ARE YOU CREATING SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE VISUAL COMMUNICATION?
— AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF FASHION COMPANIES’ EXTERNAL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON INSTAGRAM: A MARKETER’S PERSPECTIVE

Thesis for Two year Master, 30 ECTS
Textile Management
Avesta Diliwi
Josefin Bäcker

Thesis number: 2019.5.03

THE SWEDISH SCHOOL
OF TEXTILES
UNIVERSITY OF BORÅS

Publication year: 2019

Authors: Avesta Diliwi and Josefin Bäcker

Supervisor: Olga Chkanikova

Abstract

Background: Following the development of digitalization and the emergence of social media, a lot of attention has been drawn upon how these platforms are influencing the fashion industry and fashion marketing. As society is becoming more ethics and health conscious, fashion companies’ visual representations in social media are drawing more attention - who is represented and how are these representations portrayed. Previous research has shown that white and thin models are a recurrent over-representation in media, consumers through these see the ‘ideal’ or stereotypical body types or norms, and not an actual or full representation of society. The issue is, however, not that white or thin people are represented in media. The problem is how companies portray these representations and how the portrayals lead to the exclusion and misrepresentation of other groups in society.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to investigate the CSR practice of fashion companies regarding the body image representations in social media marketing communications, with specific focus on the marketer’s perspective.

Methodology: For this study an exploratory cross-sectional case-study research design approach was applied. Four corporate cases of fashion companies were analyzed using data triangulation methods on the basis of content analysis and semi-structured interviews. First, case analysis of social media contents and interviews were conducted, followed by cross-sectional analysis to find out if fashion companies’ practiced social responsibility is aligned with the verbally expressed social responsibility.

Findings: The findings of this study demonstrate that fashion companies consider external social responsibility as an important issue, however, a gap between the companies practiced social responsibility and verbally expressed social responsibility remains. The study shows that two of the companies’ practiced social responsibility on their Instagram channel is in alignment
with their verbally expressed social responsibility, when it comes to representing diversity in terms of body size, ethnicity and skin color. However, when it comes to the representational conventions it was noted that all the companies are lacking in external responsibility due to the continuous signs of idealization and body-ism on all the companies’ Instagram channels.

**Conclusion:** This study contributes to the research field regarding companies’ external social responsibility on Instagram. The findings provide companies and researchers with awareness of which representational conventions/key social aspects are currently lacking in corporate marketing activities and should become the focus for further improvement. Based on obtained results, a modified framework for image analysis and criteria for image/content creation are suggested. The framework and criteria can assist future researchers, help content creators and other practitioners to understand the complexity of external social responsibility and how to implement it in practice.

*Keywords:* CSR; Social Responsibility; External Social Responsibility; Body Image Representation; Body Image; Diversity; Body Size; Ethnicity; Skin Color
Acknowledgments

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our mentor Olga Chkanikova, university lecturer, whose continuous advice and leadership have tested our abilities and allowed us to grow as researchers. Thank you Olga for sharing your knowledge and always pushing us to strive higher, becoming better and sharpening our quality.

In addition, we would like to emphasize our profound appreciation to the four companies, who have participated in this research and given valuable insights and contributions to the research field.

Finally, we would like to express a tremendous gratitude to our families for their endless devotion, support and belief in us.

Borås, June 4th 2019

__________________  ____________________
Avesta Diliwi              Josefin Bäcker
Table of contents

1 Introduction.......................................................................................................................... 1 
1.1 Background..................................................................................................................... 1 
1.2 Problem Discussion...................................................................................................... 3 
1.3 Research Purpose & Questions................................................................................... 5 
1.4 Delimitations................................................................................................................ 6 

2 Literature Review ............................................................................................................. 8 
2.1 Concept of Social Responsibility.................................................................................. 8 
2.2 Social Responsibility in Social Media Marketing....................................................... 9 
  2.2.1 Body Image Representation .................................................................................... 11 
  2.2.1.1 Body Size ........................................................................................................ 14 
  2.2.1.2 Ethnicity & Skin Color .................................................................................... 15 

3 Methodology .................................................................................................................... 17 
3.1 Research Design .......................................................................................................... 17 
3.2 Data Collection Methods ............................................................................................ 18 
  3.2.1 Case Selection ...................................................................................................... 19 
  3.2.2 Interview Design .................................................................................................. 20 
3.3 Data Analysis Method .................................................................................................. 21 
  3.3.1 Framework for Content Analysis ........................................................................ 22 
  3.3.2 Analysis of Interviews ........................................................................................ 24 
3.4 Quality Criteria ............................................................................................................ 24 
  3.4.1 Trustworthiness .................................................................................................... 25 
  3.4.2 Authenticity .......................................................................................................... 26 
  3.4.3 Generalizability .................................................................................................... 26 
3.5 Ethical Considerations .................................................................................................. 27 

4 Results ................................................................................................................................ 28 
4.1 Content Analysis of Instagram Images ......................................................................... 28 
  4.1.1 Company 1 ........................................................................................................... 28 
    4.1.1.1 Body Size ....................................................................................................... 28 
    4.1.1.2 Ethnicity & Skin Color .................................................................................. 30 
  4.1.2 Company 2 ........................................................................................................... 31 
    4.1.2.1 Body Size ....................................................................................................... 32 
    4.1.2.2 Ethnicity & Skin Color .................................................................................. 33 
  4.1.3 Company 3 ........................................................................................................... 34 
    4.1.3.1 Body Size ....................................................................................................... 35 
    4.1.3.2 Ethnicity & Skin Color .................................................................................. 36 
  4.1.4 Company 4 ........................................................................................................... 37 
    4.1.4.1 Body Size ....................................................................................................... 37 
    4.1.4.2 Ethnicity & Skin Color .................................................................................. 39 
4.2 Empirical Findings from Interviews ............................................................................ 41 
  4.2.1 Company 1 ........................................................................................................... 41 
  4.2.2 Company 2 ........................................................................................................... 44 
  4.2.3 Company 3 ........................................................................................................... 46 
  4.2.4 Company 4 ........................................................................................................... 49 

5 Discussion ........................................................................................................................ 53 
5.1 Practiced Social Responsibility vs. Verbally Expressed Social Responsibility ............... 53 
  5.1.1 Company 1 ........................................................................................................... 53 
  5.1.2 Company 2 ........................................................................................................... 54 
  5.1.3 Company 3 ........................................................................................................... 55 
  5.1.4 Company 4 ........................................................................................................... 56 
5.2 Cross-sectional Analysis ............................................................................................... 57 
  5.2.1 CSR Definitions: Gap in Practiced External Social Responsibility ....................... 58 
  5.2.2 Insufficient Consideration of Diversity in terms of Body Size, Ethnicity & Skin Color ............................................................................................................ 58 
  5.2.3 Prevalence of Representational Conventions of Body-ism & Idealization ........... 58 

IV
Definitions

Marketer’s Perspective
This study refers to ‘the marketer’s perspective’ as a representative from the corporate cases included. A marketer’s perspective in this study is from someone who works within marketing, e.g. content creators, social media manager, marketing chief, and head of brand.

Body Image Representation
Body image representations in this study, refers to the visual portrayals of individuals in social media marketing regarding who is represented and how they are portrayed, with specific focus on body size, ethnicity and skin color.

Ideal
In this study ‘ideal’ refers to what previous literature defines as thin. The ‘ideal’ is connected to the idealization of slenderness and smaller body types - which is considered as the standard of cultural beauty.
1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the background of Body Image Representation, a problem discussion regarding the phenomenon of Body Image Representation and Social Responsibility and presents the purpose of this study.

1.1 Background

Following the development of new technology and the emergence of the Internet, a lot of attention has been given to how digitalization is influencing the field of retailing (Hagberg, Jonsson & Egels-Zandén 2017). In Sweden, with its high degree of digitalization, companies can and have been using this to their advantage (Svensk Modeindustri 2018), notably on social media which is a leading player in today’s marketing efforts (Perloff 2014). The use of social media has an annual global growth of 13% percent per year and continues to grow in Sweden (Chaffey 2018).

In line with the ever-increasing growth of social media, it is more common than ever that companies develop their internet marketing tools, were the phenomena of social media marketing, and especially Instagram (Hendrickse, Arpan, Clayton & Ridgway 2017), is among one of the fastest growing (Ungerman & Myslivcová 2014). According to Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), marketers may not have the need to regulate their advertisements to protect public interests, but simply to produce marketing advertisements (e.g. on social media) with the aim of gaining profits. However, as society is becoming more ethics and health conscious, the visual representations of these aspects on Instagram are drawing more attention, especially in the fashion industry (Grogan 2017; Hendrickse et al. 2017). For example, certain societal groups (e.g. minority groups, under-represented groups) do not have any power to influence how they are presented in advertisements and media (Schroeder & Borgerson 2005). This often leads to them being represented or misrepresented in ethically problematic ways (ibid.). In addition, since many young adults have a heavy online presence it is vital to pay attention to how these visual representations are influencing users’ health and perception (Perloff 2014).
With the fashion and beauty industry becoming one of the most thriving businesses financially, consumers can continuously be found engaging in consumption behavior to renew or maintain their appearances (Eisend & Möller 2007). The consumers’ perception of their appearance is substantially influenced by marketing efforts (Peck & Loken 2004). Marketers and social scientists are suggesting that advertisements are contributing to more than just product awareness and preferences but also influences target audiences’ beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors (ibid.). Fashion marketing has been recurrently linked to concerns regarding physical and mental health of consumers (Gardetti & Torres 2017). Specifically, social media marketing has reportedly more negative impact than other forms of media advertisement on consumer body image (Cole 2017; Dittmar 2009; Peck & Loken 2004). Body image can be defined as “a person’s perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about his or her body” (Grogan 2017, p.4), which will be the definition used in this study.

Although beauty is said to be subjective, it is almost never seen in the individual’s own reflection, neglecting the individual’s own thoughts and opinions (Ricky 2018). Those who are thin, look at themselves as heavier, and those who have, e.g. muscled body types believe they have less muscles than they do in reality (Grogan 2017). As a result of fashion marketing, consumers see the ‘ideal’ or stereotypical body types, i.e. how bodies ‘should’ be, and not an accurate view of themselves (Bearman, Presnell & Martinez 2006; Fredrickson & Roberts 1997; Grogan 2017; Schroeder & Borgerson 2005; Ricky 2018). Social media, and especially Instagram (Hendrickse et al. 2017), creates the phenomenon, where one’s ‘self-worth’ and beauty is determined by number of likes or shares a picture gets. The self-image is thus carefully constructed in accordance with Instagram trends (Fardouly, Willburger & Vartanian 2018), for instance, the cultural norm for female attractiveness being linked to the attributes of thinness (Grogan 2017).

Fashion culture influences consumers to adopt certain standards of an image as their own, leading to internalized body shape ideals and resulting in health issues (Bearman, Presnell & Martinez 2006; Fredrickson & Roberts 1997; Grogan 2017; Ricky 2018). Studies have shown that consumers that are exposed to unrealistic body image representations have a high risk of low self-esteem, which in turn can impact health-related behavior of individuals (Grogan 2017), whereas frequent Instagram and social media usage predicts increased body dissatisfaction over time (Cole 2017; Eisend & Möller 2007; Fardouly, Willburger & Vartanian 2018; Grogan 2017; Perloff 2014; Tackett 2018).
Although visual misrepresentation or lack of representation of various social groups on social media causes health and ethical concerns, those are the consequences not the core problem. The problem lies in how companies portray body images in their social media channels (Bandura 2001; Borgerson & Schroeder 2002), e.g. on Instagram. These media portrayals are observed by individuals and influence behavior in accordance with what is observed, without necessarily being accurate representations of society (ibid.). The problem is not that white and thin people are represented in social media but rather how they are portrayed and how these portrayals excludes curvier representations as well as people of color (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002). Fashion and beauty brands no longer only sell products to consumers, they sell lifestyles through their visual representations (Ricky 2018). The representations are part of constructing reality, however, once those representations become an individual’s reality, it has the ability to become problematic (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002). It is, therefore, essential for companies to take corporate social responsibility (CSR) for the impact that these representations have on society (ibid.), rather than continue following current trends in the industry in pursuit of increased profitability (Eisend & Möller 2007; Suggett 2018; Ricky 2018).

1.2 Problem Discussion

The phenomenon of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in marketing has gained great interest. It focuses on how companies can integrate the brand with the society – emphasizing on consumer wellbeing without damaging the company and its stakeholders (Vaaland, Heide & Grønhaug 2008). In 2010, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) brought forward ISO 26000, a standard that aims to help companies to understand social responsibility better and help transform social responsibility principles into implementable effective actions (International Organization for Standardization n.d.). Although CSR has been highlighted as a great interest, as well as concern, for marketers, it has attracted the global attention only recently (Eteokleous, Leonidou & Katsikeas 2016). Scholars have researched within the area of ethical behavior but limited research has been conducted within the field of social responsibility in marketing, and the concept of CSR has, therefore, remained vague (Sanclemente-Téllez 2017; Vaaland, Heide & Grønhaug 2008).

Previous research within CSR shows that environmental- and economical responsibility actions are more practiced within companies, whereas’ social responsibility efforts are less
implemented (Ahamad Nalband & Al-Amri 2013). Furthermore, research shows that the focus of social responsibility is usually on one part; the internal operations, e.g. actions concerning employees, or the supply chain, e.g. working and environmental conditions in suppliers’ facilities (ibid.). However, the other part of social responsibility, the external part oriented towards consumers, has not been researched to the same extent. The external CSR covers the factors concerning society wellbeing, discrimination and exclusion of individuals based on e.g. skin color, ethnicity, and body shape (ibid.).

Although research on the topic of CSR and Marketing is widespread, limited research has been done with specific focus on visual representations (Vaaland, Heide & Grønhaug 2008). Companies’ advertisement content and visual communication on social media are trending, portraying unrealistic body image representations (Grogan 2017), idealizing bodies and portraying the ideal body on social media, i.e offering something that is unattainable (Eisend & Möller 2007; Schroeder & Borgerson 2005). Meanwhile, movements like ‘The Body Positivism’ has been a driving force towards moving past body shame and self-judgment (The Body Positive 2018). The All Womxn Project is another movement that aims to educate, empower and advocate women (All Womxn Project n.b.). Their mission is to represent all women regardless of what size, age, ability, gender identification or color they have, shifting the way society talks and thinks about bodies and ideals (ibid.).

The movements have come to change the discourse of body images in the society and has led to an increase of the formerly excluded body image representations in marketing communications (Schroeder & Borgerson 2005). Although generally perceived as positive, recent shift towards inclusion on under-represented groups in marketing communications has also been criticized. The critique pertains to inclusion of minority or under-represented groups, based on ethnicity or skin color, while subconsciously communicating them as different and ‘non-normal’ (Schroeder & Borgerson 2005). This attempt of inclusion can, therefore, instead of compensating for misrepresentation, aggravate it even further.

Furthermore, the majority of research within marketing communication and marketing ethics focuses mainly on the topic of ‘persuasive effects of communication’ on consumption, and not much on visual issues, as e.g. external social responsibility (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002; Schroeder & Borgerson 2005). According to Borgerson and Schroeder (2002), and Schroeder and Borgerson (2005), theoretical considerations of visual issues are lacking within the area of
marketing research. In addition, there is a clear contradiction surrounding the CSR phenomenon in marketing; when companies and marketers are criticized about their marketing communication, it is stated that they are mirroring society, but when they are successful it is expressed as changing culture in society (Suggett 2018). Research by Eisend (2010) has referred to this as the ‘Mirror’ vs. ‘Mold’ perspectives. The ‘mirror’ argument implies that companies’ advertisements are reflecting values in society, whereas the ‘mold’ argument means that it is shaping the values in society. Furthermore, as research has been done from a consumer’s point of view – how body image representation impacts consumers’ thoughts, opinions and behavior (Bandura 2001; Grogan 2017), research from the marketer’s perspective is lacking (Zyglidopoulos, Georgiadis, Carroll, & Siegel 2012).

