ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY ENGAGING PUBLICS? COMMUNICATING CORPORATE SOCIAL ADVOCACY TO PUBLICS WITH DIFFERENT SOCIAL IDENTITIES
	Duli Shi, Doctor of Philosophy, 2022
Dissertation directed by:	Professor Emerita, Elizabeth L. Toth, Department of Communication

When companies take stances on controversial sociopolitical issues, diverse publics form divided responses and engage positively or negatively, actively or passively with the focal companies in the online discourse. This dissertation took a cross-disciplinary approach to investigate this corporate communication practice, corporate social advocacy. First, Study 1 employed a quantitative content analysis study to explore the existing communication strategies (relational vs. elaborational vs. activational) used in companies' CSA social media. The results showed that the most commonly used communication strategy (elaborational) did not appear to be the most effective one in facilitating publics' social media engagement behaviors. Instead, using a relational communication strategy in a CSA message to build explicit linkages to corporate images or functions was often associated with a higher level of publics' social media engagement. Meanwhile, existing activational communication strategies in CSA communication tended to be general and ineffective in enhancing publics' engagement and participation. Second, In Study 2, a pilot study and a main study were conducted to examine the impacts of advocacy fit and social identities on publics' CSA attributions, attitudes toward the company, and social

media engagement intentions. A holistic measurement of social media engagement was empirically validated by covering the activeness and valences of engagement in the pilot study. The main study showed that congruency between a company and its CSA, especially image-based, contributed to more perceived value-driven and less egoistic and strategic motives, which, in turn, led to more positive attitudes toward the company and desired social media engagement intentions. Moreover, Study 2 introduced publics' social identities to explicate their responses to CSA. Participants' social group membership and ingroup identification were significant factors in explaining their CSA attributions, attitudinal responses, and social media engagement behaviors. Additionally, Study 2 demonstrated that social group membership and ingroup identification could function as antecedents for publics' situational perceptions of sociopolitical issues, offering additional ways to identify and categorize publics.

This dissertation is theoretically and practically valuable in terms of several aspects. First, it reinforced the imperative role of communication in CSA with empirical evidence about the communication strategies across various companies on social media. Second, investigating the effects of advocacy fit on attributions guides strategic CSA communication that needs to align organizational identities and sociopolitical issues. Third, by incorporating the social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1985), this dissertation moves the theorizing publics forward with the additional considerations of societal-level factors, such as power structure and intergroup dynamics. Fourth, the comprehensive measurement of social media engagement intentions contributes to the public relations literature, given the central role of social media engagement in building and maintaining organization-public relationships (Lim & Young, 2021).

Keywords: corporate social advocacy, social media engagement, social identity, advocacy fit, communication strategy

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IDENTITIES

by

Duli Shi

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Advisory Committee:
        Professor Elizabeth L. Toth, Chair
        Associate Professor Anita Atwell Seate
        Professor Gregory Hancock
        Assistant Professor Sun Young Lee
        Professor Brooke Fisher Liu

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1   Research Problem: The Rise of CSA and Public Expectations

An increasing number of companies speak or act publicly about their stances on socially or politically controversial issues (Hong & Li, 2020). They publicly expressed their supporting stances for same-sex marriage (Starbucks), LGBTQ rights and equality (Ben & Jerry), immigration (Budweiser), and other sociopolitical issues (Hong & Li, 2020; Lim & Young, 2021; Parcha & Kingsley Westerman, 2020). This type of corporate communication practice received particularly high traditional and social media coverage during the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement as a large number of companies showed their support by announcing statements or contributing substantial money to anti-racism causes (Duarte, 2020). On June 4, 2020, Forbes listed more than 70 companies that adopted diverse ways (e.g., donations, public announcements, policy change, etc.) to demonstrate their supportiveness of racial justice (Hessekiel, 2020).

The rise of companies' advocacy efforts corresponds with general public expectations. For instance, in the 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer, 86% of respondents expected CEOs to publicly speak out about some societal challenges, like local community issues, pandemic impact, job automation, and societal issues. Businesses, in general, are expected to help build a more inclusive and equitable society (Edelman, 2021). In another survey of 1,214 U.S. participants conducted by Austin et al. (2019), participants highly agreed that corporations should advocate for social issues. Global consumers also showed their stronger intentions to "trust, buy, champion and protest" a purposeful brand or company (e.g., support for important social causes, issue advocacy, etc.) (ZENO, 2020, p. 3). The Corporate Social Mind Research Report (2020) with a nationally representative sample ($N = 1004$) revealed that publics take a

variety of online and offline actions as a result of companies' advocacy efforts. Moreover, pressure groups (activist groups) consider corporations as "a substitute for government actions" because of their high visibility, influence, and legitimacy (Nalick et al., 2016, p. 393). These findings, together, indicate the general public expectations for companies' advocacy efforts on a variety of sociopolitical issues. Such transitions in public expectations require scholars and practitioners to reconsider the values of public relations in fulfilling organizational success while participating in public discourse. In other words, advocating sociopolitical issues can offer organizations another option to engage their public by responding to their expectations, especially through social media channels (Lim & Young, 2021). Additionally, CSA facilitates publics' awareness of issues related to inequality (Waymer & Logan, 2021).

This dissertation looks into this emerging corporate practice, corporate social advocacy (CSA), by examining its strategic communication process. To date, the research on corporate social advocacy is burgeoning but is still at an early stage. More scholarly work should be devoted to researching its communication strategies and diverse public responses. Such research can develop the potential of CSA in achieving desired organizational outcomes, such as favorable attitudes and supportive intentions.

1.2   Research Gaps for Public Relations in CSA

Situating CSA within public relations helps deepen the understanding of issue management, publics, social responsibility, and strategic communication. CSA refers to "an organization making a public statement or taking a public stance on social-political issues" (Dodd & Supa, 2014, p. 5). It differs from traditional corporate social responsibility (CSR) that highlights the proactive role of business "in its relationship with a range of social actors and doing more than just trying to avoid breaking ethical rules or obeying the law" (Somerville &

Wood, 2008, p.145). Traditional CSR takes on more neutral or consensus-based causes, like veteran support or breast cancer, which could be easily aligned with almost all publics' values (Turner et al., 2019). But this goal seems to be hardly achievable for CSA, considering ongoing societal debates on sociopolitical issues. Overall, publics do not perceive CSR and CSA messages the same way (Overton et al., 2021). As "a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics" (Public Relations Society of America, PRSA, n.d.), public relations is likely to face more challenges and uncertainties to align public interests with organizational goals when a controversial sociopolitical issue is involved.

1.2.1   *Heightened Roles of Communication in CSA*

CSA reveals the evolving roles of businesses in society and exposes some research gaps in existing public relations theories. With regard to the heightened role of communication in CSA, more nuanced understandings of communication strategies are needed for organizations to arouse positive reactions and alleviate potential backlash. Companies attempt to form positive images through various communicative actions, such as Nike's persistent advocacy efforts on social justice (Waymer & Logan, 2021). For organizations, CSA brings the potential for future benefits of attracting possible stakeholders and mitigating stakeholder pressure (Nalick et al., 2016). CSA also presents organizations' identities and values (Afego & Alagidede, 2021; Park & Jiang, 2020), fulfills corporate strategic communication missions (Yim, 2021), signals corporate sincerity (Park, 2021), and (re)aligns stakeholders (Gaither et al., 2018). However, not all of these initiatives can successfully build relationships between companies and their publics. For example, in the 2020 Black Lives Matter social movement, criticism targeted companies' poor treatment of Black employees or "empty announcements" instead of concrete actions (Jan et al.,

2020). It is also possible that CSA alienates key publics, like customers (Dodd & Supa, 2014) or investors (Bhagwat et al., 2020). To summarize, CSA potentially produces supporters, "noncotters", and boycotters by agreeing with one side of the issue (Dodd & Supa, 2014; Hong & Li, 2020; Rim et al., 2020). Hong and Li (2020) defined "noncotters" as people "with a medium level of both behavioral intentions and corporate reputation" (p. 171). These different voices from publics together can contribute to healthier public conversations on sociopolitical issues (Waymer & Loga, 2021).

First of all, communication strategies in CSA deserve scholarly attention in public relations scholarship, given CSA's emphasis on advocacy (Waymer & Logan, 2021). Well-planned and strategic communication makes CSA perceived as legitimate and may avoid potential crises (Dodd & Supa, 2014). As Park and Jiang (2020) suggested, more work is needed to figure out "what accounts for effective CSA communication" (p. 19). With effective communication, companies can speak to their values and the common good, which generates beneficial organizational outcomes and elicits public engagement (Afego & Alagidede, 2021). Prior studies have suggested valuable strategies for enhancing connections with a company and its supporting issue, serving as a tool to legitimize companies' advocacy efforts. These communication strategies can be relational, elaborational, or activational (see Sohn et al., 2012; Wang & Li, 2017; Weeks et al., 2008; Weeks et al., 2018), all of which have the potential in presenting a company's transparency and authenticity, as well as achieving company goals of engaging publics.

A relational communication strategy highlights the connectedness between a company and its sponsoring issue (Cornwell et al., 2006). It focuses on parent brand associations (concrete attribute associations) that provide an explanatory link (Bridges et al., 2000). Next, an

elaborational communication strategy centers on the sponsoring issue (Wang & Li, 2017). This type of communication strategy often discusses the importance or significance of the chosen sociopolitical issue. Then, an activational communication strategy offers helpful information for publics to take action (Wang & Li, 2017). It can "promote the engagement, involvement, or participation of the sponsorship audience with the sponsor" (Weeks et al., 2008, p. 639). CSA communication on social media plays a role in public perceptions of issue-company associations (Lim & Young, 2021). Through communication strategies, a company's authenticity contributes to a genuine public relationship (Molleda, 2010). Yet, no prior studies have examined how companies have utilized these communication strategies to advocate sociopolitical issues on social media. Such empirical evidence helps bridge theoretical development and practical advancement in CSA.

1.2.2   *Advocacy Fit and Attributional Process*

Next, enacting a fit between a company and its advocated issue is one of its public relations efforts to build moral legitimacy (Lim & Young, 2021) Moral legitimacy is "*conscious moral judgments* [italics in original] on the organization's output, procedures, structures and leaders" (Palazzo & Scherer, 2006, p. 73). Extant studies have examined the effects of CSA on financial outcomes (Afego & Alagidede, 2021; Dodd & Supa, 2014; 2015), human resource management (Turner et al., 2019), public-company relationships (Park, 2021; Park & Jiang, 2020). However, less is known about the effectiveness of the congruency between a company and the supporting sociopolitical issue (i.e., advocacy fit, see Parcha & Kingsley Westerman, 2020) in contributing to publics' diverse attributions of CSA, leading to different attitudinal responses and behavioral intentions (e.g., social media engagement intention and purchase intention).

Advocacy fit affects publics' attributions and potentially poses an impact on their support, noncott, or boycott behaviors. For example, the company-cause fit in CSA leads to less boycott intention (Hong & Li, 2021). In addition, when a company's advocacy relates to its business operations or aligns with its identity, it is more likely to build issue-specific corporate reputation (Lim & Young, 2021). Prior scholars, such as Browning et al. (2020) and Lim and Young (2021), called for more research on the roles of company-cause fit in successful CSA. The alignment between a company identity and its involvement in controversial social justice issue can advance public relations and engagement research (Waymer & Logan, 2021). Ultimately, this line of research helps uncover the alignments between organizational objectives, sociopolitical issues, and public expectations, which are critical considerations in public relations and strategic communication.

Moreover, extant literature has begun to pay attention to publics' attributions of CSA (Austin et al., 2019; Coman et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2020), but no studies have investigated the mediating roles of perceived CSA motives. Park (2021) claimed that CSA could signal companies' sincere and value-driven motives, reducing public skepticism. However, Kim et al. (2020) discovered that publics might infer various reasons (value-driven, egoistic, strategic, and stakeholder-driven) for a company's CSA, such as Nike's endorsement of Colin Kaepernick. Although value-driven motives induce positive public reactions, other extrinsic attributions pose risks for companies (Kim et al., 2020). Hence, publics care more about "why" companies engage in advocacy efforts (Kim et al., 2020). And they assign various internal or external reasons to different CSA initiatives (Austin et al., 2019). Still, limited knowledge has been produced regarding publics' attributions of companies' advocacy efforts (Coman et al., 2022). Knowledge about the direct and mediating roles of CSA motives can help explicate the underlying

psychological mechanism behind publics' responses to CSA. More inquiries on CSA attributions contribute to more deepened explanations of publics' reactions and thus prepare organizations to strategically communicate their advocacy efforts.

1.2.3   Publics' Social Identities in CSA

In addition to building advocacy fit, a social identity approach offers a valuable perspective for companies to identify and engage publics when they advocate sociopolitical issues. Social identity is perceived as "an evaluative definition of the self in terms of group-defining attributes," which connects individual social cognition and behavior with collective phenomena (Hogg & Ridgeway, 2003, p. 97). The social identity approach assumes that individuals' self-concept determines their attitudes, memories, behaviors, and emotions (Hornsey, 2008) and also offers an additional motivation in choosing or avoiding media content and media interpretation (Mastro & Atwell Seate, 2012). This approach has been developed in a variety of directions over the past decades and offers profound implications for social development (Hogg et al., 2017). In the organizational context, individuals' self-defined group identities (e.g., racial minority, immigrants, female, LGBTQ+, etc.) affect their relationships with an organization (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011). Furthermore, CSA is an issue-bounded phenomenon that can make a specific social identity salient, and thus its effectiveness and success may also rely on publics' existing social identities. An organization's stance on a particular issue becomes an identity signal for publics because the issue is perceived as identity contention (Xu, 2020). Hence, applying the social identity approach in the research of public relations, especially CSA, enables a more comprehensive view of publics, in addition to organization-centered relationships.

Public relations theories so far have primarily considered individuals' characteristics in understanding publics (e.g., Grunig, 1997; Hallahan; Kim & Grunig, 2011; Jones, 2002), but most have failed to make explicit connections to group-level social identities (except for Xu, 2020). This tendency carries over to CSA research by examining individual involvement (Browning et al., 2020; Parcha & Kingsley Westerman, 2020), individual value or consumer-cause fit (Hong & Li, 2020; Rim et al., 2020), or individual ideological values (Bhagwat et al., 2020). These findings, though valuable in understanding publics as aggregates of individuals, still have limited validity in explaining communication of identity-based issues. The congruency between publics' issue-based identities and companies' issue stances bears further examination in order to achieve strategic and effective CSA communication (Rim et al., 2020). As a promising approach to "studying and theorizing organization-public relationships and connections" (Xu, 2020, p. 136), the social identity approach could lead public relations scholars to apply a more holistic view of publics' issue-based perceptions and communicative actions.

1.2.4   Measures of Social Media Engagement Intentions

Last but not least, the incomplete conceptualization and operationalization of social media engagement intentions complicate the full potential of social media in achieving strategic CSA. Social media provide a public space for people to interact and become members of a brand community in the context of CSA (Park & Jiang, 2020) and increase public awareness of CSA (Rim et al., 2020). Prior public relations research has approached engagement, including social media engagement, as a positive symmetrical construct (e.g., Kang, 2014; Paek et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2010). However, negatively valenced engagement behaviors also pose considerable threats to organization-public relationships. Especially social media intensifies negative word-of-mouth in an organizational crisis because stakeholders are exposed to a broader online

conversation (Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Pace et al., 2017). Dolan et al. (2016) showed social media users also exhibited negatively valenced engagement behaviors, like detachment and destruction. They may opt to remove the content of the brand (detachment) or take negative and active actions on social media platforms (destruction) (Dolan et al., 2016). These behaviors can be active, committed, and highly involved, but they are in a "deeply negative and engrained way" (Bowden et al., 2016, p. 263). In addition, online users may simply choose to take no actions when company-related content is delivered to them (Dolan et al., 2016). But limited studies have been done to examine the disengagement and negatively valenced engagement in public relations.

Although existing studies have measured participants' actual social media engagement behaviors, it is also valuable to consider publics' behavioral intentions in social media engagement because the behavioral intention is the proximal determinant of volitional behavior (see Theory of Planned Behavior, Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970; Ajzen, 1991). Understanding how CSA affects publics' intention to engage with a company on social media provides valuable insight into the diverse consequences of CSA, especially with considerations of engagement levels and valences. Social media engagement intentions potentially predict actual publics' engagement behaviors, leading to publics' identification with the focal company (Park & Jiang, 2020). This line of research is particularly insightful for communicating CSA on social media. CSA provokes polarized reactions simultaneously, and publics quickly utilize social media to support or boycott the involved company (Rim et al., 2020). By acknowledging the existence of diverse social media engagement behaviors and examining publics' intentions to engage with the focal company, the nature of engagement and the functions of CSA can be further understood. Considering the capability of social media in engaging publics (Cho et al., 2017; Etter, 2014;

Porter et al., 2015) and expressing social identity (Barker & Rodriguez, 2019), the present

dissertation is situated in the social media context to offer more insights into online relational

dynamics.

1.3   Research Purposes

In response to these new research gaps, the primary purpose of this dissertation is to

explore and examine how CSA can be communicated to generate positive public reactions and

mitigate negative ones, considering publics' social identities. Specifically, this dissertation: 1)

explored the current communication strategies (relational, elaborational, activational) adopted by

top companies on social media and the effects of these communication strategies on social media

engagement, 2) validated the measurement of social media engagement intentions by

incorporating disengagement and negatively valenced engagement, 3) examined the impacts of

advocacy fit and ingroup identification on publics' attributions, attitudes toward the company,

and social media engagement intentions across two racial groups, given the selected race-related

CSA; 4) tested the mediating roles of attributed CSA motives, and 5) delved into the interplay

between group-based social identities and individual factors (e.g., problem recognition,

involvement recognition, constraint recognition, referent criterion, situational motivation, and

issue attitude).

The significance of this dissertation is presented in five ways. First, locating CSA in

public relations demonstrates communication's capacity to build company-issue connections and

engage online publics. These discussion leads to more comprehension and appreciation of the

role of communication in effective and successful CSA. Second, empirical evidence about top

companies' communication strategies in CSA is valuable to enhance the validity of scholarly

discussion and theoretical development. Third, examining the effects of advocacy fit allows a

nuanced and thorough investigation of strategic communication to align organizations' objectives with publics' expectations. Especially, applying CSA attributions as mediators enables in-depth understanding of diverse publics' reactions. Fourth, linking the social identity approach and engagement theory enables an examination of the social-psychological mechanism in publics' CSA information processing and altitudinal responses, in addition to individual features. Last but not least, the comprehensive measurement of social media engagement intentions points out the possible outcomes of CSA that cover diverse levels and valences. It is also essential to capture the nature of engagement, which has become an important concept in public relations as the field increasingly employs social media platforms to reach publics.

1.4   Dissertation Overview

The dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 1 explains the research background, topic significance, and research purpose. Chapter 2 reviews theories and research studies from several aspects: CSA, communication strategies, engagement theory, advocacy fit, attributional process, and social identity approach. First of all, CSA is discussed regarding its definition and current theoretical development. Second, prior literature shed light on CSA and public engagement on social media. Engagement theory is reviewed to explain its conceptual and operational complexity. Additional attention is paid to negatively valenced engagement behaviors in social media, which has been largely neglected by past public relations scholars. Also, relational, elaborational, and activational communication strategies are explained regarding their definitions and impacts on corporate communication. Third, the literature on perceived fit is reviewed to explain its role in successful CSA. Fourth, the social identity approach, including social identity theory and self-categorization theory, is introduced and explained to offer insights into the effects of group identities on publics' perceptions of CSA. Furthermore, the relationship

between social identity and individual factors is discussed. Fifth, the attributional process of CSA is unpacked by reviewing the prior literature. Hypotheses and research questions are proposed along with the review of prior literature and are summarized again at the end of Chapter 2. In addition, a conceptual model is provided.

Chapter 3 outlines Study 1, a content analysis, which explored the communication strategies adopted by top reputable companies and their effects on public engagement on social media (Facebook and Twitter). The data collection, codebook development, coding process, data analysis, a summary of results, and limitations are delineated. Study 1 offered an overview of commonly used communication strategies and laid a foundation for the following experimental study.

Chapter 4 is devoted to Study 2, an experimental design that contained a pilot study and a main experiment. Participants were recruited from Prolific, an online crowdsourcing platform. A pilot study was designed to refine the experimental conditions and check the validity and reliability of social media engagement intentions. Additionally, a more parsimonious measure was proposed to gauge publics' intentions to engage with the focal company on social media. The pilot study utilized a randomized experimental design with two conditions (high advocacy fit vs. low advocacy fit). The sample size planning, participant recruitment, stimuli development, measures, data analysis, results, and limitations are detailed for the pilot study. After the manipulation check of experimental conditions was confirmed, a two-condition randomized between-subject main experiment was conducted in the main study. Again, the sample size planning, participant recruitment, procedure, measurement, data analysis, results, and limitations are described. At the end of Chapter 4, a summary is offered.

Chapter 5 thoroughly discusses the findings of this dissertation. Then, theoretical and practical implications of the dissertation are also provided. In addition, future research directions are proposed for scholars interested in CSA communication and public relations. Finally, a conclusion for this dissertation summarizes the highlights in this dissertation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 reviews prior literature and studies to develop the research questions and hypotheses. First, existing literature on CSA, including its definition, features, connections to public relations and corporate social responsibility (CSR), is reviewed. Second, extant literature on social media CSA communication, including social media engagement and communication strategies (relational vs. elaborational vs. activational), is discussed. Third, this chapter delves into the literature and studies on advocacy fit. Fourth, the social identity approach is introduced and its applications in corporate communication, including CSA, are discussed. Fifth, literature on CSA attributions is explicated to enlighten this dissertation. Finally, at the end of Chapter 2, the proposed research questions, hypotheses, and the conceptual model are summarized.

2.1   Corporate Social Advocacy (CSA)

2.1.1   Definition and Features of CSA

There have been different terms to describe companies' involvement in sociopolitical issues, such as corporate social advocacy (Dodd & Supa, 2014; 2015), corporate sociopolitical activism (Bhagwat et al., 2020), or organizational advocacy (Browning et al., 2020). However, the definitions of these concepts appear to be more similar than dissimilar. For example, Bhagwat et al. (2020) named companies' advocacy efforts corporate sociopolitical activism and defined it as "a firm's public demonstration (statements and/or actions) of support for or opposition to one side of a partisan sociopolitical issue" (p. 1). Browning et al. (2020) termed this corporate practice as organizational advocacy, which meant "the taking of a stance on a controversial sociopolitical issue that risks alienating some stakeholders while signaling to others a shared commitment to values or ideals important to both parties" (p. 1030).

Among different terminologies and definitions, the most popular one is CSA, defined as "an organization making a public statement or taking a public stance on sociopolitical issues" (Dodd & Supa, 2014, p. 5). Companies' stances can be either planned or unintentional (Dodd & Supa, 2014). Dodd and Supa (2014) also pointed out that CSA spanned the boundaries between strategic issue management and CSR, and they highlighted CSA's financial implications. As a form of corporate advocacy, CSA positions a company on "one side of the values it supports" with an explicit stance on contentious issues (Rim et al., 2020, p. 2). It is highly related to the concept of organizational legitimacy, which assesses the extent to which organizational activities are aligned with the values and norms prevalent in society (Dowling & Preffer, 1975). In line with prior scholars (e.g., Dodd & Supa, 2014; 2015, Hong & Li, 2021; Lim & Young, 2021; Parcha & Kingsley Westerman, 2020; Waymer & Logan, 2021), this dissertation also approaches CSA as a rising and significant public relations initiative and embraces Dodd and Supa's (2014) definition.

From these diverse definitions, several key features of CSA differentiate it from traditional CSR or corporate political activity (CPA). First of all, it deals with sociopolitical issues (e.g., Bhagwat et al., 2020; Dodd & Supa, 2014; Parcha & Kingsley Westerman, 2020), which are "salient unresolved social matters on which societal and institutional opinion is split, thus potentially engendering acrimonious debate among groups" (Nalick et al., 2016, p. 386). These issues are often "divisive, emotionally charged, and institutional" (Nalick et al., 2016, p. 384). Their controversy and salience are bounded by time, politics, and culture (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Nalick et al., 2016). The controversy entailed by CSA naturally leads to divided public responses. Second, the corporation or the brand needs to take a stance, which can be a public statement or an action (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Browning et al., 2020). For example, Nike has

actively engaged in CSA by issuing statements, initiating campaigns, and taking actions to

address social justice issues (Waymer & Logan, 2021). Third, CSA is not necessarily related

directly to the company's core business or commercial activities (Browning et al., 2020; Dodd &

Supa, 2014; Hong & Li, 20121; Yim, 2021). This feature proposes more challenges to the

discussion on the fit between a company and its CSA (Hong & Li, 2020). As a result, public

relations becomes particularly valuable in creating and enhancing the perceived fit in the CSA

context (Lim & Young, 2021). Fourth, there are different reasons to explain why companies

engage in sociopolitical issues. Based on stakeholder theory, Nalick et al. (2016) identified three

motivations for CSA, including risk-taking on future stakeholder benefits, stakeholder pressure

recognition, and executive ideological bent. These motivations can be normative, instrumental,

or mixed (Browning et al., 2020). Understanding these unique features of CSA helps its

theoretical development and differentiates it from other similar but essentially different concepts.

2.1.2 Relations between CSA and CSR

It is inevitable to discuss the connections between CSR and CSA because both of them

deal with publics' expectations of businesses' roles in society beyond economic concerns. The

most common scholarly debate is whether CSA is merely a subset of CSR. The question is even

more complicated given the variety of CSR definition. CSR "encompasses the economic, legal,

ethical, and discretionary (philanthropic) expectations that society has of organizations at a given

point in time" (Carroll, 2016, p. 2). The issues are different for CSR and CSA. The former deals

with more consensus-based issues, but the latter deals with issues that have partisan differences

(Bhagwat et al., 2020; Browning et al., 2020; Dodd, 2018). Consequently, CSA leads to more

polarized reactions from publics, which is more uncertain and riskier. It carries a more definitive

approach (clear stances on controversial sociopolitical issues) than the traditional ambiguous

approach in CSR (Park, 2021). In addition, CSA is generally more publicized compared with CSR (Bhagwat et al., 2020). The publicized and definitive stance on sociopolitical issues is more capable of signaling corporate identity and decreasing public skepticism toward the company's socially responsible activities (Park, 2021).

Given the differences above, the logic of CSR cannot be automatically applied to CSA without considering their differences (Bhagwat et al., 2020). Especially, publics process CSA and CSR messages in different ways (Overton et al., 2021). For example, publics attributed different motivations to CSR and CSA (Overton et al., 2021). In practice, CSA and CSR are very intertwined because many companies implement similar activities such as donation, NGO collaboration, or business innovation. But, compared with CSR, CSA has a stronger focus on communication via advocacy (Waymer & Logan, 2021). Through communication efforts, CSA provides information about issues that may enhance publics' issue awareness (Heffron & Dodd, 2021). Furthermore, as a voluntary effort, CSA affects publics' perceptions of CSR (Dodd & Supa, 2014). This dissertation argues that CSA represents the new and evolving form of CSR and expands the boundary of businesses' roles in society. Both CSA and CSR represent companies' non-commercial activities, but CSR has a long academic history in public relations theory (Waymer & VanSlette, 2021). CSA can be a new way for companies to "articulate their responsibility to society" (Waymer & Logan, 2021, p. 3). Therefore, extant proliferate literature on CSR helps identify corporate communication strategies and interpret publics' responses to corporate actions.

2.1.3   *CSA As A Public Relations Initiative*

CSA should be best approached through a public relations perspective with its focus on sociopolitical issues, strategic communication, and publics. Public relations is "a strategic

communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics" (PRSA, n.d.). Publics and issues are core concepts of public relations, and issue management offers a valuable perspective on individuals, organizations, and the media in sociopolitical issues (Botan & Tayor, 2004). Grunig (1997) proposed that publics "begin as disconnected systems of individuals experiencing common problems; but they can evolve into organized and powerful activist groups" (p. 9). As Grunig and Repper (1992) mentioned, "often the terms *stakeholder* and *public* are used synonymously" (p. 125), but they are different from each other. In addition, consumers are one type of stakeholders. To reconcile these terminologies, Hallahan (2000) took a broader definition by perceiving publics as "all groups to which public relations efforts are directed as publics" (p. 501) and suggested recognizing publics' different levels of activity-passivity. Compared with *stakeholder* or *consumer*, the term *publics* is issue/problem bounded and thus can best describe people involved in sociopolitical issues advocated by companies. Given the interconnections among these terms, related literature on *stakeholder* and *consumer* can also shed light on a part of publics' responses to CSA.

CSA deals with potential (active) publics formed around a sociopolitical issue instead of only stakeholders or consumers. Publics "form around issues" (Grunig, 1997, p. 5) and "organize issues and seek out organizations that create those issues" (Grunig & Repeer, 1992, p. 128). The public relations perspective allows us to consider the formation of and the power of publics. Knowledge of publics, issues, and engagement together contribute to a more in-depth understanding of the benefits and threats brought by CSA. Prior scholars have approached CSA as a function of public relations or a public relations initiative (Dodd & Supa, 2014; 2015, Hong & Li, 2021; Lim & Young, 2021). CSA is a strategic planned initiative as a form of corporate advocacy (Rim et al., 2020), contributing to ethical public relations with more consideration of

the heterogeneity of publics and marginalized publics (Austin et al., 2019). Hence, CSA is a new

area with full potential for public relations theories and research because it proposes valuable

questions for interacting with existing and potential publics strategically and effectively.

2.1.4   Opportunities and Risks with CSA

CSA has brought both opportunities and risks to companies at the same time. Extant

studies have noted many roles of CSA in affecting public opinion toward a company (Park &

Jiang, 2020). On the one hand, taking stances on sociopolitical issues provides various

opportunities for companies to engage publics, build corporate reputation, and even obtain

financial benefits. First, as a corporate identity signal, CSA attracts public attention and

contributes to public engagement in social media brand communities (Park & Jiang, 2020). The

signaling value of CSA suggests positive information about what a company values and believes

(Afego & Alagidede, 2021). So, CSA may engage new publics, in addition to existing

stakeholders (Dodd & Supa, 2015). For instance, Nike's CSA endeavors enabled engagement

with key stakeholders and publics, inviting more voices into public discussion on social issues

(Waymer & Logan, 2021). Next, taking a stance on a particular issue also reinforces a

company's authenticity because it shows how the company sincerely cares about the social issue

(Parcha & Kingsley Westerman, 2020). An authentic CSA helps a company achieve legitimacy

when it is aligned with corporate moral values and public beliefs (Yim, 2021). Lim and Young

(2021) further proposed that a company's active issue advocacy through social media helps

achieve issue ownership. Furthermore, CSA responds to public expectations and appeals to a

certain group of publics. It is perceived as a relational communication strategy so that publics

who identify with those issues are more likely to identify with the company (Bhagwat et al.,

2020). The like-minded stakeholders, including consumers, support CSA to align with their own

values and identities (Bhagwat et al., 2020). Dodd and Supa (2014; 2015) discovered a positive

impact of CSA on participants' purchase intention with a consumer-stance congruency across

several sociopolitical issues. Hence, CSA can enhance organizational performance or financial

performance with highly involved and value-driven publics (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Hong & Li,

2020; Park & Jiang, 2019). In addition, marginalized groups welcome CSA more as companies'

advocacy efforts become a strategic means to magnify their voices (Waymer & Logan, 2021).

On the other hand, a company's engagement in CSA brings uncertainty and risks when

publics' expectations are violated. For instance, investors can be suspicious of the resource

allocated to CSA, some customers' values will be misaligned, and government legislators may

oppose the company's stances (Bhagwat et al., 2020). Bhagwat et al. (2020) discovered that the

investors' adverse reactions were more severe with misaligned CSA than with aligned CSA.

Inherently, not all publics will agree with the company's stance, and thus "noncotters" and

boycotters are also created. "Noncotters" are publics who are not involved in the issue and

therefore present "a medium level of both behavioral intentions and corporate reputation" (Hong

& Li, 2020, p. 171). Noncotters can easily become supporters or boycotters (Hong & Li, 2020).

Boycotters can actively utilize opposing networks to threaten a company's legitimacy (Rim et

al., 2020). Other than direct boycotting, CSA may lead to suspicions and be perceived as "woke

washing" (Austin et al., 2019, p. 4). Woke washing refers to companies' inauthentic concerns

with social injustice issues without clear records or histories of social cause practices

(Vredenburg et al., 2020). As Yim (2021) argued, companies may not be able to successfully

achieve CSA legitimacy. Instead, they are perceived as "hypocritical or jumping on the current

bandwagon" (Yim, 2021, p. 70). For instance, in Nike's endorsement of Colin Kaepernick as the

spokesperson for its campaign for a public stance on anti-racism, Nike's sincerity was challenged given its negative reputation for exploitation abroad (Guimond, 2020).

Therefore, CSA is not an easy decision, and more research is needed to understand its communication challenges. It should be approached as a strategic, planned, and delicate process that considers organizations' identities, targeted publics, stances, communication strategies, and risk assessment. Despite increasing scholarly work on CSA, there are still many questions unanswered. First, little has been learned regarding companies' current communication strategies on social media that would build explanatory links between the advocated sociopolitical issues and companies' identities. Second, though some studies have examined the effects of advocacy fit on CSA communication (e.g., Hong & Li, 2020; Lim & Young, 2021; Parcha & Kingsley Westerman, 2020), little is known about the underlying attributional process. The attributional framework is valuable because publics' attitudes and behavioral intentions are affected by their perceived company motives for engaging in CSA (Kim et al., 2020). Third, given the importance of social identities in sociopolitical issues (Xu, 2020), more attention should be paid to publics' existing social identities to better understand their perceptions of CSA. Fourth, current studies on CSA acknowledge the critical role of social media in CSA (Park & Jiang, 2020; Rim et al., 2020), so theorizing, along with empirical research, on social media engagement provides more insight into the online communication dynamics. Overall, research on CSA is still in its early stage, and more research should be conducted to explicate effective CSA (Park & Jiang, 2019). Increasing scholarly work on CSA facilitates a deeper understanding of businesses' roles in contentious sociopolitical issues, which advances public relations theories and illuminates strategic corporate communication practices. Hence, this dissertation responds to academic and practice needs by examining publics' perceptions of and responses to CSA.

2.2   CSA and Public Engagement on Social Media

2.2.1   Opportunities and Risks of Social Media in CSA

The potential of social media for public relations, including corporate communication, is never overstated or over-studied, especially because of social media's role in social or political engagement. Social media are "*Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others* [italics in original]" (Carr & Hayes, 2015, p. 50). A variety of online platforms are included in social media, such as blogs and microblogs, social network sites, video-sharing sites, and collaborative sites (Rhee et al., 2021). Social media not only enable organizations to disseminate information to and open dialogue with stakeholders but also empower publics to become active communicators (Araujo & Kollat, 2018). With the help of social media, companies can implement two-way communication with their targeted publics directly (Rim & Song, 2016). Social media are a convenient and inexpensive way for companies to build and maintain relationships with a wide range of stakeholders (DiStaso et al., 2011; Kim, 2019). The functions of social media platforms, such as like, share (retweet), comment, reaction button, hashtag, etc., offer diverse ways for publics to engage in conversations with a company. Park and Jiang (2020) discovered that corporate issue identification (i.e., how a corporation identifies with a sociopolitical issue) positively predicted publics' functional, emotional, and communal social media engagement. Also, the beneficial roles of CSA in creating public-company identification can be maximized by social media (Park & Jiang, 2020). In addition, CSA through social media channels helps a company own a social issue (Lim & Young, 2021). An example is Ben & Jerry's frequent advocacy of LGBTQ+ rights issue on social media, which

successfully primes public perceptions of Ben & Jerry's issue association (e.g., top-of-mind rating) (Lim & Young, 2021).

Other than the benefits and potentials of social media in CSA, the risks and challenges faced by organizations using social media also deserve further discussion because organizations now are exposed to a broader online network. Companies cannot control the direction or intensity of the content shared by their publics or stakeholders (Kim, 2019) and experience challenges adapting to the constantly and rapidly changing social media environment (DiStaso et al., 2011). Publics have been empowered with more autonomy and anonymity by social media. Therefore, it is easier for them to "express their expectations or opinions about an organization and its practices" (Cho et al., 2017, p. 53). As a result, companies face more uncertainties and risks, especially when they speak up for controversial sociopolitical issues. For example, Patagonia's "The President Stole Your Land" initiative immediately aroused numerous, both positive and negative, responses across social media platforms beyond Patagonia's control of the initiative's messages (Dawson & Brunner, 2020). Particularly, exposure to negative public comments on social media could exert more impact on publics' perceptions of companies' socially responsible practices (Rim & Song, 2016). Other than negative backlash, publics may also choose to disengage with the company on social media because of CSA (Waymer & Logan, 2021).

Social media make CSA-related information more accessible to a wider range of publics (Guimond, 2020). Among diverse publics, active publics often use social media to present their stances as a response to CSA. When an organization takes a stance on a sociopolitical issue, social media users, like Twitter users, can quickly form their networks as boycotters and advocators and then utilize social media in response to CSA (Rim et al., 2020). Activist publics

create pressure on the targeted organization by using social media. For example, the American Family Association provided links and web addresses to post comments on Target's websites and encouraged social media users to use boycotting hashtags to make Target change its supportive stance on the LGBT rights (Coombs & Holladay, 2018). During this process, companies' official social media accounts were a vital information bridge that facilitate information flow in the network (Rim et al., 2020).

These case-by-case analyses are valuable in exploring how social media simultaneously poses chances and threats to organizations; yet few studies have systematically investigated diverse companies' communication strategies and their impacts on social media engagement behaviors. This dissertation extends prior scholars' research on CSA social media communication (Lim & Young, 2021; Park & Jiang, 2020) by offering a holistic and inclusive view of social media engagement and identifying factors that affect diverse social media engagement behaviors.

2.2.2   *Social Media Engagement*

With the demand for involving publics and the proliferation of digital or social media, the importance of engagement has been receiving more consensus from public relations scholars. Dhanesh (2017) defined engagement as follows:

> an affective, cognitive, and behavioral state wherein publics and organizations who share mutual interests in salient topics interact along continua that range from passive to active and from control to collaboration, and is aimed at goal attainment, adjustment, and adaptation for both publics and organizations (Dhanesh, 2017, p. 931).

Social media engagement or digital engagement is one of the main clusters of engagement research (Dhanesh, 2017; Jelen-Sanchez, 2017). By looking into publics' social

media engagement, organizations may directly detect real-time feedback from their publics (Saxton & Waters, 2014). Dessart (2017) focused on the positive aspect of engagement and defined social media engagement as "*the state that reflects consumers' positive individual dispositions towards the community and the focal brand as expressed through varying levels of affective, cognitive and behavioural manifestations that go beyond exchange situations* [italics in original]" (p. 377). This definition highlights the duality of engagement objects: the community and the brand (Dessart, 2017). The construct of social media engagement is a context-specific engagement behavior (Dolan et al., 2016).

Public relations research often relates social media engagement with positive organization-public relationships (Dhanesh et al., 2022; Men & Tsai, 2015; Smith & Gallicano, 2015; Wang, 2015). Publics' online interactions with organizations extend and complement their offline experience (Smith & Gallicano, 2015). When publics engage with a company's social media, it is more likely for them to build relationships with the company (Men & Tsai, 2015). Public engagement on social media, even sometimes adverse reactions (hashtag hijacking), should be considered valued outcomes for actors involved in the engagement process, such as organizations and publics (Coombs & Holladay, 2018). Adverse reactions also provide insight into publics' diverse opinions and may suggest more meaningful organizational changes (Lievonen et al., 2018; Waymer & Logan, 2021). Extant literature on public relations primarily studied social media and online engagement from "management/functional and relational perspectives with strong organizational focus" (Jelen-Sanchez, 2017, p. 942). Saxton and Waters (2014) recommended more attention be paid to message-level research about social media engagement to enhance organization-public relationships.

Although social media engagement entails cognitive and emotional components (Dessart, 2017; Smith & Gallicano, 2015; Theunissen, 2018), scholars so far have approached social media engagement from the behavioral level and perceived it as a communicative interaction (e.g., Dolan et al., 2016; Jiang et al., 2016; Muntinga et al., 2011; Tsai & Men, 2013). For example, Muntinga et al. (2011) proposed a continuum of social media activities that covered consuming, contributing, and creating, based on the level of activeness. Building on this study, Men and Tsai (2013) empirically tested the construct of social media engagement on Facebook and extracted two factors (reactive consuming and proactive contributing) from the exploratory factor analysis. Consuming comprises watching videos, viewing pictures, reading comments, or following, and contributing includes more active processes, like engaging in conversations, sharing posts, recommending, or uploading (Men & Tsai, 2013). They also point out the significance of social media dependency, parasocial interactions, and community identification in driving online users' engagement with a Facebook brand page. Schivinski et al. (2016) validated the scale of brand-related social media engagement to encompass a variety of online consumption, contribution, and creation activities. The most comprehensive description of social media engagement is from Dolan et al. (2016), who proposed six types of social media engagement behaviors, including "creating, contributing, consuming, dormancy, detaching and destructing" (p. 103). These dimensions consist of different activeness levels and valences of engagement behaviors. Among these behaviors, consumption, contribution, and creation indicate positive valence, while detachment and destruction represent negatively valenced behaviors. Dolan et al. (2016) considered dormancy an inactive state with neutral valence. In terms of activeness, dormancy and consumption incorporate low intensity, detachment and contribution carry moderate intensity, whereas creation and destruction reflect the highest intensity (Dolan et

al., 2016). These online engagement behaviors are also linked to offline behaviors, such as communicative actions or prosocial behaviors (Paek et al., 2013).

Furthermore, there have been many studies using the number of likes, shares, and comments to gauge online users' reactions to organizations' social media information (e.g., Cho et al., 2014; Kim & Yang, 2017; Lee et al., 2022; Li & Xie, 2020; Saxton & Waters, 2014; Shi, 2021; etc.), which is the first level of social media engagement metrics (Dhanesh et al., 2022). For example, Kim and Yang (2017) ranked like, comment, and share from low to intermediate to high regarding the level of engagement. They further explained that like is an affective response, comment is a cognitive response, share can be either affective or cognitive or a combination of both. This line of research can gain more insight from the affordance scholarship by considering social media platforms. Affordances refer to "possibilities for action" (Evan et al., 2017, p.36). Zhou and Xu (2021) suggested using "favorable affordance" as the basis for other dialogic principles for mediated communication (p. 445). Based on their work, different digital technologies provide more possibilities for engagement outcomes (Zhou & Xu, 2022). For example, Facebook introduced new "reaction" features, including "love," "haha," "wow," "sad," "angry," and "care," which are helpful for users to express emotions without high cognitive efforts. Additionally, these new features impact existing engagement behaviors (like and comment) (Yang et al., 2020). Therefore, public relations researchers and professionals are encouraged to understand the nature of these social media behaviors and cultivate organization-public relationships more strategically (Kim & Yang, 2017).

Compared with the popularity of engagement research, negatively valenced engagement on social media is under-examined (Dolan et al., 2016; Lievonen et al., 2018) Negative engagement online is defined as "an experience-based series of participative actions in online

environments where negative issues concerning an organisation or brand are publicly discussed"
(Lievonen et al., 2018, p. 288). Lievonen et al. (2018) categorized negative engagement into six
levels based on the connectivity and activity of the stakeholders. Although negative engagement
causes reputational damages to organizations, it can also motivate organizations' changes and
create a more just society by raising publics' voices and facilitating public discussion (Lievonen
et al., 2018; Waymer & Logan, 2021). In Dolan et al.'s (2016) typology of social media
engagement, detachment and destruction are more negatively valenced compared with others.
Detachment is moderately negatively valenced, meaning that "users take action to remove
content of the brand appearing in their news feed or equivalent home page" (Dolan et al., 2016,
p. 94). As the highest level of negatively valenced social media engagement behaviors,
destruction refers to creating "negative, active contributions to existing content on social media
platforms," such as negative word-of-mouth, rating companies negatively, and other negative
responses (Dolan et al., 2016, p. 95). Overall, the research on negative social media engagement
is mainly restricted to the conceptualization stage and remains under-explored (Dessart, 2017).

To conclude, the concept of social media engagement needs further investigation to cover
diverse publics' online communicative behaviors. This is particularly crucial for CSA to enact
(dis)engagement with publics who hold different or even competing stances on the focal issue.
Furthermore, contagious negative communication poses additional challenges to organizations in
the online environment (Lievonen et al., 2018). Thus, a more inclusive view of social media
engagement, even seemly "undesired comments," enlightens in-depth understandings of
stakeholders or publics (Coombs & Holladay, 2018).

2.2.3   Attitudinal Response and Social Media Engagement Intentions

Given the significance of social media engagement in CSA and the public relations practice, this research focuses on publics' social media engagement intentions. A behavioral intention measures "a person's mental readiness for action," covering both direction and intensity (Sheeran, 2002, p. 32). The theory of planned behavior posits that people's intention to perform a given behavior captures "the motivational factors that influence a behavior" and predicts the actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991, p. 182). Prior meta-analyses of correlational studies (Sheeran, 2002) and experimental studies (Webb & Sheeran, 2006) have confirmed the intention-behavior relationship. To date, behavioral intentions have been researched as an important concept to gauge CSA effectiveness, such as boycott intentions (Hong & Li, 2020), purchase intentions (Dodd & Supa, 2015; Overton et al., 2020), positive word-of-mouth intentions, and negative word-of-mouth intentions (Kim et al., 2020; Overton et al., 2020). Furthermore, public engagement intentions are also one crucial outcome for organizations to achieve (Yue et al., 2021). Cao et al. (2021) applied the theory of planned behavior and found that engagement intention was a strong predictor of actual engagement behaviors (consumption, contribution, and creation). This line of investigation enables predictions on publics' actual social media engagement behaviors in a given situation.

Publics' social media engagement intentions can be predicted by their attitudes toward a company. Attitude is defined as "an individual's disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event, or any other discriminable aspect of the individual's world" (Ajzen, 1989, p. 241). It is an overall evaluative response (Ajzen, 1989). Many extant studies have found that attitudes toward a company significantly and directly predict publics' various behavioral intentions (e.g., Boukes & LaMarre, 2021; Chu & Chen, 2019; Ki & Hon,

2007; Kim et al., 2020; Wan & Schell, 2007; etc.). Ki and Hon (2007) tested a model of relationship perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. They discovered that publics' overall attitudes toward the organization significantly and positively predicted their supportive behavioral intentions. In the context of public engagement, a positive attitude toward an organization often indicates users' engagement and interaction with the organization on social media (Watkins, 2017). Research on word-of-mouth intentions also provides valuable implications as attitudes toward the company significantly determine both positive word-of-mouth (Chu & Chen, 2019) and negative word-of-mouth (Chung & Lee, 2019). For example, Kim et al. (2020) found that positive attitudes toward Nike led to more positive word-of-mouth and less negative word-of-mouth in the CSA context.

Therefore, it is logical to connect attitudes toward a company with publics' intentions to engage in different valenced social media engagement behaviors (see Dolan et al., 2016). Dolan et al. (2016) approached creation as active and positive social media engagement behaviors when "users engage with brands and other users by creating positively valenced content on social media platforms" (p. 106). Users can also exhibit "a moderate level of positively valenced social media engagement behaviour" by contributing to "existing content in social media platforms" (Dolan et al., 2016, p. 106). As a passive type of social media engagement behavior, consumption means users only consume content on social media (Dolan et al., 2016). Dormancy is also passive and inactive (Dolan et al., 2016). Finally, detachment and destruction are more negatively valenced. Users can choose to remove companies' content from their home page (i.e., detachment) or perform negative and active behaviors toward companies (i.e., destruction) (Dolan et al., 2016). To date, little empirical research has been done to verify the relationships between publics' attitudinal responses and their social media engagement intentions in the CSA

context. Based on Dolan et al.'s (2016) conceptualization of diverse social media engagement behaviors and studies on word-of-mouth communication, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> **Hypothesis 1:** Publics' positive attitudes toward a company are positively associated with their a) consumption, b) contribution, and c) creation intentions and negatively associated with d) dormancy, e) detachment, and f) destruction intentions.

2.3   CSA Communication Strategies on Social Media

Effective communication strategies are fundamental to facilitate publics' information processing of CSA, which also helps provide explanatory links and build a company's legitimacy. Suchman (1995) defined legitimacy as "*a general 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* [italics in original]" (p. 574). The direct connection between a company and the advocated sociopolitical issue is not always available (Lim & Young, 2021). When the natural fit is not overt, communication strategies can highlight the existing association that helps publics' information processing (Simmon & Becker-Olsen, 2006; Ye, 2015). When companies partner with nonprofits, creating fit messages with rationale for corporate-nonprofit partnerships can arouse more positive feedback from publics because the message offers meanings and values of the partnership to publics (Maktoufi et al., 2020). Sohn et al. (2012) asked companies to utilize appropriate communication strategies to establish explanatory links for CSR activities. Similarly, Kim and Ferguson (2018) suggested public relations specialists consider adding clarifying messages to reduce skeptical attributions of CSR motives. When a company endorses a controversial sociopolitical issue, the relation between them signals the company's identity. Hence, a delicate design of communication strategies is necessary to demonstrate sincerity and enhance relationships.

Several prominent communication strategies have been identified by existing research about brand extension, CSR, and brand sponsorship. Brand extension literature explains how existing brands introduce new products and how success is determined by "(1) parent brand characteristics, (2) the extension's marketing context, (3) the relationship between the parent brand and the extension product, and (4) the extension's product category characteristics" (Völckner & Satter, 2006, p. 19). It is imperative for managers to "establish linkages between the brand and the extension product" (Völckner & Sattler, 2006, p. 30). Utilizing communication strategies can moderate the impact of the fit on the acceptance of the extension (Bridges et al., 2000). Sohn et al. (2012) applied explanatory links in CSR research and proposed CSR relational communication strategy and CSR elaborational communication strategy. Then, Wang and Li (2017) found the existence of all three communication strategies (relational vs. elaborational vs. activational) in native advertisements on news websites. This line of research, though in different disciplines, investigates how to enhance the perceived fit between a brand/company/sponsor, a new product/ CSR activity/ a sponsored event, and the targeted audience. Therefore, these communication strategies have the potential to build companies' legitimacy by helping publics make sense of companies' advocacy efforts on controversial issues. Each communication strategy is explained as follows.

Relational Communication Strategy. A relational communication strategy enhances the association or linkage between a sponsor and an event (Cornwell et al., 2006). This concept originates from the brand extension literature. It focuses on parent brand associations (concrete attribute associations) that provide an explanatory link (Bridges et al., 2000). Sohn et al. (2012) extended this concept to the CSR context and proposed a CSR relational communication strategy. This type of communication strategy puts more emphasis on "both the positive

traits/attributes of the sponsoring firm as well as its connectedness to the CSR activity" (Sohn et al., 2012, p. 137). Its effects can be understood from association network theory because it can activate the connected nodes (concepts) based on association (Sohn et al., 2012). Offering relational information between the sponsor and an event facilitates receivers' memory retrieval process, especially those with low sponsorship congruency (Weeks et al., 2018). Effective communication strategies should focus on making the explanatory links salient and credible (Bridges et al., 2000). Communicating brand essence is the key to brand extension messages (Kim, 2003). Kim (2003) suggested explicitly making the connections based on the features and attributes of the parent brand, including brand image and identity. Incongruent brand extensions need communication strategies to prime consumers into perceiving similarities (Martin et al., 2005). In addition, a high level of transparency by explaining the ethical rationale of CSR can enhance publics' perceived trustworthiness even if a low fit is presented (Kim & Lee, 2018). In the context of CSA, the relational communication strategy aims to offer the rationale of the advocacy based on the company's attributes and its connectedness to the sociopolitical issue.

Furthermore, research on event sponsorship has posited two kinds of relevance or fit between the sponsor and the sponsored event (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). One type is function-based associations, which use the sponsor company's product directly in the event (Gwinner, 1997). Poon and Prendergast (2006) broadened this definition by including the situation in which a company's product or service is used to facilitate the event. Hence, a function-based association is related to the sponsor's product, service, functions, or uses (Wang & Li, 2017). The other type is image-based associations, which consider the congruence between the sponsor's image or positioning goals with the sponsored event (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). An image-based association is often "symbolic, abstract, and related to social and cultural values"

(Wang & Li, 2017, p. 921). A better understanding of the sponsoring event assists a company's goal of cultivating a particular image (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). Instead of perceiving these two types of relevance as mutually exclusive, Poon and Prendergast (2006) argued that function-based and image-based relevance often coexist. Although this line of research occurs in the commercial context, it may provide insight into how companies build associations between themselves and specific events or issues in non-commercial situations. Alcañiz et al. (2010) applied two kinds of associations to the cause-brand fit in CSR: functional fit and image fit. Functional fit is diagnostic information for evaluating corporate expertise, while image fit affects perceptions of corporate trustworthiness (Alcañiz et al., 2010). So far, it remains unknown how companies have utilized communication strategies to build function-based or image-based associations in CSA.

  Elaborational Communication Strategy. Communication of CSA can also highlight the CSA itself, such as the importance or significance of the chosen sociopolitical issue, rather than focusing on the company. In the brand extension literature, an elaborational communication strategy focuses on "the extension itself and elaborates on its attributes or benefits" (Bridges et al., 2000, p. 7). It prevents the potential formation of problematic associations (Bridges et al., 2000). An elaborational CSR communication strategy focuses solely on the CSR activity (Sohn et al., 2012). By emphasizing the value of the CSR activity, the suspicion toward a company's motives can be suppressed (Sohn et al., 2012). With elaborational communication strategies, consumers engage in analytic thinking rather than holistic thinking to increase their acceptance of the extension (Monga & John, 2010). Specifically, consumers with analytical thinking consider more about an object without considering the relationships between an object with its context (Monga & John, 2010). Elaborational communication offers more positive information

about the extension; therefore, the negative effect of low fit will be reduced (Dens & Pelsmacker, 2015). Pérez and Liu (2020) recommended companies provide information in CSR messages to enhance consumers' social topic awareness (i.e., knowledge and understanding of the social issue). By de-emphasizing the sponsor, elaborational communication strategies may present organizations' sincere concerns (Wang & Li, 2017). Studies on elaborational communication strategies, so far, have primarily focused on brand extension (Bridges et al., 2000; Monga & John, 2010) or occasionally CSR (Sohn et al., 2012). However, given the connections between CSR and CSA, the elaborational communication strategy can be applied in the CSA context to offer substantial information about the history, merit, event, issue, people, etc., instead of the association with the company. This dissertation is the first to test the elaborational communication strategy in the CSA context.

