

# WHY PURPOSE?

*A quantitative study on the impact of a communicated corporate purpose on consumers' and potential employees' brand reactions*

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The purposes of organisations is an increasingly discussed topic and during recent years, more and more companies have started to communicate their corporate purpose to consumers. Consumers as well as employees increasingly desire meaning with their consumption and in their careers. Purpose is therefore believed to play an important role in building both consumer and employer brands. The aim of the thesis was to provide understanding for the value of communicating a purpose. More specifically, the thesis aimed to examine if a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, positively influences consumers' and potential employees' reactions towards the brand. Three quantitative laboratory experiments were conducted at a Swedish business school with a total of 257 respondents. The results indicate that a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, increases brand attitude and WOM intention as well as the attractiveness of the brand as a potential employer. Furthermore, the purpose was perceived as relevant and was found to signal effort, care and ability. These results indicate that a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, provides value to the brand.

*Keywords: Corporate Purpose, Brand Attitude, WOM Intention, Employer Attractiveness*

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to thank our supervisor Magnus Söderlund for your guidance, engagement and support throughout the thesis process.

We are also grateful towards all our respondents for taking the time to answer our survey and participate in our studies.

All our interviewees, Niklas Dahl, Johan Ekelin, Dominika Hagborg, Frida Karlsson, Salla Lonka, Niclas Luthman and Christopher Slim, thank you for your valuable input.

Finally, we would like to thank our families for listening to the countless reflections regarding corporate purpose, we believe you may now call yourselves purpose experts.

Thank you!

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

*The first chapter provides a background to the research topic followed by a problematisation. The purpose of the thesis is explained and the expected knowledge contributions are discussed as well as the thesis' delimitations. Finally, the outline of the thesis is presented.*

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

*“People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. And what you do simply proves what you believe”*

- Simon Sinek

The purposes of organisations is an increasingly discussed topic in business (BCG, 2017; E&Y, 2017; PwC, 2017). During recent years, companies have started to focus on their purpose, their reason for existing, and the external communication of it. One example is Airbnb, that in 2014 articulated their purpose, to make people around the world feel like they could belong anywhere, and started to use the purpose as their tagline (Lenderman, 2017). Changes in the global business world, such as the shift towards more knowledge-based competitive advantage has enhanced the importance of purpose for competitive success since an organisation's purpose directly affects its ability to respond constructively to those changes (Ellsworth, 2002). It is also believed that intangible investments, such as the investments made to develop and fulfil a purpose, is what indeed differentiates companies and can provide competitive advantages (Edmans, 2016).

Purpose is believed to be important to consumers (Roderick, 2016). Consumers increasingly aspire to give meaning to their consumption and brands conveying immaterial values could provide this meaning (Kapferer, 2012). Specifically, social purposes receive attention as consumers are believed to expect brands to not only have functional benefits but to also have a social purpose (Rodriguez Vila & Bharadwaj, 2017; Roderick, 2016). Furthermore, employees desire meaning in their work (McKinsey Quarterly, 2013). They value purpose and believe companies should make contributions to society and more than ever, employees want to be able to see how they contribute to the workplace (Forbes, 2017). Especially millennial consumers and employees are believed to deeply care about companies' social commitments (Buell Hirsch, 2016). Purpose is therefore believed to play an important role in building both consumer and employer brands.

Oxford Dictionary (2017) defines purpose as; “The reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists”. The various overall definitions of organisational purpose used by researchers are not far from this description. A corporate purpose expresses a company's “fundamental value, the reason d'être or overriding reason for existing” (Ellsworth, 2002) and describes why the company is in business rather than e.g. what business it is in (Springett, 2002). Several different types of purposes can be detected on the market as well as

in the academic literature. Researchers have different opinions of what the purpose should consist of and aim for.

For this thesis, three main types of purposes have been identified. The first is shareholder centred purposes that aims to maximise profit and shareholder wealth (Friedman, 1961). The second identified type of purpose is customer centred purposes that focuses on individual self-fulfilment (Ellsworth, 2002). The third type is society centred purposes that take into consideration the role organisations play in society at large and how organisations may serve society as a whole (Drucker, 2001). The society centred purposes recognise a mutual dependence between companies and society (Drucker, 2001; Michelini & Fiorentino, 2012) and emphasise social and environmental sustainability (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1994; Michelini & Fiorentino, 2012; Thakor & Quinn, 2013). In this thesis, the third type of purpose will be investigated. The society centred type of purpose is of interest since it seems to take up the largest part of recent academic literature as well as most of businesses' purposes today, as after decades of focusing on profit maximisation, companies have started to a larger extent aspire to achieve more than that (E&Y, 2017).

## **1.2 PROBLEMATISATION**

Despite its importance and the attention purpose has received during recent years, it is a rather unexplored subject in the academic consumer marketing literature. Even though it has previously been argued that purpose is relevant for a company's marketing (Drucker 2001), little research has, to our knowledge, been conducted to investigate organisational purposes in a consumer marketing context. Business researchers have typically conducted their investigations of corporate purpose within other fields than consumer marketing, e.g. within corporate governance, management and leadership (Burns, 1978; Davies, 1999; Ellsworth, 2002; Springett, 2004; Springett, 2005). Studies conclude that a purpose should be incorporated in and comprise all parts of the company (e.g. Bartlett & Goshal, 1994) and that it is an important aspect of leadership as a company's purpose has an impact on the motivation of its employees (Edmans, 2016; Springett, 2004; Springett, 2005). It further generates loyalty, effort and trustworthiness (Springett, 2005). A company's purpose has also been found to influence employees' perceptions and evaluations of business leaders (Springett, 2004). It can therefore be concluded that organisational purposes, communicated internally within the corporation, affects people and their reactions towards the employer. External effects, from when a purpose is communicated to a company's external stakeholders, e.g. in consumer advertising, has to our knowledge not been as frequently examined.

As companies start using their purposes in consumer communication, it is highly interesting to investigate if and how a corporate purpose will affect external stakeholder groups such as consumers and potential employees. It has been suggested that purpose is an important part in building a brand (Kapferer, 2012) and research in adjacent areas has been conducted such as consumer reactions to a brand's values, passion, and social initiatives. However, no research has, to our knowledge, been conducted on how purpose used in consumer communication influences consumers' and potential employees' reactions towards the brand. Knowledge about

the communication of purpose in a consumer marketing context is therefore considered necessary to obtain.

### **1.3 THESIS PURPOSE & RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The purpose of this thesis is to understand whether a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, influences consumers' and potential employees' reactions towards the brand. This will be examined through the following three research questions.

*RQ 1: Does a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, positively influence consumers' brand attitude?*

*RQ 2: Does a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, positively influence consumers' word-of-mouth intention for the brand?*

*RQ 3: Does a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, positively influence the attractiveness of the brand as a potential employer?*

### **1.4 EXPECTED KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTIONS**

This thesis is expected to contribute to marketing research. Limited academic research has been devoted to the effects of a communicated purpose in a consumer marketing context and the thesis therefore aims to add to and expand existing literature.

Knowledge contributions are expected to be made to research on consumer reactions in terms of consumers' brand attitude and word-of-mouth intention (from here on referred to as WOM intention) as the thesis aims to investigate whether these can be influenced by a purpose. Furthermore, the thesis builds on previous research on the theories on attribution, need for cognition, message relevance and personal involvement as well as marketing signals. Therefore, knowledge contributions are expected to be made also to these existing theories as neither theory have, to our knowledge, been explored within a corporate purpose context before. By examining potential employees' perceptions about the employer brand when a purpose is communicated to consumers, the thesis further aims to add to existing literature on the extended effects of consumer marketing.

By investigating the communication of a corporate purpose, contributions are expected to be made also to practitioners since the thesis could give insights to the value of communicating a purpose in terms of brand attitude and WOM intention. Furthermore, the study aims to contribute to opening up for new possibilities on how to attract employees to the company since the extended effects of consumer marketing on the employer brand will be investigated.

### **1.5 DELIMITATIONS**

Due to limited time and resources, the thesis is subject to certain delimitations in order to adjust to a suitable scope. The research is only conducted within the home appliance industry and for the product category small appliances. The geographical scope was delimited to Sweden and

the study was conducted at a Swedish business school with undergraduate and graduate students. These choices will be further explained in Chapter 3 Methodology.

As mentioned above, three main types of corporate purposes can be identified and the thesis aims to investigate one of these types. Only the society centred type will be addressed since it seems to dominate the academic literature as well as most of companies' purposes today. To specifically investigate this type of purpose is therefore considered most interesting, both from an academic perspective and from the perspective of practitioners. Moreover, the type of communication used when communicating the purpose is of relevance. Only communication where the company itself is the sender will be considered.

In this thesis, only corporate purposes that equal their brand purposes will be considered. Hence, the corporate purposes of house of brands, which separates their product brands from the higher corporate master brand (Petromilli et al., 2002), is not included in the scope.

## **1.6 RESEARCH OUTLINE**

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. The introductory chapter is followed by Chapter 2 presenting the theoretical framework. This chapter describes the previous research on which the thesis is built and from which hypotheses are drawn. The chapter concludes with an illustration of the research model and a summary of the generated hypotheses. Chapter 3 describes the methodological choices made in order to answer the research questions. Pre-studies, a pilot test and the design of three main studies are presented. The chapter ends with a discussion on the reliability and validity of the experiments. Chapter 4, provides the results from the three main studies and the hypotheses are answered. Chapter 5 discusses the findings in light of the theoretical framework and Chapter 6 concludes and answers the research questions. This is followed by a presentation in Chapter 7 of possible implications from the findings. Chapter 8 describes the limitations of the thesis and in the final chapter, Chapter 9, suggestions are given for future research.



## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

*Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework used for the thesis. Part 2.1 presents three brand reactions included in this study that a communicated corporate purpose may influence. In part 2.2, explanatory theories are discussed and hypotheses are generated. Since the aim of this study is to examine the effects of a corporate purpose communicated to consumers, the theoretical foundation is found in communication literature. Finally, in part 2.3, a research model and summary of the hypotheses are presented.*

### **2.1 BRAND REACTIONS**

In order to understand whether a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, influences people's reactions towards the brand, consumers' brand attitude and WOM intention as well as the perceived employer attractiveness of the brand are studied. These are important aspects of marketing as will be described below, and are likely to be influenced positively by the communication of a purpose. The reasoning behind a potential impact of purpose on these three reactions are presented in part 2.2 where also hypotheses are drawn. In this section, a background to the three measures follows.

#### **2.1.1 BRAND ATTITUDE**

Attitude is an evaluation of an object, stimuli, person or act (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2009; MacKenzie et al., 1986) that refers to how favourably or unfavourably individuals perceive said object (Petty & Brinol, 2010). The importance of favourable attitude towards a brand for its long-term success is emphasised in marketing research (Modig et al., 2014). It has been concluded that a clear link exists between consumers' attitudes and consumers' behaviour since attitudes influences intentions which in turn is an indicator of behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977). Furthermore, brand attitude can be affected by associations and information (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2009) such as a company's advertising (MacKenzie et al., 1986).

Previous research that studied effects on brand attitude frequently used attribution and signalling theory (e.g. Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977; Modig et al., 2014). Due to the importance of brand attitude for companies' long-term success and the possibility to influence it with consumer communication, this study will examine if a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, will affect brand attitude.

#### **2.1.2 WOM INTENTION**

WOM is described as the informal communication between non-commercial parties regarding brands, products or services (Arndt, 1967; Buttle, 1998). It is suggested that WOM plays a major role in consumers' buying decisions (Arndt, 1967; Engel et al., 1969; Rickins & Root-Shaffer, 1988) as consumers tend to trust peers more than marketers (Buttle, 1998; Reichheld, 2003). Additionally, WOM is seen as an indication of true customer loyalty (Reichheld, 2003). For a firm, customers' willingness to recommend the company is therefore a vital part of its marketing, and according to Reichheld (2003) the most important measure since current customers' promotions will attract new customers which affects top line growth. Several

studies have shown how consumer communication can influence consumers' WOM intention (e.g. Dichter, 1966; Modig et al., 2014). It is a significant measure since intentions are indications of actual behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977). Due to the importance of WOM, this thesis will examine if a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, influences WOM intention.

### **2.1.3 EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS**

The competition for qualitative workforce rises (Chambers et al., 1998) and to attract potential employees is of great importance for a company's future (Shlager et al., 2011). For firms to attract and retain highly skilled, quality employees is considered a necessary component for sustainable competitive advantage (Turban & Greening, 1997). Studies have shown that not only activities and marketing aimed specifically at improving the employer brand has an effect on potential employees' attitudes and perceptions about the organisation, also consumer advertising does (Rosengren & Bondesson, 2014). This extended effect of advertising on other audiences than the intended (consumers) has been studied in several settings. E.g. a positive relationship between investments in consumer advertising and the ability to attract employees has been established (Collins & Han, 2004). Therefore, this thesis aims to examine the effects of a communicated corporate purpose on the attractiveness of the brand as a potential employer. In this study, employer attractiveness refers to the measurable degree of general attractiveness that an employer brand possesses (Rosengren & Bondesson, 2014).

## **2.2 EXPLANATORY THEORIES**

Commonly used communication theories constitute the basis of the theoretical framework for this thesis. The theories on attribution, need for cognition, message relevance and signalling are frequently used theories when examining effects of consumer marketing communication and constitute the theoretical foundation in this thesis. The theories are discussed and reasoned to explain a positive influence on consumers' brand attitude and WOM intention. In addition, the communication of a corporate purpose to consumers may also influence the employer brand. This reasoning is drawn from previous research on the extended effects of consumer marketing within signalling theory.

### **2.2.1 ATTRIBUTION THEORY AND THE NEED FOR COGNITION**

Attribution theory describes individuals' desire to interpret information in a meaningful way to identify causes (Kelley, 1973). In essence, the theory deals with how people make causal explanations and answer questions beginning with "why". Attribution theory is derived from the theory on need for cognition, which also discusses people's need to structure information in meaningful ways and, as described by Cohen et al. (1955), is "a need to understand and make reasonable the experiential world". Katz (1960) described it as individuals' "need to understand" and meant that attitudes develop because information either satisfy or frustrate that need. In consumer research, attribution theory has been used to establish that causal inference influences a variety of important consumer responses as a theoretical link between attribution theory and consumer intention has been found (Folke, 1988). According to Lowe and Kassim (1980), when an audience find information relevant and easily available, more cognitive modes

of attributions should be evoked towards the brand. It is therefore no coincidence that attribution theory is one of the most commonly used theories for understanding people's perception and reaction of cause-and-effect relationships (Folke, 1988). The attribution theory may therefore also be a relevant theory when examining the relationship between a communicated corporate purpose and consumers' as well as potential employees' reactions, since consumers aspire to give meaning to their consumption and employees desire meaning in their work.

Since the theories provide a viable framework for predicting consumer attitudes and intentions (Gorn & Weinberg, 1984; Sparkman & Locander, 1980), attribution theory and the theory on need for cognition could be helpful in order to explain why higher attitudes and intentions towards the brand would be developed by the communication of a corporate purpose. Since a corporate purpose per definition answers the question "why" and conveys the firm's reason for existing, it is likely that consumers and potential employees, who increasingly seek meaning (Kapferer, 2012; McKinsey Quarterly, 2013) will develop positive attitudes and intentions towards the brand as they will receive a meaningful message.

### **2.2.2 MESSAGE RELEVANCE & PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT**

Personal involvement has proven to be an important factor for influencing attitudes (Petty & Carpaccio, 1979) and intentions (Park & Han, 2007). Much of the research done on personal involvement has in fact examined relevance (Greenwald & Leavitt, 1984). As mentioned previously, when an audience find information relevant and easily available, more cognitive modes of attributions should be evoked towards the brand (Lowe & Kassin, 1980) and attitudes and intentions will be positively affected (Ajzen et al., 1996). Several researchers have argued that relevance may be one of the most important determinations of motivation to process message information (Ajzen et al., 1996; Petty et al., 1983; Petty & Brinol, 2010) and contribute to advertising effectiveness (Lutz, 1958).

Based on this discussion, the personal involvement theory may be a viable framework to explain consumer reactions from a communicated corporate purpose. Given the above reasoning combined with the previous reasoning from the theory on attribution and need for cognition, which indicates that individuals desire to understand the meaning behind behaviours, a corporate purpose should be perceived as relevant information. Based on previous research on personal involvement and message relevance this is further likely to result in enhanced brand attitude and WOM intention. From above reasoning, the following hypothesis is generated.