To conclude, current research lacks the external consideration of companies’ social responsibility, which emphasizes the influence of marketing efforts on consumer wellbeing (Ahamad Nalband & Al-Amri 2013). Research on CSR with specific focus on body image representation and ethical visual concerns is also scant (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002; Schroeder & Borgerson 2005), with existing studies focusing primarily on the consumers’ rather than marketers’ & firms’ perspectives (Bandura 2001; Grogan 2017). Based on the previous research it can also be concluded, that disappointment and dissatisfaction with one’s own body is closely linked to Instagram’s influence, and the influence of social media as a whole (Eisend & Möller 2007; Fardouly, Willburger & Vartanian 2018; Schroeder & Borgerson 2005; Sirgy 1982). Even though one cannot hold Instagram or social media as the sole factor responsible for this dissatisfaction to occur (Cole 2017), the great influence of visual media representations cannot be ignored (Hendrickse et al. 2017). The issue of social responsibility, e.g. how companies use visual representations to portray body images in social media channels, thus requires more research attention.

1.3 Research Purpose & Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the CSR practice of fashion companies regarding the body image representations in social media marketing communications, with specific focus on the marketer’s perspective. In order to achieve this purpose, the following research questions have been formulated:
1. How do fashion companies practice external social responsibility with regards to body image representations?
   o What factors do companies consider when creating visual content regarding body image representations?
   o How are the practiced social responsibility and the verbally expressed social responsibility on social media aligned?

1.4 Delimitations

The scope of this research focuses on the dimension of external social responsibility. Previous research has primarily focused on the internal part of social responsibility, concerning e.g. employee wellbeing and working conditions, and not many research highlights factors regarding society wellbeing and exclusion of individuals based on body size, ethnicity and skin color (Ahamad Nalband & Al-Amri 2013). The researchers of this study, therefore, found a gap in research regarding external social responsibility in relation to exclusion of individuals and groups in society, in companies’ visual communications on social media. In addition, previous research has focused on how these visual representations influence consumers’ wellbeing, body image perception etc., but not much emphasis has been done on what marketers, who work at these companies who are responsible for the visual communications on social media, think.

Furthermore, Instagram is one of the most popular and influential platforms (Hendrickse et al. 2017) and fashion companies’ primary visual communication platform to inspire and influence consumers and followers (Moatti & Abecassis-Moedas 2018). As the sample selection of this study regards fashion companies, it is appropriate for this study to delimit to Instagram as the chosen social media platform to be investigated. In addition, as this study aims to conduct an image analysis, the researchers of this study were in need to focus on platforms where images could be found. Since Instagram is the social media platform that primarily focuses on imagery, and does so more than any other social media channel, for example Facebook and Youtube, the study is delimited to only Instagram.

When it comes to investigating diversity: body size, ethnicity and skin color are the elements in focus in this study. The delimitation to these three are due to them being considered as the main elements of diversity when it comes to body image representations and the elements that are easier to detect when analyzing images. Therefore, the researchers of this paper found it
relevant and crucial to delimit to body size, ethnicity and skin color for starters in order to conduct initial research on the topic of external social responsibility. Diversity in terms of body size is defined as including other body sizes than those that are considered as ‘ideal’, i.e. thin. In terms of ethnicity, diversity is connected to nationalities other than Swedish. Diversity in terms of skin color is considered other skin colors than white. The categorization of the images has, therefore, been limited to the categories: Swedish or Non-Swedish, White or Person of Color and Thin or Curvy. The categorization is made since visual representations in social media is continuously including portrayals of white and thin individuals, and since the study’s sample size includes corporate cases from Sweden.
2 Literature Review

This chapter gives a theoretical introduction to the concept of CSR and external Social Responsibility, following a literature review regarding external Social Responsibility, Body Image Representation and the key aspects of Body Size, Ethnicity and Skin color.

2.1 Concept of Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a well-known concept that has been studied from several different dimensions; economic-, environmental-, and social sustainability (Maignan & Ferrell 2004). Ahamad Nalband and Al-Amri (2013) emphasizes that CSR builds upon the idea that companies should manage their businesses in a way that contributes to sustainable development throughout all the three dimensions. The concept of CSR has been most cited as “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” (Commission of the European Communities 2001). Despite the definition, there is still uncertainty about how the concept is defined, both in society and in the academic world, since it is a context dependent phenomenon (Dahlsrud 2004; Wan & Wan 2006). Dahlsrud (2004) suggests that this uncertainty may be because CSR has been a concept that has been biased towards specific definitions due to companies wanting to solve a specific issue at hand. Therefore, numerous of definitions exist on CSR, for example:

“The commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life” (World Business Council for Sustainable Development 1999)

“Corporate social responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as the local community and society at large” (World Business Council for Sustainable Development 2000)
“Business decision making linked to ethical values, compliance with legal requirements and respect for people, communities and the environment” (Business for Social Responsibility 2000 in Dahlsrud 2004, p.7)

CSR means “treating the stakeholders of the firm ethically or in a responsible manner” (Hopkins 2003 in Wan & Wan 2006, p.181)

Among the variety of existing definitions on CSR that incorporates all three of the dimensions (Dahlsrud 2008; Maignan & Ferrell 2004), the majority of studies refers to the environmental stewardship (Dahlsrud 2008). Ahamad Nalband and Al-Amri (2013) further explains that the dimension of ‘Social Responsibility’ is something that has not been observed to the same extent as the other two dimensions.

The dimension of social responsibility refers to an organization’s commitment to meet ethical, legal, commercial, and public expectations of the society (Kovacevic & Kovacevic 2014). The dimension can be divided into two parts: internal- and external social responsibility (Ahamad Nalband & Al-Amri 2013). Internal social responsibility concerns the employees of the company and their working conditions, while the external social responsibility concerns the company's stakeholders, i.e. the impact of the brand on society (ibid.). The focus of this thesis will be on external social responsibility.

2.2 Social Responsibility in Social Media Marketing

The rise of the Internet and social media has come to change the ways social movements and social responsibility evolve in society (Cornet, Cafaro, Brady & Hall 2017), especially within the fashion industry (Bandura 2001; Cornet et al. 2017; Svensk Modeindustri 2018). With the beauty industry being one of the prosperous segments (Eisend & Möller 2007), a clear connection can be made between beliefs, consumption and media influence. Social media platforms are becoming one of the fastest growing communication platforms in today’s industry (Svensk Modeindustri 2018), and in the year of 2016 in Sweden 4 out of 5 people between the ages of 16 to 85 were using Internet daily (SCB 2016). With the growth of social media platforms, concerns regarding individuals’ health emerges (Ahamad Nalband & Al-Amri 2013; Eisend & Möller 2007). The concern comes from the influence social media platforms have, especially since research shows that young adults have a heavy online presence and reliance on social media (Dittmar 2009; Perloff 2014).
Perloff (2014) explains that consumers rely more on social media than any other type of media, which plays an outstanding role in influencing individuals negatively and their social values. According to Borgerson and Schroeder (2002) images are the most pervasive method of communication in the world, where Instagram has come to be one of the most popular platforms (Hendrickse et al. 2017). Instagram has become the outlet where beliefs and attitudes are formed (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002; Fardouly, Willburger & Vartanian 2018; Perloff 2014) and where advertisements and marketing efforts promote not only attitudes but also behavior (Bandura 2001; Cole 2017; Grogan 2017; Soares & Pinho 2014; Ricky 2018). According to Soares & Pinho (2014), these behaviors influence the individual mental and physical health, as well as their interaction with other people. Research shows that for both males and females the negative influence of Instagram concerns social perceptions, self-perceptions and body dissatisfaction (Eisend & Möller 2007; Hendrickse et al. 2017).

The greater Instagram usage and exposure to ‘ideal’ images, the more prone are individuals to be negatively influenced, in terms self-objectification and appearance-related concerns (Fardouly, Willburger & Vartanian 2018). Perloff (2014) and Ahadzadeh, Pahlevan Sharif & Ong (2017) explains that once individuals are on Instagram individuals are exposed to non-achievable images where a significant pressure is exerted on them to live up to images/visual representations. Individuals turn to different online sources for validation, in order to convince oneself that the self-perception and self-direction measures are meeting media’s ideals (Perloff 2014), to gain feelings of self-worth and to confirm their ‘social identity’ (Soares & Pinho 2014). Soares & Pinho (2014, p.5) presents an individual's ‘social identity’ as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership”. Social identity builds upon individuals evaluating themselves and others on different Social Online Networks in order to categorize them in different groups, including both similarities and dissimilarities with both members and non-members of those groups (ibid.).

Just as social media and visual communications have come to play a vital part in forming social identities, it has also come to influence the perceptions and associations of brands (Cahan, Chen, Chen & Nguyen 2015). According to Cahan et al. (2015), companies who are present and visible on social media tend to have a better brand image than companies who are not. With the fashion industry being sensitive to trends (Svensk Modeindustri 2018), it is essential for
companies to be present on social media platforms and engage in existing social media discussions to create positive associations to their brand (Keegan & Rowley 2017), and contribute with socially responsible imagery (Zyglidopoulos et al 2012; Soares & Pinho 2014; Wang & Huang 2018).

According to Zyglidopoulos et al. (2012), companies who have a powerful social media presence, tend to work more with CSR-activities (ibid.) as it brings reputational benefits (Zyglidopoulos et al. 2012; Wang & Huang 2018). The researchers further explain that companies due to their presence in media attract more stakeholders, which increases demand for their products and services. Due to high visibility and demand increase, companies must evaluate which stakeholders’ interests are the most crucial to attend to in order to ensure business survival and success (Zyglidopoulos et al. 2012). In extension, Fredrickson & Roberts’s (1997) explain that since companies main aim is to earn money, they may not feel the need to consider the effects of their visual communications (ibid.), and stakeholders’ demand for CSR may, therefore, be rejected. The rejection does not have to mean that the CSR-practices are not of importance, but that demand, interest and pressure is low on the CSR-practices and higher on other aspects (Zyglidopoulos et al. 2012). In addition, research shows that it is imperative for companies and marketers to understand how to communicate social responsibility-actions and messages in media in order for it to be beneficial (Zyglidopoulos et al 2012; Soares & Pinho 2014; Wang & Huang 2018).

Additionally, Eisend (2010) discusses whether companies’ advertisements reflect or shape the values of its target audience by putting forward the ‘mirror’ vs. ‘mold’ argument. The ‘mirror’ argument implies that companies’ visual communications reflect existing societal values, and changes in visual communication are most likely to mirror the change in these values. On the opposite, the ‘mold’ argument emphasizes that consumer values are rather shaped through visual communications, and that media and visual communication can influence and change attitudes and beliefs (ibid.), hence able to contribute with socially responsible imagery (Zyglidopoulos et al 2012; Soares & Pinho 2014; Wang & Huang 2018).

2.2.1 Body Image Representation

In the past decade, the fashion and beauty industries have become two of the most successful industries, where consumers continuously invest in renewing or preserving their appearances
(Eisend & Möller 2007), while comparing to visual representations (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002; Perloff 2014). Body image has been one of the comparisons that individuals make through visual communication, and can be explained as “a person’s perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about his or her body” (Grogan 2017, p.4), which are deeply influenced by sociocultural forces (Bearman, Presnell & Martinez 2006; Grogan 2017). Social and cultural powers produce meaning, and visual representations are part of sociocultural forces as they both create and reflect social norms regarding body images (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002; Eisend & Möller 2007; Fredrickson & Roberts 1997; Schroeder & Zwick 2004). Each visual representation has the ability to send a message, connect with individuals and influence how one perceives the self (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002).

Body images and representations have changed over the years, and so has the body ideals and acceptable body types (Grogan 2017). However, although body ideals have changed over time and society has come to recognize visual representation concerns and the risks these have on body images, researchers highlight that the industry continues to portray thin and photo-shopped body images (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002; Perloff 2014). Ahamad Nalband and Al-Amri (2013) note that the issues concern exclusion of identity groups in society based on, for example, body size, ethnicity and skin color, where companies’ visual communications plays an influential role (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002).

In addition to the issues highlighted by Ahamad Nalband and Al-Amri (2013), Schroeder and Borgerson (2005) brings forth a framework for viewing, analyzing and evaluating issues with images in visual communication (see Figure 1). The framework includes four representational conventions: Face-ism, Idealization, Exoticization, and Exclusion. Face-ism describes how media depict men with more prominent faces than women, while media focus more on women’s bodies than men’s (ibid.). The convention of idealization builds upon companies’ creation of glamorous content that portrays young and thin models in unrealistic scenarios, which are unachievable for the consumer (ibid.). The unattainable and idealized images of models, and especially bodies, are in turn influencing what is considered as appealing by others than individuals themself (ibid.). Exoticization is viewed as portraying a person as exotic and different, emphasizing on certain characteristics to attract attention (ibid.). According to Schroeder and Borgerson (2005) these characteristics can be in terms of skin color, ethnicity and culture. The research denotes further that the vision of people being exotic is not something that exists without it being created and recreated by others. The representational convention of
exclusion refers to how some people in society are commonly left out and absent in marketing communications (ibid.). The exclusion surrounds certain identity groups in society, such as minority- and under-represented groups (e.g. depending on body types), and indicates exclusion through visual communication’s categorized and stereotypical depictions (ibid.).

Schroeder and Borgerson (2005) argue that there can be an overlap of the key aspects of identity and method of analysis in the framework (Figure 1). It is stated that not many recognize how these representational conventions are diffused in marketing visual communications and how much they influence individuals’ perceptions (ibid.). As a result, individuals evaluate images based on visual cues and content, and hence judge the people portrayed in those images based on those elements as well (ibid.).

In addition to the representational conventions, Schroeder and Borgerson (2005) express that the four conventions: face-ism, idealization, exoticization, and exclusion, can be analyzed and evaluated through the methods of ‘Objective Coding’ and ‘Subjective Evaluation’ (Figure 1). The two representational conventions: face-ism and exclusion are said to highlight the objective coding method (ibid.). Objective coding is based on the physical attributes of individuals (ibid.). It builds upon visual factors and enables people to make assumptions based upon them, e.g. male or female, Asian or European (ibid.). While the two others: idealization and exoticization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of analysis</th>
<th>Key Aspects of Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective Coding</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Face-ism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Evaluation</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exoticization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Framework for visual image analysis by Schroeder and Borgerson (2005, p.588)
are believed to take on a reflective, subjective evaluation (ibid.). On the opposite to the objective coding, the subjective evaluation builds upon evaluations, interpretations and perceptions of individuals about the phenomena (ibid.).

2.2.1.1 Body Size

Due to the controversy regarding thin models in media and the movement towards realistic body size representations, Martin and Xavier (2010) argue that it is important in marketing to portray models with larger body sizes. Research shows that after watching thin models, individuals perceive their own bodies as larger than they are and want thinner bodies (ibid.). However, after viewing larger sized models in companies’ visual representations, individuals feel less pressure to be slimmer (ibid.). The phenomenon, also called idealization (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002) has been a central topic where society’s thin body ideals frequently are being portrayed as the image of imaginary happiness (Gripsrud 2002). Research done by Tiggemann (2011) highlights this through ‘Sociocultural theories’, which proposes that societies have certain body type ideals that are represented and communicated to individuals through companies’ media channels. Similarly, research denotes that media influences people to adopt a certain view of themselves and their bodies, also referred to as ‘trait self-objectification’ (Fredrickson & Roberts 1997). The theory brought forward by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) is called the ‘Objectification theory’ and highlights how an objectifying culture can influence an individual to internalize cultural body standards, hence influencing body shame, anxiety, and control. Dittmar (2009) explains that images presented in media becomes a part of the individual, something they strive to achieve. However, since this achievement is usually unattainable, a gap is created between the individual’s actual- and ideal body image (Eisend & Möller 2007).

Dittmar (2009) discusses that individuals in addition to own thoughts and views of their body are also exposed to sociocultural influence to incorporate the thin body ideal. Grogan (2017) and Borgerson and Schroeder (2002) highlight that images of visual representations are often perceived to portray the real world, when in fact these images are edited to attract viewers, putting cultural pressure on them to look in alignment with the visual representations. Borgerson and Schroeder (2002) further emphasize that images available for individuals draw them into creating beliefs of how their bodies should look without any consideration of reality or accurate knowledge, hence influencing individuals’ future behavior. Eisend and Möller
(2007) confirms that people become dependent on images and associate what they see as an accurate representation of society. As a result, visual representations can lead to a deceiving perception of both the self-image and other identity groups in society (ibid.). Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) explains that it is common for visual representations in media to focus on bodies and body parts. The researchers point out that the phenomenon is called body-ism, which is when media portray models as bodies or body parts, specifically women’s, rather than as individuals. This phenomenon can be linked to the representational convention of face-ism in research, which denotes how visual communication are more prone to focus on men’s faces and women’s bodies (Schroeder & Borgerson 2005).

