IDENTITY BUILDING AND CSR IN SOCIAL NETWORKS
Adaptation of Energy Companies in the Post-Threads Phase in Spain

ANA A. LOZANO GONZÁLEZ [1], FÁTIMA RODRÍGUEZ GARCÍA [1]
[1] Centro Universitario San Isidoro, España

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
CSR Corporate Communications Threads Social media Content Strategies Content analysis Energy sector	This study evaluates the adaptation of language, messages and social media strategies of Iberdrola, Repsol, Endesa and Naturgy focused on CSR after the introduction of Threads in Europe in 2023. Objectives include investigating changes in CSR communication on Threads, examining content strategies in comparison to Instagram and X, analysing interaction with audiences, and assessing the impact of Threads on CSR communication. Through content analysis and analytical tools, aspects such as frequency, reach and interaction will be compared. The study seeks to identify successful tactics and provide recommendations to optimise CSR communication on social networks in the energy sector.

1. Introduction

I n recent years, social networks have become a highly relevant aspect of social relations, particularly in the context of the relationship between companies and their stakeholders (Gómez-Carrasco y Guillamón-Saorin, 2021). The Internet and, in particular, social networks have facilitated the democratisation of dialogue between companies and stakeholders, becoming a conduit for information, criticism, complaints, recommendations, and a myriad of comments that seek to inform about a specific product, brand, or company, and even influence the behaviour and attitudes of users and consumers towards them (Coombs, 1998; Jansen et al., 2009).

Consequently, social networks have become a pivotal medium for the dissemination of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) information within the corporate context. There is a growing interest among companies in ensuring that the content of their corporate communications is relevant to consumers. These endeavours are directed towards the objective of exerting a favourable influence on consumers' perceptions, attitudes and behaviour in relation to the company (Aguirre, C. et al, 2021).

In this continually evolving digital communication landscape, the advent of Threads in December 2023 as a novel social network represents a noteworthy milestone. It offers companies a novel and dynamic platform through which to disseminate their messages, reaffirm their values and demonstrate their commitment to society in innovative and engaging ways.

As Afrita (2023) asserts, the introduction of this application by Meta provides users and online communities with a plethora of advantages that enhance the experience of sharing and interacting. Threads, which is focused on text-based microblogging formats, allows for short and efficient communication. Its integration with the Instagram ecosystem extends the reach of content. The ability to share diverse content, stronger privacy settings and the possibility to form intimate communities add a new dimension to online interactions. Therefore, Threads not only has the potential to become an alternative to other microblogging platforms, but also fosters new dynamics in the way we interact and share information.

1.1. Theories of Corporate Communication and CSR.

In order to address stakeholder theory in the context of this study, it is essential to recognise the ways in which social networks have transformed the manner in which companies interact with their stakeholders. The stakeholder theory, initially proposed by Freeman in 1984, posits that organisations should consider the needs and interests of all groups that can affect or be affected by their activities. These include employees, customers, suppliers, the community and shareholders (Freeman, 1984).

In the context of social media, this theory assumes a novel form. Such platforms as Threads facilitate direct, reciprocal communication, wherein stakeholders are not only privy to information disseminated by the company but are also able to articulate their opinions and expectations (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). This continuous and dynamic interaction provides companies with the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of stakeholder concerns and to respond in a more nuanced manner, thereby strengthening trust and brand loyalty (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004).

Furthermore, social media communication is not solely focused on the promotion of products or services. In the context of corporate social responsibility, companies utilise these platforms to demonstrate their commitment to social and environmental issues (Du et al., 2010).

A study by Castelló and Lozano (2011) emphasises the increasing significance of social media in the communication strategies of companies. The authors emphasise that social media platforms have transformed the manner in which companies engage with their stakeholders, providing a direct and more transparent avenue for communication. This transformation results in enhanced visibility and credibility for CSR initiatives, which markedly influence consumer perception and behaviour. Castelló and Lozano (2011) posit that when companies utilise social media to disseminate information regarding their CSR activities, they can reinforce connections with their stakeholders, thereby establishing a more robust foundation of trust and engagement.

Conversely, it is crucial to comprehend the manner in which organisations deploy social media to align their corporate social responsibility (CSR) communications with their strategic objectives and substantiate their operations in the eyes of society. This necessitates the application of the theory of strategic communication and legitimacy.

Strategic communication can be defined as the process by which organisations plan and disseminate messages with the intention of achieving specific objectives, influencing public opinion or changing the behaviour of their target audiences (Hallahan et al., 2007). CSR messages on social media serve not only to inform the public about the company's activities in areas such as sustainability, social equity, and corporate volunteering, but also to integrate with the overall brand strategy, thereby reinforcing the company's identity and values (Morsing and Schultz, 2006). A study by Nielsen and Thomsen (2021) indicates that the strategic use of social media for the communication of CSR can result in increased customer loyalty and an enhanced company image, provided that the messages are perceived as authentic and aligned with the company's actions (Nielsen and Thomsen, 2021).

In contrast, the Legitimacy Theory posits that organisations endeavour to gain societal acceptance by demonstrating that their actions align with the prevailing norms, values and expectations of the community (Suchman, 1995). In their study, Bhattacharya et al. (2009) investigate the significant influence of CSR activities on stakeholder perceptions.

1.2. Adapting Corporate Communication to New Platforms.

The role of social media in corporate communication has undergone a significant evolution. From the advent of platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn to the ascendance of Instagram and the transition from Twitter to "X", we have observed the profound impact of these platforms on the communication strategies of corporations. As an illustration, Instagram has transformed the manner in which visual marketing and storytelling are conducted (Meerman Scott, 2017). The transformation of Twitter into "X" represented a further turning point, reflecting an adaptation to the evolving requirements of users. The advent of Threads in 2023 provides companies with an additional platform through which to explore and adapt their communication strategies.

