

Thinking Harmony: Exploring Cultural Values Towards Digital CSR Communication

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ABSTRACT

Despite the massive usage of digital platforms to communicate organisations' corporate social responsibility (CSR), empirical evidence in understanding digital CSR messages is mainly dominated by quantitative inquiry. Limited research has examined millennials' expectations to digital CSR communication, particularly in emerging cultural values. Therefore, this study aims at examining how Indonesian cultural values contribute CSR initiatives in shaping 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 millennials expect companies to include Indonesian cultural values, such as *gotong royong* (mutual help among neighbors), *tenggang rasa* (empathy and mutual understanding), 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

National culture plays a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour (Marinković et al., 2024). Considering local cultural values in business activities is crucial in a competitive market. For instance, Indonesian cultural values, such as mutual assistance, harmony, conformity, tolerance, and religiousness (Dewi et al., 2024) influence how companies operate, and are seen, in Indonesia, including Corporate Social Responsibility

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(CSR) communication. Such companies include the five most popular Indonesian unicorn companies (UCs), such as Gojek, Tokopedia, Traveloka, Bukalapak, and OVO, and how designing, implementation, and communication of CSR attains mutually beneficial relationships between themselves and society, for example, millennials.

These popular Indonesian UCs present an interesting case. Being valued at over 1 billion US dollars, or Rp. 14.1 trillion (Clinton, 2019), their associated e-commerce activities contribute to the digital economy affecting Indonesia's economic growth, surpassing US\$ 130 billion (Rp. 1.831 trillion) by 2020 (Rahman, 2019). Building this positive image to gain trust from stakeholders, companies conduct CSR programmes considering Indonesian cultural values directed toward millennials since they shop online.

Despite huge numbers of millennials becoming a big market segment, UCs find it challenging to engage them through CSR communication even though they are highly active in digital environments and tend to demonstrate greater interest in CSR comparing to previous generation. Behavioural expectations of millennials, by understanding their strong cultural values, ensures programmes are closely geared towards millennials as key stakeholders in order to minimise negative impacts associated with business operations (Chatzopoulou & de Kiewiet, 2021). Furthermore, since millennials are not homogeneous groups, their expectations of CSR communication may vary based on

their cultural values shaping them to expect organisations' actions in CSR initiatives.

UCs must engage millennials through CSR communications on Instagram since effective digital CSR communication can enhance organisations' reputation, trust, and stakeholder engagement (Abdulaziz Alhumud et al., 2025). By understanding millennials' cultural values and integrating them into business activities and communications, businesses can succeed, despite competition, to win hearts and fulfil these expectations. Values play a significant role in building public expectations, particularly among western countries (Vitellaro et al., 2021). However, it remains largely unexplored in South Asia, particularly Indonesia, where values are foundational across people's lives (Karn & Bhattacharya, 2025). Likewise, studies on cultural values and CSR are mainly dominated by quantitative inquiry (e.g., Esteban et al., 2017) thus limiting their scope.

Little is mentioned of millennials in the context of CSR communications and Indonesian culture, even though they dominate the digital era. Therefore, this research aims to provide specific information on how UCs in Indonesia use Instagram to communicate CSR activities and how Indonesian cultural norms, beliefs, and practices influence these initiatives in shaping Indonesian millennial expectations. Millennials care about world issues, whilst remaining preoccupied with such platforms (Chatzopoulou & de Kiewiet, 2021), so, to enhance theoretical developments within

CSR, qualitative insights are needed to find the best practices to effectively communicate CSR through Instagram.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture and Millennials' Expectations of Companies

Understanding culture is essential for businesses' sustainability. In making organisational decisions, companies must consider local cultural values within which they operate since culture plays a central factor influencing individuals' values, attitudes, and expectations towards organisations. Defining culture as the psychological criteria guiding ethical decision-making across everyday life, it is long recognised as a significant determinant in organisational attitudes that influence ethical business activity (Roy et al., 2024). For instance, cultural values as practised throughout Indonesia possess the power to influence companies' designs, implementation, and CSR communications (Santoso & Negoro, 2025).

