



**EXPLORING DISABILITY CULTURE WITHIN THE
CONTEXT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED
NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT TÜRKİYE DIVERSITY
AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES**

BEGÜM KAMALI

Thesis for the Master's Program in Marketing Communication and Public Relations

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BEGÜM KAMALI

THESIS ADVISOR: ASSOC. PROF. DR. ZEYNEP AKSOY

Master's Exam Jury Members

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Özgür SEÇİM

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep AKSOY

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Selin TÜRKEL

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ETHICAL DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have conducted my work in accordance with academic rules and ethical behaviour at every stage from the planning of the thesis to its defence. I confirm that I have cited all ideas, information and findings that are not specific to my study, as required by the code of ethical behaviour, and that all statements not cited are my own.

Name, Surname: Begüm KAMALI

Date:23.05.2024

Signature:

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING DISABILITY CULTURE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT TÜRKİYE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES

Kamalı, Begüm

Master's Program in Marketing Communication and Public Relations

Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep AKSOY

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Perceptions of disability directed towards disabled individuals are determined by the cultural and social environments of the societies in which they live. Cultural meanings attributed to disabled individuals are acquired in the process of interactions with society. Disability culture has emerged as an understanding that aims to unite disabled individuals despite the prejudices and behavioural patterns that exist in society. Companies in the private sector are collaborating with non-governmental organizations to conduct corporate social responsibility projects in order to facilitate disabled individuals' participation in social life and change social perceptions. This thesis aims to understand the place of disability in corporate diversity and inclusion strategies. Within the scope of the literature on disability culture, the thesis examines the corporate social responsibility practices of Turkish companies included in the UN Global Compact's 2022 Diversity and Inclusion Guide for Businesses. Thematic analysis of official websites, social media accounts, and sustainability reports was

conducted to reveal how companies have integrated disability within their communications on diversity and inclusion. The findings are discussed in light of a literature review regarding diversity, inclusion, and disability culture.

Keywords: Disability culture, corporate social responsibility, diversity and inclusion, United Nations Global Compact Türkiye



ÖZET

KURUMSAL SOSYAL SORUMLULUK ÇERÇEVESİNDE ENGELLİLİK KÜLTÜRÜNÜN İNCELENMESİ: BİRLEŞMİŞ MİLLETLER KÜRESEL İLKELER SÖZLEŞMESİ TÜRKİYE ÇEŞİTLİLİK VE KATILIM GİRİŞİMLERİNİN ANALİZİ

Kamalı, Begüm

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Engelli bireylere yönelik engellilik algısı, yaşadıkları toplumdaki kültürel ve sosyal çevre tarafından belirlenmektedir. Engelli bireylere yüklenen kültürel anlamlar, toplumla etkileşim sürecinde kazanılmaktadır. Engelli kültürü, toplumdaki önyargılara ve davranış kalıplarına rağmen engelli bireyleri birleştirmeyi amaçlayan bir anlayış olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Özel sektördeki şirketler, engelli bireylerin toplumsal hayata katılımını kolaylaştırmak ve toplumsal algıları değiştirmek amacıyla sivil toplum kuruluşlarıyla iş birliği yaparak kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk projeleri yürütüyor. Bu çalışma, kurumların çeşitlilik ve katılım stratejilerinde engelliliğin yerini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Tez, engelli kültürü literatürü kapsamında Birleşmiş Milletler Küresel İlkeler Sözleşmesi Türkiye İş Dünyası Çeşitlilik ve Katılım Uygulamaları 2022 kılavuzunda yer alan şirketlerin kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk uygulamalarını incelemektedir. Şirketlerin engelliliği çeşitlilik ve katılım iletişimlerine nasıl entegre ettiğini ortaya çıkarmak için resmi web siteleri,

sosyal medya hesapları ve sürdürülebilirlik raporları üzerinden tematik bir analiz yapılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları çeşitlilik, kapsayıcılık ve engellilik kültürüne ilişkin literatür taraması ışığında tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Engelli kültürü, kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk, çeşitlilik ve katılım, Birleşmiş Milletler Küresel İlkeler Sözleşmesi Türkiye



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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Disability is a concept interrelated with various cultural concepts in society. The disabilities that an individual may experience for various reasons gain meaning when that individual is together with other people in their shared social and cultural environment, rather than from the individual's biological structure (Burcu, 2002). Disabilities, whether occurring at birth or acquired later, have sociocultural meaning in society. Individuals' reactions to their own disabilities and the ways in which a society treats disabled individuals profoundly affect the society's perception of disability. Perspectives and levels of perception of disability vary from society to society, and observations made within a society regarding disability may reflect a meaning of disability related to the reactions of other people within that society. The sociocultural mindset of the society within which these reactions emerge and are shaped is of great importance. According to Goffman (1968), 'the physical characteristics of the individual do not prevent him from being a part of the society in which he lives, but it is the meaning and labelling attached to disability that creates this situation' (p. 4-5). Cultural meanings attributed to disabled individuals and the resulting stigmatization processes reveal specific perceptions of disability.

From a social perspective, disability is not viewed as merely a medical condition or a personal characteristic of the individual. Rather, it is viewed in light of the social, cultural, and environmental barriers that prevent disabled individuals from fully participating in society (Karataş, 2002). Disability can therefore be understood as a social construct created by the attitudes, beliefs, and structures of society rather than merely the physical or mental characteristics of an individual (Burcu, 2011). Cultural depictions of disability are produced within societies. These cultural depictions have generally emerged as a result of the behaviours and feelings of non-disabled individuals in society towards disability rather than the ways in which disabled individuals describe and define themselves (Morris, 1991).

In short, a disabled individual, who is perceived as not being 'normal' in society, is labelled by that society or by others with whom the disabled individual has a relationship. Relatedly, the cultural perspective of disability also determines the existing social definition of 'being disabled'. Various approaches and projects have focused on the problems experienced by disabled individuals in society.

Along these lines, the main goal of the concept of social responsibility is to provide benefits for society. This can be achieved on the basis of volunteerism and philanthropy (Coşkun and Vural, 2011). In today's globalizing world, technological developments have revealed that institutions should have social purposes as well as economic ones. As the creation of competitive advantages and differences between companies has become mandatory for companies to survive, the existence of corporate social responsibility awareness within a company emerges as an important criterion for such differentiation (Coşkun and Vural, 2011). Disability is among the topics of projects created by companies focused on corporate social responsibility. Companies carry out social responsibility projects for the benefit of disabled individuals within the scope of their diversity and inclusion targets.

UN Global Compact Türkiye focuses on sustainability in terms of eliminating poverty, protecting the planet, and fighting inequality and injustice within the scope of the companies that are members of this organization (UN Global Compact Türkiye Official Website , 2023). Such sustainability goals are only possible with the social responsibility efforts of companies operating in many countries. Companies that are members of this organization can undertake disability-related projects within the scope of sustainability by adhering to the principles outlined by the compact. With these choices, they both strengthen the company's identity within society and express to society that they are committed to benefitting society. Disability is an issue that is focused on within the projects of the compact, as it is recognized as a phenomenon that requires sensitivity and assistance in all societies.

In light of the information presented here, the basic aim of this thesis is to evaluate the social responsibility projects put forward by companies participating in UN Global Compact Türkiye in terms of disability culture and to understand the extent to which these projects focus on work for disabled individuals and the issues that they address. In doing so, the meaning of disability culture, which is formed by the coming together of disabled individuals, is explained and the ways in which the behaviours and thoughts of disabled individuals regarding disability are perceived by other individuals in society are explored. In addition, the ways of thinking about disability have changed throughout history, and four models of disability accepted today are described in this study. These are the moral, medical, social, and human rights models and they all advocate different views on disability.

This thesis examines the corporate social responsibility projects carried out by companies within the scope of the UN Sustainable Development Goals addressing disability-related diversity and inclusion, disability culture, and corporate social responsibility through UN Global Compact Türkiye. The ways in which member companies express their corporate identities and present their projects in line with the guidelines for diversity and inclusion in the business world set forth by UN Global Compact Türkiye are evaluated together with the importance of sustainable communication for companies.



CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Diversity and Inclusion

‘Diversity’ refers to the recognition and celebration of differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, and other factors that make individuals unique (Casey, 2020). Embracing diversity means creating an environment in which everyone feels valued, respected, and supported for who they are. ‘Inclusion’, on the other hand, can be defined as the ability of individuals to fully contribute to a society or an organization without having to abandon their own identities and individual differences (Erdur, 2020).

By recognizing and celebrating differences and creating environments in which everyone feels valued and supported, organizations and communities can harness the unique strengths and perspectives of individuals to achieve growth and success. In addition, in disability culture diversity and inclusion involve the recognition and celebration of the wide range of experiences and perspectives within the disabled community and active efforts to include and empower people with disabilities in all areas of society.

As Verna Myers, a leading diversity and inclusion expert, has famously stated: ‘Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance’ (YouTube, 2015). However, being invited to dance reflects a one-way power relationship. The person is invited to dance by another person. The person being invited may decide to join the dance, but it is someone else’s decision as to whether the dance can occur in the first place or not. In exchanges of ideas, people are asked for their input and must wait their turns to speak. In Myers’ words, we can choose the people with whom we agree to dance, but there are differences between being included in an environment and feeling like we belong in an environment. From this perspective, being able to choose our ‘dance partners’ does not always mean that the diversity we create in a given environment will truly be accepted. Therefore, it is important to consider how diversity is perceived within communities. Moreover, these perceptions of diversity within society should be based on a willingness to accept people without attempting to change them and thus create a more inclusive environment.

Recognition of these societal perceptions offers opportunities to think in more detail about the different environments present within society, to produce different ideas across cultures, and to raise awareness of diversity.

In order to better emphasize diversity and inclusion in terms of disability, it is necessary to recognize that disability is not a uniform experience. There are many types of disabilities, each with their own unique challenges and strengths. Ultimately, diversity and inclusion are about creating a social structure that supports the full participation of all individuals in society, regardless of their disabilities and abilities. Disability is an important dimension of diversity and inclusion. Generally speaking, inclusion has the goal of creating an environment where the value of all individuals is recognized within a framework of respect and love regardless of the abilities or disabilities of disabled individuals. This goal is important in any effort to ensure individuals' full participation in society. Inclusion is associated with creating a society in which people with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of life, including education, employment, and social activities.

At the same time, people with disabilities have histories, cultures, and traditions that are shaped by their unique experiences and perspectives arising from their specific disabilities. Diversity and inclusion celebrate the strengths of people with disabilities and firmly reject stigma and prejudice. In short, it is impossible to consider diversity and inclusion without considering disability. These concepts are intertwined with disability and cannot be evaluated separately.

2.2. Disability Culture

'Disability culture' refers to the shared beliefs, values, behaviours, traditions, and practices of people with disabilities. It represents a way of life shaped by the experiences of living with disability and the unique challenges and opportunities that disability brings. Disability culture is transcultural; it first emerged from an art movement for disabled individuals focused on positive portrayals of people with disabilities (Dupre, 2012, p. 169).

Disability culture is an entity that includes not only a common experience of oppression but also art, humour, history, evolving languages and beliefs, values, and strategies for survival and development. It can be seen in the ways in which disabled individuals interact with others and participate in society.

