



**Linnæus University**

Sweden

# Internal Communication of CSR Projects

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*A case-study within a multinational group.*



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# Abstract

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The interest for corporate social responsibility increases with the time and more companies conducts it for every year. The VINCI group is no different and has from 2002 had a Foundation, initially developed in France. However, over the years it has expanded into multiple countries throughout Europe and has now initiated a development of the VINCI UK Foundation with the purpose of fighting social exclusion and isolation. The decentralized company structure and the involvement of multiple subsidiaries demand a high quality of the internal communication regarding the project. That is also what this study will be investigating, how the internal communication of the VINCI UK Foundation was conducted.

This research was conducted via a case study, with the author employed at VINCI Energies UK and RoI, working first hand with the subject whilst also conducting interviews with the people involved.

Multiple perspectives of both corporate social responsibility and internal communication will be discussed and how the initiation was communicated to the employees within the subsidiaries. It is important for organizations to include the real reasons as to why it was initiated, not only providing the reason of being responsible as a company. Since this will develop a skepticism in the minds of the internal stakeholders affecting the trust towards the project, or even towards the organization.

The different interpretation of what corporate social responsibility is, alongside with how the subsidiaries conduct their internal communication on a daily basis, resulted in that the information regarding the VINCI UK Foundation was communicated differently. For the years to come it could be important for the subsidiaries involved to meet prior to communicating the information in order to determine a code of conduct. This is important to develop a united front.

**Keywords:** Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR, Internal Communication, Message Content, CSR development, Case Study, United Kingdom, Charity

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<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>6</b>
1.1. BACKGROUND.....	6
1.2. PRIOR KNOWLEDGE .....	7
1.3. PROBLEM DISCUSSION .....	9
1.4. PURPOSE .....	11
1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	11
1.6. TARGETED AUDIENCE.....	11
<b>2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b> .....	<b>12</b>
2.1. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY .....	12
2.1.1. <i>Definition</i> .....	12
2.1.2. <i>CSR Commitment, Impact, and Motives</i> .....	13
2.1.3. <i>Trust</i> .....	15
2.1.4. <i>Stakeholders Definition</i> .....	16
2.1.5. <i>Communication of CSR</i> .....	17
2.2. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION.....	18
2.2.1. <i>Definition</i> .....	18
2.2.2. <i>Four Internal Communication Domains</i> .....	19
2.2.3. <i>Rethinking Internal Communication</i> .....	21
2.2.4. <i>Internal vs. External Environment from an internal communications perspective</i> .....	23
<b>3. METHOD</b> .....	<b>24</b>
3.1. CHOSEN METHOD.....	24
3.2. DEDUCTIVE VS. INDUCTIVE APPROACH.....	25
3.3. QUALITATIVE VS. QUANTITATIVE APPROACH.....	26
3.4. RESEARCH DESIGN.....	27
3.4.1. <i>Experimental Design</i> .....	27
3.4.2. <i>Cross Sectional Design</i> .....	28
3.4.3. <i>Case Study</i> .....	28
3.5. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES.....	29
3.5.1. <i>Harm to Participants</i> .....	29
3.5.2. <i>Lack of Informed Consent</i> .....	30
3.5.3. <i>Invasion of Privacy</i> .....	30
3.5.4. <i>Deception</i> .....	31
3.6. RESEARCH APPROACH .....	31
3.6.1. <i>Primary Information</i> .....	31
3.6.2. <i>Ethnographic Inspiration</i> .....	32
3.6.3. <i>Participant Observations</i> .....	32
3.6.4. <i>Qualitative Interviews</i> .....	33
3.6.5. <i>Employee Selection for Interviews</i> .....	34
3.6.6. <i>Questionnaire</i> .....	35
3.7. DATA ANALYSIS .....	36
3.8. QUALITY CRITERIA .....	36
3.8.1. <i>Validity</i> .....	36
3.8.2. <i>Reliability</i> .....	36
<b>4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>37</b>

4.1. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION.....	37
4.1.1. <i>Definition</i> .....	37
4.1.2. <i>How Internal Communication is conducted in the VINCI group</i> .....	38
4.1.3. <i>How Internal Communication is conducted in the VINCI subsidiaries</i> .....	40
4.1.4. <i>Development of internal communication</i> .....	42
4.2. CSR.....	43
4.2.1. <i>Definition of CSR</i> .....	43
4.2.2. <i>CSR activities prior to the Foundation</i> .....	45
4.2.3. <i>VINCI UK Foundation</i> .....	46
4.2.4. <i>Communication about the Foundation</i> .....	49
4.2.5. <i>Response to the Foundation</i> .....	50
<b>5. ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>52</b>
5.1. DEFINITION OF THE TWO CONCEPTS .....	52
5.1.1. <i>CSR</i> .....	52
5.1.2. <i>Internal communication</i> .....	53
5.2. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF CONDUCTING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION .....	55
5.3. MOTIVATION FOR INITIATING THE UK FOUNDATION .....	56
5.4. CSR REASONS AFFECTING TRUST .....	58
5.5. COMMUNICATION OF THE VINCI UK FOUNDATION .....	59
<b>6. CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>62</b>
6.1. FINAL DISCUSSION .....	62
6.2. CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE STUDY .....	63
6.3. FURTHER RESEARCH .....	64
<b>7. REFERENCE LIST.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2.....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3.....</b>	<b>73</b>

# 1. Introduction

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*In this chapter, the topic of the paper as well as why this topic is an important field of research will be discussed. A clear purpose of the paper will be stated as well as who the research paper might be of interest for.*

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## 1.1. Background

For the last couple of years, many researchers have started to focus their research in the area of corporate social responsibility (henceforth referred to as CSR), and the effects it can bring forth (Homburg, et al., 2013; Lai, et al, 2010; Arendt and Brettel, 2010; Han and Childs, 2016; Skudiene and Auruskeviciene, 2012). The research topic of CSR has received a higher interest from both practitioners as well as theorists over the past years (Skudiene and Auruskeviciene, 2012). Arendt and Brettel (2010) states that it has become a mainstream topic, going towards top priority within management as well as in marketing. However, keeping in mind that the topic have grown in popularity and interest and the number of articles have increased in this area, there have been problems with defining what is included in CSR (Arendt and Brettel, 2010; Skudiene and Auruskeviciene, 2012). Referring back to Dahlsrud's (2008) research paper where 37 definitions of CSR was analyzed, showing the multiple interpretations that exists for CSR in the academic world, making it difficult to define the term with one sentence covering it from all aspects. However, this will however be explained more in detail in chapter 2.1.

More and more companies are starting to invest into CSR activities, Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) states that more than 80% of the companies on Fortune 500 are now conducting CSR activities and are not short in communicating these activities. According to Han and Childs (2016), the high number of companies addressing CSR is because it is not only seen as an ethical aspect, but also as an economic benefit. It has developed into a vital aspect for any company to conduct if they are to become a market leader within their sector (Local Coordinators, Personal Communication). However, from a marketing perspective, there is a lack of evidence regarding the possible outcomes CSR can have with companies within the

business to business (henceforth referred to as B2B) market (Ganesan, et al. 2009; Sharma et al. 2010).

These recent investments into a CSR initiative of companies within the VINCI Group, started in July 2015 (Local Coordinator, Personal Communication), opened a position within the company VINCI Energies UK and RoI, assisting in the development of the VINCI UK Foundation. Employed in this position, the opportunity to investigate how the development of a newly initiated CSR project is conducted revealed itself. The usage of a partner company gave first hand practical information to the research as well as a possibility to go into depth within the subject (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

## **1.2. Prior Knowledge**

Originally from France, the VINCI Group operates through multiple business areas, employing over 185 000 individuals in over 100 countries (VINCI Essentials, 2016). During 2015, VINCI Group was able to reach €38.5 billion in revenue, resulting in a net income of €2.046 million (VINCI Essentials, 2016) In order for the VINCI Group to be able divide their expertise accordingly, the group have been divided into a number of subsidiaries (see Appendix 1), for example;

- VINCI Autoroutes
- VINCI Airports
- VINCI Concessions
- VINCI Energies
- Eurovia
- VINCI Construction

Each of these subsidiaries has their main focus on individual business lines, covering everything from energy, telecommunication, construction, traveling, etc. The daughter companies are located in multiple countries throughout the world.

However, this study will focus on the subsidiaries in the VINCI Group which are located in the UK (henceforth referred to as VINCI UK). Within the UK, the subsidiaries have a turnover of approximately £2 000 000 000 altogether, representing 6% of VINCI's total turnover and 30% of VINCI European turnover (VINCI Construction UK, n.d.). This is

accomplished through the 9000 employees that are working for the UK subsidiaries (ibid.). A full structure of the VINCI subsidiaries operating within the UK can be found in Appendix 2.

VINCI France developed a foundation in 2002 named “Foundation VINCI pour la Cité” but has since then expanded into 11 countries (VINCI UK Foundation, n.d.). Since the start of 2002, 1423 projects have been supported, £17 000 000 has been given in funding and over 18 000 VINCI employees have been involved in the development of the supported project (ibid.). VINCI UK has recently decided to invest into the development of a foundation, joining their sister Foundation throughout Europe. The foundation within the UK (henceforth referred to as the UK Foundation) is currently in its first year and is a collaboration between six of the subsidiaries located in the UK. Each of the subsidiaries appointed a so called local coordinator whose assignment was to market the UK Foundation inwardly as well as gathering and developing the applications from their respective subsidiary. The six subsidiaries involved are;

- VINCI Energies UK and RoI
- VINCI Construction UK
- VINCI Construction Grand Projet UK
- VINCI Concessions UK
- Eurovia UK
- Bachy Soletanche UK

For an overview of the companies involved within the VINCI UK Foundation, see table 1 below displaying the name, examples of industries and the revenue from 2015.

Company Name	Example of Industries	Turnover 2015
<b>VINCI Energies</b>	Telecommunication Industry Infrastructure	£140 Million
<b>VINCI Construction</b>	Civil Engineering Facilities Building	£1 Billion
<b>VINCI Construction Grand Projet</b>	Transport Infrastructure Energy Building	€1.4 Billion*
<b>VINCI Concessions</b>	Highway and Road Infrastructure Airports Rail	€5.8 Billion*
<b>Bachy Soletanche</b>	Piling and Ground Improvement for the Building and Civil Engineering Industries**	£110 Million
<b>Eurovia</b>	S&M Infrastructure Schemes Specialist Treatments Highway Maintenance	£701 Million

Table 1

*Source: The Author, with information from respondents*

*\*Total turnover for subsidiary, did not disclose figures for UK only.*

*\*\*What activities the company conducts.*

### 1.3. Problem Discussion

Previous studies have shown that there is a lack of research of CSR in the B2B market (Lai, et al, 2010; Han and Childs, 2016). The research that does exist has its main focus on the external effects that the CSR activities bring (Homburg, et al., 2013; Lai, et al, 2010; Arendt and Brettel, 2010; Han and Childs, 2016). The topics of the external effects covers customer reaction (Homburg, et al., 2013); brand performance (Lai, et al, 2010; Arendt and Brettel, 2010); corporate identity (Arendt and Brettel, 2010); as well as on customers trust (Han and Childs, 2016). There is not as much previous research that focuses in the internal effects of a company's CSR activities. Skudiene and Auruskeviciene (2012) conducted one of the few studies that examined on the internal effect that a company's CSR activities can bring forth, focusing on how the motivation of the employees are affected. Also, the majority of the previous research within a B2B context has its focus on the end benefits that CSR initiatives

can bring back to the company (Homburg, et al., 2013; Lai, et al, 2010; Arendt and Brettel, 2010; Han and Childs, 2016; Skudiene and Auruskeviciene, 2012). There appears to be a lack of research regarding the process to reach the wanted benefits.

“Accordingly, [...] communicating CSR is a very delicate matter, and a key challenge of CSR communication is how to minimize stakeholder skepticism and to convey intrinsic motives in a company’s CSR activities.” (Du, et al., 2010, p.10). There is an assumption that CSR is invested into as a tool towards reaching a company’s economic goals (Aupperle et al., 1985; Luo and Bhattacharya, 2009; McGuire et al., 1988; Varadarajan and Menon, 1988), however the discussion whether or not to invest into CSR activities has shifted beyond a profit making scenario to a efficiency scenario (Han and Childs, 2016). In other words, whether CSR should be considered as investments to benefit the company’s long-term performance, due to the recent marketing research showing links between psychological and behavioral outcomes with the concept of CSR (ibid.).

Although CSR activities are nothing new for either of the subsidiaries, it is the first time they are involved in a CSR project of this size (Local Coordinators, Personal Communication), bringing them together to this degree with one project (Previous Intern, Personal Communication). Some activities initiated prior to the UK Foundation, according to the interviewees, were seen and conducted with teambuilding as a first priority (Previous Intern, Personal Communication), others are also covering issues within the environmental and health and safety aspects (Local Coordinators, Personal Communication; Secretary, Personal Communication). This would include measuring and reducing the carbon footprint (how much carbon dioxide is released to the atmosphere), safety measures, recycling, training in everyday safety, etc. (Local Coordinators, Personal Communication; Secretary, Personal Communication).

In regards to that multiple subsidiaries are involved, each with their own locations spread out over the UK and RoI, making them all decentralized the internal communication of the UK Foundation is important to conduct effectively (Local Coordinators, Personal Communication; Secretary, Personal Communication). This since the communication will not always be possible to conduct face to face and that will, in turn, increase the risk of misunderstanding (Local Coordinator, Personal Communication). According to Du et al. (2010), all potential recipients will respond differently to any given message, based on the communication tools used and their own expectations.

