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Peer Review

Review of: "Corporate Voices Through Crisis: Length, Readability, and Tone Shifts in Integrated Reports Pre-, During-, and Post-Pandemic"

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The paper examines how South African companies adapted the language and tone of their integrated reports during the COVID-19 crisis. By analyzing reports from Johannesburg Stock Exchange-listed companies across three distinct periods, the study provides insights into report length, readability, tone, and sentiment. The findings reveal significant shifts in corporate communication strategies in response to stakeholder demands during the pandemic.

The paper presents valuable insights into how South African companies adapted their integrated reports during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, strengthening the contribution in the introduction and incorporating alternative readability measures as robustness tests would enhance the overall quality and impact of the research. I recommend that the authors address these points to improve the manuscript's clarity and depth.

1. While the introduction outlines the study's objectives, it could be strengthened by providing a clearer articulation of the research's contribution to existing literature. Specifically, the authors should:

- Clearly state what previous studies have missed regarding corporate communication during crises, particularly in the context of emerging markets.
- Emphasize how the findings can guide corporate leaders and communication professionals, particularly in crafting messages during crises.

2. The paper relies on the Flesch-Kincaid measure for assessing readability. To enhance the robustness of the findings, the authors should consider:

- **Alternative Readability Measures**: Incorporate additional readability assessments, such as the Gunning Fog Index or SMOG index, to compare results and validate findings across different frameworks.
- **Sensitivity Analysis**: Conduct a sensitivity analysis to explore how varying readability measures impact the conclusions drawn regarding corporate communication strategies.

I recommend **major revisions** to address the issues outlined above.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.