*H1: Perceived message relevance is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated*

### **2.2.3 SIGNALLING THEORY**

In addition to theory on attribution, need for cognition, message relevance and personal involvement, corporate purpose is further expected to positively influence brand attitude and WOM intention as well as employer attractiveness drawing from signalling theory. Signalling

theory is based on the notion that an unobservable element is communicated through an observable signal (Kirmani & Rao, 2000). The theory originates from biological science and the so-called handicap principle which describes how animals devote physical resources to aspects of mere appearance (Nelson, 1970; Zahavi, 1975). The idea is that excessive traits, e.g. elaborate deer's antlers, signals wealth and superiority (Ambler & Hollier, 2004). Signals can be useful to overcome information asymmetry on the market (Kirmani & Rao, 2000). The idea is built on the fact that the information would indeed need to be true as it would otherwise be unwise to not live up to the implicit commitment as it could risk the firm's credibility (Kirmani & Rao, 2000).

In marketing and advertising signalling literature, it is believed that consumers use information communicated by companies to assess corporate messages (Ambler & Hollier, 2004). Marketing signals can be detected through e.g. price (Milgrom & Roberts 1986), product packaging (Söderlund et al., 2017) and advertising (Ambler & Hollier 2004). Below, the signalling effects of perceived effort, caring and ability will be addressed.

### ***Signalling Effort***

In advertising research, several studies have shown that elements such as the perceived expense of advertising indicates marketing effort made by the advertising brand, which in turn affects brand perceptions and evaluations (Kirmani & Wright, 1989; Kirmani, 1990). In their studies on service encounters, Mohr and Bitner (1995) mean that perceived effort is the amount of energy the observer believes has been devoted to a certain behaviour. In line with Söderlund et al. (2017), perceived effort from a communication perspective can be described as the perceived amount of money, managerial time and hard work invested in the communication (Kirmani & Wright, 1989; Modig et al., 2014). Drawing from this reasoning, a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, should be perceived as an effort made by the company in the eyes of the consumers. The communication of a corporate purpose not only implies that expense, managerial time and hard work has been devoted to considering and communicating a firm's reason for existing, but also mirrors the continuous effort that should be made in order to fulfil the communicated purpose.

Several researchers have investigated the effects of the signalling of effort on brand perceptions and evaluations. It has been concluded that perceived marketing effort positively affects brand attitude (Colliander et al., 2015; Dahmén et al., 2008; Modig et al., 2014) and WOM intention (Modig et al., 2014). Modig et al. (2014) examine creativity and concludes that creative, compared to average, advertising leads to perceived effort which in turn positively affects consumers' attitude towards and interest for the brand as well as WOM intention. Colliander et al. (2015) demonstrate that online dialogues in social media with customers signal effort, which increases brand attitude and purchase intention. In accordance with previous literature it is likely that perceived effort, signalled when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers, has a positive effect on brand attitude and WOM intention. Based on above reasoning, the communication of a corporate purpose should signal effort made by the company and the following hypothesis is formed.

*H2: Perceived effort is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated*

### ***Signalling Care***

Apart from investigating perceived effort, Colliander et al. (2015) examine the perceived brand caring for customers as an explanation for the increased attitudes and intentions as a result of online dialogues. A company's perceived care for their customers' well-being, has been studied in several settings such as in a service failure context (McColl-Kennedy & Sparks, 2003) and online customer service context (Srinivasan et al., 2002). It is found to be an important factor when measuring online loyalty (Srinivasan et al., 2002), quality (Collier & Bienstock, 2006) and trust (Gefen et al., 2003). In addition, Rosengren et al. (2015) found that ambient communication signals consumer care. They argue that consumers appreciate the extra effort required to come up with ambient communication and that they interpret it as a sign of a company caring for their consumers. It has also been found that companies, described as non-profit organisations, have been perceived as more caring by consumers than other companies (Aaker, 2014).

For a company to demonstrate engagement and commitment by communicating their purpose may show consumers that it cares about them as well as other non-shareholder stakeholders, which is described as e.g. employees, suppliers and local communities (Harrison & Freeman, 1999). It is likely that consumers appreciate the extra effort required to work with and communicate a corporate purpose and that they will interpret this as a sign of caring. Drawing from the findings by Colliander et al. (2015), it is also likely that perceived caring, signalled when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers, has a positive effect on attitudes and intentions. Based on above reasoning on perceived caring it is likely that a purpose, communicated to consumers, will be interpreted as a sign of care. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated.

*H3: Perceived caring is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated*

### ***Signalling Ability***

Perceived expense has been found to, similar to effort, signal ability of the brand (Ambler & Hollier, 2004). The idea is that a company that is able to spend is wealthy, which could be interpreted as a sign of previous success due to a high ability (Dahlén et al., 2008). Several researchers have shown that the perceived ability in turn positively affects the perceived quality of the company's products (Dahlén et al., 2008; Krimani & Wright, 1989). Rosengren and Bondesson (2014) draw on this notion when investigating whether creative advertising affects potential employees. The creativity signals an ability to think differently and that the company is innovative and smart. With the same reasoning as used above for the hypothesised increase in perceived effort, the perceived ability should also be positively affected by a communicated corporate purpose. The communicated purpose shows that the company is wealthy enough, and thus able enough, to not only focus on profit. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated.

*H4: Perceived ability is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated*

#### **2.2.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR BRAND REACTIONS**

Based on above reasoning from attribution theory and the theory on need for cognition it is likely that the audience should attribute higher attitude and intention towards the brand for communicating their purpose since it answers the question “why”, hence satisfying the need for understanding. Based on this reasoning, it is likely that the audience find the purpose relevant and theory on personal involvement suggests that this will increase brand attitude and WOM intention. Furthermore, since the purpose is hypothesised to signal effort and caring, it is likely that this too will lead to higher brand attitude and WOM intention. The following hypotheses are therefore drawn from the theories presented above.

*H5: Brand attitude is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated*

*H6: WOM intention is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated*

In addition, a communicated purpose may have an effect on potential employees’ perception of the employer brand since consumer marketing may function as a signal that influences how potential employees perceive the brand as an employer. Previous research has used consumer theories and models to understand what influences reactions of potential employees (e.g. Rosengren & Bondesson, 2014). Since purpose is hypothesised to signal ability, it is likely that this will increase the employer attractiveness. Rosengren and Bondesson (2014) conclude that perceived brand ability, as a result of creative consumer advertising, enhances perceptions and the attractiveness of the brand as an employer since the advertising functions as a signal that influences how potential employees perceive the employer brand. Several researchers have previously used signalling theory to examine effects on the employer brand. The notion is that potential employees need to puzzle together pieces of information since not all information of what the company would be like as an employer is available (Barber, 1998). Information from firms is used to draw conclusions about its intentions and actions (Lurie & Srivastava, 2001). It has for example been concluded that corporate social performance affects perceptions about the brand as an employer (Backhaus et al., 2002; Turban & Greening, 1997; Turban & Greening, 2000). Based on this reasoning, it is likely that the perceived brand ability, hypothesised to be signalled when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers, has a positive effect on the attractiveness on the brand as an employer. It is therefore believed that a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, will have an extended effect and generate a higher employer attractiveness. The following hypothesis is therefore formulated.

*H7: Attractiveness of the brand as a potential employer is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated*

## 2.3 SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses, generated from previous research, are summarised below in Table 1: Summary of hypotheses and an illustration of the derived hypotheses is presented in Figure 1: Research model.

H1	Perceived message relevance is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated
H2	Perceived effort is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated
H3	Perceived caring is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated
H4	Perceived ability is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated
H5	Brand attitude is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated
H6	WOM intention is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated
H7	Attractiveness of the brand as a potential employer is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated

Table 1: Summary of hypotheses

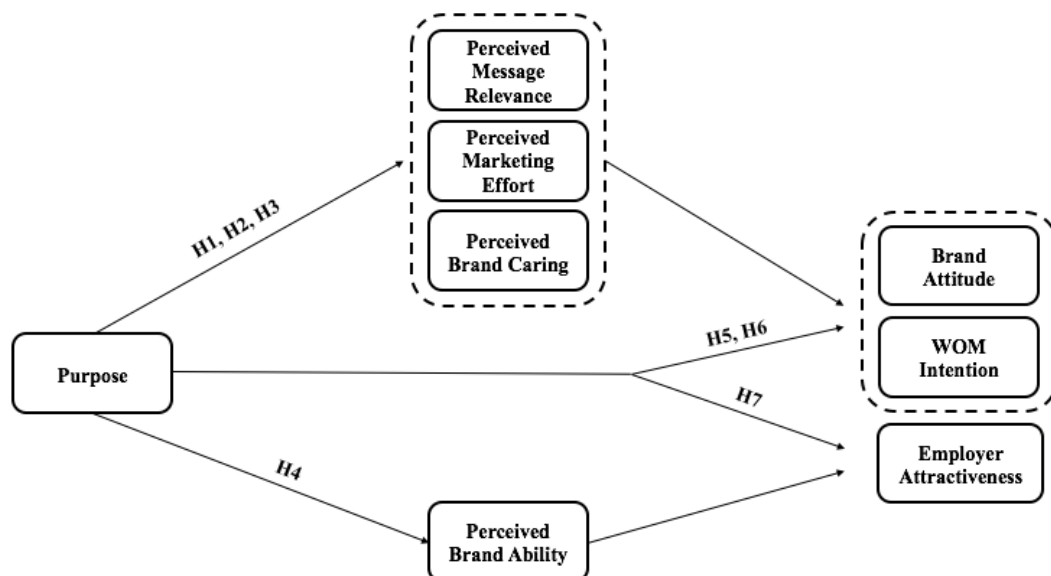


Figure 1: Research model (N.B. This is a conceptual description, parallel test will not be performed)

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

*The following chapter describes the methodological choices made for the study in order to answer the research questions. The chapter begins with a description of the scientific approach. Thereafter, a qualitative pre-study, which lays the ground for the design of the main studies, is presented. This is followed by the description of the design for the thesis' three main studies. This section also entails the results of four quantitative pre-studies. The execution and results of a pilot test are also presented. Furthermore, questionnaire design, sampling as well as statistical methods used are described. Finally, the chapter holds a section on reliability and validity.*

#### **3.1 SCIENTIFIC APPROACH**

For this thesis, a deductive approach was used. This scientific approach was considered appropriate since the thesis aimed to develop existing theory and the theoretical framework laid the foundation for hypotheses (Bryman & Bell, 2011). To contribute to research, the hypotheses drawn from previous literature were empirically scrutinised in order to answer the research questions. The results from the studies would either support or not support the hypotheses (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The aim of the three main studies was to examine the causal inference of a communicated corporate purpose on consumers' and potential employees' reactions, therefore experiments were conducted (Söderlund, 2010). A quantitative approach was used for the experiments in line with previous research within adjacent areas (Bryman & Bell, 2011). An advantage of using a quantitative methodology is that it enhances the generalisability of the empirical study (Söderlund, 2010).

#### **3.2 INTRODUCTORY PRE-STUDY: INTERVIEWS WITH INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS**

As revealed by the introduction, little academic research has to our knowledge been conducted on corporate purpose within the consumer marketing field. Therefore, in the early stage, an extensive pre-study was conducted in order to conclude how marketing practitioners regard and work with the communication of corporate purposes. The aim of the pre-study was to guide the design of the main studies. Since the pre-study set out to explore the practical use of corporate purpose in a consumer marketing context, a qualitative methodology was considered appropriate to use (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

##### **3.2.1 PROCEDURE**

Semi-structured interviews with company representatives and consultants were performed. Seven interviews were held face-to-face for 45-90 minutes. The chosen interview style was responsive interviewing, a common style for semi-structured interviews, which allows for open-ended questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Background literature on corporate purpose was used when forming the interview guide (see Appendix 1).



### **3.2.2 SAMPLE**

The interview sample consisted of four company representatives and three consultants. The company representatives were part of firms with articulated purposes. The three consultants had extensive experience of working with the development and the communication of corporate purposes. The interviewees were selected to represent different perspectives of corporate purpose under the assumption that corporate purposes can be seen from different angles depending on e.g. company size and business model. Having a diversified sample ensured the validity of the analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The sample allowed for a broad and general understanding for how practitioners view and communicate corporate purpose. The complete list of interviewees can be found in Appendix 2.

### **3.2.3 DATA PROCESSING**

During the interviews, notes were taken and afterwards a summary of the interview was written (Ahrne & Svensson, 2011). The seven summaries were then compared to identified themes and patterns (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Finally, the results were compared with the literature and theories in the theoretical framework in order to lay the ground for the design of the main studies.

### **3.2.4 KEY FINDINGS**

#### ***Confirmation of delimitation***

A clear pattern was detected regarding purposes' social and sustainable aspects. In line with the delimitation made for this thesis to only consider society centred type of purposes, six out of seven interviewees identified social and sustainable aspects as absolutely vital parts of a corporate purpose. Socially and sustainably driven purposes were identified as the most common purposes apart from maximising profit. This confirms the delimitation of the thesis.

#### ***The aim of communicating a corporate purpose***

Corporate purposes were found to be used both for internal and external communication. In some cases, it was mentioned that the purpose initially had been developed for internal use and only later had been communicated to external stakeholders. Both potential employees and consumers were mentioned as important stakeholder groups to reach. The communication of a purpose to consumers, aimed to build strong brands and to differentiate from competitors. Furthermore, the majority of interviewees mentioned that the communication of a corporate purpose to consumers would also build a strong employer brand that should attract qualified and passionate potential employees.

#### ***How companies communicate their purpose to consumers***

From the interviews, it could be concluded that companies use several channels to communicate their purpose. Similar to other company statements, such as mission and vision, a purpose is almost always found on company websites and in publications such as annual reports. Social media, such as Facebook and Instagram, was described as a commonly used communication channel for corporate purposes. Also, print advertisements (from here on referred to as print ads) were found to be frequently used to communicate purpose to consumers. Furthermore, it

was found that consumer goods companies often communicated their purposes on their product packages. Compared to information on company websites, when communicated through social media, print ads and product packaging, the purpose would be short, often consisting of only one sentence. When communicated through channels containing pictorials, mainly two possible strategies were applied; featuring a product on the picture or featuring more transformative objects connected to the purpose itself.

A list of companies with articulated corporate purposes, considered as good examples, was compiled from discussions during the interviews. This compilation of what was considered purposeful companies by the interviewees, would help guide the choice of brand and creation of stimulus to be used in the experiments.

### 3.2.5 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MAIN STUDY DESIGN

It was decided that the effect of a communicated corporate purpose would be examined through three consumer marketing channels (1) social media, (2) print ads and (3) product packaging. The corporate purpose used in the main study would be short, only consisting of one sentence and when a pictorial was used a product would be featured.

## 3.3 INTRODUCTION TO MAIN STUDIES

In order to answer the research questions, three experiments were conducted in three different communication channels. These experiments are from here on referred to as Study 1, 2 and 3. Study 1 examined the effects of a corporate purpose communicated to consumers through social media, Study 2 when communicated through print ads and Study 3 when communicated on a product packaging. All experiments aimed to answer the research questions by either supporting or not supporting the hypotheses drawn from the theoretical framework (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The study design for all three studies was scenario-based with a following self-reporting questionnaire (Söderlund, 2010). The scenario-based laboratory experiment design, made it possible to control the experiment environment as it occurred in an artificial setting conducted through a survey. Furthermore, this design made it possible to make everything identical between the groups except for the independent variable - the communicated corporate purpose (Söderlund, 2010).

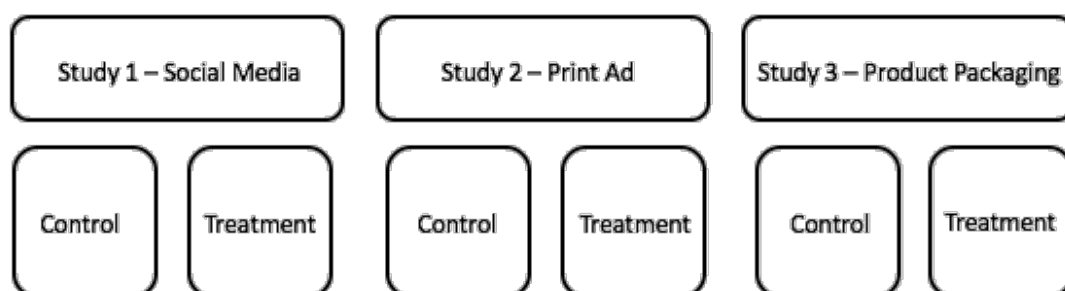


Figure 2: Experiment overview

Each study had a 1x2 factorial design, which consisted of one control group and one treatment group hence resulting in a total of six groups for all three experiments. The same treatment was given for all three studies. The treatment was determined by a pre-study (see part 3.4.3). The control groups also received the same text throughout the three studies (see part 3.4.4).

