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Handledare: Malin Andersson
Examinator: Asta Cepaite

CSR communication within controversial businesses - a closer look at the
fast fashion industry

Isac Almqvist & Lucas Adolfsson

Lunds University
Department of Strategic Communication
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Foreword

We would like to say a big thank you to our supervisor Malin Andersson. Thank you for challenging and inspiring us to further develop this thesis and thank you for your invaluable advice that has raised the quality of this thesis to a higher level.

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Abstract · Sammanfattning

Abstract

Our planet is facing severe climate crises and the global companies are those who have the opportunity to make the biggest impact on how this will unfold in the future. The aim of this thesis is to gain a deeper understanding of how companies within questioned businesses are managing their CSR-communication and communicating their responsible initiatives and engagements on social media. Further, the responsible initiatives include organisations initial communication and how they are interacting by responding to reactions in the comment section. The fast fashion organisations H&M, Mango and Gina Tricot's social media communication have been used as empirical material to conduct the analysis in order to answer the research questions based on the theoretical background. The paper has an ontological stance from the perspective of social constructionism and an epistemological stance from the hermeneutical perspective. With this a qualitative content analysis (QCA) was conducted with collected material from the above mentioned organisation's social media channels. The collected material was categorised into different *Minimising harm* and *Maximising good*-categories presented by Ju et als. (2021) together with a couple of own, identified, categories. Further, the companies responsibility initiatives in the comment sections were analysed to create an understanding of how the companies fulfil their sustainability commitment in the reactions that arise after their initial social media post. The paper concludes that the fast fashion organisations do not communicate “minimise harm” to the same extent as proposed by Lindorff et al. 's (2012) two-way model. The results also show recurring patterns of a category within “maximise good” which are collaborations. A category that has not emerged in previous research on the responsible communication of questioned companies. Further, the comment sections are not used as a platform to communicate their sustainability responsibilities, but instead as a customer service platform.

Keywords: CSR, CSR communication, Minimise harm and Maximise good, brand identity, brand communication, fast fashion, strategic communication.

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Sammanfattning

Vår planet står inför den största klimatkrisen för sin tid och de globala företagen är de som har störst möjlighet att påverka hur detta kommer att utvecklas i framtiden. Syftet med detta examensarbete är att få en djupare förståelse för hur företag inom ifrågasatta branscher arbetar med sin CSR-kommunikation och kommunicerar sina ansvarsfulla initiativ och engagemang på sociala medier. De ansvarstagande initiativen inkluderar organisationens initiala kommunikation och hur de hanterar reaktionerna i kommentarsfältet. Fast fashion-organisationerna H&M, Mango och Gina Tricots kommunikation i sociala medier har använts som empiriskt material för att genomföra analysen och för att kunna svara på forskningsfrågorna utifrån den teoretiska bakgrunden. Uppsatsen har ett ontologiskt ställningstagande ur ett socialkonstruktivistiskt perspektiv och ett epistemologiskt ställningstagande ur det hermeneutiska perspektivet. Med utgångspunkt i detta genomförde vi en kvalitativ innehållsanalys (QCA) med insamlat material från ovannämnda organisationers sociala mediekanaler. Det insamlade materialet delades in i olika kategorier för att "minimise harm" och att "maximise good" som presenterades av Ju et al. (2021) tillsammans med egendefinierade kategorier. Vidare analyserades företagens ansvarstagande i kommentarsfälten för att skapa en förståelse för hur företagen uppfyller sitt hållbarhetsåtagande i den dialog som uppstår efter deras initiala sociala medier inlägg. Uppsatsen drar slutsatsen att fast fashion-organisationerna inte kommunicerar "minimise harm" i samma utsträckning som Lindorff et al. s (2012) tvåvägsmodell föreslår. Resultatet visar även återkommande mönster av en kategori inom "maximise good" som är samarbeten. En kategori som inte uppkommit i tidigare forskning kring kontroversiella företags ansvarstagande kommunikation. Vidare använder inte organisationerna kommentarsfälten som en plattform för att kommunicera sitt hållbarhetsansvar, utan istället som en kundtjänstplattform.

Nyckelord: CSR, CSR-kommunikation, Minimise harm and Maximise good, varumärkesidentitet, varumärkeskommunikation, fast fashion, strategisk kommunikation.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

In 2013 the garment factory Rana Plaza collapsed and over 1100 people died (BBC, 2013). This is the deadliest non-deliberate accident in modern history and could have been avoided. The day before the collapse, cracks in the building were discovered and all the businesses were immediately closed, except for the clothing factory (The Conversation, 2021). The factory was used by several fast fashion companies and this led to a great debate in the media regarding the working environment of garment factory workers (Goodwin, 2021). The fast fashion industry was questioned and had to focus on taking responsibility and further down the line, communicate their responsibilities to prove to the society that they are not one of the bad guys.

How to communicate and where to communicate is constantly changing and in 2022 the world is arguably more online than ever before. In developed countries such as Sweden, 94% of the population uses the internet and 9 out of 10 are online every day (Internetstiftelsen, 2021). However, the internet is not only a place for news outlets and webpages, it is the biggest social space in the world holding social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram which are some of the most visited platforms on the internet (Statista, 2021). This forces companies to adapt and implement online strategies for everything from customer service to branding and marketing, in order to stay ahead and continue to be relevant.

In parallel with the digitalisation of society, communication studies have evolved with it. Traditional communication studies focused on communication as a one-way action that companies used to inform and to tell their messages (Jansson, 2009). Over time, the field has changed into a two-way mindset with the belief that communication is something that is created within the engagement between the sender and the receiver (Jansson, 2009). This is well reflected in the digitalisation of society and the evolution of social media over the past decade. This development has led to a new focus within the research field of communication and has become a vital part of what is commonly referred to as Strategic Communication.

Strategic communication is the main research field our study engages in. To briefly describe and define strategic communication we refer to Falkheimer and Heide (2018) who describe it as how

organisations use purposeful communication in order to inform, engage and persuade audiences by increasing their knowledge, changing attitudes and behaviour with an overall goal of fulfilling the organisation's own missions. Falkhemier and Heide (2018) highlights that campaigns within strategic communication are often designed in order to respond to different needs of the organisation's significant audiences. It is further important to emphasise that the main focus of this study is strategic CSR-communication, thus studying how organisations communicate their CSR initiatives on social media.

While society is further digitised, the world is facing severe climate changes with the warmest years ever recorded during the last decade resulting in glaciers melting and higher sea levels, wildfires and drought (Climate.gov, 2021; Hughes, 2000). Companies are expected to take responsibility and actions to prevent these negative trends, especially those within controversial businesses with a negative impact on the social or ecological environment. This kind of work is often referred to as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and traditionally this has been concretized in the form of various actions from the company (Carroll, 2016). In later years, companies are increasing the amount of communication regarding its CSR work and great CSR-actions is arguably no longer enough for the companies to receive the beneficial effects of CSR-work.

CSR is about acting responsibly as a company in many different ways. Fields that are included are, social-, economic- and ecological responsibility (Yang et al, 2020). To be responsible as a company is often generalised to the company's actions but the communication, and how they communicate can also be considered to be a part of the company's social responsibility. Responsibility is "the quality or state of being responsible, such as a: moral, legal, or mental accountability" (Merriam Webster, 2022) in which, within the field of communication, is about communicating accountability. This can be done with an engaging approach where the company interacts with its stakeholders in order to educate them and to gain their opinions on different topics in order to further develop their business.

The reason why a company is performing responsible communication can be due to many different reasons but it's nothing that we can know with certainty. Therefore we define responsible communication as follows: *Communication focused to tell the company's own responsible initiatives within social-, economic- and ecological sustainability and to influence the recipients' behaviour to become more responsible.*

One way to analyse how a company is communicating their CSR on social media is with Lindorff *et al's* (2012) two-level model that is particularly good for analysing controversial businesses. Lindorff *et al* (2012) claims that CSR within a controversial business should focus on two parts: *Minimising harm* and *Maximising good*. To do this, a qualitative selection of social media posts will be analysed through a Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) to gain a deeper understanding of the CSR communication in relation to social media performance theories and general CSR theories. Earlier the communication relied on traditional platforms but this has shifted to digital platforms, specifically social media. This shift is based on the fact that the reach and customer engagement has a greater potential on virtual platforms compared to the traditional (Jeong et al, 2013; Fernandez et al. 2021).

CSR-communication on social media is becoming more relevant and previous literature has made it clear that the reason for this is the potential of greater reach (Jeong et al, 2013). By engaging in CSR activities and communicating about it on social media, companies expect to engage with its stakeholders to encourage a better stakeholder relationship to gain from in the future (Du & Sen, 2010). Previous research has also tried to map out how to work with social media successfully. For example, Tafesse and Wien (2018) have shown that social media strategies, interaction with stakeholders and social media analysing are key activities for a successful social media performance. And Sreejesh *et al.* (2019) says that consumer-brand relationships on social media are similar to offline relationships in the way that consumers try to understand the motives of the messages before responding positively or negatively. They also say that a preferable way to create beneficial relationships with the audience is through engagement and co-creation (Sreejesh *et al.* 2019), just as Tafesse and Wien (2018) argued.

1.2 Research Problem

Previous research regarding CSR and responsible communication has had a great focus on how “general businesses” should work and communicate (Ahmad et al., 2021; Viererbl & Koch, 2022; Kaddouri & Saussier, 2021). We find that what is missing is the understanding of how companies in a questioned business - which starts on a negative note and therefore has to defend and argue for their own good in order to achieve the same starting point as “general companies” should communicate their CSR. The fast fashion industry is an example of that and thus makes a great example of the current knowledge gap, in which we want to study how the industry is

communicating their CSR on social media. Other questioned businesses such as the marijuana industry in Canada (Ju *et al*, 2021) has been studied and the fashion industry has been studied but from a broader perspective (Kwon & Lee, 2021).

1.3 Purpose

The aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of how companies within ethically questioned businesses are communicating their responsible initiatives and engagements on social media. Furthermore, the responsible initiatives include organisations initial communication on social media and how they are interacting with their stakeholders by responding to reactions in the comment section.

1.4 Research questions

RQ1: How do H&M, Mango and Gina Tricot communicate their responsible initiatives on social media?

RQ2: How do established fast fashion organisations minimise harm and maximise good with their CSR communication on Social Media?

2.0 Literature Review - responsible communication

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

With our research placed in the field of CSR communication it is of high relevance to briefly introduce and describe the concept to give a better understanding. Yang et al. (2020) describe the concept of CSR as the obligated actions a company has to undertake in relation to its multiple stakeholders to further strengthen its relationship and interaction to partly ensure that an organisation minimises the negative while maximising the positive consequences of its actions in society. Further, Nadanyiova (2020) explains CSR as the commitment of a company to contribute to a sustainable development in society in general to improve the quality of life and how an organisation can communicate these initiatives beneficially. In similarity to Yang et al. (2020), Nadanyiova (2020) points out that CSR could be described as a set of management activities to ensure that organisations minimise the negative and maximise the positive consequences.

Fernandez et al. (2021) highlights the communicative part of CSR. In this reasoning Fernandez et al. (2021) adds that CSR engagement provides companies with unique communication strategies that in turn can enhance the corporate image and products of the company. The CSR communication can for example address issues such as: social and environmental issues, corporate philanthropy and taking a stance in different societal problems involving issues such as human rights, diversity or equality. Fernandez et al. (2021) also points out that companies increasingly are communicating their own CSR initiatives on social media. To enrich the concept of CSR communication Kim and Fergusson (2018) define it as “communication that is designed and distributed by the company itself about its CSR efforts” (Kim & Fergusson, 2018, p.550). It is further argued that even though communicating about CSR initiatives is a vital aspect of business processes, Kim and Fergusson (2018) underlines that this area has been given relatively little attention, in comparison with for example CSR activities and the following consequences on reputation or financial performance.