## **1.4. Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to investigate how to conduct the internal communication of CSR initiation.

## **1.5. Research Questions**

From the discussion above, research questions was established in regards to the research topic;

- How is CSR initiation communicated within each subsidiary?
- How does one handle the potential problem of skepticism towards underlying motives regarding CSR investment?
- How does decentralized company structure effect the internal communication?

## **1.6. Targeted Audience**

This research will be of interest for companies developing, as well as expanding, their CSR activities since it studies the development of the VINCI UK Foundation. Especially interesting it will be for decentralized organizations due to the partner company in focus for this case study. It would also be interesting for companies and managers from a communication perspective, specifically internal communication. This is because this study investigates different aspects regarding the two subjects and merges them together; showing a step in the process towards the benefits CSR activities can bring to an organization.

This report might also be of interest for any individual with an interest towards communication, CSR or sustainability.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

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*Throughout this chapter, theories and concepts will be brought up and discussed from previous research.*

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### 2.1. Corporate Social Responsibility

#### 2.1.1. Definition

As mentioned above, previous researchers have provided multiple definitions CSR. According to Vaarland et al. (2008), CSR is defined as the concern of the management of stakeholders to act with regards to ethical, environmental and social aspects in order to bring benefits back to the company. Lichtenstein et al. (2004) define CSR as a firm's commitment to contribute a part of its profit towards charities, foundations and other nonprofit organizations. These two definitions differ in two major ways. Firstly, whilst the definition from Lichtenstein et al. (2004) has limited CSR towards charities and foundations, the definition from Vaarland et al. (2008) defines CSR as involving ethical, environmental and social aspect, making it broader than the former. Involving ethical and environmental aspects, alongside the social, gives the possibility to categorise many more activities as CSR activities. Secondly, according to the definition from Vaarland et al. (2008), the activities a company undertakes within CSR aim at bringing profit back to the company. That would imply that the actions are made from a business point of view and seen as an investment for future revenue.

Davis (1973, p.312) defines CSR as “[...] the firm's consideration of, and response to, issues beyond the narrow economic, technical, and legal requirements of the firm.” Sacconi (2004) as well as Werther and Chandler (2006) have their own definitions of the term. Sacconi (2004, p.6) states that CSR is “[...] a model of extended corporate governance who run a firm (entrepreneurs, directors, managers) and have responsibilities that range from fulfillment of their fiduciary duties towards the owners to fulfillment of analogous fiduciary duties towards all the firm's stakeholders.” whereas the explanation stated by Werther and Chandler (2006, p.7) is that “CSR is a broad concept that businesses are more than just profit-seeking entities and, therefore, have an obligation to benefit society. CSR should be integrated into a firm's

strategic perspective and operations because it brings a long-term benefit to the organization.” Compared to the definitions discussed in the first paragraph of 2.1.1., these definitions/explanations are broader and less specific. For example, looking at Davis (1973) definition, it says that any activity that the organization conducts, not bound from a legal, technical, or economical- perspective, is a classified as CSR activity. Or looking at how Werther and Chandler (2006) start their explanation of CSR by stating that it is a broad concept. However, they do continue on to state that a firm’s investments into CSR activities will return as long-term benefits, which goes along the same line as Vaarland et al. (2008).

However, this report will mainly be following the definition presented by Lichtenstein et al. (2004) stating that CSR is a firm’s commitment to contribute a part of its profit towards charities, foundations and other nonprofit organizations. This is because it is the most fitting definition given the nature of the CSR activities that the companies of interests are conducting with the Foundation. The work of the Foundation is towards charitable projects involved in the fight against social exclusion.

## **2.1.2. CSR Commitment, Impact, and Motives**

### **2.1.2.1. CSR Commitment**

“A company can focus on its commitment to a social cause in various ways, including donating funds, in-kind contributions or providing other corporate resources such as marketing expertise, human capital (e.g. employee volunteering), and R&D capability dedicated to a cause.” (Du et al., 2010, p.11). Dwyver et al. (1987) argues that there are multiple aspects to take into account regarding commitment, such as;

- *The amount of input* - for instance time, money, etc.
- *The durability of the association* - for instance the amount of time a company has been committed.
- *The consistency of the input* - how consistent the company is in its commitment. For instance, donating the same amount of money every year.

### **2.1.2.2. CSR Impact**

Du et al. (2010) argues that instead of measuring the input aspect of a company's CSR activities, the measuring should be regarding the result of the input. In other words, how a company's investments into CSR activities impacts the society and the actual benefits that it will bring towards the targeted audience of a social cause. Focusing on the result from the CSR investments, and doing so in a low-key manner, is also effective in regards to the marketing strategy, since it decreases the impression of bragging from the company (Sen et al., 2009).

### **2.1.2.3. CSR Motives**

As discussed in the introductory chapter, there is an old assumption perceiving CSR activities as a tool for companies to bring back profit. Du et al. (2010) asked the question if a company should emphasize their solely intrinsic motivation, or to be honest regarding the business benefits as well when communicating the CSR investments. Maignan and Ralston (2002) conducted a research in regards to this topic which gave mixed results, showing that there are companies that communicate both their intrinsic motivation and companies that communicate their extrinsic motivation. Webb and Mohr (1998) argue that the durability of support can be used as an indication regarding the motivations of the firm. Where long-term commitments will be perceived as a genuine concern from the organization towards the welfare of the society and/or community, and short-term commitments is more connected to an exploit for the company to bring back more profit.

Other research has shown that acknowledging a motivation regarding both aspects of initial investment into CSR will result in a higher acceptance and decreasing in skepticism from stakeholders (Foreh and Grier, 2003). Ellen et al. (2006) argues that consumers have a tendency to perceive multiple motives from the company regarding the CSR initiatives, no matter what is communicated. Therefore, stated by Porter and Kramer (2007), a company should acknowledge that the motivation for the CSR initiatives will be from both internal (feeling of responsibility) and external (bringing back profit) reasons.

### 2.1.3. Trust

Previous research has started to show that the decision making process within the B2B market is not only based on objective aspect but rather is affected by more intangible aspects, such as a supplier's brand (Brown et al., 2011). In addition, Williamson (1993) states that in general relational economic exchanges trust plays an important role, especially in regards to business to business relationships (Dwyer et al., 1987). Trust reflects on a party's benevolence, trustworthiness as well as their integrity (Mayer et al., 1995) According to Ganesan (1994), trust should be viewed from two different aspects; *credibility* and *benevolence*. Credibility is explained, by Ganesan and Hess (1997, p.440), as “[...] a focal partner's intention and ability to keep promises and deals with partner characteristics such as task specific competencies, reliability in the delivery of goods and services, and predictability in terms of job related behavior.” Benevolence, on the other hand, is explained as “[...] the qualities, intentions, and characteristics attributed to the focal partner that demonstrate a genuine concern and care for the partner through sacrifices that exceed a purely egocentric profit motive.” (Ganesan and Hess, 1997, p.440).

CSR activities will arouse some emotional perceptions for the company in the eyes of current and potential customers (Lai, et al, 2010). Therefore it is important for companies not to only talk about their supposed CSR activities without actually conducting them to the full extent - so called greenwashing (Arendt and Brettel, 2010). Greenwashing is a term used when companies are misleading (potential) customers regarding the company's work towards environmental issues (Delmas and Burbano, 2011). Arendt and Brettel (2010) argue that the suspicion for greenwashing of companies and the underlying motives of the firms arrive from the many different and broad definitions of CSR. The fact that the suspicion of greenwashing or companies not living up to their word on CSR activities still exists says that the CSR activities affect the credibility of the company in question. Du et al. (2010) explains that the more the customers understands the underlying motives of a company's CSR activities, the more willing they will become in developing a win-win perspective. Trust does play an important role within B2B relationships and will affect the efficiency of a firm's marketing as well as relationships commitment and continuity (Han and Childs, 2016).

## 2.1.4 Stakeholders Definition

According to Du et al. (2010), the recipients of CSR communication are the stakeholders. Stakeholders are, in Dawkins (2005) article, classified into two types; *Opinion-leader Audiences* and *The General Public*.

### 2.1.4.1. Opinion-leader Audiences

The stakeholders which Dawkins (2005) classifies as an opinion-leader audiences type include;

- Business press
- Investors
- Non-governmental organizations (NGO's).

It is not uncommon that opinion-leader audience stakeholders work proactively to investigate how specific companies work with CSR, in order to build up a clear picture for each company (Du et al., 2010). These CSR 'experts' look for trends, targets, indicators, etc. in a detailed manner and would therefore, e.g., thoroughly study a company's CSR reports. However, Du et al. (2010) state, with regards to the investors, that no everyone within the opinion-leader audiences has their main focus as the CSR 'experts'. The investors are more interested in the company's shareholders value and would therefore focus their attention towards the business aspects of the CSR activities. "Accordingly, when communicating CSR to this stakeholder group, companies should explicitly discuss the business impact of their CSR activities, and how their social initiatives are linked to key business metrics such as customer equity, employee retention, corporate governance and risk management." (Du et al., 2010, p.16).

### 2.1.4.2. The General Public

Within the general public stakeholder type, Dawkins (2005) argues that customers and local communities most often do not proactively seek CSR information about a company, not even with subjects close to their respective hearts. The most effective two ways for companies to reach the general public is to use a variety of communication channels, or to focus on one or two highly relevant channels (Du et al., 2010). They continue on by arguing that the communication channels usable to reach the general public are most likely independent channels and include;

- Tv
- Press
- Stakeholder word-to-mouth
- Corporate communication channels
  - Marketing campaigns
  - Advertising
  - Point of purchase information (e.g. printing CSR information on product)

### 2.1.5. Communication of CSR

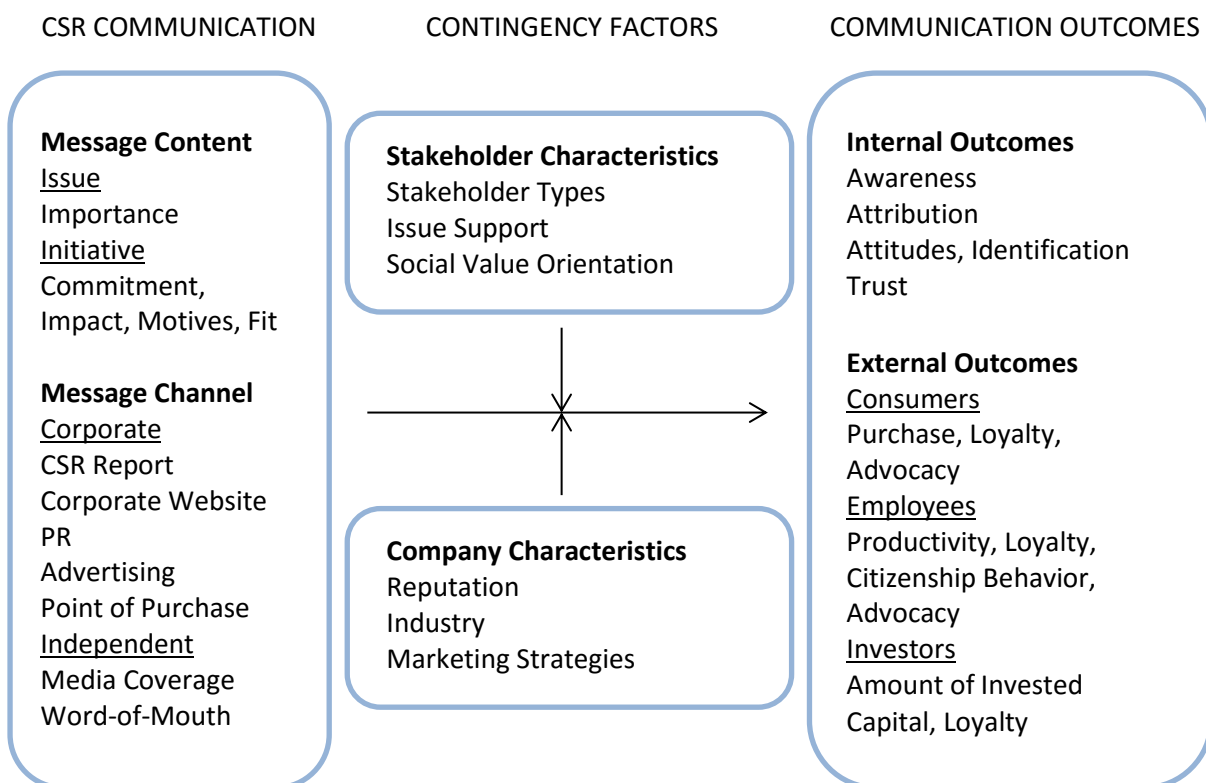
One unique aspect with CSR is the recipients of the communication, since it can reach all parties recalled as a stakeholder (Dawkins, 2005). Du et al. (2010), states that each of these potential recipients will have different expectations of the business and different needs of information which will result in different responses. Another factor, affecting the response of the potential recipients, is which channel is used when communicating (ibid.). Foreh and Grier (2003) argues that no negative response can be achieved from the actual CSR activities per se, but towards the usage of CSR activities in marketing strategies, making the marketing manipulative or deceiving. Friestad and Wright (1994) agrees with the previous statement by arguing that a CSR message should still have its main focus on either the company or the products, rather than a social issue. Because if a CSR message is predominantly about a social issue, the risk for suspicions of other motives with customers will increase. To work against this, Menon and Kahn (2003), states that it is important for companies to emphasize their CSR activities which are not directly related to the business the company conducts.