The respondents were randomly assigned to either the control group or to the treatment group for each study. According to Campbell and Cook (2002), random assortment minimises group-dependent effects and ensures that the observed effects indeed depend on the treatment. Random assignment therefore removes selection bias as it spreads out between the groups (Campbell & Cook, 2002). Knowledge and previous experience or attitudes of the chosen brand used in the experiments should therefore not interfere with the results. The only systematic difference between the two groups for each study, should thus be the treatment - the corporate purpose (Campbell & Cook, 2002). This type of experiment, where an independent variable is being manipulated and dependent variables are being assessed, are called true experiments (Campbell & Cook, 2002; Söderlund, 2010). This experimental design enabled measurement and evaluation of the real differences between the two groups (Söderlund, 2010) and made it possible to investigate the cause and effect relationships between the communicated corporate purpose and consumers' and potential employees' reactions towards the brand (Campbell & Cook, 2002).

### **3.4 PRE-STUDIES**

In addition to the introductory qualitative pre-study presented in part 3.2, four quantitative pre-studies were conducted. These four pre-studies aimed to further guide decisions regarding the design of the main studies.

#### **3.4.1 PRE-STUDY 1: BRAND PERCEPTIONS**

In order to make the experiments as authentic as possible, a real brand was chosen to be used in the experiments. The brand was selected from the compiled list of companies considered to have a clear articulated purpose, which was created in the introductory qualitative pre-study (see part 3.2.4). Electrolux, a Swedish home appliance company, launched their newly articulated corporate purpose in the beginning of July 2017. The purpose has however not yet been used in consumer communication. It is therefore unlikely that the participants of the studies would have any previous perceptions of the brand as purposeful and would hence not influence the control group. Therefore, Electrolux was chosen to be used in the experiments. The aim of Pre-study 1 was to examine consumers' previous perceptions about the chosen company.

Electrolux is considered to be a well-known brand. Since consumer perceptions about well-known brands are more difficult to influence than unknown brands, the choice of Electrolux would make the test more robust (Dahlén et al., 2008). Furthermore, the majority of advertising in major media channels are by well-known and established brands (Kent, 2002), which would make the studies more realistic.

### ***Pre-study 1: Procedure***

A quantitative pre-study, investigating consumer perceptions about the chosen brand, was performed through the online survey tool Qualtrics (Qualtrics, 2017). The pre-study was conducted in connection to Pre-study 2: Product Perceptions, hence the sample will be identical for both pre-studies. The survey consisted of a self-reporting questionnaire (see Appendix 3). The only information given about the brand was the brand name.

### ***Pre-study 1: Questionnaire Design***

A ten-point scale was used for all questions. The questions were designed either as semantic differential scales or as Likert scales (1 = do not agree/10 = agree completely). Demographic questions such as gender and age were asked in the end of the survey.

In order to ensure that the chosen brand was indeed well-known, respondents' previous knowledge about the brand was measured on a semantic differential scale (1 = I have never heard of the brand/10 = I know the brand very well). It was also of interest to measure the attitude towards the brand as respondents are more likely to engage in the experiment when they know and like the brand. Therefore, the brand attitude was measured with three items, on a semantic differential scale with the question "What is your impression of the brand?". The three items were (1 = good/10 = bad), (1 = pleasant/10 = unpleasant) and (1 = favourable/ 10 = unfavourable) (MacKenzie et al., 1989). Furthermore, a question, concerning the degree of perceived brand purposefulness was asked to ensure that the company's newly articulated purpose had not yet reached the average consumer and would not influence the control group in the main experiments. Survey questions concerning corporate purposes have, to our knowledge, not been measured before in a consumer marketing context. Therefore, questions on the level of corporate purposefulness were constructed from the definition of corporate purpose presented in the background. Six items were used on a Likert scale; "The brand has a clear purpose", "The brand aspires for something more", "The brand has a reason for existing and being", "It is clear why the brand exists", "The brand is a purposeful company" and "The brand is a meaningful corporation". To further validate that the newly launched purpose of the brand had not yet reached consumers the open-ended question "What is the brand's purpose?" was asked.

### ***Pre-study 1: Sample***

A convenience sample was used for the pre-study. A total of  $n = 33$  respondents participated, 64% identified as women and 36% as men. The average age was 22 years old.

### ***Pre-study 1: Results***

All multiple-item questions were indexed as they displayed a Cronbach's Alpha  $> .7$  (Söderlund, 2005). The results showed that the chosen brand was well-known ( $M_{\text{Well-known}} = 8.38$ ). It was also concluded that the attitude towards the company was high ( $M_{\text{Attitude}} = 7.02$ ). The brand was not considered very purposeful as the mean was rather low ( $M_{\text{Purposeful}} = 5.34$ ). None of the respondents were able to state the purpose for the brand. From these findings, it could be concluded that the chosen brand indeed is a well-known brand for which consumers

have a rather high brand attitude towards. Moreover, it was not considered as very purposeful and the articulated corporate purpose was not known.

### **3.4.2 PRE-STUDY 2: PRODUCT PERCEPTIONS**

All three studies would examine the research questions through three communication channels (social media, print ads and product packaging) where a product either needed or could be featured. Therefore, a suitable product had to be selected. As the chosen company operated in the home appliances industry, a home appliance product from the brand's own product line was selected. In order for respondents to be interested in the experiment, a product with a rather high involvement that would be relevant to all respondents, regardless of e.g. age and gender, was desirable. A kitchen blender was chosen as a suitable product to be featured in the study. The aim of Pre-study 2: Product Perceptions was to examine consumer perceptions about the chosen product.

#### ***Pre-study 2: Procedure***

A quantitative pre-study investigating consumers' perceptions about the chosen product was performed through the online survey tool Qualtrics (Qualtrics, 2017). The pre-study was conducted in connection to Pre-study 1: Brand Perceptions, hence the sample will be the same for both pre-studies. The survey consisted of a picture of the chosen product with a following self-reporting questionnaire (see Appendix 3). No other product information except for the picture was given.

#### ***Pre-study 2: Questionnaire Design***

A ten-point scale was used for all questions. The questions were designed either as semantic differential scales or as Likert scales (1 = do not agree/10 = agree completely). Demographic questions such as gender and age were asked in the end of the survey.

In order to determine what type of product the chosen product was perceived as, questions aiming to determine whether consumers perceived it as utilitarian or hedonic were asked. The statement "I find the product..." was followed by eight items on a semantic differential scale; (1 = useful/10 = useless), (1 = valuable/10 = worthless), (1 = beneficial/10 = harmful), (1 = wise/10 = foolish), (1 = pleasant/10 = unpleasant), (1 = nice/10 = awful), (1 = agreeable/10 = disagreeable), (1 = happy/10 = sad) as measured by (Batra & Ahtola, 1991). Furthermore, the relevance of the product was measured on a ten-point Likert scale with the statement "I find the product relevant". Also, previous experience of the product was considered as respondents were asked to answer if they owned the product and if they had experience from using the product. To establish the product category, respondents were asked to name a product that they considered equal to the product they had just seen on the picture. Finally, a question asking if respondents enjoyed cooking was measured.

### ***Pre-study 2: Sample***

Since Pre-study 1: Brand Perceptions and Pre-study 2: Product Perceptions were conducted in connection to each other, the same convenience sample as reported above in Pre-study 1: Sample was therefore used also for this pre-study.

### ***Pre-study 2: Results***

All multiple item questions were indexed as they displayed a Cronbach's Alpha  $> .7$  (Söderlund, 2005). By performing a paired t-test on indexes created for the utilitarian and hedonic measures, it was found that the chosen product was seen as both hedonic and utilitarian ( $M_{\text{Hedonic}} = 6.70$  and  $M_{\text{Utilitarian}} = 6.86$  with  $p = .88$ ). The pre-study also showed that the product was perceived as relevant ( $M_{\text{Relevant}} = 7.25$ ). Furthermore, an independent sample t-test showed that no significant differences in perceived product relevance were detected between women and men ( $M_{\text{Relevant Women}} = 7.29$  and  $M_{\text{Relevant Men}} = 7.17$ ,  $p = .91$ ). Moreover, 60% of the respondents stated that they owned the product and 100% stated that they had experience from using it. Finally, the test set out to define the product category as seen by consumers. The results showed that the selected product was perceived as belonging to the small appliance category, and that it is used for cooking. Finally, the pre-study showed that people enjoy cooking ( $M_{\text{Cooking}} = 7.50$ ), which could be an explanation to why a home appliance product is perceived as both hedonic and utilitarian.

These findings imply that the chosen product is seen as both utilitarian and hedonic, is relevant to both men and women and that most people have experience from using it. It can also be concluded that it belongs to the small appliance product category.

### **3.4.3 PRE-STUDY 3: STIMULUS DEVELOPMENT**

The aim with Pre-study 3 was to develop the stimulus, in other words a text that would communicate corporate purpose and could be used in all three studies. Furthermore, the pre-study aimed to ensure that the stimulus text would indeed convey that the company was purposeful.

### ***Pre-study 3: Procedure***

Ten purposes were created from the compiled list of purposeful companies and their corporate purposes created in the introductory qualitative pre-study. Some of the ten purposes were produced by combining existing purposes from different firms and some were simply taken from a single company in order to have them be perceived as authentic as possible. While clearly conveying the central aspects of a corporate purpose, it was considered appropriate that the stimulus text would not be longer than one sentence. This was decided in order to ensure that differences between the control and treatment groups, apart from the level of corporate purposefulness, would be minimal, especially since signalling theory was examined. A possible risk with using a longer stimulus text could be that the length itself would signal effort. Therefore, the ten created purposes all consisted of only one sentence and did not differ substantially in length.

Firstly, a qualitative study was performed. It consisted of small interviews with five consultants where the ten suggestions for stimulus texts were discussed. Apart from an open discussion, the interviewees were asked to rank the ten sentences in the order they found them to convey the most corporate purpose and to motivate their answers. A clear pattern could be detected as three sentences stood out for being considered to best convey a corporate purpose. The three sentences were rather similar as they were based on the same purposes from the compiled list however expressed in different ways.

The three sentences were tested quantitatively. The aim of the quantitative test was to conclude which out of the three sentences that was considered to best convey a high level of corporate purposefulness and hence would be used as stimulus in the main studies.

The sentences were put into a short text about the chosen company, inspired by the frequently existing “About us” tab on company and brand websites. This was made in order for respondents to experience the purpose in a context. Data was collected by handouts at a Swedish business school. The survey can be found in Appendix 4.

### ***Pre-study 3: Questionnaire Design***

A ten-point Likert scale (1 = do not agree/10 = agree completely) was used for the same six questions as created for Pre-study 1: Brand Perceptions, on the level of corporate purposefulness. “The brand has a clear purpose”, “The brand aspires for something more”, “The brand has a reason for existing and being”, “It is clear why the brand exists”, “The brand is a purposeful company” and “The brand is a meaningful corporation”. In addition, questions were asked concerning the purpose in order to ensure that the purpose was understood. A ten-point Likert scale (1 = do not agree/10 = agree completely) was used for the four questions; “The brand wants to shape living in small but meaningful ways each day” “The brand aims to improve animal rights”, “The brand aims to shape living for the better” and “The brand’s only aim is to improve the health of our planet”. Demographic questions such as gender and age were asked in the end of the survey.

### ***Pre-study 3: Sample***

For the collection of data, a convenience sample consisting of students was used. A total of  $n = 99$  respondents participated ( $n_{\text{Purpose 1}} = 38$ ,  $n_{\text{Purpose 2}} = 30$  and  $n_{\text{Purpose 3}} = 31$ ). 58% identified as women and 42% as men. The average age was 24.

### ***Pre-study 3: Results***

The multiple item question was indexed as it displayed a Cronbach’s Alpha  $> .7$  (Söderlund, 2005). For all three texts, the indexed means showed that the brand was perceived as purposeful ( $M_{\text{Purpose 1}} = 6.96$ ,  $M_{\text{Purpose 2}} = 7.35$ ,  $M_{\text{Purpose 3}} = 7.38$ ,  $p = .364$ ). The results showed no significant differences between the groups. However, the test gave an indication as to which purpose that could be chosen as the highest mean was contributed to the third purpose. Mutual for all purposes, was that they scored high on the question “The brand aims to shape living for the better” and high, but not as high, as the previous question on “The brand wants to shape living in small but meaningful ways each day”. Low answers were detected for “The brand aims to

improve animal rights” and “The brand’s only aim is to improve the health of our planet”. These results confirmed that all purposes were indeed understood. Since the aim of the pre-study was not to determine significant differences between the three stimuli but rather to confirm that the stimuli were indeed perceived as conveying the message of a purposeful company, the third purpose with the highest mean was chosen as stimulus for the main studies. The third purpose, "Our purpose is to shape living for the better as we strive to improve everyday life for millions of people and the world around us", was a sentence solely created from Electrolux’ purpose description.

#### **3.4.4 PRE-STUDY 4: DEVELOPING TEXT TO NOT CONVEY A CORPORATE PURPOSE**

Pre-study 4 aimed to ensure that the text presented to the control group as well as to the treatment group before the stimulus would not be perceived as conveying a corporate purpose.

##### ***Pre-study 4: Procedure***

The same qualitative study that was conducted for the stimuli in Pre-study 3, was conducted for the absence of a corporate purpose. Ten sentences conveying company information without any elements of a corporate purpose was created out of information from the chosen company’s website and annual report. Five persons were interviewed and asked to rank the texts similarly to the procedure in Pre-study 3: Stimulus Development. The different texts consisted of either one or two sentences. Since both the control and treatment group would be exposed to the short text, the length of the text was not as critical as for the stimulus. In fact, the longer the text with the absence of a corporate purpose, the smaller the difference would become between the two groups when adding the stimulus.

The three texts that were considered to the least extent convey a corporate purpose by the interviewed persons were tested quantitatively. Since both the control and the treatment groups in the main studies would be exposed to the text, less effort was invested to measure these sentences. For this pre-study, it was only of relevance to ensure that the chosen text would not be perceived as containing any element of a corporate purpose. Data was collected by handouts at a Swedish business school. The survey can be found in Appendix 5.

##### ***Pre-study 4: Questionnaire***

The short questionnaire was designed precisely like the Pre-study 3: Stimulus development with the same questions concerning the purposefulness of the brand. For measures see part 3.4.3 Pre-study 3: Questionnaire.

##### ***Pre-study 4: Sample***

For the collection of data, a convenience sample consisting of students was used. A total of  $n = 30$  respondents participated,  $n = 10$  per text. Where 16 identified as women, 13 as men and 1 as other. The average age was 25.



### ***Pre-study 4: Result***

The text that received the lowest mean ( $M_{\text{Non-purpose 1}} = 4.85$ ) was chosen to be used in the main studies. The results showed no significant differences between the three groups, which could be due to the low number of respondents. The text chosen was “Electrolux is a global leader in home appliances. The products we create are based on deep consumers insight and develop in close collaboration with professional users.”

## **3.5 MAIN STUDIES RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **3.5.1 STUDY 1 - SOCIAL MEDIA**

The aim of Study 1 was to test if a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers in social media, has a positive impact on consumers’ and potential employees’ brand reactions. The choice to examine the communication channel social media is drawn from the introductory qualitative pre-study. Facebook was chosen as the specific social media channel to perform the experiment on since it is one of the most established social media channels with the highest number of users worldwide (Statista, 2017).

In the controlled experiment, respondents were randomly assigned to either the control group or to the treatment group. The control group was exposed to a sponsored Facebook post without a communicated purpose (text developed in part 3.4.4 Pre-study 4: Developing Text to Not Convey a Corporate Purpose) and the treatment group was exposed to a manipulated version of the advertisement that included a purpose (text developed in part 3.3.3 Pre-study 3: Stimulus Development).

The design of the Facebook post was inspired by an actual Facebook post posted by the chosen brand as well as an example of a Facebook post conveying a corporate purpose so that it would be perceived as authentic. What would be featured in the ad depended on the findings from the introductory qualitative pre-study. From the interviews, it could be concluded that one of the ways companies use to communicate their purpose in social media that allows for both pictorial and text (e.g. Facebook & Instagram) was with a picture of a product with the text conveying the purpose. It was therefore decided that the chosen product would be featured in a photo in the Facebook post with the text consisting of either only the text without a corporate purpose (control group) or with the stimulus as well (treatment group). Due to the fact that on average, the majority of total time spent on the internet is accessed through mobile devices (Smart Insights, 2017), a post adapted to the mobile device version of Facebook was used. See Appendix 6 for the created Facebook posts as well as the inspirational posts.

### **3.5.2 STUDY 2 - PRINT AD**

The aim of Study 2 was to test if a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers in print ads, has a positive impact on consumers’ and potential employees’ brand reactions. The choice to examine corporate purpose when communicated in print ads is drawn from the introductory qualitative pre-study.