2.2 CSR Communication in relation to controversial businesses

Viererbl and Koch (2022) highlight that stakeholders' expectations and demands of companies to act beneficially for society are constantly increasing, especially regarding questions addressing

environmental-, social- and sustainability- issues. They further argue that companies answer and meet these demands through CSR communication. In these communicative efforts companies try to convince their stakeholders of their ongoing CSR projects. On one hand, these specific efforts regarding CSR communication can have a positive impact on the company's brand image, reputation and values. On the other hand it also can be received with scepticism as it can be perceived as a form of “greenwashing”, which could lead to negative consequences for the company (Viererbl & Koch, 2022). From this one could argue that there is a paradox regarding CSR communication, especially if a company is controversial in its nature. To understand controversial business, we would like to quote Ju et al. (2021) describing it as “Controversial businesses refer to “products, services or concepts that for reasons of delicacy, decency, morality, or even fear elicit reactions of distaste, disgust, offence, or outrage when mentioned or when openly presented”” (Ju et al., 2021, p.1).

The fashion industry is often mentioned in research regarding sustainability (Fletcher, 2015; Castagna, Duarte & Pinto, 2022) and is also often debated in news channels and other publications (Ljung, 2021; Häyrynen, 2020). In addition to this the majority of researchers agree that the climate problems are caused by humans. One of the biggest sources of climate change is overconsumption of disposable products where the fast fashion industry is a major actor. Hence, we define fast fashion organisations as questionable due to the inevitable fact that there is consensus on the negative ecological impact of overconsumption on the environment.

Previous research regarding controversial businesses have studied CSR communication in relation to the marijuana industry (Ju et al., 2021). The scholars argue that more attention is needed regarding research on CSR communication strategies in the context of controversial industries (Ju et al., 2021). In addition to this, Lindorff et al. (2012) studied how it is possible for controversial companies, that are exposed to moral, sustainable or ethical issues, to act in a responsible manner. This study mainly seeks understanding through the perspective of how organisations can maximise good and minimise harm with their CSR. In similarity with Ju et al. (2021), Lindorff (2012) also encourages scholars to further examine controversial industries in relation to CSR but they encourage researchers to expand the list of industries further beyond tobacco, alcohol, gambling, oil and weapons etc. Our own study is inspired by these encouragements. What we find is missing is the understanding of how companies in the fast fashion industry are working with CSR communication. The argumentation of why we consider fast fashion being a controversial business is partly grounded in their unsustainable

manufacturing processes and overconsumption related to the industry, which in turn has a negative environmental impact (Kwon & Lee, 2021). By this, the aim is to add knowledge to the research field by analysing the fast fashion industry. This will be an addition to the list of controversial industries that have been examined to similar extent. Our research aims to create a deeper understanding of how questionable organisations communicate responsibility on social media. This will be achieved by taking a closer look at three global fast fashion organisations with a high degree of responsibility and possible impact with its communication.

2.3 CSR Communication in relation to social media and fast fashion

It is proven that a lot of marketers and brand managers believe that social platforms and especially social media is the dominant platform for their marketing initiatives (Ashley and Tuten, 2015). According to Kwon & Lee (2021) two out of the six main CSR initiatives that organisations need to take into consideration is Cause-related marketing and Corporate social marketing. Hence, social media is a relevant topic to examine when analysing a company's CSR communication. In addition to this, social media is arguably the single most important CSR communication channel as it is an adaptive tool and the possibilities to reach stakeholders with specific interests or with specific demographics are great (Sreejesh *et al.* 2019).

CSR communication on social media in the context of a fashion company has been studied by Kwon & Lee (2021) where a quantitative analysis of six of the world's most known fashion companies were analysed. Three were considered to be fast fashion organisations and three were categorised as luxury fashion brands. Kwon & Lee (2021) provided us with knowledge about the fashion industry as a whole and tried to understand what companies from the fashion industry focus on with their CSR communication on social media. With a qualitative method, our study will instead focus on three global fast fashion organisations with a high degree of responsibility and aims to answer how they communicate their responsible initiatives on social media.

To define fast fashion we use Choi's (2014) definition: "Fast fashion is an industrial trend that is pertinent in practice, It refers to the concept of shortening lead in time and offering new products to the market as fast as possible. [...] this phenomenon is commonly adopted in fashion apparel [...] the key components of fast fashion systems include:

- 1 Quick response policy which is employed to reduce the system response time

(i.e. lead time) so that volatile demand and supply can better match.

- 2 Product assortment which changes frequently.
- 3 Product lifecycle which is very short.
- 4 Product's design which fits the fashion trend and market needs “ (Choi, 2014, p.3).

One important part of social media, which often is defined as the reason why companies and experts use it as a primary platform for external communication, is the interactivity and possibility to engage with the followers and stakeholders (Jeong et al, 2013). This is an aspect that has been studied to a great extent within the management field, on how consumers act, and react on social media and how companies should manage their channels to be as successful as possible (Van Looy, 2016; Sutherland, 2021). From a communicative point of view, there is a great gap within the research on how to communicate with, and above all, how (and what) to answer in the comment section of a post.

Imran et al. (2015) bring attention to the fact that CSR communication is a vital part for companies to master in order to convey their CSR message and provide stakeholders with a socially responsible image. Imran et al. (2015) further argue that the digitalization and the influence of social media in modern society is changing the future of companies for different reasons, such as the channel being of low cost and businesses can use it to gain insights into the market, but also to involve and create engagement with relevant stakeholders. The increased digitalization trend in modern society has in some way forced corporations to communicate their CSR through different platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. In similarity, Ju et al. (2021) also identify social media as an important tool where companies can communicate their CSR. The scholars further point out that social media as a communication platform is advantageous to utilise since it enables them to show honesty, transparency and empathy in their CSR communication. As well as it enables organisations to engage in dialogue with stakeholders.

Based on the above discussion, a relevant conclusion can be that social media is a fundamental part for businesses to use in order to stay relevant in an increasingly digitised society, as well as being able to communicate their CSR initiatives to their stakeholders.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Responsible initiatives and communication

3.1.1 Carroll's pyramid of CSR

In order to analyse and gain a deeper understanding within the field of CSR one of the classic and most recognized theories within the field should be defined and described. Archie Carroll (1991) introduced a four-part idea that suggested that companies and organisations not only had economic and legal obligations, but also ethical and philanthropic. This idea turned into a theory called “The Pyramid of CSR” and is until today one of the most prominent and most frequently cited CSR theories there is. Carroll's theory was focused on a management perspective during its creation, but over time communications researchers have shown the importance and relevance of communication within management (Fernandez et al., 2021; Kim & Fergusson, 2018).

Carroll's pyramid of CSR is based on the idea that a company needs to consider four different parts of CSR including *economic*, *legal*, *ethical* and *philanthropic* obligations. Economic and legal are considered to be required by society and ethical and philanthropic is defined as expected (Carroll, 1991). *Economic responsibilities* were originally to provide the society with products or services that were requested or required. This has developed over time and is now also the responsibility to create a profit for the organisation's owners or shareholders as well as it is the most basic requirement for the company to survive (Carroll, 1991). The *legal responsibility* is simply the requirement from society for companies to obey the law and regulations. This may seem obvious but part of the social agreement for companies is to achieve their economic goals within the national, regional and local laws and legislations (Carroll, 1991). International organisations and businesses face a larger challenge here as different demographic areas may have different social rules as well as having to obey international trade laws. In a way legal and *ethical responsibilities* are arguably the same thing since laws and legislation is based on ethical agreements. But Carroll (1991) separates these into two categories and means that ethical responsibility is about following the expectations of the society that are not written in law. The society expects companies and organisations to operate in a fair and equal way and even if these things may not be juridically required, the society is expecting it from companies. To not follow these ethical social expectations may be as harmful for a company's reputation and future as not taking economic or legal responsibility (Carroll, 1991; Brin & Nehme, 2019).

The final part of Carroll's pyramid is the *philanthropic responsibilities* which refer to actions and engagement that are carried out by a company. Philanthropic actions are for example engaging in humanitarian programs or welfare driven actions and is a way to contribute as a good social citizen. These actions are not required or expected by the society, which means that if a company does not engage in these kinds of philanthropic responsibilities the society won't consider them as bad or unethical. But on the other hand it is highly desired and often very well received. Therefore, philanthropic responsibilities can be seen as the icing on the cake - it is highly desired, but arguably not as vital as the other three categories (Carroll, 1991).

To summarise, Carroll's pyramid of CSR is a tool for how to work with CSR. The four stages represent the different kinds of CSR that a company or organisation could, should and in some cases have to do. The pyramid is one of the most prominent CSR theories and therefore it has obviously met criticism. The majority of the criticism is aimed toward the four stages being in a different order and having other prioritizations in different cultures. Despite this, the critics agree that it is a good representation of CSR in Europe and America (Visser, 2014). And since we will focus on CSR communication within the fast fashion industry and on companies with their base and background in western cultures, this strengthens the argument for why the CSR pyramid is a relevant theory to take into consideration during this research.

3.1.2 Communicative initiatives to Minimise harm and Maximise good

Lindorff's two-level model is relevant to discuss since it will be a useful tool in order for us to gain a deeper understanding of how fast fashion organisations minimise harm and maximise good with their CSR-communication on social media. The theory will be used in this study as a coding framework. Specifics regarding how this framework will be used are later presented and discussed under the method section.

Previous studies have mentioned the importance of companies to involve a two level model of minimising harm and maximising good to understand CSR-communication in controversial industries. In relation to our study, this model is highly relevant since **RQ2** is: "*How do established fast fashion organisations minimise harm and maximise good with their CSR communication on Social Media?*". It is therefore necessary to address this two-level model to gain a richer understanding of our study. Beyond this, Ju et al. (2021) also argue that this model

is particularly suitable in studies where the aim is to understand how controversial companies communicate their CSR-efforts on social media. The scholars used the model when they wanted to advance their understanding regarding CSR-communication on social media in the cannabis industry. This reasoning goes in line with the purpose of this study which is to gain a deeper understanding of how companies within questioned businesses are communicating their responsible initiatives on social media. To further strengthen the relevance of this, Yang et al. (2020) and Nadanyiova (2020) highlights that a major part of a company's CSR-efforts is to ensure that the organisation minimises the negative while maximising the positive consequences of its actions in society. CSR could be described as a set of management activities with the purpose of ensuring that an organisation minimises the negative, and maximising the positive consequences. From this, we understand that the two-level model of minimising harm and maximising good is of high relevance to apply in our own study.

Now that we have addressed a few scholars' research on the relevance of the model as well as how it can help us answer **RQ2** and fulfil our aim, it is necessary to dive deeper into the actual theory and its background.

Lindorff et al. (2012) studied how it is possible for controversial companies, that are exposed to moral, sustainable and/or ethical issues, to act in a responsible manner. This study mainly seeks understanding through the perspective of how firms are able to maximise good and minimise harm with their CSR. Lindorff *et al* (2012) mean that CSR within a controversial business should focus on two parts: Minimising harm and Maximising good. Minimising harm can be described as activities and initiatives from a company with the purpose of reducing negative effects/consequences of using the product or service the company provides, meanwhile maximising good refers to activities that in turn would benefit society (Lindorff et al., 2012). Ju et al. (2021) also address that it is fruitful to understand that the two-level model of minimising harm and maximising good has partly been aroused from the underlying argument of companies being good corporate citizens who continuously work to anticipate and prevent possible negative impacts on their businesses (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Further, it's important to bear in mind that the work of Lindorff et al. (2012) is embossed with a managerial perspective on CSR, not so much on the CSR-communication itself, similar to Carroll's Pyramid of CSR (Carroll, 1991). We are aware of this, but what has inspired and found our interests is Ju et als. (2012) development of a codebook based on the guidelines of Lindorff et al. (2012). This codebook has especially been constructed to intertwine Lindorff et al. (2012) reasoning in order to answer on how

controversial businesses use CSR-communication on social media to minimise harm and maximise good (Ju et al., 2021). It is therefore a necessity to understand Lindorff et al.'s (2012) work in order to understand how the two-level model and its codebook came about. The codebook is in other words a theoretical framework that has taken inspiration from research within the field of business management and has in turn provided communication scholars with a useful model that can help us gain a deeper understanding of how organisations within a controversial business such as the fast fashion industry are using social media to manage their CSR-communication.

