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Visual Framing, Corporate Media, and the Production of Responsibility: How CSR Campaigns Shape Public Meanings of Alcohol

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Abstract

As corporations increasingly operate as media actors, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a powerful form of strategic communication that extends beyond reputation management. Rather than simply communicating ethical commitments, CSR campaigns produce media narratives that shape public understandings of social issues. This paper examines how visual CSR communication functions as a mechanism of framing, legitimacy, and meaning production in the alcohol industry.

The study draws on theories of mediatization, framing, social semiotics, and critical CSR to conceptualize corporate communication as a form of symbolic governance operating within contemporary media ecosystems. Using a mixed-method case study of fifteen CSR campaigns produced by Kompania Piwowarska (2024–2025), the analysis combines corpus-assisted discourse analysis with qualitative visual analysis to investigate how images, narratives, and symbolic resources construct responsibility.

The findings identify four dominant media frames: corporate expertise, individual responsibility, environmental care, and lifestyle aesthetics. These visual narratives transform alcohol from a public health issue into a cultural and lifestyle practice associated with community, wellbeing, sustainability, and responsible choice. Rather than contesting health risks, CSR communication reframes them through emotionally engaging and aesthetically appealing media content that privileges individual responsibility while marginalizing structural and regulatory perspectives.

The paper argues that CSR should be understood not merely as corporate communication but as a media practice that competes with journalism and public health communication in defining social reality. By producing persuasive visual narratives, brands increasingly influence public interpretations of health, responsibility, and consumption, illustrating the growing communicative power of corporations in contemporary media environments.

Keywords: Visual Framing, Corporate Media, Production of Responsibility