

Course:	SKOM12
Term:	Spring 2019
Supervisor:	Mats Heide
Examiner:	Henrik Merckelsen

Involving While Evolving

A case study of Alfa Laval's internal CSR communication

JENNY POWER

Lund University
Department of strategic communication
Master's thesis



Abstract

Involving while evolving: A case study of Alfa Laval's internal CSR communication

There is an increasing need for companies to showcase and communicate their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives to stakeholders, yet the majority of former research on CSR communication provides little insight into how CSR is communicated to internal stakeholders. This thesis aims to understand from an employee and managerial perspective how a Swedish CSR frontrunner communicates its CSR efforts to internal stakeholders and how the company uses internal CSR communication to involve its employees in CSR initiatives. The material was gathered through interviews with 15 employees and managers from Alfa Laval, a Swedish multinational manufacturing company. By using the Stakeholder Participation Typology and the Stakeholder CSR strategies as a theoretical framework in the analysis, the findings reveal that the company's CSR communication is quite weak, as employee awareness of CSR initiatives is limited to the environmental aspects of CSR, mostly in relation to the products. It is also shown that employee participation in CSR activities is for the most part on an informative level. Alfa Laval tends to use one-way communication rather than entering into dialogue with employees regarding CSR decisions and initiatives. The study concludes that the company needs to adopt a different CSR communication strategy internally to reap the benefits of one of its most important stakeholder groups, employees. It also provides valuable implications on how multinationals can use internal CSR communication effectively and benefit from increased employee participation in CSR initiatives.

Keywords: *CSR, Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability, UN Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, Employee Awareness, Employee Involvement, Internal Communication, CSR Communication, Internal CSR Communication, Alfa Laval*

Number of words: 21,717

1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 PROBLEM DISCUSSION AND AIM	7
1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	9
1.3 DELIMITATIONS	9
1.4 DISPOSITION	10
2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH	11
2.1 CSR	11
2.1.1 CSR COMMUNICATION	13
2.2 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION	15
2.2.1 INTERNAL CSR COMMUNICATION	16
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	19
3.1 STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION TYPOLOGY	19
3.1.1 INFORMATIVE PARTICIPATION	20
3.1.2 CONSULTATIVE PARTICIPATION	20
3.1.3 DECISIONAL PARTICIPATION	20
3.2 STAKEHOLDER CSR COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES	21
3.2.1 STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION STRATEGY	21
3.2.2 STAKEHOLDER RESPONSE STRATEGY	22
3.2.3 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY	23
4. METHODOLOGY	24
4.1 CONSTRUCTIONISM AND CONSTRUCTIVISM	24
4.2 RESEARCH APPROACH	26
4.3.1 CASE COMPANY DESCRIPTION	28
4.4 DATA COLLECTION	29
4.4.1 INTERVIEW PROCEEDINGS	29
4.4.2 CLARIFYING THE INTERVIEW DATA	31
4.4.3 SELECTION OF COMPANY AND INTERVIEWEES	32
4.5 DATA ANALYSIS	34
4.5.1 TRANSLATIONS	35
4.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	35
5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	37
5.1 CSR AND ITS MEANING TO INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	37
5.2 EMPLOYEE AWARENESS OF CSR INITIATIVES	41
5.3 INTERNAL CHANNELS OF CSR COMMUNICATION	46
5.3.1 SHARE: THE INTRANET	46
5.3.2 HERE MAGAZINE	49
5.3.3 ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SPEECH	50
5.4 INVOLVING EMPLOYEES IN CSR ACTIVITIES	51
5.4.1 ONE-WAY OR TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION	53
5.4.2 OPINIONS ON PARTICIPATION	55
5.5 REACHING OUT GLOBALLY	57
6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	60
6.1. CONTRIBUTIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH	62
REFERENCES	64

1. Introduction

In today's society, companies can no longer get away with doing "business as usual". In the last couple of decades, stakeholders have increasingly demanded not only that organisations take responsibility for their actions but that they provide transparent information regarding their business practices. In other words, companies are expected to showcase Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR has evolved into a strategic imperative for companies all around the world. Although not a new concept, it has not always been common for companies to communicate their CSR efforts (Arvidsson, 2010). Falkheimer and Heide (2014) mean that it is only in the past two decades that organizational communication activities which need a strategic approach have been in the spotlight. Although the authors do not include CSR as an organizational communication activity, communicating about CSR activities plays an important role in a company's strategic approach towards stakeholders and the strategic communication of CSR practices has now become a fundamental part of organisations' corporate communication strategy (Lång & Ivanova-Gongne, 2015; Thomsen & Ellerup Nielsen, 2009).

Without communicating its stance on social and environmental issues, a company may project an image signaling that these issues are not considered important to business (Schlegelmilch & Pollach, 2005). In other words, CSR initiatives that are undertaken but not effectively communicated have little benefit for a company (Kim & Ji, 2017). Nevertheless, Dawkins (2005) argues that CSR is still not communicated well enough, and calls communication the "missing" link. Lack of effective CSR communication hinders companies from receiving a fair amount of credit for their corporate responsibility efforts.

Ihlen, May and Barlett (2014) mean that a common misconception is that CSR entails focusing on relationships with external stakeholders. Chen & Hung-Baesecke (2014) argue that this vast focus on external audiences and outcomes creates a sense that CSR initiatives are solely in place per request of external stakeholders instead of being rooted internally. This in turn, may lead to the public questioning the legitimacy of companies' CSR programs. It is increasingly being noted that it is not enough for companies to solely inform stakeholders about CSR initiatives. As argued by Jiang (2017), "employees' participation in a corporation's CSR initiatives is essential to its long-term business success". Cramer (2005) points out that if companies want to achieve legitimacy regarding their social and environmental business practices, they need to

not only communicate internally but ensure that their CSR activities are integrated into the whole organisational culture. “Strategically inviting” (Morsing, 2006, p. 245) employees to provide feedback and voice their concerns on what issues are important for the company brings many benefits. Employees are not only a company’s production force but also act as corporate ambassadors for the company (Morsing, 2006). Therefore, companies must be strategic with their CSR communication by communicating both coherently and consistently with their employees and actively involving them in CSR activities (Morsing, Schultz & Nielsen, 2008).

With this being said, CSR can be interpreted in various ways depending on which country the company is based in. Companies in more economically developed countries have shown to possess a wider range of CSR initiatives and policies (Fernando, Lawrence, Kelly & Arunachalam, 2015). Culture has also shown to influence companies’ approach to CSR, with CSR levels differentiating depending on region (Fisher, 2017).

The egalitarian culture found in the Nordic countries (Hofstede, 1980, 1994) is believed to show itself through more concentrated and faster adopted policies on sustainable development. Nordic countries have long proved themselves to be CSR frontrunners and are often viewed as pioneers, or “avant-garde” (Zukauskas, Vveinhardt & Andriukaitiene, 2018, p. 98) within the field. Often considered the most advanced welfare states in the world, the Nordic welfare model has been discussed to have an impact on Scandinavian companies’ attitude towards CSR (Midttun, Gjølberg, Kourola, Sweet & Vallentin, 2015). Out of the Nordic countries, Sweden stands out especially, with its long history of sustainable development (Haas, Levy & Parson, 1992). Sweden holds a steady top placement in various CSR rankings, ranking number one in the latest 2018 RobecoSAM Country Sustainability Ranking (RobecoSAM, 2018).

Over the years several CSR reporting trends have arisen, the latest being in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Adopted in 2015 by all UN member states these 17 goals are a global agenda for sustainable development and an urgent call for action to protect humanity and nature. Since their adoption, CSR has evolved even further and a large number of global companies are now operating in light of the new global initiative. The goals have provided businesses around the world with a brand-new framework to engage in CSR (Schönherr, Findler & Martinuzzi, 2017) and have enabled companies to more easily incorporate economic, social and environmental concerns into CSR policies across all business functions (Taddeo, 2017).

As the SDGs have risen to popularity, Swedish companies especially have started to align their CSR strategies with the goals. This is undoubtedly visible to external stakeholders as the alignment is communicated openly through CSR reports and corporate websites. However, whether companies communicate internally about new CSR frameworks such as the SDGs is unclear.

There is no unified consensus regarding CSR terminology and CSR is often used interchangeably with concepts such as sustainability, corporate responsibility, triple bottom line, corporate citizenship and responsible corporate behaviour (Ndlovu, Simba & Mariussen, 2015; Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Maon, Lindgreen & Swaen, 2010). CSR is considered “a dominant, if not exclusive, term in the academic literature and in business practice” (Carroll & Shabana, 2010, p. 86), which is why I have chosen to use it as an umbrella construct throughout the thesis. However, as it was realized that the term sustainability was a more familiar concept among the interviewees, CSR will be used interchangeably with sustainability, predominately in the analysis.

1.1 Problem Discussion and Aim

Research referring to CSR communication as its own concept is generally quite rare (Thomsen & Ellerup Nielsen, 2009) and the majority of existing CSR communication research has focused on the external communication of CSR (May, 2011) leaving the research field of internal CSR communication rather slim.

Engaging stakeholders in CSR initiatives has become important to the implementation of CSR (Lee, Zhang, Abitbol, 2019) which is why two-way communication is essential. With CSR evolving in terms of new CSR initiatives based on the UN global goals being implemented, employees can only be assets to a company’s sustainable business goals by being actively involved in CSR decisions, activities and strategies. Yet research has shown that most employees, even those that would like to be involved, are not very familiar with their employers CSR activities (Bhattacharya, Sen & Korschun, 2007). Employees are rarely asked about corporate CSR decisions and employers tend to use one-way communication when communicating matters internally (Ligerti & Oravec, 2009; Bhattacharya, Sen & Korschun,

2008). In fact, Morsing & Schultz (2006) argue “there is only little evidence that two-way communication processes are the norm currently being practised” (pg. 329).

Despite internal stakeholders often being referred to as the most important stakeholders of an organisation (Redington, 2005; Ditlev-Simonsen & Brøgger, 2013), we know little about how companies communicate about and involve employees in CSR decisions and activities. Consequently, there is a lack of insight into how employees perceive their employer’s internal CSR communication efforts. The majority of the few studies that study the employee perspective use quantitative or mixed methods (eg. Duthler & Dhanesh, 2018; Brunton, Eweje & Taskin, 2015; Lee, Park & Lee, 2013). To date, one qualitative study has focused on the employee perspective on internal environment-related communication in a Finnish manufacturing company (Uusi-Rauva & Nurkka, 2010) leaving room for similar studies in different companies in other countries to be conducted.

This study seeks to fill the gap in literature by studying the employee and managerial perceptions of how CSR initiatives are communicated in a multinational company. It will thus further contribute to the narrow field of CSR communication, most specifically internal CSR communication.

Scandinavian companies are known for their flat hierarchies and for the Scandinavian leadership style being inclusive and informal. Because of this, mean Ditlev-Simonsen and Brøgger (2013), involving employees in CSR decisions and activities may be more important in a Nordic company compared to anywhere else in the world. Therefore, it seems fitting to study a Nordic company to obtain the “insider perspective”. The case study company chosen for this purpose is Alfa Laval, a large Swedish manufacturing company operating in 42 countries. Morsing, Midttun and Palmås (2007) talk about “Scandinavian management”, which involves “a high degree of employee involvement and dialogue in Scandinavian companies” (pg. 89). Consequently, one would propose that employees in a Scandinavian owned company like Alfa Laval are very much involved in and informed about their employer’s CSR decisions and activities.

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, it aims to provide in-depth insight into how a Swedish corporate CSR frontrunner uses internal CSR communication to communicate its CSR efforts to employees. Second, it aims to understand whether the company’s employees are

actively involved, i.e. if they participate in CSR decisions and activities. This will be done through qualitative interviews with both managers and employees at Alfa Laval as perspectives may vary due to the fact that managers are often the drivers of CSR initiatives or generally better informed about the practices in place (Bhattacharya et al., 2008; Morsing & Schultz, 2008; Warner & Rowley, 2011). Additionally, to further understand Alfa Laval's internal communication of CSR, a theoretical framework will be applied to the analysis. This theoretical framework is built upon different communication and participation strategies and will act as a lens to look at the empirical phenomena. By that, it will assist in developing a deeper understanding of how aware of and involved in CSR initiatives employees actually are.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the aim of this thesis, two research questions have been formulated:

RQ1. How does Alfa Laval communicate its CSR initiatives to internal stakeholders?

RQ2. How does Alfa Laval use internal CSR communication to involve employees in CSR initiatives?

1.3 Delimitations

Conducting an in-depth interview study at a multinational company with 17,000 employees does not come without certain boundaries. The study was narrowed down geographically to Lund, Sweden and thereby cannot allow for an adequate representation of Alfa Laval's global CSR communication. Only 1,100 employees out of the 17,000 are based in Lund. 14 out of 15 employees represented employees and managers in the headquarters which risks certain bias about how the company communicates about and involves employees in CSR initiatives throughout the whole organisation. It must also be realized that each interviewee created their own personal reality from their interpretations of the company's CSR communication. Many of the interviewees worked in HR, communication or environmental positions and were most likely more familiar with CSR than others, for example, compared to blue collars. Only one employee from the production site in Lund was interviewed. Interviewees were questioned about their opinions on CSR communication globally which presented a small-scale picture of how CSR communication permeates the organisation. Naturally, it is difficult to get an accurate

image of this without interviewing employees and managers in the global hubs. Conducting interviews with employees and managers in the company's sites in other parts of the world would provide a wider and more accurate picture of a multinational company's CSR communication.

There is also the limitation that Sweden most probably has a different approach to CSR compared to many parts of the world. The strategies Alfa Laval have concerning communicating internally on CSR initiatives in Sweden, may not be possible to apply to production sites worldwide in countries where CSR is viewed differently. Another limitation is the focus on one single company making it difficult to generalize the findings. However, this focus still provides a deep understanding of CSR communication in a corporate CSR frontrunner as the in-depth interviews allow readers to understand on a general level how a Swedish multinational organisation uses internal communication to communicate about CSR initiatives and whether employees are engaged in these initiatives. To conclude, conducting in-depth interviews on a small scale in one company brings issues of generalisability and external validity, meaning that the findings cannot be generalized to a larger population within the company nor can this study claim to be fully representative of other multinational companies.

1.4 Disposition

This thesis consists of six chapters. With the introduction chapter having already been presented, five chapters remain. The second chapter of this thesis is the literature review, which offers previous research into the subjects that are relevant for this thesis: CSR, CSR communication, internal communication and internal CSR communication. The third chapter presents the theoretical framework which consists of two different models that will later be applied to the analysis to provide an understanding of how CSR communication can involve several levels of stakeholder participation or be communicated from different communication strategies. The fourth chapter is the methodology section, where the research design, data collection process and data analysis are described and the case study company is introduced. The fifth chapter is the analysis chapter, which presents and discusses the interview findings analysing these based on previous literature and the theoretical framework. The thesis ends with a discussion and conclusion chapter which summarizes the results of the study, discusses its contributions to the field and offers ideas for future research.

2. Previous Research

This chapter provides an overview of literature on the main concepts used in this study. It aims to provide a clearer understanding of what has been previously written on CSR, CSR communication, internal communication and the narrow field of internal CSR communication.

2.1 CSR

CSR has over the years developed into a wealthy field of research although most studies have been limited to developed countries, most specifically Western countries (eg. Glavas, 2016; Dawkins, 2005; Angus-Leppan, Metcalf & Benn, 2009). As mentioned formerly, the concept has been subject to countless definitions and Matten & Moon (2005) have thereby referred to CSR as a “cluster concept” (p.335) as it overlaps with several other concepts. CSR itself has been researched within a variety of academic disciplines, including but not limited to business and management, communications, public relations and marketing. The first accounted for literature on CSR that emerged was in 1953, in Howard Bowen’s publication *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* where he set forth that social responsibility was an obligation of businessmen. Bowen has been considered to be the founding father of CSR as a conception (Carroll, 1999), followed by Keith Davis in 1960, who revisited the concept, also arguing that corporate social responsibility referred to businessmen’s decisions and actions. Additionally, Davis (1960) broadened the concept by stating that these decisions and actions went beyond a company’s economic and technical interests. However, most attention has been aimed at business management professor Archie Carroll (1979), who stated that “the social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time” (p. 500). Carroll is often quoted in CSR literature and his CSR pyramid which categorizes four types of business responsibilities: philanthropic [previously discretionary] ethical, legal and economical (Carroll, 1991) is a widely used theoretical framework. Carroll (1999) has also provided an extensive review of the history of CSR, starting from the 1950s where he argues that going further back than that is not necessary as it is since then that much of what has shaped CSR theory and research has happened. His historical CSR review builds up to what many today consider a non-avoidable business model. Not surprisingly, the scope of issues and stakeholders defining CSR has evolved and expanded over time.

