What Drives Corporate Social Responsibility in New Zealand?

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Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) provides an avenue for engagement, transparency and trust between an organisation and its stakeholders, and is therefore a topic receiving growing interest from public relations scholars. Public relations practitioners have been found to play an important role in creating effective CSR communication that builds awareness while limiting stakeholder scepticism and the risk of being seen as "greenwashing". However, there is limited empirical research outside the US that studies phenomena relevant to public relations, such as CSR. The aim of this research is to gain country-specific insights by examining the drivers of CSR among a selected group of top CSR performers in New Zealand, as selected by the 2018 Annual Review of the State of CSR in Australia and New Zealand. The method of data collection was semi-structured interviews, where the CSR management from each of the organisations was asked about the drivers behind their organisation's CSR initiatives. The interviews addressed the main research question, "What are the main drivers behind CSR initiatives among organisations in New Zealand?" aiming to provide insights into organisational motivations and offer a basis for further research on this topic. These insights will help public relations practitioners and scholars to better understand organisational motivations behind CSR, and thus be better equipped to provide transparency for stakeholders. The thematic analysis of the interview data showed some key commonalities: the organisations were first and foremost motivated by the business case for CSR, particularly that of attracting and retaining employees. Stakeholder views and institutional competition and cooperation were the main sources of influence for the participating organisations in implementing and improving their CSR strategy. Furthermore, the participating organisations expressed similar views that the New Zealand public had a general lack of understanding on how the areas of CSR are interconnected, but they acknowledged that younger generations are changing the status quo by placing more importance on CSR in the New Zealand society. In addition, it was argued that New Zealand organisations are all influenced by the Māori worldview to some degree, but more benefits could be achieved from intentionally integrating the Māori worldview into organisations' CSR strategies. Lastly, the research found that although all five organisations expressed a preference for informal and direct communication with stakeholders, public relations appeared not to play a prominent role in this process. This is in contrast to the latest CSR and public relations literature which found that having strategic communication plans are essential in delivering effective CSR initiatives.

Introduction

1.1 Overview

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a topical and fluid concept that focuses on the relationship between organisations and their stakeholders (Savitz & Weber, 2014). There are several definitions of CSR, but the most well-known and widely used comes from CSR scholar Archie B. Carroll (2009), who states that "corporate social responsibility refers to business practices that address an organization's various economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities as they pertain to a wide range of stakeholders" (Carroll, 1991, p. 40). Similarly, Deloitte defines CSR as "the organisational practices that address the impacts of an organisation on society, the economy and the environment — or practices that seek to create positive societal value through core business" ("Progress, prospects and impact", n.d.). CSR is therefore a concept that not only focus on the impacts of organisations and the need to take responsibility for these impacts, but also how organisations can create positive impacts through their core business offering by providing pro-bono services or using their expertise to solve social and environmental issues. The concept embraces the interdependence of business, society and the environment and tries to create effective measures for all three bands to benefit from each other. The philosophy behind CSR is for organisations to show sustainable and responsible behaviour in all their business activities to honour their interdependence with society and the environment. Furthermore, because organisations do not exist in isolation but are affected by social change and evolving consumer behaviour, they have to adhere to the expectations (implicit and explicit) of society to maintain a "good state of legitimacy" (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). This shows that CSR is a concept which is pushed on organisations through external influence and pressures, but also through an internal voluntary adoption of a responsible and sustainable framework, as no country has yet made CSR compulsory through law (*The KPMG Survey of Corporate Responsibility Reporting 2017*, 2017). Adopting Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into business strategies has therefore been argued as the most effective way for organisations to signal a sustainable and responsible behaviour to society (Bachmann & Ingenhoff, 2016). Organisations that don't place much importance on CSR are likely to suffer reputational damage as a result (Coombs & Holladay, 2012).

For a long time, however, the role of business was limited to creating employment and paying taxes – a sufficient way to benefit the society in which it operated (Moon, 2014).

Savitz and Weber (2014) argue that it was not until the 1980s that sustainability and CSR started to receive growing awareness, when the world began to realise the damage caused by negative business impacts, and that it needed to adopt sustainable behaviours in order for future generations to also be able to prosper and make use of the world's resources. This growing environmental awareness also coincided with the increasing globalisation in the 1990s (Ihlen, Bartlett, & May, 2011), which was a result of the growing number of multinational Western companies that increased their presence in regions where there were corruption, human rights violations and political turmoil (Ihlen et al., 2011). In response to these regional issues – which had now become global – international organisations like the United Nations (UN) officially acknowledged that all countries and companies needed to balance their development with social, economic and environmental sustainability. To ensure sustainable development, the UN created a universal framework called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for all governments and businesses to adopt. The 17 goals include climate action, ending poverty and ending discrimination against women and girls, among others. The aim is to reach these goals by 2030 ("Incorporating Sustainable Development Goals into business—SBC", n.d.). In light of this, adopting the SDGs and CSR into business strategies is seen as a way for organisations to show commitment to sustainability, and thus build trust and confidence among stakeholders. In addition, through annual reporting on their progress in CSR and communicating the results in a publicly available reports, organisations create transparency and legitimacy (Deegan, 2002).

Discussions on how to effectively communicate organisational CSR initiatives to stakeholders have therefore become an increasingly researched topic in academic scholarship. Specifically, public relations scholars argue that stakeholder engagement is central to effective CSR initiatives (Chaudhri, 2016; Taylor & Kent, 2014; Tkalac Verčič & Sinčić Ćorić, 2018) due to the interdependence between organisations and their stakeholders. Public relations also imply that CSR is not a pre-existing idea, but one that is constructed, legitimised, and sustained through communication (Chaudhri, 2016). This is because CSR has been defined and adopted differently across diverse countries and cultures, and these differences are linked to the countries' cultural and social norms (Tkalac Verčič, Sriramesh, & Verčič, 2018). This further points to the importance of including public relations in CSR, as in-depth knowledge and understanding of organisations' stakeholders are required to effectively adopt, execute and communicate CSR. In addition to stakeholder understanding, Fernando & Lawrence (2014) also argue that it is important to understand corporate behaviour and motivations when it comes to CSR in order to further advance scholarly research. Focusing on corporate behaviour and motivations will also address the main challenge faced by CSR, stakeholder scepticism, and help inform future strategies to

overcome the challenge (Chaudhri, 2016). However, to date, no theoretical perspective that explains corporate behaviour in relation to CSR practices has been commonly agreed upon (Deegan, 2002). Several reviews (e.g., Fernando & Lawrence, 2014; Ho Lee, 2017) have found that the three most commonly used theories in CSR research are legitimacy theory, stakeholder theory and institutional theory. Fernando and Lawrence (2014) argue that these three theories can be integrated into a multi-theoretical framework and linked to CSR practices in a way that makes them complementary and allows for more in-depth insights into organisational CSR behaviour than what a single theory is able to do. As such, this research will use Fernando and Lawrence's (2014) multi-theoretical framework to study the motivations behind CSR in New Zealand.

1.2 Aims of the study

Communication scholars Bortree (2014) and Chaudhri (2016) argue that a focus on specialised CSR communication has become an increasingly significant agenda for communication and public relations literature. The premise of this research is based on the identified lack of empirical studies outside the US of phenomena that are relevant to public relations, such as CSR (Argandoña & von Weltzien Hoivik, 2009; Sriramesh, 2009; Tkalac Verčič, Sriramesh & Verčič, 2018). Further research in different country-specific contexts will help inform public relations literature as the current literature is dominated by American empirical studies (Sriramesh, 2009). In addition, Chaudhri also believes CSR offers an interesting, and challenging, arena for the communication profession because the norms, values and expectations regarding CSR are not fixed entities, but changes based on the time and location in which they take place (2016). To help fill this gap in the literature, the researcher chose to study CSR in the context of New Zealand, as it has a strong history of conservation and environmental protection, and was the first country in the world to enshrine the concept of sustainability in law ("Progress, prospects and impact", n.d.).

Deloitte's Annual Review of the State of CSR in Australia and New Zealand identifies the top performers in CSR in New Zealand and Australia every year. In 2018 the review selected five top performers in New Zealand, and these top five organisations will be interviewed to uncover the motivations and influences which led them to adopt CSR. More specifically, this study wants to know what the main drivers of CSR initiatives are among organisations in New Zealand. As noted by (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014), it is when looking at the motivations behind CSR that deeper understandings about the practice can be obtained. The findings of this study will contribute to public relations scholarship by providing country-

specific insights into CSR from the organisational perspective. A secondary aim of this research is to see if Lawrence and Fernando's (2014) multi-theoretical perspective can explain the motivations behind the five organisations' CSR initiatives better than what a single theory is able to achieve, which will contribute to CSR theory. Lastly, the findings of this study can assist public relations practitioners in developing strategies for stakeholder engagement and minimising stakeholder scepticism through strategic CSR communication.

1.3 Significance of the study

As noted by Deloitte in their 2018 Annual Review of the State of CSR in Australia and New Zealand, CSR brings benefits to organisations and stakeholders alike. For organisations, CSR has been found to result in an improved reputation, improved stakeholder engagement, and reduced risk among others ('Progress, prospects and impact', n.d.). For stakeholders, Grunig (2008) argues that public relations can assist organisations to empower their stakeholders in decision-making, as public relations two-way symmetric communication allows stakeholders have a voice in management. However, consumer scepticism has been highlighted as the main barrier to effectively implement and communicate CSR initiatives, as there is a general distrust in organisational motives (S. Y. Lee, Zhang, & Abitbol, 2019). Seeing as the aim of this study is to uncover the organisational motives behind CSR motivations, the findings will provide significant insights that can help public relations practitioners and scholars to better understand organisational motivations behind CSR, thus be better equipped to provide transparency for stakeholders. The findings will also serve as a basis for further research into CSR, and the relationship between CSR and public relations. Furthermore, by providing country-specific insights into CSR, this research will improve the understanding of CSR in New Zealand and provide valuable insights for public relations literature worldwide. CSR has been defined and adopted differently across diverse countries and cultures, and these differences are linked to the countries' cultural and social norms (Tkalac Verčič et al., 2018). Therefore, by understanding the social expectations of the organisation, its actions and its role in society, the public relations practice can help shape CSR strategy and improve the public's understanding of the organisation (Ihlen et al., 2011).

1.4 Research Question

The research question for this study is: What are the main drivers of CSR initiatives among organisations in New Zealand?

This main research question is further broken down into three subsidiary questions:

1. Do all the participating organisations have a similar understanding of CSR principles?
2. Are there commonalities between the organisations that can be explained through stakeholder, institutional or legitimacy theory?
3. How important is communication and public relations to CSR managers?

The aim of the three subsidiary questions is to further navigate the interviews towards providing responses that clarify the motivations behind CSR initiatives and the perceived importance of communication among CSR teams in New Zealand. In addition, the researcher also want to see if the multi-theoretical framework used in this thesis is be helpful in explaining the motivations behind CSR initiatives. Answers to these questions can provide valuable country-specific insights into the New Zealand CSR practice, which in turn will help inform public relations practice and scholarship on the nature of CSR in New Zealand.

1.5 Conclusion

Public relations scholars argue that CSR provides several benefits for organisations if their initiatives are communicated effectively (Morsing, Schultz, & Nielsen, 2008). There is therefore an important role for public relations in CSR, because it allows both organisations and stakeholders to communicate and construct meaning effectively. Currently, the main barrier to effective CSR implementation and communication is stakeholder scepticism (Chaudhri, 2016). As such, studying organisational motivations behind CSR adoption will provide valuable insights which can inform CSR communication and assist public relations in minimising stakeholder scepticism. This research will therefore focus on organisational motivations behind CSR adoption in New Zealand and the findings will provide country-specific insights which will inform the public relations practice and future scholarly research on this topic.

This thesis will start by presenting the latest research on the relationship between CSR and public relations both internationally and nationally in New Zealand in chapter two. The methodology used for this thesis will be presented in chapter three, where the interviews as the main method of data collection will be explained and justified. This is followed by the

results and findings from the interview data through a thematic analysis in chapter four. Lastly, the findings will be discussed based on the literature review, and the researcher will provide recommendations for further study and concluding remarks in chapter five.

Literature Review

As described in the introduction, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to business practices that address an organisation's various economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities as they affect a wide range of stakeholders (Carroll, 1991). CSR consists of three important principles that are commonly known as the "triple bottom line" (Hung-Baesecke, Chen & Boyd, 2016; Savitz, 2013; Savitz & Weber, 2014). The triple bottom line comprises the environment principle (to protect and responsibly use environmental resources), the social-equity principle (to treat everyone fairly) and the economic principle (to generate profits that sustain corporate environmental and social initiatives for the betterment of society). With this, CSR empowers stakeholders to keep organisations accountable to uphold these principles and effectively adjust the traditional power dynamic between the two (Taylor & Kent, 2014). CSR has provided "a context that allows for greater interaction between organisations and stakeholders" (Taylor & Kent, 2014, p. 386). Stakeholders are defined as individuals or groups that can "affect or are affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives" (Freeman, 2010, p. 25) and encompasses mainly employees, customers, suppliers, shareholders, managers, government and non-government organisations, media, competitors, and special interest groups.

Chaudhri (2016) found that the twin goals of CSR communication – creating awareness and minimising stakeholder scepticism – are critical factors when it comes to the success of CSR strategies. In addition, the 2018 State of CSR report found that the four management practices required for CSR success were: stakeholder engagement, integrating stakeholder values, stakeholder dialogue and a sense of social accountability. This means that successful organisations focus on engaging in open dialogue and acknowledging the interdependence between them and their stakeholders, as well as providing transparency through their CSR reports. By having these capabilities, the organisations are able to respond effectively to changing stakeholder and societal expectations ("Progress, prospects and impact", n.d.). These findings strengthen the significance of strategic communication to ensure organisational CSR initiatives are effective in providing awareness and generating trusting relationships with its stakeholders. As such, communication scholars Bortree (2014) and Chaudhri (2016) argue that a focus on specialised CSR communication has become an increasingly significant agenda for communication and public relations research. Chaudhri also believes CSR offers an interesting, and challenging, arena for the communication profession because the norms, values and expectations regarding CSR are not fixed entities, but changes based on the time and location in which they take place (2016).

Because of this, it's important for organisations to engage in ongoing dialogue with stakeholders to stay up to date with stakeholder demands and the ever-changing social expectations created in the public sphere (Moon, 2014). Furthermore, in section 2.2, the importance of public relations in providing country-specific advice when it comes to the organisations' cultural and social environment will be reviewed. This literature review will present a summary of research findings in these topics: 2.1 How CSR became a Universal Concept, 2.2 CSR as a Social Construction, 2.3 CSR and Public Relations, 2.4 CSR in New Zealand and 2.5 CSR Theories.