2.2.1.2 Ethnicity & Skin Color

Many companies rely on objectified representations or stereotypical characters in their visual communication in order to reach out to consumers, since those types of images may have become normalized (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002). However, since these stereotypical images may not give an accurate representation of groups in society, people identified with them are undermined and misrepresented (ibid.). Similarly, Grogan (2017) argues that larger sized models have been portrayed as non-acceptable due to being outside the sociocultural norms/ideals and are, therefore, minimized. This argument is in line with Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), who highlighted that women of color have often been victims of misrepresentations and objectifying images. The authors explain that African American women have repeatedly been objectified and portrayed in connection to animals, while Asian Americans have been portrayed in association to exotic and subordinate images.

Exoticized images have also been found in relation to companies’ attempt of including diversifying representations in visual communications (Schroeder & Borgerson 2005). Borgerson and Schroeder (2002) denote that companies have come to use preconceived and stereotypical representations since those are easily recognized by viewers in visual communications. The researchers explain that it is the familiarity and clichés in the representations that lure viewers, and that companies have defended those choices by implying that it is better to show under-represented groups than excluding those representations in total. Therefore, an attempt of inclusion can also backfire into exclusion, since those images may communicate that the representations are something ‘different’ (Schroeder & Borgerson 2005). It has also been stated that shocking, attention-grabbing images are those which draw attention
Although, the images attract viewers to companies’ visual communication, many companies have stated that they have felt hesitant in using those types of images as bait (ibid.). Borgerson and Schroeder (2002), and Grogan (2017) explain further that, although body image representations and beliefs are open to change and although companies can change the messages connected to the visual representations, past associations and meanings cannot easily be avoided.

In addition, Borgerson and Schroeder (2002) explains that visual communication influences people to see things and think in ways companies intend them to. Research emphasize that if visual communication relies upon images, then representatives of such visual communication must be able to tackle the ethical issues that those images may initiate (Schroeder & Borgerson 2005). If companies want to be part of the solution, which is, the movement towards ethical acceptable images, they need to take responsibility and withdrawal from ‘bad faith’ representations, which are representations that damages beliefs and views of body images (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002).
3 Methodology

This chapter describes and motivates the methods chosen to conduct this study. The chapter presents the chosen research design, data collection method, data analysis method, and finally how trustworthiness, authenticity and ethical considerations have been established.

3.1 Research Design

The research design of this study is of exploratory, inductive and qualitative nature. Such research designs are informed by the purpose of this study and the nature of research questions. In this study the purpose is to gain a better understanding of the yet unexplored phenomenon of social responsibility practice of fashion companies regarding the body image representations in social media marketing communications. Bryman (2016) and Bryman and Bell (2015) defines an exploratory and qualitative research design as suitable when the purpose of a study is to gain more information and understanding of an unclear phenomenon. In addition, the researchers express an inductive approach appropriate to generate new ideas and theories, in this case to distinguish the pattern of practice of social responsibility.

In order to investigate companies’ social responsibility practice, this study takes on a case study research design. The case study enables the researcher to focus on one or several cases, i.e. companies, in order to get in-depth understanding about a single phenomenon (Bryman & Bell 2015). The study does not aim to compare separate corporate cases with each other, but rather to collect two types of data within each case and then compare the findings from each data collection with each other. Hence, the cross-sectional research design was applied on each separate case (company). Bryman and Bell (2015) explains that the cross-sectional research design builds upon the collection of data from more than one case, e.g. qualitative content analysis and qualitative interviews, in order to examine the relationship between the cases. Due to the nature of the research questions and the aim to compare the practiced- and verbally expressed social responsibility of fashion companies, the cross-sectional research design was applied for the study.
3.2 Data Collection Methods

This research utilized both primary and secondary data collection methods. The secondary data collection includes a literature review to get knowledge of what different researchers state regarding the topic of ‘Social Responsibility’ and ‘Body Image Representations’. The literature was gathered through several databases to acquire information from scientific articles. The databases used were PRIMO, Google Scholar, Business Source Premier, Emerald Insight, Bloomsbury Fashion Central, ProQuest European Business Database and Taylor & Francis Online. The keywords searched for include: ‘CSR’, ‘Social Responsibility’, ‘External Social Responsibility’, ‘Ethical Concerns’, ‘Body Image Representation’, ‘Body Image’, ‘Body Size’, ‘Ethnicity’, ‘Skin Color’, ‘Visual Communication’, ‘Marketing Communication’, ‘Visual representations’, ‘Social Media’, ‘Social Media Channels’, and ‘Diversity’. These words were searched individually and in combination with each other to maximize the search output.

The primary data collection includes content analysis and interviews. A qualitative content analysis (QCA) is a data collection method that systematically describes the qualitative material and ascribes meaning to it with the help of a coding frame (Schreier 2012). The coding frame is specified by researchers and is regulated by the nature of the research questions (ibid.). In this study, QCA was conducted in order to gain knowledge of the sampling group’s practiced social responsibility. The QCA was data analyzed in form of image analysis and image-caption analysis. Images were obtained from the companies’ social media channel, more specifically from Instagram. 15 images from each company’s Instagram were collected, in total over 60 images. One image\(^1\) (+ the image’s caption) was systematically chosen to be analyzed in the beginning of each month, between the time period: January 1st 2018 to March 1st 2019. The content analysis was collected prior to the interviews. The specific purpose for this was to be able to analyze the chosen companies’ Instagram content so that it would work as a foundation for the interviews and a basis for later comparison between the two.

To conduct the interviews, a semi-structured approach was chosen for this study. This approach allowed for gaining an in-depth understanding of the companies’ verbally expressed social responsibility regarding body image representations. Although, semi-structured interviews can be said to have a disadvantage in terms of the moderator being able to influence the respondents.

---
\(^1\) For the exception of Company 2, where image 14 and 15 consisted of sequences of 10 images each. The sequences were published closest to the given date for collecting images, i.e. 1st of February and 1st of March.
(Nardi 2003; Neuman 2003; Zikmund et al. 2009), having the moderator present allows clarifying any uncertainties or misunderstandings that might have occurred otherwise (ibid.). For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were an advantage since it allowed the researchers to explore specific aspects related to the social responsibility practice in more detail.

### 3.2.1 Case Selection

This study used a purposive sampling technique for selection of corporate cases, i.e. fashion companies whose practices of social responsibility was explored. Bryman and Bell (2015) described the purposive sampling technique as a strategic way of selecting participants who are able to provide relevant information for answering the research questions, which means that the sampling is not randomly selected.

Four corporate cases were selected for this research to cover the diversity of active Swedish fashion brands in terms of size, target groups and sales channels. Ensuring such diversity in sample selection allowed for gaining in-depth data/information about how companies work with social responsibility. In addition, the advantage with including companies with different characteristics was to acquire different corporate viewpoints and broaden the understanding and awareness regarding the research problem/topic. The selected corporate cases are located in Borås and Gothenburg (Västra Götaland province). Such geographical delimitation was made due to the location convenience, but mainly due to many fashion companies in Sweden having their headquarters within this region.

The final sampling included four different Swedish fashion companies², whose names were made anonymous³:

**Company 1:** Company 1 is a Swedish fashion brand, with nearly 50 years of experience in the fashion industry. It is a small company that solely conducts business in Sweden with 54 stores located all over the country. The company is focusing on womenswear with own production as

---

² Within each case one respondent was interviewed. Interviewed respondents include corporate practitioners working with visual content creation in marketing communication.

³ This helped to protect the companies’ identities. It further creates a safer and more open environment for the discussion during the interviews (Christensen et al. 2016; Rosenqvist & Andrén 2006).
well as external brands, and is targeting women at the age of 45+, identified as women who are in their ‘golden age’.

**Company 2:** Company 2 is an international growing fashion company, with 180 stores globally. The company has a Swedish base and origin, and offers fashion to women between the ages 18 to 34, with a primary focus on females in the age of 25, emphasizing on femininity and girl power.

**Company 3:** Company 3 is a Swedish fashion company, that offers both clothes and home assortment, but their main focus is on basic and denim clothes. The company targets the young family and, therefore, offers products for both women, men and children, where the company’s primary aim is to offer affordable fashion to their consumers.

**Company 4:** Company 4 is an international online fashion company. Today the company conducts business in over 13 different markets and targets women in the ages between 18 to 35. The company is a multi-brand business and aside from their own brands, they offer over 700 external brands.

### 3.2.2 Interview Design

Questions included in an interview can either be open ended, close ended, or both (Bryman & Bell 2015). The interview design within this study followed a semi-structured interview guide, which entails a mix of both open and close ended questions (ibid.). The questions being both open ended and close ended means that the moderator leads the interview in a certain direction, but the respondents are able to answer the questions more freely rather than being restricted to a set of answer options (Bryman & Bell 2015; Zikmund et al. 2009). Open ended questions are common in an exploratory study, where the purpose is to gain understanding through collection of in-depth data (Neuman 2003; Bryman & Bell 2015).

When creating, and formulating the questions of this study, the researchers followed the guidelines of Bryman and Bell (2015) and Neuman (2003) to not initiate questions and discussions in a way that may influence the respondents and their answers. Since the topic of this study is regarding ‘Social Responsibility’ and ‘Body Image Representation’, the researchers of this thesis aimed to formulate the questions specifically to avoid obtaining
answers that were perceived as ‘socially desirable’. However, as the researchers conducted a content analysis it did not matter if the answers were perceived as socially desirable since these were later compared to the findings of the content analysis, hence detecting if the companies were practicing what they verbally expressed. Furthermore, the questions were asked from general ones to more specific, and were formulated with the goal to be as simple and straightforward as possible to avoid misunderstandings and disruptions in the conversation flow (Bryman & Bell 2015).

The interview consisted of 15 questions (see Appendix A & B), and where constructed based on previous research (see chapter 2). The interview started with 2 general questions with the aim of initiating the interview in a comfortable way for the respondents. The questions then lead towards specifics, where some of the more specific questions were placed towards the end since they were perceived to be sensitive questions (Bryman & Bell 2015; Nardi 2003). During the interview sub-questions emerged to the answers that the participants gave, which enabled the researchers to get in-depth answers regarding the subject. Each interview took between 33-45 minutes to conduct. Three of the interviews were conducted in person at the companies’ headquarters, while one interview was conducted via telephone for convenience reasons. The choice of interview location was made in order to create a safe and comfortable environment for the interviewees to talk, without being overheard or disturbed by other people (Bryman & Bell 2015).

3.3 Data Analysis Method

To increase the validation of the study, the researchers of this study have been analyzing companies’ social responsibility practice combining different types of data collection methods, i.e. qualitative content analysis and qualitative interviews. Such approach to data analysis is called a triangulation (Bryman & Bell 2015; Silverman 2006). According to Silverman (2006) and Bryman and Bell (2015) a research that uses a method of triangulation that combines multiple methods and/or theories, can look at a single problem/phenomenon from different standpoints and, therefore, enable more accurate/valid results.

As the research design of this study is of cross-sectional case study character, the analysis of the empirical material was divided into two parts based upon the different sources of empirical material: a qualitative content analysis of the companies’ social media channels and an analysis
of the qualitative semi-structured interviews. Each case was analyzed in two parts, were the content analysis and semi structured interview were analyzed separately and then compared to each other.

### 3.3.1 Framework for Content Analysis

The framework for image analysis by Schroeder and Borgerson (2005, p.588) is used to analyze and evaluate visual representations in the companies’ marketing communication on Instagram. The framework was used as a starting point for analyzing and evaluating the visual representation images, by considering each representational convention included in the framework and how/if they are portrayed in the visual communication (see Figure 2).

This framework has been simplified and modified by the researchers of this study in order to be in alignment with the key aspects of body size, ethnicity and skin color that has been presented in the literature review (see chapter 2). A simplification was made in regards to the convention of Face-ism, which has been replaced with the convention of Body-ism, presented by Fredriksson and Roberts (1997). While face-ism emphasize on men’s faces being used more in media than women’s, body-ism solely focus on how bodies and body parts have been used as visual communication tools instead of focusing on the individuals portrayed in the marketing images. Since the purpose of this study is to investigate body image representation, the representational convention of body-ism was deemed to be of greater relevance since the focus of this study is on how the portrayal of bodies are depicted in visual communication and not faces.

The key aspect ‘Gender’ has been replaced with ‘Body Size’ since the aim is not to analyze and evaluate images on companies’ Instagram based on gender but rather through the portrayal of body image, more precisely body size. Furthermore, the key aspect ‘Race’ has been replaced with ‘Ethnicity & Skin Color’ since the key aspect of ‘Race’ is too broad for this study, while ‘Ethnicity & Skin Color’ is more specific and enables a clearer framework that is specified for the study at hand.
The researchers of this study, therefore, analyzed each image by observing the model’s body size, ethnicity and skin color and then categorized and linked these with the image analysis framework (see Coding Frame in Appendix C). The content analysis was conducted by analyzing 15 images and their captions from each company’s Instagram account. In total over 60 pictures and captions were analyzed (See Appendix C Coding Frame for Image Analysis). The data was analyzed by first viewing the image individually, acknowledging the visual content, and then immediately categorizing what was observed in relation to the image analysis’ framework/coding frame. Each image was then analyzed further in connection with its caption.

In addition to the 15 images being analyzed in detail, the overall feed of each company’s Instagram was analyzed. The feeds were analyzed by detecting recurrent patterns or themes, and noting what was missing in the feeds in regards to body size, ethnicity and skin color. The overall feed of the companies was analyzed in order to obtain an objective analysis, since the

---

4 Ethnicity was analyzed in terms of models’ nationalities, which was information assumed during the content analysis and then confirmed/rejected during the interviews with each company.
5 Examples of statements that were answered were: “I get this feeling...”, “I can see these body sizes...”, “I can see these skin colors...” and “This is recurrent in the feed...”
systematically chosen images can randomly include or exclude certain groups in society based on body size, ethnicity and skin color. By analyzing the overall feed, the researchers of this study were able to detect a general view of each company’s feed and not make conclusions solely based on single images. The researchers also looked at the pattern of the companies’ Instagram feed and analyzed whether ‘compensation images’ were uploaded. With compensation images the researchers of this study refer to if there were any images that were uploaded to ‘even out’ the feed in terms of diversity and representations.

3.3.2 Analysis of Interviews

After conducting the content analysis, interviews were conducted with respective company. Each interview consisted of 15 questions, with sub-questions depending on the answer of the respondent. The interviews were audio recorded in order to get a fair and accurate data collection as possible. The answers where then transcribed and coded, which allowed the researchers to detect key information and themes for a later comparison with the findings from the content analysis. The themes that were detected during the interviews were set in relation to the coding frame that was used for the content analysis, hence connected to the representational conventions. By connecting the themes from the interviews with the findings from the content analysis, a comparison between the verbally expressed social responsibility regarding body image representations and the practiced social responsibility were enabled and thence conducted. The interviews were also used as an approach to understand how the companies have resonated regarding their content and to clarify the representations on their Instagram channel. Furthermore, the comparison was analyzed additionally in relation to the literature review to acquire further understanding of the interview answers and content analysis.

3.4 Quality Criteria

When judging the quality of a research the criteria most commonly referred to have been validity and reliability. However, these criteria are considered to be better suited for quantitative research, while qualitative research has been suggested to follow different criteria for assessment. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest two primary criteria for evaluating qualitative research: Trustworthiness and Authenticity.
3.4.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness entails four criteria, each evaluating different parts of the research quality: Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability (Lincoln & Guba 1985 in Bryman & Bell 2015). Credibility explains how realistic/believable the findings of a study are (ibid.). Transferability justifies if the findings are applicable to other contexts (ibid.). Dependability expresses if the findings are expected to pertain at other occasions (ibid.). The criterion refers to the accuracy and consistency of the findings, meaning if other researchers were to repeat the study they would come to similar conclusions (ibid.). Confirmability determines if the researchers have been objective or if they have allowed own opinions to influence the research (ibid.).