In contrast to Instagram and X, Threads may offer enhanced interactivity, personalisation, or even features tailored specifically towards corporate communication and CSR. These distinctive attributes afford companies novel avenues for engagement with their audiences, enabling more direct and concentrated communication (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). As stated by Afrita (2023, p. 23), Threads is a Meta platform that enables the sharing of text-based content, comparable to X, with the capacity to incorporate links, images, and videos in posts. The platform's key features are as follows:

- **Connection to Instagram**: It is possible to link Threads to an Instagram account belonging to the same user, thus facilitating the monitoring of the same accounts on both platforms.
- **Posts**: The maximum length of a post on Threads is 500 characters, and it is possible to include links, photos and videos of up to five minutes' duration. Furthermore, they facilitate the incorporation of image, video, and mixed carousels.
- **Privacy: Users** may elect to designate their account as public or private and may also specify the individuals with whom they wish to engage in discourse.
- **Follower management**: Upon initial setup of a Threads profile, users may elect to automatically follow the same accounts they follow on Instagram.
- **Blocking users**: you can block a user in Threads.
- **Interactions**: in addition to posting, you can like, share and quote threads or replies.
- **Differences between public and private profiles**: public profiles allow anyone to follow the user without prior approval, while private profiles require approval for followers.

A noteworthy prospective addition is the planned integration of Threads with ActivityPub, which would facilitate compatibility with other applications such as Mastodon and WordPress. This is particularly significant for content creators and marketers who seek to engage with their audiences through channels beyond the scope of social media platforms.

1.3. Social Media Content Strategies for CSR.

As previously stated, in the contemporary digital era, social media content strategies have become an indispensable component of companies' corporate social responsibility communication.

The use of visual content on social media, including images and videos, has been shown to be more effective in capturing attention and generating engagement. This can be attributed to the immediate and emotionally engaging nature of visual content. A study by Khan (2017) published in the Journal of Marketing Research demonstrated that the use of images and videos significantly enhances user engagement in comparison to text-based content alone.

In contrast, textual content is of paramount importance for the provision of detailed information, narrative and context. As postulated by Smith and Taylor (2018) in their book Digital Marketing Techniques, text facilitates more profound and comprehensive communication, which is vital for intricate or exhaustive subjects such as policy or education.

The judicious use of text and image in the content created by brands is of paramount importance in communicating their corporate social responsibility (CSR). This strategic combination plays a fundamental role in how brands communicate their corporate social responsibility (CSR) values and actions. In their study on social media and marketing, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) highlight the importance of visual content in attracting attention and fostering engagement. As these authors posit, images serve as an efficacious conduit for the expeditious and efficacious conveyance of messages, which is indispensable on social media platforms where competition for attention is intense.

Conversely, text provides the necessary context and specifics, which are essential for conveying the complex messages associated with CSR. Morsing and Schultz (2006) posit that CSR communication must be transparent and accurate, qualities that are often best achieved through text. They posit that while images can evoke emotion, text provides the depth and detail necessary for a comprehensive understanding of CSR initiatives.

Consequently, the challenge for brands is to effectively combine text and image in order to convey a coherent and compelling narrative about their CSR efforts. Schmitt (2012) proposes that narratives which effectively integrate visual and textual elements can significantly enhance brand perception and strengthen the connection with the audience.

Furthermore, it is essential to consider the active involvement of the community, which represents a fundamental aspect of effective communication of CSR in social networks. Such participation serves to reinforce the authenticity of the initiatives in question, while also ensuring that the actions undertaken are relevant and valuable to the communities in question. Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) put forth the proposition that community engagement enables companies to cultivate stronger and more meaningful relationships with their stakeholders. Such engagement is not only beneficial for the company's image, but also contributes to broader sustainable development. Porter and Kramer (2006) posit that the true effectiveness of CSR lies in the alignment between the interests of the company and the needs of the community. Consequently, CSR initiatives become a platform for dialogue and cooperation, as described by Maignan and Ferrell (2004).

1.5. Social Media Measurement and Analysis

The evaluation of social media measurement and analytics is a fundamental aspect of the assessment of the efficacy of CSR communication strategies. The utilisation of analytical instruments enables organisations to comprehend the manner in which their CSR communications are received and disseminated by the target audience. As Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) observe, these tools are of great importance for monitoring the effectiveness of social media communications. They suggest that detailed data analysis can provide valuable insights into consumer behaviour and brand perception.

The success of CSR strategies can be gauged by a number of key indicators, including metrics such as reach, engagement, sentiment and conversion. As observed by Kietzmann et al. (2011), these metrics can facilitate a profound understanding of the influence of CSR messages. Sentiment analysis, for instance, can elucidate how the company's CSR endeavours are perceived, whereas conversion rates can indicate the extent to which these messages are prompting beneficial actions, such as donations or volunteering.

In the context of social media, such as Threads, the monitoring of discussions and the measurement of engagement in specific conversations becomes a crucial aspect. This enables companies to ascertain the extent to which their CSR messages resonate with different audience segments, thereby facilitating the adaptation of their communication strategies in accordance with these insights. Chaffey and Smith (2017) posit that a meticulous examination of these interactions can yield invaluable insights for the ongoing enhancement of CSR strategies.

In the context of energy companies, the impact of their CSR messages can be measured by analysing how discussions about sustainability and energy efficiency generate engagement and awareness among the audience. The utilisation of analytical tools such as Brandwatch or Sprout Social can prove invaluable for the examination of prevailing trends and the assessment of sentiment surrounding these issues.

