

## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: AN EXPLORATION OF PUBLICS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, SHARED VALUES, AND THE PEPSI REFRESH CAMPAIGN

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This study is an exploratory investigation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) from the publics' perspectives. Using the Pepsi Refresh campaign to provide context, perceptions of CSR, including motivations for and impacts of such efforts, were accessed. Specifically, impact was considered through the lens of stakeholder management theory to determine how the campaign affected views of the corporation's values. This study expands understandings of the Pepsi Refresh campaign's target audience through twenty-six in-depth interviews with young adults. Results suggest young adults conceptualize CSR somewhat differently than other publics, emphasizing the importance of fine-tuned knowledge of specific publics. Many interviewees expressed that they are less influenced by CSR than others, signifying a third-person effect. In addition, corporate gain was noted as significant motivation for CSR. Furthermore, perception of shared values between PepsiCo and the public was limited, suggesting stakeholder management theory should be employed holistically rather than solely through CSR efforts.

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, SHARED VALUES, AND  
THE PEPSI REFRESH CAMPAIGN

by  
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## Dedication

To my parents, for their infinite support in all that I do and always believing in me, and to my grandfather, who I know will be looking down at me and smiling as I walk across that stage to receive my Master's degree.

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## Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Research Problem .....	1
Purpose of the Study/Significance .....	5
Organization .....	6
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	7
Definitional History .....	7
Rationale for Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives .....	12
Categorizing CSR Theories and Approaches .....	17
Publics' Views of Corporate Social Responsibility .....	18
CSR and Public Relations .....	24
Stakeholder Management Theory .....	27
Pepsi, PepsiCo, and the Pepsi Refresh Project .....	34
A Note on Terminology .....	38
Research Questions .....	39
Chapter 3: Methods .....	41
Qualitative Methodology .....	41
In-Depth Interviewing .....	43
Participants .....	44
Recruitment .....	46
Procedure .....	47
Data Analysis .....	49
Reliability and Validity .....	53
Reflexivity .....	55
Chapter 4: Results .....	57
Research Question One .....	57
Research Question Two .....	68
Research Question Three .....	75
Research Question Four .....	85
Chapter 5: Discussion .....	91
Defining Corporate Social Responsibility .....	91
Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility .....	93
Rationale for Corporate Social Responsibility .....	96
Implications for the Pepsi Refresh Campaign .....	97
Contributions to Stakeholder Management Theory .....	98

Practical Implications .....	102
Limitations .....	104
Future Research .....	106
Conclusion .....	107
Appendix A: Interview Protocol .....	108
Appendix B: Consent Form .....	111
Appendix C: Table .....	114
References .....	115

## Chapter 1- Introduction

For many, the news that Pepsi, previously the source of some of the most famous and over-the-top Super Bowl commercials, would *not* be advertising during Super Bowl XLIV came as a shock (Gregory, 2010). Instead of following suit with previous years where celebrities like Britney Spears or Will.I.Am were enlisted for the famed Super Bowl spot, PepsiCo opted to dedicate itself to a year-long campaign<sup>1</sup> beginning February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, during which it would donate at least twenty million dollars to “refresh America’s communities” (PepsiCo, 2010e). Named the Pepsi Refresh Project, PepsiCo’s initiative is a digitally-driven campaign providing 1.3 million dollars a month to projects designed to make a positive impact in the United States<sup>2</sup>. Proposed and submitted by people, businesses, or non-profits, the ideas that obtain the highest number of votes on the Pepsi Refresh website receive grants to bring their ideas to fruition (PepsiCo, 2010b).

But the widely-discussed question remains: Why would a for-profit corporation forgo a high-profile advertising opportunity in favor of simply giving-away a portion of their earnings? PepsiCo’s decision is reflective of a larger trend in today’s corporations: a growing emphasis on corporate social responsibility (Waddock, 2008).

### *Research Problem*

Increasingly, corporations are shifting the way they do business to devote significant time and resources to corporate social responsibility, or CSR (Carroll, 1999;

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<sup>1</sup> The campaign has since been renewed. The project temporarily ended after one year, but will begin accepting submissions again in the beginning of April 2011. Though some of the specifics have changed, including the categories, grant levels, and voting process, the overall campaign remains the same (PepsiCo, 2011d).

<sup>2</sup> As of September 7, 2010, PepsiCo announced that it will be expanding the campaign to Europe, Latin America, and Asia starting in 2011. However, ideas proposed and funded in the United States will still be aimed at improving communities within the US (Zmuda, 2010).



Waddock, 2004), or striving to benefit society in addition to achieving economic gains (Davis, 1973). For example, in 2006, Timberland footwear introduced environmentally friendly packaging with a “nutrition label” affixed detailing exactly what materials went into the product and its environmental footprint (Connolly et al., 2008). General Electric has invested 20 million in technologies designed to reduce its customers’ energy consumption and carbon emissions (Mirvis & Googins, 2006). Starbucks hosts a responsibility webpage detailing its commitment to a variety of social causes, including community services, youth, farmer support, a water fund, recycling, and climate change. Its website specifically states, “We've always believed that businesses can - and should - have a positive impact on the communities they serve” (Starbucks, 2011, para. 1).

However, despite the popularity of these CSR initiatives in practice, there are a number of gaps in the CSR research. Most basically, there is a lack of definitional consensus on what exactly constitutes corporate social responsibility. Some definitions suggest that corporate social responsibility means responding to issues beyond the economic, technical, and legal requirements of the corporation (Davis, 1973). Others consider legal liabilities part of CSR (Garriga & Melé, 2004). Some conceptions are limited to internal practices such as relations with employees or how the corporation’s business activities affect the environment (Committee for Economic Development, 1971), while others define CSR as external initiatives that outwardly benefit society (Waddock, 2008). In the industry, similar confusion is evident. Some definitions have emerged from the field; for example, the Cone Corporate Citizenship Study (2004) alludes to corporate citizenship as making decisions based on financial results as well as social and environmental performance. However, this definition does not represent a

field-wide conceptualization. A report by Edelman (2009a) states, “The field remains wide open for debate as corporate responsibility and sustainability is notorious for meaning many things to many people. If practitioners still can’t seem to agree on what to call this discipline... one might also encounter confusion when it comes to talking about it” (p. 2). As Lindgreen, Swann, and Johnston describe, “The best conceptualizations of CSR remain embryonic” (2008, p. 303).

Additionally, these conceptions come almost exclusively from the point of view of corporations or scholars rather than the publics themselves (O’Connor, Shumate, & Meister, 2008). Publics, which are discussed further below, can be defined as a group of people that recognize common issues, organize around those issues, and seek out organizations that create those issues (Grunig & Repper, 1992). Of the research that does examine how publics define CSR, the conceptualizations are practical rather than academic in nature, compiled by researchers at Edelman (Edelman, 2009a; Edelman, 2009b), Golin Harris (Golin Harris, 2009), and Cone (Cone, 2004), opening the door for further academic research to supplement what is currently known. Furthermore, while the existing quantitative research informs our understanding of CSR by providing aggregated statistics, qualitative research can build on this by providing a voice to members of the public. As stated by O’Connor et al. (2008), “Little research has been done that gives primacy to the targeted public’s voice, interpretations, and responses to corporate social responsibility” (p. 343).

Furthermore, while there is a good deal of research that examines CSR from a business or business ethics perspective, there is scant research considering public relations’ role in CSR (Kim & Reber, 2008, p. 338). Kim and Reber (2008) propose that

“Public responsibility is understood as a basic, and sometimes synonymous, concept of public relations” (p. 338), which suggests that public relations theory would be useful in extending current knowledge on corporate social responsibility.

Additionally, most scholars have studied CSR as an abstraction. O’Connor et al. (2009) state, “Research that incorporates individual organizations... would further our understanding of CSR activities and how individuals make sense of the claims” (p. 349). Furthermore, Zmuda & Patel (2010) call the Pepsi Refresh Project a ‘case for textbooks,’ illuminating the need for research investigating this particular CSR campaign. Therefore, the Pepsi Refresh campaign was selected as a vehicle through which I accessed the publics’ meaning making of the concepts associated with corporate social responsibility.

Many of these same gaps in the research on CSR are also reflected in the literature on stakeholder management theory, a lens through which the results of this study were analyzed. Stakeholder management theory suggests that corporations should strategically incorporate their stakeholders into their business operations (Freeman, 1984). Despite its relevance to public relations, the vast majority of research on stakeholders comes from the business and business ethics fields. Nearly all of the literature is from an organizational/management perspective. This study takes the stance that privileging the voices of the stakeholders (or publics) is the best way to answer Harrison and Freeman’s (1999) call for further research on developing more “fine-grained ideas” about stakeholder groups.

In sum, while CSR, including stakeholder management theory, has garnered a considerable amount of attention from practitioners, corporations, and researchers alike, there remain a number of gaps in the scholarship. Overall, there is a lack of consistency

in defining the concept of corporation social responsibility. Furthermore, there is very little research studying CSR through a public relations lens or in the context of a campaign. Lastly, research is typically focused on the corporation rather providing the publics' interpretations.

### *Purpose of the Study/Significance*

The purpose of this study was to explore how publics make meaning of corporate social responsibility, specifically the Pepsi Refresh campaign. The public of interest in this study was young adults, as they are a target audience of the Pepsi Refresh campaign (Elliot, 2010). Through in-depth interviews, I examined how young adults understand the concept of CSR and what value they place on CSR initiatives. I also collected and considered their reactions to the Pepsi Refresh campaign materials, focusing on how they conceptualized the campaign and their views on Pepsi's motivations.

My goal was for this study to be significant on a number of levels. The results of this study are practically significant by providing practitioners and businesses with an exploration of the values and expectations of young adults in regard to corporate social responsibility and CSR campaigns. Furthermore, the implementations of the Pepsi Refresh project itself is a significant case for analysis, as indicated by its ability to pique the interest of academic scholars (Zmuda & Petal, 2010); industry bloggers (Berrent, 2010; Burns, 2010; Hepburn, 2010); journalists at the *NY Times*, *Huffington Post*, *TIME*, and more (Elliott, 2010; Gregory, 2010; Grinton, 2010); and consumers alike.

In regard to theoretical significance, there has been a call for research on corporate social responsibility from a variety of sources (Maignan & Ralston, 2002; McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006; O'Connor et al, 2008). Through this study, I built

on the work of O'Connor et al. (2008), which privileged the voice of publics on CSR, in order to provide an additional viewpoint to the existing literature that discusses CSR from the corporation's point of view. Additionally, this study investigated CSR from a public relations' perspective. Furthermore, when relevant, the results were considered in light of concepts from Stakeholder Management Theory. This was done because while Stakeholder Management Theory can be applied to the Pepsi Refresh campaign on a conceptual level, as Pepsi is literally asking the public to weigh in on their corporate decisions through proposals and votes, only by gaining the publics' perspectives can we determine whether they place considerable value on having their voice incorporated in business operations in this manner.

### *Organization*

This thesis begins with a review of the relevant literature starting with research on corporate social responsibility from the field of public relations as well as from business and ethics perspectives. It subsequently details the Stakeholder Management Theory in order to lay the groundwork for exploring its relationship with corporate social responsibility. Finally, PepsiCo and the Pepsi Refresh campaign are briefly discussed. Building on this foundation of existing research, I then provide the research questions which guided this study. Following, the methodology section delineates how the study was conducted as well as the benefits and limitations of this procedure. Also included is a description of my data analysis process. The next section describes the results of this study, followed by a discussion of these themes including their implications and relationship with the existing theory. This thesis concludes by acknowledging limitations and directions for future research and a summary of the study's key points.

## Chapter 2- Literature Review

The following review of the literature begins by providing an overview of the variety of definitions of corporate social responsibility and how they have evolved over the last sixty years. Next, different rationales for why corporations may choose to engage in CSR followed by categories of theories for explaining CSR will be presented. However, as will be evident, the majority of these definitions, rationales, and theories are from the corporation's perspective. Therefore, the next section is devoted to the little research that has been done on CSR from the point of view of the publics. In order to provide contextualization to this interest in the public and the public relations lens adopted by this study, the following section outlines research on the intersection of public relations and CSR. Next, stakeholder management theory is described, though only from the perspective of management as this is the only view presented in the available literature. The final section will provide background information on Pepsi and review the Pepsi Refresh campaign.

### *Definitional History*

Despite dominant market logic, which would suggest that corporations should focus solely on maximizing profit (Waddock, 2008), there is now general agreement on the importance of simultaneously devoting attention to the social responsibility of an corporation, or corporate social responsibility (e.g. Capriotti & Moreno, 2007; Schwab, 2008; Wood, 1991). For example, in a study of Chinese executives, only 5% disagreed with the idea of businesses having social obligations (Wang & Chaudhri, 2009). Waddock, Bodwell, and Graves (2002) refer to social responsibility as “the new business imperative”, and Kramer and Kania call it an “inextricable part” of business (2006). As a

result of this new mentality, companies are increasingly assuming this added responsibility as part of their business strategy (e.g. Carroll, 1999; Cone, 2004; Waddock, 2004). As noted in the introduction, there are countless cases of corporations engaging in corporate social responsibility.

However, there is still a lack of definitional consensus. In fact, the very term corporate social responsibility is far from unanimously used. Society and business, social issues management, public policy and business, stakeholder management, corporate accountability, corporate citizenship, corporate sustainability, and cause marketing are just some of the many terms used to describe the concept of corporate social responsibility (Capriotti & Moreno, 2004; Garriga & Melé, 2004). In regard to field of CSR, Carroll (1994) refers to it as “eclectic” with “loose boundaries,” “broad,” and “multidisciplinary” (pg. 14). Votaw (1972) states:

Corporate social responsibility means something, but not always the same thing to everybody. To some it conveys the idea of legal responsibility or liability; to others, it means socially responsible behavior in the ethical sense; to still others, the meaning transmitted is that of ‘responsible for’ in a causal mode; many simply equate it with a charitable contribution; some take it to mean socially conscious; many of those who embrace it most fervently see it as a mere synonym for legitimacy in the context of belonging or being proper or valid; a few see a sort of fiduciary duty imposing higher standards of behavior on businessmen than on citizens at large (pg. 25).

While this was written nearly forty years ago, the conceptual disagreement still holds and this summarizes many of the viewpoints found in the literature.

Other scholars have taken on the task of outlining the history of the concept of corporate social responsibility (e.g., De Bakker, Groenwegen, & Den Hond, 2005; Frederick, 1987; Waddock, 2004), but one of the most widely cited is Carroll's (1999) article entitled "Corporate Social Responsibility: The Evolution of a Definitional Construct." Detailing the changes in the way corporate social responsibility has been defined throughout the history of the field, Carroll suggests that the concept of corporate social responsibility began receiving considerable attention mainly since the 1950s (Carroll, 1999). Though he cites some literature written prior to 1950 (e.g. Barnard, 1938; Clark, 1938; Kreps, 1948), he sides with the majority of other scholars who consider Bowen's 1953 book, *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman*, as the marker of the modern period of scholarship on CSR. Bowen defines corporate social responsibility as "the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society" (p. 6).

Carroll (1999) continues by discussing the significant growth of the field in the 1960s in regards to attempts to formalize and more accurately state the meaning of CSR. For example, one of the prominent scholars on CSR, Davis, argued that CSR refers to "businessmen's decisions and actions taken for reasons at least partially beyond the firm's direct economic or technical interest" (Davis, 1960, p. 70). Davis also suggested that CSR must be considered from a managerial context and that social responsibility should be proportionate to the social power of the business or businessman. Another significant contributor to the definition of CSR in the 1960s was McGuire (1963), who laid out some of the specific social responsibilities of a business, including an interest in



politics, the community, education, employees, and the whole social world. In addition, in his book *Corporate Social Responsibilities*, Walton (1967) added the element of a degree of volunteerism to the concept of CSR.

Carroll (1999) continues by highlighting many of the definitions that were proposed during the 1970s. For example, Johnson (1971) states, “A socially responsible firm is one whose managerial staff balances a multiplicity of interests. Instead of striving only for larger profits for its stockholders, a responsible enterprise also takes into account its employees, suppliers, dealers, local communities, and the nation” (p. 50). He continues by suggesting that CSR efforts are seen from other viewpoints as well, such as a method for long-term profit maximization, a way to seek multiple goals, or a secondary strategy that a company can falsely claim as its primary motive after it has reached its target profits (Johnson, 1971).

Also in 1971, the *Committee for Economic Development* published *Social Responsibilities of Business Corporations*, which suggested a three concentric circles model for defining CSR. The inner circle is the basic responsibilities of a corporation: the product, jobs, and economic growth. The intermediate circle represents the obligation the corporation has to execute these responsibilities in a manner sensitive to social values. This would include things such as environmental conservation or human relations with employees. Finally, the outer circle consists of the “amorphous responsibilities” that a business should assume to actively improve the social environment, such as poverty (Committee for Economic Development, 1971, p. 15).

In 1972, Manne and Wallich argued that any definition of a socially responsible corporate action must include three integral elements. First, the marginal returns to the

corporation as a result of the action must be less than the returns possible through an alternative action. Second, it must be purely voluntary, and third, it must be an actual corporate expenditure rather than a call for individual (consumer) support (Manne & Wallich, 1972). This definition represents a stricter viewpoint on what constitutes CSR than others.

Although these are only three of the many perspectives Carroll (1999) provides in his article, they represent the definitional specificity being suggested by CSR scholars during the 1970s. In the 1980s, however, the CSR field began to split into a number of sub-concepts, including corporate social responsiveness, corporate social philanthropy, public policy, business ethics, and stakeholder management theory (Carroll, 1999), the latter of which will be discussed in further detail below. This trend of focusing on alternative sub-themes rather than evolution of the definitional construct itself continued into the 1990s and the new millennium with the discussion of corporate citizenship, corporate philanthropy (Carroll, 1999), international social and environmental issues (Carroll, 2004), and sustainable development (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007).

This brief history of the definition of corporate social responsibility detailed above represents just a small portion of the definitions that scholars have proposed. Yet, holistically, it provides an overview of the way the concept has evolved and changed across time. However, even today, scholars still provide varied definitions for the term with little consensus on common points of contention, including whether actions must be voluntary, whether philanthropy is considered CSR, or whether it is enough to do business responsibly or if the actions must extend outside of the operations of the corporation.

Thus, it is necessary to set forth a general definition to guide this study. I chose Davis's (1973) definition because it seems to represent a conceptual middle-ground in the definitional debate. It is not excessively restrictive as to what constitutes corporate social responsibility but excludes those activities that are required of the firm. Davis states that corporate social responsibility is "The firm's consideration of, and response to, issues beyond the narrow economic, technical, and legal requirements of the firm [...] to accomplish social benefits along with the traditional economic gains which the firm seeks" (Davis, 1973, p. 313).

#### *Rationale for Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives*

After considering the definitions of CSR, it is appropriate to discuss the possible reasons why a corporation would choose to engage in corporate social responsibility. Waddock (2008) states, "In the absence of a global governance structure to ensure that corporations are accountable, responsible, transparent, and ecologically sustainable, a largely voluntary corporate responsibility infrastructure has emerged" (p. 87). Intuitively, for-profit businesses would be solely concerned with profit, or the 'bottom line' (Friedman, 1970). However, the notion of corporate social responsibility asks corporations to attend to more than just one bottom line. This is often referred to as the multi-bottom line or triple bottom line: profits, people, and planet (Cokins, 2009). This notion has garnered the attention of numerous scholars (e.g., Dhiman, 2008; Norman & MacDonald, 2004; Pava, 2007).