Du et al. (2010) presents, in their paper, a conceptual framework model regarding CSR communication (see model 1). Within this model it is possible to see what the message should include and the channels it can be sent through, as well as what will influence the interpretation of the CSR message (see *contingency factors* in model 1). Last but not least, possible outcomes are identified, divided into internal and external outcomes. Internal outcomes include aspects such as;

- Awareness
- Attributions
- Attitudes/Identification
- Trust.

Within the external outcomes, Du et al. (2010) have included;

- *Consumers* - including a possible increase in purchase, loyalty and advocacy
- *Employees* - including a possible increase in productivity, loyalty, citizenship behavior, etc.
- *Investors* - including a possible increase in the amount of investment capital and loyalty.



Model 1

Source: Du et al., 2010

## 2.2. Internal Communication

### 2.2.1. Definition

In order to comprehend what internal communication encompasses, existing definitions will be reviewed and discussed. The first definition discussed by Welch and Jackson (2007) defines internal communication from a stakeholder's perspective and states that it regards

how a particular organization manages all interactions between people with an interest or impact that occurs within the organization. This definition places its focus on the handling and management of the interactions within an organization. However, Welch and Jackson (2007) argue that since the result of interactions is relationships, meaning it is vital to include relationship when defining internal communication. They also discuss the issue brought to life by Cherney and Christensen (2001) saying that internal and external communication do not exist as two different fields and should instead be view together as organizational communication. However, they continue to explain that external organizational communication includes public relations, issue management as well as marketing, whilst employee relations, organizational development and mission statements are part of internal communication.

Kalla (2005) explains that when discussing communication within an organization it should be mentioned in a plural sense since it implies multiple interactions within a firm. Continuing, Kalla (2005), define internal communications as “[...] all formal and informal communication taking place internally at all levels of an organization.” (p.304). According to both Burgess (2005) and Ghosal et al. (1994), internal communication is identified as one of the essential parts in increasing a firm's effectivity, due to the ability to share knowledge. This resulting in not only benefits towards employees, increasing their satisfaction and productivity, but can also give an organization a competitive advantage in the external positive contributions the well-informed employees are able to make (White et al. 2010; Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta, 2012)

The definition from Kalla (2005) will be the one followed throughout this paper due to its focus on both the formal and informal perspectives on communication. Saying that it is not only, e.g., emails, formal statements, or conversations during meetings that should be classified as internal communication, but instead all interactions within the company and its organizational culture.

### **2.2.2. Four Internal Communication Domains**

Kalla (2005) presents four domains that are included in internal communication or, in other words, subcategories of internal communication. The four domains discussed in her article are;

- *Business Communication*
- *Management Communication*
- *Corporate Communication*
- *Organizational Communication*

### **2.2.2.1. Business Communication**

Reinsch (1996, p.28) states that business communication is a practical-science and defines it as “[...] the use, adaptation, and creation of languages, symbols, and signs to conduct activities that satisfy human needs and wants by providing goods and services for private profit.” However, Kalla (2005) states that many authors that use the term business communication have a tendency to refer to more specific skills such as letter writing, for instance. Easily said, business communication focuses on communication skills of the employees within an organization.

### **2.2.2.2. Management Communication**

According to Kalla (2005), management communication is in regards to the development of managers’ communication capabilities and skills. In other words, it could be regarded as “[...] the development of the knowledge sharing skills of managers.” (Kalla, 2005, p.305). Communication as a competence is an important part of any managers since communication to subordinates does take up a lot of the manager’s time, also affecting the employee’s job satisfaction (ibid.). Kalla (2005) argues that business letter writing, use of graphic aids, oral presentations, and listening is all part of a manager's everyday tasks and should therefore be skills to constantly develop.

### **2.2.2.3. Corporate Communication**

The focus of the corporate communication domain is, according to Kalla (2005, p.305), “[...] on the formal corporate communication function [...]”. Argenti and Forman (2002) states that corporate communication is the voice, and the images, given from the organization towards the various audiences on the world stage. Kalla (2005) argues that all the various internal and external communication functions could be included into corporate communication, and therefore internal communication should be referred to as employee relations.

### 2.2.2.4. Organizational Communication

Organizational Communication has its focus on philosophical and theoretical issues (Kalla, 2005). Tourish and Hargie (2004, p.10) states that organizational communication is “how people ascribe meanings to messages, verbal and nonverbal communication, communication skills, the effectiveness of communication in organizations, and how meanings are distorted or changed while people exchange messages, in both formal and informal networks.”

### 2.2.3. Rethinking Internal Communication

Welsh and Jackson (2007) discussed the aspect of internal communication and according to them there was a need to rethink the whole process and how it should be viewed. With this in mind, a model was developed and explained (see table 2).

Dimension	Level	Direction	Participants	Content
<b>1. Internal line management communication</b>	Line managers/supervisors	Predominantly two-way	Line managers-employees	Employees’ roles Personal impact, e.g. appraisal discussions, team briefings Team Information, e.g. team task discussions
<b>2. Internal team peer</b>	Team colleagues	Two-way	Employee-employee	Team information, e.g. team task discussion
<b>3. Internal project peer</b>	Project group colleagues	Two-way	Employee-employee	Project information, e.g. project issues
<b>4. Internal corporate communication</b>	Strategic managers/top management	Predominantly one-way	Strategic managers-all employees	Organizational/corporate issues, e.g. goals, objectives, new developments, activities and achievements

Table 2

Source: Welch and Jackson, 2007.

According to Welch and Jackson's (2007) model, four dimensions of internal communication exists;

1. *Internal Line Management Communication* - appears at every level within the company as the senior managers also have to answer to their superiors. The communication within this dimension is two-way and is with regards towards employee roles as well as "[...] the impact of their personal communication." (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p.185). However, the day-to-day communication regarding target-setting, access to resources, appraisal meetings, human resource management, and financial management are also included within this dimension. This has also been called superior-subordinate communication by previous researchers
2. *Internal Team peer Communication* - is a two-way communication method, taking place within teams of the organization, including managers as well as employees. However, in this sense it should be considered as either peer-to-peer or employee-to-employee since the participants are within the same group. The discussion revolves around the task that the team has been set out to finish (Welch and Jackson, 2007).
3. *Internal Project peer Communication* - involves employees working on specific projects. The discussions are regarding the project issues and are conducted in a two-way manner. Participants within this dimension can include both managers and employees, but since they are part of the same project the communication should all be viewed as employee-to-employee (Welch and Jackson, 2007).
4. *Internal Corporate Communication* - Welch and Jackson (2007, p.186) define internal corporate communication as "[...] communication between an organization's strategic managers and its internal stakeholders, designed to promote commitment to the organization, a sense of belonging to it, awareness of its changing environment and understanding of its evolving aims." It derives from a more broad perspective as its focus is on communication to all employees within the organization. Due to the fact that this dimension is mainly conducted in a one-way direction, it is emphasized that the information communicated is "[...] clear, consistent and continuous [...]" for the improvement of building employee engagement (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p.186); a statement also made by Saks (2006).

#### **2.2.4. Internal vs. External Environment from an internal communications perspective**

It is important to take the internal environment into consideration when discussing internal communication, since, according to Welch and Jackson (2007), it generates the climate and atmosphere where the communication will occur. They separate the different environments into external and internal. First considering the external environment, it can be divided into macro and micro forces. The macro forces consist of economical, political, social, technological and legal parties and do not affect the organization in a direct manner (ibid.). The micro forces consist of customers, suppliers, competitors, etc., in other words parties that are more closely related to the organization and can directly affect it (ibid.). However, the internal environment involves aspects of the “[...] organization’s structure, processes, culture and subcultures, organization behavior such as management and leadership style, employee relations and internal communication.” (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p.191).

The aspect of internal environment helps to understand the context in which the communication occurs (Anderson and West, 1998; Smidts et al., 2001; Chen and Lin, 2004). Welch and Jackson (2007) continue on by saying that aspects such as culture and attitude towards communication systems will have an effect on the climate in which the communication takes place. Climate is explained as the environment where the communication takes place and is influenced by both individual psychological and shared psychological contracts (Welch and Jackson, 2007; Smidts et al., 2001).

# 3. Method

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*In this chapter, the chosen method in order to conduct the research will be explained. Firstly a summary of the chosen approach will be explained followed by an explanation of each concept and term mentioned in the chosen approach and why they were chosen.*

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## 3.1. Chosen Method

Considering the breadth of the terminology of CSR (Arendt and Brettel, 2010; Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Vaarland et al., 2008; Skudiene and Auruskeviciene, 2012; Davis, 1973; Werther and Chandler, 2006), this study followed an inductive research approach. This gave the possibility to build up the knowledge and gather the information regarding the subject without any prior theories in mind (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The chosen strategy for this research was qualitative. This was mainly due to the possibility to go more in depth within the subject, identifying not only the level of internal communication needed to comprehend the CSR activities, but also the process, positives and negatives of the relationship, etc. All of which would not have been possible to the full extent with the statistical result of a quantitative strategy. Another reason was also the position of the researcher and the possibility to conduct observations at the same time during the information collection phase.

The empirical information was mainly gathered through the combination of two approaches; *participant observation* and *semi-structured qualitative interviews*. The participant observation was chosen due to the researcher's position within the company, as discussed earlier, which opened up the access to gather first hand practical information regarding the research subject at hand. This participant observation was conducted over a period of two and a half months, ending with the deadline for applications to the Foundation. Alongside this, semi-structured interviews were conducted to complement the information gathered through the observation, as well as to receive the perspective regarding the subject from the six local coordinators, located at the different subsidiaries, participating in the Foundation. However, two local coordinators was not met for a face to face interview and was only sent the questions (alongside the main follow-up questions from previous interviews) via email, thus eliminating the possibility to take notice of their non-verbal communication.

Besides the four local coordinators, the secretary of the Foundation, who also had the overall responsibility of the development of the Foundation, as well as the former intern were also interviewed, resulting in a total of six interviews (4 Local Coordinators, 1 Secretary, 1 Former Intern). However, the interview with the former intern was conducted over the telephone. The questions were organized into three different subsections for the sake of covering all areas as well as giving the questions a focus. Due to that two potential respondents for interviews were not able to sit down for an interview, questionnaires was developed based on the already conducted interviews and distributed. To be able to compare the perspectives of the participants with the practical actions and activities conducted by the company, the interviews was conducted and questionnaires was sent out whilst the participant observations was still ongoing.

Analysis of the collected information was conducted by a constant comparison, developed by Bryman and Bell (2011), which gave the possibility to keep a close relationship between data and conceptualization. During the data analysis, previous research was reviewed and theories were found for comparison.

### **3.2. Deductive vs. Inductive Approach**

A deductive research is built up in the following way: researchers start by investigating previous research and analyze what has been done beforehand (Bryman and Bell, 2011). They continue by explaining that from the previous work, hypotheses are drawn, basically stating what the result will show, which then either will be proven or rejected from an information collection and analysis. Final result of such research continues to build on what previous research has already started to investigate. Inductive research, however, starts with observations or other findings and performs an analysis on these and finishing by going back and finding subsidence in previous research and theories (Bryman and Bell, 2011). They continue with arguing that “There are several reasons why a researcher’s view of the theory or literature may change as a result of the analysis of the collected data:

- new theoretical ideas or findings may be published by others before the researcher has generated his or her findings;
- the relevance of a set of data for a theory may become apparent only after the data have been collected;
- the data may not fit with the original hypotheses.” (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.12).

This study followed an inductive research approach, however not to the full extent. Empirical information was collected before the research of theoretical information, however, an understanding of the two concepts, CSR and internal communication, was collected first. This to be able to have a basic understating of what is included in the areas as well as being able to conduct a more severe discussion with the interviewees.

### **3.3. Qualitative vs. Quantitative Approach**

A qualitative research focuses more on in depth information gathering from a lower number of participants (Hollensen, 2014). Utilizing a qualitative approach provides the possibility to receive a complex documentary description of how individuals experience a specific research topic (Saunders et. al., 2009). In comparison, a quantitative research involves focusing on a large number of respondents with little information from each participant (Hollensen, 2014). This information is often resulting in statistical numbers rather than words (Bryman and Bell, 2011). They continue on by stating that it a quantitative approach is often combined together with a deductive research approach.

The absolute main difference between a quantitative and a qualitative research is within the result of the information collected where a quantitative gives a result based on numbers and statistics (Creswell, 2014), whereas a qualitative research results in worded information collected (Jacobsen 2002). Creswell (2014) continues to argue that the result of a quantitative research is easily interpreted and analyzed, as long as the purpose is close at hand. It is not uncommon that a quantitative research is utilized when conducting a marketing research (Kotler and Armstrong, 2014). Bryman and Bell (2011) explain that within a qualitative research the result is given in text, which is later analyzed in order to reach a more in-depth understanding than in a quantitative research. For an easy differentiation, see table 3 below.

