take the central route to process the information and focus on the rational information. However, too much exposure and repetition of arguments might counteract, as consumers have the time to come up with counterarguments. Consequently, the persuasiveness of the messages starts to decrease (Cacioppo & Petty, 1979; Batra & Ray, 1986). In addition, some messages including rational appeals can be perceived as persuasive when the motivations for consuming are “functional or entertainment-oriented” motivations (Rietveld et al., 2020, p. 24). As a result, consumers can become suspicious of these messages as it looks like the messages include hidden sales motives.

Emotional appeals in messages aim to make consumers feel positive about products or brands (Andreu et al., 2015). Emotions are provoked by visual and textual elements that focus on certain feelings (Goldberg & Gorn, 1987). These emotional elements are used in arguments that are not based on sound reasoning but are based on emotions. The personal thoughts that follow these emotions affect the mood consumers develop toward the message (Goldberg & Gorn, 1987). Thus, the purpose of emotional appeals is to generate (often positive) emotions and feelings towards the message.

The advantage of evoking emotions is the fact that feelings can motivate and persuade consumers to, for instance, buy a particular product (Andrade & Cohen, 2007), but also has the power to influence attitude and behaviour (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999; Casais & Pereira, 2021). Hence, emotional appeals are often used in social marketing strategies to aid in the effectiveness of the message and influence or persuade particular behaviour (Casais & Pereira, 2021). For instance, emotional appeals can be used in social advertisements to transmit the positive emotions that individuals experience towards the benefits of changing a particular behaviour (Buyucek, Knox & Rundle-Thiele, 2019). Emotional appeals also appear to be more favourable on social media compared to rational appeals as social media is generally used by consumers for entertainment (Rietveld et al., 2020). The emotional aspect is more in line with the motivation to be entertained, whereas the persuasive elements of rational appeals are not in line with the motivations of using social media which negatively influences messages (Rietveld et al., 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is expected:

H2: The use of emotional appeal in an environmental CSR message on social media will result in a more positive a) consumer attitude, b) consumer trust, c) purchase interest, and d) online engagement as compared to the use of rational appeal.

2.4 Concreteness of Message

The third textual element of environmental CSR messages focuses on *concreteness of message*. Stakeholders have been demanding a greater organizational focus on environmental sustainability and environmentally friendly behaviour (Ettinger et al., 2021). However, reporting of this behaviour in environmental CSR messages has been proven to be difficult as some consumers assume that the reasoning behind CSR messages is mainly strategic and not because organizations feel responsible; that is, they are perceived as being insincere (Laufer, 2003). This often results in unfavourable responses from consumers toward sustainability messages. Walker and Wan (2012) tried to reduce unfavourable responses by introducing a new concept called green highlighting. They defined green highlighting as a way of communicating sustainable messages by including both symbolic actions as well as substantive actions (Walker & Wan, 2012). Thus, a message using green highlighting consists of two components: symbolic and substantive actions.

Symbolic actions occur when organizations communicate about something without following up on it yet with actions (Walker & Wan, 2012). This is similar to what Christensen, Morsing and Thyssen (2013) refer to as aspirational talk. They define aspirational talk as “communication which announces ideals and intentions rather than reflect actual behaviors” (p.373). Some argue that a discrepancy between communication about CSR and actions is normal, as CSR reflects a “desired future” (Christensen et al., 2013, p. 376). However, when organizations only communicate about something, without following up on it with actions, the symbolic actions or aspirational talk can turn into greenwashing (Walker & Wan, 2012). Therefore, consumers might have a more sceptical outlook toward symbolic actions.

Consequently, Walker and Wan (2012) argue that a combination of symbolic and substantive actions in communication is more beneficial. Substantive actions are explained as actions that organizations are currently doing or have done in the past (Walker & Wan, 2012). The research of Walker and Wan (2012) focused specifically on the influence of green highlighting on the financial performance of an organization. Thus, so far little research has been conducted regarding the influence of green highlighting on perceived CSR. Nevertheless, exploring green highlighting in environmental CSR communication could be of significance, as it might provide more guidance as how to effectively communicate such messages. Additionally, exploring green highlighting in relation to environmental CSR communication might provide a basis for further research of green highlighting in different contexts. Therefore, this study will explore the possibilities that green highlighting might provide for CSR communication by investigating the use of substantive content vs symbolic content. This study tries to provide additional information by answering the following hypothesis:

H3: The use of substantive content in environmental CSR message on social media will result in a more positive a) consumer attitude, b) consumer trust, c) purchase interest, and d) online engagement as compared to the use of symbolic content.

2.5 Environmental Concern

Besides the three independent variables, the covariate environmental concern was added to this study as well. This study has a specific focus on the environment, however, opinions of consumers toward the environment may differ. By taking the environmental concern of consumers into account, it can be investigated whether this influences how consumers perceive an environmental CSR message. Environmental concern can be described as the extent to which consumers believe environmental issues to be of importance to the well-being of the world (Park & Lin, 2020). Environmental concern indicates the consumers' engagement or involvement with the environmental issues and environmental protection (Park & Lin, 2020). Knowing whether the level of environmental concern influences the environmental CSR message is relevant knowledge when you know the level of concern of your target group, as it could give an indication how they will evaluate an environmental CSR message. For instance, it might be that a higher level of environmental concern will result in a more overall favourable evaluation of the CSR message as compared to a low environmental concern. Therefore, this study will investigate the influence environmental concern as a covariate on an environmental CSR message.

2.6 Interaction Effects

As was previously stated, limited research regarding the three independent variables in relation to environmental CSR communication has been done. Moreover, the combination of these three variables has, to this researcher's knowledge, not been researched yet. Therefore, this study will explore whether there are interaction effects present between the variables. The following paragraphs will further explain the reasoning behind the expected interaction effects.

The first interaction effect that is expected includes the variables spatial distance and message appeal. The Construal Level Theory of Trope and Liberman (2010) explains that far spatial distance is associated with high-level construals, and thus is viewed in the minds of individuals as more abstract and more context-independent (Kim, Lee & Choi, 2019). Far spatial distance is associated with high construal levels and is thus thought of in a more abstract way (Trope & Liberman, 2010). And vice versa, near spatial distance is associated with low construal levels and thus thought of in a more concrete way (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Hernandez et al. (2015) explain that messages are more effective when the construal levels are congruent with message appeals. The abstractness and concreteness of the message can be linked to rational and emotional appeals. Rational appeals use objective information that activates our cognition (Apkinar & Berger, 2017) and therefore can "enhance low level abstraction" (Kim, Lee & Choi, 2019, p. 491). Emotional appeals use textual or visual elements that focus on feelings and emotions (Apkinar & Berger, 2017). Therefore, Kim, Lee and Choi (2019) explain that emotional appeals "enhance a high-level abstraction" (p. 491). Therefore,

it is expected that, in this study, spatial distance (far vs near) will interact with message appeal (rational vs emotional). The following hypothesis has been formulated:

H4: The use of near spatial distance in an environmental CSR message on social media will result in a more positive effect on a) consumer attitude, b) consumer trust, c) purchase interest, and d) online engagement when combined with rational appeals as compared to emotional appeals.

The second interaction effect includes spatial distance and concreteness of message. It could be argued that both variables include components of psychological distance. Spatial distance focuses on the psychological distance of location (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Additionally, it could be argued that concreteness of message includes the psychological distance of time as it mentions past and/or future CSR actions. Symbolic content might feel as further away in time as compared to substantive content, as symbolic could be considered as vaguer, whereas substantive content could be considered more specific and therefore closer in time. Therefore, it is expected that, in this study, spatial distance (far vs near) will interact with concreteness of message (symbolic vs substantive). The following hypothesis has been formulated:

H5: The use of near spatial distance in an environmental CSR message on social media will result in a more positive effect on a) consumer attitude, b) consumer trust, c) purchase interest, and d) online engagement when combined with concrete content as compared to symbolic content.

The third interaction effect combines message appeal and concreteness of message. As the name concreteness of message implies, the substantive messages tend to include more information about environmental CSR practices as compared to symbolic messages. To ensure that the concrete CSR messages are not perceived as too informational and persuasive, it could be interesting to combine the substantive CSR content with an emotional appeal. A CSR message that only includes symbolic CSR activities that the organization plans to engage in in the future often includes less information than a substantive CSR message. If this symbolic action is combined with emotional appeal, there might be an increased risk of consumer scepticism and perceived greenwashing. Therefore, it could be interesting to explore how symbolic messages interact with rational appeals. Thus, this study expects that message appeal (emotional vs rational) will interact with concreteness of message (substantive vs symbolic).

