Master Thesis

What corporate social media content leads to higher consumer response

A study of local brands in Sweden

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Abstract

**Background:** Social media is connecting billions of people from across the globe by fulfilling basic human needs of socializing and getting entertained. While companies are now actively turning to social media to know their customers better, build strong relationships, and spread marketing messages, many are still struggling to figure out what corporate social media content actually works on social media.

**Purpose:** This research aims to understand what type of corporate social media content generates the most consumer response.

**Methodology:** This study employs content analysis of recent social media posts by a selection of top brands in Sweden on two main social media platforms: Facebook and Twitter. A total of ten brands with origin from Sweden were selected, based on 2015 Swedish Brand Award ranking, and their posts were examined to find out influence of corporate social media content on consumer response. A total of 400 posts were examined on verified Twitter profiles and Facebook Pages of these brands.

**Findings:** *Type of content* which refers to whether the post has image, video, or text-only content, and *content orientation* which can be task-oriented, self-oriented, or interaction-oriented have a statistically significant relationship with consumer response. In terms of type of content, posts with video and image content can lead to higher consumer response and in terms of content orientation task-oriented content can lead to higher consumer response. Other variables in the study, namely, *communication cues, traceability cues, and time-frame* have not emerged as significant in this study.

**Implications:** When developing corporate social media content, it’s important to focus on *type of content* and *content orientation*. In terms of type of content, managers need to focus on having video and image content as this could lead to higher consumer response and in terms of content orientation, content related to brand / product / promotion (task-oriented) can lead to higher consumer response.

**Limitations:** The study relies only on two main social media platforms and on the last 20 posts of each brand on each of these platforms and doesn’t take into account any seasonality as a full year period has not been studied. The study also relies on a general brand ranking list based in Sweden and not a ranking of brands on social media space.

**Further Research Suggestions:** Future studies could focus on bringing more social media platforms into inquiry, improving sampling robustness by having a larger sample size and broader coverage of time period to account for any seasonality in data, comparing results between different countries, having a broader mix of brands in terms of type of business area or sector or stage of brand development, and blending together the corporate and consumer perspectives. Finally, to account for platform size differences, researchers need to come up with a measure that controls for this variation across platforms.

**Keywords:** Social Media Content, Social Media Platforms, Facebook, Twitter, Communication
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1 Introduction

In this chapter we introduce the concept of social media, its use in corporate context, and the need for conducting this research. Moreover, the purpose, research questions, and report structure are also explained.

1.1 Background

Internet today accounts for a significant slice of the world’s economic output and has transformed industries over the last two decades (Harvard Business Review, 2012). There are approximately 3.3 billion Internet users in the world today (Internetlivestats, 2016) and it is expected that by 2020 world will have over 50 billion connected devices in the new realm of Internet of Things which will have sweeping impact on consumer lifestyles going forward (Lyer, 2016). There is a growing always-on culture where users are constantly connected to smartphones and Internet (Wall, 2014). Above all, Internet has also become a significant enabler for people to communicate with each other (Kang, et.al., 2013).

The real communication revolution through Internet has emerged with the rise of social media over the last decade (Qualman, 2013). The power of social media lies in connecting people from across the globe with each other through social media platforms (Heijden, 2004). According to Boyd and Ellison (2008), social media platforms enable users to create a profile, share content and communicate with each other within a bounded system. The platforms contain both large number of individuals and groups (Khong et.al., 2013) and the main benefit for users is sharing of information, communicating with each other, using services like shopping, and getting news from various industries, companies, and public communities (Nathan et al., 2008).
According to Haridakis and Hanson (2009), social media fulfills the basic human needs of socializing and getting entertained. The total number of active social media users worldwide was estimated at 2.3 billion as of Jan 2016 (Chaffey, 2016) with the two largest social media platforms in terms of MAU (monthly active users) being Facebook 1,591 million (Statista, 2016a) and Twitter 305 million (Statista, 2016b). Social media is now also entering the search domain of Internet as users are now commonly use social media to navigate content on the Internet in addition to or instead of traditional search engines (Pew Internet, 2014).

The rise of social media has brought it to the attention of companies which see it as a means to know their customers better, build strong relationships, and spread marketing messages (Mouzas, 2006). Neff (2014) states that companies are now actively engaged in tapping into social media platforms and according to Barnes et al. (2016), 74% of Fortune 500 companies have Facebook Pages and 78% have Twitter accounts. A research by Stenlzer (2016) shows that 92% marketers now consider social media as very important for their business. Unlike traditional media like newspapers and television, social media makes it easier for brands to generate awareness and interest not only rapidly but also in a more targeted way (Berger & Milkman, 2012). As a result, today, companies no longer consider social media as niche media, but rather on the same footing as the traditional media (Xie & Lee, 2015). Social media spending is also fast gaining stronghold in marketing budgets (Hudson et al., 2016). Just a few years ago, in 2009, social media spending added up to only 6% of the total marketing budget, and in a matter of five years this will reach to around 21% (Moorman, 2016). Yet, despite being a decade into the social media landscape, many companies are still struggling to figure out what content actually works on social media (Holt, 2016).

Evans (2012) and Tuten and Solomon (2013) argue that to be successful on social media, companies need to develop and deliver social media content like videos, images, or text that results in meaningful consumer response. Sabate et al., (2014) take this a step further and stress the importance of not only delivering interesting content to customers but also providing this content at the right time when users can see it and on
the right platforms where they can see it. The content such delivered can lead to consumer response which can provide increased visibility for brands in the social network of their consumers (Araujo & Neijens, 2012) hence generating word of mouth for the brand (comScore, Inc, 2016). Moreover, consumer interaction with brands on social media also adds a layer of credibility which is missing in traditional advertising (Goldsmith and Horowitz, 2006). Finally, selecting the right content can also deliver tangible results for the brands as there is evidence that brand information delivered through social media is more likely to lead to purchase behavior than that delivered from traditional media (Olbrich & Holsing, 2011; Trusov et al., 2009).