Activational Communication Strategy. An activational communication strategy strengthens the association through "communications that promote the engagement, involvement, or participation of the sponsorship audience with the sponsor" (Weeks et al., 2008, p. 639). It aims to offer useful information for consumers to take action (Wang & Li, 2017). This concept has been widely applied in the context of corporate sponsorships. Sponsor companies can interact and engage their audiences through an activational communication strategy, leading to more favorable attitudinal ratings (Weeks et al., 2008). By promoting consumers' participation, a sponsor brand's association with an event can be consolidated (Quintal et al., 2020). This idea of involving, interacting, and engaging the target recipients in activational communication strategies corresponds to the stakeholder involvement and engagement strategy in CSR communication, which keep stakeholders involved, informed, and participating (Lim & Greenwood, 2017). A CSR engagement strategy aims to establish two-way interactions with

stakeholders (Etter, 2014). As a particular type of CSR engagement strategy, participatory CSR strategies have received rising scholarly attention in recent years (Ruiz de Maya et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2021). A key component in participatory CSR campaigns is to invite public participation (Lee et al., 2021). Companies develop more interactive content such as calls-to-actions to enhance public participation (Lee et al., 2021). With participatory CSR communication, publics perceive more self-efficacy and empowerment, which lead to more desirable organizational outcomes (Park & Kim, 2021). Hence, companies can mobilize activational communication strategies to offer information about ways to participate in advocating a certain social issue. Especially social media platforms, like Facebook or Twitter, have many features that facilitate activational communication strategies.

Wang and Li (2017) discovered the existence of all three strategies in native advertisements that appeared on three general-readership news websites through a content analysis study. But their study did not test the effects of these strategies, and limited research has examined how companies deploy these communication strategies to advocate sociopolitical issues on social media. In the CSA context, whether and how companies establish the explanatory links between sociopolitical issues and themselves deserve empirical investigation as a potential communication strategy. Instead of perceiving these strategies as mutually exclusive, companies could simultaneously employ two or three of them in one CSA message. It is valuable to explore how current CSA messages utilize these communicative strategies in advocating social issues to make legitimate connections and engage publics, especially in the online environment. Thus, the first research question is proposed. A quantitative content analysis of top companies' social media post answered this research question.

Research Question 1: How, if at all, are communication strategies (relational,

elaborational, and activational) adopted by companies' CSA messages on social media?

This present study further investigates the effects of communication strategies on publics'

social media engagement. As a result, it offers insight into whether and how publics respond to

CSA social media communication. Prior studies in corporate communication, including CSR

communication, have found that communication strategies have an impact on publics' social

media engagement (e.g., Araujo & Kollat, 2018; Cho et al., 2017; Etter, 2014). Yet, prior

research has not used content analysis methods to examine how relational, elaborational, and

activational communication strategies may result in different social media engagement

behaviors. This part of the proposed study is still at the exploratory stage, and thus the following

question is asked. The second research question was answered by a quantitative content analysis

of top companies' social media posts and publics' social media engagement behaviors.

Research Question 2: How are communication strategies (relational, elaborational, and

activational) in CSA associated with publics' social media engagement behaviors?

2.4 Advocacy Fit

The concept of fit has received increasing scholarly attention to understand its impacts on

publics' responses to CSA (Hong & Li, 2020; Lim & Young, 2021; Parcha & Westerman, 2020;

Rim et al., 2020; Yim, 2021). Although the direct connection between CSA and a company's

core business is not often available (Hong & Li, 2020), perceived congruency between a

company and its CSA initiative can vary due to the multiple ways of forming fit (Browning et

al., 2020). Thus, whether CSA aligns with overall business deserves direct examination, given its

significance in publics' attributions of corporate actions. Parcha and Kinsley Westerman (2020)

built on company-cause fit and proposed the concept of advocacy fit as "the perceived

congruence between a corporation's business and the controversial social issue it is advocating

for" (p. 354). The definition of advocacy fit is almost identical to CSR fit or company-cause fit

(Parcha & Kinsley Westerman, 2020), which be perceived as a specific form of company-cause

fit. Company-cause fit is "the perceived congruence between a social issue and the company's

business" (Du et al., 2010, p. 12). Lim and Young (2021) identified two origins of advocacy fit:

brand identity and the changing social and cultural values. They define CSA-brand fit as "the

perceived congruity between the advocated cause and the brand in regard to the brand's identity

and the public expectation about the values related to the brand" (p. 4). Similarly, Hong and Li

(2020) pointed out that the perceived advocacy fit would be weak when CSA does not reflect

publics' perceptions of a company's image and value.

In regard to the effects of advocacy fit, most extant studies have revealed its value in

generating positive organizational outcomes. For example, in Austin et al.'s (2019) nationally

representative U.S. survey, participants were asked about their perceptions of companies' roles

in society. As a result, participants showed moderate agreement on "advocate on political issues

that align with their corporate values" ($M = 4.67/7$, $SD = 1.72$) and "only advocate for issues

related to their business or products" ($M = 4.50/7$, $SD = 1.78$) (Austin et al., 2019). Then, Hong

and Li (2020) discovered that company-cause fit (i.e., advocacy fit) positively affected purchase

intentions and corporate reputation, whereas it negatively affected boycott intentions, especially

for participants with low issue involvement. Thus, they advocated for congruency between a

company's image and mission and the issue to facilitate more positive responses. Companies are

suggested to evaluate to what extent their CSA can be deemed "natural" (Hong & Li, 2020, p.

172). Additionally, Yim (2021) highlighted the significance of value consistency, a company's

stand-taking rooted in its value, in achieving CSA legitimacy. The most recent study about

advocacy fit from Lim and Young (2021) discovered a significant and positive effect of perceived fit on issue-specific reputation. They further argued that public relations is particularly important to form the perceived fit between organizational identity and CSA; thus, building moral legitimacy (Lim & Young, 2021).

To sum up, the congruency effect of a high advocacy fit allows people to integrate CSA easily into their existing information system. And it eases information processing and lowers the elaboration level. Though some scholars have argued that the fit between the main business and the issue should be low in CSA (Dodd, 2018; Wettstein & Baur, 2016), they have focused on the function-based fit that highlights company operations. However, advocacy fit is determined by publics' perceptions, and it might not be aligned with the predetermined category. It is still valuable to investigate the impacts of advocacy fit because it offers valuable insight into the boundary of CSA. It has been shown that the fit exerts an influence on publics' attributional process of corporate actions (Kim & Choi, 2018; Rifon et al., 2004). But little has been found on how the advocacy fit influences publics' perceived attributions of CSA. Ellen et al. (2006) proposed four types of attributions: values-driven, stakeholder-driven, egoistic, and strategic. Value-driven motives will be attributed when consumers believe the company's CSR efforts are guided by moral obligation, ethical interest, and social expectations (Ellen et al., 2006). Strategic-driven motives are inferred when consumers believe the CSR efforts are out of attracting or maintaining customers and/or increasing profit while benefiting the social cause (Ellen et al., 2006). Egoistic motives mean companies are taking advantage of or exploiting social causes (Ellen et al., 2006). Finally, stakeholder-driven motives are perceived when people believe CSR efforts are in response to stakeholders' requirements (Ellen et al., 2006). They discovered that participants viewed value-driven and strategic motives positively, whereas

egoistic and stakeholder-driven negatively. As Browning et al. (2020) suggested, the company-cause fit should be directly tested in the context of CSA. This study extends prior studies on the advocacy fit by examining its impact on publics' attitudinal responses and behavioral intentions through the attributional process. Based on previous studies, this study proposed the first hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 2:** Compared with a low advocacy fit, a high advocacy fit in CSA leads to more perceived value-driven and strategic motives and less perceived stakeholder-driven and egoistic motives, which, in turn, leads to more favorable attitudes toward the company.

2.5   Publics' Social Identities

As an identity signaling practice (Park, 2021), CSA needs to fit a company's values and identity but also needs to align with publics' values and interests (Yim, 2021). Individuals' views on the issue and their issue involvement also determine CSA engagement (Waymer & Logan, 2021). As a promising direction to understanding publics, issues, and relationships (Xu, 2020), the social identity approach offers additional insight into the alignment between CSA and publics' identities. Despite the basis of the social identity approach deriving from social psychology, it has fruitful implications for communication phenomena (Harwood, 2006). For example, the intergroup communication scholarship examines the impacts of group memberships on their social perceptions and communicative behaviors (Atwell Seate, 2017). Additionally, the role of media in the intergroup communication process is also important and essential (Atwell Seate, 2017). Scott (2007) suggested more integration of communication and social identity theory because identity is essentially constructed through communication. This section will delve into the social identity approach and its implications on corporate communication, especially CSA.

2.5.1   Review of Social Identity Approach

Social identity theory (SIT) and self-categorization theory (SCT) are often called together the social identity approach, which goes beyond individual-level mechanisms and examines the social psychology of group processes and intergroup relations (Hornsey, 2008). Both theories examine the socially constructed self that originates from belonging to a social category or group (Hogg et al., 1995). Such social group memberships provide a self-definition and influence how people think, feel, and behave (Hogg et al., 1995). The social identity approach has been invaluable in analyzing "the relationship between self-concept and all forms of group and intergroup phenomena" (Hogg, 2018, p. 128).

Social Identity Theory. Social identity theory was developed in the 1970s by Tajfel and Turner (1978; 1979; 1986) to explain the social psychology of intergroup relations. Social identity is defined as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from knowledge of membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). When social identity is salient, individuals begin to think, feel, and behave based on particular group membership (Hogg et al., 1995). Social identity theory rests on the assumption of a social group. A group has cognitive, evaluative, and emotional components (Trepte, 2006). Tajfel and Turner (1986) defined a group as the following:

> We can conceptualize a group, in this sense, as a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same category, share some emotional involvement, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and their membership in it (p. 15).

People are driven to a positive social identity through ingroup/outgroup comparison and use strategies such as social mobility to achieve a positive social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Social identity theory underscores the social identity based on social groups, and it is driven by self-enhancement, uncertainty reduction, and optimal distinctiveness (Hogg, 2018).

Two basic socio-cognitive processes exist in social identity, categorization, and self-enhancement (Hogg et al., 1995). Social identity theory explains how individuals enhance self-esteem and positive distinctiveness through ingroup behavior (e.g., solidarity or favoritism) and outgroup discrimination (Trepte, 2006).

Self-categorization Theory. Turner (1985, 1999) further developed self-categorization theory from social identity theory, stating that a collective social identity or self-concept can be formed from the social comparison that accentuates ingroup similarities and outgroup differences (Hogg, 2018). Self-categorization theory deals with "the antecedents, nature, and consequences of psychological group formation" and helps understand the psychological basis of group behavior (Turner, 1985, p. 78). self-categorization theory underscores a hierarchical system of ingroup-outgroup categorization, which consists of the superordinate level (human identity), the intermediate level (social identity), and the subordinate level (personal identity) (Turner, 1985). A key concept in derived self-categorization theory is depersonalization, which means people perceive themselves and others "less as individuals and more as interchangeable exemplars of the group prototype" with regard to ingroup and outgroup prototypes (Hornsey, 2008, p. 208). Group members use the ingroup prototype to represent and define a group as a distinct entity (Hogg et al., 1995). Prototypes are "fuzzy sets that capture the context-dependent features of group membership" (Hogg & Terry, 2000, p. 123). In other words, depersonalization indicates a change from identification at the subordinate, personal level to more social identity, "a basic

process underlying group phenomenon" (Turner, 1985, p. 99). It is a transition from the "I" to the "we" (Turner & Reynolds, 2001). Group identity offers the definition to group members and guides their attitudes, emotions, and behaviors in a certain situation (Hornsey, 2008).

  Ingroup Identification. Not only group membership but also the extent to which individuals identify with their group predict corresponding group-level responses (Jetten et al., 2003). According to social identity theory, individuals need to subjectively identify with their groups to engage in intergroup differentiation (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). There are three components of identification, cognitive (knowledge), evaluative (placed value), and emotional-affective (Hinkle et al., 1989). Self-categorization theory posits that the salience of ingroup-outgroup categorization in a specific situation has an immediate impact on individuals' perceptions and behaviors (Turner, 1985). And identity salience is determined partially by the degree of identification with an ingroup-outgroup membership and the centrality and importance of group membership (Turner, 1985). Notably, group membership does not produce ingroup identification automatically as the latter entails the attachment to the larger collective group (Brewer, 2001). Tropp and Wright (2001) conceptualized ingroup identification as "the degree to which the ingroup is included in the self" (p. 586). People's psychological connections between themselves and specific groups vary (Tropp & Wright, 2001). Stronger ingroup identification indicates that the group membership is meaningful to an individual's self-image (Levin & Sidanius, 1999). Additionally, it is "a particularly efficient and immediate way" to reduce self-conceptual uncertainty (Hogg et al., 2007, p. 136). Group membership plays a primary role in high identifiers' self-definition because individuals internalize ingroup prototypes to define themselves or describe their identity (Hogg, 2007; Hogg et al., 2017).

2.5.2   *Social Identity Approach and Communication*

Hogg (2018) called for new integrative directions to look into the relationship between social identity, language, and communication. The communicative dimensions of intergroup relations need to be recognized because communicative ingredients shape "cognitive intergroup constructs, " including categorization and stereotyping (Giles, 2012, p. 4). Scott (2007) also suggested more integration of communication and social identity theory in organizational studies because identity is constructed through communication. Communication plays a crucial role in creating, maintaining, or changing group norms (Hogg & Reid, 2006; Smith & Hogg, 2008). For example, perceptions of group norms depend on what people say and what the media portray (Hogg & Reid, 2006). Notably, research on intergroup communication has examined the impacts of individuals' group memberships on message transmission and reception (Harwood et al., 2005). For example, a number of communication scholars have applied the social identity approach to explain media effects (e.g., Atwell Seate & Mastro, 2015; Mastro, 2003; Trepte & Loy, 2017; etc.). On the one hand, media have the powerful ability to prime specific identity cues (e.g., race-based cognitions, political judgment) and reinforce an individual's social identity through the embodiment of the ingroup prototype (Mastro et al., 2005). On the other hand, group-level factors offer an additional motivation in choosing or avoiding media content (media consumption) and media interpretation (Mastro & Atwell Seate, 2012). Also, social media has an exposure effect like traditional mass media (Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2019), and it has been utilized as an essential tool to express social identity (Barker & Rodriguez, 2019). To sum up, the social identity approach and communication are closely connected, given the influences of group memberships on communicative behaviors and the role of media in intergroup communication processes (Atwell Seate & Mastro, 2017).

2.5.3   *Social Identity Approach and CSA*

Applying the social identity approach in public relations restructures the roles of organizations and publics beyond the individual-level orientation. Publics also belong to diverse social groups and their interactions with an organization are subject to the influences of social group memberships. Publics choose to build relationships with a specific organization to "serve their identity-building and self-definitional needs," and they will perceive an organization as an ingroup entity when the organization communicates its support for issues that align with the ingroup identity (Xu, 2020, p. 136). Existing studies shed light on the potential of publics' group-based social identities to influence their reactions to CSA. The issues advocated in CSA often relate to certain disadvantaged groups (Xiao & Overton, 2021), and CSA is capable of signaling an organization's identity (Lim & Young, 2021). When interacting with an organization, individuals' social identities (e.g., racial minorities, women, LGBTQ, etc.) can be invoked by cues in the context, impacting their relationships with the organization (Crane & Ruebottom, 2012). Companies' actions often affect a wide range of social groups, so embracing the social identity approach enables them to fully understand societal expectations and values (Crane & Ruebottom, 2012). Furthermore, some recent studies have revealed that publics' certain social identities play a role in their evaluations of CSA. For example, Xu et al. (2021) discovered that publics' political partisan identity affected their reactions to CSA. Also, Xiao and Overton (2021) found that publics' politicized identity (the membership of cause supporter group) predicted their collective action intentions and positive word-of-mouth intentions about a company in the context of CSA. Another example is LGBTQ-centric CSR advertising through social media influencers, non-LGBTQ and LGBTQ Instagram users responded differently due to influencers' social identity (non-LGBTQ vs. LGBTQ) (Li, 2021). For sexual and gender

minorities (LGBTQ), they often desire communication strategies in companies' LGBTQ campaigns to incorporate the diversity of their identities (Ciszek & Lim, 2021).

To sum up, CSA is an issue-bounded concept, and its success requires consideration of publics' social identities to fully capture publics' motivations and expectations. Extant literature has applied social identity theory to understand how CSA signals a company's identity (Park & Jiang, 2020; Xu et al., 2021). However, to date, most CSA studies approach publics' social group memberships as merely demographic variables (e.g., Hong & Li, 2020; Lim & Young, 2021; Park, 2021) while neglecting their profound impacts on publics' CSA-related information processing. This dissertation fills this void by incorporating publics' social identities to capture a holistic view of publics and their responses to CSA. Given CSA initiatives often target marginaled social groups, the research on publics' social identities enables companies to recognize and further understand the needs and expectations of these groups that CSA aims to help and advocate. Only with comprehensive knowledge of what companies' advocacy efforts mean to those publics, can an authentic and genuine CSA be possibly built. In addition, with the social identity approach, our understanding of CSA can be largely deepened with additional insight from societal-level considerations such as social status differences and power dynamics.

2.5.4 *Social Identity and Public Responses to CSA*

Roles of Group Membership in CSA. Based on the social identity approach, publics' group memberships have the potential to influence their reactions to CSA. Intergroup attitude is "an outcome of an interaction between people's collective psychology as group members and the social structure of intergroup relationships" (Turner & Reynolds, 2001, p. 146). According to Tajfel & Turner (1986), ingroup refers to the group individuals feel they belong to and identify with, while outgroup(s) is(are) the other distinct group(s) individuals do not have belongings or

identification. Biases toward the ingroup and outgroup(s) are likely to occur for individuals to maintain a positive self-concept. Ingroup bias or ingroup favoritism is defined as "the systematic tendency to evaluate one's own membership group (the in-group) or its members more favorably than a nonmembership group (the out-group) or its members" (Hewstone et al., 2002, p. 576). People tend to favor their own group compared with outgroup because they seek to achieve "a positive and secure self-concept" (Hornsey, 2008, p. 207). Second, outgroup bias or derogation, "the negative evaluation of the out-group" (Trepte, 2006, p. 4), happens when one is facing a threat to an important social identity from another group (Branscombe & Wann, 1994). Identity threat is an important condition that triggers negative emotions toward the outgroup(s), like fear, hatred, or disgust (Hewstone et al., 2002).

Intergroup bias is displayed in various ways, such as intergroup attributional bias (Hewstone, 1990) and linguistic intergroup bias (Maass et al., 1989). According to intergroup attributional bias, more internal attribution (e.g., ability) will be offered for the ingroup's success (Hewstone, 1990). The group-serving attributional biases are driven by the motivation to maintain collective self-esteem (Hunter et al., 1999), which is the extent to which individuals evaluate their groups positively (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Specifically, individuals tend to assign more internal and personally controllable causes to ingroup success while attributing internal, stable, and global reasons for outgroup failure (Hewstone, 1990; Hunter et al., 1999). Studies on linguistic bias and intergroup comparison also offer valuable insight into how language differences maintain positive group-based identities (Maass et al., 1989). Abstract languages can be used for "socially desirable in-group behaviors and undesirable out-group behaviors" (Mass et al., 1989, p. 981). Comparatively, concrete languages are often used for "socially undesirable in-group behaviors and desirable out-group behaviors" (Mass et al., 1989,

p. 981). Thus, abstract terms are used for dispositional attributions (inherent traits), whereas concrete and target-specific terms yield situational attributions (context-based) (Gorham, 2006; Mastro et al., 2014). For example, Gorham (2006) discovered that White participants tended to use more abstract languages that were dispositional and less situational to describe an African American suspect. Building on prior literature, it is reasonable to infer that publics' group memberships play an indispensable role in their responses to CSA.

In the CSA context, companies often support sociopolitical issues that target minority groups, such as Nike's Colin Kaepernick campaign, Ben & Jerry's LGBTQ advocacy campaign, Target's transgender bathroom room policy, and Starbucks' support for immigrant rights. The specific context can function as a cue to invoke individuals' respective group memberships (Trepte & Loy, 2017). Therefore, CSA is capable of making publics' particular group membership more salient. For example, my ethnic (Asian) group membership becomes more salient when I am exposed to information about companies' Stop Anti-Asian Hate and Violence initiatives. The intergroup literature has used various labels for different social groups, such as dominant vs. subordinate, majority vs. minority, low-status vs. high-status, or advantaged vs. disadvantage (Hogg, 2018, Hogg & Abrams, 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). These labels are valuable for scholars to thoughtfully consider "social status differences between social groups in social systems" (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 22). Though companies' CSA efforts often center on supporting minority groups (Xiao & Overton, 2021; Zhou, 2021), CSA also addresses issues less related to social marginalization, such as gun control. For example, Gaither et al. (2018) examined Dick's Sporting Good's stance on gun control. Gun ownership is a type of social identity that can be activated by gun-related news coverage, despite its differences from traditional social group identities (Atwell Seate et al., 2012). Additionally, companies sometimes

took stances not in favor of minority groups, such as Chick-fil-A's public stance to oppose same-sex marriage in 2012. Although the power dynamics and social status differences always play a significant role in individuals' perceptions of social groups, the primary focus of this research is to understand how different social groups respond to CSA. Therefore, this dissertation will name the groups "CSA-supported group" and "non-CSA-supported group" to enable more generalizability of results to CSA practices that target non-traditional minority groups, such as issues related to gun control or firearms violence. The former refers to the social group explicitly supported in a CSA, while the latter refers to other comparative groups. For example, the LGBTQ+ community is considered the CSA-supported group in Ben & Jerry's stance on gay marriage, but the heterosexual group is the non-CSA-supported group.

When a social group is supported and advocated by a company, members of the CSA-supported group will be more likely to respond more favorably due to the ingroup favoritism. CSA communication through diverse channels functions as an additional source of publics' information about the advocated sociopolitical issues, which contributes to issue salience (Heffron & Dodd, 2021). From another perspective, CSA inherently enhances the representation of marginalized groups and aligns well with these group members' social identities. Hence, memberships of the CSA-supported group tend to evaluate CSA more positively. However, publics belonging to other groups, especially those with higher social status, will likely be less interested in CSA communication that does not feature their own groups, which may induce outgroup bias. In other words, ingroup favoritism will be less likely to occur due to the CSA communication, but their reactions to CSA are still affected by their social group membership. For instance, White identity, or White Americans' understanding of Whiteness, shapes their perceptions of the BLM Movement, regardless of no recognition or recognition of Whiteness

(Cole, 2020). Furthermore, a meta-analysis conducted by Bettencourt et al. (2001) revealed that high-status groups tend to present more inter-group bias (favorable evaluation of ingroup and unfavorable evaluation of outgroup) compared with low-status groups, especially on dimensions related to the status distinction. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that White Americans respond differently to BLM-related CSA than African Americans.

To conclude, guided by the social identity approach, this dissertation posits that publics' group memberships can impact their CSA information processing and interpretations. Social identity can be approached as an overarching process that affects individuals' media selection and media effects (Trepte et al., 2016). For example, in the context of race-related media effects, Mastro and Atwell Seate (2012) identified various functions of group membership on media use (selection or avoidance), media information processing and interpretation, media-driven group perceptions, and intergroup outcomes. Following this reasoning, CSA communication as an additional information source for group-related sociopolitical issues is also influenced by publics' group memberships. Given the exploratory nature of the research, the following research question was asked.

Research Question 3: How, if at all, do publics' group memberships (CSA-supported group vs. non-CSA-supported group) affect their responses to CSA?

Effects of Ingroup Identification. As discussed above, ingroup identification affects to what extent individuals define themselves as members of social groups, which affects their perception, affect, and behaviors (Hogg, 2007). First, the tendency of ingroup bias is stronger for individuals with strong ingroup identification (Brewer, 2001; Jetten et al., 2004; Levin & Sidanius, 1999). Stronger ingroup identification motivates individuals to favorably evaluate their ingroup (Brewer, 2001). Ingroup identification affects individuals' attention to intergroup media

(Joyce & Harwood, 2014). Prior scholars have revealed the positive effect of ingroup identification on individuals' preference for positive information about their own group (Appiah et al., 2013). For example, the linguistic intergroup bias can be stronger for high identifiers who are motivated to protect their social identities (Mastro et al., 2014). Individuals who highly value their social group memberships are more motivated to display ingroup favoritism (Crisp & Beck, 2005). In the organizational context, high identifiers will be more likely to perceive a company as an ingroup entity when the company takes a stance on a sociopolitical issue (Xu, 2020). For instance, prior studies have found that sports fans with high fan identification tend to perceive the sponsor of their teams as an ingroup member and demonstrate high purchase intention (Wang et al., 2012). Based on the above discussion, publics in the CSA-supported group with stronger ingroup identification will present more ingroup favoritism and perceive a company as an ingroup entity. Due to the ingroup attributional bias, CSA-support group members with high identification are more likely to assign dispositional attributions to CSA that are related to companies' inherent traits. In the meantime, their high ingroup identification reduced situational attributions of CSA.

Second, outgroup affect can also be affected ingroup identification. High identifiers experience higher levels of intergroup threats (Riek et al., 2006) because they are more eager to defend the group and protect threatened distinctiveness (Jetten et al., 2001; 2005). Individuals with strong ingroup identification tend to have dominant social identity concerns when the group distinctiveness is low (Jetten et al., 2001). Also, they are committed to their social groups and prioritize group loyalty over personal gain (Jetten et al., 2003). Stronger ingroup identification provides individuals additional motivations to "achieve positive valuation, maintain secure inclusion, and protect ingroup boundary," which makes intergroup prejudices or even

discrimination likely to occur (Brewer, 2001, p. 35). For example, Sassenberg and Wieber (2005) discovered that high levels of ingroup identification predicted more implicitly assessed prejudice (more negative attitudes toward the outgroup relative to the ingroup). Hewstone (1990) posited that group-serving attributions are more likely to occur when individuals are aware of their group membership. As a result, the high identifiers tend to assign external and situational reasons for an outgroup member's positive act (Hewstone, 1990). For high identifiers, their sense of belonging to their social group leads to more possibilities of intergroup attribution bias, such as attributing outgroups' success to external (situational) causes. Therefore, when a company endorses a sociopolitical issue that addresses a related outgroup's concern, publics in the non-CSA-supported will assign more external and situational, instead of internal or altruistic, reasons for CSA due to intergroup attributional bias.

In Ellen et al.'s (2006) measures of corporate attributions, perceived value-driven motives are more dispositional with abstract terms like "morally obligated" (p. 153). Comparatively, stakeholder-driven, egoistic, and strategic attributions are more situational and external. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed.

> **Hypothesis 3:** In the CSA-supported group, publics' stronger ingroup identification is positively associated with perceived value-driven motives, and negatively associated with perceived stakeholder-driven, egoistic, and strategic motives.

> **Hypothesis 4:** In the non-CSA-supported group, publics' stronger ingroup identification is positively associated with perceived stakeholder-driven, egoistic, and strategic motives, and negatively associated with perceived value-driven motives.

2.5.5   *Social Identity and Individual-level Perceptions of Sociopolitical Issues*

Existing public relations literature has applied situational theories to understand publics' communicative actions regarding diverse issues (e.g., Kim et al., 2012; Kim & Hong, 2021; Lee et al., 2014), including sociopolitical issues (Tao et al., 2020). Situational theories, situational theory of publics (STP, Grunig, 1997) and situational theory of problem solving (STOPS, Kim & Grunig, 2011), are powerful individual-level theories to categorize publics and understand publics' communicative actions. Grunig (1997) developed STP to explain the impacts of the level of involvement, problem recognition, and constraint recognition, on information seeking and processing. The situational theory of problem solving (STOPS) expands STP by refining original variables, reintroducing an independent variable (referent criterion), expanding dependent variables (communicative action), and adding a new mediator (situational motivation in problem solving). STOPS is a more comprehensive and general theoretical framework of public segmentation (Kim et al., 2016). It identifies perceptual, cognitive, and motivational antecedents. Problem recognition is defined as "one's perception that something is missing and that there is no immediately applicable solution to it" (Kim & Grunig, 2011, p. 128). Involvement recognition is "a perceived connection between the self and the problem situation" (Kim & Grunig, 2011, p. 130). Constraint recognition is the extent of perceived obstacles, and the referent criterion involves "any knowledge or subjective judgmental system that influences the way in which one approaches problem solving" (Kim & Grunig, 2011, p. 131). The situational motivation in problem solving, "a state of situation-specific cognitive and epistemic readiness to make problem-solving efforts," appears to be an immediate antecedent of communication action (Kim & Grunig, 2011, p. 132). STOPS advances our understanding of

why and how hot-issue publics arise who communicate actively about a specific issue (Kim et al., 2012).

Aldoory and Sha (2007) suggested that future studies focus on certain antecedent factors to further develop situation theory. Prior studies have tried to link cross-situational variables, such as political party identity and cultural identity, to individual-level situational variables (Chen et al., 2017; Sha, 2006). For example, Sha (2006) connected cultural identity (racioethnic identity) with publics' problem recognition and level of involvement. Similarly, Chen et al. (2017) found that party identity significantly influenced problem recognition and involvement recognition. To continue this line of research, the present dissertation aims to understand the relationships between publics' social group membership (social identity) with the situational variables in STOPS.

Extant literature has highlighted how individual factors also determine publics' evaluations of CSA. For example, Dodd and Supa (2014) found that participants showed greater purchase intention when a CSA message matched participants' attitudes towards the social issue. Only when the issue is relevant to publics' goals and values it is possible for CSA to change individuals' attitudes towards the issue (Parcha & Westerman, 2020). Issue involvement is a significant moderator between company-cause fit and corporate reputation (Hong & Li, 2020). Additionally, CSA can attract publics' attention to those who share the stance adopted by the organization (Park & Jiang, 2020). Austin et al. (2019) discovered that participants' demographic factors (gender, political affiliation, education, income) influence their perception and acceptance of organizational advocacy. Moreover, publics' engagement in and disengagement from communicating controversial sociopolitical issues are influenced by their perceptual and motivational factors identified in STOPS (Lee et al., 2014; Tao et al., 2021). Hence, the

effectiveness of CSA is contingent on individuals' perceptions of the issue and perceived issue involvement (Waymer & Logan, 2021).

The research on individual-level situational factors has been insightful to understand publics' features and categorize them into nonpublic, latent, aware, or active publics (see the situational theory of publics, Grunig, 1997). But the focus on individual-situational factors largely ignores social structures, intergroup interactions, and social identities, which inherently affect people's cognition, affect, and behaviors. As inspired by the social identity approach, both group memberships and individuals' identification with their group memberships predict their perception and behavior (Turner, 1986). For example, Holt and Sweitzer's (2020) research on the BLM Movement revealed the opposite role of ethnic identity in White American and African American participants' attitudes toward the BLM Movement. Group characteristics such as the group's social status and the group membership's salience should be considered regarding individuals' support for social change (Hässler et al., 2020). Yet, little is known about whether and how publics' social identities (group memberships and group identification) function as an antecedent for their individual-level perceptions and evaluations of social issues in a CSA context. This inquiry may be invaluable to untangling the complexity of publics' reactions to CSA. Therefore, the following research question is proposed.

> **Research Questions 4:** How, if at all, do publics' social identities affect their perceptions of the advocated sociopolitical issue (problem recognition, involvement recognition, referent criterion, situational motivation in problem solving, and issue stance) in a CSA context?

2.6   CSA Attributions

2.6.1   *Attributions of Corporate Actions*

Publics' attributions of corporate communication have been considered a significant

mediator between fit and organizational outcomes, including attitudinal responses or behavioral

intentions (Du et al., 2010; Ellen et al., 2006). The attributional process has been applied to

corporate communication and reputation management (e.g., Ozdora-Aksak et al., 2016; Parguel

et al., 2011; Sjovall & Talk, 2004; etc.). It posits that people try to find causes to explain

outcomes or results (Weiner, 2010), and this cognitive attributional process has impacts on

behaviors and affective consequences (Kelley & Michela, 1980). The internal-external causality

has been identified in prior literature (Kelley, 1967), which explains that the occurrence of an

event is attributed to something about the self or something external (Schmitt & Branscombe,

2002). In corporate communication, people can attribute corporate actions either to corporate

disposition or to external situational factors (Sjovall & Talk, 2004). People may believe that

companies' actions are motivated either by financial incentives or by striving for stakeholders'

best interests (Ozdora-Aksak et al., 2016). When a company displays benevolence, it is crucial to

encourage attribution to corporate personality (i.e., internal factors) to enhance its reputation

(Sjovall & Talk, 2004). People use available information in corporate communication to derive

reasons for companies' actions (e.g., CSR) when evaluating corporate brands (Parguel et al.,

2011). The inferred motives affect their following attitudes and/or behavioral intentions (Zhang

et al., 2020).

2.6.2   *Types of CSA Attributions*

Attribution theory has been widely used to explain the role of perceived motives in

determining CSR communication effectiveness. The fruitful research on CSR attributions sheds

light on how people make inferences about the reasons for corporate practices. Attribution of corporate motives is a well-researched mediator between CSR communication and attitudes towards the company and purchase intentions (e.g., Groza et al., 2011; Kim & Choi, 2012; Story & Neves, 2015). Companies need to "address why it supports a social issue (i.e., CSR motives) or how sincerely it supports the issue" (Kim & Ferguson, 2018, p. 553). Triggering positive attributions of CSR is a critical factor in facilitating company-consumer identification (Rim et al., 2016). Compared with the extensive research on CSR motives, much less has been known about public attributions of CSA (Coman et al., 2022). The skepticism toward companies' motivations underlying their CSA efforts posed more risks of backlash (Austin et al., 2019). Therefore, companies should constantly pay attention to publics' CSA attributions to achieve legitimacy (Yim, 2021). Waymer and VanSlette (2021) also called for more research on companies' stated motives for CSA engagement and public perceptions of such motives.

Multiple types of attributed motivations have been identified in prior literature. CSR practices can be perceived as intrinsic with sincerity or extrinsic with strategic value to the business (Story & Neves, 2015). Similar terminologies have been used, such as public-serving versus self-serving (Forehand & Grier, 2003), socially-motivated or profit-motivated (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006), or other-centered versus self-centered (Ellen et al., 2006). Studies have shown that the attributional process of CSR is complex, and people will attribute multiple motivations to CSR (Chen et al., 2019; Ellen et al., 2006; Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013; Vlachos et al., 2009). The most comprehensive category of CSR motives was proposed by Ellen et al. (2006), which included values-driven, stakeholder-driven, egoistic, and strategic. Value-driven attributions are inferred when consumers believe the company's CSR efforts are driven by moral obligation, ethical interest, and social expectations (Ellen et al., 2006). CSR efforts can be

perceived to serve stakeholders' expectations or requirements (i.e., stakeholder-driven motives, Ellen et al., 2006). Egoistic and strategic-driven motives are more self-centered, either by exploiting social causes or achieving business goals (Ellen et al., 2006). They discovered that participants viewed value-driven and strategic motives positively, whereas egoistic and stakeholder-driven negatively. Additionally, they found that the high-fit treatment (company-cause fit) led to more value-driven and strategic attributions and less egoistic attributions. But they did not find any significant effects of company-cause fit on attributed stakeholder-driven motives (Ellen et al. 2006).

Research on CSA has applied Ellen et al.'s (2006) conceptualization and categorization. For example, Austin et al. (2019) investigated publics' attributions to three CSA cases (Nike and Kaepernick, Dick's Sporting Goods and gun control, and Gillette's toxic masculinity ad). Their results showed that these CSA cases were likely to arouse all four attributions. Furthermore, Kim et al. (2020) revealed that egoistic, values-driven, strategic, and stakeholder-driven motives affected publics' attitudes toward the company and word-of-mouth communication intentions in the context of Nike's CSA efforts. Therefore, consistent with prior studies, this dissertation also adopts Ellen's (2006) four categories of perceived motivations to examine how publics assign reasons to CSA, given the categories' clarity and specificity. Based on prior literature, attributions played a mediating role in publics' processing of companies' socially responsible initiatives (e.g., Ellen et al., 2006; Groza et al., 2011; Kim & Choi, 2018; Lee & Cho, 2022). In other words, perceived motives underlying corporate actions not only directly affect publics' attitudinal responses but also function as an explanatory mechanism for corporate communication effectiveness. However, research on the direct and indirect effects of attributions in CSA communication is still in the early stage and demands more examination.

2.6.3   *Mediation Effect of Perceived Motives in CSA*

Although CSR motives have been studied extensively, more investigation should be devoted to the emerging CSA research (Austin et al., 2019; Coman et al., 2022; Waymer & VanSlette, 2021). As a corporate action that presents a company's efforts to advocate a sociopolitical issue, it is reasonable to assume that publics will infer the reasons for such events. According to attribution theory, people use certain information and contextual information to infer the causes of behaviors, which lead to subsequent evaluations, attitudes, affects, and behaviors (Kelly & Michela, 1980). Prior studies have acknowledged the mediating role of perceived motivations or reasons for corporate actions such as CSR (e.g., Ellen et al., 2006; Groza et al., 2011; Kim & Choi, 2018; Lee & Cho, 2022), corporate crisis communication (Ho & Hallahan, 2004; Jeong, 2009). Particularly, attributions are documented as an important process through which fit influences public responses (Ellen et al., 2006; Yoo & Lee, 2018). As another non-commercial corporate activity, publics are likely to infer diverse motivations behind a CSA and thus induce attitudinal responses and behavioral intentions. Whether CSA can be perceived as legitimate is determined by publics' attributions of such advocacy efforts (Kim et al., 2020). Kim et al. (2020) discovered that individuals' attributed CSA motives influenced their attitudes and behavioral intentions. Although research on CSA has begun to examine the role of perceived motives in publics' attitudes toward the company and word-of-mouth communication intention (see Kim et al., 2020), studies on the mediating role of perceived CSA motives still remain scarce. Examining the mediation effects of perceived motives on the relationship between advocacy fit, publics' social identities, and attitudes toward a company enables us to delve into the psychological mechanism underlying publics' information processing of CSA. Building on

the attribution theory and prior studies on CSR communication, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 5: Publics' perceived motives of CSA will mediate the effects of advocacy fit and ingroup identification on attitudes toward a company.

First of all, the positive impacts of perceived values-driven motives behind CSR initiatives on desirable organizational outcomes have been widely recognized (Groza et al., 2011; Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013; Vlachos et al., 2009). Value-driven motives reduce the possibility of questioning or doubting CSR efforts (i.e., CSR skepticism) because consumers can discern sincerity and genuineness (Skarmeas & Leaonidou, 2013). People tend to respond positively to values-driven attributions (Groza et al., 2011). Jiang and Luo (2020) discovered that employees' perceived intrinsic, other-serving CSR motives positively lead to their CSR social media engagement, job engagement, and organizational engagement. As a type of positive motives, value-driven motives present sincerity and benevolent intentions (Vlachos et al., 2009), which motivate publics to speak positively for a company (Marín et al., 2016). In a CSA context, publics' attributed value-driven motives result in more positive attitudes toward the company and positive word-of-mouth (Kim et al., 2020). When publics perceive a company as altruistic and sincere when it advocates for a sociopolitical issue, they will evaluate the company more favorably and talk positively about it (Kim et al., 2020). Therefore, it is desirable to elicit more values-driven motives in corporate communication, including CSA.

Hypothesis 6: Publics' perceived values-driven motives underlying CSA are positively associated with their attitudes toward a company.

Then, egoistic-driven motives relate to self-centered reasons and elicit unfavorable evaluations of companies (Austin & Gaither, 2017). They negatively affect consumers' purchase

intention (Ellen et al., 2006) and increase CSR skepticism (Skarmeas & Leaonidou, 2013). They are a type of negative attribution associated with corporate hypocrisy (Marín et al., 2016). Publics tend to respond unfavorably to profit-motivated CSR, and their skepticism arises (Kim & Choi, 2018). It reduces trust and patronage intentions because companies are perceived as unethical and manipulative under such circumstances (Vlachos et al., 2009). Kim et al. (2020) discovered that participants presented more negative attitudes toward Nike and negative word-of-mouth when they perceived more egoistic motives underlying Nike's support of Collin Kaepernick. Thus, another critical task in CSR communication is to minimize egoistic-driven attribution because CSA is deemed to exploit the sociopolitical cause. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is posed:

Hypothesis 7: Publics' perceived egoistic motives underlying CSA are negatively associated with their attitudes toward a company.

Next, stakeholder-driven motives are more self-serving (Ellen et al., 2006). As a result, people tend to respond more negatively because they believe the responsible initiatives are implemented due to pressure from stakeholders rather than the company's sincerity (Groza et al., 2011). Stakeholder-driven motives also arouse more CSR skepticism (Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013) and decrease trust and patronage intentions (Vlachos et al., 2009). The effect of stakeholder-driven motives in CSA is also found to be negative as they predicted more negative word-of-mouth (Kim et al., 2020). Publics respond negatively to CSA if they believe it is driven by stakeholder pressure. Thus, the following hypothesis is posed.

Hypothesis 8: Publics' perceived stakeholder-driven motives underlying CSA are negatively associated with their attitudes toward a company.

Last, consumers are sometimes tolerant of strategic motives (Groza et al., 2011; Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013). Even if consumers discern strategic motives for CSR efforts, they are not necessarily skeptical (Skarmeas & Leaonidou, 2013). Instead, they appear tolerant of strategic motives for CSR engagement (Skarmeas & Leaonidou, 2013). Ellen et al. (2006) also found a significant positive impact of strategic-driven motives on purchase intention. However, in corporate disaster responses, people show more skepticism when they perceive strategic-driven motives because they believe the corporate actions are enacted to make more profits (Chen et al., 2019). This is also due to individuals' dispositional skepticism of a corporate's sincerity (Chen et al., 2019). In Vlachos et al.'s (2009) study on consumers' attributions of a mobile telecommunication services provider's CSR, strategic motives negatively affected patronage intentions. In a CSA context, Kim et al. (2020) revealed a negative relationship between strategic motives and negative word-of-mouth. In other words, the more perceived strategic motives underlying CSA leads to less negative word-of-mouth communication. But they did not find any significant impact of strategic motives on attitudes toward the company or positive word-of-mouth communication. Instead, it shows that publics accept CSA as managerial practice and companies can receive benefits from CSA (Kim et al., 2020). Given the inconclusive findings in prior studies, a research question is asked about the effect of perceived strategic motives:

Research question 5: How are publics' perceived strategic motives associated with their attitudes toward the company?

2.7 Summary of Hypotheses and Research Questions

Eight hypotheses and five research questions were proposed based on the review of relevant literature on advocacy fit, social media engagement, communication strategies, social

identity, and attributions (see Table 1). Hypothesis 1 investigates the effects of attitudes toward the company and social media engagement intentions (consumption, contribution, creation, dormancy, detachment, and destruction). Hypothesis 2 examines the main impacts of advocacy fit on perceived motives underlying CSA, which lead to the subsequent attitudinal responses and social media engagement intentions. Hypothesis 3–4 asks about the effects of publics' ingroup identification on CSA attributions in the CSA-supported and non-CSA-supported groups. Hypothesis 5–8 focus on the roles of publics' attributions in CSA communication.

Research questions are proposed when illuminating inconclusive research or exploratory phenomenon. Research question 1 and 2 aim to explore the communication strategies adopted by companies on social media, which are exploratory but inspiring for these newly developing corporate practices. The findings have the potential to provide suggestions for future strategic communication of CSA on social media. Research question 3 explores the roles of publics' group memberships in their responses to CSA. Research question 4 delves into the intertwined relations between ingroup identification with situational factors derived from STOPS and attitudes toward the sociopolitical issue in the CSA context. This line of research complements and advances public relations research by understanding the social-psychological mechanism embedded in publics' perceptions of and evaluations of sociopolitical issues. Lastly, research question 5 asks about the influence of perceived strategic motives on attitudes toward the company. The research question, instead of a hypothesis, is used to examine the effects of perceived strategic driven motives, given the mixed findings in prior studies.

This dissertation takes a strategic public relations perspective to examine CSA. It delves into the possible answers for "whether" and "how" CSA can bring more positive benefits and lower risks when building and maintaining corporate reputation. First, the communicative nature

of CSA is recognized and is further examined in this dissertation by looking into communication strategies for CSA adopted by companies on social media. This bridges knowledge and practice of public relations to advance further theoretical development. Second, validating a more comprehensive measurement of social media engagement intentions is vital for public relations theory, given the increasingly significant role of social media in CSA. Third, the present research aims to investigate the direct impact of advocacy fit on attributions of CSA, which offers valuable insights into companies' possible choices in diverse sociopolitical issues. This inquiry extends the existing literature on advocacy fit with an attributional framework. Fourth, the social identity approach is fruitful in offering an insightful way to look into publics' socio-psychological mechanism in a highly identity-based context. Integrating the social identity approach into public relations provides an additional option to identify, interact, and engage publics, especially when specific social identities are activated.

Table 1

List of Hypotheses and Research Questions

H or RQ	Content
Hypothesis 1	Publics' positive attitudes toward a company are positively associated with their a) consumption, b) contribution, and c) creation intentions and negatively associated with d) dormancy, e) detachment, and f) destruction intentions.
Hypothesis 2	Compared with a low advocacy fit, a high advocacy fit in CSA is positively associated with perceived value-driven and strategic motives and negatively associated with perceived stakeholder-driven and egoistic motives, which, in turn, leads to more favorable attitudes toward the company.
Hypothesis 3	In the CSA-supported group, publics' stronger ingroup identification is positively associated with perceived value-driven motives, and negatively associated with perceived stakeholder-driven, egoistic, and strategic motives.
Hypothesis 4	In the non-CSA-supported group, publics' stronger ingroup identification is positively associated with perceived stakeholder-driven, egoistic, and strategic motives, and negatively associated with perceived value-driven motives.

H or RQ	Content
Hypothesis 5	Perceived motives of CSA will mediate the effects of advocacy fit and ingroup identification on attitudes toward a company.
Hypothesis 6	Publics' perceived values-driven motives underlying CSA are positively associated with their attitudes toward a company.
Hypothesis 7	Publics' perceived egoistic motives underlying CSA are negatively associated with their attitudes toward a company.
Hypothesis 8	Publics' perceived stakeholder-driven motives underlying CSA are negatively associated with their attitudes toward a company.
Research Question 1	How, if at all, are communication strategies (relational, elaborational, activational) adopted by companies' CSA messages on social media?
Research Question 2	How are communication strategies (relational, elaborational, and activational) in CSA associated with publics' social media engagement behaviors?
Research Question 3	How, if at all, do publics' group memberships (CSA-supported group vs. non-CSA-supported group) affect their responses to CSA?
Research Question 4	How, if at all, do publics' social identities affect their perceptions of the advocated sociopolitical issue (problem recognition, involvement recognition, referent criterion, situational motivation in problem solving, and issue stance) in a CSA context?
Research Question 5	How are publics' perceived strategic motives associated with their attitudes toward the company?

The conceptual model proposed in Study 2 is presented in Figure 1. This hypothesized model will be tested in both the CSA-supported and non-CSA-supported groups.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model in Study 2 across Groups
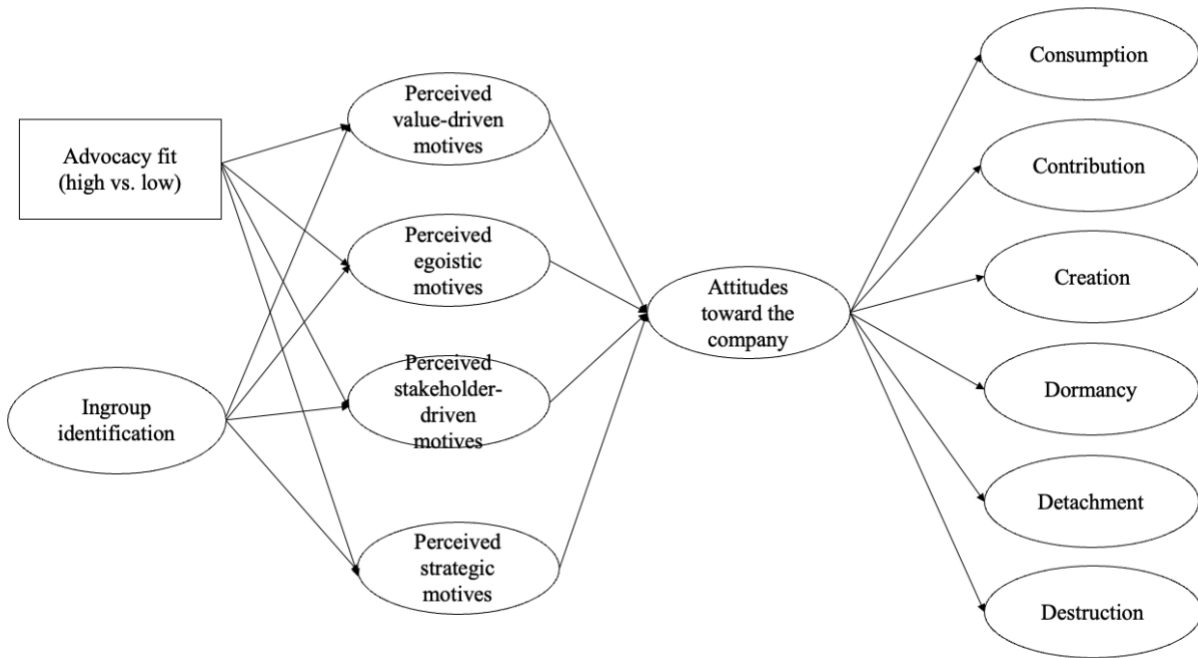
Note: This model will be tested in both the CSA-supported and non-CSA-supported groups.

The next chapter (Chapter 3) focuses on Study 1, a quantitative content analysis of companies' social media posts. Study 1 provides answers to how companies utilize diverse communication strategies in their CSA social media communication (Research Question 1). Also, Study 1 helps uncover the associations between communication strategies and social media engagement behaviors (Research Question 2)

Chapter 3: Study 1 – Content Analysis of CSA Messages on Social Media

This chapter provides details about Study 1, a quantitative content analysis, which explored existing communication strategies used by top companies on social media (i.e., Facebook and Twitter) and their effects on social media engagement behaviors. The findings of Study 1 answered the first and second research questions through descriptive statistics and a series of negative binominal regression models. This chapter describes the data collection, coding, data analysis, results, and limitations of Study 1. Prior literature has acknowledged the unique role of communication in CSA (Park, 2021; Waymer & Logan, 2021), yet limited has been the research about the commonly used communication strategies in CSA on social media. Extant studies from other areas, such as corporate sponsorship, brand extension, and CSR, have identified three communication strategies (relational vs. elaborational vs. activational) that build explanatory links between a company (or brand), its sponsored initiatives, and its targeted audience (e.g., Bridges et al., 2000; Poon & Prendergast, 2006; Sohn et al., 2012; Völckner & Sattler, 2006; Wang & Li, 2017; etc.). Thus, Study 1 applied these communication strategies and explored how companies have adopted them in communicating their advocacy efforts on Facebook and Twitter (RQ1). Moreover, Study 1 associated online publics' social media engagement behaviors with CSA communication strategies (relational vs. elaborational vs. activational) to provide insight into CSA communication effectiveness (RQ2). Hence, Study 1 enabled the investigation of publics' immediate, short-term reactions to CSA social media messages, which is called for by Park (2021).

In addition, evidence from Study 1 built a foundation for the following experiment (Study 2) with empirical knowledge of the connections between companies, sociopolitical issues, and publics in CSA social media communication. Finally, Study 1's findings also helped develop the stimuli for the following experiment, which enhanced the ecological validity of Study 2. Ecological validity deals with "the extent to which research findings would generalize to settings typical of everyday life" (Wegener & Blankenship, 2007, p. 2). According to Study 1's findings, the subsequent experimental design of Study 2 could reflect real-life CSA messages on social media.

3.1 Selection of Content Analysis

A content analysis was designed to serve two major goals in this dissertation. First, it offered an overview of how companies have advocated for diverse sociopolitical issues on their social media platforms. As pointed out by Reinard (2007), the main functions of content analysis are description and explanation, and to assist other research methods. Neuendorf (2017), using a social scientific and positivist paradigm, defined content analysis as "the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics" (p. 19). Content analysis has a long history in the communication discipline and has been applied in research on organizational messaging (Neuendorf, 2017). It can reveal "trends, patterns, and differences no longer obvious to the untrained individual" (Krippendorff, 1989, p. 404). Hence, content analysis is appropriate to uncover how CSA has been communicated. There has yet to be any systematic investigation of CSA communication strategies on social media. This dissertation filled this gap by conducting a quantitative content analysis on top companies' CSA messages on social media. Furthermore, content analysis is capable of studying the antecedents and effects of communication with theories and past research (Lacy et al., 2015; Neuendorf, 2017). Hence, Study 1 also linked CSA

communication strategies to publics' social media engagement behaviors to explore

communication effectiveness.

3.2 Message Units and Data Collection

Because content analysis is used to identify communication strategies at the message

level, the unit of data collection and the unit of analysis in Study 1 was a social media post, a

Facebook post or a Twitter post. This study focused on the United States because societal views

and legal regulations on sociopolitical views differ across cultures and countries (Nalick et al.,

2016).

3.2.1 Selection of Facebook and Twitter

Study 1 focused on Facebook and Twitter for several reasons. First, they are the most

popular social media platforms, with over 300 million Facebook users and 75 million Twitter

users in the United States in 2022 (Statista, 2022). Second, companies use Facebook and Twitter

to communicate their corporate ability or corporate social responsibility (Tao & Wilson, 2015).

From 2010 to 2015, public relations practitioners have frequently used Facebook and Twitter as

social networking, micro-blogging, and video sharing sites (Wright & Hinson, 2015). In the CSA

context, companies' advocacy efforts through social media can help companies achieve issue-

related reputation (Lim & Young, 2021) and engage online publics (Park & Jiang, 2020). Third,

both platforms are also widely used in social movements. Facebook and Twitter provide activist

organizations with alternative tools to achieve public attention and mobilize online resources

(Poell & van Dijck, 2015). They have many valuable features, including the topical hashtag

feature, to form an online community and distribute information. Twitter allows individuals to

establish group identities with hashtags and echo chambers (Ray et al., 2017). Facebook's

various interactive features also enable citizens to mobilize online social movements that moved

offline (Harlow, 2012). Given the popularity of Facebook and Twitter and their wide use in corporate communication and social movements, this dissertation focused on these two platforms to offer more insight into CSA social media communication.

3.2.2   *Selection of Companies: List of "World's Most Admired Companies"*

The 2020 Fortune Magazine's list of "World's Most Admired Companies" was used for data collection. The list is based on an industry survey responded by 3,820 executives, directors, and securities analysts (Fortune, 2020). The nine criteria used in rating companies included investment value, quality of management, products, social responsibility, and ability to attract talent (Fortune, 2020). This survey has been recognized as a measure of the company's status (Park et al., 2020) and has been used by communication scholars to explore CSR communication (Cho et al., 2017) and corporate reputation (Musteen et al., 2010; Beckers et al., 2018).

