

Matching Companies' CSR Efforts with Consumers' Perceptions

Elisabeth Lam
Souzan Meana

Copyright © Lam, Elisabeth; Meana, Souzan

Department of Technology and Society
Faculty of Engineering, Lund University
Box 118
221 00 Lund

Department of Business Administration
School of Economics and Management, Lund University
Box 7080
220 07 Lund

Master Thesis, Technology Management - Nr 275/2014
ISSN 1651-0100
ISRN LUTVDG/TVTM--2014/5275--/SE

Lund 2014
Printed in Sweden

Abstract

- Title:** Matching Companies' CSR Efforts with Consumers' Perceptions
- Authors:** Elisabeth Lam
Souzan Meana
- Supervisors:** Elg Ulf, Professor, Institute of Economic Research, Department of Business Administration, Lund University

Malmgren Charlotte, Lecturer, Environmental and Energy Systems Studies, Lund University

Månsson André, PhD student, Environmental and Energy Systems Studies, Lund University
- Issue of the study:** Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is becoming a normal part of every corporate's business. Companies are putting a lot of effort on sustainability and social responsibility due to an increase in regulations and demands from different stakeholders. Though there exists a gap between how much effort the companies put on CSR and how consumers perceive these efforts. Some companies work actively with CSR but are not perceived as sustainable companies by the consumers. Other companies do not put a lot of effort on CSR but are perceived as sustainable.
- Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to examine the gap between Swedish companies' CSR efforts and the consumers' perceptions regarding these efforts. Thus, identifying which factors and how these factors affect the gap.
- Method:** The thesis is a qualitative study based on literature review and empirical research. A literature study is first performed to form the basis for the empirical research. By examining earlier literature and theories about what is known about the problem, the framework of the empirical study was formed. Firstly, in order to demonstrate the gap of the Swedish companies, a quantitative research is performed to measure the companies' CSR efforts and compare it to the consumers'

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

perceptions. Secondly, in order to identify and analyze the factors that affect the gap a qualitative empirical research is performed. The qualitative research involves interviews with five Swedish companies and three focus group discussions that are held. The aim of the interviews is to study how the companies work with CSR and what factors associated to these companies affect the consumers' perceptions. The aim of the focus group discussions is to examine the relevant factors to the consumers that affect their own perceptions and to what extent these factors match the factors identified under the interviews and literature study.

Conclusion: There exists a gap between Swedish companies' CSR efforts and consumers' perceptions. This gap is characterized by varying but low values of consumers' perceptions compared to relatively high but uniform values of CSR efforts. This indicates that low level of external communications among the Swedish companies is one of the factors that affect this gap. Moreover, the gap depends on different factors that are directly connected to how companies work with CSR, their level of integration of CSR in their companies and how they work with sustainable communications. The gap is also influenced by other factors such as the companies' relations to their stakeholder, the industry the company belongs to, the brand, the reputation and the trust level.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, sustainability, consumer perceptions, strategy, marketing communications, value chain, stakeholders.

Acknowledgment

Lund, May 2014

First and foremost, we would like to extend our gratitude to Ulf Elg, Charlotte Malmgren and André Månsson as our supervisors who have provided guidance and shared knowledge during the whole process of this study. Moreover, we would like to thank Erik Hedén as our supervisor from the host company, Sustainable Brand Insight, for providing us the opportunity to examine an interesting research area and offering us with relevant information and advices to be able to complete the research.

In addition, we are especially thankful to the people who have taken their time to participate in our focus group discussions and company interviews. These contributions have provided us with enormous insights and perspectives within this field. Finally, we are truly grateful for the support of our families and friends during this spring.

Elisabeth Lam

Souzan Meana

Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES	8
LIST OF TABLES	8
1 INTRODUCTION.....	9
1.1 BACKGROUND	9
1.1.1 <i>Increasing Efforts in Corporate Social Responsibility.....</i>	<i>9</i>
1.1.2 <i>Corporates' Efforts within CSR Do not Match the Consumers' Perceptions</i>	<i>10</i>
1.1.3 <i>Fast Growing Number of Green Consumers</i>	<i>12</i>
1.1.4 <i>Hard Work with CSR is not Enough to Reach Out to the Consumers</i>	<i>13</i>
1.2 THE ISSUE OF THE STUDY	13
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION	15
1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	15
1.5 OUTLINE OF THE REPORT	15
2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	17
2.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	17
2.1.1 <i>Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)</i>	<i>18</i>
2.1.2 <i>UN Global Compact</i>	<i>19</i>
2.1.3 <i>Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).....</i>	<i>20</i>
2.2 CSR STRATEGY	21
2.2.1 <i>To Form a CSR Strategy</i>	<i>22</i>
2.2.2 <i>Different Attitudes within CSR Strategy.....</i>	<i>23</i>
2.2.3 <i>From Charity to Integration to Innovation – Different Views about Sustainability</i>	<i>23</i>
2.2.4 <i>CSR and Stakeholders</i>	<i>24</i>
2.2.5 <i>CSR in the Value Chain.....</i>	<i>26</i>
2.3 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS.....	27
2.3.1 <i>Marketing Communications Models.....</i>	<i>28</i>
2.3.2 <i>Important Terms within Communications</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Greenwash.....</i>	<i>31</i>
2.3.3 <i>Sustainable Marketing Communications.....</i>	<i>32</i>
2.3.4 <i>Strategies of Sustainable Marketing Communications.....</i>	<i>33</i>
2.4 ADDITIONAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE CONSUMERS' PERCEPTIONS	34
2.4.1 <i>Values</i>	<i>35</i>
2.4.2 <i>Motives</i>	<i>35</i>
2.4.3 <i>Word-of-Mouth</i>	<i>35</i>
2.4.4 <i>Industry, Reputation, Size and Demographics</i>	<i>36</i>
2.4.5 <i>Brand</i>	<i>36</i>
2.4.6 <i>Trust.....</i>	<i>37</i>
3 METHODOLOGY	38
3.1 RESEARCH STRATEGY	38
3.2 COMPARATIVE STUDY	39
3.3 DATA COLLECTION	40
3.3.1 <i>Primary Source.....</i>	<i>40</i>
3.3.2 <i>Secondary Data.....</i>	<i>40</i>

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

3.3.3	<i>Usage of data collected</i>	40
3.4	INTERVIEWS	41
3.4.1	<i>Semi-structured Interviews</i>	41
3.5	FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS	42
3.6	QUANTITATIVE DATA	43
3.7	DATA ANALYSIS	45
3.8	VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY	45
3.9	STUDY LIMITATIONS	46
4	EMPIRICAL STUDY	48
4.1	THE MATCH BETWEEN COMPANIES CSR EFFORTS AND CONSUMERS PERCEPTIONS	48
4.1.1	<i>Consumers' Perception Data Collected by Sustainable Brand Insight</i>	49
4.1.2	<i>Quantitative Data Collected from Sustainability Reports</i>	50
4.2	INTERVIEWS	50
4.2.1	<i>Bilprovningen</i>	51
4.2.2	<i>Spendrups</i>	54
4.2.3	<i>E.ON</i>	56
4.2.4	<i>SEB</i>	60
4.2.5	<i>Swedbank</i>	64
4.3	FOCUS GROUPS	67
4.3.1	<i>Different relevance regarding social and environmental sustainability</i>	68
4.3.2	<i>Consumers' perceptions and associations</i>	68
4.3.3	<i>Energy Industry</i>	70
4.3.4	<i>Bank Industry</i>	71
5	ANALYSIS	74
5.1	THE GAP BETWEEN COMPANIES' EFFORTS WITHIN CSR AND THE CONSUMERS' PERCEPTIONS	74
5.2	DIFFERENCES IN HOW COMPANIES WORK WITH CSR	75
5.3	DIFFERENT APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES WHEN WORKING WITH CSR	76
5.4	RELATIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS	77
5.4.1	<i>Customers and the General Public</i>	77
5.4.2	<i>Employees</i>	77
5.4.3	<i>Other Stakeholders</i>	78
5.5	DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE CUSTOMERS AND CONSUMERS	79
5.6	THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATIONS TO INFLUENCE CONSUMERS' PERCEPTIONS	80
5.6.1	<i>Benefit and Relevance of the Message</i>	80
5.6.2	<i>Direct Messages</i>	81
5.6.3	<i>Format and Way of Communications</i>	81
5.7	MESSENGER	83
5.8	THE ORIGIN AND SIZE OF THE COMPANY REFLECT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SUSTAINABILITY	83
5.9	THE HALO EFFECT – HEURISTICS – INTUITION	85
5.10	TRUST AND RELIABILITY	85
5.11	BRAND AND REPUTATION	87
6	CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION	88
6.1	UNDERSTANDING THE GAP BETWEEN COMPANIES' EFFORTS AND CONSUMERS' PERCEPTIONS	88
6.2	THE CSR ACTIVITIES THAT LEAD TO POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS	88
6.3	FACTORS THAT COMPANIES CAN WORK ON TO INFLUENCE CONSUMERS' PERCEPTIONS	89
6.4	FACTORS THAT INDIRECTLY AFFECT THE CONSUMERS' PERCEPTIONS	91

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

6.5	SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	94
7	REFERENCES.....	95
8	APPENDICES.....	100
8.1	APPENDIX A: SUSTAINABLE BRAND INDEX™ – RANKING SWEDEN 2013.....	100
8.2	APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE COMPANY INTERVIEWS	102
8.3	APPENDIX C: GUIDE FOR THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS	104
8.4	APPENDIX D: PRESENTATION OF OTHER COMPANIES	105
8.5	APPENDIX E: DATA USED FOR THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY	107
8.6	APPENDIX F: SUSTAINABILITY IQ MATRIX	108

List of Figures

Figure 1: The three bottom line principle of sustainable development.....	10
Figure 2: Sustainability IQ Matrix showing the position of some of the companies...	12
Figure 3: Four consumer behaviors towards companies and CSR.....	13
Figure 4: The relation between companies' activities, consumer attitudes and behaviors.....	15
Figure 5: The three bottom line principle of sustainable development.....	19
Figure 6: The categories and aspects included in the guidelines of GRI reporting framework.....	22
Figure 7: Traditional versus new stakeholders.....	26
Figure 8: Value Chain according to Porter (1985).....	28
Figure 9: Shannon and Weaver's (1948) communications model.....	30
Figure 10: Six strategies of sustainable marketing communications.....	34
Figure 11: The work process of the study.....	39
Figure 12: Consumers' CSR perceptions vs. Corporates actual CSR effort.....	49
Figure 13: Part of the results of Sustainable Brand Index™2013.....	51

List of Tables

Table 1: The values achieved by the companies concerning their perceived CSR effort and their actual CSR efforts.....	50
Table 2: Summary of Bilprovningen.....	54
Table 3: Summary of Spendrups.....	57
Table 4: Summary of E.ON.....	61
Table 5: Summary of SEB.....	65
Table 6: Summary of Swedbank.....	67

1 Introduction

In this introductory chapter the background is presented where relevant aspects are brought up, in order to give an understanding for the research question.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Increasing Efforts in Corporate Social Responsibility

The notion sustainable development started spreading to the world in 1987 after being used by the Brundtland commission in their report "Our common future". The commission coined the definition of sustainable development: "*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*" (Gröndal & Svanström, 2011, p. 32). Today, consumers and employees expect corporations to take more responsibility for the society rather than only focus on profit. This is often abbreviated to the notion CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) (Gröndal & Svanström, 2011, p. 227). According to the European Commission (2014), CSR is "a concept according to which companies voluntarily decide to contribute to the attainment of a better society and a cleaner environment". Porter and Kramer (2006) define the principle of sustainability where companies move from focusing on self-interest, where profit is the main focus into introducing the so-called triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental performance. These three aspects, also called the three pillars of sustainability, are the base of how companies should form their strategies for long-term performance. By this Porter and Kramer (2006) mean that companies should operate in a way that ensures their long-term economic performance while avoiding short term behavior that can harm society and the environment.

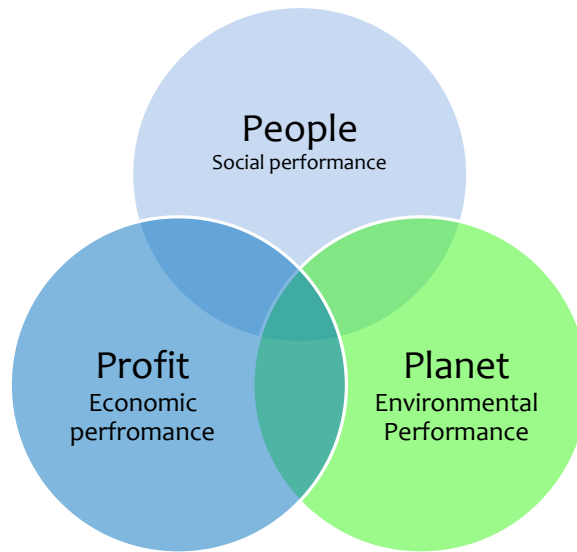


Figure 1: The three bottom line principle of sustainable development. (Source: Ottoson & Parment, 2013)

Today, companies face an increase in requirements and expectations regarding to how they work with CSR. The demand of transparency within companies has increased which results in more companies releasing CSR reports (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 12). A number of standards, codes of conducts and guidelines have been created for stakeholders to be able to appraise business impacts on society and environment. The aim with these standards is to standardize socially responsible initiatives and reduce the differences in international laws and norms in order for stakeholders to be able to appraise, monitor and audit corporate CSR activities (Costa & Menichini, 2013). Many companies have put a lot of effort into improving the social and environmental consequences of their activities. Sustainability has become a part of almost every company's core business. It ranges from choice of suppliers to strategies for recruiting and retaining employees, product development, distribution, marketing and communication strategies (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 11).

1.1.2 Corporates' Efforts within CSR Do not Match the Consumers' Perceptions

Perception is a psychological factor that affects the consumer's purchasing (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 40). It is the process through which individuals choose, organize and interpret the information to create a meaningful image of the world they live in. It is about how different stimuli that we constantly face affect us (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 40).

According to Peloza et al. (2012), there is a major gap between stakeholders' perceptions and companies' real performance regarding CSR. Their research was based on a study performed by two companies, CRD Analytics and Brand Logic (2011). The study examines the difference between companies' performance and efforts

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

within CSR and the customers' perceptions related to the CSR efforts. The total sample from this research included 2400 individuals from different countries and 100 different well-known global companies. This research shows the gap between how much effort companies put on CSR and how the consumers perceive them related to CSR. Figure 2 shows the positions of some of the companies based on the correlation between companies' real performance regarding CSR and the customers' perceptions about these efforts. The vertical axis presents the score that companies achieve based on their CSR performance while the horizontal axis presents the score that companies achieve based on customer's perceptions of how sustainable these companies are. The identified companies were divided into four different categories: Challengers are companies that do not get credit for their sustainability efforts. Laggards have generally low commitment towards sustainability. Leaders are companies that have relatively high commitment towards sustainability and at the same time they succeed in their communications. Finally, promoters are companies that achieve more credit for their sustainability efforts than they really achieve. (The original Sustainability IQ matrix with more companies can be found under appendix F)

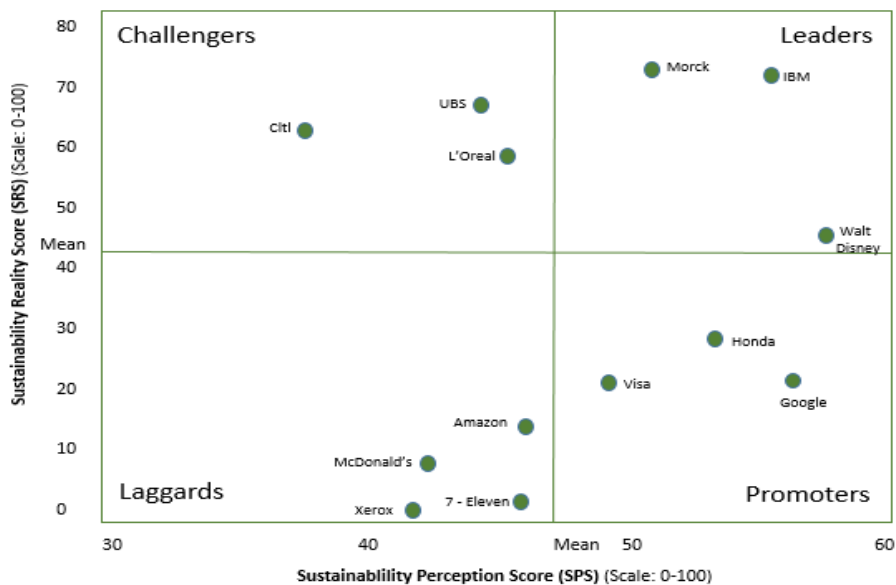


Figure 2: Sustainability IQ Matrix showing the position of some of the companies. (Source: Bridwell & Cerruti, 2012).

Awareness about consumers' perceptions and the ability to influence them is important for companies' in order to be able to uncover opportunities and risks. Moreover, stakeholders make critical decisions regarding a specific company based on their perceptions. This is why it is important for companies that put a lot of efforts on CSR, to succeed in conveying these efforts to the customers. In return, they have the possibility to influence the stakeholders' decision in favor of their own (Bridwell & Cerruti, 2012).

1.1.3 Fast Growing Number of Green Consumers

According to Ottman (2011), the number of green consumers is increasing rapidly. Ottman (2011) refers to many surveys that show that consumers are willing to pay premium price for greener products since they include more benefits. In addition, according to Ottman (2011) sustainability has become an important part of the product quality that consumers demand.

Moreover, Ottman (2011, p. 23), adds that 83% of all consumers are influenced by sustainable behavior. These consumers have different approaches. Some of them have sustainable behavior due to personal reasons such as aiming for healthier life styles. Others care about sustainability for practical reasons such as saving costs by being more resource efficient. In addition, a part of these consumers do not only choose green products and services, but also actively work with sustainability efforts.

Sustainable Brand Insight (2014), a Swedish company that performs consumers' surveys related to sustainability, did a segmentation on the Swedish market. According to Sustainable Brand Insights survey (2014), they were able to identify four types of consumers' behavior towards companies and CSR. The four groups presented in figure 3 are: Devoted, Smart, Moderate and Ego. For the Ego group, price is the most important priority. The second group, Moderate, prioritize quality and service combined with price. Regarding the Smart group, quality and service are prioritized combined with sustainability. Finally, the Devoted group represents people who show most interest in sustainability. The trend shows that more consumers are moving from Ego towards smart which is growing to become the largest group (Sustainable Brand Insight, 2014).

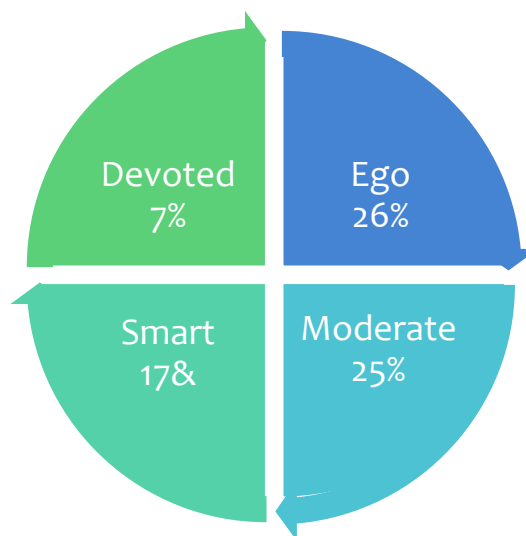


Figure 3: Four consumer behaviors towards companies and CSR. (Source: Sustainable Brand Insight, 2014)

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

According to Ottman (2011, p.2), the green market is not constant, it will grow and evolve, changing the rules of how business is done. Even based on Sustainable Brands Insights research, the trend shows that future consumers are consumers who prioritize sustainability. Companies who know how to serve today's green consumers will in the future benefit from other aspects such as: possibilities to increase their sales, revenues and market share, lower their cost, in addition to empowering the employees' capacity with the best and brightest for the future (Ottman, 2011).

1.1.4 Hard Work with CSR is not Enough to Reach Out to the Consumers

Today, both manufacturers and retailers' reputation play a very important role for customers. Customers prefer trusted brand names and products (Ottman, 2011). Moreover, Companies who are not actively working with sustainability or reaching out to the general public, will in the future face problems hiring competent people or selling their own products and services (Gröndal & Svanström, 2011, p. 233). More and more companies are communicating their efforts within sustainability. This act is important for corporates since investors want to reduce their risks and sustainable companies are less risky. In addition, other social responsible investors want to invest in companies that match their own values (Ottman, 2011, p. 18). Though, green marketing is very complicated as there is no clear guideline of how to work with marketing or where the limit is. Identifying the limit is necessary to avoid being perceived as less credible and the communication effort can be perceived as greenwashing (Ottman, 2011, p. 132).

1.2 The Issue of the Study

There are different factors that affect the consumers purchasing behavior such as: cultural, social, personal and psychological factors (Furaiji, Łatuszyńska, & Wawrzyniak, 2012). The psychological factors include among other things: attitude, perception, values and beliefs. To limit the focus of this study, consumer's behavior is set in relation with attitude which in turn is set in relation with companies' efforts and activities as shown in the figure below.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

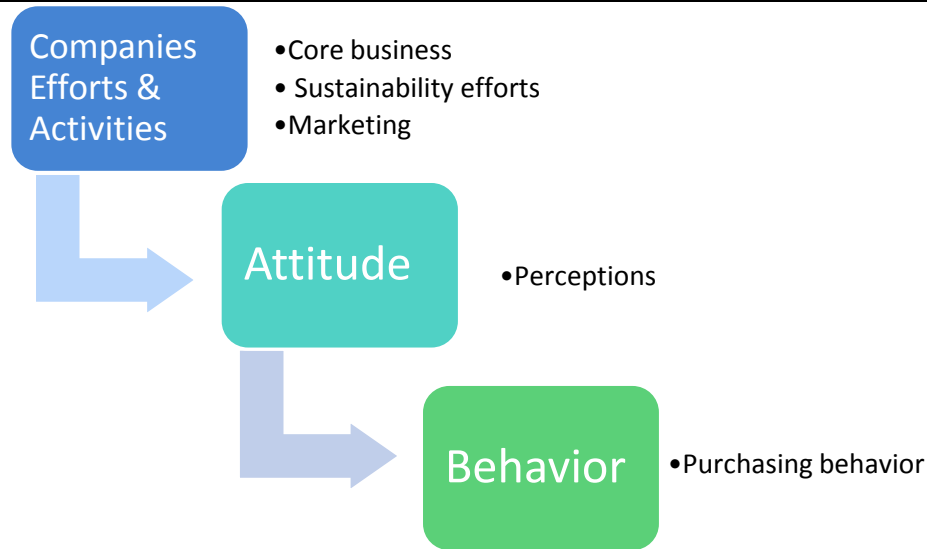


Figure 4: The relation between companies' activities, consumer attitudes and behaviors. (Source: Authors)

Earlier research within sustainability has been focusing on the relation between the customers' attitudes and the customers' behavior putting a lot of effort to understand the so called attitude-behavior gap. The attitude-behavior gap describes the fact that consumers do not always purchase in accordance with their understanding or perception (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). The fact is that although consumers have social responsible attitudes and are expressing willingness to make ethical purchases, social responsibility is not the most dominant criterion in the purchasing decision. Other factors that overweigh ethical criteria that affect consumers' decisions according to Ottoson & Parment (2013, p. 23) are: price, perceived value, brand image, trends and fashion.

Though little research has been made regarding what influences the customer's perception regarding CSR, where these attitudes come from and how they are affected by the company's activities. As the trends show that the consumers are moving toward setting sustainability as one of their prioritized criteria for purchasing, it is important to study the consumers' perceptions of sustainability and how they perceive different companies.

Moreover, studying the consumers' perceptions is relevant even to reach out to today's consumers. Research shows that even if positive attitudes toward CSR do not lead to competitive advantage, negative attitudes can be far more harmful (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2005). Klein & Dawar (2004) show in their research that CSR associations do not improve the profitability of a corporation, still it is important to take into consideration the risk of damaging or harming the brand. Furthermore, Pelozo et al. (2012), stress on the fact that in order to be able to take advantage of a sustainable brand compared to competitors, companies need to improve both the real and perceived performance of CSR. As a result, even if CSR initiatives nowadays

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

might not affect the consumers' behaviors, CSR initiatives can be used as insurance for the company's image. As mentioned earlier, research showed that negative perceptions regarding CSR are harmful for the companies and have considerably more influence than positive perceptions. For this reason corporates and executives need to pay more attention to the customer's perceptions in order to guarantee a better positioning in the market.