Some suggest that this emphasis on the multi-bottom line, a term many use interchangeably with CSR, is a reaction to the recent media attention that businesses have received for acting irresponsibly (Hooghiemstra, 2000; Waddock, 2008). For example,

Hooghiemstra (2000) suggests that corporations have increased their disclosure of social or environmental initiatives in response to negative social incidents such as the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Waddock (2008) cites problems such as the growing gap between the haves and the have not's, labor and human rights abuse, poor working conditions, child labor, abusive managers, and others as factors that have led to businesses feeling increased pressure to act responsibly coming from a multitude of sources, including the media, their competition, government mandates, activists, and the public (Porter & Kramer, 2006; Waddock, 2004).

Waddock's article "Building a New Institutional Infrastructure for Corporate Responsibility" proposes three categories to describe the pressures corporations face in regard to engaging in corporate social responsibility. According to Waddock (2008), corporate social responsibility initiatives that arise out of the criticism and pressures that businesses face from institutions based in civil society are categorized as *civil society*. These pressures may come from multistakeholder initiatives, which are teams of individuals and organizations that come together from across sectors to guide or pressure corporations on environmental, social, or governance (ESG) issues. Examples include the UN's Millennium Goals and the Global Action Network Net (Waddock, 2008). Civil society institutions also include watchdog NGO's and activists, journals and magazines such as *Business & Society*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, and *Ethical Corporation*, and rating and rankings (Waddock, 2008). Some popular rankings include "The World's Most Admired Companies" as ranked by *Fortune Magazine* (Fortune, 2010) and Global ESG 100 as rated by RiskMetrics Group (RiskMetrics, 2010).

Corporate social responsibility initiatives that are a result of state or government regulations or pressures are categorized by Waddock (2008) as *state/government-sector initiatives*. A common example of government regulation is the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002. Designed to increase corporate accounting transparency (Martin & Combs, 2010), the act has received much attention from business scholars (e.g. Bartov & Cohen, 2009; Dey, 2010; Orin, 2008). Many consider the Sarbanes-Oxley Act a response to the Enron crisis, though Martin and Combs (2010) point out that there were many other companies aside from Enron that were accused of inflating their earnings around the same time, including Kmart, Bristol-Myers Squibb, WorldCom, and Tyco. Detailing the act, one of the biggest corporate governance regulations, is far beyond the scope of this paper, but generally speaking, it was designed to protect investors by mandating several business practices aimed at “improving the accuracy and reliability of corporate disclosures” (Martin & Combs, 2010, p. 103).

The final category Waddock (2008) proposes for CSR initiatives are those that are derived from the business itself or market-like pressures, categorized as *market/business-sector initiatives*. One element of *market/business-sector initiatives* is responsibility assurance, which includes the a) setting and/or following codes of conduct, standards, and principles; b) monitoring and certification services which make sure companies are doing as they say; and c) reporting related issues via generally accepted systems (Waddock, 2008). One of the most well known principles for business practices is the UN Global Compact. According to the website, the UN Global Compact is “a strategic policy initiative for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights,

labour, environment and anti-corruption” (United Nations Global Compact, 2010). With over 7,700 corporate participants from 130 different countries, the Global Compact is the largest of its kind. The Global Compact has set forth ten principles that businesses are encouraged to align their practices with in order to help ensure that markets, commerce, technology, and finance advance in a way that is beneficial to economies and societies around the world (United Nations Global Compact, 2010). In addition to responsibility assurance, other pressures that fall under the *market/business-sector initiatives* category include the corporation’s competition, business membership organizations, consultancy agencies, and investors (Waddock, 2008).

Beyond responding to the external pressures detailed above, corporations may strategically choose to engage in corporate social responsibility because their business can benefit from the initiatives. Porter and Kramer (2006) state:

If, instead, corporations were to analyze their prospects for social responsibility using the same frameworks that guide their core business choices, they would discover that CSR can be much more than a cost, a constraint, or a charitable deed—it can be a source of opportunity, innovation, and competitive advantage (p. 80).

Some of the specific advantages that have been explored in the literature are positive reputation/corporate image and increased trust and legitimacy. While reviewing the research on each of these concepts in its entirety is beyond the scope of this paper, each will be defined and discussed briefly below.

Wang and Chaudhri (2009) found that one of the top motivators for corporate social responsibility is improving corporate image/identity or reputation. Stacks and

Watson (2007) define reputation as “the historical relationship between the organization and its publics” (p. 69). The 2011 Edelman Trust Barometer found that being a good corporate citizen, having honest and transparent businesses practices, and treating employees fairly, all of which could be considered part of CSR, are more important to corporate reputation than the corporation’s financial returns to investors. This is important because Ehling (1992) and Grunig and Hunt (1984) have both linked positive reputation to organizational success.

Another benefit that has been linked to corporate social responsibility is trust (Waddock, 2002; Vlachos, Tsamakos, Vrechopoulos, & Avramidis, 2009). Stacks and Watson define trust as “a perception that the evaluation of the organization or publics is dependable” (2009, p. 68). The 2010 Edelman Trust Barometer states that trust is just as important to corporate reputation as the quality of the products and services. Furthermore, trust is a key variable in forming and maintaining long-term relationships between a corporation and its customers (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). A study by Swaen and Chumpitaz (2008) surveying 618 consumers confirmed the relationship between corporate social responsibility and trust, reporting that “consumers’ perceptions of CSR activities have a positive influence on their trust toward the company, directly and indirectly through the influence on perceived quality of the products offered and consumer satisfaction” (p. 7).

Finally, numerous scholars have echoed the sentiment that corporate social responsibility is a legitimizing activity for corporations (e.g. Deegan, 2002; Hooghiemstra, 2000; Wartick & Cochran, 1985). Suchman (1995) defines legitimacy as “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and

definitions” (p. 574). Legitimacy theory suggests that corporations exist to the extent that the society deems they are legitimate (Deegan, 2002). Therefore, legitimacy is imperative for organizational success.

### *Categorizing CSR Theories and Approaches*

Corporate social responsibility theories and approaches are varied and prolific. Thus, in order to make sense of the field, some scholars have suggested schemes for classification (e.g., Brummer, 1991; Frederick, 1998). Garriga and Melé (2004), in an article from the *Journal of Business Ethics*, categorize CSR theories and related approaches by considering how they portray the interaction between business and society. They propose four categories: instrumental, political, integrative, and ethical. Instrumental theories are those theories that define the corporation as an instrument for wealth creation and, therefore, view CSR as a method of achieving profit. Accordingly, corporate social responsibility actions should ultimately lead to monetary gain. Approaches to CSR that fall under the instrumental theory category emphasize strategies for achieving competitive advantages (Burke & Lodgson, 1996), cause-related marketing (Smith & Higgins, 2000; Varadarajan & Menon, 1988), and maximizing shareholder value (Ross, 1973). Demetriou, Papasolomou, and Vrontis’s (2010) discuss a CSR approach that falls under the instrumental theory category in their article “Cause-Related Marketing: Building the Corporate Image while Supporting Worthwhile Causes,” which asserts that cause-related marketing is a CSR method that demonstrates a business’s “responsiveness to society’s heightened expectations and demands for responsible corporate behavior” (pg. 268).



Political theories stress the social power of corporations. Related CSR approaches emphasize the relationship a corporation has with society and suggest that along with power comes responsibility in the political arena (Garriga & Melé, 2004). The notion of the firm as a citizen of society, termed corporate citizenship, is a view which has been embraced by numerous scholars (e.g., Lin, 2010; Mirvins & Googins, 2006; Rego, Leal, Cunha, Faria, & Pinho, 2010). Another conceptualization of CSR stemming from the political theories category is Davis's notion of corporate constitutionalism (Davis, 1960; 1967). Davis's idea aligns with the popular adage 'use it or lose it.' He suggests that businessmen (or women) innately have social power, and if they do not utilize this social power, specifically in a responsible manner, their power will decrease (Davis, 1960). Furthermore, the conditions for what constitutes responsible use of this power are defined by the corporation's constituent groups, creating a 'corporate constitution' which, in part, dictates the actions of the corporation (Davis, 1967).

The third category of theories as proposed by Garriga and Melé (2004) are integrative, which includes theories that are based on the notion that corporations should integrate social demands into their business because corporations depend on society for their livelihood. Furthermore, through scanning, detecting, and responding to social demands, a corporation gains legitimacy, as discussed above. There are many types of related approaches that fall under the integrative category, including issues management as a method for identifying societal demands (Garriga & Melé, 2004).

The fourth and final category of CSR theories is ethical theories. Theories falling under the ethical category emphasize the ethical values that underline the relationship between business and society (Garriga & Melé, 2004). These theories are based on

principles that “express the right thing to do or the necessity to achieve a good society” (Garriga & Melé, 2004, p. 60). Modern stakeholder management theories are considered ethical theories because they suggest how managers should act based on a normative core of ethical values (Garriga & Melé, 2004). Stakeholder management theory will be discussed further below. Examples of CSR approaches located under this category are the common good approach, which maintains that businesses should add to the common good of society, and sustainable development (Garriga & Melé, 2004).

Although not every CSR theory or approach has been specifically noted, the preceding represents the range of thought, thus providing an overview of the ways in which CSR is discussed and studied. These theories and approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive and can work together to provide a deeper understanding of corporate social responsibility. However, as mentioned, this study will pay particular focus to stakeholder management theory, which will be defined following the remainder of the discussion of CSR.

### *Publics’ Views of CSR*

Although research has considered why corporations engage in corporate social responsibility as detailed above, little academic research has actually examined the publics’ views of corporate social responsibility. As this study is a qualitative exploration, it is important to consider previous research executed in this manner.

O’Connor et al.’s (2008) article *Walk the Line: Active Moms Define Corporate Social Responsibility* is one of very few studies which qualitatively listen to what the public has to say about CSR. The authors of this study conducted focus groups with Active Moms, women 25-49 with 2+ children, in order to determine how they negotiate meaning of

CSR (O'Connor et al., 2008). Results showed that participants associated corporate social responsibility with strategy or responsibility to society, and their reactions to corporate social responsibility efforts are strongly related to emotions and emotional connection (O'Connor et al., 2008). They suggested that CSR is necessary for the longevity of a corporation. Furthermore, they believed there are different levels of socially responsible behavior. Philanthropy, for example, was seen as taking the easy way out. Participants also stated that, all else equal, they would buy a product made from a socially responsible corporations and stray from buying from socially irresponsible corporations. However, it is price, quality, and convenience that more often impact their decisions (O'Connor et al., 2008).

Another study which qualitatively explored corporate social responsibility from the point of view of the publics is *Stakeholders' Perceptions and Future Scenarios to Improve Corporate Social Responsibility in Hong Kong and Mainland China* (Tsoi, 2009). This study, however, is limited to the views of major supply chain stakeholders in Hong Kong and China and is more focused on the status of CSR in these countries than the stakeholders' understanding of CSR. Utilizing interviews, Tsoi (2009) determined that while most interviewees considered corporate social responsibility to be somewhat significant, they reported that it is less important in their region than in the West. They cited the lack of media, consumer, and public pressure as the reason why CSR is not a concern for the majority of small or medium businesses. Furthermore, the common view amongst the stakeholders as to what constitutes a socially responsible corporation is one that meets local legislative requirements, and, as they noted, the requirements are not that

high. However, most of the interviewees agreed that there has been some progress seen in regard to attitudes toward the importance of CSR (Tsoi, 2009).

It is clear, however, that there is a lack of research considering the public's views of CSR. Quantitative studies help fill this gap. For example, researchers have attempted to measure the relationship between CSR and increased sales and overall profit. Smith (1996) found that 88% of consumers report being more likely to buy from socially responsible corporations. Furthermore, 76% report that they would be willing to switch to a new product if the brand supports the community (Jones, 1997). A study by Maignan, Ferrell, and Hult (1999) found that proactive corporate citizenship results in higher levels of employee commitment, customer loyalty, and business performance, thus leading to an overall more fruitful business. Survey-based methodologies, however, do not allow for determining cause and effect relationships (Barone, Miyazaki, & Taylor, 2000). Therefore, Barone et al. (2000) utilized an experiment to test these results. They found that CSR, specifically cause-related marketing in this case, does impact consumers' choice of which brands to support. However, this relationship is moderated by the consumer's perceptions of the company's motivations as well as the tradeoffs the consumer must make in terms of lower product performance or higher price (Barone et al., 2000).

Much of the additional research devoted to determining the public's points of view on corporate social responsibility is from the practitioner's standpoint rather than scholarly by nature. Organizations such as Cone, Edelman, and Golin Harris that specialize in corporate social responsibility have conducted quantitative surveys to use as part of their business operations. The results of these surveys emphasize the importance

consumers place on social responsibility. According to the Cone Corporate Citizenship Study, 77% of Americans believe corporations are responsible for supporting a cause (Cone, 2004). This sentiment was echoed by the Edelman 2011 Trust Barometer (Edelman, 2011) and Edelman's (2009a) report "Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability Communications: Who's Listening? Who's Leading? Who Matters Most?", which states, "Stakeholders expect companies to lead—not just manage risk—on key issues" (p. 5). The Golin Harris report on corporate citizenship suggested 71% of Americans believe that 'doing well by doing good' is a smart business strategy, and what Americans really want to see is fearless accountability: a combination of "creative thinking, bold action, corporate courage, and responsibility" (p. 2). The Edelman "goodpurpose" study suggests that 56% of consumers believe that business interests and society interests should have equal weight in the business's decisions (Edelman, 2009b). Furthermore, 67% of those surveyed in the United States believe that it is not enough for a corporation to just give money away; good causes should be integrated in their daily business practices (Edelman, 2009b).

These studies also emphasize the public's willingness to make choices based on a corporation's corporate social responsibility or lack thereof. The Cone (2004) study found that when cost and quality are equal, 86% of Americans say their business will go to the corporation supporting a cause. Twenty-eight percent claimed they have paid more for a product that supports a cause (Cone, 2004). The Cone survey also found that 43% of Americans have told a friend or family member about a product after hearing that it supports a social cause, while the Edelman "goodpurpose" study suggests 64% would

recommend the product (Edelman, 2009b). Furthermore, 81% of Americans consider a corporation's social commitment when deciding where to work (Cone, 2004).

Conversely, survey results show that Americans are willing to take action against a socially irresponsible corporation. Americans may consider switching to another company for their products or services (90%), speaking out against the company to their family or friends (81%), selling their investment in the company (80%), refusing to work at the company (75%), or boycotting the product/service (73%) (Cone, 2004). As it is, consumers believe that corporations spend too much money on marketing and advertising and should devote more to good causes (Edelman, 2009b).

The studies also discuss what consumers believe are the most important causes for a corporations to support. The Edelman "Corporate Responsibility..." report suggests they are the environment, health care, and poverty (Edelman, 2009b). The Cone study suggests the same, with the addition of education (Cone, 2004). On the other hand, the Edelman "goodpurpose" study suggests that publics consider human rights, global warming, and poverty alleviation the most important issues for a corporation to address (Edelman, 2009a).

While these results are helpful in reaching an understanding of the publics' wants, standing alone, they are not enough to claim complete understanding. The studies themselves include little to no description of methodology. Furthermore, the statistics, which sometimes vary greatly between studies, provide a description of the aggregate opinion but do not privilege individual voices. Finally, they do not discuss theory nor do they provide rationale for why they chose the particular variables in their studies.

### *CSR and Public Relations*

The majority of the research cited in the above sections comes from business, marketing, or business ethics literature. Very little exists from a public relations perspective. The literature on CSR from the public relations field is often limited to how public relations can communicate externally about the CSR efforts of the corporation (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007; Golobb & Bartlett, 2007; Tang & Li, 2009). However, Capriotti and Moreno state, “A narrow relationship between the practice of public relations and corporate responsibility can be observed” (2007, p. 85). Other scholars have expressed this sentiment as well (e.g. Clark, 2000; Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Kim & Reber, 2004). However, before further exploring this relationship, it is necessary to provide additional background on the meaning of public and reflect more broadly on the field of public relations.

As noted in the introduction, Grunig and Repper (1992) define public as a group of people that recognize common issues, organize around those issues, and seek out organizations that create those issues. In other words, organizations do not choose their publics; publics choose their organizations. Publics do not necessarily have a stake in the corporation that considers them a public; they are free standing, existing independently of the corporation (Mackey, 2006). According to the homo narrans perspective, “a public emerges through spontaneous debate, discussion, and argument over time” (Vasquez & Taylor, 2001, p. 146).

Grunig and Hunt (1984) define public relations as “the management of communication between an organization and its publics” (p. 6). Public relations is often associated with the technician role, responsible for tasks such as publicity, promotion, and

media relations utilizing one-way asymmetrical communication (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995; Toth, Serini, Wright, & Emig, 1998). However, this technician role alone is not sufficient for achieving public relations excellence, an abstraction of the public relations ideal as defined by the Excellence Study, a large-scale quantitative study which set benchmarks for public relations' best practices (Dozier et al., 1995). Accordingly, the technician role should be implemented in conjunction with the managerial function, which requires expert knowledge, strategic thinking, and a focus on relationships. Also included in the managerial function of public relations is the concept of two-way symmetrical communication, where the flow of information is not only from a corporation to its publics but also from publics to the corporation (Dozier et al., 1995).

A number of similarities and overlaps between the public relations function and corporate social responsibility are noted in the literature. As Clark (2000) states, "It becomes clear, by looking at the processes of CSR and public relations, that these two disciplines have much in common" (p. 369). Clark (2000) compares Wood's (1991) explanation of corporate social responsibility to Cutlip and Center's (1978) definition of public relations, noting that for both, the stakeholder categories were essentially identical, including employees, stockholders, consumers, community groups, and government. Additionally, Clark illuminates the fact that the first stage in both public relations and CSR is to scan the corporation's political and social environment so the corporation can be more responsive to societal demands (2000). Furthermore, she points out, both disciplines are built on the foundation that it makes good business sense for a corporation to have quality relationships with its key stakeholder groups (Clark, 2000). She points



out, however, that the main difference between CSR and public relations that is noted in the literature is the lack of a focus on communication in CSR research (Clark, 2000).

Other scholars have suggested theoretical convergence between the two fields as well. For example, David (2004) emphasizes public relations' role in reputation management, particularly during a crisis. However, reputation management is a concept used in CSR as well; in fact, the effectiveness of CSR efforts is sometimes measured using a reputation index (Clark, 2000). Furthermore, like CSR, public relations is seen as a legitimizing activity (Verčič, van Ruler, Bütschi & Flodin, 2001) David, Kline, and Dai (2005) state that both public relations and CSR initiatives influence corporate identity. Additionally, Wang and Chaudhri (2009) discuss the centrality of relationship management in both fields, while Clark (2000) points out that both disciplines have used issues management in research and practice. Finally, both corporate social responsibility and public relations are fields in need of more research in order to “solidify a permanent place as a management function” (Clark, 2000, p. 372).