<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>
<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Words</i>
<i>Point of view of Researcher</i>	<i>Point of view of Participants</i>
<i>Research Distant</i>	<i>Research Close</i>
<i>Theory testing</i>	<i>Theory Emergent</i>
<i>Static</i>	<i>Process</i>
<i>Structured</i>	<i>Unstructured</i>
<i>Generalization</i>	<i>Contextual Understanding</i>
<i>Hard, Reliable Data</i>	<i>Rich, Deep Data</i>
<i>Macro</i>	<i>Mirco</i>
<i>Behavior</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
<i>Artificial Settings</i>	<i>Natural Setting</i>

Table 3

Source: Bryman and Bell, 2011

For this study, a qualitative research approach was chosen. This was because of the broad definitions that exists the two concepts of internal communication and CSR, giving the option to receive more depth information regarding the subjects. Also, in reference to the purpose being to study and explore a process between the two subjects, the qualitative research approach was the most appropriate one.

### **3.4. Research Design**

#### **3.4.1. Experimental Design**

Experimental research design implies to the use of two groups of respondents, one experimental and one control group, with the participants unaware of which group they belong to (Bryman and Bell, 2011). It is designed in that the experimental group receives the treatment, and is then compared to the control group which does not receive the treatment in question (ibid.). “The dependent variable is measured before and after the experimental manipulation, so that a before-and-after analysis can be conducted.” (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.45).

This research design would not have fit this study since it would not have been possible to differentiate the subsidiaries involved into only two different groups. This because of that there were not only two different ways of conduct. Also, there was no treatment provided to the participants and respondents involved in the study.

### **3.4.2. Cross Sectional Design**

Also called a social survey design, the cross sectional design connected together with conducting surveys and structured interviewing (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, the authors continue with stating that it includes other research methods as well, for instance structured observation, official statistics, diaries, etc. Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 53) define cross sectional design as “[...] the collection of data on more than one case (usually quite a lot more than one) and at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables (usually many more than two), which are then examined to detect patterns of association.” They continue on with emphasizing that the quantitative or qualitative information is collected simultaneously, from the multiple variables identified for the study. The variables could be people, organizations, locations, etc. and it is common that more than two variables are chosen for one study for the increase in variation and distinction between the cases (ibid.).

### **3.4.3. Case Study**

“The basic case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case.” is the way that Bryman and Bell (2011, p.59) start to explain the concept, which also defines it in a simple and direct manner. However, it also brings up the discussion of what could be seen as a case. Bryman and Bell (2011) explains that a case can be one out of four aspects;

- A single organization
- A single location
- A person
- A single event.

According to Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), utilizing the case study research design has become a very popular design when conducting research and this paper is no different. For this study, the case would imply to be a single organization and a single event. One can argue that a geographical location could be considered as an organization or workplace (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, it does not fit in this research since VINCI Group and, especially, its subsidiaries in focus have their locations in different geographical locations spread across the UK. The research did have its focus on the network of companies, all belonging to the VINCI Group (single organization), involved in the development of the UK Foundation (single event). Due to the position of the researcher when conducting this paper, following the design for a single case research was the only logical choice.

### **3.5. Ethical Principles**

When conducting any type of research, ethical aspects come into play which have to be considered and could, according to Bryman and Bell (2011), be divided into four different areas;

- Harm to participants
- Lack of informed consent
- Invasion of privacy
- Deception

#### **3.5.1. Harm to Participants**

Bryman and Bell (2011, p.128) defines the concept as; “Research that is likely to harm participants is regarded by most people as unacceptable.” However, the use of the work harm in this sense can bring forth a number of different types of harm;

1. Physical harm
2. Harm to participants development of self-esteem
3. Source for stress
4. Harm to career prospects or future employment
5. Inducing subjects to perform reprehensible acts.

Keeping these ethical topics in mind, especially number two, three, and four, the choice to keep the interviewees real identity anonymous was taken. This to significantly decrease the risk of bringing forth any negativity towards them based on what information was given. This was an aspect important to keep in mind due to that six subsidiaries were involved with the research, increasing the possibility for comparison. Since the aim of the research was to identify means of internal communication of CSR activities to determine what was successful, safety measures had to be taken.

### **3.5.2. Lack of Informed Consent**

Lack of informed consent is referring to when a researcher does not inform the participant(s), or the people involved, to the full extent regarding the topic of the research, or when collecting information (Bryman and Bell, 2011). A large part in this concept, according to Bryman and Bell (2011) is regarding any type of covert observation taken part from a researcher. “The principle means that prospective research participants should be given as much information as might be needed to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate in a study.” (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.133). When conducting a covert observation, the option to choose if wanting to participate in the research or not is taken away for the participant(s). That means, whether they give consent or not, they would be a part of that research (ibid.). To ensure this would not be a problem, a thorough discussion took place before entering the company regarding that the internship was intended as an information source for conducting this research. This was also approved before the information collection was initiated. Alongside this, any information taken from internal documents was pre-approved by the person in question before used in the research.

### **3.5.3. Invasion of Privacy**

It is not considered acceptable to invade an individual's privacy in the sole purpose of research, especially since many people tend to hold their privacy dear (Bryman and Bell, 2011). They continue with explaining that the aspect of privacy is closely linked to the previous discussed aspect of lack of informed consent in the sense that if any level of personal information will be needed (both from an individual or an organization) for the

research, the participant will need to be informed of this before agreeing to participate. However, it is not uncommon that even after a participant has agreed to an interview, there are still some questions that will be left unanswered. Often this is because of that those questions can reveal private information which the participant does not wish to air in public, even if the interview is taken place in a private location (ibid.). Bryman and Bell (2011) states that even though some topics are considered as taboo, it is impossible for the researcher to forecast which questions would be considered sensitive caused by the personality of the participant. Therefore it is important to treat every question and topic with care and give the participant the option to withdraw if wanting.

#### **3.5.4. Deception**

Deception is, plainly said, when a researcher present the research as something it is not (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, deception takes place to some degree in most research since researchers tries to bring forth more natural answers by limiting the participants' knowledge regarding the topic of the study (ibid.). When setting up the interviews for this research, the approached participants was given an explanation of what the paper will be focusing on. The option to ask questions, before, during, as well as after, the interview took place, clearing up any confusion regarding the report, was given each of the participants.

### **3.6. Research Approach**

#### **3.6.1. Primary Information**

Primary information collection is conducted when the researchers have themselves participated in the collection (Jacobsen, 2002). Jacobsen later continue to explain that it could include an observation of relevant people, actions, and situations at different events, business meetings, congresses, etc. which also Kotler and Armstrong (2014) agrees on. Although observation is one way of collecting primary information, it could also be conducted through a survey or experiment (ibid.). Kotler and Armstrong (2014) as well state that conducting a survey is the most widely used, and best, method for collecting descriptive primary information about a subject.

This study chose to conduct the collection of primary data through observations as well as through semi-structured interviews. The semi-structure was chosen due to the fact that it gave the interviewer the option to ask questions that were appropriate based on the answers given by the interviewee (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

### **3.6.2. Ethnographic Inspiration**

According to Bryman and Bell (2011) it is not uncommon that ethnographic research is directly connected with participant observations, and to some extent it is. They continue by stating that “An ethnographic approach implies intense researcher involvement in the day-to-day running of an organization, so that the researcher can understand it from an insider’s point of view. In order to become immersed in other people’s realities, organizational ethnographers, like their anthropological predecessors, engage in fieldwork that tends to commit them to a period of time spent in the organization, or a long stay ‘in the field.’” (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.425).

However, the increase in popularity for utilizing organizational culture as a concept changed the meaning of ethnographic method. It turned into the practice of studying people and cultures within a company (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Since this was not the aim for this research, a complete ethnographic method was not adaptable. It did, however, inspire the information collection process through immersing into a company and conducting a practical observation within it.

### **3.6.3. Participant Observations**

Although conducting interviews with individuals of interest is one of the most common sources of information, to solely base a research on interviews is can be seen as usage of flecky contacts (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This meaning that, even though interviews are likely to last for a long period of time, there might not be a relationship established meaning that full disclosure of the information might not be achievable (ibid.). In participant observation, due to the longer time spent observing, relationships and trust are able to be established and more information is possible to bring forth. Bryman and Bell (2011, p.495) argues that “[...] prolonged immersion in a social setting [...]”, alongside with conducting the

type of activities as the members inside that social setting, facilitates the ability to see as other sees. Through participant observation, it is also possibly to view the hidden activities, for instance, socialization rituals (ibid.).

Quotes from observations will not be word-by-word quotes, rather capturing the essence of what each person wanted to convey. Documents, emails, or any other material information used and witnessed during the participant observations will, to the best of the researcher's ability, be referred back to through names of the documents and when they were created. The participant observation was conducted over a period of two and a half months within the business development department.

Important to remember that the observation will have an unconscious interpretation when, and what, information should be considered as important for the report (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This interpretation will be based on the researcher's previous experiences, personality, philosophic view, knowledge, etc. If another individual would conduct a similar study with the similar circumstance, it would still not guarantee the same conclusion due to a different initial interpretation in the observation phase.

#### **3.6.4. Qualitative Interviews**

In order to complement the information collected through the observation, open interviews was conducted (Jacobsen, 2002). The interviews followed what Bryman and Bell (2011) refer to as, a semi-structured approach to give the interviewer the option to ask follow-up questions based on the answers that were given to receive more detailed information without losing focus on the subject. The questions were categories into three categories;

- *Corporate Social Responsibility* - questions to explain the interviewee's view of CSR, what activities they would include within CSR, how the company has conducted CSR activities prior to the recent investment, etc.
- *Internal Communication* - questions to explain the concept of internal communication and how it differs from external communication, how it is conducted within the company, how they have communicated the invested CSR activities, etc.
- *Response of the Foundation* - questions regarding their overall feeling regarding the response, what the response has been within each of the subsidiaries, etc.

The focus of the interviews was to enquire the in-depth perspective of the interviewees, as it was meant to complement the information collected through participant observation. Therefore, asking questions which answers were already known gave the opportunity to acquire different views regarding the topics. It was important to be able to collect the majority of participants' perspectives through interviews rather than questionnaires. This since interviews, no matter if through telephone or in person, gives the interviewer flexibility, such as the possibility to explain difficult questions and skipping questions which has already been answered (Armstrong et al. 2012; Kotler and Armstrong, 2014). Kotler and Armstrong (2014) continue on stating that interviewers should always try and strive for personal interviews since it gives the interviewee a more personalized feeling, resulting in more elaborated and in-depth information. Also, it reduces the risk of misinterpretation due to the non-verbal cues which would be missed in a telephone interview (ibid.). However, due to geographical distance, one interview was conducted over the telephone. This was done with a facecam on to make the interview as close to a personal interview as possible.

The lengths of the interviews varied, with the shortest of just over 45 minutes and the longest lasting for one hour and ten minutes. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), the length of the interviews does not necessarily reflect on the quantity or quality of usable information. All interviewees gave an approval regarding being recorded for later transcription. This gave the interviewer the ability to focus on developing the discussion with the participant, asking follow-up questions, keeping eye-contact, pick up nonverbal communication cues, etc. in order to achieve a complete understanding of the interviewer's perspective (ibid.).

### **3.6.5. Employee Selection for Interviews**

The sample of interest for interviews was selected through the involvement in the company's CSR activities (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Within each of the six subsidiaries there is an employee titled local coordinator whose assignment is to handle the CSR activities for that company. Tasks within this perimeter include communicating the CSR activities to internal personnel as well as handling applications, and were therefore seen as a large information source. Also, the senior manager responsible for the success of the CSR activities was seen as a source of information. The last person identified as a part of the sample is the previous intern for the company whose assignment was to assist in the development of the UK Foundation (company's main CSR activity), handling all the legal aspects and paperwork that

comes with it. This means that the total number of people in the sample was eight individuals, divided into six local coordinators, one senior manager with overall responsibility, and one previous intern.

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Subsidiary</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Time in Position</b>	<b>Interview Date</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	VINCI Energies UK	Marketing Director	16 Years	19/04/2016
<b>Local Coordinator 1</b>	VINCI Energies UK	Pensions Administrator	9 Years	14/04/2016
<b>Local Coordinator 2</b>	VINCI Construction Grand Projet	Marketing and Communication	<10 Years	18/04/2016
<b>Local Coordinator 3</b>	Eurovia	Sustainability Advisor	2 Months	18/04/2016
<b>Local Coordinator 4</b>	VINCI Construction	Communications Director	3 Years	27/04/2016
<b>Previous Intern</b>	VINCI Energies UK	Intern - Master Student	6 Months	19/04/2016

Table 4

*Source: The Author*

### 3.6.6. Questionnaire

Two employees of interest for interviews were, due to unseen circumstances, not able to participate in a qualitative interview. To be able to collect information from these, a questionnaire was constructed based on the majority of the questions and follow-up questions from already conducted interviews. The usage of a questionnaire, according to Bryman and Bell (2011), limits the level of information collected because it significantly reduces the possibility for follow-up questions and development of a discussion. Alongside this, the risk of misunderstanding both the questions, from the participants' side, and the answers, from the researcher's side, increases. However, due to the lack of availability to set up a meeting caused by a busy schedule, the solution of a well-developed questionnaire was the most fitting one.

### 3.7. Data Analysis

Bradley et al. (2007) argue that there is no one way to conduct a data analysis on a qualitative research and that it is an ongoing process already starting in the early stages of the data collection. However, this research mainly followed a tool within the grounded theory, constant comparison which Bryman and Bell (2011) states is utilized for keeping a close relationship between data and conceptualization. In order to conduct this method fully, multiple stages of data collection are required (Creswell, 2014). Through the tool of constant comparison, the ability to compare the information from observations with the information from the interviews was available.