Out of all the definitions that have emerged in the last few decades, a more recent one defines CSR as “context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders’ expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance” (Aguinis, 2011, p. 855). Du, Bhattacharya and Sen (2010) emphasize the importance of CSR for business adding that “by engaging in CSR activities, companies can not only generate favourable stakeholder attitudes and better support behaviours but also, over the long run, build corporate image, strengthen stakeholder–company relationships and enhance stakeholders’ advocacy behaviours” (p.8). Today, especially in Western society, CSR is a critical stakeholder issue. Thomsen and Ellerup Nielsen (2012) mean that companies have been increasingly forced to adopt CSR policies as stakeholders are constantly putting pressure on them to showcase their corporate responsibilities. This increased stakeholder pressure has also led to an increase in CSR communication research, which will be reviewed further down in this chapter.

Ihlen, May and Barnett (2011) further explore the concept of CSR and what it truly encompasses. CSR to them entails that businesses handle at least one of three pillars of sustainability being economic, social and/or environmental. They agree that although CSR has a variety of definitions and interchangeable terms, all point in the same direction and include the four responsibilities that Carroll (1991) defined in his CSR pyramid. The authors explore which type of activities CSR includes, listing involving employees in philanthropic initiatives, entering into multi-sector dialogues and being in line with international standards such as the Global Reporting Initiative. However, Ihlen et al., (2011) miss out on mentioning crucial CSR activities, such as conducting supplier due diligence, committing to important sustainability goals, investing consciously and engaging external and internal stakeholders in dialogue concerning CSR decisions.

Bhattacharya et al. (2008) view CSR as something that humanizes businesses. CSR is what makes a company a contributor to society instead of solely a money-making entity. Although one would like to believe that this is true, the authors ignore the possibility of companies’ CSR initiatives being merely false marketing or in the words of Milton Friedman (1970), “hypocritical window-dressing” (p.5).

The more critical approach to CSR should also be acknowledged. Porter and Kramer (2006) have argued that many CSR approaches are often disconnected from business and strategy.

Thus, CSR solely acts as a tool to improve a company's brand image and reputation. Although businesses are aware of the ethical, social and environmental risks that exist, they are in many ways uncertain of what to do about them. This leads to many CSR responses being solely cosmetic such as in the form of glossy CSR reports. Businesses need to use the same framework they already use to guide their core business decisions to analyse their CSR chances.

There has been a vast amount of scepticism among stakeholders towards businesses CSR activities. This is often due to the lack of stakeholder dialogue and clear CSR communication (Theofilou & Watson, 2014). It is obvious in the existing body of research that CSR matters to stakeholders and that companies should engage both their external and internal stakeholders in CSR initiatives. Evidently, this requires communication and as set forth by Jurisova and Durkova (2012), "well-functioning communication is an essential part of the whole process of implementation of corporate social responsibility" (p. 146). Therefore, the next section will examine previous research on CSR communication and further highlight its importance.

2.1.1 CSR Communication

Podnar (2008, p. 75) has defined CSR communication as:

"a process of anticipating stakeholders' expectations, articulation of CSR policy and managing of different organisation communication tools designed to provide true and transparent information about a company's or a brand's integration of its business operations, social and environmental concerns and interactions with stakeholders"

Despite literature on CSR communication being remarkably small in comparison to literature on corporate social responsibility, a fair number of researchers have underlined the effectiveness and significance of CSR communication. Ihlen et al. (2011) claim that it is nearly impossible today for a company not to communicate about CSR and that even silence is a form of communication. It is not feasible for an organisation to fully escape communication as some form of communication will always be involved in CSR strategies (Ihlen et al., 2011).

Tata and Prasad (2015) have argued that communicating about CSR creates an understanding among stakeholders of the organisation's sustainability policies and initiatives and mean that these in turn "allow stakeholder audiences to become more engaged in the issues affecting them and more willing to collaborate with organizations in reaching socially responsible solutions to

problems.” (p. 777). Motwani (2012) highlights the importance of CSR communication and argues that it is as important as any other form of corporate communication. Organisations that engage in CSR communication can project a positive corporate image and create loyalty among stakeholders. For CSR to be effective, all CSR issues and activities must be communicated. Primarily the right communication channels must be used depending on which stakeholder group the company wants to reach out to as different stakeholders have different perceptions towards a company’s CSR initiatives.

Information to stakeholders can be communicated through many channels both informal and formal and several scholars have discussed which type of channels or tools are the most effective or the most preferred (Gruber, Kaliauer & Schlegelmilch, 2015; Dawkins, 2005; Capriotti, 2011). Capriotti (2011) means that the Internet plays a large role in spreading CSR information both internally and externally which is an excellent way for organisations to present their CSR agenda. However, he also states that Internet-based communication tools such as an organisation’s intranet or social media platforms are primarily used to broadcast information but do not function as tools to enter into dialogue with stakeholders concerning CSR activities. Although CSR presentation is important, it is evident in literature that two-way communication i.e. dialogue cannot be pushed aside. Organisations need to start recognizing the benefits that come with engaging in two-way communication (Ihlen, May & Bartlett, 2014).

Du, Bhattacharya and Sen (2010) agree that engaging in CSR activities is important to be able to build good relations with stakeholders, yet they also touch upon other advantages including business returns to CSR which they mean are dependent on both internal and external stakeholders’ awareness of existing CSR activities. In sum, no good comes out of refraining from communicating about CSR activities.

It must be recognized that scholars have also been aware of the negative side of CSR communication, declaring that communicating CSR can seem suspect and considered to be done simply out of corporate self-interest (Ihlen et al. 2011). Bartlett & Devin (2011) consider that due to the field of CSR being so ambiguous, the same may go for the communication of CSR which is why there is tension around communicating CSR initiatives. Regardless, most literature on CSR communication points to the necessity of communicating CSR initiatives and keeping an open dialogue between the company and its stakeholders. Dialogue, mean Golob and Podnar (2011), improves corporate governance, boosts stakeholder engagement and makes decision-making a lot more effective. As has been discussed, all stakeholders, internal and

external, need to be included in organisations' CSR communication. However, as this study will focus on the internal CSR communication of the chosen case company, the next two sections will present previous literature on internal communication and thereafter internal CSR communication.

2.2 Internal Communication

Regardless of CSR, internal communication is, in general, an extremely critical business discipline. Welch and Jackson (2007) have defined internal communication as the “communication between an organisation's strategic managers and its internal stakeholders., designed to promote commitment to the organisation, a sense of belonging to it, awareness of its changing environment and understanding of its evolving aim” (p. 186). Yet, it can be said that internal communication is so much more than just raising awareness of changes and promoting employee commitment and organisational belonging. Internal communication is important for every aspect of an organisation's actions. Although it is obvious when drawing from literature that internal communication is essential, Omilion-Hodges and Baker (2014) mean that internal stakeholders are often not considered a priority among organisations. Argenti (1998) criticizes companies for not engaging in two-way communication with employees. He states that organisations often take employees for granted and tend to not involve their most important stakeholders, employees, in any decision-making processes, whichever these may be. This lack of involvement only leads to the alienation of employees which creates reluctance towards future changes that the company may impose. Effective internal communication should include involving employees in programs that aim to achieve organisational goals and objectives.

In the last decade, a vast amount of internal communication research has emerged, focusing on how internal communication should be designed to reach its full potential. Regarding the risk of alienating employees, Welch and Jackson (2007) discuss that companies must communicate internally in a way that creates awareness of organisational changes among internal stakeholders. Non-effective internal communication leaves employees rolling their eyes at yet another sudden change. Yet, creating a well-functioning internal communication system is not an easy task for companies. Not only do managers need to communicate information to employees but employees must understand what has been communicated to them to be able to help the organisation achieve its goals (Borca & Baesu, 2014).

Scholars such as Barrett (2002) have argued that face-to-face communication is the most effective way to reach employees compared to indirect offline or online communication channels. Grunig (1992) had also argued this ten years prior, stating that face-to-face communication is the best form of internal communication as it allows for direct feedback and dialogue. Drawing from this, organisations need to acknowledge that internal communication is crucial for corporate reputation (Dortok, 2006) and increased employee engagement, performance and commitment (Bhatia & Balani, 2015; Karanges, Johnston, Beatson & Lings 2015).

For corporate decisions regarding CSR to be successful, internal communication plays a substantial role. For CSR objectives to be met and for a company to work towards sustainability, joint efforts of all members of an organisation, with emphasis on employees, are needed (Kataria, Kataria & Garg, 2013). With this being said, the final section of this chapter will present literature on internal CSR communication.

2.2.1 Internal CSR Communication

Research has proven the need for companies to engage in CSR communication with their internal stakeholders. Genç (2017) states that corporate communication plays an important role in any sustainability strategy but accentuates the weight of internal communication, meaning that without engaging employees, it is difficult for any company to implement organisational changes that have the aim to make the company more sustainable. Schlatter (2017) means that sustainability should be integrated into the whole organisation and not just be the focus of the CSR department. Holding an open dialogue on CSR initiatives with employees is essential as it shows that CSR is not just a topic that is left to the “experts” but is something that everyone in the organisation can be a part of and contribute to. Morsing, Schultz and Nielsen (2008) have also argued that CSR communication needs to start from the inside. They studied Danish companies and developed the “inside-out approach” (p. 102) to help companies understand how to best communicate their CSR activities. The approach involves that companies first need to communicate their CSR activities internally to ensure employee commitment before communicating externally. This way employees feel more committed and are on board with the company’s CSR strategy before it is communicated outwards. It is difficult for companies to convince their external stakeholders of their good deeds if internal stakeholders have not been made aware of or accepted the messages sent out (Cheney &

Christensen, 2001). Morsing et al. (2008) found that this approach creates strong organisational commitment among employees concerning the company's CSR agenda.

Regarding new CSR frameworks that play a substantial role for businesses CSR strategies, most specifically the SDGs, communication is key. Yet for employees to be properly involved in and on-board with the global goals, the SDGs need to become part of the day-to-day responsibilities across the whole organization so that employees are properly aware of the values and benefits the goals hold. This makes it easier for companies to “advance the global goals as part of their core business” (Lund Hansen, 2016).

Organisations have received a great amount of criticism in research for “forgetting” their internal stakeholders when implementing CSR programs. Bhattacharya et al. (2008) have heavily criticized companies' lack of employee involvement and mean that CSR efforts are seldom communicated clearly nor is the communication consistent. Unfortunately, the approach that companies often take when formulating and carrying into effect their CSR programs is top-down. Signitzer & Prexl (2007) argue that CSR communication should be aimed at internal stakeholders before they are aimed at external stakeholders so that employees are made familiar with any CSR policy or activity beforehand. By this, a bottom-up process can develop in place of the usual top-down process.

CSR should not be a strategy taken on by a company to simply project an outward attractive image. As Ndlovu, Simba and Mariussen (2015) contend, genuine CSR initiatives need to be built into the organisation. CSR needs to permeate the whole organisation and should be the DNA of business. Altogether it needs to be communicated in all directions and create a sense of purpose among all involved. Additionally, Bhattacharya et al. (2008) argue that CSR does not end with communication and that companies need to foster active participation of employees in CSR initiatives. Managers should involve employees in CSR initiatives “making them participants rather than onlookers.” (p. 43)

In their study from 2010, Uusi-Rauva & Nurkka interviewed employees at the Finnish manufacturing company Kone, concentrating on the environmental aspects of CSR. The study not only focuses on employee awareness of and engagement in environmental activities but also on what strategies are relevant to them in their everyday work life and whether employees see themselves as potential environmental actors within the company or if any barriers exist.

The results show that environmental initiatives and policies are well communicated internally but that employees do not particularly prioritize environmental issues in everyday work life, which in turn is seen as a barrier to engaging employees in environmental activities. The authors argue that more similar studies are needed to gain increased insight into employee perspectives on environmental communication. This thesis therefore further contributes to the research field by looking at a different Scandinavian company's CSR communication. It expands the scope of sustainability communication from just environmental to economic, environmental and social. It also looks at how a company communicates new CSR frameworks that come into action, by understanding how the SDGs are communicated to employees. Interviewing both employees and managers and using a theoretical framework based on both communication and participation strategies will provide a new angle and a different discussion. As this study comes nine years after Uursi & Nurkka's (2010) study, it expects to provide several new insights on employee awareness and involvement.

This chapter has conveyed how important it is to raise awareness of CSR initiatives internally and how involving employees in these initiatives is beneficial for a company. It has also displayed that internal CSR communication is an insufficiently researched field and that increased in-depth knowledge of the insider view is still needed. The next chapter will discuss the theoretical framework that will act as to enhance the analysis and further understand how a company communicates about CSR initiatives internally. Within this framework lays the Stakeholder Participation Typology and the Stakeholder CSR Communication strategies.

3. Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that will serve as a basis to provide a better understanding of how Alfa Laval uses internal CSR communication to raise awareness of and involve employees in CSR activities. The framework has been chosen based on the literature review and will be used to guide the analysis and provide an overview of different involvement and participation strategies from two separate models that can be applied to how an organisation communicates to its employees on CSR matters. The models have similarities but also differences and act as useful tools of analysis to assist in answering the two research questions. As made visible in the literature review, CSR communication is connected to stakeholder participation as the effectivity of CSR communication relies on employees contributing towards CSR initiatives, being engaged in dialogue and being actively involved in CSR activities.

3.1 Stakeholder Participation Typology

Green and Hunton-Clarke's (2003) Stakeholder Participation Typology was developed since the authors acknowledged that there existed no proper understanding of what stakeholder participation constitutes nor was there any method based on stakeholder participation in environmental decision-making that could be applied within companies. On this basis, a stakeholder participation typology concentrated on environmental issues was created and proposed for companies. The authors argue that stakeholder participation provides companies with the opportunity to improve their reputation and it also enables them to more easily tackle sustainability challenges.

The typology sets forth three levels of stakeholder participation: informative, consultative and decisional. The authors make sure to clarify that no level is the ultimate level for an organisation to strive for as each level can be fitting depending on which type of decision is being made. Instead, a company needs to consider the decision-making process carefully and then choose the most sustainable participation process. The typology regards all stakeholders, yet it is fit to say that it can also be applied to one specific stakeholder group. Although developed for stakeholder dialogue and participation regarding environmental issues, it will be used as a lens to examine internal stakeholder participation in all CSR aspects.

3.1.1 Informative Participation

The first level of participation, *informative participation*, encompasses all processes that involve one-way communication of information. In other words, information is solely passed on for informative purposes which means that companies have the power to decide what information is sent out to stakeholders. Thereby stakeholders cannot actively participate in decision-making. Although stakeholders may be happy to merely be informed about what is going on within the organisation or what decisions are being made regarding certain issues, there is a risk that this one-sided communication causes uproar among certain stakeholders that wish to be more involved. Green and Hunton-Clarke (2008) do however admit that informative participation can in fact in certain cases also involve dialogue, for example through surveys. Yet, participation is still very limited as the purpose of the survey is most commonly not to explore stakeholders' values or attitudes which in turn stops the dialogue in its tracks once the survey has been completed.

3.1.2 Consultative Participation

Green and Hunton-Clarke's (2003) second level within the stakeholder participation typology, *consultative participation*, entails an increased amount of stakeholder involvement. Stakeholders' perspectives are asked for about certain issues or decisions being made. This is done via more exploratory research to understand stakeholders' values and attitudes. These perspectives are further used as feedback by the company's decision-makers and even have the potential to influence future decisions. Although acknowledging stakeholders' perspectives in company projects and decisions can result in a higher level of stakeholder satisfaction regarding these projects and decisions, stakeholder influence is still limited to a certain extent as key decisions have often already been made.

3.1.3 Decisional Participation

The third and final level, *decisional participation*, refers to the highest level of stakeholder participation in companies' decision-making processes. This occurs when organisations decide to involve stakeholders from the very beginning of a plan and are open to receiving a variety of perspectives. Stakeholders may also be able to share knowledge that can be considered by the organisation before making decisions. On this level of participation, an organisation must decide if it is willing to listen to different ideas and address both negative and positive issues set forth by stakeholders. Corporate decisions made through this level of stakeholder

involvement are more likely to be socially acceptable as they have been constructed through a joint effort between stakeholders and top-management. Decisional participation also entails ongoing participation which over time helps a company to properly understand stakeholders' value and attitudes, which Green & Hunton-Clarke (2003) argue is beneficial for future environmental decision-making.