To establish credibility, the researchers of this study carefully constructed the coding frame for the image analysis. The content analysis was conducted by both researchers, where each image was analyzed separately and then discussed collectively by the researchers in order for the analysis and evaluation to be done accurately, hence strengthening the credibility of the content analysis. The final decisions on whether an image included exclusion, body-ism, idealization or/and exoticization were extensively discussed in order to get a more credible result. The researchers of this study are aware that the systematic strategy of choosing individual images used for image analysis may exclude images of diversity in terms of body size, ethnicity and skin color. Hence, the conscious choice of also analyzing the feed and browse through all the images the companies published on Instagram, within the time frame of January 1st 2018 to March 1st 2019. The credibility of interview results was ensured by: 1) careful consideration of interview design, 2) by formulating follow-up questions to ensure that issues conveyed by interviewed respondents were understood correctly, and 3) by transcribing and analyzing interview results first individually and then jointly by the researchers of this study.

As the study takes on a case-study approach and investigates four companies with different characteristics within the fashion industry, the findings can be applicable to other similar corporate contexts within the fashion industry, hence strengthening the transferability of the research. In addition, to obtain both transferability and dependability, this study includes an explicit data collection process, interview guide and a coding frame for image analysis, to allow the readers and further researchers to continue or replicate the study. The criterion of dependability was additionally met by audio recording and transcribing each interview to obtain an accurate depiction and consistency between the empirical data and reality. The major
advantage with audio recording and transcribing an interview is how it helps the memory, by enabling the researchers to go back to the transcripts and checking what has been said during the interviews (Bryman & Bell 2015). The transcripts enabled the researchers of this study to a more thorough analysis of the interviews, where the final transcripts of all four companies ended up at a total of 48 pages. When transcribing the interviews, every word said by both the interviewees and the moderators was documented and could be presented objectively, thus achieving the fourth criteria of conformability. Furthermore, the data analysis method of triangulation enabled the researchers of this study to gain insights from different sources and cross-evaluate them to ensure that the findings are accurate and objective.

3.4.2 Authenticity

Authenticity can be obtained through different approaches, two of them being through the criteria Fairness and Ontological Authenticity (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Fairness is explained as representing various viewpoints regarding the research problem/topic, while ontological authenticity expresses if the research findings help participants or practitioners gain a better understanding of the research problem/topic (ibid.). To demonstrate the fairness of the data, this study includes interviews with four different companies within the fashion industry. By interviewing companies that are different in characteristics, the researchers of this study could obtain different views, perceptions, and opinions regarding the research topic. The researchers were also able to, through interviewing various companies, gain insight and understanding of the choices each company have made regarding the topic of body image representations, either it being socially responsible actions or not. This in addition, helped the researchers of this study to inform other practitioners or readers with the findings and hopefully expand their understanding regarding the topic, and strengthening the ontological authenticity of the study.

3.4.3 Generalizability

Qualitative research, and especially case study research, has often been criticized on generating data that are not able to be generalized (Bryman & Bell 2015). However, as qualitative research facilitates learning and enables understanding (ibid.) to those individuals or practitioners whom the research is of interest to, the research may be considered generalizable to some contexts (Yin 2003). For example, as this study investigated four cases that encompassed fashion companies that varied in characteristics, the findings can be considered applicable to other
similar contexts within the fashion industry. In regards to case studies, generalization has commonly been referred to as naturalistic generalization as it enables readers to gain insight into a research problem/topic (Stake 1994). In addition, case studies can be considered generalizable as it enables readers to reflect and recognize similarities that resonate with themselves and apply the information to personal contexts (ibid.). Similarly, practitioners or companies can increase their understanding regarding the research topic in this study, external social responsibility regarding body image representations, and reflect on their social responsibility and apply suggestions made in this study to their content creation.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Within this study a great weight has been put on ethical considerations. These considerations include 1) issues concerning participation consent, in terms of recording, citing and including images from the companies, 2) participants lacking complete understanding regarding the study due to researchers disclosing information, or 3) misrepresentation of research findings, e.g. statements passed on as participants’ due to researchers wanting to achieve a desirable research outcome (Zikmund et al. 2009; Bryman & Bell 2015). The researchers of this study have, therefore, taken these ethical factors into consideration from the start by being clear of the study’s purpose and informing each respondent that all answers will solely be used for the study’s purpose and that they will be processed with anonymity. The researchers used audio recording during the interviews to process and evaluate the information in an accurate manner. The corporate approval was granted for citing the representatives from each company and including examples of corporate images in this study.

Since the topic of ‘Social Responsibility’ can somewhat be considered as a sensitive subject in the sense that answers to questions related to the subject may be formulated in a socially desirable way, the researchers asked questions related to the topic instead of asking questions directly stating the phenomenon of Social Responsibility or the key aspects of body size, ethnicity and skin color. Although some caution was taken in the question formulation, the research subject was made clear to the respondents so that no one would feel blindsided, and to obtain research transparency.
4 Results

This chapter presents the results of this study, which is divided into two parts. The first part introduces the results from the content analysis, presenting how each company practices social responsibility on their Instagram channel. The second part introduces the data collected through the semi-structured interviews, depicting how each company verbally expresses their take on social responsibility. The themes that were found during the interviews were highly interrelated, the storytelling of the empirical data from the interviews were therefore presented in a synthesize way.

4.1 Content Analysis of Instagram Images

4.1.1 Company 1

When scrolling through the Instagram feed of Company 1, the feed has a monotonous feeling rather than dynamic (see Appendix D, Table 1) since there is a frequent usage of one or two models instead of addressing diversity. The diversity aspects in terms of including models of different ethnicity and color was only addressed once by external brands’ visual communication. The feed has a positive feeling, especially since the models are always smiling and are photographed in nice locations. As a result, the images are seen as glamorized and idealized.

4.1.1.1 Body Size

When analyzing Company 1’s overall Instagram feed and layout, recurring images of tall and thin models in their 40-60s are portrayed. No themes could be detected nor any ‘compensation images’ for those portrayals by, for example, portraying models with other body sizes.

Analyzing the 15 selected images closer and in more detail, it can be determined that there is a lack of variety when it comes to the models’ body sizes portrayed in Company 1’s images on Instagram. The models that are portrayed represents thin and tall bodies, with single models being curvier. A curvier model can be seen being used for the season-change images, where the
company demonstrates cozier sweaters and knitwear. The thin representations are a recurring theme that is found in the feed, where the company uses two models at a time as the prime representation for the brand’s products. After a few months, it was detected that the two models where exchanged with two other models, but still belonging to thin body representations. In contrast to the thin body representations, a slight deviance could be found occasionally when the thin models were used to incorporate masculinity to the otherwise feminine brand.

The models used for the representations are women in their 40-60s, and look much younger than their age. For example, one of the images represents two women, one who appears to be in their 40s and the other in their 60s, showing a mother-daughter representation although the representation might not be an actual representation of the target group. In addition, the models pose and are portrayed in ways that a viewer might want to be seen as but might not look like. Therefore, the images do deviate from society through its unrealistic portrayal, hence *idealization* could be identified.

In the company’s visual communication forms of *body-ism* could be found in several images. Bodies and body parts, e.g. legs, sensual poses, products placed in connection with bare skin (see Image 1), are in focus and placed in certain ways or together with the image’s caption. Although the placement and portrayal of bodies and body parts are drawing attention to the products more, they are not perceived to be used in objectifying ways.
4.1.1.2 Ethnicity & Skin Color

Looking at the overall Instagram feed of Company 1, the women that were represented in the pictures were white females. In addition, when analyzing individual images, an exclusion of ethnicity and skin color could be confirmed in the visual communication. All models portrayed in Company 1’s Instagram were representing white female models. A minor shift could be noticed a year back in the feed, where a brunette model with a slightly tanned skin tone (still classified as a white female) was used for the brand’s representation instead of the previous blonde white female model.

Some diversity could be found concerning ethnicity and skin color, but those were single marketing images from external brands that Company 1 is selling. The diversity in those external brands visual communication, however, became overshadowed by the overrepresentation of white female models from Company 1’s own label. Hence, the minor diversity that could be detected became hidden due to the rarity of them.
*Exoticized* images could also be found lightly in the images (see Image 2). Few of the images and the models are exoticized by using the environment, garment prints and linking them with an image-caption (e.g. emphasizing on the new “*exotic leopard print*” that is in store).

![Image 2: Image from Company 1’s Instagram showing Exoticization due to the leopard print and the caption: “exotic leopard print” & Idealization since the model is considered as thinner than the target consumer of Company 1.](image)

### 4.1.2 Company 2

Company 2 uses a marketing strategy of influencer marketing and publishes pictures that are taken by somebody else, hence the company itself is not always involved in how the images and representations are portrayed. Company 2’s Instagram feed feels like it belongs to a private person. It gives a lifestyle feeling, where a dynamic feed of images of fashion, interior and travel inspiration can be found. The Instagram of Company 2 is connected to the seasons, colorful, giving a happy feeling but also a feeling of idealization when browsing through the feed. There were no patterns found in the feed in terms of combination of pictures, themes or compensations of portrayals. It was, however, noted that Company 2 publishes images of either food or food quotes, and images with quotes that encourages diversity both in terms of skin colors and body sizes. Yet, a contradiction between the inspirational quotes and the images can
be found, since under-representations of body sizes and skin colors still exist. Something that was highlighted when browsing through the Instagram feed, was that pictures of lingerie or bikinis were rarely photographed on models, but rather demonstrated separately.

4.1.2.1 Body Size

As Table 2 shows (see Appendix D), exclusion in terms of body size was recurrent at Company 2’s Instagram and thin bodies were trending, even though some diversity could be identified. A few curvy models could be found in the visual communication on Instagram, however, idealization and the thin ideal are the recurring bodies that could be found in both the models being portrayed but also in what angels the models are photographed. For example, an image of two well-known influencers, that both can be considered curvy, was published on Company 2’s Instagram. Yet, the influencers’ curvy bodies were not something that were portrayed in the picture since both poses in ways that makes them appear as ‘non-curvy’ and thin instead (see Image 3).

![Image 3: Image from Company 2’s Instagram showing Idealization due to that the models can be connected to the thin ideal.](image-url)
A common pattern of Company 2’s Instagram could be identified in connection to denim, regardless if the images were taken from the company or re-posted from somebody else. The images that included a pair of jeans from the company, were dressed on girls with very thin thighs and plump bums. This representation could be connected to the representational convention of body-ism, idealization of thin bodies, as well as exclusion in terms of body size. Idealization could be discovered through several of the pictures that were analyzed and not only in connection with denim, but also with the party-themed images. The models portrayed in the party-themed images were very thin and thinner than the other portrayals in general.

4.1.2.2 Ethnicity & Skin Color

In the feed of Company 2, the majority of individuals were white females from Scandinavian, but some diversity could be found. The diversity was highlighted most in campaigns or video material published on the platform. While browsing through the feed it was observed that an increase in diversity was made around June 2018. An example of that diversity was portrayed of a young woman wearing a hijab, which is something that previously has not been highlighted in the Instagram feed of Company 2.

Two sequences of 10 pictures each, consisting of Company 2’s consumers’ own pictures were also analyzed (see Table 3 and 4, Appendix D). It was noted during the analysis of the sequences that the majority of the representations concern Swedish females with white skin color and thin bodies (see Image 4). The under-representation of ethnicity and skin color (and body size) is closely linked to the representational convention of exclusion. No signs of Exoticization were discovered in the Instagram feed of Company 2.
During the content analysis, it was observed in the comment section that the followers of Company 2’s Instagram account expressed their dissatisfaction with the company’s choice of representations and their lack of diversity. The comments highlight the fact that the majority of the company’s content on Instagram consists of Swedish, white and thin models. Since this study aims to analyze the dimension of social responsibility from a marketer’s perspective, the comments of consumers will not be analyzed further or taken into consideration when drawing results. The comments do, however, confirm what already has been observed by the researchers of this study regarding Company 2’s lack of diversity both in terms of ethnicity and skin color (and body size).

4.1.3 Company 3

The feed of Company 3 has a light and bright tone over it. It was observed that there is a lot of focus on the products regardless if the products were dressed on a person, hanging or being photographed separately on the floor. The representations that were portrayed in the feed where
of people perceived to be between the ages of 20 to 35, where the majority were of white women with thin bodies (see Appendix D, Table 5).

4.1.3.1 Body Size

Generally, there is a representation of thin female models, and thin/fit males covering the Instagram feed of Company 3. There is an absence of diversity regarding body size by solely including portrayal of thin/fit models, hence excluding curvier models. Looking closer to the 15 selected images that were analyzed, different models were being used in the images but still an exclusion of diversified body sizes exist.

The company utilizes both full-body images and product-focused images. When marketing jeans, several product-focused pictures were used, many focusing on the ‘jeans bum’ (see Image 5). Considering the models being skinny, it was interesting how the majority of the product pictures that were focusing on the back of the jeans were with models that had a plump bum, hence referring to the representational convention of idealization.

Image 5: Image from Company 3’s Instagram showing Body-ism due to the focus on body parts & Idealization due to that the portrayal can be linked to the thin ideal.
As Table 5 shows (see Appendix D), a connection to body-ism could be revealed in several of the images. The images that where linked to body-ism where mainly related to jeans products. The images were in those cases not only emphasizing on the back of the jeans, but also attempting to highlight the jeans while instead focusing on other body parts. Furthermore, body-ism could also be found in connection with the caption. A caption could, for example, highlight body-parts and magnify the attention to the product, for example, “high-waist, tight fit and nice stretch” or “high-waist, slim legs who slims down further to the foot”.

4.1.3.2 Ethnicity & Skin Color

Browsing through the feed of Company 3 the majority of representations identified were white Swedish women. When viewing the overall feed, the diversity that could be found were mostly identified in late 2018, portraying a majority of male models (see Image 6). The male models that were portrayed on Company 3’s Instagram included diversity in representations, with models from different ethnicities and with different skin colors. When analyzing the single images, the lack of diversity that was mentioned previously was further confirmed. The analysis of the 15 single images shows that only one image represented a person of color and an ethnicity other than Swedish (see Appendix D, Table 5, September 2018), which was also a portrayal of a male model. The lack of diversity amongst the female models in terms of ethnicity and skin color, are, therefore, closely connected to the representational convention of exclusion. No signs of Exoticization were discovered in the Instagram feed of Company 3.
4.1.4 Company 4

Company 4 uses, just as Company 2, the marketing strategy of Influencer marketing. In the Instagram feed there are, therefore, images published that belongs and are created by others than the company itself. The images that are posted from consumers or influencers may add a personal touch, hence the feeling of that Company 4’s Instagram profile could belong to a private person rather than a company. Since the company’s target customers are girls and since the company uses the strategy of influencer marketing, the feed is perceived very feminine and consists of girls in pretty and colorful clothes that are photographed in nice locations all over the world. No patterns, themes or compensations of portrayals could be found in the feed of Company 4.

4.1.4.1 Body Size

Browsing through Company 4’s Instagram feed it was noted that the majority of the representations were of thin models. Although we do not analyze the comments of the picture, a discussion was noticed between a consumer stating a concern for the thin representations and
Company 4 who responded by promising a change to more diversified pictures in the year of 2018. This change could be detected in November 2018, where more and more diversity was found in the images, and after the year shift, 2018 to 2019, a clear change was seen in the content towards more diversified images in terms of body sizes. When analyzing the overall feed, it was also found that before 2019, several images were uploaded of curvier celebrities, but these did not wear Company 4’s products but were instead used as inspiration in the feed.

When focusing on the 15 images that were chosen for analysis (see Appendix D, Table 6), it was determined that the majority of these were portrayals of models that were thin. Many of the pictures were perceived as idealized or glamorized. For example, when showing a thin model and then having a caption referring to how one should surround oneself with burgers. The reference to food can be found repeatedly in connection with thin models living a luxurious life. The image could be perceived as unrealistic, since many people do not stay or look super thin while eating fast food. Another example that was found when analyzing the feed, was an image representing a female model in a tight mini dress while being pregnant. Although, people can look like that while being pregnant, the image gives an idealized and glamorized view of how pregnant women may look in society.