### 3.8. Quality Criteria

#### 3.8.1. Validity

In order to implement trustworthy information into this study, two approaches of validity-control have been executed. First; *prolonged time*, i.e. by developing an understanding about the concept beforehand, whereas the results can be reflected into the knowledge the researcher holds and enhance the validity (Creswell, 2014). Secondly, *member checking*, i.e. the result from each interview was brought back to the participants to give consent that it followed what was said (ibid.). This to make sure that the result was not subjectively written, which a concern regarding a qualitative research is brought to life by Bryman and Bell (2011).

#### 3.8.2. Reliability

Having a reliable study indicates, according to Creswell (2014, p.201), “[...] that the researcher’s approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects.” To ensure this research's reliability, the semi-structured question template was constructed to avoid misunderstandings, and was implemented with control questions to check the answers reliability. Furthermore, the results were also based on the VINCI Group’s current strategies due to the author’s position within the company where the results could be double-checked through access to related documents and repeatedly discussed topics.

# 4. Empirical Findings

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*In this chapter, the information gathered from the conducted interviews and the participant observation will be shown.*

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## 4.1. Internal Communication

### 4.1.1. Definition

When asked to define and explain what internal communication is, many different points of views were given by the interviewees. The shared view of internal communication is that it is focused inwardly into the company, rather than outwardly. Communication and sharing of information between employees, and to other internal stakeholders, are examples given during the interviews. The secretary stated that “[...] letting your stakeholders know what is happening, where they fit in, giving both good and bad news when necessary, as well as knowledge sharing through the group, are all part of internal communication.” The goal is to make sure that every employee are aware of the situation and progress within the company. Informing them of all the initiatives the company, this according to one local coordinator is not always conducted, with the communication tool Network Together as an example (further explained in 4.1.2.).

It was said by a local coordinator that the communication does not have to be in a formal situation in order to be classified as internal communication, conversations that occur in informal settings, such as hallways, are also within that category. Following this statement, it was said that the information within the company should be transparent, that all the employees should have access to all information. This was later disagreed upon by the secretary of the UK Foundation, saying that internal communication is about making sure that knowledge is shared, with the exception of confidential information. Acquisitions, technical solutions, and personal data were given as examples for confidential information.

Other approaches to internal communication were stated, arguing internal communication as a part of another concept, such as *Global communication* or *Organizational communication*.

Global communication was explained as all communication might not be external, but all information can be seen as internal. This since the public will not have access to the internal information, but the external information will be available for the internal stakeholders as well, giving them access to both internal and external information. Therefore, this local coordinator had the view of global communication, with the information aimed towards internal or external stakeholders. Also, one local coordinator states that “[...]external communication is mainly concerned with the ‘selling’ of the company to clients and the general public, internal communications should be about enhancing the employment experience of all employees.”

Organizational communication was explained as the communication within a group, or in this case, within the VINCI Group. One local coordinator stated that “Internal communication is the communication within one of the subsidiaries. When the different subsidiaries have contact between each other, regarding for instance the UK Foundation, it is not internal communications anymore, but rather organizational communication.” This is since the different subsidiaries are individually registered companies and even works independently. But, important to have in mind is that internal communication is not solely regarding communicating, it is about involvement as well.

#### **4.1.2. How Internal Communication is conducted in the VINCI group**

The communication within the VINCI group, between the companies within the group, has developed and become significantly better the last decade. The main tool for information is still email but the language problems have decreased. This is since the messages from France are now being presented in English to the UK. There are however, according to the secretary, still times when the question arises why the French offices do not ask any of the UK offices for help constructing the information piece supposed to be in English. But overall, the quality of the English emails from France has improved. According to the secretary, there is some sort of communication occurring several times per week, something that was not confirmed by one of the local coordinators. According to that local coordinator, it occurs lesser times and the internal communication within the VINCI group is not so obvious and not so open. Continuously stating that there is a good relationship built up between them but there is just no call or need for communication between the businesses.

The same local coordinator continues on by explaining the absolute main advantage of having a good relationship within such a large business group - teamwork. When the need arises to acquire information regarding a subject or an assignment, there is always someone somewhere within the VINCI group that is in possession of that knowledge or information. The only issue is to find that person. For this, as well as for any type of internal communication, multiple tools could be used;

- *VINCI magazine* - are issued every quarter and is of really good use for applying the big picture. Throughout the recent years, it has risen in quality is now considered as a good quality magazine.
- *VINCI Intranet* - an internal internet platform where huge amounts of information is stored, e.g. directory to all personnel within the VINCI group including both email addresses and phone numbers.
- *VINCI Group Webpage* - externally intended, but can be used by internal stakeholders to find recent news about the company.
- *Press releases* - can reach the internal stakeholders as well.
- *Social media* - used to find the absolute most up-to-date announcement.
- *Clubs* - where the people involved in a certain club can discuss topics at hand.
- *Annual report* - informing the key figures regarding the company.
- *Network together* - can be described as an intranet 2.0. A online software where information can be shared, discussion groups (communities) can be established and documents can be shared as well as even simultaneously worked on by two different users at the same time. However, due to the extremely bad information provided upon the release of the software have led to confusion on how to use it. At the moment, there are only a few active communities. The problem, according to a local coordinator, was that “[...] upon release, there was no real drive from the VINCI communication department.”

- *Lync (Skype for business)* - is a communication tool that every employee are supposed to have access to. It is described as an easy to use messenger where the user is able to chat, call, or have video conferences with other users via the computer.

The major aspect in need of development within VINCI Group in regards to the internal communication is the two-way communication. The majority of the interviewees agree that the information provided is mostly one-way with little ability for feedback. The overall feeling of the interviewees is that it is possible to receive feedback to some extent, but it is not always possible. Also, one local coordinator brought up the issue that information which is used in a one-way manner should be controlled in terms of keeping track of whether it reaches the targeted audience. However, no suggested solution was given.

#### **4.1.3. How Internal Communication is conducted in the VINCI subsidiaries**

The tools mentioned and explained by the respondents that the subsidiaries uses in regards for internal communication are:

- *Newsletter* - published each third or fourth month, depending on subsidiary, communicating and informing the readers of the major updates within the company.
- *Linkedin* - used as an information source, point of contact and publishing news regarding the company.
- *The subsidiary's webpage* - used as a source of information when needed. Contains the general information regarding the company accessible for the external stakeholders.
- *Intranet* - a large source of information where the employees are able to find news published every day. A few tools differ from one subsidiary's intranet to another. Some examples are that VINCI Construction and VINCI Construction Grand Project both have a blog available for all employees to access, both for reading and posting. VINCI Energies has a directory solely concerning the employees within its own subsidiary, including the employees at every business unit.

- *Yammer* - is a social media tool recently developed by VINCI Energies UK and is at the moment solely used within their respective company.
- *Health and safety bulletins* - sent out on a regular basis throughout VINCI Energies UK and their business units.
- *CR document* - a summary of the corporate responsibility within the company. IS currently used by Eurovia UK.
- *Email* - part of the everyday work and is used multiple times daily. Mainly used to share information, to either give questions or answers, or to inform specific employees of diverse subject.
- *Phone* - part of the everyday work and is, as email, used multiple times per day. Two interviewees expressed the preference of using phone over email, due to believing that it is easier to explain with voice rather than in text. Also because, according to the two interviewees, it is easier to remember what was discussed.
- *Lync (Skype for business)* – used on a day to day business (view above for description).

The importance of a well-functioning internal communication was emphasized in the interviews, due to the fact that VINCI, and the subsidiaries, have a decentralized structure. This means that, firstly, each of the subsidiaries is decentralized when it comes to their business units and office locations; secondly, the actual subsidiaries are spread out geographically as well. In order to achieve a well-functioning communication within the companies, the efficient use of internal communication was stated as highly important. In the previous few years hard work has been put into bringing the European group and segments together, developing an interaction on a daily basis. VINCI Energies UK has initiated activities such as (1) the Sharing Success Seminar, (2) the Actemium Forum day, and (3) the Budget Forum days. They have the purpose of sharing the strategic plans, figures, projects, etc. throughout the subsidiaries to develop the teamwork. One of the goals is to work more as a unit rather than individual silo's. However, in order to do this successfully, the people need to find out by themselves that it is possible to work together; otherwise it will not be

successful. Organization of such days also gives the employees the opportunity to meet up and discuss the larger internal announcements released.

#### **4.1.4. Development of internal communication**

The development regarding the internal communication differs between the subsidiaries. All of them have a distinguished communication department, however the size and existence of the department varies between the companies. VINCI Energies was the subsidiary that most recently developed a separate communication department, about 5 years ago. The number of employees within the communication department varies as well, from one subsidiary having only two employees in the department, to another that was only explained as being a large department. One thing that was common throughout the subsidiaries was that none of the companies have distinguished the employees within the communication department into solely focusing on internal- or external-communication. Instead, the employees within the communication department have assignments regarding both internal and external communication.

It was stated by a local coordinator that the human resource manager as well as the health and safety employees have had major impacts in the development of the internal communication. It was also explained by a local coordinator that news regarding the UK companies are usually communicated in a good manner, but sometimes the news regarding the VINCI Group outside of the UK is overseen in the manner that it is not fully communicated internally within each of the subsidiaries.

There is a continuous development of the internal communication within the subsidiaries, three of which are currently in the process of developing that company's intranet. The objective why is mainly to make it more user friendly, but there also are more specific reasons; e.g. VINCI Construction wants to add an environment page to their intranet, or a better connection to the newly switched email software as of VINCI Grand Projet. The initiation and development of the sharing success seminar within VINCI Energies have been well received so a local coordinator stated that a possible development within internal communication would be "Having for example a smaller success seminar for the local branches. For example, we have a few businesses near to us here and it could be good to get together for just us." However, it was continued on by acknowledging that a problem for

initiating the sharing success seminar in smaller scales could be the time. Finding the time for employees to attend this would be a problem.

There is also a call for a development of the company's activities within social media. This was argued since the new employees are younger each year and the younger audience is very active on social media. Therefore it is an area where the subsidiaries should develop their activities, to be able to reach the next generation.

## **4.2. CSR**

### **4.2.1. Definition of CSR**

It was stated that it is a relationship between the social and the financial performance of the company. This meaning a company has a responsibility towards where they are involved or have an impact. This since there is a feeling of responsibility when a company is part of the community. It was explained as going alongside with sustainability, because in order to have a fully developed CSR, as well as a fully developed company, one has to take sustainability into account. According to the secretary, that includes social, environmental, and economical issues alongside health and safety, which also was stated from a number of local coordinators. Within environment, that could include activities such as tracking the carbon footprint (how much carbon dioxide is released), recycling, as well as taking environmental impacts into account in construction sites. Within society issues, one can find charities, local communities, fundraising, among other activities that give back to the community. Health and safety issues are defined as the overall health of the employees and partners involved with projects. For example, low sick days, no injuries caused from work, making sure everyone comes back from a construction site without any problems, etc. But it is also taking other people's health and safety into account. It was states in the interview with the secretary that training is issued where the topic is other people's safety. Simple aspects such as where the employee parks the car when conducting work, that it is not parked so accidents can occur, and other aspects that is easily forgotten or overlooked.

However, it was stated that CSR activities are to be seen as a tool for the company to achieve a competitive advantage. One of the local coordinators stated that it originates evenly from the feeling of responsibility and using it to bring back profit to the company. Another local coordinator stated that even though CSR could be used as a way to present itself to the wider

public and how it impacts the world, it should only be conducted if it can add value to the company. It was stated that “A good CSR image from a company will bring long-term profit back to the company.” For example if a potential customer investigates a supplier and discovers that the supplier has the same values as the potential customer, they might become more keen to work with that supplier, hence giving them a competitive advantage. Stated by a local coordinator, “CSR can be viewed as making money from an ethical perspective.”

It was stated in multiple interviews that it is important that the CSR activities conducted by a company be connected to the business activities that the company conducts on a regular basis. Also, the level of impact the company’s business has on the both the community and the environment is to be taken into account. An example brought to life was with the oil and petrol businesses since they are seen as having a big impact on the environment, and how they are supposed to be compensating for that. The point being that if a project existed regarding construction of a powerline, how would that affect the environment, will there be any damage to roads or forests, or will it simply deprive people of electricity in their homes? All aspects has to be taken into account when projects are constructed to counteract the impact the project will have. One of the local coordinators stated that “CSR activities should not be considered as separate activities from everyday business. This meaning that it should always be taken into account and should be considered as part of the day to day business.” According to the interviewee, if separated it could be viewed as a choice whilst it should be considered as mandatory.

It was stated in three of the interviews that it would probably not be possible for a company to become a market leader without any type of CSR activities, since nowadays companies are in the spotlight far more than just a few decades ago. Thanks to, for instance, the internet, social media, as well as regular media, access to information regarding a company is quite open. “Anyone is now able to find out a lot about a company and what they stand for without asking them directly. Due to this increase in in available information, companies have to be careful to not become the “bad guy” of the community.” It was also argued that there is an increase both from employees and clients regarding activities that could be considered as CSR. This increase has developed a perceived view of how companies are “supposed” to be giving back and care about the community. However, this was described by a local coordinator as “[...] an evolution in the corporate culture as well as everyday culture.” That, because of the increase in available information, awareness regarding the CSR topics has increased with it, giving people a stronger need and belief towards these topics.