3.2 Stakeholder CSR Communication Strategies

The second model is based on Morsing & Schlutz's (2006) three CSR communication strategies that organisations may use when engaging in CSR communication: the stakeholder information strategy, the stakeholder response strategy and the stakeholder involvement strategy. The authors believe that stakeholder involvement is extremely important when engaging in CSR communication. For companies to create long-term value, they need to use two-way communication and be in constant dialogue with stakeholders instead of engaging in pure monolog. The *stakeholder information strategy* is based on one-way communication from company to stakeholders and is purely informative. The *stakeholder response strategy* involves two-way communication yet it has an asymmetrical nature to it as stakeholders' feedback cannot actively create change within the organisation. Compared to Green & Hunton-Clarke's (2003) Stakeholder Participation Typology that has no ideal participation level, the *stakeholder involvement strategy* is the strategy that Morsing and Schultz (2006) believe companies should aim for, where communication is an ongoing conversation between the company and stakeholders and where the two parties can influence each other. They argue that one-way communication is not sufficient even though sending out information about CSR decisions and initiatives is necessary. Instead, they suggest that companies should aim to use the *stakeholder involvement strategy* and develop two-way communication processes for their CSR communication to be effective.

3.2.1 Stakeholder information strategy

In the *stakeholder information strategy*, communication is always one-way and thereby there is no communication flowing from stakeholders to the organisation. In other words, the organization provides stakeholders with information without listening to or expecting feedback from them. The communication is informative and companies that use this strategy believe that merely informing the public about their CSR initiatives is enough. The organisation focuses on the best way to communicate CSR initiatives and show how these are connected to business.

The aim is to ensure that messages being sent out to stakeholders are clear and appealing, yet without stakeholders endorsing any of the company's CSR decisions or activities. Companies that adopt this communication strategy often focus on producing communicative content in the form of magazines, brochures and facts or any other content with the purpose to inform. It is often top management that believes that informing the public about CSR initiatives is enough to keep stakeholder support. In conclusion, companies' main focus is to ensure that their CSR actions are effectively communicated to all stakeholders.

3.2.2 Stakeholder response strategy

In the *stakeholder response strategy*, communication flows both ways, although not in the traditional way. Morsing and Schultz (2006) base this strategy on Grunig & Hunt's (1984) two-way asymmetrical communication model, meaning that the reason for this model being asymmetrical despite the communication being two-way, is due to the fact that organisations communicate to be able to change public opinion but do not communicate with the intent to change themselves. Although the strategy is considered a two-way model due to it involving stakeholder feedback, the authors argue that it is still very sender orientated. Via surveys and polls, organisations find out what stakeholders want and need and can thereby make decisions that hold relevance to stakeholders. Through this strategy, all communication received is feedback but instead of the feedback leading to corporate change, it helps the company figure out whether stakeholders have understood the company properly. The surveys and polls mostly include questions that generate answers that the company wants to hear. Instead of stakeholders being actively engaged in the organisation's CSR communication process, they simply act as responders. The feedback thereby provides organisations with the opportunity to understand what needs to be done to continue convincing stakeholders of their attractiveness. In other words, despite seeming like two-way communication, it instead ends up being more one-sided. In conclusion, organisations do not necessarily want feedback from stakeholders so that they can change their decisions and actions to match stakeholders demands, instead, the feedback is only there for the company to further know what actions to continue with to strengthen its corporate identity. The risk with this approach is that organisations close their eyes to stakeholders' perspectives and instead only hear their own voice being reflected back (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

3.2.3 Stakeholder involvement strategy

In the *stakeholder involvement strategy*, communication also flows both ways but unlike the response strategy, the communication is symmetrical. There is an on-going dialogue between the company and its stakeholders. Organisations communicate to stakeholders but they are also open towards receiving communication from stakeholders. Companies should aim to influence stakeholders but also look to be influenced by them. This two-way communication model provides internal and external stakeholders with the possibility to be involved in the company's CSR decisions and initiatives, as to support the company's image. Different from the response strategy, informing stakeholders and using polls and surveys is not enough for the involvement strategy. Companies need to constantly and systematically engage in dialogue with stakeholders and both the company and stakeholders need to be willing to change. Morsing and Schultz (2006) apply Weaver, Treviño & Cochran's (1999) idea of integrating company responses to stakeholder expectations with organisational activities to the strategy. Organisations through this strategy should integrate both external and internal stakeholders' CSR concerns into the conversation. Essentially, all stakeholders should be involved in the company's process of developing CSR initiatives.

4. Methodology

This chapter will provide details on the study's research design, epistemological and ontological perspective, research method, case company and data analysis. It will also cover the ethical considerations of the research. Based on the aim of this thesis to gather an in-depth view of employees' and managers' perceptions of Alfa Laval's internal CSR communication, a qualitative research approach has been taken. Creswell (2003) sets forth that qualitative research collects meaning from respondents which is then interpreted and analysed. Therefore, the empirical focus of this study will be on the meaning that the interviewees ascribe to the subject. In the following section, the epistemological and ontological position of this study is presented.

4.1 Constructionism and Constructivism

The epistemological and ontological stance of this thesis embraces both the worldviews of constructionism and constructivism which are often confused and used interchangeably due to their obvious similarities (Patton, 2002).

In 1967, in their book *The Social Construction of Reality*, Berger and Leukmann set forth the meaning of social constructionism/constructivism, explaining that individuals develop meanings that are directed toward objects and things. However, Crotty (1998) has argued that it is important to understand the difference between the two and explains how the two worldviews can be distinguished from one another. Constructivism he argues, focuses on "the meaning-making activity of the individual minds" and "points out the unique experience of each of us", whereas social constructionism focuses on the "collective generation of meaning" and emphasizes "the hold our culture has on us: it shapes the way in which we see things" (p.58). These two similar yet different worldviews have been chosen as I believe one should not exclude the other. The constructivist view in this thesis embraces how each interviewee makes meaning of the subject and how they uniquely construct meaning to CSR and experience their employer's CSR communication and activities. The constructionist worldview embraces how the respondents together with their colleagues create meaning to CSR within the organisation, i.e. creating meaning through interaction with others (Creswell, 2003)

and how Swedish culture and the organisation's culture, in turn, shapes their constructions of meaning. Both approaches entail how one constructs reality. Individuals can have a variety of experiences and perspectives and Guba & Lincoln (1994; 2005) have argued that the way we understand reality is a social construction which means that multiples realities can exist among different people, groups and perspectives.

Within the constructionist worldview, one would expect that the interviewees in this study have different experiences and different perceptions of the case company's CSR activities and CSR communication. Patton (2002) means that all these different experiences and perceptions deserve attention as all are real to the person in question. These multiple experiences and perspectives (or realities) can be captured through open-ended interviews which is one reason for why open-ended interviews have been used for this study.

Crotty (1998) when explaining the worldview of constructionism, states that meaning evolves from the way we engage with the world. As meaning is constructed, different people can easily construct different meaning concerning the same phenomena. This stance is important to this thesis as it enables the thinking that interviewees will construct different meaning in relation to their perceptions of CSR and CSR communication. Levers (2013) argues that the interpreter's, in this case, me, understanding of all the data that is to be interpreted, is also shaped by the phenomena and society. Findings are constructed by both the interpreter and the interpreted which in turn shows that the knowledge produced from the findings is merely constructed and not discovered (Crotty, 1998).

In research, Creswell (2003) asserts that researchers within this paradigm should rely on the research participants' views of the subject studied. There has to be both a reciprocal and communicational ground between the researcher and the participants as together they co-construct meaning. Like Patton (2002), he means that open-ended questions allow more room for the expression of experiences and perspectives, thus the participant's reality.

Within a social constructionist/constructivist perspective, Kvale (1996) states that interviews are "literally an inter-view, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest" (p.1) further he means that through interviews, researchers try to "understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold meaning of peoples' experiences" (p.2). Potter and Wetherell (1995) point out that the interviewer contributes as

much as the interviewee stating that “both are constructing versions, which draw on a range of varied interpretative resources” (p. 85). This relates to the previously mentioned argument by Crotty (1998), that findings are co-constructed by the researcher and the interviewees. Taking the epistemological and ontological perspective of social constructionism/constructivism in this thesis has helped me in the analysis to understand that many of my findings are co-constructed between me and my interviewees.

4.2 Research approach

This thesis takes on a qualitative research approach and uses interviews as its primary data. The qualitative research approach is often used for exploring the meaning that individuals ascribe to phenomena. Regarding generalization, the intent of the study is not to generalize the study’s findings. Although Yin (2009) argues that it is not possible to generalize based on a single case study, Flyvbjerg (2001) on the other hand means that this is a serious misconception and talks about the “power of example” (p. 64). This thesis is not an overall generalization of employee and managerial perceptions of internal CSR communication in Swedish companies. However, it can act as a “good example” within the field of internal CSR communication, something that should not be underestimated (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

This thesis uses an abductive approach to reasoning, being neither inductive or deductive but a combination of the two. Simply explained, in deductive studies research is conducted based on theory and is a very linear process. Inductive studies on the other hand use findings to decide the theory (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Dubois and Gadde (2002) explain an abductive approach as systematic combining, “a process where theoretical framework, empirical fieldwork, and case analysis evolve simultaneously” (p. 554). By going back and forth between empirical data and theory, one can increase one’s understanding of the theory and the studied phenomena. Alvesson & Sköldberg (2009) argue that abduction has an advantage over induction and deduction which are considered more ‘shallow’ models of explanation, as it includes understanding. Using an abductive method in case studies entails that the analysis of the empirical data can be combined with previous literature with the theories from former literature acting as inspiration for discovering new patterns. This means that the research process “alternates between (previous) theory and empirical facts whereby both are successively reinterpreted in the light of each other” (p. 17). This study constantly moves between previous literature, the empirical data and the theoretical framework to build the analysis.

4.3 Case study

Case studies can either be designed on a single case or on multiple cases. Gerring (2004) explains a case study as “an in-depth study of a single unit (a relatively bounded phenomenon) where the scholar’s aim is to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomena” (p. 342). Myers (2009) defines case study research as research that uses “how” and “why” questions. Cavaye’s (1996, p. 227- 228) explanation of case research paints a clear picture of the many different ways that a researcher can carry out a case study:

“Case research can be carried out taking a positivist or an interpretive stance, can take a deductive or an inductive approach, can use qualitative and quantitative methods, can investigate one or multiple cases. Case research can be highly structured, positivist, deductive investigation of multiple cases; it can also be an unstructured, interpretive, inductive investigation of one case; lastly, it can be anything in between these two extremes in almost any combination.”

Before executing a case study, Darke, Shanks & Broadbent (1998) mean that background information must be collected prior to commencing data collection. Naturally, I became properly acquainted with Alfa Laval as a company before conducting the interviews, by thoroughly reading through the external material provided on their website. This was necessary as I needed to understand the main visions and missions of the company to create an interview guide that included questions that would be relevant to the interviewees.

Benbasat, Goldstein and Mead (1987) argue that case research is best fitting in fields where “research and theory are at their early formative stages” (p. 369). A case study is useful when researching a less-developed field as thorough examinations are needed on a bigger scale when extensive research is lacking (Darke et. al., 1998). Case studies have the ability to provide readers with insight into a real situation with real people by acquiring participants thoughts, feelings and experiences of and for a situation. Conducting a case study within a field that still needs to be developed then becomes important as case studies involve detailed descriptions of a specific setting, individual or phenomena which is then thoroughly analysed by looking for different themes that can categorize the data (Creswell, 2007).

4.3.1 Case company description

Alfa Laval describes itself as a world leader within the areas of heat transfer, separation and fluid handling, providing products to customers in close to 100 countries. The company is divided into three business divisions, Energy, Food & Water and Marine but also has a separate organisation which is responsible for Global Sales and Service. Since being founded in 1883 under the name AB Separator, the company has grown into a multinational entity with over 17,000 employees. The headquarters are based in Lund, Sweden but the 42 production units are divided between countries in Europe, Asia, the US and Latin America (Alfa Laval, n.d.-a).

Alfa Laval places large focus on sustainability and the company has since 2003 its own business principles that apply to all entities attached to Alfa Laval, regardless of brand name. These business principles cover the areas of business integrity, environment, social and transparency and set the agenda for the way the company does business (Alfa Laval, n.d.-b). The Alfa Laval website provides an extensive amount of information on the company's CSR activities and sustainable business practices, including an annual sustainability report which is published separately from the annual report. The sustainability report aims to be in line with all stakeholders' concerns and includes environmental and social targets, presentations of sustainable products, contributions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and information on the company's overall CSR work regarding health and safety, the environment, community involvement and responsible sourcing. Alfa Laval does business in line with the SDGs and stakeholders can access external information on the webpage on how the company works to achieve 15 out of the 17 goals.

The website also provides a PDF version of Alfa Laval's international annual magazine *Here* which in 2018 was released as a special edition focusing on the SDGs and has been translated from English into 10 languages (Alfa Laval, n.d.-c). Alfa Laval has not gone unnoticed for its sustainability work. In 2016 the company was nominated for best CSR report by Swedish media company Aktuell Hållbarhet (Röhne, 2016). In 2018, Alfa Laval was ranked among the top 10 most sustainable companies within the capital goods sector in Sweden (Lund University, Aktuell Hållbarhet & Dagens Industri, 2018) and among the top 10 Swedish companies in a measurement study measuring to which extent companies contribute to the SDGs (Öhman & Mistra, 2018). Alfa Laval also received the 2018 GREEN4SEA Technology Award for its ballast water treatment system (Bergman, 2018).

4.4 Data Collection

The primary data collected for this study was via semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 15 employees and managers at Alfa Laval's headquarters in Lund, Sweden. According to Bryman and Bell (2007), semi-structured interviews refer to interviews where the interviewer has a set of general questions but the sequence of the questions can be varied and the possibility exists to ask further questions that may arise based on what answers are received. Kvale (2007) explains that qualitative interviews are often semi-structured as they cover certain themes but also allow for a degree of openness to change. This openness can make the interview at times seem like a conversation yet it still has a clear purpose, hence why it is semi-structured. Kvale further states that semi-structured interviews aim to "obtain descriptions of the interviewees' lived world with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena" (p. 10). Conducting qualitative interviews was the best method for me to understand employees' and managers' perspectives and how Alfa Laval uses CSR communication to engage with internal stakeholders.

4.4.1 Interview Proceedings

As mentioned previously, background information on Alfa Laval and its sustainability work was collected before drafting the interview guides. It was important for me to understand which approach Alfa Laval had to CSR, how the company was aligning its business practices with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and how sustainability activities were communicated outwards. This gave me an overview of the company so that I could create questions that were relevant to the company's employees and so that I would be able to engage in conversation that diverged from the set questions. As I planned to interview both employees and managers, I created two separate interview guides (see appendix) as certain questions did not apply to both. These interview guides were written in both English and Swedish as the interviewees were given the choice whether to be interviewed in English or Swedish. Although conducting the interviews in Swedish instead of English would entail having to translate certain parts of the transcriptions, I wanted to allow each individual to express themselves in the language they felt most comfortable speaking.

The interview guide was divided into two subject areas. The first set of questions were concentrated on Alfa Laval's general internal CSR communication whereas the second set of questions were concentrated on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Although the main

focus was to understand how Alfa Laval internally communicates about its CSR activities, it was deemed as important to narrow down certain questions to address the SDGs as they act as the latest large CSR framework for business and have set a new sustainability agenda for many companies. Gaining insight on how this “new” CSR framework has been communicated to employees since it was adopted by the company can say a lot about how the company overall uses communication to inform employees about existing and future CSR strategies and activities.

Before the interviews, each interviewee had agreed orally and in writing to being recorded. Before recording, informal conversation was held to create a comfortable atmosphere between me and the respondent. I commenced by briefing the interviewee on the purpose of the interview, the topic of research and ascertaining that no expert knowledge on CSR was necessary to be able to answer the questions. McGrath, Palmgren & Liljedahl (2018) believe that starting an interview with easy questions creates a comfortable setting between the interviewer and the interviewee and also familiarizes the respondent with the subject. Therefore, all interviews started with asking the interviewees a few standardized questions on how long they had worked for Alfa Laval, what was their position and what did the concept of CSR and/or sustainability mean to them. Nearly all of the questions were open-ended as to generate descriptive answers instead of merely a “yes” or “no”. Unlike a standardized interview or survey, the interview can turn into a conversation that relates to the topic but does not necessarily follow all the questions (Adams, 2015). This was visible when interviewing both employees and managers at Alfa Laval as questions were sometimes altered or skipped due to the dialogue taking an unforeseen path. I was also flexible with the order of the questions as the same order did not fit every interview.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face which was preferred by both parties and also possible due to shared location. Face-to-face interviewing has been said to be best fitting when the main aim of the research is to gain deep insight into the studied subject. It also often generates better quality data than telephone interviews (Gillham, 2000). Berger and Luckmann (1967) have argued that “the most important experience of others takes place in the face-to-face situation, which is the prototypical case of social interaction. All other cases are derivatives of it” (p.28).