1.2 Research Problem

According to Kim et al., (2015), several studies have been conducted to understand the effect of corporate social media content on consumer responses. Many of these pieces of research (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2011, 2013; McCorkindale, 2010; Swani et al., 2013; De Vries et al., 2012) have focused on corporate Facebook pages to better understand the effectiveness of social media content in leading to consumer responses while others have focused on Twitter (Araujo et al., 2015). However, each of these studies examines one social media platform at a time. It is important for brand managers to have an integrated perspective across platforms while making corporate social media content decisions - this calls for studies to evaluate companies’ social media effectiveness on several platforms. In terms of analyzing the content, several studies address only a part of the story (Kim et al., 2015). Araujo et al., (2015) analyze the corporate social media content in terms of emotional and informational cues and traceability cues on Twitter. Kim et al., (2015) analyze the content type and content orientation dimensions on Facebook Pages. Finally, a study by Sabate et al., (2014), while analyzing the content type, also studies the time-frame dimension of the corporate social media content on Facebook Pages although only in the context of tourism industry. However, all of these dimensions are important to get a complete perspective on the effectiveness of corporate social media content, and hence in line with foregoing discussion on integrating the social media platforms’ view, authors also plan to integrate those constructs to be
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studied in a single research. In terms of choice of brands and scale, previous research studies on this subject have focused on international brands on a worldwide scale. Table 1 summarizes the extent of these research studies and coverage:

Table 1: Brand Focus of Previous Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Brand Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Araujo et al., (2015)</td>
<td>65 global brands from Interbrand list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim et al., (2015)</td>
<td>92 brands from the Interbrand list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cvijiki &amp; Michahelles (2013)</td>
<td>100 brands with most Facebook fans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swani et al., (2013)</td>
<td>193 Fortune 500 companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Vries et al., (2012)</td>
<td>11 well-known consumer brands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cvijikj et al., (2011)</td>
<td>14 consumer brands with most Facebook fans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, it may be important to study local brands separately as they are better able to connect with local consumers and culture in their local language (Dimofte et al., 2008; Schuiling & Kapferer, 2004). Local brands are defined as the ones that only operate in a certain geographical region or have their origin based there (Dimofte et al., 2008). The time-frame measurement for local brands can also be more precise as they operate in a defined geography as opposed to a global brand which operates across multiple time zones. Moreover, study of global brands has mostly focused on English as a global language (Cvijiki & Michahelles, 2013).

For a study on corporate social media content, the authors of this research consider Sweden to be relevant for several reasons. First, Sweden has 93% Internet penetration (SOI, 2015) compared with 43% worldwide (ITU, 2015) which makes it relevant for online marketers. Second, social media advertising revenue is USD 36 per Internet user...
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(Statista, 2016c) in Sweden, which is higher than the worldwide average of USD 11 per Internet user (Statista, 2016d). Third, corporate social media usage is reported as 46% in Sweden as opposed to 32% in rest of the EU countries (SCB, 2014). Fourth, there is rising awareness of among Swedish brands to integrate social media within their overall communication (Tsvetkova, 2016). Fifth, Sweden has its own national language (Swedish) which is, according to 2012 estimates, spoken by 84% of its population (Språktidningen 2016; SCB 2015). This makes study of local brands relevant within local language context in Sweden. Finally, Sweden is also considered a startup capital for Europe (Davidson, 2015) which means many new brands are being created here and authors of this study are active in Swedish startups and entrepreneurship industry and would like to have social media content guidelines in Swedish context for local brands.

In summary, authors believe this research helps cover three gaps in current research literature (see Figure 1) and provides a practical set of guidelines to local brands operating in Sweden that want to get more impact from their social media investments.

Figure 1: Research Gap
Moreover, the research also addresses practical concerns of social media marketers where they try to hold consumer’s interest in their marketing efforts. Research shows that nearly one-third of consumers unfollow brands on social media due to uninteresting posts and another one-third unfollow due to there being too many posts (Smith, 2016). Chih-Yu et.al., (2015) suggest that a corporation driven social media page should contain some stimulus, such as entertaining and humorous content to attract consumers. Kyunghee et.al., (2015) suggests that brands on social media use the channel/platform to build long term relationships.

1.3 Purpose and Delimitations

This research aims to understand what type of corporate social media content generates the most consumer response.

The main delimitations that apply to this study are the following. Firstly, we focused on only the two largest social media platforms, i.e., Facebook and Twitter, and did not study platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram - that do not have a share count function - both due to their niche focus and because their nature of content may not precisely fall in the broad definition of consumer response (share, like, comment) as has been studied in this research or it may be difficult to collect information about it. Secondly, the geographic footprint of the study could be expanded to cover local brands in other markets and then compare results between these markets to see if findings from various markets are consistent. The study also relies on analyzing the actual social media posts rather than conducting a qualitative or quantitative research with the consumers which could answer the reasons behind consumer choice in a better way, but at the same time, not be as precise in quantifying the actual interaction score which is better measured through an analysis of social media posts instead. Finally, the research is limited only to a few top brands in Sweden and an analysis of a limited number of their pasts posts in one particular period.
1.4 Research Question

What corporate social media content by local brands in Sweden generates the most consumer response?

1.5 Research Outline

Second chapter provides a review of literature that’s relevant to the understanding of the context and key theoretical concepts. A conceptual framework is then presented in chapter three by authors linking the key constructs in the research along with an outline of hypotheses. Chapter four discusses methodology - a detailed overview has been provided on selection of brands and social media posts, which are the key units in this research. Coding rules are also presented in the same chapter. Fifth chapter presents results - descriptive statistics of the social media posts and findings of the study related to the hypotheses are discussed. Chapter six then presents a discussion of the results in relation to previous research. In chapter seven we present conclusions and answer the research question. Finally, limitations, managerial implications, guidelines on further research are provided at the end as chapter eight.
2 Literature Review

This chapter describes the literature regarding corporate social media communication and type, orientation, communication cues, traceability cues, and time-frame of social media content.

2.1 Corporate Social Media Content

Internet users today are exposed to a considerable amount of online content with social networking leading the way (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2014). It is a stream of information from digital sources that is developed, shared, and consumed by Internet users so as to inform each other about businesses, individuals, activities, or events (Chauhan & Pillai 2013). For companies, it is increasingly important to develop lasting relationships with consumers (Li & Bernoff, 2011) and hence social media offers companies a means of doing so (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2014). Within the social media sphere, there are two types of contents, and Gangadharbatla (2008) indicates that user generated content is on the rise. Christodoulides et al., (2012) mention that user generated content is both a means for collecting consumer insights as well as for initiating discussion about brands. On the other hand, Mangold and Faulds (2009) stress on the importance of having firm created social media communication also referred to as corporate social media content - which is essentially social media content created by the brands as a means to reach out to their customers - and point out that it’s a key in and a growing element of a firm’s marketing strategy. The main purpose of corporate social media content is to engage with consumers and influence their perception of product (Brodie et al. 2013). According to Nielsen (2013), the use of corporate social media content is gaining significance although many companies are still in the phase of catching up with the practice. Keller (2009) argues that it is much easier to have viral dissemination of information through Internet and Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold (2011) state that consumers are turning more and more to social media channels to search for news, information, and offers regarding brands. The characteristics of content
in the corporate social media content can hence play a crucial role in consumer engagement (Araujo & Neijens, 2012).