As aforementioned, only American companies were included in this content analysis because CSA is bound to cultural and national expectations. These identified companies' verified main accounts were used for consistency. One company (i.e., Berkshire Hathaway) does not have a Facebook account or Twitter account. Two companies, Apple and Costco, do not have any posts on their Twitter handles at the time of data collection. And, Merck does not have a Facebook account. In the end, 41 companies (40 Facebook Accounts, 39 Twitter Accounts) remained in the final list of data collection. Details about the selected companies, such as rank, industry, Twitter account, and Facebook Account, can be found in Appendix A.

3.2.3   *Selection of Issues and Keywords*

Sociopolitical issues are innumerable, and Study 1 narrowed down the scope of research by selecting five issues based on the existing literature and studies on CSA. Prior scholars (Austin et al., 2018; Browning et al., 2020; Dodd & Supa, 2014;2015; Eilert & Cherup, 2020;

Hong & Li, 2020; Nalick et al., 2016; Parcha & Westerman, 2020; Park & Jiang, 2020; Rim et

al., 2019) have frequently mentioned race relations, LGBTQ+ right, gun control, reproductive

rights, and refugee/immigration as issues addressed by CSA. All of these issues were included

for data collection. The list of keywords or keyword strings was developed with the assistance of

Cision Insights researchers. Cision Insights provides "earned media software and services to

public relations professionals" (Cision, 2019, N.A.). With their monitoring and analytics about

media management, Cision Insights researchers and the author worked together to assemble

keywords or keyword strings about selected sociopolitical issues. Also, the literature, previous

studies, and mass media news were used to add additional keywords or keyword strings. For

instance, previous content analysis studies on each topic were reviewed to identify the relevant

keywords or keywords strings. These keywords or keyword strings were also checked by several

experts in communication. Table 2 lists all the keywords.

Table 2

Keywords for Data Collection on Twitter and Facebook

Issue	Search Keywords
Race relation	racial, race, anti-racism, racist, racism, discrimination, criminal justice, black lives matter, blm, George Floyd, ethnic minority, ethnic, color-blind, color-blindness, ethnicity, black, African American, blacklivesmatter, equality
LGBTQ+ right	lgbt, lgbtq, lgbti, lgbt+, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, trans, queer, intersex, same-sex, homosexual, homosexuality, sexual orientation, homophobia, sexuality, gender identity, sexual diversity, sexual identity, sexual preference
Gun control	gun, gun-control, second amendment, 2nd amendment, assault weapon, FFL, Federal firearms license, Firearm Owners Protection Act, NRA, National Rifle Association, March for Our Lives, Gunowners of America, GOC, automatic weapon, Semiautomatic weapon, Brady Law, NICS, National Instant Criminal Background Check System, gun show loophole, strawman purchase, mass shooting(s)
Reproductive rights	abortion, reproductive, contraception, unintended pregnancy, unwanted pregnancy

Issue	Search Keywords
Immigration, refugees	refugee(s), migrant(s), immigrant(s), asylum-seeker(s), immigrate, immigrated, immigrating, asylum

3.2.4 Data Collection

Regarding collecting data from Twitter, the function of "Twitter Advanced Search" was used because it allows tailoring "search results to specific date ranges, people and more" (Twitter, n.d.). First, companies' Twitter account names, keywords, and the time frame were entered on the Twitter Advanced Search page. Then, a list of tweets was produced. Next, the URL link for each tweet were collected manually. To collect data from Facebook, the CrowdTangle platform was used to collect posts from identified companies' public accounts. CrowdTangle is a tool offered by Facebook to collect data from public content on social media (Bleakley, 2020). First, companies' Facebook account names, keywords, and the time frame were entered on the CrowdTangle platform. Then, an excel spreadsheet was generated, which included basic information for each post, such as the created timestamp, numbers of *total interactions*, *Likes*, *Shares*, *Comments*, *Love*, *Wow*, *Haha*, *Sad*, *Angry*, and *Care*, message text, the embedded links, and so on.

Data were collected between January 1st, 2020, to December 31st, 2020. A full year was covered because some issues are more prominent in certain months. For instance, the LGBTQ+ community celebrates Pride Month in June every year. Also, this timeframe captures the George Floyd protests, a significant part of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in 2020. As a result, 271 Facebook posts and 629 tweets were collected, and then a further manual screening was performed in the coding process to verify the relevance. The step of manual screening was necessary because some general keywords, such as "black" or "equality", also referred to non-CSA message content as well. For instance, posts related to global economic equality and

poverty were not directly related to Study 1's research focus. Sixty-seven Facebook posts and eighty-six tweets were excluded because they were not related to the company's stance on any studied sociopolitical issues.

3.3   Coding Scheme

Developing a solid coding scheme meant creating a set of measures in a codebook that matched the conceptual definitions (Neuendorf, 2017). Two primary goals in developing the coding scheme were 1) to ensure categories are exhaustive and mutually exclusive and 2) to use "an appropriate level of measurement" (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 191). First, after filtering the relevance of social media posts, the background information was coded, including company name, industry, account name, number of followers, and the advocated social issue(s). Then, the main variables (relational, elaborational, and activational communication strategies) were coded based on existing literature, and additional categories were added inductively after reviewing social media posts about CSA. The details can be found in the coding scheme attached as Appendix B.

Relational, elaborational, and activational communication strategies were coded as separate variables because one social media post likely utilized two or three communication strategies. As suggested by Neuendorf (2017), creating separate variables is more appropriate to deal with this situation. But to compare the use and effects of these communication strategies directly, a variable named "combined communication strategy" was created in the data analysis stage.

Relational Communication Strategy. A relational communication strategy was coded as present if the post focused on "both the positive traits/attributes of the sponsoring firm as well as its connectedness to the CSR activity" (Sohn et al., 2012, p. 137). In the context of CSA, a

relational communication strategy underscores the connection(s) between a company's traits or attributes and the advocated sociopolitical issue(s). Adapted from Wang and Li's (2017) study on native advertising, two main aspects were coded regarding the connectedness between the company and the endorsed issue, namely image-based association and function-based association. An image-based association is related to "semantic associations pertinent to cultural and social meaning" (Wang & Li, 2017, p.921). This concept is highly relevant to image-based fit studies in the CSR context, which means "a symbolic link between social cause and brand" (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2012, p. 579). For example, Procter & Gamble advocated for LGBTQI people because workplace equality is one of their fundamental values. A function-based association highlights a semantic association between an issue's characteristics or intentions and a company's services, products, functions, uses, or the main business activity (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2012; Wang & Li, 2017). Poon and Prendergast (2006) included situations in which a company's product or service is used to facilitate the event. A function-based association was linked to corporate expertise (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2012). For example, Netflix introduced more Black-related shows and movies on their Facebook to enhance the representation of the Black community. Additionally, function-based and image-based associations can coexist, according to Poon and Prendergast (2006).

To summarize, a relational communication strategy was coded as (1) image-based association; (2) function-based association; (3) both; (4) absence.

Elaborational Communication Strategy. An elaborational communication strategy in CSR means the communication focus is on the CSR activity (Sohn et al., 2012). Wang and Li (2017) coded this variable based on the presence/absence of in-text placement of the sponsor for the native advertising. In an elaborational communication strategy, the connection between the

sponsor and the topic is not explained explicitly (Wang & Li, 2017). Sohn et al. (2012) manipulated an elaborational communication strategy by underscoring the characteristics of the CSR activity. Based on prior studies, an elaborational communication strategy was coded as present when the post mainly focused on CSA itself. In other words, the post offered specific information about the sociopolitical issue (e.g., history, events, people, attributes, etc.) without emphasizing the endorsing company's traits or characteristics. Otherwise, it was coded as absent.

Activational Communication Strategy. An activational communication strategy is defined as "communications that promote the engagement, involvement, or participation of the sponsorship audience with the sponsor" (Weeks et al., 2008, p. 639). The categories were initially developed deductively based on the literature and then were revised to adapt to the studied context. Wang and Li (2017) searched for how-to advice as to the presence of an activational communication strategy in native advertising. In this content analysis, an activational strategy was coded as (1) absence; (2) offering information for virtual events (e.g., time, a link for participation); (3) offering information for offline events (e.g., time, location); (4) offering information for donation (e.g., link); (5) offering information for a petition (e.g., link); (6) offering information for volunteering (e.g., link); (7) offering information for social media actions (e.g., share, retweet, read, watch, or learn more), and (8) other. Each coder needed to offer a concise description if they chose "other."

Social Media Engagement. *Likes*, *Shares*, *Comments*, *total interactions*, and a variety of reactions on Facebook, and *Likes*, *Retweets*, *Quoted Retweets* on Twitter were used to measure publics' social media engagement behaviors based on prior studies (Choi et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2014; Kim & Yang, 2017) and new technological changes. Kim and Yang (2017) proposed to measure social media behaviors using *like* as affectively aroused and the lowest level of

engagement; *comment* as cognitively aroused and the intermediate level of; *share* as the highest level of engagement behavior and could be affective or cognitive or a combination of both. In 2016, five new single-click response features named "reactions" were added by Facebook, which include a heart symbolic icon, a laughing face, a surprised face, a sad face, and an angry face (Spottswood & Wohn, 2019). Furthermore, during the COVID19 pandemic, Facebook launched a new *Care* reaction feature for user to express their support. These new emotionally expressive paralinguistic digital affordances (PDAs) are useful tools for people to respond to negative posts made by weak ties (Spottswood & Wohn, 2019). Thus, the numbers of *total interactions*, *Likes*, *Shares*, *Comments*, *Love*, *Wow*, *Haha*, *Sad*, *Angry*, and *Care* were collected for each Facebook post. In addition, the numbers of *Likes*, *Retweets*, and *Quoted Retweets* were gathered for each tweet.

3.4   Training, Coding, and Intercoder Reliability

The author and the other invited coder participated in a coding training process to learn the coding scheme (i.e., codebook). After the initial coding scheme was developed, the author trained the other coder by explaining the codebook thoroughly with examples. Then, two coders independently coded 20 social media posts (separate from the final sample), compared and discussed the coding results, and revised the codebook. The data for the coder training came from the studied companies' Facebook posts and Tweets posted before January 1st, 2020. This process was repeated multiple rounds in the training process. From April 9th to May 4th, 2021, the codebook was repeatedly revised during the training phase until a consensus between two coders was built. Then, a pilot reliability assessment was conducted after the coder training session. According to Neuendorf (2017), at least 10% of the full sample should be used as a reliability subsample. Thus, 50 Facebook posts and 50 tweets were used to calculate the pilot

reliability, which can be found in Table 3. After that, no further revisions were made to the codebook.

The next step was that the two coders coded the full sample size independently. Qualtrics was used as the coding form. Final intercoder reliabilities (simple agreement, Krippendorff's alpha, and AC_1) for the two trained coders are reported in Table 3. Krippendorff's alpha was calculated to measure the intercoder reliability in this study for the reason that it can "handle multiple coders, nominal, ordinal, interval, ratio, and other metrics, missing data, and small sample sizes" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 428). The final value should be larger than .80 for variables to be considered, as suggested by Krippendorff (2004). Results showed that the simple percent agreement ranged from 91.67% to 96.70%, and Krippendorff's alpha ranged from .82 to .94, which exceeded the suggested cutoff points. Although Krippendorff's alpha has been perceived as "the most versatile of the commonly used coefficient" (Lacy et al., 2015, p. 805), Lacy et al. (2015) also suggested reporting Gwet's AC1 when data have a high simple agreement but low alpha. Thus, AC_1 values are reported in Table 3, which exceeded .80. Thus, intercoder reliability was established. The disagreed coding results were resolved through a discussion between two coders.

Table 3

Intercoder Reliabilities in Study 1

Variable	Pilot Reliability						Final Reliability					
	Facebook (*N* =50)			Twitter (*N* = 50)			Facebook (*N* = 204)			Twitter (*N* = 543)		
	%	Krippendorff's Alpha	AC_1	%	Krippendorff's Alpha	AC_1	%	Krippendorff's Alpha	AC_1	%	Krippendorff's Alpha	AC_1
R	92	.81	.90	94%	.86	.92	95.59	.92	.95	95.58	.91	.95
E	94	.83	.90	92%	.82	.86	91.67	.82	.85	94.48	.88	.90
A	90	.84	.88	92%	.88	.91	94.1	.90	.93	96.70	.94	.96

Note: Given the space limit, the abbreviations for variable names were used.

R = relational communication strategy, E = elaborational communication strategy, A = activational communication strategy.
% refers to simple agreement, AC_1 refers to Gwet's AC_1.

3.5   Study 1: Content Analysis Results

This section details the data analysis results for Study 1. First, the distributions of

advocated sociopolitical issues were reported to offer background information. Second, the

descriptive statistics of communication strategies (relational, elaborational, activational, and

combined) were presented to answer the first research question. Third, a series of negative

binominal regression models were implemented to examined the associations between

communication strategies and social media engagement behaviors, which answered the second

research question.

3.5.1   *Distributions of Advocated Issues in CSA on Social Media*

According to Table 4 and Table 5, the issue of race relation was mentioned the most on

both Facebook ($N_{Facebook}$ = 130, 63.73%) and Twitter ($N_{Twitter}$ = 381, 70.17%), followed by

LGBTQ+ rights ($N_{Facebook}$ = 63, 30.88%; $N_{Twitter}$ = 139, 25.60%). In addition, issues advocated by

companies on social media are sometimes intertwined with each other. Among these posts, 30

mentioned both LGBTQ+ rights and race relations ($N_{Facebook}$ = 10, $N_{Twitter}$ = 20).

Table 4

Distribution of Social Issues on Facebook (N = 204)

Advocated Issue	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
LGBTQ+ Rights	63	30.88	30.88
Race Relations	130	63.73	94.60
Immigration/Refugee	1	0.49	95.10
More than one issue	10	4.90	100.0
Total	204	100.0	

Table 5

Distribution of Social Issues on Twitter (N = 543)

Advocated Issue	Frequency	Percent%	Cumulative Percent%
LGBTQ+ Rights	139	25.60	25.60

Race Relations	381	70.17	95.76
Immigration/Refugee	3	0.55	96.32
More than one issue	20	3.68	100.0
Total	543	100.0	

3.5.2 RQ1: Distributions of CSA Communication Strategies on Social Media

The first research question asks how companies have employed various communication strategies (relational vs. elaborational vs. activational) in their CSA messages on social media. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, and cumulative percentage) were used to offer an overview of CSA communication strategies on Facebook and Twitter. In addition, a new variable "combined communication strategy" was created to provide additional insight into the comparative usage of communication strategies.

Relational Communication Strategy. More than half of the studied companies did not utilize relational communication strategies on Facebook or Twitter (See Table 6 and Table 7). Next, 26.96% of Facebook posts ($N_{Facebook}$ = 55) and 23.94% of tweets ($N_{Twitter}$ = 130) deployed function-based associations, highlighting the connections between their core business, such as products and services expertise, or industry features, and advocated sociopolitical issues. Then, a few companies tried to link their supported issues with their images, such as corporate missions, values, histories, or cultures on Facebook ($N_{Facebook}$ = 21, 10.29%) and Twitter ($N_{Twitter}$ = 47, 8.66%). Finally, several posts discussed both function-based and image-based associations in the meantime ($N_{Facebook}$ = 6, 3%; $N_{Twitter}$ = 3, 0.55%).

Table 6

Distributions of Relational Communication Strategy on Facebook (N = 204)

Relational	Frequency	Percent%	Cumulative Percent%
Image-based	21	10.29	10.29
Function-based	55	26.96	37.25
Both	6	2.94	40.20

Relational	Frequency	Percent%	Cumulative Percent%
Absence	122	59.80	100.0
Total	204	100.0	

Table 7

Distributions of Relational Communication Strategy on Twitter (N = 543)

Relational	Frequency	Percent%	Cumulative Percent%
Image-based	47	8.66	8.66
Function-based	130	23.94	32.60
Both	3	0.55	33.11
Absence	363	66.85	100.0
Total	543	100.0	

Elaborational Communication Strategy. More than half of the studied companies'

Facebook posts (61.27%, $N_{Facebook}$ = 125) and tweets (64.09%, $N_{Twitter}$ = 348) utilized

elaborational communication strategies to advocate sociopolitical issues (See Table 8 and Table

9). These posts highlighted the social issue itself without making the explicit connections

between the social issue and the company.

Table 8

Distributions of Elaborational Communication Strategy on Facebook (N = 204)

Elaborational	Frequency	Percent%	Cumulative Percent%
Presence	125	61.27	61.27
Absence	79	38.73	100.0
Total	204	100.0	

Table 9

Distributions of Relational Communication Strategy on Twitter (N = 543)

Elaborational	Frequency	Percent%	Cumulative Percent%
Presence	348	64.09	64.09
Absence	195	35.91	100.0
Total	543	100.0	

Activational Communication Strategy. The studied companies did not widely used activational communication strategies on social media. In total, 46.08% ($N_{Facebook}$ = 94) Facebook posts and 59.30% ($N_{Twitter}$ = 322) did not involve or engage publics. When these companies tried to interact with their publics, they adopted the basic strategy of asking publics to take a variety of passive and general social media actions such as *read*, *learn more*, *discover*, or *watch* ($N_{Facebook}$ = 80, 39.22%; $N_{Twitter}$ = 156, 28.73%). A few Facebook posts ($N_{Facebook}$ = 23, 11.27%) and tweets ($N_{Twitter}$ = 40, 7.37 %) offered information for publics to attend virtual events.

Table 10

Distributions of Activational Communication Strategy on Facebook (N = 204)

Activational	Frequency	Percent%	Cumulative Percent%
Absence	94	46.08	46.08
Virtual events	23	11.27	57.35
Offline event	1	0.49	57.84
Donation	2	0.98	58.33
Social media actions	80	39.22	97.55
Other	4	1.96	100
Total	204	100	

Table 11

Distributions of Activational Communication Strategy on Twitter (N = 543)

Activational	Frequency	Percent%	Cumulative Percent%
Absence	322	59.30	59.30
Virtual events	40	7.37	66.67
Donation	3	0.55	67.22
Offline events	3	0.55	67.77
Social media actions	156	28.73	96.50
Other	19	3.50	100
Total	543	100	

Combined communication strategy. To offer an overview picture of how the companies in this study spontaneously used different communication strategies in social media posts, a variable named "combined communication strategy" was created for Facebook and Twitter. According to Table 12 and Table 13, only a few Facebook posts (1.47%, $N = 3$) and tweets did not use any communication strategy (4.05%, $N = 22$). The most commonly used communication strategy on Facebook was elaborational + activational (30.39%, $N = 62$), followed by elaborational (26.47%, $N = 54$). The most commonly used communication strategy on Twitter was elaborational (37.38%, $N = 203$), followed by elaborational + activational (23.57%, $N = 128$). An interesting observation was that an activational communication strategy was often used along with the other two types of communication strategies. Only using an activational communication strategy solely was very rare on Facebook (1.47%, $N = 3$) and Twitter (1.84%, $N = 10$).

Table 12

Distribution of Combined Communication Strategy on Facebook (N = 204)

Communication Strategy	Frequency	Percent %	Cumulative Percent%
Absence	3	1.47	1.47
Relational	33	16.18	17.65
Elaborational	54	26.47	44.12
Activational	3	1.47	45.59
Relational + Elaborational	4	1.96	47.55
Relational + Activational	40	19.61	67.16
Elaborational + Activational	62	30.39	97.55
Relational + Elaborational + Activational	5	2.45	100
Total	204	100	

Table 13

Distribution of Combined Communication Strategy on Twitter (N = 543)

Communication Strategy	Frequency	Percent %	Cumulative Percent%
Absence	22	4.05	4.05
Relational	88	16.21	20.26
Elaborational	202	37.38	57.64
Activational	10	1.84	59.48
Relational + Elaborational	10	1.84	61.32
Relational + Activational	75	13.81	75.13
Elaborational + Activational	128	23.57	98.60
Relational + Elaborational + Activational	8	1.47	100
Total	543	100	

3.5.3   RQ2: Effects of CSA Communications Strategies on Social Media Engagement

The second research question asked about the effects of communication strategies on social media engagement behaviors. To answer this question, first, the distributions of dependent variables (minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation) were examined (see Table 14). All dependent variables, the numbers of social media engagement behaviors, were discrete and non-negative count data. The observations were independent. Moreover, no missing data were presented.

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics for Social Media Engagement in Study 1

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Facebook (N = 204)				
Total Interactions	4	102092	3562.71	10681.83
Likes	4	59146	1709.04	5638.63
Shares	0	14105	393.88	1362.55
Comments	0	14514	672.45	1878.47
Love	0	14923	543.30	1897.34
Wow	0	405	11.76	44.55
Haha	0	4482	100.98	443.87

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sad	0	442	10.74	42.92
Angry	0	1034	35.44	119.42
Care	0	2384	85.13	303.49
Twitter (*N* = 543)				
Like	0	1,000,000	4242.80	51,761.83
Retweets	0	206,200	947.76	10,726.97
Quoted Retweets	0	9826	123.45	768.97

Facebook Data Analysis. To select the most appropriate data analysis method, the conditional distributions of dependent variables were checked, given the values of the independent variables in the models, as suggested by Fox (2015). Ten dependent variables were entered in separate models, including total interactions, likes, shares, comments, love, wow, haha, sad, angry, and care. Observed variances for all dependent variables were much larger than their observed means. After fitting a series of Poisson regressions models, it was found that the ratios of residual deviances to *df* (degree of freedom) were much larger than 1 (as a rule of thumb, see Dormann, 2016). The follow-up overdispersion tests were performed using R statistical software, revealing substantial overdispersion. Furthermore, there were excessive 0s in the distributions of wow (48.04%, *N* = 98), haha (30.88%, *N* = 63), sad (51.47%, *N* = 105), angry (40.20%, *N* = 82), and care (28.43%, *N* = 58). As Warton (2005) suggested, a lot of observed 0s do not mean zero inflation. Both negative binomial and zero-inflated models were fitted for wow, haha, sad, angry, and care, and compared their AICs and BICs. The negative binomial models showed consistent better model fits, as showed by smaller AICs and BICs. Furthermore, the zero-inflation and outlier tests were conducted using the R software package "DHARMs," which is a simulation-based approach. The "testZeroInflation" function compared "the observed number of zeros with the zeros expected from simulations" (Hartig, 2020, p. 50). The tests indicated no existence of zero-inflations in all the dependent variables as the ratioObsSim values

were smaller than 1 with non-significant *p*-values[1]. Forty outlier tests using the "testOutliers"

revealed that the outliers ranged from 1 to 6 across all models, and only four tests were

significant[2]. A further investigation of the outliers excluded the possibilities of measurement

errors or data entry errors. Hence, they were kept in the final data analyses. As a result, negative

binomial models with 204 observations were conducted after controlling for the number of

followers and issue type. The number of followers and issue type were used as control variables

in the models due to their impacts on the outcomes (Araujo & Kollat, 2018; Lim & Young,

2021).

Before detailing the parameter estimates in each model, model comparisons were

conducted between negative binominal models with and without focal predictors. This step

offered insight into the values of relational, elaborational, activational, and combined

communication strategies in arousing various Facebook engagement actions. Table 15 reported

the 2*log-likelihood (2LL), Akaike information criteria (AIC), and Bayesian information criteria

(BIC). It showed that the inclusion of relational or elaborational communication strategies in

models occasionally improved model fit. However, the other two predictors, activational and

combined communication strategies, clearly generated a better model fit based on likelihood

ratio tests, AICs, and BICs.

Next, the parameter estimates of the proposed negative binomial regression models are

reported in Table 16, Table 17, Table 18, and Table 19. The small number using both

associations in a relational communication strategy (*N* = 6, 2.94%) caused abnormal standard

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[1] For example, when independent variable was the relational communication strategy, the zero inflation tests results were: 1) wow: ratioObsSim = 0.96071, *p*-value = 0.568; 2) haha: ratioObsSim = 0.84586, *p*-value = 0.152; 3) sad: ratioObsSim = 0.94547, *p*-value = 0.48; 4) angry: ratioObsSim = 0.97656, *p*-value = 0.872; 5) care: ratioObsSim = 0.86186, *p*-value = 0.176.

[2] 1) Total interactions on combined: outliers at both margin(s) = 5, p-value < .05. 2) likes on activational: outliers at both margin(s) = 5, p-value < .001. 3) love on activational: outliers at both margin(s) = 5, p-value < .001. 4) 3) love on combined: outliers at both margin(s) = 6, p-value < .001.

errors and model convergence issues, so these posts were recoded to either function-based or image-based, depending on the message focus. First, consistent with the model fit indices, the relational communication strategy, either function-based or image-based, was mostly not significantly associated with Facebook engagement behaviors. But, function-based associations in CSA Facebook posts led to significantly more haha, than the absence of relational communication (B = .99, SE = .38, IRR = 2.69, p = .01). IRR refers to the incidence-rate ratio, which is the estimated rate ratio for one unit change in the independent variable when controlling for the other variables. Second, CSA Facebook posts with, rather than without, an elaborational communication strategy significantly decreased the number of haha (B = -0.80, SE = .35, IRR = 0.45, p = .02).

Third, diverse activation communication strategies showed negative relations with online publics' engagement behaviors with CSA posts on Facebook. Two types of activational communication strategies (offline events and petition) were combined with "Others", given their small numbers. Results of ten negative binomial regression models showed that compared with the absence of an activational communication strategy, offering information for virtual events was associated with lower numbers of total interactions, likes, shares, comments, love, wow, haha, sad, angry, and care. Moreover, when companies called for people's social media actions, such as Read, Watch, Learn more, See, Discover, or others, the numbers of total interactions (B = -0.71, SE = .24, IRR = 0.49, p = .001), likes (B = -0.75, SE = .23, IRR = 0.47, p = .01), shares (B = -1.26, SE = .26, IRR = 0.29, p = .001), love (B = -0.95, SE = .27, IRR = 0.39, p < .001), and care (B = -1.15, SE = .34, IRR = 0.32, p < .001) were lower than those without any type of activational communication strategies.

Fourth, the created variable "combined communication strategies" was used to compare the effects of diverse communication strategies. Based on the counts of each category, "activational" and "absence" were combined, and "relational + elaborational + activational" and relational + elaborational" were merged. The data analysis results suggested the inclusion of proposed effects of combined communication strategies significantly improved the model fit. Specifically, the use of an elaborational communication strategy increased more haha ($B = 1.15$, $SE = .51$, $IRR = 3.16$, $p = .02$) and sad ($B = 1.52$, $SE = .54$, $IRR = 4.59$, $p = .005$), than a relational communication strategy. However, a relational communication strategy showed more effectiveness in generating total interactions, likes, comments, shares, love, and care, than combined elaborational and activational communication strategies. Also, the results of this study demonstrated that adding the activational component to a relational communication strategy was less effective than only a relational communication strategy with regard to the numbers of likes, shares, love, wow, and care.

Table 15

Model Comparison Based on In-Sample Goodness-of-Fit (Facebook, N = 204)

DV		Base Model	Base Model + Relational	Base Model + Elaborational	Base Model + Activational	Base Model + Combined
Total Interactions	2LL	-3461.90	-3461.04	-3461.37	-3408.16***	-3433.68***
	AIC	3469.90	3473.04	3471.37	3422.16	3451.67
	BIC	3483.17	3492.95	3487.96	3445.39	3481.54
Likes	2LL	-3191.01	-3190.63	-3190.70	-3136.71***	-3163.49***
	AIC	3199.02	3202.63	3200.70	3150.70	3181.49
	BIC	3212.29	3222.54	3217.29	3173.93	3211.36
Comments	2LL	-2602.66	-2594.49*	-2602.31	-2563.61***	-2587.45**
	AIC	2610.66	2606.49	2612.32	2577.62	2605.45
	BIC	2623.93	2626.40	2628.91	2600.84	2635.31
Shares	2LL	-2475.41	-2472.59	-2472.52	-2421.52***	-2426.12***
	AIC	2483.41	2484.59	2482.52	2435.52	2444.12
	BIC	2496.69	2504.50	2499.12	2458.75	2473.98
Love	2LL	-2564.89	-2564.84	-2564.81	-2513.29***	-2533.09***
	AIC	2572.89	2576.84	2574.81	2527.29	2551.09
	BIC	2586.17	2596.74	2591.40	2550.52	2580.95
Wow	2LL	-1000.21	-997.50	-997.43	-975.50***	-980.11**
	AIC	1008.21	1009.50	1007.43	989.50	998.11
	BIC	1021.48	1029.41	1024.02	1012.73	1027.98
Haha	2LL	-1535.40	-1528.87*	-1530.83*	-1504.03***	-1507.91***
	AIC	1543.40	1540.87	1540.82	1518.03	1525.91
	BIC	1556.68	1560.78	1557.42	1541.26	1555.77
Sad	2LL	-950.28	-949.91	-950.05	-913.52***	-920.41***
	AIC	958.28	961.91	960.05	946.79	938.41
	BIC	971.56	981.82	976.65	970.01	968.27
Angry	2LL	-1349.55	-1349.27	-1348.90	-1320.00***	-1339.52
	AIC	1357.55	1361.27	1358.90	1334.00	1357.52
	BIC	1370.82	1381.18	1375.49	1357.23	1387.38

DV		Base Model	Base Model + Relational	Base Model + Elaborational	Base Model + Activational	Base Model + Combined
	2LL	-1675.56	-1675.17	-1675.49	-1637.97***	-1650.55***
Care	AIC	1683.56	1687.17	1683.56	1683.56	1668.55
	BIC	1696.84	1707.08	1702.08	1675.19	1698.41

Note: *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Table 16

Effects of Communication Strategies on Facebook Engagement Part I (N = 204)

	Total Interactions			Likes			Comments			Shares			Love		
	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR
Relational communication strategy (Reference group: Absence)															
Function	0.04	.27	1.04	0.05	.26	1.05	-0.46	.31	0.63	.49	.30	1.64	0.02	.31	1.02
Image	0.35	.39	1.41	0.23	.38	1.26	-0.83	.45	2.28	.12	.43	1.13	0.11	.45	1.11
Elaborational communication strategy (Reference group: Absence)															
Presence	-1.08	.24	0.84	-0.13	.24	0.88	-0.17	.28	0.85	-0.46	.27	0.63	-0.08	.28	0.92
Activation communication strategy (Reference group: Absence)															
Virtual events	-3.40***	.37	0.03	-3.31***	.36	0.04	-3.31***	.44	0.04	-3.29***	.41	0.04	-3.79***	.42	0.02
Social media actions	-0.71**	.24	0.49	-0.75**	.23	0.47	-0.35	.28	0.71	-1.26***	.26	0.29	-0.95***	.27	0.39

Note: *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Table 17

Effects of Communication Strategies on Facebook Engagement Part II (N = 204)

	Wow			Haha			Sad			Angry			Care		
	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR
Relational communication strategy (Reference group: Absence)															
Function	0.68	.38	1.97	0.99**	.38	2.69	-0.17	.43	0.85	0.07	.39	1.07	-0.22	.38	0.80
Image	0.25	.55	1.28	-0.03	.56	0.97	-0.37	.62	0.69	0.29	.56	1.33	0.05	.55	1.05
Elaborational communication strategy (Reference group: Absence)															
Presence	-0.63	.34	0.54	-0.80*	.35	0.45	0.21	.39	1.23	-0.30	.35	0.74	0.09	.34	1.10
Activation communication strategy (Reference group: Absence)															
Virtual events	-3.56***	.76	0.03	-3.39***	.58	0.03	-2.84***	.65	0.06	-3.22***	.59	0.04	-4.01***	.54	0.02
Social media actions	0.33	.34	1.39	0.50	.35	1.64	-0.49	.39	0.62	0.36	.35	1.43	-1.15***	.34	0.32

Note: *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Table 18

Effects of Combined Communication Strategies on Facebook Engagement Part I (N = 204)

	Total Interactions			Likes			Comments			Shares			Love		
	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR
Elaborational	.60	.36	1.06	0.02	.35	1.02	.38	.42	1.46	-0.34	.38	0.71	0.05	.40	1.05
Activational Or Absence	-1.72*	.72	0.18	-1.83**	.70	0.16	-0.72	.85	0.49	-2.51**	.77	0.08	-2.57**	.82	0.08
Relational + Elaborational Or + Activational	-1.70**	.61	0.18	-1.61**	.59	0.20	-1.20	.72	0.30	-2.61***	.65	0.07	-2.08**	.69	0.12
Relational + Activational	-0.72	.39	0.49	-0.88*	.37	0.42	-0.06	.46	0.94	-1.40***	.41	0.25	-1.09*	.44	0.34
Elaborational + Activational	-1.34***	.36	0.26	-1.23***	.35	0.29	-1.04*	.43	0.35	-2.17***	.39	0.11	-1.53***	.41	0.22

Note: Reference group: presence of a relational communication strategy; *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Table 19

Effects of Combined Communication Strategies on Facebook Engagement Part II (N = 204)

	Wow			Haha			Sad			Angry			Care		
	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR
Elaborational	.69	.49	1.98	1.15 *	.51	3.16	1.52 **	.54	4.59	0.88	.53	2.40	0.12	.50	1.12
Activational or Absence	-0.92	1.00	0.40	-1.53	1.04	0.22	-0.77	1.11	0.46	0.25	1.06	1.28	-2.60 *	1.01	0.07
Relational + Elaborational Or + Activational	-0.88	.86	0.42	-0.85	.87	0.43	-0.69	.93	0.50	-1.09	.90	0.34	-2.38 **	.86	0.09
Relational + Activational	-1.13 *	.53	3.09	1.63 **	.55	5.08	1.27 *	.58	3.56	1.01	.57	2.74	-1.42 **	.54	0.24
Elaborational + Activational	-0.85	.50	0.43	-0.62	.51	0.54	-0.94	.55	0.39	-0.20	.53	0.82	-1.45 **	.51	0.23

Note: Reference group: presence of a relational communication strategy; *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Twitter Data Analysis. The same steps were taken to analyze Twitter data. The first step was to investigate the distributions of dependent variables (see Table 14). Observed variances for likes, tweets, and quoted retweets were much larger than their observed means. Then, the results of a series of Poisson regression models revealed that the ratios of residual deviances to *df* (degree of freedom) were much larger than 1. The follow-up overdispersion tests were performed using R statistical software, indicating substantial overdispersion. In addition, there were excessive 0s in the quoted retweets ($N = 139$), and the non-zero data showed overdispersion ($p > .05$). The negative binomial models showed better model fits than zero-inflated negative binomial models., as showed by smaller AICs and BICs. Also, tests for zero-inflation in R (i.e., testZeroInflation) were conducted to compare the observed number of zeros with the zeros expected from the simulation. The values for ratiosObsSim were significantly smaller than 1 for all models, meaning the zero-inflation was not present[3]. Second, the fixed-effect models were conducted to control for omitted variable bias because the unobserved (omitted) variables are allowed to be associated with the observed variable (Allison, 2009). Therefore, a series of negative binomial regression analyses were conducted to examine the effects of communication strategies on likes, tweets, and quoted retweets after controlling for the number of followers and issue type. After fitting models, the outlier tests were conducted to check for the most extreme observations. These tests revealed a few outliers ($N = 6$ to 13), with extremely higher scores in the response variables. Given the data collection process of a content analysis study, the outlying observations were kept because they were not caused by measurement errors or data entry errors.

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[3] Twitter zero-inflation tests for the number of quoted retweets: 1) relational: ratioObsSim = 0.03, $p < .001$; 2) elaborational: ratioObsSim = 0.10, $p < .001$; 3) activational: ratioObsSim = 0.69, $p < .001$; 4) combined: ratioObsSim = 0.69, $p < .001$.

Before reporting the details of parameter estimates, the fit statistics for negative binominal models with and without predictors were compared to determine the importance of relational, elaborational, activational, and combined communication strategies on the numbers of likes, tweets, and quoted retweets. Table 20 reported the 2*log-likelihood (2LL), Akaike Information criteria (AIC), and Bayesian information criteria (BIC). A series of likelihood ratio tests were conducted to compare models with and without proposed predictors. Results showed that the former models outperformed the later ones ($p < .001$). In other words, the proposed effects of diverse communication strategies significantly improved the model fit.

Next, Table 21 and Table 22 presented the parameter estimates of the proposed negative binomial regression models. Regarding the effects of a relational communication strategy on the numbers of likes, tweets, and quoted retweets, after controlling for the number of followers and issue type, the absence of a relational communication strategy was used as the reference group. Similar to the above data analysis of Facebook data, the small number of using both associations in a relational communication strategy ($N = 3$, 0.55%) caused abnormal standard errors and model convergence issues, so these posts were recoded to either function-based association or image-based association, depending on the message focus. Results showed that both image-based and function-based associations in CSA-related tweets led to more likes, tweets, and quoted retweets compared with the absence of relational communication strategies (See Table 21). For instance, a function-based association in a relational communication strategy was significantly associated with a 73% increase in *Likes* ($B = 0.55$, $SE = .18$, $IRR = 1.73$, $p = .003$) than the absence of a relational communication strategy in a CSA tweet.

Last, to directly compare how different communication strategies affected social media engagement behaviors on Twitter, the numbers of likes, tweets, and quoted retweets were

regressed on the created variable "combined communication strategy" in three separate ways

negative binomial regression models. The reference group was the presence of a relational

communication strategy. Results revealed that a relational communication strategy was

significantly more effective in generating higher likes and tweets than elaborational, activational,

or other combined communication strategies. Furthermore, compared with a relational

communication strategy, the activational (B = -2.44, SE = .77, IRR = 0.09, p = .002), and

elaborational + activational (B = -1.36, SE = .32, IRR = 0.26, p < .001) were significantly

associated with fewer quoted retweets. The relational communication strategy, either function-

based or image-based, showed its effectiveness in facilitating more social media engagement on

Twitter.

Table 20

Model Comparison Based on In-Sample Goodness-of-Fit (Twitter, N = 543)

DV		Base Model	Base Model + Relational	Base Model + Elaborational	Base Model + Activational	Base Model + Combined
	2LL	-7353.53	-7328.18***	-7335.78***	-5706.39***	7297.6630***
Likes	AIC	7361.53	7340.18	7345.78	7345.78	7319.66
	BIC	7378.72	7365.97	7367.27	7367.27	7366.93
	2LL	-5741.13	-5685.55***	-5642.80***	-5715.35***	-5653.52***
Retweets	AIC	5749.13	5699.55	5652.81	5725.35	5675.52
	BIC	5766.32	5729.63	5674.29	5725.35	5675.52
	2LL	-3899.32	-3886.08**	-3826.39***	-3890.20**	-3866.12***
Quoted Retweets	AIC	3907.32	3898.08	3829.93	3900.20	3921.69
	BIC	3924.51	3923.86	3851.42	3888.12	3935.39

*Note: *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001*

Table 21

Effects of Communication Strategy on Twitter Engagement (N = 543)

	Likes			Retweets			Quoted Retweets		
	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR
Relational communication strategy (Reference group: Absence)									
Function-based	0.55**	.19	1.73	0.50**	.19	1.64	0.47*	.24	1.60
Image-based	1.14***	.27	3.13	1.77***	.28	5.87	1.10**	.36	3.01
Elaborational communication strategy (Reference group: Absence)									
	-0.71***	.16	0.49	-0.93***	.17	0.39	-0.65**	.21	0.52
Activational communication strategy (Reference group: Absence)									
Information for virtual events	-0.21	.30	0.81	-0.93**	.31	0.39	-1.45***	.39	0.23
Social media actions	-0.82***	.17	0.44	-1.05***	.18	0.35	-0.47*	.22	0.63

*Note: *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001*

Table 22

Effects of Combined Communication Strategies on Twitter Engagement (N = 543)

	Likes			**Retweets**			**Quoted Retweets**		
	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR	B	SE	IRR
Elaborational	-1.27**	.22	0.28	-1.62**	.23	0.20	-0.42	.29	0.66
Activational	-3.06***	.58	0.05	-3.63	.60	0.03	-2.44**	.77	0.09
Relational + Elaborational	-0.61	.27	0.23	-0.69***	.59	0.50	0.72	.75	2.06
Relational + Activational	-1.46***	.30	0.81	-1.90	.28	0.15	0.04	.35	1.04
Elaborational + Activational	-1.92***	.24	0.15	-2.37***	.25	0.09	-1.36***	.32	0.26
Relational + Elaborational + Activational	-1.32*	.65	0.27	-2.64***	.67	0.07	-1.04	.85	0.35
Absence	-0.60	.41	0.55	-1.19*	.42	0.30	0.36	.54	1.44

Note: Reference group: presence of a relational communication strategy; *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .0$

3.6   Summary of Study 1

As one of a few studies that explored how companies have utilized their social media platforms to communicate their CSA efforts, Study 1 in this dissertation employed a quantitative content analysis to investigate how different communication strategies (relational vs. elaborational vs. activational) have been employed and their effects on social media engagement behaviors. In the studied time frame, the majority of companies' Facebook posts and tweets focused on issues of race relations and LGBTQ+ rights.

Overall, the patterns of communication strategies were very similar across companies' Facebook and Twitter platforms. In other words, companies did not largely differentiate the use of their Facebook and Twitter accounts in communicating their CSA to online publics. In terms of relational communication strategies, some studied social media posts employed relational communication strategies by making explicit connections between CSA and themselves. More posts mentioned function-based associations by linking to their core businesses such as products, services, expertise, or industry features, than image-based associations. Still, more than half of these CSA social media posts did not utilize relational communication strategies. Comparatively, the majority of companies focused on advocated sociopolitical issues rather than making direct linkages (i.e., elaborational communication strategies) in their social media posts. Aligned with prior studies on CSR communication in social media (e.g., Cho et al., 2017; Einwiller & Steilen, 2015; Kim et al., 2014), it was found the companies in the sample did not actively or innovatively engage their online publics when they communicated their advocacy efforts. They did not often mention publics in these posts. If they did, they tended to adopt more generic terms by calling out actions such as "read," "discover," or "learn more." A few Facebook posts and tweets provided information for publics to attend virtual events, such as Johnson & Johnson's

Virtual 2020 Annual Legislative Conference to discuss the state of Black health. A further investigation of combined communication strategies revealed that the most commonly used communication strategy was elaborational + activational on Facebook and elaborational on Twitter. Additionally, limited social media posts used activational communication strategies alone. Instead, an activational communication strategy was often employed along with the other two types of communication strategies.

Study 1 continued to offer answers about the effects of communication strategies on social media engagement behaviors. First, a relational communication strategy, either function-based or image-based, mainly was not significantly associated with Facebook engagement behaviors compared with the absence of a relational communication strategy. But, a function-based association in CSA Facebook posts led to a significantly higher number of haha than the absence of a relational communication strategy. Next, neither the elaborational nor activational communication strategies in CSA generated higher social media engagement on Facebook. By comparing different combinations of communication strategies, relational communication strategies showed more effectiveness in increasing total interactions, likes, comments, shares, love, and care, than elaborational + activational communication strategies. Also, adding the activational component to a relational communication strategy was less effective than using a relational communication strategy alone, with regard to the numbers of likes, shares, love, wow, and care. Next, an elaborational communication strategy was associated with more haha and sad, compared with a relational communication strategy.

Regarding the relations between communication strategies and social media engagement on Twitter, Study 1 revealed that both image-based and function-based associations in CSA-related tweets significantly led to more likes, retweets, and quoted retweets, compared with the

absence of relational communication strategies. Similar to the findings of Facebook, neither the elaborational nor activational communication strategies demonstrated any advantages in improving social media engagement on Twitter. Instead, they were more likely to relate to a lower level of social media engagement. Additionally, relational communication strategies consistently led to more likes and retweets compared with elaborational, activational, or other combined communication strategies.

To conclude, across these companies' Facebook posts and tweets, building explicit connections between advocated sociopolitical issues and themselves (i.e., a relational communication strategy) showed significantly more associations with various social media engagement behaviors.

3.7   Limitations of Study 1

Several limitations should be acknowledged in the content analysis. First of all, a non-probability sampling (i.e., convenience sampling) procedure in this content analysis limited the generalizability of the results. First, only 41 top reputational companies were used in the sample frame. Researchers need to be cautious when generalizing the findings to other companies, especially less well-known companies. Second, two social media platforms were selected, Twitter and Facebook, which may also affect how the findings could be extended to other social media platforms such as Instagram or YouTube. Third, only American companies were selected for this study. Thus, the results could differ when discussing CSA in other countries and cultures due to the evolving societal norms and expectations. Fourth, as Neuendorf (2017) commented, the internal validity of the measures in a content analysis study is inherently questionable when considering the coder decision in the coding process. Fifth, the time frame for data collection in this content analysis could have an impact on the potential results because of the outbreak of

COVID19 and the BLM Movement after the death of George Floyd. Companies may focus on the sociopolitical issues differently due to public expectations and resource availability. Sixth, there is no manipulation or control of independent variables or random assignment in a content analysis, so the true causality will not be verifiable. As Reinard (2007) stated, content analysis can't be used to draw cause-effect conclusions. The relations between communication strategies and social media engagement behaviors don't indicate a true causality, even though they offer important implications for communication effectiveness. Though some factors are used as control variables, the analysis was limited to testing message effect without considering other factors. This study tried to include the message form (image, video, link), but many negative binomial models failed to converge. Additionally, the prior history or crisis, or even the time for data collection, might impact public responses to CSA messages on social media. Thus, a true experiment is needed to continue investigating the causality between the chosen variables, which will be discussed in Study 2 (Chapter 4).

3.8   Chapter 3 Summary and Chapter 4 Prelude

Chapter 3 describes Study 1 in this dissertation, which provides a valuable overview of companies' use of communication strategies (relational vs. elaborational vs. activational) on social media. Study 1 also sheds light on the impact of these communication strategies on publics' social media engagement behaviors. The findings of Study 1 suggested the need for testing advocacy fit in the following experimental design as relational communication strategies consistently demonstrated more associations with social media engagement behaviors on Facebook and Twitter. In other words, online publics tended to engage with a CSA post more when the post explicitly built the connection between a company and its advocated sociopolitical issue (i.e., advocacy fit). Given the limitation of content analysis in drawing causal inference, an

experimental design was necessary to enlighten nuanced understanding of advocacy fit. Additionally, Study 2 will supplement Study 1 by adding publics' features in CSA communication.

The next chapter will focus on Study 2, which consisted of a pilot study and a main study. In the pilot study, whether manipulations of advocacy fit could facilitate participants' varying perceptions of the congruency between a company and its advocated sociopolitical issue was verified. Additionally, the pilot study was designed to validate a more comprehensive measurement of social media engagement intentions, based on Dolan et al.'s (2016) conceptualization. After the pilot study, the main study, a between-subject experiment, continued to examine the effects of advocacy fit and social identities on participants' attributions of CSA, attitudes toward the company, and social media engagement intentions. Participants were recruited from two social groups in order to explore the impacts of social identities. Moreover, participants' situational perceptions of (problem recognition, constraint recognition, involvement recognition, referent criterion, situational motivation in problem solving) and attitudes toward a sociopolitical issue were connected to their social identities.

Chapter 4: Study 2

Chapter 4 describes Study 2, which consisted of a pilot study and a main study. Building on Study 1, Study 2 continued to examine the effects of advocacy fit and ingroup identification on publics' perceptions of CSA. First, the pilot study tested whether the manipulation of advocacy fit in the experiment was successful and validated the measurement of social media engagement intentions. Furthermore, the pilot study proposed a more parsimonious measurement model for social media engagement intentions, which was used in the main study. Second, the main study analyzed how advocacy fit and social identities played a role in publics' attributions of CSA, attitudinal responses, and behavioral intentions in social media engagement. The results of Study 2 aimed to test all proposed hypotheses and answer the third, fourth, and fifth research questions.

4.1   Data Collection with Prolific Academic

Study 2, both the pilot study and the main study, used the Prolific crowdsourcing platform to recruit participants and gather data. Researchers have utilized crowdsourcing platforms to recruit participants in their online social science experiments. Compared with other crowdsourcing platforms such as Crowdflower or the university pool, Prolific produced a higher data quality and replicated existing results (Peer et al., 2017). Prolific has several features that enable it to be a useful crowdsourcing platform for data collection in this dissertation. First, as of April 27th, 2022, Prolific's website listed 38,444 active participants in the past 90 days within the study timeframe in the United States. Second, Prolific has more than 250 demographic screeners (e.g., sex, age, nationality, first language) to filter participants (Prolific, 2022). This screening feature can prevent the likability of dishonest participants who faked the filtering question (Palan & Schitter, 2018). Researchers can take advantage of pre-screening questions in

Prolific to filter participants based on the research purposes, which is appropriate for studies that need to pre-screen participants based on specific features. Third, Prolific offers various ways, such as acceptance score, regulated rejection procedure, award system, and minimum hourly payment, to facilitate participants' trust toward the experimenter and data quality (Palan & Schitter, 2018, p. 26). Fourth, compared with Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) participants, Prolific participants showed more naivety and diversity that interferes less with the effect size (Peer et al., 2017). Therefore, Prolific is considered "a valuable alternative to other crowdworking platforms" with its clear rules (Palan & Schitter, 2018, p. 26). Furthermore, platforms like Prolific and MTurk are appropriate for long studies that require high participant engagement (Litman et al., 2021). Since the main study planned to recruit participants from two different racial groups, the less intrusive pre-screening feature and other Prolific advantages make it appropriate for data collection across both the pilot study and the main study.

4.2 Pilot Study

In Study 2, a pilot study was conducted as the first step to serve two major purposes. First, it ensured that the experimental manipulations used in the main study would trigger different perceptions of advocacy fit in CSA messages. A pilot study is a preliminary experiment to determine the feasibility of the main experiment, which aims to develop and refine the study design (Barnlund, 2008). Thus, it is necessary to include a pilot study for the under-examined topic of CSA in this dissertation. Second, the pilot study also verified the reliability and validity of key outcome variables (i.e., social media engagement intentions), which have been under-developed in previous research. A hypothetical company was used to control for the participants' existing attitudes toward and familiarity with the company (Kim & Lee, 2018) and skepticism level (Elving, 2013).

4.2.1   *Participant Recruitment in the Pilot Study*

Sample Size Planning. The sample size planning in the pilot study considered two parts.

First, a power analysis was conducted regarding the manipulation check of advocacy fit.

Statistical power refers to the "possibility that it will lead you to reject the null hypothesis when

the hypothesis is in fact wrong" (Murphy et al., 2014, p. ix). It determines the extent to which the

results of a study can be inferred from the population. Thus, power analysis in the pilot study

was conducted with two groups (advocacy fit: high vs. low) independent *t*-test with a power of

.80. .80 is commonly used as the desired power (Cohen, 2013). The means and standard

deviations in Parcha and Kingsley Westerman's (2020) manipulations check of advocacy fit was

used for the power analysis in a two-group independent sample *t*-test. By using the *G**Power

program, the power analysis recommended a total of 20 participants ($d = 1.17$, $\alpha = .05$, $1\text{-}\beta =$

.80).

Second, the sample size planning was related to the measurement model of social media

engagement intentions. Gagne and Hancock (2006) suggested that CFA model convergence

improves as the number of indicators per factor (*p/f*) increases for a given sample size. The *p/f*

ranged from 3 (dormancy) to 8 (destruction) in the pilot study. For heterogeneous loadings,

Gagne and Hancock (2006) suggested considering the construct reliability ω or H. Coefficient

*H*s were calculated for consumption, contribution, and creation, based on the factor loadings

provided in Schivinski et al.'s (2016) article, which were above .90. However, coefficient *H*s

were not available for dormancy, detachment, and destruction. According to Gagne and Hancock

(2006), the sample size ranges from 25 to 400 when the *H* ranges from .701 to .877 to achieve

satisfactory convergence. Moreover, prior scholars proposed 300 as the good or comfortable

sample size for factor analysis (Comrey & Lee, 1992; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Pett (2003)

suggested 10-15 cases for each indicator.

Therefore, with all available information, the pilot study planned to recruit 300

participants.

Demographic Information for Participants. The research was approved by the

University of Maryland Institutional Review Board (IRB) on February 10, 2022. Data for the

pilot study were collected using Prolific from February 14 to February 17, 2022. Two important

pre-screening questions were used for data collection in the pilot study. First, participants'

nationality was set as the United States, given the research focus on the issue of race relations in

the United States. Second, to ensure reliable and credible responses, a minimum approval rate to

recruit participants (e.g., a Prolific score of at least 90) was set up. Participants who completed

the pilot study were compensated $1.50 for 10 minutes, which complied with Prolific's principle

of "ethical rewards" (at least $8 per hour) (Prolific, 2022). An additional 33% service fee was

paid to Prolific on top of the total participant cost. Participants were asked to enter their Prolific

IDs at the beginning of the study if they agreed to participate. At the end of the study,

participants were debriefed with written explanations of true research purposes and the use of the

fictitious company. They were provided the chance to revoke their answers and were thanked

and redirected to the Prolific website to ensure their compensation. The consent form is attached

as Appendix C and the written debriefing can be found as Appendix F.

Three hundred participants were recruited from Prolific. Five participants did not

complete the study. Therefore, two hundred and ninety-five participants remained in the final

analysis. The participants' demographic information and political view can be found in Table 23.

Compared with the U.S. population (U.S. Census, 2021), the current sample appeared to be

younger, with less percentage of 65 years and over ($P_{sample} = 5.4\%$, $P_{population} = 16.8\%$). The distribution of sex generally reflected the population. But the current sample was more educated as there were higher percentages of bachelor's degree or higher ($P_{sample} = 60.4\%$, $P_{population} = 32.9\%$). The distribution of ethnicity generally mirrored the U.S. population but with a smaller portion of Hispanic or Latino. The overall political views of participants in the studied sample tended to be more liberal than the U.S. population. Gallup (2021) interviewed more than 18.000 U.S. adults and discovered that 25% of participants identified as liberal. In the studied sample, 55.35% of participants chose 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale of political view (5 = very liberal). To conclude, the sample in the pilot study was younger, more educated, and more liberal than the U.S. population.