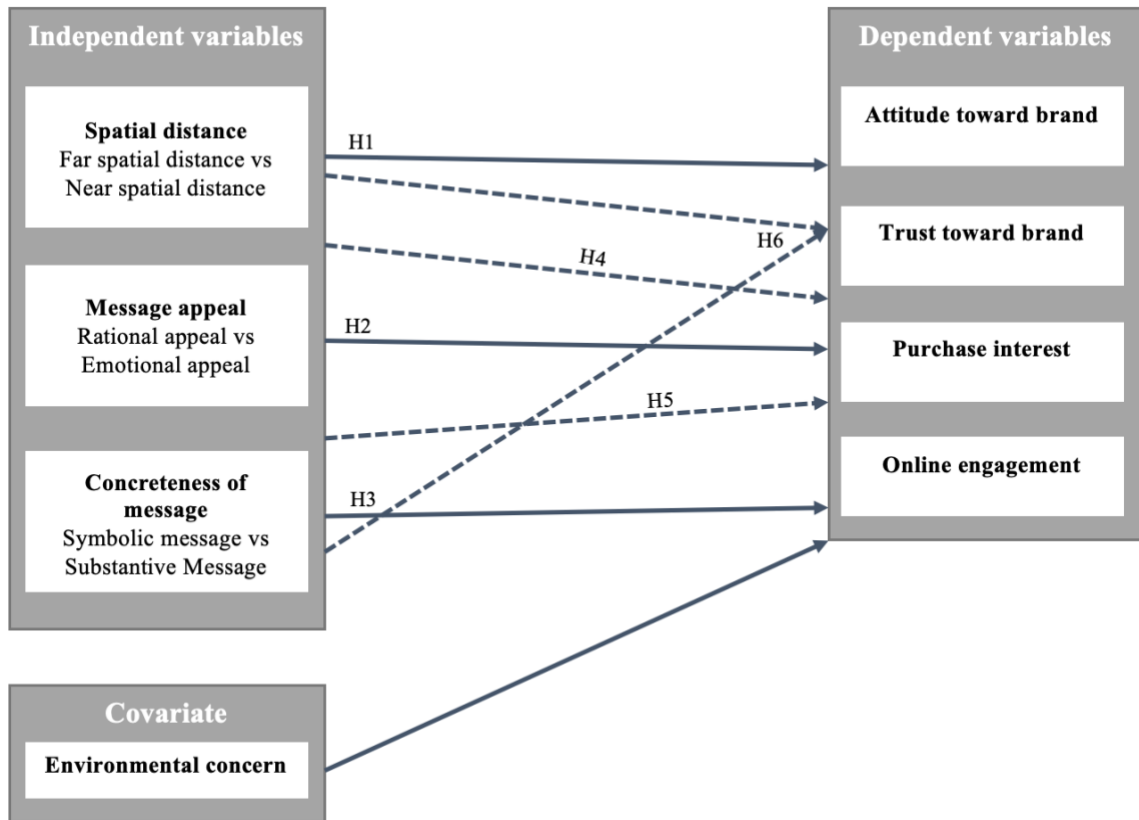
H6: The use of emotional appeal in an environmental CSR message on social media will result in a more positive effect on a) consumer attitude, b) consumer trust, c) purchase interest, and d) online engagement when combined with substantive content as compared to symbolic content.

An overview of all the hypotheses is displayed in table 1. Figure 1 displays a visual overview of this study by means of a research model.

Table 1

Overview of hypotheses

Hypotheses	
H1	The use of far spatial distance in an environmental CSR message on social media will result in a more positive a) consumer attitude, b) consumer trust, c) purchase interest, and d) online engagement as compared to the use of near spatial distance.
H2	The use of emotional appeal in an environmental CSR message on social media will result in a more positive a) consumer attitude, b) consumer trust, c) purchase interest, and d) online engagement as compared to the use of rational appeal.
H3	The use of concrete content in an environmental CSR message on social media will result in a more positive a) consumer attitude, b) consumer trust, c) purchase interest, and d) online engagement as compared to the use of symbolic content.
H4	The use of near spatial distance in an environmental CSR message on social media will result in a more positive effect on a) consumer attitude, b) consumer trust, c) purchase interest, and d) online engagement when combined with rational appeals as compared to emotional appeals.
H5	The use of near spatial distance in an environmental CSR message on social media will result in a more positive effect on a) consumer attitude, b) consumer trust, c) purchase interest, and d) online engagement when combined with concrete content as compared to symbolic content.
H6	The use of emotional appeal in an environmental CSR message on social media will result in a more positive effect on a) consumer attitude, b) consumer trust, c) purchase interest, and d) online engagement when combined with substantive content as compared to symbolic content

Figure 1*Research model*

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

By looking at spatial distance, message appeal, and concreteness of message, this study aims to investigate how these variables influence an environmental CSR message on social media. The hypotheses were analyzed using a 2 x 2 x 2 between subjects experimental design. Table 2 provides an overview of the experimental design. These different variables were tested in a main study using eight manipulations. Before the research was conducted among participants, the BMS Ethics Committee had approved this research.

The following sections will firstly discuss the stimuli designed for this study. Afterwards, the manipulation check of the pre-test will be discussed, as well as the final manipulations that flowed from the pre-test. Secondly, the measures used in the main study are explained. Lastly, this method concludes with the reliability and validity of the study.

Table 2

Overview 2 x 2 x 2 experimental design

		Spatial distance			
		<i>Far</i>		<i>Near</i>	
Message appeal	<i>Emotional</i>	Concreteness of message		Concreteness of message	
		<u>Substantive</u>	<u>Symbolic</u>	<u>Substantive</u>	<u>Symbolic</u>
	<i>Rational</i>	Concreteness of message		Concreteness of message	
		<u>Substantive</u>	<u>Symbolic</u>	<u>Substantive</u>	<u>Symbolic</u>

3.2 Stimuli

This study used different stimuli to simulate spatial distance, message appeal, and concreteness of message. The stimuli were incorporated in mock-up Instagram posts including an environmental CSR statement. Environmental CSR messages are often mentioned on social media as well (Stanislavská, et al., 2020), providing organizations with opportunities such as gaining customer insights, increasing brand awareness, and increasing loyalty (Wang & Huang, 2018). Therefore, it was decided to include social media as a communication channel in this research. After Facebook, Instagram shows the highest number of posts related to CSR topics. However, it appears that environmental CSR message has not been extensively researched in relation to Instagram. Therefore, this study wanted to broaden the literature available by including Instagram in the research. The following will further clarify why the stimuli used in this study were chosen and how they were operationalized.

First, the stimuli for spatial distance had been developed. Thus far, literature regarding the spatial distance of environmental CSR messages on social media has been limited. Therefore, it was decided to include “far” and “near” spatial distance to investigate the effect of spatial distance on environmental CSR messages. Near spatial distance is a reference location, e.g., the location where the consumer currently resides. As the study was performed among Dutch citizens in the Netherlands, “the Netherlands” was selected as the stimulus for near spatial distance. The stimulus for far spatial distance needed to create the feeling that it is located at a great distance. Therefore, it was decided to select the country “Indonesia”, as this is located on the other side of the world compared to the Netherlands.

Second, the stimuli for message appeal are discussed. It was decided to further explore the use of emotional and rational appeals in relation to environmental CSR messages. The stimuli for message appeal were created based on the definitions of rational and emotional appeals used in previous literature. The main difference found between the concepts is the formal and informative characteristics of rational appeals as compared to the informal and emotional characteristics of emotional appeals. Rational messages are often considered to include factual information and information regarding benefits and characteristics such as a brand name (Dolan et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2018; MacLiniis, Rao, & Weiss, 2002). Emotional messages often include aspects that stimulate feelings and emotions (Goldberg & Gorn, 1987), such as emotionally charged words. These definitions were used to formulate the stimuli for message appeal. For the rational appeals it was decided to include the brand name “Coffee Mate”, but also concrete numbers such as “from 2020 to 2021”, “11% reduction”, and “40% reduction”. Additionally, overall, the words chosen were more formal. For the emotional appeals, it was decided to use more informal words that elicit emotions, such as “we are extremely proud”, “our desire to take care of the planet”, “we're trying very hard to”, as well as the exclamation point at the end of the sentence. Overall, the word choice of the emotional stimulus was more informal.