In the controlled experiment, respondents were randomly assigned to either the control group or to the treatment group. The control group was exposed to an ad without a communicated purpose (text developed in part 3.4.4 Pre-study 4: Developing Text to Not Convey a Corporate Purpose) and the treatment group was exposed to a manipulated version of the ad that included a purpose (text developed in part 3.4.3 Pre-study 3: Stimulus Development).

The design of the ad was inspired by an actual print ad from the chosen brand as well as an example of a print ad conveying a corporate purpose so that it would be perceived as authentic. Print ads often consist of three main elements: the brand, text, and pictorial (Dahlén et al., 2008). The layout, company logo and picture were kept constant, while the text was varied with the stimulus. See Appendix 7 for the created ads as well as the inspirational ads.

### **3.5.3 STUDY 3 - PRODUCT PACKAGING**

The aim of Study 3 was to test if a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers on a product packaging, has a positive impact on consumers' and potential employees' brand reactions. The choice to examine a corporate purpose when communicated on a product packaging is drawn from the introductory qualitative pre-study.

In Study 3, respondents were asked to read a role-play scenario. In a written scenario, respondents are exposed to a lot more information compared to when respondents are subjected to e.g. a Facebook post or a print ad. Most of the information provided is irrelevant for the purpose of the study. Study 3 may therefore be viewed as more robust than Study 1 and 2.

Through the controlled experiment, respondents were randomly assigned to either the control group or to the treatment group. Both groups were asked to read through a text based role-playing scenario (Geller, 1978) that took place in a retail environment. In the scenario, the respondents were asked to imagine that they were on their way to buy a birthday gift for a close friend. The setting with the gift gave the respondents a mission which should make them more attentive when answering the survey (Belk, 1982). Once inside a store, a product packaging containing the chosen product was picked up. The control group would read on the packaging the text about the company that did not contain any elements of a corporate purpose (Pre-study 4: Developing Text to Not Convey a Corporate Purpose) while the treatment group would in addition to reading this text also be exposed to the corporate purpose sentence (Pre-study 3: Stimulus Development). See Appendix 8 for the role-play scenario.

## **3.6 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN**

All respondents, in both the control group and the treatment group for all three studies, were given the same questionnaire. The questions were designed either as ten-point Likert scales (1 = do not agree/10 = agree completely) or as ten-point semantic differential scales. The questionnaire was kept as short as possible to avoid respondents bias in terms of survey fatigue (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Even though the intention was to distribute the survey to students at a Swedish business school, all questions were posed in English so that nothing would get lost in

the translation from language used in the academic research. This would also allow several nationalities to participate in the study.

The order of the questions in the survey were carefully considered. First, the questions concerning the explanatory variables perceived message relevance, effort, caring and ability were asked. These were followed by the dependent variables, brand attitude, WOM intention and employer attractiveness. The questions concerning attitude were posed before questions aiming to assess intention as recommended by Bryman and Bell (2011). The manipulation control questions for the dependent variable were asked in the end of the questionnaire so that the purpose of the study would not be revealed before (Söderlund, 2010). Finally, demographic questions were asked. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 9.

### **3.6.1 MANIPULATION CONTROL**

To ensure that the manipulated variable was indeed perceived as intended, questions about the independent variable were asked. As mentioned above, to our knowledge, survey questions concerning corporate purpose have not previously been measured in a consumer marketing context. Therefore, the questions were constructed from the definition of corporate purpose described in the background. Corporate purpose was therefore measured on a ten-point Likert scale (1 = do not agree/10 = agree completely) with three out of the six items used for the pre-studies. Specifically, the following three items were chosen out of the six since they displayed the highest Cronbach's Alpha value in a Pilot test conducted (see part 3.7). The three items were "The brand has a clear purpose", "The brand has a reason for existing and being" and "The brand is a purposeful company".

### **3.6.2 EXPLANATORY VARIABLES**

All explanatory variables were measured on a ten-point Likert scale.

Perceived message relevance was measured with three items on a Likert scale (1 = do not agree/10 = agree completely). The questions were "The Facebook post/print ad/product packaging is meaningful to me", "The Facebook post/print ad/product packaging is appropriate to me" and "The Facebook post/print ad/product packaging is valuable to me" (Smith et al., 2007).

Perceived marketing effort was, as measured by Modig et al. (2014), assessed with the question "I perceive the effort behind this Facebook post/print ad/product packaging" on a Likert scale (1 = low/10 = high).

Perceived caring was measured with the question "The brand cares about their non-shareholder stakeholders (e.g. consumers, employees, society)" on a Likert scale (1 = do not agree/10 = agree completely) A similar measure has been used by Colliander et al. (2015).

Perceived brand ability was, in line with Dahlén et al. (2008), assessed using the questions "The brand is smart", "The brand is likely to develop valuable products in the future" and "The brand

is good at solving consumers' problems". The questions were assessed on a Likert scale (1 = do not agree/10 = agree completely).

### **3.6.3 DEPENDENT VARIABLES**

All dependent variables were measured with either a ten-point Likert scale (1 = do not agree/10 = agree completely) or with a semantic differential scale.

Brand attitude was measured with three items on a semantic differential scale with the question "What do you think of the brand?". The three items were (1 = good/10 = bad), (1 = pleasant/10 = unpleasant) and (1 = favourable/10 = unfavourable) (MacKenzie et al., 1989).

WOM intention was assessed using two items from Modig et al. (2014), inspired from Reichheld (2003). The items "I want to recommend the brand" and "I want to talk about the brand" were measured on a Likert scale.

Employer attractiveness was measured with the three items on a Likert scale "For me, the brand would be a good place to work", "A job at the brand is very appealing to me" and "The brand is attractive to me as a place for employment", as used by Rosengren and Bondesson (2014).

### **3.6.4 INSTRUCTION VALIDITY CONTROL AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

An instructional validity check (Söderlund, 2010) was included to ensure that respondents had read through the instructions and understood what they were answering. Two simple questions were asked in the end of the survey; "What product was featured?" and "Have you ever had a deadly heart attack?" so that all faulty answers could be removed from the sample.

The final question before respondents were asked to fill out demographic information, concerned the purpose of the experiment. In order to make sure that the respondents did not know the purpose of the experiment when participating as this could cause bias (Malhotra & Birks, 2007) the following open-ended question was asked; "What do you think the purpose of this study was?". Answers too similar to the actual study purpose would be removed.

### **3.6.5 DEMOGRAPHY**

Demographic questions, such as age and gender, were asked in the very end of the survey (Söderlund, 2010). Since the survey was in English, respondents were asked to fill in their mother tongue in order to understand if this would influence the results.

## **3.7 PILOT TEST**

After the main studies design was completed, a pilot test was performed, as recommended by Bryman and Bell (2011), in order to identify potential issues that may have unwanted impact on the study. The pilot test also ensured a high quality of the survey and increases the reliability and validity of the main studies (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to Gay, Mills and Ariasian (2006), the pilot study is a small-scale trial of the main study. This also ensures that questions would operate as intended in the given context (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Moreover, the aim was

to examine which questions that could be removed from the questionnaire to shorten it so that respondents fatigue (Bryman & Bell, 2011) would be avoided. As the surveys would probably not be in most of the respondents' mother tongue, it was of importance to receive feedback on the understanding of all questions since research have shown that language plays an important part when respondents answer questions (Harzing & Maznevski, 2002).

### **3.7.1 PILOT TEST: PROCEDURE**

Since both the same questionnaire, brand, product and text were used in all three main studies, it was decided to conduct the pilot test on one of the main studies, Study 1. Afterwards, the respondents were asked to give feedback on the survey.

### **3.7.2 PILOT TEST: SAMPLE**

A paper-based survey was handed out to business students, hence a convenience sample (Söderlund, 2010) was used. A pilot test should consist of a sample size of  $n = 15$  to  $n = 30$  (Hill, 1998; Malhotra, 2008). The sample for the pilot test was within that span,  $n = 26$  where 10 identified as women and 16 as men. The average age was 25.

### **3.7.3 PILOT TEST: RESULTS**

From feedback given by the participants, the following changes were made. Since a majority stated that the survey was too long in order to keep interest and full focus, the survey was shortened. Some longer questionnaire batteries were exchanged for shorter ones measuring the same things and also previously used in literature. For clarity, only the final version of the questionnaire was presented in part 3.6 Questionnaire Design. Furthermore, clearer instructions were added in order to improve the survey as a whole.

All multiple-item questions had a Cronbach's Alpha  $> .7$  (see Appendix 10). From independent sample t-tests it could be detected that all mean values were in line with and pointed in the same direction as was suggested by theory. Most results were significant within 90% confidence interval (see Appendix 10). The results therefore indicate that the main studies could be preceded with as intended. Moreover, as mentioned in part 3.6.1, for the measurement of corporate purpose three items out of the six tested in the pilot study was chosen to be used in the main study. This decision was made since these three items combined displayed the highest Cronbach's Alpha value out of all possible combinations.

## **3.8 SAMPLING**

Due to the limited time and resources, a convenience sample (Söderlund, 2010) was used where university students were chosen to be the respondents. Some researchers argue that students are not representative of the larger population, in this case Swedish consumers, since they for example are believed to be better at reading (Smart, 1966) and the fact that they are younger and often belong to higher socioeconomic classes (Schultz, 1969). Even though university students are not considered to be typical consumers (Wells, 1993), several researchers mean that a benefit of using students as respondents is that the sample will be more homogenous when using students. The benefit lies in the fact that a heterogeneous sample will make it harder

to reject a hypothesis, hence a homogenous sample should be used (Lynch, 1982). In line with Rosengren and Bondesson (2014), a student sample was furthermore considered suitable since the aim of the study, apart from investigating brand attitude and WOM intention, was to examine if a corporate purpose would influence the employer attractiveness. As students are potential employees that will soon be looking for employment, they are considered suitable respondents for this thesis (Berthon et al., 2005).

### 3.8.1 DATA COLLECTION

The experiment was conducted through handouts in several classes at a Swedish business school. In the interest of protecting the integrity of the respondents all responses were treated anonymously (Söderlund, 2010).

### 3.8.2 DATA QUALITY CONTROL

For all the three studies combined, 269 surveys were filled out. However, in order to ensure high quality results, data cleaning was conducted (Malhotra, 2008). Uncompleted surveys or surveys where respondents had failed the instruction validity checks were removed from the sample (Bryman & Bell, 2011). So were surveys where the respondent had understood or stated an answer too similar to the actual purpose of the study as this could cause bias (Söderlund, 2010).

	Study1	Study 2	Study 3
Initial sample	88	87	94
Number of surveys removed due to uncompleted survey	1	2	3
Number of surveys removed due to failing of instructional validity check	1	0	0
Number of surveys removed due to understanding of study purpose	2	1	2
Final sample	84	84	89
<b>Response rate</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>95%</b>

*Table 2: Data Quality*

After cleaning the data, the final sample used for all three studies combined were 257. As can be seen in table 2, all three studies had an “excellent” response rate well above 85% (Mangione, 1995).

### 3.8.3 SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHY

Respondents' demographic data for each main study is shown in table 3. It can be concluded that the groups are relatively similar in size and have rather similar demographic distribution.

	Study 1		Study 2		Study 3	
	Control	Treatment	Control	Treatment	Control	Treatment
Male	11	17	21	26	16	19
Female	30	25	19	18	29	24
Other	1	0	0	0	1	0
Total	42	42	40	44	46	43

Table 3: Sample demography

### 3.9 STATISTICAL METHODS

The analysis of the three main studies were conducted using IBM Analytics software SPSS (version 24). The statistical tests Cronbach's Alpha, between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA), independent sample t-test and simple mediation analysis (Hayes' PROCESS) were performed in order to analyse the results of the three main studies.

In order to index multi-item measurements into single metrics, Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the reliability. Results  $> .7$  were considered acceptable (Söderlund, 2005). Since the hypotheses concerned two groups, independent sample t-tests were performed to test the mean difference between the control group and the treatment group. Simple mediation analysis (Hayes' PROCESS) was then used to gain deeper understanding of the reasoning behind the differences detected by the independent t-tests. Between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the three studies.

The levels of significance are presented as: \*  $p < .1$ , \*\*  $p < .05$  and \*\*\*  $p < .01$ . Hypotheses were accepted at a significance level of 90% (Figueiredo Filho et al., 2013) and two-tailed tests were used. A 90% confidence interval excluding zero was used for the simple mediation tests performed with Hayes' PROCESS (Zaho et al., 2010).

Summary of statistical tests performed in SPSS:

- Cronbach's Alpha
- Between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA)
- Independent sample t-test
- Simple mediation analysis (Hayes' PROCESS)

### **3.10 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

It is of utmost importance to examine to which degree research conducted indeed provides an accurate description of reality and measures what was intended (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Therefore, an assessment of the reliability and validity is made.

#### **3.10.1 RELIABILITY**

Reliability concerns the consistency of the measures and whether or not the study is dependable (Bryman & Bell, 2011). One way of securing the reliability is to measure the stability, hence administer the studies several times. Due to time constraints, this was not possible for this thesis. However, it should be noted that three similar studies were conducted. Moreover, there are other methods to secure the reliability. The conduction of several pre-studies as well as a pilot test increases the reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Also, the use of multiple-item measures, from which indexes were created when Cronbach's Alpha showed a result of .7 or above, increases the reliability of the studies (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Based on this evaluation, the reliability of this thesis is considered satisfactory.

#### **3.10.2 VALIDITY**

Validity can be defined as "the approximate truth of an inference" (Campbell & Cook, 2002) and the examination of validity aims to ensure that what was intended to be measured really was measured (Söderlund, 2005). As many threats for the validity as possible were ruled out through the design of the experiments.

##### ***Internal Validity***

Internal validity refers to the experiments' accuracy and to what degree it can be ensured that it is the treatment that indeed explains the effects (Söderlund, 2010). By assorting respondents randomly to either the control or the treatment group several threats to the thesis' internal validity was removed (Campbell & Cook, 2002) such as previous knowledge or experience of the brand. Apart from the treatment, both groups received the same information. Furthermore, in order to enhance the internal validity of the studies, the material for the experiments were inspired and, as far as possible, created out of real life content (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Also, the fact that the controlled experiments were held in classrooms that made it possible to control surrounding features enhanced the validity (Söderlund, 2010). Thanks to the data collection in classrooms, there was a low dropout during the experiments (Campbell & Cook, 2002). Furthermore, the student sample used ensured a homogenous group which would make it easier to not support a hypothesis (Söderlund, 2010). In addition, the several pre-studies and the pilot test were conducted to examine the causal effect of corporate purpose and attitude, intention and employer attractiveness which thereby improves the internal validity (Campbell & Cook, 2002). Based on this evaluation, the internal validity of this thesis is considered satisfactory.

##### ***External validity***

The external validity explains to what degree the results can be generalisable beyond the specific research context (Söderlund, 2010). The homogenous sample, university students, that was argued to increase the internal validity of the studies makes it difficult to generalise the



results to an entire population of consumers, and therefore decreases the external validity (Campbell & Cook, 2002). It would even be difficult to argue that the study could be generalisable to all students since the sample solely consisted of business students. Therefore, it could be considered challenging to take the results of the studies from narrow to broad. Furthermore, the artificial experiment design, which enhanced the internal validity, reduces the transferability of the study hence lowering the external validity (Campbell & Cook, 2002). However, the fact that not only one, but three experiments testing three different types of communication were conducted, made it possible to more confidently investigate whether the results were generalisable (Malhotra, 2008). Also, the design of the role-play scenario where the participant was exposed to various information improves the external validity (Söderlund, 2010). Since three studies were performed, the external validity of this thesis is considered satisfactory. However, the fact that a sample solely consisting of students were used should be kept in mind when interpreting the results.

### ***Measurement Validity***

As this thesis consists of quantitative studies, it is relevant to consider the measurement validity. This refers to whether the measures used reflects the reality (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As previously mentioned, the questionnaire consisted of multiple-item measures and were as far as possible manifested in previous research, which increases the measurement validity (Bryman & Bell, 2011). However, some questions were slightly modified to better fit the context and the items measuring corporate purpose were created from scratch. These had not previously been used or tested in existing research. Since no questions used from previous research were translated as they were all kept in their original language (English) the validity would not have been affected even though the majority of the participants stated that English was not their mother tongue as a high level of English knowledge is required for business students. The measurement validity of this thesis is considered satisfactory.

### ***Ecological validity***

Whether or not the scientific findings are applicable to people's every day, natural, social setting is referred to as ecological validity (Bryman & Bell, 2011). By using a real brand for the studies and by having a product that consumers know of, the ecological validity is increased (Dahlén et al., 2009). In addition, the design of the experiments was based on the findings in the introductory qualitative pre-study of how companies today communicate their purposes in reality. Furthermore, the Facebook post, print ad and product packaging were all inspired by real posts, ads and product packages. Hence, the level of ecological validity for this thesis is considered satisfactory.