Some scholars argue the view that beyond just being similar, corporate social responsibility is actually part of public relations. O'Connor (2008) refers to CSR as a form of public relations, and Capriotti and Moreno (2007) state, “Corporate responsibility is one of the most prominent themes in the field of public relations” (p. 85). Steyn (2009) discusses enterprise strategy as one of the five levels of strategy in public relations. The concept of enterprise strategy closely aligns with corporate social responsibility because it focuses on nonfinancial organizational goals such as legitimacy, trust, reputation, corporate citizenship, and stakeholder relationships (Steyn, 2009). According to Steyn,

enterprise strategy is aimed at “achieving a balance between the organization’s commercial imperatives and socially acceptable behavior” (2009, p. 158).

The article *Public Relations' Place in Corporate Social Responsibility: Practitioners Define Their Role* asked 173 public relations practitioners about their conceptions of their role in corporate social responsibility (Kim & Reber, 2008). The largest number of respondents reported that public relations plays a “large” role in CSR in the form of advising clients on CSR or advocating for CSR issues. Some respondents also suggested that public relations’ role in CSR is to promote human welfare by making decisions about charitable giving, facilitating volunteer projects, promoting community relations, and other relationship-building actions. Other respondents indicated that the public relations role was based on serving as a corporate role model and enforcing ethical standards. A small portion of the practitioners said that the role of public relations in CSR is just communicating the corporation’s CSR activities to the public. Finally, the smallest portion, slightly over 10%, stated that public relations does not have a role in CSR (Kim & Reber, 2008). Overall, many respondents felt that public relations practitioners are well-informed on CSR, and they could contribute through identifying the unique needs of the community and serving as the organizational conscience. However, they felt that their contribution is restricted by their limited influence and authority within the corporation (Kim & Reber, 2008).

#### *Stakeholder Management Theory*

Stakeholder management theory is one of the key theories used in discussing corporate social responsibility (Freeman, 1984). However, before reviewing the literature on stakeholder management theory, it is necessary to define the term stakeholder. The

term stakeholder was first utilized in management literature in an internal memorandum at the Stanford Research Institute in 1963 (Freeman, 1984). A stakeholder is linked to a corporation based on the fact that they both have consequences on one another (Grunig & Repper, 1992). Therefore, corporations depend on stakeholders for continued survival (Freeman & Reed, 1983). Examples of stakeholders include customers, investors, employees, lenders, suppliers, and society (Freeman, 1984; Post, Preston, & Sachs, 2002). By utilizing the term “stakeholder,” these groups or individuals that may otherwise be overlooked are seen as having a “stake.” In other words, they legitimized in terms of their ability to affect the firm (Freeman, 1984).

There are a number of classic pieces that discuss stakeholder management theory. Therefore, although most of the literature presented here is a bit dated, it is most relevant to cite these scholars. For example, it is a widely-held notion that Freeman’s 1984 book, *Strategic Management: a Stakeholder Approach*, is the defining, landmark piece on stakeholder management theory (e.g., Golob & Bartlett, 2007; Jones, 1995; Waddock, Bodwell, & Graves, 2002). Cited by scholars discussing stakeholders, stakeholder theory, or corporate social responsibility, the book details the case that it is critical for corporations, specifically management, to systematically consider and incorporate their stakeholders into their business strategy (Freeman, 1984). As Freeman (1984) states, “To be an effective strategist you must deal with those groups that can affect you, while to be responsive (and effective in the long run) you must deal with those groups that you can affect” (p. 46). Freeman urges managers to think of ways that individual stakeholders and the corporation can simultaneously ‘win’, thus developing mutually satisfying results. He suggests that planning for stakeholder concerns is not enough; stakeholders need to be

strategically managed. In other words, in order to develop sound corporate strategy and ensure the continued survival of the firm, it is necessary for executives to understand the needs and concerns of their stakeholders (Freeman, 1984).

*Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* suggests that in order to be socially viable and avoid significant internal and external stress, corporations need to have an appropriate enterprise strategy (Freeman, 1984, p. 99). Enterprise strategy, as mentioned previously, is defined by Freeman as the level of analysis dealing with a “broad set of issues around values, social issues, and stakeholder expectations” (p. 88) In order to develop enterprise strategy, a corporation needs to conduct a stakeholder analysis, a values analysis, and a social issues analysis. As found by Sturdivant (1979), the values of management and certain stakeholders in the firm are often fundamentally different. Therefore, the desired result of these analyses is to “readjust the corporate priorities to more closely align the firm with satisfying stakeholder needs” (Freeman, 1984, p. 115). To do so, the corporation must negotiate a fit between its corporate values, its stakeholders’ expectations, and the social issues in its environment that will impact its ability to conduct business.

There are different typologies for how a corporation may decide to make this fit. First is the narrow stakeholder strategy, which is when the corporation maximizes benefits for one or a small set of stakeholders. Another strategy is stockholder strategy, which prioritizes benefits to stockholders. Utilitarian strategy maximizes benefits to all stakeholders. This could be described as the greatest good for the greatest number. Rawlsian strategy is defined as the corporation seeking to benefit the worst-off stakeholders. Finally, corporations employing the social harmony strategy act to maintain

or create social harmony by gaining the consensus of society (Freeman, 1984). In practice, however, Agle, Mitchell, and Sonnenfeld (1999) suggest that the way the fit is made, specifically in how executives give priority to one stakeholder group over another is positively related to the stakeholder's power, legitimacy, and urgency both individually and collectively.

As Donaldson and Preston (1995) point out, since the publishing of Freeman's widely-cited book on stakeholder management theory, there have more than a dozen books and over one hundred articles focusing primarily on stakeholder theory, and it is obvious in the literature that discussion of the concept has only grown in the fifteen years since their count. Applications of the theory run the gamut, including, for example, an article applying stakeholder theory to developing countries, specifically Lebanon and Syria (Jamali, 2008) and another advocating for a critical theory perspective elaboration of stakeholder management theory (Reed, 1999).

One particular area of stakeholder management theory that has received a great deal of attention is the nature or purpose of the theory and how it should be used. Donaldson and Preston (1995) illuminate three different frames of thought on its purpose. First, the theory is descriptive or empirical; the theory is used to describe certain behaviors of a firm. Used in this way, the theory can explain the past, present, and future state of affairs between a corporation and its stakeholders (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Examples of the theory being used in this manner include Wang and Dewhirst's (1992) article describing how board members think about the interests of their stakeholders or Clarkson's (1991) article describing how corporations are actually managed. According to the descriptive/empirical point of view, a corporation is justified in accepting

stakeholder management theory because managers are applying it in real life (Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

A second way theorists have explained the nature of the theory is instrumental. From this point of view, managers are justified in implemented stakeholder management theory because it will lead to greater corporate success. Instrumental uses of stakeholder theory draw connections between the stakeholder concept and common corporate performance objectives such as profitability (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Jones (1995) suggests that it is the instrumental view that offers a testable theory. One such study is Ogden and Watson's (1999) use of the case study methodology to investigate the ability of U.K. water companies to balance shareholder and stakeholder interests. They found that increasing customer services levels had a negative impact on profit in the short term due to the costs of improving customer service. However, the increases in customer services levels were linked to increases in market value, indicating the possibility of achieving long-term value (Ogden & Watson, 1999).

Another study by Kotter and Heskett (1992) empirically studied two hundred companies and found that corporate cultures which express the company's purpose in terms of stakeholders were significantly correlated with long-term financial success. Furthermore, Berman, Wicks, Kotha, and Jones (1999) tested the instrumental view of stakeholder management theory when they empirically investigated the relationship between financial performance and each of five stakeholder areas: employees, product safety/quality, community, diversity, and the natural environment. They found that two of the five variables representing the firm's stakeholder viewpoint directly impacted financial performance: employees and product safety/quality. They did not find a

statistically significant relationship with the other three variables, community, diversity, and the natural environment, though they acknowledged that others have found such relationships (Berman et al., 1999).

The final frame for explaining the purpose of stakeholder management theory is normative. The normative perspective attempts to interpret the function of the firm and offer guidance about how to manage it based on underlying moral or philosophical principles (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). It is categorical, in effect saying *do this because it is the right thing to do*. Therefore, the normative justification of stakeholder management theory is utilitarianism, individual or group rights, and the social conscious (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Numerous theorists have discussed stakeholder management theory from a normative viewpoint (Agle, Mitchell, & Sonnenfeld, 1999; Freeman, 1994; Paine, 1994; Williamson, 1985). In fact, Donaldson and Preston (1995) conclude that although the descriptive, instrumental, and normative views of the stakeholder management theory are all mutually supportive, it is the normative base that is fundamental. Jacobs and Getz (1995) argue not only that stakeholder management theory is most powerful as a normative model, but also that it loses “force and clarity” when viewed from the instrumental or descriptive models (p. 793).

However, not all scholars support this sentiment. For example, Gilbert and Rauche (2007) point out that the descriptive model is especially useful because it shows “organizations how to take stakeholder claims into account in practical ways” (p. 762). Additionally, Berman et al.’s (1999) study found that it was the firms that embraced the instrumental view – stakeholder management as a means to an end of revenue, profit, and

returns to shareholders – rather than the normative view – a moral commitment to positive treatment of stakeholders – that were linked to higher corporate performance.

Furthermore, not all scholars support stakeholder management theory in general. In his article *Stakeholders: The Case Against*, Argenti (1997) lays out what he refers to as the “dangers and defects of the stakeholder approach” (p. 442). Argenti problematizes the fact that the theory runs counter to modern capitalism, which suggests that the ultimate goal of a corporation is shareholder return as long as it is done in a way that is socially acceptable. He also points out that while shareholders know what to expect from their corporation, the theory does not specify what certain stakeholders are entitled to, especially in comparison to other stakeholders (Argenti, 1997). Whether stakeholders should be prioritized, and if so how, is another issue of Argenti’s, as he states, “If all stakeholders are equal, does this imply that when the shareholders’ dividends rise by 20%, the employees (all of them, cleaners and directors equally) should expect, as of right, 20% extra pay?” (p. 443). Furthermore, it would be the manager’s job to make these types of decisions, yet the manager him/herself is a stakeholder. Argenti supports his case by comparing the corporation to other institutions. For example, the sole purpose of a hospital is to help patients. It does not exist for the doctors, nurses, or pharmaceutical companies, even though they are part of the bigger picture. Rather, in order to be successful, the benefits of the hospital need to be focused on its beneficiaries: the patients. He suggests this should be the case for corporations as well: The goal is to benefit the shareholders. Ultimately, Argenti (1997) concludes that stakeholder management theory is outdated, philosophically misconceived, damaging, and unethical.



Even those who support the stakeholder concept or stakeholder management theory acknowledge that there is much room for growth. Clarke (1998) states that the stakeholder notion is deceptively simple, while Harrison and Freeman (1999) suggest that the stakeholder model has not been used in a very sophisticated manner. One particular area that is in need of further consideration is the way the stakeholder concept is being defined. Donaldson and Preston (1995) claim that definitions such as ‘anyone influenced or influencing the firm’ are excessively broad, yet exclude key players such as competitors and the media. Similarly, Harrison and Freeman (1999) suggest that it is necessary for the field to develop more “fine-grained ideas” about each of the stakeholder groups (p. 484). Groups such as customers, employees, and suppliers likely have a good deal of variation and differences within them and, therefore, should not be treated as homogeneous (Harrison & Freeman, 1999).

#### *Pepsi, PepsiCo, and the Pepsi Refresh Project*

The cola beverage Pepsi was first introduced in 1902 (The Pepsi-Cola Story, 2005) and is now one of the best-known brands worldwide (PepsiCo, 2011b). It has the second largest market share in the soft drink industry, falling just short of Coca-Cola (2009 Soft Drink Report, 2009). A 2009 study by Mediamark Research and Intelligence Plus (MRI+) found that 20.3% of the surveyed population drank Pepsi in the last six months. The age group with the highest percentage of Pepsi drinkers was 18-24. The percentage of people who drank Pepsi in the last six months decreased as age increased. Across all age groups, however, males are more likely to have drunk Pepsi than females. Specifically in the 18-34 age group, 28.7% of males drank Pepsi in the last six months while 24.4% of females had in the same time frame. In regard to race, 18.7% of whites

reported drinking Pepsi in the last six months in comparison to 27.5% of blacks/African-Americans, 20.7% of Asians, and 23.8% of other racial groups not including American-Indian, Alaska natives, or multiple classifications. The percentage of respondents who drank Pepsi in the past six months also varied by education level, decreasing as the level of education increased, and income, with those in the income brackets under \$50,000 annually more likely to drink Pepsi than those in higher income brackets (Mediamark Research and Intelligence Plus, 2009).

The Pepsi brand is owned by PepsiCo, “a world leader in convenient snacks, foods and beverages” (PepsiCo, 2011a). With more than 285,000 employees, PepsiCo’s revenues are over sixty billion (PepsiCo, 2011a). PepsiCo is divided into four different divisions, PepsiCo Americas Beverages, PepsiCo Americas Foods, PepsiCo Europe, and PepsiCo Middle East and Africa (PepsiCo, 2011f) and represents numerous brands in addition to Pepsi, including Sierra Mist, Slice, Tropicana, SoBe, Gatorade, Frito Lays, Quaker, and more (PepsiCo, 2011b).

Recently named the fifth most reputable company in America (Burkitt, 2010), PepsiCo’s stated mission is to “be the world's premier consumer products company focused on convenient foods and beverage” (PepsiCo, 2011c), while its vision is “to continually improve all aspects of the world in which we operate - environment, social, economic - creating a better tomorrow than today” (PepsiCo, 2011c). The catch-phrase “performance with purpose” (PepsiCo, 2011e) combines both its mission and vision in a promise to strive for excellent financial performance while balancing human, talent, and environmental sustainability (Land, 2010).

Peter Land, the Senior Vice President of Communications at PepsiCo, stated that the Pepsi Refresh project is a brand example of “performance with purpose” (Land, 2010). According to Land, the Pepsi Refresh project is an opportunity “to do something different but also to make a really serious impact in America” (Land, 2010). He also commented that it was a way to get more intimate and learn what issues really matter to American’s today (Land, 2010).

The campaign is driven by the public. Proposals are submitted, listed, and voted on completely through the Pepsi Refresh website. This technique can be referred to as crowdsourcing, which is leveraging the power of the public to do perform business-related tasks which are normally done by either the company itself or a third-party provider (Alsever, 2007). Through utilizing crowdsourcing to generate and execute corporate social responsibility ideas, PepsiCo expanded their talent pool, obtained essentially free labor, and gained insight into their customer’s wants.

The campaign is also digitally-driven. While there have been some commercials for the campaign, the majority of the advertising is digital. Labeled an “experiment in social media” (Zumda & Patel, 2010), Pepsi is utilizing social media tools like Facebook and Twitter to spread the word about the campaign (Elliot, 2010), while those who submit proposals are using it to solicit votes (Land, 2010). In fact, Land suggested that if the submitters do not take advantage of social media, it is unlikely that they will win (Land, 2010).

While the choice to embrace a digital campaign was a gamble (Hepburn, 2010), it has been referred to as “bold” and “impactful,” as many are looking to the campaign as an indicator of what’s to come (Zmuda & Patel, 2010). Furthermore, Pepsi has been

applauded for exploring what matters (Zmuda & Patel, 2010) and committing to its audiences (Grinton, 2010). Through the campaign, Pepsi has engaged its audiences in a new way and deepening its relationships with consumers. According to Zmuda & Patel (2010), the public seems to be responding positively. On the day of the launch of the campaign, the maximum number of submissions allowable per month, one-thousand, was reached in less than twenty-four hours (Grinton, 2010). By the end of 2010, the campaign had garnered nearly three billion media impressions and over seven thousand projects received more than 51 million votes (Campaign's Creativity Loved, 2010).

The PepsiCo corporation, too, is apparently pleased with the outcome of the campaign. As noted above, the project has been expanded to other countries and renewed in the United States for 2011. Although Pepsi's sales dropped 6% last year, higher than the just over 4% decline in overall carbonated beverage sales, PepsiCo maintains that this was "not a sales-driving program" or a corporate philanthropy move (Preston, 2011). Instead, the goal was to share ideas and change the world, and in that regard, according to Preston (2011), it has been a win-win-win situation for the consumers, the communities, and the brand. In fact, Pepsi bottlers have claimed that they consider it a "massive success in terms of awareness and... palpable goodwill toward the brand" (Campaign's Creativity Loved, 2010, para. 2). In terms of impact, PepsiCo states that through this campaign, it has engaged over twenty-four thousand volunteers and refreshed over two-hundred communities (PepsiCo, 2011d).

However, the campaign has not gone without criticism. Some have questioned the advertising PepsiCo has used to promote the campaign, asking why PepsiCo would spend money to tell people they are giving away money (Beyond the Bottom Line, 2010).

Others have criticized technical aspects of the website (Berrent, 2010) or raised concerns over questionable voting tactics being used (Preston, 2011). Furthermore, it is worth noting that PepsiCo is certainly not the only corporation to introduce a campaign aimed at being socially responsible, using social media, and/or listening to their audience. One example of a similar campaign is Target's Bullseye Gives campaign. A few months after the Pepsi Refresh project was launched, Target rolled out this campaign where for two weeks users could vote on Facebook for one of ten charities that had been selected by Target to dictate where 5% of Target's weekly profits would be donated (Target Puts \$3 Million in the Hands of its Fans on Facebook, 2009). Therefore, whether or not the Pepsi Refresh campaign is truly the "first-of-its-kind" (Zmuda & Patel, 2010) is debatable. However, a corporation known for spending big money on high-profile celebrity ads shifting gears to focus on a corporate social responsibility campaign, especially one that has been labeled by *Advertising Age* as one of the most "important brand efforts of the year," is a notable departure worthy of further consideration.

#### *A Note on Terminology*

The literature review has used both the terms public and stakeholder, including definitions for each. As would be expected, the literature coming from public relations most often used the term public, while discussions of stakeholder management theory use stakeholder. As can be noted throughout, this study has chosen to refer to the population of interest as a public. However, this was not a clear choice. From one point of view, PepsiCo strategically decided to target young (and online-savvy) people as their audience for this campaign (Elliot, 2010), as will be discussed further in the method section. Therefore, PepsiCo chose them and not the other way around; PepsiCo designed the

campaign so that their selected group would have a stake in their campaign. This suggests that the population aligns with the definition of a stakeholder. From another viewpoint, however, this group of young, socially active people already existed online. They emerged based on common interests, and PepsiCo recognized this. As a result, PepsiCo is using this campaign to try to build a relationship with this group. From this perspective, the population fits more with the definition of a public. This ambiguity in appropriate terminology suggests that, in light of a changing society that is increasingly active online, definitions and usages of the terms public and stakeholder, especially the distinction between the two, need to be revisited and refined. However, for the purpose of this study, the population will be referred to as a public in order to align previous literature from the public relations field.