Lastly, the stimuli for concreteness of message are discussed. Walker and Wan (2012) have performed research on the communication of specific content concerning sustainable messages, namely the communication of symbolic and substantive messages. This study further explored the content of environmental CSR messages by focusing on symbolic content (future actions) and substantive content (both past actions as well as future actions). The stimulus of substantive content consists of two elements; a substantive message (“From 2020 to 2021, we’re able to report an 11% reduction in our carbon emissions in the Netherlands”) and a symbolic message (“By 2030, we aim to achieve an absolute reduction of 40% carbon emissions”). The symbolic message only consists of a symbolic part (“By 2030, we aim to achieve an absolute reduction of 40% carbon emissions”) and does not include past actions concerning environmental sustainability. It was kept in mind that the manipulations for substantive content and symbolic content needed to approximately contain the same number of words.

Thus, for each independent variable, two stimuli were developed. However, before these stimuli were incorporated in the final eight manipulations, the stimuli needed to be tested in a pre-test. The following discusses the results that followed from the manipulation check of the pre-test.

3.2.1 Manipulation check pre-test

The pre-test consisted of nine participants in total, five females and four males, participated in this pre-test. Conducting a pre-test is of significance to ensure that participants can differentiate between the different stimuli created by the researcher, as well as to ensure that participants perceive the stimuli the way it was intended.

First the means and standard deviations of the stimuli were looked at. Near spatial distance ($M=2.18$, $SD=1.01$), rational message ($M=3.20$, $SD=0.96$), and symbolic content ($M=1.74$, $SD=0.91$) were supposed to have a mean below the middle point of three. On the other hand, far spatial distance ($M=3.63$, $SD=1.01$), emotional message ($M=3.35$, $SD=0.91$), and substantive content ($M=3.89$, $SD=1.01$) were supposed to have a mean that exceeded the middle point of three. As can be seen, only rational appeal did not show the desired results as the mean was above the middle point of three and not below. This implied that the respondents perceived the stimuli as it was intended, except for the rational appeal.

Subsequently, Independent Sample T-Tests were performed for the stimuli. The analysis showed significant results for the stimulus of far spatial distance $t(33)=4.69$, $p=0.00$ and near spatial distance $t(33)=-5.52$, $p=0.00$. Thus, there was a significant difference between the answers that measured far spatial distance and near spatial distance. The Independent Sample T-Tests for message appeal showed significant results for the emotional stimulus $t(34)=-4.77$, $p=0.00$, however the rational stimulus did not show significant results. Lastly, Independent Samples T-Tests were performed for concreteness of message showing significant results for both the symbolic stimuli $t(34)=8.76$, $p=0.00$ and the substantive stimuli $t(34)=-6.42$, $p=0.00$. Thus, there was a significant difference between the answers that measured symbolic content and substantive content.

Based on the descriptive statistics and the results of the analyses, it could be concluded that the stimuli for both far and near spatial distance and both symbolic and substantive messages could be used in the main study. As for message appeal, the results for rational appeal were not significant. Further exploration showed that one of the four questions used to measure the rational appeal did not show a significant Independent Samples T-Test, whereas the other questions did show significant effects. Therefore, it was decided to remove this question and add a different question that is less vague to the respondents. Additionally, the stimuli had been altered slightly to convey the emotional appeals and the rational appeals more clearly.

3.2.2 Final Manipulations Main Study

Based on the results of the pre-test, eight manipulations were created for the main study. The stimuli for spatial distance and concreteness of message stayed the same. However, because of the non-significant outcome of the rational message appeal, the stimuli for rational and emotional appeals were adjusted accordingly to improve the stimuli. The final manipulations are summarized in table 3.

For the main study, eight mock-up Instagram posts were created based on the eight manipulations. Besides the text of the environmental CSR messages, a plain image of coffee beans was also included in the mock-up posts that operated as a background for the text. By reducing the saturation and by putting text fields on top of the image, the focus of the manipulations stayed mainly on the text. It was decided to create a fictive coffee brand for this

study, as coffee is quite a neutral product. Additionally, the messages shown to the participants did not focus on the product itself but rather focused more on the brand. Thus, although not everyone drinks coffee, participants could still form a perception toward the brand. The mock-up Instagram posts are shown in Appendix A.

Table 3

Overview of eight conditions

Stimuli	Manipulation
1. Far, Concrete & Rational	From 2020 to 2021, we can report an 11% reduction in carbon emissions in Indonesia against our carbon target. By 2030, we aim to achieve an absolute reduction of 40% in greenhouse gas emissions at Coffee Mate.
2. Far, Symbolic & Rational	We want to reduce Coffee Mate's carbon emissions in Indonesia relative to our carbon target. By 2030, we want to achieve an absolute reduction of 40% in greenhouse gas emissions at Coffee Mate.
3. Far, Concrete & Emotional	We are extremely proud to have reduced our carbon emissions over the past year in our desire to take good care of the planet. We are trying very hard to give back to the planet more than we use by drastically reducing our carbon emissions in Indonesia over the next eight years!
4. Far, Symbolic & Emotional	In our desire to take care of the planet, we are striving to reduce our carbon emissions. We are trying very hard to give back to the planet more than we use by drastically reducing our carbon emissions in Indonesia over the next eight years!
5. Near, Concrete & Rational	From 2020 to 2021, we can report an 11% reduction in carbon emissions in the Netherlands against our carbon target. By 2030, we aim to achieve an absolute reduction of 40% in greenhouse gas emissions at Coffee Mate.
6. Near, Symbolic & Rational	We want to reduce Coffee Mate's carbon emissions in the Netherlands relative to our carbon target. By 2030, we want to achieve an absolute reduction of 40% in greenhouse gas emissions at Coffee Mate.
7. Near, Concrete & Emotional	We are extremely proud to have reduced our carbon emissions over the past year in our desire to take good care of the planet. We are trying very hard to give back to the planet more than we use by drastically reducing our carbon emissions in the Netherlands over the next eight years!
8. Near, Symbolic & Emotional	In our desire to take care of the planet, we are striving to reduce our carbon emissions. We are trying very hard to give back to the planet more than we use by drastically reducing our carbon emissions in the Netherlands over the next eight years!

3.3 Measures

In the main study, different measures were added to evaluate the effects that the independent variables might have on an environmental CSR message. These measures, also known as dependent variables, are attitude toward the brand, trust towards the brand, purchase interest, and lastly online engagement. Additionally, a construct with four items that measures the environmental concern of the participants was added to the survey as a control variable. Besides the items of attitude toward brand, all measures items were presented on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “completely disagree” to “completely agree”. The following paragraphs explain how the measures were composed.

3.3.1 Attitude toward brand

The dependent variable attitude toward the brand was measured using four items that were gathered from the research of Spears and Singh (2004) (e.g., “Unappealing/Appealing”). The items that were included in this study were measured using a six-point bipolar scale. To measure the reliability of the construct for attitude toward brand, a Cronbach’s alpha was performed. Results show that the items have a reliability of $\alpha = 0.725$

Unfortunately, the items that measure attitude toward brand should have been rated on a five-point or on a seven- point bipolar scale. The six-point bipolar scale that was utilized could not be used in the analyses. Therefore, this measure was left out for the remainder of the study.

3.3.2 Trust toward brand

Trust toward brand was measured with three items gathered from the study of Li et al (2008). An example of an item is: “I expect the brand to deliver on its promise”. A reliability analysis was performed to see how reliable the items are. The Cronbach’s alpha showed a reliability of $\alpha = 0.601$.

3.3.3 Purchase interest

Purchase interest was measured using four items. Two items were gathered from a study of Grewal (1998). The remaining two items were added to ensure that the items measure purchase interest instead of purchase intention, for instance, “I would like to know more about the brand”. The Cronbach’s alpha showed that the items measuring purchase interest have a high reliability ($\alpha = 0.819$).

3.3.4 Online engagement

Online engagement was measured using four items gathered from the study of Esmeijer (2020). An example of an item is “I would share this Instagram post”. The Cronbach’s alpha showed a relatively low reliability of $\alpha = 0.610$. By removing one item, the reliability of the construct could be increased to $\alpha = 0,791$.