*Idealization* could also be found in association with *body-ism*. One example is when Company 4 uploaded a picture representing a thin influencer with the caption “[…] just here being a BABE at the gym”. The caption together with the focus on the influencer’s chest and bare stomach, indicates an aspect of body-ism (see Image 7). The caption is also worth highlighting, since it does not denote anything about being fit or strong, but instead emphasizes on the word ‘BABE’. What could be found in the overall feed was that many of the pictures that were perceived idealized were not perceived so solely on the image but rather together with the whole setting, atmosphere of the image and the caption.
Image 7: Image from Company 4’s Instagram showing Body-ism by focusing on the influencer’s chest and stomach & Idealization in connection to the caption “[…] just here being a BABE at the gym”, which does not emphasize on strongness or fitness but rather being a ‘babe’.

4.1.4.2 Ethnicity & Skin Color

The content analysis of Company 4, showed that the company has a diverse feed on Instagram and represent women of several different ethnicities and skin colors. Browsing through the feed it was observed that the whole year of 2018 included diversity, which increased even more in November 2018. In the year shift 2018 to 2019 the change was further confirmed. In the comment section it was noted under several images that the consumers appreciated the company posting women of different skin colors or ethnicities, e.g. a young woman wearing a hijab (see Image 8). However, with the addition of its caption “the beauty of you is how you wear who you are”, the caption may express that there is something different with the image and hence leading to exclusion by an attempt of inclusion.
In the feed of Company 4, signs of *exoticization* were identified. In February 2018, the company published a picture of a girl posing in a bikini, the caption to the image was “*I’m a better person when I’m tanned* [...]”. The connection to exoticization might be considered as vague, but due to the statement that someone would be a “better person” depending on which skin color they have or that an individual’s personality would somehow be connected to their skin color the connection to exoticization becomes clearer.

It was further noted that several of the images that included women with non-Swedish ethnicity and non-white skin colors were influencers or other famous profiles. The famous profiles that are represented on the company’s profile, e.g. celebrities, do not wear the products of the company, but are still represented in their feed.
4.2 Empirical Findings from Interviews

4.2.1 Company 1

“We try to communicate all types of girls, but it is impossible to do so”
- Representative from Company 1

The interviewee, and representative of Company 1, described the company’s persona as a woman who is “in the middle of her life” and are approximately 45 years old or older. The woman that Company 1 is targeting is social, alert, health conscious and active. She has a genuine fashion interest, both for everyday wear and party outfits, but does not necessarily wear the latest trends. She prefers to dress in bold colors and prints and has a great interest for good quality and fit.

When Company 1 chooses the models that should represent the brand in their visual communication, it is important to find models that could represent their target group. They want their consumers to be able to relate to the models, which makes them turn to models that are around 45 years old and 60 years old. The representative of Company 1 explains that it is important for the company to present women in their communication channels that are representing the consumers of their products. It is, therefore, important that the models do not look too thin and if they do, corrective actions should be made. The interviewee described that they change the outfit of the model if she looks too thin e.g. if the model looks too thin in pants they will put on a dress or skirt. Another example she describes is that they have photoshopped the model because she looked too thin and makes the model look bigger than she really is.

The interviewee also expressed that the company believes that it is important to find a good mix when it comes to models in terms of body size and skin color, since they want to attract a large sample of women. The company, therefore, uses models from Germany, Sweden or Holland in an attempt to broaden their representation. The interviewee further described that the mix of models should not be hard to achieve, which can be a contradiction considering the interviewee also explaining that it is hard for the company in general to find older models that they want to use in their marketing. The interviewee further explained that it is not very common for older women to work as a model and, therefore, it is hard for the company to find models that are older and who also have curves.
When it comes to communication, the interviewee stated that it is difficult to get through the noise of today’s society and especially in the fashion industry since it is such a changing environment. However, Company 1 feels that they are able to get through to their followers/consumers even though there is a change in consumer behavior. The interviewee did not think that there are misunderstandings in the communications but that as a company one may tend to say a little too much, and in those cases it is important to remember what is the most important message, and exclude the rest. It was also emphasized that having the sales with you can allow you to extend your brand, but the difficult part is when you do not and then you must stay faithful to a specific message that the company believes in, “there is a lot of courage in that” the interviewee explained.

When it comes to the content creation on Instagram, the interviewee explained that there is a commercial motive to sell as much as possible, otherwise Company 1 would not exist but there are other aims with the images as well. The interviewee explained that the images should express warmth and be welcoming, and it should express that fashion can be fun. For example, it is significant that the models smile when they are photographed, denoting the happy and warm feeling that the company is aiming to achieve. In addition, Company 1 wants to show and communicate that they are the go-to place to find that ‘perfect fit/comfort’ so that their consumers can discover their ‘best looking self’.

In addition, the marketing and Instagram content of Company 1 is created based on different capsules. The capsules are based on themes or trends that are available during a two-weeks period. Company 1 wants the capsules, or trends, to lie as a foundation for the posts that are published on Instagram, but still have a diverse and good mix of pictures from their own brand as well as the external brands. Something that the interviewee noted was important to achieve a ‘personal feed feeling’. Aside from the capsules, the company does not have a set criteria for how or when to upload images on Instagram, but they do have a framework for what ‘not to do’ and what ‘to do’, the interviewee explained.

When it comes to Company 1’s social media channels, the interviewee explained that the company is active on Instagram but Facebook is still their biggest social media platform and the platform where their target audience are present. Company 1 is not growing as easily on Instagram as with Facebook, but they do see that more and more of their consumers are getting
used to the platform. Instagram is where the company wants to inspire and attract new customers and other target audiences, something that is important for Company 1 and Instagram is an effective platform for that. The company wants to achieve inclusivity on Instagram and one of the ways they do this is by connecting with followers/consumers through re-posting their Instagram pictures. Although the interviewee did state that it is not something they do often or a function they have left completely open to be used yet. The reason for this is that Instagram is a platform for Company 1 to market their brand, and sometimes when letting followers in fully can be a scary thing to do since there are no guidelines of how and when to do so. Although mixed feelings, the company is still working on how to include their followers more.

Company 1 values their followers’/consumers’ opinions and the interviewee explained that it is important to meet the people behind the comments in a good way and take the information with them when planning upcoming campaigns or other forms of content. The interviewee emphasized that Company 1 is continuously influenced by what consumers and society think is important since they have expectations of the company, they put value to the brand, and would probably be disappointed if the company does not address/change something that they have been pushing for. The interviewee explained that Company 1 is alert when consumers are pointing positive aspects of their images on Instagram. For example, the company uses some influencers/ambassadors to represent the brand, and it is always great when consumers state “oh how fun to see a woman with curves” or “how great that you include this person that is older”. The interviewee emphasized that the more ‘normal’ an image is, the better is the response.

Although some considerations to the external social responsibility, the environmental aspect of CSR is something that Company 1 has focused more on. One of the CSR actions Company 1 has taken was by participating in the ‘one-bag-habit’ that aimed to reduce the usage of plastic bags by e.g. using textile or paper bags instead. Other CSR questions the company is working with are: where the company’s clothes are produced, what the conditions are at the production facilities, who is working at the production and what are their salaries, can they adjust the production somehow to reduce emissions etc.
4.2.2 Company 2

“We still have a DNA and we would not change completely”
- Representative from Company 2

Company 2 is a company that wants to be related as a fashion company who can offer their consumers the latest trends. With their visual communications Company 2 aims to contribute to sales but also to inspire their consumers by showing their products and options on how to style them. The interviewee described that they want to inspire their consumers with a fun and positive feeling and a fun lifestyle that includes clothes, girls, travels, food and feel good quotes. The fun and positive feeling is something that the company aims to express in all their channels and with all models and influencers that represents the company.

The persona of Company 2 was described by the interviewee as “a fun and lovable girl that our consumers want to hang out with and have as a friend”. This persona is someone that all of the employees have in mind in all of their tasks and marketing communications. The models and influencers that represent the company are healthy girls that feel good about themselves, which are connected to the criteria of fun and lovable. They strive to work with ‘natural’ models and influencers that are neither too retouched, filtered or wearing heavy makeup. Company 2 believes that their consumers can relate more to influencers than models since the influencers are more considered as “normal girls”. The interviewee also highlighted the importance of diversity in terms of bodies, faces and hair colors.

According to the interviewee, it is of great importance for Company 2, and many other fashion companies, to be active on social media and especially on Instagram since that is the platform were their target customers are active. It is therefore a major opportunity for Company 2 to influence their consumers on Instagram. The interviewee continues to argue that Instagram is a good platform for marketing the brand and the products. When it comes to “sending messages”, the interviewee describes that the aim of their presence on Instagram may not be to provide their followers with important information but more to inspire them. The consumer, therefore, may not always read the caption of every image but still the interviewee believes that Instagram leaves less space for misunderstandings.
The company update its Instagram account on a daily basis and publishes images up to three times a day and each month they have about 15 million exposures. Due to the frequent uploads on Instagram it is of great importance for the company to show a mix and variation of images and content in their feed. The images that Company 2 publishes on Instagram are all based upon different periods where they promote different kinds of products. To provide an example, the interviewee explains that if they have a period where they should promote jeans, the images published on Instagram then focuses on jeans with either full look, an image on a ‘jeans-bum’ or focus on details like zippers or pockets, or only the product in focus e.g. lying on the floor.

As much as Company 2 wants to inspire and influence, the interviewee explained that the company is also greatly influenced by society. There is a necessity in listening to the society and the consumers, since the company cannot push or communicate something if they do not get any response or engagement from society or their consumers. Therefore, it is of significance for the company to listen to the surroundings and find a balance between what they want to communicate and what their consumers and followers desire. For example, the interviewee explains that if there is something that the consumers want then Company 2 communicates that ‘want’ to the rest of the departments and tries to find a solution to make it happen. However, the interviewee argued that Company 2 will always have their own DNA, and would never change completely if consumers and society push for something that the brand does not stand for. In addition, Company 2 has chosen this ‘fun and lovable’ feeling and the ‘fun and lovable’ girl as the brand representation and persona, but the interviewee emphasized that there are probably many that may want something else, something cool or rocky. The company may, for example, not publish images that include women with sleeve-tattoos, so if some consumers wants to see that representation then perhaps Company 2 is excluding those consumers. The company tries to communicate and represent all kinds of women but that is also difficult to do according to the interviewee.

When it comes to CSR, the interviewee explains that people expect Company 2 to take a lot of responsibility, both on what type of girls they portray in media, how their models look, how their mannequins look instore. The environment question is also huge for Company 2. The interviewee expressed that Company 2 frequently receive questions regarding how they work with sustainable projects, what their products are made of, where their products are produced, how they are shipped etc., which are questions that many of the company’s consumers are passionate about. The company does a lot of CSR related work, e.g. how to make their
productions safer, and in addition makes an effort to communicate with their consumers and followers regarding these subjects. For example, as soon as Company 2 uploads a picture on Instagram that portrays a sustainable product, the company puts a green heart to communicate that to their audience.

It is explained by the interviewee that there are many benefits concerning the CSR-push from consumers. One of them being that it helps highlight what the market demands are. The disadvantage on the other hand would be that there is currently a huge debate concerning CSR questions and since Company 2 is working with fast fashion and low prices, they cannot do everything within CSR and take on each demand, both regarding the products and the representations on Instagram. The interviewee emphasized that Company 2 tries to answer and face consumers’ comments and concerns, and represent a variety of women and bodies, but even when they do so they may receive backlash for it. For example, when they push images on Instagram with blonde thin models they receive both positive and negative comments, and when they highlight curvier models they still get both positive and negative comments. The interviewee explained that an example of a negative comment can be when they include representations of curvier models and comments are made by followers expressing that the model is perceived unhealthy. In a connecting note, the interviewee finished off by stating that the company does take a lot of responsibility and does a lot more work within sustainability than people unfortunately are aware of. People may, therefore, miss the information due to it not being communicated fully in all channels, but mainly existing on the company’s website.

4.2.3 Company 3

“We have very big challenges already where we are, organization wise we cannot manage to handle more of sizes”

- Representative from Company 3

Company 3 is a company who offers products, and especially denim and basic, for people in all ages, but the primary target focus is young men and women in the ages of 20 to 25. The company rarely talks about a persona, but the interviewee explained that it would probably be a young and aware family that works hard and are ambitious. The interviewee further described
the ‘persona’ as a person that should be fully aware that it is the person itself that is of importance.

With their visual communication, Company 3 aims to increase sales but also to simplify the fashion industry. By simplifying the fashion industry, the company means that they have an ethical starting point where they strive to offer good fashion to an extremely good price. The interviewee continued to explain that sometimes it can be hard to keep the simplicity but that they strive to keep it simple and straightforward in all their communications. The interviewee explained that the company uses a strategy which is about not paying for any forms of advertisement. Further on, the interviewee expressed that in order for the company to offer low prices it is important to cut costs for the company, e.g. in marketing. In many cases, according to the interviewee, the costs for marketing activities is included in the price of the products. This is a cost that Company 3 wants to avoid in order to be able to offer low prices and generate value to their consumers. As the company wants to keep the marketing costs as low as possible, all campaigns and content for media is photographed in the studio that is placed inside the headquarter. The campaigns and all content have a primary focus on the product and on the price and not on fancy locations or settings.

The communication channels of the company are rather limited since they do not pay for any forms of advertisements. The main communication channels are, therefore, email, Facebook and Instagram. The interviewee further explained that Instagram is considered as the company’s primary marketing channel. It is easy to keep the information simple on Instagram but it still enables a good communication with the followers. The company has 3 different accounts on Instagram which niches on different segments. They have a head-account, a denim-account and a kids-account. Just as in all other content, the content on Instagram focuses on the product and the price. The interviewee described that the content on Instagram, and all other communications, follows the campaign plan were Sundays and Mondays are for girls, Tuesdays are for boys and Wednesdays for denim. Based upon the campaign plan, no other criteria are set for either posting or re-posting images from consumers on Instagram. The re-posted images are more appreciated on the kids-account since the company do not have the opportunity to have kids come to the studio and be photographed to the same extent as adults. The re-posted kids-images, therefore, makes the Instagram account for kidswear become more alive.
When it comes to society’s influence, the interviewee believes that Company 3 are greatly influenced by both trends and consumers’ concerns and opinions. The company are continuously influenced and inspired by society, for example, the interviewee explained that the company finds inspiration on other media platforms, which they then evaluate and use for own product development and assortment. In addition, Company 3 receives a lot of feedback and comments in their social media channels about the company’s products or campaigns. These statements, whether positive or negative, allows the company to become aware of what the consumers are feeling. The interviewee argued that, many of the comments that the company receives can only be taken on as requests. Company 3 may not always take these requests into actions and go further internally with them. The interviewee explained that the reason for that is that the company has a business plan and strategy for their brands, a framework that they must stay within and work through. This framework is something Company 3 believes works well for them. The interviewee continued, that expectations or demands from the public that does not meet the business plan and strategy is responded simply with “this is our strategy”. However, Company 3 believes in change and always considers the alternatives and evaluates if the desires and demands can be taken into consideration by fitting them into the company’s strategy. In addition, the interviewee does denote that the company cannot consider everything and include everything in their assortment, the changes must work business wise otherwise there will not be any benefits with the implementations.

When it comes to expectations regarding diversity, the interviewee explained that Instagram is a platform where people have easier to write and send negative comments through. However, Company 3 has been relatively protected from those, and has only gotten a few comments about concerns for diversity regarding body size representations. An example of a comment can be “As a big company, why don’t you offer bigger sizes?”. The interviewee explained that the body size choice for the models derives from Company 3’s sample size, which is S for female and M for male, which the company has large volumes of. The interviewee denoted that the company has enough challenges at the place they are currently and could probably not handle another size addition. Instead, the company focuses on being the best they can be where they are at the moment, to hold low prices and increase sales.

Furthermore, the interviewee clarified that they believe that the reason they might not be perceived as very diversified is because it simply is not something they think about or focus on. They do not look at a specific body size, ethnicity or skin color when producing images on
Instagram, or any of their other social media platforms. What is important for Company 3 on the other hand, and what they look for when choosing models, is that they give a natural and fresh impression. This criterion is influenced by the nature and location where the company’s headquarter is located, a feeling that the company wants to transmit through their images.