2.1.1 Type of Content

Different media types allow different content richness, e.g., radio – audio only, tv – video and audio (Daft & Lengel, 1986). A video is richer in content than a picture due to its having moving pictures and audio added to it, which attracts the human senses in a more stimulating way (Coyle and Thorson 2001). According to Fortin and Dholakia (2005), richness of the message plays a role in making the customers get a positive or negative feeling towards a medium. An online advertisement with moving pictures scored higher in click-rates than just a non-moving picture (Lohtia et al., 2003). Previous research by Brookes (2010) shows that visual messages such as images and videos get more consumer response on social media posts than text only posts because images and videos are visual content and they draw more attention than just text only messages. A study by De Vries et al., (2012) researched Facebook pages of several international brands and found out that corporate social media content with videos and had greater number of likes. Research by Sabate et al. (2014) shows that images scored higher in number of likes compared to video posts. According to Fortin and Dholakia (2005) text based posts are less interactive than more content rich posts. Liu and Shrum (2002 p.54) define interactive as: “the degree to which two or more communication parties can act on each other.”

2.1.2 Communication Cues in Content

To understand the effect of communication messages on consumer response, different researchers have proposed different classifications of advertising messages (Kim et al., 2015). The classical perspective on this subject can be summarized as Snyder and DeBono (1985) who differentiate between hard-sell and soft-sell advertising, Rossiter and Percy (1987) who provide a framework for informational and transformational
advertising, Johar and Sirgy (1991) who discuss utilitarian versus value-expressive advertising appeals in their research work, Ducoffe (1995) who underscores the distinction between informational and entertainment value of advertising, and Vakratsas and Ambler (1999) who provide details on cognition- versus affectation-orientation. Dobele et al., (2007) and Phelps et al., (2004) point out that messages related to emotion are more likely to generate consumer response in context of social media and viral advertising. Eckler and Bolls (2011) have similar findings in context of email messages. On the other hand, several studies (Kwon & Sung, 2011; Golan & Zaidner, 2008; Porter & Golan, 2006) also point out to the overwhelming presence of informational cues in corporate social media content and their effectiveness in generating consumer response. In a research study on social media content, Araujo et al., (2015), in context of Twitter, found out that emotional content was significant only when used in conjunction with informational content.

2.1.3 Content Orientation

Evans (2012, p. 158) stresses that social media marketing with its two-way interaction is a leap ahead of traditional marketing which is one-way. Social media marketing is aimed at building customer relationship rather than making immediate sales as is the main job of conventional approach (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). Unlike conventional approach which is seen as distant, in social media marketing consumers get a feeling of interpersonal interaction with brands (Labrecque, 2014). Kim et al., (2015) suggest application of interpersonal communication theories to understand the consumer response to social media marketing by companies with a specific recommendation for salesmanship literature. Buyer-seller communication has long been regarded as a key to promoting and selling a product (Evans, 1963). Recognizing the role of a salesperson as central to the entire communication process, Sheth (1976) proposed three communication styles used by salespersons: task-oriented (focus on achieving goals at hand), interaction-oriented (focused on socializing and building relationship), and self-oriented (focus on personal attributes or experiences). Evans (2012) points out that one
of the major goals of social media marketers is building strong relationship which is not much different from the buyer-seller interaction in traditional selling process. Finally, Kim et al., (2015) bring together the interpersonal communication styles in this way to the social media marketing context.

2.1.4 Traceability of Social Media Content

Different researchers have argued that the way messages are displayed and searched on social media platforms and how easily they can be found can affect the consumer response to these messages (Boyd et al., 2010; Suh et al., 2010). This traceability - which can help identify the topic of the message or the trend it relates to - is evident in the usage of hashtag symbol (#) and is frequently used by brands to enhance consumer response to their social media posts (Boyd et al., 2010). These traceability cues are used by social media platforms in the storage and search algorithms hence making it easier for the consumers to find them (Suh et al., 2010).

2.1.5 Time-Frame of Content

Post timing is a key element to study to understand brand post popularity. Golder et al., (2007) argue that most of user activities on social media happen on working days. Rutz and Bucklin (2011), citing examples from Internet search, argue that people undertake more Internet search on weekdays. A report by The Buddy Media Inc. (2011) indicates that only 14% of brand posts are done on weekends. User behavior as measured through click-through rate on social media also substantially dips over the weekend (Rutz & Bucklin, 2011). According to de Vries et al., (2012), it is important to take into consideration the weekday and weekend variation of consumer engagement with brand posts. Apart from the day of the week, the actual timing of the post is also important to understand in context of brand post popularity. Hence, an understanding of peak activity hours on social media is important. Golder et al., (2007) discuss that user activity levels increase towards evening. A Buddy Media Inc. (2011) study reveals that late-night and
early-morning posts have higher engagement levels and that majority of brand posts are done in business hours. On the contrary, Pletikosa Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013) make a case for off-peak posting as in these times a brand’s post has higher chance of being visible due to less clutter. However, Sabate et al., (2014) argue that firm created social media content during business hours has a higher likelihood of consumer engagement.
3 Conceptual Framework

The following chapter presents the connection between the variables in the conceptual model based on the literature review, as well as the hypotheses.

Researchers developed a conceptual model based on the literature review (see Figure 2). This conceptual model reflects the influence of type of content, communication cues, content orientation, time-frame of content, and traceability of content on consumer response based on established precedents (Araujo et al., 2015; Sabate et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2015).

Figure 2: Framework

![Diagram of conceptual framework]
Presented below are the connections between consumer response, its various antecedents, as well as the hypotheses for this study.

3.1 Type of Content and Consumer Response

Effectiveness of different types of content (text-only, video, image) in terms of generating popularity for a brand is a key aim of this research. According to De Vries et al., (2012) images and video related content is more effective than text-posts. Therefore, authors hypothesize as,

\[ H1: \text{Content with image or video will have more consumer responses than text-only content.} \]

3.2 Content Orientation and Consumer Response

The seminal work in effectiveness of content orientation in salesmanship (Williams & Spiro, 1985) showed that interaction-oriented and task-oriented communication was more effective than self-oriented communication. In the social media application of the same concept by Kim et al., (2015), content-orientation was found to have a significant effect on consumer responses and that task-oriented content was more effective in generating consumer response than interaction-oriented content or self-oriented content. Due to its relevance to social media marketing and it being more recent, it is hypothesized that,

\[ H2: \text{Content with task-orientation will have more consumer responses than interaction- or self-oriented content.} \]

3.3 Communication Cues and Consumer Response
Studies by Dobele et al., (2007) and Phelps et al., (2004) point out importance of emotional content whereas those by Kwon and Sung (2011), Golan and Zaidner (2008), and Porter and Golan (2006) highlight informational content. However, Araujo et al., (2015) in context of Twitter found informational content on corporate social media to be more important. At the same time, authors also found out that emotional content was also important when used in conjunction with informational content hence making it mixed content (ibid). De Vries et al., in their study also did not find informational or emotional content to be independently significant in generating consumer response. The authors, hence, hypothesize as:

\( H3: \) Content with mixed communication cues will have more consumer responses than content with informational or emotional cues.