2.1 How CSR became a Universal Concept

Corporate Social Responsibility as a concept has an extensive and wide-ranging history according to Carroll (2009). He argues, like many other CSR scholars (Ihlen et al., 2011; Savitz & Weber, 2014), that the concept is first and foremost a product of the twentieth century. Profit had for a long time led the way and business attitudes didn't change overnight. An example is how whaling used to be a proud and celebrated industry that fuelled homes all over the world and made the intrepid whaler very rich. This led to greed, and as a result, the signs of decreasing stocks of whales towards the mid-1800s were ignored. Today, nearly all the whales in the world are gone, to which Savitz and Weber (2014) argues that the current fishing industry hasn't learnt much from the past judging by the increasing number of species of fish that are on the verge of extinction, such as the blue fin tuna. In his 1953 book "Social Responsibility of the Businessman", Howard Bowen, the American economist, called for management practices that improved business responsiveness towards growing social concerns. Bowen's imperative is largely credited for laying the foundation for the modern CSR movement (Carroll, 2009). In addition, the establishment of the Sullivan Principles in 1975 that advocated for a certain code of conduct for American-owned organisations in South Africa during the apartheid era is seen as the beginning of businesses taking on social responsibility ('The Sullivan Principles', 1986). The relationship between society and business became a more prominent topic with the increasing globalisation in the 1990s (Ihlen et al., 2011). This is partly because of the growing number of multinational Western organisations that increased their presence in regions where there were corruption issues, human rights violations and political turmoil. This led to questions around CSR — whether the organisations should take steps to stop these practices or leave the responsibility to the host country and adopt an attitude of "when in Rome, do as the Romans do" (Ihlen et al., 2011). Equally, in Western countries,

organisations also started to face challenges domestically such as outsourcing, gender pay-gap and economic crime. Discussions around CSR became more frequent, and as a result, stakeholder pressures more prevalent (Ihlen et al., 2011).

Historian Jeremy Moon has identified three recent key developments in CSR since the 1990s, which followed wider changes in Western societies and governments (Moon, 2014). Firstly, the responsibilities of organisations are no longer concentrated to their internal activities, but also includes their supply chain. An example of this is the implementation of the modern human slavery act in Australia in 2018 (The Federal Register of Legislation, n.d.) where organisations are now being held accountable for what happens throughout their supply chain, nationally and internationally. Secondly, when it comes to CSR responsibilities, organisations now respond to external assessments of what they should include, such as national or international CSR standards, memberships and rankings. Examples of this are the GRI reporting standard, UN Global Compact membership, and KPMG and Deloitte's international CSR rankings. Thirdly, CSR is now more corporate-oriented than corporate-centric because other institutions act as governing and managing actors when it comes to resources and policies (Moon, 2014). Examples of this are fair-trade initiatives and the fact that more and more organisations are adopting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals as a framework in their own CSR strategy (*The KPMG Survey of Corporate Responsibility Reporting 2017*, 2017). Moon also argues that CSR initiatives are now seen as an expression of a company's values (2014). In addition, the United Nations, the European Union, OECD and the World Bank all support the concept of CSR and encourage all organisations to embrace it. Even critics recognise that "for most managers the only real question about CSR is how to do it" (Ihlen et al., 2011, p. 7). Lastly, because 93% of the companies on the Global Fortune 250 list provided nonfinancial [CSR] reports in 2017, it is safe to say that communicating CSR initiatives is now the norm rather than the exception (KPMG Survey of Corporate Responsibility Reporting 2017, 2017).

2.2 CSR as a Social Construct

The previous section tells us that there is currently little doubt that CSR is an established concept in both business practice and academic literature. But does the concept mean the same thing to all organisations and stakeholders around the world? Communication scholars Tkalac Verčič, Sriramesh, and Verčič (2018) argue that when it comes to CSR one size does not fit all, due to the socially constructed nature of the concept. This is exemplified by a study

on German, American and Chinese publics, which found that trust regarding CSR differed significantly across the three countries. Social and economic sustainability had a positive effect on trust in businesses in the US, while economic sustainability influenced such trust in Germany. To the Chinese public, social sustainability served as the only significant predictor of trust in business (Hung-Baesecke et al., 2016). Another study from Korea suggests that consumers' cultural characteristics could affect their perception of CSR activities (Bae and Kim, 2013). The study proposed that the perceived importance of CSR activities in terms of economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic dimensions can be explained by consumers' cultural characteristics. They found that people who embrace collectivism, have long-term orientation and high femininity (benevolent and responsible) perceive CSR as important (Bae and Kim, 2013). This importance can be further emphasised with the following two studies: Castelo, Delgado and Sousa (2014) examined the differences and similarities between CSR communication on the web sites of companies from Sweden and Spain. The findings showed that companies from Spain place CSR information in more prominent sections and devote more space to it, but they do not disclose much information about numbers and results. The authors argue that this points to CSR being more of a publicity tool in Spain than in Sweden. Secondly, Amaladoss and Manohar (2013) examined the practice of CSR communication in India, and they found that CSR activity in India still has a founder-led approach, supervised from the top and run through foundations and trusts of companies rather than as part of business operations.

These studies highlight the different understandings of CSR and CSR practices between countries and points to the importance of country-specific contextual insights to improve CSR communication. Argandoña and von Weltzien Hoivik (2009) support this by noting that CSR initiatives are likely to be transformed into a local adaptation depending on the national environment and will therefore also require a local adaptation of CSR communication strategies. The scholar, Sriramesh (2009), who focuses on international PR, suggests that globalisation has increased the need for, and importance, of adopting a "global" public relations approach and CSR that isn't based just on dominant American research findings. Global public relations can also provide an opportunity for countries to self-analyse and self-critique their own practice. However, public relations scholarship has a shortage of empirical evidence from around the world about phenomena relevant to public relations practice, such as CSR (Sriramesh, 2009). This is supported by Ozdora Aksak et al. (2016), who says that with the explosions of CSR initiatives across the globe and a general push towards sustainability from stakeholders, we need more research into how to develop effective CSR and public relations strategies in different cultures.

2.3 CSR and Public Relations

The previous section talked about CSR being constructed differently around the world, that the interplay between organisations and stakeholders often leads to a mutual adaptation (Tkalac Verčič et al., 2018), and how PR professionals play an important role in facilitating and managing this process. Coombs and Holladay (2011) found that when organisations adopt CSR initiatives, they not only generate favourable stakeholder attitudes and support but will in the long run enhance the corporate image and strengthen stakeholder relationships. However, many organisations found that stakeholders had a low awareness of their CSR activities when questioned about it (Coombs & Holladay, 2014). There is a general hesitance among organisations when it comes to communicating CSR, because Morsing, Schultz and Nielsen (2008) found that organisations are faced with a "Catch 22" dilemma. This is because organisations are expected to be transparent with their nonfinancial results, but if they put their CSR initiatives in a positive light they are often accused of "greenwashing". This dilemma creates obstacles in organisations' attempts to improve stakeholder relationships and corporate reputations with their CSR initiatives (Morsing, Schultz & Nielsen, 2008).

Effective CSR communication is built on an organisation's knowledge of their country of operation, their stakeholders and their expectations, optimal channels of communication and ethical practices for communicating information (Bortree, 2014). According to Chaudhri (2016), the importance of effectively communicating the organisation's CSR effort is highlighted in the general CSR literature. Using subtlety and balance to cater for transparency concerns from stakeholders and the desire to build trust is paramount in creating effective CSR communication (Chaudhri, 2016). According to Cone Communications' study (2015), nearly 9 in 10 (88%) of the surveyed global consumers wanted companies to tell them what they are doing to operate responsibly and if they support important issues. The need to effectively communicate CSR efforts, and public relations role in achieving that goal, has, according to Ho Lee, been studied from several perspectives with various foci. In her content analysis, Ho Lee observed that CSR research in public relations substantially increased after 2006, and the analysis of research topics suggests that the public relations research on CSR has grown distinctly in comparison to the approaches used in the business literature. This is because the business literature has concentrated on direct, tangible and immediate outcomes such as financial returns, stating that only strategic CSR is legitimate since it brings benefits to business (Chaudhri, 2016).

A recent study by Reeves illustrated that public relations practitioners play a crucial role in CSR as advisors, communicators and boundary-spanners, and found that public relations practitioners offer a unique perspective on the effectiveness of programs, perspectives of stakeholders, and impact on the business (2016). Furthermore, the widely-recognised public relations scholar, Grunig (2008), argues that public relations give organisations a way to empower their stakeholders in decision-making, as public relations practice has moved away from trying to control the environment to letting stakeholders have a voice in management. This shows that there is an important role for public relations in providing information about CSR practices and engaging with stakeholders, because it allows both organisations and stakeholders to communicate and construct meaning. Through understanding the social expectations of the organisation, its actions and its role in society, the public relations practice seeks both to shape CSR strategy and improve the public's understanding of the organisation (Ihlen et al., 2011). Integrating effective communication strategies should therefore be a key component of CSR programmes to strengthen the reputation of the companies and achieve its wider objectives (Ruiz-Mora, Lugo-Ocando & Castillo-Esparcia, 2016). Lastly, Lee, Zhang and Abitol found that making CSR communication readily available and using the right channels to communicate CSR initiatives are paramount to achieving the organisation's desired outcomes of improved reputation and stakeholder engagement (2019). Media such as newspapers, television, radio and interpersonal communication were seen as much more credible channels than corporate websites and publications. Because one of the biggest challenges for CSR communication is consumer scepticism, public relations ability to generate positive communication through third party sources are essential to reduce stakeholder scepticism (S. Y. Lee, Zhang & Abitbol, 2019).

2.4 CSR in New Zealand

According to CSR experts Eweje and Bentley, the CSR concept has so far not been a dominating management concept among New Zealand organisations (2006). They add that terms such as social responsibility and business responsibility were not even publicly considered prior to 1998, and that this was largely due to the dominance of the neo-liberal free-market ideology at the time (Eweje & Bentley, 2006). New Zealand has lately invested a substantial amount of time and resources in developing and promoting an environmentally and socially responsible international image, with "100% Pure" being its main message. This is reflected in the marketing of New Zealand's agriculture and tourism – the country's two principal capital earners. Agriculture (along with forestry) is responsible for NZD 29.5 billion (49%) of the country's export earnings (Industries, n.d.) and tourism represents NZD 9.8 billion (16.1%) ("Tourism data overview" | Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, n.d.). As such, CSR in New Zealand makes for an interesting topic of study, because on the one hand it has an open economy that works on free market principles, while on the other hand, it is a country influenced by its indigenous Māori worldview that favours collectivism over individualism (Econation, n.d.).

Currently, New Zealand's economy is one of the least regulated free market-based economies in the OECD ("NZ Now", n.d.). According to Chappelow (2019) countries with free markets also tend to value private property, capitalism, and individual rights. This is supported by Hofstede's findings, where the cultural dimensions of New Zealand are normative, masculine and individualist ("New Zealand", n.d.). A normative culture means that people are concerned with establishing the truth and focus on achieving quick results. Masculine values favour a competitive environment where everyone should strive to do their best, and success in life is of high value. Lastly, the individualist culture means that people are expected to look after themselves and their immediate families ('New Zealand', n.d.). This contrasts with the Māori traditional culture which believes in a deep kinship between humans and the natural world. In New Zealand, indigenous relationships with the environment are embedded in narratives and cultural practices (Walker, E., Wehi, P., Nelson, N., Beggs, J., and Whaanga, H., 2019). For Māori, Tu Ao Turoa (the environment) is intimately linked with the people, and the environment cannot be isolated from the people that inhabit it. An important part of this worldview is the concept of kaitiakitanga (guardianship, protection and preservation). Kaitiakitanga encompasses many practices of environmental

sustainability such as putting restrictions (rāhui) on the unsustainable exploitation of resources such as birds or seafood. By implementing kaitiakitanga, Māori protect the natural environment for their descendants which also allows Māori to feel they are meeting the expectations and hopes of their ancestors. It also allows non-Māori to reflect on the notion of kinship with nature, and how this idea might be useful in an environmentally threatened world (Econation, n.d.). Kaitiakitanga entails rights and obligations that are obligatory according to the Maori worldview. If one cannot exercise kaitiakitanga, then one is not fulfilling their legal duty to the wider collective (Kawharu, 2000). In this sense, kaitiakitanga is more than simply guardianship, it entails a positive duty to act in a way that benefits the wider collective, which includes the sustainable management of the environment (Kawharu, 2000). Through practicing kaitiakitanga, organizations can build businesses where wisdom is consciously created through reciprocal relationships. In this worldview, humans are stewards endowed with a mandate to use the agency of their mana (spiritual power, authority, and sovereignty) to create mauri ora (conscious well-being) for humans and ecosystems—and this commitment extends to organizations. In business, the solely self-interested individual approach is blamed for much of the unsustainable muddle that business finds itself in today. Thus, it has been suggested that organizations should adopt a wisdom worldview – such as kaitiakitanga, to close the gaps of separation created by a Western philosophy that asserts primacy of the individual (Spiller, C., Pio, E., Erakovic, L. *et al.*, 2011). Recent research has found that including Māori cultural values when responding to community challenges in New Zealand has resulted in widely recognised social innovations (Bruin & Read, 2018). Most notably, in asserting that relationships to people and place are central in living sustainably and well, the Māori worldview provides a challenge to the neoliberal view of society as a combination of individuals (Bruin & Read, 2018) and is something that warrants further research alongside Māori scholars.

Recent quantitative research into the most important issues for New Zealanders found that there is a growing consciousness of social responsibility ("Better Futures 2019", 2019). For example, 86% of those surveyed stated that it was important for them to work for a company that is socially and environmentally responsible. In addition, 90% stated they would stop buying a company's products or services if they heard about them being irresponsible or unethical. However, 83% stated that the way businesses talk about their social and environmental commitments is confusing, and seven out of 10 New Zealanders are unable to name a brand that's a leader in sustainability ("Better Futures 2019", 2019). A CEO in a recent New Zealand news article supports Colmar Brunton's findings by stating:

As people got a better understanding of social issues such as poverty or about the climate today, customers were demanding businesses to take stronger action for the future generation. And although there was a strong push from consumers by purchasing from brands they ethically aligned with, there had been an even greater push from within the workforce. There has been a generational shift and businesses can no longer continue working without thinking about how they can make society better for the environment – John Crow ('Poverty amid prosperity, what businesses are doing to help', n.d.)

This shows that CSR is growing in importance among New Zealanders and there is therefore an obvious need and opportunity for organisations to get on board. In addition, exports are currently New Zealand's leading revenue earner, and they rely on New Zealand's environmentally and socially responsible international image to compete on the world stage ("Tourism data overview | Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment", n.d.). However, when it comes to levels of CSR reporting, New Zealand's top 100 companies (by revenue) are currently performing below the global average. NZ is sitting at 69%, compared to the global average of 72%. Although a rising number of New Zealand companies are publishing information on their CSR activities, the quality of that information is generally low ("KPMG Survey of Corporate Responsibility Reporting 2017", 2017).