It also helps disabled individuals present themselves in society within a framework of the unique beliefs, values, traditions, arts, and practices of individuals and communities who define themselves as disabled. It encompasses the ways in which people with disabilities create their own languages, shared experiences, and sense of identity separate from mainstream culture. 'Disability culture assumes a shared sense of identity and concern that unites disabled people and distinguishes them from their non-disabled counterparts' (Barnes and Mercer, 2001, p. 522). The formation of collective consciousness among individuals occurs through the identification of disabled individuals with disability culture. Disabled individuals develop a positive sense of identity in society knowing that their disabilities are integral parts of their selves. Disability culture has the potential to create positive social transformations that promote the participation, awareness, understanding, and empowerment of people with disabilities. This highlights the fact that social attitudes, values, and sociocultural institutions are much more effective than biological facts in determining bodily realities (Siebers, 2001, p. 1).

Finally, as in all cultures, there are specific cultural definitions applied for disabled individuals in Turkish culture. Educating society to create disability awareness will help eliminate the existing prejudices against disabled individuals and remove the obstacles to sharing life with disabled individuals. In Turkish society, educating disabled individuals and integrating them into society will enable them to gain respected positioning in society as productive people.

Morris (1991) stated that the importance of how disabled individuals are restricted in accordance with the social organization and cultural framework cannot be denied. When general social perceptions are examined in detail, it can be said that 'disability' as a construct does not reflect specific mental or physical disabilities, but rather the images of disability in people's own minds. People with disabilities are designated and categorized within particular cultural contexts and may not be able to fulfil certain roles and responsibilities that are considered 'normal' in a given culture.

In general, the idea instilled via sociocultural structures during socialization processes is that disabled individuals are members of society. However, they are often perceived as individuals who cannot do everything that others can and treated as 'incomplete' human beings, which reveals the discrimination and oppression that they face.

Furthermore, as Finkelstein (1987) stated, disabled individuals' perspectives of themselves also create their own culture. For that reason, it is important that disability culture is shaped by positivity. According to Goffman (1968), disabled individuals are exposed to cultural definitions that cause them to be labelled as unimportant in society and pushed into the background; disability culture can help offset that mindset.

Goffman (1968) further noted that, in such cases, an individual's physical disability may not stop that individual from being a part of society, but the cultural meanings attributed to that individual and the labels that are accordingly affixed call attention to the disability. Disability culture emphasizes that disability is diversity, not weakness (Burcu, 2011). It holds that disabled individuals have their own perspectives and contribute to society with their unique experiences. This entails public recognition of the historical and ongoing stigma and marginalization that disabled individuals face in all societies, a call for their acceptance in society, and an emphasis on accessibility and the recognition of disability rights by all. Disability culture may be manifested through disability pride parades, disability arts events, and disability-specific language, humour, and media platforms (Burcu, 2011).

Generally speaking, disability culture aims to create a sense of community and solidarity among disabled individuals and to challenge ableism, or the belief that disabled individuals are inferior to the non-disabled (Burcu, 2011). This culture also contains some key elements such as advocacy and activism, as people with disabilities continue fighting for their rights and for greater inclusion in society. Humour and satire are also prominent within disability culture, being used to confront and challenge disability-related stereotypes and misconceptions. Adaptive technology, assistive technology, and other adaptive tools are also important parts of disability culture.

Furthermore, art, music, and other forms of creative expression can be powerful ways for people with disabilities to express themselves and share their experiences with others. As described above, disability culture creates a sense of common identity while encouraging and supporting disabled individuals' sense of belonging to society. In the words of Dossa (2008), 'it is necessary to understand that disabled people are neither superheroes nor tragic individuals, but ordinary people' (p. 83). Disability culture seeks to spread that understanding.

In short, disabled individuals, like all other individuals in society, have basic material and spiritual needs, and they can maintain their daily lives consistently when they can interact with other individuals in society.

2.3. Models of Disability

Various models have been proposed throughout history to conceptualize disability from different perspectives. Today, four main models can be found in the literature.

2.3.1. The Moral Model of Disability

The oldest model of disability is the moral model. This model holds the individual responsible for disability and argues that disability occurs due to the incorrect attitudes or actions of individuals or their parents (Mackelprang and Salsgiver, 1999).

Mackelprang and Salsgiver (1999) explained that this model regulates the lives of disabled individuals through religious or traditional lenses. Proponents of this model claim that disability results from moral failure as a manifestation of the ‘devil’ or ‘immorality’ within humans. This model was widely accepted until the end of the Middle Ages. Subsequently, under the influence of the Enlightenment, people’s desire for both perfection and understanding began to assert itself.

2.3.2. The Medical Model of Disability

With the advancement of scientific knowledge, a new paradigm was created in which disabled individuals could be evaluated according to their biological deficiencies. Thus, the model of medical disability emerged. As a result of this, institutions aimed at correcting imperfections began to be established in many countries. According to this traditional model, individuals who do not comply with the understanding of mental or physical ‘normality’ are considered disabled (Dowling and Dolan, 2001).

According to this model, disability is a condition that occurs as a result of a physiological disorder and requires appropriate treatment by practitioners (Llewellyn and Hogan, 2000).

2.3.3. The Social Model of Disability

The social model of disability offers a framework that views disability as a social construct rather than an intrinsic personal characteristic.

According to this model, people with disabilities are disabled not because of their disabilities but rather because of the barriers and prejudices in society. The social disability model highlights the need for societal changes to remove those barriers and promote inclusion (Özgökçeler and Alper, 2010). According to Lawson (2011), notions of self and identity based on the social model of disability have also been introduced. This social model was developed to create awareness in a way that will assist social organizations in representing disabled individuals and defending their rights. Additionally, Lawson (2011) referred to existing disability discourses to emphasize the value and relevance of the social model as a supportive theoretical explanation of the social position of disabled individuals due to the inability of some individuals to express themselves. Similarly, Swain and Sally (2010) described how this new disability model emerged with the input of people with disabilities and from within disability culture. It promotes a non-tragic view of disability that encompasses both positive individual and collective social identities for people with disabilities, based on the benefits, lifestyle patterns, and life experiences of disability. This view emerged in direct opposition to the prevailing model of disability as personal tragedy, and the social model of disability was accordingly built on an emancipatory imperative.

2.3.4. The Human Rights Model of Disability

After the social model of disability, the human rights model of disability, which has emerged recently, must also be mentioned. The human rights model focuses on the inherent dignity of humans and their way of life. It takes into account the individual's medical characteristics and needs only if deemed necessary. It puts the individual at the centre in all matters affecting an individual's life.

The human rights model of disability proposes that the causes of problems in society do not originate from the individual (Degener, 2016). This approach sees disability as an issue that should be addressed within the framework of human rights, and it holds that focusing directly on people, instead of seeking criteria with which to evaluate people, will eliminate problems (Berkün, 2013). The model evaluates the harms experienced by disabled individuals, such as unemployment, lack of access to education, or poverty, as human rights violations.

The most important step in this context occurred in 1993, when the UN published standard rules on equal opportunity, which still form the basis of the disability policies of international institutions today (Akçalı, 2015). In shaping those standards, which are based on the full and equal participation of disabled individuals in society, including the areas of medical care, rehabilitation and assistance services, accessibility, and education, the policies to be followed were determined based on employment, income protection, social security, and equal participation in culture, sports, and religion. Following this first important initiative, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006, which was seen as a great achievement regarding the human rights of disabled individuals (Şişman, Kocabaş and Yazıcı, 2011). This convention aims to raise the living standards of disabled individuals on an international basis as a global document that focuses on the improvement of working conditions. With the publication of such documents, the problems of disabled individuals began being addressed by global organizations. The human rights model reflected in the UN Convention adopts a rights-based approach to life with disabilities. This approach insists that disabled individuals should be allowed to live their lives on equal terms with other members of society.

2.4. Corporate Communication, Diversity, and Disability

Corporate communication refers to the strategies and practices that organizations use to convey information, messages, and stories to various stakeholders, both internal and external. It encompasses the processes of planning, executing, and managing communication activities that shape an organization's reputation, brand image, and relationships with its stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2020).

The relationship between corporate communication and disability reflects how organizations communicate with disabled individuals both inside and outside the organization. Corporate communication strategies are essential in implementing inclusive and accessible communication. Corporate communication and corporate culture are an integral whole. A corporate culture is invented, founded, or developed by organization members in order to overcome problems of internal harmony and adaptation to the external environment.

That culture's validity is accepted when it works well or is generally sufficient; therefore, it shows new members of the organization the right way to feel and think about problems. It is a model of basic assumptions provided for educational or informative purposes (Wagner and Hollembeck, 1992, p. 695).

Corporate communications can be divided into internal and external communications. Internal communication involves communicating internally within an organization to or among employees, managers, or leaders. In the modern era, corporate management needs to focus on its internal target audience and pay equal attention to everyone. An organization should express the internal message that it wants to communicate by focusing on integration (Chmielecki, 2015). The issues particularly addressed by internal communication are employee participation and inclusive policies. Thus, disability awareness and support should be embraced and encouraged by corporate communication strategies. This is necessary for employees to better understand disability and inclusion in society. Furthermore, employees need to know their rights and responsibilities regarding disability in the workplace. Therefore, they should learn about the regulations that are in place to prevent disability discrimination.

External communication involves the ways in which an organization presents itself and communicates with the public, including stakeholders from the media (Wang, 2015). In short, it entails both customer participation and community participation. Considering this definition, organizations must make commitments to providing more accessible environments for their disabled customers. This may include making marketing materials and customer service processes accessible to disabled individuals. It is also important to engage with disability advocacy organizations and the wider community to help corporate organizations build good relationships with the community and demonstrate their commitment to disability support.

Corporate communication should address the connections between disability and diversity. Relationships built on diversity and inclusion are focused on building and nurturing connections within a diverse workforce and customer base. This involves recognizing and valuing differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, cultural background, and more.

The goal is to create an inclusive and equitable environment where all individuals feel respected, are valued, and have equal opportunities. In these ways, corporate communication should foster disability support by celebrating difference and diversity.

At the same time, corporate communication should be mentioned in the context of the concepts of corporate reputation and corporate responsibility. To explain disability through corporate communication, the concepts of corporate reputation and corporate responsibility need to be understood.

Corporate reputation is shaped by the collective approach created by the stakeholders of an organization regarding the fulfilment of the work it promises to do (Wang, 2015).

Corporate responsibility, on the other hand, 'consists of the level of an organization's social inclusion, sustainability, citizenship or other initiatives' (Wang, 2015, pp. 6). Companies engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities to protect their current positions and reputations, as well as to increase their recognition and be accepted as exemplary institutions in society (Sucu, 2022). For this reason, they pursue projects or collaboration activities related to concepts such as environmental responsibility, diversity, inclusion, and social equity. In light of the above information, the necessity of corporate communication for organizations is clear. It is a vital process used by many organizations as it contributes to building strong and meaningful relationships with all stakeholders. It helps them share the values, aims, and achievements of the organization, and in this respect, it offers the opportunity to create trust and loyalty among the public (Gümüş and Öksüz, 2010). Accordingly, the various functions of corporate communication addressed in the present study contribute to organizations in many important ways, such as allowing them to establish and protect their responsibilities, identities, and reputations.

To summarize, corporate communication is the communication of organizations and it has many different functions, including many different types of messages sent to customers, investors, or the general public. This means that it can be used as a phenomenon that contributes to sustainability.

2.5. The UN Global Compact and UN Global Compact Türkiye

2.5.1. UN Global Compact

The United Nations Global Compact is a voluntary initiative for business organizations worldwide that entered into force in 2000 with the determination of its fields of activity (UN Global Compact, 2023). The compact addresses ten basic principles regarding human rights, labour standards, environmentalism, and anti-corruption issues. All parties to the compact must adopt these principles as their own corporate strategies and undertake a commitment to maintain and support them.