### 3.4 Content Traceability and Consumer Response

According to Suh et al., (2010) hashtags in a social media post can lead to higher level of sharing, liking, and commenting among social media users. Hence, the authors hypothesize as follows:

\( H4: \) Content containing hashtags will have more consumer responses than content that does not contain hashtags.

### 3.5 Content Timeframe and Consumer Response

Numerous studies indicate that social media engagement level in consumers is significantly lower on weekends when compared with weekdays (Golder et al., 2007; The Buddy Media Inc., 2011; Rutz & Bucklin, 2011). The authors of this study hence hypothesize as,
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H5a: Content created on weekdays will have more consumer responses than content created on weekends.

Although some studies indicate that it may be beneficial to focus corporate social media content during non-business hours (Golder et al., 2007; Buddy Media Inc., 2011; Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013), authors of this study tend to align with Sabate et al., (2014) since their study is more recent, and hypothesize as,

H5b: Content created in business hours will have more consumer responses than content created in non-business hours.
4 Methodology

Following chapter presents the methodology behind the study and the choices made by the researchers.

4.1 Research Approach

In terms of research approach, Greener (2008) differentiates between inductive and deductive approaches by mentioning that whereas inductive research approach is aimed at generating theory based on a research study, deductive approach develops and tests hypotheses based on established theoretical frameworks. This study is deductive in nature inasmuch as it is aimed at testing hypotheses based on theory.

Research design lays down the direction of a research study in keeping with the purpose of the study (Aaker, 2013). Broad choices for researcher are to either pursue an exploratory or a conclusive research design with conclusive research design being further divided into descriptive and causal research designs (Malhotra, 2010). This study employs conclusive research design.

This study uses Facebook pages in line with Kim et al., (2015) and Twitter profiles in line with Araujo et al., (2015) as the main corporate social media content platforms to examine the hypothesized relationships together with the research questions. In terms of method, the study employs content analysis of recent social media posts by a selection of top brands in Sweden. Berelson (1952) refers to content analysis as an essentially quantitative technique and Holsti (1969) considers it a solid technique for systematically understanding characteristics of messages and content.
4.2 Population and Sample

Population for this study is defined as all brands with Swedish origin which are currently operating in Sweden and running their social media assets in Swedish language. The study uses brand messages in form of posts on their official Twitter profiles and their official Facebook Pages. A total of 10 brands with origin from Sweden were selected, based on 2015 Swedish Brand Award ranking, and their posts were examined to find out influence of corporate social media content on consumer response. The industry-mix of these brands is fairly broad which increases the generalizability of the results.

4.3 Social Media Platforms

In terms of choice of social media platforms, according to Papadopoulou and Hallak (2015) Twitter, Instagram and Facebook are the three most important social media platforms for Swedish brands. The authors have focused on Twitter and Facebook in this study, because Instagram as a platform does not have any share count function, which is required to have a measurement of consumer response.

4.4 Data Collection

The process of selecting brand posts was split in two phases: (1) brand selection, and (2) post selection - this is summarized in the Figure 3.
To select top global brands, researchers usually refer to various lists such as Interbrand, and Fortune 500 to select brands (Araujo et al., 2015). However, since the context of this study is Sweden, authors have used Sveriges Starkaste varumärke 2015 list based on 2015 Swedish Brand Award rankings, a survey conducted by EviMetrix, which contained 6000 respondents who were asked questions about awareness of the brands and also if the respondents had positive or negative feelings towards the brands (Evimetrix, 2015).

The list gave authors access to a total of 105 strongest brands in Sweden which are judged in terms of their awareness and preference within their respective categories by the EviMetrix research. All brands were shown within their respective categories. The
list further divided these brands within each of the categories into first, second, and third ranking. For this research, authors, focused only on the top ranked brands in each of the categories. This resulted in 35 brands to proceed with, which was same as the number of categories studied in EviMetrix study.

These brands were then checked for their local origin based on information from their official websites. This resulted in exclusion of Statoil, Hertz, Bauhus, E.ON, Elgiganten, Match.com, Fritidsresor, Nike, iPhone, Samsung, Yes, and Google.

In the next phase, brand duplications were checked. Since, both SVT Play and SVT were in the list but with separate categories, authors picked up SVT as it has larger social media footprint.

The shortlisted brands in this phase were then checked for their Swedish Twitter profiles and Facebook pages. Brands with no Swedish Facebook Pages or Twitter profiles, or a Swedish presence that could not be verified, were dropped at this stage. Verified presence was defined either as an official verification from the respective platform in form of a Facebook verification badge or a Twitter verified profile mark, or a direct link to a brand’s Twitter profile and / or its Facebook Page from their official company home page. This resulted in dropping of Mekonomen, Wasabröd, Unionen, Länsförsäkring, Zoegas, Polarn & Pyret, ICA, IKEA, Liseberg, Synsam, and Stadium.

In the final round of brand selection, brands with extensive non-Swedish language content were dropped. This was Chalmers Tekniskahögskola.

The final list comprised 10 brands as showed in Table 2:
### Table 2: List of Selected 10 Brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Company description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apoteket AB</td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>A provider of medicines, Sweden's largest pharmacy in terms of revenue (Apoteket, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volvo Cars Sverige</td>
<td>Car manufacturer</td>
<td>A Swedish car manufacturer with its headquarters in Gothenburg, Sweden (Volvocars, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friskis &amp; Svettis</td>
<td>Health &amp; Fitness</td>
<td>A health &amp; fitness chain with 159 active facilities (Friskissvettis, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyresgästföreningen</td>
<td>Interest group</td>
<td>A union for housing members (Hyresgästföreningen, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Espresso House</td>
<td>Coffee Shop</td>
<td>The fastest growing coffee chain in Europe (Espressohouse, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>Fast food</td>
<td>A fast food chain with 3500 employees (Max, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livsmedelsverket</td>
<td>Governmental organization</td>
<td>A control authority in the food sector (Livsmedelsverket, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telia</td>
<td>Mobile service provider</td>
<td>An award winning mobile service provider (Telia, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVT</td>
<td>TV channel</td>
<td>Swedish public service television (SVT, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clas Ohlson</td>
<td>Other commerce</td>
<td>A retailer of consumer goods such as tools, office products and technical devices (Clas Ohlson, 2016)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second phase included selecting brand posts. In all, there were ten Twitter profiles and ten Facebook Pages - one each for each of the brands in the study. Authors selected a sample of 20 posts leading up to May 02, 2016. This led to a total sample for the study as 400 brand posts, which has an approximately 5% margin of error at 95% level as per sampling guidelines (Malhotra, 2010) since posts were selected randomly. Finally, each of these posts was saved into a post reference file by taking a screenshot and was classified in appropriate codes based on the operationalization and coding rules in this study.

4.5 Operationalization and Coding Frame

Wood and Brotherton (2008) point out that operationalization links theoretical constructs with measurable items. In this study, we define consumer response to a social media post as a sum total of all consumer responses to a social media post - this being the aggregate number of likes, comments, or shares in line with De Vries et al. (2012). This was treated as Dependent Variable (DV) in this study.