## 4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

*This chapter reveals the results from the main studies 1, 2 and 3. Firstly, manipulation controls are presented followed by results and analysis of the hypotheses for each study. The findings from the three studies are summarised in the research model as well as in a list of the hypotheses.*

### 4.1 MANIPULATION CONTROL

Before investigating the results of the hypotheses for study 1, 2 and 3, manipulation controls were carried out in order to ensure that the independent variable purpose was indeed perceived as intended. Furthermore, the tests aimed to assess the internal validity of the studies. Independent sample t-tests were used for the manipulation controls. Results are shown in table 4.

	<b>M Control</b>	<b>M Treatment</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>
Study 1	5.78	7.09	.007***
Study 2	5.28	6.70	.009***
Study 3	6.02	7.15	.010**

\* Significant at  $p < .1$ ; \*\* Significant at  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* Significant at  $p < .01$

*Table 4: Manipulation Control*

Since the results show significant differences in means between the control and treatment groups, the results proved the manipulation of purpose to be successful in all three studies. The manipulation control thus ensured that the observed effects could indeed be attributed to the research stimulus.

### 4.2 RESULTS OF MAIN STUDIES

Study 1, 2 and 3 all aimed to examine the effects of purpose communicated to consumers on consumers' and potential employees' brand reactions. Since the stimulus, text and questionnaire were identical in all three studies, the hypotheses were tested with the same statistical tools. Independent sample t-tests were used to test mean differences between the control and treatment groups. In order to further analyse the results, simple mediation analysis was used to test mediation in line with the theoretical reasoning. For all multiple-items measures, indexes were created as all Cronbach's Alphas were  $> .7$  (Söderlund, 2005) in order to perform the statistical analyses. A list of all Cronbach's Alpha values for all three studies can be found in Appendix 11.

#### 4.2.1 STUDY 1 - SOCIAL MEDIA

The following results describe the empirical findings from Study 1 - Social Media. Table 5 displays the results from the independent sample t-tests.

	M Control	M Treatment	p
Perceived Relevance	3.57	4.32	.091*
Perceived Effort	5.07	5.98	.093*
Perceived Caring	5.70	6.76	.033**
Perceived Ability	6.37	6.94	.203
Brand Attitude	6.35	7.20	.034**
WOM Intention	4.48	4.73	.590
Emp. Attractiveness	3.84	4.77	.080*

\* Significant at  $p < .1$ ; \*\* Significant at  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* Significant at  $p < .01$

Table 5: Results from independent sample t-tests for Study 1

##### ***Perceived Relevance***

H1 predicts that perceived message relevance is higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. The results display a significantly higher mean for the treatment group than for the control group ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 4.32 > M_{\text{Control}} = 3.57$ ,  $p = .091^*$ ). For Study 1, H1 is therefore supported.

##### ***Perceived Effort***

H2 suggests that the perceived effort will be higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. In line with existing theory, the results show a higher perceived effort when a purpose is communicated ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 5.98 > M_{\text{Control}} = 5.07$ ,  $p = .093^*$ ). For Study 1, H2 is supported.

##### ***Perceived Caring***

H3 proposes that the perceived caring is higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. In line with existing theory, the results display a higher perceived caring when a purpose is communicated ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 6.76 > M_{\text{Control}} = 5.70$ ,  $p = .033^{**}$ ). For Study 1, H3 is supported.

##### ***Perceived Brand Ability***

H4 suggests that the perceived brand ability is higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. The results show no significant difference between the groups ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 6.94 > M_{\text{Control}} = 6.37$ ,  $p = .203$ ). H4 is not supported in Study 1.

##### ***Brand Attitude***

According to H5, the brand attitude will be higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. As theory suggested, the group exposed to communication with a purpose expressed a higher attitude towards the brand than the control group did ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 7.20 > M_{\text{Control}} = 6.35$ ,  $p = .034^{**}$ ). H5 for Study 1 is supported.

### ***WOM Intention***

Since theory suggested that not only attitudes but also intentions would be affected by a communicated purpose, H6 stated that WOM intention would be higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. The results do not show a significant difference between the groups ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 4.73 > M_{\text{Control}} = 4.48, p = .590$ ). Hence, H6 is not supported in Study 1.

### ***Employer Attractiveness***

Apart from examining consumer reactions, the study aimed to investigate the impact of a purpose communicated to consumers on the employer brand. H7 proposed that the employer attractiveness of the brand would be higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. The results display a significantly higher mean for the treatment group than for the control group ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 4.77 > M_{\text{Control}} = 3.84, p = .080^*$ ). H7 for Study 1 is therefore supported.

### ***Mediation Analyses***

In order to further examine the results and to further test the reasoning behind the hypotheses from the theoretical framework, mediation analyses were performed. Simple mediation analysis (Hayes' PROCESS) was used.

### ***Brand Attitude***

Apart from attribution theory and the theory on need for cognition, brand attitude was reasoned to increase due to higher perceived relevance from a communicated purpose. Also perceived effort and care, signalled when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers, were reasoned to have a positive effect on brand attitude. Therefore, mediation analyses for brand attitude were conducted for the mediating variables perceived relevance, effort and caring. Results are presented in table 6 and in figure 3-5.

Path		$\beta$	$p$	90% Conf. Interval	
Relevance				LLCI	ULCI
a		0.76	.088*	0.06	1.49
b		0.44	.000***	0.29	0.58
c	Direct effect	0.52	.149	-0.07	1.12
axb	Indirect effect	0.33		0.02	0.78
Effort				LLCI	ULCI
a		0.91	.094*	0.02	1.80
b		0.48	.000***	0.35	0.62
c	Direct effect	-0.18	.655	-0.85	0.49
axb	Indirect effect	0.44		0.04	0.97
Care				LLCI	ULCI
a		1.05	.034**	0.24	1.87
b		0.39	.000***	0.26	0.53
c	Direct effect	0.44	.230	-0.16	1.04
axb	Indirect effect	0.41		0.13	0.87

Independent: Purpose

Dependent: Brand attitude

Bootstrap sample = 5000

n=84

Table 6: Results from mediation analyses for brand attitude for Study 1

The result for the test of whether there is an indirect effect of purpose on brand attitude through perceived relevance, show that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ( $a \times b = .33$ ) with a 90% confidence interval excluding zero (.02 to .78). The direct effect for  $c$  (.52) is not significant ( $p = .149$ ). The result shows that relevance positively mediates the relationship between purpose and brand attitude, consistent with the theoretical framework for personal involvement.

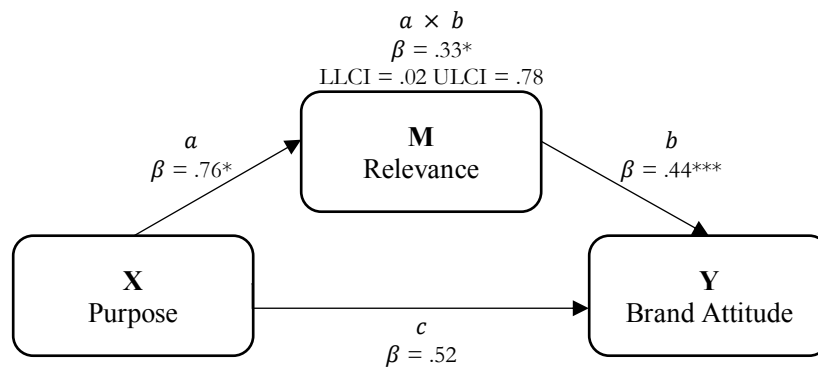


Figure 3: Result for perceived relevance as mediator for brand attitude for Study 1

The result for the test of whether there is an indirect effect of purpose on brand attitude through perceived effort shows that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ( $a \times b = .44$ ) with a 90% confidence interval excluding zero (.04 to .97). The direct effect for  $c$  (-.18) is not significant ( $p = .655$ ). The result shows that effort positively mediates the relationship between purpose and brand attitude, consistent with the theoretical framework for the signalling of effort.

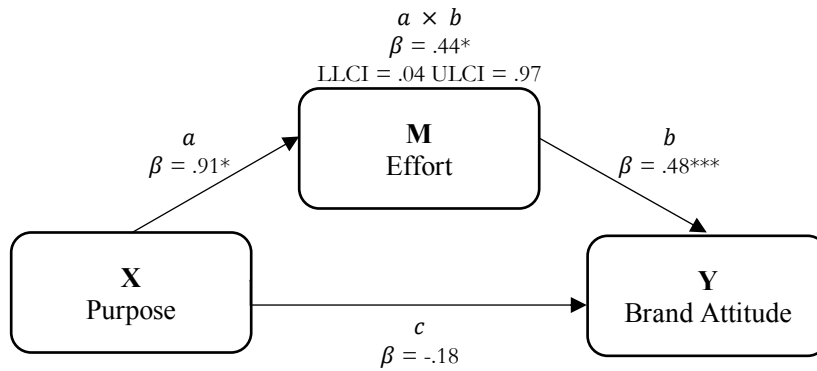


Figure 4: Results for perceived effort as mediator for brand attitude for Study 1

The result for the test of whether there is an indirect effect of purpose on brand attitude through perceived caring show that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ( $a \times b = .41$ ) with a 90% confidence interval excluding zero (.13 to .87). The direct effect for  $c$  (.44) is not significant ( $p = .230$ ). The result shows that care positively mediates the relationship between purpose and brand attitude, consistent with the theoretical framework for the signalling of care.

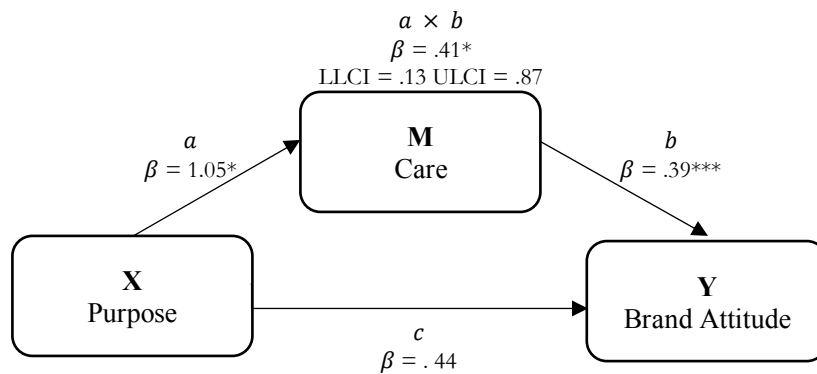


Figure 5: Result for perceived care as mediator for brand attitude for Study 1

### WOM Intention

The independent sample t-test presented above, revealed that H6 concerning WOM intention was not supported. Since no significant difference was found, no mediation analysis is performed.

### *Employer Attractiveness*

The theoretical reasoning behind the increase in employer attractiveness was drawn from signalling theory and the notion that perceived ability, signalled when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers, would have a positive effect on employer attractiveness. However, even if H7, concerning the employer attractiveness, was supported, perceived ability was not (H4). Therefore, a mediation analysis is not performed.

### ***Hypotheses Summary of Results for Study 1***

<b>Hypotheses Study 1</b>		
<b>H1</b>	Perceived message relevance is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H2</b>	Perceived effort is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H3</b>	Perceived caring is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H4</b>	Perceived brand ability is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Not supported</b>
<b>H5</b>	Brand attitude is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H6</b>	WOM intention is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Not supported</b>
<b>H7</b>	Attractiveness of the brand as a potential employer is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>

*Table 7: Hypotheses summary of results for Study 1*

### **4.2.2 STUDY 2 - PRINT AD**

The following results describe the empirical findings from Study 2 - Print Ads. Table 8 displays the results from the independent sample t-tests.

	<b>M Control</b>	<b>M Treatment</b>	<b>p</b>
Perceived Relevance	3.87	5.25	.449
Perceived Effort	4.10	5.07	.058*
Perceived Caring	5.13	6.34	.023**
Perceived Ability	5.83	6.70	.042**
Brand Attitude	6.00	6.71	.091*
WOM Intention	4.25	5.34	.056*
Emp. Attractiveness	4.13	5.11	.062*

\* Significant at  $p < .1$ ; \*\* Significant at  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* Significant at  $p < .01$

*Table 8: Results from independent sample t-tests for Study 2*

### ***Perceived Relevance***

H1 suggests that perceived relevance is higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. The results show no significant difference between the groups ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 5.25 > M_{\text{Control}} = 3.87$ ,  $p = .449$ ). For Study 2, H1 is therefore not supported.

### ***Perceived Effort***

H2 predicts that perceived effort is higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. In line with existing theory, the results show a higher perceived effort when a purpose is communicated ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 5.07 > M_{\text{Control}} = 4.10$ ,  $p = .058^*$ ). For Study 2, H2 is supported.

### ***Perceived Caring***

H3 suggests that perceived caring is higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. The results display a higher perceived caring when a purpose is communicated ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 6.34 > M_{\text{Control}} = 5.13$ ,  $p = .023^{**}$ ) and H3 is therefore supported for Study 2.

### ***Perceived Ability***

H4 proposes that perceived brand ability will be higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. The results show a higher perceived ability when a purpose is communicated ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 6.70 > M_{\text{Control}} = 5.83$ ,  $p = .042^{**}$ ). For Study 2, H4 is therefore supported.

### ***Brand Attitude***

H5 predicts that brand attitude will be higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. Like theory suggested, the group exposed to communication with a purpose expressed a higher attitude towards the brand than the control group did ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 6.71 > M_{\text{Control}} = 6.00$ ,  $p = .091^*$ ). Hence, H5 is supported for Study 2.

### ***WOM Intention***

H6 proposes that WOM intention is higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. Results show that the treatment group displayed a higher WOM intention than the control group did ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 5.34 > M_{\text{Control}} = 4.25$ ,  $p = .056^*$ ). H6 is supported for Study 2.

### ***Employer Attractiveness***

Since the study aimed to investigate the impact of a purpose communicated to consumers on the employer brand, H7 proposed that the employer attractiveness of the brand is higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. In line with theory, the results display a higher mean for the treatment group than for the control group ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 5.11 > M_{\text{Control}} = 4.13$ ,  $p = .062^*$ ). For Study 2, H7 is supported.



### Mediation Analyses

Just like for Study 1, mediation analyses were performed in order to test the underlying reasoning of the relationship between the dependent variables and the communicated purpose. Simple mediation analysis (Hayes' PROCESS) was used. Since the independent t-test for perceived relevance was not significant, no mediation analysis was performed for this variable.

### Brand Attitude

The reasoning behind the increase in brand attitude, apart from theory on attribution, need for cognition, relevance and personal involvement, was built on the idea that perceived effort and care, signalled when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers, would have a positive effect on brand attitude. Therefore, the results from these two mediation analyses are presented below as well as in table 9 and figure 6 and 7.

Path		$\beta$	$p$	90% Conf. Interval	
Effort				LLCI	ULCI
a		0.97	.059*	0.13	1.81
b		0.38	.000***	0.24	0.52
c	Direct effect	0.35	.372	-0.29	0.98
axb	Indirect effect	0.37		0.08	0.79
Care				LLCI	ULCI
a		1.21	.020**	0.35	2.07
b		0.39	.000***	0.25	0.52
c	Direct effect	0.24	.539	-0.40	0.87
axb	Indirect effect	0.48		0.13	1.00

Independent: Purpose  
Dependent: Brand Attitude  
Bootstrap sample = 5000  
n=84

Table 9: Results from mediation analyses for brand attitude for Study 2

The results from the mediation analysis with perceived effort as mediating variable show that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ( $a \times b = .37$ ) with a 90% confidence interval excluding zero (.08 to .79). The direct effect for  $c$  (.35) is not significant ( $p = .372$ ). The results show that effort positively mediates the relationship between purpose and brand attitude as suggested in the theoretical framework.

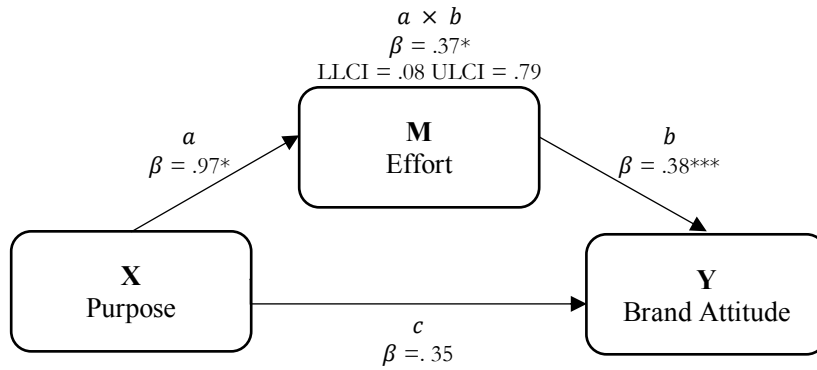


Figure 6: Result for perceived effort as mediator for brand attitude for Study 2

The results from the mediation analysis with perceived caring as variable show that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ( $a \times b = .48$ ) with a 90% confidence interval excluding zero (.13 to 1.00). The direct effect for  $c$  (.24) is not significant ( $p = .539$ ). The results showed that caring positively mediates the relationship between purpose and brand attitude as suggested by the theoretical framework.