3.3.5 Environmental concern

Additionally, a fifth construct was added to the study that measured the environmental concern of participants. This construct will measure the influence that the control variable has on the

consumer perceptions of the environmental CSR message. The four items used in this measure were gathered from a study of Lounsbury and Tornatzky (1977). An example of an item is: “The news media have exaggerated the ecological problem”. The reliability analysis Cronbach’s alpha showed a reliability of $\alpha = 0.674$.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

To determine the validity of the measures, a factor analysis was performed. A factor analysis shows whether all the items that are grouped together measure the same, as well as whether the items measure what they were intended to measure (Knehta, Runyon & Eddy, 2019). The analysis showed that one item measuring online engagement was grouped together with the items measuring purchase intention. This questions the validity of that item. Therefore, it was decided to remove this item from the measure of online engagement. Afterwards, the factor analysis was performed again without the item of online engagement. This factor analysis showed four groups, and this time all the items that measured the same construct were together in one group. All items together explain 63.6% of the total variance. Table 4 provides an overview for the factor analysis performed. For the analyses, a benchmark of 0.40 was used. All numbers below 0.40 were excluded.

The Cronbach’s alpha was used to assess the reliability of all measures used in this study. The analysis showed that the reliability of the measure online engagement could be increased by removing an item. After this item was removed, the reliability of all measures in this study was optimized. All results showed a Cronbach’s alpha of $\alpha = 0.65$ or higher except for the items measuring trust toward the brand. This measure has a reliability of $\alpha = 0.601$. When performing the analyses using the measure trust toward the brand, this relatively low Cronbach’s alpha was kept in mind.

Table 4Factor analysis: Rotated component matrix^a

Items	Component			
	1	2	3	4
I don't think this is a trustworthy brand			.714	
I expect the brand to deliver on its promise			.770	
I think the brand has good intentions			.638	
I would purchase products from this brand	.756			
I would not consider buying products from this brand	.842			
I would like to get more information about this brand	.662			
I am interested in buying something from this brand	.836			
I would share this Instagram post				.875
I would follow this Instagram account				.794
The news media have exaggerated the ecological problem		.662		
If mankind is going to survive at all, environmental pollution must be stopped		.778		
We shouldn't worry about environmental problems because science and technology will solve them before very long		.778		
I am worried about future children's chance of living in a clean environment		.743		

^aRotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

3.5 Participants

For the main study, the aim was to gather around 30 respondents per condition which resulted in a total of 240 respondents. The participants had to be Dutch with a minimum age of 18. The participants were gathered using convenience sampling through distribution using WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, QR -codes and WoM communication. In total, 254 respondents filled out the survey. However, during the cleaning out process of the data, 37 participants had to be removed due to missing data. In the end, the data of 217 respondents could be used for the analyses. The demographics of the respondents are displayed in table 5. The main study is shown in Appendix B.

Table 5

Overview descriptive statistics demographics between conditions

Conditions	Age Mean (SD)	Gender	Educational level
1) Far, Concrete, Rational	38.07 (16.55)	Female = 66% Male = 34%	1 ^a) 24% 2 ^b) 10% 3 ^c) 41% 4 ^d) 25%
2) Far, Symbolic, Rational	35.92 (14.93)	Female = 58% Male = 38% Non-binary = 4%	1 ^a) 12% 2 ^b) 0% 3 ^c) 46% 4 ^d) 42%
3) Far, Concrete, Emotional	33.30 (16.50)	Female = 56% Male = 44%	1 ^a) 7% 2 ^b) 8% 3 ^c) 44% 4 ^d) 41%
4) Far, Symbolic, Emotional	35.42 (14.28)	Female = 61% Male = 39%	1 ^a) 19% 2 ^b) 7% 3 ^c) 48% 4 ^d) 26%
5) Near, Concrete, Rational	31.48 (12.67)	Female 52% Male 42%	1 ^a) 11% 2 ^b) 4% 3 ^c) 48% 4 ^d) 37%
6) Near, Symbolic, Rational	34.87 (16.20)	Female 32% Male 68%	1 ^a) 7% 2 ^b) 3% 3 ^c) 48% 4 ^d) 42%
7) Near, Concrete, Emotional	34.24 (12.63)	Female 60% Male 40%	1 ^a) 16% 2 ^b) 4% 3 ^c) 44% 4 ^d) 36%
8) Near, Symbolic, Emotional	37.83 (16.10)	Female 39% Male 61%	1 ^a) 22% 2 ^b) 0% 3 ^c) 30% 4 ^d) 48%

a) High school
b) Secondary vocational education
c) Higher vocational education
d) University education

After gathering all the data for the study, an analysis of the demographics of the participants was performed. For each of the eight conditions, the gender, age, and education of the participants were calculated. Additionally, a Kruskal-Wallis H analysis was performed to measure whether the demographics were evenly distributed throughout the eight conditions. Table 6 shows a clear overview of the Kruskal-Wallis statistics for each demographic. Table 7 provides an overview of the Kruskal-Wallis mean ranks for each condition.

Table 6

Kruskal-Wallis Statistics

	H	df	p
Age	4.156	7	.762
Gender	10.305	7	.172
Education	8.105	7	.323

Table 7

Kruskal-Wallis Mean Ranks

Condition	N	Age MR	Gender MR	Education MR
1) Far, Concrete, Rational	29	116.24	95.24	88.28
2) Far, Symbolic, Rational	24	118.73	105.13	117.71
3) Far, Concrete, Emotional	27	94.46	106.00	116.74
4) Far, Symbolic, Emotional	31	112.48	99.81	95.34
5) Near, Concrete, Rational	27	95.94	110.00	112.72
6) Near, Symbolic, Rational	31	109.50	131.16	120.71
7) Near, Concrete, Emotional	25	107.96	101.20	108.04
8) Near, Symbolic, Emotional	23	117.87	123.74	116.26

When looking at the descriptive statistics of age in it can be seen that the mean age of the conditions ranges between 31 years and 38 years. A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was not a significant difference in age between the different conditions $H(7) = 4.16$, $p = 0.76$, with a mean rank of 116 for condition 1, 119 for condition 2, 94 for condition 3, 112 for condition 4, 96 for condition 5, 110 for condition 6, 108 for condition 7, and 118 for condition 8. Thus, it can be concluded that the characteristic age has been evenly distributed between the conditions.

When looking at gender, it can be seen that the number of female participants is slightly higher than the number of male participants between the conditions. A Kruskal-Wallis H test did not show a significant difference in gender between the different conditions $H(7) = 10.31$, $p = 0.17$, with a mean rank of 95 for condition 1, 105 for condition 2, 106 for condition 3, 100 for condition 4, 110 for condition 5, 131 for condition 6, 101 for condition 7, and 123 for condition 8. Thus, it can be concluded that the conditions have been evenly distributed between the genders.

When looking at education, it appears that the participants mainly finished the two highest levels of education; higher vocational education and university education. A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was not a significant difference in education between the different conditions, $H(7) = 8.11$, $p = 0.32$, with a mean rank of 88 for condition 1, 118 for condition 2, 117 for condition 3, 95 for condition 4, 113 for condition 5, 121 for condition 6, 108 for condition 7, and 116 for condition 8. Thus, it can be concluded that education is also evenly distributed.

3.6 Procedure

The survey for the main study was created using Qualtrics Survey Software and distributed via social media as well as with a QR code on campus. Before participants started with the survey, they were provided with some general information about the survey. This information also doubled as an informed consent which participants had to agree with by means of a question at the end of the page stating that they have read the information and agree to participate. In this part of the survey, the respondents were also informed that the study was fully anonymous and that they could withdraw from the study at any moment.

After the participants agreed to participate in the survey, the participants were exposed to one of the eight conditions that are part of this study. A short circumscribing text was added in which the participants were asked to imagine they were scrolling through Instagram and came across this post. Afterwards, they were asked to answer several questions about the post. These questions measured the dependent variables. In the circumscribing text, it was also emphasized that there are no right or wrong answers. The second part of the study measures the manipulations. The same condition that was shown to the participant in the first part of the study was shown again. Afterwards, three sets of questions were presented to the participants that measure the three variables: spatial distance, tone of message and content of message. The last part of the survey consisted of a few general and demographic questions about the participants. Before the participants would answer these questions, it was stressed that these questions are not about the Instagram post that was presented to them in the previous part of the survey. The questions consisted of a set that measured their environmental concern, as well as questions about their gender, age, and educational level. Afterwards, the participants were thanked for their participation and the contact information of the researcher was presented to them in case they had any additional questions.

4. Results

After the main test was created, the study was distributed and data was gathered. In the following section, the results of the analysis will be presented. First, the manipulation check of the main study is discussed. Afterwards, the main effects are analyzed, and the hypotheses will be accepted or refuted.