Table 1. The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact.

Principle 1 Human Rights	Businesses should support and respect internationally declared human rights.
Principle 2 Human Rights	Business should not be complicit in human rights violations.
Principle 3 Working Standards	Businesses should support employees' freedom of association and collective bargaining.
Principle 4 Working Standards	The practice of forced and compulsory labour should be ended.
Principle 5 Working Standards	All forms of child labour should be eliminated.
Principle 6 Working Standards	Discrimination in recruitment and occupation should be ended.
Principle 7 Environment	Businesses should support precautionary approaches to environmental problems.
Principle 8 Environment	Businesses should support all kinds of activities and initiatives that will increase environmental responsibility.
Principle 9 Environment	Businesses should support the development and dissemination of environmentally friendly technologies.
Principle 10 Fight Against Corruption	Businesses should combat all forms of corruption, including bribery and extortion.

Source: UN Global Compact (2000). 10 Principles [Online]. Available at: <https://www.globalcompactturkiye.org/10-ilke/> (Date of access: 15.12.2023).

The most prominent of these principles within the scope of disability are Principles 1 and 6. The first principle holds that 'businesses should support and respect internationally declared human rights' (UN Global Compact, 2000). This principle extends beyond respecting human rights and promoting humane working conditions in the business world by advocating for the full employment of the employable population.

At the core of this principle is the idea of engaging in voluntary action through strategic social investments, philanthropy, project partnerships, public policy advocacy, and collective action. In this context, disabled individuals are among the vulnerable groups whose rights must be protected. The sixth principle holds that ‘businesses should promote the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation’ (UN Global Compact, 2000). Privileges in the fields of employment and occupation often mean that positive corporate behaviours are not exhibited for some individuals due to differences that are not related to requirements in the nature of the job. These differences may include race, ethnicity, gender, religion, politics, and disability.

As a result of the continuous technological developments and the interconnectedness being experienced in today’s world, the principles of the UN Global Compact have emerged as an important resource for development culture in the global business world. The compact constitutes an innovative corporate responsibility approach that proposes universal principles for a sustainable life.

2.5.2. UN Global Compact Türkiye

In today’s increasingly globalizing world, the business sector has also transformed and has started attaching more importance to corporate sustainability and economic and social development. Many companies are now reorganizing their activities in line with a sense of social responsibility, as they consider it necessary to establish an appealing corporate identity (Caymaz, Saran and Erenel, 2014). The 10 principles of the UN Global Compact were published accordingly to help institutionalize sustainable development and bring it to an operational level. The attention paid to these principles increased as more companies participated. Turkish companies began participating in 2002, and with the aim of ensuring more permanent activities, the Turkish Global Compact Local Network was established in 2006. In 2013, Global Compact Türkiye was established with the partnership of the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD) and the Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations (TİSK) as well-established Turkish institutions, and the principles thus began to spread in the country with more definitive steps.

Finally, in 2023, UN Global Compact Türkiye began operating as the Association of Global Compact Signatories. UN Global Compact Türkiye now has many members, including non-governmental organizations, universities, and municipalities, as well as participating companies (UN Global Compact, 2023).

2.6. UN Sustainable Development Goals

Akgöz and Engin (2013) defined sustainable development as ‘meeting the needs of the present generation without eliminating the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (p. 87). The social dimension of sustainable development is closely associated with disability because it entails ensuring the continuity of social and cultural systems and the well-being and survival of people. The concept of sustainability is now being taken seriously at the institutional level due to consumers having become more conscientious, demanding better conditions for both themselves and the societies in which they live. In addition, organizations in the private sector have realized that a better environment, a stronger society, and sustainable development add value to both social and commercial life. Thus, businesses around the world have begun initiating projects to produce solutions for sustainable development.

‘Corporate sustainability is a concept that is used at the company level with the concept of sustainable development and is considered to be in the same mentality’ (Akgöz and Engin, 2013, p. 88). On a corporate level, sustainability is becoming an integral part of business strategies and an important value for companies (Signitzer and Prexl, 2008). In line with the definition provided here, the UN Global Compact Türkiye website states that ‘the UN Global Compact is the largest corporate sustainability initiative in the world’.

The UN Global Compact, launched under the auspices of the United Nations, has also embraced the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Figure 1), which consist of 17 principles aimed at supporting sustainability efforts and providing a road map to achieve sustainable development. On a corporate level, organizations that accept these goals employ CSR activities to produce solutions to the economic, social, and environmental problems that pose obstacles to sustainable development. In addition to addressing existing problems, these projects may also provide new social and cultural benefits.

Thus, CSR is an indispensable part of today's business world and an integral part of corporate sustainability.



Figure 1. Sustainable Development Goals

When the UN Sustainable Development Goals were announced, there was disappointment among disabled individuals and disability organizations because disability inclusion was not explicitly mentioned as a main target of the goals and efforts to support and encourage disability organizations were not suggested (Ghai, 2009). However, although disability is not directly mentioned among the targets, discourses relevant to disabled individuals are included in the main descriptions of some goals. Specifically, Sustainable Development Goals 4, 8, 10, 11, and 17 are of relevance in the context of supporting disabled individuals.

Sustainable Development Goal 4 states that everyone should benefit from inclusive education of equal quality, and it is aimed to encourage learning opportunities. This goal emphasizes that the elimination of all kinds of inequalities in education should be assured and that access to education and training appropriate for all educational levels should be provided with the inclusion of all disadvantaged groups, such as disabled individuals.

Sustainable Development Goal 8 explains that inclusive and sustainable economic growth with full employment should be promoted for all and that employment opportunities should be provided under humane conditions.

The importance of the productive employment of all segments of the population, including disabled individuals, is emphasized with a call for access to employment opportunities for all under humane conditions.

Sustainable Development Goal 10 focuses on promoting and sustaining the social, economic, and political participation of all people, including people with disabilities, and minimizing inequalities within societies and between countries.

Sustainable Development Goal 11 states that cities should be organized and made sustainable in accordance with humane living standards, and that transportation systems and roadways should be constructed safely while creating affordable and accessible areas for everyone. While these aims are being pursued, disability should be considered as an important criterion in discourses on accessibility.

Finally, Sustainable Development Goal 17 calls on all stakeholders of the UN Sustainable Development Goals to strengthen the implementation of the goals and revitalize global partnerships. This will allow increased accessibility to high-quality and up-to-date data on important social issues, including disability inclusion.

Thus, the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is not merely a document about sustainable development; it is a vision for the future. With these goals, it is aimed to establish a vision of sustainability and combat all kinds of discrimination on a solid foundation built with a respectful stance towards human rights, the rule of law, equality, and diversity.

In short, the UN Sustainable Development Goals pave the way more clearly for individuals to discover their own potential and improve themselves. The importance of equality of opportunity is emphasized by these goals, with a focus not only on personal welfare but also on common and collective welfare.

In its own words, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for ‘a just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met’ and ‘a world in which consumption and production patterns and use of all natural resources...are sustainable’ while ending ‘poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions’ (United Nations, 2015a).

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are rapidly gaining importance in the world. In today’s world, the importance of social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and economic development as three interconnected components is accepted by all countries, but there are differences between countries in the levels of implementing and understanding these goals. The aims expressed by these goals will only be fully realizable when all societies agree to pursue them with the same levels of commitment.

2.7. Sustainability Communication

Sustainability communication is structured with a strategic perspective that requires a pre-determined stance and the definite participation of corporate management, and it tracks cultural changes according to the conditions of the global market and different sectors, reflects the behaviours of major stakeholders, and acts together with those stakeholders (Newig, 2011). It constitutes a management phenomenon that creates integrity by maintaining regular communication with all organs of an institution, and it helps disseminate concepts related to sustainable communication and CSR.

One of the most important reasons for this type of communication is that activities developed within the scope of CSR contribute to the well-being of the environment, society, and economy. Changes in the understanding of the concept of CSR have been intertwined with the formation and development of the concepts of sustainability and corporate sustainability. In the past, CSR projects generally addressed social issues such as social development, human rights, and philanthropy, while sustainability projects focused on environmental issues. Today, however, the scope of corporate sustainability encompasses not only environmental issues but also economic, social, and environmental opportunities and risks. In other words, corporate sustainability ‘is seen as a business management approach that creates long-term shareholder value by managing economic, social and environmental risks and opportunities’ (Lo and Sheu, 2007, p. 346).

Sustainable development is a necessary element in efforts to carry out corporate sustainability projects in a way that will meet the needs of current generations while simultaneously ensuring the limited use of resources to avoid causing irreparable damage to natural resources and the environment for the well-being of future generations, as per the general definition of sustainability (Fremann and Soete, 2003, p. 468).

In this context, it is important to minimize both the use of resources and damage to the environment while ensuring that resources are recycled as much as possible. The idea of the UN Sustainable Development Goals emerged at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, introduced with the aim of setting universal targets that address environmental, political, and economic problems. Following extensive processes of discussion and research, the UN Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 and implementation began in 2016 with the guidance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in more than 170 countries and regions. These goals are intended to ensure that all of humanity lives in peace and prosperity, eliminating poverty and protecting the planet. ‘It is a universal call to action that will guide financing’ (UNDP Türkiye, n.d.). In line with the stated objectives, efforts are being made to solve problems that have global dimensions in a more participatory and effective way.

Thus, among the reasons for companies to engage in CSR activities, the necessity of CSR for ensuring company sustainability is a primary objective, particularly in light of the growing global recognition of the importance of sustainability goals. This is followed by objectives such as supporting local development, providing social benefits, and adding value to society.

2.8. Corporate Social Responsibility

Building further on the explanations provided here about disability culture in Türkiye, it is necessary to explain the relationship between CSR and disability culture because the activities of both are in a position to make significant impacts today. CSR, as described above, refers to the way in which companies and organizations take responsibility for the social and environmental impacts of their activities.

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on disability inclusion and accessibility as a part of CSR efforts in Türkiye and around the world. By embracing CSR efforts, companies emphasize that they are corporate citizens and can invest in social issues by taking ethical approaches in consideration of their business strategies, their relationships with employees and stakeholders, and other social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors (Sucu, 2022). CSR entails practices that companies voluntarily undertake of their own initiative; they are not actions performed solely to comply with legal obligations.

In today's globalizing world, CSR has become a necessity for businesses. The CSR approach, based on the principle of companies giving back to society from what they have taken from society and the belief that organizations achieve social benefits through their activities, has an important place in terms of optimally strengthening promotional opportunities and the brand images of the products and services they provide in the market (Sucu, 2022). While working to reach their own goals, businesses must also respond to expectations and social demands of actors related to them and unrelated actors within the broader community.

Many different discourses on CSR are available in the current literature. When an organization decides to engage in CSR efforts, it first determines the area of focus. In general, CSR involves four main areas of responsibilities: economic responsibilities, legal responsibilities, ethical responsibilities, and philanthropic responsibilities. The economic responsibilities of companies include working to maximize earnings and efficiency for shareholders, obtaining as high a profit as possible, and maintaining their competitive positions (Carroll, 1991). The fact that legal responsibilities follow economic responsibilities in the social responsibility pyramid clearly reveals that these are two inseparable areas. Moreover, the existence of behaviours that must be followed even though they are not explicitly specified by law is widely recognized. These behaviours are ethical responsibilities. Considering the ethics section of the social responsibility pyramid, organizations strive to 'be honest, feel obliged to do the right thing, be truthful and fair, [and] avoid harm' (Carroll, 1991). Within this framework, the role of business ethics is very important. Applying the principles of business ethics, companies undertake their activities without harming their employees, partners, or society and perhaps even while actively making positive social contributions.