As a result, given the fact that the number of green consumers is increasing and many consumers are shifting from being passive to more active regarding sustainability, it is relevant to study how CSR efforts and companies' activities in general can affect consumer perceptions. However, it is important to understand these perceptions to protect the brand and the reputation of the company. Especially that the consumers' perceptions do not match the companies' CSR efforts. Moreover, the research done by Pelozo et al. (2012) has been generalized over a larger scope of countries where they focused mainly on communications to explain the mismatch between companies' CSR efforts and consumers' perceptions. For this reason, it would add value to focus on a specific country in this case Sweden, which is considered as one of the leading countries within sustainability and with an increased awareness among consumers according to Ottoson & Parment (2013). In addition, there are probably other aspects than communications that can explain this gap. This leads to the following research question.

1.3 Research Question

- How well do the Swedish companies' CSR efforts match the consumers' perceptions?
- What are the factors that can explain the gap between companies' CSR efforts and consumers' perceptions and how do they affect this gap?

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the match between companies' CSR efforts and consumers' perceptions. Herby, the purpose is to understand and explain the gap between companies' CSR efforts and how consumers perceive these efforts. This is done by identifying factors that lie behind this gap and analyze how these factors affect this gap.

1.5 Outline of the Report

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this introductory chapter the background is presented where relevant aspects are brought up, in order to give an understanding for the research question.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Background

In this chapter, the main concepts and theoretical models related to this study are presented based on a literature study. These models and concepts are used as a guideline to later analyze how companies work with CSR and identify factors that have influence on consumers' perceptions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology section presents the research design and defines the process that the authors followed throughout the study. In addition, detailed explanations of the company interviews, focus group discussions and data analysis are presented. Furthermore, the research limitations can be found here as well.

Chapter 4: Empirical Study

The empirical study presents relevant empirical data collected through both the quantitative and qualitative study. First, the gap between companies' CSR efforts and consumers' perceptions are presented as a result from the quantitative study. Then the data collected from the interviews and focus group discussions is presented.

Chapter 5: Analysis

In this chapter, the analysis of the data collected through the empirical study is performed. The analysis is done by examining the phenomena experienced through the empirical study and to what extent they match the theories and studies that are raised in this research. By identifying differences, similarities and relations between phenomena, conclusions can be drawn regarding the gap between companies' efforts within CSR and consumers' perceptions and the affecting factors that lie behind. The analysis is formed by first analyzing how different companies work with CSR and how their efforts affect consumers' perceptions. Then other factors that directly or indirectly affect consumers' perceptions are analyzed.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Discussion

In this chapter, general conclusions that are drawn from this study are presented and discussed. The conclusions cover the different areas that are touched in the analysis that help answer the research question of the study.

2 Theoretical Background

In this chapter, the main concepts and theoretical models related to this study are presented based on a literature study. These models and concepts are used a guideline to later analyze how companies work with CSR and identify factors that have influence on consumers' perceptions.

2.1 Sustainable Development

Since the research question concerns sustainable development and CSR, it is essential to have an understanding of the fundamentals and how these are related to each other. The vision of sustainable development is that the global system of companies and markets should operate with a long-term thinking and resource efficiently (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 7). Sustainable development deals with three different dimensions: Environmental, social and economic (Gröndal & Svanström, 2011, p. 36). This is the so called, triple bottom line, which is a framework developed by John Ellington in the mid-nineties (Slaper & Hall, 2011).

The environmental pillar refers to the natural resources including the ecosystem's functions and biological diversity. Additionally, the social pillar refers to the human capital and social expectations ruled by cultures and politics. Lastly, the economic pillar refers to the values presented in the economic system (Gröndal & Svanström, 2011, p. 36). According to Gröndal and Svanström (2011, p. 38), sustainable development is about system thinking and the connection between the three dimensions. This is in order to come up with a compromising solution that takes care of the different aspects together.

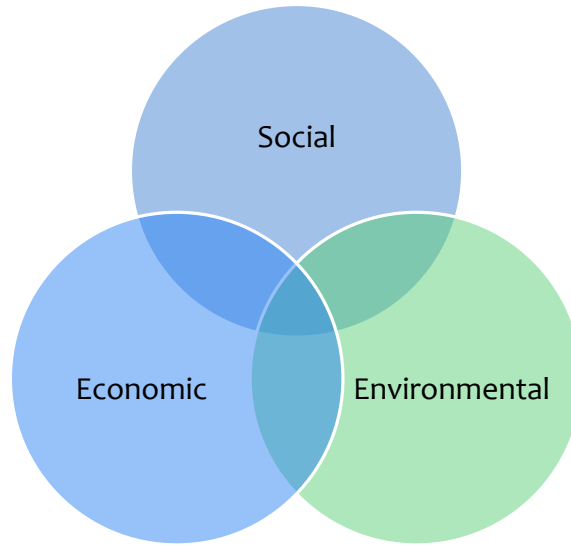


Figure 5: The three bottom line principle of sustainable development. (Source: Ottoson & Parment, 2013)

Another definition of sustainable development, which is widely accepted, is: “Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable - to ensure it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations” (Kates, Parris, & Leiserowitz, 2005). The future needs that should be met concerning sustainable development depend on the balance of social, economic and environmental objectives when making decisions today (Harris, 2004, p. 267). In order to understand this, the question to ask is what is to be sustained? By studying the three bottom line principle, a number of challenging questions are raised. Is the goal of sustainable development to sustain the environment, people’s daily life or economic growth? However, human activities must respect the natural resources and be environmentally sensitive. For this to be achieved, significant changes in people’s everyday life and the economic development have to be made. The value of sustainability differs to different stakeholders and its value changes over time (Harris, 2004, p. 69). Moreover, the complexity of the global environment is difficult to understand. This causes uncertainties of what the future will bring. So the decisions for future actions are based on uncertain facts and science. These reasons make it difficult to settle agreements both on global and local levels (Harris, 2004, p. 271).

2.1.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR, refers to companies’ responsibility toward the society. This is a concept that several companies strive to follow within their daily operations (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 7). This responsibility includes all parts of the value chain. Furthermore, CSR includes taking responsibility of the company’s own customers and the future use of their own products (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 7). Today, investors are even committed to the social and environmental issues, where CSR plays an important role in their investment decisions (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 7).

Corporate social responsibility is a term that can be interpreted in different ways depending on different contexts (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 19). The idea behind corporate social responsibility continuously moves between the borders of the company's duties. What CSR involves changes continuously depending on the society's view and understanding of what responsibility should involve. A more standardized framework that many agree on regarding companies' sustainability and corporate social responsibility is the UN Global Compact.

2.1.2 UN Global Compact

The UN Global Compact is an optional strategic policy for corporations that are CSR committed to align their operations and strategies with the ten principles within the areas of human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption (UN Global Compact, 2014). The framework was initiated in June 2000 by the former president of the United Nations Kofi Annan. Global Compact is the largest voluntarily corporate social initiative in the world with more than 120,000 international corporates. The main aim with Global Compact is to assist corporates in managing the increasingly complex problems and opportunities that face them regarding the environmental, social and economic aspects. These principles are used as a ground to examine how companies work with CSR in this research. The ten principles from UN Global Compact's website are presented below:

Human Rights

- Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Labor

- Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labor;
- Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labor; and
- Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Environment

- Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Anti-Corruption

- Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

2.1.3 Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

Another framework that companies use when working with sustainability is Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). GRI is a non-profit organization that acts in the field of promoting sustainability. GRI produces the world's largest sustainability reporting standards to help organizations become more sustainable (Global Reporting Initiative, 2014). The reporting framework of GRI is used widely all over the world. The framework covers the economic, environmental and social impact caused by the corporate's every day activities. The categories and aspects that are included in the guidelines of GRI are shown in the figure below. These categories are also used to examine how companies work with their sustainability.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

TABLE 1: CATEGORIES AND ASPECTS IN THE GUIDELINES				
Category	Economic		Environmental	
Aspects ^{III}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Performance • Market Presence • Indirect Economic Impacts • Procurement Practices 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials • Energy • Water • Biodiversity • Emissions • Effluents and Waste • Products and Services • Compliance • Transport • Overall • Supplier Environmental Assessment • Environmental Grievance Mechanisms 	
Category	Social			
Sub-Categories	Labor Practices and Decent Work	Human Rights	Society	Product Responsibility
Aspects ^{III}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Labor/Management Relations • Occupational Health and Safety • Training and Education • Diversity and Equal Opportunity • Equal Remuneration for Women and Men • Supplier Assessment for Labor Practices • Labor Practices Grievance Mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment • Non-discrimination • Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining • Child Labor • Forced or Compulsory Labor • Security Practices • Indigenous Rights • Assessment • Supplier Human Rights Assessment • Human Rights Grievance Mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Communities • Anti-corruption • Public Policy • Anti-competitive Behavior • Compliance • Supplier Assessment for Impacts on Society • Grievance Mechanisms for Impacts on Society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Health and Safety • Product and Service Labeling • Marketing Communications • Customer Privacy • Compliance

Figure 6: The categories and aspects included in the guidelines of GRI reporting framework. (Source: GRI 2014)

2.2 CSR Strategy

According to Pelozo et al. (2012), companies that are leading within sustainability perceptions among consumers are those which succeed in making sustainability an integral part of the business strategy. Thus, it is interesting to study different CSR strategies in order to further examine how companies apply these and what effect they have on consumer perceptions.

CSR strategies are not as established as other areas with common and developed models. However, there are numerous theoretical models that are used. It is due to the expectations from stakeholders and the society around the companies, which pressure them to develop and apply these strategies. Moreover, it is notable that internal strategies such as marketing and value chain strategies within a company are

influenced and affected by the development of CSR strategies (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 236).

2.2.1 To Form a CSR Strategy

CSR strategies are about identifying and prioritizing issues that are essential for the companies' business. There is a strategic process to identify these issues. This basically means the companies choose to focus on three or four most important questions for their business, which can be handled and conceptualized into a comprehensible and communicable strategy. It is a demanding process to prioritize and know what activities and processes the company can invest in. In order to make the right decisions within CSR, companies are required to have both experience and control over their CSR activities (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 237). This also requires that the highest management group within the company is engaged and supports the process. The company needs to have enough resources to put on CSR efforts. These reasons combined explain why there are several organizations that do not have a clear CSR strategy (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 237). By looking at how different companies form their CSR strategies and what they prioritize, it is the intension of this study to examine what effects different strategies have on consumers' perceptions.

One of the most famous models within CSR has been developed by Michael Porter and Mark Kramer (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 240). Porter & Kramer (2011) focus on the importance of having CSR efforts closely connected to companies' overall business strategy. For example, charity work without any connection to companies' core businesses is not a preferable strategy. CSR strategy is a long-term investment for company's competitive advantage (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 240). In order for a company to excel in this area, it is required from the companies to create a unique position by performing differently compared to their competitors and using CSR to create this unique position (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 241). When a company has a more advanced CSR strategy, it can add social benefit in its offers and to its brand. The company is then associated with more than its services and products. Porter and Kramer (2011) emphasize that the company's unique position should meet the needs within the social area, which the competitors do not cover.

Porter & Kramer's (2011) model is described as the concept of shared value. The principle of shared value involves creating economic value in a way that also creates value for the society by addressing its challenges and needs (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Porter & Kramer (2011) stress that shared value is not only about social responsibility, but a new way to achieve economic success. Moreover, they argue that a company is on the bottom level if only the financial aspects are considered. Short financial plans exclude important customers and stakeholders and hurt the company's reputation and viability (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 242).

By implementing shared value, companies and stakeholders should meet at a win-win situation. Since companies' activities could both have positive and negative effects on

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

stakeholders, the choices a company take have to benefit both the company and its stakeholders. It is about finding common denominators, which both parties can invest in and identify social aspects to fit these processes (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 241). According to Porter, it is important to handle the negative effects caused by the activities in the value chain.

Strategic CSR according to Porter & Kramer

- Integrate CSR in the value chain; making sure that CSR issues are taken into consideration both on short and long-term.
- Find win-win situations. Prioritize CSR initiatives that both concern and benefit the company's stakeholders.
- Create a special social invitation that adds value for the customers.

(Source: BorgLund et al. (2012))

2.2.2 Different Attitudes within CSR Strategy

There are three attitudes reflected by corporations towards increased demand on sustainability according to Ottoson & Parment (2013, p. 90):

1. **Defensive:** Increased sustainability requirements harm the company and therefore should be resisted through lobbying etc.
2. **Reactive:** The sustainability requirements are ignored until the company is forced to implement the changes.
3. **Proactive:** The company realizes that sustainability requirements are reasonable and try to integrate them in their operations.

2.2.3 From Charity to Integration to Innovation - Different Views about Sustainability

Several CSR models involve companies participating in different social engagements connected to its core businesses. Halme and Laurila (2009) have divided the different engagement into three categories; charity, integration and innovation. The authors mean that companies moves from being in a philanthropical stage into an integrated environment and then move to an innovative working environment. Philanthropical CSR is about charity work, social sponsorships and volunteering among the employees. This does not always have to be connected to the company's core values or business. However, indirectly this could strengthen the company's reputation and business (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 245).

CSR integration involves increasing the value of company's existing business through various CSR factors. It is about working with CSR questions concerning the core business and taking responsibility for the essential CSR areas in relation to its stakeholders. This includes CSR questions such as working conditions, product qualities, gender equality and environmental responsibility. Taking this into

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

consideration allows organizations to minimize the risks within the business and thereby living up to stakeholders' expectations (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 245).

CSR innovation is about developing new business models to solve social and environmental issues. The companies see the opportunity with innovation to develop new services and products to solve these problems in order to increase the value of the company's business (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 246).

2.2.4 CSR and Stakeholders

Taking stakeholders into consideration is an integral part in the CSR strategies. Thus it is necessary to study how companies can work with their stakeholders and how the CSR efforts affect these stakeholders.

Both Ottoson & Parment (2013) and Ottoman (2011) stress on the importance of relations and partnership while working with CSR in order to succeed. According to Ottoson & Parment (2013, p.122), companies with ambitions to be more sustainable should have strategies toward each stakeholder. These relations should be characterized by integrity and authenticity. In addition forming constructive relations with the different stakeholders have many advantages such as new ways to cut costs, new innovations, improving the value and reinforcing the image of a company (Ottman, 2011, p. 159). Historically, the stakeholders with direct interest in corporations were limited to investors, employees, customers, end-customers, suppliers and media. Today on the other hand, due to the increased awareness of the industries' impact on the society and the environment, the number of stakeholders has increased to include the general public, bloggers, educators, activists and governments etc. (Ottman, 2011, p. 150). This in return changes the rules of how traditional business is conducted.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

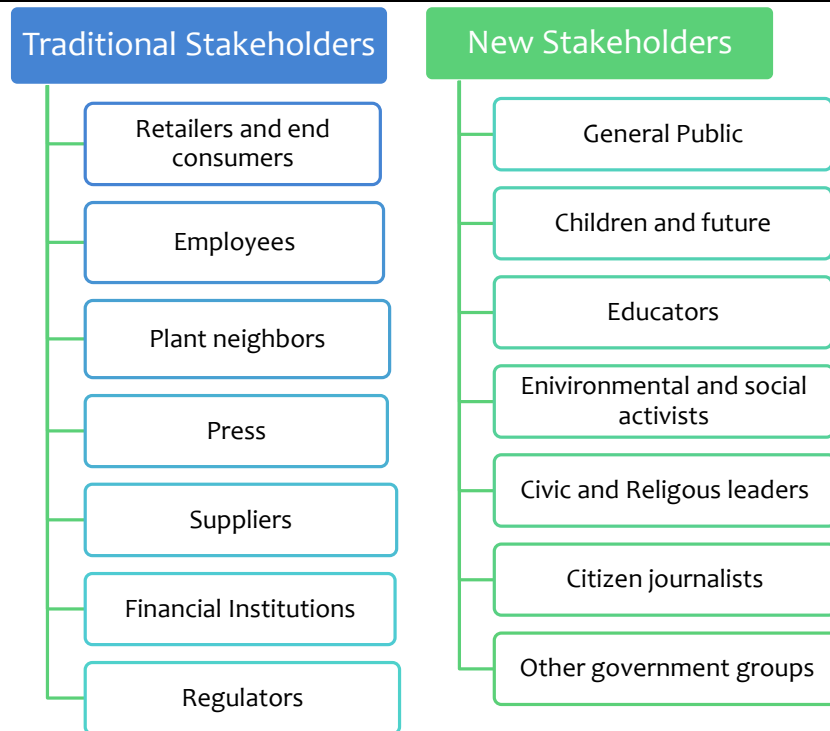


Figure 7: Traditional versus new stakeholders. Source: J. Ottman (2011)

Ottman (2011, p. 161) and Ottoson & Parment (2013, p. 122) have compiled a list with strategies regarding relations towards different stakeholders as follows:

- General public & the local environment: Companies should have strategies for educating the general public and engaging in relevant sustainability issues. In order to establish a new business, acceptance from the local environment is a requirement. Businesses with sustainability focus are more easily accepted compared to other companies.
- Customers: the customer's evaluation about the company's sustainability is important, which makes it necessary to have increased transparency. In addition, companies should focus on building long-term relationships with customers.
- Coworkers: Companies with sustainability requirements should make sure to hire the right people. Employees should be treated well and always receive acknowledgements through either internal or external communications. Moreover, companies should encourage their employees to participate in activities that lead to positive impact both regarding the community and the company's brand. Since employees are those who actually carry the main burden of responsibility and have the capability of implementing corporate social responsibility in the organization, the success of the companies' efforts depend on their employees. Employees have the ability to implement sustainability and launch sustainability practices when given the power and

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

authority (Ottman, 2011, p. 136). In order to make sure that the employees are motivated and committed to implement corporate social responsibility and achieve the desirable outcome, Collier & Esteban (2007) suggest the use of values programmes. It is a way that helps employees relate to the organization and identify themselves as members and commit to the company's values and goals. With this mindset, the role of the management is to define these values and live after them and let the employees take control of their own a sustainable responsibility (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 94).

- Retailers: As retailers have direct contact with the end-consumers, they have larger impact on educating and informing shoppers and the general public. The relationship with retailers can be strengthened by supporting them with trainings and promotions of sustainable products.
- Investors: Companies that appear to be more sustainable attract a larger number of investors. Many investors avoid corporates with doubtful activities. Moreover, according to Sjöström (2010), investors' actions on the long run can influence the norms about sustainability.
- Suppliers: The relations with suppliers are important factors for success and can lead to competitive advantages. Sustainable companies should make sure that suppliers care about sustainability issues the whole way from raw materials to delivery. Though, this can be challenging due to trade secrets and the complexity of the value chain. In order to work on the relationship with their suppliers, companies need to put effort into educating and helping them to work with sustainability. Moreover, to motivate them to work with new innovations that can reduce their negative impact.
- Competitors: Competitors affect the industry's reputation. Cooperation with other competitors could then be a prerequisite toward developing the industry to be perceived as more sustainable.
- Government and legislators: The laws and policies affect the level of acceptance and possibilities for profitable sustainable enterprises. Companies can improve the relationships with governments and legislators by participating in voluntary activities and partnering on new sustainable projects.

2.2.5 CSR in the Value Chain

A value chain includes all value-adding activities behind a product or service where the value increases for every activity step in the chain as presented in figure 8. Organizations' value chains could stretch from different parts of the world. Value chain allows organizations to achieve lower costs, increased efficiency, better exchanges of competence, technology expertise and natural resources (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 179). By identifying the level of control that companies have on their value chain, it is possible to discuss the extent to which it affects consumers' perceptions.

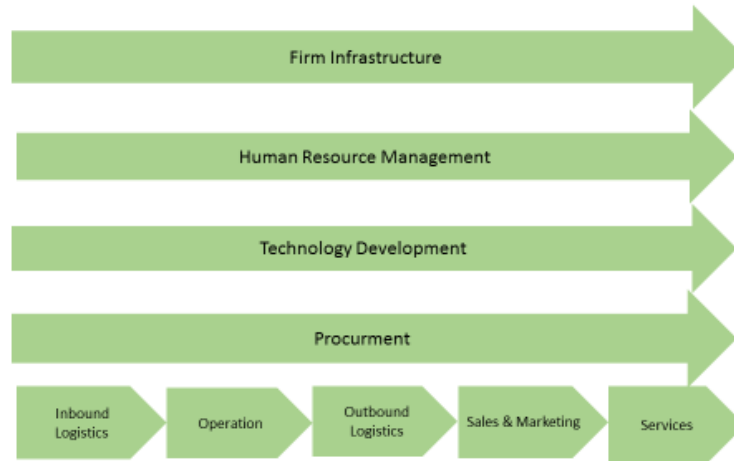


Figure 8: Value Chain according to Porter (1985).

The different strategies of CSR are applied in the value chain depending on factors such as the character of the chain, size of the organization, the industry, the maturity level of CSR etc. The model an organization chooses to base its supply chain on provides different opportunities for supplier impact and sustainable value creation, due to the various levels of relations, insight and control (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 182).

There are three types of value chain that affect CSR initiatives within organizations' business (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 182):

- Transaction oriented: This strategy lacks contact and insight since wholesalers or agents perform the trading.
- Suppliers' selection: This strategy involves relationship and control at a larger extent since the organization makes its own selection of suppliers and partners. They are analyzed and examined to live up to the requirements and standards. However, this type of insight and control does not cover the whole value chain.
- Strategic development of suppliers: This strategy involves that organization invests in educations to raise the suppliers' competence and quality. It could also mean that the organization and the suppliers together invent new methods, due to environmental and social issues.

2.3 Marketing Communications

Internal and external CSR efforts cannot effectively reach out to the consumers without marketing communications. Thus, marketing communications are essential

tools that affect consumers' perceptions. Hence, it is necessary to evaluate the different methods of communications and study their effect on the consumers.

2.3.1 Marketing Communications Models

One of the most important models within marketing communications is Shannon and Weaver's (1948) model of communications presented in figure 11 (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 142). This model can be used to evaluate the efficiency of a message communicated by a company. That's why this model is chosen in this study as a method to analyze and understand the success and failure in communicating CSR messages. In additions, different concepts and terms related to this model used in the analysis are presented below.

Shannon and Weaver's model includes the following steps:

- Source that sends the message
- Sender channel through which the message is sent
- Receiver channel through which the message is delivered to the destination
- Destination which receives the message
- Sent signal which is the form of the message when it is sent
- Received signal which is the form of the message when it is received at the destination
- Noise that disturbs and affects the forms of the message due to for example many signals at the same channel at the same time.

The message goes through encoding and decoding process on the way between the source and destination. In order for the message to be effective, the sender's encoding process should be coordinated with the receiver's decoding process.

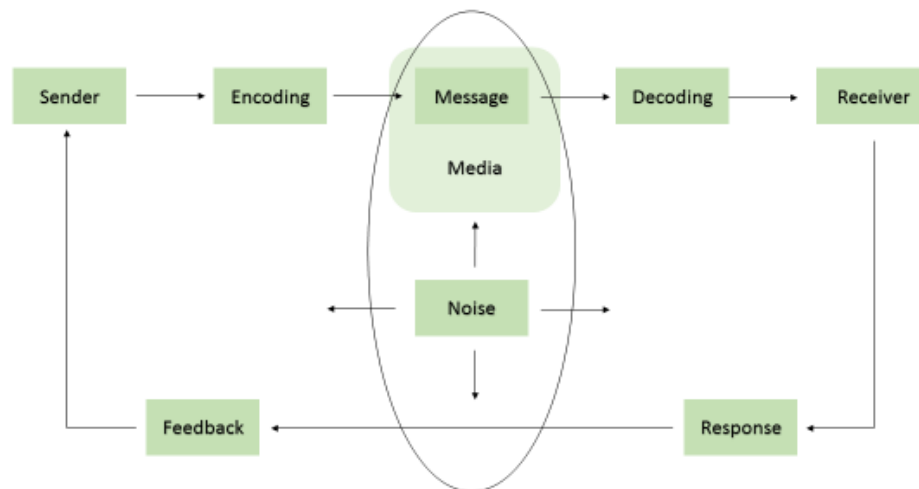


Figure 9: Shannon and Weaver's (1948) communications model. Source: Ottoson & Parment 2013.

The efficiency of the message depends on how much the experience and way of communications of the sender match the receiver's way of communications and interpretation. According to Ottoson & Parment (2013, p. 143) words that are positive and familiar to the receiver lead to effective communications.