Indonesian cultural values, therefore, must be considered when operating throughout Indonesia. As a collectivist culture, Indonesia sees good social relationships as foundational in their life. The values of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity), *tenggang rasa* (empathy and mutual understanding), and *gotong royong* (mutual help among neighbours) serve as guiding principal promoting social cohesion, harmony, unity, and resilience within Indonesian society (Gede Agung et al., 2024).

Local people, where companies operate, are important stakeholders in companies' decision-making processes, including CSR, as they are affected by company objectives (Ghezal, 2024; Kim et al., 2019) revealed cultural values, for instance in South Korea, have strong correlation with CSR expectations. Inspired their study, this study explores Indonesian millennial stakeholders' CSR expectations related to their cultural values since they are significant in CSR development, influencing companies' commitments to responsibly contribute toward a better society or environment (Dewi et al., 2024).

Millennials are born from 1981 to 1996 (Badan Pusat Statistik/Central Agency of Statistics, 2020). Furthermore, Indonesia's millennial generation encompasses 69.9 million people (roughly twice the population of California), or 25.87 % of Indonesia's total inhabitants (Badan Pusat Statistik/Central Agency of Statistics, 2020). Before making decisions, they gather as much information as possible.

CSR Communication and Culture

CSR has become an important indicator for successful businesses. Therefore, companies spend large sums designing, implementing, and communicating CSR (Bae & Kim, 2013). This encourages companies to focus on social aspects to leverage their responsibilities by involving ethics held in common whilst making a profit (Santoso & Negoro, 2025). Consequently, people from different cultures have different expectations of CSR programmes and communication (Santoso & Negoro, 2025).

In the case of Indonesia, CSR practices contribute to a better society and environment whereby locals become the main targets of CSR activities. Activities that should not only be oriented towards increasing materiality, but of the well-being of society and its environment (Ganesh et al., 2024). Indonesian society exhibits group dependence, whereby mutual assistance, harmony, conformity, tolerance, and religiousness, become foundational in daily life (Dewi et al., 2024). Considering Indonesian cultural values in business practices, such as CSR, contributes to Indonesians' support and companies' sustainability.

CSR communication is carried out through various media. Digital media has become critical in the transformation of CSR communications. Ahmad et al. (2021) cite digital media changes to CSR communications from a one-way communicative model to an interactive one. Through such platforms, public responses to CSR information can be directly replied, enabling companies to reach a wider audience and expand their market (Gomez, 2020).

Furthermore, the presence of the internet has improved companies' CSR reputations by informing CSR activities regularly, providing opportunities for stakeholders to send, and receive information (Diehl et al., 2017). As a result, CSR communication becomes dialogic, symmetrical, and multidirectional—many-to-many (Diehl et al., 2017). This model allows stakeholders to strongly influence business decisions directly (Ahmad et al., 2021).

Social media, such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, reach diverse stakeholders in briefer time. These social media platforms have changed the way the organisation communicates its CSR and its relationship with stakeholders (Gomez, 2020). Since the stakeholders practice their cultural values in their daily life, the organisation must consider employing the values when communication with CSR in social media platforms. These platforms become powerful tools informing stakeholders about CSR initiatives meeting their expectations. Moreover, companies create stories about their contributions toward bettering society and the environment sharing them with stakeholders through these 'powerful platforms' (Ahmad et al., 2021), that build e-reputations (Ali et al., 2020).

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study. This method enables greater understanding of digital CSR communications across UCs, specifically, by exploring millennial perspectives on how cultural values influence expectations. Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews with key informants conducted in 2022. The interview guide is based on the concepts of digital CSR communication and cultural values.