At the end of each interview, interviewees were asked if they had anything they would like to bring up that had not been covered. Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008) state that ending an interview with this kind of question can lead to the discovery of information that may not have emerged otherwise. It allows the interviewee to bring up any thoughts or issues that he or she did not have the chance to voice before (Kvale, 2007).

The interviews were conducted over a period of 7 weeks. This was longer than expected as it was difficult to find employees and managers that were willing to be interviewed or had time to be interviewed. The shortest interview lasted 20 minutes and the longest 39 minutes. Out of the 15 interviewees, 4 had managerial positions. All interviewees had Swedish as their first language. Although a substantial number of employees of different nationalities work at the Alfa Laval headquarters, it was pure coincidence that all my interviewees were Swedish.

The interviews were recorded on my mobile telephone using a standard recording application. The app was always tested beforehand to assert that it was functioning properly. After being recorded, each interview was transcribed manually. Despite transcribing manually, there were several words during interviews that were difficult to grasp even after listening to the same recording several times. Therefore, the words that could not be understood were transcribed as *inaudible*. McLellan, MacQueen & Neidig (2003) admit that sometimes a researcher just needs to “settle on” what to transcribe and that the transcribed data will never cover everything that was expressed during the interview. Deciding on what to transcribe is the first data reduction step. Interview transcriptions often require reduction and interpretation to make the written text more readable (Bailey, 2008). The interviews were transcribed into formal, written style instead of by verbatim to avoid repetitions and ‘mh’s, etc. as to be able to provide more readable excerpts of the interview data in the findings and analysis chapter (Kvale, 2007). As set forth by Kvale (1996) transcripts are “not the rock-bottom data of interview research, they are artificial constructions from an oral to a written mode of communication” (p.163).

4.4.2 Clarifying the interview data

When conducting the interviews, it was quickly understood that *CSR* was not the term that was used to explain economic, social and environmental efforts at Alfa Laval. To most interviewees, *sustainability* was a more natural concept as the definition *CSR* was not commonly used within the company. This did not come as a surprise as in Swedish, sustainability is directly translated into *hållbarhet*, which has come to be a preferred concept among most Swedish companies to

explain a company's CSR efforts. When I realized that the interviewees were more comfortable talking about sustainability, I exchanged CSR for sustainability when asking questions. Therefore, in the analysis, CSR will be used interchangeably with sustainability to preserve the answers.

4.4.3 Selection of Company and Interviewees

Choosing a Swedish company to conduct a case study on had two reasons behind it. The first reason was out of convenience. Being based in Sweden and speaking the language, the whole process of establishing a connection with a company and collecting interviews was made a lot easier. Choosing a large multinational company within reasonable travel distance also meant saving on resources and made it possible to spread out the interviews over time. Residing in a country that is considered to be ahead of the crowd when it comes to CSR, became my obvious second reason for choosing a Swedish company.

The case company itself was chosen through criterion sampling, which is one of Patton's (1992) 16 different strategies of purposeful sampling. Patton defines criterion sampling as "cases picked because they meet some predetermined criterion" (p. 182). The main criterion I had for the company was that it was a multinational company with primary headquarters located in Sweden. Signitzer and Prexl (2007) mean that "multinational and global companies tend to have more financial means to actively engage in sustainability management and to conduct corporate sustainability communication" (p. 10). The company also had to release an annual sustainability report, exhibit CSR initiatives including work with the SDGs on external platforms and admit that they communicated these CSR activities to internal stakeholders. I emailed close to 10 companies giving a detailed description of my intended research, asking if they were interested in taking part. Most companies replied that unfortunately they did not have the resources to properly internally communicate about or engage employees in their current or future CSR efforts. Alfa Laval became the company that eventually met every criterion and that was also willing to take part in my case research.

The reason behind only interviewing 15 people was due to lack of time and difficulties finding employees and managers that had time to participate or were interested in participating. I sent out individual emails to several employees and managers within the company and that way managed to secure certain interviews. I was also referred several times to interviewees' colleagues which also assisted me in finding participants. Thereby several sampling methods

were used for selecting interviewees. Three out of four managers were selected through purposeful sampling. I considered it important to interview managers within communication and CSR departments and therefore directly emailed the managers that I was interested in interviewing. The remaining interviewees were selected through convenience sampling and snowball sampling. In other words, they were selected for interviews either by availability and accessibility (*convenience*) or via referral from one employee to another (*snowball*) (Bryman, 2013). Bryman (2013) means that probability sampling is often avoided due to it requiring more preparation and other difficulties. In fact, most social research tends to be based on convenience sampling.

As the company had already been selected through purposeful sampling, all employees were valuable for interviewing. Therefore, there was no need for employees to be sampled strategically. It would have been ideal to interview employees from additional departments but this would have required more time as employees often referred me to other interviewees within the same department.

job title	in text referral	years at Alfa Laval	length
Head of Sustainability	Manager_1	5	39 min
PR Manager	Manager_2	10	29 min
Anonymous	Manager_3	4	39 min
Sourcing Office Manager	Manager_4	7	37 min
Anonymous	Employee_1	12	37 min
Anonymous	Employee_2	11	37 min
Anonymous	Employee_3	5	39 min
Anonymous	Employee_4	3	20 min
Anonymous	Employee_5	3,5	35 min
Anonymous	Employee_6	7	28 min
Global HSE Manager*	Employee_7	2,5	33 min
Corporate Sustainability Development Manager*	Employee_8	8	37 min
Anonymous	Employee_9	2,5	37 min
Business Developer	Employee_10	6	31 min
Chemical & Environmental Engineer	Employee_11	6	37 min

* It must be clarified that some employees hold the title *manager* but are not necessarily in charge of a department or any staff. Prior to being interviewed, the participants that held the title *manager* were asked if they were

managers of staff or a department or if they identified more with being an *employee*. Those that had a managerial title but were not managing any staff or department decided that the interview guide for employees was more fitting. Therefore, these participants have been referred to as *employees* throughout the thesis.

4.5 Data Analysis

Doing interviews with 15 participants resulted in a large number of transcripts. These transcripts needed to be coded, which meant breaking down the qualitative data into different parts and labelling them. The coding helped to reduce the data to be able to make sense of it (Bryman, 2011). At first, the transcripts felt overwhelming to code, which is why the coding software program NVivo 12 was used to help alleviate the process of structuring the data and sorting it into themes. After uploading the transcripts to Nvivo 12, I started reading through each interview transcript and assigning initial codes to the data. First, I conducted open coding, which is the initial phase of the coding process (Blair, 2015). This involved applying several codes that emerged from the text. Eventually, I could notice patterns in my interviews that were emerging during the coding process, so when I was done with open coding, I started selective coding. As argued by Glaser & Holton (2004) “selective coding begins only after the analyst is sure that he/she has discovered the core variable” (p.55). Selective coding was necessary to organize the initial codes into categories based on core variables. Braun & Clarke (2006) explain that coding can be either data-driven or theory-driven. In this case, the coding was data-driven as the themes created depended on the data. All themes aimed to “capture something important about the data in relation to the research question” (p. 10) which is why creating themes based on the interview data that would help answer the research questions was prioritized over coding based on the theoretical framework.

I am aware of the case that using multiple coders to code the qualitative data refines the codes and brings forward new perspectives on the data (Berends & Johnston, 2005). However, due to lack of resources, I was the sole coder of the empirical data.

The interview data was analysed by conducting a thematic analysis, which meant identifying different themes within the data. Thematic analysis is both a commonly used method and a fitting method for approaching interview data as it “organises and describes data in rich detail” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.6). It means moving back and forth between the data being analysed and the analysis that is being produced (Braun & Clarke, 2006). On finishing the coding, five core themes became visible from my interview data which were relevant to the research

questions (Bryman, 2011). The themes have acted as building blocks for understanding how Alfa Laval communicates on CSR initiatives to internal stakeholders and have been used to name the chapters in the analysis.

From a social constructivist/constructionist perspective the findings presented in the analysis are constructed by me and the interview participants. As Soini & Kronqvist (2011) describes it “knowledge is created in social interaction between investigator and respondents and the “results” or “findings” are literally created as the investigation proceeds”. The analysis is constructed based on what I chose to use and analyse from my findings.

4.5.1 Translations

Out of the 15 interviews, 13 were held in Swedish and 2 in English. The Swedish interviews were transcribed manually into Swedish and the English interviews into English. Instead of translating each Swedish transcript into English which would be immensely time consuming, I only translated quotes from the transcripts that were used for the analysis. The translated quotes were kept as literal as possible with the exception of small necessary adjustments where certain words or sayings could not be translated literally.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

When conducting qualitative research there are always moral and ethical issues that need to be taken into consideration. For one thing, the research population in a research project should never be subject to harm or embarrassment (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Mauthner, Birch, Jessop and Miller (2002) argue that ethical problems often arise in research because of “researching private lives and placing accounts in the public arena” (p. 1). During interviews, participants are disclosing their thoughts about subjects that they may not be comfortable sharing outside of the room. Openly disclosing thoughts and opinions without guaranteed anonymity could even have negative career consequences. Therefore, participants must be entitled to both anonymity and confidentiality. Establishing a trusting relationship with the interviewee prior to and during the interview is also fundamental and requires that the interviewer has interpersonal skills (Newton, 2010). As explained in the *interview proceedings* section, informal conversation on the purpose of my thesis was held with each interviewee before starting the official interview to create a relaxed atmosphere. Another ethical consideration is to ensure that all interviewees are properly informed about the purpose and procedure of the interview (Kvale, 2007). Bryman (2011) sets forth that participants need to be

properly informed so that they can make an informed decision about their choice to participate in the study.

All interviewees were sent a consent form via e-mail before the day of the interview giving them the possibility to read it through properly before signing. The consent form allowed for each participant to choose anonymity, either full or partial. Partial anonymity meant that their name would be protected but their corporate position could be used in the report. However, after completing all the interviews, I decided to not quote anyone by given name as it was deemed unnecessary. Quoting by corporate position was considered to be more essential and valuable to the analysis. The form also stated that the interview would be recorded and that the transcripts of the recordings would be sent by request to the participants shortly afterwards in case any statements wanted to be withdrawn. It was also made clear that all recordings would be deleted after being transcribed. Lastly, I assured the interviewees that the finished thesis would be sent out to each interviewee before it was made fully accessible to the public.

5. Findings and Analysis

In this chapter, the findings from the interviews will be presented and analysed to be able to answer the research questions. The analysis will be conducted in accordance with the thematic analysis approach and apply the chosen theoretical framework as a lens to help explain the findings, using it to be both analytical and critical. The findings have been divided into five themes. To understand the overall internal CSR communication at Alfa Laval, it is necessary to first understand what CSR as a concept means to internal stakeholders and how important internal CSR communication is considered to be. This will be presented in the first theme, which sets the stage, so to say. The second theme will focus on employee awareness to understand how aware employees are of Alfa Laval's CSR initiatives including the implementation of the UN global goals, and how they perceive the company's overall internal CSR communication. The third theme will present different communication channels that the company utilizes to communicate about CSR efforts internally. The fourth theme will look at employee involvement to understand the ways in which employees are involved in CSR initiatives, if they have a voice within the organisation and if the company's internal communication on CSR related issues is one-way or two-way. The final theme will focus on how CSR is communicated outside of the headquarters, specifically to global hubs. Both managers and employees at Alfa Laval Lund presented their perceptions of how the company communicates about CSR globally, a matter that is critical to any multinational company operating in several countries.

5.1 CSR and its meaning to internal stakeholders

In order to get an overview of how internal stakeholders perceive their employer's internal communication on CSR, I deemed it important to understand what CSR meant to the interviewees as a concept and whether it was something they considered important. The managerial aspect of the importance of spreading CSR values among employees was also explored. When participants were asked what CSR as a concept meant to them, it became noticeable among the answers that CSR was not a familiarly used concept at Alfa Laval. All participants made it clear from the start that sustainability was the term that was more commonly used. In Scandinavia, it has been observed that the concept of sustainability is increasingly gaining popularity over CSR, which could be due to the fact that the language of sustainability is more formally rational whereas the language of CSR is normative (Strand,

Freeman & Hockerts, 2015). It was Alfa Laval's Head of Sustainability that explained why sustainability was preferred over CSR as a term to explain the company's economic, social and environmental activities. When presented with the question what CSR meant to her as Head of Sustainability for a multinational company she replied:

To me, CSR is a very complicated word because I don't know if you mean CSR, how we work with volunteering or if you mean CSR working with sustainability? [...] That's why I changed actually what CSR was called at Alfa Laval because to me, I make a direct link to working with philanthropic issues when I talk about CSR.

One employee, aware of this change, admitted that sustainability was a more relatable concept than CSR as it was more focused on a holistic approach to sustainable business practices, encompassing both environmental and social responsibilities (employee_11). Another believed that using the concept CSR was confusing in Alfa Laval's international production sites, using India as an example, where CSR equals using resources towards projects in local communities (employee_8). It was clear that sustainability was important to the participants even if it was not always on their mind. Among the majority of employees, there was a shared understanding that sustainability was a long-term goal of working towards creating a better world in terms of people and the planet. As stated by one employee when asked what sustainability meant to him:

It's about taking responsibility, focusing, but not focusing solely on making a lot of money. Taking responsibility for the environment, taking responsibility for the work environment, taking a social responsibility and being involved in a variety of social projects. (employee_7)

Pride was a common mention among all interviewees. Feeling a sense of pride towards working for Alfa Laval, a company with sustainability values was articulated in some way by every participant. According to Gazzola and Mella (2016), employees are more likely to be committed to their organisation and feel a higher sense of pride towards their employer when the company engages in CSR initiatives. Employees that were more familiar with Alfa Laval's CSR initiatives were especially enthusiastic about their employer. For example, among employees

in the Human Resources (HR) department, CSR was considerably important. However, it must be noted that the HR department often plays an important role in organisations' adoption and implementation of sustainability strategies. Thereby, HR employees tend to be more on board with the company's CSR activities (Cohen, Taylor & Muller-Camen, n.d.). These interviewees stressed the importance of CSR and what it meant to them.

Well to me it means a lot I would say. Because it makes me feel like that's what my purpose is and that's our purpose, it's what makes me proud to go to work, that we are doing something good and that's what I try to pass on through the activities that I am involved in. So, it is very important to me. Partly because of how we are towards each other within the company and that it affects our clients but also because the world is a little crazy right now considering the environment so it is good that we are doing something good for it. (employee_2)

Employees that feel a sense of pride towards the organisation in relation to CSR, often have a strong bond with the company which results in a long-term commitment to their employer (Ng, Yam, Aguinis, 2018). When reflecting on this statement, it becomes clear that when employees understand the importance of CSR, they have an increased amount of positive feelings towards their organisation. It is therefore beneficial for the organisation to put efforts and resources into making all employees understand the value of CSR for the company.

Managers considered it very important to promote sustainability values among employees, to create a feeling of pride which positively influences the company.

If you can encourage them [employees] and above all make them feel proud of what we do, then you've come quite a long way. (manager_2)

I think actually that young people are more prone to work for companies that have a purpose and companies that try to make a difference in this area so I think it's important [to promote sustainability] from a pride perspective. (manager_1)

Communicating internally about CSR initiatives and values was also considered important as it meant that employees could further act as ambassadors for the organisation (manager_1). This was reassuring, based on the benefits for the organisation to have proud employees that understand the meaning of CSR for a company. As Ng et al. (2018) argue, “to assess CSR effectiveness, then, managers should determine whether employees feel proud as a result of their perceptions of CSR”. In line with Brunner and Lagner’s (2017) argument that communication of CSR should start internally for a CSR culture to be established, it was acknowledged by management that CSR communication to internal stakeholders is equally important as to external as everything a company does, starts internally (manager_3). One employee pointed out that since working for Alfa Laval their behaviour had changed due to being projected to CSR values on a daily basis and being expected to behave by the company’s sustainability values. This also further affected the choices they made in their private life when realizing the importance of CSR (employee_9). This matches the conclusion that employees will adjust their behaviour in their daily business if internal CSR communication is successful in an organisation (Brunner & Langner, 2017)

Only one respondent felt distant from the concepts of CSR and sustainability, never having reflected over what they meant (employee_5). Another was not familiar with CSR but acknowledged sustainability as a concept that meant working in an environmentally friendly way. It was clear that for those employees that worked closer to the products, sustainability was more about environmental responsibilities than anything else (employee_6, employee_9). With Alfa Laval praising itself as sustainable through among other things its energy effective products, it does not come as a surprise that employees who are more connected to the products are more familiar with the environmental efforts taken on by the company in terms of producing and marketing sustainable products to consumers. However, this gives the impression that the organisation is often too focused on highlighting how their products benefit the environment instead of raising awareness among employees across the whole organisation about CSR efforts that relate to economic, social and environmental issues both inside and outside the company. One participant from top management expressed that sustainability was all about delivering and selling sustainable values and solutions to customers, refraining from mentioning CSR responsibilities towards other stakeholders (manager_3). This suggests an insensitivity regarding the negative consequences that business can bring (Ihlen, Bartlett, May, 2011b), by focusing on sustainability related to the products and their sales value and neglecting the

importance of sustainability on a social level. However, the company's Head of Sustainability made it clear that although CSR is important for Alfa Laval in terms of business and sales, there is also an essential need for the company to work on its own risks and its own economic, environmental and social aspects.