Table 23

Demographic Characteristics of Participants in the Pilot Study (N = 295)

Variable Name				
	minimum	*maximum*	*Mean*	*SD*
Age	19	84	39.98	13.82
Political View	1	5	3.52	1.14
		n	*%*	*Cumulative %*
Education				
Less than a high school diploma		2	0.7	0.7
Graduated high school or equivalent (e.g., GED)		38	12.9	13.6
Some college, no degree		47	15.9	29.5
Associate degree (e.g., AA, AS)		29	9.8	39.3
Bachelors' degree (e.g., BA, BS)		113	38.3	77.6
Master's degree (e.g., MA, MS, MEd)		51	17.3	94.9
Professional degree (e.g., MD, DDS, DVM)		9	3.1	98.0
Doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD)		5	1.7	99.7
Prefer not to answer		1	0.3	100
Race				
White		216	73.2	73.2
Black or African American		24	8.1	81.4
American Indian or Alaska Native		2	0.7	82.0
Asian or Asian American		21	7.1	89.2
Hispanic/Latinx		8	2.7	91.9
Other/Multi-ethnicity		24	8.1	100

Variable Name			
Sex			
	n	*%*	*Cumulative %*
Male	142	48.1	48.1
Female	147	49.8	98.0
Non-binary/Third-gender	6	2	100

4.2.2 Experimental Manipulations

In the pilot study, a fictitious food company and its Facebook posts were created to vary

the degree of the fit between the company and its support for racial justice and the BLM social

movement. Facebook has been often used in corporate communication (Tao & Wilson, 2015),

including CSA. Several factors were taken into consideration during this stage. First, prior

studies have pointed out the benefits of using a fictitious company in CSR fit experiments,

including controlling for existing corporate reputation and participants' history or past

experiences with the organization (Austin & Giather, 2019; Nan & Heo, 2007; Tao & Song,

2020). Similarly, Coombs (2016) suggested experimental studies on crisis communication using

fictitious organizations based on real crisis situations. Therefore, this dissertation also used a

fictitious company in the experimental stimuli. Second, a food company was created to avoid

possible preexisting associations between this company's industry with the selected issue (i.e.,

race relations). Prior studies have utilized food companies in manipulating CSR fit (e.g., Choi et

al., 2018; Kim & Ferguson, 2018; Zhou & Ki, 2018). Recent research on CSA also utilized a

food company (Xu et al., 2021). Third, the manipulations of advocacy fit focused on the

company's value, mission, and identity instead of the core business, as suggested by prior

scholars (Hong & Li, 2021; Lim & Young, 2021). A company's CSA is not often related to its

core business (Browning et al., 2020; Hong & Li, 2020), but public perception of fit can

originate from the congruency between its identity, core value, and the advocated sociopolitical issue (Lim & Young, 2021).

Specifically, two conditions were created, high advocacy fit and low advocacy fit. Each condition was composed of a company introduction and a Facebook post. The advocated issue was kept the same to exclude confounding factors. Racial justice and the BLM Movement were selected as the advocated issue because they have been areas to which companies have devoted their CSA efforts (Heffron & Dodd, 2021; Logan, 2021; Kim et al., 2020; Waymer & Logan, 2021; Yim, 2021). For example, Nike has taken various communicative actions to raise public awareness of race relations and advocate for social justice (Waymer & Logan, 2021). The death of Georgy Floyd in 2020 sparked expeditious public attention to systemic racism and companies' responses to the BLM Movement (Heffron & Dodd, 2021). The BLM Movement erupted as "one of the largest movements in the history of the United States" (Heffron & Dodd, 2021, p. 16). Therefore, this dissertation focused on businesses' roles in this significant sociopolitical issue. Additionally, literature on social identity and intergroup relationships has examined how social identities affect people's support for the BLM Movement (e.g., Holt & Sweitzer, 2020; Sawyer & Gampa, 2018; etc.). Hence, this issue was used to enable examination of the effects of social identities on perceptions of CSA.

The same fictitious company, B&C Pizza Company, was used in both conditions with different descriptions. A pizza company was chosen, given the widespread consumption of pizza in the U.S. (Statista, 2021). In the high advocacy fit condition, the company was Black-owned, and the company introduction highlighted how the company had integrated race relations and social justice in its mission, vision, identity, and history. Comparatively, the company's introduction in the low advocacy fit condition only focused on the company's product and

service, without making any connections to race relations. For the social media post, the

Facebook post was used as the format because of wide usage of Facebook in CSA

communication. Only the high advocacy fit post made explicit connections between the

company's identity, history, and mission and the company's support for racial justice.

Furthermore, the length of company descriptions and Facebook posts and reading level (10th

grade) were kept to be equivalent across two conditions to enhance internal validity. The visuals

were consistent across two conditions[4]. But the brand logo colors varied across two conditions:

yellow for low advocacy fit condition, black for high advocacy fit condition. Visual elements,

such as logo, is an important part of corporate visual identity (van den Bosch et al., 2005). The

manipulations for both companies are found in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Figure 2

Company Introduction and Social Media Post in the High Advocacy Fit Condition

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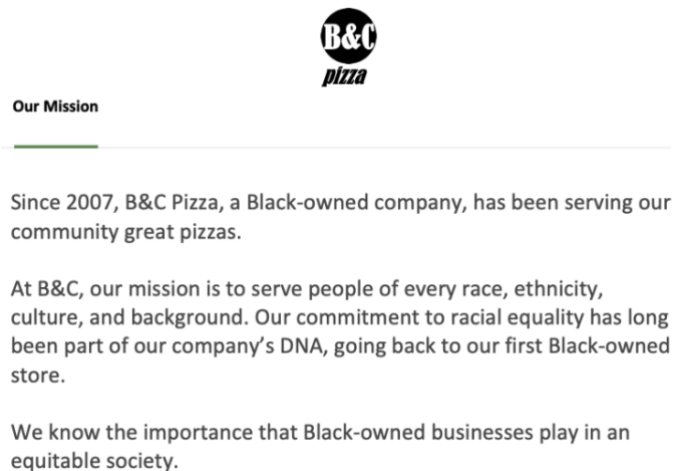
[4] The photo was taken with permission.

Figure 3

Company Introduction and Social Media Post in the Low Advocacy Fit Condition

To ensure ecological validity, more than ten real companies' websites and social media posts were consulted when designing the fictitious company description website page and its Facebook page. Moreover, the content analysis in Study 1 offered a variety of examples in terms of commonly used CSA social media posts. In addition, several experts in communication were also consulted to check content, ecological validity, and potential confounding factors. Finally, to ensure participants could easily process and understand the manipulation messages and questionnaire items, the feedback from seven communication scholars who actively research communication and eight members of the lay audience were collected. They proposed valuable suggestions and comments to improve item wording and sentence phrasing.

4.2.3 Procedure

The pilot study was posted on Prolific after the approval of IRB. Participants were randomly assigned to one experimental condition after signing the electronic consent form.

Qualtrics was used to format the experimental conditions and questionnaire. After reading the experimental condition (i.e., a company's description and a Facebook post), participants completed an online survey that asked questions about perceived advocacy fit, social media engagement intentions, and message authenticity. Finally, demographic information was collected regarding gender, age, race, and education. Political ideology was measured by a 5-point semantic differential scale (1 = very conservative, 5 = very liberal), according to Austin et al. (2019). This U.S. survey discovered that demographic factors affected participants' expectations of and attitudes toward CSA. Participants were debriefed and thanked at the end of the survey. See Appendix D for a copy of the pilot survey questionnaire.

4.2.4   Measures in the Pilot Study

Perceived Advocacy Fit. To ensure the manipulation of advocacy fit was successful, five 7-point differential items were adapted from Parcha and Kinsley Westerman (2020) to assess participants' perceived advocacy fit. These items were unrelated – related, a weak match – a strong match, unassociated – associated, dissimilar – similar, incongruent – congruent. Table 24 provides descriptive statistics for each item.

Table 24

Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Advocacy Fit (N =295)

Item	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Unrelated–Related	4.86	2.05	-0.64	-0.96
A weak match–A strong match	4.95	1.94	-0.71	-0.68
Unassociated–Associated	4.92	2.01	-0.66	-0.88
Dissimilar–Similar	4.81	2.00	-0.55	0.99
Dissimilar–Similar	4.94	1.89	-0.71	-0.61

Social Media Engagement Intentions. This pilot study measured participants' intentions to engage with the company on social media. It was measured from six dimensions with 32

items, including consumption, contribution, creation, dormancy, detachment, and destruction, based on prior scholars' conceptualizations and operationalizations (e.g., Cao et al., 2021; Dolan et al., 2016; Tsai & Men, 2013; Schivinski et al., 2016). A 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree, 7 = strongly disagree) was used for all items. Descriptive statistics can be found from Table 29 to Table 34.

Consumption. The measurement of consumption was derived from the work of Schivinski et al. (2016) and Dolan et al. (2016). Five items were modified: "I will read posts related to this company on social media," "I will read fanpage(s) related to this company on social media," "I will watch pictures/graphics related to this company," "I will follow blogs related to this company," and "I will follow this company on social media."

Contribution. Based on Schivinski et al. (2016) and Tsai and Men (2013), Contribution was measured with six items: "I will comment on videos related to this company," "I will comment on posts related to this company," "I will comment on pictures/graphics related to this company," "I will share this company's related posts," "I will '*Like*' pictures/graphics related to this company," and "I will '*Like*' posts related to this company."

Creation. Six items were derived from the work of Schivinski et al. (2016) to measure creation engagement intention. The items were: "I will initiate posts related to this company on social media," "I will post pictures/graphics related to this company," "I will post videos that show this company," "I will write posts related to this company on forums," "I will write reviews related to this company," and "I will initiate posts related to this company on blogs."

Dormancy. Based on Dolan et al. (2016) and Moon et al. (2016), dormancy was measured by three items: "I will take no action if the company-related content is delivered to

me," "I will not express any opinions or feelings about this company on its social media page,"

"I will not express any opinions or feelings about this company on my own social media page."

Detachment. Based on Dolan et al. (2016), four items were used: "'I will unlike this

company's social media page," "I will unfollow this company on social media," "I will terminate

a subscription for future updates and content from this company," and "I will select to hide

future posts from this company." In addition, an instruction sentence was provided, which was

"Imagine that you currently like, subscribe, and/or follow the B&C Pizza company's social

media account; how likely are you to take the following actions?" Hence, the items could be

appropriately understood by participants.

Destruction. Eight items are used to capture destruction based on Dolan et al. (2016): "I

will talk negatively about this company-related content online," "I will make negative comments

to this company's forums," "I will publicly rate this company's products negatively," "I will

publicly rate this company negatively," "I will comment negatively on posts, blogs, videos or

pictures posted by this company," "I will write a public complaint on this company's social

media page," "I will write negative product reviews and/or testimonials on my own social media

content," and "I will report this company or company-related social media content for

misconduct."

Message Authenticity. Because message authenticity influences consumers' attitudes

toward the information (Pérez & Liu, 2020) the pilot study also measured how participants

perceived the message authenticity of manipulations. Adopted from Chiu et al. (2012, p. 268), a

three-item 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree, 7 = strongly disagree) was used to measure

message authenticity. Items included: "The message seems able to occur in the real world," "The

message is authentic," and "There is an abundance of facts in the message so that I believe it is

authic." The descriptive statistics of three items in message authenticity can be found in Table

25. It showed that participants, on average, believed the messages were authentic in both

conditions.

Table 25

Descriptive Statistics of Message Authenticity (N =295)

Item	Condition	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
This message is authentic.	High fit	5.83	1.44	-1.49	1.97
	Low fit	5.23	1.65	-1.07	0.55
This message seems able to occur in the real world.	High fit	6.05	1.22	-1.83	4.07
	Low fit	5.88	1.38	-1.86	3.69
This message provides enough facts so that I believe it is authentic.	High fit	5.76	1.30	-1.17	1.31
	Low fit	5.18	1.66	-0.90	0.12

4.2.5 Pilot Study Data Analysis

Manipulation Check. As O'Keefe (2003) proposed, researchers could include

manipulation checks to assess psychological states or message perceptions evoked by the

message manipulations. Hence, five independent *t*-tests were performed to check whether the

manipulation of advocacy fit aroused participants' different perceptions of fit and congruency

between the company and its CSA. Levene's tests for equality of variances showed significant

results (p < .001), which meant equal variances were not assumed. Therefore, the second row of

SPSS output, "Equal variances not assumed," was reported. In addition, five tests were

conducted, so the Bonferroni correction was implemented by setting the significance level as .01

(α/5). Results in the pilot study showed that participants in the high, rather than low, advocacy fit

condition believed the company and the BLM Movement supported in its Facebook post were

more related $M_{high\_fit} = 6.00$, $M_{low\_fit} = 3.72$, $t(293) = 11.48$, $p < .001$), associated ($M_{high\_fit} = 5.97$,

$M_{low\_fit} = 3.86$, $t(293) = 10.63$, $p < .001$), similar ($M_{high\_fit} = 5.98$, $M_{low\_fit} = 3.73$, $t(293) = 11.06$, p

$< .001$), congruent ($M_{high\_fit} = 5.84$, $M_{low\_fit} = 4.03$, $t(293) = 9.32$, $p < .001$), and they had a

stronger match ($M_{high\_fit} = 5.88$, $M_{low\_fit} = 4.01$, $t(293) = 9.47$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, participants

agreed that the advocacy message presented to them was authentic ($M_{high\_fit} = 5.83$, $SD_{high_fit} = $

1.44; $M_{low\_fit} = 5.23$, $SD_{low\_fit} = 1.65$), seemed able to occur in the real world ($M_{high\_fit} = 6.05$,

$SD_{high\_fit} = 1.22$; $M_{low\_fit} = 5.88$, $SD_{low\_fit} = 1.38$), and provided enough facts ($M_{high\_fit} = 5.76$,

$SD_{high\_fit} = 1.30$; $M_{low\_fit} = 5.18$, $SD_{low\_fit} = 1.66$). To summarize, the manipulation of advocacy fit

in CSA social media posts was successful. Table 26 provides the *t*-test results.

Table 26

Perceptions of Advocacy Fit across Experimental Conditions in the Pilot Study (N = 295)

Fit Perceptions	Fit Conditions	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*(293)	*p*	95% CI lower	higher
related	High	148	6.00	1.31	11.48	< .001	1.89	2.67
	low	147	3.72	2.02				
associated	High	148	5.97	1.34	10.63	< .001	1.72	2.51
	low	147	3.86	2.01				
similar	High	148	5.98	1.38	11.06	< .001	1.78	2.55
	low	147	3.73	1.94				
congruent	High	148	5.84	1.37	9.32	< .001	1.43	2.19
	low	147	4.03	1.91				
match	High	148	5.88	1.39	9.47	< .001	1.48	2.26
	low	147	4.01	1.96				

Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Social Media Engagement Intentions. Confirmatory

factor analysis (CFA) is used when "the researcher has some knowledge about the underlying

structure of the construct underlying investigation" (Pett et al., 2003, p. 4). With CFA, the

differences between "the observed covariances among the factors and those predicted by a

reflective measurement model" can be minimized (Hancock & Mueller, 2013, p. 58). Prior

literature proposed the six-factor structure of social media engagement (Dolan et al., 2016); some

studies have empirically tested consumption, contribution, and creation (e.g., Cao et al., 2021;

Tsai & Men, 2013; Schivinski et al., 2016). Hence, a CFA model was conducted in Mplus 7.4 software.

The data screening process was performed. First, no missing data were detected. Second, the means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis values for each item are reported in Table 29. According to the means of all items, participants did not show strong intentions to engage with the company across two conditions on social media in an active way, as evidenced by high dormancy scores (See Table 27). Moreover, Table 27 showed that participants were primarily intended to perform passive consumption behaviors such as reading social media posts (M_{high} = 3.78, SD_{high} = 2.03; M_{low} = 3.88, SD_{low} = 2.09), watching pictures/graphics (M_{high} = 3.66, SD_{high} = 2.06; M_{low} = 3.73, SD_{low} = 2.03), or following the company on social media (M_{high} = 3.41, SD_{high} = 2.19; M_{low} = 3.38, SD_{low} = 2.17). The absolute skewness and kurtosis values for most variables were no greater than 2.0 and 7.0, respectively. However, the skewness values for eight variables (as supposed to measure destruction) were equal to or larger than 3, and kurtosis values for the same eight variables ranged from 8.83 to 16.52 (see Table 29). Under such circumstances, artifactual factors could form because these similarly-distributed variables tended to be highly correlated. In other words, these can form "difficult factors" that are difficult to achieve, independent of the item content (Bandalos & Finney, 2019). Third, the value of Mardia's normalized multivariate kurtosis was checked, which was much greater than 3. The nonnormality could result in inaccurate results when using ML estimation (Yuan et al., 2005). Fourth, the univariate 26 outliers with larger z-scores (greater than 3 standard deviations from the mean) were identified. After testing the Mahalanobis Distance, 56 outliers were found. Hence, 213 observations remained if the outliers were excluded. Bandalos and Finney (2019) suggested that analyses be conducted with and without outliers. After conducting CFA models with and without

the outliers, it was found that the effects of the outlying cases on both parameter estimates and model fit indices were quite small. Under such circumstances, all data were kept in the final analysis.

Table 27

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness, Kurtosis of Social Media Engagement Intentions in the Pilot Study (N = 295)

Item	Total (N = 295)				High Advocacy Fit (N =148)				Low Advocacy Fit (N = 147)			
	M	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Consumption												
Consumption 1	3.83	2.06	-0.11	-1.34	3.78	2.03	-0.01	-1.29	3.88	2.09	-0.21	-1.38
Consumption 2	2.81	1.89	0.74	-0.63	2.82	1.88	0.75	-0.57	2.81	1.91	0.74	-0.68
Consumption 3	3.69	2.04	-0.03	-1.34	3.66	2.06	0.03	-1.34	3.73	2.03	-0.10	-1.34
Consumption 4	2.73	1.91	0.81	-0.56	2.74	1.87	0.76	-0.60	2.71	1.95	0.86	-0.51
Consumption 5	3.39	2.18	0.31	-1.35	3.41	2.19	0.30	-1.37	3.38	2.17	0.31	-1.34
Contribution												
Contribution 1	2.86	1.91	0.64	-0.90	2.82	1.92	0.72	-0.71	2.9	1.91	0.56	-1.07
Contribution 2	2.97	2.00	0.54	-1.14	2.9	2.00	0.62	-1.02	3.04	2.01	0.46	-1.25
Contribution 3	2.86	1.96	0.62	-1.00	2.88	1.99	0.65	-0.94	2.85	1.94	0.60	-1.07
Contribution 4	2.77	1.94	0.73	-0.74	2.76	1.96	0.78	-0.62	2.78	1.92	0.69	-0.81
Contribution 5	3.67	2.19	-0.01	-1.51	3.68	2.24	0.06	-1.51	3.67	2.14	-0.08	-1.53
Contribution 6	3.69	2.19	-0.02	-1.52	3.75	2.25	0.02	-1.50	3.63	2.14	-0.07	-1.58
Creation												
Creation 1	2.24	1.58	1.22	0.66	2.27	1.58	1.20	0.67	2.21	1.59	1.26	0.72
Creation 2	2.22	1.60	1.24	0.64	2.21	1.60	1.32	0.88	2.24	1.60	1.18	0.46
Creation 3	2.08	1.55	1.47	1.39	2.04	1.56	1.56	1.64	2.12	1.55	1.40	1.25
Creation 4	2.21	1.62	1.25	0.65	2.16	1.64	1.31	0.75	2.25	1.61	1.21	0.62
Creation 5	3.12	2.00	0.35	-1.24	2.99	1.92	0.43	-1.13	3.26	2.05	0.27	-1.33
Creation 6	2.08	1.58	1.48	1.34	2.1	1.57	1.35	0.97	2.07	1.59	1.62	1.79
Dormancy												
Dormancy 1	4.40	1.88	-0.22	-0.93	4.45	1.89	-0.32	-0.80	4.35	1.88	-0.12	-1.03
Dormancy 2	4.50	2.00	-0.22	-1.16	4.57	1.97	-0.33	-0.99	4.43	2.02	-0.11	-1.29
Dormancy 3	4.80	2.02	-0.47	-1.04	4.86	2.02	-0.55	-0.95	4.73	2.02	-0.40	-1.10
Detachment												
Detachment 1	2.37	2.07	1.39	0.43	2.47	2.07	1.25	0.08	2.27	2.08	1.56	0.90
Detachment 2	2.49	2.17	1.26	-0.00	2.55	2.15	1.17	-0.17	2.44	2.21	1.36	0.21
Detachment 3	2.54	2.22	1.18	-0.23	2.68	2.22	1.03	-0.55	2.40	2.21	1.36	0.21

Item	Total (N = 295)				High Advocacy Fit (N = 148)				Low Advocacy Fit (N = 147)			
	M	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Detachment 4	2.59	2.16	1.11	-0.31	2.75	2.18	0.95	-0.64	2.44	2.14	1.31	0.17
Destruction												
Destruction 1	1.51	1.20	3.18	10.48	1.55	1.22	2.96	9.09	1.46	1.18	3.47	12.57
Destruction 2	1.42	1.06	3.66	14.96	1.43	1.05	3.62	15.10	1.40	1.06	3.74	15.40
Destruction 3	1.49	1.20	3.32	11.44	1.51	1.14	3.17	11.13	1.46	1.25	3.47	11.92
Destruction 4	1.54	1.28	3.00	8.85	1.55	1.20	2.90	8.95	1.52	1.36	3.07	8.83
Destruction 5	1.45	1.07	3.37	12.28	1.48	1.09	3.07	10.63	1.42	1.15	3.67	14.05
Destruction 6	1.44	1.07	3.38	12.68	1.49	1.09	3.05	10.39	1.39	1.06	3.81	15.96
Destruction 7	1.43	1.08	3.63	14.47	1.46	1.05	3.29	12.57	1.39	1.11	3.96	16.52
Destruction 8	1.36	1.00	3.94	16.94	1.32	0.87	4.12	20.10	1.39	1.11	3.72	14.42

Note: The specific item content can be found in Appendix D.

As recommended by prior methodologists (Bandalos & Finney, 2019), the fit indices include absolute indices (e.g., the chi-square test of goodness of fit, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)), parsimony-adjusted indices (e.g., the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and its associated confidence interval, and incremental fit indices (e.g., the comparative fit index (CFI) and the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI)). Hu and Bentler (1999) suggested the cutoff values for model fit indices: SRMR .08, RMSEA .06, and CFI .95. These model fit indices should be used with caution as they are affected by sample size, factor reliability, number of items, and so on (McNeish & Wolf, 2021). Given the "flooring" effect in some items, the eight positively skewed variables were set as categorical variables, as suggested by Muthen (2001). Then, the WLSMV (weighted least square mean and variance adjusted) estimator was applied in Mplus. Results indicated that the six-factor 32-item model had an acceptable model fit to the data (RMSEA = .052, 95%CI RMSEA = [.046, .058], CFI = .959, SRMR = .060).

To further verify whether the factor-item structure worked the same way across the two experimental conditions, a multigroup analysis was conducted. First of all, two separate CFA models were conducted with the WLSMV estimator. The model fit indices are reported in Table 28. Results showed that the CFA model for social media engagement intentions in the low advocacy fit achieved a satisfactory model fit based on Hu and Bentler's (1999) cutoff values (RMSEA = .038, 95%CI RMSEA = [.025, .049], CFI = .985, SRMR = .052). However, the CFI value in the CFA model in the high advocacy fit was below .95. As pointed out by Marsh (2004), researchers should consider multiple factors such as the sample size and the level of model misspecification when using goodness-of-fit (GOI) indexes. Marin et al. (2015) also suggested that CFI larger than .90 can indicate an acceptable fit to the data. Therefore, the two CFA models

were deemed acceptable, meaning that the measurement model worked in both groups. The standardized path coefficients in all CFA models can be found in Table 30.

When moving to the multigroup analysis stage, several difficulties emerged. First, the WLSMV estimator did not work because different numbers of options in destruction items were selected by participants in two conditions. For example, participants in the low fit condition selected all seven options in "destruction item 8", but participants in the high fit only selected six options in "destruction item 8". Then, the MLM estimator was applied. But the model fit was not acceptable (RMSEA = .114, 95%CI RMSEA = [.109, .119], CFI = .850, SRMR = .086). The model could not reach Hu and Bentler's (1999) fit requirements even after adding multiple error covariances. This poor model fit was attributed to too many highly correlated items. Therefore, six separate multigroup CFA models were conducted with each factor with factor loadings constrained to be equivalent. The model fit indices were reported in Table 29. CFI and SRMR values in consumption, contribution, creation, dormancy, and detachment indicated satisfactory model fits. As noted by Kenney et al. (2015), RMSEA does not perform well for models with a small degree of freedom, especially with a limited sample size. Therefore, though RMSEA values for consumption, contribution, and creation exceeded .8, these models were deemed to be acceptable. For the CFA model measuring destruction, SRMR was marginal (.087). The SRMR evaluates "the overall difference between the observed and predicted correlations" and relies on "the metrics of the observed variable" (Kline, 2016). The marginal SRMR value in this pilot study was caused by highly correlated items in destruction, based on the correlation residual values. Using Sattora-Bentler scaled χ^2 tests, the models with constrained factor loadings did not perform significantly worse ($p > .05$, see Table 29). Also, modification indices across all multigroup CFA models sometimes suggested error variance covariances, but not for factor

loadings. In other words, all the items performed the same when they measured the same factor across the two experimental conditions.

Regarding the construct reliability, coefficient *H*s was used instead of other reliability indices such as Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha assumes the essential tau-equivalence, which is not likely to be met in practice (Bandalos & Finney, 2019). Coefficient *H* informs to what extent the indicators can represent the latent construct (i.e., factor) (Hancock & Mueller, 2001). Coefficient *H*s for all factors across models were above .90, demonstrating adequate construct reliability. In addition, the average variances extracted (AVEs) were reported as a measure of convergent validity, which ranged from .78 to .93. The correlations between factors and the average variance extracted (AVE) were reported to examine discriminant validity. It was found that correlations between consumption, contribution, and creation were above .80 (64% shared variance). Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggested comparing the AVEs with the squared correlation between two constructs (i.e., AVE/γ^2) as a way to determine discriminant validity. The discriminant validity is established when the AVE is larger than the squared factor correlation (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). After comparing the AVEs and the squared factor correlations, the discriminant validity was established in all models. The coefficient *H*s and AVEs for six latent factors can be found in Table 30. The correlation matrix can be found in Table 31, Table 32, and Table 33.

Table 28

Model Fit Indices for CFA Models across Experimental Conditions in the Pilot Study

	Total (*N* = 295)	High Advocacy Fit (*N* =148)	Low Advocacy Fit (*N* = 147)
$\chi^2(df)$	805.629(449)	699.084(449)	544.733(449)
RMSEA	.052	.061	.038
95%CI RMSEA	[.046, .058]	[.052, .070]	[.025, .049]
CFI	.959	.936	.985
SRMR	.060	.079	.052

Table 29

Model Fit Indices and Sattora-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square Difference for Testing Measurement Invariable for Social Media

Engagement Invariance (N = 295)

	Consumption	Contribution	Creation	Dormancy	Detachment	Destruction
With Constraints Model Fit Indices						
RMSEA	.088	.094	.103	.000	.041	.066
95%CI RMSEA	[.039, .135]	[.060, .129]	[.071, .136]	[.000, .056]	[.000, .114]	[.036, .094]
CFI	.987	.983	.974	1.000	.999	.957
SRMR	.026	.054	.030	.007	.022	.087
With Constraints χ^2 information:						
$\chi^2(df)$	25.568 (12)	48.604 (21)	59.218(23)	0.161(2)	8.698 (7)	66.713 (40)
Scaling correction factor	1.90	2.47	1.86	0.81	2.23	4.93
Without Constraints χ^2 information:						
$\chi^2(df)$	22.014 (8)	39.089 (16)	50.589 (18)	0.000(0)	5.998 (4)	57.931 (33)
Scaling correction factor	1.51	3.01	2.14	1.00	2.85	5.08
Sattora-Bentler Scaled χ^2 Test						

TRd	5.72	3.23	2.21	0.16	1.64	8.19
p	0.22	0.67	0.82	0.92	0.65	0.32

Note: TRd = Sattora-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square Difference

Table 30

Standardized Factor Loadings, Coefficient Hs and AVEs in 32-item CFA Models (Pilot Study)

	Total (*N* = 295)			High Advocacy Fit (*N* =148)			Low Advocacy Fit (*N* = 147)		
	Standardized Factor loading	*H*	AVE	Standardized Factor loading	*H*	AVE	Standardized Factor loading	*H*	AVE
Consumption									
Consumption 1	.93			.93			.92		
Consumption 2	.84			.84			.84		
Consumption 3	.91	.96	.82	.92	.96	.82	.90	.95	.79
Consumption 4	.85			.84			.86		
Consumption 5	.93			.95			.92		
Contribution									
Contribution 1	.89			.88			.90		
Contribution 2	.88			.87			.89		
Contribution 3	.89	.96	.81	.87	.96	.78	.93	.97	.83
Contribution 4	.93			.92			.93		
Contribution 5	.90			.88			.91		
Contribution 6	.90			.88			.91		
Creation									
Creation 1	.92			.94			.91		
Creation 2	.93			.95			.93		
Creation 3	.90	.97	.81	.91	.97	.82	.90	.96	.80
Creation 4	.94			.95			.92		
Creation 5	.86			.83			.87		
Creation 6	.87			.86			.86		
Dormancy									
Dormancy 1	.83	.95	.82	.81	.97	.82	.86	.94	.82

	Total (N = 295)			High Advocacy Fit (N =148)			Low Advocacy Fit (N = 147)		
	Standardized Factor loading	*H*	AVE	Standardized Factor loading	*H*	AVE	Standardized Factor loading	*H*	AVE
Dormancy 2	.96			.98			.93		
Dormancy 3	.92			.91			.93		
Detachment									
Detachment 1	.93			.92			.94		
Detachment 2	.97			.97			.97		
Detachment 3	.95	.99	.92	.92	1	.91	.97	.99	.94
Detachment 4	.99			1			.99		
Destruction									
Destruction 1	.96			.96			.98		
Destruction 2	.96			.95			.98		
Destruction 3	.92			.89			.96		
Destruction 4	.97			.98			.98		
Destruction 5	.97	.99	.90	.92	.99	.87	.98	.99	.93
Destruction 6	.96			.94			.98		
Destruction 7	.94			.94			.96		
Destruction 8	.87			.81			.92		

Table 31

Factor Correlation Matrix for 32-item CFA Model in the Full Sample (N = 295)

	Consumption	Contribution	Creation	Dormancy	Detachment	Destruction
Consumption	1					
Contribution	.89***	1				
Creation	.82***	.88***	1			
Dormancy	-.70***	.79***	-.66***	1		
Detachment	-.62***	-.52***	-.39***	.34***	1	
Destruction	-.26**	-.14*	-.03	-.04	.52***	1

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 32

Factor Correlation Matrix for 32-item CFA Model in the High Advocacy Fit Condition (N = 148)

	Consumption	Contribution	Creation	Dormancy	Detachment	Destruction
Consumption	1					
Contribution	.87***	1				
Creation	.79***	.85***	1			
Dormancy	-.66***	-.76***	-.61***	1		
Detachment	-.62***	-.50**	-.35***	.29***	1	
Destruction	-.18*	-.07	.09	-.06	.48***	1

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 33

Factor Correlation Matrix for 32-item CFA Model in the Low Advocacy Fit Condition (N = 147)

	Consumption	Contribution	Creation	Dormancy	Detachment	Destruction
Consumption	1					
Contribution	.91***	1				
Creation	.85***	.90***	1			
Dormancy	-.75***	-.83***	-.72***	1		
Detachment	-.62***	-.54**	-.44***	.38***	1	
Destruction	-.33*	-.21*	-.15	-.03	.53***	1

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Parsimonious Measurement Model for Social Media Engagement Intentions. After the initial measurement model was established, extremely high correlated measurement items were checked to achieve a more parsimonious measure for social media engagement intentions in the main study. For example, the correlation between "I will "Like" pictures/graphics related to this company" and "I will "Like" posts related to this company" was .98 across two experimental conditions. Such excessively correlated items potentially indicated that they actually measured the same thing except for measurement errors. In other words, participants who intended to "Like" pictures/graphics related to this company would also plan to "Like" posts related to this company. Similarly, high bivariate correlation values occurred for items related to "post," "pictures/graphics," and "videos." That said, participants in this present study did not respond differently to "post," "pictures/graphics," and "videos" regarding their behavioral intentions in social media engagement. Cao et al. (2021) combined these aspects in one item to measure social media engagement behaviors. Given this present research focused on participants' behavior intentions in social media engagement, items related to "posts," "pictures/graphics," and "videos" should be combined in the main study.

Next, the correlation between "I will unfollow this company on social media" and "I will terminate a subscription for future updates and content from this company" was excessively high (r_{high} = .95, r_{low} = .99). Although worded differently, participants in this study might perceive these two items almost the same. The item "I will unfollow this company on social media" was dropped because it was also highly correlated with the other two items ($r > .90$). Furthermore, the eight items intended to measure destruction were highly correlated ($r > .90$), especially in the low advocacy fit condition. The present study was the first study that empirically tested these items, so the high polychoric correlations provided valuable information about redundant

information in factor analysis due to similar items. Four items[5] were kept in the following analysis. More details about highly correlated items can be found in Table 34. This step enabled the main study to incorporate more variables without causing participants' fatigue due to an excessively long questionnaire.

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[5] The four items were "I will talk negatively on this company-related content online," "I will publicly rate this company negatively," "I will comment negatively on posts, blogs, videos or pictures posted by this company", "I will report this company or company-related social media content for misconduct."

Table 34

Highly Correlated Items in Social Media Engagement Intentions Measurement (N = 295)

Item	Item	Correlation Total (*N* = 295)	Correlation High (*N* =148)	Correlation Low (*N* = 147)
I will read posts related to this company on social media.	I will watch pictures/graphics related to this company.	.90	.91	.89
I will "Like" pictures/graphics related to this company.	I will "Like" posts related to this company.	.98	.98	.98
I will post pictures/graphics related to this company.	I will post videos that show this company.	.91	.91	.91
I will comment on videos related to this company.	I will comment on posts related to this company.	.96	.97	.95
I will comment on videos related to this company.	I will comment on pictures/graphics related to this company.	.96	.97	.96
I will comment on posts related to this company.	I will comment on pictures/graphics related to this company.	.96	.98	.95
I will unlike this company's social media page.	I will unfollow this company on social media.	.92	.94	.90
I will unlike this company's social media page.	I will terminate a subscription for future updates and content from this company.	.90	.90	.89
I will unfollow this company on social media.	I will terminate a subscription for future updates and content from this company.	.97	.95	.99
I will unfollow this company on social media.	I will select to hide future posts from this company.	.94	.92	.97
I will terminate a subscription for future updates and content from this company.	I will select to hide future posts from this company.	.93	.89	.96
I will talk negatively on this company-related content online.	I will make negative comments to this company's forums.	.95	.93	.98
I will talk negatively on this company-related content online.	I will publicly rate this company negatively.	.94	.95	.94

Item	Item	Correlation		
		Total (*N* = 295)	High (*N* =148)	Low (*N* = 147)
I will talk negatively on this company-related content online.	I will comment negatively on posts, blogs, videos, or pictures posted by this company.	.93	.87	.95
I will make negative comments to this company's forums.	I will publicly rate this company negatively.	.93	.93	.94
I will make negative comments to this company's forums.	I will comment negatively on posts, blogs, videos, or pictures posted by this company.	.90	.86	.95
I will make negative comments to this company's forums.	I will write a public complaint on this company's social media page.	.92	.88	.98
I will publicly rate this company's products negatively.	I will publicly rate this company negatively.	.93	.88	.97
I will publicly rate this company negatively.	I will write a public complaint on this company's social media page.	.92	.91	.93
I will comment negatively on posts, blogs, videos, or pictures posted by this company.	I will write a public complaint on this company's social media page.	.95	.96	.95
I will comment negatively on posts, blogs, videos, or pictures posted by this company.	I will write negative product reviews and/or testimonials on my own social media content.	.93	.90	.96
I will write a public complaint on this company's social media page.	I will write negative product reviews and/or testimonials on my own social media content.	.91	.91	.91

Next, the remaining 21 items were included in a new CFA model with the WLSMV estimator in Mplus. Given the extremely high skewness and kurtosis values, four measured destruction items were still specified as categorical variables. Results indicated that the 21-item model overall had an acceptable model fit to the data (RMSEA = .056, 95%CI RMSEA = [.047, .065], CFI = .944, SRMR = .052). The standardized factor loadings, Coefficient Hs, and AVEs can be found in Table 35. The factor correlation matrix can be found in Table 36. Coefficient Hs were above .90, demonstrating satisfactory construct reliabilities. After comparing AVEs with the squared factor correlations, there were slight concerns regarding the consumption-contribution correlation constructs and the contribution-creation constructs. However, the difference was very small, less than 0.02. Overall, discriminant validity was generally acceptable for this parsimonious model.

Table 35

Standardized Factor Loadings, Coefficient Hs, and AVEs in the 21-item CFA Model (N = 295)

	Standardized Factor Loading	Coefficient H	AVE
Factor 1: Consumption			
I will read posts[6] related to this company on social media.	.92		
I will follow this company on social media.	.93	.94	.80
I will read fanpage(s) related to this company on social media.	.84		
I will follow blogs related to this company.	.85		
Factor 2: Contribution			
I will comment on posts related to this company.	.84	.92	.78
I will share this company's related posts.	.92		
I will "Like" posts related to this company.	.89		
Factor 3: Creation			
I will initiate posts related to this company on social media.	.91	.94	.78
I will write posts related to this company on forums.	.93		
I will write reviews related to this company.	.85		

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[6] In the main study, the item will also add picture/graphic/video to cover other related aspects.

	Standardized Factor Loading	Coefficient *H*	AVE
I will initiate posts related to this company on blogs.	.86		
Factor 4: Dormancy			
I will take no action if the company-related content is delivered to me.	.84		
I will not express any opinions or feelings about this company on its social media page.	.96	.95	.82
I will not express any opinions or feelings about this company on my own social media page.	.92		
Factor 5: Detachment			
I will unlike this company's social media page.	.91		
I will select to hide future posts from this company.	.95	.98	.91
I will terminate a subscription for future updates and content from this company.	.99		
Factor 6: Destruction			
I will talk negatively about this company-related content online.	.97		
I will publicly rate this company negatively.	.96	.98	.88
I will write a public complaint on this company's social media page.	.96		
I will report this company or company-related social media content for misconduct.	.85		

Table 36

Factor Correlation Matrix for the 21-item CFA Model (N = 295)

	consumption	contribution	creation	dormancy	detachment	destruction
consumption	1					
contribution	.91***	1				
creation	.85***	.90***	1			
dormancy	-.71***	.80***	-.67***	1		
detachment	-.60***	-.55***	-.40***	.34***	1	
destruction	-.28**	-.20**	-.06	-.03	.55***	1

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

4.2.6 Pilot Study Summary

The pilot study laid a solid foundation for the main experiment regarding the design of experimental conditions and measurement validation of social media engagement intentions. First of all, participants' responses revealed that perceived fit and congruency could be manipulated through the connections between a company and its stance on a sociopolitical issue. A growing body of research has investigated the role of fit in CSA, even though CSA is not often determined by available connections or predetermined congruency between a company and an issue (Hong & Li, 2021; Parcha & Westerman, 2020; Lim & Young, 2021). As commented by Browning et al. (2020), the fit has multiple meanings beyond the relatedness to the core business. Publics' perceived advocacy fit also happens in a CSA when the congruence is originated from a company's value, identity, image, or character (Hong & Li, 2021). An important aspect of perceived CSA-brand fit is associated with a company's identity, which could align publics' expectations of a company (Lim & Young, 2021). The advocacy fit established through the alignment with the organizational identity helps a company achieve moral legitimacy (Lim & Young, 2021). Furthermore, the congruency between company identity and advocated issues can enhance the signaling role of CSA. The pilot study contributed to this line of research by discovering that participants' perceived match, congruency, relatedness, and similarity increased when there were explicit connections between a company's identity, history, and value to its response to a sociopolitical issue.

Another significant value of the pilot study was to validate a comprehensive measure of publics' intentions in engaging a company on social media (i.e., social media engagement intentions). Perloff (2003) defined behavioral intentions as "the intention to perform a particular behavior, a plan to put behavior into effect" (p. 93), which is "an intermediate variable between

attitude and behavior" (Ki & Hon. 2007, p. 7). This study approached social media engagement intentions as a type of behavioral intention and validated its structure. Hence, this study shed light on how publics plan or intend to engage with a company on social media in a CSA context. The results empirically presented six types of social media engagement behavioral intentions, consistent with Dolan et al. (2016)'s conceptual framework. These six types (consumption, contribution, creation, dormancy, detachment, and destruction) covered diverse intensities and valences of social media engagement intentions.

Aligned with prior studies (Tsai & Men, 2013), participants in the pilot study did not present a strong intention to engage the focal company in a proactive approach. Instead, they preferred to remain dormant or just reactively consume the company's information. Dolan et al. (2016) conceptualized dormancy and consumption as more passive engagement behaviors with lower intensity. Comparatively, participants did not intend to engage with the focal company with creation or destruction behaviors. Particularly, the majority of participants in the present study showed extremely low intentions in performing destructive social media engagement behaviors. The negative valenced, destructive behaviors, such as negative word-of-mouth communication, can be driven by other factors such as attitudes toward complaining (Lau & Ng, 2001). Additionally, using a fictitious company in the pilot study might affect whether and how participants intended to interact with the company. For example, in Sung and Kim's (2014) experiment, participants exposed to a fictitious company presented lower purchase intentions than those exposed to a real company. Especially, Dolan et al.'s (2016) definition of dormancy assumes online users have interacted with the focal company or brand previously. Thus, past experiences with a company can be a driving force for online users' social media engagement intentions.

Overall, the scale developed in the pilot study facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of diverse actions that publics plan to perform when they respond to CSA. It allows a holistic and inclusive view of social media engagement intentions, a key concept in public relations with the rising new communication technologies. Furthermore, the proposed parsimonious measurement model is valuable for future research to test this critical outcome (i.e., social media engagement behavior intentions) while incorporating many other variables.

4.2.7   Limitations of the Pilot Study

Though the pilot study was valuable in developing a full-scale experiment, its limitations should still be recognized. First of all, the usage of Prolific for data collection was still limited given its differences from the U.S. population. Particularly, participants recruited showed more tendency toward the liberal side with 3.52/5 as the average score of political view. The overall younger, more educated, and more liberal sample might not represent the United States population well. Second, this study was subject to social desirability bias, given the sensitive topic and self-reported approach. But as argued by Larsen et al. (2020), online surveys reduce the possibility of social desirability due to indirect communication. Moreover, confidentiality and strict anonymity were highlighted multiple times in the survey to repress participants' concerns. Third, although the development of the parsimonious measurement model prevents overly long questions for participants to complete, the process remains exploratory in nature. Especially when the measure is applied to actual social media engagement, more validation work should be conducted to ensure the items capture the full scope of engagement activities. Additionally, this dissertation validated social media engagement intentions as a dependent variable in an experimental design. Future research can utilize survey-based designs to fully investigate this construct across diverse contexts. Fourth, not all variables were included in the pilot study. In

other words, the pilot study was not designed to directly answer the research questions or test the proposed hypotheses. Therefore, a full-scale main experiment was proposed in the next section, building on the pilot study's findings.

4.3   Main Study

After the pilot study verified the validity of experimental manipulations and proposed the parsimonious measure of social media engagement intentions, a between-subject randomized experiment was conducted to understand the impacts of advocacy fit and social identities on CSA communication effectiveness in the main study. The main study was designed to test all hypotheses and answer the third, fourth, and fifth research questions. As one type of quantitative research method, an experiment is "a method of studying the effect of variables in a situation where all other influences are held constant" (Reinard, 2007, p. 16). It is often used to investigate causal inference (Singleton & Straits, 2017). Specifically, the main study examined the effects of advocacy fit and publics' social identities on publics' attributions of CSA, attitudes toward the company, and social media engagement intentions. In addition, the relations between the group-based social identities and individual-level situational factors (e.g., STOPS situational variables and attitudes toward the issue) were investigated. Given the selected issue of racial justice, two racial groups (African Americans and White Americans) were recruited. Race is one of the readily accessible social categorizations (Hogg, 2018), so this study focused on race/ethnicity as the basis of and possible trigger for publics' social identities in the studied context. When studying the BLM Movement, prior studies have focused on Blacks and Whites (e.g., Holt & Sweitzer, 2018; Sawyer & Gampa, 2018) because "categories of White and Black have been the primary axis of racism in the United States" (Sawyer & Gampa, 2018, p. 1042). This section is

devoted to detailing the recruitment, procedures, measures, data analysis, and discussion in the main study.

4.3.1   Participants Recruitment

Sample Size Planning. SEM usually requires a large sample size (Kline, 2016), which depends on the number of variables, the size of the factor loadings, indicator reliability, missing data, data distributions, and many other considerations (Kyriazos, 2018). Some traditional rules of thumb offer suggestions for the number of participants, such as *N:p* ratio (e.g., 5-10 cases per measured item) or *N:q* (e.g., 5-20 per measured variable per estimated parameter) (Kyriazos, 2018). Kline (2016) recommended 200 as the medium sample size with no missing scores on dependent and independent variables but also commented that 200 would be too small for a relatively complex model with non-normal data distributions. Hancock and French (2015) provided a sample size table to help conduct sample size planning to test data-model fit. The sample size of 300 can be sufficient when the degree of freedom (*d*) is larger than 40, and the number of estimated parameters is not too large that violates sample size guidelines such as 5 cases per estimated parameters (Hancock & Freeman, 2001).

In addition to the overall data-model fit, testing parameters within a model was also considered. Although the Monte Carlo approach has been suggested by prior scholars for sample size planning (Hancock & French, 2013; Wolf et al., 2013), challenges existed for this main study because there was limited available information about the path coefficient estimates of ingroup identification on the studied outcomes as well as the path coefficient estimates of attitudes on social media dormancy, detachment, destruction behavioral intentions. Therefore, prior literature on the studied constructs were consulted for a tentative Monte Carlo simulation in Mplus. For example, Wang et al. (2012) found the coefficients for fan identification on attitudes

towards international sponsors to be 0.304. Holt and Sweitzer (2020) found the significant impact of ethnic identity on African Americans' BLM attitudes ($\beta = .44$). Therefore, the path coefficient was set as .35 for the effect of ingroup identification on the positive outcome, such as perceived value-driven motives for the African American group. For the impact of advocacy fit, .20 was used as the expected path coefficient for the effect of advocacy fit on perceived value-driven motives, guided by prior literature (e.g., Hong & Li, 2020; Lim & Young, 2021). The Monte Carlo simulation revealed that 500 participants would result in a greater than 95% probability of rejecting the null hypothesis. However, the sample size did not fully consider the group differences due to the unknown differences in unstandardized path coefficients across groups. With additional considerations of the high cost of data collection, 1000 participants, 500 for each group, were planned for recruitment in the main study.

Demographic Information for Participants. The main study was developed to examine the effects of advocacy fit and publics' racial ingroup identification on White American and African American publics' evaluations of CSA and the race relations issue. Data were collected from March 12 to March 27, 2022. Using a Prolific's prescreening criterion (i.e., ethnicity), five hundred White American and five hundred African American participants were recruited. To ensure reliable responses, a minimum approval rate was set up to recruit participants (e.g., a Prolific score of at least 90). Also, participants who completed the pilot study were excluded from the main study, with another prescreening criterion. Participants who completed the pilot study were compensated $3.00 for 20 minutes, with an additional 33% service fee paid to Prolific. Given the research purpose, 35 participants were removed from the following data analysis because they selected more than one ethnic group in the demographic question "Which of the following best describes your race? Please check all that apply." Multiracial individuals'

racial identity, racial identification, and racial category intertwine with each other and depend on the context (Rockquemore et al., 2009). Thus, it is not possible to categorize them into one single racial category, either White Americans or African Americans. As a result, four hundred and eighty-eight White American and four hundred and seventy-seven African American participants remained in the final analysis.

The demographic information and political view of participants from both groups can be found in Table 37. The U.S. Census Bureau (2021) released the educational attainment of the population 18 years and over in the United States, which was used to compare with the studied samples. After comparing age distributions, the studied samples, both White American and African American, were younger than the U.S. population. The distribution of sex in the White American group generally mirrored the U.S. population. But a much low portion of male African American participants was recruited than the U.S. population 18 years and over ($P_{\text{sample}} = 38.6\%$, $P_{\text{population}} = 49.1\%$). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2021), around 35% of White American and 25% of African American population obtained a Bachelor's degree or higher[7]. However, the studied samples were more educated, with over 65% of White American and 45% of African American participants. Next, based on the U.S. Census Bureau's population report on income ad poverty (2020), the median income was $71,231 for White and $45,870 for Black. The current studied sample overall reflected the population regarding the incomes. Lastly, regarding the political view, Gallup's (2022) political ideology trend based on 12,000 U.S. adults was used to compare with the studied samples. As a result, participants in the sampled two groups appeared to be more liberal than the U.S. population. To summarize, samples in the main study were younger, more educated, and more liberal than the U.S. population.

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[7] The percentages were calculated based on the data released by the U.S. Census Bureau titled "Educational Attainment in the United States: 2021".

Table 37

Demographic Characteristics of Participants in the Main Study (N = 965)

Variable	White American (N = 488)				African American (N = 477)			
	min	max	Mean	SD	min	max	Mean	SD
Completion Duration (seconds)	255	3403	744.97	475.59	248	174366	1531.88	8350.02
Age	18	79	40.62	13.04	18	79	34.22	12.09
Political View	1	5	3.46	1.21	1	5	3.78	0.98
		N	%	Cumulative %		N	%	Cumulative %
Gender								
Male		233	47.7	47.7		184	38.6	38.6
Female		251	51.4	99.2		286	60.0	98.5
Non-binary/Third gender		3	0.6	99.8		6	1.3	99.8
Prefer not to answer		1	0.2	100		1	0.2	100.0
Education								
Less than a high school diploma		2	0.4	0.4		4	0.8	0.8
Graduated high school or equivalent (e.g., GED)		48	9.8	10.2		66	13.8	14.7
Some college, no degree		85	17.4	27.7		129	27.0	41.7
Associate degree (e.g., AA, AS)		34	7	34.6		50	10.5	52.2
Bachelors' degree (e.g., BA, BS)		218	44.7	79.3		178	37.3	89.5
Master's degree (e.g., MA, MS, MEd)		75	15.4	94.7		40	8.4	97.9
Professional degree (e.g., MD, DDS, DVM)		15	3.1	97.7		8	1.7	99.6
Doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD)		11	2.3	100		1	0.2	99.8
Prefer not tell		0	0.0	100		1	0.2	100
Income								
Less than $10,000		14	2.9	2.9		37	7.8	7.8
$10,000 to $19,999		38	7.8	10.7		30	6.3	14.0
$20,000 to $29,999		41	8.4	19.1		66	13.8	27.9
$30,000 to $39,999		34	7	26		59	12.4	40.3
$40,000 to $49,999		42	8.6	34.6		50	10.5	50.7
$50,000 to $59,999		46	9.4	44.1		58	12.2	62.9
$60,000 to $69,999		32	6.6	50.6		32	6.7	69.6

Variable	White American (N = 488)			African American (N = 477)		
$70,000 to $79,999	43	8.8	59.4	33	6.9	76.5
$80,000 to $89,999	21	4.3	63.7	19	4.0	80.5
$90,000 to $99,999	47	9.6	73.4	22	4.6	85.1
$100,000 to $149,999	74	15.2	88.5	49	10.3	95.4
$150,000 or more	56	11.5	100	22	4.6	100.0

4.3.2   *Experimental Manipulations and Procedure*

The main study was posted on Prolific with the IRB approval. The pilot study showed that the manipulated advocacy fit in two experimental conditions successfully elicited participants' different perceptions of the match, relatedness, similarity, consistency, and congruency, accordingly. Hence, the same experimental conditions were used in the main study without additional revisions (see section 4.2.2 Experimental Manipulations).

After Prolific participants signed the electronic consent form and entered their Prolific IDs, they were asked about their racial ingroup identification. Next, participants were randomly assigned to one scenario, either the high advocacy fit or the low advocacy fit. Same as the pilot study, the experimental conditions and surveys were formatted on Qualtrics. Then, participants were asked to read a fictitious company's (B&C Pizza Company) introduction and its Facebook post. A 15-second timer was set up to ensure participants read the introduction and the post carefully. After reading the stimulus, participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire to assess their perceived motives of CSA, attitudes toward the company, and social media engagement intentions. Furthermore, participants were asked about their perceptions of race relations (problem recognition, involvement recognition, constraint recognition, referent criterion, and situational motivation in problem solving) and their attitudes toward the BLM Movement. Finally, demographic information (gender, age, sex, education, and income) and participants' political views were collected, due to their potential impacts on CSA perceptions (Austin et al., 2019). At the end of the questionnaire, participants were thanked and debriefed with a written statement that explained the use of the fictitious company and its social media post. Participants were offered chances to revoke their responses.

4.3.3   Measures

Perceived advocacy fit was measured with the same items and scales as the pilot study. The measures of social media engagement intentions were built on the pilot study results and adopted the more parsimonious measures. Measurements for other variables were adopted and adapted from existing literature. The detailed questionnaire can be found in Appendix E.

Racial ingroup Identification. This measure was adopted from the work of Martinez and Ramasubramanian (2015). A 7-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 7 = very much) was used, and it contained seven items: "How strong a sense of belonging do you have with your race or ethnicity?" "How similar do you feel to your race or ethnicity as a whole in terms of general attitudes and beliefs?" "How closely knit are you with others of your race or ethnicity?" "How included do you feel by others of your race or ethnicity?" "How much do you identify with other members of your race or ethnicity?" "How important is your racial/ethnic identification to your self-image? And "How strong are your ties to other members of your race or ethnicity?"

Perceived CSA Motives. Based on prior studies (Cheng et al., 2018; Ellen et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2020), four perceived motives underlying the company's CSA were measured. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale to ask participants' levels of agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

1) Perceived value-driven motives were measured with three items: "The company feels morally obligated to help," "The company has a long-term interest in the community," and "The company is trying to give something back to society."

2) Perceived egoistic motives covered three items: "The company is trying to capitalize on the growing social issue," "The company is taking advantage of this social cause to help its

own business," and "The company is trying to benefit from the increased awareness of social problems."

3) ***Perceived stakeholder-driven motives*** included three items: "The feels its customers expect it to advocate for this issue," "The company feels society, in general, expects it to advocate for this issue," and "The company feels its stakeholders expect it to advocate for this issue."

4) ***Perceived strategic-driven motives*** contained four items: "This company wants to get new customers by advocating for this issue," "This company wants to keep existing customers by advocating for this issue," "This company hopes to increase profits by advocating for this issue," "This company hopes to increase its competitiveness by advocating for this issue."

Attitude toward a company. Four 7-point semantic differential items were adopted from MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) to measure participants' attitudes toward the focal company. Four items were: bad – good, unpleasant – pleasant, unfavorable – favorable, negative – positive.