2. Methodology

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, utilising two analytical frameworks to evaluate the social media communication strategies of leading energy sector companies in the context of CSR following the introduction of Threads in Europe in December 2023.

Firstly, an analysis sheet was developed for the purpose of evaluating the content of the selected companies' (Naturgy, Repsol, Cepsa and Iberdrola) publications on Threads, Instagram and X over the two-month period following the implementation of Threads in Europe (12 December 2023 to 12 February 2024). The analysis encompassed 28 posts from the @iberdrola profile and 15 from the @naturgy profile, including those from @naturgyclientes. However, it has been observed that no publications were present on the @cepsa and @repsol profiles up to the date of the study.

This tab comprises categories including company identifier, date of publication, platform, content type (text, image, video), message text, link to the publication, message tone and style, message length, hashtags used, and key CSR concepts. Furthermore, a comprehensive examination of the visual content, including images, videos and embedded media, is conducted to gain insight into the visual strategy and its alignment with corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives. In order to perform the visual analysis, a detailed description of the images, videos or content embedded in the publications is provided, which allows for the evaluation of how companies utilise visual elements to reinforce their messages. Finally, an examination is conducted to ascertain whether the content published on one platform is replicated on the other two analysed platforms, thereby facilitating a comparative analysis to gain insight into how companies adapt their content on different networks.

This analysis sheet provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating the ways in which companies in the energy sector, such as Iberdrola, have adapted their social media communication strategies, particularly in the context of CSR) and how they have responded to the paradigm shift represented by the introduction of Threads.

In addition to the analysis of social media posts, the study methodology includes a detailed analysis of company profile bios on Threads, Instagram and X. This analysis is centred on several pivotal elements, including the text of the biography, with the objective of examining the content of the text, its length and the utilisation of emojis. This allows for an understanding of the manner in which companies present their corporate identity and values in a concise manner.

Conversely, the utilisation of links and profile images is examined, encompassing sophisticated links, hyperlinks to external websites, in addition to the profile image and profile name. These elements are of significant importance in understanding how companies direct their audience to supplementary information and how they present their corporate image.

Another element that is subjected to analysis is that of cross-platform matches, whereby the consistency of information across platforms is evaluated. This entails examining the degree of similarity or dissimilarity between biographies on Threads, Instagram, and X, which may signify disparate strategies for each platform.

Furthermore, the number of featured stories and their relationship to CSR are assessed, thereby providing insight into how companies utilise this feature to highlight their CSR initiatives.

Additionally, further information is gathered, including details such as profile dates, header image descriptions and locations. This provides further context regarding the manner in which companies present themselves on these platforms.

This comprehensive analysis of biographies serves to complement the content analysis of posts, thereby providing a complete picture of how companies in the energy sector utilise their social media profiles to communicate their commitment to CSR and to construct their corporate identity.

Once the analysis sheets had been designed, data was collected from profile posts and biographies on the three platforms over a set period of time (December 2023 to February 2024). A quantitative

analysis was conducted to collect data on the frequency of posts, extent of interactions and other quantifiable aspects. In addition, a qualitative analysis was performed to gain insight into the quality and content of posts in relation to CSR and other relevant topics. This combination of methods enables an evaluation of the impact of the introduction of Threads on the communication strategies of these companies. It allows for an examination of changes in tone, style, message content and images used, as well as an analysis of engagement with audiences on this platform in comparison to other social media platforms.

The results of the analysis were then interpreted, combining the quantitative and qualitative findings in order to obtain insights into how companies adapt their communication and reflect their CSR commitments on different social media platforms. Based on the combination of quantitative and qualitative data, conclusions and recommendations were drawn, highlighting effective strategies and areas for improvement for each company and platform.

3. Objectives

In the contemporary digital era, social media has become a pivotal element of corporate communication strategies, particularly with regard to the domain of CSR. The advent of Threads in Europe in December 2023 has presented novel opportunities and challenges for companies in their online communication. This study aims to evaluate the ways in which energy sector leaders, including Iberdrola, Repsol, Endesa and Naturgy, have adapted their language, messages and strategies on these platforms in the context of CSR in the wake of the emergence of this new platform.

The principal aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of the advent of Threads in Europe in December 2023 on the social media communication strategies of Iberdrola, Repsol, Endesa and Naturgy, with a particular focus on their approach to CSR.

In order to achieve this objective, four specific aims have been set out:

- To investigate how these companies have modified their communication on Threads, analysing the tone, style, content of messages and images used, and reflecting their commitments to CSR.
- To examine the evolution and diversification of content strategies on Threads in comparison to those employed on Instagram and X.
- To analyse the ways in which these companies engage their audience on Threads and other social media, with a view to identifying how this represents their approach to CSR.
- To evaluate the impact of the introduction of Threads on the communication of companies' CSR initiatives.

These objectives aim to provide a detailed understanding of the evolution of corporate communication in the context of CSR in an ever-changing social media landscape.

4. Analysis and Results

This section presents the findings of the analysis of the adaptation of Spanish energy companies to Threads, with particular emphasis on the evolution of their CSR communication strategies in the context of the new digital environment. The discussion addresses the identified trends, the efficacy of the content disseminated, and the impact on audience engagement.

With regard to the type of content published on Threads, the results demonstrate that Iberdrola predominantly employed horizontal video, followed by vertical video and embedded external content. Less frequently, they also utilised image carousels, animated GIFs and static images. In Naturgy's Threads profiles, external embedded content was the most prevalent, followed by vertical video and image. A diverse range of other formats was also observed, including animated GIFs and text.