The fourth main area according to Carroll (1991) involves philanthropic responsibilities. This means that companies voluntarily engage in activities that protect the benefit and welfare of society as good corporate citizens. This can include projects in the fields of art, education, and social areas, amongst others. This four-part social responsibility pyramid gives the main areas of corporate social responsibilities a certain order of priority and describes them as being interconnected. Carroll (1991) stated that economic responsibilities require a firm basis to support any other CSR efforts.

Overall, successful CSR activities will positively affect the success of an organization. When such corporate efforts are evaluated from the perspective of disability culture, it can be said that they fall within the scope of both ethical and philanthropic responsibilities, because care should be taken on an ethical basis to treat people with disabilities equally and fairly. The issue of disability should be included in more voluntary projects because, like other social problems, the situations faced by disabled individuals are important challenges with social ramifications that cannot be ignored.

An older model of CSR known as the Davis model was proposed by Keith Davis in his book titled *Human Relations at Work* (1960). This model is one of the oldest and most cited conceptualizations of CSR and it has provided a framework for understanding the social responsibilities of organizations that has influenced the work of many researchers, such as Carroll (1991). According to Davis and Blomstrom (1966), considering the implications of the CSR model, the power given to institutions and organizations by society needs to be used responsibly. Accordingly, institutions should act responsibly to produce social benefits beyond their economic, technical, and legal obligations. In the Davis model, there are five assumptions about why and how institutions that protect the welfare of society take their precautions. Davis argued that social responsibility stems from power. Since institutions have strong positions in the events taking place in their external environments, they should assume responsibility in those matters. The communication between institutions and society should be continuous and open. Institutions should calculate the social implications of products and services. In addition, institutions should work voluntarily to solve social problems. Social costs should be shared indirectly with consumers.

According to Carroll (1999), the Davis model of CSR and the Carroll model of CSR share some similarities in terms of their approaches to understanding the social responsibilities of businesses. Both models recognize that businesses have responsibilities beyond their economic interests and profits. Both recognize that businesses have legal and ethical responsibilities to both their stakeholders and society as a whole. Building on Davis's work, Carroll (1999) argued that businesses should be open to social activities. They should be ready to communicate with individuals who represent society with the aim of improving and developing society. These statements paved the way for advancements in key areas in the future, such as sustainability and community service.

At the same time, Carroll's model also proposes that businesses have social responsibilities beyond their obligations to comply with laws and regulations (Carroll, 1999). However, neither of these models directly addresses the relationship between disability culture and CSR, but most businesses today include disability culture among their CSR strategies, stating that disability is a type of diversity that must be protected from discrimination. In terms of corporate economic responsibilities, disability inclusion and accessibility can contribute to a company's financial profits by expanding its customer base and enhancing its reputation. For example, if a business provides products or services that will make the lives of disabled individuals easier, it can make a significant profit by taking advantage of inadequacies in the service sector. In this way, companies can use the market to their advantage.

From a legal perspective, all companies have a responsibility to comply with disability discrimination laws and regulations (Carroll, 1991). These laws safeguard important rights for disabled employees in terms of providing suitable working environments and respect for equality and diversity. They also facilitate improved services for people with disabilities. From an ethical perspective, businesses aim to contribute to and support disability culture by implementing strategies for diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in harmony. The aim is to contribute to society through collaborations by providing training to more diverse employees and working in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and their goals. Finally, from a philanthropic perspective, businesses can cooperate with disability-focused organizations and provide financial support or create cooperative projects.

In this regard, they can make valuable contributions to disability culture through advocacy and social assistance.

In Türkiye, relationships between CSR and disability culture take many different forms. Some companies and organizations in Türkiye emphasize the importance of the participation of disabled individuals as part of their CSR initiatives.

Thus, they undertake activities to reach more disabled individuals by developing relevant products and services, providing employment opportunities for disabled individuals and highlighting the benefits of their participation in society, defending the rights of disabled individuals, and/or raising awareness and support.

On the other hand, in some cases CSR initiatives deviate from these well-intentioned goals and entail efforts to commodify disability culture. This can be harmful to the social assistance provided for disabled individuals in Türkiye. Instead of emphasizing the difficulties and inequality faced by disabled individuals, CSR initiatives of this sort may reduce the credibility of the words of disability activists and may draw attention away from the seriousness of the issue by foregrounding superficial works.

In general, contemporary CSR initiatives in Türkiye most often take the form of many independent projects. Moreover, they operate independently, shaped by the specific actions and attitudes of individual companies and organizations. However, if these initiatives are planned and implemented in a way that will affect large portions of the public, they have the potential to play significant roles in promoting participation and accessibility for disabled individuals in Türkiye. CSR involves companies' efforts to contribute to social, environmental, and economic development beyond their core business activities, and from the perspective of Türkiye, it is important to consciously encourage people of all ages to participate in development goals. This is also important in terms of disability inclusion.

In this regard, CSR and disability culture are interrelated in Türkiye in some important areas. The first is inclusive employment. Companies can play a major role in supporting the participation of disabled individuals in society by employing disabled individuals who can work in the relevant professional fields while providing the necessary individualized arrangements and assistance that they might need.

This not only benefits individuals; it also contributes to a more diverse and inclusive workplace culture. Secondly, accessibility is important in corporate settings. Companies can make their products and services accessible to disabled individuals. This may include providing accessible digital content, installing ramps and lifts in their buildings, and ensuring that signage and communication materials are accessible. The third important area is advocacy and awareness-raising. Companies can use their media platforms and resources to advocate for disability rights and raise awareness.

This may include partnering with disability organizations, sponsoring disability-related events, or using marketing and communication channels to encourage the participation of disabled individuals.

Finally, the issue of supplier diversity has entered the agenda recently. Companies can establish partnerships with other businesses founded by disabled individuals. This will create economic opportunities for the disabled community and help support greater participation in the business world as a whole. Overall, there are many opportunities for companies in Türkiye to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities and contribute to the development of disability culture through CSR initiatives. By taking a proactive approach to the inclusion of people with disabilities, companies can demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility and make a positive impact in the lives of disabled individuals. With these considerations serving as a starting point, the main aim of this research is to examine the CSR activities of companies with high turnover operating in Türkiye and to determine to what extent and in which areas they participate in disability projects and what results are achieved.

2.9. Corporate Social Responsibility Regarding Disability in Türkiye

Diversity and inclusion are interrelated phenomena that cannot be separated from disability. They are intertwined with disability and cannot be evaluated in a vacuum. Inclusive companies that embrace diversity encourage a creative and progressive social environment by enabling different people to address important issues from different perspectives. Companies that have developed an inclusive culture are often more productive and successful than others (Zeybek-Arslanboğa and Soykut-Sarıca, 2023).

Thus, diversity and inclusion in Türkiye, along with disability culture, are valuable for recognizing the unique experiences and perspectives of people with disabilities in Turkish society, creating an inclusive environment in which they can fully participate and contribute.

In recent years, Türkiye has made significant progress in promoting diversity and inclusion in the context of disability culture. The country has implemented laws and regulations to increase accessibility and protect the rights of people with disabilities.

In 2005, Türkiye signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which recognizes the right of disabled individuals to full participation in all areas of society. Support for the rights of people with disabilities has continued to grow in Türkiye since then (United Nations, 2015). One of the best examples of this is the Grant Programme for the Development of Social Integration of Disabled People, which was initiated with the cooperation of the Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Policies and the European Union Representation in Türkiye; the efforts continue with various projects (European Union and Republic of Türkiye, 2015). Within the scope of this programme, projects are developed to ensure that individuals of all ages and with various disabilities are well integrated into society and importance is given to education and employment. These projects are carried out in cooperation with well-known disability associations operating across Türkiye, which often host the projects (European Union and Republic of Türkiye, 2015).

As described in Section 2.5, UN Global Compact Türkiye was initially established in 2013 as a platform organized with the cooperation of TÜSİAD and TİSK (UN Global Compact, 2023). Since then, more companies operating in Türkiye are organizing their plans and strategies in line with sustainable development goals. Article 10 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals aims to reduce inequality within and between countries, including inequalities based on disability (UN Global Compact, 2023). Within this scope, it is clearly stated that disabled individuals are exposed to inappropriate behaviours and marginalization regarding equality and participation in society. In terms of disability culture, the UN Sustainable Development Goals emphasize the importance of promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities. This includes the right to participate in cultural life, to access cultural products and services on an equal basis with others, and to benefit from scientific progress and practices. In short, it is obvious that diversity will contribute even more

to society if disabled individuals begin contributing more to society. Therefore, it is important that disabled individuals take active roles in social activities within society. Overall, promoting diversity and inclusion through disability culture in Türkiye is an important step towards creating a more just, equitable, and inclusive society for all individuals, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

In Türkiye, disability has generally been viewed through the lens of the medical model introduced in Section 2.3.2 (Özgökçeler, 2006). The medical model presents an understanding of disability that is largely grounded in the physical realm and it argues that disabled individuals need to be rehabilitated in order to adapt to society. Therefore, the majority of disabled individuals in Türkiye face many obstacles in existing and participating in society. They are widely exposed to social stigma and discrimination. This discrimination begins in social institutions, and education, employment, and health services are the most important types of institutions that can be given as examples.

In order to increase the employment of disabled individuals and eliminate the reluctance of companies to hire disabled employees, disabled individuals should be given more advanced educational opportunities and the vocational and basic education levels of disabled individuals should be increased (Şen, 2018). The social position and prestige of an individual mirrors the extent to which the individual can improve that position within a specific social environment (Burcu, 2011).

Despite difficult living standards and widespread stigma, disabled individuals in Türkiye are trying to develop and promote their own culture and identity by creating a unique sense of self. In this context, disability culture ‘is aimed at changing negative cultural definitions and highlights the effort in which everyone in society is an active participant’ (Burcu, 2011, p. 37). The purpose of promoting disability culture is to foster a sense of solidarity by creating an organized community encompassing all disabled individuals in Türkiye. For disability culture to develop fully in Türkiye, initiatives should be taken to help redefine the identities of disabled individuals. People must be aware of the existence of different group identities to support inclusion in a multicultural environment. This is the meaning of acceptance (Burcu, 2011).

Without true acceptance, ‘society, on the one hand, produces discourses for disabled individuals that they are no different from non-disabled people and that they are equipped to do everything they can do, but on the other hand, it tries to draw social boundaries by referring to their differences’ (Ercan, 2018, p. 62). Thus, the opportunities of individuals with disabilities may be limited and they may face barriers to their full participation in society.

One of the most important obstacles in this regard is that most public spaces and buildings in Türkiye do not offer full accessibility. A lack of the necessary infrastructure in the physical environment, improperly planned architectural designs, and inaccessible public transportation vehicles cause disabled individuals to experience difficulties in accessing education, employment, social support and health services, and participation in social life (Tiyek, Eryiğit and Baş, 2016). When evaluating disability culture in Türkiye, disability needs to be addressed directly in the context of cultural values, accessibility, and equality. Disability culture is shaped by various factors that include the experiences and perspectives of disabled individuals living in a particular country.

