Pertanika Proceedings 1 (1): 21 - 24 (2025)

PERTANIKA JOURNALS

PERTANIKA PROCEEDINGS

Journal homepage: http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/

Synergizing Cultural Values for Digital CSR Communication

Nobertus Ribut Santoso* and Sherly Hindra Negoro

Communication Department, Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta, 55281, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study examines how Indonesian cultural values contribute to CSR initiatives that shape Indonesian millennial expectations. Results, based on 14 in-depth conversations with millennials actively using Instagram and following one of the Indonesian unicorn companies (UCs), revealed that millennials expect companies to include Indonesian cultural values, such as *gotong royong* (mutual help), *tenggang rasa* (tolerance), and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity) when communicating CSR through Instagram. Considering Indonesia's diversity, this study proposes that to ensure harmony, issues of ethnicity, religion, group-based interests, pornography, LGBT, and politics should be avoided when communicating CSR.

Keywords: Cultural values, digital CSR, harmony, millennial expectations, unicorn companies

INTRODUCTION

Culture significantly influences individual behaviour and business ethics, making it essential for companies to integrate local cultural values into their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies (Pandin & Yanto, 2022). In Indonesia, values such as mutual assistance, harmony, and religiousness shape CSR communication, requiring companies like Gojek and Tokopedia to adapt their strategies accordingly (Blasco & Zølner, 2008). Despite the importance of these values, Indonesian unicorn companies (UCs) face challenges in effectively engaging millennials through CSR communication, particularly on digital platforms like Instagram (Neufeld, 2021).

Existing research on cultural values and CSR often overlooks Southeast Asia, leaving a gap in understanding how Indonesian cultural norms impact CSR, especially in relation to millennials (Esteban et al., 2017). This study addresses this gap by exploring how Indonesian UCs use Instagram for CSR communication, aiming to enhance

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received: 09 January 2025
Published: 17 February 2025

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47836/pp.1.1.005

E-mail addresses:
nobertus.ribut@uajy.ac.id (Nobertus Ribut Santoso)
sherly.hindra@uajy.ac.id (Sherly Hindra Negoro)
* Corresponding author

© Universiti Putra Malaysia Press

theoretical developments and provide practical recommendations for engaging millennials through culturally relevant CSR strategies (Rideout & Watkins, 2019). Given Indonesian millennials' digital engagement and influence on businesses, companies must tailor their CSR communication to resonate with this key demographic (Stewart et al., 2017).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to explore how Indonesian cultural values influence millennial expectations of digital Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) communication among Indonesian unicorn companies (UCs). Semi-structured interviews with purposively selected 14 key informants, based on their active Instagram use and engagement with UC CSR content, were conducted to gather in-depth insights. The interview guide focused on digital CSR communication and cultural values, with interviews conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to facilitate clear expression. Data were recorded with consent, transcribed, and coded into themes aligned with the research objectives. Findings were translated into English and analyzed inductively to ensure accurate representation and deeper understanding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research findings highlight that Indonesian unicorn companies (UCs) are expected to engage in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to benefit society and the environment, especially given their profits. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CSR initiatives often focused on philanthropy, such as vaccinations and aid distribution, reflecting the cultural value of *gotong royong* (mutual help). Informants appreciated these efforts and viewed them as demonstrating the companies' commitment to societal welfare. Additionally, UCs supported Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with mentorship and digital tools, which were vital for businesses and the broader economy.

Despite positive perceptions, some informants raised concerns about the potential negative impacts of CSR activities, such as increased consumption driven by digital platforms, which could exceed people's purchasing power and harm traditional businesses. The research emphasizes the need for more inclusive CSR programs that consider vulnerable populations. Moreover, integrating Indonesian cultural values like *gotong royong* (mutual help), *tenggang rasa* (tolerance), and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) into CSR communication is crucial. UCs should ensure that their communication is transparent and culturally sensitive, fosters inclusivity, and aligns with deeply rooted societal values.

Indonesian unicorn companies (UCs) like Gojek, Traveloka, Bukalapak, Tokopedia, and OVO have embraced Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives focused on social and environmental well-being, particularly during COVID-19. Their philanthropic

efforts, including vaccinations, mask donations, and aid distribution, reflect the cultural value of *gotong royong* (mutual help) and have strengthened stakeholder relationships (Jaiyeoba et al., 2021). By supporting Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and promoting digital economic growth, these companies align their core business with community needs, enhancing organizational sustainability and social benefits (Chuah et al., 2022).