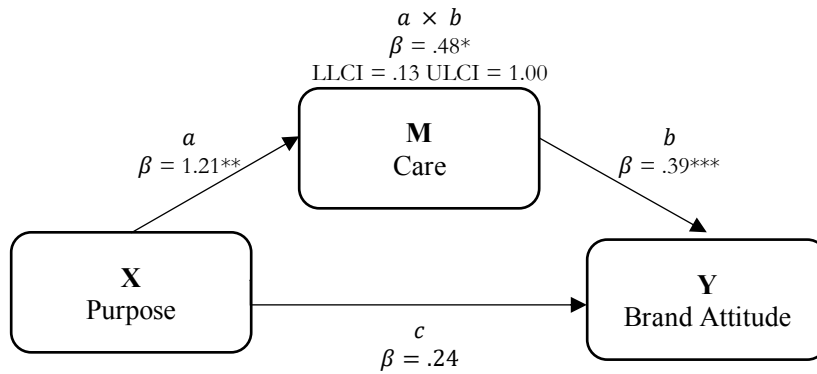


Figure 7: Result for perceived care as mediator for brand attitude for Study 2

### WOM Intention

Apart from theory on attribution, need for cognition, relevance and personal involvement, WOM intention was reasoned to increase as perceived effort and care, signalled when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers, would have a positive effect on this. Therefore, mediation analyses for WOM intention were conducted for the mediating variables perceived effort and caring. Results are presented in table 10 and in figure 8 and 9.

Path		$\beta$	$p$	90% Conf. Interval	
Effort				LLCI	ULCI
a		0.96	.059*	0.12	1.81
b		0.48	.000***	0.34	0.61
c	Direct effect	0.62	.102	-0.01	1.25
axb	Indirect effect	0.46		0.08	0.93
Care				LLCI	ULCI
a		1.21	.020**	0.35	2.07
b		0.61	.000***	0.50	0.72
c	Direct effect	0.34	.284	-0.18	0.87
axb	Indirect effect	0.74		0.21	1.36

Independent: Purpose

Dependent: WOM intention

Bootstrap sample = 5000

n=84

Table 10: Results from mediation analyses for WOM intention for Study 2

The results from the mediation analysis with perceived effort as mediating variable show that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ( $a \times b = .46$ ) with a 90% confidence interval excluding zero (.08 to .93). The direct effect for  $c$  (.62) is not significant ( $p = .102$ ). The results show that perceived effort positively influence WOM intention as suggested in the theoretical framework.

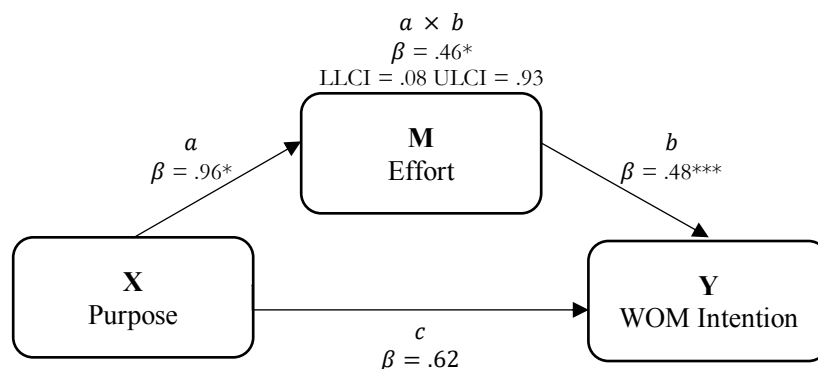


Figure 8: Result for perceived effort as mediator for WOM intention for Study 2

The results from the mediation analysis with perceived caring as mediating variable show that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ( $a \times b = .74$ ) with a 90% confidence interval excluding zero (.21 to 1.36). The direct effect for  $c$  (.34) is not significant ( $p = .284$ ). The results show that perceived care positively influence WOM intention as suggested in the theoretical framework.

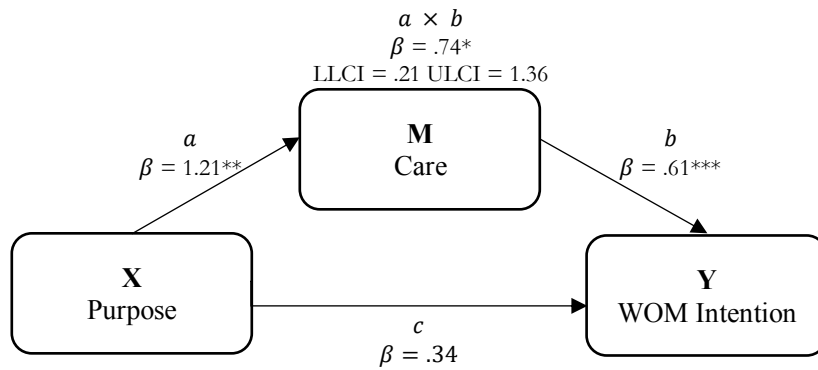


Figure 9: Result for perceived care as mediator for WOM intention for Study 2

### Employer Attractiveness

The theoretical reasoning behind the increase in employer attractiveness was drawn from signalling theory. Perceived ability, signalled when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers, was reasoned to have a positive impact on the attractiveness of the brand as an employer. Therefore, a mediation analysis with perceived ability as mediating variable was conducted. Results are presented in table 11 and in figure 10.

Path		$\beta$	$p$	90% Conf. Interval	
Ability				LLCI	ULCI
a		0.87	.041**	0.17	1.57
b		0.74	.000***	0.56	0.93
c	Direct effect	0.33	.442	-0.38	1.06
axb	Indirect effect	0.64		0.15	1.18

Independent: Purpose

Mediator: Emp. Attractiveness

Bootstrap sample = 5000

n=84

Table 11: Results from mediation analyses for employer attractiveness for Study 2

The results of the analysis show that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ( $a \times b = .64$ ) with a 90% confidence interval excluding zero (.15 to 1.18). The direct effect for  $c$  (.33) is not significant ( $p = .442$ ). The results showed that perceived ability positively mediates employer attractiveness as suggested by theory.

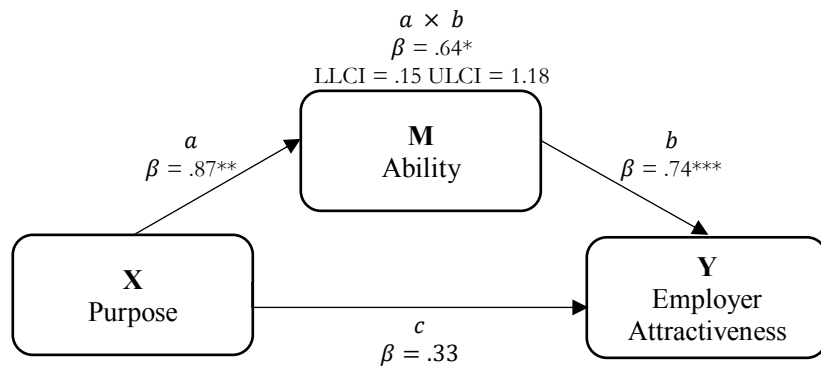


Figure 10: Result for perceived ability as mediator for employer attractiveness for Study 2

### Hypotheses Summary of Results for Study 2

Hypotheses Study 2		
<b>H1</b>	Perceived message relevance is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Not supported</b>
<b>H2</b>	Perceived effort is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H3</b>	Perceived caring is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H4</b>	Perceived brand ability is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H5</b>	Brand attitude is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H6</b>	WOM intention is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H7</b>	Attractiveness of the brand as a potential employer is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>

Table 12: Hypotheses summary of results for Study 2

### 4.2.3 STUDY 3 – PRODUCT PACKAGING

The following results describe the empirical findings from Study 3 - Product Packaging. Table 13 displays the results from the independent sample t-tests.

	M Control	M Treatment	<i>p</i>
Perceived Relevance	4.17	5.46	.009***
Perceived Effort	5.00	6.56	.002***
Perceived Caring	5.37	7.23	.000***
Perceived Ability	6.29	7.21	.019**
Brand Attitude	6.48	7.30	.003***
WOM Intention	4.04	5.71	.000***
Emp. Attractiveness	3.88	5.37	.004***

\* Significant at  $p < .1$ ; \*\* Significant at  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*Significant at  $p < .01$

Table 13: Results from independent sample t-tests for Study 3

#### ***Perceived Relevance***

H1 suggests that perceived relevance is higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. The results show a higher perceived relevance when a purpose is communicated ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 5.46 > M_{\text{Control}} = 4.17$ ,  $p = .009***$ ). H1 is supported for Study 3.

#### ***Perceived Effort***

H2 suggests that perceived effort is higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. In line with existing theory, the results display a higher perceived effort when a purpose is communicated ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 6.56 > M_{\text{Control}} = 5.00$ ,  $p = .002***$ ). For Study 3, H2 is supported.

#### ***Perceived Caring***

H3 predicts that perceived caring will be higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. The results show a higher perceived caring when a purpose is communicated ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 7.23 > M_{\text{Control}} = 5.37$ ,  $p = .000***$ ) and H3 is supported for Study 3.

#### ***Perceived Ability***

H4 suggests that perceived brand ability is higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. In line with existing theory, the results display a higher perceived ability when a purpose is communicated ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 7.21 > M_{\text{Control}} = 6.29$ ,  $p = .019**$ ). For Study 3, H4 is supported.

### ***Brand Attitude***

H5 proposes that brand attitude will be higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. The group exposed to communication with a purpose expressed a higher attitude towards the brand than the control group did ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 7.30 > M_{\text{Control}} = 6.48, p = .003^{***}$ ). H5 is therefore supported for Study 3.

### ***WOM Intention***

H6 predicts that WOM intention is higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. Results show that the treatment group displayed higher WOM intention than the control group did ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 5.71 > M_{\text{Control}} = 4.04, p = .000^{***}$ ). For Study 3, H6 is supported.

### ***Employer Attractiveness***

H7 suggests that the employer attractiveness of the brand is higher when a purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated. The results display a higher mean for the treatment group than for the control group ( $M_{\text{Treatment}} = 5.37 > M_{\text{Control}} = 3.88, p = .004^{***}$ ). For Study 3, H7 is therefore supported.

### ***Mediation Analyses***

As for Study 1 and 2, mediation analyses were performed also for Study 3 in order to test the underlying reasoning of the relationship between the dependent variables brand attitude, WOM intention and employer attractiveness and the communicated purpose. Simple mediation analysis (Hayes' PROCESS) was used.

### Brand Attitude

The results of mediation analyses performed for brand attitude for the mediating variables perceived relevance, effort and caring are presented in table 14 and in figure 11-13.

Path		$\beta$	$p$	90% Conf. Interval	
Relevance				LLCI	ULCI
a		1.28	.008***	0.49	2.06
b		0.34	.000***	0.25	0.42
c	Direct effect	0.38	.106	-0.01	0.77
axb	Indirect effect	0.44		0.18	0.78
Effort				LLCI	ULCI
a		1.55	.002***	0.74	2.37
b		0.05	.326	-0.04	0.16
c	Direct effect	0.73	.014**	0.24	1.21
axb	Indirect effect	0.08		-0.04	0.32
Care				LLCI	ULCI
a		1.86	.000***	1.18	2.54
b		0.36	.000***	0.26	0.46
c	Direct effect	0.14	.575	-0.28	0.28
axb	Indirect effect	0.67		0.41	1.01

Independent: Purpose

Dependent: Brand attitude

Bootstrap sample = 5000

n=89

Table 14: Results from mediation analyses for brand attitude for Study 3

The results from the mediation analysis with perceived relevance as mediating variable show that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ( $a \times b = .44$ ) with a 90% confidence interval excluding zero (.18 to .78). The direct effect for  $c$  (.38) is not significant ( $p = .106$ ). The results show that perceived relevance positively influence brand attitude as indicated in the theoretical framework.

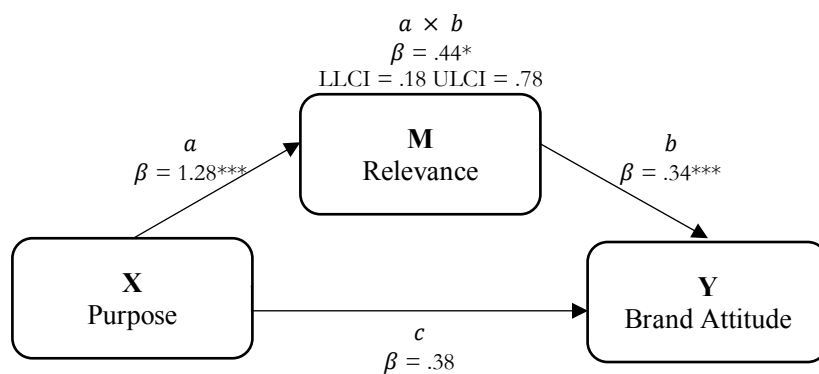


Figure 11: Result for perceived relevance as mediator for brand attitude for Study 3



The results from the mediation analysis with perceived effort as mediating variable show that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive but not significant ( $a \times b = .08$ ) with a 90% confidence interval including zero (-.04 to .32). The direct effect for  $c$  (.73) is significant ( $p = .014^{**}$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that effort does not mediate brand attitude

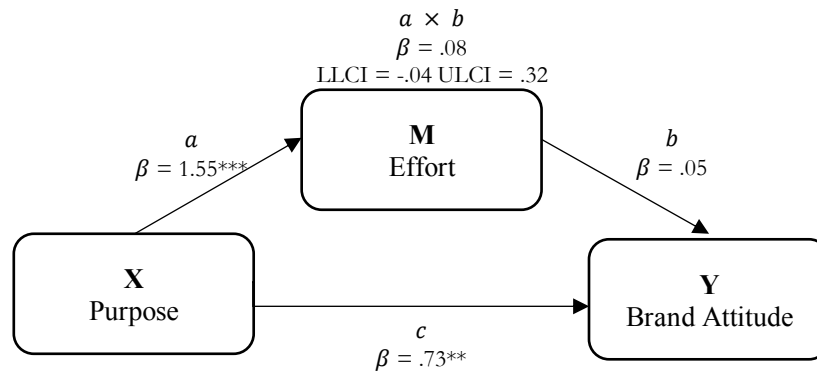


Figure 12: Result for perceived effort as mediator for brand attitude for Study 3

The results from the mediation analysis with perceived caring as mediating variable show that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ( $a \times b = .67$ ) with a 90% confidence interval excluding zero (.41 to 1.01). The direct effect for  $c$  (.14) is not significant ( $p = .575$ ). The results show that caring mediates brand attitude, as indicated in the theoretical framework.

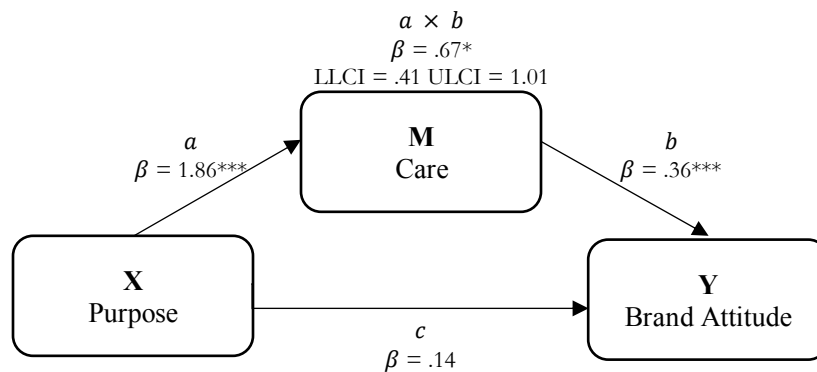


Figure 13: Result for perceived care as mediator for brand attitude for Study 3

### WOM Intention

The results of mediation analyses performed for WOM intention for the mediating variables perceived relevance, effort and caring are presented in table 15 and in figure 14-16.