### *Research Questions*

The above review of the literature has detailed the definitions and history of corporate social responsibility, the rationale for engaging in CSR activities, the categories of theories on CSR, the publics' views of CSR efforts, the relationship between CSR and public relations, and the concepts of stakeholder management theory, as well as providing further background on Pepsi, PepsiCo, and the Pepsi Refresh campaign. While there are a great deal of theories, approaches, definitions, and research in general on CSR, there is a clear lack of research from the public relations research field. As a result, the literature is dominated by management and organizational perspectives, and the publics' views on CSR are under-examined. Of the studies that do consider this viewpoint, many are statistical representations collected by public relations agencies, creating the opportunity

for additional in-depth scholarly investigations to supplement and expand these current understandings.

Furthermore, though it has been established as a case worthy of study, the Pepsi Refresh project has not been previously examined in a systematic manner. Therefore, this study argues that through understanding more about how young adults make meaning of the campaign and its motivations, as well as specifically applying the concepts of stakeholder management theory to determine what impact they have on how PepsiCo is perceived, our understanding of the bigger picture of corporate social responsibility will be advanced. For this reason, the following research questions were developed to address the noted gaps:

RQ1: How do young adults make meaning of corporate social responsibility?

RQ2: How do young adults perceive PepsiCo?

RQ3: How do young adults make meaning of the Pepsi Refresh campaign materials and messages?

RQ4: How do young adults understand Pepsi's motives for the Pepsi Refresh campaign?

## Chapter 3- Method

This study was executed utilizing qualitative research methods. Through in-depth interviews, I explored young adults' perceptions of corporate social responsibility, incorporating the Pepsi Refresh project and stakeholder management theory. Below is a description of qualitative methods followed by a discussion of in-depth interviewing. Next, I detail the participants; procedure, including Institutional Review Board approval, consent, and confidentiality; and data analysis plan. Finally, attention is devoted to validity, reliability, and reflexivity.

### *Qualitative Methodology*

The defining characteristic of qualitative research is the focus on meanings (Dey, 2003). Qualitative researchers “seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 8). They strive to understand not only people and their social settings, but also how people make sense of their social settings (Berg, 2009). Qualitative methods can be used to understand experiences, reconstruct events, fill in historical gaps, explore personal issues, or revisit past problems (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). It is commonly agreed that qualitative methods include interviews, focus groups, case studies, content analysis, and unobtrusive methods, among others (Berg, 2009).

However, in terms of an actual definition of qualitative methodology, great variance exists, referred to by Potter (1996) as “a potpourri of definitions” (p. 13). For example, Strauss and Corbin's (1990) definition was broad: “Any kind of research that produces findings that are not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (p. 17). On the other hand, Auerbach and Silverstein's (2003)



definition is considerably narrower: “Research that involves analyzing and interpreting texts and interviews in order to discover meaningful patterns descriptive of a particular phenomenon” (p. 3). Then there are those who resist the notion that a definition could even be provided. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) suggest that “the ‘field’ of qualitative research is far from a unified set of principles promulgated by networked groups of scholars” (p. ix).

There are many benefits to qualitative methodology. The results achieved through qualitative methodologies are often noted for their depth (Dey, 1993). As stated by Berg (2009), “Qualitative procedures provide a means of accessing unquantifiable facts about the actual people researchers observe and talk to” (p. 8). Furthermore, qualitative methods allow the data to be defined by the subjects (Patton, 1980). In this way, qualitative methods, can adjust to the changing contexts and situations in which the research is taking place (Mason, 2002). In addition, while some researchers have taken issue with the lack of objectivity in qualitative research methods, Grunig (2008) rejects the notion of objectivity and embraces the relationship between research and the people who create it. She suggests that qualitative scholars locate themselves in the middle of their research topic and the people they study, resulting in the co-creation of “a very high-quality knowledge” (Grunig, 2008, p. 124). Supporting the rejection of objective truth, Lindlof (1995) explains, qualitative researchers gather credible, dependable data to ensure that the right interpretations are achieved; however, “Notice that I do not say *the* right interpretation. There are many possible interpretations of a case” (p. 238).

### *In-Depth Interviewing*

McCracken (1988) states, “The long interview is one of the most powerful methods in the qualitative armory. For certain descriptive and analytic purposes, no instrument of inquiry is more revealing” (p. 9). Termed by Burgess (1984) a ‘conversation with a purpose’, interviews allow the researcher to access the fuller social and cultural contexts of their topic of study (McCracken, 1988).

Yin (2009) suggests that in-depth interviews can be used to inquire about matters of fact as well as opinions. Interviewees may even be asked to propose their own insights into certain phenomena or occurrences (Yin, 2009). Through this inquiry, interviews give us the opportunity to see into the mental world of the interviewee, access the logic and categories he or she uses to view the world, and essentially “experience the world as they do themselves” (McCracken, 1988, p. 9). Bogdan and Bilken (1998) echo this sentiment, stating that interviews allow researchers to gather descriptive data in the subjects’ own words in order to determine how he or she interprets some aspect of his or her world. While it has been suggested that interviews sometimes result in biased or inaccurate data due to solely relying on the words of the informants (Yin, 2009), this can be minimized through conducting multiples interviews.

Because qualitative researchers are not just interested in learning about a topic but also what is important to those being studied (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), it is imperative that the interviewer truly listens to the interviewee (Mason, 2008). The interview is not an equal conversation because the purpose is to obtain information (Berg, 2009). Therefore, the researcher must seek to maintain a low profile (McCracken, 1988) while simultaneously keeping everything running smoothly by making instant decisions about

the content and sequence of the interview (Mason, 2002). The researcher must also take caution to avoid articulating questions poorly (Yin, 2009) or imposing his/her own understandings into a question (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). However, if executed skillfully, interviews can result in rich, vivid, deep, and nuanced responses to inform the study (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

### *Participants*

In total, twenty-six participants were interviewed for this study. Saturation of data, or the point at which no additional data that could lead the development of more categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), was achieved. Although scholars have suggested that saturation can be reached in as few as twelve (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006) or even eight (McCracken, 1988) interviews, the availability of participants and depth of data desired made a case for including a greater number of interviewees.

Twelve of the interviewees were male, and fourteen were female. Eleven participants were Caucasian, six were Asian-American, seven were African-American, and two identified as Hispanic. Most were students at the University of Maryland, though majors varied widely. The study was restricted to young people, operationalized in this case as adults aged 18-24 in accordance with Mediamark's breakdown of the demographic group, which, as noted in the literature review, is most likely to drink Pepsi more than its competitors. Young people were selected for the focus of this study based on Pepsi's target audience for their campaign. As stated by Lee Clow, the chief creative officer and global director for media arts at the PepsiCo corporation, the goal of the campaign is "to develop a mechanism for young people to create ideas to make things better," (Elliot, 2010). He continued, "Every generation refreshes the world. Now it's

your turn” (Elliot, 2010). As stated in the Cone Corporate Citizenship reports, “Younger Americans are also influencing companies to commit to social causes. Companies recognize that younger consumers are more likely to differentiate between products based upon a company’s social and environmental commitments than older generations. Therefore, many companies are working to identify causes that resonate with younger demographic groups to remain relevant and top of mind” (Cone, 2010, p. 3). This makes it especially important to understand their perceptions of corporate social responsibility campaigns. Additionally, by focusing on a specific age group, this study answers O’Connor et al.’s (2008) call for “further research into how demographic attributes (i.e., age, gender, income, education, nationality) influence perceptions of CSR” (p. 348) and takes strides toward developing more “fine-grained ideas” about stakeholder groups (Harrison & Freeman, 1999).

I did not restrict participation based on previous knowledge of corporate social responsibility. Varying levels of insight on the topic were acceptable; those that had no previous knowledge were provided with a definition and, if necessary, examples of companies commonly known for their corporate social responsibility efforts in order to be sure that they understood the concept of interest. In fact, by interviewing participants with differing levels of knowledge on the topic, I believe I was able to access a greater range of perspectives. Additionally, I did not restrict participation to those who are familiar with the Pepsi Refresh campaign. During the interview, I showed two videos about the campaign, read a description of it, and allowed the participant to spend as much time as they wished perusing the website, ensuring they had a sufficient understanding of the basics of the campaign regardless of whether they had previously heard of it. Again, I

believe that allowing different levels of familiarity to participate led to some interesting variation in perceptions.

### *Recruitment*

Participants for the study were recruited through convenience and purposive sampling. Most were recruited through the University of Maryland's Department of Communication's research participant pool, SONA. Through this system, University of Maryland students between the ages of 18-24 signed up to partake in the study on the SONA website. Some of these students, depending on their individual courses, received extra credit for their participation. I supplemented the interviewees recruited on SONA with purposive sampling of personal and networking connections. I was conscious, however, to not include any interviewees with whom I had previously discussed the study in order to avoid any possible bias this may have created.

With both SONA and personal contacts, I specifically recruited to achieve an approximately stratified sample in terms of gender and race, maximizing the demographic variety in the participants and accessing diverse views. It is likely that participants may have been skewed in regard to socio-economic status and education level. However, this is not believed to have negatively impacted the results of the overall study as its goal was to understand how young adults make meaning of corporate social responsibility but not to generalize to any greater public.

### *Procedure*

*Interview Protocol.* I conducted in-depth interviews with each of the participants to understand their meaning making of corporate social responsibility, the Pepsi Refresh project, and stakeholder management theory. The interviews were semistandardized,

meaning that “questions are typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but interviewers are allowed freedom to digress; that is, interviewers are permitted (in fact, expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared standardized questions” (Berg, 2009, p. 107). This type of interviewing is flexible and allows the interviewer to gain access to the world from the subject’s perspective (Berg, 2009), while still allowing for the use of an interview protocol. A protocol, or guide, helps the interviewer from getting lost during the interview by “pointing out the general direction but not specifying which nooks and crannies will be explored” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 150). The protocol for this study is included in Appendix A. Within the protocol, I noted which research question each actual question was designed to address.

After asking some general demographic questions, the interview protocol began by posing broad questions, otherwise known as ‘grand tour’ questions (McCracken, 1988), about the interviewee’s conceptualization of corporate social responsibility. This section included questions about their attitudes toward soda and Pepsi. I then used campaign materials to introduce the Pepsi Refresh project in order to frame the remainder of the discussion (To view the materials, see Appendix A), and then asked about their conceptualizations of the campaign. I transitioned from this to a larger discussion of corporate social responsibility before returning to a line of questioning about Pepsi’s motives and possible efforts to match their business operations with the desires of their stakeholders. Finally, interviewees were asked if they had any other points they wanted to discuss or any suggestions for additional questions that I could ask other interviewees.

Throughout all of these sections of questions, I utilized probes to elicit more information about the interviewee’s responses (Berg, 2009). However, when and to what

extent I probed depended on the particular interviewee and his or her level of previous knowledge. Furthermore, though I generally followed the protocol, at times I deleted questions or changed their order during the course of the interview if the interviewee brought up a related point or had already discussed the topic when responding to a previous question.

*Pre-testing.* As suggested by Mason (2002), I used pre-tests to help formulate and fine-tune the interview protocol and preemptively expose any issues that might have surfaced during the interview process. Four interviews were conducted prior to the official start of the study. The feedback provided by these participants as well as my own reflection on these interviews through memos, which will be discussed below, were used to improve the protocol, my probes, the interview experience, and the overall study.

*Consent and Confidentiality.* This study was executed in accordance with all Institutional Review Board policies. Before beginning the study, I received approval from the University of Maryland's Institutional Review Board. Prior to conducting each interview, participants were asked to sign a consent form detailing the purpose of the study, risks and benefits, their rights and ability to withdrawal, and confidentiality information (Appendix B). This information was also verbally reviewed and any questions were answered. Upon receiving the permission of the interviewee, the interviews were audiotaped for later reference. If requested, the interviewees were able to review the transcript of their interview, though no participants expressed interest in this option. The identity of all participants was kept strictly confidential. The interviewees' names were not listed on the transcript of their interviews, nor will their names be linked with any of the results or quotes below. Transcripts and recordings were stored in a

secure location, separate from the signed consents forms or any other information which would reveal the identity of the participants.

### *Data Analysis*

Miles and Huberman (1984) advise researchers to start the data analysis process while still in the data collection stage. Though it may be tempting to focus solely on data collection and put off all data analysis until after this is complete, doing so rules out the possibility of filling in gaps in the data, testing new hypotheses, or developing rival hypotheses to question the researcher's assumptions. Additionally, data analysis would be an overwhelming task if done all at once (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Therefore, I began data analysis immediately upon completing each interview through the process of writing down all my initial thoughts and impressions in observer's comments, shorter reflections scattered throughout my notes, and memos, longer reflections commenting on the overall experience (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998), to be referenced later.

Using the audio recordings, each interview was transcribed shortly after the interview occurrence to ensure that important details were not lost. Each transcription listed the race and gender of the participant for reference in the event that this information was deemed relevant at some point in the data analysis. However, the results were not specifically analyzed based on this information due to the lack of any previous theory suggesting if and how these factors influence perceptions of corporate social responsibility. The only available data was the demographic breakdown of Pepsi drinkers found in the literature review, which, while interesting, did not suggest any huge disproportion that would be likely to impact results.



Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest only putting into the transcript “the level of detail we are likely to analyze and include any information that might influence the interpretation” (p. 204). I interpreted this to mean anything related to the research questions. Therefore, I transcribed the interviews in the format of partial transcriptions, which included detailed summaries of what was said in response to each question staying as true as possible to their verbiage rather than paraphrasing in my own words. I also included any potentially important quotes that illustrated the interviewee’s line of thought and noted the time in the interview recording so it could be referenced for further information. While transcribing, I continued to include observer’s comments and memos. Doing so helped me “move easily from data to a conceptual level, refining and expanding codes further, developing key categories and showing their relationships, and building toward a more integrated theory of events, process, and outcomes” (Miles & Huberman, p. 71).

As stated by Dey (1993), “There is no one kind of qualitative data analysis, but rather a variety of approaches, related to the different perspectives and purposes of researchers” (p. 1). Therefore, because the research questions of this study have different purposes, two different techniques for data analysis were utilized. Research questions one and four, which ask about understandings of CSR and the motivation behind it, deal with topic areas on which much theory has already been developed. Additionally, research question two on how PepsiCo is perceived was specifically analyzed from the perspective of an existing theory – stakeholder management theory. As a result, the data collected in association with these three questions were analyzed using the pattern-matching technique. Pattern-matching is based on comparing empirically based patterns with

predicted ones to determine whether a certain theory is present in the case (Yin, 2009). Plowman's (1998) model was used as a framework for the analytic strategy that was applied to these three research questions. Plowman based his model off the models found in Marshall and Rossman (1989), McCracken (1988), Yin (1989), Bogdan and Biklen (1992), and Miles and Huberman (1984) (as cited in Plowman, 1998), combining them in a way he believes capitalizes on the advantages of each model. The following steps were adapted from his framework:

1. A study of key issues that emerge in the individual interviews.
2. A comparison of the interviewees' understandings of corporate social responsibility to each other in search of patterns.
3. A comparison of the interviewees' perceptions of the corporation to each other in search of patterns.
4. A comparison of the interviewees' understandings of motivations to each other in search of patterns.
5. After the data were gathered and patterns seemed to emerge, a search for alternative explanations—to challenge the very patterns that seem so evident or obvious.
6. After patterns developed, conclude with a comparison of findings back to theory to establish or discredit the specific model developed from theory.

In order to execute this analysis, I closely read each of the transcripts. As stated by Dey (1993), "Reading in qualitative data analysis is not passive" (83). Therefore, I constantly asked questions of the data (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). I compared the responses of the interviewees, pay attention to associations between the emerging variables. Through this process, I began to extrapolate connections across the variables as well as to the pre-existing theory. However, I was careful to examine not only the regularities in the data but also the variations and singularities (Dey, 1993).

Research question three asks how young adults make meaning of the campaign materials and messages. There is no specific previous literature on this topic. Therefore, the data analysis for this research question was executed through open coding. Furthermore, in order to avoid limiting interpretations of research question two to strictly the concepts of stakeholder management theory, results for research question two were also open coded.

Open coding requires the researcher to open inquiry widely, hold interpretations tentatively (Berg, 2009), and “believe everything and believe nothing” (Strauss, 1987, p. 28). In open coding, the researcher must approach the data with a specific and consistent set of questions, analyze the data minutely, repeatedly interject notes, and never assume the relevance of any variable unless or until the data shows it to be relevant (Strauss, 1987). Following the open coding process, axial coding, intensive coding around one category, was used to develop coding frames (Berg, 2009). These coding frames linked different segments or instances in the data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) though developing criteria for distinguishing observations as similar or related (Dey, 1993). According to Dey (1993), “Typically, this is done through the development of a set of categories” (p. 96) so that data within each category can be compared. Dey (1993) warns against assigning categories arbitrarily, emphasizing the importance of reflecting what is actually present in the data. However, as Coffey and Atkinson (1996) caution, coding cannot be considering the analysis in and of itself. In other words, the analysis does not end here. Instead, the process discussed above sets the stage for the researcher to develop interpretations and draw conclusions (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) through systematically

examining, questioning, and comparing the coding frames to develop themes (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

### *Reliability and Validity*

In order to establish the results of this study as credible, it is important that I devote attention to the concepts of reliability and validity. Reliability in qualitative research can be thought of as the “degree to which the finding is independent of accidental circumstances of the research” (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p. 20). I believe I addressed most if not all of the potential threats to reliability during the pre-testing process by working out issues with the wording of the questions, the order of the discussion, and my own interviewing skills. Additionally, Lindlof (1995) states that most threats to reliability come from inconsistencies in how the study is carried out. Therefore, I was sure to show each interviewee the same campaign videos.

Validity is commonly defined as whether the study actually addresses the phenomena it intends to investigate (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Kvale, 1995). In other words, the methodology must actually access the topic of interest (Lindlof, 1995). Kvale (1995) states, “Validity is ascertained by examining the sources of invalidity; and the stronger the attempts of falsification a proposition has survived, the more valid, the more trustworthy the knowledge” (p. 26). According to Kvale (1995), the process of addressing these sources of invalidity involves craftsmanship, dialogue, and pragmatism.

Craftsmanship requires the researcher to continually check, question, and theoretically interpret the findings, not just at the conclusion of the study but throughout the entire research process. Dialogue involves a conversation about social reality and is decided

through discourse. Pragmatism is validity in a practical sense; that is, can it produce the desired change in the very conditions being investigated (Kvale, 1995).

Some methods I used to achieve craftsmanship included memoing and reflection throughout, paying attention to outlying responses, gathering feedback from interviewees, being transparent with my data collection and analysis methods, and exploring rival hypotheses. Furthermore, triangulation, or “bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 44), was achieved through the sheer number of informants that were interviewed and the diverse range of perspectives they provided. This ensured dialogic validity because through the discussions of twenty-six participants, many views on the same concept were accessed and used to explore the research questions from multiple angles. Finally, the results were compared back to current understandings throughout the research process in order to suggest both practical and theoretical implications, making certain that the study also achieved pragmatic validity.