4.1 Manipulation Check Main Test

Before analyzing the data to test the hypothesis, a manipulation check was conducted to assess whether the manipulations work as intended. To check the manipulations of the variables, multiple ANOVA analyses were performed. Table 8 provides an overview of the descriptive statistics of the manipulation check. The results of the MANOVA analysis are displayed in table 9.

Table 8

Descriptive statistics manipulation check

Independent Variables		<i>Mean (SD)^{a)}</i>
Spatial distance	Near	2.99 (0.86)
	Far	2.63 (0.89)
Message appeal	Rational	2.17 (0.64)
	Emotional	2.96 (0.70)
Concreteness of message	Symbolic	2.20 (0.61)
	Substantive	2.89 (0.75)

a) 5-point Likert scale (1=completely disagree / 5=completely agree)

Table 9

MANOVA manipulation check

Variable	F	df	Error df	p
Spatial distance	9.15	1	215	.03
Message appeal	78.07	1	215	.00
Concreteness of message	55.48	1	215	.00

The analysis for spatial distance shows significant results [$F(1, 215)=9.15, p=0.03$], thus far spatial distance ($M=2.63, SD=0.89$) is significantly removed from near spatial distance ($M=2.99, SD=0.86$). The manipulations created for far and near spatial distance can therefore be used for further analysis. Nevertheless, the mean of near spatial distance did not show the desired results, indicating that the participants did not consider the near spatial distance to be nearby.

For message appeal, the analysis again shows significant results [$F(1, 215)=78.07$, $p=0.00$]. The rational manipulation ($M=2.17$, $SD=0.64$) is significantly removed from the scores for the emotional manipulation ($M=2.96$, $SD=0.70$). Thus, it can be concluded that the manipulations for message appeal work as intended and can be used for further analysis. However, the mean of the emotional appeal should ideally have been above the middle point of three, indicating that participants did not consider that manipulation to be very emotional.

Lastly, the manipulation check for concreteness of message shows significant results [$F(1, 215)=55.48$, $p=0.00$] indicating that symbolic content ($M=2.20$, $SD=0.61$) and substantive content ($M=2.89$, $SD=0.75$) are significantly removed from another. Thus, the manipulation works and can be used in further analyses. Yet, it could be argued that the substantive content is not perceived as intended, as the mean is below the middle point of three.

Based on the manipulation check, it can be concluded that all manipulations work and can be used for further analyses. However, not all stimuli were perceived by the participants as intended. This should be kept in mind when deriving conclusions from the results.

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

Using a MANCOVA analysis, it was investigated whether there are significant differences in terms of spatial distance, message appeal, and concreteness of message on the dependent variables when controlling for environmental concern as a covariate. The MANCOVA analysis explored the effects of the independent variables on trust toward brand, purchase interest and online engagement. Lastly, the MANCOVA analysis also explored the possible significance of the interaction effects between the independent variables. The Wilk's Lambda was used to calculate the different effects. Table 10 provides an overview of these effects.

Table 10

MANCOVA analysis of independent variables

Multivariate test for variance (GLM / MANCOVA)

Multivariate tests (Manova)	<i>F-value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Wilk's Lambda		
Environmental Concern	3.47	0.02
Spatial distance	1.19	0.32
Message appeal	0.71	0.98
Concreteness of message	0.59	0.63
Spatial distance * Message appeal	0.50	0.69
Spatial distance * Concreteness of message	0.21	0.89
Message appeal * Concreteness of message	0.13	0.94
<hr/>		
Test of between subjects design effects (Anova)	<i>F-value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Environmental concern		
Trust toward brand	0.47	0.45
Purchase Interest	7.66	0.01
Online engagement	0.04	0.84
Spatial distance		
Trust toward brand	0.09	0.77
Purchase Interest	2.53	0.11
Online engagement	0.76	0.39
Message appeal		
Trust toward brand	0.16	0.69
Purchase Interest	0.00	0.96
Online engagement	0.00	0.98
Concreteness of message		
Trust toward brand	0.17	0.68
Purchase Interest	0.59	0.44
Online engagement	0.78	0.38
Spatial distance * Message appeal		
Trust toward brand	1.06	0.31
Purchase Interest	0.92	0.34
Online engagement	0.14	0.71
Spatial distance * Concreteness of message		
Trust toward brand	0.07	0.79
Purchase Interest	0.02	0.90
Online engagement	0.57	0.45
Message appeal * Concreteness of message		
Trust toward brand	0.18	0.67
Purchase Interest	0.36	0.55
Online engagement	0.10	0.75

First, the main effect of spatial distance was explored. As can be seen in the table, the main effect of spatial distance on the dependent variables after controlling for environmental concern

is not significant [$F(3, 206)=1.19, p=0.32$]. Thus, it could be concluded that the conditions including near spatial distance do not positively influence an environmental CSR message on social media as compared to the condition including far spatial distance. When looking at the effect of spatial distance on the separate dependent variables, no significant results for spatial distance can be reported on trust toward brand [$F(1, 206)=0.09, p=0.77$], purchase interest [$F(1, 206)=2.53, p=0.11$], and online engagement [$F(1, 206)=0.76, p=0.39$]. Therefore, H1b, H1c, and H1d are not supported.

Second, the main effect of message appeal was investigated. The analysis showed that the main effect of message appeal on the dependent variables after controlling for environmental concern is not significant [$F(3, 206)=0.71, p=0.98$]. It could therefore be concluded that emotional appeals do not positively influence an environmental CSR message on social media as compared to rational appeals. When looking at the effect of message appeal on the separate dependent variables, no significant effects were found for trust toward the brand [$F(1, 206)=0.16, p=0.69$], purchase interest [$F(1, 206)=0.00, p=0.96$], and online engagement [$F(1, 206)=0.00, p=0.98$]. Therefore, H2b, H2c, and H2d are not supported.

Lastly, the main effect of concreteness of message on the dependent variables had been explored. No significant effect of concreteness of message on the dependent variables after controlling for environmental concern can be reported [$F(3, 206)=0.59, p=0.63$]. Thus, it could be concluded that substantive content does not positively influence an environmental CSR message on social media as compared to symbolic content. To further look into this effect, the influence of concreteness of message on each dependent variable were also investigated. There are no significant results for concreteness of message on trust toward the brand [$F(1, 206)=0.17, p=0.68$], purchase interest [$F(1, 206)=0.59, p=0.44$], and online engagement [$F(1, 206)=0.78, p=0.38$]. Thus, H3b, H3c, and H3d are not supported.

In addition to the main effects, the interaction effects were also explored using a MANCOVA test. First, the interaction effect between spatial distance and message appeal, after controlling for environmental concern, was investigated. No significant effect can be reported for this interaction effect [$F(1, 206)=0.50, p=0.69$]. It can be concluded that the use of near spatial distance in combination with rational appeal does not positively influence the environmental CSR message on social media, after controlling for environmental concern, as compared to emotional appeal. Moreover, the results of the interaction effect on the separate dependent variables were explored. There is no significant interaction effect of near spatial distance in combination with emotional appeal on trust toward brand [$F(1, 206)=1.06, p=0.31$], purchase interest [$F(1, 206)=0.92, p=0.34$], and online engagement [$F(1, 206)=0.14, p=0.71$]. Therefore, hypothesis H4b, H4c, and H4d cannot be supported.

Second, the interaction effect between spatial distance and concreteness of message was explored. The analysis showed that the interaction between spatial distance and concreteness of message, after controlling for environmental concern, are not significant [$F(1, 206)=0.21, p=0.89$]. Based on these results, it can be concluded that near spatial distance in combination with substantive content do not positively influence an environmental CSR message on social media as compared to a symbolic message. To dive deeper into this effect, the influence of spatial distance in combination with concreteness of message on the separate dependent variables had been explored. The results showed that combining near spatial distance and a

substantive message does not have an influence on trust toward brand [$F(1, 206)=0.07, p=0.79$], purchase interest [$F(1, 206)=0.02, p=0.90$], and online engagement [$F(1, 206)=0.57, p=0.45$]. Thus, H5b, H5c, and H5d are not supported.

The last interaction effect that was explored is the effect between message appeal and concreteness of message. A MANCOVA analysis showed that the interaction between the independent variables, after controlling for environmental concern, is not significant [$F(1, 206)=0.13, p=0.94$]. Therefore, it can be concluded that emotional appeal in combination with substantive content do not positively influence an environmental CSR message on social media as compared to symbolic content. Additionally, the analysis explored the influence of the interaction effect on the separate dependent variables. The interaction of emotional appeals and substantive content does not influence trust toward brand [$F(1, 206)=0.18, p=0.67$], purchase interest [$F(1, 206)=0.36, p=0.55$], and online engagement [$F(1, 206)=0.10, p=0.75$]. Therefore, H6b, H6c, and H6d are not supported.