However, one respondent brought up the issue that the CSR activities of a company should be done with caution, meaning that profit still has to come first. From further explanation it was uncovered that it meant that companies should not be investing into CSR activities if they do not have the profit beforehand. That even though CSR could be used as a way to present itself to the wider public and how it impacts the world, it should only be conducted after profit has been made. Also, it is vital to be cautious on how activities are conveyed to the stakeholders of the company. All the activities said to be done by the company, have to be true to not damage the image of the company. Clients do not want to work with dishonest companies, as often it is perceived that as the dishonest company only tries to lure you in.

#### **4.2.2. CSR activities prior to the Foundation**

Recycling is one aspect brought to life throughout all the companies and how the usage of water, paper, energy, etc. are all measured to make sure nothing is unnecessarily wasted. Also, aspects as which cars are purchased and used, as well as the traveling aspect overall is taken into account when measuring the environmental impact. The goal is always to strive to the minimal impact possible. The carbon footprint is measured and analyzed every year for possibilities to reduce it in the years to come.

Alongside this, regular funding is given to charities, sports teams, and schools by the subsidiaries. How the funding was conducted differed between the companies. For example, for the last couple of years VINCI Energies UK conducted two team building events once per year, the wolf run and a dragon boat race. The wolf run is a 10 km obstacle race for which the employees can apply to participate in, and in the dragon boat race the business units can participate with a boat they obtain by donating. In both of these team building events, there will be the possibility to raise money which will later be donated to a charitable cause of their own choice. Since these activities are of physical act they also helped motivate employees to go to the gym or go out for a run. This, in turn, improves their overall health and will result in lesser sick days. This also implies as CSR according to the definition discussed above.

VINCI Energies UK alongside other subsidiaries also focuses on the use of local employees when conducting projects, for example the construction of a power line in Scotland, to try and counteract the unemployment problems that exist. Other activities from the other subsidiaries involve offering the employees a few days off work with full pay to go and

conduct charitable work as well as matching an employee's funding towards a charitable cause. For example, if an employee of Eurovia conducts a fundraising and donates the money raised to a charity, Eurovia will match the employee's fund to the same charity, with a maximum of £300.

### **4.2.3. VINCI UK Foundation**

#### **4.2.3.1. Explanation of the VINCI UK Foundation Structure**

VINCI UK has recently decided to follow other sister companies in other countries and started to invest into CSR activities by initiating a foundation (UK Foundation). The purpose of the UK Foundation is to give back to the community with the focus towards social exclusion and isolation. No projects will be conducted from the company itself; instead charity project will be able to apply for funding of currency to be used for purchase of tangible products. However, there are some criteria that have to be met in order for a charity project to be eligible. Since social exclusion is quite a broad umbrella, covering many aspects, the UK Foundation has chosen to filter projects focusing on;

- *Integration Through Housing* - providing access to housing for struggling individuals, ex. accommodation for homeless, renovating homes for struggling families, etc.
- *Promoting Access to Employment* - helping people back to employment, ex. Internships, training, education, etc.
- *Inclusive Mobility* - providing mobility to those deprived of means of transportation, ex. cheap car rentals, transport for people with disabilities, etc.
- *Building Better Communities* - providing support for struggling individuals in the community, ex. youth centers, workshops, support for kids with abusive homes, etc.

Although the charity projects have to match one of the fields above, there are also other criteria within the bye-laws stating that;

- The project must be conducted by a registered charity.
- The application must come from an organization.
- It cannot be a political or religious end goal for the project.
- The organization has to be a non-profit organization.
- The project must be an ongoing event, not a one-time event.

- The project must involve a VINCI employee to act as a sponsor.
- The project has to be local to the sponsor's home or work, meaning within a driving distance.

The role of the sponsor is to work as the middle man between the charity project and the Foundation, devoting his time and knowledge to help the charity project for an amount of time agreed upon by all parties (sponsor, charity, foundation, and sponsor's manager) during working hours. Other main parties include;

- *Local Coordinator* - Each VINCI UK daughter company has their own who handles the potential projects and sponsors from the different business units within their own daughter company. Assignment also includes filtering down and summarizing the potential projects, which is later sent on to the selection committee.
- *Selection Committee* - Consists of an employee in a senior position from each daughter company as well as two external experts. Assignment includes selecting from the pool sent by the local coordinators the projects that should receive the funding asked for and sending these to the board of directors for approval.
- *Board of Directors* - Consists of the directors of all daughter companies as well as a director for the main French VINCI Foundation. Assignment is to double check and approve of the selected projects for funding.

The UK is the 10th VINCI country that initiates the VINCI Foundation within their operating country and has since the start been followed by Spain as well. The initial VINCI Foundation was started 2002 in France and since then, it has been growing substantially resulting in;

- 1600 projects supported
- £20 000 000 in funding granted
- 2 200 sponsorships set up.

#### **4.2.3.2. Miscellaneous Information regarding the VINCI UK Foundation**

Before the start of the Foundation, the CSR activities tended to be more fragmented, and the development of the Foundation has now brought the involved companies together. An initiation was tried around 2010, but at that point, it never got off the ground. According to a respondent, the French Foundation was keen to develop the UK Foundation so they initiated a Foundation on the Isle of Wight. Since the Isle of Wight and the UK have quite similar cultures, it was possible to use as a stepping stone. In this project, VINCI Concessions UK was highly involved.

When discussions were started in spring 2015, the CEO of VINCI Energies UK was one of the front figures in pushing and motivating the other subsidiaries to invest into the development of the UK Foundation. It was also decided that VINCI Energies UK would be the subsidiary responsible for handling the development of the UK Foundation, with the local coordinator at each subsidiary handling the applications originating from within their company.

Since CSR is a broad subject, limits and regulations had to be set, and in order to be able to go under the VINCI Foundation name, the aim of the UK Foundation had to follow some strict regulations set by the French. Each of these locations (France, Netherlands, Belgium, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Africa, and Isle of Wight) had to adapt and develop their Foundation to fit their culture, but in order to be able to present a united front; some regulations followed the same structure. Examples such as the logo, the focus on social exclusion and isolation with the four criteria fields (housing, mobility, employment, and building better communities), and the selection process are all regulations set by the French Foundation. It was believed by a respondent that the focus of social exclusion was chosen due to the unemployment problem that exists in France and since VINCI Group is as big as they are, the responsibility of fighting that problem was developed.

When interviewees were asked to explain what the UK Foundation is and how it works, everyone brought up the aim towards social exclusion and isolation, the four fields within the aim, as well as the financial contribution between £3,000 and £20,000. Everyone brought up the criteria of having one, or multiple, VINCI employee(s) involved in a sponsor role between the UK Foundation and the charitable project. This meaning that all brought up the main topics for the UK Foundation, the financial and human contribution, as well as the main criteria.

However, the majority did not continue on and mentioning the rest of the criteria, such as;

- Application had to be from an organization
- The organization must be a registered charity
- The aim of the charity cannot be towards a political or religious purpose
- The project must be of a sustainable manner
- The project must be carried out by a non-profit organization
- The project must be carried out from a small/medium size charity.

None of the interviewees brought up all of the criteria, and when the restoring criteria was mentioned, it was never the same ones.

#### **4.2.4. Communication about the Foundation**

The communication about the Foundation differs between the subsidiaries, even when it comes to the initial communication. The majority of the companies sent out an information mail with a letter attached, alongside putting up an announcement on the company's intranet. One of the subsidiaries sent out a survey in early November 2015, informing the employees that the UK Foundation will be developed and looking for initial response and interest. Another subsidiary started by informing its business unit's managers at manager meetings and asked them to send out initial information to their respective employees. One of the subsidiaries decided to conduct what they call a road show, meaning that they went and presented the Foundation at each of their business units.

However, while conducting the first two presentations, they chose to push it back since they wanted the printed material to be finalized before continuing. The printed material included the development of the webpage, posters, sponsor guidebooks and the essentials leaflets. The posters and webpage was developed first and when finalized, the posters and the link to the webpage were distributed to all business units. The sponsor guidebooks and essentials leaflets was printed on a later occasion, but when finalized they were also distributed to all the subsidiaries for further distribution to all their respective business units. Once this was done, the road-show's continued on as well. The secretary also made sure to mention the development of the Foundation at each board meeting, held every month.

One of the local coordinators has taken use of the selected corporate responsibility (CR) champions, located at each site. With their help, communication regarding the Foundation could be made more efficiently as well as gathering and organizing the applications from potential sponsors, since most ,of the applications have come from within the company.

Alongside this, regular appearance of the Foundation has been made on the intranet, on the internal newsletters, as well as continued email updates to employees. The communication is explained as a drip-effect, as soon as the communication regarding a topic stops, it becomes history. This meaning that the communication within each company has to be done continuously. However, no external call for applications has been made so far. One press release has been organized. This was divided into a national release alongside a local release for each subsidiary, if they wanted. The aim for the press release was not to bring forth more applications, but instead to inform the public that the UK Foundation does exist and is live.

It was stated by two of the interviewees that the communication, both internal and external, will be more efficient and effective as well as larger (external) towards next year's application. This since it will be proven to be working in the UK as well as being real and live. Alongside, there will also be real examples of funded projects within the UK, hopefully erasing the image of the Foundation as being specific to France.

#### **4.2.5. Response to the Foundation**

It was stated that even though the overall response has been very positive and better than the previous attempt in 2010, “[...] the response has been as expected”. One local coordinator was hoping for a higher response with applications, since in regards to the size of the company in the UK, the response could be considered small. However, it was stated by multiple interviewees that since it is the first year, the fear of receiving too many applications resulting in the rejection of the majority of them exists. This because it is vital to build up a positive image towards the UK Foundation and not get people thinking “It is no use applying for this since only a few will get picked for funding anyway”. It was stated by one local coordinator that responses has been received saying that due to the short application time this year, they will apply for next year's call instead.

The overall feeling for the response for the first year was good, with employees giving feedback believing that it is a good idea. The secretary stated that “[...] at each road show there has been at least one participant that stayed after the presentation was completed for further information with a project or charity in mind.” Throughout the subsidiaries, the applications (with a few exceptions) originated from an employee who is previously involved with a charity outside of work.

It was stated by one local coordinator that it is difficult to reach all the employees located at the company sites and business units. Thus relying on the snowball effect where information is spread through word to mouth among the employees. However, the problem with this is that if the employee conducting the explanation does not comprehend the UK Foundation to its fullest, misinformation will be spread. Also, there seems to be a worry among the employees to get behind at work, and what the other co-workers will think if someone is not prioritizing their own work.

# 5. Analysis

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*In this chapter, the empirical findings will be analyzed alongside the theories framework.*

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## 5.1. Definition of the two concepts

### 5.1.1. CSR

Following how Lichtenstein et al. (2004) defined CSR, which was focusing on giving part of the company's profit to charities, foundations and other non-profit organizations, it goes along with how the UK Foundation is developed. However, for the interviewees, CSR activities include more than that. Aspects such as environment, economy as well as health and safety were also included, which is more in line with the definition presented by Vaarland et al. (2008). Focusing on the social aspect (due to the UK Foundation's focus), the interpretations of CSR from the respondents differs from how Lichtenstein et al. (2004) defined it since they argued that CSR is a firm's commitment to contribute part of its profit, meaning that there is a choice for the company to commit or not. However, the empirical findings suggest that CSR activities should not be viewed as a choice, but instead a mandatory part of their everyday business. Giving the example that when conducting business which results in the release of carbon dioxide, it should be mandatory to reduce it as much as possible.

On the other hand, if CSR activities are viewed as a commitment, a measure of the company's commitment would be in order to ensure the sustainability of the commitment. This is since it was highly valued from the respondents, that the CSR activities a company conducts are consistent. From the empirical findings one can determine the aim for the UK Foundation is to develop it into a long-term CSR project. This is there has been multiple references during the discussions of the UK Foundation regarding what "[needs to/can] be changed for the years to come." It has also been stated in multiple meetings that the aim is to have the UK Foundation running multiple years.

According to Dwyver et al. (1987), to determine the sustainability, a measurement of the amount of input, the durability of the association and the consistency of the input is a must.

To either making sure that the investments into CSR are consistent or improved for each year, which some of the subsidiaries are conducting, at least when it comes to environmental issues. For the charitable projects that will be sponsored by the UK Foundation, they have to turn in a report regarding the success or failure of the project, giving the company a chance to develop a measurement in this aspect as well. This would go along with what Du et al. (2010) stated regarding measuring CSR, that it should be done on the result and not on the input.

It was stated from the respondents that the CSR activities should be conducted in line with the company's everyday business, since this is where their business has an impact on both the environmental as well as the social wellbeing. This is believed to be the reason for why the UK Foundation has the criteria that the project has to be local to the sponsors home or workplace, meaning that it is located close to where the sponsor's company conducts its business. Also, since the sponsors are encouraged to devote time during their working hours towards the charitable projects selected for funding, the sponsored projects has to be within the vicinity. Otherwise there could be, from a business perspective, too much time allocated towards a charitable project. "The time the sponsor is supposed to allocate towards the selected project will have to be approved by their manager beforehand and therefore the project has to be within a 20 miles radius from the sponsors work or home. If not, their manager will probably not accept it due to the loss of time towards the employees business work, resulting in turnover lost for the business unit."