Social Media Engagement Intentions. Derived from prior studies (Cao et al., 2021; Dolan et al., 2016; Schivinski et al., 2016; Tsai & Men, 2015) and empirically tested in the pilot study, 21 items were used to measure six types of social media engagement intentions. The item selection and item wording modification were conducted based on the pilot study results. Participants were asked the extent to which they agreed with the statements regarding their potential social media interactions with the focal company (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

1) ***Consumption*** contained four items: "I will read posts (e.g., text/videos/pictures/graphics) related to this company on social media," "I will read fan pages

related to this company on social media," "I will follow this company on social media," and "I will follow blogs related to this company."

2) *Contribution* was measured with three items, which were "I will comment on posts/videos/pictures/graphics related to this company on social media," "I will share this company's related posts on social media," and "I will 'Like' posts/videos/pictures/graphics related to this company."

3) *Creation* was assessed with four items: "I will initiate posts/videos/pictures/graphics related to this company on social media," "I will write posts related to this company on forums," "I will write reviews related to this company," and "I will initiate posts related to this company on blogs."

4) *Dormancy* included three items: "I will take no action if the company-related content is delivered to me," "I will not express any opinions or feelings about this company on its social media page," and "I will not express any opinions or feelings about this company on my own social media page."

5) *Detachment* was measured with additional instructions. First, participants were instructed to imagine that they currently liked, followed, or subscribed to the company's social media account. Then, they were asked the extent to which they would "unlike this company's social media page," "terminate a subscription for future updates and content from this company," and "select to hide future posts from this company."

6) *Destruction* covered four items "I will talk negatively about this company-related content online," "I will comment negatively on posts, blogs, videos, or pictures posted by this company," "I will publicly rate this company negatively," and "I will report this company or company-related social media content for misconduct."

Social Media Dependency. Based on Men and Muralidharan (2017, p. 90), social media dependency assesses the extent to which people rely on social media for information and networking. It was measured with a four-item 7-point Likert scale. The four items were: "I would rather spend my leisure time on social media than someplace else," "Using social media is one of the more important things that I do each day," "If the social media weren't working, I would really miss it," and "I could easily do without using any type of social media for a given day (reversed)." This variable was used as a control variable because it affected public engagement on social media (Men & Tsai, 2013).

To capture participants' perceptions of racial justice in the United States, STOPS's situational variables (problem recognition, involvement recognition, constraint recognition, referent criterion, and situational motivation in problem solving) were measured based on Kim and Grunig's (2017) suggested measures. To reduce the impacts of social desirability bias, two sentences were provided to highlight the anonymity and confidentiality of the study, which were "Please remember that your answers are absolutely anonymous and will never be linked to your personal identity or information. Your frank answers will make a great contribution to the research." All items were measured on a 1-7 Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Participants were told that "For each statement, please consider racial discrimination and inequality in the United States as the/this issue."

1) *Issue recognition* was measured by three items: "I think the issue is a serious social or national problem," "The government should take action to solve this issue," and "Something should be done immediately to solve this issue."

2) ***Involvement recognition*** consisted of three items: "I see a close connection between myself and this issue," "I think this issue could affect me personally," and "I am connected with this issue and its consequences."

3) ***Constraint recognition*** was measured by three items, including: "I can make a difference in the way this issue is solved," "I feel I can improve this problematic situation," "I feel like my ideas and opinions matter to those in the government (or corporation) who are working on this issue."

4) ***Referent criterion*** was assessed with three items: "I have clear ideas about how to deal with this issue," "I could easily come up with a plan to deal with this issue," and "I have faced a similar problem in the past."

5) **Situation Motivation** covered three items: "I frequently think about this issue," "I would like to better understand this issue," and "I am curious about this issue."

Attitude toward the BLM Movement. Participants were also asked about their opinions on the BLM Movement. A seven-point Likert-like scale was adopted from the work of Holt and Sweitzer (2020). Six items were included: "My personal attitude about the Black Lives Matter movement is that I: Dislike it a great deal – Like it a great deal," "In my opinion, the Black Lives Matter movement is: Very bad – Very good," "My attitude toward the Black Lives Matter movement is: Very unfavorable – Very favorable," "In terms of the Black Lives Matter movement, I think what protesters are doing is: Very unwise – Very wise," "In my opinion, the Black Lives Matter movement will ultimately prove to be: Very unbeneficial – Very beneficial," "To what extent do you agree that the Black Lives movement is necessary? "Very unnecessary" – "Very necessary." The higher number indicated more positive attitude toward the BLM Movement.

Demographic Information. Age, sex, education, and income were collected in this study. Political ideology was measured by a 5-point semantic differential scale (1 = very conservative, 5 = very liberal), according to Austin et al. (2019).

4.3.4   Data Analysis and Results

4.3.4.1 Manipulation Check. To double-check how the manipulation of advocacy fit affected participants' perceptions of congruency and relevance between the focal company and its support for the BLM Movement in the main study, five independent *t*-tests with Bonferroni correction were conducted for the total, White American, and African American participants. Levene's tests for quality of variances showed the homogeneity of variance assumption (i.e., the variances of two groups are not equal) were not ensured. Therefore, the rows of SPSS outputs, "Equal variance not assumed," were reported. The *t*-test results showed that all White American and African American participants perceived the high advocacy fit condition was more related, associated, similar, and congruent than the low advocacy fit condition (see Table 38). And the focal company and its CSA were considered a stronger match in the high, instead of low, advocacy fit. Again, the manipulation of advocacy fit was successful. The descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis) for the five items that measured participants' perceptions of advocacy fit were reported in Table 39.

Table 38

Perceptions of Advocacy Fit across Experimental Conditions in the Main Study (N = 965)

Fit Perceptions	Fit Conditions	Total (N = 965)				White American (N =488)				African American (N = 477)			
		N	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*
Related	High	482	6.03	1.43	16.52	243	5.86	1.55	12.73	239	6.20	1.28	10.84
	low	483	4.14	2.06	***	245	3.78	2.03	***	238	4.52	2.03	***
Associated	High	482	6.07	1.44	16.87	243	5.92	1.61	12.92	239	6.22	1.22	11.16
	low	483	4.15	2.04	***	245	3.78	2.03	***	238	4.54	1.98	***
Similar	High	482	5.90	1.49	16.12	243	5.78	1.58	12.71	239	6.03	1.39	10.27
	low	483	4.12	1.92	***	245	3.73	1.96	***	238	4.51	1.80	***
Congruent	High	482	5.93	1.47	14.31	243	5.78	1.62	11.25	239	6.08	1.29	9.20
	low	483	4.35	1.92	***	245	3.93	1.99	***	238	4.78	1.75	***
Match	High	482	6.03	1.42	16.31	243	5.86	1.61	12.09	239	6.20	1.18	11.29
	low	483	4.25	1.93	***	245	3.88	1.98	***	238	4.62	1.81	***

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 39

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness, Kurtosis for Perceived Advocacy Fit in the Main Study (N = 965)

Item	Total (N = 965)				White American (N =488)				African American (N = 477)			
	M	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Unrelated–Related	5.08	2.01	-0.84	-0.55	4.81	2.08	-0.66	-0.90	5.36	1.89	-1.05	-0.03
Incongruent–Congruent	5.14	1.92	-0.85	-0.37	4.84	2.12	-0.64	-0.97	5.41	1.72	-1.00	0.16
Unassociated–Associated	5.11	2.01	-0.84	-0.55	4.75	2.05	-0.61	-0.92	5.38	1.84	-1.07	0.10
Dissimilar–Similar	5.01	1.94	-0.76	-0.56	4.85	2.04	-0.68	-0.79	5.27	1.78	-0.89	-0.13

Item	Total (N = 965)				White American (N =488)				African American (N = 477)			
	M	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
A weak match–A strong match	5.14	1.89	-0.88	-0.29	4.86	2.06	-0.67	-0.81	5.43	1.67	-1.03	0.32

4.3.4.2 Effects of Advocacy Fit and Racial Ingroup Identification. This section details the first part of data analysis in the main study, which examined the proposed conceptual model in two racial groups. Hypothesis 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 were tested. Also, Research Question 3 and 5 were answered.

The primary purpose of the main study was to examine whether the non-CSA-supported group (White American) and CSA-supported group (African American) perceive CSA differently, and a multi-group approach was applied. As suggested by Morin et al. (2016), measurement invariance is "an important prerequisite to any form of valid group-based comparison" (p. 410). The multigroup confirmatory factor analysis (MCFA) was selected to test the measurement invariance because it allows comparisons of factor model features, such as factor loadings, item intercepts, and factor means (French & Finch, 2008). In total, 965 observations were included.

Data Preparation. The first step was to perform data screening. First, no missing data was detected. Second, the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis for each item across two groups are reported in Table 40 to Table 43[8]. The absolute skewness and kurtosis values for the majority of items were less than 2. But similar to the pilot study, the items for destruction behavioral intentions on social media remained highly skewed (|Skewness| > 3) and leptokurtic (|Kurtosis| > 7). Specifically, over 75% of participants selected "1 = strongly disagree", which revealed the difficulties of demonstrating destructive social media engagement intention. Next, Mardia's multivariate skewness and kurtosis coefficients and their corresponding statistical significance were calculated. Both tests were significant, and Mardia's normalized multivariate kurtosis values were much greater than 3.0 ($p < .001$). Thus, the univariate and multivariate

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[8] Given the limited space in tables, only the item number was present. The corresponding item contents can be found in Appendix E.

normality assumptions were violated in the existing data set, requiring other estimation methods other than maximum likelihood (Bandalos & Finney, 2019). The WLSMV estimator could not be used because participants did not select all levels of destruction items across two racial groups. As a result, the MLM estimator was applied in the following data analyses. Third, outlier detection techniques were used. Regarding the univariate outliers, z-scores were calculated to check for extreme cases (i.e., absolute 3 standard deviations from the mean). The z-score test indicated 78 outliers, which occurred for items in destruction behavioral intentions on social media. Then, Mahalanobis D was used to screen for multivariate outliers, revealing 33 outliers. A further investigation for these outliers excluded the possibilities of measurement errors or data entry errors. Hence, all outliers remained in the following analyses.

Table 40

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness, Kurtosis of Racial Ingroup Identification in the Main Study (N = 965)

Item	Total (N = 965)				White American (N =488)				African American (N = 477)			
	M	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
RII 1	5.01	1.67	-0.65	-0.42	4.35	1.65	-0.24	-0.71	5.68	1.41	-1.31	1.48
RII 12	4.99	1.54	-0.60	-0.17	4.50	1.53	-0.29	-0.33	5.50	1.39	-1.06	0.98
RII 13	4.66	1.52	-0.38	-0.40	4.22	1.44	-0.24	-0.35	5.12	1.47	-0.65	-0.03
RII 14	5.16	1.51	-0.75	0.10	5.02	1.51	-0.68	0.06	5.30	1.50	-0.84	0.22
RII 15	4.88	1.61	-0.53	-0.45	4.43	1.57	-0.27	-0.50	5.34	1.53	-0.91	0.23
RII 16	4.57	1.97	-0.35	-1.09	3.66	1.84	0.22	-0.99	5.51	1.62	-1.10	0.48
RII 17	4.75	1.64	-0.41	-0.59	4.31	1.57	-0.18	-0.47	5.21	1.58	-0.75	-0.21

Note: Given the space limit, the abbreviations for factor names were used.

RII = Racial ingroup identification

Table 41

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness, Kurtosis of Perceived CSR Motives in the Main Study (N = 965)

Item	Total (N = 965)				White American (N =488)				African American (N = 477)			
	M	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Value-driven												
Value 1	5.65	1.48	-1.22	1.10	5.55	1.56	-1.20	0.89	5.75	1.39	-1.21	1.22
Value 2	5.70	1.44	-1.30	1.48	5.53	1.51	-1.18	1.11	5.86	1.34	-1.42	1.95
Value 3	5.77	1.46	-1.45	1.81	5.59	1.60	-1.29	1.04	5.96	1.28	-1.56	2.65
Egoistic												
Egoistic 1	3.78	2.00	0.07	-1.27	3.95	1.98	0.01	-1.27	3.60	1.99	0.14	-1.26
Egoistic 2	3.54	2.00	0.24	-1.22	3.78	2.04	0.13	-1.31	3.29	1.93	0.35	-1.10
Egoistic 3	3.86	2.01	-0.02	-1.28	4.14	2.01	-0.17	-1.29	3.58	1.97	0.12	-1.21
Stakeholder-driven												
Stakeholder 1	4.76	1.65	-0.57	-0.32	4.75	1.59	-0.60	-0.19	4.76	1.71	-0.55	-0.43
Stakeholder 2	4.71	1.66	-0.53	-0.38	4.69	1.62	-0.52	-0.34	4.73	1.71	-0.55	-0.41
Stakeholder 3	4.38	1.70	-0.32	-0.59	4.52	1.66	-0.36	-0.51	4.24	1.73	-0.27	-0.67

Item	Total (N = 965)				White American (N =488)				African American (N = 477)			
	M	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Strategic-driven												
Strategic 1	4.38	1.84	-0.38	-0.83	4.55	1.73	-0.44	-0.61	4.19	1.92	-0.28	-1.02
Strategic 2	4.84	1.66	-0.71	-0.11	4.89	1.59	-0.75	0.11	4.80	1.73	-0.67	-0.31
Strategic 3	4.25	1.86	-0.28	-0.94	4.46	1.80	-0.37	-0.80	4.03	1.90	-0.18	-1.06
Strategic 4	4.21	1.87	-0.28	-0.96	4.44	1.80	-0.41	-0.77	3.98	1.90	-0.15	-1.09

Table 42

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness, Kurtosis of Attitude toward the Company in the Main Study (N = 965)

Item	Total (N = 965)				White American (N =488)				African American (N = 477)			
	M	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Bad – Good	5.51	1.617	-1.09	0.58	5.19	1.81	-0.89	-0.13	5.83	1.32	-1.08	0.80
Unpleasant – Pleasant	5.5	1.653	-1.13	0.62	5.17	1.87	-0.87	-0.27	5.84	1.32	-1.23	1.45
Unfavorable – Favorable	5.48	1.683	-1.09	0.43	5.18	1.90	-0.87	-0.36	5.79	1.37	-1.15	1.06
Negative – Positive	5.55	1.667	-1.19	0.69	5.20	1.91	-0.90	-0.31	5.91	1.29	-1.28	1.55

Table 43

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness, Kurtosis of Social Media Engagement Intentions in the Main Study (N = 965)

Item	Total (N = 965)				White American (N =488)				African American (N = 477)			
	M	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Consumption												
Consumption 1	4.14	1.99	-0.22	-1.17	3.83	2.11	-0.04	-1.39	4.46	1.88	-0.39	-0.90
Consumption 2	3.18	1.92	0.46	-0.96	2.87	1.89	0.66	-0.73	3.47	1.94	0.29	-1.06
Consumption 3	3.56	2.11	0.19	-1.33	3.21	2.07	0.41	-1.21	3.86	2.12	0.01	-1.35

Item	Total (N = 965)				White American (N = 488)				African American (N = 477)			
	M	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Consumption 4	2.94	1.90	0.63	-0.77	2.60	1.71	0.81	-0.32	3.27	2.00	0.42	-1.09
Contribution												
Contribution 1	2.92	1.89	0.63	-0.77	2.48	1.72	0.95	-0.16	3.37	1.95	0.33	-1.04
Contribution 2	3.02	1.97	0.53	-1.00	2.59	1.82	0.85	-0.47	3.47	2.02	0.23	-1.22
Contribution 3	4.06	2.20	-0.18	-1.41	3.56	2.21	0.15	-1.48	4.57	2.07	-0.50	-1.03
Creation												
Creation 1	2.41	1.72	1.12	0.30	2.03	1.48	1.55	1.81	2.81	1.86	0.77	-0.48
Creation 2	2.30	1.68	1.27	0.72	1.97	1.45	1.67	2.27	2.65	1.83	0.95	-0.15
Creation 3	3.09	1.94	0.41	-1.10	2.81	1.87	0.60	-0.88	3.37	1.98	0.22	-1.21
Creation 4	2.24	1.70	1.32	0.71	1.83	1.41	1.93	3.23	2.66	1.86	0.89	-0.39
Dormancy												
Dormancy 1	4.40	1.89	-0.19	-1.02	4.77	1.80	-0.45	-0.84	4.03	1.90	0.07	-1.02
Dormancy 2	4.50	2.01	-0.23	-1.22	4.90	1.92	-0.50	-1.12	4.09	2.03	0.04	-1.25
Dormancy 3	4.78	2.03	-0.45	-1.11	5.18	1.91	-0.76	-0.64	4.36	2.07	-0.16	-1.30
Detachment												
Detachment 1	2.12	1.79	1.64	1.55	2.42	2.05	1.27	0.14	1.82	1.40	2.07	4.01
Detachment 2	2.22	1.88	1.47	0.87	2.53	2.14	1.14	-0.26	1.91	1.49	1.79	2.51
Detachment 3	2.29	1.91	1.39	0.64	2.65	2.18	1.05	-0.45	1.93	1.51	1.71	2.18
Destruction												
Destruction 1	1.41	1.00	3.12	10.39	1.50	1.17	2.82	7.83	1.31	0.78	3.19	11.21
Destruction 2	1.35	0.91	3.57	14.38	1.39	1.02	3.43	12.72	1.30	0.77	3.47	13.77
Destruction 3	1.44	1.05	3.06	10.01	1.52	1.23	2.80	7.64	1.35	0.83	3.00	10.60
Destruction 4	1.32	0.87	3.63	14.86	1.35	0.95	3.58	14.23	1.29	0.77	3.49	13.54

Measurement Invariance: Configural, Metric, and Scalar Invariance Tests. First of all,

two separate CFA models were conducted on both White American and African American

samples to check whether the measurement model was tenable for each group. The initial models

achieved an acceptable fit, but the modification indices suggested that some paths between

measurement error terms should be added. As advocated by Bandalos and Finney (2019), the

post-hoc model modification should be carried out with substantively meaningful justifications.

A further investigation revealed two pairs of unmodeled covariation due to similar wording

effects. After adding the additional paths between error terms, the final model fit statistics were

summarized in Table 44. Results showed that the measurement performed well in both groups as

the model fit indices met the requirements set by Hu and Bentler (1999). Factor loadings,

coefficient *H*s, and AVEs across two groups were provided in Table 45. It showed that all latent

variables were reliably measured. The correlation matrix for each model was also presented in

Table 46 and Table 47. Consistent with the pilot study results, the correlations of consumption

and contribution remained extremely high across the two groups.

Table 44

Model Fit Indices for CFA Models across Two Racial Groups in the Main Study (N = 965)

	White American (*N* = 488)	**African American (*N* =477)**
$\chi^2(df)$	2287.74(1095) ***	1952.43(1.95) ***
Scaling correction factor	1.19	1.23
CFI	.95	.96
SRMR	.054	.047
RMSEA	.047 [.045, .050]	0.041 [.038, .043]

Table 45

Standardized Factor Loadings, Coefficient Hs, and AVEs in CFA Models across Two Racial

Groups (N = 965)

	White American (*N* = 488)			African American (*N* =477)		
	Standardized Factor loading	*H*	AVE	Standardized Factor loading	*H*	AVE
Racial Ingroup Identification						
Identification1	.89			.88		
Identification2	.92			.89		
Identification3	.84			.84		
Identification4	.77	.95	.72	.83	.95	.73
Identification5	.87			.89		
Identification6	.81			.78		
Identification7	.85			.87		
Perceived Advocacy Fit						
Perceived Advocacy Fit 1	.95			.93		
Perceived Advocacy Fit 2	.96			.91		
Perceived Advocacy Fit 3	.96	.98	.93	.93	.96	.84
Perceived Advocacy Fit 4	.97			.92		
Perceived Advocacy Fit 5	.96			.90		
Value-driven Motives						
Value-driven Motives 1	.91			.88		
Value-driven Motives 2	.84	.93	.81	.77	.90	.70
Value-driven Motives 3	.94			.85		
Egoistic Motives						
Egoistic Motives 1	.96			.90		
Egoistic Motives 2	.95	.96	.89	.95	.95	.84
Egoistic Motives 3	.91			.91		
Stakeholder-driven Motives						
Stakeholder-driven Motives 1	.92			.91		
Stakeholder-driven Motives 2	.89	.92	.79	.87	.90	.69
Stakeholder-driven Motives 3	.86			.71		
Strategic-driven Motives						
Strategic-driven Motives 1	.88			.86		
Strategic-driven Motives 2	.68	.95	.76	.61	.95	.72
Strategic-driven Motives 3	.95			.96		
Strategic-driven Motives 4	.91			.88		
Attitude toward the Company						
Attitude 1	.98			.93		
Attitude 2	.97	.99	.82	.95	.97	.61
Attitude 3	.99			.95		
Attitude 4	.98			.96		
Consumption						

	White American (N = 488)			African American (N =477)		
	Standardized Factor loading	*H*	AVE	Standardized Factor loading	*H*	AVE
Consumption 1	.90			.83		
Consumption 2	.81	.93	.76	.78	.92	.73
Consumption 3	.92			.92		
Consumption 4	.83			.86		
Contribution						
Contribution 1	.88			.86		
Contribution 2	.91	.92	.78	.92	.91	.75
Contribution 3	.86			.82		
Creation						
Creation 1	.91			.89		
Creation 2	.90	.94	.71	.93	.95	.78
Creation 3	.73			.80		
Creation 4	.90			.93		
Dormancy						
Dormancy 1	.82			.79		
Dormancy 2	.94	.92	.76	.91	.91	.75
Dormancy 3	.85			.89		
Detachment						
Detachment 1	.95			.90		
Detachment 2	.98	.98	.91	.92	.94	.82
Detachment 3	.93			.91		
Destruction						
Destruction 1	.94			.86		
Destruction 2	.90	.95	.80	.86	.93	.74
Destruction 3	.91			.86		
Destruction 4	.78			.88		

Table 46

Factor Correlation Matrix in the White American Group (N = 488)

	RII	Fit	Value	Egoistic	Stake	Stra	Att	Cons	Contri	Creat	Dorm	Detach	Destruct
RII	1												
Fit	-.10	1											
Value	-.09	.63	1										
Egoistic	.20	-.40	-.58	1									
Stake	.15	.03	-.04	.39	1								
Strategic	.22	-.25	-.35	.79	.52	1							
Att	-.12	.58	.79	-.62	-.14	-.42	1						
Cons	-.02	.46	.58	-.49	-.11	-.38	.71	1					
Contri	.03	.43	.51	-.44	-.10	-.31	.65	.90	1				
Creat	.11	.28	.31	-.23	-.01	-.16	.40	.71	.84	1			
Dorm	-.02	-.29	-.33	.31	.08	.22	-.43	-.67	-.77	-.66	1		
Detach	.22	-.46	-.68	.54	.13	.41	-.85	-.65	-.56	-.34	.38	1	
Destruct	.17	-.38	-.58	.35	.10	.23	-.53	-.53	-.21	-.06	.07	.57	1

Note: Given the space limit, the abbreviations for factor names were used.

RII = Racial ingroup identification; Stake = Stakeholder-driven motives, Att = Attitude toward the company, Cons = Consumption, Contri = Contribution, Crea = Creation, Dorm = Dormancy, Detach = Detachment, Destruc = Destruction

Table 47

Factor Correlation Matrix in the African American Group (N = 477)

	RII	Fit	Value	Egoistic	Stake	Stra	Att	Cons	Contri	Creat	Dorm	Detach	Destruct
RII	1												
Fit	.33	1											
Value	.39	.71	1										
Egoistic	-.26	-.43	-.60	1									
Stake	-.01	.10	.02	.31	1								
Strategic	-.13	-.29	-.44	.75	.42	1							
Att	.44	.66	.81	-.56	-.06	-.43	1						

	RII	Fit	Value	Egoistic	Stake	Stra	Att	Cons	Contri	Creat	Dorm	Detach	Destruct
Cons	.46	.48	.56	-.37	.02	-.30	.56	1					
Contri	.45	.47	.55	-.37	-.02	-.29	.53	.94	1				
Creat	.35	.32	.34	-.20	-.20	-.15	.35	.84	.84	1			
Dorm	-.42	-.38	-.43	.39	.05	.30	-.47	-.74	-.74	-.56	1		
Detach	.29	-.42	-.51	.39	.39	.34	-.61	-.36	-.35	-.17	.33	1	
Destruct	-.14	-.20	-.37	.25	-.004	.20	-.36	.03	.03	.17	.03	.51	1

Note: Given the space limit, the abbreviations for factor names were used.

RII = Racial ingroup identification; Stake = Stakeholder-driven motives, Att = Attitude toward the company, Cons = Consumption, Contri = Contribution, Crea = Creation, Dorm = Dormancy, Detach = Detachment, Destruc = Destruction

Next, a configural invariance model was specified in which the factor means were fixed to 0, and the factor variances were fixed to 1 for identification within each group. This step was to check whether the model was tenable for both groups simultaneously. In other words, all parameters were allowed to be unequal across groups. As shown in Table 51, the model had good fit ($\chi^2(2190) = 4234.98$, RMSEA = .044, 90%CI RMSEA = [.042, .046], CFI = .956, SRMR = .051). Hence, the CFA model worked for both groups simultaneously.

The equality of the unstandardized item factor loadings across two groups was examined by specifying a metric invariance model in which all factor loadings were constrained to be equal across groups. But all item thresholds were permitted to vary across groups. The factor variance was fixed to 1 for the White American group (reference group) and was freely estimated in the African American group. The factor means were fixed to 0 in both groups for identification. The model fit significantly worse than the configural invariance model, as evidenced by the significant Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 difference test result ($\chi^2(37) = 125.36$, $p < .001$). The model fit indices can be found in Table 48. As suggested by Hancock (2019), using MIs sequentially allowed the estimation of "the benefits of releasing each individual equality constraint" (p. 30). The Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 difference test was conducted for each release (see Table 49). As a result, the equality constraints of 9 items were released (e.g., "How strong a sense of belonging do you have with your race or ethnicity?"). It meant that these nine items were not related to the latent factors equivalently across two groups in this main study.

To meaningfully compare the factor means across groups, a scalar invariance model was specified in which the factor mean and variance were fixed to 0 and 1, respectively, for the White American group (reference group). The factor variance and mean were allowed to be freely estimated in the African American group. All factor loadings and item thresholds were

constrained to be equal across groups, except for the identified nine items. The scalar invariance

model fit the data significantly worse compared with the partial metric invariance model

(Satorra-Bentler scaled $\chi^2(27) = 114.74$, $p < .001$). Therefore, the scalar invariance did not hold,

or more simply, two groups have different expected item responses at the same absolute level of

the traits. Guided by the MIs, another 3 item intercepts were released sequentially: "How

included do you feel by others of your race or ethnicity?" "This company feels its stakeholders

expect it to advocate for this social issue," and "My attitude toward this B&C Pizza Company is:

negative – positive." The Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 difference test for scalar invariance model

can be found in Table 50.

The above analyses showed that full measurement invariance did not hold. However,

Byrne et al. (1989) pointed out that partial invariance of factor loadings and item thresholds were

allowed to make valid statistical inferences as well. Marin et al. (2013) suggested the minimum

partial measurement invariance that one factor loading and one intercept of each factor's

measurement item were equal across groups. The finalized multigroup model achieved the

minimum requirement of partial measurement invariance. Furthermore, for any single factor in

the model, there were at least two items with equivalence two factor loadings across groups.

Factor Means Across Groups (RQ3). The third research question asked the effects of

social group memberships on publics' responses to CSA. Comparing factor means across groups,

in part, provided answers to this question. After achieving the partial measurement invariance,

the factor means of factors across two groups were compared through the intercepts due to the

inclusion of control variables. The White American group was set up as the reference group with

all latent factors' intercepts to be zeros. Participants' demographic information (age, gender,

education, and income) were included as covariates to control their impacts on the factors. In

addition, political views were used as an additional control variable for factors related to participants' responses to CSA such as perceived fit, CSA motives, attitudes toward the company, and social media engagement intentions. The model fit was satisfactory ($\chi^2(2674) =$ 4929.558, RMSEA = .042, 95%CI RMSEA = [.040, .044], CFI = .953, SRMR = .074).

According to the intercepts of factors (see Table 51), participants in the African American group generally presented more positive reactions to CSA. Specifically, African American participants significant perceived more advocacy fit ($b_0 = 0.289$, $p = .01$, $d = 0.165$), attributed less egoistic ($b_0 = -0.282$, $p = .02$, $d = -0.159$) and strategic motives ($b_0 = -0.319$, $p = .003$, $d = -0.205$), displayed more positive attitudes toward the company ($b_0 = 0.396$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.292$), and presented more consumption ($b_0 = 0.406$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.229$), contribution ($b_0 = 0.649$, $p <$ .001, $d = 0.422$), and creation ($b_0 = 0.667$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.441$) intentions, and less dormancy ($b_0 = -0.532$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.365$) and detachment ($b_0 = -0.405$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.279$) intentions. Additionally, they demonstrated significantly more racial ingroup identification ($b_0 = 1.123$, $p <$ .001, $d = 0.756$). Table 51 also reports factor variances for each group, after controlling for control variables. The results, in part, answer the third research question about how publics' issue-related group memberships (CSA-supported group vs. non-CSA-supported group) affect their responses to CSA.

Table 48

Model Fit Indices for Tests of Multiple Group Measurement Invariance (N = 965)

Model	Free Parms	χ^2 Statistics		df	CFI	RMSEA and 95%CI			SRMR
		Value	Scaling correction factor			RMSEA	Lower	Higher	
1. Configural model	460	4243.98	1.21	2190	.956	.044	.042	.046	.051
2. Metric Invariance Model	423	4395.37	1.22	2227	.953	.045	.043	.047	.056
3. Partial Metric Invariance Model (after releasing factor loadings)	432	4274.06	1.22	2218	.955	.044	.042	.046	.052
4. Scalar Invariance Model	405	4388.80	1.21	2245	.95	.044	.043	.046	.053
5. Partial Scalar Invariance Model (after releasing item intercepts)	408	4315.98	1.21	2242	.96	.044	.042	.046	.053

Table 49

Tests for Metric Invariance Model (N = 965)

Model	Free Parms	χ^2 Statistics			Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 difference			
		Value	Scaling correction factor	df	CD	TRd	Δdf	p
Configural model (everything separate across groups)	460	4243.98	1.21	2190				
Released factor loading: Ingroup racial identification item 1	424	4386.67	1.22	2226	1.83	118.43	36	< .001
Released factor loading: Ingroup racial identification item 1+ Value item 3	425	4376.41	1.22	2225	1.85	110.53	35	< .001
Released factor loading: Ingroup racial identification item 1+ Value item 3 + Fit item 5	426	4367.30	1.22	2224	1.86	103.48	34	< .001

Model	Free Parms	χ^2 Statistics			Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 difference			
		Value	Scaling correction factor	df	CD	TRd	Δdf	p
Released factor loading: Ingroup racial identification item 1+ Value item 3 + Fit item 5 + Destruction item 4	427	4336.67	1.21	2223	1.21	92.69	33	< .001
Released factor loading: Ingroup racial identification item 1+ Value item 3 + Fit item 5 + Destruction item 4+ Ingroup racial identification item 2	428	4328.83	1.21	2222	1.21	84.85	32	< .001
Released factor loading: Ingroup racial identification item 1+ Value item 3 + Fit item 5 + Destruction item 4+ Ingroup racial identification item 2 + Ingroup racial identification item 6	429	4318.39	1.21	2221	1.21	74.41	31	< .001
Released factor loading: Ingroup racial identification item 1+ Value item 3 + Fit item 5 + Destruction item 4+ Ingroup racial identification item 2 + Ingroup racial identification item 6 + Consumption item 1	430	4300.78	1.21	2220	1.21	56.80	30	.002
Released factor loading: Ingroup racial identification item 1+ Value item 3 + Fit item 5 + Destruction item 4+ Ingroup racial identification item 2 + Ingroup racial identification item 6 + Consumption item 1 + Consumption item 4	431	4289.33	1.21	2219	1.21	45.35	29	.03
Released factor loading: Ingroup racial identification item 1+ Value item 3 + Fit item 5 + Destruction item 4+ Ingroup racial identification item 2 + Ingroup racial identification item 6 + Consumption item 1 + Consumption item 4 + Contribution Item 3	432	4274.06	1.22	2218	2.00	39.53	28	.07

Note: CD = Difference Test Scaling Correction; *TRd* = Sattora-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square Difference; Δ*df* = Difference in Degrees of Freedom

Table 50

Tests for Scalar Invariance Model (N = 965)

Model	Free Parms	χ^2 Statistics		df	Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 difference			
		Value	Scaling correction factor		CD	TRd	Δ*df*	*p*
Metric Invariance Model (after releasing factor loadings)	432	4274.06	1.22	2218				
Released item intercept: Racial Identification item 4	406	4333.54	1.21	2244	.36	81.90	26	< .001
Released item intercept: Racial Identification item 4+ stakeholder item 3	407	4320.02	1.21	2243	0.33	39.87	25	< .001
Released item intercept: Racial Identification item 4+ stakeholder item 3 + Attitude item 4	408	4315.98	1.21	2242	0.29	27.93	24	.26

Note: CD = Difference Test Scaling Correction; *TRd* = Sattora-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square Difference; Δ*df* = Difference in Degrees of Freedom

Table 51

Group-based Intercepts for Factors (N = 965)

Factors	Estimate	S.E.	*p*	Variance	*d*
Racial Ingroup Identification	1.123	.105	< .001	2.107 2.304	0.756
Perceived Advocacy Fit	0.289	.112	.01	3.494 2.631	0.165

Factors	Estimate	S.E.	*p*	Variance	*d*
Perceived Value-driven Motives	0.135	.085	.103	1.654 1.415	0.110
Perceived Egoistic Motives	-0.282	.117	.016	3.130 3.128	-0.159
Perceived Stakeholder-driven Motives	0.043	.100	.664	2.173 2.257	0.029
Perceived Strategic Motives	-0.319	.108	.003	2.204 2.646	-0.205
Attitude toward the Company	0.396	.084	< .001	2.225 1.450	0.292
Consumption	0.406	.125	< .001	2.653 3.633	0.229
Contribution	0.649	.110	< .001	1.876 2.871	0.422
Creation	0.667	.105	< .001	1.650 2.932	0.441
Dormancy	-0.532	.102	< .001	1.875 2.382	-0.365
Detachment	-0.405	.092	< .001	2.679 1.513	-0.279
Destruction	-0.107	.055	.052	1.037 0.480	-0.123

Note: The reference group is the White American group. The factor intercepts in the White American group were 0s.

 d refers to the effect size.

 Control variables are age, gender, education, income for all factors; political view for all variables except for racial ingroup identification.

Multi-group SEM data analysis. The following data analysis can test the proposed

conceptual model across two groups. After achieving partial measurement invariance, the

multigroup SEM was conducted. First, separate SEM models were performed on each group to

ensure the model was tenable. Different types of perceived CSA motives were allowed to covary

with each other. Demographic information (gender, income, education, and income) was

included as control variables. Again, the political view was used as a control variable for

perceived CSA motives, attitudes toward the company, and social media engagement intentions.

As implied by prior studies, social media dependency was added as an additional control variable

for social media engagement intentions (Tsai & Men, 2013). The MLM estimator was applied in

Mplus, given the non-normal data distribution. The model fit indices for two groups were

reported in Table 52. Both SRMR and RMSEA indices showed acceptable model fits based on

Hu and Bentler's (1999) recommendations. Although the CFI values were slightly lower than

.95, the overall model fits for both models were acceptable.

Table 52

Fit indices for Structural Equation Models in the Main Study (N = 965)

	White American (N = 488)	African American (N =477)	Configural SEM (N = 965)
$\chi^2(df)$	2613.321 (1311)	2382.600 (1311)	5085.065 (2651)
Scaling correction factor	1.138	1.140	1.140
CFI	.947	.946	.945
SRMR	0.056	.052	.062
RMSEA	0.045	.041	.044
90%CI RMSEA	[0.043, 0.048]	[0.039, .044]	[.042, .045]

Next, a configural SEM model was specified to verify whether the structural model was

tenable for two groups simultaneously. The factor loadings for nine items were relaxed based on

the results of the measurement invariance test, and all other items' factor loadings were fixed to

be equivalent across two groups. The model used demographic information, political views, and social media dependency as control variables. In particular, gender, income, education, and income were used as control variables for all independent and dependent variables. The political view was used as an additional control variable for all dependent variables. Moreover, social media dependency was used as another control variable for social media engagement intentions. The configural SEM model had an acceptable fit ($\chi^2(2651) = 5085.065$, CFI = .945, SRMR = .062, RMSEA = .044, 95% CI RMSEA = [.042, .045]). Thus, the SEM model worked for both groups simultaneously.

__Effects of Group Membership (RQ3).__ To further understand how participants' group membership affected the relations between variables (RQ3), the Wald chi-square tests were conducted using "MODEL CONSTRAINT" function in Mplus to compare the unstandardized path coefficients across two groups in Mplus. First, the results showed that advocacy fit and racial ingroup identification affected White American and African American participants' perceived value-driven, egoistic, and strategic-driven motives significantly differently. Specifically, advocacy fit posed more significant positive impacts on African American participants' perceived value-driven motives (*diff* = 0.354, *p* < .001), and more negative effects on their perceived egoistic motives (*diff* = -0.409, *p* < .001) and strategic motives (*diff* = -0.366, *p* = .032). Next, racial ingroup identification had more positive impacts on perceived CSA motives among African American compared to White American, participants. For example, the unstandardized coefficient of racial ingroup identification on perceived value-driven motives in the African American group was significantly larger than that in the White American group (*diff* = 0.231, *p* < .001). Furthermore, racial ingroup identification led to more reduced perceived egoistic (*diff* = -0.409, *p* < .001) and strategic-driven motives (*diff* = -0.296, *p* < .001) in the

African American group than in the White American group. Next, perceived egoistic motives

played a different role in participants' attitudes toward the company across the two groups (*diff* =

0.136, *p* = .020). It only had significant negative impacts on White American participants'

attitudes toward the company. Moreover, White American and African American participants'

attitudes toward the company had significantly different degrees of impact on their social media

engagement intentions (see Table 53). Based on the differences of unstandardized coefficients,

the impacts of attitudes toward the company on positive social media engagement intentions (i.e.,

consumption, contribution, and creation) and dormancy were stronger in the African American

group than those in the White American group. But, the impacts of attitudes toward the company

on detachment and destruction intentions were significantly weaker in the African American

group than those in the White American group. To summarize, White American and African

American participants in this study did not always process CSA-related information in the same

way. These findings provided valuable insight when answering the third research question.

Table 53

Wald Test of Path Coefficient Difference in the Main Study (N = 965)

Path	Estimate	S.E.	*p*
Advocacy fit –> Perceived value-driven motives	0.354	.128	.006
Advocacy fit –> Perceived egoistic motives	-0.655	.187	< .001
Advocacy fit –> Perceived stakeholder-driven motives	-0.203	.164	.215
Advocacy fit –> Perceived strategic-driven motives	-0.366	.170	.032
Racial ingroup identification –> Perceived value-driven motives	0.231	.050	< .001
Racial ingroup identification –> Perceived egoistic motives	-0.409	.075	< .001
Racial ingroup identification –> Perceived stakeholder-driven motives	-0.109	.061	.071
Racial ingroup identification –> Perceived strategic-driven motives	-0.296	.069	< .001
Perceived value-driven motives –> Attitude toward the company	0.007	.067	.913
Perceived egoistic motives –> Attitude toward the company	0.136	.058	.020
Perceived stakeholder-driven motives –> Attitude toward the company	-0.005	.039	.889
Perceived strategic-driven motives –> Attitude toward the company	-0.025	.055	.649

Path	Estimate	S.E.	*p*
Racial ingroup identification –> Attitude toward the company	0.011	.042	.801
Advocacy fit –> Attitude toward the company	0.091	.104	.377
Attitude toward the company –> Consumption	0.170	.058	.003
Attitude toward the company –> Contribution	0.217	.052	< .001
Attitude toward the company –> Creation	0.223	.053	< .001
Attitude toward the company –> Dormancy	-0.285	.052	< .001
Attitude toward the company –> Detachment	0.243	.045	< .001
Attitude toward the company –> Destruction	0.118	.042	.004

Note: The reference group is the White American group.

Effects of Advocacy Fit (H2). Regarding Hypothesis 2, the results of this study showed

consistent positive impacts of advocacy fit on participants' perceived CSA motives across White

American and African American groups. Specifically, when participants were in the high

advocacy fit condition, they presented more perceived value-driven motives ($B_{WA} = 0.580, p <$

$.001; \beta_{AA} = 0.950, p < .001$), less egoistic motives ($B_{WA} = -0.777, p < .001; B_{AA} = -1.357, p <$

$.001$) and strategic-driven motives ($B_{WA} = -0.513, p < .001; B_{AA} = -0.789, p < .001$) (see Table

58), than those in the low advocacy fit, after controlling for demographic features and political

views. Furthermore, the advocacy fit demonstrated stronger positive impacts on CSA attributions

in the African American group than in the White American group. However, all participants'

perceived stakeholder-driven motives were not affected by advocacy fit in CSA. Thus,

hypothesis 2 was mostly supported.

Effects of Racial Ingroup Identification (H3 and H4). Hypothesis 3 and 4 proposed the

effects of publics' ingroup identification on their CSA attributions in the CSA-supported and

non-CSA-supported groups. In the context of race-related CSA, White American participants'

stronger racial ingroup identification predicted more perceived egoistic motives ($B_{WA} = 0.158, p$

$= .002$), stakeholder-driven motives ($B_{WA} = 0.069, p = .021$), strategic-driven motives ($B_{WA} =$

$0.167, p < .001$), after controlling for their demographic features and political views. While, in

the African American group, the roles of participants' racial ingroup identification were

different. The stronger racial ingroup identification that African American participants indicated, the more value-driven motives ($B_{AA} = 0.276$, $p < .001$), more stakeholder-driven motives ($B_{AA} = 0.069$, $p = .021$), and less egoistic motives ($B_{AA} = -0.211$, $p < .001$) they attributed to the company's CSA. In other words, African American participants' racial ingroup identification elicited more positive CSA attributions and mitigated negative CSA attributions. Conversely, White American participants tended to assign more external, situational reasons for the company's CSA. Hence, hypotheses 3 and 4 were mostly supported.

__Effects of CSA Motives (H6, H7, H8, and RQ5).__ H6, H7, H8, and RQ5 were proposed to examine the impacts of CSA motives on publics' attitudes toward the company. Regarding the roles of perceived CSA motives, perceived value-driven significantly contributed to more positive attitudes toward the company for both White American and African American participants ($B = 0.720$, $p < .001$) after controlling for their demographic features and political views. But perceived egoistic motives negatively affected White American participants' attitudes toward the company ($B_{WA} = -.0.167$, $p < .001$). In the African American group, participants' perceived egoistic motives did not significantly predict their attitudes toward the company ($B = -0.060$, $p = .06$). In both groups, perceived strategic and stakeholder-driven did not significantly affect participants' attitudes toward the company. Therefore, hypothesis 6 was supported. Hypothesis 7 was supported in the non-CSA-supported group but not in the CSA-supported group. Hypothesis 8 was not supported. RQ5 was answered.

__Effects of Attitude toward the Company (H1).__ Hypothesis 1 aimed to test the impacts of attitude toward the company and social media engagement intentions. The parsimonious measures of six social media engagement intentions (consumption, contribution, creation, dormancy, detachment, and destruction) showed satisfactory construct reliabilities with

coefficient Hs larger than .90 (see Table 45). As indicated in Table 43, participants in the main study also tended to take more passive social media engagement intentions such as dormancy or consumption than active ones. Participants' attitudes toward the company predicted their social media engagement intentions. More positive attitudes toward the company led to stronger intentions in consumption (B_{WA} = 0.679, p < .001; B_{AA} = 0.849, p < .001), contribution (B_{WA} = 0.502, p < .001; B_{AA} = 0.718, p < .001), and creation (B_{WA} = 0.285, p < .001; B_{AA} = 0.508, p < .001), after controlling for participants' demographic features and social media dependency. And, the more positive attitudes toward the company predicted less dormancy (B_{WA} = -0.310, p < .001; B_{AA} = -0.595, p < .001), detachment (B_{WA} = -0.851, p < .001; B_{AA} = -0.608, p < .001), and destruction (B_{WA} = -0.313, p < .001; B_{AA} = -0.195, p < .001), after controlling for participants' demographic features and social media dependency. The results of main study supported the first hypothesis.

Differences in the Final Models across Groups. Table 54 reports R^2 (proportion of explained variance). A worthy note is that only small proportions of variances for perceived stakeholder-driven ($R^2_{stakeholder\_WA}$ = .022; $R^2_{stakeholder\_AA}$ = .012) and strategic motives ($R^2_{stakeholder\_WA}$ = .094; $R^2_{stakeholder\_AA}$ = .085) were explained by independent variables in the model. But all independent variables in the model, together, explained a large proportion of participants' attitudes toward the company ($R^2_{attitude\_WA}$ = .716; $R^2_{attitude\_AA}$ = .708). Table 55 provides both standardized and unstandardized path coefficients across two groups. It details how relations between variables differed across two groups. Then, Figure 4 and 5 visualize the final models in two groups, showing direct comparisons. Being in the CSA-supported or non-CSA-supported group changed a lot of path coefficients between variables in the proposed model, which also answered the third research question.

Table 54

Proportion of Variance Explained (R^2) in Endogenous Variables (N = 965)

|	R^2	
Factor	**White American** **(N = 488)**	**African American** **(N = 477)**
Perceived value-driven motives	.210	.317
Perceived egoistic motives	.143	.238
Perceived stakeholder-driven motives	.022	.012
Perceived strategic motives	.094	.085
Attitude toward the company	.716	.708
Consumption	.500	.353
Contribution	.432	.318
Creation	.212	.178
Dormancy	.195	.249
Detachment	.714	.409
Destruction	.297	.168

Table 55

Standardized and Unstandardized Path Coefficients across Two Racial Groups (N = 965)

Path IV – DV	White American (*N* = 488)				African American (*N* =477)			
	Unstandardized Path Coefficient	S.E.	Standardized Path Coefficient	S.E.	Unstandardized Path Coefficient	S.E.	Standardized Path Coefficient	S.E.
Advocacy fit –> Perceived value-driven motives	0.580***	.096	.209***	.035	0.950***	.085	.395***	.033
Advocacy fit –> Perceived egoistic motives	-0.777***	.131	-.208***	.035	-1.357***	.126	-.373***	.035
Advocacy fit –> Perceived stakeholder-driven motives	0.139	.082	.047	.028	0.139	.082	.046	.027
Advocacy fit –> Perceived strategic-driven motives	-0.513***	.104	-.168***	.034	-0.789***	.126	-.242***	.039
Racial ingroup identification –> Perceived value-driven motives	0.043	.037	.046	.039	0.276***	.035	.346***	.038
Racial ingroup identification –> Perceived egoistic motives	0.158**	.052	.124**	.041	-0.211***	.050	-.174***	.041
Racial ingroup identification –> Perceived stakeholder-driven motives	0.069*	.030	.069**	.030	0.069*	.030	.069	.030
Racial ingroup identification –> Perceived strategic-driven motives	0.167***	.049	.161**	.041	-0.080	.050	-.074	.046
Perceived value-driven motives –> Attitude toward the company	0.720***	.033	.578***	.028	0.720***	.033	.708***	.031
Perceived egoistic motives –> Attitude toward the company	-0.167***	.031	-.180***	.033	-0.060	.032	-.090	.047
Perceived stakeholder-driven motives –> Attitude toward the company	-0.019	.018	-.016	.016	-0.019	.018	-.023	.023
Perceived strategic-driven motives –> Attitude toward the company	-0.033	.024	-.029	.022	-0.033	.024	-.044	.033
Advocacy fit –> Attitude toward the company	-0.168**	.051	-.045**	.015	-0.168**	.051	-.069**	.021
Racial ingroup identification –> Attitude toward the company	0.105***	.021	.090***	.018	0.105***	.021	.130***	.027

| Path IV – DV	White American (*N* = 488)				African American (*N* =477)			
	Unstandardized Path Coefficient	S.E.	Standardized Path Coefficient	S.E.	Unstandardized Path Coefficient	S.E.	Standardized Path Coefficient	S.E.
Attitude toward the company –> Consumption	0.679***	.037	.660***	.029	0.849***	.052	.560***	.027
Attitude toward the company –> Contribution	0.502***	.033	.597***	.029	0.718***	.046	.521***	.028
Attitude toward the company –> Creation	0.285***	.030	.384***	.033	0.508***	.048	.365***	.031
Attitude toward the company –> Dormancy	-0.310***	.037	-.381***	.041	-0.595***	.045	-.469***	.032
Attitude toward the company –> Detachment	-0.851***	.032	-.774***	.020	-0.608***	.041	-.583***	.035
Attitude toward the company –> Destruction	-0.313***	.031	-.500***	.038	-0.195***	.029	-.341***	.049

Figure 4

Final Structural Equation Model in the White American Group (N = 488)
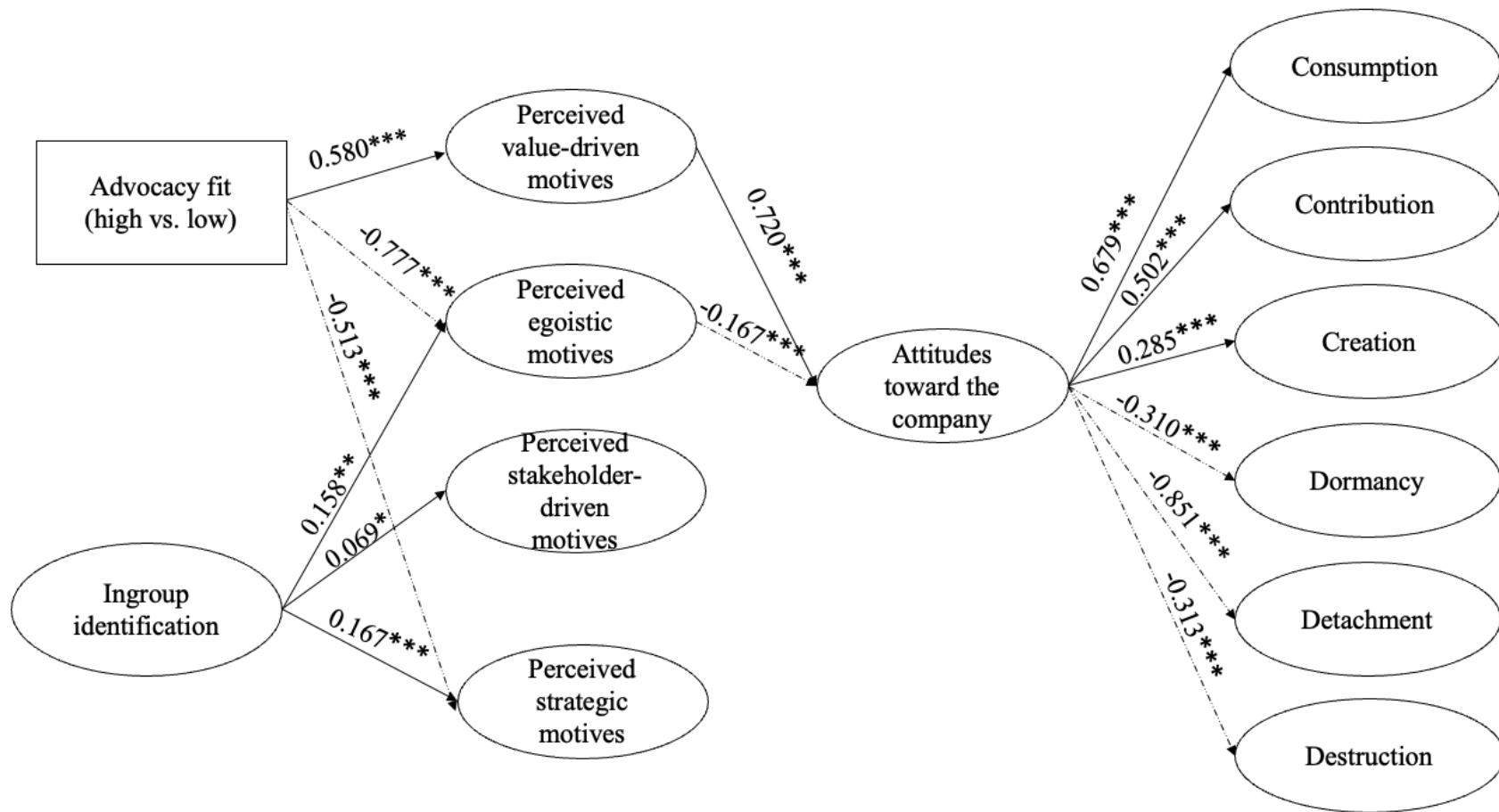
*Note: *p* < .05, **p* < .01, ***p* < .001. Statistics are unstandardized coefficients. Only significant paths were shown. Dotted lines represent negative relations.