On the other hand, many private companies operating in Türkiye aim to ensure the continuity of their existence and activities by launching CSR projects that focus on the problems experienced by disabled individuals in this society and their solutions. Today, the primary actors of CSR efforts are large corporations and holding companies, as well as non-governmental organizations and foundations (Alakavuklar, Kılıçaslan and Öztürk, 2009). Thus, large corporations and other organizations determine the target audiences of their CSR projects within the institutional context of this network of actors. In addition, philanthropic activities, which have a long history in Türkiye, continue in the form of the project-based activities of large actors such as corporations (Alakavuklar, Kılıçaslan and Öztürk, 2009). Charitable donations are often made anonymously by individual people, but CSR projects are project-based activities carried out with full public awareness.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH

3.1. Aim of the Study

This study aims to provide an up-to-date understanding of disability inclusiveness and diversity and the inclusion strategies of companies in Türkiye. Accordingly, the following research questions were pursued:

RQ.1 To what extent do Turkish companies include disability in their CSR projects?

RQ.2 How do companies represent disability in their corporate communication messages?

RQ.3 What are the prominent themes in corporate communications about disability?

To better understand the place of disability in the diversity strategies of Turkish companies, the scope of the study was limited to corporations that are members of UN Global Compact Türkiye. This criterion helped in selecting the unit of analysis because UN Global Compact partners have a strong commitment to sustainability and diversity. More specifically, the sample for analysis was determined from the Diversity and Inclusion Guide for Businesses issued by UN Global Compact Türkiye. This report presents the diversity and inclusion efforts of nine member companies. One of those companies, WPP, was excluded from the study as information relevant to the research questions was not provided. Therefore, eight companies were included in the analysis.

3.2. Method of the Study

This study employed a thematic analysis method with a qualitative research approach to reveal how and to what extent companies have addressed disability among their diversity and inclusion strategies. As described by Çalık and Sözbilir (2014), thematic analysis involves observing and interpreting research conducted on a central subject from a critical perspective by creating themes. According to Au (2007), thematic analysis helps to observe in depth the general structure of a subject being discussed from a holistic perspective and to determine priority areas. Thematic analysis studies also provide space for comparatively explaining the similarities and differences of studies carried out by different institutions, individuals, or companies. In thematic analysis, the sample size must be limited (Çalık and Sözbilir, 2014).

In the present study, thematic analysis was preferred in order to understand the main perspectives and objectives underlying the CSR strategies of the companies included in the UN Global Compact report to identify the narratives repeated by these companies as their projects were put into operation and to draw more categorized and in-depth conclusions regarding their attitudes and behaviours. In this context, thematic analysis enabled the discovery of common themes and recurring themes when information from these eight companies was examined, including their Sustainability Reports, media releases, and social media profiles in year 2022.

In the process of determining the CSR positions of these companies, first their CSR projects were listed and presented in a table together with the fields in which they were conducted. In the next step, the areas in which CSR projects were carried out in relation to disability issues were identified. The particular issues that these companies repeatedly mentioned in their publications were then determined as the themes of the study, and the eight companies were examined while identifying their similarities and differences within the scope of the research questions.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The findings of this study are presented in this chapter within three main sections. These address the extent to which disability is included in CSR projects, how disability is represented in corporate communication messages, and the prominent themes in corporate communications about disabilities.

4.1. Findings on the Companies' CSR Projects and the Place of Disability

The first research question addressed the extent to which the companies included disability in their CSR projects. Accordingly, the CSR projects were examined and the total numbers of projects conducted in 2022 are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. CSR Projects and Distribution by Areas

	Total	Environment	Women, Youth, Children	Social Issues	Arts, Culture, Tourism, Sports, Employment	Entrepreneurship, Technology	Disability
Boyner Group	38	5	13	15	1	0	4
DowAksa	14	3	5	0	5	0	1
Coca-Cola Türkiye	14	2	4	7	0	1	0
Unilever Türkiye	9	2	3	0	0	0	4
Mercedez-Benz Türkiye	15	0	6	0	6	2	1
Anadolu Efes	71	16	0	0	28	26	1
Shell Türkiye	11	3	4	0	0	2	2
Mey Diageo	13	5	1	5	0	0	2

In Table 2, the CSR projects of eight companies operating in Türkiye, as mentioned in the 2022 UN Global Compact report, are enumerated in terms of the areas in which the projects were conducted.

Table 3. CSR Projects on Disability by Areas

	Social Issues	Education	Health	Employment
Boyner Group	4	0	0	0
DowAksa	0	0	1	0
Coca-Cola Türkiye	0	0	0	0
Unilever Türkiye	3	0	0	1
Mercedes-Benz Türk	1	0	0	0
Anadolu Efes	1	0	0	0
Shell Türkiye	1	0	1	0
Mey Diageo	2	0	0	0

Table 3 presents the areas in which these companies engaged in CSR activities focused on disability.

Boyner Group served on the Board of Directors of the UN Global Development Goals Türkiye Network in 2021 and is one of the major companies attaching importance to the principle of sustainability (Boyner Group, 2022a). Boyner Group has also added a digital dimension to its CSR projects. Thus, the company carries out CSR activities in two ways: in areas created by utilizing online environments and in one-to-one communication with people. According to the company's 2022 sustainability report, there were a total of 37 projects including both digital activities and other CSR projects. The social responsibility areas in which Boyner Group is most active were issues pertaining to women, youth, and children (13 projects) and social issues (15 projects) (Table 2). Five projects were related to environmental protection and 1 project was related to arts, sports, or cultural activities. Three projects had disability as their main focus. Specifically, they addressed the social lives of disabled individuals (Table 3). Boyner Group emphasized that these three projects were carried out to increase 'accessibility' for disabled individuals in society. The first project, 'Freepark', aimed to facilitate the access of disabled individuals to parking areas. The second, 'Sesli Durak', or 'Voiced Stops', aimed to ensure that disabled individuals know where they are while traveling by bus.

The third, ‘Gönülden İşaret’, or ‘Sign from the Heart’, involved company employees receiving sign language education. With these projects, the company aimed to provide disabled individuals with easier shopping experiences in Boyner-affiliated stores. In addition, Boyner Group states via its Instagram account that it has provided financial support for canes to 10 visually disabled students via the WeWalk Walking Stick project (Boyner Group, 2022b).



Figure 2. Freepark Project (Source: Boyner Group,2022a)



Figure 3. Gönülden İşaret Project (Source: Boyner Group,2022a)

Dow, a multinational corporation, operates under the name DowAksa in Türkiye. DowAksa is one of the important stakeholders among the founding members of the Green Strategy Group and is thus aligned with its sustainability goals.

The company plans to continue its work to implement the guidelines proposed by the European Green Deal (DowAksa, 2022).

As seen in Table 2, DowAksa had a total of 14 CSR projects according to its sustainability report for the year 2022. More specifically, DowAksa focused on sports, arts, and culture with 5 projects and on women, children, and youth with 5 projects. Three of the company's projects addressed the environment and climate issues. One project focused on disability; it was undertaken in collaboration with the Turkish Spinal Cord Paralytics Association to support the purchase of wheelchairs by collecting and donating blue caps from disposable water bottles. Thus, this collaboration directly addressed the health of disabled individuals (Table 3).

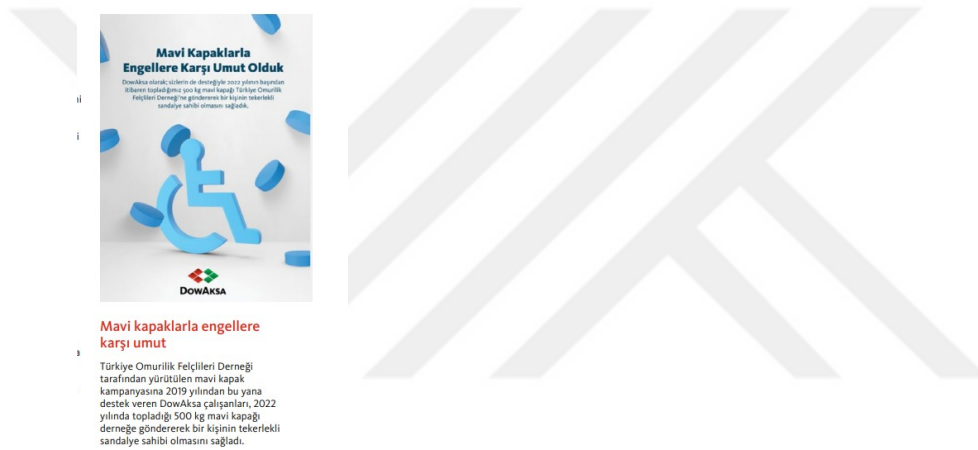


Figure 4. Blue Caps Project (Source: DowAksa,2022)

Coca-Cola Türkiye manages the operations of the international Coca-Cola Company within Türkiye. Coca-Cola did not produce a separate sustainability report specific to Türkiye but did publish a sustainability report that collectively presents all its work on a global scale. The company's approach to CSR is also provided in the media centre section of Coca-Cola Türkiye's website and that information is specific to Türkiye. The website lists 14 CSR projects (Table 2). Seven of those projects addressed social issues. Four projects focused on women, youth, or children and 2 projects were related to the environment, climate, and green protection.

One project addressed technology and entrepreneurship, which has become an increasingly important field. Coca-Cola Türkiye conducted no CSR projects addressing disability in 2022.

Unilever Türkiye is the Turkish branch of Unilever, a multinational corporation. On an international level, Unilever conducts projects on human health in relation to food and beverage consumption. Related projects in Türkiye also address issues such as genetically modified foods and microplastics in accordance with the relevant laws. As seen in Table 2, Unilever Türkiye conducted 2 CSR projects addressing the environment. Three projects focused on women, children, or youth and 4 projects focused on disabled individuals.

Unilever engages in active in-house CSR activities in Türkiye (Table 2). With awareness of its internal social responsibility, the company has given importance to ensuring appropriate physical conditions for disabled employees (Table 3). Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of internal awareness-raising activities by providing training to employees on this subject. The company organizes workshops and training series on disability awareness, and the website states that the company values the employment of disabled individuals with the aim of integrating them in a more inclusive society. Unilever describes these goals as follows: ‘We have set our global goal to be the number one employer choice for people with disabilities, to have our disabled employees representing 5% of the workforce, and to make all our facilities around the world fully accessible by 2025’ (Unilever Türkiye). This statement reflects active goals to support the company’s discourse. Moreover, Unilever offers Enable@Unilever in-house support networks to address the problems of its disabled employees. Unilever Türkiye also provided support via financial donations to the Amputee Football National Team in 2022.



Figure 5. Disabled Individuals (Source: Unilever,2022)

Mercedes-Benz is a world-famous automobile manufacturing company, and Mercedes-Benz Türk is among the companies with the most patents in the country. The Mercedes-Benz Koza Centre and Mercedes-Benz Ventures were established by the company to be actors in the fields of CSR, innovation, and entrepreneurship (Mercedes-Benz, 2023). Mercedes-Benz Türk attaches the most importance to education for girls among the issues addressed by its CSR projects in Türkiye, as seen in Table 2. In addition, support was given to sports and arts events in 2022 with 6 projects. Two projects addressed the increasingly important field of technological development and entrepreneurship. Disability issues, on which the company has recently been focusing, were addressed in the field of sports (Table 3). The company cooperates with the Amputee Football National Team and provides support via financial donations.