Figure 1. Type of content published in Threads by organisation.
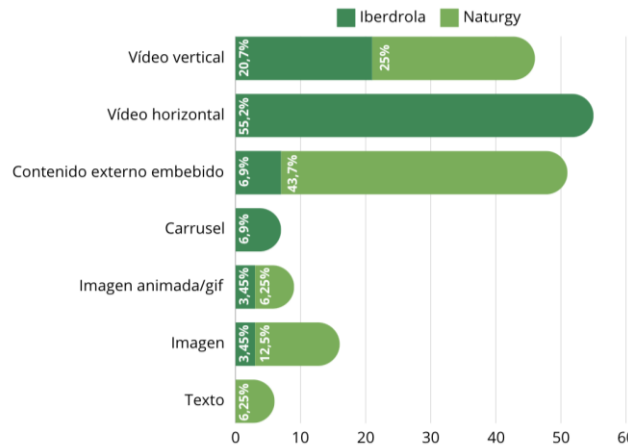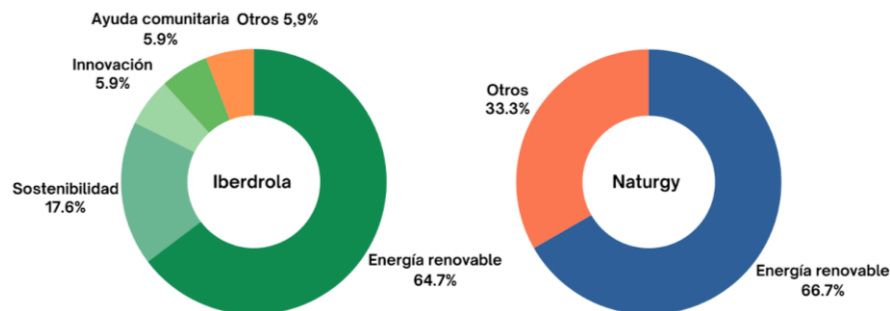

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

A review of the textual messages revealed that the average length of Iberdrola's publications was 249 characters. Despite the permitted limit of 500 characters, Naturgy opted for shorter textual messages, which did not exceed an average of 54 characters. The discrepancy in the length of the messages may be indicative of the distinct communication strategies employed by each company and their approach to engaging with their audience on Threads:

- Iberdrola's strategy aimed to disseminate information in a more comprehensive manner, potentially to convey CSR messages in greater depth or to engage the audience more profoundly with narrative content.
- The strategy adopted by Naturgy attempted to capture attention rapidly, focusing on pivotal messages while eschewing exhaustive elaboration.

In terms of CSR, Iberdrola exhibited a more diverse and comprehensive approach, with a notable focus on renewable energy and sustainability. Furthermore, initiatives were observed in the realms of innovation and community support. The Threads publications of Naturgy demonstrated a comparatively limited diversity in the CSR topics covered, with some references to renewable energy.

The findings suggest that while Iberdrola utilises its social media platforms to present a comprehensive range of CSR initiatives, Naturgy focuses on specific matters, which may indicate discrepancies in communication strategies or corporate priorities.

Figure 2. Variety of issues related to the Corporate Social Responsibility of Iberdrola and Naturgy.

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

In terms of the communicative approach adopted, Iberdrola employed a combination of direct and indirect communication, with a slight inclination towards the latter. In contrast, Naturgy adopted a strategy of exclusive direct communication.

**Figure 3.** Communication tone used by Naturgy and Iberdrola.
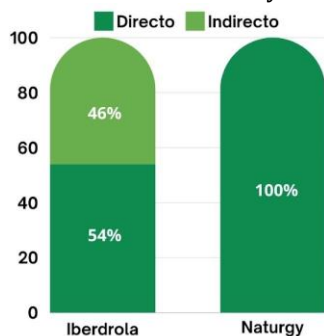
Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

Iberdrola employed a variety of stylistic approaches, including informative, narrative, emotional, educational, and persuasive techniques. Naturgy's communication style was primarily informative, followed by educational and, on occasion, humorous.

The data analysis indicates that both corporations tend to favour informative communication, although Iberdrola demonstrates a greater diversity in its communication styles, encompassing narrative and emotional elements. This may suggest an attempt to establish a more profound connection with its audience.

Figure 4. Communication style used in Threads by Iberdrola and Naturgy.
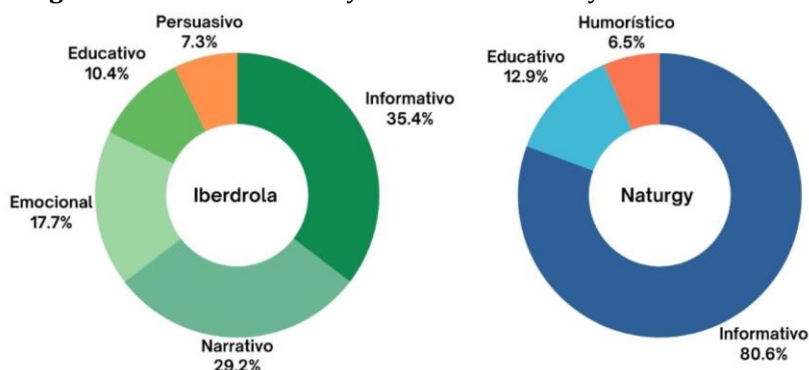
Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

The study undertook an analysis of the types of narrator employed in the messages disseminated on Threads by the two companies. Both Naturgy and Iberdrola demonstrated a notable prevalence of posts devoid of a discernible narrator, a tendency that was particularly pronounced in the case of Naturgy. This observation suggests a proclivity towards visual content or textual messages devoid of voice narration. Iberdrola employed a more diverse range of narrator types, including mixed voiceovers, on-air and off-air, as well as specific narrators, which suggests a more varied multimedia content strategy.