The codebook itself contains two different main categories, the first one is minimising harm and the second one is maximising good. Within these two categories there are multiple categories regarding those types of CSR-communication. These in turn function as the coding framework where the social media posts will later be coded into (Ju et al., 2021). These categories have influenced our coding frame for the analysis but have been further developed to suit our purpose and research. The model itself is reasonable but it has its limitations in relation to our study. Therefore we have adjusted the different topic categories. This has been done during the analysis process since we found results that differed from previous research. How the model and its topic categories have been developed is presented in the method section.

The following descriptions of the topic categories are related to Ju et al. (2021) study regarding the cannabis industry. The categories under minimising harm are: **1) Education** - which involves posts that in some way educate the usage of various cannabis products. **2) Compassionate program** - which is described as a post containing information on different compassionate programs that are created for the community. **3) Misinformation clarification & destigmatization** - Social media posts that address a correction regarding misinformation about cannabis. **4) Health-related information dissemination** - Posts that highlight specifically the health benefits of using cannabis. **5) Advocacy** - which involves posts that advocate legalisation of the product. Finally **6) Other** - Other cannabis related content such as for instance research, tax return methods and legal compliance (Ju et al. 2021).

The categories maximising good are: **1) Environmental stewardship** - This category involves posts that provide information about efforts in order to protect the environment. **2) Philanthropic contribution** - Posts that contain information about the company's charity work. **3) Educational commitment** - Includes posts which provide information to contribute to educational endeavors.

4) *Employee involvement* - Posts that address and share information regarding different employee initiatives and activities. 5) *Community engagement* - This category regards posts that provide information about the company's involvement or engagement in communities. 6) *Public health commitment* - Posts related to their commitment and contribution to public health. 7) *Other* - This category involves other posts related to maximising good, for instance holiday greetings, positive quotes etc (Ju et al. 2021).

In relation to our study, this codebook will be modified with other categories that are more relevant and applicable to the fast fashion industry. This modified framework will be presented in the method section but we found it fruitful to present the original codebook for the reader to gain a deeper understanding of the theory as well as for our own study.

To briefly summarise this section, previous studies have shown that the two-level model of minimising harm and maximising good and its codebook is useful in relation to understanding CSR-communication in controversial industries on social media. In addition to this, the model will help us answer **RQ2** which is: “*How do established fast fashion organisations minimise harm and maximise good with their CSR communication on Social Media?*”. The development of the two-level model codebook is a theoretical framework inspired by research within business management. It has in turn provided communication scholars with a useful model that can help us gain a deeper understanding of how a selection of companies within the fast fashion industry are using social media to communicate their responsibility. From this, we understand that the model is of high relevance in relation to the purpose and aim of this study.

3.2 Social media performance

Social media is often talked about as one single platform and the discussion regarding the phenomenon is many times focused on one of the prominent and most popular platforms. This study won't focus on one single medium but will instead focus on social media as a collection of platforms. Therefore we are using Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) definition “[Social media is] a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p.61).

Tafesse and Wein (2018) developed a theory on how to strategically implement social media as an organisational process and during the development of the theory, they found a positive correlation between a successful social media performance and marketing performance. The theory is relevant for this research since we intend to create an understanding of social media usage with a CSR approach. But also since many scholars have defined CSR as a part of a company's marketing and branding activities (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Kwon & Lee, 2021). Hence, there is a possibility that the positive correlation between a successful social media performance and marketing performance also correlates to a successful CSR performance.

Tafesse and Wein (2018) had a thesis that four different components would be correlated to a successful social media performance. First, Tafesse and Wein (2018) argued that the implementation of a *social media strategy*, to have a clear guidance in the work on social media with the purpose of eliminating “guessing” and unstrategic posts and interactions on social media would be beneficial for the overall social media performance. Second, an *active presence* was argued as a basic prerequisite for success. To not be active on social media platforms may be an obvious reason for why a company won't succeed on the medium. Third, *customer engagement* is seen as a decisive factor for a successful social media performance (Taffese and Wein, 2018), which multiple other scholars have argued for as an important part of social media as well (Jeong et al, 2013; Fernandez et al. 2021; Du, & Sen, 2010). This component will be focused on when answering **RQ1**: “*How do H&M, Mango and Gina Tricot communicate their responsible initiatives on social media?*“ and will help us to achieve the purpose of the research. Fourth and last, *social media analytics* is important since it is an easy way to create a better understanding for what works and what does not on the company's social media page (Taffese and Wein, 2018). These four parts are argued as factors to become successful on social media performance which in turn is a factor for a successful marketing performance.

The study then shows that their thesis works on all criterias except for one. Taffese and Wein (2018) did not find a positive correlation between *social media presence* and social media performance. They found that some companies are successful even though their presence is inconsistent but especially that there are companies that are unsuccessful despite an active social media presence. Their conclusion is that an active presence alone can't create success on social media. Partly because of being too active might be repellent for some customers on an already time consuming platform, and partly because the algorithms promote and highlight content primarily based on interaction and relevance (Taffese and Wein, 2018). Despite this, they still

highlight the fact that a company needs to have some sort of active presence to be given the opportunity to become successful with its social media performance.

Between having a *social media strategy* and social media performance, *customer engagement* and social media performance, *social media analytics* and social media performance and *social media performance* and firm marketing performance positive correlations were found (Taffese and Wien, 2018).

3.3 Brand Identity

In order to further frame our study it is a necessity to present and discuss the concept of brand identity. Its relevance is based on our interest which is gaining a deeper understanding of how organisations within a questionable industry such as the fast fashion industry communicate their responsibility on social media. From this, we understand that our study touches upon concepts such as understanding how organisations frame themselves and how they create an identity that in turn projects externally to its stakeholders.

Burmann et al. (2017) describe the concept of brand identity as “a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and they imply a promise to customers from the members of its organisation.” - (p. 29). He further argues that brand identity is something that the company itself is designing. In similarity with Burmann et al. (2017), Huggard and Cope (2020) describe brand identity in terms of how it works as a projection of how a company wants to be viewed by its audience. An important activity for a company to involve in order to fulfil an advantageous brand identity is “brand communication” (Huggard & Cope, 2020). Brand communication involves the process of how a company communicates to persuade, inform and influence behaviour and attitudes of its stakeholders about the company, its values, mission and vision, as well as its products and services (Huggard & Cope, 2020; Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015).

In relation to our study, the concept of Brand Identity is important since it has a major part in understanding how a company projects itself to its public. For us it involves how a selection of fast fashion organisations projects themselves with the help of CSR-communication in order to maintain and proceed a sustainable brand identity. Despite its core manufacturing processes and

industry could be considered as questionable and unsustainable as we previously discussed in this text.

4.0 Method

4.1 Ontological and epistemological stance

This study had an ontological position within the perspective of social constructionism. The ontological position *social constructionism* can be described as the approach where the reality is seen as socially constructed (Bryman, 2012). Bryman (2012) further describes that it involves multiple and different subjective meaning constructions and these meanings are constantly being constructed by different social actors. The perspective implies that reality is constantly being created and recreated by different social actors. In relation to our study the understanding of reality has been reflected through a selection of fast fashion companies and their posts on social media.

Regarding the epistemological stance of the study, knowledge was gained through a hermeneutical perspective. The hermeneutic methodology could be briefly described as a method for scholars to produce understanding through interpretation (Denzin, 2018). Our own interpretations of the empirical material was a central aspect in terms of answering the relevant research questions. Since interpretation could be described as a process of determining the meaning and making sense of one or multiple phenomena through interpretation (Perri 6 & Bellamy, 2011), we argue that this process was relevant since the purpose of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of how organisations within a controversial business are using social media to manage their CSR-communication. This has been done partly through our own interpretations but also in combination with the presented theoretical framework, together with a qualitative content analysis.

4.2 Qualitative Study

This study intended to create a deeper understanding of how fast fashion organisations communicate their responsibility on social media. This was done based on an analysis of selected posts from the fast fashion organisations social media platforms, hence a qualitative study was considered appropriate to achieve the research purpose. Qualitative research is described as a method to use when analysing text and other non-numeric data to understand concepts, opinions or experiences (Silverman, 2017). Further, the study intended to create an understanding of how the companies work based on a collection of theories that have been

presented in the previous chapter, which is an example of deductive research (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2015). But to further contribute to the field of strategic communications, the study aimed to develop or add new insights to these existing theories based on findings from the “reality”. Therefore both deductive and inductive research design contributed to answer the research questions which is known as abduction (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2015).

4.3 Sampling and proceedings

The empirical material consists of social media posts from three large fast fashion companies. The three companies were H&M, Mango and Gina Tricot and were all selected on similar grounds. Large companies have a greater responsibility and the opportunity to have a bigger impact on people and society compared to smaller sized businesses. Hence, these companies were selected as empiric material for this research. In order to find relevant social media posts to include in the analysis we used, and further developed, Ju et al’s (2021) framework to decide what posts were relevant for the analysis and to categorise them. The collected material was then compiled within the categories and good, representative posts were selected to be included as examples in the analysis.

The sampling of the social media posts was selected on the textual communication provided on the social media post during the timeframe 1st of January 2021 until 25th of April 2022. Posts with a clear connection to any of the categories were selected and included in the analysis. Posts that required their own interpretations or associations to be perceived as sustainable or responsible communication were not selected, nor if a semiotic analysis of the post was required. Further we have chosen to only present the captions in the analysis of our research. We are well aware of the fact that an image can affect how a message is perceived and that the social medias Instagram and Facebook are relying on the images. But in our case we are studying how the companies initial communication generates possible reactions and can lead to discussions in the comment sections, and further how the companies are managing this.

4.4 Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

A *Qualitative Content Analysis* (QCA) is a method within qualitative research where the researchers create an analytical framework in order to better understand and analyse the qualitative data with a more systematic approach. The method is a further development of a quantitative content analysis with the purpose of creating a way to analyse qualitative data in a

quantitative way to become as objective and intersubjective as possible (Schreier, 2014). Schreier (2014) describes QCA as “[...] (it) reduces data, it is systematic and it is flexible” (p.170). Hence, the method helped us to firstly, reduce the amount of data to be analysed. Many other qualitative methods allow the researcher to add more data that is to be analysed which can create complications and confusion when mapping out what is relevant and what is not (Schreier, 2014; Boyle & Schmierbach, 2015). Instead the QCA facilitates the selection process and lets us focus on the selected data to understand the meaning and to answer our research questions. Secondly, the method is highly systematic which helped and required us to consider every single social media post that could be relevant for our topic as an important post for our study. In this way we ended up with a more intersubjective collection of data that weren't as shaped by our expectations and assumptions as many other qualitative methods would make it (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2015). Thirdly, the method is very flexible which allowed us to include both concept-driven and data-driven categories in our analytical framework. The framework was influenced by Ju et al's (2021) framework when analysing CSR within the Cannabis industry but updated to fit our study.

When conducting a qualitative study, Rennstam and Wästerfors (2015) defines three recurring problems, *chaos problem*, *representations problem* and *authority problem*. To prevent these problems they propose three different activities to counteract. *Sort, Reduce and Argument* (Rennstam and Wästerfors, 2015). The QCA allowed us to do these proactive activities at an early stage to avoid problems along the way. When collecting data and relevant material through the framework of the study, the reduction of material begins straight away which led us to the point where only the relevant posts for our study were left for us to analyse. This prevented the chaos problem and helped us to handle the data of our study with ease. Also, we analysed early on when collecting the social media posts which would be favourable for the study. Mainly because this allowed us to gather the most important posts for the study to answer the research questions. This facilitated the representation's problem in knowing what information and data to include (since everything could not be included due to, in this case, the amount of social media posts regarding CSR communication). But this was also favourable in order to reduce the amount of unnecessary data to be included in the study.

To argue for the findings of this study and to prevent the authority problem, QCA is a good tool since it improves the reliability and validity. To further build on these aspects of the study we have used (with a few modifications) Ju et al's (2021) framework when collecting and analysing

the social media posts. This strengthens the argument that this study will be valid and reliable even more since we are using a framework created by other, successful researchers (Rennstam and Wästerfors, 2015). When using this framework, we made sure that we were studying the right thing and ensuring that other researchers would come to the same conclusions as us if the research was to be re-done. The latest, is also one of the main purposes of the QCA, to create an intersubjective and systematic method of analysing qualitative data that, if the framework is well developed, allows researchers to compare results with other studies within the same field (Schreier, 2014; Mayring, 2014).