The interviewee emphasized that beauty ideals is something that have changed over the years. During some periods, it was modern to have no waist, and other times it has been very ‘important’ to have a big and plump bum. Company 3 tries to stay consistent and not get influenced by the body and beauty ideals that society holds. The company does not want to change and jump on beauty trends since it does not go in alignment with their view that a person should be themselves and not altered. For example, when having photoshoots, the company does not have any makeup artist at the location. The idea is instead, that the models should themselves put their own makeup on and be as ‘natural’ as possible.

4.2.4 Company 4

“Social responsibility is not equal to ‘doing what society expects you to do’ but to push the society that you want to see yourself”

- Representative from Company 4

Company 4 is an online business that targets young women. The interviewee explained that the company does not have only one persona, but several personas. The reason for the company to focus on several personas is that the consumers of the company are different, have different interests, look different due to the various fashion trends in society and, therefore, get inspired by different things. The characteristics that the personas have in common is that they are all young women that are strong, self-confident and happy. The interviewee stressed the importance to have all of the personas in mind in every practice and activity the company conducts, in order to be clear and consistent in their communications.

With their marketing communication, the main aim of Company 4 is to increase sales. In addition, the company aims to inspire their consumers and while doing so the interviewee explained that it is important to portray people, trends and products in a responsible way, since they target a young consumer. The interviewee further explained that in order to get inspired it
is important for the consumers to be able to relate to the communications. It is of great importance for the company to represent all their consumers in their marketing communications. When the consumers of Company 4 feels represented on the website and in their social media channels the company can see that the sales conversion increases. The interviewee further stressed the importance for the company to find a good balance between its short-term sales and long-term brand building. In order for the company to inspire their consumers and at the same time strengthen their brand, the company has a clear strategy that combines these two goals. The strategy builds upon offering diversity in terms of models and trends that should go along with the tonality of the company. The interviewee further explained that the strategy is not something that can be discussed too much in detail since it is something that must be kept internally.

Company 4 uses a lot of different social media channels and the channels have different purposes. Regardless of the purposes, the company chooses their media channels or platforms based upon the media presence of their consumers, where Instagram is one of the leading platforms for the company. Instagram is the platform where the company considers themselves to inspire and influence their consumers more than other platforms. The interviewee further explained that both Instagram and social media in general have gained interest the past five years, which has resulted in that every person consumes more content than ever. According to the interviewee it is, therefore, important to understand that as society consumes more content, every single content gets less attention than before. The consumer may not look at the picture and also read the caption but instead just look at one of them. The interviewee, therefore, stressed the importance to always have in mind how the consumers or followers consume content in order to communicate and produce content in the best possible way.

When it came to more specific questions regarding how the portrayal of human bodies influence the fashion industry, the interviewee stated that body is of course important if you want to showcase clothes, you want to show the products in its user state. However, it is not more to it than that. The interviewee continued, that it is like that in every industry and categories – “you want to show the product in its user state and you get inspired by seeing it on someone that you look up to or if the product is visualized in a way that you as a consumer would like”. However, the discussion on how body and beauty are used in the fashion industry becomes problematic, since the interviewee explained that Company 4 does not want to show a norm when visualizing their clothes. With norm, the company does not mean a specific person, but rather the marketed
ideal historically. It is important for the company to not follow that norm but to have their own
standards, e.g. show clothes on healthy bodies. The interviewee emphasized that when their
consumers go on their channels they want them to feel represented and to see products in a way
that they would consume them, and to enable that it is important for Company 4 to show their
products in different situations and in width regarding representations.

Company 4 is not 100 percent where they want to be when it comes to diversity in
representations but it is a continuous development and work that is put into it, which takes time.
The interviewee highlighted that there is an issue within the fashion industry of exclusion
regarding body size, ethnicity and skin color. To tackle the issue Company 4 took matters into
own hands a while back and implemented a plan to find additional representations for the brand.
The process consisted of consumers themselves sending in applications to become models for
the company. In this way, consumers were getting a chance to take part in the brand process
and the company gets the models and representations they desire, but which they do not have
access to today. The interviewee highlighted that it is known that society has a higher
acceptance to ‘the norm’, but Company 4 cannot wait for a change in society, that social
responsibility is something the company must take themselves, help and push forward.

The interviewee noted that it is sad when the company gets negative comments regarding
content when they are showing diversity, something that should be perceived positive. The
interviewee explained that it is thus important to stand up for the content and continue
communicating diversity since it is what the company stands for. When the company receives
feedback, they always take it internally and discuss it. The interviewee explained that the
discussion regards why the company has gotten the feedback in the first place and if the
company agrees or disagrees with the comments. The comments may concern the models’ body
size, as well as skin color. The interviewee highlighted that comments will on the other hand
always exist, especially with Instagram since people are free to think and state whatever they
want. Some of those comments may, however, be very hurtful, and may not come from the
company’s target customers. When the comments, on the other hand, come from young girls
i.e. the target customers, the interviewee highlighted that it is particularly disappointing. The
interviewee continued that those comments are direct reflections of how the girls’ sees
themselves and society’s view on how young girls should look.
When it came to society’s influence, Company 4 believes that fashion is influenced by consumers and what is happening in society, hence the fashion company themselves are also being influenced. The interviewee explained that society and consumers have expectations and put pressure on the company, as they should, to act in a socially responsible manner. Today consumers are participants of the co-creation of the brand and are constantly a part of the response and feedback that enables Company 4 to develop. Since the company is a large company and has the ability to influence many, the pressure and topic of social responsibility becomes even more stressed. The interviewee emphasized that it is all about upholding a balance of listening and being inspired by the surrounding, society and consumers, but at the same time keeping Company 4 as a brand, who they are, what they stand for and what they can achieve. The interviewee continued that, when the company is clear and honest about what they are capable of doing, different kinds of expectations are put on them. Therefore, it is important for the company to focus on what lays closest to its core and invest time and money on the right things instead of tackling all expectations that are placed on them. In that way, it becomes clear that the company is not acting irresponsibly but is focusing on communicating what they are doing and focusing on right now. The interviewee finished off by stating that “social responsibility is not equal to ‘doing what society expects you to do’ but to push the society that you want to see yourself”.

5 Discussion

This chapter presents an analysis and comparison of each company’s practiced social responsibility and their verbally expressed social responsibility. In addition, the results are compared to previous research that is presented in the literature review. Finally, this chapter includes a discussion regarding the image analysis framework and presents a suggestion for an updated framework for image analysis and criteria for image/content creation.

5.1 Practiced Social Responsibility vs. Verbally Expressed Social Responsibility

This section identifies the key factors that the corporate cases consider for content creation. Each company’s practiced social responsibility and verbally expressed social responsibility were first analyzed separately and then cross-evaluated with each other, within each case.

5.1.1 Company 1

When creating content, company 1 focuses on specific factors to portray the content in alignment with its brand. The key factors that are important for the company are that the content should have a positive, happy and warm feeling to it. Company 1 finds it important that their content and images present women that are a reflection of the consumers of the brand, which are women around 45-60 years old. Hence, the models portrayed should not look too skinny, the content should be diverse and include a good mix of representations. While Company 1 considers key factors when producing content, the company must also sell as much as possible, hence a commercial motive is also instated. The company focuses on different capsules, themes and trends to inspire the consumers to become their ‘best looking self’ and to attract new customers to the company.

When it comes to the external social responsibility aspect, Company 1 stresses that diversity is something they take into considerations greatly since their target audience are older women who are curvier. However, the company expressed that it is difficult to hire older women as
models since there are usually not many within the industry and who has the diligence that is needed to conduct the job. Company 1 does on the other hand think it should not be too difficult to obtain a diverse Instagram feed, which can also be considered a contradiction considering what has previously been stated.

Furthermore, Company 1 perceives to be practicing external social responsibility, but this is something that appears to only be considered verbally and not expressed practically. While the company talks about social responsibility it can be observed that it is confused with internal social responsibility (e.g. employees, environment) and not external social responsibility (e.g. diversity in terms of body size and skin color). In addition, the Instagram feed of Company 1 is monotonous where almost no diversity could be obtained in terms of either body size, ethnicity or skin color. The feed included 1-2 tanner models and 1-2 curvier models but other than that the feed consisted of white thin female models. The images where of positive and happy models in their 40s-60s, which is in alignment to what the company expressed during the interview. However, many of the images are connected to idealization since they are considered to be beautified and deviated from society.

5.1.2 Company 2

The key factors that Company 2 considers when creating content are DNA, inspiration and diversity. The most important of those key factors would be the company DNA which refers to that all actions should be close to the core business and values of the company. Company 2 stresses the importance of being related to a fun and lovable feeling. The company also finds it important to inspire their consumers and followers with this fun and lovable feeling by portraying ‘normal girls’ and a lifestyle rather than just products. Diversity is also being expressed as one of the company’s key factors considered when creating content where the focus lays on different bodies, faces and hair colors.

In terms of social responsibility, Company 2 strives to represent and portray ‘natural’ models and influencers since they believe that their consumers can relate more to them as they are considered more as “normal girls”. The company expresses themselves, therefore, actively striving for their representations to neither be too retouched filtered nor wear heavy makeup. Company 2 considers themselves focus on diversity and represent all kinds of women. The company further considers themselves being influenced by the society and especially within the
issue of CSR. The representative of Company 2 expresses that the society has a lot of expectations of e.g. their social media portrayals. Yet, they would never make any changes that would not allow them to be aligned with the brand values, even though the society and consumers push for it. Company 2 expresses that it is impossible for them to take on every push and demand from society with regards to both products as well as portrayals in social media and other marketing communications.

On the company’s Instagram account, the expressed social responsibility can somewhat be confirmed but not to the same extent that the company considers themselves to work with it. Although diversity could be found in terms of both skin color and body sizes, a majority of Swedish, white females with thin, and idealized bodies are represented. Hence, a lack of diversity is identified compared to the company’s expressed social responsibility and diversity. The company also expresses themselves wanting to portray “normal girls” but what is portrayed is a rather deviated image of society, that somewhat can be perceived as beautified both concerning body sizes and lifestyles. Body-ism was also identified were the content on Instagram often focuses on specific body parts, e.g. a bum in a pair of jeans.

5.1.3 Company 3

Company 3 main aim with their visual communication is to increase sales. The company does so by focusing on factors such as simplicity, show that good fashion can be obtained at low prices, and by having a straightforward communication. The company always have their business plan and strategy in mind that focuses on giving a simple, natural and fresh impression, which reflects the brand and is also applied to their models. Company 3 does not focus too much on diversity, but rather focuses on not following trends and body ideals in society. The company focuses on the simple and natural side instead and the vision that every person should be themselves.

Company 3 does not use any influencers or pay for any advertisements nor fancy locations, something that allows them to cut costs and focus on what is the most important thing for the company, i.e. product and price. The company believes that they are influenced by trends and consumers’ opinions, which becomes contradicting when they have previously stated that they do not follow trends and that they many times do not take consumers’ opinions into considerations if it does not follow the company’s business plan. The company believes that
every consideration that they take, or change that they make, must work business wise otherwise the company will not benefit from it. One of the examples that the company brings forth is when they have been asked by consumers to increase their assortment by adding bigger sizes. Since the company feels that they cannot provide that at the moment, they cannot go forward with the request. Company 3 does not necessarily feel like they are excluding intentionally when it comes to body size, ethnicity or skin color, but rather that it has not been something that has been pushed for extensively by consumers. The company emphasizes that when they produce images, they do not look at specific body sizes, ethnicities or skin colors, but rather that the portrayals must represent the brand and not be based on the beauty ideals in society.

While what Company 3 practice regarding social responsibility and what they verbally expressed, seems to be in alignment, there are other aspects that are worth highlighting as well. The company’s attempt to keep it simple is transmitted through the feed, which has a light bright tonality to it. A lot of focus is on the products, which the company has stated is one of their primary focuses. The company communication regarding that they cannot expand to larger clothing sizes, is also something that can be detected in the company’s Instagram channel, showing an exclusion of curvier models. In addition, as the company states that they do not necessarily exclude certain types of body sizes, ethnicities or skin colors, it is difficult to ignore the wide representation of white thin females while a representation of curvier bodies and ethnicities are missing. The company does, however, obtain some diversity when it comes to their male models in terms of ethnicity and skin color, but these portrayals are also of thin/fit bodies. Considering the images portraying thin bodies, majority of the product-focused images, e.g. of ‘jeans bums’ were of models with plump bums, which can be perceived as idealized or beautified and perceived as body-ism. To conclude, as Company 3 has expressed that the company does not think about representations in depth but rather that it should match their brand and business plan, the verbally expressed social responsibility does all in all align with the practiced social responsibility, although some contradictions can be found in the representations.

5.1.4 Company 4

When creating content Company 4’s main aim and key factors are to increase sales while at the same time strengthening the brand over time. All actions that are made and content that is published are strategically in tone with the brand and its core. Company 4 believes that it is
important to show *diversity* in their channels in order to represent all the consumers of the company. The company also stresses that diversity enables the company to *inspire* their consumers more since they get more inspired when they feel represented and can relate to the model or how the products are being portrayed.

During the interview, the representative of Company 4, clarifies that it is especially important to take social responsibility when targeting such a young target group as they do. When creating content, Company 4 stresses the importance of staying true to their core values and not only focus on the short-term sales. The company strives to represent all their consumers and expresses themselves to offer their customers diversity both in terms of body sizes, ethnicity and skin colors, that are still aligned with the brand tonality. In the end that is what the company always comes back to, what their values are and what they stand for. Company 4 believes that it is important to take responsibility and work towards a more sustainable society rather than just act the way society expects you to act. As they consider themselves take social responsibility, they still believe that they have a way to go in order to be 100 percent where they want to be.

The verbally expressed social responsibility, regarding diversity in terms of body size, ethnicity and skin color, are somewhat in alignment with the practiced social responsibility on Instagram. In the overall feed it was noted that during 2018 more diversified models were represented and increased especially in November 2018 where the diversity was confirmed in terms of both skin colors and body sizes. Several of the earlier published images that included women of non-Swedish origin were often famous profiles or influencers that not necessarily wore or owned products from the company. It may yet be suggested that Company 4 still portrays deviating images and representations of society that can be perceived as rather *idealized* or beautified and images including *body-ism*.

### 5.2 Cross-sectional Analysis

*This section integrates the results from the case study analysis, discussing the practice of social responsibility among studied companies in comparison to existing research.*
5.2.1 CSR Definitions: Gap in Practiced External Social Responsibility

When the companies are talking about CSR, the majority of them initially refer to environmental responsibility and not social responsibility, which is in alignment with research done by Dahlsrud (2008). In the cases that social responsibility is highlighted, many companies discuss the internal part rather than the external part. When external social responsibility is eventually discussed, it is not understood as a concept of its own, but rather through other concepts, e.g. in terms of body size, ethnicity and skin color. The companies then state that they work greatly with social responsibility and the element of diversity. However, a contradiction is found since an exclusion of diversity can be found in the majority of the companies’ Instagram channels, which is also highlighted in research by Borgerson and Schroeder (2002) and Perloff (2014). Therefore, companies’ practiced social responsibility and verbally expressed social responsibility may not be in alignment due to the confusion regarding the definition of CSR and external social responsibility, and its implementation.

During the interviews, it was noted that external social responsibility is a question/dimension that all companies feel is important and something they work with internally, but to different degrees. Although external social responsibility is perceived significant for all studied companies, it may not be a dimension that companies may feel the need to communicate through their content on Instagram. This may be due to that the companies may consider the phenomenon of CSR as an informative aspect, e.g. information regarding working conditions and product materials. This could somewhat be confirmed by Company 3 that states that Instagram is a channel for them that should be used for simple and clear communication, and Company 2 adding that Instagram is not a platform for information, but rather for inspiration. The findings, therefore, suggests that the companies perceive external social responsibility as something informative rather than something that can be expressed visually.