Figure 5. Various types of narrator employed in the Iberdrola and Naturgy threads.
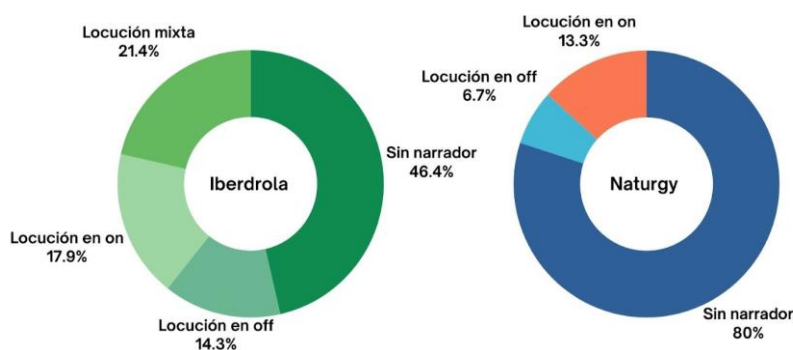
Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

With respect to the gender diversity of the narrators, Iberdrola exhibited a greater degree of diversity, with a notable representation of female voices (39.3%). The proportion of female brand spokespersons declined markedly in the case of Naturgy (6.7%). This indicates the disparate methodologies employed in the creation of content and the manner in which these organisations endeavour to establish a connection with their audience through the utilisation of CSR narratives.

Figure 6. Diversity of genres represented in the contents of Iberdrola and Naturgy Threads.
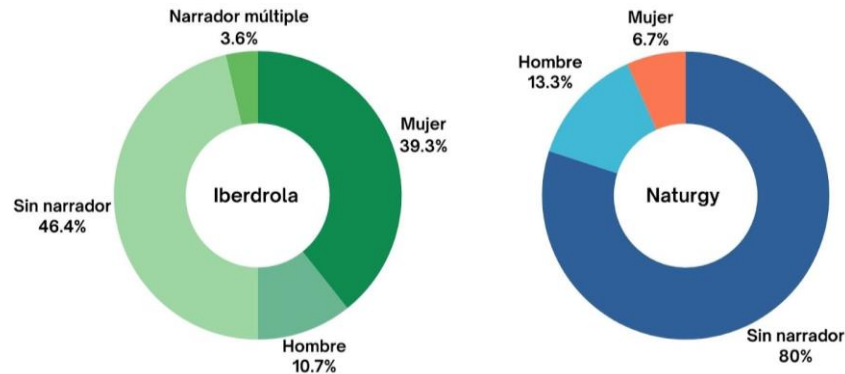
Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

The research also sought to examine the development of content strategies followed on Threads, comparing posts with their counterparts on Instagram and X. The results highlight some practices that were detected to a greater or lesser extent in both organisations.

Both Iberdrola and Naturgy demonstrated a consistent approach to messaging across all platforms, with a particular focus on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and other pertinent topics.

Conversely, both companies tailored their messages to the specific characteristics of each platform, preserving the core message while modifying the style and length to align with the standards and expectations of each social network. In this regard, an analysis of the publications suggests that Iberdrola has endeavoured to adapt and optimise its content on Threads, while maintaining consistency with its presence on X and Instagram. The particular adaptation for Threads suggests an intention to exploit the distinctive features of this platform, while the similarities with X and Instagram indicate an integrated social media communication strategy. In particular, these adaptations can be classified into the following categories:

- **A specific adaptation for Threads**. A total of 10.71% of the publications included adaptations in hashtags, the use of specific emojis, and differences in the focus of the message and the wording of the text, with respect to the same content published on other networks.
- **A comparison of the Threads message with the same content posted on X:** A total of 42.85% of posts employed identical or analogous textual content, video sharing strategies, and/or comparable content strategies.
- **A comparison of the Threads message with the same content posted on Instagram**: A total of 28.57% of the messages exhibited a shared use of videos, minor adaptations in the text, and a strategy of using the same hashtags.
- **Similarities with both networks:** A total of 17.85% of the messages shared elements or strategies with both platforms, making minor adjustments to the text and video content to suit each platform, but essentially using the same content in substance and form.
- **Content specific to the Threads platform:** Iberdrola employed Threads not only for the dissemination of content originating from other platforms, but also for the distribution of exclusive content. This was achieved by leveraging the distinctive features of each social network, with the objective of maximizing reach, engagement, and the growth of its community. Consequently, the strategy encompassed both the adaptation of messages to align with audience expectations on each platform and the strategic selection of platforms for specific content, reflecting an integrated and diversified approach to CSR communication.

Consequently, 28.7% of the publications under examination were not disseminated on Instagram, while 10.71% were not posted on X.

In the case of Naturgy, an effort was made to generate specific content for Threads while maintaining alignment with the overarching global publication strategy. In this regard, the following information is relevant:

- **Network-specific adaptations** were also made. A total of 33.33% of the publications included adaptations in hashtags, the use of specific emojis, and/or differences in the focus of the message across the three networks analysed.
- **Adaptations specific to Threads**: Twenty percent of the content published on Threads constituted specific, abbreviated adaptations of material that had been disseminated on Instagram and X in a different format.
- **A comparison of the Threads posts with those on Instagram** revealed that: A further 13.33% of posts employed video sharing, minor text adaptations and hashtag strategies.
- **The content was identical across all three networks**. A total of 6.66% of the publications exhibited identical content across all three networks.
- **The content specific to the Threads platform** is as follows: A total of 26.66% of the posts were exclusive to Threads and did not appear on the other social networks that were analysed.