Path		$\beta$	$p$	90% Conf. Interval	
Relevance				LLCI	ULCI
a		1.28	.008***	0.49	2.06
b		0.49	.000***	0.37	0.61
c	Direct effect	1.03	.003***	0.47	1.58
axb	Indirect effect	0.63		0.25	1.14
Effort				LLCI	ULCI
a		1.55	.002***	0.74	2.37
b		0.17	.040**	0.03	0.31
c	Direct effect	1.39	.001***	0.71	2.07
axb	Indirect effect	0.26		0.04	0.68
Care				LLCI	ULCI
a		1.86	.000***	1.18	2.54
b		0.45	.000***	0.30	0.61
c	Direct effect	0.80	.040**	0.16	1.45
axb	Indirect effect	0.84		0.42	1.44

Independent: Purpose  
Dependent: WOM intention  
Bootstrap sample = 5000  
n=89

Table 15: Results from mediation analyses for WOM intention for Study 3

The results from the mediation analysis with perceived relevance as mediating variable show that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ( $a \times b = .63$ ) with a 90% confidence interval excluding zero (.25 to 1.14). The direct effect for  $c$  (1.03) is also significant ( $p = .003***$ ). The results show that perceived relevance positively meditates WOM intention as indicated in the theoretical framework.

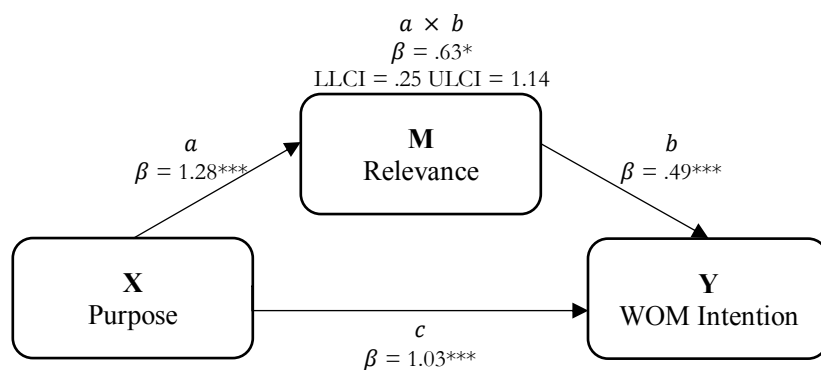


Figure 14: Result for perceived relevance as mediator for WOM intention for Study 3

The results from the mediation analysis with perceived effort as mediating variable show that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ( $a \times b = .26$ ) with a 90% confidence interval excluding zero (.04 to .68). The direct effect for  $c$  (1.39) is also significant ( $p = .001***$ ). The results show that effort positively meditate WOM intention as indicated in the theoretical framework.

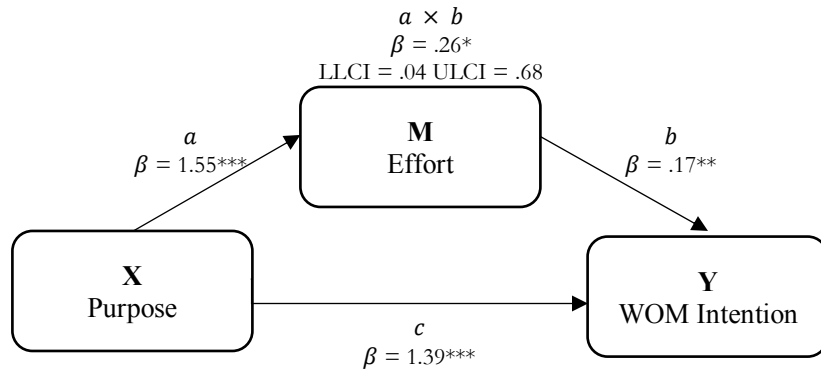


Figure 15: Result for perceived effort as mediator for WOM intention for Study 3

The results from the mediation analysis with perceived caring as mediating variable show that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ( $a \times b = .84$ ) with a 90% confidence interval excluding zero (.42 to 1.44). The direct effect for  $c$  (.80) is significant ( $p = .040**$ ). The results showed that caring positively meditate WOM intention as was indicated in the theoretical framework.

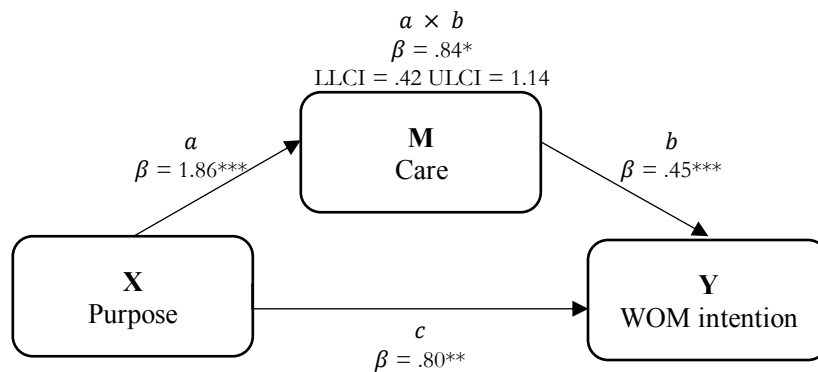


Figure 16: Result for perceived care as mediator for WOM intention for Study 3

### Employer Attractiveness

The results of a mediation analysis performed for employer attractiveness for the mediating variable perceived ability is presented in table 16 and figure 17.

Path		$\beta$	$p$	90% Conf. Interval	
Ability				LLCI	ULCI
a		0.91	.018**	0.28	1.55
b		0.63	.000***	0.43	0.83
c	Direct effect	0.09	.047**	0.15	1.64
axb	Indirect effect	0.57		0.21	1.02

Independent: Purpose

Dependent: Employer Attractiveness

Bootstrap sample = 5000

n=89

Table 16: Results from mediation analyses for employer attractiveness for Study 3

The results show that the indirect effect from bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ( $a \times b = .57$ ) with a 90% confidence interval excluding zero (.21 to 1.02). The direct effect for  $c$  (.09) is significant ( $p = .047$ ). The results show that ability positively mediates employer attractiveness as indicated in the theoretical framework.

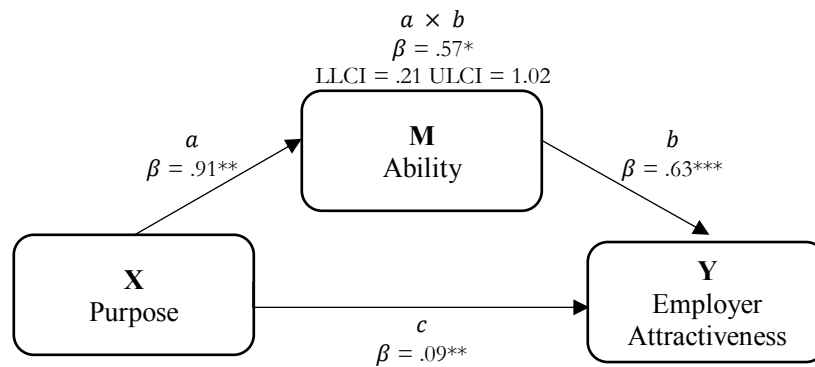


Figure 17: Result for perceived ability as mediator for employer attractiveness for Study 3

### *Hypotheses Summary of Results for Study 3*

<b>Hypotheses Study 3</b>		
<b>H1</b>	Perceived message relevance is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H2</b>	Perceived effort is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H3</b>	Perceived caring is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H4</b>	Perceived brand ability is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H5</b>	Brand attitude is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H6</b>	WOM intention is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H7</b>	Attractiveness of the brand as a potential employer is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>

*Table 17: Hypotheses summary of results for Study 3*

#### 4.2.4 HYPOTHESES SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR ALL STUDIES

Hypotheses	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3
<b>H1</b> Perceived message relevance is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>	<b>Not supported</b>	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H2</b> Perceived effort is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H3</b> Perceived caring is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H4</b> Perceived brand ability is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Not supported</b>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H5</b> Brand attitude is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H6</b> WOM intention is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Not supported</b>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H7</b> Attractiveness of the brand as a potential employer is higher when a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers compared to when it is not communicated	<b>Supported</b>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>Supported</b>

Table 18: Hypotheses summary of results for all studies

## **5. DISCUSSION**

*In the following chapter a discussion on the results provided in Chapter 4 is held in light of the theoretical framework. The three studies will first be discussed separately and then a general discussion follows. The general discussion also holds a comparison of the three studies.*

### **5.1. DISCUSSION OF STUDY 1**

When a corporate purpose is communicated to consumers through social media, the message is perceived as more relevant, the marketing is perceived as more effortful and the brand is perceived as more caring (H1-H3). This is in line with theory on attribution, need for cognition, and message relevance suggesting that when a purpose is communicated to consumers it answers the question “why”, the need for cognition is satisfied and the message is perceived as more relevant, as hypothesised in H1. In accordance with signalling theory, which describes effort as the perceived amount of money, managerial time and hard work invested in the communication (Kirmani & Wright, 1989; Modig et al., 2014; Söderberg et al., 2017), effort was hypothesised (H2) to be higher when a purpose is communicated. This was hypothesised since the purpose should signal to consumers the money, managerial time and hard work put into the work on the corporate purpose. The purpose further signals to consumers that the company cares for their non-shareholder stakeholders (H3) which was drawn from previous research on the signalling of caring for customers (Colliander et al., 2015). However, the brand was not perceived as more able when a purpose was communicated through social media as hypothesised in H4. A speculation of why, is that social media is an interactive channel (Rohm & Crittenden, 2011) and that consumers simply expect more from this type of channel than one-way communication.

#### **5.1.1 BRAND ATTITUDE**

When purpose is communicated through social media, consumers’ brand attitude is higher compared to when it is not communicated (H5). This was shown to be positively influenced by the perceived relevance, effort and caring. This is in accordance with previous research suggesting that perceived relevance leads to higher brand attitude (Petty & Carpaccio, 1979), as does effort (e.g. Modig et al., 2014) and caring (Colliander et al., 2015). Hence the reasoning behind the increase in brand attitude holds true for Study 1 and the theoretical model is therefore viable for brand attitude.

#### **5.1.2 WOM INTENTION**

For Study 1, no significant difference in consumers’ WOM intention, was found when corporate purpose is communicated. The findings question the reasoning behind H6 and suggests that purpose is not relevant for WOM intentions when communicated in a Facebook post. A speculation of why this is, could be as mentioned above, that social media is an interactive channel (Rohm & Crittenden, 2011) and that consumers simply expect more from this channel than one-way communication in order to share their experience about the brand.

### 5.1.3 EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS

When purpose is communicated in a Facebook post, the attractiveness of the brand as an employer is higher (H7). However, since perceived ability was not proven higher, employer attractiveness cannot be explained by ability as reasoned in the theoretical framework, and the theoretical reasoning behind H7 should therefore be questioned. Further studies should examine what explains the increased employer attractiveness when purpose is communicated through social media.

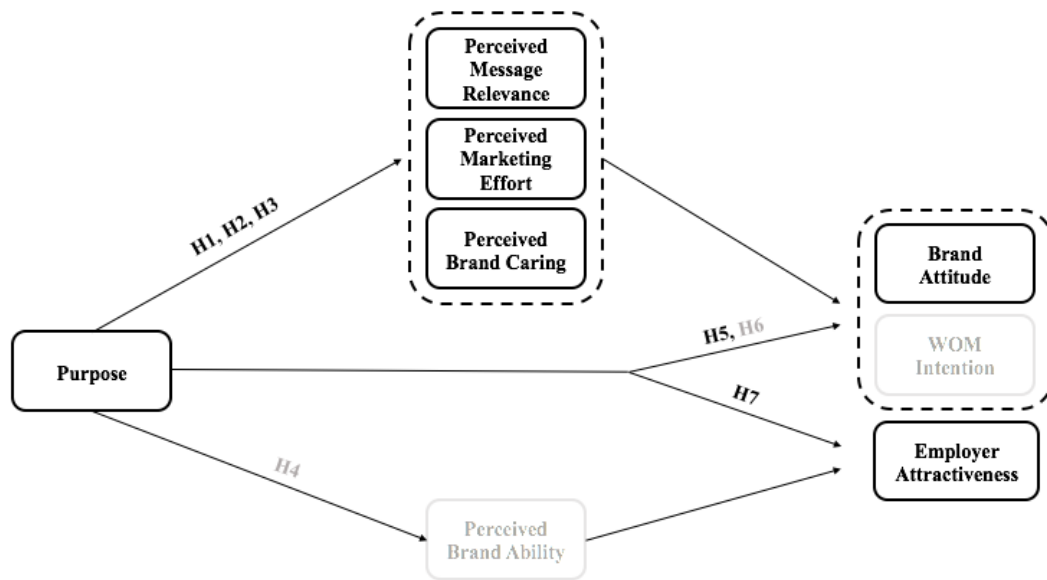


Figure 18: Result of research model for Study 1



## **5.2 DISCUSSION OF STUDY 2**

When a purpose is communicated through a print ad, the perceived relevance did not increase and H1 did therefore not hold true. This may be due to the fact that traditional print ads may no longer be seen as a particularly relevant communication channel (Rayport, 2013). Research suggests that new possible communication channels and strategies exist and traditional advertising is not perceived as equally exciting and may therefore not convey the message in the most relevant way possible. However, the results showed that consumers perceived as if there were more effort behind the communication (H2) and the brand was perceived as more caring (H3). This is in line with the reasoning made in the theoretical framework as discussed above in part 5.1. Also, the brand was perceived as more able (H4), which is in line with the reasoning that a brand communicating a purpose is wealthy enough to “afford” to not only focus on profit and could be interpreted as a sign of previous success due to high ability (Dahlén et al., 2008).

### **5.2.1 BRAND ATTITUDE**

The results show that brand attitude is higher when a purpose is communicated through a print advertisement compared to when it is not (H5). The results did not show that perceived relevance explained the increase in brand attitude. However, the reasoning that the higher perceived effort and caring would explain an increase in brand attitude proved true and it can be argued that communication of purpose in print advertisement signals effort and caring which influences consumers’ brand attitude. The relationship between communicated purpose and consumers’ brand attitude in Study 2 is therefore not completely consistent with the suggestion in the theoretical model, two out of three possible explanatory paths held true.

### **5.2.2 WOM INTENTION**

For Study 2, consumers’ WOM intention increased when purpose was communicated (H6). As stated above, when purpose is communicated through print ads it signals effort and care but is not perceived as more relevant compared to when purpose is not communicated. The results also show that perceived effort and care positively influence consumers’ higher WOM intention. This is in line with the theoretical framework, which suggests that perceived effort leads to consumer intentions (Modig et al., 2014) as does caring (Colliander et al., 2015). The relationship between communicated purpose and consumers’ WOM intention in Study 2 is therefore not completely consistent with the suggestion in the theoretical model, hence only two out of three possible explanatory paths held true.

### **5.2.3 EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS**

When purpose is communicated in print ads, the attractiveness of the brand as an employer is higher compared to when it is not communicated (H7). As reasoned in the theoretical framework, this could be explained by the increase in perceived brand ability. Previous research suggests that perceived brand ability influences employer attractiveness (Rosengren & Bondesson, 2014), the results for Study 2 showed that this held true. The suggested theoretical model for the relationship between corporate purpose and employer attractiveness is therefore viable when purpose is communicated through print ads.



### **5.3 DISCUSSION OF STUDY 3**

When purpose is communicated on a product packaging, the perceived relevance, effort, care and ability are all higher compared to when it is not communicated (H1-H3). This is in line with the theoretical framework as discussed above for studies 1 and 2.

#### **5.3.1 BRAND ATTITUDE**

The results for Study 3 show that consumers' brand attitude is higher when a purpose is communicated compared to when it is not (H5). It can further be concluded that the increase in perceived effort does not explain the increase in brand attitude. However, both perceived relevance and caring positively influence brand attitude as suggested in the theoretical framework. The suggested theoretical research model for the relationship between a communicated corporate purpose and consumers' brand attitude is therefore not fully viable as effort does not influence consumers' brand attitude. Instead, attribution theory and the need for cognition combined with message relevance and the signalling of care are viable frameworks to explain the improved brand attitude when purpose is communicated on a product packaging.

#### **5.3.2 WOM INTENTION**

When a purpose is communicated on a product packaging, consumers' WOM intention is higher compared to when it is not communicated (H6). Additionally, as mentioned above, consumers perceive higher relevance, effort and care when purpose is communicated (H1-H3). These are all viable frameworks to explain the increase in WOM intention as discussed for studies 1 and 2 since mediation analyses show that they all have a positive indirect effect on WOM intention. The suggested theoretical research model for the relationship between a communicated corporate purpose and consumers' WOM intention is therefore supported by the results of Study 3.

#### **5.3.3 EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS**

The employer brand is perceived as more attractive to potential employees when a purpose is communicated (H7). Perceived brand ability, which is higher when purpose is communicated (H4), positively influence employer attractiveness as was suggested by previous research (Rosengren & Bondesson, 2014). The suggested theoretical research model for the relationship between purpose and employer attractiveness is viable.