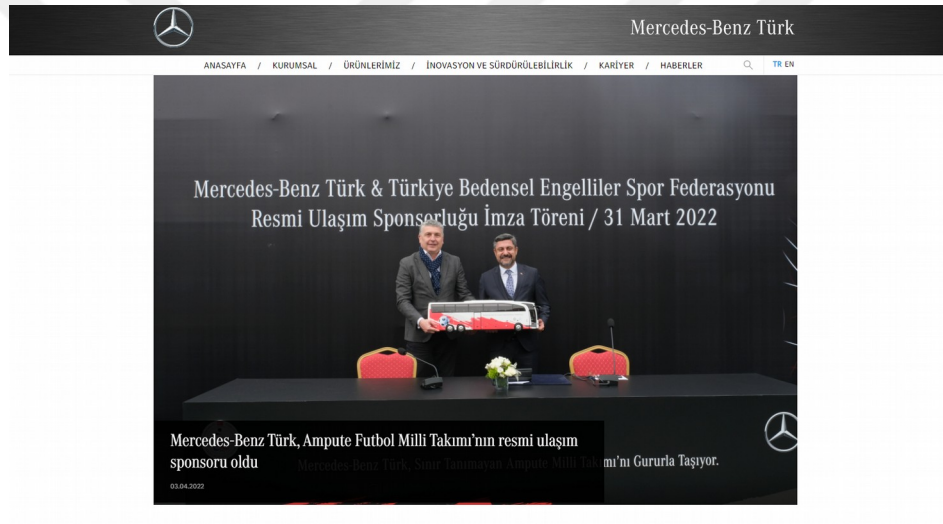


Figure 6. Amputee Football National Team (Source: Mercedes-Benz,2022)

Anadolu Efes Türk carries out projects and collaborations under the name 'Plus 1' in most of its marketing and advertising campaigns in Türkiye. The company presents its CSR projects with the theme of 'Plus Value for the Future'.

In 2022, Anadolu Efes had 16 CSR projects related to the environment, climate, and green protection; 28 projects related to culture, arts, and sports; 26 projects related to technological developments and initiatives; and only 1 project addressing disability. The disability-related project specifically addressed social life for disabled individuals. Anadolu Efes supports an initiative called 'BlindLook' that assists disabled individuals in social access. BlindLook aims to produce different solutions

by focusing on the problems that visually disabled individuals face in their daily lives in society using capital support provided by companies such as Anadolu Efes and encouraging business partners in the food and beverage industry to support such projects. BlindLook has implemented a ‘voice menu’ application for use by businesses operating in the food and beverage industry.

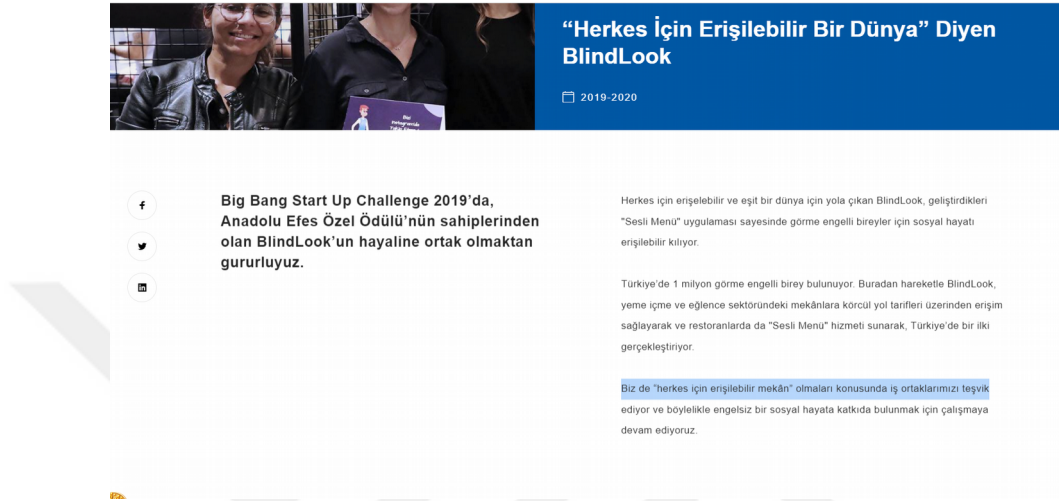


Figure 7. BlindLook (Source: Anadolu Efes,2022)

Shell Türkiye, as the Turkish branch of a multinational fuel company, implements its sustainability strategy on three levels. The first involves sustainability in in-house activities, the second entails long-term planning of corporate activities to provide more benefit to society, and the third encompasses efforts carried out for the sustainability of energy resources since Shell is an organization that works in the energy sector (Shell Türkiye, 2023).

As presented in Table 2, Shell Türkiye had 3 CSR projects in 2022 related to the environment; 4 projects related to women, youth, or children; 2 projects related to technology and entrepreneurship; and, finally, 2 projects related to disability. The CSR projects addressing disability were related to health and social life. Shell Türkiye supports the participation of disabled individuals in sports by cooperating with the Turkish National Paralympic Committee. Additionally, Shell Türkiye donates a portion of the income from its ‘Deli2go’ products sold at petrol stations to support users of wheelchairs.



Figure 8. Deli2go (Source: Shell,2022)

The Mey company was established after the privatization of Tekel's alcoholic beverages division in Türkiye. Later, Mey entered a partnership with Diageo, a company operating in the world's beverage industry. Mey now oversees the production and Diageo oversees the sales and marketing departments (Mey Diageo, 2024).

Mey Diageo communicates its sustainability goals to society with the slogan 'Another Company is Possible'. This is defined as follows: '...a company that supports the arts, defends the rights of all living beings and in other words, tries to be a "responsible social institution" beyond fulfilling its corporate social responsibility'.

Five of the company's CSR activities in Türkiye in 2022 were related to the environment and ecosystem; 1 was related to women, youth, and children; 5 were related to social issues; and 2 were related to disability (Table 2). As seen in Table 3, the disability-related activities addressed social issues relevant to the participation of disabled individuals in society. Mey Diageo, like Anadolu Efes, supported BlindLook and made the menus of 100 restaurants and taverns accessible to visually disabled individuals. There is also a programme within the company itself that oversees accessibility training and workshops.

4.2. Representations of Disability in Corporate Communication Messages

The second research question addressed how these companies represented disability in their corporate communication messages. In this stage of the research, textual contents provided by the companies were examined. The main messages of their projects are listed in Table 4.

Table 4. Messages Used by Companies in Their Campaigns

Company	Main message
Boyner Group	'Barrier-free communication is possible' ['Engelsiz iletişim mümkün']
DowAksa	'Support for social development and the country's economy' ['Toplumsal kalkınmaya ve ülke ekonomisine destek']
Coca-Cola	-
Unilever Türkiye	'Creating a workplace that is 100% physically and culturally accessible' ['Fiziksel ve kültürel olarak %100 erişilebilir bir işyeri oluşturmak'] #UniquelyUnilever
Mercedes-Benz Türk	'Mercedes-Benz Türk Proudly Carries the Amputee Football National Team Without Limits' ['Mercedes-Benz Türk, Sınır Tanımayan Ampute Milli Takımı'nı Gururla Taşıyor'] #beaware, #nobarriers, #alwaysforward
Anadolu Efes Türk	'Plus value for the future' ['Geleceğe artı değer'] 'An accessible world for everyone' ['Herkes için erişilebilir bir dünya']
Shell Türkiye	'We are working to create a barrier-free world' ['Engelsiz bir dünya yaratmak için çalışıyoruz'] Barrier-free service area, barrier-free life, reducing inequalities
Mey Diageo	'Everyone is equal, everyone is different' ['Herkes eşit, Herkes farklı']

In their CSR project titled 'Gönülден İşaret', or 'Sign from the Heart', Boyner Group states: 'We deliver goodness to society and people with our volunteers and non-governmental organizations' (Boyner Group, 2022a). In communications about this project, Boyner Group has focused on the difficulties that disabled individuals experience while communicating with others in society. In addition, Boyner Group shared information about the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on Instagram with content that included visuals and messages about the company's Sign from the Heart project for individuals with hearing loss. In this way, they aimed to create the impression that the company attaches importance to disability awareness by publicizing the company's own work while celebrating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

DowAksa conducts CSR projects intended to provide ‘support for social development and the country’s economy’. The slogan for its Blue Caps project to support the purchase of wheelchairs by collecting and donating blue caps from disposable water bottles is ‘Hope against obstacles with blue caps’. By providing wheelchairs for disabled individuals who need them, the company aims to benefit society by facilitating accessibility and participation.

Coca-Cola has not chosen disability as an area of CSR projects; therefore, there does not seem to be a relevant message.

Unilever Türkiye presents its work for disabled individuals with a motto of ‘equality, diversity, and inclusion’. The message to society regarding this issue is that the company aims at ‘creating a workplace that is 100% physically and culturally accessible’. The hashtag #UniquelyUnilever is used when the company posts about its disabled employees on social media. Thus, Unilever Türkiye aims to set an example for society by publicizing its egalitarian behaviour towards disabled employees. Like Boyner Group, Unilever shared a post on Instagram on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities that included a video about a visually disabled individual employed by the company, showing his access to the working environment with an application specially developed by the company for disabled employees. This is a good example of disability awareness and in-house efforts to support the employment of disabled individuals.

Mercedes-Benz Türk expresses its position regarding support for disabled individuals through its cooperation with the Amputee Football National Team, for which it serves as the official transportation sponsor. Its slogan is as follows: ‘Mercedes-Benz Türk Proudly Carries the Amputee Football National Team Without Limits’. In addition, the company aims to communicate to society that disabled individuals can be very successful in sports with the necessary support, using the slogans #beaware, #nobarriers, and #alwaysforward in its social media posts for this football team. Mercedes-Benz Türk also shared an Instagram post on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, stating its support for physically disabled athletes with images from football matches reflecting its collaboration with the Amputee National Football Team, and the company identified disabled individuals as the target audience with certain slogans in the video. Here, the company’s aim was to communicate the disability awareness activities being carried out to society.

Anadolu Efes Türk publicizes its CSR efforts with the theme of ‘Plus value for the future’. The ‘voice menu’ application created in collaboration with BlindLook is publicized to society with the slogan of ‘A world accessible to everyone’. This effort aims to provide easier access for disabled individuals in society while meeting their basic needs, such as eating and drinking outside the home when they want to socialize.

Shell Türkiye conveys its messages to society with the slogan of ‘barrier-free life’. By stating that it is ‘working to create a barrier-free world’ regarding wheelchair assistance, the company communicates a message to society about physical spaces in society and the facilitation of access for disabled individuals. At the same time, it supports that message with discourses of ‘reducing inequalities’ and ‘barrier-free service areas’ within the scope of disability support.

With the slogan ‘Everyone is equal, everyone is different’, Mey Diageo shares its goal with society regarding its understanding of inclusivity and diversity as follows: ‘Our purpose is to ensure that each employee of Diageo Türkiye can clearly feel the freedom to reflect their specific characteristics in every aspect’. In addition, the company states its dedication to supporting ‘diversity, differences and a working environment where these are proudly introduced and mutually recognized’.

Table 5. Number of Social Media Posts in (2022)

	Instagram	Twitter	Facebook	YouTube
Boyner Group	80	6	63	9
DowAksa	0	0	1	4
Coca-Cola Türkiye	34	2	30	0
Unilever Türkiye	37	0	0	0
Mercedes-Benz Türkiye	270	0	0	67
Anadolu Efes	130	0	126	0
Shell Türkiye	155	0	0	0
Mey Diageo	128	0	116	0

Table 6. Number of Social Media Posts Addressing Disability in (2022)

	Instagram	Twitter	Facebook	YouTube
Boyner Group	2	6	0	1
DowAksa	0	0	0	0
Coca-Cola Türkiye	0	0	0	0
Unilever Türkiye	1	0	0	0
Mercedes-Benz Türkiye	3	0	0	1
Anadolu Efes	0	0	0	0
Shell Türkiye	6	0	0	0
Mey Diageo	0	0	0	0

Table 5 presents the total numbers of posts shared via these companies' social media accounts in 2022. Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube posts were reviewed. More specifically, Table 6 presents the numbers of posts addressing disability made by these companies in 2022 via Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube.