5.2.2 Insufficient Consideration of Diversity in terms of Body Size, Ethnicity & Skin Color

The representational convention of exclusion was continuously identified, regarding body size, ethnicity or skin color. From all the companies included in this study, only one company had a clear diversity in their feed, and only two companies were considered having a correspondence between what they practice regarding issues of body size, ethnicity and skin color and what they verbally expressed regarding social responsibility. A reason for the gap between
the practiced- and the verbally expressed social responsibility may be due to that each company differently includes consumer behavior in their planning process and regard their consumers with different approaches. For example, some companies look carefully at the consumer demands when creating content, while others consider what they are capable of doing in the broader picture. Company 2, who showed some diversity, explained that they cannot do everything which Company 3 responded similarly. Company 3 stated that they do not have the capability to expand their brand and include larger clothing sizes, which results in exclusion of body sizes presented on their Instagram channel.

In addition, Company 1 stated that one of the reasons for their lack of diversity was that they want to include models that represent their consumers but that it is difficult to get a hold of older models. Many of the companies are aware of the thin ideals and their lack of diversity (Grogan 2017; Fredrickson & Roberts 1997), but two of the companies emphasizes that even when they push for diversity they get backlash for it. Company 2 explained that regarding curvier bodies, they get comments expressing that models are unhealthy, something Company 4 had experienced as well. However, Company 4 emphasized that those comments are usually a reflection of the individual themselves and their view of their body, as well as society’s view of how they should look, which relates to research findings by Borgerson and Schroeder (2002), Perloff (2014) and Soares and Pinho (2014).

Furthermore, Company 1 has stated that they have tried to include diversity by including models from Germany and Holland, in addition to Sweden. The company expressed doing this in an attempt to broaden their representation in terms of ethnicity. However, since these models are white thin females, they appear to show the same portrayals as the Swedish models that the company are already representing, and not the diversity that the company may want to achieve. This can somewhat be connected to literature reflecting that companies may think that it is better to show some diversity than excluding it in total (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002), even if this is not visually understood. Furthermore, ethnicity is something that has in many cases been expressed through objective features such as skin color, hair color or cultural expressions. What happens is that Company 1 may fail to express other ethnicities than Swedish due to that the visual characteristics of Germans and Dutch being alike Swedish. The difficulties to express diversity in terms of ethnicity is something that not only Company 1 may fail with, but all four companies. The reason can be due to the subjective perspective of ethnicity, and something that many times are not visually detected on Instagram. The researchers of this study, therefore,
stresses the issues and difficulties by studying ethnicity from an objective point of view since the key aspect of ethnicity can be more subjective than objective at times.

5.2.3 Prevalence of Representational Conventions of Body-ism & Idealization

In many of the images that were analyzed, the representational conventions of body-ism and idealization could be found repeatedly. When asking how bodies influence the fashion companies, one of the company’s answer to this was that it is more ‘fun’ to show clothes on a person than a hanger. Another company agreed to this stating that bodies are important since you want to show the clothes in its user state, hence on a body. Since this study investigates fashion companies, it may be assumed that it is always in their interest to highlight the product rather than a person to increase sales. Therefore, it can be understood why companies many times chose to cut out faces and focus on the product, since this is what they sell. However, the problem is not that the products are presented on users per se, but rather that many images discard the person in total and focuses on its body parts instead to emphasize a specific product in a way that becomes objectifying.

Several of the companies stated that they aim to empower with their images, but there is a difference and a fine line between visually appealing images and visually objectifying images. The companies state that they want to communicate female empowerment, but when bodies or body parts are used as a tool for sale, the body becomes objectified leading to body-ism (Fredrickson & Roberts 1997). The question is why bodies or body parts have to be used as a sign and representation for empowerment instead of showing representations of the individuals themselves and not solely emphasizing on their body parts. It becomes more ‘accepted’ if individuals want to upload images that show bodies or body parts themselves (e.g. influencer marketing, re-posting), as a symbol of empowerment. However, when companies, media or society promotes these representations the message can immediately change negatively, e.g. by being perceived as promoting unrealistic/idealized bodies. Furthermore, many times companies express that they create content/images based on a representation of their consumers. It may be suggested that the companies are representing and creating a persona, which the consumer cannot relate to, rather than portraying their real consumers. This persona may be created as an inspiration for the consumers, but many times it becomes an idealized and unattainable goal for them to try and achieve.
The content analysis showed that all the companies, some more than others, include idealized and glamorized images to reach consumers, which is in accordance with Perloff (2014) stating that individuals are continuously faced with unrealistic (idealized) images and pressured through social media to live up to those images. All the companies have stated that they want to inspire with their content, but those inspirational images can easily translate into idealized images, hence it is significant how companies choose to inspire. The images can be of thin bodies, or thin bodies with a caption about surrounding oneself with food, and this kind of relation can make the images appear unrealistic and appear as compensational images for the lack of representation regarding curvier bodies. Another compensation that can be considered is when the majority of the companies continuously include images focusing on the back part of the jeans with all models having a plump bum. Media continuously portray thin models and exclude curvier models (Grogan 2017) but still try to depict the thin models with plump and curvier bums, which can also be associated with the representational convention of idealization.

Borgerson and Schroeder (2002) states that companies can attract consumers through clichés and familiarities in their images, something that was found in several of the images analyzed. For example, Company 1 frequently use the same models instead of using diversity, but this choice may be to create familiarity and recognition with the consumers and for the viewers to connect with them/the personas. Similarly, Company 2 uses familiarity in their Instagram channel, but what is interesting to discuss is the motive and reason for why and how Company 2 works with familiarity. The company explained that they include influencers because they believe that their followers and consumers can relate to influencers more than models. The interviewee further stressed that the reason for this is that influencers are more considered as “normal girls” than models are. It may be suggested that since Company 2 wants to influence their consumers with not only products but also a lifestyle, the lifestyle of influencers may reflect the lifestyle of “normal girls” more than the lifestyle of models. However, what is worth emphasizing here is that the life of an influencer is majority of the times not a life that a “normal girl” can relate to, since many of the influencers represented in the social media of e.g. Company 2 can be considered as high-income people. Influencers that are wearing expensive bags and clothes and travel to nice locations, express a life that is rather beautified. It may also be implied that influencers of today live their lives to create content rather than create content based upon the lives they are living. The influencers’ images, therefore, portray a glamorized and idealized version of society rather than a ‘real’ or ‘normal’ one.
In addition, what may become a problem when companies include images from influencers is that when companies fill out their own content with influencers content, the voice of the influencers and their content speaks louder than the company’s own content and voice. It is, therefore, important that the influencers that are represented in the social media account of companies are in alignment with the company’s values and what they stand for. The complexity that may occur, however, is that even though the influencer may be in alignment with the company’s values, the influencer will always have associations and own values. The phenomenon of influencer marketing also started the discussion whether companies may be able to re-post images of influencers with either content, portrayals or representations that the companies would not create themselves and by that get away with the representation. On the opposite, influencers also let companies represent people or groups of people they would not be capable to represent otherwise (e.g. Company 1).

5.2.4 Aim of Marketing Communication: Company DNA or Sociocultural Influence?

Previous research made by Zyglidopoulos et al. (2012) argues that companies should evaluate their stakeholders’ interests and demands, and determine which ones are the most important to focus on, in order to ensure company survival and success. For Company 4 these interests and demands are expressed through their key factors of content creation (presented in Chapter 5). Company 4 explained that they have a clear and different aim with every image they post on Instagram, were the different posts should have a good balance between long-term brand building and short-term sales but still be in tone with what the company stands for and their core values. One image can therefore aim to highlight empowerment, diversity or engagement which is connected to the company’s long-term brand building, while other images aim to increase sales rather than long-term brand building. Compared to the other companies, it seems like Company 1-3 focuses more on the short-term sales incorporated with their long-term brand building in every picture rather than separating the two different aims. Furthermore, it was confirmed by not only Company 1-3, but all four companies that their main aim is to earn money since they need to survive on the market, which is also brought up in research by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997). It may, therefore, be suggested that the companies attempt to show diversity and external social responsibility comes in the shadow of their attempt for commercial motives i.e. to increase sales.
Furthermore, the findings showed that Company 2 and 3 have difficulties in fully focusing on external social responsibility-activities. Company 2 explained that the company’s DNA (which is a key factor for the company’s content creation) influences the business to the extent that they would not be able to change even if their consumers pushed for it. Furthermore, Company 3, who does not work with the dimension of external social responsibility, in terms of diversity, stressed that the company is not capable to take on external social responsibility-demands at the moment, i.e. to expand their size-range, since it is not in alignment with their business plan/strategy (key factor in the company’s content creation). Hence, it may be suggested that some CSR-activities are not fully in alignment with the companies’ key factors/stakeholder demands and interest, and are therefore discarded.

In contrast to Company 2 and 3, Company 4 stated that it is vital for the company to consider the demands, but instead of doing what society expects you to do, the company should push the society that they want to see. Company 4 believes that by communicating what responsibilities and efforts the company are focusing on in the present, the company will not be perceived as irresponsible but responsible, perhaps since they are communicating that they are doing some effort and showing that they may do more in the long-run. The difference between Company 4 and Company 3 is that the company does not state that they will not take on anything that they are not capable of doing or that it is not in alignment with the business plan, but rather that they will focus on what they can do now in order to take on more in the future. When comparing Company 4 with the other companies, the main difference is that the company does not state that they take social responsibility without taking it. Company 4 is also aware that social responsibility is not about following society’s ideals, since that will not take them where they want to be as a company. Instead social responsibility lays in the moral and ethical believes that the company themselves has, wants, and pushes for. The view Company 4 has regarding social responsibility is greatly connected to Eisend’s (2010) ‘mirror’ and ‘mold’ argument. The mirror and mold argument is applicable for all the companies but to different extent. The ‘mold’ argument could be identified during the interviews, where the companies expressed that they do not include trends and ideals for their representations concerning body images. On the other hand, in practice, the content analysis showed that the companies are more prone to ‘mirror’ the society since it is noticed through their representations that they are influenced by sociocultural norms.
6 Recommendations

This chapter discusses the image analysis framework used in this study and introduces a new and updated framework for image analysis. In addition, this chapter presents suggested criteria for image/content creation based on the findings of this study.

6.1 Revised Framework for Image Analysis

The framework for image analysis by Schroeder and Borgerson (2005) was used as a basis for the content analysis conducted in this study. When analyzing the content, it became apparent that all representational conventions, Body-ism, Idealization, Exoticization and Exclusion, did not appear as frequently. For example, exoticization was only detected twice, while the other representational conventions were identified recurrently. Since the representational conventions body-ism, idealization and exclusion were found repeatedly in the companies’ Instagram images, the studied companies appear not as socially responsible as they may think, even if practiced and verbally expressed social responsibility are aligned regarding diversity of body image representations. It is a point worth highlighting, since many companies may not be aware that representational conventions on its own affect their practice of social responsibility. In other words, it is important to address not just aspects of body size, ethnicity and skin color in marketing visual communication, but also how these aspects are being used and portrayed in media through means of representational conventions.

Based on results of the analysis, updates to the framework for image analysis by Schroeder and Borgerson (2005) are suggested (see Figure 3). This framework is discussed in detail below, with focus on key aspects of identity, representational conventions and methods of evaluation. The updated framework demonstrates a clearer way of presenting the framework and can be of relevance for future research in the field of social responsibility in marketing visual communication and for companies when creating visual marketing content. The framework is considered to be simplified since it outlines in detail how each part of the framework can be used and what role each part adopts. By simplifying the framework, the researchers of this study hope to clarify its implementation and raise awareness regarding the key aspects of
identification, representational conventions and method of evaluation, to help close the gap of practiced external social responsibility regarding body image representation.

![Modified Framework for Image Analysis](image.png)

**Figure 3: Modified Framework for Image Analysis**

### 6.1.1 Key Aspect of Identity

In the framework for image analysis, Schroeder and Borgerson (2005) stresses that there can be an overlap of the Key Aspects of Identity in the framework. This was further confirmed by the researchers of this study while doing the content analysis on the companies’ Instagram accounts. What the researchers of this study agreed on, was that it would be more clear to place the Key Aspects of Identity, i.e. body size, ethnicity and skin color, in the middle of the framework in order to clearly show how the key aspects influence all of the representational conventions in the framework and individuals’ perceptions. The Key Aspects of Identity are something that can change depending on what ethical issues the study will focus on and investigate. Body size, ethnicity and skin color is something that can be replaced with e.g. gender and race. The framework can, therefore, be applied to similar contexts within the fashion industry.
6.1.2 Representational Conventions

For this study, the representational convention of exclusion was recurrent and, therefore, played a ‘bigger part’ in the framework. Hence, the convention of exclusion was placed in the top of the framework to show its significance. The representational conventions of body-ism, idealization and exoticization are placed in the bottom of the framework. This is not done because they play a lesser role than exclusion but because exclusion is considered the convention including all three key aspects of body size, ethnicity and skin color, while the other three representational conventions are included to only one or two of the key aspects of identity. The representational conventions in the framework could be seen as the representations or portrayals in the images that the company wants to avoid. Depending on what industry the framework is applied to and what ethical issues the study focuses on, the representational conventions can, just as the Key Aspects of Identity, be exchanged.

6.1.3 Method of Evaluation

The Method of Evaluation, just as the Key Aspects of Identity, are overlapping in Schroeder and Borgerson (2005) image analysis framework as well as in the suggested framework. It was noted during the analysis that even though two of the representational conventions, body-ism and exclusion, are supposed to be evaluated from an Objective point of view, ‘outer factors’ will always affect the view of the picture. The outer factors, for this specific study were the caption of the picture. Patterns in the feed\(^6\), as the pictures that are posted before or after the specific image, will also affect the perception of the picture. Hence, the outer factors affect how images are interpreted, a box with ‘outer factors’ is placed around the framework to show that external factors can affect the image interpretation.

In comparison to the original framework by Schroeder and Borgerson (2005) that stated which representational conventions are evaluated from either an objective or subjective point of view, the method of evaluation is placed in the middle (Figure 3). This is because all of the

\(^6\) For example, if mainly publishing images of white and thin models and on occasion publishing single images portraying a person of color or a curvy model. These single images that are included becomes ‘compensation images’ for the lack of inclusion in the otherwise monotonous feed, and affects the perception of the images. In addition, other images or portrayals that are always published in combination with each other is considered as creating intentional patterns or as compensation for previous portrayal.
representational conventions can be evaluated from both an objective as well as a subjective point of view.\(^7\)

### 6.2 Criteria for Image/Content Creation

Based on the research findings, all the companies believed that what they aim to communicate is received/understood accurately by their consumers. This is an interesting question to highlight since the findings showed that what the companies practiced and what they verbally express regarding external social responsibility is not in alignment. Since there is a gap between what the companies practice and what they verbally express, the message that companies believe they are communicating may not be the same message as the viewer perceive. In addition, as it is suggested that they are not perceived correctly when it comes to external social responsibility there is a risk for the companies to be misunderstood in other occasions as well.\(^8\)

The researchers of this study, therefore, believed it would be beneficial to present criteria for image creation (see Table 7), which companies can take part in and benefit from in order to take more social responsibility. Companies can follow the criteria by asking themselves each question, demonstrated in Table 7. For example, by distinguishing what the company’s aim is with their content, the company can communicate the message more explicit and avoid misunderstandings. Additionally, it is suggested that companies ask themselves questions regarding what type of representations they portray and how these are portrayed on their social media channels. For example, by asking themselves if the content can lead to exclusion or if a portrayal is connected to body-ism, companies can avoid becoming socially irresponsible in terms of the representational conventions presented in the framework. Thus, minimizing the gap that may exist regarding their external social responsibility practice.

\(^7\) An example for an evaluation of both objective and subjective character is exclusion of ethnicity. In many cases ethnicity is something that is portrayed by either skin color, hair color or other visual attributes. But this can also be a subjective evaluation since visual attributes may deviate from the stereotypical view of how people from different ethnicities should look like. In addition, ethnicity is something that can be seen subjectively regarding how and what individuals identifies themselves with, rather than how they visually are perceived.

\(^8\) For example, all companies expressed that they want to inspire and influence through their content on Instagram, hence it can be discussed whether their attempt to inspire is perceived as positive rather than negative.
When creating content, it is important that the company:

- is clear with what they want to inspire
- is clear with how they want to inspire
  - looks at how the inspiration is portrayed in the image
- is clear with what they want to influence
- is clear with how they want to influence
  - looks at how the influence is portrayed in the image
- analyze how the image can lead to exclusion of individuals or groups in society
- analyze how the image can exclude groups in society by including a caption or factors that will make them appear e.g. different (inclusion results in exclusion)
- analyze how the image can idealize and glamorize reality/individuals
- analyze how the image can objectify individuals
- analyze how the image can be perceived as body-ism
- analyze how the image can be perceived as exoticization
- analyze what can be done to prevent exclusion, idealization, objectification, exoticization and body-ism

Table 7: Criteria for Image/Content Creation
7 Conclusion & Implications

This chapter concludes the purpose of the study and outlines the contribution of the study in terms of research and managerial implications.