The length of posts exhibited considerable variation between different platforms. On Instagram, the length of messages was typically more detailed, whereas on X and Threads, the character limitations of these platforms were taken into account, resulting in shorter messages. Both organisations employed abbreviated, synopsis-like formats on X and Threads, while ensuring the complete and unaltered meaning of the message was conveyed. Despite the stricter limits imposed by X (a maximum of 280 characters per post), there were no significant differences in length compared to Threads, where posts rarely reached the 500-character limit. A total of 21.48% of Iberdrola's posts on Threads exceeded the 280-character limit set by the former Twitter, whereas this figure dropped to 6.66% in the case of Naturgy.

The discrepancy in length between the platforms was frequently attributed to the more prolific utilisation of hashtags on Instagram. In this regard, notable discrepancies were observed in the utilisation of hashtags and emojis across the networks under examination. In certain instances, a greater number of hashtags are employed on Instagram and X in comparison to Threads, which tends to utilise a more streamlined approach, potentially influenced by the distinctive usage of tags on this platform.

With regard to the format of the content, there were also notable differences in the use of video and image formats. On Instagram, there was a greater utilisation of vertical videos and image carousels. Conversely, on Threads and X, a variety of formats and condensed versions of visual content were frequently employed, often favouring horizontal videos, which presented the same content as their vertical counterparts or included additional content related to the same topic.

As a consequence of these strategies, the content of the organisations under examination elicited a certain level of engagement from the public, which ultimately allows the algorithms to enhance the reach of the messages published. The engagement analysis demonstrates that Iberdrola is the most effective of the organisations under review, having captured the majority of interactions. The level of engagement observed for the Threads posts was markedly higher than that observed for the Naturgy posts. This may be indicative of a more efficacious content strategy or a larger and more active follower base on this platform.

Furthermore, the mean engagement per post was markedly higher for Iberdrola, indicating that its content is more engaging or pertinent to its audience, thereby generating more interactions.

The formula employed to ascertain audience engagement was the sum of reactions, comments, and shares. Additionally, the number of followers on the profiles under examination was employed as a point of reference.

Table 1. Interactions generated by the contents published in Threads by Iberdrola and Naturgy.

	Total *engagement*	Average *engagement* per post	Total number of followers	% of interactions per followers
Iberdrola	139	4,79	7.274	1,91%
Naturgy	19	0,53	2.794	0,68%

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

Iberdrola's strategy on Threads appears to be more effective in terms of audience engagement. This may be attributed to the company's diversified use of content types and a more varied communication style that seeks to connect with its audiences in different ways. In contrast, Naturgy employs a more linear approach, with a focus on providing informative content and a relatively limited range of content types. This may be a contributing factor to the discrepancy in engagement levels between the two companies.

The analysis highlighted the necessity of adapting social media communication strategies to align with the expectations and constraints of each platform, while maintaining consistency in message and communication objectives.

The majority of Iberdrola's (82.76%) and Naturgy's (93.75%) postings on Threads elicited no responses or recorded no specific sentiments within the available data.

In the case of Iberdrola, the proportion of positive responses (10.34%) exceeded that of negative responses (3.45%), indicating a generally favourable reception of its publications. Nevertheless, the proportion of positive responses was relatively modest in comparison to the total number of publications under examination.

Furthermore, Naturgy exhibited an even higher percentage of posts with no recorded responses, which rendered it challenging to evaluate the reception of its messages on Threads based on the aforementioned analysis.

In addition to the aforementioned analysis of the publications, the research also encompassed an examination of the information presented in the biographies of the four organisations in question. The length of the biographies exhibited considerable variation between companies. Iberdrola had the longest biography (114 characters), while Naturgy had the shortest (61 characters). This was observed in the context of Threads. A comparison of Naturgy's general and customer accounts revealed that the customer account had a longer biography (96 characters vs. 61 characters). This may indicate a focus on providing more information or a more welcoming tone for this specific stakeholder group. In contrast, Cepsa employed a biography of 106 characters, while Repsol utilised a 105-character presentation.

A more detailed analysis of Iberdrola's biographies revealed the presence of specific descriptions for each social profile under examination. Among these, those of X and Threads exhibited the greatest degree of similarity in terms of both the type of wording employed and the content conveyed. With respect to length, the Threads profile employed a description of 114 characters, in comparison to 123 and 158 for Instagram and X, respectively.

The Threads profile incorporated the use of emojis, including a world ball, a lightning bolt, and a green heart, which reinforced the concepts of global leadership, energy, and connecting with people.

It is notable that the Instagram profile made a specific geographical mention (Bilbao), which was not present in the other profiles.

Both Instagram and Threads incorporated links to external resources, which could be accessed via the platform. The direct link to the website was provided solely in the X profile, where links to secondary profiles, such as the customer profile and the English version, were also provided. This indicates a differentiated strategy to direct users to further information.

In terms of key messages, all descriptions placed emphasis on the company's global leadership in the field of renewable energy and its focus on people as a core aspect of its raison d'être. The Instagram profile emphasised the company's history and track record, thereby reinforcing its commitment to renewable energy and people's lives. The X profile focused on the company's leadership in renewables and value to people. The Threads profile followed a similar line of communication, but with specific wording.

Regarding the featured Instagram stories, eight of the ten categories exhibited a direct correlation with the organisation's CSR initiatives.

All Iberdrola profiles employed the identical iconography, thereby ensuring graphic coherence.

Upon examination of the content of Naturgy's biographies on various platforms, it became evident that communication strategies had been adapted to align with the specific characteristics of each medium. The length of the descriptions varied, with the biography on Threads being the most concise, comprising 61 characters, while the versions on Instagram and X extended to 97 and 144 characters, respectively.