To reveal the influence of Indonesian cultural values on millennial expectations regarding digital CSR communication, the following criteria was considered: 1) having a private Instagram account that

is not locked and engaging Instagram at least once in the previous month uploading photos or videos to ensure that informants are Instagram active user, 2) following the official Instagram account of one of Indonesia’s UCs, and (3) giving comments and/or giving like to posted videos or photos about CSR activities from UCs. Since this study was conducted in 2022, videos or photos about CSR activities posted by UCs related to COVID-19 pandemic.

Interviews were recorded with consent and guaranteed anonymity to achieve a

degree of frankness during interviews. Recordings were carefully transcribed, then re-listened to whilst re-reading the transcripts to ensure accuracy and an in-depth understanding of interview results. Researchers then coded all data, classifying them into themes according to research objectives. In presenting the findings, the data has been translated into English and proofread by an Australian English native speaker. All results were analysed inductively.

Table 1
Informant identity

Informant	Age & Gender	Follower	Reason Becoming Follower
Informant 1	32 years old, Male	@bukalapak	Gaining knowledge about e-commerce, how to order products, find cheap and excellent gadgets
Informant 2	32 years old, Female	@tokopedia	Finding out promotions
Informant 3	30 years old, Female	@traveloka	Finding out about hotels and restaurants
Informant 4	35 years old, Male	@bukalapak	Finding interesting information
Informant 5	36 years old, Male	@tokopedia	Finding out promotions
Informant 6	31 years old, Male	@tokopedia	Finding out giving away and promotions
Informant 7	33 years old, Male	@traveloka	Finding out promotions
Informant 8	30 years old, Female	@traveloka	Finding updated information about travel policies
Informant 9	30 years old, Male	@gojekindonesia	Finding information about products and promotions
Informant 10	34 years old, Male	@bukalapak	Interested in promotional programmes
Informant 11	32 years old, Female	@ovo_id	Finding out promotions
Informant 12	32 years old, Female	@gojekindonesia	Being interested in interesting content
Informant 13	32 years old, Female	@ovo_id	Finding out promotions
Informant 14	33 years old, Male	@ovo_id	Finding out promotions

Source: (interview, 2022)

RESULTS

Gotong Royong as Unicorn Companies' CSR

Informants identified CSR as a UCs' obligation to its stakeholders by collectively contributing to a better society and environment. Informants expected UCs should engage in CSR since businesses take great benefits from their patronage. However, some understood that CSR activities implemented tended to be more philanthropic, conducting vaccinations, donating masks, and giving aid to people affected by COVID-19. Through these initiatives, informants believed companies wanted to show the value of *gotong royong* (mutual help among neighbors) where they cared about the situation many faced during the pandemic.

When companies do activities, what kind are they? Caring for others or CSR [that] impacts society? For example, vaccines maybe the most straightforward thing distributing free masks or kits like that, huh? (Informant 3, follower of Traveloka)

It's a sense of caring by Tokopedia stepping into help. Especially Indonesians facing COVID. It was extraordinary. (Informant 2, follower of Tokopedia)

CSR in the form of aid to create business was crucial during the pandemic. UCs collectively mentored Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to help

build and sustain their businesses. Due to COVID-19, many were laid off. Therefore, encouraging and assisting them in having their own business helped them survive.

Because many companies were affected by the pandemic, many were laid off. Some cannot fulfil their basic needs. They struggle. On the other hand, yes, at least it helps in terms of how to make a business. Slowly adjusting targets for these businesses can be profitable, even though they're not as big as the companies already run. (Informant 13, follower of OVO)

CSR activities implemented by UCs are seen as reciprocal relationships between companies and users of the Apps these groups produce. Since users use these applications for online transactions, it becomes an obligation for them to ensure CSR activities take on forms of social, educational, and even religious activities.

It's a form of social responsibility. Every big company like Tokopedia certainly benefits from us, the community as users. It must provide more benefits in return. We take advantage of their platform, and they give back in the form of social, educational, and religious assistance. (Informant 5, follower of Tokopedia)

In contrast, informants believe CSR conducted by UCs should embrace the Indonesian cultural value of *gotong royong* (mutual help among neighbors)

by empowering MSMEs since they are essentially business partners. Their existence influences the sustainability of local economies. Thus, companies should make it easier for them to manage their businesses by providing digital tools and applications, educating them on how to operate in the digital environment. This approach aligns with the spirit of *gotong royong* (mutual help among neighbors) through fostering collaboration and mutual support among members of society.