A common critique of the validity of the interviewing methodology is that the results are not valid because they rely solely on the reports of the subject (Kvale, 1995). However, this is not of concern for this study, since it is the reports of the subject that were of interest. The goal of this study was not to recount an event or obtain any objective fact; it was to privilege the public's voices. Another common critique of the validity of qualitative studies is the lack of external validity, or ability to be generalized to other populations (Babbie, 2010). However, McCracken dismisses this concern, stating:

In the qualitative case, however, the issue is not one of generalizability. It is that of access. The purpose of the qualitative interview is not to discover how many, and what kinds of, people share a certain characteristic. It is to gain access to the cultural categories and assumptions according to which one culture construes the world... It is the categories and assumptions, not those who hold them, that matter. In other words, qualitative research does not survey the terrain, it mines it (p. 17).

### *Reflexivity*

As Dey (1993) states, “Do not let assumptions blind you to the qualitative analysis. Avoid preconceived ideas. Before you start to analyze your data, make sure your cup is empty” (p. 63). In order to empty my cup and ensure the quality of this study’s results, it is integral that I exercise reflexivity. According to Mason (2002), reflexivity “means thinking critically about what you are doing and why, confronting and often challenging your own assumptions, and recognizing the extent to which your thoughts, actions, and decisions shape how you are research and what you see” (p. 5). Researchers must think critically about what they are doing and why they are doing it (Mason, 2002). They must pay attention to their internal dialogues, repeatedly examining what they know and how they came to know it (Berg, 2009). Grunig (2008) claims that reflexivity is the hallmark of qualitative research. Therefore, at this time, I provide a description of my identity as a researcher.

I am a white female raised in a middle-class community in the mid-Atlantic region. The neighborhood was largely homogeneous, comprised mostly of white, Christian, nuclear families. I am a graduate student in my early twenties studying public

relations. I was raised to believe in the value of giving back and have been a member of many clubs and organizations that focused on community service and volunteering. Therefore, although I have never worked for a corporation or been involved in any corporate social responsibility efforts (aside from as a consumer), I selected corporate social responsibility as the topic for this study because I believe in the idea of corporations helping society. I reject the opinion of naysayers who believe that corporations will never act ethically, and hope that through public relations, I can be a part of ensuring this is not the case. While some may call it naïve, I believe in the notion that corporations can and should contribute positively to society.

I grew up in a Coke-drinking household, but I do not have a strong preference myself as I am not a frequent soda drinker. I first heard about the Pepsi Refresh campaign after Super Bowl 2010 when the group of people I was watching with noticed that Pepsi did not have a commercial. We searched online and found the reason for this choice was the Pepsi Refresh campaign. Upon deciding to study corporate social responsibility, I immediately thought of the Pepsi Refresh project. I was surprised to learn that very little research has been done on this campaign and, therefore, believed that this would make for an interesting and valuable research topic.

Throughout the process of this study, from planning the data collection, conducting the interviews, and analyzing the data, I had to make a conscious effort to compartmentalize any preconceived notions that I may have as a result of these and other aspects of my identity. For example, any personal reactions to the interviewees and their responses had to be set aside in order to avoid bias. The memoing procedures described

above helped in this regard as well as simply being aware of my own identify and what impact this may have on my research.



## Chapter 4- Results

Overall, the results illustrate that young adults make meaning of corporate social responsibility and the Pepsi Refresh campaign in a variety of ways. Their understandings are detailed in the themes below, separated by the research question to which each theme corresponds. For the research question that elicited multiple perspectives of perceptions, the themes are broken down into sub-sections.

### **Research Question One: How do young adults make meaning of corporate social responsibility (CSR)?**

#### *Corporate Social Responsibility Activities*

Interviewees had varying suggestions for which corporate activities are part of the concept of corporate social responsibility. Respondents provided examples of ways to be socially responsible, and their responses often stressed certain types of activities. Many associated CSR with one or more of four general categories: the environment, donating money, the community, and business practices.

*The environment.* Some interviewees associated corporate social responsibility largely with the environment, in some cases noting “environmentally being responsible” or “environmental awareness” first when asked to define CSR. Interviewees suggested that corporations are using “greener alternatives” and “incorporating green techniques into their products: recycling, reusing materials, conserving water, at their plants and all the facets of the company.” One interviewee stated that corporations should not “make all this money and destroy everything in their path.” Interviewees also mentioned things like sustainability, citing the example of architects that are certified to build sustainable buildings, and using resources wisely or “to their advantage”. Several interviewees also

specifically noted planting trees; one stated, “If you’re removing trees, plant more trees.” Participants also noted that treating the environment poorly, such as pollution or oil spills, is socially irresponsible. BP was frequently noted as an example of a socially irresponsible corporation. One interviewee stated, “BP goes back to the opposite of going green: going black sludge.”

*Donating money.* Donating money to charities, non-profits, and social causes was often noted as not only a socially responsible activity, but also part of the actual definition of corporate social responsibility. For example, when asked to define what CSR meant to her, one interviewee stated, “It basically means that big corporations that are like giving money that like provide services for people.” In some cases, the interviewees mentioned philanthropy in their definition of CSR. In addition to mentioning simply donating money, some interviewees suggested related activities for corporations including funding projects, holding fundraisers, starting their own charity, or establishing a corporate matching policy for employees who choose to donate their own money. Some also alluded to cause-related marketing, stating things like, “If you buy something, they’ll donate ten cents.” In regard to the relative importance of donating money as a corporate social responsibility effort, one interviewee stated, “I think that philanthropy should be the most important.” However, not everyone agreed. Others stated “I don’t think you always have to throw money at things” or noted that “I think a lot of times companies get caught up in donating money and sometimes a lot of the money doesn’t go into the aid or where it needs to be.” In addition, one interviewee stated that it’s “easier for them to just give money away and say we gave money away.”

*The community.* Community was a frequently mentioned word in the discussion of CSR. As with the environment, “give back to the community” or some variation of that sentiment was often the first thing mentioned by the participants when asked to define corporate social responsibility. Suggestions included that corporations need to “do [their] part for the community,” “not harm the community,” try to do “things for society in the community,” and “devote some time to bettering society and the community.” Some used community to refer to the immediate area where the company is located – “give back to the community that it draws from” – whereas others had a broader view of community – “giving back to not only like your immediate community but just people in general.”

Furthermore, many of the CSR activities suggested are related to the community. Some included: building playgrounds, sending volunteers out into the community to work, tutoring community members, raising awareness for social issues, starting a charity, helping the homeless, and sponsoring food banks. Some suggested that these types of corporate social responsibility efforts are the most favorable. For some, it was a matter of principle. For example, one interviewee stated: “I personally think that programs involving actual people and improving their lives is a little more important than the environment. Like human lives take precedence.” For others, however, community-oriented CSR is favorable because it shows more initiative on the part of the company. One interviewee stated:

A lot of companies they give money back, they donate, and that’s fine and all, but I think that the better companies, the ones that practice corporate social responsibility in a better manner, are the ones that encourage their employees to

take time out and actually volunteer because I think time is the thing. They push their employees to constantly work all the time, and so if the company is telling their employees the opposite, you know take time off and don't work and instead go and volunteer because that means more, that shows a bigger commitment on the part of the company.

*Business practices.* Some participants included factors of the corporation's business practices in their definition of CSR. One aspect is the corporation's relationship with employees. Several interviewees noted that corporations should treat their employees fairly, including not paying too low of wages, offering insurance, and providing day care services. One interviewee noted that she would consider a corporation socially irresponsible "if I heard about something on the news about they were treating their employees, a lot of employees were unhappy, like strikes, they were really dissatisfied." Many mentioned sweatshops as being in contrast to a socially responsible corporation as well.

Definitions incorporating business practices also mentioned the corporation's relationship with the consumer. Again, interviewees thought that corporations should treat their consumers fairly, including "just being honest with the consumers" and trying to improve "its relations with consumers." Part of that involves not overpricing products or "lowering their prices because everyone can't afford it." It also includes ensuring that the product is safe by following safety procedures and "not putting a product that isn't safe on the market or something that's bad for you." Some participants stressed the importance of product safety, noting that it is one of the factors they consider when purchasing a product.

The view was expressed that the internal business practices of a corporation were the most important factor of corporate social responsibility. One interviewee stated:

I think treating employees fairly is really important. I think making sure that the product you're putting out is safe and not harmful is also probably really important because there's lots of organizations that work at helping the environment or helping poverty, but if the company itself is putting out harmful products, it doesn't really matter what else they do... I mean there's no way to make themselves seem good if they're putting out really dangerous products.

Another interviewee explained she believes caring for employees should be a more respected form of corporate social responsibility because it "shows me that they actually care about the people." She added "when they're doing stuff like that it's not really publicized as much," indicating that she agrees with other interviewees who expressed that CSR efforts that are "under the radar, like do it within the company [are] probably for, less for like to attach the company name to something" and more about being responsible.

#### *Ideal Corporate Social Responsibility*

Aside from the types of activities and causes that corporations can/should engage in, additional themes emerged from the responses regarding how the participants viewed ideal corporate social responsibility.

*Going above and beyond.* Several participants expressed that doing just slightly more than what is required is not enough to qualify as corporate social responsibility. Instead, CSR efforts should be "beyond just the bare minimum of what you have to do" and corporations should be "going above and beyond just doing what's asked of them

because I feel like if they're just doing what's asked of them then that's not really being like social responsibility." One interviewee stated:

If a company's forced to pay taxes or do something out of not their own will, it's not really like being responsible, it's part of their job description... I feel like it has to be a decision to do something because if it just happens by chance its' not really being responsible.

Interviewees also used the word big to describe CSR efforts, such as "doing something big to help the world" or "not that effective unless they have a big campaign."

Participants suggested that CSR has more impact on consumers when it is a larger effort, stating, "When you see a corporation going above and beyond or seeming to go above and beyond, it prompts me more to support them and buy their products and things like that."

One interviewee commented on the definition of CSR provided during the interview (Davis, 1973) because "it kind of seems like it's, just as long as it's barely about the minimum, then that counts as being socially responsible, and I don't necessarily agree with that." Some interviewees took this sentiment a step further, suggesting that not only does it not qualify as corporate social responsibility if the organization does not go above the minimum requirements, but it is actually being socially irresponsible. One interviewee stated it is socially irresponsible "if you're a company that's making money and just sitting on it." Another corroborated that "companies that are all about the bottom line and just making profits" are socially irresponsible.

*Domestically Focused.* Commenting on the scope of corporate responsibility efforts, some interviewees suggested that they feel corporate social responsibility efforts

of companies operating in the United States should focus first and foremost on the issues in our country rather than providing aid abroad. One interviewee noted that “sometimes domestic issues get overshadowed.” Another interviewee asserted:

I also think it’s important...that we like focus more on things inside the States before we focus on other countries because like there’s a lot of problems here that people don’t acknowledge. And like it’s great that companies, it’s great that Starbucks does RED to help people in Africa, but there’s also people that need help in the states that also can’t get help so I feel like you should help the people of your country that need help first and then once you’ve helped them you can like look out and become an example for the rest of the world.

*Separate from economic gain.* Some interviewees believed that corporate social responsibility efforts should be considered completely separate from the corporation’s pursuit of economic gain. As one interviewee stated when defining corporate social responsibility, “It means like the companies not really trying to sell its product, it’s trying to improve its brand.” Another interviewee described, “They should be working towards the benefit of people...over their personal goals; like it doesn’t matter if they get rich.” In particular, some interviewees took issue with the provided definition of CSR (Davis, 1973) as a result of the latter half of the definition which states “to accomplish social benefits along with the traditional economic gains which the firm seeks” (p. 313). These interviewees felt that economic gains should have no part in defining corporate social responsibility. For example, one stated, “It shouldn’t have to be about economic gains because they’re going to gain regardless.” Taking this a step further, another interviewee declared that although he agreed with parts of the definition, “not necessarily economic

gain because if you're trying to be socially responsible you don't need to be making money. If you're trying to help people, you should actually be losing money because you should be giving it to somebody."

*Included in the corporation's profit-seeking efforts.* In contrast, other interviewees had no issue with the presence of "economic gain" in the definition; rather they thought it was an important part. For example, one interviewee defining CSR began with the concept of profit, stating it is "caring about making profit as well as not harming the community and being ethically correct in the way that a business handles themselves." Another interviewee stated that as we live in a capitalist society, everything is profit-seeking. He later added, "I think all of these [CSR activities] are important and justified and admirable, but they're all still profit seeking businesses." Along those same lines, another interviewee proclaimed "I don't think companies do it just to do it from the bottom of their heart. They obviously do it to gain something," presumably "to get more profits." Another interviewee, taking a more 'middle-of-the-road' approach, suggested that it is a balance: "They should be able to balance because like they want to make money, but at the same time, they want to benefit society."

#### *Rationale for Corporate Social Responsibility*

In their discussion of corporate social responsibility, all of the interviewees said that corporate social responsibility is something that a corporation should do. Some even said it is something a corporation needs to do. Therefore, many interviewees discussed the rationale for this business practice. The following themes represent their perceptions.

*A duty that comes with comes with power.* Many interviewees saw corporate social responsibility as a duty of corporations as a result of the power that they inherently



have, largely due to their accessibility to money and resources. Interviewees stated that corporations engage in CSR “because they are so fortunate,” “they played a huge aspect in the world,” “they make a lot of profit,” “they have some control over people,” and “they have the power.” As one interviewee describes, “[Companies] have all this power to make a change, [they] could do it being socially responsible since they have the gift of having successful corporation and they can really influence people by the wealth they have.” Participants stated that, “People that have a lot of power like corporations, they also have to have responsibility, it comes in a package” and thus it is a “duty” or an “accepted gesture.”

Participants also explained that because corporations have this power, they can accomplish more and thus their help is needed. For example, as a corporation, “people will listen to them” and “they can really influence people by the wealth they have.” As one interviewee stated:

Corporations have more resources and they have more money than like a regular person, so like one person could say ‘Oh, I want to change something in the world. Like I acknowledge that the kids don’t really have anywhere to play in like the city; we need to build a park.’ But like one person can’t really do it. It kind of takes a whole group of people. When you have a corporation you have all the resources, you have all the money, so you actually can do that.

Furthermore, if corporations choose not to contribute, “that would take so much money away; like what they contribute is a large part of the overall contribution to help out the world.”

Some interviewees associated this point of view with socialism. One participant explained that it's "almost a little socialist in a way," while another maintained that "I don't want to sound like socialist or anything," but "I think just because like I said before they have the means to, and like, you know in most big companies the higher ups are making just like a huge salary... I think they could kind of give back to better the community."

*Quid Pro Quo.* Some participants also expressed that corporations engage in corporate social responsibility to give back to repay for what they take from the community. For example, participants said corporations engage in CSR to "give back to the people... that buy their product" and to think about "the people their making money off of." One interviewee states, "It's kind of like these people are getting you rich so give back and help their lives a little bit." Participants stated that CSR is something a corporation is "supposed to" do "because it takes resources" from the communities.

Accordingly, since the goal is to give back for what they take, the responsibility for engaging corporate social responsibility is something some interviewees saw as related to the size of the corporation and the resources it uses. For example, when asked if corporations should engage in CSR, one interviewee responded:

If it's a corporation that draws large resources from an area, you know, you're drawing a lot from the community and a lot the people, then I believe it should give back. But if it's a small corporation or a smaller mom and pop store or something like that, that really has not a lot of resources or power, then it maybe not be.

Another interviewee compared it to taxes, stating, “If you’re making a lot of money you should be willing to pay a little more than somebody who’s not making a lot of money.”

*A moral responsibility.* Many respondents expressed the belief that engaging in corporate social responsibility is simply a moral responsibility of companies. They used the words “moral,” “ethical,” or “the right thing to do.” To show that they “actually care”, one interviewee suggested, “I think they should just do it out of the goodness of their hearts.” Another added, “I always believed in doing the right thing, and I feel like it’s just the right thing to do like morally and ethically.”

*A way to improve their image.* Some respondents rationalized corporate responsibility as a way for corporations to improve their image. As one interviewee explained, “Big corporations make a lot of money, so they definitely want to improve their image.” Similarly, another stated, “I’m sure they always want to look better” and “it makes the company look better if you do [CSR].” One participant clearly asserted, “I see them in a positive way because they’re responsible.” Other interviewees corroborated these views, stating corporate social responsibility efforts “make their image look better,” “make their company look nice,” “raises credibility,” and “show them in a better light.”

Taking it a step further, not only did interviewees claim that engaging in corporate social responsibility has a positive impact on the corporation’s image, some felt that not engaging would actually have a negative impact. For example, one interviewee stated, “I think companies realize that if you are a giant company and you don’t give back to the community in any way, people notice and people are kind of like ‘You know what, you’re being assholes’.” Not all interviewees agreed, however. One interviewee asserted, “It’s certainly not going to hurt their image if they take their money and go for a Super

bowl ad,” referring to if Pepsi had decided to continue spending their money on a large-scale ad rather than beginning a corporate social responsibility campaign.

*A cost of business.* Some participants rationalized corporate social responsibility as another cost of business, something businesses just need to do if they want to be successful. As one interviewee explained, “Nowadays you kind of have to be [socially responsible]; you don’t have an option... I think a lot of companies are doing it, more than have before, and it’s become almost a cost of big business rather than an extracurricular sort of thing.” Society, whether it is the “public,” “consumers,” or “stakeholders” now hold corporations accountable for being socially responsible. Accordingly, when discussing whether corporations need to engage in corporate social responsibility, one interviewee stated, “I mean they’re not like required but if they want people to use their product then they probably should.” Another added, “If they don’t, they may not be in business very much longer.” Furthermore, if society disapproves of their business practices, “The business is going to have to change because if they don’t change, then they’re going to go under.” Because it is seen as a cost of business, according to the participants, corporate social responsibility efforts are now widespread. Interviewees stated they “always hear about companies doing random things” and “lots of companies kind of do this.”

### **Research Question Two: How do young adults perceive PepsiCo?**

Interviewees shared their perceptions of PepsiCo at multiple points during the interview. In order to present these views and also to make note of any shifting of opinions that occurred throughout the discussion, their responses have been separated into three sections: initial views of PepsiCo expressed prior to discussing the Pepsi

Refresh project, opinions of PepsiCo in light of introducing the Pepsi Refresh project, and views expressed about PepsiCo as a result of the voting procedures of the campaign.

*Prior to Discussing the Pepsi Refresh Project*

*Lack of information.* Many interviewees expressed that they simply did not know anything about PepsiCo as a corporation. When asked their attitude toward the corporation, several interviewees indicated that they were neutral, that they had “no attitude toward the corporation” or were “completely indifferent”. Interviewees made statements such as, “I don’t really know much about the company” or “I don’t really have any feelings about it.” Others suggested a lack of exposure; one interviewee reported “you don’t really hear much about stuff Pepsi does,” and another stated that he “haven't been exposed to too much Pepsi.” With no other information to base on which to base an opinion, another interviewee presupposed “I guess it's just another company that is trying to make money by products.”

*Corporate operations.* Some interviewees had knowledge of some aspects of PepsiCo’s corporate efforts and business practices and provided these facts to describe how they perceived the corporation. For example, a few interviewees mentioned that PepsiCo had a number of brands or “lots of products.” Others associated PepsiCo with their commercials and advertising efforts. For example, interviewees would mention the “Pepsi Girl,” “Britney Spears,” and “celebrities,” and one interviewee noted, “They do a good job at advertising.” In addition to associating PepsiCo with its many brands and advertising efforts, one interviewee noted that he believed the corporation had a female CEO, and “I know that they’ve made some efforts towards corporate social responsibility.” As he described, “I know that they have their hands in a lot of things.”