In 2022, Boyner Group shared 80 posts via its Instagram account, 6 posts via Twitter, 63 posts via Facebook, and 9 posts via YouTube (Table 5). Thus, in terms of social media, Boyner Group has been most active via Instagram but also has a high number of Facebook posts. Overall, it can be stated that Boyner Group generally uses social media platforms actively, but only 2 posts addressed disability in 2022. One of these was about the Sign from the Heart project, on 24 February 2022, and the second was about the WeWalk Walking Stick project in conjunction with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, on 3 December 2022. For the Sign from the Heart project, a video was shared via YouTube (Table 6).

DowAksa shared 1 Facebook and 4 YouTube posts in 2022. The company shared no posts on Instagram or Twitter (Table 5). Thus, it can be said that DowAksa is not active on social media platforms, and the company did not share any social media posts addressing disability in 2022 (Table 6).

Coca-Cola Türkiye had 34 Instagram posts, 2 Twitter posts, and 30 Facebook posts in 2022. There were no YouTube posts from this company (Table 5). It can be concluded that Coca-Cola is active on social media platforms and most often uses Instagram and Facebook. This company had no disability-related social media posts in 2022 (Table 6).

While Unilever Türkiye shared 37 Instagram posts in 2022, it had no posts on Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube (Table 5). Thus, Unilever is generally not an active user of social media platforms and the company had no posts about disability in 2022 (Table 6).

Anadolu Efes Türk shared 130 posts on Instagram and 126 posts on Facebook in 2022. It did not share anything via Twitter or YouTube (Table 5). It can be understood from this that the company actively uses social media, but there were no social media posts about disability in 2022 (Table 6).

Shell Türkiye shared 155 Instagram posts in 2022. The company had no posts on Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube in that year (Table 5). Thus, the company is active on social media with a clear focus on Instagram posts. Shell Türkiye shared 6 posts about disability on Instagram in 2022 (Table 6).

Mercedes-Benz Türk shared 270 posts on Instagram and 67 on YouTube in 2022, with no posts via Twitter or Facebook (Table 5). Thus, among the companies included in this study, Mercedes-Benz Türk is one of the most active on social media. Three posts about disability were shared in 2022 via Mercedes-Benz Türk's Instagram page, including 2 posts on 31 March 2022 and 1 post on 2 April 2022. There was also 1 post addressing disability on YouTube. The contents of all these posts were related to the company's collaboration with the Amputee National Football Team (Table 6).

Mey Diageo shared 128 Instagram posts and 116 Facebook posts in 2022, with no posts via YouTube or Twitter (Table 5). No posts shared by this company in 2022 addressed disability (Table 6).

Table 7. Media Releases in (2022)

	Total	Diversity	Disability
Boyner Group	14	6	1
DowAksa	1	0	0
Coca-Cola Türkiye	6	5	0
Unilever Türkiye	12	6	1
Mercedes-Benz Türk	26	5	1
Anadolu Efes	5	1	0
Shell Türkiye	13	2	2
Mey Diageo	61	10	0

Table 7 presents the numbers of media releases issued by the companies' media centres or via their websites.

Boyner Group shared a total of 14 media releases in 2022, 6 of which were about diversity and 1 of which was about disability. Boyner Group also shared media releases addressing issues of relevance for women and gender equality. Thus, it can be said that media releases addressing disability are rarely issued by this company. In 2022, the media release related to disability addressed the company's Sign from the Heart project.

DowAksa issued only 1 media release in 2022. It did not address diversity or disability. In general, the company's media centre is not actively used.

Coca-Cola Türkiye produced a total of 6 media releases in 2022 and 5 of them were related to diversity. The company did not have any disability-related media releases. Its releases about diversity primarily addressed the theme of women. From this information, it can be concluded that the company does not use its media centre very actively and does not focus on issues of disability.

Unilever Türkiye shared a total of 12 media releases, 6 of which addressed women and equality and can therefore be categorized as media releases pertaining to diversity. One release addressed disability. In that case, Unilever shared a news article with content regarding the support of the Clear brand, with which it cooperates, for the Amputee National Football team. Overall, Unilever does not address its projects related to disability in its media releases.

Mercedes-Benz Türk produced a total of 26 media releases, which included 5 addressing diversity and 1 addressing disability. Mercedes-Benz shared detailed information in 2022 regarding its financial support for the Amputee National Football team. Overall, Mercedes-Benz pays more attention to issues other than disability in its media centre and does not share much information about disability projects.

Anadolu Efes Türk shared a total of 5 media releases. One addressed diversity while none were related to disability. The news release about diversity focused on equality. Thus, it can be concluded that Anadolu Efes Türk does not use its media centre actively.

Shell Türkiye shared a total of 13 media releases, 2 of which were about diversity while 2 addressed disability.

Shell Türkiye issued a media release explaining that the profits from the sale of its Deli2go sandwiches were being donated to disabled individuals who needed wheelchair assistance. This company also mentioned the employment of disabled individuals in a media release. In general, however, Shell’s media releases primarily addressed topics other than disability or disability-related CSR projects.

Mey Diageo shared a total of 61 media releases in 2022. Thus, it can be said that this company uses its media centre actively, but it primarily focuses on issues other than diversity or disability. Ten of its media releases pertained to diversity, touching on subjects relevant to women, equality, and human rights. No media releases addressed issues of disability.

4.3. Prominent Themes in Corporate Communications on Disability

Thematic analysis was performed for the corporate communications described above, including social media posts and media releases. In this process, two main themes emerged: accessibility and equality.

4.3.1. Accessibility

Regarding the theme of accessibility, Boyner Group’s Freepark, Voiced Stops, and Sign from the Heart projects stand out. In addition, the company’s Instagram page also describes its support for the WeWalk Walking Stick project, mentioned in a reels video shared on 3 December 2022.

In accordance with the theme of accessibility, it is stated in Boyner Group’s 2022 Sustainability Report that the Freepark project aims to prevent the use of parking spaces designated for disabled individuals by the non-disabled and to create spaces that are accessible to everyone and where freedoms are not restricted by popularizing these parking solutions (Boyner Group, 2022a, p. 78).

Voiced Stops (‘Sesli Durak’), an application that audibly indicates the current stop for visually disabled individuals using public transportation in their daily lives, aims to make daily life more accessible for disabled individuals (Boyner Group, 2023a, p. 78).

In addition, with its Sign from the Heart (‘Gönül Den İşaret’) project, Boyner Group strives to make its stores more accessible to individuals with hearing loss by providing sign language training for its employees (Boyner Group, 2022a, p. 98).

Although the WeWalk Walking Stick project, which was addressed in an Instagram reels video shared by the company, is not directly a project of Boyner Group, the company offers financial support facilitating access to social life for 10 visually disabled students (Boyner Group, 2022b).

DowAksa aims to make social life more accessible by providing wheelchairs to disabled individuals who need them in cooperation with the Spinal Cord Paralytics Association (DowAksa, 2022, p. 45).

Unilever Türkiye states the following on its website regarding in-house disabled employment: ‘We are committed to creating an inclusive culture for disabled people’. It is further stated that the company has ‘set our global goal to be the number one employer choice for people with disabilities, to have our disabled employees representing 5% of the workforce, and to make all our facilities around the world fully accessible by 2025’. Moreover, informative training sessions and workshops on disability are provided for Unilever employees as described on the website. Through these organizational efforts, the company aims to create more accessible spaces for disabled individuals. Furthermore, Enable@Unilever is a support network that strives to create a more accessible work environment for disabled employees by listening to their needs regarding physical or emotional limitations (Unilever, 2023.).

Based on its cooperation with the Amputee Football National Team, Mercedes-Benz Türk redesigned the interior of a specially outfitted Mercedes-Benz vehicle in line with the needs of the Amputee Football National Team athletes. Thus, the company aimed to create a more accessible environment, taking into account the vehicles used by disabled athletes and their specific health needs. The company stated that the cooperation established with this national team supports its general efforts for creating more accessible social areas and activities for disabled individuals (Mercedes-Benz, 2022).

Within the scope of its cooperation with BlindLook, Anadolu Efes Türk has offered its support in adding audio menus to the menu options of some restaurants and taverns. The company states that it encourages its business partners to be ‘accessible places for everyone’ and thus provide barrier-free social experiences: ‘We continue to work to contribute to life’ (Anadolu Efes, 2024).

Shell Türkiye aims to facilitate accessibility in the daily lives of its disabled customers and provide easier access with the ‘barrier-free service areas’ created at the company’s petrol stations (Shell, 2024).

As a result of its collaboration with BlindLook, Mey Diageo has made the menus of 100 restaurants and taverns accessible to disabled visitors. Additionally, training sessions and workshop programmes on accessibility are offered within the company (Mey Diageo, 2024).

4.3.2. Equality

Regarding the theme of equality, Boyner Group’s 2022 Sustainability Report described the Freepark project as an application to prevent the use of parking spaces designated for disabled individuals by the non-disabled and to ensure that disabled individuals benefit from parking spaces equally (Boyner Group, 2022a, p. 78). In addition, Boyner Group provides sign language training to its employees through its Sign from the Heart project, aiming to ensure that individuals with hearing loss who come to its stores receive equal customer service under the same conditions as other customers (Boyner Group, 2022a, p. 98).

Unilever Türkiye states that it maintains an egalitarian recruitment policy regarding the employment of disabled individuals within the company. The Enable@Unilever support network was also created to find equitable solutions to the problems faced by disabled employees. Finally, videos on Instagram highlight the ways in which the company offers an egalitarian work environment for disabled employees.

Within the scope of its collaboration with BlindLook, Anadolu Efes Türk provided support for adding audio menus to the menu options of some restaurants and taverns. In this way, disabled individuals have opportunities to receive equal services from businesses while they are socializing outside the home.

Shell Türkiye has created ‘barrier-free service areas’ at its petrol stations, and care is taken to ensure that the service experiences of disabled customers visiting these areas are of equal quality to those of non-disabled customers.

Finally, as a result of its collaboration with BlindLook, Mey Diageo has made the menus of 100 restaurants and taverns accessible to visually disabled visitors, aiming to ensure that disabled individuals receive service from businesses more easily and on a level equal to that of other individuals.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

In this study, the CSR projects of Turkish companies included in the UN Global Compact's 2022 Diversity and Inclusion Guide for Businesses (UN Global Compact, 2022) have been discussed in terms of disability culture, and the themes most addressed within the scope of disability-related projects have been shown to be accessibility and equality. In this chapter, the findings presented in Chapter 4 are discussed together with the social model of disability and the human rights model of disability, which are prominent in modern understandings of disability.

Among the themes that emerged from the CSR communications analysed in this study, one major theme was accessibility. Eight companies were examined and it was seen that accessibility, one of the issues most focused on and mentioned by these companies in their CSR projects, is generally considered in terms of the ability of disabled individuals to carry out their daily life activities freely like all other individuals.

One of the key requirements of a sustainable society for people with disabilities is that everyone is able to access the activities of daily life independently, inclusively, safely, and actively in an environment that respects diversity (Tatal, 2019). Accessibility, within the scope of diversity and inclusion, refers to an individual's ability to access, enter, use, and move around in the spaces wanted or needed by the individual, regardless of personal physical, mental, or sensory characteristics (Erdur, 2020). The findings of the present study support these definitions of accessibility, because the main purpose of disability culture and related CSR projects is to ensure social participation in a way that allows disabled individuals to contribute more to the diversity in society.