Lastly, the following paragraph will focus on the results of the covariate environmental concern in more detail. As stated previously, the MANCOVA analysis did not show significant effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables after controlling for environmental concern. Thus, environmental concern does not influence the effect that spatial distance, message appeal, and concreteness of message have on the dependent variables. However, as can be seen in table 10, environmental concern does significantly influence the sustainable CSR message [$F(1, 206)=3.47, p=0.02$]. To further explore this effect, the effect of environmental concern on the individual dependent variables was investigated. Results showed that environmental concern does not influence trust toward brand [$F(1, 206)=0.47, p=0.50$] and online engagement [$F(1, 206)=0.04, p=0.84$]. However, environmental concern does have a significant influence on purchase interest [$F(1, 206)=7.66, p=0.01$]. This effect explains that consumers with high environmental concern have a higher purchase interest ($M=3.09, SD=0.846$) when looking at a sustainable CSR message as compared to consumers with low environmental concern ($M=2.75, SD=0.771$).

5. Discussion

The objective of this study was to investigate the effect that spatial distance, message appeal and concreteness of message might have on environmental CSR messages on social media. This was realized by exploring the influence that these textual elements might have on the trust toward the brand, purchase interest, and the online engagement, after controlling for environmental concern. The following paragraphs will dive deeper into the results and the hypotheses by means of an in-depth discussion that aims to explain the findings. Additionally, the academic and practical implications that emerge from these findings will be construed, limitations of this study will be discussed and possibilities for future research formulated. Lastly, this study will wrap up with a conclusion of all the main findings.

5.1 Main Findings

The results of the study showed that all the formulated hypotheses could not be accepted. Thus, it can be argued that there is no significant main effect of near spatial distance (as compared to far spatial distance), emotional appeal (as compared to rational appeal), and substantive content (as compared to symbolic content) on the dependent variables, after controlling for environmental concern. Additionally, no interaction effects between the independent variables were found. Thus, the combination of near spatial distance and rational appeal (as compared to far spatial distance and emotional appeal), near spatial distance and substantive content (as compared to far spatial distance and symbolic content), and the combination of emotional appeal and substantive content (as compared to rational appeal and symbolic content) do not positively influence environmental CSR message on social media. The following paragraphs will elaborate on these surprising findings and will provide explanations for the contradicting results.

The level of construals, as part of the Construal Level Theory (Trope & Liberman, 2010), might provide a first explanation for the contradicting findings. Nearby locations (vs far locations) are thought of using concrete low-level construals (vs abstract high-level construals) (Trope & Liberman, 2010; Trope et al., 2007). Ryoo, Hyun, and Sung (2017) explain that, by creating a message that already uses textual construals that are in line with the distance of the location, the message is processed more fluidly, and sustainable behaviour can be promoted. Therefore, it can be argued that spatial distance and the level of construals of the message should correlate for an optimal effect. In this study, the level of construals was not considered. It can be argued that this might have diminished the effect spatial distance has on environmental CSR messages. In the future, it could be interesting to add the level of construal or abstractness as an additional variable.

The level of construals is not only apparent in spatial distance, but there is also an interplay between the level of construals and message appeals. The abstractness and concreteness of the message can be linked to rational and emotional appeals. Rational appeals “enhance low level abstraction” (Kim, Lee & Choi, 2019, p. 491) by using objective information that activates our cognition (Akpınar & Berger, 2017). Emotional appeals, on the other hand, “enhance a high-level abstraction” (Kim et al., 2019, p. 491) by using elements that focus on feelings and emotions (Akpınar & Berger, 2017). Keeping in mind that congruency

between spatial distance and construals is beneficial for a message, it could also be expected that congruency between message appeals and construals will be beneficial messages. However, it could go even further by arguing that not only the level of construals should have been kept in mind with both spatial distance and message appeal, also the combination of spatial distance and message appeal with the same construal levels should have been kept in mind. This is also in line with the research of Kim et al. (2019). However, in this study the level of construals was not considered in the creation of the stimuli. Therefore, congruency between these three elements was also not considered and the messages might not have been processed as fluidly. This could partly explain why the results contradict previous research.

A second explanation can be found in a discrepancy between the favored spatial distance (near or far) of CSR activities and of sustainability. Lii et al. (2013) and Groza et al. (2011) both explain that CSR activities located close to the consumers have more favourable outcomes. However, in this particular study, the environment plays a main role in the CSR activity. Sustainability as part of climate change is a concept that consumers perceive as more abstract and psychologically distant (McDonald, Yi Chai & Newell, 2015; Spence & Pidgeon, 2010). Additionally, Alaoui and Cova (2021) show that other factors such as “consumer residential identification, degree of pessimism, or perceived self-efficacy” (p. 49) need to be considered and understood before a correct hypothesis can be formulated regarding sustainability and psychological distance (Alaoui & Cova, 2021). Thus, not only do CSR activities and sustainability show different preferences regarding spatial distance, there are also multiple other factors that need to be considered and understood in relation to sustainability before a correct supposition can be hypothesized.

The concept of sustainability in relation to the channel of communication used in this research might provide a third explanation for the results of this study. In general, research has shown that emotional appeals on social media result in more advantageous outcomes as compared to rational appeals on social media (Rietveld et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2018). However, the results of this research are not in line with the theory. It could be argued that the topic of environmental sustainability as the CSR message has influenced the outcome. Kamalanon, Chen and Le (2022) explain that consumers who are concerned about the environment “expresses feelings of involvement and awareness of environmental consequences” (p. 695). Therefore, it can be argued that consumers that are concerned about the environment are likely to use the central route in the ELM, which would imply that rational appeals are more effective in this context. Accordingly, the favored message appeal for social media and the favored message appeal for the topic of sustainability contradict one another. This could explain the extremely similar results for both emotional and rational appeals that resulted from this study. When removing the aspect of social media, rational appeals might be more favourable in this new context, which might evoke completely different results.

Lack of knowledge and background information about the brand “Coffee Mate” might provide a fourth explanation. People use background information and previous experience with a brand to form opinions and ideas about a brand; this is also known as brand image. Gensch (1978) explains that brand image is significantly related to brand preference. Brand image influences whether consumers trust a brand and whether they would be interested in purchasing from the brand (Malik, Naeem & Munawar, 2012; Zatwarnicka-Madura, Stecko & Mentel, 2016). Thus, brand image can be considered to influence the way consumers perceive a brand.

However, for this study, a fictive brand was created and no background information about the brand was provided. Background information about a brand might be of significance to the formulation of a brand image, which could have an influence on the dependent variables. Thus, in future studies, adding background information about the brand might create a stronger effect on dependent variables such as purchase interest and trust.

A last explanation for the contradicting results might be found in the manipulations themselves. The results showed a significant manipulation check for all three independent variables, which means that the manipulations could be used for the analyses. However, it was also noted that not all manipulations seem to be interpreted by the respondents as was intended by the researcher. The formulated hypotheses were based on the idea that all manipulations were clearly perceived as intended by the respondents. The fact that for each independent variable, one manipulation did not seem to have been perceived as intended could provide a fundamental reason as to why the findings of this study are not in line with other literature discussing related topics.

Even though the findings showed that there is no significant effect of spatial distance, message appeal, and concreteness of message on the environmental CSR message after controlling for environmental concern, the results did present a significant effect for environmental concern on purchase interest. The environmental concern was added to the study as a control variable to see whether the level of concern that participants showed regarding the environment could influence the outcomes of the results. The findings showed that people with a higher environmental concern display a higher purchase interest as compared to people with a lower environmental concern. This is in line with previous research explaining that environmental concern has been identified as a “major driver” (p. 129) to purchase intention as well as purchase behaviour to sustainable or green products (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Kamalanon et al. (2022) elaborate on this by explaining that purchase intention predicts purchase behaviour. A high environmental concern leads to a higher purchase interest, which predicts the purchase behaviour of consumers. Therefore, it could be argued that consumers with a high environmental concern result in an increase of the purchase behaviour. However, it should be kept in mind that the actual buying process depends on the trade-of between the sustainability of the brand or product and the product attributes (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Thus, it could be said that the brand or product needs to be sustainable and of a certain quality for this effect to take place.