Shannon and Weaver argued that there are three levels of problems in communications: The first problem is the technical problem which depends on how accurately the message can be transmitted. The second problem is the semantic problem which depends on how precisely the message is conveyed. The last problem is the effectiveness problem, which depends on how effectively the received message influences the behavior at the destination.

Shannon and Weaver's model is criticized of being very diagrammatic and missing the interactivity that distinguishes today's marketing. In this model, only the sender has an active role (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 143).

2.3.2 Important Terms within Communications

Target Group and Communications Aim

Effective marketing communications start by defining the target group. What is to be said and how depends on the target group that will receive the message. After determining the target group, the next step is to determine the aim behind the communications. The aim of the communications could involve examples such as strengthening the brand, marketing a new product or communicating companies CSR efforts. Depending on the intention behind the message, a specific kind of communication technique should be used (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 144).

The Message's Content and Format

A message's content is described as rational, emotional or moral. The rational content includes for example the physical sustainability of a product. The emotional content includes examples such as fear or guilt regarding sustainability. Finally, the moral content involves what is morally right and this is used to catch the receivers' attention (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 143).

The format of the message should actively be chosen. The format can be in the form of TV ads, newspaper ads etc. Each format requires a review taking into consideration the different aspects that can affect the message. The organization's core values should be a determining factor while choosing the format. Taking the company's values into consideration increases the sustainability in communications and reduces risks (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 146).

Message Decoding

Decoding a message depends on the level of processing and elaboration of the individual receiving the message (Peloza et al., 2012). In case of high elaboration, the receiver is engaged with careful consideration to interpret the message. However, in case of low elaboration, the receiver draws conclusions based on simple cues deducted from the communications. Communicating to receivers that are not motivated or able to process the message rely on continuously exposing the receiver to the message in order get an effect and create attitude change. According to Peloza et al. (2012), individuals lack motivation to process sustainability messages. Moreover, the ability of individuals to process these messages is also low due to a low degree of knowledge with sustainability. In this case, individuals who are not able to draw conclusions based on knowledge and information rely on heuristics instead. Research performed by Smith et al. (2010) show that when individuals are exposed to information about a sustainability initiative (e.g., a recycling program), they use this information to draw conclusions about the company's performance across a broad range of sustainability issues. This phenomenon is called "halo effect" and it involves that individual's over- or underestimates the true sustainability efforts of a firm (Smith, Read, & Lopez-Rodriguez, Consumer Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility: The CSR Halo Effect, 2010). According to Peloza et al. (2012), these heuristics are based on the following: sustainability initiative form, category biases, brand biases, and senior management image.

Message Delivery

Given the limited motivation and ability to process sustainability messages according to Peloza et al. (2012), companies who only rely on their sustainability reports to communicate their messages are unlikely to succeed. Corporates that succeed in their messages use media and other strategies rather than just relying on sustainability reports. Many companies succeed by including sustainability messages on packages and products. Other companies with high degrees of customer contact are perceived

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

as more sustainable as they are able to deliver their sustainability messages in their retail environments repeatedly. Other companies that succeed are able to embed sustainability in their mainstream advertising. Pelozo et al. (2012) studied the effect of communications on consumers' perception.

Messenger

A message sent by a trustworthy messenger is more persuading. Usually companies use messengers such as doctors and well educated people in marketing of medicine, food etc. When it comes to emotional products, celebrities and opinion-makers are suitable messengers. Regarding sustainability there are high requirements to use the right messenger, otherwise the image of the company would be harmed. The messenger's profile should be consistent with the image and should not send counteracting messages (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 146). Within this area, a concept called co-branding is to be taken into consideration. Co-branding means that the other organizations that the messenger work with does not have a contradicting sustainability profile or send signals that counteract the company's communications (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 147).

A Well Thought Message

Today, due to a higher intensity in communications and a continuous increase in messages, more innovation is needed for the message to reach out to the consumers in order to succeed with communications. The message should be connected to the company's brand or product. Messages need to be interesting, meaningful and useful in order to attract the consumer. However, communicating sustainability is challenging, as it can be perceived as boring to the consumers. Some try to turn it into more fun and positive kind of communications. In this case, it is necessary to take into account the border of greenwashing.

Greenwash

Greenwashing describes how companies use marketing, especially advertisement to claim that their products are more sustainable than they actually are (Ottoson & Parment, 2013: 138). Grant (2007) argues that these statements can be counterproductive if consumers would suspect that these companies are trying to hide something due to misleading green communication. According to Emery (2012), due to greenwashing, there is a trend that consumers would reject any products or brands that try to communicate their sustainability activities. Instead, they choose products that do not communicate anything about this issue.

The reason behind marketing sustainable products is to try to change the consumers' behavior towards a more sustainable behavior, though greenwashing risks that a lot of consumers would give up the whole idea of purchasing more sustainable products (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 138).

In order to avoid the risk of consumers and other stakeholders perceiving communication of CSR as greenwashing, the information given should be detailed, particular and honest (Ottoson & Parment, 2013: 138). Greenwashing proves that sustainable marketing is complicated and requires more than tweaking certain attributes. It requires total commitment regarding companies' activities and communications (Ottman, 2011, p. 44).

2.3.3 Sustainable Marketing Communications

Communication of CSR is closely connected to the CSR strategies that companies choose. Communicating a company's vision of sustainability internally and externally is a part of implementing CSR strategies (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 262). Only companies with sustainable strategies and business models are able to create genuine sustainable marketing communications (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 139). Sustainable marketing communications are defined as product promotions and communications including statements about sustainability (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 140). According to Ottman (2011, p. 43), green marketing communications are far more complex compared to traditional marketing communications. Consumers have much higher expectations. Companies are in a dilemma, as communicating CSR could be perceived as greenwashing. While, lack of communication can be interpreted as the company does not have a CSR strategy (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 262). Moreover, companies need to have clear marketing communications in order to influence the consumers' perceptions about the company. By examining the different communication strategies that companies have and their level of success, it is possible through this study to identify the factors that are relevant for consumers and their perceptions.

Emery (2012), talks about four different types of sustainable marketing communications:

- Communications that aims to change consumers' behaviors towards a sustainable trend (lifestyle).
- Communication that focuses on changing the customer's behavior toward a specific product.
- Communication that tries to inform consumers and other stakeholders about sustainable products and services.
- Communication that tries to convince customers to purchase from a specific company since it is more sustainable.

Mette Morsing stresses on the importance of two-way communication, as companies need to conduct dialog with their stakeholders. It is through this dialog trust is built (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 263). Stakeholders present their opinions of what trust issues and types of responsibility the companies need to focus on. Morsing & Beckman (2006) define three forms of CSR communications:

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

- Information strategy: This strategy represents one-way communication through the sustainability reports, websites etc.
- Response strategy: By having dialog with the important stakeholders, companies are able to identify what is important for these stakeholders and get insights about their perception.
- Involvement strategy: Companies collaborate with their stakeholders in order to work together on forming CSR strategies and activities.

2.3.4 Strategies of Sustainable Marketing Communications

Ottman (2011, p. 111) defines six strategies corporates need to follow in order to succeed in their marketing communication listed in the table below.



Figure 10: Six strategies of sustainable marketing communications. Source: Ottman 2011.

Know your customer

Consumers are segmented according to their different interests and needs. Companies need to identify which customers that are receptive to their messages. Then, be ready to provide these customers with the kind of information that is necessary to reach out to them (Ottman, 2011, p. 11).

Appeal to consumer's self-interest

Even if the environment is an important factor for many people, it is still not the main reason to why they choose some specific brands. In the message, the benefits that appeal to the consumer's self-interest should be clear (Ottman, 2011, p. 112).

Educate and empower

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

Consumers depend on marketers among other sources to provide them with the information needed about different products and services. In this way, the information provided should make the customers feel that they can make a difference following their values (Ottman, 2011, p. 115). Consumers need to feel that they are capable of making a difference by choosing a specific product (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 110). That is why the sustainability benefits of a product should be clearly communicated. The products need to be accessible. In addition, consumers need to understand what it is in there for them in order to see the benefits (Ottman, 2011, p. 111).

Ottman (2011, pp. 116-119) focuses on the form of information that companies should provide. Three things to stress on are: firstly, to dramatize the sustainability benefits by using reliable statistics that compels to the target group. Secondly, be optimistic with the information in order for consumers to have positive possibilities to make a difference. Lastly, to address the underlying motivations of the consumers by focusing on the most relevant information which makes sense for the target group.

Reassure on performance

Some consumers perceive green products to be less valuable, it is important to focus on the benefits and quality of the product (Ottman, 2011, p. 121).

Engage the community

Since today's consumers rely on trusted information from other people and networks rather than traditional marketing. Brands can be used to engage the community to influence their opinions about things they are concerned about (Ottman, 2011, p. 122). This includes cause-related marketing where a part of the product revenues is donated to non-profit groups. In return, this leads to enhancing the brand and associating the business with positive impact (Ottman, 2011, p. 125). In addition, companies need to be creative in order to create positive reputation. For example, by using social media, blogging and creating communities through the companies' own channels (Ottman, 2011, p. 127).

Be credible

Credibility is a crucial aspect for sustainable marketing communications. Companies should be credible with all the efforts they do by taking into consideration the different causes they choose to take part of. The causes should be relevant to the company in order for it to be relevant to the consumer. In addition, the third parties that companies choose to collaborate with should be trustable (Ottman, 2011, p. 126).

2.4 Additional Factors that Affect the Consumers' Perceptions

It is interesting to examine additional factors that are not necessarily related to a company's CSR efforts and that are beyond the company's control but still have an effect on consumers' perceptions. These factors include: values, company's motives,

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

word-of-mouth, reputation, brand, company's demographics, industry and trust among consumers. It adds value to this research to study the role these factors have on consumers' perceptions compared to what effect the companies CSR efforts and communications.

2.4.1 Values

According to Ottman (2011), there are several factors that affect consumers' choices than price, performance and convenience. Social and environmental values guide consumers' behavior. Moreover, Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), suggest that in order to influence consumers' attitudes, companies need to be adding new beliefs and targeting the normative beliefs of the consumers. There are some values that companies need to think about in order to succeed while working with sustainability. These values are: Transparency, authenticity and simplicity (Ottman, 2011). As for transparency, consumers today have more control and are able to question and reveal companies that are hiding any information. Regarding authenticity, the brands perceived as most genuine are the brands that integrate sustainable issues that are relevant and related to their core activity. Lastly, regarding simplicity, the consumers are more aware of what adds value to their lives and are therefore supporting companies that express simplicity as a value.

Fairness, respect and honesty are three values that Öberseder et al. (2013) focus on that should guide companies' responsible behavior. By living these values, companies' actions are perceived as more credible and CSR efforts are not perceived as a method for PR.

2.4.2 Motives

Based on Bhattacharya and Sen's study (2004), consumers do question why companies engage in CSR and care about the sincerity of the CSR motives. According to their study, two factors influence the consumers' suspicions: reputation of the company and the fit between the company and the cause. Consumers are skeptical to companies with bad reputation that try to engage in CSR or companies that are engaged in causes that are not close to their business. Moreover, their study shows a positive relation between the company's reputation and perception of the fit of the cause with company. Consumers that perceive that a company has a good reputation also perceive a high fit between the company and the cause. Yoon et al. (2006) also argue about the importance of perceived sincerity of the company's motives in order to succeed with CSR campaigns. The campaigns will not succeed if the consumers have a reason to suspect that the good behavior is mostly driven by hidden motives.

2.4.3 Word-of-Mouth

Companies cannot only rely on traditional media to build consumer loyalty. The whole world is connected, demanding new methods of communicating with the consumers. Moreover, consumers are more affected by recommendations from friends, families

and other trusted parties (Ottman, 2011). Many ecological brands succeed to reach the top without any advertisement, but by relying on influential customers and the word-of-mouth (Ottman, 2011, p. 45). Word-of-mouth has a main influence on households' products purchases (Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008). According to Hoyer and MacInnis (2004), word-of-mouth is four times more effective on influencing consumer's attitudes compared to persuasion of sale assistants. Bhattacharya & Sen (2004) also mention word-of-mouth as an important factor that affects the consumers' perception regarding companies and their CSR efforts.

2.4.4 Industry, Reputation, Size and Demographics

Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) argue that the extent to which CSR initiatives will lead to positive internal outcomes depends on several external factors. Belonging to a certain industry is one of these factors. For example, belonging to oil, tobacco or alcohol industry is more likely to dull the effect of CSR efforts on the consumers' perceptions. Reputation is another factor that was highlighted earlier. According to Bhattacharya and Sen (2004), the reputation magnifies the internal efforts of CSR. Consumers are more likely to make favorable attributions and have positive associations towards companies with good reputations. Moreover, according to Pickett-Baker & Ozaki (2008), consumers in general trust popular brands and well-known companies as the level of perceived risk is much lower for these companies.

The company's size and demographics are two more factors that Bhattacharya and Sen identify in their research. Consumers are more likely to have positive attitudes towards companies that are small rather than big, local rather than national, and a small personal privately owned operation rather than a big impersonal conglomerate or multinational operation.

2.4.5 Brand

Kotler and Armstrong (1991) define brand as a name, label, sign, symbol or design that aim to identify products or services from a seller differentiating them from competitors. Kotler et al. (2009) argue that brand is more than a name or symbol; it expresses an identity that gives meaning to the brand. According to Borglund et al. (2012, p. 268), development of CSR leads to an increase in the meaningfulness of a brand which in turn is connected to the consumers' identities. Individuals decide by themselves if the brand harmonizes with their own identity. By this, individuals avoid brands that do not match their perceptions or their own values.

The brand creates associations towards the different stakeholders. According to Kotler et al. (2009), it is these associations and the accumulated experience of the company that create value for the company in the end. Taking the consumers into consideration, the brand represents a pledge that this brand and the company behind it will follow certain values and criteria in their actions (Ottoson & Parment, 2013, p. 166).

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

A strong brand has many benefits such as higher margins and better relations with stakeholders (Parment & Dyhre, 2009). According to Stiff (2006), there has been a revolution regarding how consumers perceive and use brands in the buying decisions. It is mainly the brand that influences the buyers' decisions rather than the products themselves. Holmberg and Wiman (2002), add that the world we live in is branded where all we see is symbols and associations connected to different brands

2.4.6 Trust

Trust is an important factor that is connected to communications (Mayer, Davis, & Shoorman, 1995). The business world in general faces a high level of suspicion due to the classical economic theories and decision making (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 43). Economical activities in general are not perceived to be associated with good corporate citizenship. In general, this leads to low levels of trust in profit-driven companies. According to Mayer, Davis and Shoorman (1995), trust is defined as: "to accept to be exposed to someone else's actions including situations that matter for this person even though she is not capable of controlling the other person". The definition says that trust exists even if the possibility of monitoring and controlling does not exist. According to Mayer, Davis and Shoorman (1995), companies are not able to create trust directly but they can do it indirectly. Companies can work on their trustworthiness. In their article about trust, Mayer, Davis and Shoorman stress on three factors that affect trustworthiness: Ability, benevolence and integrity.

By ability, the authors mean the skills, competences and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within a specific domain. Showing the ability and knowledge within a specific field improves the trustworthiness. Benevolence is related to good will. It is the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor apart from the profit motivation. Mayer, Davis and Shoorman add that benevolence is the perception of a positive orientation of the trustee towards the trustor. Regarding companies, benevolence involves companies showing a willingness to create long-term relations with their stakeholders for everyone's benefit. It is important not to let short-term solutions control the company's activities or gain at the expense of others (Borglund, et al., 2012, p. 46). The third factor according to Mayer, Davis & Shoorman (1995) is integrity. Integrity is connected to trust as it involves the trustor's perception that the trustee stands by certain principles, which are acceptable. The degree to which extent a corporate is judged to have integrity is affected by the following: The consistency of the corporates actions, credible communications in addition to following the principles and guidelines of the corporate. Moreover, Mayer Davis & Shoorman, mention creation of possibilities to control as a way to emphasize the company's trustworthiness. It is based on the ability of a corporate to have control over their actions and to be open and transparent through its communications.

3 Methodology

The methodology section presents the research design and defines the process that the authors followed throughout the study. In addition, detailed explanations of the company interviews, focus group discussions and data analysis are presented. Furthermore, the research limitations can be found here as well.

3.1 Research Strategy

Before the introduction of the methodology for this study, the research question is addressed again:

- How well do the Swedish companies' CSR efforts match the consumers' perceptions?
- What are the factors that can explain the gap between companies' CSR efforts and consumers' perceptions and how do they affect this gap?

To shortly recall the value and purpose with the research question, it is to examine the match between companies' CSR efforts and consumers' perceptions by explaining the gap between these two aspects and the factors that influenced them. In order to gain an understanding of the problem, it is important to find out how companies work with CSR and what effect these CSR efforts have on consumers' perceptions. Moreover, how companies communicate their CSR efforts have also an effect on how they are perceived by consumers. Consumers' perceptions are both influenced by organizations' actions and other factors, which are out of the companies' control. Many of these factor are difficult to measure and quantify, thus the research will be built upon a qualitative approach. The work process of the study is presented below.

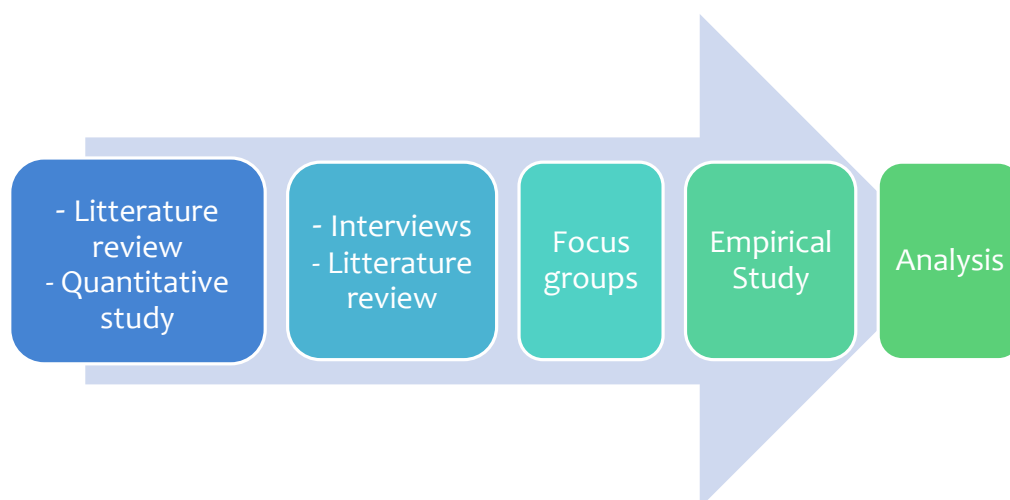


Figure 11: The work process of the study.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

The work process of the study started with a literature review to gain understanding of the research problem and earlier research in this field. To examine the match between companies CSR efforts and consumers' perceptions, both the companies' and the consumers' aspects need to be taken into account. In order to find out how companies work with CSR, interviews were conducted. To capture the consumers' aspects regarding the research question, focus group discussions were held. The formation of the interview guideline was based on information from earlier literature. Moreover, through these interviews, other aspects such as how companies communicate CSR and their relations to the consumers were collected. The literature review proceeded throughout the first part of the process. This is due to new perspectives identified during the interviews. Moreover additional aspects including consumers' perceptions were studied before proceeding with the focus group discussions.

Based on the description of the process above, it is clear that the study followed a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach helps researchers gain insight of the phenomenon and capture a meaningful context generated by the data (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005, p. 202). A qualitative approach allows interpretation of the social reality, which is difficult to obtain through numerical data and statistical analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 298). This is an effective method to capture people's attitudes, experiences and perspectives for this research.

Moreover, a quantitative research was carried out at the beginning as an attempt to illustrate the gap based on quantitative measurements of both CSR efforts and consumer perceptions. This quantification represents a small part of the whole study in order to be able to demonstrate the gap based on both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2 Comparative Study

A comparative study focuses on explaining the similarities and differences within a phenomenon (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 74). By comparing two or more different situations or cases with each other, it contributes with a better understanding of the social context examined. For this research, the comparative design was applied with the help of a qualitative research strategy (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 78). As mentioned earlier, companies CSR efforts and other factors were compared in order to identify and explain the gap, and the factors that lie behind the gap. The insights from the interviews were compared with the insights from the focus groups concerning consumers' perceptions. Furthermore, the results were compared with the theories to check how much they correspond with each other.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Primary Source

A primary source is a source in its original state without added motives or information. With the help of primary sources, information about people's attitudes, intentions and behavior relevant for this research were provided (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005, p. 103). This type of source also provides the reasons behind consumer behavior, management decisions and problems within organizations (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005, p. 103). Thus, in order to answer the research question, the primary data was collected through company interviews, focus group discussions, sustainability and annual reports.

3.3.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data is an interpretation of primary sources; literatures and journal articles are all examples of secondary resources. These sorts of data are useful to understand the research problem and access information that can help the researcher solve the problem (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005, p. 91). In this research, secondary data was mainly used during the literature review.

Another type of secondary data was provided from Sustainable Brand Index which is an annual brand study on sustainability conducted by a company called Sustainable Brand Insight (SBI). Quantitative data regarding consumers' perceptions is provided from this index. This index is based on United Nations Global Compact. Consumers evaluate different brands and determine the perceived sustainability level of each company (Sustainable Brand Insight, 2013). Moreover, companies that were selected for this research were chosen based on this index.

3.3.3 Usage of data collected

The data collected formed mainly two parts of the study: the theoretical and empirical background. The theoretical background was formed from the literature review. The aim of the theoretical background was to provide the authors and the reader with an understanding about the concepts touched in this study and what is known around the field. Moreover, through the literature review, the authors were able to form a guideline for the interviews and the empirical data collection by focusing on the relevant fields related to the study. The information from the theoretical background was then used in the analysis to be compared with the results and the data collected from the empirical study.

The empirical data collected was used in the comparison between how different companies work with CSR and to what extent it matches the data concerning consumers' perception both collected from SBI and the focus groups. The empirical data was even compared with the theoretical data to examine to what extent it

matches what is already known about the field and if new findings were deduced that the theory did not cover.

3.4 Interviews

An interview is a way to collect richer and fuller empirical information. It is a more accurate way to understand the causality within an organization (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005, p. 11). The people interviewed in this study were chosen by the companies themselves depending on who is able to provide information for the research problem. In most cases, it was the CSR manager or a person with the knowledge, holistic overview, competence and interest within CSR who participated. By interviewing one person from a company, only the insights of this person were captured which might differ from other people's insights in the company. Moreover by only interviewing CSR managers, there is a risk that the information provided concerning CSR was subjective.

The companies that were selected as the target companies for this research are ranked on Sustainable Brand Index 2013. Firstly, 25 companies from the index were selected due to the close relationship between the managers in these companies and the CEO of Sustainable Brand Insight. Thus, it is more likely that these managers would respond to the interview proposal. However, the number of companies was restricted to 25 companies due to time limitations. Secondly, out of these 25 companies, five were willing to participate; Swedbank, SEB, Spendrups, E.ON and Bilprovningen. So these were the targeted companies for this research. The companies are both national and multinational corporations representing the fields of banking, fast-moving consuming goods, service and energy.

Due to the low number of companies participating in the study, the possibility to generalize the results decreased. Besides, in order to make relevant comparisons between companies within sustainability, it is preferable to have companies belonging to the same industry. Though this was not possible in this case except for the two banks that belong to the same industry.

3.4.1 Semi-structured Interviews

The interview method used in this research is called semi-structured interviews. This means that the interview process is flexible where the questions asked do not have to follow a specific order (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 595). The reason behind choosing semi-structured interviews depends on the fact that the interviewed companies belong to different industries. Thus, the importance of the different questions varies depending on the company and the industry it belongs to. Moreover, another reason for choosing semi-structured interviews was to be able to open up for new perspectives and new findings beside what was already covered in the literature review.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

The interviewers' role during the interviews involved asking the questions from the guideline. Additionally, further questions were asked to get additional information when interesting topics concerning the research question came up. The planned questions that were asked during the company interviews covered the different aspects of CSR, strategy and communications to answer the research question. These aspects were based on the theoretical study, which covered the following: how companies work with and implement CSR, the level of integration of CSR in the organization, how CSR is communicated both internally and externally, in addition to the companies' relations to their stakeholders. Within each of the themes more specific questions were asked in order to cover the whole aspect and to achieve a more complete picture of each company.