The analysis included the following categories, for *Minimising harm*: **1) Education** - posts that educate the audience regarding the production line and manufacturing processes of the company. **2) Compassionate programs** - posts that show the company's engagement in the communities where they are present. **3) Misinformation clarification** - social media posts that address a correction regarding misinformation about the industry/the company as a whole. **4) Working conditions** - posts that enlighten the current and improved working conditions of their employees.

Maximising good: **1) Environmental stewardship** - posts that contain information about efforts to protect the environment. **2) Philanthropic contribution** - posts that contain information about charitable giving to worthy cause on a large scale. **3) Educational commitment** - posts that educate the audience in sustainable living. **4) Employee involvement** - posts that share information on employee involvement initiatives, programs, policies or activities. **5) Community engagement** - posts about information on the involvement or engagement with local communities. **6) Public health commitment** - posts regarding commitment and contribution to public health. **7) Collaborations** - posts that share a collaboration with a known individual or organisation in order to strengthen the company's credibility. **8) Other** - posts regarding inclusiveness, equality and diversity.

The empirical material was then collected from the organisation's social media pages. And as previously mentioned, the two-level model and its categories were further developed when we found new interesting discoveries that could help us answer our research questions and suit the purpose of this study. The reason for this is because of the awareness that the model is reasonable but has its limitations to fit our study. This understanding came about during the analysis of the empirical material since we found posts that demanded new topic categories that

have not been included in previous research. The result of these insights has resulted in a further development of the codebook.

4.5 Method reflections

When conducting a Qualitative Content Analysis transparency is an important aspect that has a large impact on the trustworthiness of the research (Bryman, 2012; Schreier, 2014). This has been worked with throughout the entirety of our study through open discussions, reflections and presentations of our thoughts during the process of making this study. Through these transparency actions the study becomes more trustworthy but this is arbitrary and forces the reader to trust in our process and in our work which is an inevitable difficulty in qualitative studies.

A reflection of the concept validity is necessary since this qualitative study has a subjective nature. Validity is described by (Bryman, 2012) as one of the most important criteria when it comes to research. The concept itself refers to how valid the analysed material is in relation to the study, the research questions and what you want to measure (Bryman, 2012). In our case, one could argue that a possible threat to the validity lies in our data collection. Because of the subjective and interpretive nature of this study it is difficult to ensure that other scholars within the research field would choose the same posts and interpret them in the same way as we did. In turn, this creates difficulties in terms of ensuring that the exact same answers would be repeated in future studies. In order to increase the validity, we have taken inspiration from Ju et al's (2021) two-level model codebook who have argued that this theory is advantageous to apply in the type of study we have conducted. This is because as earlier discussed, the development of the two-level model codebook is a theoretical framework inspired by research within business management which in turn has provided communication scholars with a useful model that can help us gain a deeper understanding of how organisations within the fast fashion industry communicate their responsibility on social media. Further, the social media posts from H&M is written in Swedish and the analysis has been conducted on the Swedish material. We have then translated the texts and included them in this thesis which might affect how the texts are perceived. This we are aware of but want to clarify that the initial analysis was conducted on the original content that the organisation posted, in Swedish.

5.0 Analysis

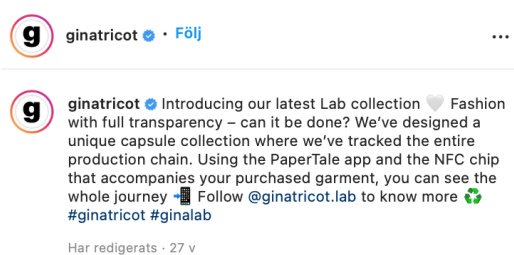
In this chapter the result of the collected data will be presented and analysed. Firstly, posts regarding Minimising harm will be presented, followed by a chapter regarding Maximising good. Lastly, a chapter regarding organisations responsible presence in the comment section.

5.1 Prevent and correct misunderstandings

Below, the collected material from our categories regarding Minimising harm will be analysed, discoveries beyond the theories categories were made which is presented and further discussed in this section.

5.1.1 Education

Below two different posts regarding *education* where the companies try to educate their followers on sustainable living and how they, as a company, are working towards becoming a more sustainable business are presented. This can either be done through educational posts regarding how the company is working towards a more sustainable business, or through posts that educate the audience on new sustainable materials, ways of producing clothes or how they themselves can act more sustainably (Ju et al. 2021).



Post 1 (Gina Tricot, 2021)



Post 2 (Mango, 2021)

Post 1 and *post 2* are two different examples of how education is communicated by the companies. *Post 1* is about a new solution that allows the customers to see the whole production line in a transparent way. This shows the company's commitment to becoming sustainable and educates the customers in a transparent way on exactly where their garments have been created and where it has been shipped. Ju et al. (2021) mention transparency as one of the benefits of the social media platforms and in *post 1* Gina Tricot has chosen to communicate their transparency message on their social media platforms to take advantage of the media's benefits to better convey their message. Further, this educates the followers on how Gina Tricot in this case is using modern technologies to be in the forefront of sustainability work which can be seen as a way that they are minimising harm (Lindorff et al., 2012). They are putting pressure on other companies to also become more transparent with their production lines which can create an illusion that Gina Tricot is leading the way and that they are forcing their competitors to follow. But in reality, we don't really know how good or bad Gina Tricot really is compared to other companies with similar responsibilities. This forces them to be transparent and actually be doing a good job in order to not have a negative impact on the company's brand identity and actually hurt themselves (Burmman et al., 2017).

Post 2 is focusing on educating the followers on how the company is developing and discovering new, more sustainable materials and techniques to use. This aims to educate the followers about what makes them more sustainable than other competitors. Lindorff et al. (2012) says that companies within questionable industries need to minimise the harm that they possibly are causing. To educate your followers on how you are trying to find better, more sustainable solutions to decrease the negative impact is something that the three studied companies have posted about. All of them communicated a large number of posts regarding this which shows that Lindorff et al. 's (2012) theory is accurate in this case. In addition, this finding is similar to what

Ju et al. (2021) found out when studying the cannabis industry in Canada, which indicates that the *education*-category is relevant and further strengthens Lindorff et al. 's (2012) theory.

Huggard and Cope's (2020) say that a company itself is creating its brand identity. *Posts 1* and *post 2* are two examples of how the companies are communicating and portraying themselves as responsible and sustainable organisations. Presumably, all three companies want to be seen as actors within the fashion market that is taking their sustainability responsibilities seriously and by communicating about it, Burmann et al. (2017) argue that they are more likely to succeed in creating such brand identity.

5.1.2 Misinformation clarification

Misinformation clarification posts are intended to clarify false prejudices that society or the media have expressed, either concerning the specific company or towards the industry as a whole (Ju et al. 2021). *Post 3* is an example of where H&M is communicating their concern regarding harmful substances within the clothing industry and what they are doing to minimise this. The misinformation that they are addressing in this post is that fast fashion companies such as H&M are using harmful substances in their production line for example for economic or timesaving reasons. Society is expecting companies to act in a responsible and beneficial way for the society (Viererbl and Koch, 2022) hence H&M needs and wants to address misinformation and prejudices like this to further build upon, instead of harming their brand identity (Burmann et al., 2017).

Social media is a great place for companies to communicate messages like this. The reason for this is that the possibility to reach a large audience through one single social media post is greater compared to other media platforms (Sreejesh *et al.*, 2019). In addition to this, the possibility to engage with the audience is superior, which is one of social media's USPs (Tafesse and Wein, 2018). In this case *Post 3* is engaging in the way that H&M encourages their audience to read more about how they work with chemicals and to create a bigger understanding of this topic. In this way, this post is similar to, and can be categorised as an *educational* post as well (Ju et al., 2021) which indicates that posts can be categorised into more than one of Ju et al's (2021) categories. Another benefit of posting this on social media is that H&M will see the reactions and discussions that this communication is generating in



Nej, för oss är det oerhört viktigt att kläderna vi säljer inte innehåller ämnen som kan vara skadliga 🚧🚫. Här berättar vi varför kemikalier används i textilindustrin över huvud taget och hur vi arbetar för att eliminera skadliga ämnen i produktionen: <https://schysstmode.hm.com/kemikalier/>. Där kan du även ställa dina frågor om vårt hållbarhetsarbete.

Post 3 (H&M, 2021)

No, to us it is very important that the clothes we are selling are not produced with substances that might be harmful. Here we clarify why we use chemicals in the textile industry in the first place and how we are working to eliminate the harmful substances from the production line: (link). Where you also might ask your questions regarding our sustainability work.

the comments. In this way H&M can gather information on if the post is positively or negatively received by the audience, which Tafesse and Wein (2018) argued for as an important factor for social media performance. And they also have the opportunity to moderate and answer questions in the comments. Which can lead to an overall better reception of the message by the audience (Sreejesh *et al.*, 2019) and result in a stronger brand identity (Burmam *et al.*, 2017).

5.1.3 Summary prevent and correct misunderstandings

Minimising harm is something that is unique to organisations within questioned businesses and is not required by organisations within “normal” businesses in their daily CSR communication (Lindorff *et al.*, 2012). The purpose of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of how companies within questioned businesses are communicating their responsible initiatives and engagements on social media. With a focus on the fast fashion industry which is repeatedly questioned regarding environmental and social sustainability within the production lines (BBC, 2013; Climate.gov, 2021) we intend to fulfil this purpose. Therefore, the finding that no posts regarding *Working conditions* nor *Compassionate programs* could be identified and within the category *Misinformation clarification* only one post from all the three companies’ social media platforms could be identified is startling.

Compared to Ju *et al.*’s (2021) findings on the Canadian cannabis industry this differs a lot and what this may depend on is hard to tell. But one suggestion could be that the cannabis industry has more questions, and above all, that the industry itself accepts themselves as questioned. The companies within the fast fashion industry tend to ignore the fact that they are being questioned

and claim for themselves that they are not doing anything controversial. If this is the case, this could be a reason for why they don't minimise harm to the same extent, simply because they do not see themselves as questioned businesses. Therefore, the answer to the first half of **RQ2**: “*How do established fast fashion organisations minimise harm and maximise good with their CSR communication on Social Media?*” might be that they don't minimise harm to a particularly large extent.

Education though, the fast fashion companies are communicating a lot. And these posts are almost all regarding either environmental sustainability or their own production lines. Which is probably due to the fact that this is what the discussions about the industry are circulating (Hughes, 2000; The Conversation, 2021).

5.2 Communicating a good corporate citizen

Below, the collected material from our categories regarding Maximising good is analysed, discoveries beyond the theories categories were made which is presented and further discussed in this section.

5.2.1 Environmental stewardship

Environmental stewardship has been the most frequently identified category out of all the categories. *Environmental stewardship* is posts that contain information about efforts to protect the environment (Ju et al., 2021). This has been communicated in several different ways and some of the posts that are presented and discussed under other subheadings can also be categorised into this one. But in this chapter, two examples that create a good summary and overview of how this category is communicated on the companies social media channels will be presented and discussed.

In *Post 4* Gina Tricot is communicating about an upcoming collection together with the designer and influencer Hanna MW. What is special about this collection is the techniques used to produce the products. The company tells us about how the entire collection is made of reused materials and modern technology in order to make it as sustainable as possible. Ju et al. (2021) identified one of the advantages of using social media platforms as the possibility to speak directly to the audience which is exactly what Gina Tricot has done in this post. This allows them

to show honesty, transparency and empathy in their CSR communication, as well as it enables organisations to engage in dialogue with stakeholders (Ju et al., 2021).



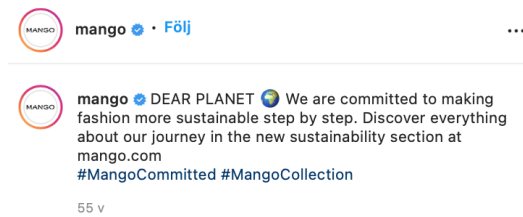
Post 4 (Gina Tricot, 2022)

In addition to the chosen platform the company is working together with a known name within the industry which creates more credibility to the message since it isn't only Gina Tricot themselves who stands as the sender of the message (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015). Hanna MW, the designer of the collection, has a very good reputation and has previously worked with many sustainable brands. According to Rosenbaum-Elliott et al. (2015), this will result in Hanna's previous reputation being reflected upon Gina Tricot. Thanks to this collaboration the collection and the message that Gina Tricot and Hanna MW are jointly communicating will be perceived as more credible and reliable compared to if Gina Tricot would be to communicate the same message themselves (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015), which also is advantageous for their brand identity building (Huggard & Cope, 2020).