Figure 5

Final Structural Equation Model in the African American Group (N = 477)
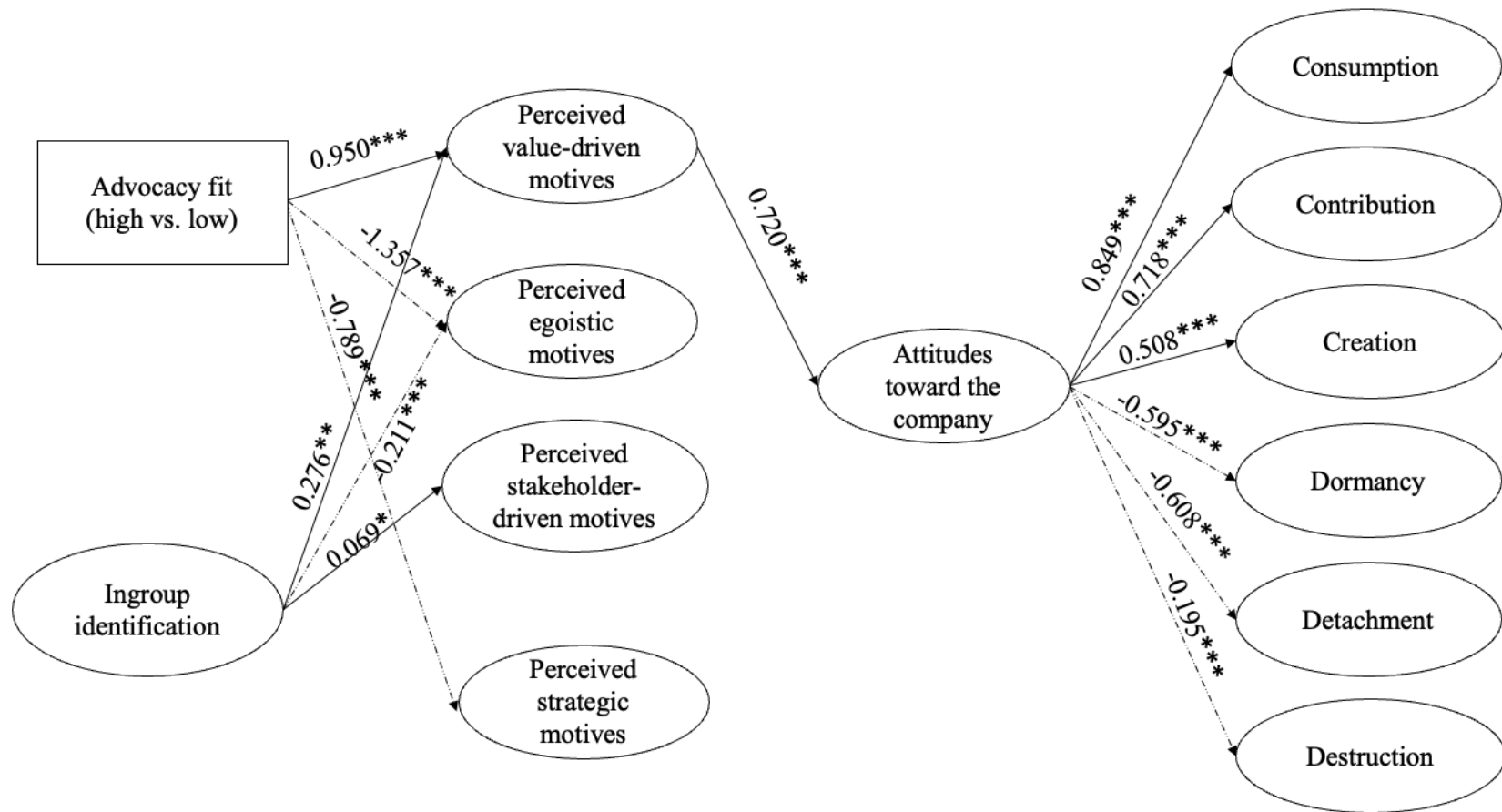
*Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Statistics are unstandardized coefficients. Only significant paths were shown. Dotted lines represent negative relations.

Mediation Effects of Perceived CSA Motives (H5). Hypothesis 5 asked about the mediating roles of CSA motives. First of all, a series of the Wald chi-square tests were conducted through "MODEL CONSTRAINT" in Mplus to compare the indirect effects of perceived motives across White American and African American groups. Several different indirect paths were revealed (see Table 56). Perceived value-driven motives mediated the impact of advocacy fit on the attitudes toward the company differently in the White American group compared with the African American group (*diff* = 0.267, *p* = .004). Additionally, results showed that the mediating roles of perceived value-driven (*diff* = 0.167, *p* < .001) and egoistic motives (*diff* = -0.039, *p* = 0.005) in the effect of racial ingroup identification on attitudes toward the company differed across the two groups.

Next, each mediation effect was checked across two groups simultaneously using Mplus with 5,000 bootstrapping. Table 57 details the mediation role of perceived CSA motives in the White American group. Table 58 details the mediation role of perceived CSA motives in the African American group. In total, high, relative to low, advocacy fit significantly led to more positive attitudes toward the company in total for White American participants (*B* = 0.393, *p* = .001, 95%CI = [0.159, 0.621]). The total indirect effects through perceived CSA motives were significant (*B* = 0.561, *p* < .001, 95%CI = [.356, .764]). Specifically, White American participants' perceived value-driven motives significantly mediated the effect of advocacy fit on their attitudes toward the company with an estimated indirect *ab* = 0.417, *p* < .001, 95% bootstrap *CI* [0.250, 0.597]. Perceived egoistic motives also significantly mediated the relation between advocacy fit and White American participants' attitudes toward the company with an estimated standardized indirect *ab* = 0.129, *p* = .001, 95% bootstrap *CI* [0.061, 0.224]. The mediating roles of perceived CSA motives in the African American group were also confirmed

with a significant total indirect effect of 0.621, $p < .001$, 95% bootstrap *CI* [0.437, 0.802]. A further investigation presented that only perceived value-driven motives mediated the positive impact of advocacy fit on attitudes toward the company with a significant total indirect effect of 0.684, $p < .001$, 95% bootstrap *CI* [0.526, 0.866], in the African American group. However, the mediation effects of perceived stakeholder-driven and strategic-driven motives across the two groups were not significant.

The mediating roles of CSA motives in the relations between racial ingroup identification and attitudes toward the company mainly were different among White American and African American participants. First, the results of the mediation analysis demonstrated that perceived CSA motives did not mediate the effect of racial ingroup identification on the attitudes toward the company for White American participants with a standardized total indirect effect of -0.002, $p = .960$, 95% bootstrap *CI* [-0.081, 0.080]. However, perceived CSA motives significantly mediated the impacts of racial ingroup identification on the attitudes toward the company for African American participants with a standardized total indict effect of 0.212, $p < .001$, bootstrap 95% bootstrap *CI* [0.152, 0.284]. In the African American group, higher racial ingroup identification predicted more perceived value-driven motives, which, in turn, led to more positive attitudes toward the company (*ab* = 0.198, p < .001, 95% bootstrap *CI* [0.143, 0.267]). But other types of perceived CSA motives (egoistic, stakeholder-driven, strategic-driven) did not significantly mediate the relation between African American participants' racial ingroup identification and their attitudes toward the company. To summarize, hypothesis 6 was partially supported.

Table 56

Wald Tests for Mediation Effects (N = 965)

Indirection Path	Estimate	S.E.	*p*
Advocacy fit –> Perceived value-driven motives –> Attitude toward the company	0.267	.092	.004
Advocacy fit –> Perceived egoistic motives –> Attitude toward the company	-0.048	.042	.250
Advocacy fit –> Perceived stakeholder-driven motives –> Attitude toward the company	0	-	-
Advocacy fit –> Perceived strategic-driven motives –> Attitude toward the company	0.009	.008	.280
Racial ingroup identification –> Perceived value-driven motives –> Attitude toward the company	0.167	.026	< .001
Racial ingroup identification –> Perceived egoistic motives –> Attitude toward the company	-0.039	.014	.005
Racial ingroup identification –> Perceived stakeholder-driven motives–> Attitude toward the company	0	-	-
Racial ingroup identification –> Perceived strategic-driven motives –> Attitude toward the company	-0.008	.006	.204

Note: The reference group is the White American group.

Table 57

Mediation Effects of Perceived CSA Motives in the White American Group (N = 488)

	Unstandardized					Standardized				
	Estimate	S.E.	*p*	95% CI Low	High	Estimate	S.E.	*p*	95% CI Low	High
Effects from advocacy fit to attitude toward the company										
Total effect	0.393	.117	.001	0.159	0.621	.114	.034	.001	.046	.180
Total indirect effect	0.561	.105	< .001	0.356	0.764	.162	.031	< .001	.103	.222
Through perceived value-driven motives	0.417	.089	< .001	0.250	0.597	.121	.026	< .001	.072	.173
Through perceived egoistic motives	0.129	.040	.001	0.061	0.224	.037	.012	.001	.018	.065
Through perceived stakeholder-driven motives	-0.003	.005	.590	-0.019	0.003	-.001	.001	.591	-.005	.001
Through perceived strategic-driven motives	0.017	.017	.315	-0.011	0.056	.005	.005	.315	-.003	.016
Effects from racial ingroup identification to attitude toward the company										
Total effect	0.098	.058	.091	-0.017	0.211	.083	.049	.090	-.015	.180
Total indirect	-0.002	.042	.960	-0.081	0.080	-.002	.035	.960	-.069	.070

	Unstandardized					Standardized				
	Estimate	S.E.	p	95% CI		Estimate	S.E.	p	95% CI	
				Low	High				Low	High
Through perceived value-driven motives	0.031	.034	.359	-0.031	0.101	.026	.026	.358	-.026	.086
Through perceived egoistic motives	-0.026	.012	.034	-0.056	-0.006	-.022	.011	.033	-.047	.005
Through perceived stakeholder-driven motives	-0.001	.002	.543	-0.008	0.002	-.001	.002	.542	-.007	.001
Through perceived strategic-driven motives	-0.006	.006	.343	-0.018	0.003	-.005	.005	.343	-.018	.003

Table 58

Mediation Effects of Perceived CSA Motives in the African American Group (N = 477)

	Unstandardized					Standardized				
	Estimate	S.E.	p	95% CI		Estimate	S.E.	p	95% CI	
				Low	High				Low	High
Effects from advocacy fit to attitude toward the company										
Total effect	0.621	.093	< .001	0.437	0.802	.254	.038	< .001	.180	.326
Total indirect effect	0.789	.090	< .001	0.618	0.975	.323	.035	< .001	.256	.394
Through perceived value-driven motives	0.684	.087	< .001	0.526	0.866	.280	.035	< .001	.217	.349
Through perceived egoistic motives	0.082	.051	.108	-0.017	0.184	.033	.021	.108	-.006	.076
Through perceived stakeholder-driven motives	-0.003	.005	.590	-0.016	0.003	-.001	.002	.590	-.008	.001
Through perceived strategic-driven motives	0.026	.026	.315	-0.018	0.086	.011	.011	.311	-.008	.035
Effects from racial ingroup identification to attitude toward the company										
Total effect	0.321	.037	< .001	0.251	0.395	.396	.040	< .001	.319	.472
Total indirect effect	0.212	.034	< .001	0.152	0.284	.262	.038	< .001	.189	.338
Through perceived value-driven motives	0.198	.032	< .001	0.143	0.267	.245	.036	< .001	.179	.321
Through perceived egoistic motives	0.013	.009	.163	-0.001	0.035	.016	.011	.158	-.002	.042
Through perceived stakeholder-driven motives	-.001	.002	.543	-0.006	0.002	-.002	.003	.542	-.010	.002
Through perceived strategic-driven motives	0.003	.004	.480	-0.001	0.015	.003	.005	.473	-.002	.018

4.3.4.3 Roles of Racial Ingroup Identification in Individual-level Perceptions (RQ4).

The fourth research question asked about the impacts of publics' social identities on their

perceptions of the advocated sociopolitical issue. Hence, the main study also aimed to examine

how participants' racial ingroup identification played a role in their individual-level perceptions

of race relations and the BLM Movement across two ethnic groups. The multigroup analysis

approach was applied with seven latent factors and the grouping variable (i.e., race).

Data Preparation. Again, data screening was performed to prepare for the following

model tests. First, no missing data was detected. Second, the means, standard deviations,

skewness, and kurtosis values for each item across two groups are reported in Table 59[9]. The

absolute skewness and kurtosis values for all items were less than 2 and 7, respectively (see

Table 59). The Mardia's multivariate skewness and kurtosis coefficients and their corresponding

statistical significance were calculated. Both tests were significant, and values of Mardia's

normalized multivariate kurtosis were much greater than 3.0 ($p < .001$). Thus, the multivariate

normality assumption was violated in the existing data set, which required other estimation

methods other than maximum likelihood (Bandalos & Finney, 2019). Third, the outlier detection

techniques were applied. Regarding the univariate outliers, z-scores were calculated to check for

extreme cases (i.e., absolute 3 standard deviations from the mean). Z-scores for 29 variables

indicated 0 outliers because the minimum z-score was -3.00. Then, Mahalanobis D was used to

screen for multivariate outliers, which revealed only 4 outliers. A further investigation for these

outliers excluded the possibilities of measurement errors or data entry errors. Hence, all four

outliers were kept in the following data analysis.

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[9] Given the limited space in tables, only the item number was present. The corresponding item contents can be found in Appendix E.

Table 59

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness, Kurtosis of Individual-level Factors in the Main Study (N = 965)

Item	Total (N = 965)				White American (N =488)				African American (N = 477)			
	M	*SD*	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**	*M*	*SD*	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**	*M*	*SD*	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**
Problem Recognition												
ISR 1	5.91	1.59	-1.62	1.83	5.51	1.87	-1.19	0.16	6.32	1.09	-1.84	3.45
ISR 2	5.58	1.79	-1.27	0.62	5.11	2.03	-0.88	-0.50	6.05	1.36	-1.60	2.24
ISR 3	5.73	1.71	-1.43	1.13	5.26	1.96	-0.99	-0.25	6.21	1.24	-1.86	3.51
Involvement Recognition												
INR 1	4.58	2.03	-0.40	-1.07	3.50	1.81	0.10	-1.04	5.69	1.60	-1.25	0.82
INR 2	4.70	2.07	-0.46	-1.10	3.40	1.79	0.23	-1.00	6.04	1.37	-1.74	2.98
INR 3	4.77	2.00	-0.53	-0.90	3.68	1.84	0.03	-1.03	5.88	1.46	-1.48	1.83
Constraint Recognition												
CONR 1	4.27	1.79	-0.33	-0.77	3.95	1.91	-0.14	-1.09	4.60	1.60	-0.43	-0.32
CONR 2	4.12	1.82	-0.23	-0.90	3.83	1.90	-0.10	-1.13	4.42	1.67	-0.30	-0.61
CONR 3	3.51	1.93	0.26	-1.08	3.19	1.88	0.44	-0.93	3.83	1.92	0.09	-1.12
Referent Criterion												
RC 1	3.80	1.79	0.07	-0.97	3.49	1.76	0.30	-0.84	4.11	1.76	-0.16	-0.89
RC 2	3.50	1.84	0.31	-0.91	3.14	1.75	0.55	-0.60	3.87	1.86	0.08	-1.00
RC 3	3.67	2.06	0.20	-1.27	2.59	1.65	0.94	0.02	4.78	1.84	-0.50	-0.78
Situation Motivation												
SM 1	4.41	1.88	-0.34	-0.99	3.87	1.81	-0.11	-1.07	4.96	1.80	-0.67	-0.58
SM 2	4.70	1.93	-0.61	-0.75	4.47	2.04	-0.51	-1.05	4.95	1.77	-0.66	-0.45
SM 3	4.74	1.94	-0.61	-0.76	4.46	2.04	-0.50	-1.04	5.02	1.79	-0.68	-0.48
Attitude toward the BLM Social Movement												
BLMAtt 1	4.98	1.99	-0.79	-0.56	4.63	2.13	-0.57	-1.05	5.33	1.77	-1.00	0.17
BLMAtt 2	5.10	1.97	-0.87	-0.40	4.76	2.15	-0.62	-1.01	5.45	1.70	-1.10	0.52
BLMAtt 3	5.07	2.01	-0.85	-0.50	4.71	2.19	-0.60	-1.08	5.44	1.73	-1.07	0.36
BLMAtt 4	4.83	1.96	-0.66	-0.69	4.47	2.09	-0.43	-1.11	5.21	1.74	-0.85	-0.08
BLMAtt 5	4.85	1.96	-0.69	-0.61	4.49	2.09	-0.47	-1.06	5.21	1.75	-0.89	0.06
BLMAtt 6	5.38	2.04	-1.06	-0.22	4.95	2.24	-0.71	-1.02	5.82	1.71	-1.48	1.27

Measurement Invariance Tests. The multigroup CFA is often used to test the

measurement invariance before group-based modeling. The Mplus MLM estimator (i.e., Satorra-

Bentler corrections) was implemented in all analyses to adjust the standard errors and fit indices

because the current data departed from normality. First of all, two separate CFA models on both

White American and African American samples were implemented to determine whether the

model was tenable for each group. Based on previous data analysis, one error covariance

between two items[10] was added in both models. The final model fit indices were reported in

Table 60. Using the cutoff values suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999), two CFA models were

satisfactory. The detailed factor loadings, composite reliability, and AVEs across two groups

were reported in Table 61. The factor correlation matrix for each group can be found in Table 62.

Table 60

Model Fit Indices for CFA Models across Two Racial Groups in Testing Racial Ingroup

Identification and Individual-level Factors (N = 965)

	White American (*N* = 294)	**African American (*N* =287)**
$\chi^2(df)$	806.92(328) ***	813.80(328) ***
Scaling correction factor	1.25	1.34
CFI	.97	.95
SRMR	.053	.076
RMSEA	.055 [.050, .059]	0.056 [.051, .061]

Table 61

Standardized Factor Loadings, Coefficient Hs, AVEs of Racial Ingroup Identification and

Individual-level Factors (N = 965)

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[10] The two items were used to measure racial ingroup identification, which were "How strong are your ties to other members of your race or ethnicity?" and "How closely knit are you with others of your race or ethnicity?"

	White American ($N = 488$)			African American ($N = 477$)		
	Standardized Factor Loading	H	AVE	Standardized Factor Loading	H	AVE
Racial Ingroup Identification						
Identification1	.89			.88		
Identification2	.92			.89		
Identification3	.84			.84		
Identification4	.77	.95	.72	.83	.95	.73
Identification5	.87			.89		
Identification6	.81			.78		
Identification7	.85			.87		
Problem Recognition						
Problem Recognition 1	.94			.87		
Problem Recognition 2	.94	.97	.91	.85	.94	.74
Problem Recognition 3	.97			.95		
Involvement Recognition						
Involvement Recognition 1	.89			.91		
Involvement Recognition 2	.81	.92	.77	.93	.94	.85
Involvement Recognition 3	.92			.65		
Constraint Recognition						
Constraint Recognition 1	.96			.91		
Constraint Recognition 2	.98	.97	.81	.93	.92	.67
Constraint Recognition 3	.75			.65		
Referent Criterion						
Referent Criterion 1	.96			.95		
Referent Criterion 2	.90	.94	.70	.89	.93	.60
Referent Criterion 3	.56			.44		
Situation Motivation						
Situation Motivation 1	.77			.65		
Situation Motivation 2	.96	.97	.84	.86	.91	.67
Situation Motivation 3	.98			.93		
BLM Attitude						
BLM Attitude 1	.98			.97		
BLM Attitude 2	.99			.97		
BLM Attitude 3	.99	.99	.92	.97	.98	.85
BLM Attitude 4	.92			.86		
BLM Attitude 5	.93			.87		
BLM Attitude 6	.95			.89		

Table 62

Factor Correlation Matrix for Racial Ingroup Identification and Individual-level Factors (N = 965)

	White American (N = 488)							African American (N = 477)						
	RII	PR	IR	CR	RC	SM	BLMA	RII	PR	IR	CR	RC	SM	BLMA
RII	1							1						
PR	-.25	1						.46	1					
IR	-.17	.62	1					.47	.67	1				
CR	-.08	.65	.68	1				.45	.32	.38	1			
RC	.08	.12	.42	.41	1			.41	.20	.28	.67	1		
SM	-.20	.75	.65	.72	.29	1		.43	.50	.53	.50	.32	1	
BLMA	-.27	.86	.63	.64	.15	.75	1	.50	.58	.54	.37	.24	.55	1

Note: Given the space limit, the abbreviations for factor names were used.

RII = racial ingroup identification; PR = problem recognition; IR = involvement recognition; CR = constraint recognition; RC = referent criterion; SM = situational motivation; BLMA = attitude toward the BLM social movement

Three steps (configural, metric, and scalar invariance) were implemented to establish, at least partially, measurement invariance. A configural invariance model was specified in which the factor means were fixed to 0, and the factor variances were fixed to 1 for identification for both groups. This step verified whether the model was tenable for both groups simultaneously when all parameters were allowed to be unequal across groups. As shown in Table 63, the model had good fit ($\chi^2(656) = 1620.96$, RMSEA = .055, 95%CI RMSEA = [.052, .059], CFI = .96, SRMR = .066). Thus, the CFA model worked well for both groups simultaneously.

The second step was to examine the invariance of the unstandardized item factor loadings. A metric invariance model was specified with the factor variances fixed to 1 in the White American group but freely estimated in the African American group. All factor loadings were constrained to be equal across groups, but all item thresholds were permitted to vary across groups. The factor means were fixed to 0 for identification. The model fit indices for the metric invariance CFA were reported in Table 63. The CFI, TLI, SRMR, and RMSEA values showed acceptable model fit. Furthermore, the Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 difference test was conducted, which showed a significant result ($\chi^2(79.72, 21) < .001$). In other words, the metric invariance model resulted in a poorer fit compared with the configural model. Further analyses were conducted to determine which loadings differed across groups based on the modification indices (MIs) tests. Finally, each equality constraint was released sequentially to estimate the improvement of model fit. In the end, six equality constraints were released. The Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 difference tests results can be found in Table 64. The results indicated that six items were not related to the latent factors equivalently across groups: "How strong a sense of belonging do you have with your race or ethnicity?" "How much do you identify with other members of your race or ethnicity?" "How important is your racial/ethnic identification to your

self-image?" "I think the issue is a serious social or national problem," "My personal attitude about the Black Lives Matter movement is that I (Dislike it a great deal – Like it a great deal)," and "To what extent do you agree that the Black Lives movement is necessary? "Very unnecessary" – "Very necessary."

To meaningfully compare the factor means across groups, a scalar invariance model was specified in which the factor means and variances were fixed to 0 and 1, respectively, in the White American group (reference group). The factor means and variances were freely estimated in the African American group. All factor loadings and item thresholds were constrained to be equal across groups, except for the identified six items. The scalar invariance model fitted the data significantly worse compared with the partial metric invariance model (Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2(612.59, 15) < .001). Therefore, the scalar invariance did not hold, or both groups had different expected item responses at the same absolute level of the traits. Guided by the MIs, another 4 item intercepts were released sequentially, which were "How similar do you feel to your race or ethnicity as a whole in terms of general attitudes or beliefs?", "I think this issue could affect me personally," "I have faced a similar problem in the past," and "I frequently think about this issue." The model fit indices of the finalized partial scalar model are reported in Table 63. Table 65 details the Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 difference tests results for the scalar invariance model. Finally, the partial measurement invariance was achieved.

Factor Means (RQ4). To answer the fourth research question, the factor means of situational and motivational variables in STOPS and attitudes toward the company were compared across the two racial groups. The intercepts of factors across the two groups were compared, after adding the control variables. Demographic features (age, gender, education, and income) were included as covariates to control their impacts on participants' perceptions of the

issue. In addition, political views were used as an additional control variable for all issue-related variables (problem recognition, involvement recognition, constraint recognition, referent criterion, situational motivation in problem solving, attitude toward the BLM Movement). The model fit was satisfactory (χ^2(2096.44) < .001, RMSEA = .051, 95%CI RMSEA = [.048, .054], CFI = .957, SRMR = .068). According to the intercepts of factors (see Table 66), participants in the African American group demonstrated significantly higher problem recognition, involvement recognition, constraint recognition, referent criterion, situational motivation in problem solving, and more positive attitude toward the BLM social movement, compared with the White American group. Table 66 also reports factor variances for each group and effect sizes, after controlling for demographic information and political views. The results, in part, answer the effects of group memberships on publics' situational and motivational perceptions of a sociopolitical issue.

Effects of Racial Ingroup Identification on Individual-level Perceptions (RQ4). To examine whether and how participants' racial ingroup identification affected their perceptions of race relations and attitudes toward the BLM social movement (RQ4), a multigroup SEM approach was applied to test the predictive paths across groups. Since the goal was to assess the predictive paths across groups, the weak invariance across groups (i.e., partially invariant factor loadings) was sufficient (Newsom, 2020). Demographic information (sex, age, education, income) and participants' political views were added to the model as control variables. First, a multigroup SEM with freely estimated path coefficients was conducted, which showed satisfactory model fit (Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2(912) = 2080.319, CFI = .957, RMSEA = .052, 95% CI RMSEA = [.049, .054], SRMR = .071). Next, a series of the Wald chi-square tests were performed using "MODEL CONSTRAINT" function in Mplus to compare the path coefficients

across two groups. As shown in Table 67, the results of the tests revealed that the impacts of racial ingroup identification on all dependent variables significantly differed across White American and African American groups.

By comparing the unstandardized path coefficients across the two groups, the racial ingroup identification did not play a crucial role in White American participants' perceptions of race relations and attitudes toward the BLM Movement after controlling for demographic factors and political views. Their racial ingroup identification only significantly led to more and referent criterion ($B = 0.140$, $p = .009$). On the contrary, African American participants' racial ingroup identification significantly led to more problem recognition ($B = 0.278$, $p < .001$), involvement recognition ($B = 0.360$, $p < .001$), constraint recognition ($B = 0.439$, $p < .001$), referent criterion ($B = 0.450$, $p < .001$), situational motivation in problem solving ($B = 0.274$, $p < .001$), and more positive attitudes toward the BLM social movement ($B = 0.432$, $p <. 001$). The details can be found in Table 68. In addition, the proportion of explained variances (R^2) of all the endogenous variables are reported in Table 69. Overall, racial ingroup identification played a more crucial role in African American, compared to White American, participants' perceptions of race relations and their attitudes toward the BLM social movement.

Table 63

Model Fit Indices for Tests of Multiple Group Measurement Invariance in RQ4 (N = 965)

Model	Free Parms	χ^2 Statistics		df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA and CI			SRMR
		Value	Scaling correction factor				RMSEA	Lower	Higher	
1. configural model	212	1620.96	1.29	656	.96	.96	.055	.052	.059	.065
2. Metric Invariance Model	191	1693.89	1.28	677	.96	.95	.056	.052	.059	.068
3. Partial Metric Invariance Model (after releasing factor loadings)	197	1639.37	1.29	671	.96	.96	.055	.051	.058	.066
4. Scalar Invariance Model	182	2050.68	1.28	686	.95	.94	.064	.061	.067	.073
5. Partial Scalar Invariance Model (after releasing item intercepts)	186	1658.21	1.28	682	.96	.96	.054	.051	.058	.066

Table 64

Tests for Measurement Metric Invariance in RQ4 (N = 965)

Model	Free Parms	χ^2 Statistics		df	Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 difference			
		Value	Scaling correction factor		CD	TRd	Δdf	p
Configural model (everything separate across groups)	212	1620.96	1.29	656				
Released factor loading: BLM attitude item 1	192	1682.60	1.28	676	.95	65.85	20	< .001
Released factor loading: BLM attitude item 1+ Issue recognition 1	193	1671.25	1.28	675	0.93	51.52	19	< .001
Released factor loading: BLM attitude item 1 + Issue recognition 1 + Ingroup racial identification item 1	194	1663.08	1.29	674	1.29	42.12	18	< .001

Model	Free Parms	χ² Statistics		df	Satorra-Bentler scaled χ² difference			
		Value	Scaling correction factor		CD	TRd	Δdf	p
Released factor loading: BLM attitude item 1 + Issue recognition 1 + Ingroup racial identification item 1 + BLM attitude item 6	195	1655.93	1.29	673	1.29	34.97	17	.006
Released factor loading: BLM attitude item 1 + Issue recognition 1 + Ingroup racial identification item 1 + BLM attitude item 6 + Ingroup racial identification item 2	196	1648.77	1.29	672	1.29	27.97	16	.03
Released factor loading: BLM attitude item 1 + Issue recognition 1 + Ingroup racial identification item 1 + BLM attitude item 6 + Ingroup racial identification item 2+ Ingroup racial identification item 6	197	1639.37	1.29	671	1.29	18.41	15	.24

Note: CD = Difference Test Scaling Correction; TRd = Sattora-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square Difference; Δdf = Difference in Degrees of Freedom

Table 65

Tests for Measurement Scalar Invariance in RQ4 (N = 965)

Model	Free Parms	χ² Statistics		df	Satorra-Bentler scaled χ² difference			
		Value	Scaling correction factor		CD	TRd	Δdf	p
Metric Invariance Model (after releasing factor loadings)	197	1639.37	1.29	671				
Released item intercept: Referent criterion item 3	183	1831.82	1.28	685	0.80	287.17	14	< .001
Released item intercept: Referent criterion item 3+ Issue involvement item 2	184	1764.18	1.28	684	0.76	187.69	13	< .001

Model	Free Parms	χ² Statistics		df	Satorra-Bentler scaled χ² difference			
		Value	Scaling correction factor		CD	TRd	Δdf	p
Released item intercept: Referent criterion item 3+ Issue involvement item 2 + Situational motivation item 1	185	1710.24	1.28	683	0.72	103.10	12	< .001
Released item intercept: Referent criterion item 3+ Issue involvement item 2 + Situational motivation item 1 + Racial ingroup identification item 4	186	1658.21	1.28	682	0.67	11.52	11	.40

Note: CD = Difference Test Scaling Correction; TRd = Sattora-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square Difference; Δdf = Difference in Degrees of Freedom

Table 66

Group-based Intercepts for Individual-level Factors (N = 965)

Factors	Estimate	S.E.	p	Variance	d
Racial Ingroup Identification	1.128	.104	< .001	2.065 (WA) 2.235 (AA)	0.769
Problem Recognition	2.231	.223	< .001	1.655 (WA) 0.978 (AA)	1.942
Involvement Recognition	2.036	.100	< .001	2.079 (WA) 1.721 (AA)	1.476
Constraint Recognition	2.030	.265	< .001	2.617 (WA) 2.181 (AA)	1.310
Referent Criterion	0.726	.114	< .001	2.789 (WA) 2.681 (AA)	0.461
Situational Motivation in Problem Solving	0.186	.080	.020	1.370 (WA) 1.192 (AA)	0.164
Attitude toward BLM	1.499	.297	< .001	1.951 (WA) 1.987 (AA)	1.069

Note: The reference group is the White American group. The factor intercepts in the White American group were 0s.

  d refers to the effect size.

  Control variables are age, sex, education, and income for all variables. The political view is an additional control variable for all variables except for racial ingroup identification.

Table 67

Wald Tests of Path Coefficient Differences Regarding Racial Ingroup Identification and Individual-level Factors (N = 965)

Path	Estimate	S.E.	*p*
Identification –> Problem Recognition	0.326	.059	< .001
Identification –> Involvement Recognition	0.393	.063	< .001
Identification –> Constraint Recognition	0.365	.071	< .001
Identification –> Referent criterion	0.310	.072	< .001
Identification –> Situational Motivation in Problem Solving	0.316	.052	< .001
Identification –> BLM attitude	0.485	.063	< .001

Note: Control variables are age, sex, education, and income for all variables. The political view is an additional control variable for all variables except for racial ingroup identification.

  The reference group is the White American group.

Table 68

Group-based Unstandardized and Standardized Path Coefficients Regarding Racial Ingroup Identification and Individual-level

Factors (N = 965)

Path	White American (N = 488)				African American (N =477)			
	Unstandardized		Standardized		Unstandardized		Standardized	
IV – DV	Path Coefficient	S.E.	Path Coefficient	S.E.	Path Coefficient	S.E.	Path Coefficient	S.E.
Identification –> Recognition	-0.048	.049	-.042	.043	0.278***	.032	.379***	.040

| Path | White American (N = 488) | | | | African American (N = 477) | | | |
| IV – DV | Unstandardized | | Standardized | | Unstandardized | | Standardized | |
	Path Coefficient	S.E.	Path Coefficient	S.E.	Path Coefficient	S.E.	Path Coefficient	S.E.
Identification –> Involvement	-0.033	.050	-.031	.047	0.360***	.037	.381***	.036
Identification –> Constraint	0.073	.054	.062	.046	0.439***	.046	.445***	.044
Identification –> Referent	0.140**	.054	.123**	.057	0.450***	.046	.405***	.038
Identification –> Motivation	-0.042	.040	-.047	.044	0.274***	.031	.342***	.036
Identification –> BLM attitude	-0.053	.048	-0.040	.036	0.432***	.040	.391***	.035

Note: Control variables are age, sex, education, and income for all variables. The political view is an additional control variable for all variables except for racial ingroup identification.

Table 69

Proportion of Variance Explained in and Individual-level Factors (R^2) in the Final Structural Model (N = 965)

| Factor | R^2 | |
	White American (N = 294)	African American (N = 287)
Problem Recognition	.409	.340
Involvement Recognition	.149	.306
Constraint Recognition	.143	.208
Referent Criterion	.028	.184
Situational Motivation in Problem Solving	.204	.311
Attitude toward BLM	.502	.437

4.3.5 Summary of Main Study

The goal of the main study was two-folded. First, it was designed to investigate the impacts of advocacy fit and social identities on publics' attributions of CSA, attitudes toward the company, and social media engagement intentions. Racial justice (the BLM Movement) was selected as the focal issue due to the unprecedented companies' advocacy efforts after the murder of George Floyd (Purtell & Kang, 2022). White American and African American participants were recruited, and they were randomly assigned either to the high advocacy fit condition or the low advocacy fit condition. The high (vs. low) advocacy experimental conditions successfully aroused participants' higher perceived relevancy, congruency, and matchness between the focal company and its support for racial justice and the BLM Movement. Then, the multigroup analysis approach provided a valuable perspective on how different groups of participants processed CSA-related information. Second, the main study examined how participants' group membership and ingroup identification function as antecedents for their individual-level situational and motivational perceptions of sociopolitical issues. Results of the main study tested all proposed hypotheses and provided answers to the third, fourth, and fifth research question.

Hypothesis 1 asked about the effects of attitudes on social media engagement intentions. Participants' positive attitudes toward the company predicted more consumption, contribution, and creation intentions, while less dormancy, detachment, and destruction intentions on social media. Additionally, the multigroup analysis revealed that the magnitudes of impacts presented differences across the White American and African American groups. Particularly, the positive effects of attitudinal responses on positive social media engagement intentions appeared to be stronger in the African American group. Similarly, positive attitudes toward the company predicted even less dormancy intention for African American participants. But the negative

impacts of attitudinal responses on detachment and destruction intentions were stronger for White American participants. H1 was supported in the main study.

Hypothesis 2 proposed the positive impacts of advocacy fit on perceived CSA motives and attitudes toward the company. The main study showed that the high congruency between a company and its advocated sociopolitical issue led participants to attribute more value-driven and less egoistic and strategic-driven motives, which predicted more positive attitudes toward the company. But perceived stakeholder-driven motives were not significantly affected by advocacy fit. Additionally, the total effects of advocacy fit on attitudes toward the company were positive among White American and African participants. This finding was consistent with prior studies in the contest of CSA that confirmed the power of advocacy fit in achieving positive organizational outcomes (e.g., Hong & Li, 2020; Lim & Young, 2021). Thus, H2 was mainly supported.

The third research question asked about the roles of group membership in publics' reactions to CSA. First of all, the multigroup analysis demonstrated that White American and African American participants displayed non-equivalent average scores of tested latent variables such as ingroup identification, perceived advocacy fit, perceived egoistic and strategic-driven motives, attitude toward the company, and social media engagement intentions. Overall, African American participants in this study presented fewer negative attributions of CSA (egoistic and strategic), more favorable attitudes toward the company, more positive social media engagement intentions (consumption, contribution, and creation), and less negative social media engagement intentions (dormancy and detachment), in the context of a race-related CSA. Second, the positive effects of advocacy fit on perceived value-driven motives were stronger in the African American group. Also, the roles of advocacy fit in reducing perceived egoistic and strategic-driven motives

were stronger among African American participants than White American participants. Thus, advocacy fit played a more prominent role in facilitating positive attributions and repressing negative attributions in the CSA-supported group. Third, group memberships also influenced the directions regarding the effects of ingroup identification, which will be explained in the next paragraph. Fourth, perceived egoistic motives only negatively affected White American participants' attitudes toward the company while having no significant impact on African American participants' attitudes toward the company. Fifth, the magnitudes of attitudes-social media engagement intentions differed across two groups, as summarized in the previous paragraph. Sixth, the mediating roles of perceived value-driven and egoistic motives significantly differed across the two racial groups. Therefore, participants' group memberships not only directly affected their CSA attributions, attitudes, and behavioral intentions but also influenced the relations between variables.

Hypothesis 3 and hypothesis 4 were proposed to test the effects of ingroup identification in the CSA-supported group and non-CSA-supported group. Racial ingroup identification was used as a specific example of ingroup identification in the studied context. Results showed that racial ingroup identification displayed quite different roles in White American and African American participants' CSA attributions. It significantly increased White American participants perceived egoistic, stakeholder-driven, and strategic motives but did not significantly affect their perceived value-driven motives in a race-related CSA. However, the situation was the opposite for African American participants, which meant racial ingroup identification generated more positive CSA attributions (value-driven) while diminishing perceived egoistic and strategic motives. Hence, although racial ingroup identification was a valuable predictor for participants'

reactions to CSA, the influencing directions tended to be different or even opposite among social groups. Therefore, H3 and H4 were largely supported.

Hypothesis 6, 7, 8 and Research Question 5 focused on the influences of perceived CSA motives on attitude toward the company. Attributed value-driven motives showed powerful and consistent impacts on both White American and African American participants' attitudes toward the company. When participants inferred more sincere value-driven or public-serving motives from CSA, they demonstrated more favorable attitudes toward the focal company. The elicited positive attitudes led participants to indicate stronger intentions to engage with the company more positively (consumption, contribution, and creation) and less negatively (dormancy, detachment, and destruction). Another insightful finding was the perceived egoistic motives only significantly and negatively predicted White American participants' attitudes toward the company. This path was not significant in the African American group, meaning that participants in this group had more acceptance of perceived egoistic motives. However, the present study failed to reveal any significant impact of perceived stakeholder-driven and strategic motives on the attitude toward the company. Therefore, H6 was supported, H7 was partially supported, but H8 was not supported.

H5 was proposed to test the mediating effects of CSA motives. Perceived value-driven motives were a significant mediator in the impact of advocacy fit on the attitude toward the company in both racial groups. Also, this type of positive attribution mediated the effects of racial ingroup identification on the attitude toward the company in the African American group. Another significant mediating effect was found for perceived egoistic motives regarding the impact of advocacy fit on attitudes toward the company in the White American group. Across both groups, perceived stakeholder-driven and strategic motives did not mediate the impact of

advocacy fit and racial ingroup identification on participants' attitudes toward the company. Additionally, participants' racial group membership (i.e., being in the White American group or the African American group) also affected the mediating role of perceived motives. For example, perceived egoistic motives were a significant mediator for the effect of racial ingroup identification on the attitudes toward the company in the White American group but not in the African American group. Although perceived value-driven motives mediated the effect of advocacy fit on White American and African American participants' attitudes toward the company, the mediating impact was stronger in the latter group. To conclude, H5 was partially supported.

To answer the last research question, this study examined how social identities affected their perceptions of racial justice and attitudes toward the BLM Movement across White American and African American groups, in the context of CSA. The two-group analysis revealed substantial differences in participants' average scores on issue-related factors. Primarily, participants in the African American group demonstrated significantly higher problem recognition, involvement recognition, constraint recognition, referent criterion, situational motivation in problem solving, and more positive attitudes toward the BLM Movement on average than those in the White American group. Conversely, with regard to the effects of racial ingroup identification, it did not significantly affect White American participants' perceptions of race relations and attitudes toward the BLM Movement, except for their referent criterion. Conversely, African American participants' racial ingroup identification significantly led to more problem recognition, involvement recognition, constraint recognition, referent criterion, situational motivation, and more positive attitudes toward the BLM social movement. Therefore,

publics' ingroup identification should be considered a critical antecedent to individual-level factors to better understand, categorize, and build relationships with publics.

4.3.6   *Main Study Limitations*

Although a randomized experiment helps draw causal inferences for CSA, it was limited in the following aspects. First of all, this experimental design was restricted regarding external validity or generalizability. For instance, because a hypothetical company was used, the findings could be different for real companies when considering the effects of existing reputation or publics' past experiences with a company. As discussed in the pilot study, using a fictitious company might affect participants' reactions to CSA, especially their social media engagement intentions. Thus, both scholars and practitioners should be cautious of generalizing the findings to real companies with additional considerations of existing corporate reputation. Other research methods, like surveys, can be used in future studies to enhance external validity. Second, only one issue is tested in the experiment, so future research should consider diverse sociopolitical issues advocated by companies. Xu (2020) discovered that issues triggered participants' specific identity salience differently. Thus, the findings need to be re-examined by using other sociopolitical issues. Next, the boundary of the non-probability sampling method should be acknowledged. The studied Prolific samples still differed from the general U.S. population, regarding age, education, and political view. Furthermore, it is still questionable whether these crowdsourcing workers represent publics. Based on participants' situational perceptions of the focal issue (racial justice), White American participants, on average, showed low levels of involvement recognition and referent criterion. In other words, they might not be equivalent to publics in the studied context. The conclusions drawn from Prolific workers' responses should be treated cautiously because they might share dissimilarities with publics in the studied context.

Like the pilot study, data collection of self-reported responses to CSA and sociopolitical issues

could be biased caused by social desirability. Other observation-based data collection methods

might overcome this issue in future research. Last but not least, the fuzzy-set qualitative

comparative analysis (fsQCA) can be an additional technique to supplement SEM, especially

given the complex CSA attributions. Instead of the "net effect," fsQCA provides insight into how

combinations of conditions lead to different outcomes (Woodside, 2013). This method helps deal

with asymmetrical relationships and thus find the necessary and sufficient conditions for an

outcome to occur (Atwell Seate et al., 2015). For instance, Skarmeas et al. (2014) utilized fsQCA

to discover the nuanced understanding of how combined sets of CSR attributions affected CSR

skepticism. Thus, it is also likely that the combinations of CSA attributions can affect

participants' attitudes toward the company in this study.

4.4   Chapter 4 Summary and Chapter 5 Prelude

Chapter 4 provides details about Study 2, including a pilot study and a main study. First,

the pilot study tested the manipulations of advocacy fit and empirically verified the measurement

of social media engagement intentions. A more parsimonious measure for social media

engagement intentions was proposed to be used in the main study. Second, the main study

employed a between-subject randomized experiment to examine the effects of advocacy fit and

social identities. Participants were recruited from two racial groups (White American and

African American), given the selected racial justice issue and BLM Movement. Evidence from

the main pilot confirmed the crucial role of advocacy fit in evoking positive attributions and

reducing negative attributions. Also, the main study supported the imperative influences of

participants' social identities in their responses to CSA and perceptions of sociopolitical issues.

The next chapter will discuss the results of Study 1 and Study 2, followed by theoretical and

practical implications. Potential research directions were also identified for future research in public relations, especially in CSA.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter discusses the results of Study 1 and Study 2 regarding communication strategies, social media engagement, advocacy fit, attributional processes, and publics' social identities. Then, theoretical and practical implications are proposed. Further, some potential future research directions are identified to move the public relations research forward.

Through a quantitative content analysis, Study 1 offered an overall view of how current companies have utilized relational, elaborational, and activational strategies to communicate their CSA efforts on social media. It further innovatively pointed out the possibility of using a combination of several communication strategies in one social media post. Despite all communication strategies existing, the studied companies predominantly applied elaborational, rather than relational or activational, communication strategies in their CSA social media communication. Also, the associations between these communication strategies and social media engagement behaviors identified in Study 1 pointed out potential directions for companies to advocate sociopolitical issues more effectively and strategically in the online environment. Jointly, the findings of Study 1 reinforced the crucial role of communication in this rising corporate practice.

Study 2 built on the results of Study 1 and employed a pilot study and a main study to examine the impacts of advocacy fit and social identities in the context of a race-related CSA. The pilot study found that manipulations of advocacy fit successfully affected participants' perceptions of the fit between a company and its CSA. Meanwhile, it empirically validated six types of social media engagement intentions by encompassing activeness and valence. By recruiting participants from two racial groups, the main study in Study 2 particularly compared how different groups of publics processed CSA information with consideration of their social

identities. It further examined how publics' social identities (group membership and ingroup identification) affected individual perceptions of sociopolitical issues. These results, together, shed invaluable light on strategic CSA communication that better aligns organizational objectives with public expectations. Finally, the key findings of Study 1 and Study 2 were summarized in Table 70.

Table 70

Summary of Research Findings

H or RQ	Key Findings	
Study 1: Content Analysis		
	Facebook	**Twitter**
RQ1: Communication strategies on social media	Relational: More than half did not use it (59.80%). Elaborational: More than half used it (61.27%). Activational: Nearly half did not use it (46.08%). Combined (mostly used): Elaborational + Activational (30.39%)	Relational: More than half did not use it (66.85%). Elaborational: More than half used it (64.09%). Activational: More than half did not use it (59.30%). Combined (mostly used): Elaborational (37.38%)
RQ2: Effects of communication strategies on social media engagement behaviors	Relational: function-based –> more *Haha* Elaborational: Less *Haha* Activational (virtual events or social media actions): Less Facebook engagement behaviors Combined: A relational communication strategy often led to more Facebook engagement behaviors. An elaborational, compared with relational, communication strategy led to more *Haha* and *Sad*.	Relational: function-based or image-based –> more *Likes*, *Retweets*, and *Quoted Retweets*. Elaborational: Less *Likes*, *Retweets*, and *Quoted Retweets*. Activational (virtual events or social media actions): *Likes*, *Retweets*, and *Quoted Retweets*. Combined: A relational communication strategy often led to more *Likes*, *Retweets*, and *Quoted Retweets*.
Study 2: Experiment (Pilot Study)		
Social media engagement intentions	1) Six types: consumption, contribution, creation, dormancy, detachment, and destruction 2) Prominence of passivity: dormancy and consumption 3) Proposal of a parsimonious measurement model (reduce 32 items to 21 items)	
Study 2: Experiment (Main Study)		

H or RQ	Key Findings			
H or RQ	**Non-CSA-supported Group (White American) Statistics**	**Results**	**CSA-supported Group (African American) Statistics**	**Results**
H1: attitudes –> social media engagement intentions	1) Positive attitudes toward the company –> more consumption (0.679***), contribution (0.502***), and creation (0.285***) 2) Positive attitudes toward the company –> less dormancy (-0.310***), detachment (-0.851***), and destruction (-0.313***)	Supported	1) Positive attitudes toward the company –> more consumption (0.849***), contribution (0.718***), and creation (0.508***) 2) Positive attitudes toward the company –> less dormancy (-0.595***), detachment (-0.608***), and destruction (-0.195***)	Supported
H2: Effects of advocacy fit	1) Value-driven: 0.580*** 2) Egoistic: -0.777*** 3) Stakeholder: 0.139 4) Strategic: -0.513***	Partially Supported	1) Value-driven: 950*** 2) Egoistic: -1.357*** 3) Stakeholder: 0.139 4) Strategic: -0.789***	Partially Supported
H3: Effects of ingroup identification in the CSA-supported group	NA	NA	1) Value-driven: 0.276*** 2) Egoistic: -0.211*** 3) Stakeholder: 0.069* 4) Strategic: -0.080	Supported
H4: Effects of ingroup identification in the non-CSA-supported group	1) Value-driven: 0.042 2) Egoistic: 0.158** 3) Stakeholder: 0.069* 4) Strategic: -0.167***	Partially Supported	NA	NA
H5: Mediating roles of CSA motives	1) Advocacy fit –> value-driven –> attitude: 0.417***	Partially Supported	1) Advocacy fit –> value-driven –> attitude: 0.684*** 2) Ingroup identification –> value-driven –> attitude: 0.198***	Partially Supported

H or RQ	Key Findings			
	Non-CSA-supported Group (White American)		**CSA-supported Group (African American)**	
H6: Perceived value-driven motives –> attitude toward the company	0.720***	Supported	0.720***	Supported
H7: Perceived egoistic motives –> attitude toward the company	-0.167***	Supported	-0.060	Not Supported
H8: Perceived stakeholder-driven motives –> attitude toward the company	-0.019	Not Supported	-0.019	Not Supported

Key Findings

RQ3: Roles of social group membership	1) More positive responses in the CSA-supported group (less perceived egoistic and strategic motives, more positive attitudes toward the company, consumption, contribution, creation, and less dormancy and detachment). 2) It also affected the relations between variables (different path coefficients in the final models).			
RQ4: Relations between social identities and perceptions of a sociopolitical issue	1) African American participants demonstrated significantly problem recognition, involvement recognition, constraint recognition, referent criterion, situational motivation in problem solving, and more positive attitudes toward the BLM social movement than White American participants. 2) The racial ingroup identification only played a crucial role in African American participants' perceptions of the racial justice issue, but not for White American participants (except for referent criterion).			
RQ5: Perceived strategic motives –> attitude toward the company	-0.033	No Significant Impact	-0.033	No Significant Impact

5.1   CSA Communication Strategies on Social Media (RQ1)

This dissertation provided a systematic analysis of CSA communication strategies on social media, contributing to strategic corporate communication in the online environment. Relational, elaborational, and activational communication strategies have been examined in brand extension (Bridges et al., 2000; Kim, 2003; Völckner & Sattler, 2006), corporate sponsorship (Cornwell et al., 2006; Weeks et al., 2018), and CSR (Sohn et al., 2012). This dissertation is the first to apply these communication strategies in the CSA contexts, which pointed out the potential of communication in building explanatory links or semantic associations for companies' advocacy efforts. Relational communication strategies highlight the associations between companies and their advocated issues, whereas elaborational communication strategies solely focus on the advocated issues. Finally, activational communication strategies aim to provide information for publics to take action. Communication and public relations play a unique role in CSA due to its focus on advocacy (Waymer & Logan, 2021) and weak ties to its core business (Lim & Young, 2021). Through analyzing 204 Facebook posts and 543 tweets, Study 1 revealed the existence of all three communication strategies (relational, elaborational, and activational) in CSA communication on companies' social media platforms. This content analysis study strengthened our understanding of CSA social media communication by documenting companies' commonly used communication strategies on two popular social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter). Study 1 offered empirical evidence about how companies respond to public expectations through CSA social media communication. Therefore, the results of Study 1 added additional insight into the rising literature on dialogical corporate communication and digital media (see Capriotti et al., 2020).

First, this study presented the possibility of communication in creating explicit connections or explanatory links between a company and its CSA activity on social media. Research on relational communication strategies, despite its marketing origin, has been extended to the CSR context as created fit (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006) or CSR relational communication strategy (Sohn et al., 2012). This dissertation continued this line of research by showing that some companies' social media posts have adopted relational communication strategies, both function-based and image-based associations. Regarding function-based associations, many companies utilized their products, services, expertise, or business operations to support sociopolitical issues. As prior studies proposed, function-based sponsorship facilitated the event operation using the sponsor's product (Poon & Prendergast, 2006). Study 1 also found that some companies began to utilize their products or services to advocate for sociopolitical issues. For example, Mastercard posted a tweet about their "True Name" initiative that allowed their transgender & non-binary community to choose a name to display on their cards. Comparatively, image-based associations focus on the meanings and symbolic links between involved companies and issues (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2012). In this study, some CSA social media posts built explanatory links by reminding publics of companies' values, histories, missions, visions, leaderships, and other image-related information. Through relational communication strategies, companies try to make themselves and their advocated sociopolitical issues "hang out" together through function-based or image-based associations. These findings spoke to the communicative nature of the fit, as argued by de Jong and van der Meer (2017). Although prior studies have discussed how companies tried to link their advocacy to corporate values and internal policies (Coombs & Holladay, 2018; Waymer & Logan, 2021), this dissertation was the first study to catalog such efforts as relational communication strategies in

CSA. When a company is not tied closely to a particular sociopolitical issue, relational communication strategies become especially valuable to offer information cues that legitimize the advocacy effort and facilitate publics' information processing of CSA.

Second, the prevalence of elaborational communication strategies on Facebook and Twitter discovered in Study 1 signaled the unique features of CSA, such as unavailable fit and advocacy focus. Companies in this study devoted their social media communication to elaborate on the sociopolitical issues' significance, events, people, history, and features. Such a focus on sociopolitical issues in communication reflects CSA as a specific form of corporate advocacy (Waymer & Logan, 2021), which influences public opinions on issues through research, analysis, design, and mass dissemination of arguments (Heath, 1980). From a social issue management standpoint, positively defining the issue, legitimizing a company's involvement, and creating issue awareness are critical communicative tasks when a company takes a stance on a controversial issue (Coombs & Holladay, 2018). Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that elaboration on issues through social media communication can be a possible way to define the issue, further legitimatize CSA and increase public awareness. For example, Lee (2017) conducted a content analysis to analyze the Fortune 500 companies' sustainability communication on Facebook, primarily conveying information about sustainability or encouraging sustainable consumption. Lee (2017) found that Facebook is considered a valuable tool for publics to share information quickly. Consistent with Lee's (2017) finding, this study also discovered that companies tend to use their social media channels to inform and advocate for publics sociopolitical issues. Furthermore, this finding contributed to current literature on informing strategy in CSR communication that informs publics about CSR initiatives (Morsing, 2006). This research pointed out additional possibilities in informing strategies by dissemination

formation about the supported sociopolitical issue in CSA communication. Ultimately, Study 1's finding on relational communication strategies deepens our scholarly knowledge of how CSA essentially differs from other corporate practices such as CSR. In other words, companies' active adoption of elaborational communication strategies on social media showed that CSA is highly publicized and communicative (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Waymer & Logan, 2021).

Third, Study 1 also revealed the inactive and unplanned use of communication strategies in CSA across companies' Facebook and Twitter. This dissertation took an interdisciplinary approach and answered Capriotti et al.'s (2020) call for research on organizations' dialogical communication through social and digital media. Evidence from Study 1 showed that companies' CSA social media posts exhibited a low degree of activational communication strategies rather than actively encouraging publics' actions and involvement. Specifically, they either did not mention publics at all or employed more generic terms such as "learn more," "watch," "discover," or "read." This finding was consistent with prior studies on corporate communication, including CSR, which have noted that companies did not fully exploit social media's full two-way or dialogical potential (Cho et al., 2017; Einwiller & Steilen, 2015; Kim et al., 2014). For example, Kim et al. (2014) identified the prevalence of generic terms like "try" or "learn" from companies' Facebook posts that failed to trigger publics' social media engagement. Despite the merits of social media in activational communication strategy, this dissertation implied that companies might not be prepared or willing to leverage activational communication strategies to invite publics into the online conversation. The concept of activational communication strategies has been applied widely in studies on sponsorship activation (Quintal et al., 2020; Week et al., 2008). This dissertation was a pioneer that tested activational communication strategies in CSA, providing insight into dialogical corporate communication on

social media. The further conceptual development of activational communication strategies can benefit from key dimensions of dialogical corporate communication on social media, such as active presence, interactive attitudes, interactive resources, responsiveness, and conversation (see Capriotti et al., 2020).

Moreover, Study 1 observed similar patterns of adopting communication strategies on Facebook and Twitter, which echoed some prior studies. For instance, Wright and Hinson (2015) discovered that public relations practitioners frequently disseminate the same messages across Facebook and Twitter. Similarly, Tao and Wilson (2015) found that Fortune 1000 companies also implemented consistent corporate communication strategies across Facebook and Twitter. But they also called for more flexibility in using communication strategies to better adapt to the dynamic nature of social media (Tao & Wilson, 2015). Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have different features that affect brand-related user-generated content (UGC, Smith et al., 2012). For example, it is more likely that brand-related UGC on Twitter rather than on YouTube centers on brand-related information (Smith et al., 2012). Furthermore, these social media sites are preferred by different groups of people. For example, Ruehl and Ingenhoff (2015) revealed that politicians and digital natives possessed different motivations and behaviors in choosing Facebook or Twitter when interacting with companies. Additionally, social media users' motivations for selecting social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat) to follow brands/companies differ (Logan, 2014; Phua et al., 2017). Despite scholarly suggestions for more tailored corporate communication based on social media platforms, this dissertation still affirmed that companies lacked strategic adjustments for their communication strategies and message content across a wide range of social media sites when advocating sociopolitical issues.