Effective CSR communication is essential for engaging millennials, a key stakeholder group. While Instagram has been a primary platform, UCs should leverage other channels like Twitter and traditional media to broaden their reach. Millennials expect CSR content to be relevant and engaging, but many are unaware of UCs' CSR efforts on Instagram, suggesting a need for more compelling content (Katadata Insight Center, 2020). Incorporating Indonesian cultural values such as *gotong royong* (mutual help), *tenggang rasa* (tolerance), and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity) into CSR communication is crucial for gaining millennial support. Focusing on harmony and empowerment while avoiding sensitive topics will help UCs build stronger relationships and adapt to the digital age (Chatzopoulou & de Kiewiet, 2021). Moreover, this study supports the study of Blasco and Zølner (2008), in which in making social responsibility and ethics, the cultural values must be locally adapted by the companies. Values and practices regarding culture influence the practical implementation of CSR at the individual and organizational levels (Stahl, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study explored the role of culture in developing millennials' expectations of Indonesian unicorn companies when communicating CSR through Instagram. Results suggest such values—*gotong royong, tenggang rasa*, and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, make messages more relatable to millennials and should be considered when designing, implementing, and communicating CSR. In the interest of maintaining harmony, issues of ethnic groups, religions, race, pornography, LGBT, and politics should be seen as divisive and best avoided. In sum, we provide a foundation for Indonesian unicorn companies' CSR communications via Instagram to identify more closely with the millennial cultural values practised daily.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors express their heartfelt gratitude to Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta for providing a research grant that made this study possible. They also acknowledge the participants for sharing their narrative stories during the interview. Their contributions have played a crucial role in understanding the phenomenon.

REFERENCES

Blasco, M., & Zølner, M. (2008). Corporate social responsibility in Mexico and France. *Business & Society, 49*(2), 216–251. https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650307309434

Chatzopoulou, E., & de Kiewiet, A. (2021). Millennials' evaluation of corporate social responsibility: The wants and needs of the largest and most ethical generation. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *20*(3), 521-534. https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1882

Chuah, S. H. W., Sujanto, R. Y., Sulistiawan, J., & Cheng-Xi Aw, E. (2022). What is holding customers back? Assessing the moderating roles of personal and social norms on CSR's routes to Airbnb repurchase intention in the COVID-19 era. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *50*, 67–82. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.12.007

Esteban, V. A., Villardón, M. P. G., & Sanchez, I. M. G. (2017). Cultural values on CSR patterns and evolution: The biplot representation. *Ecological Indicators*, *81*, 18-29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2017.05.051

Jaiyeoba, H. B., Hossain, S., Salleh, H. M., & Elgharbawy, A. A. (2021). CSR as an effective promotional tool for Malaysian halal certified companies in the era of Covid-19. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 14*(2), 317-341. https://doi.org/10.1108/jima-09-2020-0287

Katadata Insight Center. (2020). *Status literasi digital Indonesia 2020: Hasil survei 34 provinsi (2020 Indonesia digital literacy status: Survey result from 34 provinces).* Katadata Insight Center.

Pandin, M. G. R., & Yanto, E. S. (2022). Exploratory practice as practitioner research: Review of exploratory practices for continuing professional development: An innovative approach for language teachers. *Qualitative Report*, *27*(8), 1547-1551. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5809

Rideout, V., & Watkins, S. C. (2019). *Millennials, Social Media, and Politics*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Institute for Media Innovation.

Stahl, G. K., de Luque, M. S., & Miska, C. (2024). Culture and corporate social responsibility and sustainability. In M. J. Gelfand & M. Erez (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cross-Cultural Organizational Behavior* (pp. 690–717). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190085384.013.27

Stewart, J. S., Oliver, E. G., Cravens, K. S., & Oishi, S. (2017). Managing millennials: Embracing generational differences. *Business Horizons*, *60*(1), 45-54. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2016.08.011

Neufeld, D. (2021). *There are 1.8 Billion Millennials on Earth. Here's Where They Live*. World Economic Forum.