Bukalapak's social responsibility is to make it easier for business partners to organise and manage products sold on its platform. Continuing to make digital applications like that. (Informant 1, follower of Bukalapak)

CSR activities undertaken by UCs are driven by the value of *gotong royong* (mutual help among neighbors) aiming at increasing brand reputation in the minds of millennials. They saw CSR programmes implemented during COVID-19 as essential in building a good image, implying they are aware of the hardship faced by Indonesians and showcasing their commitment to societal welfare. It helps too in competing with other companies.

I think it's more about branding. They do it so they're judged as being social. Maybe because Gojek's market is wide, their contribution from the community is also wide. Turns out that Gojek understands what's happening socially. (Informant 12, follower of Gojek)

CSR makes it easier for customers, building a better image for Tokopedia. [It's] for the sake of increasingly fierce competition. CSR provides a better image. (Informant 6, Tokopedia)

Again, some informants believed the existence of these companies has positive and negative impacts on stakeholders. MSMEs find them helpful as they provide business space, a concept deeply rooted in the value of *gotong royong* (mutual help among neighbors) where this business space provides opportunities for MSMEs to directly connect to customers. This 'space' is in the form of an application providing convenience and increasing transactions economically impacting to the growth of Indonesia.

What I saw was more enthusiastic at first, they were very helpful. Especially with the app, they might increase [too] the number of orders for goods and things like that. (Informant 1, follower of Bukalapak)

Informants noted that UCs generally provide convenience offered through application accessibility. This convenience is aligned with the value of building good relationships expecting to meet consumer needs. However, COVID-19 has limited direct interaction, thus supporting the existence of businesses in these facilities offered, like purchases and payments that do not need to be made in person.

It's a positive impact, making it easier for people like me who don't travel but need the application. With the application, it's easy. We order what we want, then the system matches what we need. (Informant 8, follower of Traveloka)

OVO makes life easier, especially [during] the pandemic. We're not allowed to touch friends physically. OVO makes it easier, in my opinion, [they're] a pioneer of digital payments. (Informant 14, follower of OVO)

In contrast, UCs providing these conveniences fulfill community needs and increase mobility. This raises the potential risk of spreading COVID. Additionally, increased public consumption cannot be matched by people's purchasing power. Society attaches importance to pleasure without considering how payment should be made.

Tourism is opening. Attractions have started again. Tickets have also been opened for various flights. Automatically, sales of airplane tickets or accommodation increases. (Informant 3, follower of Traveloka)

The development of UCs is based on creating a technology-based ecosystem that provides convenience. However, several informants felt there were negative impacts related to the security aspects of this technology. The issue is in the form of payment problems and trusting online stores.

Moreover, this technological advancement is not matched by the ability and knowledge of end users, highlighting the value of *bijaksana* (wisdom) in navigating and utilising these platforms effectively.

Bukalapak is an open platform for everyone. It doesn't sort out sellers one by one, so there are fake ones. I was sent a message by a seller that was suspicious. Bukalapak is responsible for looking after its customers [if] a seller is suspicious. (Informant 4, follower Bukalapak)

UCs are often seen as having negative impacts on the environment. In particular, the high ownership of motorised vehicles increases air pollution and emissions that cause global warming. Based on data obtained, several informants felt UCs had little negative impact. Videos uploaded to Instagram, for example, show companies' concerns for helping, facilitating, and communicating programmes to partners and the public alike reflecting the value of *kepedulian* (caring).