Independent Variables (IVs) in the study had following levels,

1- Content type (text, photo, or video).
2- Content orientation (task-oriented, interaction-oriented, or self-oriented).
3- Communication cues (informational content, emotional content, mixed content).
4- Content traceability (presence or absence of hashtags).
5- Content time-frame (day of the week, time of the post).

Independent variables 1, 4, and 5 - content type, content traceability, content time frame - were visually inspected on social media posts and coded at per post level.

For independent variable 2 - content orientation - authors referred to coding framework adopted by Kim et al., (2015) as summarized in Table 3.
Table 3: Operationalization and Coding of Content Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task-Oriented Content</th>
<th>Persuasive message or visuals focusing on a product or a brand. Announcement of a new service or product. Promotions of various types, for example, deals, coupons, discounts, contests.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction-Oriented Content</td>
<td>Messages or visuals referring to a special event, person, or day. Content not directly related to brand. A statement, proverb, or saying. Discussion of weather, season, surroundings. Requesting to like, share, comment on, attend an event in, or vote on the post. Discusses entertainment in some way for instance, celebrities, television programs, movies, sports events. Discusses a social cause, topic, or opinion. Content related to brand users, fans, followers, or participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Oriented Content</td>
<td>A discussion of company or its products in form of news, history, or general information. Reference to a program or event sponsored by the company. Content about company owners, staff, or management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Posts with coder disagreement were set aside and discussed in detail in round 2 in line with the coding rules. These differences were then resolved through multiple discussions in keeping with Kim et al., (2015). Similar procedure was adopted for independent variable 3.
For independent variable 3 - communication cues - authors developed following coding classification as outlined in Table 4, inspired from Resnik and Stern (1977), Hong et al., (1987), de Vries et al., (2012), and Araujo et al., (2015):

**Table 4: Operationalization and Coding of Communication Cues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informational</td>
<td>Posts containing information about the organization or its products in some way especially in terms of company or brand name, price, value, quality, performance, components of content, availability, special offers / promotions, taste / flavor, packaging / shape, guarantees / warranties, safety, nutrition, information from some independent / company research, or new ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Posts containing content with humorous, informal, or entertaining written language. Posts targeted at creating certain feelings among the readers such as making them happy, fearful, pleasant, angry, interested, disgusted, sad, and surprised. Use of emoticons, or punctuation (especially the use of exclamation marks) in an emotional context, or</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
directly referring to or appealing to the target group with an emotional salutation.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Posts that are neither entertaining nor informative or have some components of both categories. For example, asking a question, “What day…”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In case of image / video, a holistic assessment was made of overall impression of the post.

4.6 Coded Posts

Following are two examples of coded posts on each of the two social media platforms studied in this research (see Figure 4 and Figure 5).

**Figure 4: Twitter Post Coding**

- 1 – Brand (Max)
- 2 – Platform (Twitter)
- 3 – Day of week (Tuesday)
- 4 – Time of Day (13:54)
- 5 – Traceability (Yes)
- 6 – Content Type (Text only)
- 7 – Post orientation (Self-orientation)
- 8 – Communication Cues (informational)
- 9 – Likes (3)
- 10 – Shares (6)
- 11 – Comments (0)
Figure 5: Facebook Post Coding

- 1 – Brand (Volvo)
- 2 – Platform (Facebook)
- 3 – Day of week (Thursday)
- 4 – Time of Day (11:52)
- 5 – Traceability (Yes)
- 6 – Content Type (Image)
- 7 – Post orientation (Task-orientation)
- 8 – Communication Cues (informational)
- 9 – Likes (1101)
- 10 – Shares (67)
- 11 – Comments (18)

4.7 Reliability and Validity

This research study employs various techniques to determine validity of the research (Aaker, 2013). Study measures were derived from established theoretical frameworks to ensure validity. To ensure face validity in line with Aaker (2013), coding procedure and data collection process were pretested using 10 posts each on Twitter and Facebook. In particular, this helped the research team in faster navigation and storage of social media content, selection of different content categories, and more efficient data entry by adjusting the SPSS file columns to match the content layout order on Twitter and Facebook.

4.8 Data Analysis

Exploratory data analysis on 400 social media post was carried out using Frequencies and Descriptives procedures in IBM SPSS software. SPSS is a widely used program to analyze statistical data by university researchers specially in social sciences (Brace et al., 2009). For hypotheses testing, SPSS One Way Analysis of Variance procedure was used.
5 Results

This chapter presents results from analysis of social media posts. It starts by presenting descriptive statistics. These are followed by results for research hypotheses.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

5.1.1 Brand and Platform

Table 5 summarizes brand and platform coverage in the posts.

Table 5: Brand and Platform

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Size (n)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand (posts)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apoteket AB</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volvo Cars Sverige</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friskis &amp; Svetts</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyresgästerföreningen</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Espresso House</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livsmedelverket</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telia</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVT</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clas Ohlson</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Platform (posts)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, total sample of 400 posts had equal coverage of brands and platforms. Each brand had forty posts to its credit, representing a tenth of the total sample. Each of the two platforms, had 200 posts each, representing half of total posts. Each brand had an equal coverage of platform as well, i.e., twenty posts on Twitter and twenty on Facebook.
For the brands covered in this study, the average number of followers on Twitter were 9,352 whereas average number of Facebook fans were 83,325 and average consumer response (sum of likes, shares, and comments) on these two is 9 and 767 respectively.

5.1.2 Content Type, Orientation, and Communication Cues

Table 6 summarizes frequencies for content type, content orientation, and communication cues of the posts in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Size (n)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Only</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task oriented</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction oriented</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self oriented</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Cues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, in terms of type of content, six out of every ten posts studied contained images, whereas another three out of ten contained only text. Only one tenth of the posts had video content.

In terms of content orientation, it can be seen that almost half of the posts are interaction-oriented, whereas another three out of ten are task-oriented. Only two out of every ten posts are self-oriented.
Finally, in terms of content cues, it can be observed that two-thirds of the posts were informational, whereas a quarter were with mixed content. Only one in ten contained emotional cues.

Table 7 explores the content type, content orientation, and communication cues by the brands studied in this research. The highest numbers in each row are highlighted.

Table 7: Type, Orientation, and Communication Cues - Brand Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRAND</th>
<th>Apoteket AB</th>
<th>Volvo Cars Sverige</th>
<th>Friskis &amp; Svettis</th>
<th>Hyresgästföreningen</th>
<th>Espresso House</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Livsmedelverket</th>
<th>Telia</th>
<th>SVT</th>
<th>Clas Ohlson</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Content</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text only</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task oriented</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction oriented</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self orientation</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Cues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data visualization: bold percentages are higher than overall sample proportions.