5.2 Employee awareness of CSR initiatives

Internal communication means communicating to internal stakeholders on different issues, decisions or activities that affect business. In other words, it means creating an awareness among employees on a variety of corporate actions. Employee awareness is important, especially in regard to CSR as companies need to not only “talk the talk” but also “walk the walk” internally for CSR activities to be effective (Brunton et al., 2015).

Awareness of CSR initiatives has been proven to have positive effects on employees (Raub & Blunschi, 2014) which is why the interviewees were questioned about their knowledge of Alfa Laval's CSR initiatives. Most of the interviewees were confident that Alfa Laval communicated well about various sustainability efforts yet the same employees also admitted that they were unaware of any actual activities that existed to actively engage employees in CSR decisions and initiatives. This already gave the impression that corporate decisions were made without internal stakeholders participating in the company's CSR decision-making processes. Three out of four managers believed that Alfa Laval communicated sufficiently on CSR initiatives to employees (manager_2, manager_3). Alfa Laval's Sourcing Manager was positive towards the current amount of internal CSR communication expressing that *‘I believe and agree that the [CSR] communication is sufficient, the question is how much one can take in.’* This gives the impression that sending out a large amount of information on CSR initiatives is considered sufficient, yet for the company to have an effective CSR communication strategy communication needs to also flow from the stakeholders to the organisation which no manager gave any mention of. The Head of Sustainability acknowledged that the current form of CSR communication is not ideal, admitting there was still room for improvement *‘I would say we're not excellent at that, I think we've become better slowly’*.

It became evident that in many cases interest guided awareness (manager_3, employee_1, employee_2, employee_3, employee_6). Alfa Laval may communicate about CSR initiatives through several channels but employees also have to be willing to take in the information provided.

There is [CSR] communication and there is loads of information on the intranet and I mean if you are interested there is SO much that you can read about. (employee_10)

It was stressed that it is basically up to each employee to take in the information provided on the company's intranet. The same went for being aware of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Unfortunately, it was considered that the communication around the SDG initiatives was limited: *'I don't think they [employees] have learnt about it [the SDGs] until the Here magazine came out, honestly'* (manager_1). The Head of Sustainability also disclosed that

If you work with customers you've seen it [the SDGs] in Here Magazine and you might have gotten it through my presentations, but we have never like made a big bang communication about this.

A problem arises when using this form of communication that is received out of interest or accessibility as it lays a lot of responsibility on employees to seek out the information provided. Creating a consensus internally on CSR efforts becomes difficult. This informative stance (Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003) of CSR communication exhibits the power that the company has had on how and what to share about the SDGs within the company.

I believe that if you want to be kept informed it is very easy due to our sustainability report and the information that went out through 'Here' magazine and the Christmas speech. It has [sustainability] been highlighted these last two years so if you are interested in knowing what the company does and what it stands for there are opportunities to develop one's knowledge (employee_11).

It was clear that employees that were more interested in CSR issues on a private level were more prone to being interested in their employer's CSR initiatives and thereby more aware of these initiatives (employee_5). Lee et al. (2019) found that employees that actively look for CSR information are generally more aware of CSR activities. Participants based in the

headquarter offices were substantially more aware of Alfa Laval's CSR initiatives, which seemed to be the result of the accessibility to and frequency of using the intranet. When employees were questioned about their awareness of CSR initiatives, the majority answered that the intranet *Share* was the main source of information for creating awareness around what Alfa Laval does in regard to CSR (employee_1, employee_2, employee_7). However, when asked how frequently Alfa Laval communicated about CSR efforts on the intranet, some employees perceived it to be very rare, around once every fiscal quarter (employee_6, employee_7). This suggests that there are gaps in Alfa Laval's internal CSR communication. Shockingly, one employee was not even aware that a separate department focusing on CSR existed within the company (employee_6).

The CSR initiatives that employees were aware of differed. There was also a difference between how managers perceived what employees know in comparison to what employees actually knew. For example, one manager was positive that employees were well informed about several CSR initiatives such as the recycling heat initiative in the Lund production site (manager_4). The Head of Sustainability, however, believed that employees in the headquarters were generally more aware of CSR initiatives compared to employees in other locations.

Awareness of CSR initiatives differed depending on which employee I was talking to. Two employees mentioned their awareness of the company's philanthropic efforts in India (employee_4, employee_10). One employee was aware of *some kind* of local initiative that focused on sustainable travel and another that focused on reducing transportation. There was some awareness of e-learning on sustainability but these seemed to be extremely limited and only available to certain departments such as the sales department. However, what was noted was that the trainings on sustainability that existed for the sales force were primarily for marketing purposes to promote Alfa Laval's sustainable products to customers. A few employees showed awareness of initiatives that incorporated Alfa Laval's products, mostly externally but also internally '*we use our own products to re-use heat and energy from the machines to heat up the buildings*' (employee_1). Disappointingly, most initiatives that employees were aware of were product-oriented, '*everyone knows what our products do so everyone knows that we have a positive impact and that we work with sustainability*' (employee_2). There was little awareness of Alfa Laval's CSR initiatives focused on social concerns or other environmental issues that were not related to the benefits that the products had when used. This falls within the stakeholder information strategy (Morsing & Schultz,

2006), as the organisation's main focus is informing employees about CSR initiatives that are connected to business, in this case how their products create a more sustainable world. This information is also very focused on the environmental aspects of CSR.

One employee expressed disappointment wondering why more was not being done, especially in terms of local CSR initiatives (employee_5). Awareness of CSR initiatives actually seemed to be higher in the production sites. The employee interviewed from production was aware of several initiatives that were ongoing at the factory, for example cutting down on energy usage, buying material locally as much as possible and setting up goals for reducing emissions (employee_9). Despite this general lack of insight on ongoing activities, most employees and managers were confident that *everyone* knew about Alfa Laval's sustainable values. As put by an employee from the HR department, *'everyone knows that [sustainability] is our core business'* (employee_2). Yet when asked about how they were aware of the company's CSR efforts, employee_1 shared that the internal communication may not be that good after all, *'I've actually taken in more information from the external channels than the internal'*. Another HR employee meant that although *everyone* knows that Alfa Laval is a company that focuses on sustainability, it is more in relation to the products, but if you dig deeper the level awareness of the company's other CSR initiatives is substantially low (employee_3).

What must be taken into consideration before being too critical towards Alfa Laval is that employee unawareness does not equal lack of CSR initiatives. Ng et al. (2018) mean that just because employees are unaware of CSR efforts it does not mean that the organisation does not engage in CSR activities. Low CSR perception among employees may just be the result of the company being bad at creating internal awareness.

An example of this arose when interviewing an employee who was personally involved in CSR activities. His statements included *'because I am involved I know that a lot more is being done'* and *'I know myself, we do a lot and the other day I thought, we should inform how much money we invested in safety in 2018, for example'*. He also acknowledged that different levels of awareness existed internally, meaning that employees in departments where work does not revolve around sustainability on a daily basis, most likely knew nothing about the CSR initiatives that existed at Alfa Laval. Thereby, he argued that much more could be done in terms of strategically communicating CSR efforts and that it currently was an *untapped potential* (employee_7).

Regarding awareness, department and position seemed to determine how knowledgeable employees were in terms of Alfa Laval's CSR initiatives. This was realized when interviewing an employee working more hands-on with the products regarding their awareness of the SDGs:

In my daily work, I don't hear that much about it [sustainability]. It's more about saving money and making it [the product] more effective. Somehow that is what I hear the most, then of course one wants to be environmental too but it's not like we talk about that a lot in my job at least. (employee_6)

Increased awareness was created among employees that worked in departments where managers took the responsibility to communicate about CSR initiatives. One interviewee confirmed this saying that awareness of CSR came down to the managers of each department and what they prioritized when communicating to their employees (employee_9).

Unfortunately, it did not strike me that communicating effectively about CSR was something managers commonly did as few participants mentioned sustainability being brought up during department meetings. It was, however, something that was being worked on, getting managers to understand how the company works with sustainability and how important it is. This had been the main focus of the Head of Sustainability which exhibited that working towards raising CSR awareness among employees in all departments was on the agenda.

All employees were familiar with the implementation of the SDGs *on a superficial level*, mostly due to the company's annual Christmas speech but also because large colourful boxes with each goal were placed in the headquarters. Nevertheless, not many could account for what the goals literally entailed or how the company and its employees could benefit from them. It was visible that employees had not taken part in any consultative or decisional participation (Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003) since implementing the SDGs and were involved solely on an informative basis but even so, the awareness was bleak which was said to come down to a lack of resources (manager_1). One employee expressed dismay over the fact that many employees most likely did not know much about how important the SDGs actually are *'I think that's something that one could really really target'* (employee_4).

5.3 Internal channels of CSR communication

Understanding how Alfa Laval communicated about CSR initiatives meant also learning about which channels were used. In a multinational company like Alfa Laval, internal channels are vital for the organisation to communicate on different matters to sites all around the world. It is obvious that certain channels are preferred above others and different channels have different levels of effectivity and engage stakeholders in different ways (Men, 2014). When companies engage in CSR initiatives, they use various channels to spread their CSR messages and engage their stakeholders (Du et al., 2011). The interviewees enabled me to understand which channels of communication were most commonly used to spread information about CSR initiatives. There were vague mentions of CSR initiatives being communicated through LinkedIn, YouTube (external channels), emails and poster extracts on the walls from the annual magazine, *Here*. One employee working in global sales mentioned that department meetings were a source of CSR communication, but this seemed obvious as sustainability '*is a strong sales argument*' (employee_10). Overall, face-to-face communication seemed infrequent as a channel of CSR communication '*there's less of that I would say*' (employee_4). Using magazines and posters to inform internal stakeholder about CSR initiatives again signalizes the adaptation of the stakeholder information strategy as the content is used with the sole purpose to inform (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

The channels that were repeatedly mentioned by interviewees as the main channels used to communicate CSR efforts was the intranet *Share*, the magazine *Here* and the annual Christmas speech. Therefore, these three channels have been the focus of this section.

5.3.1 *Share: The Intranet*

Various statements by participants proved that the intranet, *Share*, was the most popular channel of communication used by the company to communicate about all forms of corporate news, activities and other information relating to business. There was not one single interviewee who did not mention *Share* when asked about how they received information that related to CSR. One participant explicitly expressed that *Share* was the primary communication channel used to spread CSR information to employees (employee_4). Although most interviewees could also list other communication channels used to spread CSR information, one employee considered *Share* to be the only channel used to spread information about CSR efforts and could not think of any other channels that had been used (employee_9). *Share* was also the channel where

employees were made aware of the company's implementation of the SDGs *'it must have been through the intranet Share'* (employee_10). In general, Share was the communication channel that informed employees about any ongoing CSR initiatives or specific activities *'what is communicated is through the news on the intranet'* (employee_7).

Alfa Laval's Head of Sustainability agreed that the intranet was the main source of CSR information.

The main channel in my perspective and maybe I'm missing things, the main channel we communicate with is the intranet, and therefore the news flow that comes there to some extent touches the sustainability arena, but I'm not sure that employees that are not directly working with it understand the link, so even if we have articles about how important it is with health and safety or how you should work with, or that there's a mandatory course open for anti-bribery and anti-corruption or that we have goals in energy and this is how we work, I'm not sure the individual employee adds up one plus one plus one equals this means that we work with sustainability. But rather they see the news as a singled-out news piece.

However, despite seeming to be the most popular communication channel for the company to use in regard to spreading CSR information, not all employees were in agreement with how well Share was used to inform employees about CSR initiatives. The frequency of posting was one issue.

Where I come into contact with it [CSR information] is on our intranet where news is released every now and then but it's not very frequent. (employee_7)

Another issue was the intranet's limited reachability. One employee brought up the fact that to log onto Share, one had to have access to a computer. This meant that blue collars within the company that had no own computer probably had no access to Share and are therefore slightly *forgotten* in the CSR communication process (employee_3). This dependency on a personal

computer is negative for Alfa Laval as the majority of the organisations' 17,000 employees do not work in the headquarters and most likely do not have daily access to a computer. It then becomes questionable how much they actually know about any ongoing CSR initiatives.

Interviewees also lifted forward the fact that there was an information overflow on Share. This way information on CSR initiatives was easily lost. This is a common fault of organisations, by sharing CSR information on the intranet that gets "tucked away" under all other information which results in missing out on the opportunity to connect with employees regarding CSR initiatives (Bhattacharya et al., 2008). Thereby, the intranet may not be an ideal communication channel as the information that is shared is often mixed up with a great number of other information being sent out by the company that does not relate to CSR (Ndlovu et al., 2015).

One employee complained that the overflow of internal communication on Share meant that employees often had to actively seek out what they wanted to read (employee_9). Another employee expressed the same:

It's nearly impossible to take in all the information that is sent out and then it comes down to interest or what you are focused on at that moment and when it's sent out, because if you have a lot to do then maybe you don't have the possibility to take in all the information so it's put aside and then you might not even log on to Share. (employee_1)

Based on the above-mentioned statements, I argue here that other forms of communication need to be taken into consideration if the current communication is focused on channels that do not guarantee to reach the whole employee base due to lack of time or lack of interest to read about what is shared. The extent to which information can spread across the whole organisation is dependent on what channels of communication are used (Wood, 1999), and if Share is the most commonly used channel but only accessible to employees with computers, it is not sufficient. Even within the stakeholder information strategy (Morsing & Schultz, 2006), a company's focus should be to ensure that their CSR actions are effectively communicated to all stakeholders. With an overflow of information on the intranet that leads to information on CSR actions being *lost*, the CSR communication is not as effective as the company may hope it to be. Internet-based communication tools such as the intranet may act as a great way for

organisations to spread information and present their CSR agenda (Capriotti, 2011) but if they do not function as tools to enter into dialogue with stakeholders, they remain informative.

Employee awareness of CSR initiatives drives results (Raub & Blunschi, 2014) which is why I argue how important it is for a company to choose ways of communicating that will create a guaranteed unified internal awareness, for example through open dialogue and participation or setting specific internal goals and encouraging employees to help achieve these on a daily basis. Most specifically, a company should ensure that these types of communication channels like the intranet reach every section within the organisation. Based on the interview responses, the intranet is not a communication channel that involves dialogue, nor does it seem to reach every employee within the company.

5.3.2 *Here Magazine*

Another communication channel used by Alfa Laval to inform employees about CSR initiatives was the 2018/2019 edition of the annual corporate magazine *Here*. This edition was specifically used to communicate about the company's alignment with the SDGs and how each goal related to business. The magazine that is each year distributed externally was this year also distributed internally, '*Here magazine has been sent to most employees*' (manager_1) although *most employees* seemed to mean employees within the headquarters, '*it has been distributed in Lund to all employees*' (manager_2).

The majority of the employees I interviewed mentioned that they had received the magazine and that excerpts of the magazine had been made into posters that could be found in the corridors in the main office building. One employee conveyed that the magazine was a good channel of communication as people who did not work with CSR issues could get easily informed about the company's CSR commitments by reading it (employee_3). Another employee was certain that *everyone* had received the magazine but that it was questionable who read it.

I mean everyone has been given the magazine, so yeah, everyone has that, but how many actually read it I don't know.
(employee_1)

Employee_11 stressed the fact that *Here* magazine was a good channel of communication to be informed about the SDGs and Alfa Laval's CSR initiatives in line with the goals but showed

that interest steered its success. As lifted forward in the awareness section, interest was one main factor of whether employees were aware of CSR initiatives. It can be argued again that using channels that are based on one-way communication to communicate about CSR efforts makes the company's overall CSR communication very weak.