In spite of this, according to the 2018 Deloitte Annual CSR survey, CSR management capabilities have become better embedded in New Zealand organisations over the past three years, rising from a score of 73% to 80%, as judged by their employees. The largest improvement was in stakeholder engagement which jumped from 80% to 89%. The results suggest a heightened engagement with CSR and are further supported by Labour's election win in 2017 and the subsequent establishment of the target of carbon neutrality by 2050. This pledge has prompted a number of companies to get on the front foot of regulation and make similar commitments to cutting emissions ("Social license is key to New Zealand business survival | Deloitte New Zealand | Risk Services", n.d.).

2.5 CSR Theory

Scholars note that building a common CSR theory is challenging, as the boundaries of the meaning of CSR changes between national and industry contexts, and through time (Frynas

& Yamahaki, 2016). Because of this elusiveness of the CSR concept, no commonly agreed theoretical perspective that explains corporate behaviour in relation to CSR practices currently exists (Deegan, 2002). Specifically, Thomson (2007) identified 33 groups of theories used in CSR studies as theoretical frameworks (Unerman, 2010). Several reviews (e.g., Fernando & Lawrence, 2014; Ho Lee, 2017) have found that three of the most commonly used theories in CSR research are legitimacy theory, stakeholder theory and institutional theory (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). However, another content analysis into public relations research of CSR found that stakeholder theory was the most used theory, followed by legitimacy, attribution and institutional theory (Ho Lee, 2017). These theories are all classified as 'social and political theories' which take the cultural and societal situation into consideration when explaining a phenomenon (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). According to Frynas and Yamahaki (2016), institutional, legitimacy and stakeholder theories are particularly suitable for informing external motivations for CSR initiatives, because they focus on the relationship between organisations and the society or environment in which they belong. Although these theories are normally used in isolation, Fernando and Lawrence (2014) argue that they can be integrated into a multi-theoretical framework and linked to CSR practices in a way that makes them complementary – not competing. Frynas and Yamahaki supports this by noting that:

> While there are differences, these theories tend to share important similarities and sometimes overlap. The concept of societal legitimacy is important for all these theories (2016, p. 261).

By looking at the motivations behind an organisation deciding to disclose their CSR initiatives and results, Fernando and Lawrence (2014) found that one theory was insufficient. They argued that because CSR is such a complex phenomenon, it is difficult to explain it through a single theory. This verdict is supported by the results of a Danish study from 2014 (Trapp), which found that the stakeholder theory was insufficient, as stakeholder management was only a small part of the big picture. Trapp adds:

> In a Danish context, among front-runner companies, CSR strategy-making in many ways resembles a professional, mostly internal, institutionalised process, involving company managers, strategically chosen stakeholders, experts, and paid-for consultants (Trapp, 2014, p. 48).

Although these three theories are normally used in isolation, Fernando and Lawrence (2014) argue that they can be integrated and linked to CSR practices in a way that makes them complementary, not competing. Further, they argue that because CSR is such a complex phenomenon, it's difficult to study it through a single theory. In addition, as CSR isn't

compulsory by law in New Zealand, organisations tend to implement CSR in a way that fits the organisational culture, core business offering and environment, which means one single theory will most likely fail to include all the various factors, motivations and societal pressures that influence an organisations' CSR strategy. The three theories will be discussed below, followed by the premise that a theoretical framework which includes all three theories will provide a greater insight into the societal factors that motivate organisations to adopt CSR.

Legitimacy Theory

Legitimacy theory is concerned with the relationship between an organisation and society at large (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). It argues that organisations do not exist in isolation and there's an interdependence between organisations and society. This means they have to adhere to the expectations (implicit and explicit) of society to maintain a "good state of legitimacy" (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). CSR disclosures then are seen as a way to communicate their legitimisation initiatives to society. Legitimacy can be seen as an operational resource in an organisation where activities, like CSR, enhance organisational legitimacy, and negative events like a crisis or reputational damage decreases organisational legitimacy. Looking through empirical evidence, the scholars state that "organisations may refrain from disclosing negative news related to them, provide explanations about unhealthy mass media news related to them, increase positive CSR news, or even reduce CSR news if they think that would help to increase or maintain the level of their organisations' legitimacy" (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014, p. 156-157).

Institutional Theory

This theory examines organisational fields and how they shape the behaviours of individual organisations. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) define an organisational field as "those organisations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognised area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organisations that produce similar services or products" (p.147). According to this theory, organisations conform within an organisational field through competitive forces (internal and external) that push organisations to adopt similar practices to maintain a competitive edge and increased

legitimacy. The theory is based on the premise that organisations respond to pressures from their institutional environments and adopt procedures that are socially accepted as being the appropriate organisational choice (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). An example of this in New Zealand is when Countdown decided to ban plastic bags from their supermarkets in 2017 ('Countdown bins plastic bags', 2017). Because Countdown had now set a new standard of what was an appropriate organisational choice when it came to shopping bags, which also proved to be a very popular action among its stakeholders, the initiative was quickly imitated by supermarkets like New World and Farro in order to maintain their legitimacy and competitive edge. According to institutional theory, an organisation's predicted CSR motivation is the desire to become similar to other organisations by adopting practices that society consider the norm. Ozdora Aksak, Ferguson, & Atakan Duman (2016) have specifically proposed that institutional theory is used when examining the role between CSR and the value this has for organisations and their overall reputation. This is because CSR is one of the key public relations initiatives used to communicate industry norms and values, and thus gain legitimacy.

Stakeholder Theory

This theory is concerned with the relationship between an organisation and its stakeholders. There are various stakeholder groups with different and sometimes conflicting expectations of the organisation. Freeman (1984) defined a stakeholder as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm's objectives" (p. 49). This theory highlights that an organisation has accountabilities beyond economic and financial performance, and the focus should not be on shareholders alone, but meeting the expectation of its various stakeholder groups. In other words, an organisation has financial, social and environmental responsibilities to its stakeholders, and the ability of stakeholders to pressure an organisation depends on their organisational attributes. Empirical evidence through the implementation of stakeholder theory has found that the main motivation for CSR disclosure lies in the desire to manage the most powerful stakeholder groups. Importantly, communicating CSR information should always be responsibility-driven instead of demand-driven, to adhere with the stakeholder theory's view that the community has a right to know about certain aspects of an organisation's operations. The role of communication in CSR is therefore to provide stakeholders with information about the extent to which the organisation has met its given responsibilities (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). By providing CSR disclosures to its stakeholders (in the ethical perspective; to all stakeholders,

in the managerial perspective; to economically powerful stakeholders) the organisation reduces the information asymmetry and places different kinds of stakeholders on a level playing field (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). However, as mentioned earlier, the results of a Danish study (Trapp, 2014) found that the stakeholder theory was insufficient as stakeholder management was only a small part of the big picture.

Benefits of a Multi-Theoretical Perspective

By looking at the motivations that determine whether an organisation decides to adopt CSR and communicate their CSR initiatives and results, Fernando and Lawrence (2014) found that one theory was insufficient. When looking at motivations for CSR, they argue that the combination of legitimacy, institutional and stakeholder theory in a theoretical framework will explain CSR disclosures in a more thorough and holistic way due to their complementary features. In other words, they argue that their integrated theoretical framework gives the researcher a fuller and deeper understanding of CSR practices than a single theory. The three theories were chosen as they have been most frequently used in CSR scholarship, and Fernando and Lawrence (2014) argue that they can be integrated and linked to CSR practices in a way that makes them complementary – not competing. Further, they argue that because CSR is such a complex phenomenon, it is difficult to explain it through a single theory. Finally, as well as Fernando and Lawrence (2014), scholars like Deegan, Rankin and Voght (2000) also suggest that it is always better to use more than one theory in order to gain a fuller understanding of the practice.

2.6 Conclusion

The premise of this research is based on the identified lack of empirical evidence from parts of the world that study phenomena relevant to public relations practice, such as CSR. This thesis aims to contribute to public relations scholarship by researching the motivations behind CSR in New Zealand and provide a basis for further research. A secondary goal was to see if Lawrence and Fernando's (2014) multi-theoretical perspective illuminates the motivations behind the five organisations' CSR initiatives better than a single theory would be able to, which will contribute to CSR theory. Regarding practice, this study will inform public relations and communication professionals on the motivations behind and desired

outcomes of organisational CSR initiatives in New Zealand, which can assist in developing strategies for stakeholder engagement and CSR communication.

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research approach undertaken in order to address the research question, "What are the main drivers behind CSR initiatives among organisations in New Zealand?" The goal of the research is two-fold: firstly, to gain country-specific insight into organisational CSR and, secondly, to test the usefulness of Fernando and Lawrence's (2014) multi-theoretical framework. This chapter will explain the theoretical and methodological approach adopted for this research project. This research project is viewed through the lens of constructionism (Crotty, 1998), and it applies a qualitative methodological approach (Silverman, 2013) to understanding New Zealand organisational understandings of CSR by engaging in interviews with the CSR management of the chosen organisations. This qualitative research approach applies a multi-theoretical framework developed by Lawrence and Fernando (2014) and uses the method of semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis (Braun, Clarke, & Rance, 2014) will be employed to analyse the data. This analysis will be done inductively and deductively as the research is informed by the theoretical framework, but also allows for what may come up through the coding. This chapter will first discuss the paradigm of constructionism and the multi-theoretical framework which has influenced the research. Second, the use of a qualitative methodology is explained and the research method is outlined (3.4), then the method of analysis is presented (3.5), along with the trustworthiness of the research (3.6) and lastly, the ethical considerations made in the research process is discussed (3.7).

Research paradigm	Theoretical framework	Methodology	Method	Analysis
Constructionism (Crotty, 1998)	Multi-theoretical framework (stakeholder, legitimacy and institutional theory) (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014)	Qualitative Research (Silverman, 2013)	Interviews (Gray, 2018)	Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2016)

3.2 Constructing CSR

The aim of this research is to gain insight into the drivers of CSR in New Zealand. Because of this, the natural choice of the overarching paradigm fell on constructionism. The research paradigm is the philosophical stance that supports the methodology used in the research project (Crotty, 1998). It provides a context for the research process and a foundation for the logic and criteria used in the analysis. In addition, constructionism is not just a way of trying to understand the subject in question, but also an understanding of how the researcher's own perspective shapes the different ways of examining the world (Crotty, 1998). The paradigm, also known as epistemology, provides a philosophical grounding in deciding what kind of knowledge is adequate and legitimate. It is because of this that there's a need to explain and justify the epistemological stance that a researcher decides to adopt (Crotty, 1998). The main justification for employing constructionism for this research is that this stance does not believe in only one reality. Constructionism argues that everyone has their own constructions of reality based on their own unique perspectives and backgrounds, and humans create meaning as they interpret the world and engage with it (Crotty, 1998). More precisely, constructionism promotes the belief that knowledge and reality are constructed through social interchange and discourse (Burr, 2015). This paradigm therefore allows the research to focus on the uniqueness of the New Zealand understanding of CSR, as well as comparing it to global best practice.

Constructionism emerged in contradiction to the positivist claim for an "objective truth" in attempts to understand and explain human and social reality. It was developed as a reaction to the desire to develop a 'natural science of the social' and traces back to the 18th century (Crotty, 1998). An often used claim of phenomena being 'the way they are', is, according to constructionism, just the way humans have made sense of them. They are historically and culturally achieved interpretations rather than a set truth (Crotty, 1998). In addition, constructionism reminds us to always be aware of our own bias, and the way we categorise and understand the world does not necessarily refer to real groupings (Burr, 2015). Historical and cross-cultural comparisons have showed us, at different times and in different places, that there have been and are very different interpretations of the same concept. Women's rights is one example of this. As a culture or society, we collectively construct our own versions of reality. We are also then forced to accept the problematic notion of

"objective truth" as not applicable in social sciences as all knowledge is effectively relative to the culture and historical aspect of which it was constructed (Burr, 2015). As portrayed in chapter 2, the interpretations of CSR as a concept differ in both historical and cultural terms (Amaladoss & Manohar, 2013; Castelo, Delgado & Sousa, 2014; Sriramesh, 2009; Ozdora Aksak et al., 2016), and these interpretations therefore affect how it is integrated and played out in specific contexts. Because of this, constructionism is best suited as a lens to explore the topic of CSR motivations in a country-specific setting, because constructionist research does not seek to find an objective truth about CSR, rather to understand the peculiarities of different CSR practices in various cultures and periods of time, and use those findings as pieces of a dynamic puzzle that informs scholarly research.

Furthermore, Silverman (2013) emphasises that theorization is fundamental to making sense of and studying the world around us. Social theories, broadly speaking, are frameworks used to study and examine social phenomena. They encompass ideas that seek to explain social behaviours, power and social structures, gender and ethnicities and how societies change and develop (Harrington, 2005). Theory helps to prompt ideas around questions that haven't been answered yet, and can therefore provide an incentive for research. Bacharach (1989) argues that a better understanding of theories in academic research helps lead a greater scholarly accuracy. These theories can therefore help make sense of the complexity of the world through explanations and predictions (Bacharach, 1989). This relates to CSR scholarship, as theory can provide explanatory frameworks to communicate useful insights from research into socially responsible practices, for example (Unerman & Chapman, 2014). Further, Frynas and Yamahaki (2016) state that there is a need for multi-level research that looks at both the internal and external drivers behind CSR implementations. This study looks at both the internal and external drivers behind CSR implementations by asking the participants about their perceived motivations and pressures. Secondly, according to Frynas and Yamahaki (2016), CSR is a broad movement and the emergence of a single, testable, unified multi-theory model of CSR is unlikely or even undesirable. Theoretical perspectives on CSR are competing and sometimes overlapping, but they argue that more research is needed on integrating theories to allow for more robust and richer empirical testing. Future studies can employ a combination of two or more theories for explaining CSR. In particular, a combination of theories related to external and internal drivers may help to illuminate different sets of relationships, including the relationship between the societal context and internal organizational resources for example (Frynas & Yamahaki, 2016). This research addresses this identified research gap by looking at theories that focus on both internal and external drivers for CSR.

As explained in chapter 2, the literature review for this research project found that there were many diverse theories explaining various aspects of CSR (Bacharach, 1989). For example, Thomson (2007) identified 33 groups of theories used in CSR studies. However, more recent reviews (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014; Frynas & Yamahaki, 2016) identified stakeholder theory, legitimacy theory and institutional theory as the most commonly used theories when studying CSR. When looking at motivations for CSR, Fernando and Lawrence (2014) found that the combination of legitimacy, institutional and stakeholder theory in a theoretical framework helped explain CSR disclosures in a more thorough and holistic way. Therefore, this research project will be using Fernando and Lawrence's multi-theoretical framework to discuss the drivers of CSR initiatives among five different New Zealand organisations. According to this framework the motivations behind the three theories are as follows:

- According to institutional theory, an organisation is motivated to adopt and implement CSR through the desire to become similar to other organisations that have adopted successful CSR practices, and to stay relevant and future-proof their organisations (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014).

- The stakeholder theory argues that organisations that communicate their CSR initiatives do so to provide transparency and be accountable to all stakeholders (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). Deegan (2002) also adds that indirect benefits from CSR disclosure, such as retention and attraction of employees and improved reputation, are also motivations that drive CSR adoption.