The use of emojis, specifically the world ball and a lightning bolt, was observed exclusively in the biography on Threads, which serves to underscore the organisation's focus on sustainability and innovation. This approach is analogous to that of Iberdrola.

In the Instagram version, a direct reference to "@naturgyclients" was highlighted, thus differentiating it from other corporations by promoting a specific customer service channel. This is evidence of a tactic aimed at improving interaction and customer service.

The incorporation of smart links on Instagram and X facilitated user access to a curated selection of pertinent links. This strategy was given precedence over other potential avenues, such as the provision of direct links to corporate websites. This indicates a contemporary approach to navigating the information and services offered by the organisation.

The overarching message conveyed on all platforms was the transition to a greener, more sustainable energy model. While each platform addressed this central theme, Instagram and X did so in a more detailed and targeted way, with X presenting a bilingual message that spoke not only about sustainability but also about accessibility and global customer care.

The Instagram stories that were selected for display demonstrated a heightened emphasis on CSR within the company's general profile, with four out of the five available categories represented. In contrast, the specific customer profile, which encompassed a more expansive range of topics, exhibited only two out of the ten available categories.

The visual cohesion between the profiles was maintained through the use of an illustration that combines key visual elements, including savings, innovation and social responsibility. This contributed to the maintenance of Naturgy's brand identity and its commitment to sustainability.

An analysis of the bios on the social platforms in question revealed a unified approach to messaging, albeit with variations in presentation depending on the medium. The length of the biographies was consistent between Threads and Instagram, at 105 characters, extending to 154 characters on X. This suggests an effort to provide additional information or services on the latter platform.

Emojis were not employed by Repsol in any of the biographies, with a preference for a more direct and formal tone, with the focus on the clarity of the content.

The incorporation of intelligent links was substantiated on Instagram, indicating Repsol's inclination towards consolidating valuable resources for users in a centralized location, thereby streamlining access to comprehensive information and tailored services. However, on Threads and X, a direct link to the website was used, thus differentiating these platforms as an immediate access point to a greater quantity of the company's content.

The core messaging across all platforms centred on the concept of connecting energy in order to facilitate ease of living and promote savings. This highlighted Repsol's commitment to providing convenient and energy-efficient solutions for its customers. On X, the message was expanded to include details on customer service, offering extended service hours, thereby reflecting a focus on accessibility and customer support.

In the featured Instagram stories, CSR had a relatively prominent presence, with six of the fifteen thematic categories set in the profile.

Furthermore, a unified visual identity was evident across the profiles, in addition to a coherent message and linking strategy.

With regard to Cepsa, a coherent narrative centred on energy transition and a dedication to sustainability was evident across the channels under examination. The length of the biographies exhibited slight variation, with 106 and 105 characters on Threads and Instagram, respectively, and extending to 136 characters on X. The increase in the number of characters available on X enabled Cepsa to provide further elaboration on its vision and commitment to sustainability.

The strategic use of emojis, such as a plant symbol and clapping hands, was observed on Threads and Instagram, thereby enriching the message with a tone of optimism and collective action in favour of the positive movement. In X, a single clapping emoji was selected, maintaining the emotional tone while simplifying the visual presentation.

The incorporation of intelligent hyperlinks was substantiated on both Threads and Instagram, indicating that Cepsa prioritizes providing users with convenient access to a repository of resources and services. The absence of a direct link to the website in X highlighted the preference for directing users to specific channels where they can gain further insight into the company's sustainable mobility initiative.

The core message conveyed across all platforms emphasised the transition to greener and more sustainable energy sources, encouraging users to participate in the #PositiveMotion initiative. The X campaign served to reinforce Cepsa's position as a leader in sustainable energy and mobility, thereby reinforcing its active role in the creation of a better future.

The organisation was the most prolific in terms of outstanding stories, with 21 categories, 17 of which were directly related to its corporate social responsibility policies.

From a visual perspective, Cepsa maintained consistency through the use of an image representing the sky and an X wave, linked to its 2030 Strategy. This symbolic use reinforced Cepsa's brand identity and its focus on sustainability.

5. Conclusions

Energy companies in Spain have exhibited noteworthy flexibility and evolution in their CSR communication strategies, leveraging new social media platforms, such as Threads, to engage with their audiences. This adaptability reflects a commitment to digital innovation and to maintaining effective and relevant communication with stakeholders in the context of the evolving digital landscape.

Collectively, these energy companies utilise their social media profiles not only as marketing tools, but also as pivotal platforms for communicating their CSR initiatives, with a particular focus on sustainability, green energy innovation, and social and environmental engagement. Despite differences in tone and specific content details, a common thread runs through these profiles, emphasising the importance of the energy transition towards a more sustainable future and corporate responsibility towards society and the environment. Consequently, social media represents an efficacious avenue for these organisations to disseminate their corporate identity and CSR values on a global scale, thereby fostering awareness and engagement with their sustainable initiatives.

Iberdrola and Naturgy, the companies that publish content on Threads, have implemented a range of strategies to highlight their CSR initiatives. The variety of content, which includes videos and textual messages, and the integration of CSR themes, reflect a strategic approach to engaging the audience and communicating the company's commitment to sustainability and social responsibility.

Furthermore, Iberdrola has demonstrated a commitment to diversity and inclusion, particularly in terms of gender representation among its storytellers, in addition to addressing specific topics related to its activities. Such a strategy serves to reinforce the company's values while simultaneously enhancing its connection with a more diverse audience, thereby promoting a more inclusive and responsible corporate image.