*PepsiCo equals soda.* It was clear that many participants associated PepsiCo with Pepsi, the cola beverage. While this is not surprising, it has implications for how they perceived the company. Many participants perceive soda as something that is “very unhealthy” and “not good for you”. They noted that soda is “sugary,” contains “high fructose corn syrup” and “caffeine,” causes “pimples,” is bad for “your teeth,” and “affects your calcium intake and bone formation.” As a result, interviewees stated, “I kind of link it with obesity” or “I associate it with fast food.” They suggested that it should be treated as a dessert and should “probably be taken in moderation.” This negative perception of the soda itself sometimes translated into a negative opinion about the corporation. For example, an interviewee stated that she had negative feelings towards PepsiCo because “people really shouldn’t be drinking soda because it’s horrible for you.”

*In comparison to Coca-Cola.* Participants automatically perceived of PepsiCo in terms of how it compared to Coke. Overall, participants tended to know more about Coke or have more to say about the brand than about PepsiCo. They explained that Coke is “a more recognizable brand” than PepsiCo, and Coke as a term is more widely used than Pepsi. Interviewees also saw PepsiCo as a newer company than Coca-Cola. One interviewee explained, “I think Pepsi to me kind of conveys a younger brand” and “Pepsi’s kind of new, so if I were to think of a hipper company I would think of Pepsi.” In contrast, interviewees called Coke “a classic kind of drink” and “the all-American brand.” Another commented that he saw PepsiCo as the smaller company.

Other interviewees saw PepsiCo as essentially the same as Coca-Cola. One interviewee stated, “I figured they came out after Coke to make people have a choice

between the two... I just see them as the same, maybe not as successful as Coke, but mostly the same.” Another explained, “Honestly, I think both brands are pretty interchangeable at this point.”

### *In Light of the Campaign*

Although an in-depth explanation of how the campaign materials affected the interviewees’ perceptions will follow in the results regarding research question three, it is worthy of noting at this time that some interviewees’ indicated a shift in perceptions of PepsiCo itself in response to being introduced to or reminded of the Pepsi Refresh project.

*Positive reflection.* Several interviewees noted that they viewed PepsiCo more positively after hearing about the campaign. They now stated things about PepsiCo such as, “they’re probably one of the better corporations” and “they have good values.” The campaign “makes Pepsi seem like they care more” and that “Pepsi is working to make the world a better place.” One interviewee commented that it makes PepsiCo “more credible as a drink and a company.” Another interviewee who, like many of the participants, originally stated that her view of PepsiCo was neutral, changed her opinion, stating “Well it’s not neutral anymore.” Another stated he “would have seen Pepsi with more positivity; more so than before, just more positivity because they – based on the project – they seem socially responsible.”

*No change.* Not all interviewees noted a change in opinion after viewing the campaign materials. One interviewee who earlier stated she had no feelings about PepsiCo alluded that she was not convinced to adopt a more positive view when she was

asked to comment on the message Pepsi was sending through the campaign. She proclaimed:

I'm sure that Pepsi also does things that aren't so good, which obviously they're not going to make a commercial of that so I wouldn't just like 100% believe it... I'm sure that they do things that people say aren't corporate socially responsible so them doing a campaign like this they could just be covering something up.

#### *In Regard to Soliciting Grants and Votes*

I included the interviewees' attitudes toward PepsiCo that were a direct reflection of Pepsi's decision to accept grant proposals and determine recipients based on votes in this separate section. This was done in order allow for analysis according to stakeholder management theory.

*Pepsi cares about what you want.* Many of the participants felt that the voting signified that Pepsi cares about what they want. For instance, one interviewee noted:

They're trying to convey to like the whole country itself that they care about what people care about because like they acknowledge there's change that needs to be in the world, and they want to see what other people care about because they want to do what other people want.

Another interviewee echoed this same sentiment toward Pepsi, stating "It shows that they actually care about what people actually wanted for it rather than just saying 'We're going to like help this random fund that people don't really like know about'." Others noted that consumers are able "to have a say in where the money goes and what exactly Pepsi chooses to do," and people are "more involved, rather than just Pepsi being in



control of who gets money.” One interviewee suggested that this makes PepsiCo “the hero to everyone.”

*Pepsi cares about you.* Some interviewees considered the grants and voting process an indication that PepsiCo cared about them. One interviewee interpreted it as a way for PepsiCo to demonstrate that it cares about its customers and that it is “putting people first.” Another interviewee explained, “It makes me feel that the company cares about me versus just the other stakeholders or the economic gain or the legal gain or the technical gain. That’s a positive feeling.”

*Pepsi empowers people.* The theme of power and empowerment continually emerged from the participants’ responses in reaction to PepsiCo’s decision to accept grants proposals and letting the public vote. Interviewees compared this feature of the campaign to American Idol stating, “This is me. I vote. I’m going to decide.” They suggested that “it makes people feel powerful” and “people like to have the power to make decisions and influence decisions, just to make a change.” They also talked about the value of feeling “like you have a voice”, and one suggested that “having that little amount of power, it almost like stimulates people.” Furthermore, some interviewees internalized this feeling, stating “I feel empowered” and “it makes you feel good.” One reported, “It makes them feel more secure, more satisfied.”

*No impact on opinion of Pepsi.* Some interviewees implied or declared that the solicitation of participation aspect of the campaign specifically did not impact their opinion of PepsiCo. In some cases, they identified the themes above in their responses, but they did not actually believe them to be true or feel influenced by them. For example, in regard to the *Pepsi cares about what you want* theme, one interviewee interpreted the

interactive aspect of the campaign as PepsiCo trying to make it “look like they care about the people” when in reality, “they’re in it for the money.”

Regarding the *Pepsi empowers people* theme, one interviewee stated:

So the people feel they’re in control; it’s not really like a big business controlling. It gives people another way to unite, so it’s kind of like they’re making the decisions, not the corporations. It makes them feel like they’re in control of the project which I think is a big idea behind it. It makes people feel like they have power.

However, when asked “How does it make you feel then?“, she responded simply “Neutral.” Another interviewee stated that the campaign only would have influenced her in this way if she herself had actually voted or won.

From another perspective, one interviewee made the distinction between having a say in the campaign and influencing the corporation. She stated:

I have a say in just the interaction of giving the grant to a company; I don’t feel like I have any say in Pepsi or in the whole campaign. By voting I’m not affecting their marketing strategy really, but I would say I have a hands-on effect with a grant being given.

One interviewee did not feel impacted by this aspect of the campaign because she feels that “everybody’s operating that way these days” in the sense that she believed many organizations are using opinion polls or collecting votes.

Finally, many times, the interviewees’ reasons for why Pepsi decided to use voting in the campaign did not make any reflection back on how they viewed Pepsi. For

example, participants suggested that they used this method for reasons including to avoid bias, take advantage of social media, create buzz, and discover the best possible ideas.

**RQ3: How do young adults make meaning of the Pepsi Refresh campaign materials and messages?**

Most of the interviewees had not heard of the Pepsi Refresh campaign until I introduced the materials to them. However, one interviewee mentioned the campaign before I brought it up, and a few others remembered the campaign after seeing the materials. They attributed their previous exposure to either the commercial or being solicited to vote for a certain grant. A few interviewees thought they had heard of it, but what they described was not actually the Pepsi Refresh campaign.

*Characterizing the Campaign*

In light of viewing the campaign materials and receiving and interpreting the messages, the interviewee's responses characterized the campaign, both in general and specifically in regard to the materials/messages themselves, in a number of ways. The themes below describe these views.

*Positive.* All interviewees, in some way, shape, or form, expressed that the campaign message is positive. Interviewees claimed it is a "great idea," a "positive message," and a "good opportunity" and suggested that "Pepsi's doing a good thing." They called the campaign "cute," "creative," "clever," and "bright." One interviewee stated, "I think the project as a whole is actually really really impressive," and another commented, "I think it's a good campaign; it's one of the better ones that I've seen." Some especially took note of the size of the corporation that was responsible for the

positive work. For example, one participant noted, “I just like that a big corporation seems like they’re doing something positive.”

*An example of CSR.* Additionally, and as a corollary to seeing the message as something positive, all interviewees interpreted the materials and messages of the campaign to suggest that the campaign as an example of corporate social responsibility efforts. Interviewees called the campaign a “pretty cool way to give back” and stated “it’s just nice to see them doing something good.” When describing their perceptions of the campaign, interviewees said things such as it is to “help the world,” “save the planet,” “help the nation,” and “make the world a better place.” More specifically, the campaign is “helping the world through Pepsi.”

Some interviewees focused on the issues, suggesting the campaign messages and materials are “raising awareness” and “bringing light to these causes.” Others viewed the campaign as facilitating resources for social change. One stated, “You don’t have to have many resources. You can make a change in the world simply by going online.” Another interviewee reported that he felt that Pepsi providing the resources so people are able to help is “more responsible or beneficial than donating money.” Other interviewees’ responses centered on the social aspect, considering it a way to “to help people and their communities.” All of these understandings, however, support the conceptualization of the campaign as an example of corporate social responsibility.

*Interactive.* Participants also recognized the materials and messages of the campaign as promoting interactivity with the public. For example, they stated that it is “interactive” and “makes it easier for people to get involved.” One pointed out that for the campaign to work, it “takes other people to care and be involved” Another

interviewee saw it as a way for Pepsi to interact directly with people and noted that this makes “a company as big as Pepsi... look like a smaller company because they’re interacting with individuals.” Interviewees reacted to this characteristic of the campaign positively, stating, “It’s kind of different, and I feel like no one else really does that lately” and suggesting that by getting people involved, the campaign might actually get more accomplished.

*Unity.* Many interviewees perceived a theme of togetherness from the campaign’s materials and messages. Several participants used “unity” and “unifying” to describe the message they took away from the campaign. It was described as something to which “everyone can kind of relate.” As one interviewee explained, “I think it’s trying to preach a message of unity and togetherness.” Another added that she sees it as “people coming together to make the world a better place, how everyone is just getting along for a common cause.” Tying it back into the corporation, one interviewee believed the campaign could “bring people together through Pepsi products.”

*Diversity.* Related to the idea of unity is the theme of diversity. Interviewees made note of the fact that the images associated with the campaign pictured people from “a lot of different cultures and areas where people are living and different lifestyles.” They used the words “diverse” and “multicultural” to describe their interpretations of the campaign’s materials/messages. Comments included that the materials “used a “wide variety of people,” and “brought together a lot of minorities.” One interviewee felt the campaign fostered a sense of a “global community.” Another suggested that the campaign “goes across all barriers of race and religion.” It is worthwhile to note that all

responses falling under this theme came from interviewees who were not Caucasian, identifying as either African-American, Asian/Asian-American, or Hispanic.

*Modern.* “Cool,” “fresh,” and “modern” were some of the words interviewees used to describe the campaign. One interviewee stated, “They make it seem like the cool, hip thing to do...It kind of takes a different angle to the soda; like refreshing the world, kind of like refreshing what the soda does.” Many also noted the social media aspect of the campaign and expressed that the campaign was “targeted at young people” and designed to “appeal to youth.” One interviewee took it a step further, describing the materials as “liberal” and “hippie-ish” and stated, “but that’s what they’re going for, so yea, it works.”

*An advertisement.* Many interviewees conceptualized the campaign materials as advertising. They referred to the videos as “advertisements” and the campaign as a “promotion.” Some interpreted the message of the campaign materials to be “We’re a good company.” However, they clarified that they thought it was a good advertisement. One interviewee stated, “It’s something I’d probably pay attention to more other than commercials that are just advertising the product.” Another echoed a similar view, explaining, “Everyone would rather see an advertisement like that than ‘Go buy Pepsi,’ even though that’s essentially what the ad is doing.”

### *Issues with the Campaign*

In addition to describing how they characterized the campaign’s messages and materials, the interviewees also raised some topics that they saw as issues with the campaign.

*A disconnect with the soda.* Many interviewees found there to be a disconnect between the campaign itself and the parent corporation of PepsiCo and/or the Pepsi product. For some, this was because they did not see any connection between what the campaign is doing and Pepsi. For example, one interviewee explained:

It doesn't really seem like it has anything to do with the Pepsi product. It's just a company, so them drinking Pepsi's didn't do anything... because it doesn't have anything to do with the soda itself. Because I could go do this, and I don't even drink soda.

Another interviewee stated, "This has nothing to do with the brand itself. It could have been under anyone else's brand."

One of the phrases used in one of the videos seemed to be of particular concern to some of the interviewees. The video states, "Can a soda really make the world a better place? With your help, it will." One interviewee commented on this by stating, "I know the second video was like 'How can a soda change the world?'. I kind of didn't really understand how drinking a soda could really do anything." Another responded, "They like said like with every Pepsi you can change kind of thing, but you don't necessarily have to buy Pepsi products to vote for things, so that's like a little confusing there."

In addition, some interviewees experienced a disconnect with the campaign being linked to Pepsi because of the health concerns with drinking soda. For example, one interviewee expressed that she had difficulty making meaning of Pepsi's CSR efforts because she felt "it's kind of ironic that Pepsi itself is not that great for the people's actual body but they're trying to help people and their communities." Another interviewee echoed a similar sentiment, stating, "Soda isn't good for you, so it doesn't

make sense. It makes sense like on a corporate level, but you're still distributing all these sodas that aren't good."

*Needed more advertising.* Interviewees expressed that the campaign had not been advertised well enough and more effort should have been put into letting people know they can get involved. Interviewees suggested that "Pepsi needs a little bit more advertising" and that "they could have had more commercials and yea, been more visible with it." When asked if there was anything she did not like about the campaign, one interviewee responded, "Probably visibility. They should do something to advertise it more. Plus I don't think it's going to harm them. The more ideas get sent in, the better ideas get picked; there's better competition." In particular, some interviewees did not think it was appropriate to rely so heavily on social media. For example, one stated, "I feel like if you're only on social websites, you might not know about it... It's appealing, but to younger people I think." Another noted that Pepsi has a lot of "control over people's actions, so if they tried a little harder other than just technology and stuff, it'd be better." Interviewees suggested that Pepsi could have had influential people endorse the campaign or could have put information about the campaign on the labels of Pepsi products.

### *Factors of Debate*

Certain topics surfaced in multiple interviewees' responses. However, the interviewees' opinions of these topics conflicted. The themes below represent ideas on which the interviewees expressed opposite views.

*Target audience.* Aside from interviewees believing the campaign was targeted at young people as noted above, there were also a number of other groups suggested as the



audience of this campaign. Some felt the audience was the people that see the problems first hand. One interviewee stated that she thought the campaign was trying to reach “people like us.” When asked to elaborate, she explained that she was referring to the “middle class because we’re the ones who usually don’t have the funding but we’re the ones that usually want to make the difference because we’re immersed in where the problems are.” Another interviewee suggested that it was middle to lower class because “they see a lot of areas for change... and the thing is Pepsi doesn’t cost too much so anyone can really buy it even if you’re in the lower class, so it really gives back to them, all the little people who buy Pepsi.”

Others believed that the campaign was more targeted to middle to upper class. For example, one interviewee explained, “it sort of targets, I guess, middle class, maybe higher class, because of an online campaign... I guess that sort of limits the audience.”

Another presumed:

I’d assume middle to, I don’t really know if the upper class is heavy Pepsi drinkers, but sort of like middle to upper-middle, that range of people. People that are very busy, always running around doing things, people that are very into social networking, so that idea of helping someone through this organization so if you buy Pepsi you know come on our website, look at our things, and you can help people indirectly.

Another interviewee, when asked whom PepsiCo was trying to reach through its campaign replied “other companies” because “everything is a competition so if Pepsi does this, it might spark another company to do it just because they want to be like ‘Oh well they’re doing this and we can do it too’.”

*Size of donation.* Some felt that the twenty-million dollars being offered by Pepsi was a large donation. One interviewee described it as “going out on a limb” because “not too many people just say ‘here’s twenty million dollars’.” Other interviewees referred to the amount as “a lot of money” and “a lot of their profits.” One interviewee stated, “This is the biggest like on-going project that I’ve ever seen like by a like a soda company or anything else than can compare to Pepsi’s size. Or maybe this is the only one that I’ve ever paid attention to.” However, there were other voices who did not find the amount quite so impressive. One interviewee pointed out, “We’re sort of led to believe that twenty million is a lot when for Pepsi it could be quote unquote pocket change.”

*Scope of the campaign.* There was also disagreement over whether or not the campaign took on too many issues. Some interviewees praised the broad range of topics included in the campaign. One interviewee noted that he likes “that it changes the causes; it changes the subject areas to help a broad range of people.” Another commented, “Probably compared to most of the other campaigns that come to mind it, I think it does a better job... I feel like everything else is directed to one specific area, but this is broad.” However, with a conflicting viewpoint, another interviewee suggested that the campaign causes are “too abstract.” She believes:

The whole part where they’re saying ‘I care about this, I care about that, I care about’, just saying all those different things, I feel it’s not very personal, so they’re just trying to reach out to as many people as they can and have like as many different demographics as they can like come to their company and say ‘Oh they’re doing something that’s going to help me’, but it’s not really a personal thing. It’s like general.

In her opinion, the campaign could have been improved by “making things more specific.”

*The overall tone.* The interviewees’ views conflicted regarding the balance between portraying happiness and realism. Several interviewees indicated that they felt the campaign materials were “happy,” “bright,” and “energetic.” One interviewee noted this as an aspect of the campaign that she particularly liked. She stated:

I like how it’s not depressing. You know some commercials, they want you to help out, they have sad stuff to make you sad, but they had like the popular music and people smiling and stuff. They put you in a good mood to make you feel like you should go vote on an idea.

However, another interviewee interpreted this happy tone as being “cheesy” and too “happy-go-lucky.” He suggested that the campaign needed to focus more on the problems. In his words:

I would showcase the problems that there are out there and then show how you can change rather than like ‘Oh, you just submit ideas and vote for ideas that are great’ ... Or like have some like realism in it, not just like vote for all these solutions without really knowing the problems.

### *Impact of the Campaign*

*Possible influence on behaviors.* Some interviewees expressed that the campaign materials and messages might influence their behaviors. For some, this meant that they would consider getting involved with the campaign. They mentioned they might vote or might “check out the website.” One interviewee noted that she had voted a few times. Another interviewee reported that the campaign might lead to positive word of mouth,

stating “I think it’s great, and if it comes up in conversation, I’ll tell someone ‘Oh Pepsi’s doing this new thing. It’s really great’.”

A few interviewees alluded that the campaign might influence their buying habits to a limited extent. For example, one interviewee indicated,

If I was ambivalent toward which product to buy, like if I didn’t care if it was Pepsi or Coke, and knowing what Pepsi’s doing and not really knowing what Coke is doing, I’d probably choose Pepsi, but if I already have a strong opinion, then it wouldn’t really change it.

Another interviewee said it might influence his product choice on a subconscious level.

*Would influence others.* Several interviewees expressed that though the campaign would not have any impact on their own behaviors, it would influence others’ behaviors.