- According to legitimacy theory, organisations adopt CSR and communicate their CSR initiatives in order to "retain, gain and regain their legitimacy" (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014, p. 156). In aligning with this theory, organisations are expected to make necessary changes in order to be perceived as responsible and legitimate organisations with justifiable business goals and methods.

The resulting findings from the thematic analysis will be studied based on these predicted motivations. Fernando and Lawrence's (2014) main argument is that more than one theory is needed in order to gain sufficient insights when performing empirical research, and the combination of legitimacy, institutional and stakeholder theory is ideal when evaluating motivations behind organisations' adoption of CSR. This hypothesis will be tested and discussed in chapter five.

3.3 Qualitative Methodology

Using constructionism and the multi-theoretical framework meant that a decision had to be made between the use of a quantitative or a qualitative methodology. According to Ho Lee, the use of quantitative rather than qualitative methodologies in public relations research into CSR have been adopted to similar extents (2017). Like theories, methodologies cannot be true or false, only more or less useful (Silverman, 2013).

Quantitative research generally involves large numbers of people that respond to a questionnaire or survey, which then involves statistical and numerical measurements of the collected data. These measurements are then used to see how proportions of people think and behave in a certain way and can then be used as a generalisation about, for example, customer behaviour. Although a very useful methodology when it comes to understanding more about CSR, especially from a stakeholder perspective such as the study performed by Colmar Brunton (Better Futures, 2019), this methodology may not be able to gather deep insights into the social construction of CSR from an organisational perspective. This particularly applies since the goal of the research was to understand the drivers behind CSR, and that these drivers can often require further inquiry into the given responses to understand what motivations truly lie behind them.

Qualitative research on the other hand is more focused on meaning rather than measurements. It seeks to answer the what, how and why – rather than 'how many' or 'how much'. In other words, the core of qualitative research is to understand human behaviour – why people think and behave the way they do. According to Braun et al., qualitative research is often described as cultural research because the focus is on the relationships between people, people and products, services or brands within a specific cultural context (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield & Terry, 2018). Qualitative research involves the gathering of individual opinions, experiences and views in their own words. According to Braun and Clarke (2014), the most common way of gathering people's words as data is through the qualitative interview. Through a planned set of questions, the researcher can collect the participants' understanding of the research topic in their own individual words.

As mentioned in chapter 2, several studies have showed that different countries treat and understand the concept of CSR in different ways (Sriramesh, 2009; Diehl et al. 2017; Bae & Kim, 2013; Chaudhri, 2016), and there is a need for more empirical studies from around the world to make public relations scholarship more relevant for practitioners who are venturing into new markets and cultures. This also provides an opportunity for countries to engage in introspection and critique its practice and its scholarship (Sriramesh, 2009). As such, using qualitative research, as opposed to quantitative research, studying CSR will allow the

researcher to gather substantial insights into why the participants decide to adopt CSR. This is because much of a culture's norms and social narratives are often sub-conscious and therefore require some digging through additional questions by the researcher to uncover the meaning behind participants' responses. Furthermore, by using a qualitative research method, insights into how the participants understand the concept can be obtained which can then show themes or indicate why different understandings of the concept occur. These deciding factors can be decisions from CEOs and leadership teams, corporate culture, media pressure or cultural values and norms.

3.4 Method

3.4.1 Interviews

Silverman (2008) states that methods are specific research techniques used to collect data. These include quantitative techniques like questionnaires and statistical correlations, and qualitative techniques like observation, case studies and interviewing. Many scholars (Silverman, 2008; Braun & Clarke, 2014; Knox & Burkard, 2009) argue that interviews are the best method when it comes to describing, interpreting, contextualising and gaining insights into phenomena or specific concepts. Braun and Clarke (2019) describe the interview as a mirror of the individual experience which gives us access to subjective observations. This is because the design of the qualitative interview research is more concerned with tuning in to the individual participant than it is with following the same identical track for every person interviewed (Knox & Burkard, 2009).

Because of that, this research project will use interviews as its main research method in order to get fuller, more in-depth descriptions of the motivations behind their CSR initiatives. Qualitative interviews can be used as the main instrument of data collection or in conjunction with observation, document analysis or some other type of data gathering. Qualitative interviews utilise open-ended questions using informal, conversational interviews, semi-structured interviews or standardised interviews (Gray, 2018). The reason for using qualitative research based on interviews is that it provides a means for exploring the points of view of the research subjects, "while granting these points of view the culturally honoured status of reality" (Silverman, 2011, p. 11). In other words, qualitative interviews are less concerned with data collection and try instead to understand the meanings of the responses given by the participants. According to Brennen (2013), qualitative interviews are heavily influenced by constructionism, which, as noted in section 3.2, sees participants as important meaning-makers rather than passive study objects. Thomas and Znaniecki said that:

A social institution can be fully understood only if we do not limit ourselves to the abstract study of its formal organization, but analyse the way in which it appears in the personal experience of various members of the group and follow the influence which it has upon their lives (cited in Chase, 2005, p. 60).

Gray notes that it is only through semi-structured interviews which recognise and build on their interactive components, instead of sticking rigidly to a script, that deep insights and mutual understanding can be achieved (2018). It is because of this that semi-structured interviews will be applied for this research. Semi-structured interviews are placed in the middle of the continuum when it comes to how much control the interviewer will hold, placed between unstructured and structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are mainly used when an interviewer wants to dig deep into a topic and thoroughly understand the answers provided by the participants (Gray, 2018). The opportunity to ask follow-up questions or probes makes this style of interview particularly suited to this study, as it allows the researcher to gain further insights from participants who may deliver short replies.

Still, case study and focus groups could have been used instead of interviews because they are also well-used methods of qualitative research that can provide insights into a single topic or issue (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). In addition, when it comes to qualitative studies of CSR in Public Relations scholarship, Ho Lee (2017) found that the three most used methods were case study, interviews and focus groups. However, in a case study, the researcher often takes the role of a decision-maker by presenting recommendations of how to address the topic or issue in focus. This means that researchers will first describe a case and then analyse, assess and appraise it (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Although this research analyses and assesses the motivation behind the drivers of CSR in each company, it does not seek to appraise the organisation's constructions and implementation of CSR. It aims to present the findings in order to understand the influences behind CSR within organisations which it is hoped will lay the foundation for future research. Therefore, the case study method was considered too constricted for such an emergent area.

The focus group method was also considered for this thesis as focus groups are commonly used to gain timely individual feedback regarding policies, issues and products, for example. Focus groups are also a great way to get insights into individual behaviours and reactions (Brennen, 2013). However, the limitations of focus groups are that the individuals might not be as honest in a group setting as they would be in a one-on-one setting. Some might see it as an opportunity to debate an issue instead of allowing all the group members to express their own opinions (Research For Organizing, n.d.). Because this research project was

interested in the perceptions of the people running the CSR teams in the individual organisations, the use of focus groups would have complicated the comparative element of this study and would have greatly limited the respondent's honest interpretations of CSR. This is because having a group of their "peers" in the ever-evolving CSR space would have most likely led to either intimidation or debate among the participants. In summary, to best respond to the research question, the researcher concluded that the method of semi-structured interviews was the best tool to gain insights into the participants' motivations behind adopting CSR.

3.4.2 Interview guide

The interviews are semi-structured in the sense that nine questions are prepared in advance and all participants will be asked the same questions. However, this structure also allows for additional questions during the interview in order to clarify responses and get more in-depth understanding of the participants' own CSR practice. Questions 2 to 8 investigate the influence stakeholders, institutional and social pressures had on the five organisations' strategic decisions regarding CSR. Questions 1 and 9 were included to gain some extra insights regarding the New Zealand CSR environment. Lastly, the role and importance of communication are also examined to see whether the two parts of the organisation have a strong collaboration. More details of the interview questions can be found in Appendix 3.

3.4.3 Participants

The participants for this research project were chosen from the *Deloitte 2018 Annual Review of CSR in Australia and New Zealand*. The review identified five organisations that were top CSR performers in New Zealand. A relationship-driven sampling approach was applied to gain access to the sustainability teams in the chosen organisations. The criteria for the participants was that they had to be manager level and higher to provide experienced and credible sources of knowledge on CSR (Patton, 2002). The researcher then contacted the CSR management as identified through their website or LinkedIn. Initially, all participants were contacted via e-mail (the participants whose e-mails could not be found online were contacted through LinkedIn InMail). Out of the five top performers, four of them agreed to participate in the study, and one declined because of limited resources. As a replacement, the researcher recruited a New Zealand organisation that played an integral part in the 2018 Annual Review. Owing to confidentiality considerations, neither the organisations nor the participants will be named in this thesis. Because it is only the motivations, definitions and influences of CSR that are relevant to this research, it is not necessary to know the details of the participating organisations. Also, there could have been a risk that the organisations

might not have been as transparent in their responses if they were going to be identified. See Appendix 1 for a complete overview of the interview participants. They will be referred to in the results and findings as organisations A to E.

The professional roles of the five participants were GM Responsible Management, Sustainability Senior Consultant, Sustainability and Community Manager, Sustainability Director, and Sustainability Manager. All five recipients had been in their roles for at least three years, and most of them had a similar role before, meaning they have in-depth knowledge of both their organisations and the sustainability field in New Zealand. Four of the participants are female and one is male. Four of the participants are based in Auckland and one in Wellington. They all work in-house for what can all be classified as large corporations in New Zealand. Four of the organisations are publicly listed and one is privately owned. The interviews are around 50 minutes each, with an audio recorded average of 35 minutes each. The time before the formal interview started was used to get to know the participants, their organisations and develop a trusting relationship. The interviews are recorded with a phone app called Voice Recorder on the researcher's iPhone. The recordings are later uploaded to the researcher's computer and transcribed. The transcribed documents are the main source of data used for the thematic analysis.

3.4.4 Limitations of Interviews

In the interviews, the participants are only providing their subjective view on the questions asked. This is consistent with Silverman (2011) who argues that research cannot provide an objective representation of the social world that positivists strive for but provides the meanings people give to their experiences and social worlds. This is both a strength and a challenge, as it is up to the researcher to decide how much importance is put on the research subjects' points of views. In this sense, a downside to interviews is that interviewees sometimes respond to questions through the use of familiar narrative constructs, rather than by providing meaningful insights into their individual view (Silverman, 2011). This provides a prefabricated response instead of a thoughtful answer from the participant. However, the researcher can limit this with the use of a semi-structured interview where the participant is asked follow-up questions to get access to the true underlying meanings (Gray, 2018).

3.5 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a method for systematically identifying, organising and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set (Braun et al., 2018). According to the thematic analysts, Braun and Clarke, thematic analysis started to appear as an approach to analyse qualitative data in the health and social sciences during the 1980s and 1990s when there was a general explosion of interest in qualitative research (Braun et al., 2018).

Thematic analysis allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences. This method is a way to identify what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about and of making sense of those commonalities (Braun et al., 2018). Thematic analysis can also examine the factors that influence, underpin, or contextualise particular processes or phenomena to identify views about particular concepts, such as CSR (Braun et al., 2018). Therefore, thematic analysis was chosen as the best way to identify patterns of shared meaning of CSR in the New Zealand context as the method captures implicit ideas that lie beneath the surface of the data, as well as capturing more explicit and concrete meanings.

Braun et al. (2018) focus on what they call 'reflexive thematic analysis' to emphasise the active role of the researcher in the knowledge production process. The aim of coding and theme development in reflexive thematic analysis is not to summarise the data in the most accurate and objective way, because neither objectivity nor accuracy is possible as the researcher will always have a subjective understanding of the data. Therefore, the aim of thematic analysis is to provide a coherent and compelling interpretation of the data, grounded in the data. As Braun argues, the researcher is a storyteller who interprets data through the lens of their own culture, social setting and scholarly knowledge (Braun et al., 2018).

When analysing the research data, the six-step approach to thematic analysis will be utilised as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006):

- The first step is that of data familiarisation. This will be done through listening to the audio recording and reading the transcripts of all five interviews while making notes of preliminary observations.
- Secondly, initial codes are generated. This is done through selecting data from the transcripts that is relevant to the research question.

- Thirdly, themes are generated from the codes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) it is important to tell a particular story about the data that answers the research question, not present everything that was said in the data.

- The fourth step is to review the themes in relation to the whole data set. In other words, perform a quality check by reviewing the themes and making sure they all answered the research question.

- The themes are then defined and named in the fifth phase. Braun and Clarke (2006) say that a good thematic analysis will have themes that do not try to do too much. They should have a single focus, can be related and build on other themes but should not overlap or be repetitive.

- Lastly, the final phase consists of telling the story of each theme by selecting extracts from the data to present and analyse. This is because data does not speak for itself. The researcher needs to interpret the data and inform the reader through analytic descriptions. The purpose of the research is to tell a story about the data based on the researcher's analysis (Braun et al., 2018).

3.6 Trustworthiness of the Research

A way to gain credibility in qualitative studies is the use of data triangulation, which refers to gathering data using multiple sampling strategies. This can include time triangulation, when data is collected on the same phenomenon over a period of time; space triangulation, when data is collected from multiple sites; and person triangulation, where data is collected from three different levels of the organisation (Gray, 2018, p.184). This research project has focused on gathering the data in the same period of time – namely April and May 2019, as well as collecting the data from multiple sites (organisations). For the sake of clear comparison, and the time and space limitations of a master's thesis, the interviews were being conducted with one person – the sustainability director or manager. Because this research project used a thematic analysis it is deemed sufficient with one respondent from each organisation, as the objective of the research was to find themes in the respondents' constructions of CSR, not necessarily data collection. In addition, because it was the perceptions of the individual respondents that were important, quality checking these through different levels of the organisation was not seen as necessary. However, Brennen (2013) adds that an important part of qualitative interviews is verification of the information given by the respondents in terms of basic truthfulness and accuracy. The researcher will therefore review the information given by respondents on their organisational website and the Climate Leader's Coalition's website, for example.

3.7 Ethical Considerations in the Research

Researchers have a moral responsibility to protect respondents from emotional harm, and in this case, harm to their professional role. The AUT ethics committee approved the interview approach and objective on 1 February 2019, and the researcher's ethical due diligence has been deemed appropriate (Appendix 4).

As required by the AUT ethics committee, in order to secure honest and unfiltered responses from the participants, and to protect the respondents from any professional repercussions of their responses, the researcher will keep all interviews confidential. This means that the organisations and participants are not named, and the organisations will be referred to as A, B, C, D and E in the thesis.

Informed participant consent was also required. This meant that the participants would know exactly what the research project was about and what the researcher planned to do with the data (Brennen, 2013). Therefore, an information sheet was created for all participants (Appendix 5) that outlined the purpose and uses of the research, followed by a consent form with bullet points of the most important ethical aspects of the study which the participants signed before the interviews started (Appendix 6).