3.5 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions are a helpful tool when a limited social context is to be examined. They bring out aspects that are not anticipated. Several participants can discuss a certain topic at the same time. Focus groups can explain why individuals have a specific viewpoint from an effective method to develop and gain clarity of individuals' experiences (Jacobsen, 2002, p. 174). One of the aims with the focus groups in this study was to discuss the participants' personal and general experiences within CSR generally and the banking and energy industry specifically. Another aim with the focus groups was also to find out about the perceptions of the targeted companies within these two industries for this research; SEB, Swedbank and E.ON. Neither Spendrups nor Bilprovningen were selected as topics for discussions. Since Spendrups focuses on the contact with retailers and Bilprovningen only covers the consumers who own cars. The basis for choosing these two industries specifically was that all the participants are familiar with and have come in contact with both the banking and energy industry. Another reason was to limit the area of discussion within the focus groups in order to get the participants' deep and thorough insights.

The participants chosen for the focus groups were students with different genders and educational backgrounds at Lund University. These were the target group due to the large availability of both students and locations for the focus groups to be held. Though, the disadvantage of only having students as participants, is that it only covers a fraction of the Swedish consumer market.

In total, three focus groups with five participants in each group were held for one hour each. Furthermore, by having several focus groups, a more nuanced result will be achieved and this could be used as a control tool. If the groups provide similar arguments and answers, the results achieved can be generalized (Jacobsen, 2002, p. 179).

The aim of the focus group discussions was to examine what perceptions consumers have regarding companies CSR efforts and where these perceptions come from. The results would then be compared to the insights from the interviews and the theories

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

that were discussed earlier concerning consumer perceptions. For this reason, the discussions were focused around the participants' perceptions of CSR within the frame of this study. The focus group discussions started by asking the participants about their thoughts about CSR in general. Then the Sustainable Brand Index is shown to the participants to discuss their perceptions around the top ranked companies on the list. This was to find out if their perception of these companies' actual CSR performance matches their top placement on the index. Later, general questions about the participants' perceptions of the targeted industries and companies were asked.

The focus group environments were open for the respondents to freely and interactively decide upon the direction of the discussions. The participants had the possibility to share their own thoughts and insights on the topics discussed. So the interviewers did not actively participate in the discussions. However, the interviewers used leading questions in order to guide the discussions and to ensure the discussions were limited within the frame of the research question.

3.6 Quantitative Data

In order to compare Swedish companies' real efforts within CSR with the consumers' perceptions and to demonstrate the gap between them, a quantitative study was conducted. Quantitative study is a research strategy, which stresses on the quantification when it comes to data collection and data analysis. Quantitative measurement provides the possibility to obtain a perception of the social reality, which represents an external and objective reality (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 40). For this research, the quantification is a direct way to map the gap between the observed companies CSR efforts and the consumer's perceptions.

Different parameters need to be identified in order to map the companies' actual CSR efforts. To measure the companies CSR efforts, different indicators were selected based on the principles of UN Global Compact and the categories of GRI. The principle and categories included in Global Compact are both quantitative and qualitative. Thus, the indicators were chosen depending on the ability to quantify them. Moreover, the sustainability level of different companies depends on their size and industries. Since most companies are complex institutions, often present in multiple geographies and industrial sectors, it is a challenge to determine whether companies are sustainable or not. So there is no universal code for measuring "corporate sustainability" (Global100, 2014).

To perform the measurements, a specific methodology needs to be chosen. After examining different methodologies to measure sustainability, the methodology used by Global100 was selected due the availability of the information online and the possibility to make use of their own collected data. Global100 is a transparent and objective corporate sustainability assessment performed by a company called

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

Corporate Knights Capital (Global100, 2014). Global100 uses twelve sustainability quantitative key performance indicators to rank companies within different segments.

Global100's list of key performance indicators consists of energy and water use, employment compensation etc. These indicators are derived from the categories of Global Reporting Initiative. Swedish sustainability reports are based on these guidelines, which is another reason for this choice of methodology. Thus, Global100's KPIs that are found in the Swedish companies' sustainability reports are used. 25 companies were selected from the list of Sustainable Brand Index based on the criteria mentioned earlier. Moreover, the final selection of the companies was based on the total number of KPIs found. The companies with the largest number of KPIs available were chosen, seven companies in total. The selected KPIs and the equations to calculate their values with the input data needed are presented below.

- Energy Productivity: Revenue (\$US) / Energy use (Gigajoules)
- Carbon Productivity: Revenue (\$US) / Greenhouse gas emissions
- Water Productivity: Revenue (\$US) / Water withdrawal (cubic meters)
- Waste Productivity: Revenue (\$US) / Waste generated (metric tons)
- CEO to average worker pay: Total CEO Compensation / (Total wage bill / Number of employees)
- Employee turnover: Number of departures / Average total employees
- Leadership Diversity: Female representation on the Board of Directors and Executive Management team

Since the companies that were selected belong to different industries, it is not relevant to rank the companies in this study and compare them with each other regarding the quantitative data. Hence, it is more relevant to compare companies that belong to the same sector. Global100 co-operates with several thousand companies from different sectors. So the weighting between the companies is credible due to the large number of participants. Hence, Global 100 score companies on a percentage rank basis against each other within the industry they operate in (Global100, 2014).

To compare the rank of the companies in this study by making use of the database of Global100, an application provided by Corporate Knights, CK Ranker (Corporate Knights Ranker, 2014), was used. With this application, Global100's KPIs can be calculated by providing the necessary input data. A resulting total ranking value for each company can then be deducted. This value is the sum (in percent) of all the KPI values for each specific company. As mentioned earlier, companies are compared to other companies that belong to the same industry. The database includes 4000 companies from more than 24 industry groups. Hence, there are a large number of companies within each industry which makes the comparison more trustworthy than comparing the companies within the study with each other.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

The results collected concerning the companies CSR efforts were compared to the results concerning the consumers' perceptions collected from Sustainable Brand Index. The results were put in relation to each other to examine the existence of the gap between companies CSR efforts and consumers' perceptions related to these efforts.

3.7 Data Analysis

The quantitative empirical data was derived from companies' sustainability reports to rank the companies' CSR effort and Sustainable Brand Index to get the values of the consumers' perceptions of each company. This data is used to map out the gap between companies' CSR efforts and consumers' perceptions. The analysis of this data was done by identifying patterns and relations between these two factors and among the companies in general.

The qualitative empirical data in this study was derived from two sources: company interviews and focus group discussion with consumers. However, the guideline for interviews was derived from the theoretical review. The main purpose of this data was to explain the gap by identifying and analyzing the factors that lie behind it. Thus, the analysis of this data was performed by benchmarking the empirical data with the theoretical data in order to examine the match between what this study shows and what earlier research says.

Data from the interviews and focus groups were categorized and sorted into different units based on patterns that were experienced. This data was then compared to investigate if the factors identified in the focus group discussion match with factors identified during the interviews and to what extent these factors influence the consumers' perceptions. The results are then benchmarked with the theories examined earlier.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Validity is a measurement, which shows if the conclusions drawn from the collected data and the findings match with each other (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 48). According to Bryman and Bell (2005), a study has validity if the findings do not fluctuate over time and is similar if the study is performed in the future. For this qualitative research to be validated some forms have to be applied; descriptive, interpretative, theoretical and generalizable (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005, p. 216). For a descriptive validity to be applied, the information presented in the research has to be true in its nature. The analysis in the research is based on respondents' answers from both company interviews and focus groups discussions. These answers risk to be biased and subjective which makes it difficult to determine if it is true in its nature. In addition, for the research to have an interpretative validity, the data was collected with an objective interpretation. The authors of this study tried to be as objective as possible. Though, the biggest part of the study is based on qualitative methods, the

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

interpretation of the results depends on the researchers' knowledge and associations. In order for the research to have a theoretical validity, it is essential that earlier studies and that the conceptual theory frameworks are satisfactory and sufficient applied. One of the main issues studied in this research was sustainability and CSR. These two concepts are vague and there have no constant definitions since these subjects are developing continuously. Moreover, most of the models discussed in this study are quite modern due to the new phenomenon uprising with sustainability. Thus, many of the models are not theoretically confirmed.

Reliability is questioning the obtained results in the research. The result is reliable if it is the same when the research is repeated and if it is not affected by random and temporary conditions (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 48). The concept of CSR is in a rapid changing development state. Thus, the concept is vague and the measurements of CSR are subjective since it is still not completely defined or standardized. Moreover, the consumers' CSR awareness increases and companies CSR performances become more sustainable over time. This indicates that if the research is conducted in the future, it may result in different conclusions. In order to make sure the study is reliable, it is essential that the approach is completely explained (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 49). The conducted research is specialized and substantiated by theoretical frameworks and concepts based on the comparison between consumers' perceptions and companies' performance within CSR on the Swedish market. However, changes in any of the aspects may affect the conclusions. Moreover, the research does not examine multiple companies and the focus groups include only students within a certain area, Lund, which makes it difficult to draw adequate generalizations.

3.9 Study Limitations

There are several restraints with the research, which are valuable to be noted. Firstly, the research deliberately emphasizes only on the Swedish market and companies listed on the Sustainable Brand Index 2013. This requires caution when findings in a country are generalized to a wider context. Moreover, relying on only the information from Sustainable Brand Index questions the credibility of the research. Though the authors tried to complement the consumers' perspectives with the focus group discussions. Another restraint is related to the sustainability rankings used in the study. As mentioned earlier, CSR is still a relative new concept and not yet established and standardized. Thus a lot of the rankings can be questionable as it is difficult to state what is sustainable and what is not. Furthermore, these rankings are only relevant when comparing companies from the same industry. The same applies for the rankings based on consumer perceptions. It is not clear how consumers evaluate companies depending on how these companies act given the industry they belong to or if they evaluate companies in general against each other. This makes the results deducted from SBI, Global100, Brandlogic and CRD Analytics questionable.

Moreover, the primary collected data is based on consumer's perception and companies' knowledge and perspectives, which can be interpreted as subjective. The

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

result of the data collection may differ depending on whom it refers to. In addition, restricted information might not be shared because the respondent from the companies does not know how much information that is allowed to be shared. The risk with this is that the companies hold back on information they think of as sensitive which might affect the future business negatively.

Furthermore, drawing conclusions based on comparing these companies is quite risky. As many of the principles and criteria are qualitative, it is not clear that it is efficient to compare the companies within each other. Even for the quantitative criterion, the size of the company and the type of the industry makes it less credible to compare these companies with each other. Comparing a larger number of companies from the same industry would have given more credible results.

Finally, other limitations involve the risk of qualitative studies especially regarding the interviews. The information that is gathered is not the whole truth. It is easy to draw conclusion about the information that is provided. Though just because the interviewed persons did not provide a specific information does not necessarily mean that it does not exist.

4 Empirical study

The empirical study presents relevant empirical data collected through both the quantitative and qualitative study. First, the gap between companies' CSR efforts and consumers' perceptions are presented as a result from the quantitative study. Then the data collected from the interviews and focus group discussions is presented.

4.1 The Match between Companies CSR Efforts and Consumers Perceptions

In order to demonstrate the gap between companies CSR efforts and consumers' perceptions, a quantitative study is performed. Both a quantification of consumers' perceptions and CSR effort are done. The result of this study is presented in the graph below. The source and way of data collections of the quantitative data is presented later in this chapter.

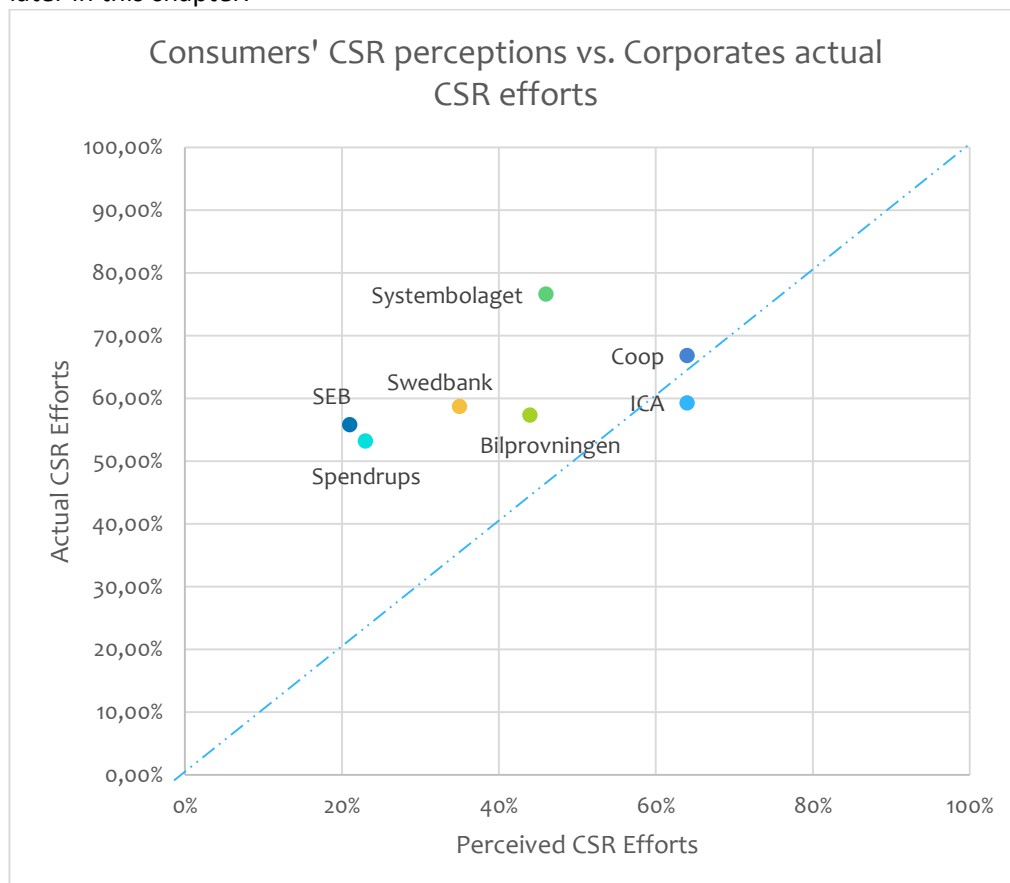


Figure 12: Consumers' CSR perceptions vs. Corporates actual CSR effort.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

The horizontal axis of the graph represents the values of perceived CSR efforts while the vertical axis represents the companies' value of actual CSR efforts. Both values lie between 0-200 percent. Thus 200% is the maximum value a company can get concerning both perceived CSR efforts and actual CSR efforts. Companies that lie near the blue line have a high match between the CSR efforts and consumer's perceptions. The larger the distance is between the company's position and the blue line, the larger the gap is between company's CSR efforts and consumers' perceptions.

The values achieved by the companies are presented in the table below:

Table 1: The values achieved by the companies concerning their perceived CSR effort and their actual CSR efforts.

Companies	ICA	Coop	System bolaget	Bilprovnin gen	Swedbank	Spendrups	SEB
Perceived CSR efforts	64%	64%	46%	44%	35%	23%	21%
Actual CSR efforts	59,28 %	66,82 %	76,60%	57,30%	58,72%	53,18%	55,78%

The perceived CSR efforts values are derived from Sustainable Brand Index. The actual CSR efforts' values are calculated through the data provided in the companies' sustainability reports. The companies examined in this graph are selected depending on the availability of information provided in their CSR reports.

4.1.1 Consumers' Perception Data Collected by Sustainable Brand Insight

Sustainable Brand Insight (SBI) is a leading company working with Insight and strategy in the field of sustainable branding. The company creates and gathers brand surveys, customized researches and shares sustainable strategic advices. The list of clients includes companies such as IKEA, Lantmännen, SEB, ICA and many more.

SBI performs an annual brand study on sustainability; Sustainable Brand Index. The basis of Sustainable Brand Index is the United Nations Global Compact and its ten principles on human rights, labor conditions, environment and anti-corruption.

In this study, 9000 Swedish consumers evaluate different brands and determine the perceived sustainability level of each company. The survey is performed via an online questionnaire. Each brand is assessed by 1000 people. All brands in the survey are randomly distributed into questions to each respondent, meaning that each respondent is exposed to different combinations of brands.

Brands presented in the survey are selected based on the following:

- Market presence in the country concerned
- Turnover and market share

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

- General brand awareness

A part of the results of the consumer survey from 2013 is presented in the figure below. The companies are ranked based on the consumer's perceptions of how good these companies are regarding CSR. A detailed list of the index is found under appendix A.

SWEDEN 2013

1. ICA	18. KPA Pension	35. Västtrafik
2. Coop	19. ICA Banken	36. Wasabröd
3. GodEl	20. Norrmejerier	37. Arvid Nordquist
4. Lantmännen	21. Folksam	38. Göteborg Energi
5. Arla	22. SL	39. Swebus
6. SJ	23. Skellefteå Kraft	40. OKQ8
7. Volvo	24. Länsförsäkringar	41. Clas Ohlson
8. IKEA	25. AMF	42. Hemköp
9. Naturkompaniet	26. McDonald's	43. Arlanda Express
10. Max	27. Swedbank	44. Google
11. Systembolaget	28. Toyota	45. Polam & Pyret
12. Posten	29. E.ON	46. Volkswagen
13. Bilprovningen	30. Jämtkraft	47. BMW
14. Vattenfall	31. Trygg Hansa	48. Gevalia
15. Telge Energi	32. Handelsbanken	49. City Gross
16. Scandic	33. Scan	50. Skånetrafiken
17. Skånemejerier	34. Fortum	51-228. Download

Figure 13: Part of the results of Sustainable Brand Index™2013. (Source: Sustainable Brand Index, 2014)

4.1.2 Quantitative Data Collected from Sustainability Reports

Quantitative data that are used to present the gap between perceived CSR efforts and actual CSR efforts are derived from the companies' sustainability reports. More information about the criteria and how the value are calculated is found under the methodology chapter in section 6.7. Moreover detailed information about the data collected from the sustainability reports for each company and presentation of the companies are available under Appendices D and E.

4.2 Interviews

In-depth interviews were performed with 5 different companies; SEB, Swedbank, Spendrups, E.ON and Bilprovningen. The companies and the information collected from these interviews are presented below. The information from the interviews are also supplemented with additional data from the companies' websites and sustainability reports. The presentations of the companies are collected from the companies' websites while the sustainability reports are used to collect information

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

about how companies work with sustainability based on the principles of Global Compact. The data collected from the interviews is categorized into subcategories that are presented for each company. The categories include: Company presentation, principles of Global Compact implemented in the company, the level of integrations of CSR in the organization, the CSR communications internally and externally, in addition to consumer perceptions.

4.2.1 Bilprovningen

Bilprovningen is a leading Swedish company within consultancy and vehicle inspections. The main business includes offering traffic safety measures, contributing to less traffic accidents and reducing the impact of traffic on the environment. Bilprovningen is a part of the public sector in Sweden. It has 89 stations and during 2012, 5.4 million inspections were performed within Bilprovningen's stations. The company strives for a close relationship with the customers by offering services based on their individual needs and requests. This is done by continuously developing the personal meetings held with customers, services and employees in order to increase the positive customer experience.

According to Bilprovningen, the company was established in order to contribute for sustainable development. Through vehicle inspections, the traffic safety is increased and the impact on the vehicles on the environment is reduced. That makes sustainability a part of Bilprovningen's core business. The values Bilprovningen stands for are: quality, customers and to have a responsible corporate culture. Bilprovningen has put a lot of efforts on customer services, which has made them one of the companies with the best customer service performances. This stresses on the importance of focusing on quality and availability of the product, which affects customer's positive association with the company.

Global Compact's Principles According to Bilprovningen

- Human rights: It is self-evident that Bilprovningen audits its suppliers. Specific quality and environmental requirements are evaluated according to the 10 principles of Global Compact. The company contributes with sustainability development by having open dialogues and close co-operations with the suppliers.
- Labor: Bilprovningen strives for diversity within the workforce. In the past year, the number of female technicians has increased with 8 percent while the overall statistic of females working in the company has increased with 167 percent since 2006. Bilprovningen works hard to reach out to potential workers who are not born in Sweden in order to give them the possibility to apply for the jobs they offer. Bilprovningen offers them education and internships which, in the long-term, hopefully will lead to future employment.
- Environment: One of Bilprovningen's core activities is to reduce the environmental impact of vehicles. In addition, Bilprovningen works with increasing the knowledge and awareness among drivers regarding the

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

environmental impact. Moreover, Bilprovningen works internally on reducing their own emissions and climate effects by being more energy efficient and using environmental friendly cars.

- **Anti-Corruption:** Bilprovningen works actively to counteract corruption. Ethics are discussed and continuously followed up on the different levels of the organization. Objectivity in the inspections and equal treatment of the customers is a presumption. Serious actions are taken in case of bribery, both concerning employees and customers. All new employees are informed about the rules that apply through the mandatory training offered by Bilprovningen.

Bilprovningen's Level of CSR Integration

According to Eva Morger, CSR is integrated in Bilprovningen's all business areas. Thus, CSR is integrated in the company's vision, ethics, business, purchase, employees, safety policies and core values. Bilprovningen strives for a long-term sustainable business. Each year the company reports according to GRI where aspects of CSR are considered. It is the HR manager who has the overall responsibility for CSR being integrated within all levels within the company. While the manager for quality-environmental issues has the responsibility for practical CSR to be implemented within the whole company. The managing group, board of directors and the CEO have started to put more emphasis on CSR priorities, strategies, and identifying concrete business opportunities concerning CSR.

Bilprovningen's Internal CSR Communications

According to Bilprovningen, the foundation for successful strategies within the company is to focus more on educating the employees. All leaders and managers are educated within leadership and strategy. The goal is to reassure that the business is heading in the right direction by increasing the consciousness among the workers. This in turn leads to employees acting more responsibly towards the customers and making the workplace more attractive and appealing to the public. This is way, the competences stay within the company and the company attracts competent individuals. Managers receive materials about CSR and the achieved results yearly, which they can use to inform the employees about. This is communicated through the company's internal website.

Bilprovningen's External CSR Communications

According to Bilprovningen, the communication of CSR is a priority in order to position the company's profile among its rivals in the market. There is a study performed by Bilprovningen, where the stakeholders had to answer if the company met the goals of how they wished to receive information about the company's sustainability efforts. The study showed that different stakeholders wish to receive information indirectly instead of dedicating specific channels for communicating sustainability. That is why, Bilprovningen focuses on the strategy of communicating information to the customers through the personal meetings at the stations. The personal dialog with the customer is an essential part of the company's communication and it results in an increase of

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

customer loyalty. Moreover, media and the external website are two possible channels for communicating sustainability. The website is a natural channel for customers to book appointments where the messages regarding sustainability can be brought up. The media is used for press releases in order to gain attention. For example, they used the press release to inform the public when they reached the 100 female vehicle inspectors limit. Through the website, Bilprovningen provides simple surveys that they use to increase the awareness among the customers and it is an effective way to improve their publicity. In their messages, Bilprovningen does not focus on using the word sustainability. Instead words are used that explains the benefit a service offers the customer. In addition, it is important for them to highlight one message at the time. For example, the messages about children in the car and how cars affect the climate are communicated separately.

Since Bilprovningen is such a great actor within traffic safety and has an impact on the environment. They have a responsibility to work with the development of safety and environmental measurements and to spread information about these issues. The company has the competence to inform society and customers about the developments of cars and traffic safety. The aim with communicating this sort of information to the customers is to change customers' driving behavior. They are able to do this due to their authority within this field.

Bilprovningen's Public Relations and Sponsorship

Bilprovningen is engaged in several collaborations with relevant companies to become more successful within their communication. These collaborations include campaigns connected to traffic safety and to inform drivers about different safety measures. Another important connection for Bilprovningen is CITA (Comité International de l'inspection Technique Automobile) which is a global association where governments and companies are involved in different ways to affect inspections of vehicles. Bilprovningen's involvement through CITA is to spread knowledge about vehicle controls and environmental effects in countries where these controls will be implemented. Bilprovningen is also involved in European Road Safety Charter since 2004 which is an initiative by the European Commission with the goal to decrease the number of deaths in the traffic.

Bilprovningen's Brand Perceptions

According to Eva Morger, Bilprovningen has a strong brand and are perceived by a large number of customers as a reliable and safe company. This is due to their close relationship with the customers. In addition, it is flexible and simple to come in contact with the company. According to Bilprovningen, the company's strong brand and its history play an important role on influencing customers' perceptions.

Summary of Bilprovningen

Area	Comments
------	----------

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

Business	Consultancy and vehicle inspections. Belongs to the public sector.
Global Compacts principles	Bilprovningen covers all the principles of Global Compact.
Integration of CSR	High level of integration supported from the whole company. A proactive approach is taken as sustainability is a part of the core business.
Internal Communications	Focus on training and education to increase the awareness among the employees.
External Communications	The main focus is put on the direct meetings with the customers. Moreover, messages that are communicated focus on the benefits rather than sustainability per se.
Relations and Sponsorship	Campaigns related to the business. Relations with different kinds of stakeholders both nationally and internationally.
Perceptions	Strong brand with long history. Reliable and close to customers.