One interviewee said that the campaign does not affect her but “maybe other people besides me are swayed by it and like would go out and drink it because they saw that commercial.” Another stated that people might buy Pepsi because they “see that Pepsi is doing good things” and is “a company you can trust,” but it does not influence him in that way. Another interviewee attributed it to personality differences, stating:

I feel like a lot of people would buy the products more or would give them the profit they’re looking for, but my personality isn’t that. I wouldn’t be more likely to buy a product based on the commercials or things that I’ve seen because I’ve never been like that but I’m sure people are.

*Would not influence behaviors.* Finally, many interviewees maintained that the campaign’s messages and materials do not influence their behaviors. Some interviewees felt that although CSR is important, it is not something that would come into play at the

time of purchase. One reported that it was the least important of the factors that she considers when buying a product. The interviewees provided several reasons for why this is the case. Price, convenience, quality, peers' preferences, and brand loyalty were all suggested as taking precedence over corporate social responsibility. One suggested that as a college student, he just did not have the "buying power" to take corporate social responsibility into consideration. Another interviewee stated it does not have an impact because "in the end, I am a consumer. I'm not a moral judge of anything. As a consumer, I'm buying things that I need." Another felt, "If I don't want a Pepsi, I'm not going to drink a Pepsi purely for service reasons. I mean, if I wanted to do community service, I could do it myself." Furthermore, one interviewee felt it would not make a difference if she bought Pepsi or not. She stated, "Not drinking Pepsi isn't going to affect their corporate responsibility." In addition to not influencing buying habits, one interviewee noted, "I don't know if it'd make me go on the website and vote."

**RQ4: How do young adults understand Pepsi's motives for the Pepsi Refresh campaign?**

*Marketing/Advertising*

Several interviewees interpreted Pepsi's motivation for the Pepsi Refresh campaign as a marketing, advertising, or public relations effort. Participants called the campaign a "great PR thing," "a type of advertising," "a marketing scheme," and "publicity." They suggested that the purpose for the campaign was for Pepsi to "get their name out," "get people to your site," and make "their efforts more public." One interviewee, who called the project "a marketing campaign and a really smart one," rationalized that this campaign will "make people feel like when they're buying Pepsi,

they're doing something good, too. What people want is to be told that what they're doing is good.”

Another interviewee who viewed Pepsi's motivation as advertising pointed out that he believed “they wouldn't do it without their logo on it. It's also ‘Pepsi Refresh,’ it's not just ‘The Refresh Project’.” Another stated, “Ultimately it's just another commercial; like ‘Pepsi's doing something. Drink Pepsi’.”

#### *To Match or Surpass the Competition*

Interviewees conceptualized Pepsi's motivation as an effort to keep up with or surpass their competition, namely Coca-Cola. One interviewee stated that the motivation was that “it makes them look better so more consumers will end up choosing Pepsi over Coke,” while another added, “this definitely sets them apart from Coke.” Another interviewee explained that the reason is “because I think they know that they're always thought of in second place when it comes to like soda and Coke.”

Some saw it as a way to get ahead. They stated that it is “a chance to leap forward from other ones” and to “separate themselves from their competitors.” This campaign gives them “the edge.” Others framed it as something they have to do to keep up. One interviewee stated, “Everyone knows that corporate social responsibility is increasing so it's like they might be like jumping on the train. Like we should do it too; we should have a campaign that refreshes the perception of the public.”

#### *Positive Image*

Many participants believed that building a positive brand image was Pepsi's motivation for the campaign. Interviewees cited reasons including to “make their image look better,” “increase their reputation,” and “build a positive brand image through social

media.” One interviewee stated, “I think that the main purpose is probably to associate the company name with a more positive message.” Some saw this as “revamping their image” so that consumers would have a “different view of Pepsi” and view them as a “fresh brand.” Others interpreted it as reinforcing their existing brand. As one interviewee explained, Pepsi will benefit from this positive image. He stated:

If you see that Pepsi is doing good things, you’ll feel that Pepsi is a company you can trust, Pepsi is a company you can buy from, and if you buy from Pepsi, you’ll feel that by extension you’re helping someone out. I mean it’s the same reason most corporations do it.

#### *In Response to Problems*

Some felt that Pepsi’s motivation might be due to problems and issues going on in the world. For example, one interviewee suggested, “Something must have happened to start it... Did they just start out of the blue? I would have thought like an event happened or something.” He continued, “Nah, the oil spill didn’t happen that time. Possible, maybe the economy?” Another interviewee also thought it might be related to the current economy, stating, “Maybe they thought it was just time for them to start helping because of the economic time we’re dealing with.” Referencing a different issue, one interviewee suggested, “I think in the wake of the whole global warming thing, they’re just trying to help the planet in so many ways.”

#### *Gain More Customers*

To “reach out to customers” and “get a bigger customer base” was proposed as the motivation behind the campaign. As one interviewee stated, “Maybe they decided that to get more customers, they may need to just help out the community.” Interviewees

suggested that this “is a good business plan” because it allows them “to connect with people directly” and hopefully people will “choose Pepsi because they want to see this happen more to other people.” One interviewee described it as “I’ll itch your back if you itch mine,” meaning because Pepsi is doing this for the public, the public will in return be Pepsi’s customer. Another interviewee suggested that the campaign was more about “trying to attract customers than to do a good thing.”

### *Increase Profit*

On a related note, interviewees felt that the motivation behind the campaign was to increase Pepsi’s profits. Comments about making money and generating profit abounded and were not contained to just responses to the questions asking about Pepsi’s motives but, often times, sprinkled throughout the entire interview. Interviewees stated, “Pepsi is a place to make money first,” “they’re in it for the money,” and “it’s a money making business.” Several interviewees noted specifically that they thought it was more about profits than about making a difference. For example, one stated, “I think it’s a good thing that they’re doing, but I feel like at the end of the day, their motivation is just to increase sales because at the end they are a business. They are a company just trying to sell their product more.” Another said, “My opinion on what they’re doing, and pretty much all companies are doing as far as campaigns like this go, is it’s all for business, not for the better of society.” While one interviewee noted that she did not see this as an anomaly because “most things companies do are for money,” another suggested that she felt conducting the campaign in this way was manipulative.



Furthermore, interviewees appeared relatively confident that the campaign would, in fact, generate the desired profits. They stated, “I think they’ll make a bigger profit later,” and “it will generate more revenue than they will donate.”

#### *As a Cover-Up*

Some interviewees believed that the motivation for the campaign might be to cover up for something less positive. One interviewee saw it as a way to counteract bad press. She stated, “I don’t know anything about Pepsi or the industry so any bad press Pepsi might have previously or in the future, it can just be, the effects of it can be lessened.” Another suggested it could be Pepsi’s attempt to compensate for their product “so people don’t associate Pepsi with a harmful soda but rather as trying to like I said compensate for the unhealthiness.” Others assumed it was an offsetting measure but were not sure for what. For example, when asked why she believed Pepsi chose to do this campaign, one interviewee questioned, “I’m not sure. I don’t know. Has there been like a scandal or something?” Another stated:

I don’t necessarily know if it’s like making up for something or anything like that. I don’t know the underlying. There might be something like negative about it that I don’t know about. I hope they didn’t do anything too bad that maybe we don’t know about or anything.

#### *To Help*

Several interviewees also mentioned that Pepsi’s motivation in launching this campaign was simply to help in some way. They noted that Pepsi “might have a genuine desire to help” and “they care about the topics but they wanted to get people involved.” They suggested that Pepsi is doing this to help “the community” and “the world.” One

interviewee stated, “I guess maybe they feel like they need to be responsible and help somehow.” Another suggested, “They might just be helping the community because they’re making a lot of money so this is what they want to do to help out.” One interviewee thought they might be doing this because it will also inspire others to help.

### *With Skepticism*

Several interviewees alluded or admitted that they were skeptical about Pepsi’s motivations. For example, interviewees stated, “Most companies don’t really do it out of the goodness of their heart” and “I don’t think companies do it just to do it from the bottom of their heart. They obviously do it to gain something.” One interviewee indicated skepticism about the way the campaign claims to function, stating, “I think it’s a worthwhile enough campaign, I mean, if it really works the way it says it works.”

Some associated their skeptical views with being business majors. For example, after he explained that there is a “bandwagon” element to participating in CSR, one interviewee qualified, “Sorry, I’m a business major so…” Another stated, “I think it’s like amazing that they’re taking the time to do that, but still I’m a business major. I still think like that it’s mostly just like to get customers and stuff like that.”

Others indicated that they believe they are more skeptical than the average person. For example, one interviewee apologized, “I’m sorry that I’m such a skeptic about this.” Another reported, “I guess I might be a little more cynical than the average consumer. I think overall they do a pretty good job, but I kind of don’t buy it.” In his opinion, if Pepsi was doing this campaign because they really cared, they would have done the campaign before corporate social responsibility became the popular thing to do and would have funded the grants without all the voting and publicity efforts.

## Chapter 5- Discussion

This exploratory study probed into perceptions of corporate social responsibility. Through twenty-six in-depth qualitative interviews, a deeper understanding of young adults as a public, specifically in relation to conceptualizing CSR, was accessed. Furthermore, by using the Pepsi Refresh project as an example, the results of this study provide contextualized insights about how the interviewees actually make meaning of corporate social responsibility efforts.

Below is a discussion of these results, both specific to this study and in relation to previous research. The results are considered in regard to the definition of corporate social responsibility, the impact of CSR efforts, and the rationale for engaging in it. Then, themes from the interviewees' perspectives on the Pepsi Refresh campaign are discussed. Next, implications for stakeholder management theory are elucidated. Finally, practical applications of the findings, limitations of the study, and directions for future research are delineated.

### *Defining Corporate Social Responsibility*

Overall, interviewees were familiar with the concept of corporate social responsibility. Some knew this concept by the term "corporate social responsibility," while others defined it by discussing what they think it means for an organization to be socially responsible. Regardless, however, the majority conceptualized corporate social responsibility in the same way as the chosen Davis (1978) definition, which is "the firm's consideration of, and response to, issues beyond the narrow economic, technical, and legal requirements of the firm...to accomplish social benefits along with the traditional economic gains which the firm seeks" (p. 313).

Young adults agreed that the definition of CSR must stress that corporations need to go beyond what is required of them in order to achieve corporate social responsibility, which differs from what Tsoi (2009) found in regard to corporate social responsibility in Hong Kong and China. However, there was disagreement amongst the interviewees over whether the concept of economic gains should be included in the definition. Though some felt uncomfortable by its presence as a defining feature of CSR, many others believed that economic gain is inseparable from corporate social responsibility efforts and thus belongs in the definition.

Previous literature is also mixed on this issue. Definitions of CSR sometimes do not comment on the aspect of profit (e.g. Bowen, 1953) or state that CSR should not produce economic gain (e.g. Manne & Wallich, 1972). Others define profit maximization as part of CSR (e.g. Johnson, 1971). However, the majority frame CSR as separate from or in addition to economic gain (e.g. Davis, 1960). Based on the interviewees' viewpoints, this study suggests that the concept of economic gain should be included in the definition of corporate social responsibility but as a goal or an outcome rather than a defining quality of a corporate social responsibility effort. However, this aspect of the definition could still be further researched.

The types of corporate social responsibility activities described by the young adult interviewees can be described as fitting into four categories: being conscious of the environment, giving back to the community, donating money to social causes, and practicing responsible business practices. Some interviewees stated that they saw one of these types as more important than the others, mainly either giving back to the community or practicing responsible business practices. O'Connor et al. (2008) found

that accountability in business was also the most valued type of CSR for Active moms. However, Active moms did not consider donating money as qualifying as corporate social responsibility, demonstrating that young adults' conceptualizations are not identical to other stakeholder groups and emphasizing the need for more fine-tuned understandings of different publics.

### *Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility*

Overall, through the lens of the Pepsi Refresh campaign, interviewees expressed that corporate social responsibility efforts may impact their attitudes, but the extent to which they would influence their behaviors is limited. Interviewees were more likely to suggest behavioral intentions unrelated to purchasing such as positive word of mouth or somehow getting involved with the campaign. Those who did express that it would impact their purchasing decisions said it would do so subconsciously or only if they were ambivalent about the product choices. More often, interviewees reported that corporate social responsibility efforts do not impact their behaviors. However, interestingly, they frequently believed that it would impact others'. This is reminiscent of the third-person effect (Davidson, 1983).

The third-person effect theory states, "A person exposed to a persuasive communication in the mass media sees this as having a greater effect on others than on himself or herself" (Davidson, 1983, p. 1). This study proposes that corporate social responsibility efforts can result in a third-person effect for young adults. It is possible that because the interviewees often conceptualized the campaign as an advertising effort, they interpreted the campaign materials as attempting to persuade, thus triggering the third-person effect. This may also explain why many interviewees believed they were more

skeptical of the campaign's motivation than their peers. However, the third-person effect also suggests that, as a result, the person himself/herself is actually more likely to take action based on the belief that others around him/her will be impacted (Davidson, 1983). It is worth investigating whether the same holds true for corporate social responsibility; that is, young adults would support socially responsible brands not because they "buy into" the corporations' efforts but because they believe their peers do.

Furthermore, the young adults' position that they would not consider corporate social responsibility when purchasing clearly contradicts the numbers reported by previous research, including Smith (1996) and Jones (1997), which suggest that over three-fourths of consumers would be more likely to buy products from a socially responsible corporation and would even switch brands because of it. It seems that rather than consciously adapting their purchasing habits, many young adults reacted to the CSR campaign by assuming the stance of "I am beyond outside influence." It is possible that this attitude can be attributed to the specific public of interest in this study. It is a widely held belief that young adults strive for independence (Kloep & Hendry, 2010). Further research could investigate whether the discrepancy between previous findings and the results of this study may be related to the personality characteristics typical of young adults.

From another perspective, this incongruence with previous results may be partly due to the other factors impacting the relationship between CSR and consumer behavior. O'Connor et al. (2008) found that price, quality, and convenience were more likely to influence Active mom's purchasing decisions than social responsibility alone. Each of these three factors was also mentioned by one or more of the young adult interviewees in

this study as being more important influencers of buying habits than CSR. Furthermore, Barone et al. (2000) found that the consumers' opinions of the corporation's motivations as well as the tradeoffs of lower product performance and higher price act as moderating variables in the relationship between CSR and likelihood of purchase. For this study, in regard to the corporation's motivations, the majority of the interviewees proposed motives for the Pepsi Refresh project that were related to corporate gain and were self-reportedly skeptical. Furthermore, as one interviewee suggested, young adults may not be in the financial situation to be able to consider other variables in their purchasing decisions outside of price. Finally, in terms of product performance, consumers often have such strong opinions in the Coke vs. Pepsi debate that they might consider their preference to be a reflection of product performance.

This situation warrants comparison to the theoretical propositions of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970). The theory of reasoned action suggests that behaviors are best predicted by behavioral intentions, which may be predicted by attitudes and subjective norms. Subjective norms are determined by social norms and the individual's motivation to comply with the social norms. The campaign appears to have some impact on the young adults' attitudes toward PepsiCo. It likely also impacts social norms considering that the young adults perceived that their peers would be more strongly influenced by the campaign materials and would support PepsiCo because it is a good company. This combination of positive attitudes and supportive social norms is theorized to lead to the behavioral intention to purchase products from Pepsi. However, ultimately, the young adult interviewees self-reported that this situation is not resulting in the overt behavior of purchasing Pepsi products that would be expected. This study

suggests that it is those mediating factors of price versus financial situation, convenience, quality, and brand loyalty among others that are preventing the predicted relationship from holding true.

#### *Rationale for Corporate Social Responsibility*

As mentioned in the results, all the interviewees suggested that corporations should engage in corporate social responsibility, actually surpassing what was found by the Cone Corporate Citizenship Study (2004) in terms of whether American's believe corporations are responsible for supporting a cause. Although this is not statistically generalizable, it does hint that young adults may have even higher expectations for corporations to be socially responsible than the general public.

The young adults' rationales for why corporations in general should engage in corporate social responsibility aligned closely with the categorization scheme proposed by Garriga and Melé (2004). The *a duty that comes with social power* theme fits within the political category, and the *quid quo pro* theme is very similar to the integrative category. The *a moral responsibility* theme aligns with the ethical category while both the *a way to improve their image* and *a cost of business* themes are clearly related to the instrumental category. This suggests that these categories are applicable for describing the different approaches to corporate social responsibility from the perspective of young adults (See Appendix C for a table).

Waddock's (2008) categories for the pressures corporations face in regard to corporate social responsibility, however, did not align as closely with the perceptions of the young adult interviewees. Firstly, participants did not acknowledge any civil society pressures. While this is worth noting, it is not necessarily surprising because Waddock's



categories are for describing pressures on the corporations, and as outsiders looking in, young adults may not be aware of the civil society pressures. However, in regard to state/government sector initiatives, young adults did not believe that efforts done in response to these pressures should even qualify as corporate social responsibility. Thus, while they acknowledged these pressures exist, young adults would likely not include this as one of the categories of pressures for engaging in CSR because these types of efforts do not fit within their conceptualization of the term.

However, the third category, market/business sector initiatives, was certainly recognized as a significant motivator for corporations to engage in CSR, especially when discussing motivations through the lens of the Pepsi Refresh project. Many of the themes for research question four would fall under this category, including *marketing/advertising, to match or surpass competition, positive image, gain more customers, increase profit, and as a cover up*. In particular, profit gain was seen by many as the end goal of corporate social responsibility efforts. Interviewees did note some of the other reasons that were raised in previous research such as image/reputation (Wang and Chaudhri, 2009) and increased trust (e.g. Waddock, 2002). However, often times, these factors were then linked back as to ways to increase profit. Briefly circling back to the previous discussion, it is worth pointing out that while so many interviewees saw CSR efforts as motivated by the desire to increase profits, so few stated that they themselves would purposefully buy from socially responsible corporations. This paradox provides further support for extending the application of the third-person effect to corporate social responsibility efforts.

### *Implications for the Pepsi Refresh Campaign*

Despite the skepticism regarding the motivations of the campaign discussed above, this study found that the overall impressions of the Pepsi Refresh project as expressed by the target audience of the campaign were quite positive, which aligns with much of the existing analysis on the campaign (e.g. Zmuda & Patel, 2010; Campaign's Creativity Loved, 2010). No interviewees expressed that they did not like the campaign or did not see it as an example of corporate social responsibility. Furthermore, it is clear that participants had much more to say about PepsiCo, and specifically more positive things, after being exposed to or reminded of the Pepsi Refresh campaign. As would be expected, no one saw PepsiCo in a worse light because of the campaign. This suggests that, broadly speaking, PepsiCo's campaign materials impacted the targeted public as intended.

Interviewees indicated, however, that they thought one weakness of the campaign was that it is not widely-known. Although it was previously seen as a concern that PepsiCo would spend money to advertise that they are donating money (Beyond the Bottom Line, 2010), this did not seem to be perceived as a contradiction in the minds of the young adult interviewees. However, many of the young adults interpreted the campaign itself as an advertising effort. From this perspective, it is not surprising then that they would want to see it more widely advertised and through more media than just social media.