5.2   Communication Strategies and Social Media Engagement (RQ2)

As the first research to assess the effectiveness of relational, elaborational, and activational communication strategies on publics' engagement behaviors online, this dissertation further enriched the literature on strategic CSA social media communication. Hence, the results added new and valuable social media monitoring knowledge with newly applied communication strategies in the CSA context. As Capriotti et al. (2020) encouraged, organizations should use quantitative measures, the number of *Likes* and *Shares*, to better assess social media users' responses to their digital content. These first-level social media engagement metrics (Dhanesh et al., 2022) allow examination of "publics' immediate, short-term reactions to organizational messages (Kim & Yang, 2017, p. 442). Study 2 shed valuable light on the "responsiveness" dimension to deeply understand the plausible communicational exchange between companies and publics, which determines the success and effectiveness of dialogical corporate communication on social media (Capriotti et al., 2020).

The findings of Study 1 implied a significant role of relational communication strategies in eliciting publics' responsiveness to CSA on social media. This dissertation expanded prior research on perceived advocacy fit in CSA by providing additional knowledge on how to constitute fit through communication. With relational communication strategies, CSA can function as a meaningful signal of corporate identity and value. Study 1 demonstrated that the presence of a relational communication strategy showed more associations with publics' social media engagement behaviors on Facebook and Twitter, compared with other communications strategies. This finding concurred with de Jong and van der Meer's (2017) claim on the communicative nature of CSR fit. They highlight that communication can strengthen, frame, and prime the fit of corporate socially responsible activities. Essentially, articulation through a

relational communication strategy creates an associative link between a company and an event, even without a natural link (Coppetti et al., 2009). As a result, the perceived fit can be improved (Sohn et al., 2012). Prior literature has documented the benefits of fit in the CSA context (Hong & Li, 2020; Lim & Young, 2021; Yim, 2021). Moreover, this finding extended the discussion on the relations between the "walk" (practices) and the "talk" (communication) to CSA, which has been a burgeoning research direction in CSR communication (e.g., Schoeneborn et al., 2020). For example, when a sponsor's expertise is used to support the event operation, it is perceived as more responsible and devoted (Poon & Prendergast, 2006). Hence, function-based associations present companies' concrete actions and expertise in CSA, which can show authenticity through "walk the talk."

Nevertheless, the effects of relational communication strategies as a standalone variable were not entirely consistent across Facebook and Twitter. For example, the presence, compared to the absence, of a relational communication strategy, either function-based or image-based, was not significantly associated with most Facebook engagement behaviors. Only the presence of functional associations can be related to more clicks of haha. The haha reaction button entails more ambivalence regarding valences (Sumner et al., 2020). However, the existence of an image-based or function-based association in CSA-related tweets led to more *Likes*, *Retweets*, and *Quoted Retweets*. One possible explanation can be derived from online users' different motivations to follow companies on various social media platforms. For example, the need for information drives Twitter users' intention to follow brands but not Facebook users (Logan, 2014). Those who follow brands on Facebook appear to be more interested in other users' comments than corporate messages (Logan, 2014). Additionally, Facebook is more about social connectedness, while Twitter is often used to disseminate brand-related information (Smith et al.,

2012). As a result, Facebook users showed less interest in interacting with brands (Pelletier et al., 2020). Additionally, Facebook and Twitter have different platform features that may affect the specific applications of communication strategies, such as Twitter's 280-character limit. Therefore, it is likely that the connections between companies and CSA via relational communication strategies can be more concise on Twitter and meet Twitter users' needs for brand-related information. Finally, the finding of the differences between Facebook and Twitter users' reactions to relational communication strategies pointed to directions on social media users' various processing of company-related information across diverse channels.

Next, this study indicated the overall ineffectiveness of using elaborational communication strategies in engaging publics on both Facebook and Twitter. This finding questioned the extent to which companies are expected and authorized to enter public debates when the roots of advocacy efforts remain unclear. Only informing publics about sociopolitical issues through elaborational communication strategies does not actively involve or engage publics. An elaborational communication strategy limits the image transfer from the extension to the parent brand (Dens & De Pelsmacker, 2016). Thus, in the context of CSA, a company and its supported issue are not tied together. As Yim (2021) points out, companies should not overly use social advocacy or consensus-driven communications to legitimatize their advocacy. When publics can not identify any real root in a company's culture or history for its CSA, the company's advocacy will be considered window-dressing or self-interest oriented (Yim, 2021). Another explanation is related to a lack of actions in CSA information with an elaborational communication strategy. Publics tend to perceive CSA as less credible and authentic and display less intention in positive behavioral intentions (word-of-mouth, purchase intentions) if a company stance is not followed by an action step (Heffron, 2019). The present study also

discovered that CSA social media posts with elaborational communication strategies often lack information about companies' concrete actions. Under such circumstances, CSA legitimacy and authenticity can be questioned. Without consistent and identifiable messaging and practice, companies' advocacy on sociopolitical issues could be perceived as "woke washing" (Vredenburg et al., 2018, p. 444). Again, this dissertation reinforced the notion of "walk the talk" (i.e., alignment between communication and practices) in the CSA.

Despite the overall ineffectiveness of elaborational communication strategies, Study 1 discovered that an elaborational, compared with relational, communication strategy led to more haha and sad on Facebook. Online publics were more likely to click haha and sad reaction buttons when a post elaborates on the advocated sociopolitical issue. A worthy note is that these elaborational communication strategies did not contain other two types of communication strategies. In other words, these posts usually provided ample information about the advocated issues, such as histories or personal narrative stories. This finding was illuminating with regard to the concept of affordances on social media. Wilkerson et al. (2021) defined affective affordances as "*the relational enactment of feeling through the vernacular of technological functions representing discrete emotions*" (p. 1045). They further highlighted that Facebook's new "reaction" features enable online users' emotional expression, which should be considered as affective affordances (Wilkerson et al., 2021). Newly added reaction buttons expand the "like" button and fulfill online users' need for the emotional expression "in a richer and more animated manner" (Shao & Kwon, 2019, p. 21). The inclusion of more reaction buttons offers a more precise description of online users' opinions toward a discussion (Kaur et al., 2019) because users can choose the button to express their emotions (Sumner et al., 2020). Using reaction buttons is considered to be a deliberate and thoughtful process (Sumner et al., 2020). This

dissertation implied the value of elaborational communication strategies in facilitating affective responses with the support of Facebook's affective affordances. By parsing out the affective responses, this study added new insight into the unique functions of elaborational communication strategies.

Moreover, Study 1 found that activational communication strategies in CSA were not effective in generating Facebook or Twitter engagement behaviors. This finding was valuable to further research on dialogical communication by identifying the disparity between activational communication strategies and actual public participation. In other words, providing how-to advice does not automatically bring desired public engagement, especially with the use of generic terms. As indicated from the descriptive statistics, studied companies' social media posts often employed "read," "learn more," "watch," or "discover" as a way to solicit public responses. However, activational communications strategies can be effective only with the interaction between a company and its publics (Ye, 2015). When asking publics to read, watch, learn more, or discover on social media, publics may not be actively involved or engaged and still passively process CSA-related information. Similar to this dissertation, Kim et al. (2014) also found that using generic terms like "try" or "learn" in companies' Facebook posts reduced the number of *Likes* and *Comments*. Instead, companies should seek more specific and personal action-oriented participation to enhance public engagement on social media (Kim et al., 2014). The findings of this study lead to discussion on the rising concept of participatory CSR. Lee et al. (2019) asked for more attention on participatory CSR strategies to move an aware public to an active public. Interactive content such as calls-to-action in participatory CSR campaigns enhances publics' perceived interactivity (Lee et al., 2021). This dissertation implied that the broad concept of

activational communication strategy might not capture the essence of being participatory in CSA.

5.3 Social Media Engagement Intentions

5.3.1 Measurement of Social Media Engagement Intentions

The pilot study in Study 2 offered a holistic view of publics' intentions to engage in a wide range of social media activities when responding to CSA. The study also empirically verified the multidimensional nature of social media engagement, expanding scholars' and practitioners' knowledge of publics' complex but intertwined activities on social media. This study built on Dolan et al. (2016)'s conceptualization and prior studies (Cao et al., 2021; Schivinski et al., 2016; Tsai & Men, 2013) to confirm publics' intentions to engage in various social media activities: consumption, contribution, creation, dormancy, detachment, and destruction. Research on social media engagement intentions enables assessing CSA outcomes, as public relations literature has acknowledged the influential role of social media engagement in positive organization-public relationships (Dhanesh et al., 2022; Men & Tsai, 2015; Smith & Gallicano, 2015; Wang, 2015). A few recent studies have examined publics' social media engagement intentions. For example, Yue et al. (2021) used seven items to assess the extent of publics' intentions to engage with the CEO and the company. Cao et al. (2021) applied the theory of planned behavior and found that engagement intention was a strong predictor of actual engagement behaviors (consumption, contribution, and creation). Therefore, this dissertation furthered this line of inquiry by expanding the scope of social media engagement behaviors.

This dissertation responds to Kang's (2014) research call by incorporating both activeness and valence in publics' social media engagement behaviors. Remarkably, the inclusion of disengagement and negative engagement is imperative in CSA because CSA

receives potential divided public responses brought by the inherent controversies of sociopolitical issues (Park & Jiang, 2020; Rim et al., 2020). Hence, considering the negativity in publics responses to CSA illuminates more comprehensive knowledge of dynamic and complicated relationship management in the CSA context. Extant literature from diverse disciplines (public relations, marketing, and political communication) has highlighted the value of social media engagement in contributing to desired organizational outcomes such as trust and commitment (Dessart, 2017). Furthermore, diverse social media engagement (function, emotional, and communal) is a key driver of public-company identification when a company adopts a definitive stance on a sociopolitical issue (Park & Jiang, 2020). However, literature has primarily approached social media engagement as a purely positive construct and fails to acknowledge the existence of negatively valenced behaviors. Without recognizing the potential risk associated with CSA, our scholarly understanding of this burgeoning corporate communication practice can be jeopardized and biased.

The predominant intention to engage in passive social media engagement intentions indicated publics' hesitation to use social media as a tool to interact and engage with companies. Among diverse social media activities, participants in Study 2 generally showed a low degree of intention to engage with the company in an active way. Although this dissertation used a fictitious company that may interfere with participants' social media engagement intentions, this finding was consistent with Tsai and Men's (2013) study. Respondents in their study displayed more reactive Facebook engagement behaviors such as reading brand-related posts rather than proactive behaviors such as commenting on brands' Facebook pages (Tsai & Men, 2013). These passive consumption behaviors require low engagement effort (Cao et al., 2021) and represent the lowest level of activeness (Muntinga et al., 2011). Passive consumption behaviors are driven

by online users' demand for company-related information, entertainment, and remuneration (Muntinga et al., 2011). More active and intense behaviors, contribution and creation, are motivated by personal identity, integration and social interaction, and entertainment (Muntinga et al., 2011). Furthermore, literature on intergroup relations shows that active behaviors towards groups can also be motivated by social identities (see BIAS map, Cuddy et al., 2007). Thus, participants may lack strong motivations, either persona or social, to actively engage with companies on social media regarding CSA. Additionally, the prevalence of passive engagement behaviors may suggest that social media have not been fully capitalized on to maintain or build relationships between brands and consumers, despite the wide use of social media in corporate communication (Tsai & Men, 2013).

In addition to low activeness, the participants in Study 2 also presented extremely low intention to engage in destruction activities on social media as a response to the focal companies' CSA information. This result spoke to the complex antecedents for highly negative valenced social media engagement behaviors. Although this study tested publics' social media engagement intentions instead of their actual engagement behaviors, this finding corresponded to prior studies. For example, Ji et al. (2017) analyzed Facebook posts of 112 *Fortune 500* companies from 2009 to 2013 to study the relations between shallow engagement indicators (*likes*, *shares*) and profound engagement indicators (positive, negative, neutral comments). Based on their summary of descriptive statistics, the average number of negative comments ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 3.05$) was much smaller than positive ($M = 5.37$, $SD = 3.59$) and neutral comments ($M = 9.59$, $SD = 5.32$). Furthermore, participants in Hong and Li's (2020) research also presented a low level of boycott intention to Coca-Cola's CSA initiatives on same-sex marriage, as evident by low average scores on three measurement items ($M = 2.02$, 1.92, 2.38). Another

reason for the low level of destruction intentions could be attributed to a popular and mainstream sociopolitical issue selected in this dissertation. But the negative Facebook comments still cause a strong detrimental impact on corporate reputation (Ji et al., 2017). Hence, publics' intention to engage in destruction activities on social media, although it appears to be low, should not be neglected. The negative valenced, destructive behaviors, such as negative word of mouth, can be driven by other factors such as attitudes toward complaining (Lau & Ng, 2001). Negative engagement behaviors also involve a collective orientation and relate to publics' "self-esteem, self-efficacy, and a sense of control or financial compensation" (Lievonen et al., 2018, p. 540). Similarly, Juric et al. (2016) proposed multiple factors for negative customer brand engagement, such as personal goals, self-serving motives, and customer-brand relationships. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that participants' intention to engage in destruction activities on social media might be motivated by other factors beyond their attitudes toward the company. For instance, this study found that participants' social media dependency increased the possibility of destruction intention.

5.3.2 *Attitudes and Social Media Engagement Intentions (H1)*

Examining the relationships between attitudes toward a company and social media engagement intentions in this dissertation further illuminated the valence and intensity of social media engagement behaviors, which affirmed Dolan et al.'s (2016) conceptualization. Study 2 found that positive attitudes toward the company led to publics' higher intention to engage in consumption, contribution, and creation on social media. Other prior empirical studies have also discovered a significant correlation between social media engagement behaviors (consumption, contribution, and creation) with brand attitude (Schivinski et al., 2016) or organization-public relationships (Men & Tsai, 2014). For instance, the more publics consume company-related

information and interact with a company on Facebook, the more likely they will publicly

advocate for the company as they perceive more organizational transparency, authenticity, and

organization-public relationships (Men & Tsai, 2014). This dissertation, along with prior studies,

has portrayed a positive circle that connects attitudes, positive social media engagement

intentions, and actual positive social media engagement.

This study was one of a few studies that empirically tested the negatively valenced social

media engagement behaviors. Participants in Study 2 intended to engage in dormancy,

detachment, and destruction on social media when they held negative attitudes toward the

company. Dolan et al. (2016) defined dormancy as "a temporary state to inactive, passive

engagement by users who may have previously interacted with the focal brand" (p. 107). They

posited that dormancy is considered a neutral social media engagement behavior as dormant

users don't exhibit negatively valenced engagement behaviors (Dolan et al., 2016). However,

there is a lack of research on effective communication strategies or efforts facilitating dormant

users' engagement (Dolan et al., 2016). This study pointed to a possible way to diminish publics'

intention to keep dormant as a response to CSA on social media through cultivating more

positive public attitude. In this dissertation, participants did not previously interact with the

fictitious company, which suggested the measure of dormancy intentions might differ from the

original conceptualization. Participants' dormancy intentions in this dissertation indicated a

negative, rather than neutral, valence. Moreover, publics' intentions to engage in detachment and

destruction activities are motivated by their unfavorable perceptions of a company. Although

these behaviors may pose challenges to organizational reputation, they also present publics'

diverse opinions and promote more meaningful organizational changes (Lievonen et al., 2018;

Waymer & Logan, 2021). Therefore, this research advanced the scholarly inquiry on gauging and managing publics' negative responses to CSA.

5.3.3   Group-based Differences of Attitudes-Social Media Engagement Intentions Relations

This dissertation was the first study to consider how group membership altered the influences of attitudinal response on social media engagement intention, contributing to a group-based and identity-based approach to CSA communication. The current positively-/negatively-valenced brand/company engagement conceptual model (Hollenbeek & Chen, 2014) stays on the organization-level focus. Additionally, publics' social identities also drive their social media engagement with a company (Men & Tsai, 2013). Specifically, the main study of Study 2 demonstrated that the magnitudes of attitudes-social media engagement intentions relations differed across the two racial groups. The impacts of attitudes toward the company on positive social media engagement intentions (i.e., consumption, contribution, and creation) and dormancy were stronger in the African American group than in the White American group. The social identity approach is insightful in offering explanations for these findings. African American participants' racial group membership can exacerbate the positive effects of attitudes on positively valenced engagement intentions on social media, which can be explained by ingroup favoritism and their desire to achieve and maintain a positive social identity as a low-status social group (see social identity theory, Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Lake et al. (2021) found that racial minorities engage in more active forms of online engagement to support the BLM Movement. Furthermore, the similarity between the social group and an organization's identity (e.g., a social venture) motivates individuals to engage in more social media activities (Hall-Phillips et al., 2016). Hence, for African Americans, a company's CSA provides additional chances to express their support for racial justice and the BLM Movement through active and

positive social media engagement behaviors. Simultaneously, their positive attitudes led to much less probability of remaining dormant.

However, the impacts of attitudes toward the company on detachment and destruction intentions were significantly weaker in the African American group than those in the White American group. According to Dolan et al. (2016), both detachment and destruction behaviors represent a moderate to a high level of negatively valenced social media engagement behaviors. This study discovered that African American participants' attitudes toward the company was a less crucial factor in changing their negative social media engagement behaviors than White American participants. A possible explanation is additional group-based variables such as perceived identity similarity or identity salience also offer valid explanations for African American participants' negative social media engagement intentions. However, no study has examined the group-based difference in the attitudes-social media engagement intentions relationships, so the speculations and explanations from the present research are still tentative and require further verification.

5.4 Effects of Advocacy Fit (H2)

5.4.1 Similar Findings across Groups

Extending prior scholarly work on advocacy fit in CSA, this dissertation pointed to the underlying attributional process that further explicated publics' reactions to CSA. Prior studies on crisis communication (see situational crisis communication theory, Coombs, 2007) and CSR (e.g., Ellen et al., 2006) have shown the explanatory power of attribution theory to understand publics' perceptions of organizations' responsibilities. The findings of this dissertation added new knowledge to the literature on advocacy fit with a nuanced explanation of its impacts on various attributions. First of all, this dissertation confirmed that publics' perceived fit and

congruency between a company and its CSA could be established through the company's value, identity, image, or character, which was well-aligned with prior literature (Hong & Li, 2021; Lim & Young, 2021). It is known that the direct connection between a company's core business and the advocated sociopolitical issue is not always available, but public relations efforts can help form a perceived advocacy fit (Lim & Young, 2021). In Coman et al.'s (2022) study on Gen Z's perceptions of CSA, some participants, though they cared less about the functional fit, still agreed that selecting a specific issue should depend on the connections with a company's purpose (i.e., image fit). Consequently, companies still need to consider "who they are" before jumping into CSA. Therefore, this dissertation provided empirical support for the necessity of research on advocacy fit in CSA.

Adding to previous research, this research took an attribution-based perspective and deepened understanding of the positive functions of a high advocacy fit. Specifically, this research showed that participants believed the company was driven by its own missions and values and sincerely cared about the social issue when the advocated issue remained highly congruent with its image or identity. Some companies, such as Ben & Jerry and Google, frame their stance on same-sex marriage as value-based and vision-based (Westtstein & Baur, 2016). Prior literature applied different theoretical frameworks to explain the benefits of high advocacy fit, such as the cognitive dissonance theory (Hong & Li, 2020), the issue ownership theory (Lim & Young, 2021), and perceived authenticity (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Such congruency makes publics more likely to become "supporters" of CSA with enhanced purchase intention and diminished boycott intention (Hong & Li, 2020). Also, perceived fit helps the company own the issue in publics' mind over time (Lim & Young, 2021). Although the challenge exists to gain automatic alignment between a company and its promoted sociopolitical issue, the positive

effects of a high advocacy fit on perceived value-driven motives pinpointed the invaluable

potential of public relations in building corporate identities and framing CSA efforts.

This research also demonstrated the value of high advocacy fit in mitigating publics'

perceived egoistic motives in a CSA context. Perceived egoistic motives are perceived as a type

of negative attributions because publics think the company is exploiting the social issue (Kim et

al., 2020). The congruency between a company and its CSA helps suppress such negative

attributions and the subsequent skepticism. Park (2021) approached CSA as an identity signaling

practice that reflects the company's value. With clear and explicit connections between a

company and its CSA, it is more likely for the company to demonstrate a definitive stance on the

advocated issue and signals a deep-rooted commitment. Such corporate issue identification

presents the company's sincerity and transparency, leading to less public skepticism (Park,

2021). The match between a company's stated value and actual performance can minimize the

factual gap and build organizational legitimacy (Yim, 2021). Conversely, the misalignment

between a company's fundamental value and its CSA exposes itself to the danger of hypocrisy

(Westtstein & Baur, 2016). Under this circumstance, publics may perceive CSA efforts as "woke

washing" because it does not indicate any clear record of social cause practice (Vredenburg et

al., 2020, p. 444).

The negative impact of advocacy fit on perceived strategic motives shown in this study

further illustrated the importance of aligning CSA with a company's image and value. With a

high congruency in CSA, publics tend to display less perceived strategic motives. Strategic

attributions are approached as one type of self-centered attributions that reflect companies'

business goals such as getting new customers, keeping existing customers, making profits, or

increasing competitiveness (Ellen et al., 2006). In the CSR context, the high fit between the

company's core business and the supported social issue can induce more suspicions of opportunism (Ellen et al., 2006). Contrary to Ellen's (2006) finding in CSR, this present research showed that a high advocacy fit led to less strategic attributions. Furthermore, the negative and significant correlation between perceived value-driven motives and strategic motives (R^2_{WA} = -.35, $p < .001$; R^2_{AA} = -.44, $p < .001$) implied the self-serving nature of the latter. Unlike CSR fit derived from core business (see Ellen et al., 2006), advocacy fit in CSA often relies on the congruency between a company's identity/value and its CSA (Hong & Li, 2020). In this research, advocacy fit was manipulated through the company's mission, history, identity, and value. This type of fit in CSA is highly desired by publics, as shown in Austin et al.'s (2019) nationally representative U.S. survey. The value consistency contributes to corporate legitimacy (Lim & Young, 2021; Yim, 2021), which suppresses publics' attributed strategic attributions.

This research failed to identify any significant effect of advocacy fit on perceived stakeholder-driven motives in a CSA context. When Ellen et al. (2006) proposed the four types of CSR motives, they also tested the impacts of fit on these attributions. In their findings, fit did not significantly affect perceived stakeholder-driven motives. Similarly, when examining the fit effect in a socially stigmatized industry, Austin and Gaither (2017) also did not find any significant impact of fit on attributed stakeholder-driven motives. Possible speculation for these similar findings is that other organizational, personal, or contextual factors play more critical roles in publics' perceived stakeholder-driven motives. For example, Ellen et al. (2006) discovered that companies' high commitment to a cause lessened participants' perceived stakeholder-driven motives. Also, when a high-reputation company supports a low-fit cause, the perceived stakeholder-driven becomes prominent (Zhang et al., 2020). Next, personal characteristics such as interpersonal trust can elicit more stakeholder-driven motives (Marín et

al., 2016). Additionally, Lee and Cho (2022) discovered that publics incorporate the impact of the COVID19 pandemic on business as a contextual factor in their attributions of CSR. Following these reasonings, it is possible that publics' perceived significance, legitimacy, and urgency of the selected social issue (racial justice) determines the extent to which they believe the CSA is driven by stakeholder pressure.

To conclude, this dissertation expanded the literature on advocacy fit by breaking down its impacts on publics' perceived value-driven, egoistic, strategies, and stakeholder-driven motives underlying a CSA. The findings, together, pointed out that advocacy fit was an essential factor in CSA to facilitate positive public responses through increasing favorable attributions and decreasing unfavorable ones.

5.4.2   Different Findings Across Groups

Furthermore, this study is pioneering by introducing the social identity approach to unpack the conditional fit effects in the CSA context through a multigroup analysis. Study 2 showed that participants' social group memberships altered path coefficients between advocacy fit and perceived CSA motives in the final models. Particularly, advocacy fit played a more substantial role in facilitating positive attributions and repressing negative attributions for the CSA-supported group. These differences suggested that advocacy fit might function more consequentially for the CSA-supported group, in addition to its overall positive impacts. This dissertation introduced the social identity approach (see Tajfel, 1979; 1986; Turner, 1985) to extend the scholarly inquiry on publics' reactions to advocacy fit in CSA. It is worth noting that African American participants, on average, perceived a higher level of fit between the company and its CSA on racial justice than White American participants in the main study. In this dissertation, advocacy fit was manipulated based on the varying congruency between corporate

identity and the advocated issue (racial justice). Hence, it is more likely that a high advocacy fit bundles the company, supported issue, and issue-related social group members together, leading to more enhanced positive results. As Hong and Li (2021) discovered, a high level of congruency among a consumer, a company, and a CSA cause formed the supporter group. Hence, publics in the CSA-supported group are more likely to become supporters when exposed to a high-fit condition as they experience the person-organization fit or identification with the company simultaneously. This argument corresponds to the concept of identity similarity in Bhattacharya and Sen's (2003) conceptual framework of consumer-company identification. Individuals find a company more attractive when "it matches their own sense of who they are" (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003, p. 80). That is to say, the congruency between a company and its advocated issue further helps match CSA-supported group members' self-concept with the company's identity.

5.5   Roles of Ingroup Identification Across Groups (H3 and H4)

The study was the first research to apply ingroup identification in examining publics' responses to CSA. Ingroup identification was found to influence publics' attributional process and attitudes toward the company, which led to publics' intentions to engage in different social media engagement behaviors. The multigroup analysis revealed significant but different roles of ingroup identification across the two racial groups, which verified the potential of the social identity approach in expanding our understanding of public responses to CSA. As Borden (2016) posited, attribution of corporate crisis responsibility can be reconstructed by stakeholders' social identities, such as national identity. Like Borden's (2016) research, this dissertation also affirmed that the intergroup attributional bias (Hewstone, 1990) occurred when publics assigned reasons to CSA. The findings on the impacts of ingroup identification across the CSA-supported and non-CSA-supported groups opened up new ways of researching CSA communication

effectiveness. Moreover, this dissertation contributed to the literature on intergroup relations by applying the social identity approach in a business context.

5.5.1   Roles of Ingroup Identification in the CSA-Supported Group (H3)

This dissertation delved into the CSA-supported group members' attributions of CSA, providing support for the influential roles of publics' social identities in their CSA perceptions. Overall, African American participants in the main study demonstrated a significantly higher level of identification with their race/ethnicity group compared with White American participants. This finding aligned with the existing social identity and intergroup literature as minority groups are more likely to highly identify with their groups than majority groups (Dovidio et al., 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1978). Minority group members are more motivated to protect their positive distinctiveness (Dovidio et al., 2007). Optimal distinctiveness theory posits that people want to identify with distinctive and optimal groups to satisfy two identity needs (inclusion and differentiation) (Brewer, 2011). Thus, individuals tend to have more identification with numerical minorities, rather than numerical majorities (Leonardelli et al., 2010).

As members of the CSA-supported group, African American participants' strong identification with their racial group led them to attribute more value-driven motives, stakeholder-driven motives, and less egoistic motives in a race-related CSA case. In other words, African American participants interpreted companies' motivations to engage in advocacy efforts in ways that supported their social identities. A Although limited knowledge has been known about publics' ingroup identification in the CSA context, the prior literature on intergroup relations sheds valuable light on these findings. High ingroup identification implies stronger psychological connections between themselves and specific groups (Tropp & Wright, 2001). High identifiers engage in the depersonalization of individual self-concept, and their salience of

ingroup-outgroup categorization affects their perceptions and behaviors in a given situation (Turner, 1985). In the CSA context, high identifiers are more likely to perceive a company as an ingroup entity with an aligned identity (Xu, 2020; Wang et al., 2012) and display more ingroup favoritism. According to intergroup attributional bias, more internal attributions (e.g., ability) are offered for the ingroup's success (Hewstone, 1990). For example, Choi et al. (2016) found that consumers make more altruistic attributions for a domestic (ingroup) company's CSR than a foreign (outgroup) company's CSR. And this pattern is even stronger for collectivistic consumers who tend to identify more with their country (Choi et al., 2016). Therefore, African American participants highly identified with their racial group were inclined to perceive the focal company as an ingroup entity and attributed more intrinsic reasons to its CSA. As a result, they believed the company's CSA was driven more by sincere and internal causes (i.e., value-driven motives) and less by extrinsic and self-centered motivations (i.e., egoistic motives). The positive impact of their ingroup identification on perceived stakeholder-driven motive was also found in the research. Ellen et al. (2006) perceived stakeholder-driven attributions as a type of other-centered motives. Members of the CSA-supported groups with high ingroup identification can equate their expectations with stakeholder expectations, given their escalated attention to and motivation in supporting the focal issue. Jointly, the CSA-supported group members' ingroup identification drives their support for the CSA, as shown by increased intrinsic attributions and decreased extrinsic ones.

5.5.2 *Effects of Ingroup Identification in the Non-CSA-supported Group (H4)*

The present research extended the intergroup attributional bias to a CSA context and confirmed that individuals with high identification were more likely to assign more external causes to a company's advocacy on an outgroup issue. White American participants' racial

ingroup identification significantly increased their perceived egoistic, stakeholder-driven, and strategic motives. But it did not substantially affect their perceived value-driven motives in a race-related CSA. As explained in the intergroup attribution bias, individuals tend to assign fewer internal attributions to an outgroup's success or a positive act (Hewstone, 1990). Instead, they often inferred more external reasons for the outgroup's success (Hewstone, 1990). Furthermore, these group-serving attributions are more likely to occur when the group membership is salient (Hewstone, 1990; Islam & Hewstone, 1993). The intergroup attribution bias can serve positive social identity and self-esteem (Islam & Hewstone, 1993). As pointed out by Hewstone et al. (2002), identification can exacerbate intergroup bias. High identifiers are more likely to experience increased intergroup threats (Riek et al., 2006). Consequently, they tend to have a more negative affect when making outgroup-internal attributions for unfavorable ingroup outcomes (Costarelli, 2007). Although this line of research occurs dominantly in the intergroup context, following this logic helps explain this dissertation's findings. High identifiers in the White American group showed more tendency to attribute situational reasons, such as egoistic, stakeholder-driven, and strategic motives, rather than altruistic and value-driving motives, for a company's race-related CSA. Their group serving attributional bias is motivated by a strong motivation to maintain a positive social identity (Hunter et al., 2000), which is more prominent for high identifiers. These findings echoed the literature on intergroup attribution bias and implied high identifiers' defensiveness as a response to a specific CSA to a certain degree.

5.6 Direct and Moderated Effects of Social Group Membership (RQ3)

This dissertation unpacked the mechanism through which publics' social identities affected their responses to CSA. By introducing the social identity approach, this study was one of a few studies to explicitly document the significance of publics' social identities in their

attributions, attitudinal responses, and behavioral intentions to companies' advocacy efforts. As noted by Austin et al. (2019), the "one-size-fits-all approach" treatment of publics does not work because a lot of factors (e.g., age, gender, political affiliation, etc.) influence publics' perceptions of CSA. Some research on stakeholders has acknowledged the influences of stakeholders' social identities on their interactions with companies. For example, Crane and Ruebottom (2012) argued that the incorporation of social identity help companies identify "relevant, even critical, stakeholder issues and connections" (p. 83). Furthermore, Schneider and Sachs (2017) approached stakeholders as social groups to "focus on norms, values, and goals as prototypical characteristics shared among members of stakeholder groups" (p. 45). And this trend has begun to emerge in the field of public relations, particularly with a focus on CSA (Xiao & Overton, 2021; Xu, 2020; Xu et al., 2021). By approaching publics as members of social groups, this dissertation moved CSA research forward with strengthened knowledge of diverse publics.

This dissertation revealed the direct impacts of social group memberships on publics' responses to CSA. Evidence from Study 2 illustrated that being in the CSA-supported group primed participants' favorable reactions. Participants in the African American group demonstrated fewer negative attributions of CSA (egoistic and strategic), more favorable attitudes toward the company, more positive social media engagement intentions (consumption, contribution, and creation), and less negative social media engagement intentions (dormancy, detachment, and destruction) than did the White American group, in this race-related CSA case. Ingroup favoritism offers a valid and overarching explanation for these observations. Social identity theory posits that individuals are motivated to evaluate their own group positively through ingroup/outgroup comparison so that they can achieve or maintain a positive social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Hornsey, 2008). The social categorizations (e.g., race) are used

for individuals to make sense of social contexts (Hogg, 2018), and the specific context can function as a cue to remind individuals' respective group memberships (Trepte & Loy, 2017). Since issues are capable of triggering publics' specific social identities (Xu, 2020), it is not an overstatement that the race-related CSA can provoke publics' relevant social identities. Especially racial identity appears to be an essential component of African Americans' self-concept (Thomson, 1999; Holt & Sweitzer, 2020). Thus, group membership (race) guided African American participants' perceptions of the race-related CSA.

Especially, African American participants in this study displayed significantly more ingroup identification than White American participants, consistent with prior literature (e.g., Dovidio et al., 2007). Conversely, the large numeric size of White Americans in the United States also weakens the likelihood of their racial ingroup identification (Appiah et al., 2013). Thus, they do not always consider race a significant part of their self-concept (Appiah et al., 2013). Furthermore, low-status groups are more eager to preserve a positive social identity, as proposed in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Considering social identities is particularly important for vulnerable or minority social groups because they choose activities and institutions to satisfy their demand for positive social identities (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011). As a result, compared with White American participants, African American participants presented more likelihood of perceiving the focal company as an ally or an ingroup entity to advocate for their group's needs and interests, which leads to more positive evaluations.

An additional explanation for the group-based differences in attributions to CSA can be derived from the intergroup attribution bias. To achieve and maintain a positive social identity, individuals tend to infer internal reasons for ingroup members' positive acts but perceive external drivers for outgroup group members' success (Hewstone, 1990; Islam & Hewstone,

1993). Prior literature has found that individuals' ingroup-outgroup identities (e.g., national identity) affect their attributions to international companies' crisis communication (Borden, 2016; Cho & Kim, 2012; Choi et al., 2016). For example, Choi et al. (2016) found that consumers make more altruistic attributions for a domestic (ingroup) company's CSR than a foreign (outgroup) company's CSR. Similarly, this dissertation demonstrated that individuals attributed more intrinsic and value-driven motives to a company when its CSA aligned with individuals' social identity. Comparatively, the non-CSA-supported group (i.e., White American) perceived more external situational motivations (egoistic, stakeholder-driven, and strategic) for the "outgroup" company's CSA. Thus, the intergroup attribution bias also occurs when publics interact with a company in a CSA context. This finding was novel and insightful because it showed the possibility of an organization being perceived as either an ingroup or outgroup entity.

Second, other than the main effects of group memberships on publics' responses to CSA, as discussed above, this research also demonstrated the moderation effects of group memberships that alter the relations between variables. Many path coefficients in the final models differed across the two racial groups. In other words, group memberships reconstructed the relations between key variables in this dissertation. First, the influences of attitudes toward the company on social media engagement intentions had different strengths across the two groups (see 5.3.3). Second, the group membership, being a member of African American, exacerbates the positive impacts of advocacy fit on CSA attributions (see section 5.4.2). Third, group memberships shifted the effects of ingroup identification on CSA attributions (see sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2). Fourth, perceived egoistic motives only significantly and negatively affected White American participants' attitudes toward the company. The path turned out to be non-significant in the African American group (see section 5.7.1). Fifth, the mediating roles of CSA

attributions showed group-based differences (see section 5.7.2). These findings, together, revealed the necessity of incorporating publics' relevant social group memberships when discussing the effects of key factors in CSA.

The findings highlighted the crucial role of relevant social group memberships in unweaving and further interpreting publics' responses to CSA. More importantly, considerations of publics' social identities should go beyond superficial and oversimplified categorizations based on demographic features (e.g., race, gender, income) but dive into the needs, expectations, and attributional bias across different groups. These findings stressed the nonnegligible roles of publics' group memberships as motivations for them to interact with companies, especially in the CSA context. The integration of the social identity approach enables CSA to transcend the organization-centric perspective with additional considerations of social groups, intergroup dynamics, and larger social structures.

5.7 Importance of Perceived CSA Motives (H5, H6, H7, H8, and RQ5)

5.7.1 Direct Impacts of Attributed CSA Motives Across Groups

This dissertation contributed to the CSA literature by reinforcing the power of attributions in provoking publics' attitudinal responses. Despite fruitful research on other corporate practices such as CSR or crisis management, attributions have been "an omitted aspect in the current CSA literature" (Coman et al., 2022, p. 12). Thus, this research offered more in-depth insight into publics' attributional processes of CSA. This research found that perceived value-driven motives led to more positive motives, regardless of the group membership. However, perceived stakeholder-driven and strategic motives did not predict participants' attitudinal responses in both racial groups. But the effects of perceived egoistic motives differed

across groups, meaning that African American participants displayed more tolerance of such negative attributions in a race-related CSA context.

This research continued to confirm the benefits of perceived value-driven motives in the CSA context. Participants demonstrate more positive attitudes toward the company as long as they discerned companies' sincerity in advocating a sociopolitical issue. As a typical type of other-serving motives, perceived value-driven motives have presented a powerful function in leading to desired organizational outcomes. Prior studies in the CSR context have widely documented the role of perceived value-driven motives in reducing publics' CSR skepticism (Chen et al., 2019; Groza et al., 2011; Romani et al., 2016; Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013). Publics are less likely to be skeptical of companies' social initiatives when they believe those initiatives are motivated by benevolence (Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013). Additionally, more trust will be evoked with a high level of perceived value-driven motives (Vlachos et al., 2009). Thus, publics present favorable attitudes toward a company with attributed genuine, altruistic, and public-serving motivations (Krystallis et al., 2021). The positive effects of perceived value-driven motives carry over to the CSA context, as supported by Kim et al.'s (2020) research and this dissertation. Kim et al. (2020) also discovered that participants demonstrated more favorable attitudes toward the company and positive word-of-mouth intentions with more inferred value-driven motives. In this situation, publics discern the genuineness of CSA as it is believed to fulfill a company's "moral and ethical missions and for societal good" (Kim et al., 2020, p. 3).

The findings of this dissertation implied that publics have become accepting of companies' complex motivations for engaging in sociopolitical issues. Consistent with Kim et al.'s (2020) findings, this study found that neither perceived strategic motives nor stakeholder-driven motives were significantly associated with participants' attitudes toward the company.

Skarmeas et al.'s (2014) fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) provided valuable answers to this finding. As Skarmeas et al. (2014) noted, perceived strategic motives are not a necessary condition for CSR skepticism to occur. In other words, the presence of strategic attributions does not ensure the occurrence of CSR skepticism. Also, perceived stakeholder-driven motives are "neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for high skepticism" (Skarmeas et al., 2014, p. 1893). These findings shows that publics do not oppose stakeholder-driven motivations underlying CSR engagement automatically. Study 2 research findings aligned with their conclusions, though via a different analysis method (SEM). Publics acknowledge the business nature of companies, which need to maintain economic sustainability (Leonidou & Skarmeas, 2017). Thus, they are more likely to accept companies' profit-motivated CSR (Vlachos et al., 2009). Especially when positive and negative attributions co-exist, publics respond to companies' socially responsible initiatives more favorably because they acknowledge the dual goals of businesses (bottom-line concerns and social good) (Ellen et al., 2006). When CSA is perceived as a response to stakeholder pressure or strategic goals, publics do not necessarily present negative attitudes toward the company. In addition, the effects of perceived strategic or stakeholder motives can be context-bounded because of varying public expectations of businesses. As argued by Purtell and Kang (2022), the national attention to the BLM Movement escalated after the murder of George Floyd, which propelled the unprecedented companies' attention and responses. Thus, the national attention and widespread companies' responses may explain publics' acceptance of strategic and stakeholder-driven motives.

This research embraced the social identity approach to add more nuanced explanations about the impacts of CSA attributions, especially perceived egoistic motives. African American participants in the main study showed more tolerance of perceived egoistic motives in a race-

related CSA. They did not necessarily display negative attitudes toward the company even when they attributed self-serving and ego-driven reasons underlying the CSA. For them, perceived value-driven motives alone are sufficient to drive their favorable evaluations of a race-related CSA. Skarmeas et al. (2014) found that the high presence of egoistic attribution and absent value-driven motives were simultaneously necessary conditions to develop CSR skepticism. However, this dissertation pointed out that for publics in the CSA-supported group, their egoistic attributions might not necessarily evoke suspicion. The ingroup favoritism also offers a valid rationale for this finding. Publics perceive a company as an ingroup entity when publics' ingroup identity matches with the advocate issue (Xu, 2020). Thus, African American publics incline to perceive a company endorsing the BLM Movement as an ingroup entity. Guided by their motivation to maintain a positive social identity, they are more likely to neglect the perceived egoistic motives behind a CSA. Their favorable attitudes toward the focal company is purely derived from their perceived value-driven motives. The novel and insightful finding of the group-based reactions to perceived egoistic motives implied the possibilities of various psychological mechanisms driven by publics' social identities.

Comparatively, Study 2 showed that White American participants' perceived egoistic motives underlying a CSA led them to present more negative attitudes toward the focal company. This finding was consistent with previous studies about the negative role of perceived egoistic motives in building corporate reputation (Kim et al., 2020). Publics demonstrated skepticism toward motivations underlying CSR by sensing the socially responsible initiative is driven by monetary or image-building purposes (Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013; Skarmeas et al., 2014). Kim et al. (2020) showed egoistic motives resulted in more negative attitudes toward the company as well as negative word-of-mouth intention, in the case of Nike's Colin Kaepernick

campaign. Hence, publics are more likely to doubt the sincerity of CSA when they believe a company is taking advantage of the advocate sociopolitical issue to benefit themselves or build good public images. Unlike African American participants, White American participants lacked strong motivations, driven by the need for positive social identities, to downplay the negative egoistic attributions in this race-related CSA.

5.7.2   Group-based Mediating Roles of Perceived CSA Motives (H5)

The findings illuminated the literature on CSA communication with additional insight from social identity theory and attribution theory. This study revealed that publics' attributions of CSA mediated the effects of advocacy fit and ingroup identification on attitudes toward the focal company. Coman et al. (2022) discovered that how publics attribute social responsibilities influenced their expectations of CSA. The perceived motivation behind CSA is a significant factor in CSA (Overton et al., 2021). To date, limited studies have been conducted on the mediating roles of attributed CSA motives. However, examining such psychological mechanisms underlying publics' responses to CSA offers in-depth knowledge of the attributional process and the subsequent reactions. Consequently, companies can be better informed and guided to respond to publics' judgment (Marín et al., 2016). More importantly, this dissertation discovered the mediating functions of perceived CSA motives significantly differed across the two racial groups in a race-related CSA. Therefore, this dissertation underlined the intertwined relations between social identities and attributions.

This dissertation extended the mediating role of perceived value-driven motives in the effects of advocacy fit in the CSA context. Moreover, the results added new knowledge about how publics' ingroup identification induced favorable attitudes toward a company through perceived value-driven motives in the CSA-supported group. The critical roles of perceived

value-driven motives were confirmed in this dissertation, given its positive mediating effects on advocacy fit in both racial groups. Additionally, African American participants' perceived value-driven motives mediated the positive relationships between ingroup identification and attitudes toward the company. These findings underscored that eliciting publics' positive and intrinsic attributions is a critical task for CSA communication. Value-driven or altruistic motives have been verified as a crucial mediator in CSR communication (Groza et al., 2011; Krystallis et al., 2021), especially in explaining the effects of fit (Ellen et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2018; Rifon et al., 2004). This dissertation expanded this line of inquiry in CSA by examining the mediating roles of attributions in explaining the impacts of ingroup identification on publics' attitudinal responses. Integrating knowledge from attribution theory and the social identity approach shed light on this finding as attributions of corporate actions can be altered by social identities (Borden, 2016). Thus, companies can recognize the possible influences of publics' social identities on their attributional processes, which affect the subsequent responses. Overall, value-driven attributions provide a pivotal pathway to explaining how publics process CSA information.

Aligned with the above discussion on African American participants' acceptance of perceived egoistic motives, their attributed self-serving egoistic motives did not play a mediating role in the effects of advocacy fit or racial ingroup identification. Based on this result, perceived value-driven motives can be a sufficient condition for CSA-supported group members to display positive attitudes toward the company's CSA with a high advocacy fit and strong ingroup identification. Conversely, the perceived egoistic motives play a significant mediating role in the effects of advocacy fit and ingroup identification on White American participants' attitudes toward the company. For them, high advocacy fit predicted positive attitudes toward the

company by reducing perceived egoistic motives. But their ingroup identification leads to more negative attitudes toward the company through increasing perceived egoistic motives. Literature on CSR skepticism (Chen et al., 2019; Skarmeas & Leoindou, 2013; Skarmeas et al., 2014) can offer a valid explanation as egoistic attributions brought more suspicions toward a CSA initiative. Therefore, the findings of this dissertation stressed the importance of perceived egoistic motives in the non-CSA-supported group members' evaluations of CSA.

Across both groups, perceived stakeholder-driven and strategic motives did not mediate the impacts of advocacy fit and ingroup identification on participants' attitudes toward the company. Even though some paths from independent variables (advocacy fit and ingroup identification) sometimes influenced participants' perceived stakeholder-driven or strategic motives, these motives did not significantly influence participants' attitudes toward the company in the research (see section 5.7.1). As discovered by Skarmeas et al. (2014), both perceived stakeholder-driven and strategic motives are not necessary conditions for the presence of CSR skepticism. Consistently, participants in the present research seemed to accept these other-centered reasons for CSA. These findings indicated that both stakeholder-driven and strategic motives might be less important in explicating the influences of advocacy fit and ingroup identification on publics' attitudinal responses.

To summarize, publics attribute complex causes to a company's CSA, similar to other non-commercial business practices. The interpretations of why companies engage in CSA affect publics' subsequent attitudinal responses. For the CSA-support group, perceived value-driven motives are the only significant mediator that explains the valuable roles of advocacy fit and publics' ingroup identification. For the non-CSA-support group, both perceived value-driven and egoistic motives mediate the positive impacts of advocacy fit. Also, the non-CSA-support group

members' high ingroup identification led to more negative attitudes through increased perceived egoistic-driven motives. The group-based analysis showed that the social identity approach was insightful in explicating diverse publics' cognitive and psychological processes when responding to CSA-related information.

5.8   Social Identity and Issue-related Perceptions (RQ4)

This dissertation responded to prior scholars' call for more studies on antecedent and cross-situational factors for situational theories (Aldoory & Sha, 2009; Chen et al., 2017). Specifically, the findings recommended that publics' social group membership and ingroup identification should be considered an essential antecedent to individual-level factors to better understand, categorize, and build relationships with publics, given their impacts on all situational variables in STOPS and attitudes toward the company. The comprehensive independent variables in STOPS, along with attitudes toward the sociopolitical issue, predict publics' various communicative actions. This dissertation's focus on social identities extended prior research on cross-situational variables in STOPS, such as party identity and social vigilantism (Chen et al., 2017; Roh & Oh, 2021). This approach enables organizations to meaningfully categorize publics based on their social identity needs. Furthermore, considerations of cross-situational variables lead to more tailored and strategic messages and communication for different subgroups according to their internal need and construct issue-publics relationships (Chen et al., 2017). However, extant research on static, cross-situational variables failed to bridge publics' social identities to their situational perceptions. With the rise of CSA, the consideration of publics' social identity is particularly imperative because the advocated sociopolitical issues typically activate the salience of publics' specific social identities (see Xu, 2020).

Study 2 extended the social identity approach to public relations and systematically incorporated a variety of perceptual, motivational, and attitudinal responses. The results suggested that publics could form and evolve under the influence of their social group membership, especially minority group members. For example, African American participants displayed significantly more problem recognition, involvement recognition, constraint recognition, referent criterion, situational motivation, and more positive attitudes toward the BLM Movement. Since CSA often supports underrepresented social groups, the social structure and power dynamics should be taken into account. As noted by Dovidio et al. (2007), being a member of a majority or minority group shapes peoples' perceptions and experiences of intergroup relations. For example, Saguy et al. (2008) also discovered that majority and minority groups respond differently to social changes. Particularly, minority group members are more motivated to talk about group-based power changes than majority group members (Dovidio et al., 2007). Also, they prefer to consume information such as news media that portrays their own racial group (Holt & Carnahan, 2020). Similarly, this research's findings indicate being an African American led to individuals' higher motivation to understand and talk about the racial justice issue, compared to White participants. In addition, their ingroup favoritism further brings their more favorable attitudes toward the BLM Movement. While, White American participants might not necessarily rely on their race group membership to shape their perceptions of and attitudes toward the racial justice issue due to additional factors under the broad category of "White" (Holt & Sweitzer, 2018). Thus, it is critical to consider individuals' different motivations and goals in certain situations when they belong to other social groups (Dovidio et al., 2007; Saguy et al., 2008).

Study 2's findings of ingroup identification's critical role in the CSA-supported group members' perceptions of a particular sociopolitical issue inspired research on the formation of active publics or even advocates. This study discovered that African American participants' higher ingroup identification significantly predicted more problem recognition, involvement recognition, constraint recognition, referent criterion, situational motivation, and more positive attitudes toward the BLM social movement. Situated in the self-categorization theory, Joyce and Harwood (2014) emphasized the role of ingroup identification in enhancing attention and the learning process. With a salient collective identity, individuals demonstrate ingroup bias and better memories of information related to the metacontrast principle (Dovidio et al., 2007). Remarkably, members of minority social groups desire to address group-based power to enhance their position and change the status quo (Dovidio et al., 2007; Saguy et al., 2008). This tendency is even strengthened by their ingroup identification (Saguy et al. 2008). Hence, African American participants' high ingroup identification led them to think, feel, and act more like members of their race group rather than the "self." The ingroup identification builds on the self-categorization process (Reid & Hogg, 2005). According to self-categorization theory (1985), when people cognitively categorize themselves into a social category, their perception and behaviors are affected by the ingroup prototype. Consequently, they sense how racial justice is problematic and perceive more connections and fewer constraints. Thus, they presented more situational motivations to think about and understand the issue. Tao et al. (2021) tested and extended STOPS to explain publics' communication on sociopolitical issues. With all perceptual, cognitive, and motivational factors, publics are more likely to present highly active communicative actions such as information acquiring, selecting, and transmitting (Tao et al., 2021). The research continues to point out the likeability of individuals who are highly identified

with their CSA-supported group to become aware and active publics, given their activated perceptual, cognitive, and motivational antecedents of communicative actions.

This dissertation revealed that White American participants' ingroup identification could not predict the situational antecedents of their communicative actions. Their problem recognition, involvement recognition, constraint recognition, and situational motivation were not affected by their identification with their race groups. Prior research on intergroup relations elucidated this finding. High-status group members' ingroup identification satisfies their need for a positive social identity through ingroup favoritism rather than outgroup derogation (Levin & Sidanius, 1997). Therefore, their ingroup identification might not function as a strong motivation for them to pay attention to issues closely related to the outgroup. For example, prior scholars discovered that White Americans tended to embrace a colorblind ideology (i.e., seen as an individual human being regardless of race or ethnicity) than Black Americans (Ryan et al., 2007). Hence, White Americans, especially those with a colorblind ideology, can be less aware of the racial justice issue. As suggested by Knowles and Peng (2005), measuring White identity should encompass identity centrality, evaluation of the ingroup, and ideology. However, the current research only measured racial ingroup identification, which may be neither a necessary nor sufficient condition to induce White American participants' situational perceptions of the racial justice issue and the BLM Movement. Other factors such as interethnic ideology or social dominance orientation contact may play more critical roles in their perceptions of the race-related issue.

Additionally, this research presented the possibility of ingroup identification to enhance individuals' objective and subjective "available" and "applicable" knowledge in a given situation. In Study 2, both African American and White American participants' ingroup

identification activated their subjective referent criterion (relevant stored knowledge and past experiences) to handle a problematic situation. According to Grunig (1997), a referent criterion relates to individuals' social contact and past experiences. Kim and Grunig (2011) added a subjective aspect of a referent criterion, "the present and extent of wishful thinking and/or willful thinking" (p. 131). A referent criterion determines publics' cognitive efforts (Kim et al., 2012). Thus, strong ingroup identification may lead to publics' communicative action on a sociopolitical issue through the activated referent criterion.

Adding individuals' attitudes toward the sociopolitical issue in this dissertation complemented situational variables in STOPS. Results showed that the high identifiers in the supported group possess favorable attitudes toward the issue and are motivated to communicate about the sociopolitical issues. Consequently, they can become not only active publics but also advocates or supporters of the sociopolitical issue. Study 2 results were consistent with Holt and Sweitzer's (2020) research. They also discovered that ethnic identity (racial ingroup identification) only predicted African American participants' attitudes toward the BLM Movement. For high-status groups such as White Americans, their ingroup identification is not a necessary condition for them to present outgroup bias (Levin & Sidanius, 1999). Whether White American participants oppose or support the BLM Movement is primarily determined by their social dominance orientation (Holt & Sweitzer, 2020), which is beyond the present research's scope. Also, White American participants' other relevant group identities, such as activist group membership, can predict their support for collective action related to the disadvantaged group (Selvanathan et al., 2018). Conversely, for African American participants, their increased ingroup identification increased the possibility of ingroup favoritism (Crisp & Beck, 2005), leading to more favorable responses to the BLM Movement. For low-status group members,

their ingroup identification motivates them to exhibit more favorable affect toward the ingroup

so that they can establish a positive social identity (Levin & Sidanius, 1999). The ingroup

favoritism is exacerbated by the extent to which low-status group members are identified with

their group, which is also verified in this dissertation.

This dissertation was one of a few studies that tested the impacts of publics' social

identities on their perceptional, cognitive, and motivational factors (STOPS) related to a

sociopolitical issue and their evaluations of the issue (Chen et al., 2017; Sha, 2006). This

dissertation showed that organizational communication practices such as CSA should embrace

more thoughtful considerations of publics' social group memberships and ingroup identification.

The results of this dissertation well aligned with the central argument in the social identity

approach, which is that both social category memberships and individuals' identification with

their group memberships predict their perceptions and behaviors (Turner, 1986). As suggested by

Hässler et al. (2020), group characteristics such as the group's social status and the group

membership's salience should be considered regarding individuals' support for social change.

This dissertation pointed out the possible formation of active publics based on publics' existing

social identities. Jones (2002) posits that publics arise as a result of sharing identities, and public

relations should pay attention to the exchange of publics' identities and organizations' identities.