Valuing diversity means valuing the differences in a community and establishing policies, structures, and norms of behaviour in such a way that every member of the community is respected and included (UN Global Compact, 2020). The positive contributions of diversity and inclusion to accessibility within the scope of the present study can be described as processes by which disabled individuals have increased access to different realms of social life, feel valued, and are actively included in decision-making processes.

Accessibility means ensuring that people with disabilities can live independently, like other individuals in society, and participate fully and effectively in all areas of life; it means providing physical environments, transportation, information, and communication technologies and systems on equal grounds for both disabled and non-disabled individuals (Öz, 2013, p. 75). This is in line with the findings of the present study, and when accessibility is considered within the scope of disability culture, it can be said that preventing disabled individuals from accessing social life means creating a less diverse social life without them.

The medical model of disability described disability as a disorder arising from the individual, and individuals' health problems were accepted as an excuse for their exclusion. Since disabled individuals were exempted from social obligations by this model, their access to society was restricted and they were defined as living maladaptive lives or being unable to accept reality (Hiranandani, 2005). In contrast, the social model of disability has brought a new approach aimed at changing social perceptions regarding the access of disabled individuals to society. The individualistic, regulatory, controlling, limiting, and stigmatizing mentality of the medical model presented an understanding of disability as a health problem, and this has begun to change (Barnes, 2012, pp. 3-5). The findings of the present study confirm this, as thought patterns have changed due to the introduction of the social and human rights models of disability and access to social life has increased for disabled individuals, but the extent of this access is still relatively limited today. Furthermore, it is highly variable. Since each individual's level of disability is not the same, their level of access to societal participation is not the same.

Regarding accessibility for disabled individuals within the scope of corporate communications, the UN Global Compact's 2020 Diversity and Inclusion Guide for Businesses states that decisions that will protect and facilitate the rights of disabled individuals should be made at all stages, including implementation, and the principle of 'not for them, but with them' should be made a part of corporate culture (UN Global Compact, 2020). Similarly, the findings of the present study emphasize the fact that making social environments generally accessible to disabled individuals is not enough and that their personal access to social activities is important.

Companies can cultivate a more positive image by including groups that are typically excluded while communicating their corporate values to their target audiences.

Kotler and Lee (2005) defined the concept of social responsibility as responsibility undertaken for increasing the welfare of society through volunteer work and via resources provided by organizations and institutions. In this regard, Carroll (1991) referred to the principles of volunteering, evaluated within the scope of the social responsibilities of institutions in Carroll's social responsibility pyramid, and highlighted how projects are carried out by businesses for the benefit of society as a result of having social aims together with economic aims. Building on these explanations, a more recent study (York and Jochmaring, 2023) described how new working styles such as crowd working, remote working, and working from home allow for heightened participation of disabled individuals in society by meeting complex work demands with newly developed techniques. Within the scope of this study, the employment of disabled individuals can be given as an example of their participation in social life, because disabled individuals, like all people, need both financial resources and other people to maintain their existence in society and to socialize. New techniques like those described here provide improved employment opportunities for more diverse employees. The situation varies from individual to individual, and as a result of differences in people's capacity to do the things they value, some individuals may need more resources than others individual in employment contexts. It is clearly evident that employment factors are determined according to resource limitations, demographic factors, and the health statuses of workers. Most of the companies analysed in this study have undertaken initiatives regarding the employment of disabled individuals, social accessibility, and workplace areas that are physically accessible for disabled individuals.

The aforementioned goals are pursued within the context of corporate culture, taking into account social responsibility awareness. In the UN Global Compact's 2020 Diversity and Inclusion Guide for Businesses, it is stated that 'company culture ensures harmony with the working environment' (UN Global Compact, 2020). Thus, companies focus on accessibility to create successful solutions to material or mental restrictions on the access of disabled individuals to participate in social environments.

The negative impact of being exposed to inequality by individuals within society is of critical importance in these efforts, as is the impact of cultural factors on the quality of life of disabled individuals and their participation in daily social activities.

The most significant barriers that prevent disabled individuals from accessing the social, cultural, and economic resources required to participate in social life have been described as ‘hegemonic body norms’, constituting a phenomenon by which some people are classified into the lower layers of society in the name of ‘social hierarchy’ (Dreger, 2008). In this context, disabled individuals fall outside of society’s perceptions of the ‘normal human body’ due to physiological ailments. Moreover, according to Goering (2015), for many disabled individuals, the main disadvantages that they experience are not due to their bodies; rather, they arise from the world viewing disability as undesirable and the ways in which institutional norms and social attitudes exclude or humiliate disabled individuals. Agmon, Sa’ar and Araten-Bergman (2016) stated that the ‘otherness’ and social exclusion of disabled individuals are among the factors that lead to a decrease in the social status of their bodies, as well as active discrimination against them. Baffoe (2013) argued that in order to make a positive difference in the lives of disabled people, effective public awareness-raising studies and projects are needed on a nationwide basis with the aim of eliminating myths, negative perceptions, stereotypes, superstitions, and the resulting discrimination and marginalization of disabled individuals. Within the scope of this study, explanations of disability culture similarly highlight the fact that disabled individuals are often excluded or denied value due to cultural assumptions and beliefs.

Clearly, disability should not be labelled as an illness that needs to be ‘cured’. There is a need for first institutionalization support and subsequently public and organizational support and acceptance of disabled individuals and the inclusion of disabled individuals as normal, important, and productive members of society. Disabled individuals develop reactions to the behaviours they are exposed to, and they have begun coming together to create a culture of disability, establish an environment of social solidarity with other disabled individuals and their supporters within society, and defend their right to determine their own destinies.

However, Switzer (2003) noted that the achievements of the disability rights movement were still fragile at the beginning of the twenty-first century, consisting largely of partial approaches: ‘Given the prevalence of belief in the medical model of disability, disabled people may be hesitant to publicly disclose the difficulties they experience, which proves that cultural adaptation is difficult to achieve’.

This statement quickly brings to mind the social model of disability. Disabled individuals may have difficulty in achieving cultural adaptation because their ‘core identities’ are not accepted by society in the course of daily life.

Barnes and Mercer (2006) also touched upon this issue, placing experiences of disability at the centre of the social model: ‘Disabled people demand independence and control over their services and daily lives, rather than care and dependency’ (p. 317). Furthermore, according to Siebers (2006), all bodies are socially constructed, and the influence of social attitudes and institutions in this construction is more dominant than the biological existence of the body. Considering all of these discourses, it could be said that economic responsibility and legal responsibility are necessary, ethical responsibility is expected, and voluntary responsibilities are desirable responsibilities (Schwartz and Carroll, 2003, p. 504). Along these lines, the present study has highlighted how different companies consider the inclusion of people with disabilities and focus on a wide range of policies such as income and financial support, education, employment, housing, transportation, and the environment.

In the UN Global Compact’s 2020 Diversity and Inclusion Guide for Businesses, it is stated that UN Global Compact member companies will embrace the aim of improving their CSR efforts and corporate culture by sharing examples of practices addressing diversity and inclusion with each other, in order to disseminate good practices in this field and encourage learning from each other (UN Global Compact, 2020). Institutional leadership has an important place in these practices being implemented in an equitable and fair manner.

Corporate leadership groups can spread the ideas of diversity and inclusion and ensure that organizational policies are not merely written in documents but are thoroughly implemented in practice. This ownership of ideas and policies is of critical importance for the development and transformation of corporate culture (UN Global Compact, 2022). Demir (2021) emphasized the expectation of seeing that CSR campaigns are carried out to produce value for society and to ensure that companies use a certain part of what is received from society for the benefit of society. The companies examined in the present study in terms of their CSR activities are well-known companies operating in Türkiye with international economic and legal obligations.

With the CSR projects, collaborations, and studies that these companies undertake, they aim to show that they attach importance to ethics in their internal and external work and thus communicate to the public that they work voluntarily for the benefit of society while also desiring to improve their corporate reputations. However, despite the efforts of these companies to implement projects for the benefit of disabled individuals, this study has revealed that the number of corporate projects addressing disability remains low, even among companies that are a party to the UN Global Compact. The companies in this study could be expected to undertake disability-focused CSR work to a larger extent. In reality, however, some of the companies examined in this study have no projects addressing disability.

The social model of disability has had important implications for disability culture. However, the human rights model of disability, which has been developed more recently in light of the evolution of disability culture, is also of great importance. This model advocates that the individual always be considered at the centre of people's situations (Dreger, 2016). A problem experienced in society is not the result of a wrong behaviour performed by an individual. The common view shared by both this model and the present study is that problems such as unemployment, lack of education, and poverty experienced by disabled individuals must be understood as violations of human rights, because all individuals need to meet their material and spiritual needs in order to sustain their lives. Some of the companies considered within the scope of this study focus on the employment of disabled individuals, design working environments with the needs of disabled individuals in mind, and contribute to the quality of life of disabled individuals by offering tools to improve accessibility.

Considering these two important models of disability, it can be said that the focus of these companies on disability and equality within the scope of this study is contrary to the more traditional perception of 'normality' proposed by older models of disability. Efforts such as these, undertaken with the aim of increasing social participation, accessibility, and inclusion by organizing CSR projects that will make life easier for disabled individuals, are of great importance. In this way, corporations work to support disabled individuals in combatting the inequalities that they experience in the course of daily life.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study has aimed to reveal the approaches to CSR of eight Turkish companies included in the UN Global Compact's 2022 Diversity and Inclusion Guide for Businesses within the framework of disability culture. With that aim, the study sought to focus on the CSR activities of these eight companies regarding disability, to observe the extent to which the companies focus on issues of disability, and to evaluate the specific disability-related issues or areas that they address.

With those research goals, the sustainability reports, online media centres, and social media accounts of the eight companies were examined to identify themes. Qualitative data were used to categorize the findings according to themes and thematic content analysis was applied to identify recurring concepts in the CSR projects carried out by these companies regarding disability. The findings revealed that the recurring concepts are primarily 'accessibility' and 'equality' as seen in the contents and implementation strategies of these companies' CSR projects regarding disability.

Subsequently, accessibility and equality were discussed in the context of disability culture, diversity and inclusion, and CSR and sustainability communications. It was concluded that all of these concepts have a direct impact on the quality of life of disabled individuals.

In addition, CSR projects and the contemporary models of disability should be applied together to create a more inclusive and accessible society for people with disabilities. Companies can use CSR initiatives to actively promote inclusivity and accessibility, removing barriers and promoting a more equitable society for people with disabilities.

By considering other organizations within the scope of their compliance with the aims of the UN Global Compact, CSR activities developed in line with sustainable development goals could be evaluated in future research by separating the activities according to the areas in which they are carried out.

Within the scope of the UN Global Compact, it can also be understood how other companies contribute to sustainable development and to what extent the UN Global Compact's goal of bringing companies together to set examples for each other has been achieved.

6.1 Limitations of the Study

Although this study has provided useful insights on representations of disability in diversity and inclusion programmes among companies participating in UN Global Compact Türkiye, its findings are specifically limited to a Turkish sample derived from the UN Global Compact's 2022 Diversity and Inclusion Guide for Businesses. Additionally, the study implemented the thematic analysis on the communication content of year 2021 of the corporates. Therefore, time span is accepted as another limitation of the research.



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