Table 2: Summary of Bilprovningen.

4.2.2 Spendrups

Spendrups is a family company with more than 100 years of history. Spendrups is a brewery which offers drinks for all occasions. It includes wide range of drinks such as beer, soda, mineral water and coffee. The company has a huge impact on the Swedish drinking culture and Spendrups invest in developing new drinks and tastes.

Spendrups' customers are retailers, restaurants and liquor stores. These customers demand wide range of product portfolio with different drinks. Spendrups is also a company that differs from the big international players in the industry. Customers see the company as a company with quality which offers Swedish beer and products. Spendrups started as a small local family brewery, which has grown into one of the largest breweries in Sweden. The company's entrepreneurial mentality drives the passion for its products and the focus on customers' relationships has created satisfied customers. Spendrups believes this is an advantage towards customers.

Global Compact's Principles According to Spendrups

- **Human rights:** Since all production is located in Sweden, the question regarding human rights is more relevant when it comes to raw products and components imported from abroad. Spendrups imports wine from all over the world where the human rights issues are considered in as well. Spendrups use a list of identified criteria to audit suppliers. This applies to suppliers who deliver raw components, ingredients and packages. Suppliers who are not in the EU are audited in all areas such as marketing, textiles, ingredients etc.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

Other environmental and working issues and problems related to these suppliers are also considered.

- Labor: Spendrups works actively to increase the percentage of women within the company. There is an underrepresentation of women within the company (25 %). However, there are more females among managers than the distribution in the whole company. The gender diversity is affected by the fact that Spendrups is acting in a male dominant industry.
- Environment: Spendrups is ISO certified according to the ISO standard 14001. This standard sets out the criteria for an environmental management system (ISO, 2014). This lays the basis for Spendrups entire sustainability business. Goals concerning water, waste, energy usage etc. are continuously followed up.
- Anti-corruption: At the company, employees are continuously educated and trained about this issue. Some employees are more affected by these issues than others, especially those who work within marketing and sales.

Spendrups' Level of CSR Integration

Spendrups has a more systematic approach compared to 5-6 years ago. According to Claes Åkesson, there is a CSR department which makes sure CSR is aligned and integrated in all activities. The department co-operates with other functions such as HR, marketing and production. This gives an integrated approach and a positive picture of the company. The CSR manager is part of the board and there are people in the production who are involved with CSR in the operations. Spendrups has a defensive approach towards sustainability as it is important for the company to be free from any accusations concerning CSR in order to avoid backlash. However, they do wish to become more successful with their CSR communication externally in the future. Since they are selling alcoholic drinks, it is a priority to inform customers about respectable limits and to push for a healthy drinking culture. In the brewery industry, it is more difficult to be on the offensive side since the topic could be sensitive for several people.

Considering life cycle analysis of their products, Spendrups performs life cycle analysis for most of the packages in order to ensure that the material and glass production are constantly in the process of development. However, Spendrups does not perform an entire life cycle analysis on any processes. They try to control the areas where the company finds it essential to do so such as production, distribution and marketing communications. In areas where they are not able control, they find other possible ways to affect these processes, for example by partnering with their suppliers.

Spendrups Internal CSR Communications

For Spendrups, sustainable information such as education and new innovations are updated more often on the intranet. Internal educations are held during conferences and other events such as kick-offs and meetings. Spendrups has also recently introduced a new interactive e-learning system in order to keep their sustainability

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

issues up-to-date within the company. All new employees are obligated to participate in an introduction concerning CSR for example.

Spendrups' External CSR Communications

Spendrups is a company that does not focus on external CSR communication. Traditional marketing to inform about sustainability is barely used.

Spendrups' Brand Perceptions

For Spendrups, the company's sustainability image is affected by the question of water and the fact that they are a local firm with local connections. Since they origin from a small Swedish family company, the perception can be positively affected.

Summary of Spendrups

Area	Comments
Business	Swedish family brewery that operates nationally.
Global Compacts principles	Spendrups cover almost all the principles of Global compact. Two issues that are more important for the company involve the percentage of females in the company and the water consumption.
Integration of CSR	Spendrups has a defensive approach towards CSR due to the sensitivity of the drinking industry. CSR manager is part of the board.
Internal Communications	Focus on training and education.
External Communications	No focus is put on communicating CSR externally.
Perceptions	Local Swedish company with local connections.

Table 3: Summary of Spendrups

4.2.3 E.ON

E.ON is a major investor-owned energy supplier established in June 2000 upon a merge between VEBA and VIAG, two successful industrial companies with a long history. From that time several acquisitions were performed including Sydkraft which became E.ON Sweden in 2005. E.ON produces and delivers energy to the Nordic market in different forms such as electricity, gas, heat, waste treatment and different solutions regarding energy for about 1 million customers. One of E.ON's goals is to be the most considerable partner delivering sustainable energy solutions. According to E:ON, energy products are huge contributors to the climate change which makes it important to consider sustainability and it should be part of the core business. Sustainability for E.ON:

"To us, sustainability is about living up to our responsibilities to all our stakeholders:

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

our employees, our customers, and the communities and regions where we operate (E.ON, 2014).“

E.ON's overall strategy is called cleaner and better energy. It is about long-term thinking rather than short-term while trying to improve the efficiency of our resources. It is important to be aware of the effects in order to be able to make the right decisions. It is also about having a minimal effect on the environment while taking the responsibility to ensure that there is enough amount of energy when it is needed. The availability and price are important parts of sustainability. The economic and environmental aspects are connected to the so called: Energy Trilemma. There are 3 dimensions that need to be balanced which are price, reliability and the effect on the environment and people. The prices need to be set at a reasonable level. E.ON should be able to manage the energy request at all times and take into consideration people's safety and the effects on the environment. Within sustainability, climate issue is a top priority. But safety and casualty are very important aspects as well.

Compared to other energy companies, E.ON are far ahead regarding energy efficiency. This is for example achieved through different experiments and campaigns performed on different households. This year, E.ON issued a new campaign called (100koll), where 120 thousand energy meters are divided on different households. These activities increase the consumers' awareness about sustainability and help E.ON build a stronger brand and a customer base that believes in them. A lot of effort is also put on research and development mainly regarding the climate and the environment. Another emphasis is put on mobility, in an effort to make the transport sector less dependent on fossil fuel.

Global Compact's Principles According to E.ON:

- Human rights: E.ON's own supplier organization evaluates the risks for infringement against human rights. Purchases are primarily done in Sweden and other purchases are done in Europe. Regarding the value chain, E.ON has different requirements, which suppliers need to fulfill. The first tier suppliers are audited, but not the second tier suppliers. However, second tier suppliers are required to follow the same requirements. E.ON's CSR covers the whole value chain depending on different raw materials. For example oil, the traceability is not wholly possible. While for nuclear fuel, the whole value chain is controlled and audited.
- Labor: E.ON's biggest problem is employees' safety and accidents at work especially within the electricity network. A lot of effort has been put to change the employees' mindset around safety and introducing new measurements to improve safety. Health issues and employees turnover are quite low within the company. Issues concerning the gender distribution are important for E.ON, especially the number of women executives is an important metric. For the past 5 years, the percentage of women executives increased to 35%.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

Diversity regarding ethnical backgrounds requires implementation of new measurements to improve the current situation.

- Environment: In addition to the reduction of the effect on the environment and the usage of resources efficiency, the E.ON Global Climate Change and Environment Policy ensures that environmental management is conducted in accordance with uniform minimum standards across the company.
- Anti-Corruption: Avoiding conflict of interest is a top priority. E.ON's supply chain includes countries where the risk of corruption is high. E.ON conducts risk assessments in order to mitigate these risks.

According to the materiality analysis performed by E.ON, stakeholders consider the environmental issues as the most important issue for E.ON to take into consideration. While human rights and supplier conditions are barely as important. In their sustainability report, E.ON strives for transparency where they present both their strengths and shortcomings.

E.ON's Level of CSR Integration

E.ON's focus on integration is a little bit different from other companies as they work with energy and they have larger impact on the environment. Social responsibility for E.ON is one of the core values and a lot of the employees take it seriously as it is an expected part of the business. Life cycle analysis (LCA) are partially done on energy resources. However, it is easier to perform LCA on other products such as ECO-services where the whole impact can be analyzed. The head of corporate sustainability is part of the management group and works for an increased focus on sustainability within the group's level. Since E.ON is in the energy sector, it is difficult to separate sustainability from its business strategy. Concrete sustainability goals are defined on the corporate level and are closely connected to the business goals.

E.ON are facing a several changes and challenges through their value chain due to regulations and competitions. At the same time E.ON can create opportunities to add more value into the energy value chain by adjusting the strategic course. Some of these plans are: to combine growth and climate protection, reduce carbon intensity to reduce risks, continually enhancing the efficiency of renewables in addition to involving stakeholders early in the process. Moreover, E.ON are spending a lot of resources on R&D for more innovative technologies and solutions and integrated renewables.

E.ON's Internal CSR communications

For E.ON, the internal communications of sustainability are now centralized and more integrated in the internal activities. E.ON has a new strategy concerning communication by having a group who actively works with these issues. They have also put efforts on communicating the importance regarding safety and diversity within the company. In these communications, none of the aspects are communicated directly as CSR. Sustainability is being communicated as a package in the different

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

activities. Regarding recruiting, new employees are introduced to company's sustainability through introduction trainings provided where CSR is introduced on different levels. In addition, mandatory training and code of conduct are performed each year for all the employees.

E.ON's External CSR Communications

For E.ON, the direct campaigns regarding sustainability were not successful as the customers are more interested in what they can gain from their product rather than the impact it has on the environment. According to E.ON, the word sustainability is being "over used" and the concept is interpreted and defined differently by different individuals. The way to communicate sustainable products is to work on the clarity of what the company is offering the customer. Making it clear what advantages the product has and how it benefits the customers. For example, energy efficiency that leads to lower prices makes customers automatically connect this with sustainability without mentioning CSR. Catja Appelros who is the CSR manager at E.ON stresses on the importance of acting and doing rather than communicating by words in order to reach out to the customers and to gain their trust.

In order to get better results from the communications and make a difference on the customers' perceptions, E.ON has shifted the focus of sustainability within the organization. Before the CSR issues were discussed with the human resources department. Today sustainability performance is separated from HR and included in the communication area. The management group for communications consists of; the head of corporate sustainability, the brand manager, the corporate communication manager, sustainability manager, the customer communication manager and the public affairs manager. The role of this group is to discuss communication issues on a strategic level.

Customer satisfaction is also an important aspect for E.ON. Customer satisfaction is measured by net promoter score system. The factors, which can improve customer satisfactions, are continuously identified and followed up. As a result, it improves company's reputation and more customers would recommend E.ON to others.

E.ON's Public Relations and Sponsorship

E.ON has certain restrictions regarding partnering and sponsorship. E.ON want their brand to be perceived as warm, humane and strong with the capability to make a difference. The company is therefore very careful with choosing the right type of partnership and sponsorship. All the activities performed with partners need to be clearly socially beneficial.

E.ON's Brand Perceptions

Regarding what affects the customers' perceptions, E.ON considers the price as an important factor. Beside the price, the simplicity factor is important as well. This includes a lot things from power supply, the website, and the simplicity of starting or

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

canceling contracts within customer service. Everything needs to function easily and simply. Especially, when it is not a large group of E.ON's customers who are genuinely interested in sustainability issues or energy related issues.

Summary of E.ON

Area	Comments
Business	International energy producer and supplier. Work actively with energy efficiency, implementing renewables and R&D
Global Compacts principles	Most of the principles are followed. Important issues within sustainability include: employees' safety, diversity, value chain and most importantly, the energy issues.
Integration of CSR	Sustainability is one of the core values and it is one of the most important issues for E.ON being active in the energy industry. Sustainability is connected to the energy trilemma where the price, reliability and impact on the environment should be considered. Head of corporate responsibility is part of the managing group and the question is discussed on group level.
Internal Communications	Centralized communications. The focus internally is focused on improving employees' safety and diversity.
External Communications	The communications are focused on clarifying the benefits for the customer rather than the level of sustainability. Communication issues are discussed on a strategic level.
Relations and Sponsorship	Careful regarding sponsorship to make sure that the brand is perceived as humane and the activities are socially beneficial.
Perceptions	Price is an important factor. Furthermore, simplicity is another factor that affects the customers' perceptions.

Table 4: Summary of E.ON.

4.2.4 SEB

SEB is a bank established in 1856 with head office in Stockholm. SEB is present in 20 countries with 4 million private customers, 400 thousand small and middle-sized companies and 2900 bigger companies and institutions. SEB has been operating for 160 years and is helping many companies to grow. This is a result of the long-term strategy and sustainable mind-set that has helped SEB to survive for so long as a responsible organization. Sustainability for SEB:

“SEB takes a responsible role in the society, are present and available for the customers and companies in order to drive the growth and development together. “

CSR at SEB is built on 3 fields of responsibility. Responsible business, people and community and environment. Through acting responsible, SEB wants to contribute to better governance in the banking sector, social engagement and protection of the environment. As SEB provides services, the direct impact on the environment is quite low. On the other hand, the investments have big impact. This includes services such as bank investments, funds and lending money to customers. The financing of different projects is a very important aspect for the bank to take into consideration.

Global Compact's Principles According to SEB

- **Human rights:** As people and community are part of the fields of responsibility, SEB pays attention to the financing, the structure of the companies the bank works with and the supply chain. There are policies regarding these issues that apply for the whole company in general, for example the code of conduct that the employees follow and a specific policy regarding human rights. Moreover, a new supplier code of conduct dedicated for supply chain has recently been developed and a supplier assessment process will be carried out together with an external partner. The purpose is to be able to rate suppliers based on their routines, supply chain policies and to establish a “dialogue of progress” for low rated suppliers.
- **Labor:** SEB has a female CEO. In the middle management level, the gender distribution is equal. While, there is a male dominance in the higher management level. SEB are working on making the gender distribution more even within the company. Regarding cultural diversity, there are a number of people with different nationalities working at SEB. An example of this is the telephone bank which offers services in more than 20 languages. This spread of diversity helps the company to reach out to different groups and individuals in the society which creates more value.
- **Environment:** The environmental aspects are covered by the sustainable and environmental policy. As this aspect can be quite risky (projects can lose the ability to pay the money back), discussions are conducted with customers in advance before any financing or investment decisions are taken. The bank's direct footprint and resource efficiency is taken into consideration even if it has a minor impact.
- **Anti-Corruption:** This is an important aspect. This is strictly followed in line with applicable legislation. Analysis of the customers is a must. Control functions are maintained to detect possible internal corruption as well as a whistle blower system in which reporting can be made to management or to the compliance function as well as anonymously online.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

Sustainability parameters are measured continuously. Divisions have their own goals to follow up and they report directly in SEB's reporting system for sustainability.

SEB's Level of CSR Integration

Regarding SEB, integrating sustainability within the business is the main focus for them. It is important to improve the awareness and the sustainability should be a part of the business, not as an add-on. SEB needs few more years before sustainability is wholly integrated in the organization. It should be part of employees' daily activities. SEB uses business cases to consider advantages, disadvantages and impacts before making a decision regarding a new project. For example, decisions concerning investments, the social and environmental impacts are taken into consideration. Other aspects that are taken into consideration are how this project is affected by the legislation within few years and if it is going to survive in the long term.

The board has the main responsibility regarding CSR while the management group with a more operational role ensures that CSR is integrated in the organization. There is a corporate sustainability committee that works structurally with CSR. This committee is made up of division managers and four people from the committee are part of the management group. Human resources, on the other hand, handles personnel issues related to sustainability.

SEB's Internal CSR Communications

SEB aims their communications to create awareness. Sustainable awareness internally is an important goal for SEB. SEB offers e-learning practices, workshops and information on the intranet. New employees participate in introduction programs. Moreover, the sustainability division works as a knowledge hub where people in the organization can turn to regarding sustainability issues. The code of conduct is part of SEB's values. In addition there is a concept called: We are SEB. This concept is a way to strengthen the culture and the values within the organization.

SEB's External CSR communications

SEB does not have a specific strategy on how to communicate their CSR efforts. On the other hand, they try to bring up the important aspects of sustainability that are relevant in the direct contact with the customers. It is a goal to include the sustainability communication as a natural part of the "normal" banking business. For example, sustainability issues should be found on the website and in booklets etc. Sustainability is a part of the dialog with the customers in order to reach common goals. Moreover, SEB participates in workshops and conferences where their CSR performances are presented and discussed. An example of a product which is used in SEB's sustainability communication is the green bonds. These bonds have been developed for financing sustainable projects and are offered to customers. Moreover, CEO Annika Falkengren and Klas Eklund, the senior economist, are both important figures for SEB who participate in both national and international networks where they convey the message behind SEB and its CSR efforts.

The communication externally for SEB is also done through different collaborations with other organizations and NGOs, which SEB are engaged in. By this engagement, SEB contributes with improvements regarding different societal problems. This recognition and efforts are communicated through SEB and the organizations SEB cooperate with. SEB tracks stakeholders' input by having channels for gathering and monitoring and allowing essential feedbacks from these stakeholders.

SEB's Public Relations and Sponsorship

SEB as mentioned above has collaborations with different organizations in order to contribute to society. SEB uses these relations as a method for external communications.

SEB's Brand Perceptions

In general, the banking industry is affected by negative CSR associations. The whole financial industry and banking sector are having a real problem due to the ongoing debate around bonus payments and incentives and mortgage interests. The media has a tendency to shed light on the incentive systems of the banks, which affects customers' opinions regarding banks in general. The result of this is that the bank sector has a bad reputation regarding sustainability compared to other industries. Regardless of how much effort is put on CSR. This reputation does not only affect customers, but even future employees. These facts about the banking industry applies for SEB.

The customers have an increased CSR awareness and understanding that this area includes several other aspects and not only the environmental ones. For example, there is an increased attention concerning the anti-corruption aspects even if the company has been working with it for a long time., It is noticeable that the new generation of employees are more interested in companies that are fair and caring. In order to get a better reputation, SEB needs to work on the product range and its current way of working with communications, such as the sustainability reports. These reports are important for both private customers and potential investors. Today the attention is driven gradually toward the green investments and green bonds, which improves the image around sustainability. But still there are other things that affect customers' opinion about SEB. SEB's strongest approach and value towards customers is to be able to handle all the customers equally. SEB's mission is to help people and business thrive by providing quality advice and financial resources.

Here in Sweden SEB is a large corporate. Bigger and more known companies can be easily perceived as better within sustainability. Moreover, according to Jonas Solehav at SEB, companies that work with eco-labeled and fair trade products benefit more through these products and the direct contact with the customers.

Summary of SEB

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

Area	Comments
Business	Originally Swedish bank that operated internationally.
Global Compacts principles	The bank does not have huge a direct impact on the society on the environment. Though the indirect impact through investment and money lending is quite high. There the bank tries to cover all the principles.
Integration of CSR	Sustainability is not yet fully integrated. Sustainability issues are taken into consideration within decision-making. The management board has main responsibility for CSR. Moreover, there is a CSR committee made up of division managers and four people from this committee are part of the management group.
Internal Communications	The aim is to increase awareness through e-learning practices and workshops. A concept: "We are SEB" is established to strengthen the CSR values in the culture.
External Communications	There are no specific strategies for external communication. More focus is put on the direct contact with the customers. Green bonds and collaborations with other organizations.
Relations and Sponsorship	Collaborations with other organization for social contributions.
Perceptions	SEB is affected by the banking industry's general reputation.

Table 5: Summary of SEB.

4.2.5 Swedbank

Swedbank is a bank rooted in the Swedish savings bank history. The bank has 8 million private customers and more than 600 thousand corporate organizational customers. The bank works hard to develop close and long-term relationships with their customers. Swedbank's employees carry on the bank's values which are being simple, open and caring.

Swedbank works with three core sustainability aspects: social, ecological and economical. It is about integrating these aspects within the business process regardless of how much effect they have. Most importantly is to look into the indirect impact of the bank through credit, investment and purchase. Due to Swedbank's position in the banking industry, responsibility becomes an important part of the business. The bank's core business is to help the society grow and develop. Swedbank has restructured in the past few years in order to become a secure and reliable player

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

in the financial market through endorsing new regulations that aim towards a responsible market.

Global Compact's Principles According to Swedbank

- Human rights: A new program has been initiated, which is based on the United Nations' principles for human rights. The program includes policy, training and implementation of human rights issues. Moreover, human risk assessment and interviews with senior managers are performed before taking investment or lending decisions.
- Labor: Concerning the gender diversity, there are totally more women in the organization than men. Though at the management level, the number of men is higher.
- Environment: The climate question is considered in the relation with suppliers, credit and fund management, in addition to the efforts to minimize the bank's own climate impact.
- Anti-Corruption: There is an internal whistle blower system where it is possible to report anonymously. In addition the managers have a role in enabling and supporting a better process.

The customers do not put a lot of pressure on Swedbank to work with sustainability. However, the efforts of social responsibility have had big effects, especially on the local presence around Sweden. Each bank decides individually how to operate and direct the energy and commitments to create a positive attitude towards the bank among its customers. Moreover, the sustainability efforts affect the employees and coworkers. The values of the bank should permeate through the whole process within the bank. The direct contact with the customers should reflect the values the bank stands for.

Swedbank's level of CSR Integration

Swedbank is a company that works with sustainability at higher levels in the organization. Today, three people work with sustainability on a group level. The commitment is originated from the management group, which in turn requires all the managers to take the responsibilities needed within each division.

Regarding asset management, Swedbank has signed under the PRI initiative (principles for responsible investments) where for example Swedbank will not invest in illegal weapons or weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, Swedbank works with sustainability funds and green bonds where dialogs are conducted before making decisions around them. Though, regarding credits, it is more difficult to control and regulate as it is for funds and investment. Corporate credits are being assessed from a risk/sustainability point of view. If the branch advisor finds questions regarding the company's work, or it is a high risk country/sector, the advisor shall bring the case to his/her credit committee for guidance. If they also find the decision to be difficult, Swedbank has an ethic council where credit decisions/customer engagement can be

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

discussed. As of the procurement chain, they have a well-integrated sustainability thinking in their purchases. A self-assessment questionnaire as well as a code of conduct with sustainability issues is a "must" before signing a contract.

Swedbank's Internal CSR Communications

Swedbank has mandatory trainings for employees about ethics and sustainable banking to increase the knowledge internally about the bank's actions regarding CSR. There are also trainings for managers with the focus on equality and diversity.

Swedbank's External CSR Communications

Swedbank on the other hand, has different strategies for external communications. These communications are done through collaboration with municipalities and community involvements. The communication strategies are not centralized. Each local bank decides what and how to communicate. But the information through internet and TV represents all the banks as a whole. Swedbank has about 30 environmental ambassadors in different business areas. Managers have even an important role in spreading the information about the banks CSR efforts.

Swedbank's Public Relations and Sponsorship

Swedbank has a lot of local collaborations with municipalities and communities, though they try to be careful regarding the type of sponsorship connected to sustainability. They are not interested in partnership in the form of sponsorship. They focus on doing the job themselves rather than paying others for doing it.

Swedbank's Brand Perceptions

Regarding Swedbank, the image that customers have on Swedbank is affected by the bank's history and local commitment. As mentioned above, Swedbank is the first Swedish bank that prohibits investing in nuclear weapons. Moreover, Swedbank offers a lot of jobs locally and for younger people. It is a bank that is also working and implementing sustainability within the credit and purchase process.

Swedbank has worked a lot to improve their reputation. Swedbank puts a lot of efforts on building trust. Though the long history of the bank, the local commitment and the fact that it is strong-capitalized bank have protected its reputation somehow.

Summary of Swedbank

Area	Comments
Business	Swedish bank originating from the savings bank. Operates internationally.
Global Compacts principles	The principles are covered through the banks purchase process, investment and money lending. Regarding asset management, the bank signed under principles of responsible investments (PRI). Moreover,

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

	it I the first Swedish bank that will not invest in illegal weapons etc.
Integration of CSR	The commitment originates from the management group where three people work in the management group work with sustainability.
Internal Communications	Focus on training and education.
External Communications	External communications are performed through collaborations and community involvements. Though the strategies are not centralized. Each bank defines its own communication strategy locally.
Relations and Sponsorship	Careful with sponsorship regarding sustainability.
Perceptions	Long history and local commitment

Table 6: Summary of Swedbank.