We have found posts that can be categorised into *environmental stewardship* with various approaches on how they communicate their environmental initiatives. *Post 5* is another example of this where Mango is communicating their sustainability initiatives and how they are working towards becoming a more environmental organisation step by step. One big difference between *Post 4* and *Post 5* is that they are selling themselves and their sustainable initiatives with different approaches, where *Post 4* is selling a sustainable product and *Post 5* is selling the company as a whole as sustainable.

In *post 5* Mango is communicating their sustainability work by showing all the tiny steps that the organisation is taking in the right direction and to tell this story they urge their audience to read more about the journey on their website. The strategy to try to create an engagement with the

audience is fitting well into Janssons (2009) claim that communication is continuing to develop into a two-way activity where communication is something that is created in the exchange between the sender and the receiver. Further, this is also a well fitting strategy to use on social media platforms since this kind of engaging communication has a better potential on social media platforms compared to traditional media platforms (Jeong et al, 2013; Fernandez et al. 2021).

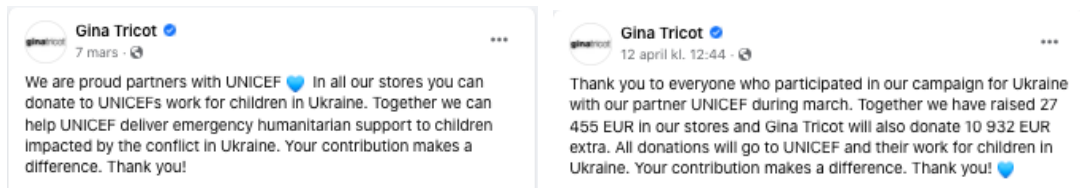


Post 5 (Mango, 2021)

5.2.2 Philanthropic contribution

First of all, it is fruitful to remind ourselves of the meaning of *Philanthropic contribution*. Philanthropic responsibilities refer to actions and engagement that is carried out by organisations in order to contribute as a good social citizen. These actions could for example be to engage in humanitarian programs or welfare driven actions (Carroll, 2016). In the context of our study and our empirical material it refers to organisations' social media posts that communicate information about charitable giving to worthy cause on a large scale.

Through the perspective of Lindorffs two level model (2012) we understand that both *post 6* and *7* are examples of how an organisation communicates regarding their *Philanthropic contribution* in order to maximise their good. Remember that *Philanthropic contribution* refers to how organisations' communicate information about charitable giving to worthy cause on a large scale (Ju et al., 2021). In *post 6* the organisation informs about their collaboration with UNICEF where their customers can donate in order to help children in Ukraine. In *post 7*, Gina Tricot raises awareness regarding their appreciation to their customers and how much money they have raised. Both *post 6* and *7* are uploaded in the heat of the Russia and Ukraine



Post 6 and Post 7 (Gina Tricot, 2022)

conflict that is currently taking place in Europe. Another example of how an organisation refers its initiatives to the crisis can be seen in *post 8* uploaded by Gina Tricot on Instagram. Gina Tricot's initiative together with the organisation “*Human Bridge*” encourages people to contribute with emergency humanitarian support to those most affected by the crisis. Not only are these interesting examples because it is a current conflict that is well debated in the news, but also because they involve a new category that we found multiple times in our empirical material that differs both from the previous research and our presented theoretical framework. Our analysis provides an addition to the codebook in terms of a new topic category which is described as “*Collaborations*”. What we have found during the collection of the empirical material is a recurring theme amongst these organisations to communicate posts that share a collaboration with a known individual or another organisation in order to strengthen its own credibility when it comes to responsibility. These findings differ from what Ju et al. (2021) and Lindorff et al (2012) present in their research where the aspect of credible collaboration is non-existent.

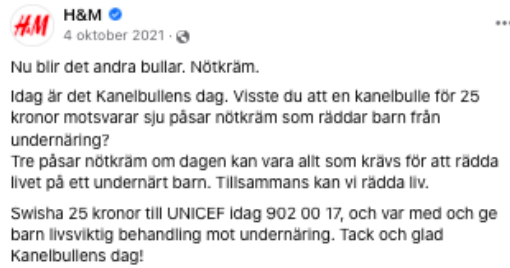
Furthermore, *post 9*, uploaded by H&M, acts as an example where philanthropic contributions are communicated in a similar but, in the meantime slightly different way (in relation to *post 6,7* and *8*). The similarities lies within the fact that both posts communicate information about charitable giving to worthy cause on a large scale which is according to Ju et al. (2021) beneficial regarding a organisations responsible communication. What is the most interesting part and what also differentiates *post 9* is mainly the strategy to incorporate a Swedish and Finnish celebration theme day: “*Kanelbullens dag*” in their CSR-communication in order to highlight their initiative together with UNICEF. What is seen is how cultural aspects within the communication process are incorporated in order to maximise good. By both showing philanthropic contribution in terms of encouraging their followers to donate money to UNICEF, they also seize the opportunity to celebrate this theme day which Ju et al. (2021) is discussing is one strategy to use in order to maximise good.



Post 8 (Gina Tricot, 2022)

The discussed posts are also examples of what Huggard and Cope (2020) points out regarding how a brand itself creates and develops the company's brand identity. Through the organisation's communication on social media, one can argue that these posts contain the strategy that involves the process of communicating in order to influence behaviour and attitudes of its stakeholders about the company itself, its values, mission and vision (Huggard & Cope, 2020). In our examples these posts can be seen as a strategy which aims to project their mission regarding providing humanitarian support for children in need, which in turn can create positive associations to the organisation and its brand identity (Burmann et al., 2017).

In addition to this, our findings not only provide us with knowledge about how organisations maximise good by communicating information about charitable giving to worthy cause on a large scale. *Post 10* is an example how philanthropic contribution (Carroll, 2016) is expressed and communicated in relation to questions of feminism and empowerment. The presented example provides an understanding on how an organisation with their communication on social media addresses the international women's day. Not only does the post address the international women's day, it also informs the receiver that all profits will be donated to support girls education in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Ethiopia. Because of this, it is reasonable to argue that the post intends to maximise good since the purpose is to provide charity to a worthy cause on a larger scale (Ju et al., 2021). These examples also provide an understanding on how organisations with their communication on social media frame themselves as responsible in relation to social sustainability.



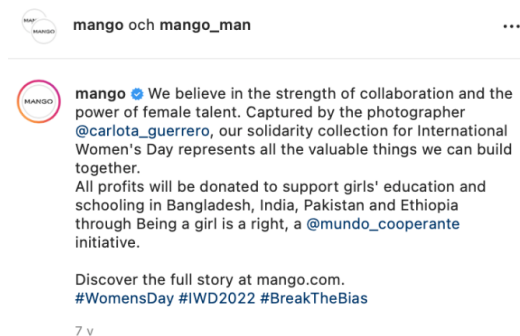
Post 9 (H&M, 2021)

Now there will be other buns. Nut cream. Today is cinnamon bun day. Did you know that a cinnamon bun for 25 SEK is equivalent to seven bags of nut cream that saves children from malnutrition?

Three bags of nut cream a day can be all it takes to save the life of a malnourished child. Together we can save lives.

Swish 25 SEK to UNICEF today 902 00 17, and give children vital treatment for malnutrition. Thank you and happy cinnamon bun day!

With the help of analysing the presented examples, we gain knowledge of how the aspect of philanthropic contribution is communicated by fast fashion organisations on social media. Carroll (2016) points out that it is important for organisations to assist voluntary projects that can in turn enhance humans or community's quality of life. In line with Carrolls (2016) reasoning, the presented examples provide an understanding on how the aspect of philanthropic contribution can be expressed by questionable organisations on social media.



Post 10 (Mango, 2022)

5.2.3 Educational commitment

Educational commitment is, in comparison to the minimising harm category *education*, posts and communication regarding how the company engages in educational opportunities in order to further develop the knowledge and exchange experiences with other professionals within the field (Ju et al., 2021). From a minimising harm point of view, *Education* focuses on and is limited to posts that educate the audience on how the company is working today in order to become more sustainable and responsible. And the *educational commitment* is instead posts that are about educating the audience and at the same time gaining new knowledge themselves from conversations and collaborations with other professionals with different previous experiences (Ju et al., 2021).

In *Post 11* H&M is letting their followers know that they have initiated a conversation between the high tops of the company and creators within the industry to jointly discuss what sustainability is, how to work with it and what they are hoping that the sustainable future in the fashion industry will look like. This post is an excellent example of when a company is communicating about their philanthropic actions (Carroll, 2016). For H&M to initiate a conversation as in *Post 11* is not required by the company but it is something that is highly appreciated by the audience. And in this case, this is a contribution that the organisation itself also gains from since they, except for the good looks that this creates, also is provided with plenty of new and exciting ideas regarding the future of sustainable fashion.



Post 11 (H&M, 2021)

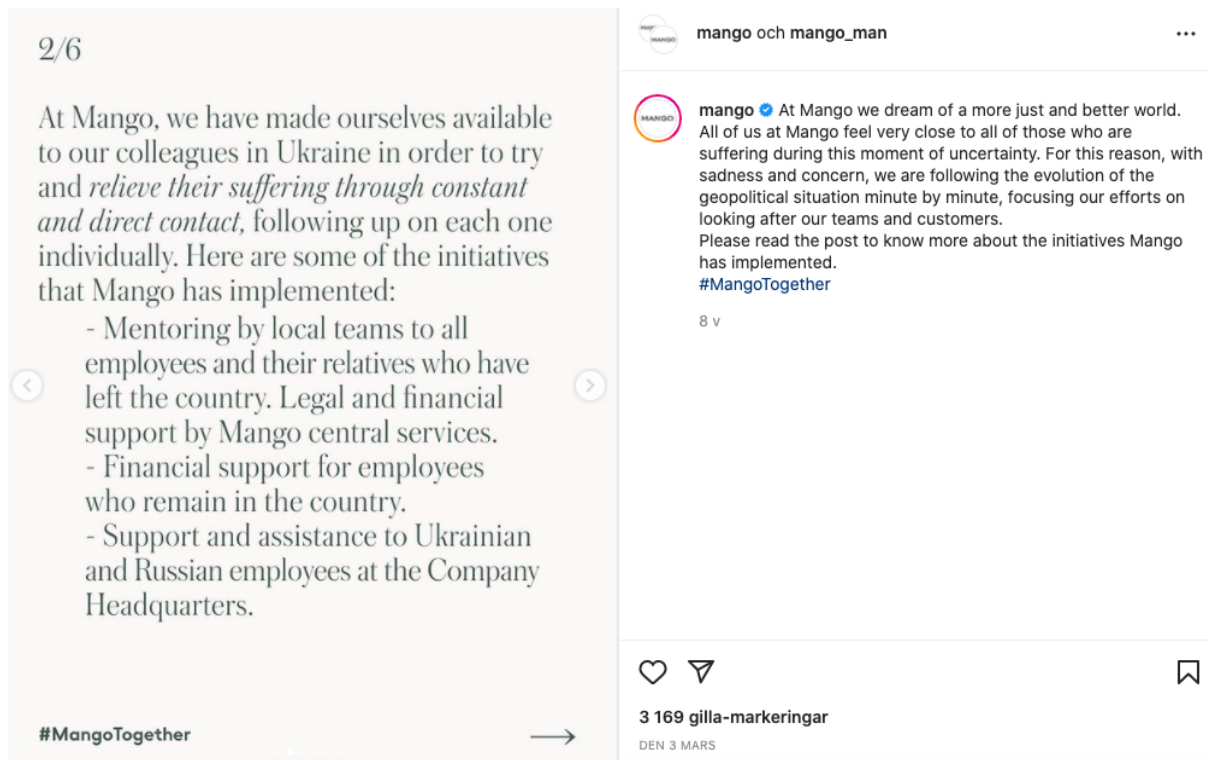
H&M:s CEO, sustainability representatives, designer for Lee x H&M, and Transparency lead met virtually with the creators Deba Hekmat, Alima Lee, Zinnia Kumar, Peter Dupont and Avery Ginsberg to discuss what sustainability means for them, how one can act for a change and their hopes for the future.