Also, the fact that the magazine seemed to have only been distributed inside the headquarter office building, '*it's an external magazine but it's visible in all our offices*' (manager_2), makes it a very limited channel of communication in relation to the remaining employees in Sweden and around the world.

Alfa Laval's Head of Sustainability was certain that the magazine would have a big effect on employees, stating '*I think that the magazine is going to shape the whole employee view on this*'. However, I argue that if the magazine only reaches a very limited employee base and is only read out of interest, it may not be as effective as a channel of CSR communication as hoped for by management. An example of this channel of communication, (with the important purpose of informing employees of Alfa Laval's work with the SDGs and other CSR initiatives) not being used well enough, was when an employee working in the production facility admitted that they had never even seen the magazine or knew anything about it (employee_9). This suggests that most CSR communication is concentrated to the headquarter office building. Other employees that did not work with sustainability related tasks admitted that although they had received the magazine, they had not had time to read it as it was not a primary interest of theirs (employee_5, employee_6).

5.3.3 Annual Christmas Speech

Every year in December, the 1,100 employees that work in Lund gather together with top management and a Christmas speech is held by Alfa Laval's local site manager. The 2018 Christmas speech was focused on the SDGs and in connection with the speech, colourful boxes with each goal were presented in the form of a Christmas tree. As the interview questions incorporated questions about how Alfa Laval communicated about the SDGs as to understand how a new CSR framework was communicated when implemented in a large company, much interview data included answers that showed awareness of the goals. The annual Christmas speech was mentioned as the primary oral communication channel used to raise awareness of the global goals among Lund based employees. Although positive that the latest edition of Here magazine and last year's Christmas speech were mainly focused on the latest agenda for

sustainability, it is not clear if it is common that CSR initiatives have been communicated through these two channels in previous years. However, as put forward by one employee '*it [sustainability] has been lifted forward a lot in the last two years*' (employee_11), which could mean that internal CSR communication is more on the agenda. Although interviewees were aware of the Christmas speech having been used as an oral channel to communicate about the 'new' addition to working with sustainability, it was a speech that employees might only have listened to if they were interested in CSR.

It [sustainability] is presented quite well but the question is if you are willing to listen to what is being presented. When we had the Christmas speech we had these sustainability goals like a big Christmas tree, they were there, everyone saw them, but if you don't take in the message then it's hard to influence...
(employee_8)

Employees that worked more hands on with the products were also aware of the SDGs, which was contrary to their lack of knowledge of Alfa Laval's general CSR initiatives (employee_6, employee_9). Therefore, one can argue that the Christmas speech was an effective way of communicating about sustainability initiatives locally, as all employees from the Lund site were present. Unlike the indirect communication channels such as the intranet and the magazine, the Christmas speech gives the company the possibility to communicate to all local employees directly, face-to-face. Nonetheless, the Christmas speech was based on one-way communication instead of two-way which implies that the three main communication channels used in the last year by Alfa Laval were primarily one-way communication channels. All three channels indicate that stakeholder participation is merely on an informative level and the company clearly uses the stakeholder information strategy as no proper dialogue is present (Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003; Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

5.4 Involving employees in CSR activities

Based on Morsing & Schultz's (2006) CSR communication strategies, effective internal CSR communication for a company means engaging in two-way communication and involving employees in CSR decisions and initiatives. It has already been concluded in the previous section that the main channels of internal CSR communication according to employees are more

about informing employees and less about engaging them in CSR decisions and initiatives. Aside from using communication channels to inform there are ways to involve employees in CSR activities, through workshops, pro-active stakeholder dialogue or other means that allow employees to contribute towards CSR activities instead of merely being receivers (Ndlovu et al., 2015). As Raub & Blunschi (2014) set forward, “awareness of organizational engagement in CSR can be facilitated when CSR initiatives are implemented in such a way that they allow for active participation of employees” (p.16).

It was mentioned that introduction courses were held three times a year which involved informing new employees about the company’s CSR work including the SDGs. Yet these introduction courses also lean more towards informative participation (Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003), as the managers in charge of the introduction courses decide what information is sent out to newly employed staff. These courses do not necessarily need to involve consultative or decisional participation as they are solely for introductory purposes, which may be the most suitable participation process in this case. Other initiatives may require other levels of participation (Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003).

In Lund, there were several smaller local CSR initiatives in place which many of the employees mentioned, such as food waste calculations in the canteen, recycling facilities in each department and encouraging employees to buy electric cars by providing electrical charging stations. Employees in HR seemed to be involved in larger CSR initiatives such as gender equality initiatives focusing on employing more women and creating a more diverse working environment. Yet when asked about any form of overarching corporate CSR involvement, several employees stated that they had never heard about any CSR related activities existing where employees actively participated (employee_5, employee_7, employee_3).

When managers were asked about the same thing, there was a common agreement that involving employees in CSR activities was a weak point for the company (manager_1, manager_4). This was conveyed more clearly by the Head of Sustainability when asked if activities were present to actively involve employees in CSR initiatives *‘no regretfully not, we are a bit weak on that side. It has to do with resources’*. She also expressed that:

I think we're quite weak at using our employees as stakeholders, but figuring out a way of getting people involved, I think it is a good idea and there are a lot of people that for example want to volunteer. Back to the CSR point, I've gotten a lot of questions about whether people can volunteer and I think we're a bit weak there as well because we only have one global project we work with from a CSR perspective and then we have very many local things but it's very much associated to sports and we don't have a real... we are very keen on helping kids but other than that we don't have a special focus. Getting people engaged is a tough project in a big company.

The statement that Alfa Laval is weak at using employees as stakeholders is a weakness in itself, especially as employees are often emphasized as key stakeholders and one of the most important assets to a company (Ditlev-Simonsen & Brøgger, 2013). The Stakeholder Participation Typology and the Stakeholder CSR Communication Strategies both focus on the benefits that companies can reap from involving stakeholders. If employees are considered a less important stakeholder than other stakeholders, it affects the level of to which they are involved in CSR initiatives which in turn can lead to what Argenti (1998) argues, alienating employees from the company's overarching CSR work which does not benefit employees or the company in any way in the long-run.

5.4.1 One-way or Two-way communication

Aside from researching which CSR activities employees were involved in, the interviews also aimed to understand whether Alfa Laval engages in dialogue with internal stakeholders in regard to current and future CSR decisions and initiatives. What was unfortunately not discovered which could be due to the lack of questions not touching upon employee feedback enough was whether the company sent out surveys or polls to find out which CSR matters were important to internal stakeholders.

However, the interviewees were asked if they ever had the possibility to give feedback regarding CSR decisions and if they believed that employees had a "voice" to share opinions and other matters relating to CSR. A few employees mentioned that Alfa Laval was a very open organisation and if one needed to voice an opinion or give feedback on an issue related to

anything including CSR, the possibility existed ‘*you can always go to your boss and have an open dialogue*’ (employee_10). The managerial viewpoint on this was that Alfa Laval was an open organisation giving employees the possibility to voice their concerns while being listened to.

At [Alfa Laval] there is freedom of speech and action so I don't believe that there is anyone who feels like they can't say what they think if you have an opinion about something that isn't right or if you think something different. (manager_4)

We are a company that has freedom of speech and action and to have engaged employees... that, you get by listening to them, so I believe that we do listen. (manager_2)

Whether feedback was encouraged by the company was unclear, as was how employees would be able to give feedback if they wanted to and whether two-way communication was prevalent. Two interviewees mentioned that every post on the intranet had commentary fields as an example of ways that employees could leave feedback on information that was posted. Even so, comments were not anonymous and the frequency of them was sporadic. I argue that the downside of this is that every intranet user can see who has posted what on which post which may lead to a fear of commenting in the first place. Thereby the commentary field is an ineffective way of involving employees and receiving feedback. This type of feedback option appears to be two-way asymmetrical, and leans more towards the stakeholder response strategy than the stakeholder involvement strategy, with employees acting as responders as opposed to being actively engaged in the initiative from the start (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Even if extensive feedback in the commentary fields was given in the form of opinions on CSR initiatives from employees, it would at most help the company understand that their internal stakeholders have understood the information, i.e. the feedback would only act as responses. However, the impression given by the interviewees points more towards the commentary fields not really being used and therefore no feedback is given, resulting in the fact that not even asymmetrical two-way communication is present (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

Perceptions of the company's CSR communication being top-down, bottom-up, one-way or two-way differed among interviewees. Employees admitted that the communication was still

top-down and that it did yet not flow both ways (employee_3, employee_4, employee_6, employee_10) with one employee giving the example of the Christmas speech. Another employee meant that CSR communication could also be bottom-up as discussions were often held at the production sites with managers regarding issues such as health and safety and other CSR relating projects (employee_11). One interviewee working close with sustainability issues uttered that Alfa Laval did unfortunately not engage in dialogue with internal stakeholders regarding CSR initiatives *'It [CSR communication] is quite one-way I would say'* (employee_4).

5.4.2 Opinions on participation

The Head of Sustainability was aware of that involving employees to an increased extent in CSR initiatives would be positive *'I think doing more of those kinds of seminars [relating to CSR] would make sense'* but that the company yet does not communicate enough internally *'In sustainability as a whole we have been a very introverted company. I think we communicate too little as a whole'*. The company's PR manager admitted that *'internal communication has been slightly rigidly treated'*.

An employee working more on an international level with Alfa Laval's 27 sales offices around the world, was the only participant to express that employee feedback was often encouraged and listened to within his department

We have had a lot of questions [from employees] regarding building systems to take care of discharge water or water that we use in our service processes that gets dirty, how we should clean it and what we should use it for. So that has been taken in as feedback and we have started a global project where we try to, we are developing a new standard, so that we can have that type of wastewater treatment plant in our service centres.
(employee_7)

This reveals that certain international service centres have entered into decisional participation (Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003) with employees, listening to ideas and making decisions based on stakeholder perspectives. In terms of the stakeholder involvement strategy, an on-going dialogue between the company and its stakeholders is present (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). This

fits to what the Head of Sustainability explained about Alfa Laval ‘*we are an extremely decentralized company, it takes longer to permeate the organisation*’ which suggests that stakeholders are involved in different ways, depending on where they are based within the company and the level of participation in CSR activities that the manager of that site encourages.

There was a shared interest among employees to be involved in CSR initiatives on a higher level. It was considered that if participation opportunities existed, many would be willing to take part.

I believe that many think it [CSR] is really interesting and really important and many feel a sense of pride to be working for Alfa Laval and I think this pride is enhanced if it [CSR] is highlighted more. (employee_4)

One of my interviewees pointed to the fact that participation in CSR initiatives should start with getting employees to understand what benefits it has for their day-to-day work duties

I think it is an advantage to connect it [CSR] to employees’ daily work tasks so that it doesn’t become a separate happening, but that you actually incorporate the activities into everyday work life because that’s when it starts to become alive. (employee_1)

In fact, Raub & Blunschi (2014) set forward that employees are more likely to be aware of CSR initiatives that impact their personal work environment.

Despite an interest being present among employees to participate more in CSR activities, I believe that they are not yet aware of how they could participate on a decisional level (Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003) and what benefits this would have. The employees mentioned the will to be involved in learning more about CSR initiatives than what they knew already, but as stakeholder participation currently seems to be informative, drastic changes would be needed for participation to become decisional (Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003). Based on the stakeholder involvement strategy, Alfa Laval would need to help employees understand how their active involvement in CSR initiatives could support the company’s overall image. The

first step, however, would be undertaking the stakeholder response strategy, encouraging feedback and engaging in some form of dialogue (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

Green and Hunton-Clarke (2003) articulate that stakeholder participation processes require a lot of resources and dealing with stakeholders' perspectives is not always the easiest task. For companies to get better at welcoming stakeholder participation, they might need to change the whole way in which they work which could be necessary if the company wants to "move towards sustainable development" (p. 298).

5.5 Reaching out globally

When interviewing managers and employees in one location it becomes difficult to understand how CSR communication reaches the whole company and all the global hubs around the world. However, both employees and managers gave insight based on their perceptions into whether CSR communication permeates the organisation or not. Culture was a common topic among the interviewees, portraying the role national culture plays on CSR communication '*there are so many different cultures and one does things differently because that's how it's always been done in one's society*' (employee_7). One employee expressed the difficulties that exist for a multinational company operating in several countries with different cultures

I think it's one of the challenges in having a global company, that the same information maybe isn't receptive the same way everywhere, so then you have to, well, some will receive it in a good way but otherwise you have to tailor the information.
(employee_11)

Tailoring the information so that it reaches out properly is something that a company that operates in countries with different cultural settings needs to make sure to do. It is easy for companies to end up in a country where CSR policies differ or where policies that function in the home country do not work as well in the host market (Muller, 2006) and therefore managers should work on applying customized CSR strategies based on country and culture (Peng, Dashdeleg & Chih, 2012). Alfa Laval's PR manager stressed the need for CSR communication to reach out properly to global hubs as Alfa Laval operates in so many different cultures. While operating in countries where working with CSR on an economic, social and environmental level is not as forward as in Sweden, Alfa Laval has a *responsibility* and the *possibility* to drive

initiatives and *'demonstrate the opportunities and benefits of working with more sustainable processes'* (manager_2). Yet all managers admitted that it was a challenge for the company to communicate holistically about CSR when operating in various markets, accentuating that culturally, Sweden is further ahead on CSR matters than certain other parts of the world *'in certain places it's a bit like yeah yeah whatever, it feels distant in a way'* (manager_4).

The company only has one Head of Sustainability who is based in the headquarters. It is not a surprise that it is difficult for one manager to reach out globally and involve employees around the world in CSR initiatives. Currently, the notion given is that when internal stakeholders are involved in CSR initiatives, it is limited to the headquarters *'that's why we're so weak internally'* (manager_1). Which stakeholder CSR communication strategy (Morsing & Schultz, 2006) the company undertakes varies substantially within the company. With the company being as decentralized as it is, it is not easy to know which managers in which global hubs see CSR as a priority for employees. Aiming for the stakeholder involvement strategy (Morsing & Schultz, 2006) where all stakeholders in every location are involved in the processes of developing CSR initiatives does not come without difficulties, which is acknowledged *'I would like it to become global but how do you do that on a pragmatic basis?'* (manager_1). Effective stakeholder involvement requires an on-going dialogue (Morsing & Schultz, 2006) but as Kimiagari, Keivanpour, Mohiuddin & Van Horne (2013) declare, cultural and political frameworks can complicate this dialogue.

I have been able to draw the conclusion that Alfa Laval's CSR department is centralized but does not reach out enough globally. It was found that in India, China and Mexico there are managers that work with sustainability, which shows that CSR communication is both centralized and decentralized. Nevertheless, it was expressed that aside from the employees that work with CSR on a day to day basis, employees in the global hubs may not be aware of Alfa Laval's sustainability work, *'I think people out in the global hubs are more hands on in their day to day'* (manager_1). Transferring CSR initiatives globally and involving employees from around the world is a difficult task for the company yet it is crucial that multinational companies deal with the challenges of stakeholder involvement and configure the relationship between headquarters and local and global stakeholders (Kimiagari et al., 2013). Global hubs need to follow a polycentric approach by adapting CSR initiatives and strategies to local conditions (Looise & Drucker, 2001). However, is difficult to know if this is being done without input from employees and managers in these hubs.

One employee working in global sales mentioned that sustainability managers are present in global hubs and therefore CSR is communicated on some level to all employees within the organisation (employee_10). What can be concluded from these findings, is that the level of participation varies in relation to several factors, for example global site managers' attitudes to CSR. Green & Hunton-Clarke (2003) argue that "the level of initiated participation will ultimately depend on priorities, culture and values of the company" which could be the basis for why participation in headquarter ordered CSR initiatives stays on the informative level as the priorities of the company are not to involve employees in the global production sites in CSR initiatives. Findings show that this is mainly due to lack of resources in the CSR department, *'I don't really have the time or the resources to do it.'* (manager_1). However, as employee_7 responsible for health, safety and environment in the global service centres revealed, stakeholder participation can be on a higher level in terms of local CSR initiatives depending on which resources exist in that location, *'it's about how many local resources you have'* (employee_8).