7.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was fulfilled through four corporate cases, based on content analyses and semi-structured interviews. The findings showed that two of the companies’ practiced social responsibility are in alignment with their verbally expressed social responsibility when it comes to diversity in terms of body size, ethnicity and skin color. However, this alignment becomes unbalanced when analyzing the representational conventions, since these affects companies’ social responsibility as well. Body-ism, Idealization and Exoticization, since body-ism and idealization were recurrent conventions in images and exoticization could be found a few times. The issue is, therefore, not only if companies exclude representations in terms of body size, ethnicity and skin color, but also how these representations are portrayed in regards to body-ism, idealization and exoticization.

It was common for all four companies that social responsibility, in terms of body image, is an important issue. However, as the companies consider their resources and key factors for content creation, these may not enable external social responsibility practices. For example, companies have a commercial motive when creating content, meaning that their priority is to sell products. Therefore, implementations or content creations, in regards to external social responsibility, must be in alignment with the companies’ business strategy or values. Therefore, even though external social responsibility is considered an important issue, the companies cannot do as much as they would like to or everything that society/consumers push for.

To conclude, fashion companies seems to believe they take social responsibility or consider/discuss it internally, more than they are able to practice and express it externally on their Instagram channel. What can be noticed is that although companies believe that social responsibility is vital, fashion companies main aim is to sell clothes. The fashion companies
primary aim may, therefore, not be to make society and the beliefs that exists there better, but there is an expectation on them to not make it worse.

7.2 Implications

7.2.1 Research Implications
This study contributes to the research and academic field of CSR and the dimension of external Social Responsibility in visual communication. As previous research within CSR focuses on sustainability from a consumer perspective, this study contributes to the research from a marketer perspective and a comparison of their practiced social responsibility and their verbally expressed social responsibility. The findings of this study supported the researchers to modify the framework for image analysis made by Schroeder and Borgerson (2005). The modified version is clarified for this specific use and industry, which is external social responsibility within the fashion industry. The representational conventions used in the framework for image analysis are given different weight than in the framework by Schroeder and Borgerson (2005). For example, the representational conventions of Exclusion, Body-ism and Idealization were recurring while the convention of Exoticization was only identified one or two times. This indicates that the way content is created today has changed over the past years and different content creators may want to highlight different aspects of an image than what has previously been desired.

7.2.2 Managerial Implications
The findings of this study are of relevance for marketers, content creators and other practitioners who are working with creating or analyzing images/content. As this study shows that companies are not as socially responsible as they may perceive themselves to be, the findings of this study encourage companies to evaluate their social responsibility status further. For example, even though some companies’ practiced social responsibility are in alignment with their verbally expressed social responsibility in terms of body size, ethnicity and skin color, companies can still be lacking the practice of external social responsibility if their content includes representational conventions such as e.g. idealization, body-ism and exoticization.
This study helps companies realize (through examples of corporate cases) how working with social responsibility may not be fully translated in practice. Furthermore, companies can through the use of the suggested content analysis framework and criteria for content creation detect which representational conventions are identified or which key aspects of identity they are lacking in and work towards bettering those aspects, and thus becoming more socially responsible. As this study uses a case study research design, including four companies that are different in characteristics, the findings of this study is not restricted to ‘social responsibility regarding body images representations’, but can also be applied to similar contexts in the fashion industry. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 6, if future research does not focus on the topic of body image representations; the representational conventions of exclusion, body-ism, idealization and exoticization; or the key aspects of identity - body size, ethnicity and skin color, these can be exchanged with suitable replacements.
8 Limitations & Future Research

This chapter addresses the limitations of the study, including factors that could have influenced the study and steps in the data collection method that could have been conducted differently. Finally, the chapter provides suggestions for future research.

8.1 Limitations

This study would have benefited by including more companies. However, due to the limited time for this study and corporate willingness to participate in research, this study accounts for investigation of four corporate cases. Due to resource limitations and convenience considerations, this study is restricted to companies that have their headquarters in Västra Götaland region. Although the restriction may not have major influence on the result, the study could have benefited from including companies located in other parts of the country, which in turn could have strengthen the generalizability of the results.

Another limitation to this study was how open/restricted the company representatives were during the interviews. The researchers of this study understand the complexity for companies to discuss their marketing strategies and that the interviewees could not discuss in detailed how they work with social responsibility due to corporate strategies and confidential information. There is, therefore, a risk that the information the companies shared does not reflect how they actually works with the issue internally. The companies could also intentionally and unintentionally withhold information regarding how they practice external social responsibility.

Furthermore, as a revised framework for image analysis and criteria for content creation emerged from the findings, there was no time to test the framework nor the criteria. The updated framework and the criteria could, therefore, not be included in the research aim and thus included as recommendations instead.
8.2 Future Research

This study investigates the practice of social responsibility regarding body image representation among four companies. Future research should, therefore, include a broader segment to acquire further data regarding how companies work with *Exclusion, Body-ism, Idealization* and *Exoticization*, and if/how it affects their content creation. By including more companies in the study, more clear and significant conclusions can be made, along with enhancing credibility and generalizability of research results. For the content analysis 60 images were analyzed for each company. It can be beneficial for future research to analyze more images in order to detect more solid patterns in addressing issues of diversity and applying different representational conventions. This will further enhance the credibility of research results. In addition, Instagram was used as the platform for the content analysis in this study, however, future research can make the same research and apply it to other social media channels to analyze images or text/captions.

Evaluation of the representational conventions and their relevance is suggested in future research. Since the representational conventions of exclusion, body-ism and idealization were recurring representational conventions while the representational convention Exoticization was hardly identified, an evaluation of the conventions and their relevance would be of significance in order to develop the framework for image/content analysis even further. Additionally, it is recommended that future research improve the research methodology. For example, in order to get a more ‘reliable’ foundation about society norms and ideals (and not only the subjective view of what is ideal, what the researchers of this study believes is ideal), it would be beneficial for future research to have a focus group discussion with consumers prior to the content analysis, so that the researchers could gather consumers’ belief of what can be considered as ideal, exotic, objectified body images, body-ism etc. This will make research more ‘neutral’ from the personal beliefs and perception of researchers who carry out the investigation.

Furthermore, this study highlighted that some companies receive negative comments when showing diversity, something the companies expressed should be perceived as positive. It would be interesting in future studies to research this phenomenon and investigate the relation between negative comments, societal beliefs and self-perception regarding body image.
Reference List


Appendices

Appendix A Interview Guide - English Version

Interview Guide based on Literature:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Creation Process</th>
<th>Q: 1,2, 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company Influence</td>
<td>Q: 3, 5, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society’s Influence - Norms, Ideals, Expectations, Trends</td>
<td>Q: 8, 9, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram’s Influence</td>
<td>Q: 6, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Image Representation - Exclusion, Body-ism, Idealization,</td>
<td>Q: 11, 12, 13, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exoticization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name:
Title /Role:
Function at the company:

1. Who is [COMPANY] target group?

2. If [COMPANY] would be a person, how would you describe her/him?
   a. Who is she and what does she look like?
   b. How does that person influence the content creation within your role at the company?

3. What is [COMPANY] goals with marketing images/visual communication?
   a. How can your visual profile help you reach that goal?

4. What does the planning process for visual content look like?
   a. E.g. Criteria for content creation?
   b. Does the planning process for visual content look differently depending on platform (website/social media)? If yes/no, how?
   c. Do you have a specific strategy when it comes to your Instagram feed? E.g. patterns of images, after a product-focused image comes a full-body images etc.
   d. How do you choose which images to re-post?
      i. Do you have any criteria for re-posting?
         1. Are those criteria the same for your own content creation?

5. How does [COMPANY] want to influence your consumers with your visual profile?

6. Why have [COMPANY] chosen to use Instagram as a platform for marketing?

7. Is Instagram influencing your consumers more than any other media?

8. How do society/consumers influence you as a company?
a. Not only within fashion, but trends in the society.

9. Do you think society has certain expectations of you as a brand?
   a. To act/perform/create content?
   b. If yes/no, what are the benefits/consequences with society’s expectations/pressure?

10. How are [COMPANY] influenced by trends?

11. A big part of the beauty/fashion industry is face, body and vanity
    a. How do you look upon this and how does it influence your work and content creation?

12. How does [COMPANY] think about diversity in visual communication?

13. If your customers expressed dissatisfaction with the body image representations that are portrayed on [COMPANY] Instagram, how would you process such feedback?
    a. How do the discussions look like?
    b. Can you give an example of how an action from [COMPANY] would look like?

14. Do you think there are any risks for visual profiles on Instagram to exclude potential customers who otherwise would identify as the target group?
    a. Do you think [COMPANY] is in risk for excluding customers due to your visual profile on Instagram?

15. Do you feel as marketers/content creators that what you want to say is received correctly by customers?
    a. If yes/no, how/why do you think that is?
Appendix B Interview Guide - Swedish Version

Intervjuguide baserat på Litteratur:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skapande av Content</th>
<th>F: 1,2, 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Företagsinflytande</td>
<td>F: 3, 5, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samhällsinflytande - Normer, Ideal, Förväntningar, Trender</td>
<td>F: 8, 9, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagrams Inflytande</td>
<td>F: 6, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Image Representation - Exclusion, Body-ism, Idealization, Exoticization</td>
<td>F: 11, 12, 13, 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Namn:
Yrkestitel:

Arbetsuppgifter/Funktion för rollen:

1. Vad har [FÖRETAGSNAMN] för målgrupp?

2. Om [FÖRETAGSNAMN] skulle vara en person hur skulle ni beskriva denne?
   a. Hur är hon och hur ser hon ut?
   b. Hur influerar den bilden “content creation” inom din funktion?

3. Vad har [FÖRETAGSNAMN] för mål med marknadsförings-bilder/visuell kommunikation?
   a. Hur hjälper er visuella profil er att nå era mål?

4. Hur ser er planeringsprocess ut för produktion av visuellt material/content?
   a. T.ex. Kriterier att följa för skapandet av visuellt material/content?
   b. Ser planeringsprocessen/“content creation” processen olika ut beroende på plattform (hemsida/social medier)? Hur?
   c. Har ni någon specifik strategi när det gäller Instagram flödet? tex. Mönster, Efter produktbild kommer en bild på modell, sen livsstilsbild?
   d. Hur väljer ni ut bilder att re-posta? Har ni “kriterier” för dessa bilder?
      i. Utitfrån vilka kriterier utvärderar ni dessa bilder innan ni re-postar?
         1. År dessa kriterier densamma som [FÖRETAGSNAMN] egna kriterier för “content creation”?

5. Hur vill [FÖRETAGSNAMN] influera era konsumenter genom er visuella profil?

6. Varför har [FÖRETAGSNAMN] valt att satsa på Instagram som en plattform för marknadsföring?

7. Influerar Instagram era konsumenter mer än annan typ av media?

8. Hur influerar samhället/konsumenterna er?
a. Inte bara mode, utan även samhällstrender.

9. Tror ni att samhället har förväntningar på er som företag?
   a. Att agera/prestera på vissa sätt?
      i. Om ja/nej, vad är fördelarna/nackdelarna med att samhället har förväntningar/press på er som företag?

10. Hur influeras [FÖRETAGSNAMN] av trender?

11. Ansikte, kropp och skönhet har länge legat som grund för modeindustrin
    a. Hur ser ni på detta och hur influerar det er verksamhet och content?

12. Hur ser [FÖRETAGSNAMN] på diversitet i visuell kommunikation?

13. Om era kunder uttrycker sig missnöjda med de kropps-representationer som porträtterats på [FÖRETAGSNAMN] Instagram, hur går ni vidare med sån feedback?
    a. Hur ser diskussionerna ut?
    b. Kan ni ge ett exempel på hur en åtgärd från [FÖRETAGSNAMN] sida kan se ut?

14. Tror ni att det finns en risk för visuella profiler på Instagram att utesluta potentiella kunder som annars identifierar sig med målgruppen?
    a. Tror ni att [FÖRETAGSNAMN] befinner sig i en sådan risk för exkludering av kunder pga. er visuella profil på Instagram?

15. Känner ni som marknadsförare/content creators att det ni vill få sagt faktiskt när ut till kunden?
    a. Om ja/nej, hur/varför tror ni att det är så?
Appendix C Coding Frame for Image Analysis

Exclusion:
- Is the image excluding people of color?
- Is the image excluding people of Non-Swedish ethnicity?
- Is the image excluding people with curvy body sizes?
- Is the image excluding, in connection with the caption?

Body-ism:
- Is the image focusing on the human body and specific body parts rather than the individual itself?
- Is the body/body parts portrayed in an objectified way?
- Is the image connected to body-ism, in connection with the caption?

Idealization:
- Is the image portrayed in an idealized way?
- Is the image portrayed in a glamorized way?
- Is the image idealized in connection with the caption?

Exoticization:
- Is the image portraying people of Non-Swedish ethnicity in a way that makes them appear as exotic/different?
- Is the image portraying people of color in a way that makes them appear as exotic/different?
- Is the image exoticized in connection with the caption?
## Appendix D Tables of Content Analysis on Company 1-4 Instagram based on the Framework for Image Analysis

### Company 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample date on Instagram</th>
<th>Body Size</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Skin Color</th>
<th>Objective Coding</th>
<th>Subjective evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization + in connection with caption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Exotization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>Curvy</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2019</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2019</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2019</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Content analysis on Company 1’s Instagram based on the Framework for Image Analysis

### Company 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample date on Instagram</th>
<th>Body Size</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Skin Color</th>
<th>Objective Coding</th>
<th>Subjective Evaluation (Caption)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White female</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization + in connection with caption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2018</td>
<td>Curvy</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White female</td>
<td>Exclusion - Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization + in connection with caption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White female</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization + in connection with caption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White female</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization + in connection with caption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>People of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White female</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Skin color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization + in connection with caption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White female</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White female</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Skin color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2019</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2019</td>
<td>9 Thin + 1 Curvy</td>
<td>Majority Swedish</td>
<td>8 White + 1 Person of color</td>
<td>Exclusion</td>
<td>Idealization + Exotization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2019</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Majority Swedish</td>
<td>8 White + 2 People of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, (Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Content analysis on Company 2’s Instagram based on the Framework for Image Analysis
### Table 3: Sequence 1 (February 2019) from analysis on Company 2’s Instagram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Body Size</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Skin color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image 1</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 2</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 3</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 4</td>
<td>Curvy</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 5</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 6</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 7</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 8</td>
<td>Curvy</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 9</td>
<td>Thin/curvy</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 10</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4: Sequence 2 (March 2019) from analysis on Company 2’s Instagram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Body Size</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Skin color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image 1</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 2</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 3</td>
<td>Curvy</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 4</td>
<td>Thin/Curvy</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 5</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 6</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 7</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 8</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 9</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 10</td>
<td>Curvy</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Company 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample date on Instagram</th>
<th>Body Size</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Skin Color</th>
<th>Objective Coding</th>
<th>Subjective evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2018</td>
<td>Thin/curvy</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color (Body-ism)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2019</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2019</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2019</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5: Content analysis on Company 3’s Instagram based on the Framework for Image Analysis**

### Company 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample date on Instagram</th>
<th>Body Size</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Skin Color</th>
<th>Objective Coding</th>
<th>Subjective evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td>Idealization Exoticization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color Body-ism</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>Thin/curvy</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - (Body Size), Ethnicity, Skin Color</td>
<td>Idealization + in connection with caption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td>Exoticization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color + White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color</td>
<td>Idealization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Ethnicity, Skin Color</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2018</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2019</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size, Skin Color</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2019</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>Person of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2019</td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Non-Swedish</td>
<td>People of color</td>
<td>Exclusion - Body Size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6: Content analysis on Company 4’s Instagram based on the Framework for Image Analysis**