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has described the research approach undertaken in order to address the research question, "What are the main drivers behind CSR initiatives among organisations in New Zealand?" It has outlined the appropriateness of the adopted paradigm, methodology, method and analysis. The paradigm of constructionism is adopted because it promotes the belief that knowledge and reality are constructed through social interchange and discourse (Burr, 2015). This paradigm therefore allows the researcher to focus on the uniqueness of the New Zealand understanding of CSR, as well as comparing it to global best practice. The qualitative methodology is used because the core of qualitative research is to understand human behaviour – why people think and behave the way they do. The interview method is chosen as it aligns well with constructionism in that it seeks to investigate what motivations and social constructions lie behind people's decisions, and does so in depth. Lastly, thematic analysis is utilised in order to bring out themes in the participants' responses which would then be able to answer the research question adequately. The following chapter will provide the results gathered from this research process.

Results and Findings

The purpose of this research was to understand what makes New Zealand organisations decide to adopt CSR in their business. More specifically, to learn what the main drivers of CSR initiatives are among New Zealand organisations. This was done by interviewing five New Zealand leaders in CSR to analyse their motivations behind adopting CSR and what influences and pressures existed, if any. When analysing the data from the interviews the researcher used the six-step process of reflexive thematic analysis as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2013) and, as noted in chapter 3, the process of thematic analysis started with familiarisation of the research data and selecting phrases relevant to the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The second stage of the thematic analysis involved creating semantic (descriptive) codes from the selected phrases. Thirdly, themes were identified and interpreted across the data set and, lastly, the themes were defined, named and presented (4.3). How the interview data was analysed through these stages will be presented in the following sections. To prevent organisations from being identified, the * symbol will be used to cover identifying content.

4.1 Data Familiarisation

The first phase of the six-step process is, according to Braun, Clarke and Rance (2014), common across all types of qualitative research and it involves getting immersed in the data through focused and active reading. The researcher needs to think about the research question, notice initial patterns and make notes of initial ideas found in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The data familiarisation stage in this thesis started with the transcription of the recorded interviews and reading through them several times while highlighting phrases and paragraphs that related to the research question and supplementary questions. In the 31 pages of transcripts the researcher found 127 relevant phrases and paragraphs that related to definition, motivations, pressures and drivers of CSR. Other phrases that weren't highlighted related to clarifying the questions and examples of actual CSR initiatives that the organisations were implementing, for example. These were not considered relevant in answering the research question.

Below is an example of a paragraph that was highlighted because it linked directly to the way that organisations defined CSR:

Our framework is "protect, respect, grow" which pretty much is to sort of go, "We cannot do any of those pieces without the other." As a business we strive to operate in such a way that we do not have a negative impact on the opportunity for the society to exist long-term. So therefore, it is an integrated piece. We shouldn't be looking at growing our business if that would have a negative impact on either society from a people perspective or environment.

Another example of a phrase that wasn't highlighted because it provided context and extra information which wasn't directly relevant to the research question was:

The other side of things might be, one of our other core parts of our strategy is looking around financial wellbeing. So financial wellbeing of a customer, so it might be the financial capability or their financial literacy, that might be the debt levels of our customers, those kinds of things.

All the highlighted phrases and paragraphs were then inserted into a table for the second step of the thematic analysis. For additional details, the coding tables can be found in Appendix 2.

4.2 Creating Codes

The second step of the process is the start of the more systematic process of working through the data and marking the highlighted paragraphs with a code (Braun et al., 2014). A code can be viewed as a form of label that provides a short, succinct summary of the data which can be understood without having to read the phrases. These codes will then be used in the development of themes in the next steps of the thematic analysis. This process created 127 codes from the phrases that had been highlighted from the interviews. Examples of these can be seen below:

Phrases/Paragraphs	Codes
74% of millennials today expect the company that they work for to have a CSR strategy and to be acting on it. So it's actually a talent attraction and retention issue, which I find really compelling.	Millennials expect the company they work for to have a CSR strategy – talent attraction and retention issue

I think New Zealand society, as you know, is hugely important to us. We've got a social obligation to act.	Social obligation to act
The * is an initiative that we drove to get the tourism industry to drive an initiative that showed society that we actually want to help, that we are actually out there to drive responsible behaviour for local and international visitors. And I suppose that is a way of responding to societal demands.	Desire to show a responsible behaviour for local and international visitors
I think because we are so proactive from a sustainability perspective, generally we are ahead of what everybody else is asking us to do. So therefore, we don't really have to choose for any reason. I mean, definitely, government is totally behind, as in they're back from where we are. We've not had laws come in that we hadn't taken care of yet, sort of thing.	Ahead of societal demands
So I think that's really core. So in terms of how we form our strategy, it's always… a big part of it's been engaging with all our stakeholders	Stakeholder relationship is core to their strategy
I think the easy answer is it's always highly important for us. I wish I could be in the room when other people were answering this just to see what they say.	Stating that societal demands are important is easier than acting on it
I would probably use is like dialogue or conversation and I feel like that's a really big part of this landscape in New Zealand right now is that there's a lot of people who are kind of going on the journey so to speak and if I was going to use that word then I'd say absolutely it's really important.	Dialogue with stakeholders is really important
Critical. And absolutely critical when I think that it still remains because we have lost our social licence.	Adhering to societal demands is critical as they have lost their social licence
But also that urban… that change in consumer expectations around how and where their food is produced is both a risk and an opportunity to us.	Change in consumer expectations has affected their business

4.2 Creating Themes

The 127 codes were then reviewed and classified into themes based on how they identified the main drivers of CSR initiatives among the participating organisations. In addition, the three additional questions were also taken into consideration when clustering the codes together to form themes. According to Braun, Clarke and Rance (2014) a theme "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response of meaning within the data set" (p. 7). The process of clustering the codes together was done as follows:

1. Coding that referred to how the organisations described CSR created the theme *Definition*. This linked to the supplementary question, "Do all the participating organisations have a similar understanding and adoption of CSR principles?"

2. Coding that referred to why the organisations adopted CSR created the theme *Motivation.* This links to the main research question as well as the second supplementary question about the multi-theoretical framework (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014).

3. Coding that referred to influences from stakeholders, industry and society created the theme *Influence.* This links to the main research question as well as the second supplementary question about the multi-theoretical framework (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014).

4. Coding that referred to how the organisations describe the New Zealand CSR environment created the theme *NZ Publics.* This links to the main research question and the supplementary question, "Do all the participating organisations have a similar understanding and adoption of CSR principles?"

5. Coding that referred to how the organisations communicate their CSR initiatives created the theme *CSR Communication.* This links to the supplementary question, "How important is public relations to CSR managers?"

An example of the process of clustering the codes into themes is provided below:

Summative Code	Theme
Growth cannot have a negative impact on society/environment.	Definition
Protect society for the future.	Definition

Want to lead. Ahead of shareholder thinking, industry thinking and government policies.	Motivation
Prefer informal over formal communication with stakeholders. Value partnerships.	CSR Communication
Change in consumer expectations has affected their business.	Influence
People still care about all aspects around CSR, they just might not necessarily understand how it's connected.	NZ Publics
People intuitively get CSR principles, but the understanding of the word itself, they don't get.	NZ Publics
Big millennial move – internal and external.	Motivation

4.3 Presentation of Themes

The last three steps of the six-step process are *defining*, *naming* and *presenting the themes* that developed through the process of thematic analysis. It is during these steps that the story of the research is crafted by selecting the most relevant and important data when presenting the themes so that the narrative clearly answers the research question (Braun et al., 2014). The five main themes that resulted from this process were introduced in section 4.2 but will be presented here in more detail.

4.3.1 Definition

The first theme named *definition* played a central role in answering the research question, as the researcher needed to examine if the organisations had similar understandings of CSR. If they didn't then that would affect the correlation of the listed drivers as the purpose of CSR would most likely also be different. Secondly, this initial broad focus was essential to establish a baseline insight into participants' understanding of the concept to see how their working definitions of CSR related to the definitions provided by scholars and professional bodies. In addition, this theme linked to the supplementary research question, "Do all the participating organisations have a similar understanding and adoption of CSR principles?"

Firstly, when defining CSR all five organisations differed slightly in their definitions. One organisation had chosen to use the term sustainability instead of CSR, and three organisations had tailored their main organisational CSR focus to fit with their business offerings. An example of this is organisation B, which adopted an environmental focus for their CSR strategy as their business offering related to tourism. Because of this, their CSR definition and messaging centred around respect and protection of natural resources. Organisation C had tailored their CSR in a similar manner, only they focused on financial initiatives. However, there was a consensus from all five organisations that CSR referred to organisational responsibility and protection of resources for future generations. This suggests that even though the organisations presented CSR in a way that aligned with the business offering of their organisations, they would still all refer, directly or indirectly, to prominent international definitions such as the ones by the UN and ISO 26000. The UN's 1987 Brundtland Commission's definition of CSR is "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" ('Brundtland Report—An overview | ScienceDirect Topics', n.d.), and the internationally well-known definition from ISO 26000 states that CSR is "an organization's responsibility for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behaviour" ('ISO 26000 – an introduction', 2016). Both of these definitions were referred to, directly and indirectly, in the organisations' definitions of CSR. An example is organisation C, whose definition is very similar to the UN's:

> Sustainability for us is… making sure that our impacts environmentally, socially and economically don't make our future generations worse off. That's kind of how we usually talk about sustainability as really looking at what our impacts are and making sure that future generations can still meet their needs, whatever those are in the future.

While organisation D favoured ISO 26000's definition:

> We use ISO 26000 sustainability guideline, and that talks about taking into account the impacts of your decision on the environment and society. And I like this definition because… that the addition of… not only is it looking at what your impacts are but how you can contribute in a meaningful way using your organisation's skills and capabilities.

Additionally, all five organisations stated that they use the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their sustainability reports but have selected the ones which aligned best to

their organisations. As such, the main finding from this theme is that all five organisations had a similar understanding of CSR by referring to internationally acknowledged and widely adopted definitions and framework such as the ones created by ISO 26000 and the UN, which highlights the holistic and future-oriented aspect of the concept. However, they all tailored these global definitions in a way that aligned with the nature of their organisation.

Secondly, an influential way of shaping the organisations' understanding and implementation of CSR was through the proactive process of acquiring stakeholder feedback. This means that all the organisations reached out to their stakeholders through social media or online surveys, they facilitate forums or conduct formal materiality assessments or stakeholder audits through a third-party representative in order to get the latest sentiments regarding their CSR performance. The timeframe of these stakeholder engagement activities ranged from weekly to yearly. In addition, two organisations set up external sustainability advisory panels that they would consult a couple of times a year to get expert advice regarding their CSR strategy. The purpose of the external sustainability advisory panels was to provide the organisations with feedback on the quality of their CSR strategy. This finding is connected with the fact that four out of the five organisations saw CSR as a journey in which they would continuously improve both their understanding of CSR and their CSR strategy. Organisation C describes the role of the external sustainability advisory panel in the following way:

> The external sustainability advisory panel, so these people are from outside of * and they might be experts in different areas. And they're really important. We call them our critical friends because we want them to be critical and we want them to give us that real external view.

Organisation E explained their materiality assessment like this:

> Through ISO 26000, what we do is we do a materiality assessment each year, and so we plot all of our stakeholders, the most important of whom are our staff, our customers, government, specialist community such as iwi in New Zealand, for example, or environmental groups, trade groups overseas. So we've got a whole raft of stakeholders, and we go out to them with a survey, and we ask them to rate… we give them a list of all of our issues.

In summary, this theme shows that the participating organisations' definition of CSR differed in the terms they used, and which of the SDG they focused on, however, all five organisations saw CSR as a holistic concept, and placed a high importance on input from

both internal and external stakeholders when creating their CSR strategy. The way they showed this is through the action of using stakeholder input to inform their CSR strategy. Four out of five also saw CSR as a journey in which they would continuously improve both their understanding of CSR and their CSR strategy. This is visible through the two organisations that used external sustainability panels to continuously improve their CSR strategy.

4.3.2 Motivation

This theme is focused on what motivated the organisation's leadership team to decide to implement CSR. It links to the main research question and the second supplementary question about the multi-theoretical framework (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014): "Are there common themes between the organisations that can be explained through stakeholder, institutional or legitimacy theory?" The main finding from this theme was that the participating organisations were motivated by the business case for CSR and the positive outcomes CSR can bring to their organisation.

Firstly, all organisations mentioned beneficial business outcomes as the main motivation to implement CSR. According to the Deloitte 2018 State of CSR in Australia and New Zealand Report, the most commonly experienced benefits for businesses as a result of CSR include strengthened reputation, reduced risk, strengthened competitive advantage, new value through new products/markets, reduced costs and reduced complaints and disagreement with stakeholders ("Progress, prospects and impact", n.d.). The business outcomes stated by the participating organisations in this research include future proofing of their business, benefit to their reputation, reducing risk and positive organisational-stakeholder relationships. An example of the business case for CSR as a motivation is reflected in organisation C's statement:

> I think it's the relevance and it's good for our business. So it's very much about the
> risk side of things. You could talk about reputational risk as well. I think that springs
> to mind first when I think about it. But reputation is huge as well, and particularly we
> are often looking at what our competitors are doing as well. And so yeah, it's all
> linked in.

The business outcome that was mentioned the most as a motivation for CSR was improving and maintaining positive organisational-stakeholder relationships. More specifically, the most important stakeholder group was current and future employees. Three of the participating organisations saw talent attraction and retainment as a big motivation for CSR, and two of those organisations were dependant on employee involvement to run their community projects and workshops. Organisation D called this "the big millennial move" as younger generations are expressing a desire to work for responsible and sustainable companies. This insight can also be seen in the Colmar Brunton's Better Futures report findings mentioned in chapter 2. Organisation C further illustrates this point in the following two statements:

> I think a big thing is the benefit to our workforce, so we know that employees are more and more wanting to work for ethical companies or companies that are doing good for the community or the environment. So us being really strong, that means that we can attract and retain employees.

> For us, it's also about creating really engaging stories in what we're doing so we can engage with our customers again. So if we're doing something really cool we can talk about it, and so it's really good for our brand as well and for our reputation, which will lengthen to it being good for business.

In contrast, a disparity to this finding was that two organisations stated it was solely the ethical case for CSR which had motivated them. One example stated by organisation B was:

> As a business we strive to operate in such a way that we do not have a negative impact on the opportunity long-term for the society to exist. So therefore it is an integrated piece. We shouldn't be looking at growing our business if that would have a negative impact on either society from a people perspective or environment.

In addition, organisation A stated that CSR had been a part of the organisation's fabric from day one. However, both of these organisations expressed that they had a reputation of being leaders in CSR, so it can be argued that enhanced reputation – a business case for CSR – also played a role in the two organisations' motivation to lead the CSR movement in New Zealand.

Two other motivations that were mentioned by more than two organisations were risk mitigation and attaining a reputation as a leader in sustainability. Firstly, CSR was seen as a

way to reduce risk when it came to business continuity, and secondly CSR was linked to institutional competition and the desire to lead. The latter was described by organisation C in the following way:

> Everyone is very much about sharing. Obviously, there's a competitive element to things. People want to be seen as the leader, not the person that's following and that kind of thing.

Organisation B stated that:

> We definitely are trying to lead, so trying to be the best we can be which is generally ahead of the shareholder thinking, and definitely ahead of the industry thinking.