4.3 Focus Groups

According to the different participants in the focus groups, sustainability within companies has different meanings and associations. Many connect sustainability directly to the environmental impact of the company and how to be resource efficient. While others connect the social aspects as well, such as employees and suppliers' conditions.

Some of the participants were more aware of other sustainability principles, such as the difference between salaries within companies. Another important aspect is the impression of how much companies care about the environment and society. It does not necessarily have to do with how much they actually do within CSR but its more about how much they care and if sustainability is a part of their mission and vision. Moreover, many participants talked about the triple bottom line dimension and the long-term thinking. Companies that work with long-term strategies aiming to do things better continuously are considered to be sustainable. It is the work companies perform which shows improved results every year that reflects a good impression in their sustainability efforts. An interesting aspect about the concept of sustainability which was brought up in the discussion is when companies consider themselves as a part of a bigger system taking into consideration the effects they have on the environment, society, customers, competitors etc.

The intention and the connection of the company to the society play an important role that affects consumer's perceptions. Lantmännen is a company that is formed from traditional Swedish farmers with intensions to help and protect farmers. IKEA is a traditional Swedish company with Kamprad's vision to create a better everyday life for the many people. These two companies are highly perceived as sustainable by the participants.

4.3.1 Different relevance regarding social and environmental sustainability

According to one of the participants, the environmental impact of companies is a priority since it affects the world globally while social sustainability can more easily be controlled nationally by different regulations. For other participants, the social aspects such as work conditions and child labor are of high priority. Though many agree that in order to have a higher impact on consumers' perceptions, the social aspects may have a higher effect. Slogans which incorporate child labor and working conditions resonate more and can be more dramatized and touching compared to environmental issues. In addition, the economical aspect of sustainability is more difficult for consumers to be informed about while social and environmental issues are easier to take part of.

4.3.2 Consumers' perceptions and associations

Some consumers connect sustainability to small genuine companies. For example ICA and Coop that rank highest on Sustainable Brand Index are not perceived as national giants within grocery. Especially, participants living outside the bigger cities, the image of these brands is: small, close and local businesses that are perceived as less harmful and more sustainable. On the other hand other, there were participants who do not think of these companies as small and genuine. Instead they associate them as big national companies as there are several of them around the whole country. But these companies are still perceived as sustainable. The reason is that these companies are well known and rely on good reputations to survive. Thus, it is important for them to take responsibility. Small mistakes from these companies are easily seen and can rapidly spread throughout the whole country. So there is more pressure on these companies, which forces them to take responsibility.

Genuineness and authenticity appear to be two important values that consumers associate with sustainability. This is reflected through companies' communications via slogans and ads. For example, ads that participants focused on are ads that reflect more old-fashioned feelings and more closeness to the nature. Companies such as Lantmännen have succeeded with their communications through their slogan "från jord till bord" (field to fork) which summarizes their message that the food is wisely taken care of from its origin to the end-consumers. Other slogans that Lantmännen are known for, are for example, that they take care of the farmers and that they are originated as farmers etc. The closeness to the nature and feeling of authenticity in their message reflects higher levels of sustainability.

Another important factor that affects consumers' perceptions is intuition. Most of the participants have an intuition towards different companies that they can associate with how good or bad companies are within sustainability. This is for some participants based on the genuineness of the messages they send to the customers

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

that is in turn based on the relevance of their businesses. What is known about the companies' daily business reflects an image that is responsible for this intuition.

Some participants base their perceptions on word of mouth and different stories they have heard from other people regarding the companies. Some stories that are strong and impactful, keep a longer effect on people. The experiences consumers have about different companies spread easily throughout today's social media forum. Therefore the companies' own marketing and communication today is less relevant. On the other hand companies need to be honest, authentic and walk the talk. Since the image about the company can be spread through consumer's own stories and experiences.

Some companies are associated with sustainability more than other depending on the industry. Companies that work with products rather than services have a greater impact both socially and environmentally due to the use of different resources and the longer value and supply chain that can have further impact. Companies that offer services do not need to bother about spillage and emission which explains why people do not associate them with sustainability. Since they do not necessarily need to work within environmental dimension of sustainability.

The type of industry a company is active in affects the general image of the company. Companies such as MAX that work actively with CSR and are well known for their efforts are still not perceived as the best. According to the participants, this is due to the fact that they belong to the fast food industry which is generally perceived as less sustainable. The fast food industry has an impact on both the society and the environment due to the effect on peoples' health and life styles and the meat's effect on the environment. Moreover, the country of origin affects the impression of certain companies.

Lantmännen was a company of interest for the participants as they won the first place in the ranking of Sustainable Brand Index for 2014. One of the participants commented that Lantmännen are not sustainable since they do not have numerous of ecological products. However, other participants did not agree, as Lantmännen's concept is to provide and support Sweden with long-term local agriculture which is an important aspect to be considered as sustainable.

ICA and Coop are two other interesting companies that have been on the top of the Sustainable Brand Index every year. The participants' perceptions about these companies are based on their position within the food industry. As food is a basic need for all consumers, this industry cannot be accused for overconsumption and is therefore more sustainable than other industries such as the fashion industry. Moreover, ICA and Coop are companies that consumers get in contact with at a daily basis and interacts with sustainable messages through the different ecological products they offers. This reflects a strong sustainable brand.

The consumers' perceptions have a lot to do with associations. Consumers associate different industries with different aspects of sustainability and base their perception on these aspects. This means that different companies are to be perceived more sustainable than others depending on which industry they belong to.

4.3.3 Energy Industry

Participants didn't have a lot of information about the different companies in the energy industry. Most of them know of some of the brands and are more informed about one of the companies, but not more than that. Some ideas about the industry in general: The energy industry is an industry that all the other industries and households depend on. They have an impact on the whole society though their main sustainability impact related to the environment. The level of transparency is and should be higher within this industry according to the participants, as it should be easy to track the sources of energy and if it is sustainable.

Some of the participants' ideas about energy companies: Energy companies have started working with sustainability and taking action. They sell green electricity and they appear to have plans of how to become greener. As the energy industry is a quite involved in the sustainability issues, people have an idea that companies within this industry take responsibility for their actions affecting the environment and the society. That's why the energy is strongly associated with sustainability compared to other industries as there are different parties that keep their eye on this industry. Innovation is an important factor that energy companies need to focus on. When energy companies promote about their innovation capacity or efforts, they can be perceived as more sustainable, since they are trying to make things better.

E.ON

The first impression about E.ON from most of the participants was: a Giant German company. They have a lot of coal power and buy less sustainable energy from other parts of Europe. However, E.ON has recently started to think differently as they understand that if they continue to work this way, they will be undermined by other companies. That's why now they need to move towards being cleaner and better.

Students who have been in contact with E.ON through some courses have another picture of E.ON due to their knowledge about their efforts within sustainability. They are aware that E.ON tries to find new and more sustainable business possibilities. In addition, they work with their customers for more sustainable energy consumption. E.ON have succeeded to show themselves as more sustainable through some of their new campaigns which reaches out to the customers. Recently, they launched a new campaign: 100Koll. This campaign aims to help consumers reduce their energy consumption, which in return reflects a better image about sustainability for this

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

company. However, none of the participants knew that E.ON offers green energy as they never heard about it through E.ON's communication channels.

Other companies such as GodEl (which basically means Good Electricity) are perceived to be better just by mentioning their name. The impression that people get from their name is connected to CSR. Many of the participants did not know a lot about GodEl. By judging the name they associated the company with green energy. However, this is not the reason why GodEl have their name. It is because all the revenues are given to charity (GodEl, 2014). Moreover, GodEl does not necessarily provide green energy. Not many of the participants were aware of what GodEl is dealing with regarding energy.

Moreover, GodEl is even known for the celebrity artist Lasse Åberg who helps them and even have participated in their advertisements. So the participants associate Lasse Åberg as a spokesman for GodEl. Furthermore, GodEl's main communication channel with consumers is through their volunteers that try to sell their contracts in the streets. Even this way of marketing shows that they are not profit-driven and won't spend money on unnecessary marketing.

While choosing energy suppliers for their households, most of the participant focused on the price as determining factor. Moreover, one of the participant that has been more in contact with energy companies stressed on the importance of clarity and explicitness. It is crucial that the contract is simple and states clearly all the information needed about the price, conditions, binding period etc. In addition, the invoices should be simple and clear where the information needed is clearly stated. If the invoice is clear enough, it reflects a clearer image about the company since the source of energy would be stated explicitly. Participants think that it is important for companies to promote their initiatives within CSR if they want to be perceived as more sustainable. Few people actively seek information through their webpages to achieve information about how they work with CSR. Regarding greenwashing, participants agreed that when companies promote CSR efforts with facts, details and numbers, they can be trusted as it is more specific.

4.3.4 Bank Industry

The most dominant aspect regarding the bank industry is the economical dimension of sustainability. The banking business is related to what one of the participant call unsustainability. The banks' ways of working is quite short-term. Especially concerning the economic crisis and the banks relying on the government to solve their problems. In general, the banking industry does not have a positive reputation as they deal with money. This is why they are perceived as greedy. In addition, according to the participants, a continuous issue that banks face is the complaints from the customers when the bonuses are announced. People think it is unfair that the interest from their loans create these bonuses. When a company is perceived negatively in one aspect,

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

other aspects are affected too. So while the banks are being perceived as bad guys in one dimension, they are also perceived as less sustainable.

One of the participants, who worked at a bank, was familiar with the products that the banks offer that are connected to sustainability, such as the green bonds. The participant was also aware of the regulations regarding investments where different CSR aspects are taken into consideration before making decisions. On the other hand, the other participants that were customers at different banks did not think that these aspects are clearly communicated from their banks. They did not know about the investments and they find it difficult to get information about green bonds etc. The advertisements and promotions from the banks are never concerned about the bank's CSR efforts, but about the services that the bank offers that can create more value for the customers.

Comparison between Swedbank & SEB

According to some of the participants, Swedbank reflects an impression of the genuine, local savings bank. The impression of being little, genuine and close to their customers benefits Swedbank. Additionally, many of the participants were aware of the fact that Swedbank originates from the Swedish savings bank. Swedbank are known for their sponsorship of different sports clubs, which results in people associating them with social sustainability.

The participants did not have a lot of opinions about SEB. One point that one of the participants raised is their connection to the Wallenberg family (one of the richest and most influential families in Sweden). Due to this connection, SEB is perceived as very profit-driven and less sustainable bank.

The difference between Swedbank and SEB according to consumers' perceptions originates from the difference between national and local banks. Swedbank originates from the old savings banks and these banks are established locally in every village close to the customers. SEB on the other hand, is perceived as a bigger national bank where wealthy people work to become wealthier. This leads to different associations that people make regarding sustainability where local banks are more caring and close to the customers, thus being perceived more sustainable.

The participants put a lot of focus on the local presence of companies that affect their perceptions regarding sustainability.

Though Handelsbanken is another bank that participants associate strongly with sustainability. The main reason is that this bank was established originally with a purpose to give people a chance to live as they wish. Even in their own business model, they are known to be working with long-term strategies. Even more, considering the funds that they have internally for their employees, which they can benefit from after their pensions. These funds provide the same chance for all employees to have a fair amount of money to live with, regardless of what position the employee had earlier. So it could be said that the employees of Handelsbanken are treated more equally

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

compared to other banks. Moreover, Handelsbanken are quite local where the managing board do not interfere at a local level.

Another bank that was mentioned was ICA Banken which several participants shared positive associations with. ICA Banken is perceived as a Bank that cares about their customers. A bank that wants to make things easier for other people and do not have intentions to deceive their customers as other banks seem to do, according to the participants. Their promotions are quite simple and pragmatic. They are also favored due to the connection to the ICA brand. The perception of sustainability is connected to trust. Participants feel trust towards ICA Banken compared with other banks.

5 Analysis

In this chapter, the analysis of the data collected through the empirical study is performed. The analysis is done by examining the phenomena experienced through the empirical study and to what extent they match the theories and studies that are raised in this research. By identifying differences, similarities and relations between phenomena, conclusions can be drawn regarding the gap between companies' efforts within CSR and consumers' perceptions and the affecting factors that lie behind. The analysis is formed by first analyzing how different companies work with CSR and how their efforts affect consumers' perceptions. Then other factors that directly or indirectly affect consumers' perceptions are analyzed.

The companies interviewed had different positions on the list of Sustainable Brand Index. The following table presents the ranking positions each company achieved for the year 2013. Comparing the collected data about these companies' and their activities with their ranking position enables us to highlight the most important factors that affect their positions.

Company	Bilprovingen	Spendrups	E.ON	SEB	Swedbank
Position 2013	13	89	29	106	27

5.1 The gap between companies' efforts within CSR and the consumers' perceptions

The results from the quantitative data showed that there is a gap between companies' efforts with CSR and the consumers' perceptions. The interesting part is that by looking at the values that the different companies have concerning their CSR efforts, the values are relatively close. On the other hand, the big difference is seen in the values that these companies achieved regarding consumer perceptions. These values varied widely compared to the values of the companies' efforts. Moreover, it is seen that for most of the companies, the perceived sustainability level is less than the values of their actual CSR efforts. Hereby, these companies are not succeeding in delivering their sustainability messages to the consumers.

When comparing the companies' CSR activities through the interviews, it was difficult to see vast differences. All the companies follow the principles of Global Compact and GRI where different aspects are more or less as important for each industry. All companies have specific guidelines for code of conduct and implement different policies to make sure that these are followed. In addition, these companies report about their sustainability based on GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) which sets a type of guideline on how to work with sustainability and what to focus on. Though again

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

by looking at the rankings of these companies, there is a large difference in how they are perceived by the customers which emphasizes the gap that Pelozo et al. (2012) examined earlier.

Two of the companies interviewed, Swedbank and SEB belong to the same industry. By examining how these two companies specifically work with CSR, a lot of similarities can be identified. The only difference that we experienced through the interviews is that Swedbank focused on facts regarding implementing of principles of responsible investment and exiting investments in weapons while SEB did not. Though by checking SEB's webpage, it is notable that SEB has also signed UN's principles for responsible investment and exited investments in weapons few years ago (SEB, 2014). Thus the approaches these banks have concerning CSR are very similar. The differences on the other hand that are noticeable involve other factors than working with CSR that are discussed later in this chapter.

Herewith, in order to understand this gap it is necessary to identify differences among how companies work with CSR and the extent to which these differences affect the ranking. Moreover, it is necessary to take into consideration other aspects such as communications and additional factors that might weigh more in this case.

5.2 Differences in how companies work with CSR

Among the companies interviewed, there are some noticeable CSR performance differences between these companies concerning for example diversity and the supply chain. E.ON, for example, is a company that has not been working actively to improve the diversity issues within the organization. Diversity appears to be a problem for most of the companies, especially the gender diversity within the companies depending on the industries they belong to.

Regarding the supply chain, both types of supply chain strategies mentioned by Borglund et al. (2013), suppliers' selection and strategic development of suppliers, can be identified. Bilprovningen has open dialogues and close co-operations with the suppliers which is close to strategic development of suppliers. While the other companies focus only on suppliers' selection. Spendrups, Swedbank and SEB audit their suppliers. For E.ON, the first tier suppliers are audited, but not the second tier suppliers. The other aspect concerns the supplier conditions. Most companies try to audit their suppliers but have difficulties controlling them which causes problems for companies who strive for a wholly sustainable supply chain. According to Borglund et al. (2013), difficulty with controlling CSR activities within the value chain affects the success of the CSR process and the ability to form clear CSR strategies. E.ON has a problem regarding supply chain due to difficulties with tracking the origin of some of the raw materials such as oil. Though, according to the materiality analysis performed by E.ON, the environmental issues are the most important aspects for customers. Thus, human rights and labor conditions are less probable to affect the consumers'

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

perceptions and their ranking. On the other hand, the source of energy and implementing renewable are important aspects.

Another dimension that differs between the interviewed companies is the incentive systems and the differences in salaries and bonuses. This problem is evident within the banking industry. This dimension is a relevant part of sustainability both according to the banks themselves and the participants of the focus groups.

5.3 Different Approaches and Strategies when Working with CSR

It is clear that all the companies studied strive for higher level of integration of sustainability where both the boards and management groups are involved in the discussions. Though it is also clear that most of the companies' CSR efforts are reactions toward the new regulations and increasing demands and expectation from the different stakeholders. Bilprovningen is an exception in this case where their approach towards sustainability is proactive due to involvement of CSR in their core business. Bilprovningen's business is the closest to the shared value principle presented by Porter & Kramer (2011). Since their core activities involve improving the traffic safety and reducing the traffics impacts on the environment, Bilprovningen addresses the challenges and needs of the society and the environment.

Furthermore, considering Halme and Laurila (2009) different categories of engagement: charity, integration and innovation. The companies have integrating approaches since they are working with CSR questions concerning the core business and taking responsibility for the essential CSR areas in relation to the stakeholders. These companies are working on areas such as working conditions, gender equality and environmental responsibility. Bilprovningen, on the other hand, address the social and environmental problems through their core business, which makes them close to the innovation category. However, the rest of the companies continuously try, to reach the innovation categories. For example E.ON believes that they have a great responsibility as an energy producer on the environment. In addition, they actively work with research and development to try to find innovative solutions that can help address the impact of the energy industry. Even the banks are increasingly working with investments in projects that address societal and environmental problems but the effect is not wide yet. Spendrups try to work on improving their internal processes to become more sustainable within production and packaging with new innovations. Though they still consider themselves to have a more defensive approach in general.

Company	Bilprovningen	Spendrups	E.ON	SEB	Swedbank
Category of engagement	Proactive - innovation	Reactive - integration	Reactive - integration	Reactive - integration	Reactive - integration

5.4 Relations and Stakeholders

Several researchers such as Ottoson & Parment (2013) and Ottman (2011) stress on the importance of relationships and partnership to succeed within sustainability. More specifically they focus on the constructive relations with the different stakeholders as a way to add value for the company.

5.4.1 Customers and the General Public

The general public is one of the main stakeholders. According to Ottman (2011), companies should have strategies in empowering and educating the general public. E.ON is a company that works actively on engaging their customers and the general public to improve the energy efficiency at households. E.ON has released different campaigns in the recent years that involve consumers including 100Koll, their new campaign this year. Many of the participants in the focus groups were able to relate these campaigns to E.ON where the company showed that they are working for a better resource efficiency resulting in a more sustainable image. Engaging the community is one of Ottman's (2011) six strategies for sustainable communications in order to influence their opinions and enhance the company's image. Swedbank is also known for the engagement with municipalities and sports clubs according to the participants of the focus groups. Ottman (2011) argues that through these engagements, companies are able to spread positive information about their activities through the participants and their networks. The opinions from the focus group discussion verify this fact as people were able to relate E.ON and Swedbank to these engagements, though they didn't participate themselves.

Here we can add the effect of word of mouth resulting from community engagement. E.ON is an example of a company that understands the importance of word of mouth. In their future communications, they want their present customers to be the ones who speak of E.ON and make the brand stronger. Moreover, based on the focus group discussions, it is clear that many of the participants based their opinions and perceptions on things they have heard from other people.

5.4.2 Employees

Employees are also important stakeholders. All the companies interviewed had similar strategies regarding the involvement of the employees in their CSR activities. The focus is mostly put on training and educating in order to increase the awareness of the employees. In addition many companies focused on the internal communications as a way to attract competent people in the future. The future generations want to work for companies that are more caring and sustainable.

Though not a lot of effort is put in involving the employee in working with CSR. Ottman (2011) recommends giving employees the power to make a change. From the interviews, it is not clear how much the employees are involved in the CSR activities more than participating in different practices. The only difference experienced under

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

the interviews is that companies focus on their values where employees are supposed to live up for these values and some of these values are connected to CSR.

According to Collier & Esteban (2007), Ottman (2011) and Borglund (2013), employees are the drivers of implementing CSR strategies and the degree of success of these strategies depend on the commitment of the employees. Collier and Esteban (2007), suggest values programmes as a tool to engage and motivate employees in their CSR strategies. Bilprovningen, E.ON and Swedbank stress on their values that are drivers for their employees' commitment. Moreover, all three companies have corporate social responsibility as a part of their core values.

Both Ottman (2011) and Öberseder et al. (2013) mention that there are specific values that should guide the company's behavior to succeed within their CSR efforts. These values include: authenticity, simplicity, fairness and respect. It is also clear that companies with high level of consumers' perceptions within CSR share some of these values.

Simplicity is a value that both E.ON and Bilprovningen talk about as an important factor for the customers. The participants in the focus groups also include simplicity as a factor that can be associated to sustainability given the fact that simplicity increases the clearness and transparency of the company. Genuineness and authenticity are two values that participants of the focus groups stressed on regarding CSR. Lantmännen is example of a company that succeeded in making their communications more genuine and authentic by focusing on their core activity and benefit of it related to the consumers and the Swedish society.

5.4.3 Other Stakeholders

Other types of stakeholders that are included in the green marketing are customers, competitors, governments and stakeholder. Bilprovningen collaborates internationally with governments and other companies to improve the business of vehicle control such as CITA and European Road Safety Charter. There, Bilprovningen cooperates with different governments and companies all over the world. As Bilprovningen is perceived as one of the most sustainable companies in Sweden. This matches with the facts about marketing communications where relations with customers, governments and competitors reflect high levels of sustainability.

Moreover, sponsorship is another type of building relationships with different stakeholders. Companies choose to work differently with sponsorships and social contributions. Bilprovningen chooses collaborations where the campaigns included are connected to traffic safety and to inform drivers about different safety measures. SEB has different collaborations with organizations and NGOs in order to contribute with benefit to the society. Moreover Swedbank has collaborations with municipalities and communities. E.ON is on the other hand careful regarding partnership and sponsorship where the social benefit is a determining factor.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

However, Spendrups is a special company when compared to the other companies interviewed. Spendrups has several brands under its company that are more known to the consumers than the brand Spendrups itself. Thus Spendrups does not have direct contact with the customers in the same way as other companies. Spendrups' customers are retailers that sell their beverages to the end-consumers. Still, Spendrups is known as a Swedish brewery that has local connections and relations with buyers and suppliers in Sweden. In addition to few suppliers that are international.

Company	Bilprovingen	Spendrups	E.ON	SEB	Swedbank
Community engagement	Moderate	Low	High	Low	High
Relations with stakeholders	- National and international collaborations with governments and companies - campaigns related to the business	- Relations with local retailer and both national and international suppliers	- Engaging the public in energy efficiency - Sponsorships chosen carefully to guarantee the social benefit	-Collaborations with organizations and NGOs for sponsorship	- Collaborations with municipalities and communities
Values	Quality, customers and responsible corporate culture	-	Included in their code of conduct – corporate social responsibility	Mutual respect, professionalism, commitment and consistency	Simple, open and caring

Borglund et al. (2013) mention stakeholder analysis as a tool to be used within the CSR process. Stakeholder analysis is used to identify the main stakeholder and define the CSR strategies based on what is important for the stakeholders. Most of the companies that we interviewed mentioned some kind of study of the stakeholder to identify their main focus areas. Moreover, sustainability reports usually include materiality analysis which is also used to identify the stakeholders' main concerns within sustainability. The companies interviewed were aware of their main stakeholders and make use of their opinions to guide their CSR strategy.

5.5 Direct Contact with the Customers and Consumers

Bilprovingen put a lot of focus on the relationship and the meeting with customers at the stations as this contact reflects the values and attitudes of the company. This

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

relationship determines the level of loyalty and how the customers would perceive the company.

According to Pelozo et al. (2012), companies with high degrees of customer contact are perceived as more sustainable as they are able to deliver their sustainability messages in their retail environments repeatedly. This is quite clear by following the results of Sustainable Brand Index over the past few years. ICA and Coop are two companies that have direct contact with consumers continuously. Moreover, the products offered by these companies include a lot of ecological and fair trade products both under their own brands and other brands. According to the participants of the focus groups, by visiting one of ICA and Coop shops, they receive a lot of sustainability messages through the products and packages which reflects a high level perceived sustainability. Furthermore, all the companies interviewed stress on the power of meeting the customers as a way to communicate their sustainability issues.

Spendrups is a company that fulfills many of the factors to be perceived as a sustainable company. Though Spendrups rank on the list is not so high. This is related to two factors. The first one is that Spendrups does not have direct contact with the end-consumers as their customers are retailers and restaurants. So the end-consumers are not so aware of what brands lie under Spendrups. The other factor is the external communications, as Spendrups do not put any effort on their communication externally. This in return is affected by the contact with end-consumers. Communications are difficult when companies do not have direct contact with the consumers and the consumers do not connect the different brands they get in contact with to Spendrups.