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to gather insight into a Scandinavian (most specifically Swedish) multinational CSR frontrunner's internal CSR communication as Scandinavian companies have been thought to listen to and involve internal stakeholders in CSR decision-making and activities on a higher level, due to their inclusive leadership style, in comparison to companies in other parts of the world (Ditlev-Simonsen & Brøgger, 2013). Researching employee and managerial perspectives was considered important as previous literature shows that there is a shortage of the "insider view" concerning companies' CSR communication and employee involvement in CSR activities. The study has provided in-depth knowledge on how a Swedish multinational organisation communicates about CSR initiatives internally and whether the communication also involves employee participation. The findings revealed several themes that led to a greater understanding of the company's CSR communication including: CSR and its meaning to internal stakeholders; employee awareness of CSR initiatives; internal channels of CSR; involving employees in CSR activities and reaching out globally. By conducting thematic analysis of the interview data collected from interviews with managers and employees at Alfa Laval in Lund and by applying the theoretical framework of the participation typology and communication strategies, I was able to answer this thesis' two research questions: *How does Alfa Laval communicate CSR to internal stakeholders?* and *How does Alfa Laval use CSR communication to involve employees in CSR initiatives?*

To summarize, CSR values seem to be integrated into the company's overall organisational culture despite employees not being actively involved in CSR decisions and initiatives. Employees are well aware of that Alfa Laval lays emphasis on developing products that provide the most sustainable solutions for customers and assist in protecting the environment. This aligns with Bhattacharya et al. (2008) findings that although employees have an idea that they work for a socially responsible company, they are still very much unaware of the specific CSR activities that the company engages in, such as the social and economic aspects of CSR. The interviewees gave the impression that the organisation focuses its CSR communication on highlighting how their products benefit the environment instead of incorporating employees in all forms of CSR decision-making and initiatives.

Green and Hunton-Clarke's (2003) Stakeholder Participation Typology and Morsing and Schultz's (2006) Stakeholder CSR Communication Strategies assisted in providing a more interesting analysis. The participation typology was used more analytically than critically as there is no 'ideal' level of participation, it all comes down to which level matches which decision. The communication strategies were applied using a more critical stance. The two models allowed for conclusions to be drawn that the company is yet not engaging in strategic CSR communication. Both the theoretical models made it clear that CSR communication that is solely informative, is not securing all the effective benefits that exist.

In the headquarters, CSR communication is for the most part on an informative level and internal stakeholders participate in CSR decisions on an informative participation level (Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003). Alfa Laval is yet not using the stakeholder involvement strategy which would be the most effective strategy to use regarding communicating on CSR initiatives to employees (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Unfortunately, employees are not aware of that other levels of participation could benefit both themselves and the company. One large problem that arose from the stakeholder information strategy being primarily used by Alfa Laval was that too much information was sent out. This elevated the risk of CSR communication not even reaching its informative participation (Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003) potential if employees with a lack of interest or no access to a computer did not receive the information.

Employees' awareness of CSR initiatives was based on the information they receive via the main communication channels, which are to a large extent one-way communication channels. Only the intranet provides the possibility for the company to engage in two-way asymmetrical communication, which ideally incorporates the use of Morsing & Schultz's (2006) stakeholder response strategy, but as feedback is voluntary and not encouraged on the intranet, the company is in fact still using the stakeholder information strategy. CSR decisions are being made without internal stakeholder participation and communication is currently more one-way. The lack of two-way communication on CSR initiatives is acknowledged by sustainability management and there exists an inclination to involve employees more in CSR initiatives yet a lack of resources does not make it possible to face this challenge.

This does not coordinate with the "Scandinavian management" that Morsing et al. (2007) discuss, which involves employee involvement and dialogue. Instead, it seems that Morsing & Schultz's (2006) argument that there is little evidence that two-way communication processes

are the norm in companies still adheres. This seems to come down to Alfa Laval being a decentralized organisation, which affects the way CSR is communicated as it is often up to each department manager which level of participation to engage employees in regarding CSR issues. Site and location seemed to steer both the communication strategy used and the level of participation. It was found that some departments or production sites outside of the headquarters, do engage employees in consultative and decisional participation (Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003), and use either the stakeholder response or involvement strategy (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Based on the answers collected from the interviews, it would be beneficial for Alfa Laval's headquarters to adopt an overarching stakeholder involvement strategy (Morsing & Schultz, 2006) for CSR initiatives which would provide opportunities for employee dialogue and participation across the whole organisation, leading to long-term benefits for the company. From this study, it can be concluded that Alfa Laval is for the most part weak at using CSR communication to involve employees in CSR initiatives.

6.1. Contributions and future research

As research on CSR communication especially in relation to internal stakeholders is very slim, I have been able to contribute to the field by providing valuable insight into how a Scandinavian multinational company positions itself towards communicating CSR internally. The study expands the existing research scope of internal CSR communication currently focused on the environmental aspects, to all aspects of CSR: economic, social and environmental. It also looks at how a company communicates new CSR frameworks that come into action, by understanding how the SDGs have been communicated to employees. The study also contributes to the field of strategic communication as CSR communication is part of a company's strategic communication approach towards satisfying stakeholders. Strategic communication also incorporates internal communication (Falkheimer & Heide, 2014) which suggests that CSR communication needs to be strategic not only externally but also internally.

This study has also provided the case company with insight into how their current internal CSR communication is perceived by employees and which strategies for communicating and involving employees could be beneficial for the future. As the scope of the study is limited due to adopting a single case study approach, conducting a multiple case study and interviewing employees and managers from multiple organizations would give a broader view of how multinationals use internal communication to communicate about their CSR initiatives. Due to the decentralized nature of Alfa Laval it was difficult to get an accurate picture of the company's

internal CSR communication. This study therefore only really provides proper insight into the headquarters. By doing cross-cultural interviews, a better picture of Alfa Laval's internal CSR communication and employee involvement in CSR initiatives would have been given. This is something that should be considered in future research when conducting a similar study on a multinational company.

Future studies could either continue looking at the Scandinavian context to add to the existing limited body of research or they could broaden the field of CSR communication even further by researching companies in middle-income or developing countries. This would provide both valuable and interesting insight into how companies use internal communication in countries where CSR tends to be approached differently compared to developed countries. Several themes that emerged from the data but weren't used could be useful for further research, most notably organisational CSR culture. Given that the employee level of awareness of Alfa Laval as a sustainable company in terms of their products is high, it would be interesting to further explore why multinational companies that put so much emphasis on sustainability and implement sustainability into their culture, do not communicate about and involve employees more in CSR decisions and initiatives that encompass economic, social and environmental issues.

References

- Adams, W. (2015). Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews. In J. Wholey, H. Hatry & K. Newcomer (Eds.) *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*, (pp.492-505), Jossey Bass
- Aguinis, H. (2011). Organizational responsibility: doing good and doing well. In S. Zedeck (Ed.). *APA handbook of industrial and organizational psychology, Vol. 3. Maintaining, expanding, and contracting the organization*, (pp. 855-879). Washington DC, US: American Psychological Association.
- Aguinis, H., & Glavas, A. (2012). What We Know and Don't Know About Corporate Social Responsibility. *Journal of Management*, 38(4), 932–968
- Alfa Laval. (n.d.-a). Our Company. Retrieved from <https://www.alfalaval.com/about-us/our-company/>
- Alfa Laval. (n.d.-b). Sustainability – a matter of trust. Retrieved from <https://www.alfalaval.com/about-us/sustainability/a-matter-of-trust/>
- Alfa Laval. (n.d.-c). Contribution to the UN Global Goals. Retrieved from <https://www.alfalaval.com/about-us/sustainability/a-matter-of-trust/alfa-laval-contributes-to-the-global-goals/>
- Alvesson, M., & Skoldberg, K. (2009). *Reflexive methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). London; Los Angeles: Sage.
- Angus-Leppan, T., Metcalf, L., & Benn, S. (2009). Leadership styles and CSR practice: an examination of sensemaking, institutional drivers and CSR leadership. *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal*, 24(5)
- Argenti, P.A. (1998). Strategic Employee Communications. *Human Resource Management*, 37(3-4), 199-206.
- Arvidsson, S. (2010). Communication of Corporate Social Responsibility: A Study of the Views of Management Teams in Large Companies. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 96(3), 339–354.
- Bailey, J. (2008). First steps in qualitative data analysis: transcribing. *Family Practice*, 25(2), 127–131
- Barrett, D.J. (2002). Change communication: using strategic employee communication to facilitate major change, *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 7(4), 219-31.
- Bartlett, J. and Devin, B. (2011) 'Management, Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility', in Ø. Ihlen, J.L. Bartlett and S. May (Eds.) *The Handbook of Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility*, (pp. 47–66). Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell.

- Benbasat, I., Goldstein, D., Mead, M. (1987). The Case Research Strategy in Studies of Information Systems Case Research. *MIS quarterly*, 11(3), 369–386.
- Berends, L., & Johnston, J. (2005). Using multiple coders to enhance qualitative analysis: The case of interviews with consumers of drug treatment. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 13(4), 373–381
- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The Social Construction of Reality*. New York, NY: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group Inc.
- Bergman, A. (2018, March 8). Alfa Laval vinner miljöpris. *Sjöfartstidningen*. Retrieved from <https://www.sjofartstidningen.se/alfa-laval-vinner-miljopris/>
- Bhatia, K., & Balani, M. (21-22 November, 2015). Effective internal communication: A crucial factor affecting employee performance. *Proceedings of International Conference on Management, Economics and Social Sciences*, Dubai.
- Bhattacharya, C. B., Sen, S., & Korschun, D. (2007). Corporate social responsibility as an internal marketing strategy. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 49(1), 1–29
- Bhattacharya, C.B., Sen, S., & Korschun, D. (2008). Using Corporate Social Responsibility to Win the War for Talent. *MIT Sloan Management Review*. 49. 37-44
- Blair, E. (2015). A reflexive exploration of two qualitative data coding techniques. *Journal of Methods and Measurement in the Social Sciences*, 6(1), 14-29
- Borca, C. and Baesu, V. (2014). A Possible Managerial Approach for Internal Organizational Communication Characterization. *Social and Behavioural Sciences*, Vol. 124, 496-503
- Bowen, H. R. (1953). *Social responsibilities of the businessman*. New York, NY: Harper & Row
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2), 77-101.
- Brunner, C.B. & Langner, T. (2017). Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility for Brands. In S. Diehl, M. Karmasin, B. Mueller, R. Terlutter & F. Weder (Eds.) *Handbook of Integrated CSR Communication*. Springer International Publishing, 149-169
- Brunton, M., Eweje, G., & Taskin, N. (2015). Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility to Internal Stakeholders: Walking the Walk or Just Talking the Talk? *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 26(1), 31–48.
- Bryman, A. (2011). *Social research methods*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2011). *Business research methods*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

- Capriotti, P. (2011). 'Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility through the Internet and Social Media'. In Ø. Ihlen, J. L. Bartlett, & S. May (Eds.), *Handbook of Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility* (pp. 358-378). Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell.
- Carroll, A.B (1979). A Three-Dimensional Conceptual Model of Corporate Social Performance. *Academy of Management Review*, 4(4), 497–505.
- Carroll, A.B. (1991). The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders. *Business Horizons*, 34(4), 39-48
- Carroll, A. (1999). Corporate social responsibility: Evolution of a definitional construct. *Business & Society*, 38(3), 268-295
- Carroll, A.B (2008). A History of Corporate Social Responsibility: Concepts and Practices. In A. Crane, A. McWilliams, D. Matten, J. Moon & D. Siegel (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility* (pp. 19-45). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
- Carroll, A.B & Shabana, K. (2010). The Business Case for Corporate Social Responsibility: A Review of Concepts, Research and Practice. *International Journal of Management Reviews*. 12.
- Cavaye, A.L.M. (1996). Case study research: a multi-faceted research approach for IS. *Information Systems Journal*, 6(3), 227-242
- Chen, YRR & Hung-Baesecke, CJF. (2014). Examining the Internal Aspect of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Leader Behavior and Employee CSR Participation, *Communication Research Reports*, 31(2), 210-220
- Cheney, G., & Christensen, L. (2001) Organizational identity: linkages between internal and external communication. In F. Jablin & L. Putnam (Eds.) *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication*, Sage Publications
- Cohen, E., & Taylor, S., Muller-Camen, M. (n.d.). *SHRM Foundation Executive Briefing HR's Role in Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability*. Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/foundation/ourwork/initiatives/building-an-inclusive-culture/Documents/HR's%20Role%20in%20Corporate%20Social%20Responsibility.pdf>
- Cramer, J. (2005). Company learning about corporate social responsibility. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 14(4), 255–266
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. London, UK: Sage Publications

- Darke, P., Shanks, G., & Broadbent, M. (1998). Successfully completing case study research: combining rigour, relevance and pragmatism. *Information Systems Journal*, 8(4), 273–289.
- Davis, K. (1960). Can business afford to ignore social responsibilities? *California Management Review*, 2, 70-76.
- Dawkins, J. (2005). Corporate responsibility: The communication challenge, *Journal of Communication Management*, 9(2), 108 – 119
- Ditlev-Simonsen, C.D, & Brøgger, B. (2013). CSR and Employee Motivation. In A. Midttun (Ed.), *CSR and Beyond – A Nordic Perspective* (pp. 117-134). Oslo, Norway: Cappelen Damm AS
- Dortok, A. (2006). A Managerial Look at the Interaction Between Internal Communication and Corporate Reputation. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 8(4), 322–338.
- Du, S., Bhattacharya, C., & Sen, S. (2010). Maximizing Business Returns to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): The Role of CSR Communication. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 12(1), 8–19.
- Dubois, A., & Gadde, L.-E. (2002). Systematic combining: an abductive approach to case research. *Journal of Business Research*, 55(7), 553–560.
- Duthler, G., & Dhanesh, G. S. (2018). The role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and internal CSR communication in predicting employee engagement: Perspectives from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). *Public Relations Review*, 44(4), 453–462
- Falkheimer, J. & Heide, M. (2014). From Public Relations to Strategic Communication in Sweden. The Emergence of a Transboundary Field of Knowledge. *Nordicom Review*, 35(2), 123-138
- Fernando, S., Lawrence, S., Kelly, M. & Arunachalam, M. (2015). CSR practices in Sri Lanka: an exploratory analysis, *Social Responsibility Journal*, 11(4), 868-892
- Fiksel, J.; Axelrod, R. A. and Russell, S. (2005). Inside Out: Sustainability Begins at the Workplace. *Green@Work Magazine*. Summer Special Issue.
- Fisher, V. (2017). An International Analysis of CSR Rankings and a Country's Culture, *Senior Honors Theses*. 561. Retrieved from <http://commons.emich.edu/honors/561>
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making social science matter: why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again*. Oxford, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Friedman, M. (1970, September 13). The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits, *The New York Times*, Retrieved from <https://www.bncapital.ch/files/friedman.pdf>
- Gazzola, P. & Mella, P. (2016). Can CSR Influence Employees Satisfaction? *The Annals of the University Oradea. Economic Sciences*. XXV. 485-493.

- Genç, R. (2017). The Importance of Communication in Sustainability & Sustainable Strategies. *Procedia Manufacturing*, 8, 511–516
- Gerring, J. (2004). What is a Case Study and What is it Good for? *The American Political Science Review*, 98(2), 341-354
- Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Methods of data collection in qualitative research: Interviews and focus groups. *British Dental Journal Official Journal*, 204(6), 291-295
- Gillham, B. (2000). *The Research Interview*. London, UK: A&C Black
- Glaser, B., & Holton, J. (2004). Remodeling Grounded Theory. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 5(2), 47-68
- Glavas, A. (2016). Corporate Social Responsibility and Employee Engagement: Enabling Employees to Employ More of Their Whole Selves at Work. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7.
- Golob, U., & Podnar, K. (2011). Corporate Social Responsibility Communication and Dialogue. In Ø. Ihlen, J. Bartlett & May, S. (Eds.) *The Handbook of Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility* (231–251) Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Gruber, V., Kaliauer, M., & Schlegelmilch, B. B. (2015). Improving the Effectiveness and Credibility of Corporate Social Responsibility Messaging. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 57(4), 397–409.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 191-215). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Grunig, J.E. and Hunt, T. (1984). *Managing Public Relations*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.
- Grunig, J. E. (1992). *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Haas, P., Levy, M., & Parson, E. (1992). Earth Summit: How should we judge UNCED's success. *Environment Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*. 34. 6-33.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Cultural consequences*. London, UK: Sage.
- Hofstede, G. (1994). *Cultures and organizations. Software of the mind*. London, UK: HarperCollins
- Ihlen, Ø., Bartlett, J. L., & May, S. (2011a). Corporate social responsibility and communication. In Ø. Ihlen, J. L. Bartlett, & S. May (Eds.), *Handbook of Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility* (pp. 3–23). Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell.

Ihlen, Ø., Bartlett, J. L., & May, S. (2011b). Conclusions and Take Away Points. In Ø. Ihlen, J. L. Bartlett, & S. May (Eds.), *Handbook of Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility* (pp. 3–23). Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell.