Having the knowledge that environmental concern is a driver for purchase interest and, based on the trade-of consumers make, is also a driver for purchase behaviour, can be beneficial for organizations. It is of importance to know your audience, as it is beneficial for the organization that consumers with high environmental concern receive clear communication regarding the environmental CSR actions of the organization as this could result in increased purchase interest and purchase behaviour. As consumers make the trade-of between the sustainability and the quality of a brand, it is likely that this knowledge about the environmental CSR message will positively influence the decision on whether to buy the product or not.

5.2 Academic and Practical Implications

The findings of this study contribute to the body of literature currently available. This study broadens the literature as each independent variable has not been extensively researched yet in this context. Spatial distance and message appeals have been extensively researched in marketing literature, yet research in the context of environmental CSR messages on social media appears to be limited. Moreover, research into the effects of concreteness of message appears to have been minimal in general. Additionally, to this researcher's knowledge, these variables have not been researched together in one study, thus this study also provides new insights into the interplay between the variables.

Additionally, this study confirms past research explaining that environmental concern of consumers positively influences purchase interest. Thus, consumers that show high environmental concern indicated a higher purchase interest, regardless of what condition of the sustainable CSR message they were shown. This is an interesting finding that broadens the literature currently available regarding this topic. Nevertheless, further research is crucial to explore these results more in-depth as it was only a small part of this study.

Besides contributing to the current literature available, this study also challenges the current perspectives on environmental CSR communication. Contrary to what was predicted, the findings of this research showed that spatial distance, message appeals, and concreteness of message did not have an influence on environmental CSR messages. These contradicting findings bring new insights and questions in the field, such as "is it actually of significance for communication professionals to take into account spatial distance, message appeals and concreteness of message when communicating environmental CSR messages on Instagram or does this have no influence on how consumers perceive the message?" This new question should be further explored as the manipulations of this study make it difficult to draw conclusions from these findings. Nevertheless, this knowledge could be of significance for future research.

Thus, the limited research into the variables in relation to this context ensures that the findings of this study both broaden and challenge current research and is of value to the body of literature currently available regarding environmental CSR messages, as well as provides a new base for future research. This is of added value as the environment is of significance to consumers and therefore takes a prominent place on the corporate agendas. This assures the continued relevance of this topic in research. Researchers can build on the findings of this study as the relevancy of the topic guarantees that research into this topic will continue to be of interest and significance.

The findings of this study can also be practically applied by organizations that are interested in communicating their environmental CSR activities. Firstly, the findings confirm that it is of added value to know whether the target group of the message is highly concerned about the environment or not. Consumers that are highly concerned about the environment are more interested in purchasing from a sustainable brand. Therefore, it might be more relevant to target the sustainable CSR message toward consumers with higher concern. Thus, based on this study, it can be advised that communication professionals know whether their target group is highly involved with the environment or not. Nevertheless, further research is needed to investigate

this finding more in-depth in this specific context so clearer and more extensive practical implications can flow from this in relation to this specific context.

Secondly, the findings question whether Instagram is the right social media channel to use when communicating environmental CSR messages. The results of this study showed that online engagement is relatively low for all conditions. Thus, none of the variables appear to influence online engagement. A more formal channel might prove to be more suitable, such as the corporate website of the organization. This does not prove that environmental CSR messages should not be communicated on Instagram at all, however, it might be more appropriate to only mention it shortly on Instagram and go more in-depth on one of the other channels. However, no conclusions regarding Instagram can be drawn from this study, thus further research is needed that specifically focusses on the channel used for communicating environmental CSR messages. Therefore, it is advised that communication professionals try this out for themselves to see what works best for them.

Lastly, the findings of this study bring to mind that it might not be necessary for organizations that are interested in communicating environmental CSR activities to pay attention to spatial distance, message appeal, or concreteness of message at all. The results showed that the variables did not influence the environmental CSR message on social media. Thus, there are no positive or negative effects on the environmental CSR message as a result of the variables. Therefore, it might not be of significance to take these variables into account at all when communicating on social media. This would make the creation of a post less complicated, as there are less aspects to take into consideration. However, it should be noted that some of the stimuli used in the manipulations could use some refinement, which might change these findings.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations that must be addressed in this study. The first limitation that will be discussed is aimed at the manipulations. The manipulation checks for both the pre-test and the main study showed significant results. Thus, the manipulations could be used in the analyses of this study. However, the manipulation check of the main study showed that the manipulations used were not perfect representations of the variables. For instance, the stimuli used for near spatial distance was not perceived by the respondents to be nearby. Because the manipulations were not perfect depictions of the variables, it is likely that this has influenced the results. It can be assumed that, at least partly, the results of this study are contradictory to previous literature because the findings are based on manipulations that were not perceived by the participants as intended. This should be kept in mind when formulating conclusions, as they are based on manipulations that do not perfectly represent the variables.

Therefore, it might be interesting if future research focuses on optimizing the stimuli, so they are perceived by respondents as intended. Findings of future research could provide more definite conclusions regarding the use of these variables. Future research could provide clearer answers to the questions that arose in this study, namely if the insufficient manipulations of this study influenced the results or if spatial distance, message appeal and concreteness of message indeed do not influence environmental CSR messages. This is meaningful knowledge for both academics and practitioners.

A second limitation of this study is aimed at the construct that measures the social media “Instagram” as part of this study. To measure whether the manipulations influence an Instagram post that focusses on environmental CSR communication, mock-up Instagram posts were created, and participants had to answer questions that measure online engagement with the post. The findings of this study showed relatively low results for online engagement. However, no control variable about the normal Instagram use of the participant was included. Because of this, it could not be measured how participants use Instagram in their personal life. It might have been the case that, compared to their usual online engagement with posts, this “low” level of engagement is actually not considered low but normal. Nevertheless, without the control questions there is no way to discern this.

Therefore, it could be interesting for future research to add a construct that measures how participants use Instagram in their day-to-day life. In addition to this, it could be relevant if future research further explores the effects of the three variables on environmental CSR messages using a different communication channel. Future research could explore what medium might be preferred and if the low online engagement with the Instagram post is in line with the online engagement for another social media channel or not. The findings of the study would be of added value to corporate communication managers of organizations as it gives more guidance to the right medium to communicate environmental CSR messages.

A third limitation focuses on the brand displayed in the study. It was decided to create a fictive brand that was named Coffee Mate. The participants encountered the name of the brand in the mock-up Instagram post, as it was displayed in the username. Additionally, the brand name was mentioned in the manipulations that included the rational appeal. However, because the brand is fictive, the respondents had never heard of it before. Additionally, no background information regarding the brand was provided during the study. It is expected that the participants were less engaged with the brand because of this, which could have influenced the results of this study.

Therefore, this study proposes that future research should explore the use of an existing brand. In this study a fictive brand was used, thus, consumers have not had the opportunity to form a brand image about the fictive brand. However, in a real-life setting, it is likely that consumers have formed a brand image about the brand. Thus, it could be interesting to perform this research using an already existing brand to imitate a more representative real-life situation.

The last limitation addresses the dependent variable “attitude toward brand”. Attitude toward the brand was supposed to be a dependent variable in this study. However, during the main study, a six-point bipolar scale was used. Unfortunately, this scale was supposed to be a five- or seven-point bipolar scale. Consequently, the scale could not be used in the analysis. Therefore, the dependent variable attitude toward brand could not be analyzed. No conclusions could be drawn from this dependent variable.

For future research, it could be interesting to again include the dependent variable attitude toward brand. As the theory regarding the influence of the three independent variables on an environmental CSR message is still limited, proper research into the attitude of consumers toward the CSR message would be of added value for academic research and the body of literature that is currently available.

5.4 Conclusion

The motivation behind this study was to investigate the effects of spatial distance, message appeal, and concreteness of message of environmental CSR messages on consumer perceptions. A 2 x 2 x 2 experimental design was created. Eight conditions emerged from this experimental research design, of which eight manipulations resembling mock-up Instagram posts were constructed. The effect of the variables on attitude toward brand was taken out of this study as the results unfortunately did not prove to be useful due to a practical error.

The findings of this study did not show significant results of the independent variables on the dependent variables. Thus, it can be argued that spatial distance, message appeal and concreteness of message do not influence how consumers perceive an environmental CSR message, after controlling for environmental concern. Nevertheless, the control variable environmental concern did show a significant effect on sustainable CSR messages. This effect shows that consumers with a high environmental concern also show a higher interest in purchasing from the brand.