In terms of type of content, Livsmedelverket has highest proportion of text-only content followed by Friskis & Svettis and Clas Ohlson, whereas Volvo and Espresso House have for image based content, and SVT has for video based content. Studying content orientation, one finds that Volvo has highest proportion of task-oriented content, whereas Livsmedelverket has for interaction-oriented followed by Hyresgästföreningen, and Max and Apoteket AB of self-oriented. Finally, Livsmedelverket and Hyresgästföreningen
have highest proportion of informational content whereas Telia and Espresso House have of emotional, and Telia and Friskis & Svettis of mixed content.

5.1.3 Traceability and Time

Table 8 summarizes traceability and time-frame information pertaining to all posts covered in this research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Size (n)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traceability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day of the Week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekday</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>86.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of the Day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Hours</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Hours</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only one-third of all posts covered in this study had hashtags. Analyzing the results by platform, it is clear that 49% of Twitter posts had hashtags, whereas only 17% of Facebook posts had hashtags.

Most of the posts were done on weekdays. The day-wise post distribution was, Monday (18%), Tuesday (16%), Wednesday (16%), Thursday (20%), Friday (17%), Saturday (7%), and Sunday (7%). In terms of a particular day, Thursday has the highest posting frequency.

Seven out of ten were done during working hours. Each day was divided into several intervals: work-hours were split up into three intervals with one each before, during, and after lunch hours to check posting frequency in those hours. Likewise, non-working hours
were divided into early morning before work, right after work and evenings, and late night and onwards. Detailed time-band distribution was, 05.00-07.59 (4%), 08.00-10.59 (12%), 11.00-13.59 (33%), 14.00-16.59 (26%), 17.00-21.59 (23%), and 22.00-04.59 (2%). The peak post time is 11.00-13.59. Very little post activity in 05.00-07.59 and 22.00-04.59.

5.2 Hypotheses Testing Results

In this section, results relating to hypothesized relationship between independent variables (type of content, content orientation, communication cues, traceability cues in content, day of content, and time of content) and dependent variable (consumer response to corporate social media content) are presented.

5.2.1 Type of Content

This hypothesis was stated as “H1: Content with image or video will have more consumer responses than text-only content.” To be able to statistically accept or reject the data for this hypothesis the difference between consumer response to image, video, and text-only social media content (posts) was calculated using a One-Way ANOVA as follows (see Table 9):

Table 9: Consumer Response to Type of Content on Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One Way ANOVA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Consumer Response</th>
<th>ANOVA F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1: Content Type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text-only</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>16.64 (7.72)</td>
<td>6.237*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>524.66 (102.28)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>554.19 (122.05)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05. ** p < 0.001. Mean values of consumer response. Standard errors in parentheses.
The difference between mean scores of Text-only (17), Image (525), and Video (554), content is significant at 5 percent level (0.002), and the hypothesis is hence accepted.

5.2.2 Content Orientation

The researchers stated this hypothesis as “H2: Content with task-orientation will have more consumer responses than interaction- or self-oriented content.” To be able to statistically accept or reject the data for this hypothesis the difference between consumer response to task-oriented, interaction-oriented, and self-oriented social media content (posts) was calculated using a One-Way ANOVA as follows (see Table 10):

Table 10: Consumer Response to Content Orientation on Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One Way ANOVA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Consumer Response</th>
<th>ANOVA F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H2: Content Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task-orientation</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>604.43 (131.01)</td>
<td>5.284*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction-orientation</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>171.68 (29.43)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-orientation</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>580.38 (226.93)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05. **p < 0.001. Mean values of consumer response. Standard errors in parentheses.

The difference between mean scores for interaction-orientation (172), self-orientation (580), and task-orientation (604) is significant at 5 percent level (0.005), and the hypothesis is hence accepted.
5.2.3 Communication Cues

This hypothesis was stated as “H3: Content with mixed communication cues will have more consumer responses than content with informational or emotional cues.” To be able to statistically accept or reject the data for this hypothesis the difference between consumer response to informational communication cues, emotional communication cues, and mixed communication cues was calculated using a One-Way ANOVA as follows (see Table 11):

Table 11: Consumer Response to Communication Cues on Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One Way ANOVA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Consumer Response</th>
<th>ANOVA F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H3: Communication Cues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational Cues</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>304.00 (59.80)</td>
<td>2.116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Cues</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>287.32 (97.51)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Cues</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>598.72 (183.18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05. **p < 0.001. Mean values of consumer response. Standard errors in parentheses.

The difference between mean scores for informational cues (304), emotional cues (287), and mixed cues (599) is not statistically significant, and hence the hypothesis is rejected.

5.2.4 Traceability Cues

This hypothesis was stated as “H4: Content containing hashtags will have more consumer responses than content that does not contain hashtags.” To be able to statistically accept or reject the data for this hypothesis the difference between consumer
What corporate social media content leads to higher consumer response: A study of local brands in Sweden

response to posts with hashtags and posts without hashtags was calculated using a One-Way ANOVA as follows (see Table 12):

Table 12: Consumer Response to Traceability Cues on Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One Way ANOVA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Consumer Response</th>
<th>ANOVA F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H4: Traceability Cues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posts without Hashtags</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>359.13 (82.59)</td>
<td>0.398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posts with Hashtags</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>447.44 (107.18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05. ** p < 0.001. Mean values of consumer response. Standard errors in parentheses.

The difference between mean scores for posts without hashtags (359) and posts with hashtags (447) is not statistically significant, and hence the hypothesis is rejected.

5.2.5 Time-Frame

Time-frame comprises two aspects: day of the week and time of the day. Hence, two separate hypotheses were tested for time-frame:

**H5a: Content created on weekdays will have more consumer responses than content created on weekends. (Day of Week)**

**H5b: Content created in business hours will have more consumer responses than content created in non-business hours. (Time of Day)**

To be able to statistically accept or reject the data for these hypotheses the differences between consumer response to options for day of the week and time of the day were calculated using a two separate One-Way ANOVA procedures.
First, we examine results of Day of Week, i.e., H5a, in Table 13.

**Table 13: Consumer Response to Day of Week on Social Media**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One Way ANOVA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Consumer Response</th>
<th>ANOVA F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H5a: Day of Week</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekday</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>348.95 (69.19)</td>
<td>2.232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>351.72 (105.48)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05. ** p < 0.001. Mean values of consumer response. Standard errors in parentheses.

The difference between mean scores for weekdays (349) and weekends (352) is not statistically significant, and hence the hypothesis is rejected.

Now, we examine results of Time of Day, i.e., H5b, in Table 14.

**Table 14: Consumer Response to Time of Day on Social Media**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One Way ANOVA</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Consumer Response</th>
<th>ANOVA F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H5b: Time of Day</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Hours</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>403.26 (82.11)</td>
<td>0.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Business Hours</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>388.05 (65.66)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05. ** p < 0.001. Mean values of consumer response. Standard errors in parentheses.