### **5.1.2. Internal communication**

The one aspect that all interviewees agreed upon is that internal communication has an internal focus, however, it is a bit more complex. Taking Burgess (2005) and Ghosal et al. (1994) perspective of internal communication into consideration, stating that internal communication is regarding sharing knowledge between the employees of the company, and the topic discussed during some interviews regarding what information should be available to the employees, it differs. It was stated by a local coordinator that all information within a company should be available for all the employees working for that company, which falls in line with what both Burgess (2005) and Ghosal et al. (1994) argues. They argue that information should be shared in order to develop a competitive advantage through well-informed employees.

However, the secretary states that “knowledge should be shared with caution; all employees cannot be in possession of the confidential information. An example of confidential information given was regarding personal information of the employees, which if accessible by everyone will upset employees.” Depending on what is classified as “well-informed employees”, this statement from the secretary could argue against what is said by Burgees (2005) and Ghosal et al. (1994). For instance, does an employee need to be in possession of information regarding all aspects of the organization to be considered as well informed? Or is it enough for the employee to have knowledge within their field, meaning, e.g., a finance director possessing information regarding the finances of the company but not regarding the human resource aspects of the company?

According to Kalla (2005) internal communication not only include the formal statements sent out to the employees via a communication tool, but also include the informal conversations between employees. This is an aspect of internal communication which was emphasized by the respondents as well, stating that regular conversations which can take place while passing someone by in the hallway is a part of internal communication. It was further stated by an interviewee that all types of interactions between employees are should be viewed as internal communication. It helps in the development of the relationships between the employees, which aligns with what Welch and Jackson (2007) argues regarding internal communication.

However, the perspectives of organizational and global communication were presented in the empirical findings. These does not go in line with previous research, since how the respondent explained the view of global communication is the same view as Cherney and Christensen (2007) has for organizational communication. That internal and external communication should be viewed together as one, since all external and internal communication will reach the internal stakeholders. “It is only the focus when developing the communication statement that will differ, having the external statement written from a sales perspective.”

What was described as organizational communication by an interviewee, stating that it is the communication taking place between companies belonging to the same organizational group (the subsidiaries), can be argues to match with what Kalla (2005) explains as the corporate communication domain. It is argued that corporate communication is the message that an organization gives to audiences on the world stage (Argenti and Forman, 2002). Since the

VINCI group has locations spread all over the world, the interviewee's perspective on organizational communication can therefore also be viewed as an internal corporate communication. In this scenario it would mean that when the VINCI Group sends

## **5.2. Similarities and differences of conducting internal communication**

The majority of the communication tools used by the VINCI group are used within the subsidiaries as well, for instance, an intranet, a newsletter, social media, etc. Although, these tools are developed and formatted to fit each of the specific subsidiaries, meaning that each of the companies has its own developed intranet, its own newsletter and its own social media profile. There was a call for a development of the VINCI groups two-way communication, however when examining the tools mentioned during the interviews, it showed five tools that would be considered one-way and four that would be considered two-way. When considering the rethought internal communication model presented by Welsh and Jackson (2007), it is explained that organizational news, objectives, developments, achievements, etc., should mainly be communicated via one-way. However, the message communicated should be both clear and consistent, but also continue and not be considered as a one-off message (Welsh and Jackson, 2007).

When taking the empirical findings into consideration, the respondents' view of how clear the communication from the VINCI group is differs regarding which position within the company the respondent has. For example, the secretary with a senior position perceive the information consistent and clear (with the language exception), whilst a local coordinator not in a senior position perceived it as fragmented and said that there is no need for much of it. But taking that the majority of the employees within VINCI UK is not in a senior position, one can argue that the information communicated internally from the VINCI group is not consistent nor enough. The outcome of this could be confusion, or, in the case of Network Together, mean that employees become unmotivated to utilize what lacks the information.

The communication tool Network Together was solely presented with a small email stating its existence. It was stated that "A more developed communication regarding Network Together as well as some type of demonstration would have been necessary for this communication tool." It was emphasized that it is not a problem with the tool itself, but the lack of information alongside its release has resulted in the slim activity on that communication tool. It is believed that an increase of two-way communication is precisely

the Network Together would need to comprehend the software better, this also resulting in a higher usage of the product.

Within each subsidiary, the internal communication is handled differently. With regards to the tools discussed in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that six of the tools can be considered as two-way communication tools (Linkedin, Intranet (in the case of VINCI Construction and VINCI Grand Projet with their blog), Yammer, Email, Phone and Lync) with the remaining five tools viewed as one-way. The dominant way of information being conducted in a two-way direction goes along with what Welsh and Jackson (2007) are determining in their model. However, three out of four communication dimensions have a two-way direction in the model from Welch and Jackson (2007), which is not the case for the VINCI subsidiaries. Therefore there is an understanding to why the respondents are calling for a development within the internal two-way communication. This development will lead to “a greater understanding of the topic for the message, which most likely will result in a more efficient and effective usage of what that information is regarding.”

Due to the subsidiaries and its business units location spread, it was emphasized in the interviews how important the internal communication is for the companies. Since each subsidiary are working as individual organizations, they all have their own developed corporate culture, structure, processes, etc. which are all aspects of internal environment (Welsh and Jackson, 2007). These are important to consider since, according to Welsh and Jackson (2007), these will affect the climate in which the communication takes place.

### **5.3. Motivation for Initiating the UK Foundation**

Based on the empirical findings, it is not possible, or at least very hard, for a company to become a market leader within their industry without conducting some type of CSR activity. A reason for this is the development of the Internet and the use of social media, making information regarding a company much more accessible for anyone looking for it. One respondent stated that “no company wants to be labelled as the “bad guy” in their community or industry.” Another respondent explained that it is because of an evolution of the culture of the business world, as well as within countries, developing a stronger belief of the importance of CSR with both employees and clients.

It was continued on with stating that “this evolution and increase in belief for CSR activities are a result of information being more available. Not only specifically regarding the company, but also regarding environmental, social, and other CSR aspects.” This access to information puts a company at risk for exposure of falsified communication regarding the subject, e.g. greenwashing (Arendt and Brettel, 2010), which would lead to a negative emotional perception for the company (Lai et al. 2010).

It is important for stakeholders to understand why a company conducts its CSR activities to reduce the suspicion and develop a win-win perspective (Arendt and Brettel, 2010; Du et al, 2010). Arendt and Brettel (2010) argue that the broad definitions of CSR are the reason for the initial suspicion and skepticism. The reason for a company to invest into CSR differed between the respondents. One stated that “even though CSR activities might help a company from a business point of view, it should be initiated from a responsibility aspect.” Other respondents argued that the investments into CSR originate evenly from a feel of responsibility and to bring the company more profit in the long run. Another respondent stated that “even though CSR could be used as a way to present itself to the wider public and how it impacts the world, it should only be conducted if it can add value to the company. That CSR should be viewed as making money from an ethical perspective.”

The commitment an organization shows towards a CSR activity will affect how the stakeholders perceive the ideas and reasons to why it is conducted (Dwyver et al., 1987). With regards to the durability, it is not high at the moment since it is the first year of the UK Foundation. However, the idea is to have this ongoing for multiple years going forward and small discussions regarding how to develop the CSR activity for the following year has already taken place. This is interpreted as a commitment to develop the UK Foundation into long-term existence. It was stated that “The donation from each of the subsidiaries can differ for each year based on the success or failure of the UK Foundation.” This means that the utilization of the budget and the number of projects funded will play an affect in the level of input from the subsidiaries for the next year.

The multiple motives for the CSR initiatives are falling in line with what Ellen et al. (2006) states, that no matter what is communicated, the stakeholders have a tendency to perceive that multiple ideas are the reasons to why a company is conducting it. Previous research show that companies should acknowledge both their intrinsic- (feel of responsibility) as well as their extrinsic-reason (bringing back profit) when communication to stakeholders, since this has

been proven to reduce the skepticism (Foreh and Grier, 2003; Porter and Kramer, 2006). Customers are keener to work with companies which have the same values.

#### **5.4. CSR Reasons Affecting Trust**

Ganesan (1994), argued that trust should be from two perspectives; *credibility* and *benevolence*. The UK Foundation is offering support in two ways; a financial support as well as the skills, time, and knowledge of (at least) one sponsor. During the selection process, applications are sent in from the charitable organizations, reviewed, more information is asked for if needed, and a visit to the charitable organization is organized before a potential project is forwarded to the selection committee. During this whole process, discussions are held with the charitable organization to confirm that full understanding is occurred.

During the contact with the potential projects, a concern was raised by the local coordinators to make a promise where the UK Foundation will not be able to deliver. This concern falls in line the *credibility* category from Ganesan (1994), meaning that everything which is agreed during the selection process, provided that the charitable project is selected for funding, will have to be met. That would include both in term of the financial (goods) and the skills, time, and knowledge of the sponsor (service). If promises are made which are not able for the UK Foundation to meet, it will result in a decrease the perceived credibility. It is interpreted that this could be a reason to why there existed a concern regarding receiving too many applications during the first year. “If we receive too many applications which fit the criteria, it will mean we would have to reject more. This in turn could give out the impression among the employees that it is unnecessary to get involved since it is impossible to get selected either way.”

The *benevolence* category, on the other hand, would be harder for the UK Foundation to meet, due to the fact it is based on attributes of longer time. To develop a showing genuine concern and care towards the social environment that is based on other than an egocentric profit. However, this is the case for the UK Foundation, that it could be used as a tool to benefit the subsidiaries from a business perspective. The practical intention differs between the involved, where observations have shown that the external benefits are more important for some than for others. During multiple meetings, the topic of external communication of the activities has been discussed. How and what information and messages should be promoted towards the external stakeholders. It is interpreted that there is an interest of the

respondents as well as with other people involved that to give back and help in the community from a responsibility perspective. However, a business aspect is always kept in mind, referring back to the statement “CSR can be viewed as making money from an ethical perspective.”

In order to develop the a perceived genuine concern for the social environment in the external as well as internal stakeholders minds, a longer time will have to be spent with the UK Foundation. The purpose with the UK Foundation is to develop a sustainability peeler and have it running for multiple years. This will aid in the development of the benevolence category since the durability of the support can act as a framework for the organizations motivation (Webb and Mohr, 1998). The longer the organization has shown its support, in the case of the UK Foundation that would mean the number of years conducting its funding, the stronger the genuine concern towards the society of community is perceived by the stakeholders (ibid.). It is continues by stating that short-time commitment can be perceived as one-off events which are conducted for the sole purpose of bringing back profit to the company.

## **5.5. Communication of the VINCI UK Foundation**

Argued by Dawkins (2005), the communication of an organization’s CSR activities is unique since it is interesting for all stakeholders, meaning both the opinion-leader audience and the general public. However it is important to keep in mind that all the potential recipients of the communication will interpret it differently (Du et al., 2010). This is due to the understanding and expectations of the business, as well as the different need of information (ibid.). For example, the employees might interpret the meaning of CSR differently from one and the other resulting in a need of different amount of information regarding it. Also, if an employee has been involved with charitable work, especially towards the social environment, they would already be in possession of information regarding how the UK Foundation will work, thus also decrease the need of information. This could be seen during the presentations of the road show conducted by VINCI Energies UK, that the employees that have previous experience of the subject are interested in other types of information.

With regards to the other aspect of why the interpretation of the information will differ (the understanding and expectations of the business) includes the definition of what CSR is as well as the employees’ time spent within the company. This means that the longer an

employee has worked for the company, the knowledge regarding the company's business will increase. Comparing this with what was stated by the interviewees regarding the CSR activities being related to the organization's business activities, connection can be made.

Foreh and Grier (2003) argue the CSR activities themselves will not bring an organization any negative response; instead it is how the activities are used in a marketing strategy that is vital. Menon and Kahn (2003) argue that it is important for the company to distinguish between the CSR activities not directly related to the company's day-to-day business with the CSR activities that are when communicating it. However, there are also studies showing the main focus of the CSR message should still be regarding the organization or products (Friestad and Wright, 1994). Du et al. (2010) agrees with this by stating that the channel for the communication also affects the response of the stakeholders. How the information regarding the UK Foundation was communicated differed between the subsidiaries. Some chose to conduct the communication via one-way while through sending out an email with information, posting on the intranet, etc. whilst others chose to conduct the communication in a two-way state via road shows, using of CR champions, etc.

According to Du et al. (2010), the CSR communication can have both internal and external outcomes, but in order to reach these outcomes there are many aspects to take into account. When developing the CSR message, the level of importance, as well as what motives, impact, and commitment the company has, have to be determined and clear. When communicating the message, multiple, less controllable factors will affect the outcome of the message, including the stakeholder characteristics as well as the company characteristics (ibid.). However, if done effectively, the communication of the CSR activities can result in an increase in loyalty, productivity and advocacy from the employees.

The initial information regarding the UK Foundation was sent out to the employees through informative emails and was followed up by having continuing updates on both the intranet and in the newsletter. This falls in the fourth dimension in the model presented by Welch and Jackson (2007); *internal corporate communication*. The content of the messages within this dimension are, e.g., new development and activities, which would include information statements sent out by the local coordinators to their employees regarding the development of the UK Foundation. From this, interested employees were located and possible charitable organizations were brought forth to the respective local coordinators. Discussions between the potential sponsor and the local coordinator took place, where the potential sponsor is

acting as a link, to develop the application forms. These discussions falls in line with the third dimension from Welch and Jackson's (2007) model; *internal project peer*.