Watch the conversation here: (LINK) [...]

To invite a large number of people to the conversation is a great idea in order to be successful with their social media communication. Not only does it lead to a better discussion with more diversity and participants with different experiences and ideas, it will also create better conditions for the social media post to achieve better reach. This since the number of high-profile names and accounts that will interact with the post is high (Taffese and Wein, 2018). And as a lot of the CSR related communication and posts this will in turn help H&M to better their brand identity building (Kwon & Lee, 2021; Huggard and Cope, 2020) which is one of the main goals with CSR activities and communications according to several scholars (Yang et al., 2020; Nadanyiova, 2020; Fernandez et al., 2021; Carroll, 2016).

5.2.4 Community engagement

Community engagement is a topic category within maximising good which refers to social media posts that provide information about the organisation's involvement and engagement in communities (Ju et al., 2021). In our study, *posts 12* and *13* are examples of how an organisation is communicating its *community engagement* on social media in order to maximise good. The posts are published during the escalated conflict between Ukraine and Russia during March and April 2022 and are providing information on Mango taking actions in order to support their employers, colleagues and partners in the affected areas. Furthermore, these examples also highlight what Fernandez et al. (2021) points out which is how CSR communication can address issues and how an organisation can with the help of social media communicate their stance in different societal problems, in this case the conflict between Ukraine and Russia. In addition to this, *post 12* and *13* could also be argued to represent how an organisation communicates its ethical responsibilities that Carroll's pyramid of CSR (2016) addresses. Ethical responsibility is about following the expectations from society that are not written in law. The society expects companies and organisations to operate in a fair and equal way and even if these things may not be juridically required, the society is expecting it from companies (Carroll, 1991; Brin & Nehme, 2019). In relation to our study, Mango has followed the trend of companies shutting down business in Russia. This activity is nothing that is a legal must, but instead a growing expectation amongst people around the globe. By putting this in relation to the theory of brand identity, these examples provide understanding on how an organisation meets its stakeholders expectations in order to create and maintain a set of beneficial brand associations (Burmam et al., 2017). In these examples it refers to an organisation not wanting to be associated with Russia.



Post 12 (Mango, 2022)

One could argue that these examples instead should be categorised under minimising harm and more specifically under: “*Compassionate program*”. The reason why this categorisation has not been made is based on the fact that the conflict is nothing Mango as a company has created, or products/services from the company has created, therefore there is no harm to minimise. For instance, hypothetically, if news broke on how Mango's different clothing collections are damaging the well being of their customers due to unhealthy chemicals in the material of their products it would have been different. In this context, the crisis would have been created by Mango themselves and therefore a different level of responsibility would be present and in turn also a need to minimise the harm. Instead, *post 12* and *13* are matters of maximising good since they have the intention to highlight the organisation's own actions in society in order to frame themselves as beneficial corporate citizens who are taking responsibility in one specific societal issue (Porter & Kramer, 2006).

4/6

Given the responsibility we owe our 800 employees in Russia, as well as our franchisees and partners, we have tried to *safeguard our operations* in the country until the last moment. However, Mango has finally taken the decision to *temporarily suspend* its operations in Russia, closing its company stores and its online platform, as well as stopping the delivery of goods to the country.

From this moment, Mango is making itself available to its employees in the country, as well as franchisees and other partners, in order to attend to their needs.

#MangoTogether



Post 13 (Mango, 2022)

5.2.5 Public health commitment

Public health commitment refers to posts which communicate an organisation's commitment and contribution to public health in order to maximise good (Ju et al., 2021). *Post 14* is an example where Gina Tricot is communicating about one of their projects “*Stay at home X Gina Tricot*” which is an initiative with the purpose of supporting and contributing with money and awareness for children and teenagers with mental illness. The project is a collaboration with the organisation “Mind Sverige” and in this example a music event will be livestreamed where the listeners can send money in order to support the initiative. Furthermore this is also an example where an organisation is communicating regarding social sustainability. What is further interesting with *Post 14* is that one can argue that it is also an example where Gina Tricot is communicating its philanthropic responsibilities, this is based on the purpose of the post which is an organisation's initiative in order to contribute as a good social citizen by supporting children with mental illness. This purpose is similar with Ju et al., (2021) description of the concept philanthropic contribution which refers to initiatives that contain the purpose of charitable giving to a worthy cause on a large scale.



Post 14 (Gina Tricot, 2021)

Stay at home X Gina Tricot!

Tonight, Friday at 21-22, DJ Gino Pettersson's live gig will be streamed from the roof of our head office in Borås. The DJ gig is part of the project Stay at home which is done together with Mind Sweden for children and young people with mental illness. During the evening, you who watch will be able to compete on receiving gift cards from us. Get that Friday feeling and watch the livestream tonight at (link).

Another analysis of *Post 14* is that it is an example of how Gina Tricot uses social media to create engagement. Not only does Gina Tricot with the help of social media spread awareness of mental illness but they also encourage people to contribute and support organisations that are working with these social questions. Imran Ali et al (2015) points out the importance of communicating an organisation's CSR activities on social media since it can involve and create engagement with various stakeholders. This in turn strengthens Gina Tricot's relationship with its followers based on Imran Ali et al (2015) reasoning. Not only is *post 14* an example that shows how Gina Tricot, with the usage of social media, can reach out and show their followers how the organisation is taking responsibility, but also how it can facilitate their followers to do the same. Another reflection is this is also an example of how an organisation is using social media in order to communicate information about the project but also to influence their followers behaviour and attitudes (Huggard & Cope, 2020; Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015). This example provides us with understanding on how a company through its CSR-communication projects themselves to its publics in order to maintain and proceed a sustainable brand identity.

Post 15 is another example where an organisation within the fast fashion industry communicates *public health commitment* in order to maximise good (Ju et al., 2021). What is interesting with *post 15* is how it differs from *post 14*. In this example, Mango instead provides us with information on how they take responsibility in order to improve the quality of life of their followers by encouraging them to participate in a yoga challenge called "*Life Balance Challenge*". In similarity with *post 14*, it is an example of how an organisation with the help of social media can involve and create engagement among their followers regarding questions of a

healthier lifestyle. On the other hand, in contrast with *post 14*, *post 15* from Mango is not about contributing with money to an organisation as Gina Tricot did with their collaboration with “Mind Sverige”. *Post 15* is instead an example of how an organisation through communication regarding public health commitment can inform and influence its stakeholders about its products (Huggard & Cope, 2020; Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015). What is seen is how Mango is presenting a challenge/competition in order to market their own “*Activewear collection*”. The difference between *Post 14* and *Post 15* provide us with further knowledge on how *public health commitment* can be communicated differently. It is further interesting to also reflect upon the different intentions between the two, since *Post 14* actually guides and encourages how you as a follower can contribute with money to organisations that are working to prevent mental illness amongst children. *Post 15* instead uses *public health commitment* to promote their own products.



Post 15 (Mango, 2021)

5.2.6 Collaborations

Collaborations in relation to responsible communication and CSR on social media are posts that focus on a collaboration that the company is doing or initiating which can be with either recognized persons or organisations. We found that all three of the analysed organisations are working with collaborations on a recurring basis in order to strengthen its own credibility when it comes to responsibility.

In *Post 16* Mango is taking the initiative to talk about their sustainability process and how they are using recycled cotton as one component of their efforts to become more sustainable. As you may notice, a lot of the communication regarding sustainability from these companies are focused on the ecological aspect of sustainability and could be categorised as *Environmental*

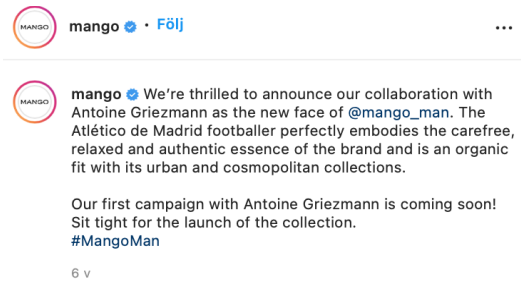
Stewardship. In *Post 16* Mango has combined *Environmental stewardship* with *Collaboration* in order to create more legitimacy to the message.

Rosenbaum-Elliott et al. (2015) argues that a collaboration with an expert can increase the legitimacy of an organisation's communication. To do so, Mango has invited @eagletta, a recognized woman who is working as a creative director at several different clothing and fashion brands with sustainable mindsets. This creates legitimacy to the message and further helps Mango to build upon their brand identity since their message is supported by this, within the field, recognised professional (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015; Huggard & Cope, 2020).



Post 16 (Mango, 2021)

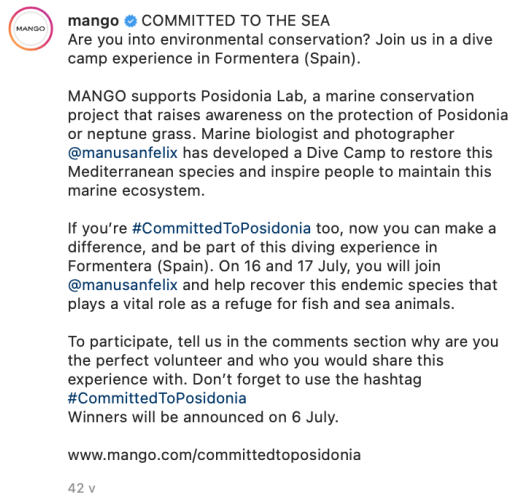
Post 17 is another way to *collaborate* on social media. In this case Mango is not communicating anything regarding their sustainability work or regarding their responsibilities. This post and upcoming collaboration is simply a way to create a new association to the brand, a strategy that often is referred to as “brand as a person” or “celebrity endorsements” (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015). The purpose of this is to create a personality to the company in order for the audience to better understand and relate to the company (Huggard & Cope, 2020). In *post 17* Mango has chosen to collaborate with Antoine Griezmann, a well known and highly respected football player. By doing so, Mango hopes that the good associations that society has to Antoine Greizmann will reflect on Mango's brand in order for society to perceive them as more reliable (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015).



Post 17 (Mango, 2021)

The collaboration does not have to be with highly respected celebrities or experts. It can also be together with an organisation. In *Post 18* the company is collaborating with and supporting an organisation that is fighting for the future of our oceans. In the post they tell their audience about the organisation and its objectives and suggest that they join a competition to gain further knowledge within the subject. This is an great example of how Mango tries to engage with their audience in order to maximise the audience in order to maximise the amount of accounts that interacts with the post and further the potential performance of the social media platforms (Taffese and Wien, 2018).

Further, this can also be considered to be an example of where Mango is taking philanthropic responsibility from Carroll's pyramid of CSR (Carroll, 2016). It is not required by anyone that they engage with this organisation and support their causes, but it is highly appreciated by the audience and is a good source to positive CSR. This kind of collaboration (*Post 18*), as well as the previous two (*Post 16 & Post 17*) that has been presented, all are initiated in order to further build on the organisation's brand identity (Huggard & Cope, 2020). In *Post 18* Mango is using this collaboration to tell their own priorities and to clarify for the audience what their stance on these kinds of questions are. But they are also riding the wave of this charity organisation in order to further build their own brand identity.



Post 18 (Mango, 2021)

5.2.7 Other

CSR is not only about environmental sustainability, it is about all kinds of social responsibility and being inclusive as an organisation is an important part of this (Yang et al. (2020)). This category is dedicated to posts regarding responsibility but which could not fit into any of the other categories and is an example of both social responsibility and inclusiveness.