The difference between mean scores for business hours (403) and non-business hours (388) is not statistically significant, and hence the hypothesis is rejected.
5.2.6 Additional Analysis

Results for H4a (Traceability Cues) were separately analyzed for the two platforms as well, i.e., Twitter and Facebook. The results for Twitter were found to be statistically significant at 5 percent level (0.000) indicating higher consumer response to content with traceability cues (hashtags). One reason for this could be higher prevalence of hashtags in Twitter posts (49%) than in Facebook posts (17%). No platform-level differences were found for other variables in the study, i.e., content orientation and content timing.

5.3 Summary

The research framework is now shown (see Figure 6) with illustrations of the significance level of the proposed hypotheses and their outcome:

**Figure 6: Summary of Results**
6 Discussion

Following chapter discusses the results of the study and connects them to previous research in order to provide a holistic perspective on consumer response to corporate social media content.

The purpose of this research is to understand what type of corporate social media content generates the most consumer response. With separate One Way ANOVA analyses, 400 social media posts of top Swedish brands were tested against the proposed hypotheses.

H1 - “Content with image or video will have more consumer responses than text-only content” was confirmed in this research indicating that content with video or image has more consumer responses than text-only content. This is in line with findings from earlier research studies such as De Vries et al. (2012) and Brookes (2010) who argue that images and video related content is more effective than text-only posts. Fortin and Dholakia (2005) state that this is because text-only posts are less interactive than the posts with richer content which contain videos or images. A study by Sabate et al. (2014) showed that images scored higher in number of likes compared to video posts, however, in our study, the consumer response to video is higher than that for images. The difference between video and images - as found out through our research where video has scored slightly better on consumer response - is supported in prior research by Coyle and Thorson (2001) who maintain that video is richer in content than a picture due to having moving pictures and audio added to it, which attract the human sense in a more stimulating way. Moreover, Lohtia et al., (2003) have also confirmed that online advertisements with moving pictures scored higher in click-rates than just a non-moving picture.

H2 - “Content with task-orientation will have more consumer responses than interaction- or self-oriented content.” was also confirmed in this research indicating that content with task-orientation will have more consumer responses than interaction-
or self-oriented content. This finding is in line with Kim et al., (2015), who found out that task-oriented content was more effective in generating consumer response than interaction-oriented or self-oriented one. Task-oriented content can contain an ad about the brand/product, a product or service announcement, or different forms of promotions. It is, however, interesting to note that task-oriented content is not a majority phenomenon in the posts studied in this research. In fact, half of the content (49% of the posts studied) was actually interaction-oriented. So, there seems to be a difference between what marketers are trying to accomplish on social media and what actually works on social media. According to Labrecque (2014), marketers view social media as a means to develop long-term relationship with customers and, in this spirit, posting interaction-oriented makes sense. On the other hand, consumer based research studies such as Smith (2016) indicate that consumers reasons for following brands on social media is to get some form of tangible benefits, which is mostly in form of some promotion. Hence, it seems that while brands are focusing more on posting interaction-oriented content, the content that actually works for them is task-oriented.

Contrary to the statement of H3 - “Content with mixed communication cues will have more consumer responses than content with informational or emotional cues,” our study finds no difference in consumer response to different communication cues in the corporate social media content, i.e., informational, emotional, or mixed. Previous research has had differing results. In their study focused on re-tweeting, Araujo et al., (2015) found that presence of informational cues led to re-tweeting behavior whereas there was weak support to emotional cues in this context. On the other hand, a study by Eckler and Bolls (2011) found presence of emotional cues could lead to better consumer response. However, De Vries et al.’s (2012) in their study did not find informational or emotional content to be independently significant in generating consumer response. Authors interpretation of this is that choice of communication cues to be used in a brand’s social media posts is closely linked to a brand’s communication objectives and may best be studied in context of a particular communication task of a particular brand rather than at an aggregate level. Particularly, in the case of this study, different brands are engaging with their audience with different strategies. Telia, which is a mobile
service provider, is much lower compared to rest of the brands in use of informational cues which makes its messages are much more likely to be emotional or with mixed content. On the other hand, Hyresgästföreningen is more heavily relying on informational cues rather than emotional or mixed – they being a union for tenants. These and other such results, indicate that to account for these variations in sectors and usage of communication cues a much broader sample may be required or, on the contrary, a focused sector-based research may be conducted to find out any significant differences in consumer response.

Our study also doesn’t find support for H4 - “Content containing hashtags will have more consumer responses than content that does not contain hashtags.” wherein it was hypothesized that content containing hashtags will have more consumer responses than content that does not contain hashtags. These findings are contrary to findings by Suh et al., (2010) which maintain that hashtags in a social media post can lead to higher level of sharing, liking, and commenting among social media users. However, a more recent study by Araujo et al. (2015) qualified this to instances where hashtags are used in combination with product information and links to brand website while indicating that mere presence of hashtags alone does not lead to significantly higher consumer response. One reason for this could be that hashtags are more prevalent on Twitter (49%) as emerging from this study – compared to 17% for Facebook – and for Twitter posts they have come out as significant even in this study. Moreover, since Twitter is not as popular as Facebook – as emerging from our sample in terms of fans / followers and consumer response – the overall results for hashtags may not have been affected even if Twitter results are significant on this.

Finally, time-frame has also not emerged as a key dimension either in terms of day of the week (H5a - Content created on weekdays will have more consumer responses than content created on weekends.) or time of the day (H5b - Content created in business hours will have more consumer responses than content created in non-business hours.). Unlike various past studies (Golder, Wilkinson, & Huberman, 2007; The Buddy Media Inc., 2011; Rutz & Bucklin, 2011) that indicate that social media engagement level in
consumers is significantly higher on weekdays than on weekends, we did not find any variation in consumer response based on the post timing in terms of day of the week. Similarly, while previous research is divided on the matter of timing in terms of time of the day and consumer response that it generates - for instance, Golder et al. (2007), Buddy Media Inc. (2011), and Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles (2013), indicate that non-business hours generate more consumer response whereas Sabate et al., (2014) state that it’s the other way around - our research does not find a link between time of the day a post is posted and the consumer response it generates. Collectively, this means that choice of time frame for the content may not lead to a difference in the consumer response to posts. One reason for this could be that Sweden has more than 2x higher Internet penetration compared to rest of the world, more than 3x higher social media advertising revenue per Internet user indicating more reach directed efforts by the brands, and significantly higher corporate social media usage when compared with rest of the EU countries, which may reflect in different social media usage habits when compared with global studies – social media users in Sweden may be more connected at all times, hence, diluting any effect of time-frame differences.
7 Conclusions and Theoretical Implications

This chapter provides answer to the research question and mentions the contribution this study makes to previous knowledge.