In summary, when explaining why the participating organisations adopted CSR into their organisations the main finding is that they were first and foremost motivated by the business case for CSR. In particular, attracting and retaining employees were seen as the main motivation, followed by mitigating risk and gaining an improved reputation as a result of being leaders in CSR in New Zealand.

4.3.3 Influence

The theme of influence looks at who or what influenced the participating organisations to implement CSR or improve their CSR strategy. The previous theme of motivation focused on internal decisions around CSR, while this theme looks at what external pressures (outside the boardroom) influenced the organisations to implement CSR. This theme links to the main research question as well as the second supplementary question relating to the multi-theoretical framework (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014): "Are there common themes between the organisations that can be explained through stakeholder, institutional or legitimacy theory?" The main finding in this theme was that stakeholder feedback and institutional competition and cooperation were the key mechanisms which influenced the organisations' CSR initiatives to the greatest extent.

Regarding institutional influence, the analysis showed that all five organisations adopted CSR principles within a short timeframe (between 2008 and 2014), which could be argued as adaptive and imitative organisational behaviour. In addition, all five organisations are signatories to the New Zealand Climate Leaders Coalition (CLC), which is effectively a collective business industry movement to tackle the shared risks that climate change presents. As a signatory to this coalition the organisations are invited to workshops and

presentations from innovative climate change solution providers, and signatories also get to present case studies of what they are doing in the area. In this sense, the participating organisations will be closely following other sustainably oriented organisations in New Zealand. As such, institutional collaboration and competition is a solid feature of this theme. The following statements refer to how the participating organisations view the extent of CLC influence on their own CSR strategy:

Organisation A:

> No. I mean, [we were] one of the founding partners of the Climate Leaders Coalition, so no. Put diplomatically, no. I think it's the other way around, without sounding arrogant.

Organisation B:

> We definitely are trying to lead, so trying to be the best we can be which is generally ahead of the shareholder thinking, and definitely ahead of the industry thinking.

Organisation C:

> Everyone is very much about sharing. Obviously, there's a competitive element to things. People want to be seen as the leader, not the person that's following and that kind of thing.

Organisation D:

> Oh, I think there is a definite influence by others. I mean if you look at some of the members of that group [CLC], there are organisations that are doing some amazing things already. I can learn from that. How did they do that? What was the approach? And people are really happy to talk as well. It's great.

Organisation E:

> So, absolutely, the... it's shared learnings, and it's peer pressure, really powerful. And the ability to influence, because this group can also then talk to the government or the government can be invited in and, again, we can talk quite sensibly around what the regulatory framework or policy settings that would enable a more sustainable future for New Zealand.

Secondly, the element of stakeholder influence became clear through the amount of weight and importance the organisation put on the stakeholder's feedback as a part of their CSR strategy decision process. Insights gained from their stakeholder audits played a deciding

role in their CSR strategy. This was also mentioned as a defining factor in the first theme of definition. Organisation C stated:

> So in terms of how we form our strategy, a big part of it's been engaging with all our stakeholders. It [the stakeholder audit] was going to all our employees, asking them about what issues mattered most to them. And then around what they thought was fixable within that. And we went out and interviewed different stakeholders. So we did stuff with our people, we did stuff with some of our senior leaders. We've engaged with certain kind of thought leaders in different sectors, and we talked to environmental, we just went really broad and said to people, "What do you think are the issues that New Zealanders care about most? Where do you see us [as an organisation]?" And that's how we formed our strategy.

An important thing to note about this finding is that the organisations were still in control of this process. They decided which stakeholders they approached and selected what feedback they would take on board.

Lastly, according to legitimacy theory, society will play a decisive role in pressuring organisations to adopt CSR (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014). However, this was not as evident as expected. As described in chapter 2, New Zealand has a strong international image as a 'clean and green country', and because of this an initial assumption was that there would be strong public pressure to ensure all organisations in New Zealand were sustainable and preserved the country's image. This assumption did not come across in the data as four out of the five organisations said they were ahead of current government regulations and societal demands in New Zealand and hadn't experienced any strong public pressures regarding their CSR strategy. Only organisation E stated that they experienced pressures from stakeholders and government agencies regarding their CSR strategy as "they had lost their social licence to operate". Organisation B illustrates the lack of public pressure with the following statement:

> By societal expectations as I keep saying I wish society, in general, would be more demanding really of businesses. They're not really. I suspect it will be. If there are certain societal demands that are really loud and clear and we haven't thought of it, I'm sure that would influence what we do. But we haven't really had that situation as such really.

In summary, stakeholder views and institutional competition and cooperation were the main external sources which influenced the participating organisations to implement CSR or improve their CSR strategy. This was a process in which the majority of the organisations

could still choose how and by whom they were influenced. Only one organisation experienced strong stakeholder pressures which influenced the direction of their CSR strategy.

4.3.4 NZ Publics

Coding which identified how the organisation described New Zealand publics and the CSR environment created the theme *NZ Publics*. This links to the main research question as it provides further insights into the importance and value placed on CSR in New Zealand. The main finding from this theme was that all the participating organisations described a general lack of understanding among the New Zealand public when it comes to CSR. Organisation C noted:

> With our real close stakeholders that we work with I think they sort of see the big picture. But when I think about the everyday person (…) or my everyday friends, they're outside of the sector, I don't think people have enough understanding of it. But I think that's kind of the terminology because it's not to say that people don't care about those things or aren't thinking about those things, but I don't think they necessarily understand how it's connected.

Similarly, organisation B argued that:

> In the latest Colmar Brunton report, where they, basically, interview people about sustainability and people are going, "Yay, I'm sustainable because I don't use plastic bags." That's pretty much my opinion of New Zealand's [sustainability] vision right now. It's really, really narrow. I think generally the general public doesn't take responsibility for the wider impact. I really don't think people understand or want to understand or are just not aware of it, what it actually means to live a sustainable life, to run a sustainable business.

In other words, there is currently a lack of understanding of CSR and how it's all connected among the New Zealand public. The organisations also noticed that awareness is growing, and people and businesses are starting to pay increased attention to CSR, as discovered in the latest Colmar Brunton report ("Better Futures 2019", 2019). When asked why there aren't more organisations prioritising CSR in New Zealand, organisation B responded:

> I think a lot of it often is priorities, focus, and New Zealand has for a long time, I suppose, been in a survival mode economically. I think there are so many small to medium-sized businesses that run really, really lean, and they just do not know how

to fit additional thinking into their day-to-day life. And I don't think it's necessarily out of not wanting to do it. I think it's more that they just don't know how to stop and then look at it and then integrate it and then do it, sort of thing.

Another point in regards to the above question was mentioned by organisation D:

It's a bit of a mixed bag, I'd say. I think there are some amazingly progressive voices and thinking in this space, on a range of issues. But I think we're also sometimes trapped by our size and just not feeling like we can really have a genuine impact on anything or issues. So it's interesting because you get both sides of that. You get the: "We can conquer Everest and we can be the first, we can be the best", but then you also get the: "Oh, we're just so small, it doesn't matter". And so it's really interesting to have those polarities there.

In sum, all five organisations expressed very similar views in that the New Zealand public's current understanding of CSR is narrow, and that there is a lack of understanding of how the economic, environmental and social aspects of society are linked together and the role of businesses within this. However, they acknowledged a growing trend, especially among younger generations, of a rising awareness of CSR.

Lastly, two organisations emphasised the role and influence that Māori businesses and the Māori worldview have on the New Zealand business community, and the potential for them to help improve CSR in New Zealand even more. For example, organisation D argued that all New Zealand organisations are influenced by the Māori worldview to some degree. Māori businesses are often the ones that "push the envelope" by being principled and guided by *Te Ao Māori* (Māori worldview), which essentially comes from the same philosophy that CSR is based on: interconnectedness, social responsibility and guardianship over the natural environment.

Organisation B expressed very similar sentiments, and stated:

The good thing is that large businesses like Ngāi Tahu, who have, obviously, a long history of Māori culture because they are a Māori business, they don't do it [CSR] because the government tells them to. They do it because they have re-engaged with their roots and sort of gone, "We really need to preserve this for the future."

When asked why there aren't more New Zealand organisations embracing Te Ao Māori, organisation D said:

I think, as a country, we're still reckoning with our past and coming to terms with what it looks like to be a bicultural or a multicultural nation, and I don't think we've fully

given true room to the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi in our society yet. And I think when we do, we'll see a lot more flourishing in terms of the way in which our societies operate, the way in which our businesses operate. So I think we're moving there, but I don't think we're quite there yet, and I think there's some resistance for different reasons.

In sum, the current CSR environment in New Zealand isn't experiencing much public scrutiny, and the participating organisations believe that this is due to a general lack of understanding in how the areas of CSR are connected. They acknowledge that younger generations are changing the status quo by placing more importance on CSR in New Zealand society. It was argued that New Zealand organisations are all influenced by the Māori worldview to some degree, and more benefits could be achieved by intentionally integrating the Māori worldview into their CSR strategy.

4.3.5 CSR Communication

The last theme of this research's thematic analysis was how CSR was being communicated. This theme looked at the most prominent finding when it came to how the CSR teams communicated their organisation's strategies and whether public relations played a key role in communicating CSR to stakeholders. This links to the supplementary question, "How important is public relations to CSR managers?" and helps inform the main research question by providing patterns that could be seen as country-specific traits. The main finding of this theme was that informal communication initiatives with stakeholders were the preferred mode of communication for all five organisations. Although stakeholder engagement was a high priority for the participating organisations, public relations professionals were not mentioned as being involved in this process.

Firstly, four out of five organisations named their organisation's sustainability report as their main official approach to communicate their CSR strategy and initiatives to their stakeholders. An example is organisation B, which explained:

> We have basically communicated through our sustainability report. That has been our main vehicle for communication, which I know is not ideal at all, but that is to do with resource constraints really. Ideally, we'd do a lot more around communication.

However, all five organisations expressed a strong preference for informal communication where they engaged directly and actively with stakeholders. All the organisations showed a preference for a more unrestricted and frank form of communication that favoured knowledge-seeking and sharing. Organisation E even embraced this approach with activist

groups who had set out to challenge them. All five organisations appeared to prioritise transparency and collective learning over the risk of being vulnerable. In addition, the organisations talked about CLC as an arena where the organisations could learn, collaborate, influence and teach each other more about sustainability in business. Below is a selection of quotes in order from organisations C, D and E, respectively, which illustrates this finding:

> I would probably say that our stakeholder engagement is just we meet with people and talk to them about what we do and whatever's relevant to them as opposed to a formal communication.

> So there's dialogue [with stakeholders] in terms of what we're doing, how we're doing it. Some of that is us contributing knowledge because we're pushing on something, some of it is us reporting in a way, and some of it is also us learning from others.

> My biggest thing about stakeholders is involving them and truly collaborating with them. I wouldn't say we're perfect at this, but it's much more than about just communicating to them what you're doing because actually, bring their views in so that you understand [what] their views mean [so] that you do actually make different decisions in your business that are then going to benefit the stakeholder and the issue.

However, when talking about the ways they communicated with and engaged with their stakeholders, none of the organisations mentioned that their public relations team or agency assisted in these processes. When asked about their communication strategy in regards to CSR, organisation D replied:

> *I probably can't talk authoritatively about some of that stuff. I'd be happy to look more into it, but I haven't learnt it well, obviously. But yeah, we definitely do. I know that.*

This shows that although informal and direct communicating with stakeholders are both a preference and a high priority for the participating organisations, public relations appear not to play a prominent role in this process and are not top of mind for CSR management.

4.4 Conclusion

The five common themes identified through the analysis of interviews were: the definition of CSR; the motivations behind CSR; internal and external influences; New Zealand publics and the importance of CSR communication. The researcher found several commonalities between the five participating organisations through these themes. Firstly, the results

highlighted the importance of input from both internal and external stakeholders when creating their CSR strategy. Four out of five organisations also saw CSR as a journey in which they would continuously improve both their understanding of CSR and their CSR strategy. In addition, the organisations were first and foremost motivated by the business case for CSR, particularly that of attracting and retaining employees. Stakeholder views and institutional competition and cooperation were the main sources of influenced for the participating organisations when it came to implementing and improving their CSR strategy.

All the participating organisations expressed similar views in that there was a general lack of understanding among the New Zealand public of how the areas of CSR are connected, but they acknowledged that younger generations are changing the status quo by placing more importance on CSR in New Zealand. In addition, it was argued that New Zealand organisations are all influenced by the Māori worldview to some degree, but more benefits could be achieved from intentionally integrating the Māori worldview into organisations' CSR strategies. Lastly, although all five organisations expressed a preference for informal and direct communication with stakeholders, public relations appeared not to play a prominent role in this process.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to understand what makes New Zealand organisations decide to adopt CSR in their business. More specifically, the research wanted to know what the main drivers of CSR initiatives were among organisations in New Zealand. This focus was a response to scholarly calls for more empirical evidence from parts of the world where phenomena relevant to public relations practice, such as CSR, are studied (Argandoña & von Weltzien Hoivik, 2009; Sriramesh, 2009; Tkalac Verčič et al., 2018). This is supported by Ozdora Aksak et al. (2016) who says that with the explosions of CSR initiatives across the globe and a general push towards sustainability from stakeholders, we need more research that studies effective CSR and public relations strategies in different cultures. In addition, several studies have shown that there is an important role for public relations to play in CSR through engaging with stakeholders, because it provides both organisations and stakeholders with an opportunity to communicate and construct meaning (Grunig & Grunig, 2008; Ihlen et al., 2011; Reeves, 2016). In light of this, the research studied the main drivers behind the CSR initiatives of five top CSR performers in New Zealand as selected by the 2018 Deloitte State of CSR Report.

The findings from this research contributes to public relations literature in several ways. Firstly, the study found that both institutional pressures and stakeholder influences are present when organisations decide when and how to adopt CSR. Secondly, the motivations were first and foremost rooted in the business case for CSR, such as reduced risk, improved reputation and improved organisational-stakeholder relationships. Thirdly, the multi-theoretical framework used in this study proved valuable in producing more in-depth insights than a single theory would have done. This is because all three theories were needed to explain all the motivations present among the participating organisations. Lastly, because stakeholders are very important to organisations in New Zealand, and there is a current confusion around CSR as a concept coupled with a growing desire for CSR among younger New Zealanders – public relations could have a very important role to play in ensuring effective CSR communication between organisations and their stakeholders. This chapter will discuss the findings and limitations of this study further, followed by recommendations for further research and the final conclusion.