Global warming due to the use of many motorbikes creates more pollution that impacts the wider community. (Informant 12, follower of OVO)

Tenggang Rasa Value Embedding CSR Communication Instagram

UCs' CSR activities must fulfil millennial expectations by continuing to improve social and environmental problems vis ethically based business operations. Informants

viewed previous social responsibility programmes as having brought positive impacts that better(ed) society. However, other hopes have been expressed too. Mitigating, or preventive programmes could also be considered since COVID-19 has not yet ended. This programme could bring more advantages for companies, particularly UCs, whose core business is in travel.

Traveloka can provide CSR in the form of mitigation or prevention. It must be done, it needs to be given because it will indirectly affect. (Informant 3, follower of Traveloka)

Educating and helping MSMEs to effectively navigate the marketplace could be a future CSR programme, embodying the value of *tenggang rasa* (empathy and mutual understanding) where UCs committed to foster equitable partnerships and uplift local communities. Programmes that help people living remotely are also essential, nurturing potential partners in a digital age that benefits both parties. Such programmes bring benefits for MSMEs in fostering their sustainable growth.

The hope is that it will be more educative for the marketplace and help MSMEs. Hopefully, breakthroughs will help small communities in remote areas the market has not reached. [It] can help traders in this digital era. (Informant 2, follower of Tokopedia)

The value of *tenggang rasa* (empathy and mutual understanding) is reflected

where UCs prioritise options for poorer consumers as part of future programmes. Equal access to groups seen as weak, poor, marginalised, and disabled, helps develop skills and competencies that impact economically, socially, and politically in positive ways. Empowering marginalised populations through CSR helps them become independent.

‘Option for the poor’ is the term. Earlier they said they have responsibilities towards people who, in our terms, are weak, poor, marginalised and disabled. What they’ve done leads to the disabled, weak, poor, and marginalised being left out. Traveloka must prioritise these groups! (Informant 7, follower of Traveloka)

Because some UCs’ business operations directly, or indirectly impact the environment, they must consider planning programmes focusing on this issue, incorporating the value of *tenggang rasa* (empathy and mutual understanding) to showcase UCs’ responsibility towards the well-being of future generation. Programmes that aim to reduce damaging effects on the environment from their business’ processes. Campaigning for electric vehicles could be a priority. Likewise, programmes should be sustainable, empowering people to become less dependent upon these companies.

Ideally, it should be more for electric motors. It's an interesting solution because people think that motorcycle taxis make [life] easier. They don't

think it also makes things difficult in terms of pollution. (Informant 12, follower of Gojek)

As such, millennials have varying expectations of unicorn companies' CSR communication through their official Instagram accounts. They hope communications become packed in informative ways, anticipating values relevant to their CSR mission, whilst aligning with customers' cultural ideals. In addition, they should be more attractive to gain wider community attention.

For me, at least it's informative, or symbolic [of what's needed]. It should symbolise that Tokopedia can rise alongside MSMEs. The value of prestige or dignity packaged for a more attractive, elegant presentation. (Informant 2, follower of Tokopedia)

UCs' posts on Instagram are dominated by messages packed with promos as part of its application's facilities. The dominance of such posts makes CSR information harder to find. Even though clearly presented, they can be difficult to interpret. Therefore, it is hoped that future communication will become easier to understand. Additionally, messages should build emphatic engagement with end users.

From the system side, there needs to be improvement, so repairs and completion doesn't take [so] long. In terms of uploads, there's no problem. It's info

about OVO helping MSMEs that needs improvement. So far, uploaded data is very detailed, but it doesn't have to be all uploaded to understand. The problem is reading data is not easy for some people. (Informant 13, follower of OVO)

On the other hand, good CSR programmes need to be communicated widely. Communications undertaken thus far have been limited to millennials. Therefore, the benefits of CSR programmes conducted by companies can only be known by millennials through the use of digital devices.

I see social responsibility as conveyed by Traveloka as good, but not optimal, because maybe the socialisation is not enough. Millennials only know the benefits because they're always holding gadgets. (Informant 7, follower of Traveloka)

From a visual standpoint, informants hoped there would be more interesting content when communicating with CSR. Movies were suggested for creating attractive content relatable to more people. Informants argued that attractive messages make Instagram users remember messages conveyed by companies. Creative content, such as 'movie spoofs' and parodies, could attract people to their content.