This study also supports previous research that establishes a relationship between corporate social responsibility and public relations (e.g. Clark, 2000). Specifically regarding Pepsi Refresh, some interviewees conceptualized the project itself as a public

relations campaign. Furthermore, some discussed the campaign as a way to manage the corporation's reputation, a concept also fundamental to public relations (David, 2004). Interviewees also noted that through this campaign, the corporation is reaching out to people to build relationships, similar to relationship management in public relations (e.g. Hon & Grunig, 1999; Ledingham & Brunig, 1998). While fully delving into relationship management is beyond the scope of this study, a few implications for building organization-public relationships are worth noting. The Pepsi Refresh project facilitated interaction with the public as part of the campaign. Some saw this method of fostering interactivity as a unique feature that set this campaign apart from others. Interviewees also emphasized the importance of building these positive relationships in order to ultimately achieve success in business.

Revisiting the issue of the ambiguous distinction between stakeholder and public raised in the literature review, the responses of the interviewees in this study similarly suggest a lack of terminological clarity. When interviewees described who they believed PepsiCo was targeting with this campaign, they generally named some sort of demographic characteristic such as young people or upper class. This could suggest that PepsiCo chose to target a specific demographic group and defined them as the stakeholders for this campaign. However, often the interviewees' rationales for why they felt this was the targeted group suggested that the group was more of a public because they existed previously and sought out the corporation because of this campaign. For example, one interviewee suggested that the campaign targets middle to upper class because they are a busy group of people who use social networking tools and want to help out, and they could do so through PepsiCo. This rationale seems to imply that this

was a group of people brought together because of commonalities, and they sought out PepsiCo because the campaign was of interest to them. Overall, this uncertainty regarding terminology complicates the field and, as noted in the literature review, suggests that our current definitions of the terms should be revisited.

### *Contributions to Stakeholder Management Theory*

As was discussed in the literature review, stakeholder management theory stresses the importance of corporations understanding the needs and concerns of their stakeholders and suggests that in order to ensure long-term success, the corporation must adjust their corporate priorities to align with those needs (Freeman, 1984). Through probing into the interviewees' perceptions of PepsiCo and their meaning making of the grants and voting process, this study advances our understanding of how the corporation's stakeholder efforts impact the stakeholders themselves. As was stated above, while a few interviewees felt their opinions of PepsiCo remained the same in light of the campaign, none reported a diminished attitude and most reported a significantly more positive perspective. This indicates that, at least to some extent, the campaign met the needs of the stakeholders.

However, what is likely more relevant to our understanding of stakeholder management theory is how the interviewees specifically reacted to the voting and grants aspect of the campaign. PepsiCo's decision to run the campaign in this manner can be viewed as an overt attempt to align themselves with their stakeholders' needs and concerns in order to foster a sense of shared values. What really matters, however, is whether the stakeholders themselves – the young adult interviewees – saw it this way and what impact that had. In this regard, there were mixed results.

Some interviewees clearly had positive reactions to PepsiCo as a result of the voting and grants process. They felt empowered by PepsiCo and believed that PepsiCo actually cared about what they want. This indicates that these young adult interviewees interpreted the Pepsi Refresh campaign efforts as PepsiCo trying to understand their needs and concerns, as is suggested by stakeholder management theory. Thus, using an online crowdsourcing campaign of this sort appears to be a way to fulfill the recommendations of the theory.

However, other interviewees' interpretations would suggest otherwise. Some did not feel that PepsiCo encouraging public participation in the campaign had any impact on their opinion of the corporation. In some cases, the interviewees felt the voting and grants process was just an act, which indicates the campaign obviously did not have the intended effect. However, in other cases, the interviewees acknowledged that PepsiCo was giving control to the people but did not see this as reflecting back on the corporation itself, or, similarly, they saw themselves as able to influence the grants that get selected but not the larger campaign or PepsiCo as a corporation. This indicates that there was a breakdown in the strategy of conveying a sense of shared values between the corporation and the young adult interviewees. Although the young adults felt their voices were being solicited, this was not enough to make them feel that they were being heard and incorporated into the corporate strategy.

This has implications for stakeholder management theory. The results of this study suggest that efforts to understand the needs and concerns of a corporation's stakeholders will not be as successful in creating a sense of shared values if limited to just one segment of the company or one corporate endeavor. Furthermore, incorporating the

publics' wants in some aspect of the corporation will not necessarily overcome their discontent with the corporation itself; for example, with the unhealthiness of soda. Therefore, stakeholder management theory should not be applied only in regard to corporate social responsibility efforts but must be considered more holistically. In order for stakeholder management theory to have the intended positive effect, the connection between the corporation's efforts to listen to its stakeholders must be evidently linked to how the corporation itself functions. If this connection is made clear, using crowdsourcing as a tool for enacting the suggestions of stakeholder management theory has the potential to be a successful strategy. However, if the relationship between the functions of the corporation and its engagement with stakeholders is not clearly spelled out, stakeholders will not necessarily make this mental jump.

#### *Practical Implications*

The results of this study have numerous practical implications for corporate social responsibility and public relations practitioners at corporations. First, this study has showed that publics make meaning of corporate social responsibility in different ways. Although there was certainly variation within the young adult interviewees' responses, there were some overarching themes that differed from the themes found by O'Connor et al. (2008) in regard to Active moms. Thus, it is important for corporations and public relations practitioners to consider who specifically they are trying to build relationships with through their efforts, learn as much about this public as possible, and integrate that knowledge into the planning and execution of their CSR. For example, corporations targeting young adults should be aware that their audience may be primed to view their corporate social responsibility efforts as profit driven. Furthermore, the young adults may

assume that their peers are more influenced by the campaign efforts than they are. Thus, the corporation can try to leverage this fact to encourage young adults to support what they perceive their peers are supporting and create a community effort.

One subpublic of the young adult interviewees was those of minority background. The results of this study suggest that minorities made meaning of the campaign materials in a slightly different manner from the larger group. Only those interviewees from minority backgrounds took note of the fact that the videos and website featured a diverse group of people, and they interpreted this as emphasizing diversity and unity. Corporations looking to reach out to their minority publics through their corporate social responsibility initiatives should take note of this finding. Although it would be overly simplistic to suggest that simply including minorities in CSR materials would increase product sales among minority populations, it at least appears to be something minorities notice and, therefore, should be something corporations consider this when designing their materials.

Another practical implication of this study is in regard to using corporate social responsibility to create good will toward the corporation. Many participants expressed that they were confused by the campaign being linked to the soda. Marketing CSR efforts in relation to the product can not only be unintuitive but could also appear superficial. Therefore, corporations should link their efforts back to the brand or the corporation itself rather than to the product. Perhaps an even better option would be for the corporation to choose to do corporate social responsibility efforts that are directly related to what their corporation does.

The study also had practical implications in regard to executing the tenets of stakeholder management theory. As was discussed above, it is important for corporations to consider the needs and concerns of their publics through corporate social responsibility efforts but also more broadly in their corporate strategy as a whole. Furthermore, they need to clearly explicate the connection between their efforts to listen to their public and the impact they have on the corporation because young adults will not automatically assume that one affects the other.

### *Limitations*

There were some limitations to this study that will be addressed here. One limitation is simply the sample. While the size of the sample was certainly large enough to reach saturation, most of the interviewees were students at the University of Maryland. Although I explained above that I do not believe this rendered the results any less valuable, it does mean that the sample was limited to those young adults with higher education and likely, a higher socio-economic status. Thus, the views of young adults from a lower socio-economic status who might be truly in need of the support of corporations in regard to their community, education, health, or other areas tackled by the campaign were not obtained.

Additionally, the interviewees' views of corporate social responsibility may have been biased by the use of the Pepsi Refresh campaign as an example. Although ultimately I believe the benefits of using the campaign as a method for accessing their views far outweigh the drawbacks, this still may have limited the interviewees' responses to only the aspects of corporate social responsibility that were seen in this particular campaign. Furthermore, the fact that this campaign was linked to Pepsi may have also affected some



of the interviewees' responses. Consumers often times have strong opinions about whether Pepsi or Coke is superior, and these opinions could have influenced how they viewed PepsiCo or even their campaign.

Another logistical limitation arose as a result of a timing issue. The campaign began in February 2010 and was slated to occur for one year, meaning it would end after January 2011. Although PepsiCo decided extended the campaign, they did take a break for a few months after the one-year period to make a number of changes to the project. The interviews for this project, which occurred in January and February 2011, happened right around this same time. Therefore, the participants who were interviewed in January saw the active campaign website, but the interviewees in February saw a post-project website that overviewed what had been occurring for the last year. While it is unlikely that this had any effects on the overall results of the study, it is an inconsistency that could have slightly biased the interviewees' reactions to the campaign materials.

A final limitation with the study is a result of the nature of interviewing and self-reports. For one, it was difficult to design questions for the interview that would not lead to social desirability bias. For example, when asking the interviewees questions about how important corporate social responsibility is and if it is something an organization should do, interviewees may have felt the need to answer in a way that would make them look good. Furthermore, interviewees may have responded to questions about the Pepsi Refresh campaign in a certain way because they believed that I wanted them to respond this way, either due to response bias or interviewer bias. Lastly, when asked to reflect on how CSR efforts would or would not impact their actions, self-report bias may have influenced their responses. Many steps were taken to minimize the effects of these biases,

including pre-testing the interview, adjusting the wording of the questions, and explaining to the interviewees up front that there was no right or wrong answers. Overall, their responses were a mix of positive, negative and neutral reactions, with even more critical responses than I had anticipated, which would suggest that these biases did not jeopardize the overall integrity of the results. However, there is no way to be certain that these biases did not impact the study.

### *Future Research*

This study could lead to countless avenues of future research. For one, it is clear that publics make meaning of corporate social responsibility in different ways. As little research has been done on the publics' perspectives of CSR and even less from the perspective of a specific public, one logical area for further research would be to investigate CSR from other publics not yet researched.

Further, this study alone is not enough to assert we have a complete understanding of young adults' conceptualizations. Additional qualitative and quantitative studies could add to the insight gathered through this study. In particular, it is worth doing further research on the third-person effect as it relates to young adults' perceptions of corporate social responsibility. In addition, as was suggested by one of the interviewees, it would be beneficial to execute a similar study of young adults using a different campaign or multiple campaigns within the same interview for comparison.

Additional research could look into crowdsourcing as a tool for stakeholder management theory. Crowdsourcing has the potential to allow corporations to leverage the power of the internet and mass collaboration to listen to their stakeholders' needs and

concerns. Additional case studies can help determine best practices under the guidance of stakeholder management theory.

Finally, as discussed above, public relations practitioners should reconsider the use of the terms stakeholder and public in light of the increasing use of online communication tools and the formation of web-based communities. These developments may have blurred the distinction between the suggested usages of these terms.

### *Conclusion*

The results of this study yielded a number of implications regarding the publics' perspectives of corporate social responsibility. Specifically focusing on young adults as the public of interest, the study provides suggestions for practitioners engaging in corporate social responsibility by shedding light on how young adults make meaning of CSR, CSR campaigns, and attempts to establish shared values under the suggestions of stakeholder management theory. In addition, this study extended theory, including fine-tuning current understandings of how corporate social responsibility should be defined and suggesting that the third-person effect is present in regard to corporate social responsibility, leading the public to assume that others are comparatively more influenced by the corporation's efforts. As this study was simply exploratory by nature, it is clear that this is still much more research to be done. However, through accessing the views from the ground level through the words of the people themselves, this study has taken one step to add some much-needed variety to the existing understandings of corporate social responsibility.

## Appendix A- Interview Protocol

### Interview Protocol

Can I get your permission to audiotape the interview just so I can gather details later?

(If no), Okay, I understand. Let's get started with the interview. . .

(If yes), Great! Let's get started.

Before we get into the heart of the interview, I just want to learn a little more about you through some basic demographic questions.

Age?

Sex?

Race?

Year?

Major?

*Research Question Two:*

- 1) I'd like to start out by talking about soda. What are your thoughts or opinions about soda?
  
- 2) What's your preference between Coke and Pepsi? Why?
  
- 3) What are your thoughts about Coke as a corporation? Pepsi?

*Research Question Three:*

- 4) Have you ever heard of the Pepsi Refresh campaign?

If so, what do you know about it? How did you hear about it? What are your impressions of the campaign?

At this point, I just want to tell you a little bit about the Pepsi Refresh campaign. *Beginning February 2010 and lasting for one year, PepsiCo launched the Pepsi Refresh campaign, vowing to donate a total of at least 20 million dollars to causes throughout the United States. Each month, people can submit ideas for \$5,000, \$25,000, \$50,000, or \$250,000 grants to use toward public service projects in one of six categories: Health, Arts & Culture, Food & Shelter, the Planet, Neighborhoods, and Education. The ideas get posted on the Pepsi Refresh website and anyone can visit the website to vote. Those ideas that receive the most votes get funded, so the decision of where to donate the money is determined entirely by these online votes. The campaign also integrates social media*

tools, featuring links to their Facebook page, Twitter page, and a blog. (Source: Pepsi Refresh Website)

I'm also going to show you some of the campaign materials:

*Pepsi Refresh Commercial-*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fS39FitsoQ&feature=channel>

*Pepsi Refresh Intro Video-*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4eX7Dl8Dn0I>

Now I'm just going to ask you to look at the website ([www.refresheverything.com](http://www.refresheverything.com)). Click around, explore, and read about the campaign. Take at least a few minutes to get familiar with the campaign.

- 5) What are your initial thoughts of the campaign materials? The messages? The campaign? (Or if they had previously heard of it, what are your thoughts in light of these materials?)
  
- 6) What do you like and why? What would you change and why?

*Research Question One:*

- 7) Some people consider this campaign to be an example of corporate social responsibility. Have you heard this term before?

If so, what does it mean to you?

If not, what would it mean to you for a corporation to be socially responsible? (*If they cannot answer this question, skip to the definition.*)

- 8) What are some examples of corporations you know that are socially responsible? How are they responsible?
  
- 9) What other ways can a corporation be socially responsible or engage in corporate social responsibility?
  - a. Are any better or more responsible than others?

*Research Question Three:*

- 10) Do you think this campaign is an example of a corporation being socially responsible? Why or why not?

*Research Question One:*

- 11) What corporations do you know of that are NOT socially responsible? How are they not responsible?

- 12) The definition of corporate social responsibility that I am using for the purpose of this study is “*the firm’s consideration of, and response to, issues beyond the narrow economic, technical, and legal requirements of the firm [...] to accomplish social benefits along with the traditional economic gains which the firm seeks*” (Davis, 1973, p. 313). In what way does this match with how you would define CSR? In what way does it differ?

- 13) Do you think corporations should engage in corporate social responsibility? Why or why not? Do you think corporations need to engage in corporate social responsibility? Why or why not?

- 14) How, if at all, do a corporation’s socially responsible or irresponsible behaviors impact you?

*Research Question Three/Four:*

- 15) How, if at all, did the Pepsi Refresh campaign materials impact you or will impact you in the future?

*Research Question One/Two:*

- 16) How important to your attitudes toward Pepsi is the fact that they have such a campaign? In comparison to other factors you use to judge the value of a corporation?

*Research Question Four:*

17) Why do you think Pepsi chose to do this campaign?

18) Who do you think they are trying to reach through the campaign?

19) What do you think Pepsi is trying to say about themselves by doing a campaign like this?

*Research Question Two/Four:*

20) Why do you think Pepsi chose to let it up to people to decide where their money was going to be donated? How does this make you feel that you could have a say?

Ok that is all the formal questions I have. Is there anything else you wanted to add? Any questions you wanted to revisit? Any questions that I didn't ask that you think I should have asked and should ask in the future?

Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed. May I have a phone number or e-mail from you, just in case I need to clarify something from the interview or ask a follow-up question? And if you would like a copy of our final report, let me know and I'll make sure you get a copy.

**Appendix B- Consent Form**  
**University of Maryland College Park**

*Initials* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date* \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Project Title</b>	Publics' Understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility and Shared Values
<b>Purpose of the Study</b>	This is a research project being conducted by Dr Elizabeth Toth and Ms. Janna Raudenbush in the Department of Communication at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project as an informant on young adults' understanding of corporate social responsibility. The purpose of this research project is to understand how young adults make meaning of corporate social responsibility campaigns.
<b>Procedures</b>	The procedures involve in-depth interviews. Face-to-face interviews will occur on a date and time determined by you and the researcher. They will last approximately 60 minutes and will be audiotaped. Questions will focus on corporate social responsibility.
<b>Potential Risks and Discomforts</b>	There may be some risk, in terms of identification from participating in this research study and being audiotaped. However, all information will be kept confidential as described above. Your name will not be identified or linked to the data you provide at any time unless you give your express consent to reveal your identity.
<b>Potential Benefits</b>	This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about public relations and corporate social responsibility. We hope that, in the future, other people and organizations might benefit from this study through improved understanding of these phenomena.
<b>Confidentiality</b>	<p>This research project involves making audiotapes of you for purposes of accuracy in data collection. We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. Should you choose not to participate in the study, information on your refusal to participate in the study will not be released to the organization and/or your supervisor. Your name will not be identified or linked to the data at any time Only the principal and student investigators will have access to the names of the participants.</p> <p>Data will be securely stored on the investigators' computers, several hard disks, and audiotapes. Hard copies and audiotapes of the data will remain in the possession of the student investigator at her locked, home office. Informed consent forms will be stored separately from any and all data. All data including audiotapes will be destroyed (i.e., shredded or erased) when their use is no longer needed but not before minimum of five years after data collection. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.</p> <p>Please initial:</p> <p>___ I agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study</p> <p>___ I do not agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study</p>



<b>Right to Withdraw and Questions</b>	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, related to the research, please contact the investigator, Elizabeth L. Toth at 301-314-9471 or <a href="mailto:eltoth@umd.edu">eltoth@umd.edu</a>	
<b>Participant Rights</b>	If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact: <b>Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) <a href="mailto:irb@deans.umd.edu">irb@deans.umd.edu</a>; (telephone) 301-405-0678</b> This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.	
<b>Statement of Consent</b>	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form. If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.	
<b>Signature and Date</b>	<b>NAME OF SUBJECT</b> <b>[Please Print]</b>	
	<b>SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT</b>	
	<b>DATE</b>	

Appendix C- Table

<b>Garriga and Melé (2004)’s Classification for Theories and Approaches</b>	<b>Results of this Study Regarding Rationale for Engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility</b>
<p>Instrumental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on achieving economic objectives through social activities</li> </ul>	<p>A Cost of Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Something businesses need to do in order to be successful</li> </ul> <p>A Way to Improve their Image</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves or maintains a corporation’s reputation and credibility</li> </ul>
<p>Political</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on a responsible use of business power in the political arena</li> </ul>	<p>A Duty that Comes with Social Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An inherent responsibility of corporations as a result of the power, money, and resources they have</li> </ul>
<p>Integrative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on the integration of social demands</li> </ul>	<p>Quid Pro Quo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restitution for what the corporation takes from society in the process of doing business; should be proportionate to the amount the corporation takes</li> </ul>
<p>Ethical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on the right thing to achieve a good society</li> </ul>	<p>A Moral Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The moral and ethical “right thing” for corporations to do</li> </ul>

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