The biographies of companies' social media profiles are of significant importance in terms of communicating their corporate identity and commitment to CSR. The meticulous construction of these biographies, which emphasise the company's role as a leader in renewable energy and its commitment to people, serves to reinforce a coherent brand image that is aligned with the values of corporate social responsibility.

While Iberdrola and Naturgy have been at the vanguard of utilising Threads for CSR communication, the dearth of CSR content from Repsol and Cepsa on this platform indicates both challenges and opportunities for companies in the energy sector. The effective expansion of CSR strategies on social media requires not only adaptation to the distinctive characteristics of each platform but also an ongoing commitment to innovation and authentic audience engagement.

References

Aguirre, C., Ruiz, S., Palazón, M., & Rodríguez, A. (2021). El rol del eWOM en la comunicación de RSC en redes sociales. *Anagramas - Rumbos y Sentidos de la Comunicación*, *19*(38). https://doi.org/10.22395/angr.v19n38a2

Afrita, J. (2023). Development of a thread-based interaction model to increase user connection in online communities. *IMWI Student Research Journal*, *4*(1), 23-31. https://doi.org/10.52851/wt.v4i1.47

Bhattacharya, C. B., & Sen, S. (2004). Doing Better at Doing Good: When, Why, and How Consumers Respond to Corporate Social Initiatives. *California Management Review*, *47*(1), 9-24. https://doi.org/10.2307/41166284

Bhattacharya, C. B., Korschun, D., & Sen, S. (2009). Strengthening Stakeholder–Company Relationships Through Mutually Beneficial Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives. *Journal of Business Ethics, 85*(2), 257–272. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-008-9730-3

Briones Peñalver, A. J. (2024). (Coord.). *Sostenibilidad Territorial y Acciones de RSC como estrategia regional para fomento de la Economía Azul*. Cartagena: Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena. https://core.ac.uk/download/599470696.pdf

Castelló, I., & Lozano, J. M. (2011). Searching for new forms of legitimacy through corporate responsibility rhetoric. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *100*(1), 11-29. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-0770-8

Chaffey, D., & Smith, P. R. (2017). *Digital marketing excellence: planning, optimizing and integrating online marketing*. Taylor & Francis. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003009498

Coombs, W.T. (1998) An Analytic Framework for Crisis Situations: Better Responses From a Better Understanding of the Situation. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *10*, 177-191. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532754xjprr1003_02

Du, S., Bhattacharya, C. B., & Sen, S. (2010). Maximizing Business Returns to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): The Role of CSR Communication. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *12*(1), 8-19. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2009.00276.x

Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*. Pitman. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139192675

García-Sánchez, I.-M., & García-Sánchez, A. (2023). The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility Communication on Social Media on Corporate Legitimacy. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *168*(1), 183-200.

Gómez Carrasco, P., & Guillamon Saorin, E. (2021). RSC 2.0: La comunicación entre empresas y stakeholders en redes sociales. En N. Lado y D. Peña (Eds) *Marketing digital y big data* (pp. 121-136). Fundación de los Bancos y Cajas de CECA (FUNCAS). https://www.funcas.es/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Marketing-y-big-data_Capitulo-7.pdf

Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., Van Ruler, B., Vercic, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2007). Defining Strategic Communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, *1*(1), 3-35. https://doi.org/10.1080/15531180701285244

Jansen, B. J., Zhang, M., Sobel, K., & Chowdury, A. (2009). Twitter power: Tweets as electronic word of mouth. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, *60*(11), 2169-2188. https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.21149

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons, 53*(1), 59-68. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003

Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons*, *54*(3), 241-251. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.005

Khan, G. (2017). Visual content and engagement in social media. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *54*(2), 123-139.

Maignan, I., & Ferrell, O. C. (2004). Corporate social responsibility and marketing: An integrative framework. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *32*(1), 3-19. https://doi.org/10.1177/0092070303258971

Mangold, W. G., & Faulds, D. J. (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons*, *52*(4), 357-365. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.03.002

Meerman Scott, D. (2017). *The new rules of marketing and PR: How to use social media, online video, mobile applications, blogs, news releases, and viral marketing to reach buyers directly*. John Wiley & Sons Inc. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119172499

Morsing, M., & Schultz, M. (2006). Corporate Social Responsibility Communication: Stakeholder Information, Response and Involvement Strategies. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, *15*(4), 323-338. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8608.2006.00460.x

Nielsen, A. E., & Thomsen, C. (2018). Reviewing corporate social responsibility communication: A legitimacy perspective. *Corporate Communications: An international Journal*, *23*(4), 492-511. https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-04-2018-0042

Nielsen, A. E., & Thomsen, C. (2021). The Role of Social Media in Corporate Social Responsibility Communication: A Global Perspective. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, *26*(1), 42-57.

Porter, M. E., & Kramer, M. R. (2006). Strategy and society: The link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility. *Harvard Business Review*, *84*(12), 78-92. https://hazrevista.org/wp-content/uploads/strategy-society.pdf

Suchman, M. C. (1995). Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches. *Academy of Management Review*, *20*(3), 571-610. https://doi.org/10.2307/258788

Scott, D. M. (2011). *The new rules of marketing & PR: How to use social media, online video, mobile applications, blogs, news releases, & viral marketing to reach buyers directly*. John Wiley & Sons. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119172499

Smith, J., & Taylor, E. (2018). *Digital Marketing Techniques*. Oxford University Press.

Smith, J., & Taylor, A. (2022). The Impact of Social Media on Stakeholder Engagement and Corporate Reputation. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *170*(3), 589-605.

Schmitt, B. (2012). The consumer psychology of brands. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *22*(1), 7-17. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2011.09.005