The visual[s] can be made more interesting. Maybe like a short film,

like “Cek Toko Sebelah, inserting film footage. Movies are already in our minds, so they can effectively influence consumers. (Informant 4, follower of Bukalapak)

In the realm of CSR communication, the value of *tenggang rasa* (empathy and mutual understanding) emphasises the importance of transparency and openness. The data revealed that in communicating CSR, openness becomes important. This openness discloses core principles of CSR programmes. Programmes could cover education, health, orphanage, even Islamic boarding school activities in the future. This depth of information should be present when communicating via Instagram, as it is important for the public to know about good activities undertaken by companies.

More open! Several cities should be targeted with CSR activities, such as education, health, orphanages, [even] Islamic boarding schools. Tokopedia has provided more detailed data to communicate its responsibility toward the community. (Informant 5, follower of Tokopedia)

Instagram is one of many social media choices for communicating with unicorn companies’ CSR. Instagram is interpreted as a platform for presenting a portfolio of companies’ activities. However, other social media, such as Twitter, are alternatives to developing awareness across wider markets. Conventional media such as television could

also be considered when communicating CSR objectives, as social media is not always accessible to some communities.

Instagram is a place for companies’ portfolios. But, when looking for platforms that provide specific information, Twitter can be considered too in reaching wider markets. (Informant 12, follower Gojek)

Informants state that CSR via Instagram is crucial, as a means to uphold the value of *tenggang rasa* (empathy and mutual understanding) where this social media platform lets the public know how companies work for a better society or environment. Good CSR communication can build awareness and increase community participation.

It’s important communities know and want to participate in the future. If people know, they will join. (Informant 11, follower of OVO)

Bhinneka Tunggal Ika as Soul of Unicorn Companies’ CSR Communication

Cultural values become essential in communicating CSR. These values should be the soul, or, basis of designing, implementing, and communicating CSR. As a collectivist country, having diverse ethnic groups, religions, races, and group-based interests, the value of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) becomes important when creating messages through CSR communication. Informants see CSR videos

uploaded on UCs' Instagram accounts as showing the values of diversity indicative of Indonesian people's lives.

Cultural values and those of everyday life are important. Especially in Indonesia, there are various ethnicities, races, and religions. It must be *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. (Informant 9, follower of Gojek)

Friendliness too becomes a characteristic indicative of Indonesian people embracing the diversity, fostering understanding, respect, and empathy towards others regardless of their differences. In effortless ways, greetings nurture warmth and sociability. Respect becomes key to social interactions. Indeed, with business partners having diverse needs and grievances, inclusion of these values when communication CSR could make messages more relatable to Indonesian experience(s).

Like "hello, it's been shown in the[ir] videos". It means that from business partner services, they're people who'll visit. Then, yes, it's a form of respecting the needs of every partner. [...]. Then, business partners' complaints are different, but are still heard and accommodated. (Informant 1, follower of Bukalapak)

Informants prioritised Indonesian cultural etiquette as equally important when communicating CSR. It is the core, or soul that governs expectations of social behaviour among Indonesians. Informants highlight

the fact Indonesian culture emphasises that people remain socially responsible toward each other. Through videos uploaded on Instagram, UCs communicated to stakeholders they are socially responsible toward MSMEs affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

People in MSMEs vary in age, from young to old. Elders usually emphasise manners more. When Bukalapak comes with CSR, manners must be involved. (Informant 10, follower of Bukalapak)

However, with Indonesia being culturally diverse, comprising various ethnic groups, religions, races, and group-based interests, informants stressed the fact UCs should not emphasise differences when communicating CSR. Involving issues of ethnicity, religion, and group-based interests, often results in problems, even conflict. As such, the value of tolerance should be core to CSR communication among Indonesian UCs. Since Indonesians value politeness, sarcasm too should be avoided as something considered rude and obnoxious.