5.6 The Importance of Communications to Influence Consumers' Perceptions

In their research, Pelozo et al. (2012), focused on communications as means to influence consumers' perceptions. The existing communication models such as Shannon and Weaver's are helpful tools to evaluate the efficiency of a corporate's communications. According to Ottoson & Parment (2013), the efficiency of a message depends on the experience of both the sender and receiver and the extent to which the receivers are able to interpret the message.

5.6.1 Benefit and Relevance of the Message

Most of the companies we interviewed were quite aware of the fact that the word sustainability is not static and different individuals interpret it in different ways. For this reason, companies such as Bilprovningen and E.ON do not literally use sustainability in their communications. However, they focus on the benefit for the customers or employees and the information that interests them. The customers and employees are then free to make their own associations regarding sustainability. Examples such as vehicle control and energy efficiency are connected to sustainability

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

but the relevance for the customers is safety and cost efficiency. Researchers such as Ottman (2011), Borglund et al. (2012) and Ottoson and Parment (2013) stress on the importance of communicating the benefit and relevance of a product to a customer. Since most of the customers today would not choose a product only because it is sustainable.

Pelozo et al. (2012) state that the message decoding depends on the level of processing and elaboration of the receiver. Moreover consumers lack motivation to process sustainability messages and have a low level of elaboration due to the lack of knowledge within sustainability. This emphasizes the importance of focusing on the benefit and relevance of the message for the consumers in order to engage them and motivate them to process the message.

5.6.2 Direct Messages

Most of the companies focused on the importance of the messages being simple and direct. For Bilprovningen for example it is about to focus on one message at a time and do not mix the messages that can mislead the consumers. According to Ottoson and Parment (2013), companies that want their messages to be delivered effectively need to focus on repeating the message and avoid including too much information on the message. This is also connected to the target group and communications' aim that Ottoson and Parment (2013) focus on. By identifying the right target group and the aim of the message companies can choose better methods for efficient communications.

5.6.3 Format and Way of Communications

The format and the way the communication are other important factors. Bilprovningen for example is a company that chooses to communicate sustainability mainly through the personal meeting with the customers at the station. Moreover, media and the website are also two channels that are used for press releases and additional information. Though the personal meeting is the more effective and preferable way for the customers. E.ON focuses on communicating the benefits of the products which in return reflects the sustainability of the product.

Bilprovningen and E.ON are two companies that work with communications regarding CSR on a strategic level while the other companies do not have strategies for sustainable communications. However, for Swedbank the different branches locally decide how to work with communications concerning CSR. Spendrups on the other hand do not put any focus on communicating their CSR efforts.

Given the type and format of sustainable communications that the different companies use compared to their position in Sustainable Brand Index shows that focusing on benefit and personal meeting improves the consumers' perceptions.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

Company	Bilprovingen	E.ON	SEB	Swedbank
Message Type	Benefit to customer	Benefit to customer	When it is relevant for the business	Defined locally
Message Format	Customer meeting	Products	Customer meeting – green bonds	Collaborations locally – green bonds

Moreover, among these companies we can identify two of the types of communications that Emery (2012) talked about. The first way aims to change the customers' behavior toward a more sustainable trend and life style. This method stresses on the feelings and emotions of the customers where they can feel that they are able to make a difference. Bilprovingen adopts this strategy as it is a part of its core business. Furthermore, E.ON works actively to engage their customers in different campaigns where one of the purposes is to increase the awareness of the customers and reduce their energy usage. The other companies do not have specific strategies for their communications. Though it can be deduced that the banks have another strategy with an aim to convince customers to choose a specific company since it is more sustainable. This is clear due to the banks' efforts to improve their image and reputation that is affected by the whole banking industry.

Furthermore we can see all three the strategies that Morsing and Beckman (2006) define. Bilprovingen adopts an involvement strategy where they collaborate with their stakeholders in order to work together to form their CSR strategies and activities. E.ON, SEB and Swedbank have a response strategy by having dialogs with their important stakeholders in order to identify what is important for these stakeholders and get insights about their perception. This is mainly done through for example materiality analysis. Spendrups on the other hand has an information strategy where they have one way communications through their website and sustainability reports.

Company	Bilprovingen	E.ON	SEB	Swedbank
Aim/type of communications	Aim to change consumers' lifestyle	Aim to change consumers' lifestyle	Aim to convince customers that company is more sustainable	Aim to convince customers that company is more sustainable
Strategy of communications	Involvement strategy	Response strategy	Response strategy	Response strategy

The points above are related to the problems in communications that were identified by Shannon and Weaver. Sending direct messages while focusing on the benefit and relevance for the consumer improves the accuracy of the message upon transmission, the level of understanding at the receiver in addition to the ability of influence the behavior at the receiver. Both Bilprovningen and E.ON are aware about these problems and work on improving their communications.

5.7 Messenger

Ottoson and Parment (2013) focus on the importance of choosing the right messenger within sustainable communications. The messenger's profile should be consistent with the image and should not send counteracting messages. The importance of the messenger in this study became clear during the focus group discussions. Many of the participants were able to associate different companies with specific people that can be considered as messengers. Regarding the consistency with the messenger, SEB was associated with the Wallenberg family that according to some of the focus group participants does not reflect a sustainable image. Hereby, SEB trying to send sustainability messages to consumers conflicts with their image as they are associated with the Wallenberg family.

Considering the example of GodEl, though some of the customers were not aware of GodEl's business and activities, they were able to relate their efforts to social responsibility due to their messenger Lasse Åberg. Lasse Åberg is famous among the Swedish population. However, SEB has two strong figures that represent them: Annika Falkengren the CEO and Klas Eklund. Klas Eklund is a senior economist who was ranked by the magazine, CSR I Praktiken, as Sweden's most influential advisor within sustainability (CSR I Praktiken, 2012). All the messengers mentioned above are consistent with the sustainability messages that the companies try to send. Though, the difference is that Lasse Åberg is more known by the general public while Annika Falkengren and Klas Eklund are known among people involved in the banking industry or people that are interested in the sustainability of the banking industry.

5.8 The Origin and Size of the Company Reflect Different Levels of Sustainability

The five companies interviewed have a lot of differences and similarities. The first aspect that participants of the focus groups discussed was the origin of the company and the intention of the business. Bilprovningen is Swedish company that belongs to the public sector with an intention to improve the traffic safety and environmental impact. Bilprovningen is not directly associated with profit driven companies. Spendrups is a Swedish family company that has an impact on the Swedish drinking culture. Moreover, the first image that some participants had on E.ON was: Huge German company that does not match with their image of sustainable companies.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

Furthermore, SEB and Swedbank are both Swedish banks but with different perceived images about their size. Swedbank is perceived as a bank that is more local and available for everybody. Though SEB is a national bank focused on big businesses. This matches the facts about the customers of these banks. Swedbank has 8 million private customers and more than 600 thousand corporate organizational customers while SEB has 4 million private customers, 400 thousand small and middle-sized companies and 2900 bigger companies and institutions. Moreover though both these banks have a long history in Sweden, Swedbank originates from the Swedish savings banks and customers tend to trust this bank more than other banks. This reflects an idea about how these banks are perceived differently according to the customers.

Moreover, companies such as Bilprovningen and Swedbank focus on the importance of availability and closeness to the customers as two factors that are important for the customers. This even applies for the insights of the participants in the focus groups. Most of the participant mentioned that the localness and closeness as factors that reflect that a company is more sustainable than others.

Company	Bilprovningen	Spendrups	E.ON	SEB	Swedbank
Origin	Swedish – public	Swedish – Family	German – Huge investors	Swedish	Swedish – savings bank
Perceived Size	Family business	National – local connections	Huge – International	National	Local

Moreover, the industry and positioning affects that consumers' perceptions. The banks in general suffer from bad perceptions due to the negative associations people have for the whole banking industry and that they are profit driven. Though certain banks such as Swedbank and Handelsbanken succeed in being perceived as sustainable through other factors discussed in this study such as community involvement. Max is Swedish company that works proactively within sustainability. Though Max's ranking lies behind other companies that don't put so much effort on sustainability. According to the participants of the focus groups, despite Max efforts, the company still belongs to the fast food industry that has a big impact on both people's life styles and the environment.

Furthermore, different company's positions and business models such as low cost positioning affect the consumers' perceptions. H&M is a company that suffered from scandals regarding sustainability connected to reducing costs through their contact with their suppliers (Ottoson & Parment, 2013). IKEA is an example of a company that succeed to have positive sustainable perceptions among (top 10 every year) consumers though they focus on low cost positioning and pressing prices. According to Pelozo et al. (2012), companies that experience conflict between sustainability and

branding position, need to integrate sustainable messages into positioning (e.g., low-cost positioning supported by efficiencies). Despite IKEA's low cost positioning, IKEA is associated with sustainability and consumers have positive perceptions about IKEA's CSR efforts. Moreover, Borglund et al. (2013) argue that IKEA is a strong value driven company which has affected the sustainable image that the consumers have about IKEA.

5.9 The Halo effect – Heuristics – Intuition

This study proves the effect of the Halo effect that Smith, Read, & Lopez-Rodriguez argue about. Consumers appear to under- or overestimate the level of sustainability of a company based on small amount of information they have concerning sustainability. Especially after taking into consideration the different opinions that participants of the focus groups had. Participants could be certain about the level of sustainability of an organization based on one fact. In addition the opinions among customers could be contradicting regarding the same company. For example the case of E.ON, some participants could directly draw negative associations about E.ON due to the fact that they are skeptical to their energy resources and by that draw conclusions that E.ON is not sustainable. On the other hand, other participants were aware of E.ON's innovation efforts with renewables and thus could draw conclusions that E.ON are sustainable.

Based on the reflections from the focus groups, the participants agree that they several times base their perceptions regarding companies' CSR on their intuition. These intuitions are based on the authenticity of the company's messages or for some they are based on word of mouth. According to these participants, information about companies are often received through networks and social media which makes the companies' own communications less relevant.

According to Pelozo et al. (2012) consumers draw their conclusions regarding the sustainability of different companies relying on heuristics. These heuristics on their turn are based on the following: sustainability initiative form, category biases, brand biases, and senior management image.

5.10 Trust and Reliability

Trust and reliability appear to be two important factors that affect the consumers and influences their perception about the companies. Both Bilprovningen and E.ON stress on the importance of reliability in their contact with their customers. Being reliable leads to positive associations and increases the level of trust in a company which in return affects the consumers' perceptions regarding sustainability. Trust is another aspect that is especially identified regarding the banks and the general image about this industry. A lot of the participants mentioned that they don't trust the banks and comparing companies on the list of Sustainable Brand Index, the banks in general have low rankings.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

Mayer, Davis and Shoorman (1995) identified three factors that influence the level of trust in a company: Ability, benevolence and integrity. Ability is connected to reliability, showing the skills and competence within a field increases the trustworthiness and reliability of the company. Benevolence or good will and integrity are two areas that were repeated often during the focus group discussions. The participants of the focus groups mentioned repeatedly how they associated companies with sustainability based on how they perceive the intention of these companies. Taking the banks' example, the participants were able to trust ICA Banken more than Swedbank and SEB since they think that the intention of ICA Banken is to take care of the customers and build long-term relations. On the other hand, the other banks intentions are mainly focused on profit. Other examples of companies that consumers think they have good intentions are for example Lantmännen that ranks among the top companies on the List of Sustainable Brand Index. Integrity is related to the companies being credible in their communications and following certain principles. Moreover integrity is connected to the consistency of the CSR efforts with the company's core activities. Lantmännen succeed through their communications to send messages that involve sustainability but are consistent with their core activities.

Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) talk about the fit between the company and a cause as an aspect that affect the consumers' suspicions towards a company. Bilprovningen and E.ON try to work with CSR activities that are connected to their business such as campaigns to increase the awareness among customers and employees. Though the social contributions that the bank participates in are not really connected to their business according to some of the participants in focus groups. Thus, the consistency of CSR activities can be one of the factors that affect the consumers' trust in companies related to sustainability.

Company	Bilprovningen	Spendrups	E.ON	SEB	Swedbank
Perceived Intention	Safety and sustainability	Profit - Influencing the Swedish drinking culture	Profit - leaders in sustainable energy	Profit	Profit
Positive Associations	Yes - connected to their values	Yes - family business	Mixed - cheap energy sources & innovation	No - profit driven	Mixed - can be trusted
Consistency of CSR activities	High	-	High	Low	Low

5.11 Brand and Reputation

Both the companies and the participants of the focus groups stressed on the connection between reputation and sustainability. Companies with good reputation can be easily associated as better and more sustainable. On the other hand, bad reputation has a stronger effect on the company and it is more difficult to avoid. Companies with bad reputation are perceived as non-sustainable. A simple example is the airline company Ryanair which has a very poor reputation and a lot of negative associations (Vizard, 2013). Ryanair got the last position in Sustainable Brand Index, both 2013 and 2014 which underscores the relation between reputation and sustainability perceptions.

Moreover, according to Bhattacharya and Sen (2004), consumers are more likely to make favorable attributions and have positive associations towards companies with good reputations. This seems to apply in this study too. By looking at the top companies of sustainable brand index, it is clearly seen that the top companies are companies with good reputation. More over all of these brand are extremely well-known brand in Sweden. Based on Picket-Baker and Ozaki's (2008) research, consumers trust well-known brands as the level of risk is much lower for these companies. Some of the opinions from the focus group discussions verify this theory as some of the participant believe that well-known companies are more sustainable for reasons such as risk and increased responsibility.

Furthermore, by looking at the top list of Sustainable Brand Index, it is clearly seen that it includes companies with strong brands that are well known. Then it is relevant to examine if the brand affects how the consumers' perceive companies regarding CSR. According to Stiff (2006), it is mainly the brand that influences the buyers' decisions. Consumers make different associations based on different brands that affect their own perceptions. Bilprovningen is an example of such companies. Bilprovningen is one of three companies that were divided in 2013 where Bilprovningen got to keep one third of the business, hence keeping the brand. Although the 2 other companies work within the same business with very similar strategies, Bilprovningen is perceived as one of the best companies within CSR in Sweden.

6 Conclusions and Discussion

In this chapter, general conclusions that are drawn from this study are presented and discussed. The conclusions cover the different areas that are touched in the analysis that help as answer the research question of the study.

Throughout this study, the gap between companies CSR efforts and consumers' perceptions was examined. Factors that affect this gap were identified and compared to what earlier theories and researchers say. Factors such as the level of integration of sustainability and communications were studied. Furthermore, other factors that indirectly affect the consumers' perceptions were identified. The main implications from this study regarding the gap and the factors that affect it are presented below.

6.1 Understanding the Gap between Companies' Efforts and Consumers' Perceptions

There is a gap between Swedish companies' efforts and consumers' perceptions regarding CSR

Based on both quantitative and qualitative research throughout this study, it is verified that there exists a gap between companies' efforts within CSR and consumers' perceptions regarding these efforts. As it is noticeable, different companies work with sustainability, putting somehow more or less similar effort on sustainability. Though by looking at the ranking of Sustainable Brand Index and the results from the focus group discussions, huge differences among consumers' perceptions are identified.

A lack of External CSR Communications among Swedish Companies

The Swedish companies examined share a quite uniform approach towards CSR putting similar efforts. Though the consumers' perceptions regarding these efforts are widely spread and their values lie generally below the values of the companies' efforts. Hence, lack in external communications is one of the main reasons that can explain the consumers negative perceptions regarding the companies CSR efforts.

6.2 The CSR activities that lead to positive perception

Controlling value chain is a prerequisite to succeed with CSR strategies

Controlling the value chain is a problem that is experienced among most of the interviewed companies. The ability to control the value chain enhances the success of the CSR process and implementing clear CSR strategies. This in turn leads to companies can easily communicate sustainability including detailed, reliable and complete information.

Focusing on what is relevant for the stakeholder to match their expectations

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

Several researchers mentioned earlier, stress on the importance of identifying the right target group and understanding the customers' and other stakeholders' needs and expectations. Different sustainability aspects are more important for stakeholders depending on the industry. Stakeholders and consumers have certain expectations from companies depending on the industry they operate within. Identifying what is relevant for the most important stakeholders makes the CSR process less complex and leads to positive perceptions. Stakeholder analysis and materiality analysis are two tools that can be used to identify the major stakeholders and the main issues that a company needs to focus on that are appreciated by the stakeholders.

Swedish companies moving from integration into innovation

Right now most of the Swedish companies examined have a reactive approach towards sustainability. The CSR efforts are resulting from an increase in the stakeholders' expectations and stricter regulations. These companies are in the integration part of their CSR processes where they strive for implementing CSR in their core business. However, it is clear that many of the companies are aware of the possibilities that can be grasped through moving into the innovation phases. The innovation phase enables these companies to add value to their companies while becoming more sustainable. Many companies are putting efforts to reach this phase. In the near future, we will probably be able to see the results of these approaches including better match between companies' CSR efforts and CSR perceptions.

6.3 Factors that Companies can Work on to Influence Consumers' Perceptions

Engaging the community affects the consumers' perceptions positively

Engaging the community is a natural CSR activity that researchers stress on and that appears to have results on the Swedish community. Companies who succeeded in engaging their customers and the community in their CSR efforts succeed in influencing the customers' perceptions positively. Moreover, engaging the community enhances the company's image through *word-of-mouth*.

Employees enhance CSR in the organization – CSR is a condition to attract competent employees in the future

Based on this study, the Swedish companies examined are not making full use of the power of the employees. It is the employees that are able to imbed CSR in the whole organization. These companies should work on enabling employees to take control and drive the CSR process in the right direction. Moreover, in the future, companies who are not perceived as sustainable will not be able to attract competent coworkers. Hereby, to succeed in the CSR process, employees should be given more power both to protect the company now and enhance the company's value in the future.

Good relations with other stakeholders such as governments, competitors and NGOs reflect a high level of sustainability

Working with CSR involves building long-term relations with stakeholders and addressing problems and challenges that face the society. This involves cooperating with stakeholders such as competitors, governments and other organizations. Consumers' are able to identify companies' motives and by cooperating with such stakeholders, the negative perception associated companies working with short term solutions and focus on profit will be diminished. This in turn reinforces the positive perceptions of consumers regarding how sustainable the companies are.

Personal meeting with the consumers is the most effective way of communicating CSR

Based on the literature review and the experiences of both companies and consumers, the personal meeting with the consumers is the most effective way to communicate CSR. Companies that meet their customers directly and repeatedly are favored by customers regarding CSR. Based on this, companies that already have direct contact with consumers should be able to focus on these communications through this channel and form suitable strategies for these communications. Companies that do not have continuous contact with customers should focus on other channels to make the communications effective. However, the direct contact with the consumers should not be neglected but these companies need to try to make the communications as effective as possible in order to reach out for these consumers through the few occasions they get in contact with them.

Consumers want to know what there is in there for them

Companies that succeed in their communications and are perceived as sustainable by the consumers are companies who focus on communicating what is relevant and beneficial for the consumers rather than communicating sustainability. Focusing the message on what is relevant for the consumers motivates them to listen to the message and increases their engagements. The messages need to be interesting, meaningful and useful in order to attract the consumer. This in turn leads to consumers processing the message and drawing their own associations towards sustainability.

Moreover, stressing on the benefits helps companies with skeptical business models to be positively associated with sustainability.

Making the consumers feel good through making a difference influences the consumers' perceptions positively

Stressing on the emotions and feelings of the consumers influences the consumers' perceptions. Companies that have communication strategies that involve trying to change the consumers' behavior succeed better than other communication strategies. This is due to the fact that these companies succeed in making the consumers feel better as they are making a difference.

Specific and well-thought messages are prerequisites to succeed in marketing communications

Identify the right target group and the aim of the message in order to choose an effective message of communications. Depending on the type of the target group and the content of the message, different problems may occur. Thus it is important to have strategies for communications, evaluate the communications and be aware of the disturbance around. Messages should be direct and simple. One message at a time should be sent with one specific aim to the right target group in order to avoid confusing the receivers.

Messengers with inconsistent profiles destruct the efforts put on CSR and Communications

The results of this study corresponds with the theory regarding how different messengers affect how companies are perceived by consumers. While communicating CSR, the messenger's ideas and beliefs should be consistent with the company's image and the message they are trying to send. Messengers with profiles that contradict the content of the message affect the consumers' perceptions negatively. Moreover, the messengers need to be known to the target group in order to reach out for them and influence their perceptions.

The most important things to take into consideration regarding sustainable marketing communications:

- Be authentic and balanced showing the positive and negative information
- Identify the target group and send messages that are relevant to this group
- Focus on the personal meeting with the consumers
- Stress on the benefit of the products or service rather than sustainability
- Try to give the consumers the power and to feel that they are making a difference
- Messages should be direct and simple
- Choose messengers that have consistent profile with the message and the company

6.4 Factors that Indirectly Affect the Consumers' Perceptions

Values have an impact on both the company internally and the consumers which leads to better perceptions

Values appear to play an important role on how companies are perceived within sustainability. The values affect both the employees internally and the consumers externally. Bilprovingen, E.ON and Swedbank have strong values connected to sustainability that are communicated both internally and externally combined with a high ranking position based on consumers' perceptions. This reflects the importance

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

of having values connected to CSR that are communicated both internally and externally in order to be perceived as sustainable.

Based on the literature review and the empirical study, certain values are specifically connected to sustainability and influence consumers' perceptions. These values include: ***authenticity, simplicity, fairness and respect.***

Consumers perceive local, small and close businesses as sustainable

The localness and availability are two factors that consumers appreciate and relate to sustainability. Local businesses in general are perceived as more sustainable than national and international businesses. Though it is clear that not only the actual size and positioning that affects the consumers' perceptions regarding CSR. The consumers have their own perceptions regarding the company's size and positioning that in turn affect the perceptions connected to CSR. These perceptions are connected to the company's relation and closeness to their customers. Companies that are available for the customers are perceived as local even if in some cases they are national giants.

Belonging to an industry with bad reputation leads to negative perceptions

Companies that belong to certain industries such as banking and the fast food industry are perceived to be less sustainable despite all the efforts they put on CSR. These companies need to be innovative in order to be able to influence the consumers' perceptions. Moreover, there are other factors, including factors mentioned above, that companies can work on to improve their situation given the industry they belong to.

Consumers base their perceptions on heuristics and intuition

Most of the consumers do not actively search for information regarding companies CSR efforts. When asked about company's CSR efforts, these consumers rely on heuristics and their intuition. Consumers are able to draw conclusions about how sustainable a company is based on simple information. Alternatively they rely on their feelings and how authentic they perceive the message to be or what they have heard from other people. Here the ***word-of-mouth*** is an important aspect that affects the consumers' heuristics and intuitions which in turn affects the consumers' perceptions of sustainability.

Consumers trust companies that are reliable, authentic and have good motives

Based on the companies' opinions and consumers' perceptions, consumers perceive companies that are reliable, authentic and have good motives as sustainable. These three factors affect the trustworthiness of the consumers in the company and thereby affecting their perceptions of how sustainable the company is. Here it is important to note that the integrity and intentions according to the consumers are affected by ***the fit between the CSR efforts and the companies' core business.***

Well-known companies with strong brands and good reputations are perceived as sustainable

Consumers trust companies with good reputations and have positive associations toward these companies. Moreover companies with strong brands are also trusted due to low levels of risk. Thus these brands can be trusted by the consumers which in turn influences their perceptions regarding how sustainable these companies are.

6.5 Academic Contribution

The results of this study match to a high extent the results examined in earlier research and theoretical models. More specifically, the results concerning the factors that influence consumer perceptions which in turn influences the gap studied. Earlier studies focused on specific domains and factors that have an effect on consumer perceptions for example communications, demographics, etc. The factors studied separately in earlier research apply for this study too. However, this study covers a wider number of factors providing a holistic view of the field that concerns consumer perceptions. Moreover, the study shows that these factors studied in earlier research among international companies even apply for the Swedish market. Though the Swedish market is known for a larger awareness among consumers and through this study it is shown that these consumers are more skeptical towards companies' CSR efforts.