7.1 Conclusions

With nearly two billion connected users and nearly three-fourths of biggest brands now tapping into these, social media platforms are thriving in present times. This medium is no longer a niche choice for marketers. Corporates social media marketing budgets have bumped up more than three times in the last five years. Yet, previous research studies on consumer response towards corporate social media content have been conducted on world's biggest international brands. To address the lack of knowledge on brands in a local context, this study covers this gap and summarizes results for a cluster of brands with local origin and with the use of local communication on two different social media platforms. The purpose of the study is to understand what type of corporate social media content generates the most consumer response.

Referring to our research question, "What corporate social media content by local brands in Sweden will generate the most consumer response?", it can be concluded that some decisions related to social media content may help marketers increase consumer response while others may not. In particular, choices related to type of social media content and content orientation can help generate higher consumer response. In case of type of social media, having video or image content can lead to higher consumer response than would text-only content. Likewise, having task-oriented content can also help increase consumer response. On the other hand, choices related to communication cues, traceability cues, and time-frame do not seem to lead difference in consumer response. This means that consumer response to social media content posted by Swedish brands will be almost similar irrespective of whether the content has informational, emotional, or mixed communication cues; or whether it has hashtags or
not; or whatever day of the week or time of the day it is posted on. What matters is posting the right type of content (video or images) and orientation (task or self).

7.2 Theoretical Implications

The results of this study on type of content and content orientation are consistent with previous research done at international brands level. This means that in these two domains the findings are similar for marketers in global markets and within local context – this research extends this theoretical understanding of global context to the local context.

Results related to communication cues, traceability cues, and time-frame are not significant and present a departure from global findings. This could reflect uniqueness of social media content related decisions for brands that operate in a local context (in this case, Sweden). Hence, study makes a theoretical contribution in the latter three aspects by finding out that, in a local corporate social media context, decisions on communication cues, traceability cues, and time-frame do not lead to higher consumer response (in the local context).
8 Managerial Implications, Limitations, Further Research

In this chapter we discuss weaknesses of the study, outlines guidelines for future research on this subject, and also provides practical managerial recommendations.

8.1 Managerial Implications

This thesis provides several managerial implications for Swedish brands operating in Sweden and targeting audience who can read and understand Swedish.

First of all, one of the basic decisions that social media marketers face is the type of content they need to post on social media. Should it be text, or video, or an image? The thesis points out that posting a video on social media has the highest potential of generating consumer response. Pictures also have almost a similar high potential for generating consumer response, however, text only content may not lead to a similar response level. Having said that, a brand can also think out-of-box and do text in a very different way. May be, the current level of text-only communication by the brands that have been covered in the study needs improvement. So, social media marketers can approach this aspect from either of these two routes. Another important aspect to consider from a practical perspective is that while text-only content can simply be written out, creating a video or posting a picture may have time or resource implication for companies. So companies, need to take decisions that lead to generating consumer response but within their marketing or social media budgets.

Second implication for the companies is to focus on the business at hand. Task-oriented content has come out as strongest in terms of consumer response followed closely by self-oriented content. In a way, both are about the company or its brand / product in some way. Consumer response to interaction-oriented content is relatively much lower. As in case of the previous discussion, brands can also think of this from a different perspective also and see if they can really come up with interesting interaction-oriented
content unlike the one that has been covered in this study. Having said that, it may be safer to focus more on task-oriented content (and talk about product, brand, promotion, consumer takeaway) and then on self-oriented content (such as about the company, its history, people and so on).

Third implication of the study, at least in the context studied i.e., Sweden, is that choice of communication cues does not necessarily lead to different levels of consumer response. From a managerial perspective, this means that there is no ready-made formula that suggests whether having informational content is better than having emotional content or mixed content on social media for brands operating in Sweden. So, managers, depending on the task at hand, can take a decision on communication cues without taking end consumer response in consideration and leave that consideration to factors that do have an impact on consumer response (like type of content and content orientation).

Fourth implication for managers is that while having traceability cues in the content in general doesn’t lead to a significantly different consumer response than not having these, the decision is linked to the social media platform being used. Traceability cues do lead to higher consumer response on Twitter which is recognized as a platform for hashtags.

The final implication in this context, the Swedish local study, is that authors did not find any significant difference on time variable, in other words, there were no difference in consumer response if the social media post were posted/launched in specific time frame such as, morning/lunch/noon/evening or weekend/weekday. Suggestion from this study should therefore land in, as long as managers do posts on social media at any time is better than posting fewer posts on a specific/optimal time. This spread in time-variable may be explained by that consumers are today more connected (always on) and checking their social media more often during all times of day, with their smartphones.
8.2 Limitations

Several aspects limit the possibility of generalizing the findings in this study. First, as shown, Twitter’s user base among both the Swedish consumers and managerial/corporation usage is lower than Facebook’s as emerging in the context of this study. Brand profiles on Facebook showed around 9 times more followers among the brands studied and 81 times higher consumer response on average for the posts studied, Facebook is a higher consumer response generation platform. This could tilt the results in favor of Twitter. Secondly, we only checked the last 20 posts by brands on these platforms, which in some cases only went one or two months back in time. If we had done a study over a full year in time span the consumer response might have been different or the results could have been more generalized. Third, the top brand list that was used in this study was conducted/summarized by a consumer sample of 6000. The choice of brands could have been different if we had picked the most profitable brands in Sweden or brands in Sweden with most Facebook-fans/Twitter followers etc. Fourth, we could not control if the responses on each brand post were made by a native Swede, therefore we cannot generalize the results to indicate whether a brand’s activity is actually working on the Swedes as target group.

8.3 Further Research

Authors suggest several approaches to take this research further so as to improve the understanding of this topic. The sample size in this study was 400 posts which, while met the requirement for margin of error set for the research by the authors, could be increased to improve generalizability. With an increase in sample size, it is also recommended that a fixed period be set for post analysis, for instance, one full year to account for any seasonal variation in post themes. A complication that could arise in that case could be uneven coverage of brands, i.e., brands which are more active on social media in that particular year may have greater share of sample with such an approach. However, this could be controlled by doing sampling in two stages. Stage one could be about finding out total number of posts posted by each brand on social media and stage two could be about selecting a sampling interval for each individual brand
weighted by the size of the brand’s social media activity. While this study focuses on top brands in Sweden, this could be taken further into the domain of comparing similar metrics between top / established and startup / establishing brands as well. This is particularly relevant because, social media may have different appeal and use among these two sets of brands with startup / establishing brands being savvier in this domain than the top / established ones which might be relying extensively on traditional media. Another set of brands could be ones that have gained rapid popularity on social media in some way. Authors also recommend a broader selection of brands for the study as that could add robustness to results. A related decision could be to select a stratified sample of brands by some sort of definition of area of business which could be business sector (telecom, FMCG, retail etc.), or type of offer (products, or services), and type of market they are operating in (business to business, business to consumer, or consumer to consumer). In addition to sampling considerations, an analysis of key variables by these areas of businesses could yield interesting and more targeted insights for companies operating in a particular business area.
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