5.1 Stakeholder and institutional motivations

The answer to the research question, "What are the main drivers of CSR initiatives among organisations in New Zealand?" was found to be stakeholders, with institutional influence the second driver. Firstly, stakeholders were found to be the main driver of CSR initiatives as they influenced the organisations CSR initiatives both internally (through employees) and externally (through consultation and with talent attraction being a desired outcome of CSR initiatives). All organisations regularly consulted a selected group of stakeholders to get their feedback on the organisation's CSR strategy. This stakeholder engagement process took place during informal conversations, and through formal stakeholder audits and materiality assessments. As such, stakeholders were found to be the main driver of CSR among the participating organisations, as the organisations all placed a high value on their stakeholders' feedback when designing their CSR strategy and continuously approached stakeholders for input and expertise through external advisory panels. According to recent research, such as Moon (2014) and Chaudhri (2016), regularly approaching stakeholders for input is important when it comes to CSR. Both scholars state that the norms, values and expectations regarding CSR are not fixed, but changes based on the time and location in which it takes place. Because of this, it's important for organisations to engage in ongoing dialogue with stakeholders to stay up to date with stakeholder demands and the ever-changing social expectations created in the public sphere (Moon, 2014). In addition, the 2018 Deloitte State of CSR report found that the four management practices required for CSR success were stakeholder engagement, integrating stakeholder values, stakeholder dialogue and a sense of social accountability. Again, stakeholder engagement has been found to be paramount in achieving effective results from CSR initiatives. In other words, by involving a varied group of stakeholders through the CSR strategy development stages they are effectively doing what recent studies have found to be best practice (Chaudhri, 2016; Moon, 2014).

This study also showed that stakeholders were seen as a motivation for implementing CSR initiatives, due to talent attraction and employee retention being a desired outcome of CSR initiatives. When explaining this motivation, the organisations referred to the 2019 Colmar Brunton *Better Futures Report* finding that it was important for New Zealand employees to work for a company that is socially and environmentally responsible. This is particularly relevant as New Zealand has had a shortage of skilled professionals for a long time (Competenz, 2019), so securing skilled employees is a high priority among New Zealand

organisations. Thus, this research proved CSR to not only be an attractive trait for current and potential employees but has also given organisations "a context that allows for greater interaction between organisations and stakeholders" (Taylor and Kent, 2014, p. 386). This aspect is seen in some of the organisations' employee facilitation programmes as described by organisations C and D in section 4.3.2, where the organisations encouraged their employees to take ownership of their organisational CSR initiatives and help facilitate various community workshops and pro-bono services. This trait of co-design and cooperation between the management and their employees in the area of CSR also ties in with Geert Hofstede's findings in New Zealand that "hierarchy is established for convenience, superiors are always accessible, and managers rely on individual employees and teams for their expertise" ("New Zealand", n.d., p.1.). This finding also aligns with the argument made by Grunig (2008) that public relations can give organisations a way to empower their stakeholders in decision-making by letting their employees have a voice in management. Equally, L. Lee and Chen (2018) found that CSR initiatives has the power to generate positive effects on employees' level of satisfaction and retention. This suggests that there is an important role for public relations in CSR by effectively managing the communication between the organisation's management and their employees to ensure the desired outcomes in regard to stakeholder engagement.

Secondly, this study showed that that being exposed to other organisations' CSR initiatives affected the participating organisations' own CSR strategy, which illustrates that institutional competition and collaboration also functioned as drivers of CSR among the participating organisations. Specifically, three organisations stated that they actively used Climate Leaders Coalition as a way to further their own knowledge of CSR and be inspired by other organisations. In addition, the analysis also showed that all five organisations adopted CSR within a short timeframe (between 2008 and 2014), which could be argued as adaptive and imitative organisational behaviour. This builds on institutional theory, which argues that organisations' predicted CSR motivation is the desire to become similar to other organisations by adopting practices that society considers the norm (Ozdora Aksak et al., 2016). This point will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

5.2 Multi-theoretical framework

Fernando and Lawrence's (2014) multi-theoretical framework proved to be helpful for the aim of this research, and their argument that one theory alone is insufficient to explain organisational behaviour in regard to CSR proved correct in a New Zealand setting. The framework also explains the collective motivations and provide insights into the organisational behaviour of the participating organisations. Firstly, institutional theory provides insights into why all the participating organisations signed the industry movement Climate Leaders Coalition's (CLC) pledge. Institutional theory argues that an organisation will adopt behaviours and practices that have been shown as socially acceptable by other organisations. The empirical results of the study bear the theory out by showing that all the participating organisations agreed to adhere to the collective pledge set by the coalition. It also links with Moon's argument that CSR is now more corporate-oriented than corporate-centric because other institutions act as governing and managing actors in regard to resources and policies (2014). In this case, CLC functions as a managing actor in creating a common goal for businesses in New Zealand concerning environmental responsibility. The study also identified a strong collaborative environment regarding CSR among organisations in New Zealand. As shown in the previous chapter, in section 4.3.3, all organisations expressed a desire and willingness to learn from each other when it came to CSR, and CLC created an arena where this could happen. Another point that can be explained through institutional theory and its aspect of competitive forces is that all organisations adopted their individual CSR initiatives within a short space of time – between 2008-2014. This points to the fact that the New Zealand organisations influenced each other, as globally CSR had been adopted by organisations since the 1980s (Savitz & Weber, 2014).

Secondly, all the participating organisations regularly publish CSR reports to offer transparency and information regarding their CSR initiatives to stakeholders. This is not yet compulsory in New Zealand, so by reporting on their CSR initiatives and results, from the stakeholder theory perspective, the organisation accepts its stakeholders' right to know details about their CSR strategy. In addition, by providing CSR information the organisation reduces information asymmetry and places different kinds of stakeholders on a level playing field. As part of their reporting framework, all organisations made reference to the United Nations Sustainability Goals in their reports and four out of five organisations used the Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI) reporting standards. This finding is similar to the international trend, where 93% of the companies on the Global Fortune 250 list provided nonfinancial reports in 2017 ("KPMG Survey of Corporate Responsibility Reporting 2017", 2017). This builds on stakeholder theory which explains why the organisations placed such importance on stakeholder feedback and views when creating their CSR strategy. According

to Deegan (2002), employees are a powerful stakeholder group, and therefore, the retention and attraction of employees are motivations that drive CSR adoption. An important point is that CSR communication should always be responsibility-driven instead of demand-driven to stay in line with the stakeholder theory's view that stakeholders have a right to know about certain aspects of an organisation's operations. The role of communication in CSR is therefore to provide stakeholders with information about the extent to which the organisation has met its responsibilities (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014).

Thirdly, this study also builds on legitimacy theory which explains the reason for the organisations' voluntary CSR reporting. Four out of the five organisations used Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) as their reporting framework in their CSR reports (the fifth organisation used integrated reporting (IR)). GRI is an independent organisation that provides a voluntary reporting framework for organisations which benefit the global community ("About GRI", n.d.). Therefore, by voluntarily choosing to report their CSR initiatives, they are providing transparency to their stakeholders and effectively providing a way for society to keep them accountable – thus signalling a desire to be seen as legitimate (Deegan, 2002). In addition, one organisation stated that societal pressure was a strong motivator in adopting CSR as they had lost their 'social licence' in New Zealand through what had been deemed by the public as environmentally irresponsible operational practices. Although the fight for legitimacy was not as apparent with the other four organisations who were in different industries, this finding further builds on legitimacy theory which showed how CSR adoption and implementation will be prioritised among organisations that find themselves in industries that are under public scrutiny. When Fernando and Lawrence (2014) looked through global empirical evidence, they found that organisations will normally increase positive CSR news if they think that would help to increase or maintain the level of their organisations' legitimacy (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014, p. 156-157). This was the case with the organisation mentioned above as they had recently established external sustainability advisory panels for the purpose of making sure that their CSR efforts and initiatives were effective. In addition, because they were being held accountable for their strategic goals by the panel, this can also be seen as an activity towards greater legitimacy.

As noted in the literature review, theoretical perspectives on CSR are competing and sometimes overlapping, but Frynas and Yamahaki (2016) argue that more research is needed on integrating theories to allow for more robust and richer empirical testing. In particular, a combination of theories related to external and internal drivers of CSR may help

provide insights on the relationship between the societal context and internal organisational resources (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014; Frynas & Yamahaki, 2016). This research has done this by looking at three theories that focus on both internal and external drivers of CSR. The research project found that all three theories could be used to explain the motivations behind CSR implementation and that each of them highlighted separate areas of the concept and were therefore, as proposed by Fernando and Lawrence (2014), complementary.

5.3 Public Relations and CSR

The participating organisations all noted that among the New Zealand public, there was a general lack of understanding and scrutiny of the organisation when it came to CSR. However, they also observed that recently there has been a growing awareness of CSR – especially among younger generations in New Zealand. These statements are supported by Colmar Brunton's latest report which found that 83% of the surveyed New Zealanders believe the way businesses talk about their social and environmental commitments are confusing. Additionally, seven out of ten were unable to name a company that is a leader in sustainability (Better Futures 2019, February 2019). Furthermore, Cone Communications (2015) found that nine in ten (88%) of global consumers want companies to tell them what they are doing to operate responsibly and support important issues. In spite of this growing desire for increased CSR, coupled with more easily accessible CSR communication, the public relations role in this process was not front of mind among the participating organisations. The organisations acknowledged the importance of including both internal and external stakeholders in their CSR initiatives and strategy process, however, the CSR managers preferred informal and unstructured conversations directly with key stakeholders. When asked specifically about their CSR communication strategy, four out of five organisations said the CSR report was the main communication tool, supplemented by informal communication directly with stakeholders. Organisation B stated that they didn't do enough communication-wise, and organisation D lacked knowledge about their CSR communication strategy. This shows that although stakeholder engagement is a priority for the participating organisations, strategic CSR communication did not play a central role in the CSR strategy. This goes against recent research which has found that integrating effective communication strategies should be a key component of CSR programmes if

organisations want to achieve a strengthened reputation and improved stakeholder engagement as a result of their CSR initiatives (Ruiz-Mora et al., 2016).

In addition, although the organisations allowed for stakeholder input through processes like materiality assessments and stakeholder audits, these are both exercises in which the organisations hold the power by being in charge of which stakeholders are included in the audits, and what feedback they choose to take on board. Therefore, Taylor and Kent's (2014) argument, that CSR provides a context where the traditional power dynamic between organisations and their stakeholders is shifted by providing greater interaction for stakeholders, is only true to a certain extent among these participating New Zealand organisations. Although all the participating organisations noted that they often met with stakeholders directly and that it was their preferred mode of communication, this is still a process in which the organisations hold the power to decide whom they meet and under what circumstances. This finding is in line with Chaudhri's recent research, where he found that CSR managers state a need to exercise control in their interaction and communication with stakeholders (2016). CSR can provide the opportunity for organisations and stakeholders to create strategies that leads to mutual beneficial outcomes, but public relations practitioners play an important role in managing and facilitating that process (Tkalac Verčič & Sinčić Ćorić, 2018).

Secondly, two organisations pointed out that a stronger alignment between organisations and the Māori worldview would improve CSR in New Zealand. This aligns with Bruin and Read's (2018) findings where the recognition of indigenous cultural values increased innovation in addressing social and environmental challenges in New Zealand. This is because the strong collective way of acting and being has resulted in innovative and effective Māori responses to community challenges. In addition, because the philosophy behind CSR and the Māori worldview share many similarities when it comes to interdependence, sustainability and shared responsibility, integrating the Māori worldview into CSR in New Zealand has the possibility of not only relating to their Māori stakeholders in a more effective way, but creating more awareness of CSR in the New Zealand context and limiting stakeholder scepticism through a culturally authentic representation of CSR initiatives. As noted earlier, these are the twin goals of CSR communication (Chaudhri, 2016), and public relations practitioners could play an important role in facilitating this process (Tkalac Verčič et al., 2018), because, as Bruin and Read (2018) argued, including

the Māori worldview is integral to finding innovative, collective solutions for mitigating complex social problems and sparking transformational change in New Zealand.

In sum, these findings show that there are two main areas where public relations can assist New Zealand organisations in their CSR implementation. Firstly, by increasing awareness of CSR among the NZ public by supplementing and improving the current stakeholder engagement processes through strategic CSR communication and, secondly, by engaging and empowering all stakeholders to a greater extent in the organisation's CSR strategy, not just the most powerful ones. There can also be room for public relations to create an enriched space for the Māori worldview to be included in CSR in New Zealand organisations with the purpose of improving stakeholder awareness and limiting stakeholder scepticism.

5.5 Limitations of study

The main limitation of this research was the narrow scope of the study. Firstly, the research focused primarily on the drivers of CSR and did not focus on details regarding the participating organisations' CSR strategy and initiatives. In addition, the conclusions regarding the public relations role in CSR among the participating organisations were based on limited interview data, so the conclusions of this study may differ from other studies because the main focus here was on the drivers of CSR initiatives and not details of execution and stakeholder engagement.

Secondly, the method was limited to interviews and did not supplement the interview data with other forms of analysis, other than fact-checking of statements. As argued by Silverman (2013), during the interview process the participants are only providing their subjective view on the questions asked. However, the aim of the interviews was not to gather facts but the participants' constructions of CSR. The findings from this research may therefore not apply to all organisations that have adopted CSR in New Zealand. In addition, the empirical data was restricted to a small sample of five participating organisations within a limited timeframe as the interviews ranged from 22 minutes to 53 minutes. Because CSR is a complex concept (Moon, 2014), the amount of insight gained from one interview is limited. However, the findings from this research can be used for future studies to gain greater country-specific insights by expanding the scope to include more interviews with the same participants, and

supplement the interviews with other methods, such as case studies on the organisations' CSR strategies.

5.6 Recommendations for further study

Firstly, as seen in this study, the participating organisations only started adopting CSR between 2008 and 2014, which makes it a very recent phenomenon. The organisations might therefore be unsure of how to approach the area of CSR communication, and a concern could well be the risk of being seen as greenwashing (Morsing et al., 2008). In addition, communication scholars Bortree (2014) and Chaudri (2016) argue that a focus on specialised CSR communication is an increasingly significant area for future communication and public relations research, because of the potential benefits public relations can bring to CSR when it comes to stakeholder engagement and effective communication strategies. Therefore, because public relations practitioners are experts in creating effective stakeholder communication strategies, the area of stakeholder engagement through CSR would therefore warrant further study.

Secondly, as noted by Frynas and Yamahaki (2016), theory can help CSR scholars understand how social change might be triggered – and as found in this study, a trigger for change in New Zealand can be accredited to the stakeholder group of current and prospective employees and the powerful role they currently hold in New Zealand, as stated by Eweje and Bentley (2006). Therefore, future multi-level research that focus specifically on the role employees play in relation to CSR, both as an internal and external factor, would benefit both CSR and public relations scholarship (Frynas & Yamahaki, 2016). This study looked at the internal and external drivers behind CSR implementations by asking the participants about their perceived motivations and pressures. The data showed both internal drivers (passion from employees, board members) and external drivers (CLC, attracting talent, external sustainability panel). As such, it would be beneficial to see if the multi-theoretical framework can also be applied to other aspects of CSR, such as CSR implementation and the relationship between CSR and public relations. Both of these points of focus will provide insights that can assist in achieving the twin goals of CSR communication – creating awareness and minimising stakeholder scepticism (Chaudhri, 2016). Additionally, because attracting and retaining talent is a top priority for New Zealand

organisations, research on the relationship between CSR and staff retention in New Zealand is therefore an important focus for future research (Eweje & Bentley, 2006).