The factors that were touched in the theoretical background and that even apply in this study include: the effect of the level of integration of CSR and control of the value chain, relations with stakeholders, consumers' engagement, communications, and demographics. Moreover, some new findings were revealed related to additional factors and some findings emphasize the importance of earlier factors. This includes the effect of the customer meeting that was covered earlier, this research puts much stress on the importance of this factor in influencing consumer perceptions. Furthermore, the messenger was studied in earlier research. Though in this study, new aspects such as the popularity of the messenger and the effect it has on consumers was addressed. Another finding is the effect of the brand that was not directly touched in previous research. Earlier CSR was studied as a tool to strengthen the brand though, in this study, it is revealed that the brand has an effect on how to be perceived by the consumers regarding CSR. This study even touches the fields of trust and reliability of the company related to their perceived intentions according to the customers. These factors are strongly related to how consumers perceive companies regarding CSR which increases the complexity of working with CSR.

Furthermore, through this research, it becomes easier to differentiate between factors that can be relevant for certain companies or industries based on the current circumstances. Additionally, conclusions can be drawn regarding which factors that are more or less important are based on the company's situation.

6.6 Suggestions for Future Research

Due to the limited time frame of this thesis, the sample of both companies and consumers were limited. Hence, a future study that can examine the research question broadly can be conducted. By including a larger number of companies, including companies belonging to the same industries, the results can be more precise and generalized for the given industry. Moreover, by studying a larger number of consumers including different groups of the population, more detailed results can be deducted and generalized. In addition, this research was limited to certain aspects that were studied. Adding new aspects to the theoretical background would add value to the study and provide a more comprehensive picture.

Furthermore another approach to conduct the study is recommended. This study was based on literature review which probable limited the findings to what is already know about the problem. On the other hand, by applying an inductive approach, the chances to get new results and findings increase.

It is also recommended to follow up this research soon to examine the future trends of both how companies work with CSR and how the awareness of the consumers is influenced. Hereby, to examine how the gap will develop and what new factors can affect the consumers' perceptions.

7 References

- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Becker-Olsen, K. L., Cudmore, A. B., & Hill, R. P. (2005). The impact of perceived corporate social responsibility on consumer behavior. *Journal of Business Research*, 46-53.
- Bhattacharya, C. B., & Sen, S. (2004). Doing Better at Doing Good: Why, When and How Consumers Respond to Corporate Social Initiatives. *California Management Review*.
- Bilprovningen. (2013). *Bilprovningen - Års och Hållbarhetsredovisning 2012*. Bilprovningen.
- Borglund, T., De Geer, H., Sweet, S., Frostebson, M., Lerpold, L., Nordbrand, S., . . . Windell, K. (2012). *CSR - En guide företagens ansvar*. Stockholm: Sanoma Utbildning AB.
- Bridwell, H., & Cerruti, J. (2012). *2012 Sustainability Leadership Report*. Brandlogic Corp. and CRD Analytics.
- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2005). *Företagsekonomiska forskningsmetoder*. Malmö: Liber.
- Carrigan, M., & Attalla, A. (2001). The myth of the ethical consumer - do ethics matter in purchase behavior? *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 569-578.
- Collierand, J., & Esteban, R. (2007). Corporate social responsibility and employee commitment. *Business Ethics: A European Review*.
- Commission, E. (2014, April 23). *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*. Retrieved from European Commission: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sustainable-business/corporate-social-responsibility/index_en.htm
- Corporate Knights Ranker*. (2014, 05 06). Retrieved from <http://www.ckranker.com/>
- Costa, R., & Menichini, T. (2013). A multidimensional approach for CSR assessment: The importance of the stakeholder perception. *Elsevier*, 150-161.
- CSR I Praktiken. (2012, 03 05). *Klas Eklund: Hållbarhet på väg bli en självklarhet*. Retrieved from CSR I Parktiken: <http://csripraktiken.se/taggar/klas-eklund/>
- E.ON. (2013). *E.ON 2012 Sustainability Report*. E.ON.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

- E.ON. (2014, 04 14). *About Us*. Retrieved from E.ON: <http://www.eon.com/en/about-us.html>
- Emery, B. (2012). *Sustainable marketing*. Essex: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Furaiji, F., Łatuszyńska, M., & Wawrzyniak, A. (2012). An Empirical Study of the Factors influencing Consumer Behaviour in the Electric Appliances Market. *Vizja Press & IT*, 76-86.
- Gamble, J., Gilmore, A., McCartan-Quinn, D., & Durkan, P. (2011). The marketing concept in the 21st century: A review of how marketing has been defined since 1960s. *The marketing review*, 227-248.
- Ghuri, P., & Grønhaug, K. (2005). *Research Methods in Business Studies - A practical Guide*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Global Reporting Initiative. (2014, 05 01). *About GRI*. Retrieved from Global Reporting Initiative: <https://www.globalreporting.org/information/about-gri/Pages/default.aspx>
- Global100. (2014, 05 06). *Global100*. Retrieved 05 06, 2014, from Global100: www.global100.org
- GodEl. (2014, May 4). *GodEl*. Retrieved May 4 2014, from GodEl: www.godel.se
- Grant, J. (2007). *Green is a Principle, not a Proposition: A Review Of The Green Marketing Manifesto*. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.
- Gröndal, F., & Svanström, M. (2011). *Hållbar utveckling - en introduktion för ingångare och andra problemlösare*. Stockholm: Libre AB.
- Halme, M., & Laurila, J. (2009). Philanthropy, integration or innovation? Exploring the financial and societal outcomes of different types of corporate responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 325-339.
- Hamburgare, M. (2014, May 14). *Max*. Retrieved May 14, 2014, from Max: www.max.se
- Handelsbanken. (2014, May 4). *Handelsbanken*. Retrieved May 4, 2014, from Handelsbanken: www.handelsbanken.se
- Harris, F. (2004). Sustainable Development. In F. Harris, *Global Environmental issues* (p. 8). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Holmberg, I., & Wiman, M. (2002). *En varumärkt värld: Några ledmotiv*. Malmö: Liber Ekonomi.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

- Hoyer, W., & MacInnis, D. (2004). *Consumer Behavior*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- ICA. (2014, May 4). *ICA*. Retrieved May 4, 2014, from ICA: www.ica.se
- ICAbanken. (2014, May 4). *ICA banken*. Retrieved May 4, 2014, from ICA banken: www.icabanken.se
- IKEA. (2014, May 4). *IKEA*. Retrieved May 4, 2014, from IKEA: www.ikea.se
- ISO. (2014, 05 08). *ISO 14000 - Environmental management*. Retrieved from ISO: <http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/management-standards/iso14000.htm>
- Jacobsen, D. I. (2002). *Vad, hur och varför? Om metodval i företagsekonomi och andra samhällsvetenskapliga ämnen*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Kates, R. W., Parris, T. M., & Leiserowitz, A. A. (2005, April). What is Sustainable Development? Goals, Indicators, Values and Practice. *Issue of Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*, pp. 8-21.
- Klein, J., & Dawar, N. (2004). Corporate social responsibility and consumers' attributions and brand evaluation in a product-harm crisis. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 203-217.
- Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (1991). *Principles of marketing*. Englewood Cliffs N J: Prentice Hall.
- Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., & Parment, A. (2013). *Marknadsföring: teori, strategi och praktik*. Harlow: Pearson.
- Kotler, P., Keller, K., Brady, M., Goodman, M., & Hansen, T. (2009). *Marketing Management*. Pearson Education.
- Lantmännen. (2014, May 4). *Lantmännen*. Retrieved May 4, 2014, from lantmannen: www.lantmannen.se
- Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Shoorman, F. D. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 709-734.
- Morsing, M., & Beckmann, S. C. (2006). *Strategic CSR communication*. Copenhagen: DJØF Publishing.
- Ottman, J. A. (2011). *The new rules of green marketing: strategies, tools and inspiration for sustainable branding*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Ottoson, M., & Parment, A. (2013). *Hållbar Marknadsföring*. Lund: Studentlitteratur AB.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

- Parment, A., & Dyhre, A. (2009). *Sustainable employer branding: Guidelines worktools and best practices*. Liber/Samfunnlitteratur.
- Peloza, J., Loock, M., Cerruti, J., & Muyot, M. (2012). Sustainability: How stakeholder perceptions differ from corporate reality. *California Management Review*, 74–97.
- Pickett-Baker, J., & Ozaki, R. (2008). Pro-environmental products: marketing influence on consumer purchase decision. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 281-293.
- Porter, M. E., & Kramer, M. R. (2006). Strategy and Society: The Link Between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility. *Harvard Business Review*.
- Porter, M. E., & Kramer, M. R. (2011). Creating Shared Value. *Harvard Business Review*.
- Roth, M. S., & Romeo, J. B. (1992). Matching Product Category and Country Image Perceptions: A framework for Managing Country-of-Origin Effects. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 477-497.
- SEB. (2013). *Corporate Sustainability 2012*. SEB.
- SEB. (2014, 05 04). *Sustainability at SEB*. Retrieved from SEB: <http://sustainableperspectives.sebgroup.com/Sustainability-SEB/Responsible-selling/>
- Sjöström, E. (2010). *Ansiktilösa men ansvarsfulla? Institutionella ägare och en hållbar utveckling*. Stockholm: EFI.
- Slaper, T. F., & Hall, T. J. (2011). The Triple Bottom Line: What Is It and How Does It Work? *Indiana Business Review*.
- Smith, C. N., Read, D., & Lopez-Rodriguez, S. (2010). Consumer Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility: The CSR Halo Effect. *INSEAD*.
- Smith, C. N., Read, D., & Lopez-Rodriguez, S. (2010). Consumer Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility: The CSR Halo Effect. *INSEAD*.
- Spendrups. (2013). *Spendrups Hållbarhetsredovisning 2012*. Spendrups.
- Stiff, D. (2006). *Sell the Brand First: How to Sell Your Brand and Create Lasting Customer Loyalty*. McGraw-Hill.
- Sustainable Brand Insight. (2014). *Sustainable Brand Index, 2014, Official Report*. Stockholm.

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

- Sustainable Brand Insight. (2013, 03 01). *Sustainable Brand Insight*. Retrieved 04 29, 2014, from Sustainable Brand Insight: <http://www.sb-insight.com>
- Swedbank. (2013). *Hållbarhetsredovisning 2012*. Swedbank.
- Systembolaget. (2014, 05 3). *Systembolaget*. Retrieved 05 3, 2014, from Systembolaget: www.systembolaget.se
- UN Global Compact. (2014, 05 01). *Overview of the UN Global Compact*. Retrieved from UN Global Compact: <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/AboutTheGC/index.html>
- Visser, W. (2011). *The Age of Responsibility: CSR 2.0 and the New DNA of Business*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.
- Vizard, S. (2013). Brand Audit: Ryanair. *Marketing Week*.
- Yoon, Y., Giirhan-Canli, Z., & Schwarz, N. (2006). The Effect of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Activities on Companies with Bad Reputations. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 377-390.
- Zadek, S. (2004). The Path to Corporate Responsibility. *Harvard Business Review*, 125-132.
- Öberseder, M., Schlegelmilch, B. B., & Murphy, P. E. (2013). CSR practices and consumer perceptions. *Journal of Business Research*, 1839-1851.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: SUSTAINABLE BRAND INDEX™ – RANKING SWEDEN 2013

1. ICA	45. Polarn & Pyret	87. Marabou
2. Coop	46. Volkswagen	88. Skandia
3. GodEl	47. BMW	89. Spendrups
4. Lantmännen	48. Gevalia	90. Mercedes-Benz
5. Arla	49. City Gross	91. Statoil
6. SJ	50. Skånetrafiken	92. Abba Seafood
7. Volvo	51. Öresundskraft	93. First Hotels
8. IKEA	52. Polarbröd	94. Apple
9. Naturkompaniet	53. Flygbussarna	95. Microsoft
10. Max	54. Clarion Collection Hotels	96. Husqvarna
11. Systembolaget	55. Willys	97. Swedavia
12. Posten	56. Findus	98. Rica Hotels
13. Bilprovningen	57. Zoégas	99. Team Sportia
14. Vattenfall	58. Fritidsresor	100. Stadium
15. Telge Energi	59. Telia	101. Kalles Kaviar
16. Scandic	60. If	102. Kappahl
17. Skånemejerier	61. Ving	103. Intersport
18. KPA Pension	62. Skogaholm	104. Åbro Bryggeri
19. ICA Banken	63. Clarion Hotels	105. DHL
20. Norrmejerier	64. Nordic Choice Hotels	106. SEB
21. Folksam	65. Indiska	107. SBAB
22. SL	66. Veolia	108. Biltema
23. Skellefteå Kraft	67. SAS	109. Skoda
24. Länsförsäkringar	68. Familjen Dafgård	110. Cloetta
25. AMF	69. Pågen	111. Preem
26. McDonald's	70. Löfbergs Lila	112. Carlsberg
27. Swedbank	71. Nordea	113. Miele
28. Toyota	72. Hästens	114. Pressbyrån
29. E.ON	73. Elite Hotels	115. Ikano Bank
30. Jämtkraft	74. Åhléns	116. Hemtex
31. Trygg Hansa	75. Quality Hotels	117. Kopparbergs bryggeri
32. Handelsbanken	76. Electrolux	118. Cylinda
33. Scan	77. Comfort Hotels	119. Jula
34. Fortum	78. Lindex	120. Mekonomen
35. Västtrafik	79. Schenker	121. Ford
36. Wasabröd	80. H&M	122. Peugeot
37. Arvid Nordquist	81. SPP	123. Siemens
38. Göteborg Energi	82. Radisson Blu	124. Avanza Bank
39. Swebus	83. Audi	125. Bring (Citymail)
40. OKQ8	84. Felix	126. Kjell & Co
41. Clas Ohlson	85. Best Western	127. Norwegian
42. Hemköp	86. Alecta	128. Fazer
43. Arlanda Express		129. Jysk
44. Google		

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

130. Burger King	163. ST1	196. Lenovo
131. KIA	164. Nordnet Bank	197. Rusta
132. Citroën	165. Taxi o2o	198. HP
133. Renault	166. LG	199. Danske Bank
134. Malmö Aviation	167. Lidl	200. Nilson Shoes
135. Bauhaus	168. Skandiabanken	201. HTC
136. Samsung	169. Mitsubishi	202. Scorett
137. Sibylla	170. KLM	203. Chevrolet
138. Subaru	171. Quality Resort	204. TopShop
139. Bredbandsbolaget	172. Hertz	205. Gina Tricot
140. Santa Maria	173. Opel	206. Air France
141. Bosch	174. Byggmax	207. Acer
142. Honda	175. Sony	208. Zara
143. Nokia	176. UPS	209. Suzuki
144. Sverigeflyg	177. Dressmann	210. Fujitsu
145. Telenor	178. JC	211. Fiat
146. Apollo	179. Asus	212. Taxi Kurir
147. Hyundai	180. Forex Bank	213. XXL
148. Taxi Stockholm	181. Jerns	214. Avis
149. Nissan	182. Sverigetaxi	215. Sixt
150. Solresor	183. Netto	216. Vagabond
151. Com Hem	184. MQ	217. Mabi
152. Tele2	185. Din Sko	218. Deichmann
153. Procordia Food	186. Europcar	219. Budget
154. Pepsi	187. Meca	220. Pernod Ricard
155. Coca Cola	188. Dell	221. Alfa Romeo
156. Lufthansa	189. Cubus	222. Sisters
157. MIO	190. Decathlon	223. Jack & Jones
158. Finnair	191. British Airways	224. Tre
159. Shell	192. 7-eleven	225. Toshiba
160. Mazda	193. Seat	226. Brothers
161. Subway	194. Nestlé	227. GE Money Bank
162. Jet	195. Hornbach	228. Ryanair

8.2 Appendix B: Interview guide for the company interviews

The persons that were interviewed in this study are:

- Eva Morger, Sustainability, Quality & Environmental Manager, Bilprovningen
- Catja Appelros, Head of Corporate Sustainability, E.ON
- Claes Åkesson, Director environmental & sustainability affairs, Spendrups
- Jonas Solehav, Environmental manager, SEB
- Pernilla Ruin, Senior sustainability manager, Swedbank
- Amanda Jackson, Group senior sustainability advisor, Swedbank

The questions asked are presented below:

Vad är hållbarhet för er?

Hur arbetar ni med hållbarhet?

Kriterier från Global Compact och GRI

Mänskliga rättigheter

Arbetsvillkor

Miljö

Korruption

Hur implementeras CSR och hur kan ni mäta det?

- Använder ni balance score cards eller finns det specifika policies för CSR?
- Används KPI:er för att utvärdera nya mål eller strategier?

Hur kommunicerar ni ert CSR arbete?

Vad är det ni kommunicerar?

- Internt
- Externt

Kommunicerar ni CSR genom produkterna/tjänsterna specifikt eller allmänt om hela företaget?

Hur sprider ni kunskap om företagets hållbarhetsarbete för anställda och ev. andra intressenter?

Skiljer hållbarhetskommunikationen sig från den allmänna kommunikationen?

Vad/Vem använder ni som messenger (budbärare) allmänt inom kommunikation? (För att inte påverka företagets image)

Handlar meddelandet om hur hållbar produkten är eller om fördelarna med produkten?

Inkluderas information om hållbarhet i produkterna? (på förpackningen etc.)

Matching Companies' CSR efforts with Consumer's Perceptions

Hur har detta påverkat företaget? Har det lett till någon förändring? Hur mäter ni om kommunikationen är framgångsrik eller effektiv? När ni målet med att kommunicera utåt?

Tycker ni att många konsumenter identifierar sig med er?

Har ni strategier för att kunderna ska identifiera sig mer er?

Hur starka är företags värderingar och om kunderna identifierar sig med dem?

Hur integrerat är hållbarhet i verksamheten och värdekedjan?

Gör man en livscykel analys inför införandet av en ny produkt? Vilken påverkan har produkten på sociala och miljömässiga perspektivet?

Räknar ni på vilken effekt ett agerande skulle ha på miljön jämfört med vilka fördelar den tillför för företaget?

Finns det en ansvarig person för hållbarhet i ledningsgruppen? Eller på vilka nivåer inom verksamheten finns det ansvariga för CSR?

Är hållbarhet ett kriterie vid anställning av nya personer?

Hur integreras medarbetarna i hållbarhetsfrågorna?

Är hållbarhet en del var strategiplaneringen?

Är hållbarhet implementerat inom alla nivåer i värdekedjan?

Är hållbarhet en del av företagskulturen?

Vilka faktorer tror ni påverkar konsumenternas uppfattning om hur duktiga företagen är på hållbarhet?

Hur viktigt anser ni att företagets rykte ska associeras med CSR arbete?

Tror ni att den direkta kontakten med kunderna påverkar kundernas uppfattning? (Exempel företag där kunden behöver träffa anställda och vara på plats jämfört med andra företag där kunder får tjänsten utan att fysiskt träffa företaget)

Vad har företagen för strategier för att påverka sitt rykte?

Hur duktiga anser ni er själva vara inom CSR på en skala 1-10?

- Gällande er rankning plats på SBI indexet, anser ni att ni lever upp till det?

Vad/vilka är era framtids planer gällande CSR?

- Vad är det ni vill uppnå? Hur ska ni gå vidare?

8.3 Appendix C: Guide for the Focus Group Discussions

Themes for the focus group discussions are presented below. The themes were the starting point for the discussion and depending on the group dynamics and the discussion's direction, leading questions were asked in order to keep the discussions within the framework of the research questions

- The general perception of CSR
- What is the perception of the companies ranked top 10 on the Sustainable Brand Index 2013
- Perception of the energy industry
- Perception of – E.ON within the energy industry
- Perception of the banking industry
- Perception of SEB and Swedbank as companies within the banking industry

8.4 Appendix D: Presentation of Other Companies

Lantmännen

Lantmännen is an agricultural cooperative owned by all 32 000 farmers in Sweden. The company has a long Swedish history as they were founded back in the 19th century. The company's core mission is to provide seed, fertilizer, food and other essential agricultural services. In order to focus on the customers, they strive to develop and refine farm resources in a responsible way. The vision is to make use of the soil in the most optimal way in order to provide everyone with possibilities for a healthier life (Lantmännen, 2014).

Ikea

Ikea is a company founded in Sweden in 1943 which designs and sells ready-to-assemble furniture such as beds, desks, chairs and other home accessories. The company is the world largest furniture retailer. Ikea is known for its modern designs for various types of furniture and home appliances and the interior design is often associated as eco-friendly and simple. It is known for its supplier network, which allows Ikea to continuously work on their product development, operational details and to control their cost. Ikea is a multinational company, which operates in 43 countries with 349 stores (IKEA, 2014).

Max

Max is Sweden's oldest hamburger chain and it was founded in 1968. Today, there are restaurants opened up in Denmark and Norway as well. The company is the first hamburger company, which offered healthier meals with less fat and more taste. This includes foods such as chicken, GI-hamburgers, salads, beans and mini-carrots. For several years, Max has focused on reducing the climate impact (Hamburgare, 2014).

ICA

ICA is one of the leading retailers of daily consumer goods in the Nordics, which operates in Sweden, Norway and the Baltic. The stores in Sweden are franchised and are followed by the agreements with ICA Sweden. There are different type of stores; ICA To Go, ICA Nära, ICA Supermarket, ICA Kvantum, ICA Maxi Stormarknad.

ICA To Go has a concept where the food should be eaten on the go. ICA Nära's concept is to have the stores close to the consumers' houses or workplaces with long opening hours. ICA Supermarkets are stores found in the inner city. ICA Kvantum are stores, which are found outside the bigger cities. ICA Maxi Stormarknad are ICA largest stores, which offers foods, clothes, shoes, home accessories etc.

ICA offers also a wide range of food selections under their own brand such as ICA eco-selection (which includes ecological foods and products) and ICA Basic (which is the cheapest selection of foods and products due to simple packages and large volumes) (ICA, 2014).

ICA Banken

ICA Banken offers financial services for the Swedish consumers. This includes offerings such as bankcards, bank accounts, mortgages, loans and savings in funds and stocks, and insurances. There are possibilities to deposit and withdraw money in all ICA stores. Furthermore, ICA Banken runs their own ATM and other banking transactions can be done through the bank's website or by the phone (ICAbanken, 2014).

GodEl

GodEl is a company which delivers electricity to the Swedish consumers. All profit made in the company is donated to different charities. It is up to GodEl customers to decide which charity the profit should be donated to. The charities GodEl co-operates with are: SOS Barnbyar, Stockholm Stadsmission, Rädda Barnen, Läkare Utan Gränser, Naturskyddsföreningen, Hand in Hand and Barncancerfonden (GodEl, 2014).

Handelsbanken

Handelsbanken is a Swedish bank which provides universal banking services including traditional transactions, investments and trading, consumer banking and life insurances. Moreover, Handelsbanken is one of the major banks in Sweden and it has expanded into the other Nordic countries, Netherlands, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania (Handelsbanken, 2014).

Systembolaget

Systembolaget is publicly owned and it is a chain of liquor stores in Sweden. It has monopoly, as it is the only retail store that sells alcoholic beverage which contains more than 3,5 % alcohol. Systembolaget also sells non-alcoholic beverages. But these non-alcoholic beverages represent less than half percent of the total sales. In order to be able to buy alcoholic beverages at these stores you have to be 20 years old (Systembolaget, 2014).

8.5 Appendix E: Data Used for the Quantitative Study

Values entered	ICA	Coop	Systembolaget	Bilprovningen	Swedbank	Spendrups	SEB
Sector	Food & Staples Retailing	Food & Staples Retailing	Food, Beverage & Tobacco	Consumer Services	Bank	Food, Beverages & Tobacco	Bank
Revenue	9,69E+10	3,79E+10	2,51E+10	1,55E+09	3,66E+10	3,96E+09	3,88E+10
Nbr Employees	21020	8236	5036	1442	17313	990	18168
Total Energy use (GJ)	5510146	1368540	64681	179658	737402	412066	444751
Carbon (ton)	301744	47779	2860	3739	67585	15320	28497
Water	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	204995	1485504	142132
Waste (ton)	72705	80934	6069	N/A	1163	45300	N/A
CEO comp. CEO	10000000	7178000	3098000	2100000	8000000	3000000	8000000
CEO comp. All	8,92E+09	3,15E+09	1,1E+09	8,39E+08	5,9E+09	3,82E+08	8,33E+09
Employee turnover	6516 (31%)	N/A	805 (16%)	105 (7,3%)	2666 (15,4%)	N/A	1690 (9,3%)
Leadership Div	9 men board, 3 men 2 women directly to CEO	board 17 % women, directly CEO 40 %	Board: 38 %, Directly to CEO : 50 %	Board: 20 %, Directly to CEO: 38 %	Board: 40 %, Directly to CEO: 33 %	Board: 30 %, Directly CEO: 35%	N/A
Overall:	29,64%	33,41%	38,30%	28,65%	29,35%	26,59%	27,89%

8.6 Appendix F: Sustainability IQ Matrix