Ihlen, Ø., May, S., & Bartlett, J. (2014). Four Aces: Bringing Communication Perspectives to Corporate Social Responsibility. *Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility: Perspectives and Practice Critical Studies on Corporate Responsibility, Governance and Sustainability*, 25–39.

Jiang, H. (2017, October 8). Bridging Corporate Social Responsibility and Employee Communication [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://instituteforpr.org/bridging-corporate-social-responsibility-employee-communication/>

Jurisova, V. & Durkova, K. (2012). CSR communication and its impact on corporate image. *Review of Applied Socio-Economic Research, Pro Global Science Association*, 4(2), 145-149

Karanges, E., Johnston, K., Beatson, A., & Lings, I. (2015). The influence of internal communication on employee engagement: A pilot study. *Public Relations Review*, 41(1), 129–131

Kataria, A., Kataria, A., & Garg, R. (2013). Effective Internal Communication: A Way Towards Sustainability. *International Journal of Business Insights and Transformation*, 6(2), 46-52

Kim, S., & Ji, Y. (2017). Chinese Consumers' Expectations of Corporate Communication on CSR and Sustainability. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 24, 570– 588

Kimiagari, S., Keivanpour, S., Mohiuddin, M., & Horne, C. V. (2013). The Cooperation Complexity Rainbow: Challenges of Stakeholder Involvement in Managing Multinational Firms. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 8(22)

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kvale, S. (2007). *The Sage qualitative research kit. Doing interviews*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.

Lång, S. & Ivanova-Gongne, M. (2015). Strategic communication of CSR in global business networks: A semiotic perspective. 31st IMP conference, Kolding, Denmark, IMP Group

Lee, E.-M., Park, S.-Y. & Lee, H.-J. (2013). Employee perception of CSR activities: Its antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(10), 1716-1724

Lee, S.-Y., Zhang, W., & Abitbol, A. (2019). What makes CSR communication lead to CSR participation? Testing the mediating effects of CSR association, CSR credibility, and organization-public relationships. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 157(2), 413-429,

Levers, M.-J. D. (2013). Philosophical Paradigms, Grounded Theory, and Perspectives on Emergence. *SAGE Open*, 3(4)

Ligeti, G., & Oravecz, Á. (2008). CSR Communication of Corporate Enterprises in Hungary. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 84(2), 137–149

Looise, J. K., & Drucker, M. (2001). Employee participation in multinational enterprises. *Employee Relations*, 24(1), 29–52.

Lund Hansen, O. (2016, December 14). Re: Should business play a greater role in the SDGs? – Read what happened in our live Q&A [Discussion comment]. Retrieved from - <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/live/2016/dec/08/business-role-sdgs-un-debate-poverty>

Lund University, Aktuell Hållbarhet & Dagens Industri (2018). *Hållbara Bolag*. Sweden

Maon, F., Lindgreen, A., & Swaen, V. (2010). Organizational Stages and Cultural Phases: A Critical Review and a Consolidative Model of Corporate Social Responsibility Development. *International Journal of Management Reviews*. 12.

Matten, D., & Moon, J., (2005). Pan-European Approach: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding CSR. In A. Habisch, M. Wegner, R. Schmidpeter & J. Jonker (Eds.) *Corporate Social Responsibility Across Europe* (pp.335-356). Berlin, Germany: Springer

Mauthner, M.m Birch, M., Jessop, J. & Miller, T. (2002) *Ethics in Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications

May, S. (2011). Organizational communication and corporate social responsibility. In O. Ihlen, J. L. Bartlett, & S. May (Eds.), *The Handbook of Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility* (pp. 87-110). West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Mcgrath, C., Palmgren, P. J., & Liljedahl, M. (2018). Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Medical Teacher*, 1–5.

McLellan, E., Macqueen, K. M., & Neidig, J. L. (2003). Beyond the Qualitative Interview: Data Preparation and Transcription. *Field Methods*, 15(1), 63–84.

Men, L. R. (2014). Strategic Internal Communication. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 28(2), 264–284.

Midttun, A., Gjølborg, M., Kourula, A., Sweet, S., & Vallentin, S.. (2012). Public Policies for Corporate Social Responsibility in Four Nordic Countries: Harmony of Goals and Conflict of Means. *Business & Society*. 54

Morsing, M., Midttun, A., & Palmås, K. (2007). Corporate Social Responsibility in Scandinavia: A turn toward the business case? In S. May, G. Cheney & J. Roper (Eds.), *The Debate over Corporate Social Responsibility* (pp. 87-103). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press

- Morsing, M. (2006). Strategic CSR communication: Telling others how good you are. In J. Jonker & M. de Witte (Eds.), *Management Models for Corporate Social Responsibility* (pp.238-246), Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer
- Morsing, M., & Schultz, M. (2006). Corporate social responsibility communication: stakeholder information, response and involvement strategies. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 15(4), 323–338
- Morsing, M., Schultz, M., & Nielsen, K. U. (2008). The ‘Catch 22’ of communicating CSR: Findings from a Danish study. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 14(2), 97–111.
- Motwani, S. (2012). Communicating CSR is More Challenging than Paying CSR. *International Journal of Research and Development - A Management Review*, 1(1), 42-45
- Muller, A. (2006). Global versus local CSR strategies. *European Management Journal*, 24(2–3), 189–198.
- Myers, M. D. (2009). *Qualitative research in business & management*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Ndlovu, T., Simba, A., & Mariussen, A. (2015). The Treacherous Path of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Role of Information Systems in Its Implementation. *Corporate Social Responsibility: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools and Applications* (pp. 597–619). Hershey, PA: IGI Global
- Newton, N. (2010) The use of semi-structured interviews in qualitative research: strengths and weaknesses. *Paper submitted in part completion of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy*, University of Bristol. Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/1561689/The_use_of_semi-structured_interviews_in_qualitative_research_strengths_and_weaknesses
- Ng, T. W. H., Yam, K. C., & Aguinis, H. (2018). Employee perceptions of corporate social responsibility: Effects on pride, embeddedness, and turnover. *Personnel Psychology*, 72(1), 107–137
- Nielsen, K. (2007). The Qualitative Research Interview and Issues of Knowledge. *Nordic Psychology*, 59(3), 210–222
- Öhman & Mistra (2018). *Öhmans Agenda 2030-barometer*. Stockholm, Sweden: Öhman
- Omilion-Hodges, L. M., & Baker, C. R. (2014). Everyday talk and convincing conversations: Utilizing strategic internal communication. *Business Horizons*, 57(3), 435–445
- Patton, M.Q. (2002) *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications
- Peng, Y.S., Dashdeleg, A-U., & Chih, H.L. (2012). Does National Culture Influence Firm’s CSR Engagement: a Cross Country Study. *International Proceedings of Economics Development and Research*, 58(9)

- Podnar, K. (2008) Guest editorial: communicating corporate social responsibility, *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 14(2), 75–81.
- Porter, M., & Kramer, M. (2007) Strategy and Society: The Link Between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(12), 78-92
- Potter & Wetherell (1995). Discourse Analysis. In J. Smith, R. Harré & L. Van Langenhove (Eds.) *Rethinking Methods in Psychology*. Sage Publications
- Raub, S., & Blunschi, S. (2014). The Power of Meaningful Work. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 55(1), 10–18
- Redington, I. (2005). *Making CSR Happen: The Contribution of People Management*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
- RobecoSAM (2018). *Country Sustainability Ranking Update – November 2018*. Zurich, Switzerland.
- Röhne, J. (2016, May 2). Här är alla nominerade till Årets Bästa Hållbarhetsredovisning [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://www.aktuellhallbarhet.se/har-ar-alla-nominerade-till-arets-basta-hallbarhetsredovisning/>
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education
- Schlatter, I. (2017, June 12). Creating a corporate culture of sustainability [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://www.southpole.com/blog/creating-a-corporate-culture-of-sustainability>
- Schlegelmilch, B.B., Pollach, I. (2005). The perils and opportunities of communicating corporate ethics, *Journal of Marketing Management*, 21(3), 267-290
- Schönherr, N., Findler, F., & Martinuzzi, A. (2017). Exploring the interface of CSR and the Sustainable Development Goals. *Transnational Corporations*, 24(3), 33–47.
- Signitzer, B., & Prexl, A. (2007). Corporate Sustainability Communications: Aspects of Theory and Professionalization. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 20(1), 1-19
- Soini, H., & Kronqvist, E-L. (2011). Epistemology- A Tool or a Stance? In H. Soini, E-L. Kronqvist, G. Huber (Eds.), *Epistemologies for Qualitative Research* (pp. 5-9), Tübingen, Germany: Center for Qualitative Psychology
- Strand, R., Freeman, R.E. & Hockerts, K. (2015) *Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability in Scandinavia: An Overview*. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 127(1), 1-15
- Taddeo, T. (2017, November 27). Shifting from CSR to the UN SDGs: Where We're Headed [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://aleron.org/2017/11/shifting-csr-un-sdgs-headed/>
- Tata, J., & Prasad, S. (2015). National cultural values, sustainability beliefs, and organizational initiatives. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 22(2), 278–296

Theofilou, A., & Watson, T. (2014). Sceptical Employees as CSR Ambassadors in Times of Financial Uncertainty. *Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility: Perspectives and Practice Critical Studies on Corporate Responsibility, Governance and Sustainability*, 355–382.

Thomsen, C. & Ellerup Nielsen, A. (2009). CSR communication in small and medium-sized enterprises: a study of the attitudes and beliefs of middle managers. *Corporate Communications. An International Journal*, 14 (2), 176-189.

Thomsen, C., & Nielsen, A. E. (2012). CSR Communication – An Emerging Field. The Editors' Preface. *HERMES - Journal of Language and Communication in Business*, 49(49)

Trapp, N. L. (2014). Stakeholder involvement in CSR strategy-making? Clues from sixteen Danish companies. *Public Relations Review*, 40(1), 42–49

Uusi-Rauva, C., & Nurkka, J. (2010). Effective internal environment-related communication. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15(3), 299–314.

Warner, M. & Rowley, C. (2011). *Chinese management in the 'harmonious society': managers, markets and the globalized economy*. London, UK: Routledge

Weaver, G. R., Treviño, L. K., & Cochran, P. L. (1999). Integrated and Decoupled Corporate Social Performance: Management Commitments, External Pressures, and Corporate Ethics Practices. *Academy of Management Journal*, 42(5), 539–552.

Welch, M., & Jackson, P. R. (2007). Rethinking internal communication: a stakeholder approach. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 12(2), 177–198.

Wood (1999) Establishing Internal Communication Channels that Work, *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 21:2, 135-149

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zukauskas, P., Vveinhardt, J., & Andriukaitiene, R., (2018). *Management Culture and Corporate Social Responsibility*, London, UK: Intech Open

Appendix

Consent Form

Research project description: An analysis of Alfa Laval's internal CSR communication with focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Research investigator: Jenny Power

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. This consent form is necessary for me to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Please read the accompanying information and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

1. The interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced.
2. You will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors.
3. The transcript of the interview will be analysed by Jenny Power, Master's Student in Strategic Communication at Lund University for the sole purpose of the thesis project in question.
4. Access to the interview transcript will be limited to Jenny Power and supervisor Professor Mats Heide, Lund University.
5. The actual recording will be kept until the transcription is finished and later destroyed.
6. Any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval.

Anonymity

You will be given the opportunity to remain anonymous, both by name and corporate role. If you decide to remain anonymous, any interview content or direct quotations from the interview that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will not refer to your direct name or corporate position.

With regards to being quoted, please initial next to any of the statements that you agree with:

..... I wish to review the notes, transcripts, or other data collected during the research pertaining to my participation.

..... I agree to be quoted by name.

..... I agree to be quoted solely if my name is not published and instead a made-up name (pseudonym) is used.

..... I agree to be quoted by corporate position

By signing this form, I agree that:

1. I am voluntarily taking part in this project.
2. I understand that I do not have to take part, and I can stop the interview at any time.

3. The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used solely for the purpose of this specific thesis project.
4. I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits I feel necessary.
5. I can request a copy of the finished thesis project before it is sent to publication.

_____ Name of participant	_____ Date	_____ Signature
------------------------------	---------------	--------------------

_____ Name of researcher	_____ Date	_____ Signature
-----------------------------	---------------	--------------------

To be counter-signed and dated electronically for telephone interviews or in the presence of the participant for face to face interviews.

Copies: *Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form. A copy of the signed and dated consent form will be placed in the researcher's main project file which will be kept in a secure location.*

Interview guide for employees

1. How long have you worked at Alfa Laval for?
2. How important is it for you to work for a responsible and sustainable company?
3. What does Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) mean to you?
4. How informed are you about Alfa Laval's CSR work in general?
5. How often do you receive information about the company's CSR initiatives? Can you give examples of types of information you may receive?
6. Through which communication channels do you receive this information?
7. Would you say there is a CSR culture in your work place?
 - 7a) **If yes:**
 - Could you explain more or give an example?
 - 7b) **If no:**
 - Would you want CSR to be more integrated into everyday work culture? How?
8. Are you aware of any CSR activities/initiatives that have existed to involve employees?
 - 8a) **If yes:**
 - Can you give examples of such activities?
 - To which extent have you personally been involved in these CSR activities/initiatives at work?
 - Do you feel motivated when engaging in your company's CSR initiatives? In which way?
 - 8b) **If no:**
 - Would you be interested in participating in CSR activities/initiatives?
9. Are you ever encouraged to provide feedback on Alfa Laval's CSR efforts? i.e. do employees have a "voice" in CSR decisions and implementation?
10. How do you in general perceive the internal communication of information in your company? Is it one-way or two-way?
11. Overall, how satisfied are you with the amount of internal communication on CSR you receive.
12. How familiar are you with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
13. What do the SDGs mean to you?
14. Have you been informed about Alfa Laval's commitment to working in line with the SDGs?
 - 14a) **If yes,** how were you informed? Any specific manager/department?

15. Have you participated in any SDG workshops, lectures or other activities since Alfa Laval started working in line with the goals?

15a) **If yes**, what kind of activities?

16. Would you like to be more informed about or involved in Alfa Laval's work with the SDGs?

17. Do you know the benefits of working in line with the SDGs for your company?

17a) **If yes**, could you name some of these?

18. How about the benefits for yourself as an employee?

19. Do you have anything additional you would like to add or comment on that we have not covered?

Interview guide for managers

1. What is your current position at Alfa Laval and for how long have you been in this position?
2. How important is it for you to work for a responsible and sustainable company?
3. What does CSR mean to you?
4. Do you consider it important to you as a manager, to promote sustainability and responsibility among employees? Why/Why not?
5. What does internal communication mean for Alfa Laval's CSR work?
6. How would you describe the internal communication of Alfa Laval's CSR efforts? Is it open or closed?
7. Which communication channels are used to internally communicate the company's CSR initiatives?
8. How do you perceive executive management's and/or the board of directors views on internal CSR communication? Is it important or is it ignored?
9. Are you part of or aware of any CSR activities/initiatives that involve the company's employees?
 - 9a). **If yes:**
 - Could you give examples and explain such activities?
 - 9b). **If no:**
 - Why would you say that is the case?
10. Do you think it is important to engage employees in the decision-making and implementation of new CSR processes?
 - 10a). **If yes:**
 - Is this something that is being done?
 - Could you give examples of how employees have been engaged?
 - 10b). **If no:**
 - Why not?
11. Are you aware of Alfa Laval's commitment to the SDGs?
12. When did you become aware of Alfa Laval's work in line with the SDGs?
13. What does working in line with the SDGs mean to you? How important do you consider it to be for a company?
14. How much focus would you say is laid on the SDGs in the company's overall CSR work?
- 15a. To which extent are the SDGs communicated internally?

15b. Can you give examples of how the SDGs are communicated internally?

16. Which department(s) have been mainly responsible for communicating about the SDGs to employees? Do you think that more departments should be involved in this communication process?

17. Are you aware of or have you been in charge of any internal activities related to the SDGs, for example, workshops, lectures, etc? Please elaborate.

18. In general, how would you describe the implementation process of the SDGs? Has it been controlled from the top or has it been more of a collaboration between top-managers, middle managers and employees?

19. Have there been or are there any specific obstacles in the implementation of the SDGs?

20. Would you say that involving and educating employees on Alfa Laval's alignment with the SDG benefits the company?

10a). **If yes**, could you give examples of how?

10b). **If no**, why not?

21. Would you say that the external communication of the company's CSR practices and initiatives is a lot more prioritized than the internal?

11a). **If yes**, Why?

11b). **If no**, how about when it comes to the SDGs?

22. Is there anything else you would like to add or comment on regarding Alfa Laval's internal CSR communication?