Although this argument is vital to point out the non-organization-centric formation of publics, it

neglects explicit connections to publics' social identity as an essential supplement to personal

identities. The research shifted the focus from publics' personal identities to social identities as

the latter captures a holistic view of the interplay between self-concept and group process (Hogg,

2018). It is important to note that this dissertation never aims to over-simply the segmentation of

publics by their static demographic features such as race/ethnicity. Instead, the findings

highlighted the differences in publics' perceptions of sociopolitical issues due to the impacts of their social identities. These findings were invaluable in offering a more comprehensive understanding of publics and their responses to CSA with additional considerations of intergroup dynamics and hierarchical social structure. As pointed out by Crane and Ruebottom (2011), the incorporation of social identities helps companies locate "relevant, even critical, stakeholder issues and connections" (p. 83). To conclude, publics should be approached as social actors to better understand how they make sense of the meanings of CSA to their social identities.

5.9   Theoretical Implications

The fruitful results of this dissertation provide invaluable answers to the overarching question about "how to strategically communicate CSA," contributing to scholarly discussion on communication strategies, fit, attributions, publics, and social identities. Strategic communication centers on "strategic significance" of communication to an organization's goal (Zerfass et al., 2018). In particular, communication plays a crucial role in CSA due to its focus on advocacy (Park, 2021), which is used to align corporate identity and social good (Afego & Alagidede, 2021). Still, no systematic knowledge has been established regarding how companies have used different communication strategies to build linkages between themselves, their advocated sociopolitical issues, and publics. This dissertation fills this void with a quantitative content analysis that depicts an overview of commonly used communication strategies in CSA on social media. Next, this dissertation advances the field of public relations by validating a comprehensive measure of social media engagement intentions that consider both activeness and valence. Also, the investigation on advocacy fit continues the scholarly interest in the fit effect with the addition of attributional processes. Advocacy fit offers a possibility for CSA engagement to become an effective identity signaling process. Finally, applying the social

identity approach in this dissertation deepens our knowledge of public responses to CSA beyond their individual-level "self." It further enhances our scholarly understanding of publics by connecting situational factors (see STOPS, Kim & Grunig, 2011) with publics' social identities.

First of all, situating the research in the social media context adds value to the existing literature on CSA social media communication. Communicating CSA on social media can help companies achieve issue ownership and build issue-specific corporate reputation (Lim & Young, 2021). Despite the academic consensus on the significance of social media in CSA (Lim & Young, 2021; Park & Jiang, 2020; Rim et al., 2020; Waymer & Logan, 2021), little is known about commonly used communication strategies in CSA social media communication. This dissertation is the first study to catalog companies' communication strategies and examine their impacts on publics' social media engagement with top companies. Public relations research can benefit from the overview of CSA communication strategies on social media to identify the gaps between theoretical frameworks and practices. For example, Kent and Taylor (2021) proposed four design frameworks to facilitate dialogical engagement on social media: user expectation, engagement, content curation, and sustainment/rhizomatous features. However, this dissertation, along with other previous studies (Cho et al., 2017; Einwiller & Steilen, 2015; Kim et al., 2014), reveals that companies still have a long way to go to apply these invaluable features to make their social media communication more dialogic. Furthermore, unpacking the relationships between communication strategies (relational vs. elaborational vs. activational) and social media engagement behaviors enables the investigation of publics' immediate, short-term reactions to CSA social media messages. Park (2021) called for more research on the short-effect of CSA, and this dissertation responds to that call and yields new knowledge in this underexplored area. Additionally, the research on communication strategies also echoes de Jong and van der Meer's

(2017) argument on CSR fit, which highlights CSR communication as "a means of creating fit perceptions" (p. 71). Similarly, advocacy fit in CSA becomes evident and manifest through effective communication strategies. Together, this dissertation contributes to social media scholarship by identifying diverse functions of communication strategies in CSA social media communication, such as enhancing fit, advocating issues, and engaging publics.

Second, prior research has not developed a comprehensive measurement tool for publics' social media engagement intentions. Public relations literature has acknowledged the influential role of social media engagement in positive organization-public relationships (Dhanesh et al., 2022; Men & Tsai, 2015; Smith & Gallicano, 2015; Wang, 2015). This dissertation is the first research to validate a new and comprehensive measurement for how publics engage with companies online, which considers disengagement and negatively valenced engagement. The results verify the multidimensional nature of social media engagement, expanding academic understanding of publics' complex but intertwined activities on social media. Moreover, the inclusion of dormancy, detachment, and destruction in the measures further moves their current conceptualization stage forward. This line of research is particularly critical for the area of CSA because the contentious nature of sociopolitical issues drives polarized public responses (Park & Jiang, 2020; Rim et al., 2020). Moreover, the empirical validation of a cohesive social media engagement construct enriches the existing literature and opens more possibilities for future research on the antecedents and consequents of public engagement. Broadly, the research on social media engagement makes contributions to the field of public relations with in-depth knowledge of "social media use, best practice, benchmarking" (McCorkindale & DiStaso, 2014, p. 10).

Third, the dissertation also extends the research on the fit effect to the CSA context through a multigroup analysis. With an attributional framework, this research confirms the positive impacts of advocacy fit directly on positive attributions and indirectly on attitudes toward the company. Although the direct and immediate connection between a company's core business and its supported sociopolitical issue is often missing (Hong & Li, 2020), this dissertation proves that the positive fit effect still occurs with aligned corporate value and image. In addition, the advocacy fit is even stronger for publics in the CSA-supported group, supporting Hong and Li's (2020) triad-relation system (consumer-cause fit, consumer-company congruence, and company-cause fit). The finding on advocacy fit illuminates existing literature on strategic CSA communication that essentially needs to align companies' goals with their advocacy efforts and public expectations. Furthermore, the concept of advocacy fit reinforces the value of creating clear corporate images over time. Building a unique corporate identity is more than a one-time advocacy message but also needs a deep-rooted commitment, leading to a more natural fit in publics' minds. Moreover, this dissertation contributes to the emerging literature on the advocacy fit in CSA by explicating its impacts on various attributions. It shows how advocacy fit affects the ways in which publics assign internal and/or external reasons for CSA. Adopting an attributional framework allows more insight into publics' psychological mechanism in processing CSA-related information. Thus, the fit-attribution-attitude path, discovered in Study 2, sheds light on different ways advocacy fit exerts influence on public responses.

Fourth, as noted above, this dissertation is the first study to directly connect social identities to publics' reactions to CSA, despite decades of research that confirm group identities have major implications on how individuals communicate (Mastro, 2003; Mastro & Atwell Seate, 2012; Joyce & Harwood, 2020). Research on stakeholders has recognized the role of

social identities in motivating stakeholders to provide evaluations and feedback to organizations (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011; Nason et al., 2018). Xu (2020) pointed out that the social identity approach provides valuable implications for understanding publics, issues, and organizational communication. Existing literature on public relations, including CSA, primarily considered individual-level factors in identifying or categorizing publics while neglecting the overarching impacts of social identities. A few latest studies in public relations begin to employ the social identity approach to understand publics' response to organizational practice (e.g., Shen & Cheng, 2021; Xu, 2020). The research extends this emerging line of inquiry by revealing that publics' social group memberships and ingroup identification pose significant impacts on their attributions of CSA, attitudinal responses, and social media engagement intentions. This dissertation suggests that applying the social identity approach in public relations research, especially CSA, enables a more meaningful and in-depth interpretation of publics' responses. Publics are social actors who choose to interact and engage with organizations to satisfy their needs for positive social identities. Introducing the social identity approach in CSA is also a response to Ihlen and Verhoeven's (2012) call for societal views on public relations. This research encourages more integration of the social identity approach and public relations to open new and insightful academic inquiries

Fifth, this dissertation innovatively approaches publics' social identities as an antecedent to their situational perceptions of and evaluations of sociopolitical issues. It bridges the comprehensive theoretical framework of publics (STOPS) with the social identity approach, which continues prior scholars' inquiries on cultural identity (Sha, 2006) and party identity (Chen et al., 2017). The results enrich the body of public relations research by opening a new perspective on the formation of publics, in addition to organization-centered relationships.

Publics' social group memberships can function as a determinant of their situational perceptions of a given sociopolitical issue. Furthermore, when publics feel highly identified with their CSA-supported group, they are more likely to become active publics with increased problem recognition, involvement recognition, referent criterion, situational motivation, and reduced constraint recognition. Also, their ingroup identification motivates them to perceive the focal issue more positively, which makes them more readily become not only active publics but also supporters or advocates. Eventually, integrating the social identity theory deepens our scholarly comprehension of how publics can be socially constructed. It also inspires public relations scholars to be more mindful of the social structure and power relations in a given society that essentially affect publics' needs and expectations.

Sixth, this dissertation's examination of CSA attributions offers theoretical contributions with empirical evidence on the effects of various attributions on publics' attitudes toward the company. Despite the prominent academic interest in CSR motives (e.g., Du et al., 2010; Ellen et al., 2006; Groza et al., 2011; Marín et al., 2016; Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013; Vlachos et al., 2009; etc.), much less scholarly attention has been paid to CSA attributions yet (Coman et al., 2022). Kim et al.'s (2020) study investigated a real-life case of Nike's CSA practices, while the current research utilized a randomized experimental design. These two studies reveal very similar patterns regarding the impacts of CSA attributions on attitudes toward the company. The salient benefits brought by perceived value-driving motives well align with the literature on CSR communication. Then, the non-significant influences of strategic and stakeholder-driven motives imply the possible differences in publics' expectations of CSA compared with CSR. The findings speak to "the fundamental conceptual differences between CSR and CSA" (Kim et al., 2020, p. 8). Other than the consistent findings, the present research further added new and critical insight

into CSA attributions by revealing the different impacts of perceived egoistic motives on publics' attitudes toward the company across the CSA-supported and non-CSA-supported groups. Particularly, the CSA-supported group members' acceptance of perceived egoistic motives calls for academic attention to conditional impacts of attributions based on social identities.

5.10   Practical Implications

In addition to theoretical implications, the dissertation also enlightens practitioners in public relations and corporate communication in regard to communication strategies and the relationship-building process. First of all, it offers valuable guidance on CSA communication strategies on social media. As Park and Jiang (2020) suggested, practitioners need to think about strategies to effectively engage their social media community and cultivate more active supporters. It is likely for a company to achieve reputational benefits through active CSA social media communication (Lim & Young, 2021). Although the studied companies commonly used elaborational communication strategies by focusing on the advocated issues, Study 1 suggested that those strategies might not be effectively engaging publics, due to the lack of explicit connections. If publics can not identify any real root in a company's culture or history for its CSA, they are more likely to consider such advocacy efforts as self-interest oriented (Yim, 2021). Instead, companies should reflect on their own identities and expertise to build meaningful and concrete links, signaling their altruistic motivations and sincere commitment. Additionally, practitioners need to carefully consider using activational communication strategies in CSA. Aligned with Kim et al.'s (2014) finding, Study 1 in the dissertation also confirms that using generic terms like "try" or "learn" in companies' social media posts undermines publics' engagement behaviors online. Therefore, companies are recommended to fully exploit the

features of social media platforms and create more interactive content to effectively facilitate public participation in companies' CSA initiatives. For example, Smith and Gallicano (2015) suggested encompassing "personal, social, and participatory elements" to effectively interact and engage publics online. As noted by Kent and Taylor (2021), practitioners should embrace the dialogic principles before social media use and take a user-centered approach to enhance dialogical social media affordances.

Next, the comprehensive measurement of social media engagement intentions highlights the importance of anticipating and monitoring publics' diverse social media activities, especially in the CSA context. The validated measures for consumption, contribution, creation, dormancy, detachment, and destruction offer an additional tool for practitioners to gauge the CSA effectiveness. The results contribute to the more strategic management of organization-public relationships due to the interconnected relations between social media engagement and organization-public relationships (Smith & Gallicano, 2015). The results reveal publics' low degree of intention to engage with the company in an active way, which calls for strategic message designs and communication strategies to fully engage publics online. For example, companies can design more identity-related and ethical campaigns and messages to provoke publics' stronger motivations to engage in contribution or even creation behaviors online. Although participants in this study presented very low intention to perform negatively valenced social media engagement activities such as detachment and destruction, practitioners still need to closely track these engagement activities, given their potential damage and constructive suggestions to the organization spontaneously (Lievonen et al., 2018; Waymer & Logan, 2021). Such understanding can enable organizations to be more mindful of diverse (no)voices from publics, which ultimately benefits both sides.

Regarding the effects of advocacy fit, evidence from Study 2 recommends organizations thoughtfully scrutinize their identities as well as connections between advocated sociopolitical issues before their advocacy initiatives. Although the challenge exists to gain automatic alignment between a company and its promoted sociopolitical issue, the company can take advantage of public relations to form a perceived fit (Lim & Young, 2021). Through communication, companies can make explicit linkages to their value, identity, image, or character. Such efforts can trigger publics' positive attributions and mitigate negative attributions, leading to more positive attitudinal responses. From a long-term perspective, active CSA communication with high advocacy fit also helps companies achieve issue ownership and build issue-specific reputation (Lim & Young, 2021). This significant role of advocacy fit highlights the functions of public relations (Lim & Young, 2021), which also corresponds to the findings in the content analysis. Public relations plays a crucial role in constituting congruency and helping publics make sense of companies' advocacy efforts through a variety of communication strategies. For example, corporate image associations in relational communication strategies can also remind publics of corporate identity and companies' deep-rooted commitment to a given sociopolitical issue.

This dissertation also strongly suggests that public relations practitioners embrace the social identity approach. The findings evidently indicate the potential of publics' social identities in affecting their reactions to CSA. Publics' social identities function as motivations to evaluate organizations and provide feedback (Nason et al., 2018). As shown in this dissertation, the CSA-supported and non-CSA-supported groups responded differently to a company's advocacy effort regarding attributional processes, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. Thus, practitioners need to cultivate a deeper understanding of larger social systems and structures to fully capture their

targeted publics' expectations and demands before advocating a given sociopolitical issue. Only with such deepened knowledge can practitioners know how publics derive meanings from CSA and choose to engage, disengage, or negatively engage with a company in order to fulfill their self-concept. Meanwhile, the present research presents the possibility of CSA in signaling a company as an ally to a CSA-supported group. The dichotomy between the CSA-supported and non-CSA-supported groups implicitly suggests extra delicate consideration of social status differences and power relations. Hence, public relations practitioners should go beyond the organizational focus by delving into publics' perceptions of the focal issue and companies based on their social identities. For example, being in a CSA-supported group automatically activates publics' attention and awareness of the identity-based CSA, making them more readily transform into active publics. To achieve organizational goals and meaningfully address sociopolitical issues simultaneously, practitioners should be trained and prepared to deal with social groups' diverse or even competing needs before jumping into a sociopolitical issue. Enhancing the diversity of public relations practitioners can invite more inclusive and diverse voices in the decision-making process, which ultimately produce campaigns and messages to meet publics' expectations and needs.

Furthermore, the present research encourages a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of publics' social identities beyond static group memberships (e.g., gender, race, income, sexual orientation, etc.). In other words, the extent of subjective and psychological identification with a social group is also a significant determinant in predicting the impacts of social identities (Hewstone et al., 2002; Turner, 1985). Thus, the segmentation of publics can be conducted based on relevant and meaningful identities in a specific context. Assessing publics' ingroup identification allows substantial analysis of whether and how publics' social group

memberships influence their reactions to CSA. Practitioners need to pay additional attention to high identifiers in the CSA-support and non-CSA-supported groups when advocating sociopolitical issues because they are more motivated to display intergroup attribution bias. For example, strategic communication should be planned to mitigate publics' external and other-centered attributions of CSA when they are highly identified with the non-CSA-supported group. Regarding high identifiers in the CSA-supported group, their high problem recognition, involvement recognition, referent criterion, situational motivation in problem, more positive attitudes toward the issue, and less constraint recognition make them become active publics or even supporters of companies. To conclude, this dissertation presents the potential of the social identity approach in identifying, categorizing, and engaging with publics in a meaningful manner.

Last but not least, the findings of the present research confirm the significance of publics' attributional process in the CSA context. As Kim et al. (2020) argued, publics care more about "why" than "what" in companies' advocacy efforts. Publics assign various reasons to CSA: value-driven, egoistic, stakeholder-driven, and strategic. Acknowledging publics' complex attribution process enables companies to holistically consider diverse aspects of CSA communication. Based on this dissertation, practitioners should strive to arouse more perceived value-driven motives, regardless of the targeted publics' social identities. As companies engage in controversial sociopolitical issues, they need to develop strategies to demonstrate their altruistic and public-serving motivations. This dissertation offers some options like enhancing advocacy fit or meeting publics' needs for positive social identities. Next, the contingent effects of perceived egoistic motives are insightful for practitioners to consider the target publics' social groups when trying to minimize backfire. They can even tailor their communication strategies

and messages for the CSA-supported and non-CSA-supported groups to fully address publics'

concerns. For example, companies need to implement strategies to prevent or cope with the non-

CSA-supported group's egoistic attributions. Furthermore, the non-significant effects of

stakeholder-driven and strategic motives encourage practitioners to become more active in

sociopolitical issues as long as their efforts are perceived to reflect their deep-rooted values and

missions. Instead of hiding other-centered motivations, companies can work on enhancing the

salience of sincerely value-driven attributions to their CSA efforts.

5.11   Future Research Directions

The identified limitations in each study (see sections 3.7, 4.2.7, 4.3.6) suggest important

and valuable future research directions. First of all, to enhance the generalizability of Study 1's

findings, future research can diversify the selections of companies, sociopolitical issues, and

social media platforms. The convenience sample of the 2021 Fortune Magazine's list of

"World's Most Admired Companies" limits the findings to what extent to which the results can

be generalized to less well-known or regional companies. Prior research points out that the size

of companies (multinational companies vs. small and medium-sized enterprises) affects their

implementation and communication of CSR practices (Baumann-Pauly et al., 2013). Existing

literature on CSA has primarily focused on large companies such as Nike (Kim et al., 2020),

Starbucks (Rim et al., 2020), and Ben & Jerry (Lim & Young, 2021). Studies on how small and

medium-sized enterprises advocate sociopolitical issues on social media in the future can expand

the scope of the CSA literature. Next, study 1 discovered the dominance of race relations

covered in companies' CSA messages regarding the supported sociopolitical issues. This

observation can be caused by the time frame for data collection in this content analysis, which

covered the BLM Movement after the death of George Floyd. As a result, companies chose to

devote their CSA initiatives to the racial justice issue due to rapidly growing public expectations

at a given time. Therefore, future studies can select a broader range of time frames to encompass

more sociopolitical issues. Additionally, Study 1 chose only two social media platforms,

Facebook and Twitter, given their popularity in corporate communication. Other platforms are

also valuable for companies to communicate their socially responsible initiatives. For example,

companies such as Coca-Cola, Walt Disney, Google, and Microsoft, have established their

official YouTube pages that attract a large number of views and eventually contribute to their

corporate reputation (Meadows & Meadows, 2016). Moreover, online users can respond to

companies' CSA-related messages differently on other social media platforms such as YouTube

or Instagram because online users' engagement behaviors can also be affected by the platform

operation (Vander Schee et al., 2020). Finally, the associations between communication

strategies and social media engagement behaviors in Study 1 should not be used to draw causal

inferences, given the nature of content analysis (Reinard, 2007). Hence, experimental designs are

promising to test the cause-effect relations for identified communication strategies in the future.

In Study 2, participants were recruited from Prolific, a crowdsourcing platform. As a

newly developed platform, Prolific brings many benefits, such as participants' relative naivety

towards research materials, reliable data quality, and various demographic distributions (Peer et

al., 2017). However, its total population size is limited, with 38,700 active U.S participants in the

past 90 days as of April 23, 2022, which only counts for a small portion of the total U.S.

population. In other words, the convenience sampling nature of Prolific sets a boundary on how

the findings can be generalized to other populations. Future research can try to recruit a

nationally representative sample of participants through a probability-based online panel survey.

Another issue about data collection that can be improved in future studies relates to social

desirability bias because of the selected sensitive topic and self-reported approach. Though online surveys reduce the possibility of social desirability due to indirect communication (Larsen et al., 2020) and multiple reminders were set up in this dissertation, future research can apply more implicit measures of participants' responses to controversial sociopolitical issues to minimize the negative impacts of social desirability bias. For example, the implicit measure of prejudice has been applied in gauging attitudes toward the outgroup (Sassenberg & Wieber, 2005). Similar measures can be developed and deployed in the CSA context as well.

Like most work on social media engagement, this research also approaches engagement as communicative interaction that neglects the cognitive and affective components (Dhanesh, 2017). However, the majority of publics can be cognitively and emotionally engaged without overt communication behaviors yet (Dhanesh, 2017). The pilot and main studies discovered the predominance of passive social media engagement intentions. If cognitive and affection components were included, the observed passivity in this dissertation could be further understood and explained. To fully capture Dessart's (2017) definition of social media engagement, future research is recommended to consider publics' cognitive and affective manifestations so that organization-public relationships can be further fostered. Scholars can draw on this research's validated measures for social media engagement intentions and further include cognitive and affective aspects. Dessart's (2017) empirical work on affective and cognitive engagement can be integrated with the identified behavioral engagement while embracing more disengagement and negative engagement. This line of research will be worth investigating to deepen scholarly and practical understanding of social media engagement, which ultimately promotes more effective communication strategies to enhance online organization-public relationships.

Furthermore, this dissertation chose social media engagement intentions as the final outcome to acknowledge the significance of CSA social media communication. However, how online engagement behaviors transit into offline experiences and behaviors remains unknown. As noted by Smith and Gallicano (2015), public engagement with organizations through social media complements their offline experiences. For example, publics' favorable perceptions of companies' messages on social media and clicking the "like" button can cultivate their offline behaviors (e.g., civic engagement, product purchase) (Alhabash et al., 2015). In addition to social media engagement, CSA affects publics' offline behaviors, such as purchase intentions (Dodd & Supa, 2015; Hong & Li, 2020; Park, 2021). Thus, future studies should link publics' social media engagement to their offline behaviors, such as civic engagement or boycott behaviors, to comprehensively capture CSA effectiveness.

This dissertation focused on the image-based association when manipulating the advocacy fit, but perceived fit can be triggered in many other ways. For example, the sponsorship literature proposes function-based associations that utilize companies' expertise in supporting an event (Gwinner, 1997; Poon & Prendergast, 2006; Wang & Li, 2017). Study 1 in this dissertation also discovered that existing companies had taken advantage of their corporate expertise to support sociopolitical issues. For example, MasterCard's "True Name" campaign shows a function-based association by allowing transgender and non-binary customers to select preferred first names on their credit cards. Prior literature on CSR has demonstrated that image and functional fit played different roles in public perceptions of company expertise and trustworthiness (Alcañiz et al., 2010). As de Jong and van der Meer (2017) noted, various types of CSR fit can happen in practice. Parcha and Kinsley Westerman's (2020) CSA study manipulated advocacy fit from a function-based association and discovered effective low

advocacy fit for highly involved individuals. Therefore, future research can expand this line of inquiry by testing how other types of advocacy fit, such as function-based associations, can affect publics' attributions and attitudes toward the company.

This dissertation opens a new avenue for future research on integrating the social identity approach and public relations. Study 2 selected an externally ascribed social identity (ethnic identity) rather than an internally acquired social identity such as interest-based due to the relative stability of the former and distinction with individual identity (Crane & Rueboottom, 2011). Also, including ingroup identification assesses to what extent individuals include the social identity in the self (Tropp & Wright, 2001). However, participants' average ingroup identification in the non-CSA-supported group (White Americans) in Study 2 appeared to be low to moderate. Other social identities might be more contextually assessable and drive their reactions to CSA. For example, some of them can be identified with the activist group supporting racial justice, which determines their perceptions of the race-related CSA. As Hogg (2018) pointed out, individuals can have multiple social identities that differ qualitatively. Future research should continue to verify the generalizability of this research's results to other types of social identities, including acquired ones. In addition, only the racial justice issue was included in the experiment, so future research should consider diverse sociopolitical issues advocated by companies. Issues can trigger publics diverse social identities (Xu, 2020), and the results of this research need to be verified by testing other issues such as the abortion debate, immigration and refugee rights, and so on. For instance, the intertwined relations between culture and social identities point to a promising direction for future social identity research (Hogg et al., 2017), which can also be examined in the immigration-related CSA context. In addition, intergroup emotions can be explored in future research on CSA as social identities also influence

individuals' emotions in a given context (Hogg et al., 2017; Mackie & Smith, 2015). For example, publics' emotional resections to organizations' crises can be driven by their social identities (Ma, 2017; Shen & Cheng, 2021). In the CSA context, publics' emotional responses should not be neglected, and more research should be devoted to this promising area in the future.

5.12   Summary of Chapter 5

In Chapter 5, the key findings of Study 1 and Study 2 in this dissertation were discussed. Study 1 identified the patterns of communication strategies (relational vs. elaborational vs. activational) on companies' social media platforms. The effectiveness of relational communication strategies in arousing social media engagement pointed out the communicative nature of fit in the CSA context. The prominence of elaborational communication strategies did not always indicate its positive impact on engaging publics online. Additionally, companies have not exploited the full potential of social media in designing and implementing activational communication strategies. Drawing on Dolan et al. (2016)'s conceptualization, the pilot study confirmed publics' intentions to engage in various social media activities: consumption, contribution, creation, dormancy, detachment, and destruction. The overall passivity of social media engagement in this study aligned with prior studies (Tsai & Men, 2013). Also, attitudes toward a company appeared to be a powerful determinant of publics' social media engagement intentions. The main study in Study 2 revealed the positive effects of advocacy fit on provoking favorable attributions and suppressing unfavorable ones. Furthermore, the multigroup analysis sheds light on the non-negligible role of publics' social identities in their responses to CSA-related information. The social identity approach literature offers valuable perspectives in explaining the findings in this dissertation. The mediating roles of CSA were explained with

literature and studies in CSR and CSA communication. Finally, publics' social identities are approached as an antecedent for their perceptions of a sociopolitical issue, especially in the CSA-supported group. After unpacking the findings of this dissertation, theoretical and practical implications were provided in this chapter. In addition, several important future research directions were pointed out to elucidate more scholarly work in public relations.

Conclusion

This dissertation applied a multi-method approach to offer insight into the newly emergent public relations initiative: CSA. The ultimate goal is to provide an understanding of strategic CSA communication that aligns corporate identities, sociopolitical issues, and publics. Also, both Study 1 and Study 2 focus on social media to enrich CSA social media communication literature. First, the quantitative content analysis of top companies' CSA-related social media posts unveiled the predominance of elaborational communication strategies that focused on the advocated issues on Facebook and Twitter. Although companies primarily employed elaborational communication strategies in their CSA social media communication, relational communication strategies that made explicit connections between companies and sociopolitical issues were more often associated with higher numbers of social media engagement behaviors. The results also suggested more strategic and mindful use of activational communication strategies in order to fully promote publics' interactions and participation on social media.

Second, the pilot study in Study 2 validated a holist measurement of social media engagement intentions based on Dolan et al.'s (2016) conceptualization, covering consumption, contribution, creation, dormancy, detachment, and destruction. This dissertation further discovered the tendency to engage in more passive forms of social media engagement behaviors.

Next, the main study showed the positive role of advocate fit in enhancing perceived value-driven motives and reducing perceived egoistic and strategic motives. Such positive effects were even stronger in the CSA-supported group. Publics' social identities (social group memberships and ingroup identification) significantly impacted their attributions of CSA, attitudes toward the company, and social media engagement intentions. Overall, motivated by ingroup favoritism, the CSA-supported group was more supportive of the race-related CSA by attributing less egoistic and strategic motives, displaying more positive attitudes toward the company, and showing higher intentions in positive social media engagement and lower intentions in negative social media engagement. The tendency for attributional bias was stronger for those highly identified with the CSA-supported group, which assigned more altruistic motives to CSA. Conversely, the higher ingroup identification of participants in the non-CSA-supported group significantly increased their perceived egoistic, stakeholder-driven, and strategic motives for the race-related CSA. Additionally, the main study confirmed that social group membership and ingroup identification could function as antecedents for publics' situational perceptions of sociopolitical issues, offering additional ways to identify publics and further build relationships with them in a meaningful and targeted manner.

This dissertation is innovative in many ways with a cross-disciplinary approach. It brings valuable insight into the burgeoning and unprecedented CSA phenomenon. First of all, the empirical overview of existing communication strategies in CSA social media communication presented the heightened role of communication in creating connections between a company, its CSA, and its publics. Second, as the first research to empirically validate a comprehensive measurement of how publics intent to engage with companies online, the results demonstrate the multidimensional nature of social media engagement. It, therefore, expands academic and

practical understanding of publics' complex but intertwined activities on social media. Third, the significantly positive effects of advocacy fit on CSA attributions suggest more efforts in identifying and creating congruency between a company's identity and its stance on a sociopolitical issue. Fourth, this dissertation proves the necessity of integrating the social identity approach in public relations research. Embracing publics' social identities allows a more in-depth understanding of whether and how organization-publics interactions and relationships mean to publics. Especially, the determinant role of social identities in publics' perceptions of sociopolitical issues points to additional directions of theorizing publics. This dissertation is only an initial step and serves as a catalyst to encourage more public relations research to include social identities as an additional consideration to completely interpret publics' responses to organizational practices and sociopolitical issues.

Appendix A

Company Information in Study 1

Rank	Company Name	Industry	Tweeter Account	Facebook Account
1	Apple	Computer	no tweets	apple
2	Amazon	Internet Service and Retailing	amazon	Amazon
3	Microsoft	Computer Software	Microsoft	Microsoft
4	Walt Disney	Entertainment	Disney	Disney
5	Berkshire Hathaway	Insurance, Property, and Casualty	no account	no account
6	Starbucks	Food Services	Starbucks	Starbucks
7	Alphabet	Internet Service and Retailing	Google	Google
8	JPMorgan Chase	Megabanks	jpmorgan	jpmorganchase
9	Costco Wholesale	General Merchandisers	no tweets	Costco
10	Salesforce	Computer Software	salesforce	salesforce
11	Southwest Airlines	Airlines	SouthwestAir	SouthwestAir
12	Coco-Cola	Beverages	CocaCola	CocaColaUnitedStates
13	Nike	Apparel	Nike	nike
14	American Express	Consumer Credit Card	AmericanExpress	AmericanExpressUS
15	FedEx	Delivery	FedEx	FedEx
16	Netflix	Entertainment	netflix	netflixus
17	Marriott International	Hotel, Casinos, and Resorts	MarriottIntl	marriottinternational
18	Walmart	General Merchandisers	Walmart	walmart
19	Delta Air Lines	Airlines	Delta	delta
20	Nordstrom	General Merchandisers	Nordstrom	Nordstrom
21	Home Depot	Specialty Retailers	HomeDepot	homedepot
22	Target	General Merchandisers	Target	target
23	Procter & Gamble	Soaps and Cosmetics	ProcterGamble	proctergamble
24	USAA	Insurance, Property, and Casualty	USAA	USAA
25	BlackRock	Securities and Asset Management	blackrock	BlackRock

26	Johnson & Johnson	Pharmaceuticals	JNJNews	jnj
27	Goldman Sachs Group	Megabanks	GoldmanSachs	goldmansachs
29	3M	Chemicals	3M	3M
33	UPS	Delivery	UPS	ups
35	IBM	Information Technology Services	IBM	IBM
36	VISA	Consumer Credit Card	Visa	VisaUnitedStates
37	Charles Schwab	Securities and Asset Management	CharlesSchwab	CharlesSchwab
38	CVS Health	Pharmaceuticals	cvspharmacy	CVS
41	McDonald's	Food Services	McDonalds	McDonalds
42	Mastercard	Consumer Credit Card	Mastercard	MastercardUS
43	PepsiCo	Consumer Food Service	PepsiCo	PepsiCo
44	Caterpillar	Construction and Farm Machinery	CaterpillarInc	caterpillarinc
46	Lockheed Martin	Aerospace and Defense	LockheedMartin	lockheedmartin
47	Adobe	Computer Software	Adobe	Adobe
48	Publix Super Markets	Food and Drugstores	Publix	Publix
49	Merk	Pharmaceuticals	Merck	no account
50	Exxon Mobil	Petroleum Refining	exxonmobil	ExxonMobil

Appendix B

Communication Strategies for Corporate Social Advocacy on Social Media Codebook

1. Study Overview
    a. Study purpose:
        i. To identify communication strategies (relational vs. elaborational vs. activational) used by companies to communicate about their CSA on social media (i.e., Facebook and Twitter).
        ii. To explore how CSA communication strategies are associated with publics' social media engagement behaviors.
    b. Research questions:
        i. RQ1: How, if at all, are communication strategies (relational, elaborational, activational) adopted by companies' CSA messages on social media?
        ii. RQ2: How are communication strategies (relational, elaborational, activational) in CSA associated with social media engagement behaviors?
2. Unit
    a. Unit of data collection: a Facebook post, a tweet.
    b. Unit of coding: a Facebook post, a tweet.
    c. Unit of analysis: a Facebook post, a tweet.

3. Selected organization: The 2020 *Fortune Magazine's* list of "World's Most Admired Companies" is used for data collection. Its top 50 companies are examined. Only American Companies are selected.

4. Sample: Facebook posts and tweets from the selected companies between January 1st, 2020, to December 31st, 2020.
    a. Data collection:
        i. Facebook: CrowdTangle (Only public accounts and public contents can be collected.)
        ii. Twitter: Advanced Search
        iii. Issues and keywords:

Issue	Search Keywords
LGBTQ+ right	lgbt, lgbtq, lgbti, lgbt+, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, trans, queer, intersex, same-sex, homosexual, homosexuality, sexual orientation, homophobia, sexuality, gender identity, sexual diversity, sexual identity, sexual preference
Gun control	gun, gun-control, second amendment, 2nd amendment, assault weapon, FFL, Federal firearms license, Firearm Owners Protection Act, NRA, National Rifle Association, March for Our Lives, Gunowners of America, GOC, automatic weapon, Semiautomatic weapon, Brady Law, NICS, National Instant Criminal Background Check System, gun show loophole, strawman purchase, mass shooting(s)

Issue	Search Keywords
Racial relation	racial, race, anti-racism, racist, racism, discrimination, criminal justice, black lives matter, blm, George Floyd, ethnic minority, ethnic, color-blind, color-blindness, ethnicity, black, African American, blacklivesmatter, equality
Reproductive rights	abortion, reproductive, contraception, unintended pregnancy, unwanted pregnancy
Immigration, refugees	refugee(s), migrant(s), immigrant(s), asylum-seeker(s), immigrate, immigrated, immigrating, asylum

5. Key rules:
   a. The contents in external links should not be coded or affect the coding results. To keep consistency, coders should only focus on the post itself.
   b. Coders should read the visual(s) (images or graphics) to fully capture the communication strategies.
   c. Coders also need to watch the full video in the post to code communication strategy.

6. Variable Description:
   a. Company name
   b. Account platform ID
   c. Post URL
   d. Platform:
      (1) Facebook
      (2) Twitter
   e. The issue(s) advocated in the post: (Choose all that apply.)
      (1) sexual orientation
      (2) gun control
      (3) racial relation
      (4) reproductive rights
      (5) immigration, refugee

   f. Relational communication strategy: the connectedness between the company and the endorsed issue. (Sohn et al., 2012; Wang & Li, 2017)

Variable	Category	Description/Example
Relational Communication Strategy	Image-based association	1) An image-based association is present when the post highlights the connection between the company's image and its CSA. 2) The post is about "semantic associations pertinent to cultural and social meaning" (Wang & Li, 2017; p.921). It also means "a symbolic link between social cause and brand" (Bigné et al., 2012. P. 579). 3) Some keywords should be considered: image, history, identity, core value, vision, mission, and long-term commitment.

Variable	Category	Description/Example
		4) An image-based association is more symbolic and abstract, drawing on corporate image and brand association. 5) An image-based association is a general evaluation that is not related to a company's expertise or product/service. Example 1: "Workplace equality is one of the core values we live by." (Proctor & Gamble, 2020) Example 2: Nordstrom (2020) discussed their value and commitment when supporting the BLM Movement on Facebook. Example 3: Earning a perfect score on HRC's Corporate Equality Index (CEI) is coded as an image-based association when the post highlights the company's value and commitment.
	Function-based association	1) The post highlights a functional connection between an issue's characteristics or intentions and a company's services, products, functions, uses, or the main brand activity (Bigné et al., 2012; Wang & Li, 2017). 2) If the activity is about this company's expertise, it should also be coded. 3) The key idea is to consider the company's products, services, or expertise. 4) A function-based association builds on comparing the features and functions of the product or service and the feature or purpose of sociopolitical issues (Bigné Alcaniz et al., 2010). Example 1: Netflix introduced more Black-related shows and movies on their Facebook to enhance the representation of the Black community. Example 2: Google introduced a new icon (digital sticker) on Google Maps and Search to help support the Black-owned businesses.
	Both	1) If a post mentions both an image-based association and a function-based association, it should be coded as "both." 2) This happens more often when a post is long or contains several images.

Variable	Category	Description/Example
	Absent	It does not offer information about the connectedness between the company and the endorsed issue.
	Other	Please offer a concise description if the above categories don't capture a post's communications strategy.

g. Elaborational communication strategies: focusing on sponsorship (Sohn et al., 2012) and underscoring the characteristics of CSA.

Variable	Category	Description/Example
Elaborational Communication Strategy	Present	1) An elaborational communication strategy is coded as present when the post mainly focuses on the CSA itself. In other words, the post offers specific information about the sociopolitical issue (e.g., history, significance, stories, events, people, attributes, etc.) without emphasizing the endorsing company's traits or attributes. 2) Usually, the company's features, either image-based or function-based, are not mentioned in the post. 3) There is no explicit connection between the company and the advocated issue or CSA in the message. 4) The post provides information on the sociopolitical issue. Example 1: Merck shared their employees' thoughts on love's unifying feelings through a video on Twitter in 2020. Example 2: Salesforce discussed systematic racism in its "Leading Through Change" series on Facebook.
	Absence	1) The post does not elaborate on the advocated sociopolitical issue. No information is offered on the issue. 2) It can happen when the post only emphasizes the endorsing company's traits or attributes. 3) It can also happen with a short public statement like "We support BLM." Under this situation, no specific information about the issue is provided.

h. Activational communication strategies: "communications that promote the engagement, involvement, or participation of the sponsorship audience with the sponsor" (Weeks et al., 2011, p.639).

Variable	Category	Description/Example
Activational communication strategy	Absent	There is no information to help publics take action. The post is purely one-way information delivery.
	offering information for virtual events	The post provides information, including but not limited to a specific time, or link, for publics to register for an online event, such as lecture, livestream events, or panel discussion. Example 1: Procter & Gamble posted a tweet on April 24th, 2019, to share a link for an LGBTQ-related livestream event. Example 2: Charles Schwab shared a registration link for a panel discussion related to racial wealth on Facebook in 2021.
	offering information for offline events	The post provides information, including but not limited to a specific time, location, and procedure for publics to attend an offline/in-person event. Example: Procter & Gamble provided information about the Mobile Testing Relief campaign on Facebook.
	offering information for donation	The post provides information, such as a link or a portal for publics to donate. Example: Netflix shared links for the Poussey Washington Fund and Color of Change on its Facebook.
	offering information for a petition	The post provides information, such as a link or a portal for publics to sign a petition.
	offering information for volunteering	The post provides information, such as a link, time, location, and registration portal, for publics to volunteer virtually or in person.

Variable	Category	Description/Example
	offering information for social media actions	1) The post asks publics to click reaction buttons, such as like, retweet/share, or comment. 2) The post asks publics to "read," "watch," "discover," "learn more," "see more," and so on. Note: The post often contains a link with these terms.
	Other	Coders need to offer a concise description if this is selected.

  k. Social media engagement
    i. Facebook:
      1. The number of *total interactions*:
      2. The number of *Likes*:
      3. The number of *Shares*:
      4. The number of *Comments*:
      5. The number of *Love*:
      6. The number of *Wow*:
      7. The number of *Haha*:
      8. The number of *Sad*:
      9. The number of *Angry*:
      10. The number of *Care*:
    ii. Twitter:
      1. The number of *Likes*:
      2. The number of *Retweets:*
      3. The number of *Quoted Retweets*:

  l. Comment box (leave comments, if any):

Appendix C

Consent Form
(Pilot Study and Main Study)

Project Title	Positively or Negatively Engaging Publics? Communicating Corporate Social Advocacy to Publics with Different Social Identities
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Duli Shi at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are at least 18 years of age and are considered to be a general U.S. consumer. The purpose of this research project is to discover companies' effective strategies to generate value for the companies and social issues.
Procedures	[Pilot Study] You will read a company's description and its social media post and answer questions about your perception of the company and the post. You will also be asked about your demographic information. **There will also be an attention check question in the middle of the survey.** At the end of the survey, you will receive a Completion Code that you will need to copy and paste into the Prolific link. **This study will take about 10 minutes to complete.** [Main Study] First, you will answer questions about your existing perception of your social group. Second, you will read a company's description and its social media post and answer questions about your perception of the company and the post. Third, you will be asked about your demographic information. **There will also be 2 attention check questions in the middle of the survey.** At the end of the survey, you will receive a Completion Code that you will need to copy and paste into the Prolific link. **This study will take about 20 minutes to complete.**
Potential Risks and Discomforts	No physical, psychological, or social issues are expected to arise from participating in this study. You may skip any question you do not wish to answer.
Potential Benefits	There are no direct benefits from participating in this research. However, the results will benefit communities, society at large, and the environment by helping companies to create more effective programs aimed at solving social problems or affecting public opinion or policies, which will eventually contribute to creating a more functional society.

Confidentiality	No personally identifiable data will be collected and data will be analyzed in an aggregated manner. Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing data in a password-protected server. Only the investigator Duli Shi, and her dissertation advisor Dr. Elizabeth L. Toth will have access to the research data. Once the data are analyzed and articles based on the data are published, the data will be permanently destroyed by deleting the data from the hard drive and deleting the survey in Qualtrics; this typically takes about 2 years.
Compensation	You will be compensated $1.50 [$3.00 for the main study] for your time after your submission is completed and verified (typically within one week). At the end of the survey, you will receive a Completion Code that you will need to copy and paste into the Prolific link. There will be an attention check question [2 attention questions for the main study] in the middle of the survey and you will NOT be compensated if you respond to that question incorrectly.
Right to Withdraw and Questions	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, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator: Duli Shi Department of Communication University of Maryland shiduli@umd.edu
Participant Rights	If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount Hall College Park, Maryland, 20742 E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405-0678

	For more information regarding participant rights, please visit: https://research.umd.edu/irb-research-participants This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Statement of Consent	By clicking the "Next" button, you are indicating that you are at least 18 years of age, that you have read this consent form or have had it read to you, that your questions have been answered to your satisfaction, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this consent form upon request to the principal investigator, Duli Shi, at shiduli@umd.edu. If you agree to participate**, please click "I AGREE to participate in this study."**
	    o I have read the above information and I AGREE to participate in this study.
	    o I have read the above information but I DECLINE participate in this study.

Appendix D

Pilot Study Questionnaire

Perceived Advocacy Fit (Hong & Li, 2020; Parcha & Kingsley Westerman, 2020)
I think B&C Pizza Company and the Black Lives Matter social movement advocated in the message are
1. Unrelated – Related
2. A weak match – A strong match
3. Unassociated – Associated
4. Dissimilar – Similar
5. Incongruent – Congruent

Message Authenticity
The following items ask about your perceptions of B&C Pizza Company's Facebook post.
1. The message seems able to occur in the real world.
2. The message is authentic.
3. There is an abundance of facts in the message so that I believe it is authentic.

Social Media Engagement Intentions (Cao et al., 2021; Dolan et al., 2015; Schivinski et al., 2016; Tsai & Men, 2015)
The following questions ask about your potential social media interactions with the B&C Pizza Company.
Consumption
1. I will read posts related to this company on social media.
2. I will read fanpage(s) related to this company on social media.
3. I will watch pictures/graphics related to this company.
4. I will follow blogs related to this company.
5. I will follow this company on social media.

Contribution
1. I will comment on videos related to this company.
2. I will comment on posts related to this company.
3. I will comment on pictures/graphics related to this company.
4. I will share this company's related posts.
5. I will "Like" pictures/graphics related to this company.
6. I will "Like" posts related to this company.

Creation
1. I will initiate posts related to this company on social media.
2. I will post pictures/graphics related to this company.
3. I will post videos that show this company.
4. I will write posts related to this company on forums.
5. I will write reviews related to this company.
6. I will initiate posts related to this company on blogs.

Dormancy
1. I will take no action if the company-related content is delivered to me.
2. I will not express any opinions or feelings about this company on its social media page.
3. I will not express any opinions or feelings about this company on my own social media page.

Detachment
Imagine that you currently like, subscribe, and/or follow the B&C Pizza company's social media account; how likely are you to take the following actions?
1. I will unlike this company's social media page.
2. I will unfollow this company on social media.
3. I will terminate a subscription for future updates and content from this company.
4. I will select to hide future posts from this company.

Destruction
1. I will talk negatively about this company-related content online.
2. I will make negative comments to this company's forums.
3. I will publicly rate this company's products negatively.
4. I will comment negatively on posts, blogs, videos, or pictures posted by this company.
5. I will write a public complaint on this company's social media page.
6. I will write negative product reviews and/or testimonials on my own social media content.
7. I will report this company or company-related social media content for misconduct.

Demographic Information
Finally, the following questions ask about your demographic information. Remember that no personally identifying information (name or any other information unique to you) is collected or associated with your answers.

What is your sex?
1. Male
2. Female
3. Non-binary/third gender
4. Prefer not to say

Which of the following best describes your race? Please check all that apply.
1. White
2. Black or African American
3. American Indian or Alaska Native
4. Asian or Asian American
5. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
6. Hispanic/Latino
7. Other (Please specify)

Please indicate the answer that includes your entire household income in (previous year) before taxes.

1. Less than $10,000
2. $10,000 to $19,999
3. $20,000 to $29,999
4. $30,000 to $39,999
5. $40,000 to $49,999
6. $50,000 to $59,999
7. $60,000 to $69,999
8. $70,000 to $79,999
9. $80,000 to $89,999
10. $90,000 to $99,999
11. $100,000 to $149,999
12. $150,000 or more

How do you rate your political views?
     1 = Very Conservative – 5 = Very liberal

Appendix E

Main Study Questionnaire

Racial/Ethnic Identification (Martinez & Ramasubramanian, 2015)
1. How strong a sense of belonging do you have with your race or ethnicity?
2. How much do you identify with other members of your race or ethnicity?
3. How similar do you feel to your race or ethnicity as a whole in terms of general attitudes and beliefs?
4. How included do you feel by others of your race or ethnicity?
5. How strong are your ties to other members of your race or ethnicity?
6. How important is your racial/ethnic identification to your self-image?
7. How closely knit are you with others of your race or ethnicity?

Now I would like to ask about your perceptions of B&C Pizza Company's advocacy message. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Perceived Advocacy Fit (Hong & Li, 2020; Parcha & Kingsley Westerman, 2020)
I think B&C Pizza Company and the Black Lives Matter social movement advocated in the message are
1. Unrelated – Related
2. A weak match – A strong match
3. Unassociated – Associated
4. Dissimilar – Similar
5. Incongruent – Congruent

Perceived CSR Motives (Cheng et al., 2018; Ellen et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2020)
After your read the introduction of B&C Pizza Company and its Facebook post, how do you perceive B&C's motivation underlying this advocacy activity?

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

Value
1. This company has a long-term interest in the community and society.
2. This company feels morally obligated to help society.
3. The company is trying to give something back to society.

Egoistic
1. This company is trying to capitalize on this growing social issue.
2. This company is taking advantage of this social issue to help its own business.
3. This company is trying to benefit from the increased awareness of this social issue.

Stakeholder
1. This company feels its customers expect it to advocate for this social issue.
2. This company feels society, in general, expects it to advocate for this social issue.

3. This company feels its stakeholders expect it to advocate for this social issue.

Strategic
1. This company wants to get new customers by advocating for this issue.
2. This company wants to keep existing customers by advocating for this issue.
3. This company hopes to increase profits by advocating for this issue.
4. This company hopes to increase its competitiveness by advocating for this issue.

Attitude toward B&C Pizza Company (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989)
My attitude toward this B&C Pizza Company is
1. Bad – Good
2. Unpleasant – Pleasant
3. Unfavorable – Favorable
4. Negative – Positive

Social Media Engagement Intentions (Cao et al., 2021; Dolan et al., 2015; Schivinski et al., 2016; Tsai & Men, 2015)
- *The item selection and wording are modified based on the pilot study results.*

The following questions ask about your potential social media interactions with the B&C Pizza Company.
Please indicate the level of your agreement with the following statements. 1 = "Strongly Disagree", 7 = "Strongly Agree"

Consumption
1. I will read posts (e.g., text/videos/pictures/graphics) related to this company on social media.
2. I will read fan pages related to this company on social media.
3. I will follow this company on social media.
4. I will follow blogs related to this company.

Contribution
1. I will comment on posts/videos/pictures/graphics related to this company on social media.
2. I will share this company's related posts on social media.
3. I will "Like" posts/videos/pictures/graphics related to this company.

Creation
1. I will initiate posts/videos/pictures/graphics related to this company on social media.
2. I will write posts related to this company on forums.
3. I will write reviews related to this company.
4. I will initiate posts related to this company on blogs.

Dormancy
1. I will take no action if the company-related content is delivered to me.
2. I will not express any opinions or feelings about this company on its social media page.

3. I will not express any opinions or feelings about this company on my own social media page.

Detachment

Imagine that you currently like, subscribe, and/or follow the B&C Pizza company's social media account; how likely are you to take the following actions? (1 = "Strongly Disagree", 7 = "Strongly Agree")

1. I would unlike this company's social media page.
2. I would terminate a subscription for future updates and content from this company.
3. I would select to hide future posts from this company.

Destruction

1. I will talk negatively about this company-related content online.
2. I will comment negatively on posts, blogs, videos, or pictures posted by this company.
3. I will publicly rate this company negatively.
4. I will report this company or company-related social media content for misconduct.

The following part will ask about your personal opinions on racial discrimination and inequality in the United States. Please note that the following questions are not connected with the previous company message.

Please remember that your answers are absolutely anonymous and will never be linked to your personal identity or information. Your frank answers will make a great contribution to the research.

I would like to ask for your personal opinions on the issue of racial discrimination and inequality in the United States. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

For each statement, please consider racial discrimination and inequality in the United States as the/this "issue."

Issue-related Variables (Kim & Grunig, 2017)
Problem Recognition

1. I think the issue is a serious social or national problem.
2. The government should take action to solve this issue.
3. Something should be done immediately to solve this issue.

Involvement Recognition

1. I see a close connection between myself and this issue.
2. I think this issue could affect me personally.
3. I am connected with this issue and its consequences.

Constraint Recognition

1. I can make a difference in the way this issue is solved.
2. I feel I can improve this problematic situation.

3. I feel like my ideas and opinions matter to those in the government (or corporation) who are working on this issue.

Referent Criterion
1. I have clear ideas about how to deal with this issue.
2. I could easily come up with a plan to deal with this issue.
3. I have faced a similar problem in the past.

Situation Motivation
1. I frequently think about this issue.
2. I would like to better understand this issue.
3. I am curious about this issue.

Black Lives Matter Attitude (Holt & Sweitzer, 2020)
The following statements will ask about your personal opinions on the Black Lives Matter movement. (Please be frank in your opinions.)
1. My personal attitude about the Black Lives Matter movement is that I: "Dislike it a great deal" (1); "Like it a great deal" (7)
2. In my opinion, the Black Lives Matter movement is: "Very bad" (1); "Very good" (7)
3. My opinion about [attitude toward] the Black Lives Matter movement is: "Very unfavorable" (1); "Very favorable" (7)
4. In terms of the Black Lives Matter movement, I think what protesters are doing is: "Very unwise" (1); "Very wise" (7)
5. In my opinion, the Black Lives Matter movement will ultimately prove to be: "Very unbeneficial" (1); "Very beneficial" (7)
6. To what extent do you agree that the Black Lives matter movement is necessary? "Very unnecessary" (1); "Very necessary" (7)

Demographic Information
Finally, the following questions ask about your demographic information. Remember that no personally identifying information (name or any other information unique to you) is collected or associated with your answers.

What is your sex?
5. Male
6. Female
7. Non-binary/third gender
8. Prefer not to say

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? (If you're currently enrolled in school, please indicate the highest degree you have received.)
1. Less than high school degree
2. High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
3. Some college but no degree
4. Associate degree in college (e.g., AA, AS)
5. Bachelor's degree in college (e.g., BA, BS)

6. Master's degree (e.g., MA, MS, MEd)
7. Professional degree (e.g., JD, MD, DDS, DVM)
8. Doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD)
9. Prefer not to answer

Which of the following best describes your race? Please check all that apply.
1. White
2. Black or African American
3. American Indian or Alaska Native
4. Asian or Asian American
5. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
6. Hispanic/Latino
7. Other (Please specify)

Please indicate the answer that includes your entire household income in (previous year) before taxes.
1. Less than $10,000
2. $10,000 to $19,999
3. $20,000 to $29,999
4. $30,000 to $39,999
5. $40,000 to $49,999
6. $50,000 to $59,999
7. $60,000 to $69,999
8. $70,000 to $79,999
9. $80,000 to $89,999
10. $90,000 to $99,999
11. $100,000 to $149,999
12. $150,000 or more

How do you rate your political views?
      1 = Very Conservative – 5 = Very liberal

Social Media Dependency (Men & Muralidharan, 2017)
1. I would rather spend my leisure time on social media than someplace else.
2. *I could easily do without using any type of social media for a given day. (reversed)
3. Using social media is one of the more important things that I do each day.
4. If social media weren't working, I would really miss it.

Comment Box
      (Optional) Please feel free to leave any comments here.

Appendix F

Written Debriefing

Thank you for your participation in my research. Sometimes, scientific methods require that participants in research studies not be given complete information about the research until the experiment or survey has ended. Although I cannot always tell participants everything before they begin, I can explain more when they have finished the survey.

The study you just participated in examines your perceptions of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) social movement, a company, and that company's activity. I am interested in examining whether a company's different messages about a social issue would generate different perceptions of the company and the benefits that the public perceive.

Please note that the name of the company and the message you read are fictional. I hope you enjoyed participating in this study. I apologize for the deception to obtain meaningful results in this study. You have the option to withdraw your data from this study. If you want to do so, please feel free to contact me at shiduli@umd.edu. Thank you again for your participation.

Please click the button below to be redirected back to Prolific and register your submission.

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