In *Post 19* Gina Tricot shows their support to the pride community and is raising awareness and financial support to an organisation that is working within the LGBTIQ+ community. Similar to other categories, Burmann et al. (2017) says that the goal of this kind of communication is to show what the organisation stands for and what their beliefs are to build upon the company's brand identity. But the mental and monetary support can also be categorised into the ethical responsibilities that Carroll (2016) presents as a part of his CSR pyramid. This kind of posts is though the only ones that we have identified that clearly can be linked with ethical responsibilities, hence one can assume that the CSR pyramid is more relevant within CSR work, which in fact is what the theory itself is intended to describe (Carroll, 2016), and not as relevant within CSR communication.



Post 19 (Gina Tricot, 2021)

5.2.8 Summary communicating a good corporate citizen

The purpose of the conducted analysis in this section has been to throughout the theory of maximising good (Lindorff et al., 2012) gain deeper understanding on how questionable organisations communicate their responsible activities on social media. With a specific focus on the fast fashion industry which is repeatedly questioned regarding environmental and social sustainability.

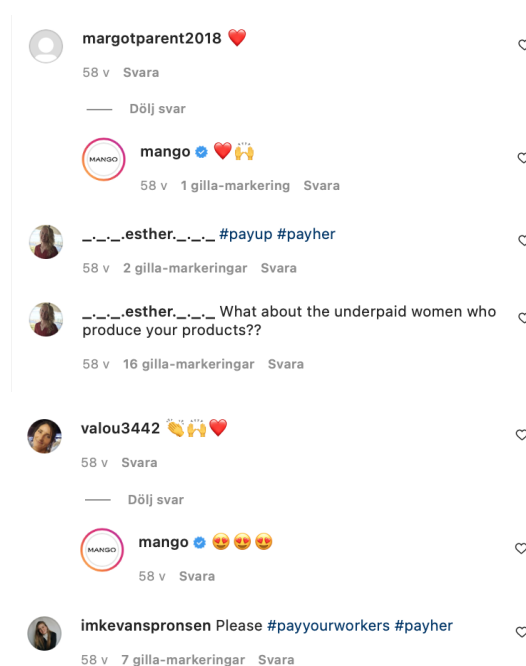
The findings of the conducted analysis are that the topic category *Environmental stewardship* is a recurring category amongst multiple social media posts. In the analysis two examples have been discussed but there are valid reasons to argue that *Environmental stewardship* is part of the other categories since it refers to posts that contain information about efforts to protect the environment (Ju et al., 2021). Our findings present what we argue to be a new topic category which is described as “*Collaborations*”. What is found during the collection of the empirical material is a recurring theme amongst organisations to communicate posts that share a collaboration with a known individual or another organisation in order to strengthen its own credibility when it comes to responsibility. These findings differ from what Ju et al. (2021) and Lindorff et al (2012) present in their research where the aspect of credible collaboration is non-existent. Although, these can be examples of what Du & Sen (2010) discusses how organisations expect to engage with its stakeholders in order to strengthen and encourage an advantageous relationship to gain support in the future. By collaborating with organisations such as UNICEF and MIND Sverige, one could argue that questionable organisations gain credibility from this. On the other hand, it is relevant to point out that UNICEF and MIND Sverige are not organisations that are primarily working towards a more sustainable fashion industry, therefore we can raise the question if this is a method of shifting the light from their core issues. What is

important to highlight though is that the study has also found examples where fast fashion companies are collaborating with organisations for a more sustainable fashion industry, see *post 1* as an example.

Another finding that differentiates from previous research is that in the context of questionable organisations, in specific the fast fashion industry, the category *Employee involvement* that Ju et al., 2021 presents have not been found in our study. The reason for this can be that these are such established and global organisations that do not intend to use Instagram and Facebook as recruitment tools. It would be interesting to expand the research field regarding this, for instance one could analyse channels such as LinkedIn which is a platform that is more used for recruitment and networking.

5.3 Responsible presence in the comment section

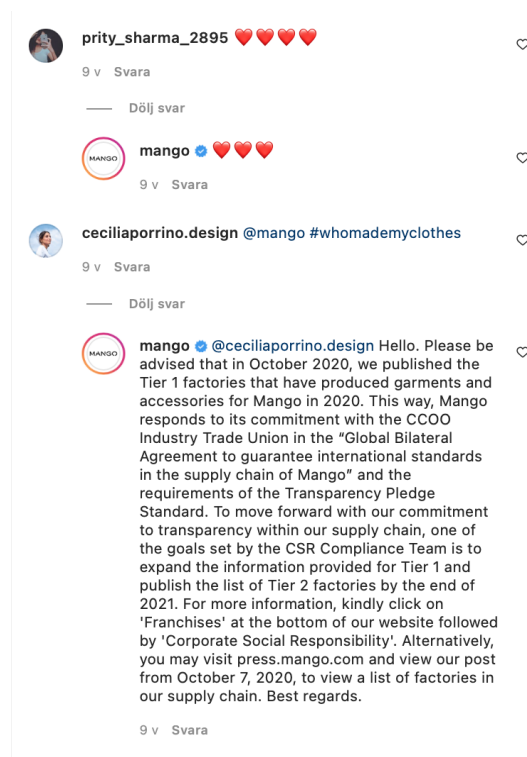
In previous chapters, an analysis of the organisations responsible communications within the initial communication of their social media posts have been conducted. CSR is about contributing to the development of society and to improve the quality of life (Nadanyiova, 2020). And to communicate about this in a responsible and beneficial way is the central part of CSR communication, in order for the organisation and for society to gain as much as



Comment 1 (Mango, 2021)

possible from the organisations contributions. But communication is a two-way practice that occurs between the sender and the receiver (Jansson, 2009). Hence, responsible communication on social media is not isolated to the initial communication but also includes the presence and communication in the comment sections.

The organisations have communicated a lot about their responsible initiatives in the initial communication on their social media channels but surprisingly enough, many times these responsible initiatives were not carried through to the comment sections. In *Comment 1* an example of this is displayed where the organisation has chosen to answer two positive comments regarding their initial communication but avoided the questioning comments. This is surprising since Jeong et al (2013) says that one of the main purpose of using social media as a communication platform is the possibility of interactivity. In addition, a responsibility message that isn't well-founded or an organisation that is not answering challenging questions might be accused of being a fraud (Viererbl & Koch, 2022). That the organisations repeatedly choose to avoid difficult questions in the comment section is surprising, especially when it is proven that it can be detrimental to their brand identity (Huggard & Cope, 2020).



Comment 2 (Mango, 2022)

Comment 2 is a better example of how an organisation can use their social media platforms to interact with its audience in order to better their own reputation and to further build a relationship with the stakeholders. In this case, the organisation is replying to a questionable comment that is questioning who is making the clothes for Mango and if their working conditions are fair. This has been a hot topic within the fast fashion industry since the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013 (BBC, 2013) and by answering questions like these, Mango can explain and show that they are taking their responsibilities. In this way, Mango can build upon their transparent brand identity and further develop the relation to their stakeholders, which generally have a positive impact on their perception of the brand (Burmam et al., 2017; Sreejesh *et al.*, 2019).

It seems like the companies are taking their responsibility initiatives seriously and that they are diligent in communicating about it on their social media platforms. But when analysing the comment sections we have found that the responsible communication in a majority of the cases ends with the initial post and that the negative or questionable comments most of the times are ignored. What this depends on is hard to tell, but it can be assumed that this is not something that benefits the organisations' brand identities or CSR performances.

6.0 Discussions and Conclusions

Firstly, with the use of the two-level model of minimising harm and maximising good our findings have provided an understanding that organisations within the fast fashion industry are not communicating minimising harm to the same extent as they communicate in terms of maximising good. The aim of this research was to further build upon previous research which has encouraged scholars to extend the research field by studying more questionable industries, hence our choice of the fast fashion industry. The new context of the fast fashion industry has provided us with knowledge regarding communicating minimising harm that differs from what for example Ju et al's (2021) findings on the Canadian cannabis industry has shown. One can argue that one reason why minimising harm is not as present is that the cannabis industry is more questioned, and above all, that the industry itself accepts themselves as questioned. The companies within the fast fashion industry tend to ignore the fact that they are being questioned and claim for themselves that they are not doing anything controversial. If this is the case, this could be a reason for why they don't minimise harm to the same extent, simply because they do not see themselves as questioned businesses.

Secondly, our findings have also provided an understanding of a recurring pattern which is that organisations within the fast fashion industry frequently communicate about their "Collaborations". What is found during the collection of the empirical material and the analysis is a recurring theme amongst these organisations to communicate posts that share a collaboration with a known individual or another organisation in order to strengthen its own credibility when it comes to responsibility which is a well established brand identity approach (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015). As earlier described, these findings differ from what Ju et al. (2021) and Lindorff et al (2012) present in their research where the aspect of credible collaborations are non-existent.

Thirdly, it is interesting to highlight the paradoxical aspect regarding these organisations and how they communicate their responsibility on social media. With the help of our presented examples we understand that organisations are highly active in communicating how they maximise their good by posting content related to their initiatives that are sustainable from an ecological- and/or a social point of view. By analysing how these organisations communicate in the comments it's relevant to raise the question regarding their true intentions of their responsibility. What is found is recurring patterns of these organisations to answer their followers when they comment something that is positive or beneficial for the organisation. But

our research has also found recurring patterns of these organisations not answering when they reserve criticism or critical questions regarding for example their manufacturing processes or working environment in their factories. In the collected material only one example was found where an organisation answered criticism referring to their sustainable initiatives in the comments. What is further interesting is that it is not a case of these organisations totally ignoring all criticism, they are highly active in answering when their followers have complaints regarding delayed shipments or incorrect orders etc. This further builds upon raising questions of their true intentions when the organisations post about their sustainable initiatives. It is interesting, and surprising that the organisations do not take advantage of the proximity to their consumers in the comment sections. This is described as one of the great benefits of using social media (Jeong et al, 2013). Despite this, none of the organisations is taking advantage of it and interesting further research would be to examine why organisations don't do that. Moreover, what is lost from the organisation's perspective is the opportunities to tie better relationships with their followers in the comment sections. Also, since the two-level model stated minimising harm, that we later concluded as “prevent and correct misunderstandings” as a part of what organisations within questioned industries have to work with and communicate about. The comment sections would be an ideal platform for the organisations to use for that purpose. Instead the organisations are ignoring negative and questionable comments which most likely will have a negative impact on how the followers perceive the organisations. In addition it risks communicating that the company does not take its sustainability responsibility seriously. But then again, the impact of this is nothing that we have investigated and would be an interesting field for future researchers to dig into.

In other words, organisations do not go beyond their initial communication when it comes to communicating their responsibility. As previously discussed, responsibility also contains the act to *respond*, this is something that organisations tend not to do, especially when it comes to critical questions of their sustainability initiatives. From this, we understand that one could argue of the paradoxical aspect regarding these organisations and their responsible communication, especially when the companies are controversial in nature.

6.1 Limitations and suggestions for future research

First of all, the study has provided an understanding that depending on which questionable industry is studied, their communication on responsibility differs. This strengthens Ju et al.

(2021) and Lindorff (2012) encouragement (which inspired the initiative for our study) to expand the list of studying other questionable industries in order to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon itself. Either by studying a different questionable industry or, studying more organisations within the same context as this study - the fast fashion industry. Since this study has provided refreshing knowledge within a new context, we would like to do the same, which is in similarity with Ju et al. (2021) and Lindorff (2012) further encourage scholars to conduct research on other questionable industries. Since the two-level model contained some limitations in relation to our study, further research on the model itself is necessary. This is based on the findings which provided refreshing knowledge that in turn further developed the model. Therefore, an encouragement for future research is to study other questioned industries in order to find out if this model can be further developed, but also if the model can become a more holistic model and a tool for companies within questioned industries to use.

As previously discussed, the analysis only focused on the captions in the different social media posts, not the images. There is an awareness of the fact that images can influence and affect how a message is perceived, especially in combination with a caption on social media. A suggestion for further research would therefore be to expand this type of study by doing a multimodal analysis involving both images, videos and textual elements. By doing this, a greater understanding will be gained regarding the interplay between the different elements in the context of how questioned industries communicate their responsibility on social media.