The second dimension, stated as *internal team peer*, occurs when the local coordinators meet to discuss which projects will be forwarded to the selection committee, as well as between the selection committee members during their meeting (ibid.). However, it also implies to the communication occurring during the meetings which focuses on the development of the UK Foundation, the next step to take, developing the timeline etc. The first dimension in the model presented by Welch and Jackson (2007); *internal line management communication* can be located in the road show conducted by one of the subsidiaries. Since the communication within this dimension is referring to the employees' roles and the personal impact each employee can have (as sponsors). However, one can also argue that any two-way communication between a local coordinator and an interested potential sponsor falls into this dimension due to that the same information might be transferred during these discussions. The practical actions when communicating information regarding the UK Foundation located in the first dimension contradicts one aspect explained in the model; that it occurs between an employee and its superior, meaning the local coordinator is in a superior position compared to the interested employee within the company. This was not always the case in practice, for instance, one potential sponsor being a business unit general manager which is a higher position in comparison to the local coordinator who handled that person.

# 6. Conclusion

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*In this chapter, the conclusions following the analysis will be presented alongside the critical limitations of this study as well as ideas for further research will be proposed.*

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*The purpose of this study is to investigate how to conduct the internal communication of CSR initiation.*

## 6.1. Final Discussion

Even though the overall feeling regarding the response was positive from the employees involved with the development of the UK Foundation, the procedure of how the initiative was communicated throughout the subsidiaries differed. Conducting the communication with initial surveys sent out before the UK Foundation went live and communicating via one-way tools, to using the help of CR managers and conducting road shows. The differentiation in the practical actions from each of the subsidiaries can be explained via the different definitions and interpretation of the concepts CSR and internal communication, as well as partly to how information is usually communicated within the company. This meaning that the different perspectives of the two concepts in the minds of the people involved will result in a variety of message content and channel. For future reference, a discussion regarding the definitions and how to conduct the communication practically should be held before the information is sent out. This can result in a similar way of conducting the communication in practice.

Alongside the fact that the subsidiaries and their respective locations are decentralized will result in different practical ways of conducting the internal communication on a regular basis. Also, the subsidiaries are using different tools when conducting their internal communication, affecting how the information regarding the UK Foundation is spread.

For the following years, the subsidiaries should sit down together and develop the core of the UK Foundation, making it clear for everyone involved and included in every message sent to

the internal stakeholders. They should also keep in mind the dimension (model from Welch and Jackson, 2007) in which the message belongs; since the information included, and the structure of the message, differs if it belongs to the 1<sup>st</sup> or the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension.

Another aspect important to discuss between the subsidiaries is the motivation and reason behind why the UK Foundation was initiated in the first place. Since when an organization is communicating regarding CSR activities, the message should include all aspects to why the firm is conducting it. But in order to do that, why the UK Foundation was developed needs to be determined and clear for all the employees involved, e.g. to bring back profit in the long run or to satisfy the feel of responsibility. The reason for initiation might be multiple, but nonetheless should be clear for the employees involved and included in the message communicated internally. It is believed that the following years will be result in more response in terms of potential projects since the UK Foundation is now in its first year. More years of existence for the UK Foundation will not only show sustainability to the internal employees, but also show the commitment the UK VINCI companies has towards the social environment. This will in term, alongside with all motivations in the message, result in an increase in trust towards the UK Foundation as well as towards the company as a whole.

## **6.2. Critical Review of the Study**

First of all, this study is written to receive a bachelor degree by an author with certain previous experience within the fields of internal communication as well as CSR. This results in an interpretation of the collected information which another person with other experiences and knowledge could have interpreted differently. Interpretation of the information collected via the observations as well as interviews would most likely also differ due to other discussions occurring during interviews and other information perceived as important during the observations.

This thesis was written as a case study, involving subsidiaries belonging to the same company group, meaning that the result could differ if conducted with another company, project, or with another research approach and design. Also due to the few subsidiaries involved compared to the ones that are able to be involved, the results might have differed if other subsidiaries were to replace the ones taking part in this study. It is also the case with the respondents, due to the perceived view of both internal communication and CSR and how the results could have changed if other employees were involved.

Keeping in mind that this case study was conducted in the UK and with the country's culture, the results from the study might vary if it were to be conducted in another country with a different culture. Lastly, the empirical findings were partly collected from a handful of interviews and more interviews could have provided more conclusive information.

### **6.3. Further Research**

Although this study has investigated the process of the communication of an organization's CSR activities to the internal stakeholders, the subject is still under researched. Also, this study focused on one case and one company, resulting in a call for further research regarding the subject in multiple cases. Investigating the internal communication of the other VINCI Foundations would be an interesting study to be able to compare one from the other, to identify the advantages and disadvantages. Also, if a study between the different VINCI Foundations took place, there would be a possibility to analyze how the cultural differences affect the outcome.

Since this study was focused on the internal communication of the CSR activities, there is a call for research focusing on the external communication of CSR activities and how that should be conducted. Since there is previous research stating that CSR activities affects the brand performance, corporate identity and customers trust (see 1.4), it would be interesting to study how the external communication of the CSR activities should be conducted to reach these effects.

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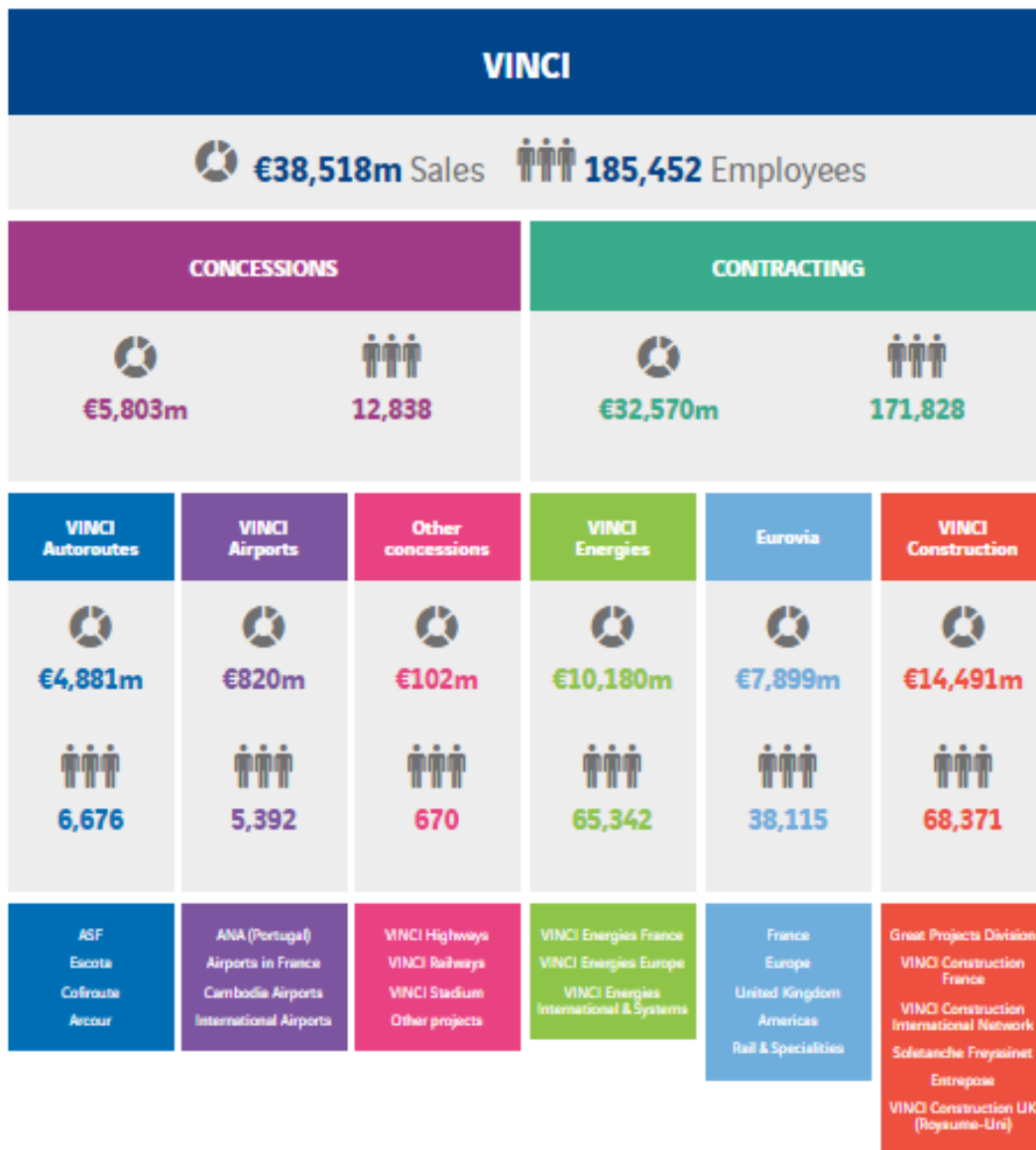
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# Appendix 1

The tree structure of Group VINCI

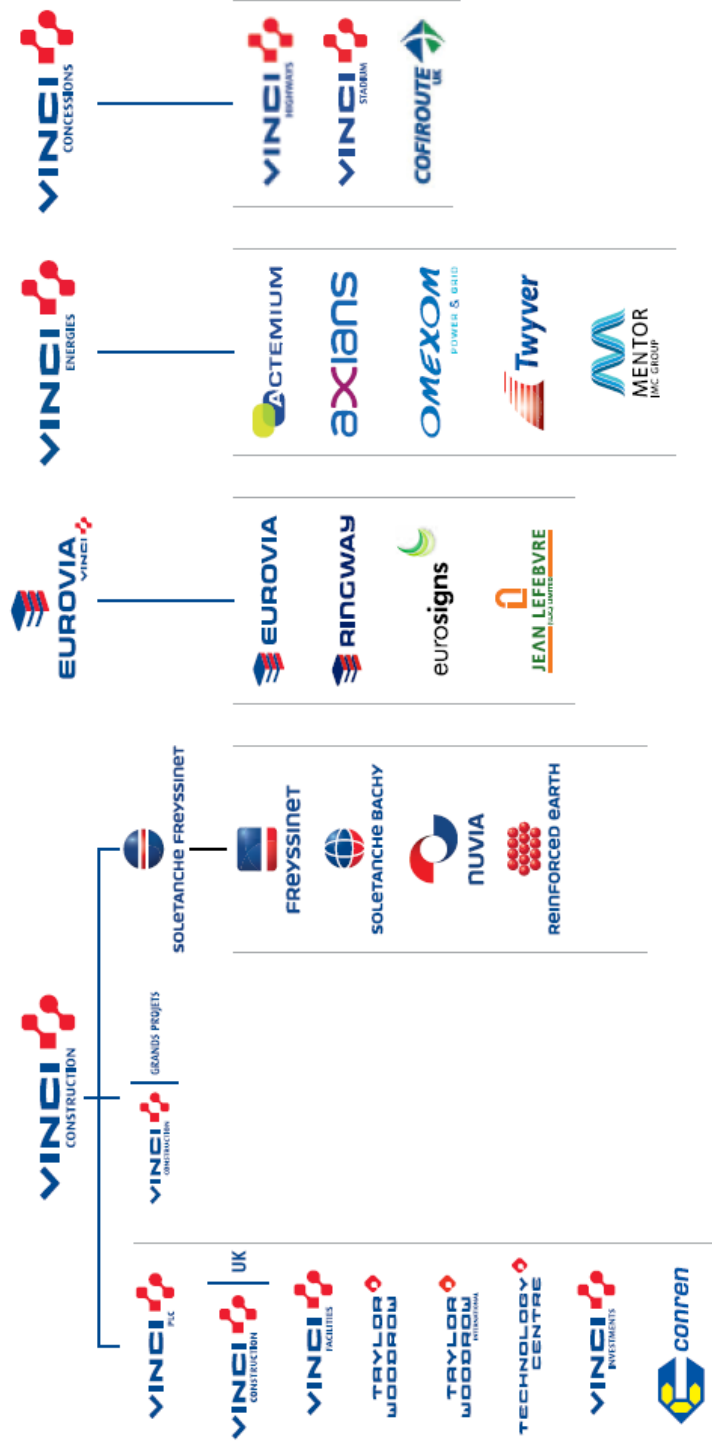


Source: <https://www.vinci.com/vinci.nsf/en/page/tree-structure.htm>

# Appendix 2

VINCI companies located and operating in the UK

VINCI in the UK



Source: Booklet - VINCI Companies in the UK

# Appendix 3

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## *Semi-structured questionnaire for qualitative interviews*

Subcategorized into different categories;

### *CSR understanding*

1. How would you explain CSR overall?
2. How would you explain CSR within the company? (past oriented, prior uk foundation)
3. Why have the company chosen to investigate into CSR at this moment?
4. What recent investments have the company made regarding CSR activities?
5. What is the VINCI UK Foundation? - full out explanation

### *Internal communication*

1. What is internal communication for you?
2. How is the internal communication conducted over VINCI Group? - positive/negative
3. How is the internal communication conducted within (Daughter Company's name)? - positive/negative
4. Has the internal communication been developed in the last couple of years? - If yes, explanation.
5. What would you say is the next development areas within internal communication?
6. Please explain how the company's recent investments into CSR activities have been/are being communicated to the employees.
7. Is it a continuously communication or a one-time advert? - Explanation.

### *Internal interest toward the CSR activities.*

1. What has the response been regarding the communicated CSR activities? - Applications from employees, willing sponsors, etc.
2. How have the discussions around the office changed after the introduction of CSR activities has been communicated?

3. How have the information been received by the employees?
4. How often (and containing) are you questioned by employees regarding the CSR activities?