The first thing, for sure, no SARA! (ethnic groups, religions, races, and group-based interests). It's most important, in my opinion. Indonesians are easily divided over issues of SARA. (Informant 3, follower of Traveloka)

Although Indonesia strongly upholds the value of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) emphasising diversity, the

issue of LGBT becomes an exception in this context due to a conflict between traditional cultural values and the LGBT issue creating tension and disagreement within society. Therefore, maintain a balance between respecting differences and confronting challenges in accepting diversity as a whole in Indonesia is complex. Moreover, since religious values are strong in Indonesians' daily life, pornography also becomes sensitive. When communicating CSR, videos should avoid pornographic content. Displaying scantily clad bodies, for example, is seen as distasteful, even shameless. Similarly, politics must be abandoned when communicating CSR, with Indonesia possessing many rival parties.

Secondly, there should be no pornographic elements. Another is LGBT issues. Because, right, that's just [too] sensitive in Indonesia and there are still many pros and cons. (Informant 3, follower of Traveloka)

As for product promotion, CSR is fine. For politics, don't convey [that] to the public. (Informant 9, follower of Gojek)

Informants highlight a need for UCs' communications to be contextualised through local values. Since every province has its own strong, local values as practiced daily, they regularly promote characteristics unique to their own people. Therefore, contextualising CSR communications based on local values makes it more palatable and accepted.

If they make videos on Instagram, making videos specifically for each region is impossible. Maybe, [if] CSR personalizes its approach for areas such as Central Java-Yogyakarta, West Java, Sumatra, etc. it's more acceptable. (Informant 4, follower of Bukalapak)

DISCUSSION

As companies providing utilised online platforms connecting businesses to customers, Indonesian UCs—Gojek, Traveloka, Bukalapak, Tokopedia, and OVO—have a moral obligation to present CSR activities focused on social and environmental well-being. Companies' philanthropic activities included vaccinations, donating masks, and giving aid, thus strengthening the social aspect of CSR in providing help to stakeholder relations, particularly to those most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This social aspect provides opportunities to survive and maintain well-being during difficult times resonating with the value of *gotong royong*.

Their socially responsible business practices assist in empowering MSMEs' sustainability since their core business is providing online platforms connecting businesses and customers through e-commerce, ride-hailing, online travel, and digital payment services, directly related to their own success. These could collectively promote an increase in the digital economy, thus neutralising the negative impacts of their own business activities.

Undertaking CSR promotions in the form of philanthropic activities is

an excellent way for Indonesian UCs to promote a more socially sensitive side towards the plight faced by people. This study reveals that COVID-19 has pushed CSR communications to the edge, moving their focus from benefits maximisation to business sustainability. Furthermore, this study highlights synergising Indonesian UCs' core business and community needs during COVID-19 achieves both organisational and social benefits, aligning with literature that suggests dealing with societal issues when developing philanthropic activities. This 'strategic philanthropy' becomes a long-term investment, thus developing stronger market orientation, allowing stakeholders to evaluate positive impressions that bring benefits to companies (Ali et al., 2020).

Since Indonesia consists of some seventeen thousand islands with diverse ethnic groups, religions, races, and group-based interests united in the value of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, findings reveal that CSR activities should be conducted differently in areas populated by different people. Therefore, it becomes challenging for Indonesian UCs to create ideal concepts that can be implemented across different regions (Jamali & Karam, 2016). Furthermore, CSR in the form of socially responsible business practices, has the potential to provide the most value to their business partners in particular, and consumers more generally. Indeed, Indonesian UCs' business partners are empowered to build and sustain their businesses, with this empowerment providing a holistic picture for consumers to evaluate companies' socially responsible business practices that could influence

purchasing behaviour (Alawamleh & Giacaman, 2020).

Although researchers acknowledge the benefits of CSR in building a positive corporate image (e.g., Ali et al., 2020) this study reveals that CSR—philanthropic and socially responsible business practices—become foundational for Indonesian UCs and used as promotional tools to influence purchasing behaviour during COVID-19. Indeed, Indonesian unicorn companies' CSR through Instagram informs of benefits of becoming a partner, encouraging customers to help too by buying MSME's products through UCs' Mobile Apps.