Since a Qualitative Content Analysis was conducted there are limitations on gaining knowledge on how the different communication managers at these organisations reason when they produce their content regarding responsibility. A suggestion for further research would therefore be to conduct interviews with these professionals in order to gain a deeper understanding of the intentions, but also on the working process behind their strategic communication on social media. Because this is a qualitative study only a few organisations were analysed, hence it would be interesting to conduct quantitative studies based on the same purpose in order to explain the phenomenon further. This would provide scholars with knowledge if there are any other connections between these organisations in terms of communicating their responsibility on social media.

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9.0 Appendix

Post 1, Gina Tricot, (14 October 2021). *Introducing our latest Lab collection* ❤️ *Fashion with full transparency – can it be done? We’ve designed a unique capsule collection where we’ve tracked the entire production chain. Using the PaperTale app and the NFC chip that accompanies your purchased garment, you can see the whole journey* 📱 Follow

[@ginatricot.lab](https://www.instagram.com/p/CVAI23Tljag/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link) to know more ♻️ [#ginatricot](#) [#ginalab](#)

[Instagram post] https://www.instagram.com/p/CVAI23Tljag/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Post 2, Mango, (27 February 2021). *The Sustainable Choice by @jen_wonders*
With sustainability as part of our DNA, we’re constantly looking for new eco-friendly materials or technologies to use in our production processes. This is how we discovered Eco-wash, a denim washing technique that saves water, energy and chemicals. To find out more about it, check out our new IGTV, in which our Mango Girl @jen_wonders will explain it for you!

[#MangoCommitted](#) [#MangoGirls](#)

[Instagram post] https://www.instagram.com/tv/CLy7ufqCv6O/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Post 3, H&M, (2 January 2021) *No, to us it is very important that the clothes we are selling are not produced with substances that might be harmful. Here we clarify why we use chemicals in the textile industry in the first place and how we are working to eliminate the harmful substances from the production line: (link). Where you also might ask your questions regarding our sustainability work.*

[Facebook post]

<https://www.facebook.com/hmsverige/photos/a.595094170623305/2022914684507906/>

Post 4, Gina Tricot, (30 March 2022) *Designed by Hanna MW* ❤️ *The first collection sold out in just a few hours so now we’re launching another denim remake capsule designed by fashion designer and stylist @hannamw* ♻️ 📱 *The popular relaxed fit jeans now come in even more washes and in an updated, shorter style. To complete the look, tops made of more durable materials have been added. These have been developed by Renewcell using innovative circular technology* ♻️ *The Designed by Hanna MW collection will be launched online on April 7 at 7pm CET and in selected stores on April 8. Stay tuned!* [#ginatricot](#) [#ginalab](#)

[Instagram post]

https://www.instagram.com/p/CbuM9hwqWYU/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Post 5, Mango, (1 April 2021) *DEAR PLANET 🌍 We are committed to making fashion more sustainable step by step. Discover everything about our journey in the new sustainability section at mango.com #MangoCommitted#MangoCollection*

[Instagram post] https://www.instagram.com/p/CNITSBAIKyU/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Post 6, Gina Tricot, (7 March 2022) *We are proud partners with UNICEF ❤️ In all our stores you can donate to UNICEF's work for children in Ukraine. Together we can help UNICEF deliver emergency humanitarian support to children impacted by the conflict in Ukraine. Your contribution makes a difference. Thank you!*

[Facebook post]

<https://www.facebook.com/GinaTricot/photos/a.10150107818417896/10158890413817896/>

Post 7, Gina Tricot, (12 April 2022) *Thank you to everyone who participated in our campaign for Ukraine with our partner UNICEF during march. Together we have raised 27 455 EUR in our stores and Gina Tricot will also donate 10 932 EUR extra. All donations will go to UNICEF and their work for children in Ukraine. Your contribution makes a difference. Thank you!*

[Facebook post]

<https://www.facebook.com/GinaTricot/photos/a.10150107818417896/10158943497062896/>

Post 8, Gina Tricot, (3 March 2022) *Donate clothing to Ukraine in our stores. We have been partners with Human Bridge since 2010 to support people in need. Our current effort is to provide clothing to people in Ukraine, and Gina Tricot is now donating warm outerwear. Join us and contribute by donating outerwear that you no longer need. You can hand in garments (warm winter clothing, winter jackets, children's clothing and blankets) at the cash desks in all Gina Tricots stores. Thank you!*

[Facebook post]

<https://www.facebook.com/GinaTricot/photos/a.10150107818417896/10158884345137896/>

Post 9, H&M, (4 October 2021) *Now there will be other buns. Nut cream. Today is cinnamon bun day. Did you know that a cinnamon bun for 25 SEK is equivalent to seven bags of nut cream that saves children from malnutrition? Three bags of nut cream a day can be all it takes to save the life of a malnourished child. Together we can save lives. Swish 25 SEK to UNICEF today 902 00 17, and give children vital treatment for malnutrition. Thank you and happy cinnamon bun day!*

[Facebook post] <https://www.facebook.com/hmsverige/photos/a.595094170623305/2383321625133875/>

Post 10, Mango, (4 March 2022) We believe in the strength of collaboration and the power of female talent. Captured by the photographer @carlota_guerrero, our solidarity collection for International Women's Day represents all the valuable things we can build together. All profits will be donated to support girls' education and schooling in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Ethiopia through Being a girl is a right, a @mundo_cooperante initiative. Discover the full story at mango.com. #WomensDay #IWD2022#BreakTheBias

[Instagram post] https://www.instagram.com/p/CarLfiFoQAj/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Post 11, H&M, (25 January 2021) H&M:s CEO, sustainability representatives, designer for Lee x H&M, and Transparency lead met virtually with the creators Deba Hekmat, Alima Lee, Zinnia Kumar, Peter Dupont and Avery Ginsberg to discuss what sustainability means for them, how one can act for a change and their hopes for the future. Watch the conversation here: (LINK)

[Facebook post] <https://www.facebook.com/hmsverige/photos/a.595094170623305/2172274692905237/>

Post 12, Mango, (3 March 2022) At Mango we dream of a more just and better world. All of us at Mango feel very close to all of those who are suffering during this moment of uncertainty. For this reason, with sadness and concern, we are following the evolution of the geopolitical situation minute by minute, focusing our efforts on looking after our teams and customers. Please read the post to know more about the initiatives Mango has implemented. [#MangoTogether](#)

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At Mango, we have made ourselves available to our colleagues in Ukraine in order to try and relieve their suffering through constant and direct contact, following up on each one individually. Here are some of the initiatives that Mango has implemented: - Mentoring by local teams to all employees and their relatives who have left the country. Legal and financial support by Mango central services. - Financial support for employees who remain in the country. - Support and assistance to Ukrainian and Russian employees at the Company Headquarters.

[Instagram post] https://www.instagram.com/p/CapsUcDoZtD/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Post 13, Mango, (3 March 2022) At Mango we dream of a more just and better world. All of us at Mango feel very close to all of those who are suffering during this moment of uncertainty. For this reason, with sadness and concern, we are following the evolution of the

geopolitical situation minute by minute, focusing our efforts on looking after our teams and customers. Please read the post to know more about the initiatives Mango has implemented.

[#MangoTogether](#)

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Given the responsibility we owe our 800 employees in Russia, as well as our franchisees and partners, we have tried to safeguard our operations in the country until the last moment. However, Mango has finally taken the decision to temporarily suspend its operations in Russia, closing its company stores and its online platform, as well as stopping the delivery of goods to the country. From this moment, Mango is making itself available to its employees in the country, as well as franchisees and other partners, in order to attend to their needs.

[Instagram post] https://www.instagram.com/p/CapsUcDoZtD/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Post 14, Gina Tricot, (4 June 2021) Stay at home X Gina Tricot! Tonight, Friday at 21-22, DJ Gino Pettersson's live gig will be streamed from the roof of our head office in Borås. The DJ gig is part of the project Stay at home which is done together with Mind Sweden for children and young people with mental illness. During the evening, you who watch will be able to compete on receiving gift cards from us. Get that Friday feeling and watch the livestream tonight at (link).

[Facebook post]

<https://www.facebook.com/GinaTricot/photos/a.10150107818417896/10158408279997896/>

Post 15, Mango, (21 March 2021) Join our Life Balance Challenge and win a full look from our Activewear collection! It's easy: - Take a video of yourself doing a Yoga pose in which Balance is key. - Post it on your Instagram or TikTok profile. - Tag [@mango](#) and the

[#TheWellbeingCommunity](#) hashtag. The winners will be announced on our IG Stories on Monday 29th. [#MangoCollection](#) [#TheWellbeingCommunity](#) [#Contest](#)

[Instagram post]

https://www.instagram.com/reel/CMrXmMoIqOP/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Post 16, Mango, (27 March 2021) The Sustainable Choice by [@eaglella](#) We're committed to taking care of the planet, and a good way to do that is not only by creating new clothes with sustainable processes and materials, but also by recycling the existing ones! That is why we love using recycled cotton. To find out more about it, check out our new IGTV now, in which our Mango Girl talks about its benefits, among other things. [#MangoCommitted](#) [#MangoGirls](#)

[Instagram post]

https://www.instagram.com/tv/CM7uMbnoTVe/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Post 17, Mango, (7 March 2022) *We're thrilled to announce our collaboration with Antoine Griezmann as the new face of [@mango_man](#). The Atlético de Madrid footballer perfectly embodies the carefree, relaxed and authentic essence of the brand and is an organic fit with its urban and cosmopolitan collections. Our first campaign with Antoine Griezmann is coming soon! Sit tight for the launch of the collection. [#MangoMan](#)*

[Instagram post] https://www.instagram.com/p/Caz_ejNoC7R/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Post 18, Mango, (30 June 2021) *COMMITTED TO THE SEA Are you into environmental conservation? Join us in a dive camp experience in Formentera (Spain). MANGO supports Posidonia Lab, a marine conservation project that raises awareness on the protection of Posidonia or neptune grass. Marine biologist and photographer [@manusanfelix](#) has developed a Dive Camp to restore this Mediterranean species and inspire people to maintain this marine ecosystem. If you're [#CommittedToPosidonia](#) too, now you can make a difference, and be part of this diving experience in Formentera (Spain). On 16 and 17 July, you will join [@manusanfelix](#) and help recover this endemic species that plays a vital role as a refuge for fish and sea animals. To participate, tell us in the comments section why are you the perfect volunteer and who you would share this experience with. Don't forget to use the hashtag [#CommittedToPosidonia](#) Winners will be announced on 6 July. www.mango.com/committedtoposidonia*

[Instagram post] https://www.instagram.com/p/CQv5THhoFAd/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Post 19, Gina Tricot (28 June 2021) *Update: thank you all for participating. We have now donated 15 000 sek to the Un Free & Equal Campaign   Pride day  1  = 1 SEK! To show our love and support we will donate 1 SEK for every  (like) this post gets during 24h to [@free.equal](#) and their work for equal rights and fair treatment of the LGBTIQ+ community  Read more about their work (link in stories). We believe in equality for all      *

[Instagram post]

https://www.instagram.com/p/CQp4OHNL9R-/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link


Comment 1, Mango, (8 March 2021)




[Instagram comments]


https://www.instagram.com/p/CMJwkslKji1/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Comment 2, Mango, (15 February 2022)


 **prity_sharma_2895** ❤️❤️❤️❤️
9 v Svava

— Döj svar

 **mango** 🌐❤️❤️❤️
9 v Svava

 **ceciliaporrino.design** @mango #whomademyclothes
9 v Svava

— Döj svar

 **mango** 🌐 @ceciliaporrino.design Hello. Please be advised that in October 2020, we published the Tier 1 factories that have produced garments and accessories for Mango in 2020. This way, Mango responds to its commitment with the CCOO Industry Trade Union in the "Global Bilateral Agreement to guarantee international standards in the supply chain of Mango" and the requirements of the Transparency Pledge Standard. To move forward with our commitment to transparency within our supply chain, one of the goals set by the CSR Compliance Team is to expand the information provided for Tier 1 and publish the list of Tier 2 factories by the end of 2021. For more information, kindly click on 'Franchises' at the bottom of our website followed by 'Corporate Social Responsibility'. Alternatively, you may visit press.mango.com and view our post from October 7, 2020, to view a list of factories in our supply chain. Best regards.

9 v Svava

[Instagram comments]

https://www.instagram.com/tv/CZ_372Bo1EJ/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link