5.7 Final conclusion

The premise of this research was based on the identified lack of empirical evidence from parts of the world that study phenomena relevant to public relations practice, such as CSR (Sriramesh, 2009). The main goal of the thesis was to uncover country-specific motivations behind CSR, and the research question was: "What are the main drivers behind CSR initiatives among organisations in New Zealand?". The organisations were first and foremost motivated by the business case for CSR, particularly that of attracting and retaining employees. Institutional competition and collaboration served as the second main driver for the participating companies, where the Climate Leaders Coalition was named as the main arena for institutional collaboration and competition in New Zealand. The five themes developed from the interview data offered a narrative of similar understandings, motivations, influences and communication of CSR among the five participating organisations. Firstly, all five organisations saw CSR as a holistic concept and highlighted the importance of input from both internal and external stakeholders when creating their CSR strategy. Furthermore, the participating organisations saw the New Zealand public as lacking knowledge in how the areas of CSR are connected, but they acknowledged that younger generations are changing the status quo by placing more importance on CSR in New Zealand. Furthermore, it was argued that New Zealand organisations are all influenced by the Māori worldview to some degree, but more benefits could be attained from intentionally integrating the Māori worldview into organisations' CSR strategies. Lastly, although all five organisations expressed a preference for informal and direct communication with stakeholders, public relations appeared not to play a prominent role in this process. The secondary goal of this research was to see if Lawrence and Fernando's (2014) multi-theoretical perspective provided more comprehensive insights on the motivations behind the five organisations' CSR initiatives than a single theory would be able to achieve. Fernando and Lawrence's (2014) multi-theoretical framework proved to be helpful for the aim of this research, and their argument that one theory alone is insufficient to explain organisational behaviour in regard to CSR proved correct in a New Zealand setting. The research project found that all three theories could be used to explain the motivations behind CSR implementation and that each of them highlighted separate areas of the concept and were therefore, as proposed by

Fernando and Lawrence (2014), complementary.

These findings show that there are two main areas where public relations scholarship can assist New Zealand organisations in their CSR implementation. Firstly, public relations can help increase awareness of CSR initiatives among the New Zealand public by improving the current stakeholder engagement processes outlined in chapter four with strategic CSR communication that focus on erasing stakeholder scepticisms. Secondly, public relations can engage and empower all stakeholders to a greater extent through two-way symmetrical communication, not just the most powerful ones. There can also be room for public relations to create an enriched space for the Māori worldview to be mirrored in New Zealand organisations CSR strategy with the purpose of improving awareness and limiting scepticism through a culturally appropriate stakeholder engagement approach.

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Appendices

1. Participating Organisations

Participant identifier	Role title	Location of Organisations	Medium of interview	Transcribed interview (minutes)
Organisation A	Sustainability and Community Manager	Wellington	Telephone	22:16
Organisation B	GM Responsible Management	Auckland	In-person	34:00
Organisation C	Sustainability Manager	Auckland	In-person	37:04
Organisation D	Sustainability Senior Consultant	Auckland	In-person	53:36
Organisation E	Sustainability Director	Auckland	In-person	30:51

2. Tables of all codes from interview data

Description of CSR
All codes
Definiton of CSR
value and purpose driven
Sustainability as an integral part of the organisations
focus on responsibility
Growth cannot have a negative impact on society/environment
Protect society for the future
Taking responsibility for their impacts and protect future generations
Ideal business strategy gives value back to society and has no negative impacts
Call it sustainability, not CSR
Self-chosen CSR focus/priorities
CSR sounds like 'license to operate', they bring a different attitude
thinks focusing on contribution is positive, and not just on impacts
talking about ideal understanding vs current understanding
Environmental focus
Not enough embedding of sustainability - many companies treat it as an add-on
Use sustainable development goals
Use ISO 26000 guidelines, accountability for impacts
Continuous improvement of reporting framework, integrated our sustainability goals into our strategy.

Motivations
Embedded in their company
Needed to take responsibility
Talks generally and doesn't refer specifically to their organisation's motivations
Want to lead. Ahead of shareholder thinking, industry thinking and government policies.
External pressures from industry movements and bodies they're a part of
Good for business, risk, reputation, competition - it's all linked in
Big millennial move - internal and external
Many companies are motivated by risk
Climate change is a risk to their organisational operating model
Business survival - keep the business model sustainable
Good for business, risk, reputation, competition - it's all linked in
climate change is a risk for their product offerings
Organisational protection to show social responsibility
Use CSR to do initiatives that directly benefit customers and indirectly the company
poor reputation
To attract and retain employees
Responding to customer expectations
millennials expect the company they work for to have a CSR strategy -talent attraction and retention issue
To create good communication for customers
Enhance/protect reputation
Good for business, risk, reputation, competition - it's all linked in
Big millennial move - internal and external
Push from their chairman
Stakeholder pressures
To remain relevant in terms of stakeholder expectations
Investors are becoming interested in sustainability and risk
Stakeholder demands
Customising global CSR strategies for NZ
Recognising international trends

CSR Communication
social media
Prefer informal over formal communication with stakeholders. Partnerships.
focus on communicating through their own channels
Dialogue is the best way of communicating with stakeholders
direct communication about sustainability initiatives between B2B
Social media is used as a channel
Blog and company publications are used as a channel
communication to represent integrity
link their CSR initiative to what someone else is doing, not self-promoting. Being strategic, where you can make your biggest play.
Use CSR comms to benefit brand and reputation and competitive advantage
place high importance on communication, but do not know details of their comms strategy
Sustainability report main comms tool
Sustainability report is a transparency tool
All organisations use similar reporting frameworks
Sustainability report is the main form of communication
Report is the main comms tool, we use their group report, do not make a separate NZ report
Need a firm consensus of their CSR inside the organisations to communicate effectively
Need to use carrot and stick internally in the organisations to be able to meet external demands from government and public. Focus on establishing consensus internally regarding CSR.
Have to balance competing external pressures
Empower employees to participate in CSR, internal comms
Perform stakeholder engagement mapping
Facilitated a youth conference to get feedback on sustainability
Got an always-on stakeholder engagement approach - constantly asking customers what they think
meet stakeholders to get insight into recent developments outside of their organisations and hear what critiques about them are
Use a sustainability external advisory panel
include stakeholders in the CSR strategy development process

Do annual materiality assessments of their stakeholders biggest concerns
Stakeholders, like NGOs, put pressure and provided expertise on how to do things better
Use a sustainability advisory panel
Influence and pressures
Not influenced by other organisations
No pressure from NZ society
Often people/stakeholders come to them and ask for help - and they provide low or pro-bono services as a way to responding to social needs.
Media can have an influence on organisational actions
Look for opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders/other organisations in tackling social and environmental issues. Realise we aren't big enough to solve any issues by our self.
Have pushed other organisations in their sector to adopt a more responsible behaviour
Reluctant to sign up to CLC because they were so much more progressive. Joined to show themselves as a leader and influence a bigger drive.
CLC has established a collaboration, a shared journey between the signatories in NZ.
CLC and SBC fosters open conversations and knowledge sharing. But there is an element of competitiveness as everyone wants to be seen as a leader.
CLC has gathered the community of people/organisations wanting to create positive change - collective action and impact.
Progressive CSR organisations influence others
CLC is shared learnings and peer pressure
Institutional pressure (adopted similar time)
We have a social obligation to act
ahead of societal demands
Dialogue with stakeholders is really important
Core in how we form our strategy. engage with all our stakeholders
Need to investigate whether words have translated into real actions
critical as we have lost our social licence
Change in consumer expectations has affected their business

International customers/stakeholders trumps NZ Stakeholders
difficult to keep up with the pace of external pressures

NZ Public
Passion leads to action and gov regulation will lead to action.
NZ has been in economic survival mode for a long time - not yet a priority. Many small - medium sized businesses that run really, really lean.
Delta between words and actions among the public
sustainable behaviour is not consistent or holistic. There is a strong community spirit in NZ but it doesn't include sustainability
NZ vision of sustainability is really narrow - lack of understanding
Externalise sustainability, do not take personal responsibility, based on ignorance. Up to us as businesses to educate, and bring everyone along on the journey as sustainable behaviour is for the country and everyone needs to participate.
Terminology is confusing for everyday people as they think it's just about the environment.
People still care about all aspects around sustainability, they just might not necessarily understand how it's connected.
People intuitively get sustainability principles, but the understanding of the word itself, they don't get.
Social media has pushed a rising awareness on issues like plastic pollution.
People care about the social side as well, might not see it as sustainability
NZ wants companies to do well, but do well the right way.
Colmar Brunton shows a rise in a demand for sustainable products and services from businesses. More consumer awareness.
The Colmar Brunton survey results are New Zealand's materiality matrix
Small size of NZ is a benefit for collaboration and creating change at a senior level
You get both sides, polarities; progressive voices that say "We can conquer Everest and we can be the first, we can be the best," but also the "Oh, we're just so small, it doesn't matter."
Thinks the Maori worldview influence all NZ companies to some degree
Maori economy often push the envelope - they have some amazing leaders

| Maori businesses do sustainability because they engage with their roots, worldview - not because the government tells them to |
| As a nation still coming to terms with being a multicultural country and haven't given true room for the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi in our society yet. When we do business and society will flourish. |
| |

3. Interview Questions

1. Deloitte defines CSR as *"the organisational practices that address the impacts of an organisation on society, the economy and the environment - or practices that seek to create positive societal value through core business".* Would you say this resonates with your understanding of your social responsibility and your CSR strategies?

2. What are the main reasons for adopting CSR? If you had to rank the motivations from 1 to 3? (prompts: strengthen your reputation, stakeholder demands, reduce risk, because you signed up to external standards and coalitions)

3. How important would you say it is for your organisation to be seen as following the social and environmental demands of your stakeholders and the NZ society?

4. How do you communicate your CSR initiatives to your stakeholders?

5. How do you navigate between the different expectations of the public, government and other businesses? Do you communicate directly with your stakeholders?

6. To what extent are your organisational initiatives and behaviour influenced by societal expectations? Who gets to have the biggest say in the activities of your organisation?

7. You have signed up to the climate leaders' coalition so you will know a bit about what other companies in New Zealand are doing to become more sustainable. Does this knowledge influence your strategy in sustainability and as a business overall?

8. When did your organisation start to strategically focus on CSR – as in hiring sustainability managers etc? Do you know what was happening at the time when this became a priority?

9. How is your experience with the New Zealand public and their understanding of what CSR means to them?

4. Ethics Approval Letter

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

1 February 2019

Averill Gordon
Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies

Dear Averill

Ethics Application: 19/22 **How are corporate social responsibility (CSR) motivations communicated in New Zealand. A country specific case study through a multi-theoretical analysis**

I wish to advise you that a subcommittee of the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee [AUTEC] has **approved** your ethics application.

This approval is for three years, expiring 1 February 2022.

Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. This application has been made on an old version of the firm. Future applications must be made using the latest version of the form downloaded from our website.

2. Please include a Privacy section on the Information Sheet and advise participants that since there is only a small pool of potential participants who may be known to each other or whose identity might be inferred, only a limited confidentiality is offered.

Non-standard conditions must be completed before commencing your study. Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC before commencing your study.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics.
2. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics.
4. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
5. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation then you are responsible for obtaining it. You are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz

Yours sincerely,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Manager
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: pierce.cathrine@gmail.com

5. Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

28 Jan. 2019

Project Title

"What are the imperatives driving CSR development in NZ: Insights from the top five Deloitte 2018 NZ CSR organisations"

An Invitation

My name is Cathrine Pierce and I invite you to participate in my research into corporate social responsibility (CSR) in New Zealand through a short interview. CSR is a very exiting area and I want to look into the motivations and strategies behind CSR initiatives of NZ organisations. I am very interested to hear about your organisation's experience in this area, and therefore ask if you would be willing to participate in an interview. The interview will be held at your office at a time that suits you and shouldn't take more than an hour. The findings from my research will be used to write a thesis, with the receiving of a Master degree as an end result. I would be very grateful if you choose to participate in my study, however, it would not advantage or disadvantage you if you chose not to participate.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research is being done because the researcher has found a gap in scholarly research when it comes to studying corporate social responsibility (CSR) in New Zealand specifically.

This research will benefit the participants by allowing them an avenue to share their insights and knowledge, based on their own experience. The findings will advance the body of knowledge around CSR in New Zealand, and thus benefit organisations involved in CSR initiatives, and those wanting to take on CSR initiatives in the future.

For the primary researcher, this research will provide the data required to write a thesis for the completion of a Masters of Communications, as well as provide more knowledge on a topic of great interest to the researcher. This will be beneficial in writing academic articles in the future, as well as expanding the body of knowledge in academic public relations research.

In addition to writing a thesis, the findings may result in the publication of an academic journal article, a conference paper or other academic publications or presentations.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

As your organisation is one of the five top CSR performers in New Zealand as determined by Deloitte's 2018 review, you have been chosen to provide further insights into the CSR strategies and communications of your organisation. The top performers are Air New Zealand, THL, Z, Fonterra and Westpac. Your contact details were obtained through LinkedIn.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

I will provide a consent form for you to sign prior to the interview. Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

This project involves researching the current corporate social responsibility (CSR) environment in New Zealand. I will do this by interviewing a manager from each of the top CSR performers in New Zealand. All five organisations will be answering the same set of questions, which will take approximately 60 minutes to go through. Upon agreeing to participate in this study, I will meet you at your office building, where we will go through the interview questions in a quiet room – normally an office or meeting room.

After the interviews are done, I will provide you with a transcript of the interview for you to approve. Once approved, I will review and compare the results and use the findings to write a thesis titled: "How are corporate social responsibility (CSR) motivations communicated in New Zealand?". This thesis will lead to me obtaining a Master in

Communication Studies, and may also lead to me writing a journal article, a conference paper and other academic publications or presentations.

What are the discomforts and risks?

As you or your organisation will not be identified (only referred to with an unidentifiable letter) there will be minimal to no discomfort and risks. You will be able to read and approve the transcript from the interview, and I will respect any organisational practices and confidenciality agreements that is presented to me.

What are the benefits?

This research will advance the body of knowledge of CSR in New Zealand, and thus benefit organisations involved in CSR initiatives, and those wanting to take on CSR initiatives in the future.

For the primary researcher, this research will provide the data required to write a thesis for the completion of a Masters of Communications, as well as provide more knowledge on a topic of great interest to the researcher. This will be beneficial in writing academic articles in the future, as well as benefit academic public relations research.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

In regards to time spent, I have assumed a maximum of one-hour for the interview and approximately 30 minutes for responding to invitation/e-mails and reading this information sheet.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

2 weeks from the day the invitation was received.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you would like a summary of the findings of my research, then please let me know when signing the consent form, and I will provide it to you.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Averill Gordon, averill.gordon@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 extn 6492

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Cathrine Pierce – pierce.cathrine@gmail.com

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Averill Gordon – averill.gordon@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTEC Reference number *type the reference number*.