What is more, data collected in this current research acknowledges the usefulness of Instagram when communicating with CSR. It effectively disseminates CSR information for interested stakeholders. However, millennials believe UCs should take action to improve their message. Other platforms, such as Twitter, could be considered and utilised too, increasing reach to the public. Although social media such as Instagram can 'actively engage the public', traditional media, such as television, cannot be ignored. Most people still depend on this media as their primary source of information (Amahjour & El Khalkhali, 2024).

Findings reveal that Indonesian UCs' CSR communications on Instagram are aimed primarily at external stakeholders, particularly millennials. These stakeholders are identified as the key to CSR initiatives since they influence the business sustainability of such companies. This study highlights that external stakeholder, particularly millennials, support CSR actions

by voicing opinions about the company's CSR activities, often volunteering for cause-supporting activities of trusted companies. As such, companies should communicate CSR activities with openness, focusing the users' attention on what they are doing to a better society during COVID-19.

Findings show that CSR communication should ideally be personally relevant to millennials. Further, communication should be informative, attractive, and engaging. Although most informants are not exposed to these companies' CSR information, they are followers of UCs' official Instagram accounts; exposure is scant. It could be an indication that CSR content uploaded to Instagram is less attractive, preventing them from going viral and reaching wider audiences. Additionally, content could focus on issues faced by society, ones more open to their interests, as well as lighter and easier to understand.

This study reveals that millennials' expectations must be considered, along with their local cultural values, when designing and communicating CSR. Fulfilling millennial expectations is crucial to sustaining unicorn companies since they always support companies by purchasing products. Their expectations, and by internalising the cultural values they practice, benefits UCs in sustaining their business, making them more aware of company activities than previous generations (Chatzopoulou & de Kiewiet, 2021).

Even though UCs in this study are Indonesian, they must still adopt and internalise Indonesian cultural values, such as *gotong royong*, *tenggang rasa*,

and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, if they are to get millennials' support. These values are internalised, becoming the umbrella by which to cover their daily lives, to CSR communication designs engaging the audience. This is in line with Ye et al. (2020) suggesting companies should remain responsive to the local environments within which they operate. As such, CSR communication is often accepted by millennials when it relates to life/lived experience.

These findings show that a collectivist mentality encompassing *gotong royong*, *tenggang rasa*, *Bhinneka Tunggal* and the like, are core to Indonesian cultural ideals. Internalised into UCs' CSR communications, and responsive to situations faced by society, each value teaches them how to live harmoniously. When such principles are adopted by UCs, it empowers their partners. Therefore, most CSR communications on Instagram evoke relationship-building and empowering partners by facilitating potential partners in becoming co-partners in business.

Indonesia is renowned for being culturally diverse. Living in harmony should be the foundation of CSR communications on Instagram. Pornographic and LGBT issues too should be avoided as issues too sensitive for most Indonesians, contradicting socio-religious values practised by Christian and Muslim alike (Martin-Anatias, 2020). Likewise, political issues must be avoided. However, Sun et al. (2023) suggests companies might advocate political issues only when aligning with stakeholder values.

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. This study provides a foundation for Indonesian unicorn companies' CSR communications via Instagram to identify more closely with the millennial cultural values as practiced in daily life.

This study was limited to data from the five most popular Indonesian unicorn companies; therefore, the results cannot be generalised. However, the findings emphasise the relevant discussion on theories and practices of digital CSR communication and provide a more nuanced understanding of the interaction between culture, stakeholder expectations, and digital CSR communication. Moreover, the findings can be an alert to the importance of integrating cultural values when communication with CSR initiatives in order to get full support from the stakeholders. In addition, this study can be further developed in a specific organisation such as mining industries having sensitive operational, environmental, and social issues in conducting their business so that local cultural values will be heavily

considered in making communication policies.

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