The findings of this study broaden the body of literature currently available as research into environmental CSR messages on social media is still limited. Additionally, the positive relation between environmental concern and purchase interest could be an interesting finding for corporate communication managers as it implies that knowing the environmental concern of your target group could be of added value. It might be more beneficial to target the environmental CSR message more on consumers that are highly concerned with the environment. However, this research also challenges the current body of literature as the findings are contradictive with past research. This raises the question whether spatial distance, message appeal, and concreteness of message are of importance when communicating an environmental CSR message on Instagram or not. These new findings present new perceptions and should be further explored before conclusions can be drawn. Researchers can build on the findings of this study as the relevancy of the topic guarantees that research into this topic will continue to be of interest and significance.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Mock-up Instagram posts main study



1) Far, Concrete, Rational



2) Far, Symbolic, Rational



3) Far, Concrete, Emotional



4) Far, Symbolic, Rational



5) Near, Concrete, Emotional



6) Near, Symbolic, Rational



7) Near, Concrete, Rational



7) Near, Symbolic, Emotional

Appendix B: Pre-test



Beste deelnemer,

Hartelijk dank voor uw deelname aan dit onderzoek als onderdeel van mijn master thesis. Uw participatie wordt zeer gewaardeerd en is heel waardevol.

Het doel van dit onderzoek is om te observeren hoe consumenten reageren op verschillende elementen uit berichten van organisaties. Deelname aan dit onderzoek zal slechts 5 minuten duren.

Uw deelname is geheel vrijwillig en mocht u willen stoppen tijdens de vragenlijst dan is dat op elk moment mogelijk. Dit onderzoek zal volledig anoniem zijn en alle informatie die wordt verzameld zal alleen worden gebruikt tijdens het huidige onderzoek.

Als u doorgaat met het onderzoek, gaat u ermee akkoord dat u bovenstaande informatie hebt gelezen en dat u deelneemt aan dit onderzoek.

Bij voorbaat dank voor uw tijd.

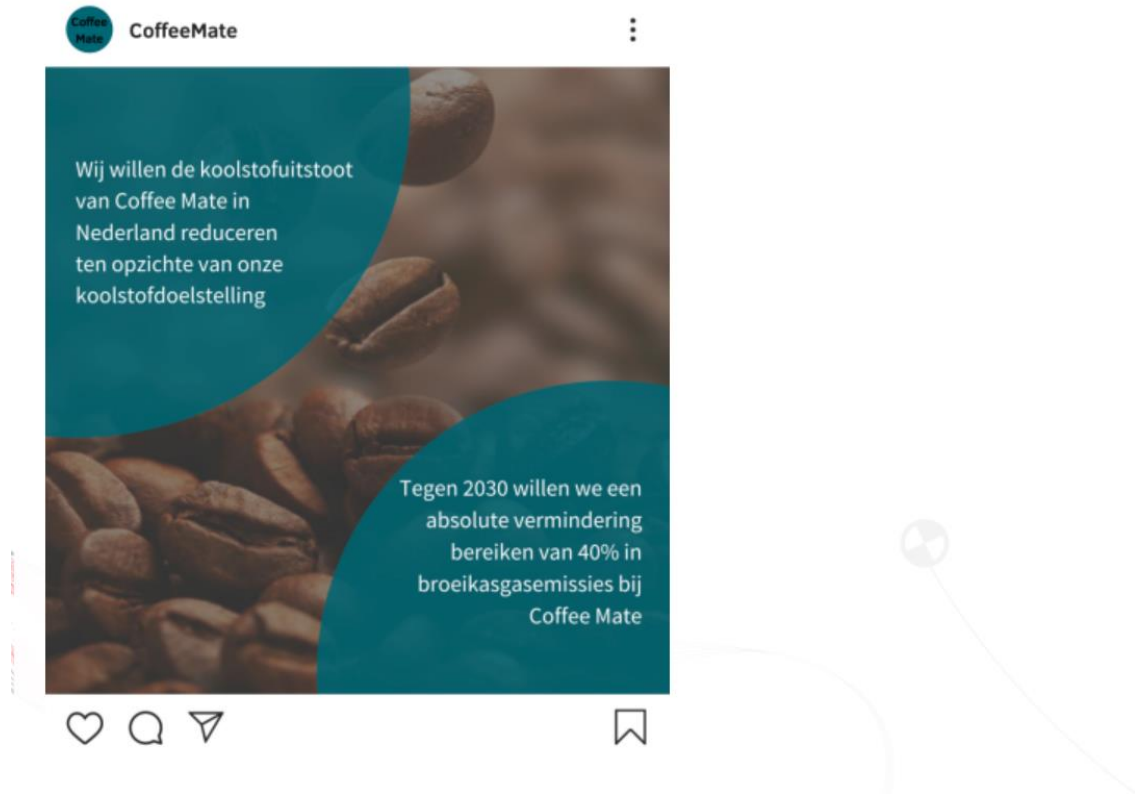
Met vriendelijke groet,

Pien van Dalen
Communication Science student
University of Twente
j.h.vandalen-1@student.utwente.nl

Ik heb bovenstaande informatie gelezen en ga akkoord met deelname

Ja

Stel je voor dat je op Instagram aan het scrollen bent en het volgende bericht tegenkomt. Kijk goed naar het bericht en lees de tekst nauwkeurig door. Beantwoord daarna de vragen die gaan over het bericht. Er zijn geen goede of foute antwoorden. Het gaat om uw eerste ingeving.



Na het zien van dit bericht denk ik dat dit merk... is.

Onaantrekkelijk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Aantrekkelijk
Goed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Slecht
Aangenaam	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Onaangenaam
Ongunstig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Gunstig

Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen:

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee eens en niet mee oneens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Ik denk niet dat dit een betrouwbaar merk is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik verwacht dat het merk zijn belofte nakomt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik denk dat het merk goede bedoelingen heeft	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen:

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee eens en niet mee oneens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Ik zou producten van dit merk kopen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou niet overwegen producten van dit merk aan te schaffen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou meer informatie willen over dit merk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik heb interesse om iets van dit merk te kopen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen:

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee eens en niet mee oneens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Ik zou deze Instagram post delen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou dit Instagram account volgen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou geen comment op deze Instagram post achterlaten	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou dit Instagram account ontvolgen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



U krijgt nogmaals hetzelfde bericht te zien. Bekijk dit bericht en beantwoord de volgende vragen hierover. Er zijn geen goede of foute antwoorden. Het gaat om uw eerste ingeving.



Geef aan of u vindt dat het bericht:

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee eens en niet mee oneens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Betrekking heeft op een milieuprobleem dicht bij uw huidige locatie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gericht is op een probleem dat zich ver van uw huidige locatie bevindt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Geen betrekking heeft op uw huidige locatie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Zich richt op uw huidige locatie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Geef aan of u vindt dat het bericht:

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee eens en niet mee oneens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Emotionele woorden bevat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Een informele toon heeft	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Koel, nuchter of zakelijke woorden bevat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Als een emotioneel bericht overkomt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Als een afstandelijk bericht overkomt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Geef aan of u vindt dat het bericht:

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee eens en niet mee oneens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Zowel verleden als toekomstige acties benadrukt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Duidelijk maakt wat het bedrijf al voor het milieu heeft gedaan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alleen de nadruk legt op toekomstige acties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Niets vermeldt over wat het bedrijf al voor het milieu heeft gedaan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

U bent bijna klaar! Dit laatste deel bestaat uit een aantal algemene en demografische vragen. Deze vragen gaan niet meer over het bericht wat u hiervoor heeft gezien.

Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen:

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee eens en niet mee oneens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
De nieuwsmedia hebben het milieuprobleem overdreven	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Als de mens wil overleven, moet de milieuvervuiling gestopt worden.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We moeten ons geen zorgen maken over milieuproblemen, want wetenschap en technologie zullen dit binnen niet al te lange tijd oplossen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik maak me zorgen over de kans die toekomstige kinderen hebben om te leven in een schone omgeving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Wat is uw geslacht?

- Vrouw
- Man
- Non-binary
- Anders

Wat is uw leeftijd?

Wat is uw hoogst behaalde opleiding?

- Middelbare school (VMBO, HAVO, VWO etc.)
- Middelbaar Beroeps Onderwijs (MBO)
- Hoger Beroeps Onderwijs (HBO)
- Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs (Universitair)