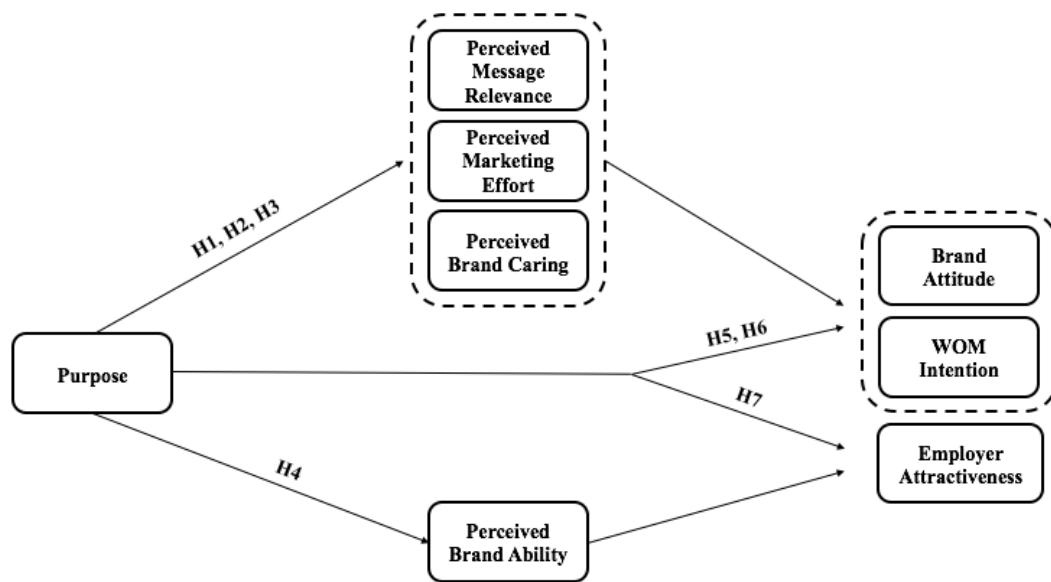


Figure 20: Result of research model for Study 3

## 5.4 GENERAL DISCUSSION

The discussions on the three studies, generate several insights. When purpose is communicated to consumers, the perceived marketing effort (H2) and brand caring (H3) is higher compared to when purpose is not communicated, for all three investigated communication channels. This is in line with the reasoning drawn from existing theory, which suggests that the perceived money, managerial time and hard work invested in the communication of purpose would signal effort made by the company. The higher results for perceived brand caring indicate that consumers perceive a brand, communicating a purpose, as more caring for the wellbeing of their non-shareholder stakeholders.

Furthermore, the brand attitude is higher when a purpose is communicated for all three studies (H5). This is in line with the reasoning drawn from attribution theory and the need for cognition. When a purpose is communicated it answers the question “why”, hence satisfying the need for cognition, and more positive attributions and attitudes are evoked as consumers and employees increasingly seek meaning (Kapferer, 2012; McKinsey Quarterly, 2013).

Moreover, in all three studies, the signalling of caring positively influence consumers’ brand attitude as suggested by previous research (Colliander et al., 2015). Signalling theory in terms of perceived caring, combined with attribution theory and the need for cognition therefore seem to be viable frameworks to explain consumers’ improved brand attitude as a result of the communication of purpose. This study can therefore, with three different studies, with confidence argue that a communicated corporate purpose signals brand caring, which positively influence consumers’ brand attitude.

The attractiveness of the brand as an employer was higher in all three studies when a purpose was communicated to consumers (H7). However, since all three studies could not support the idea that perceived brand ability would explain the increase in employer attractiveness, further research is needed in order to understand the underlying mechanisms of the higher employer attractiveness.

To summarise, the three studies indicate that the communication of a corporate purpose is of value to the brand as it was found to increase perceived marketing effort and perceived brand caring as well as brand attitude and employer attractiveness in all three studies. The findings also show that perceived brand caring is a viable theory to explain the increase of brand attitude in all three communication channels. In two out of three studies, the perceived message relevance, the WOM intention and perceived brand ability was higher when a corporate purpose was communicated compared to when it was not communicated. For these three variables, it can therefore be concluded that the communication of a purpose has been shown to positively influence them, however further research is needed to fully understand this effect.

### **5.4.3 COMPARISON AND MERGING OF MAIN STUDIES**

Since the three main studies all aimed to answer the research questions through different communication channels, it was considered interesting to compare the three studies. Therefore, in addition to the analysis presented in Chapter 4, the data from the three studies were combined in order to further examine the results. Data from the three studies was merged into one file and a between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. It showed no significant differences between the three communication channels social media, print advertisements and product packaging. Since no significant differences between the channels were detected and since the same stimulus, text, brand and product as well as the same sample was used for all three studies, the merged file was analysed. The same test as conducted in Chapter 4 for the three main studies separately were performed also for the merged file. Two groups, consisting of all control groups and of all treatment groups from the three studies were formed and independent sample t-tests were performed between those groups. The results showed that for all three studies combined, all hypotheses were supported on a significance level  $p < .01^{***}$ . The tests also showed that all mediation effects expected from the reasoning in the theoretical framework, held true.

As concluded in the discussion of the findings from the three separate studies, the findings from the merged study also indicate that a purpose communicated to consumers provides value to the brand by increasing brand attitude, WOM intention and the attractiveness of the brand as an employer. The findings further indicate that the communication channel itself does not have a major significance for this impact. However, no conclusion will be drawn from the analyses made from the merging of all three studies. Instead, the conclusion below will be based on the findings from the three main studies separately as discussed above.

## 6. CONCLUSION

An increasing amount of companies choose to communicate their purpose to consumers (Lenderman, 2017). Consumers as well as employees become more conscious and are increasingly seeking meaning (Kapferer, 2012; Forbes, 2017). This thesis has investigated the communication of a purpose from a consumer marketing perspective. The aim was to investigate whether the communication of a corporate purpose to consumers influenced consumers' and potential employees' reactions towards the brand. The findings from the thesis are presented below as the research questions are answered.

*RQ 1: Does a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, positively influence consumers' brand attitude?*

From the findings, it can be concluded that a purpose communicated to consumers positively influence brand attitude in all three studies. The answer to RQ 1 is therefore yes, it does.

*RQ 2: Does a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, positively influence consumers' WOM intention for the brand?*

For RQ 2, the findings show that for two out of three studies, a communicated purpose positively influence WOM intention. Therefore, the answer to the research question seems to be yes, however, more research is needed in order to further understand the relationship between a communicated purpose and consumers' WOM intention.

*RQ 3: Does a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, positively influence the attractiveness of the brand as a potential employer?*

Since the findings for all three studies showed that the attractiveness of the brand as an employer was positively influenced by a purpose, communicated to consumers, the answer to RQ 3 is yes, it does.

The findings from this thesis show that a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, indeed provides value to the brand, an important contribution both to the academic literature as well as to practitioners, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **7. IMPLICATIONS**

*This chapter highlights implications based on the findings. Both theoretical and managerial implications are addressed.*

### **7.1 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The thesis contributes to and extends the literature on corporate purpose by examining it in a consumer marketing context. Since brand attitude was found to be positively influenced by a communicated purpose in all three studies, the thesis contributes with new knowledge and adds to existing consumer marketing literature by providing implications on how consumers' brand attitude may be influenced. The communication of a purpose was found to positively influence both perceived effort and perceived caring in all three studies and perceived caring was further found to mediate the increase in brand attitude. This indicates that signalling theory is an important framework for studying the communication of purposes. This thesis therefore adds to existing theory on the signalling of caring as it finds that it is applicable to the communication of purposes.

Theoretical implications can also be found for the extended effects of consumer marketing on other groups than consumers. Since a communicated purpose was found to positively influence the attractiveness of the employer brand in all three studies, it extends existing literature and indicates that it is viable also in a purpose context. In conclusion, the findings extend and give theoretical implications for both existing consumer marketing theory as well as purpose literature.

### **7.2 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

It can be beneficial for managers to consider the practical implications from the communication of a purpose to consumers as the findings indicate that there is value in communicating purpose. As previously mentioned, brand attitude is considered important for a brand's long-term success (Modig et al., 2014) and the attitude is considered to be linked to and to be an indication of consumer behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Since consumers' brand attitude was shown to increase in all three studies from the communication of a purpose, the findings indicate that the communication of a corporate purpose indeed contributes to the long-term success of the firm and may contribute to consumers' favourable behaviour.

As previously mentioned, the competition for qualitative workforce rises (Chambers et al., 1998) and to attract potential employees is of great importance for a company's future (Shlager et al., 2011). Since, the results show that a corporate purpose used in consumer communication affects the attractiveness of the employer brand, it may open up for new opportunities to attract employees to the company by communicating purpose. These results indicate that a corporate purpose, communicated to consumers, is valuable also from a human resource perspective. These practical implications indicate that a corporate purpose may not just do good for society but may also help the company do good.



## 8. LIMITATIONS

In the beginning of the thesis, certain delimitations were stated as it was considered necessary to adjust to a suitable scope considering the limited time and resources. The research is limited to the home appliance industry and the product category small appliances. The results from the thesis are therefore only applicable to the researched industry and category, i.e. home appliances and small home appliances. By including additional brands and product categories, the results' generalisability would have increased.

Only one out of the three identified main types of purposes were investigated. This limited focus enabled deeper research and more robust results as three studies within three types of consumer communication were conducted. However, since only one type of purpose, the society centred, was tested the results are not representative for corporate purpose as a whole. Especially not if considering that a society centred purpose may differ substantially from a profit centred purpose. Furthermore, the way the purpose was communicated, through only one sentence, may not be representative of all possible ways a purpose can be communicated. Since a purpose by definition should be incorporated in and comprise all parts of the company, e.g. in production, research and development, initiatives and partnerships, it may be limiting to only examine it through one sentence communication even if this was deemed most suitable for the design of the experiments.

A methodological choice was to collect data through laboratory experiments. This improves the internal validity however harms the external validity and could be improved by performing experiments in a real setting (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Due to time and resource constraints it was deemed suitable to perform laboratory experiments. Furthermore, as the experiments were conducted on pen and paper, the respondents had the possibility to go back and forth between the stimuli and the questions which may influence the cause and effect. (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The selection of a homogenous sample consisting of business students is motivated in part 3.8. However, this could be considered a limitation since the use of a heterogeneous sample, e.g. in terms of age, might have given slightly different results. As most students are millennials, who are considered especially conscious consumers interested in benefits for society (Buell Hirsch, 2016), the sample used does not give a representative description of all consumers, which should be kept in mind when interpreting the results.

## **9. FUTURE RESEARCH**

Since people increasingly seek meaning with their consumption (Kapferer, 2012) and in their careers (McKinsey Quarterly, 2013), the communication of purposes may increase and become a persistent part of consumer communication. Hence, more academic research on the topic is both expected and needed. It is therefore suggested and would be interesting to further research the topic and build on the findings from this thesis.

In order to gain knowledge and an overview of purposes used in consumer communication as a whole, future research should focus on more types of purposes. This is suggested since only one of the identified main types of purposes – the society centred – was investigated in this thesis. Furthermore, since only the home appliance industry was subject to this study, it is suggested that more industries are examined.

The credibility of and perceived motives behind a purpose is not unlikely to be questioned and may influence people's perception of the company communicating their purpose. Therefore, research on e.g. intrinsic and extrinsic perceived motives behind the purpose as well as perceptions about potential differences between a stated, communicated purpose and a lived purpose would be interesting and valuable to examine in the future.

This thesis set out to examine the communication of a purpose in consumer marketing where the company itself is the sender. It would be interesting to extend the research to also entail consumer communication where the company itself is not the sender, such as using a public relations strategy, to understand if the communicator has an effect on consumers' and potential employees' perceptions and evaluations of the brand.

Since the subject of purpose is rather unexplored in a consumer marketing context, it is suggested to examine the subject also drawing from other communication and consumer marketing theories than used for this thesis. This would enable further understanding for how consumers' and potential employees' brand reactions are affected by the communication of a purpose.

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## 11. APPENDICES

### 11.1 APPENDIX 1

#### Interview Guide

- What does the term corporate purpose mean to you?
  - How do you define it?
  - Do you consider there to be several types of corporate purposes?
- What is/was the process of developing a/your purpose?
- How do you work with purpose?
- How do you work with the communication of a/your purpose?
- Who do you consider recipients of a/your corporate purpose communication?
- Have you noticed any reactions from stakeholders concerning a/your corporate purpose?
- What is expected from the communication of a corporate purpose?

### 11.2 APPENDIX 2

#### List of Interview Sample

Company	Type of Company	Interviewee	Position
Ben & Jerry's	FMCG	Dominika Hagborg	Nordic Brand Manager
	Purposeful		
Do Good Invest	Investments	Christopher Slim	Partner & Investment Manager
Electrolux	Home Appliance	Salla Lonka	Global Communication Manager
House of Radon	Full-service Agency	Frida Karlsson	Account Director
	Brand Management		
Lynxeye	Consultancy	Johan Ekelin	Co-founder & Partner
Nick's	FMCG	Niclas Luthman	Founder and CEO
	Strategic Brand &		
Silver	Design Agency	Niklas Dahl	Strategy and Insight Director

## 11.3 APPENDIX 3

### Pre-study 1 and 2: Brand and Product Perceptions

Hi,

We are two students from the Stockholm School of Economics, who are currently writing our master thesis. It would mean a lot to us if you could take 3 minutes of your time to answer this short survey. There are no incorrect answers, please follow your instincts. The survey is anonymous.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our survey!

Many thanks,  
Annie Olsson & Anna Berg

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#### Electrolux

- I have never heard of Electrolux/I know Electrolux very well
- What is your impression of Electrolux?
  - Good/Bad
  - Pleasant/Unpleasant
  - Favourable/Unfavourable
- Please answer to what extent you agree with the following statements?
  - Electrolux has a clear purpose
  - Electrolux aspires for something more
  - Electrolux has a reason for existing and being
  - It is clear why Electrolux exists
  - Electrolux is a purposeful company
  - Electrolux is a meaningful corporation
- What is Electrolux purpose? (open-ended)

#### (Picture of kitchen blender)

- I find the product...
  - useful/useless
  - valuable/worthless
  - beneficial/harmful
  - wise/foolish
  - pleasant/unpleasant
  - nice/awful
  - agreeable/disagreeable
  - happy/sad
- I find the product relevant.

- I own a product like the one on the picture (Yes/No)
- I have experience from using a product like the one on the picture (Yes/No)
- What other product would you consider equal to the product you just saw on the picture? (open-ended)
- Age (open-ended)
- Gender (Male/Female/Other)
- Occupation (open-ended)

## 11.4 APPENDIX 4

### Pre-study 3: Stimulus Development

Hi,

We are two students from the Stockholm School of Economics, who are currently writing our master thesis. It would mean a lot to us if you could take 3 minutes of your time to answer this short survey. There are no incorrect answers, please follow your instincts. The survey is anonymous.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our survey!

Many thanks,  
Annie Olsson & Anna Berg

---

Electrolux is a Swedish multinational company that was founded in 1919 and is one of the world's leading manufacturers of home appliances. We are 55 400 employees and sell more than 60 million household and professional products in more than 150 markets every year.

Purpose 1	Our purpose unifies us in the common cause to shape living for the better by improving the lives for millions of people and the world around us, now and for generations to come.
Purpose 2	Our purpose is to shape living for the better as we want to be a driving force in improving everyday life for millions of people and the world around us.
Purpose 3	Our purpose is to shape living for the better as we strive to improve everyday life for millions of people and the world around us.

Electrolux is organised into six business areas. There are four major appliances sectors covering North America, Latin America, Europe/Middle East/Africa and Asia Pacific and two global business areas, Small Appliances and Professional Products.

### Please answer the following questions

Please consider the following statements about the text you just read  
(1 = do not agree/10 = agree completely)

- Electrolux has a clear purpose
- Electrolux aspires for something more
- Electrolux has a reason for existing and being
- It is clear why Electrolux exists
- Electrolux is a purposeful company
- Electrolux is a meaningful corporation

Please consider how well the following statements correspond to Electrolux' purpose  
(1 = *do not agree*/10 = *agree completely*)

- Electrolux wants to shape living in small but meaningful ways each day
  - Electrolux aims to improve animal rights
  - Electrolux aims to shape living for the better
  - Electrolux' only aim is to improve the health of our planet
- 
- Age (open-ended)
  - Gender (Male/Female/Other)
  - Occupation (open-ended)

## 11.5 APPENDIX 5

### Pre-study 4: Developing Text to Not Convey a Corporate Purpose

Hi,

We are two students from the Stockholm School of Economics, who are currently writing our master thesis. It would mean a lot to us if you could take 3 minutes of your time to answer this short survey. There are no incorrect answers, please follow your instincts. The survey is anonymous.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our survey!

Many thanks,  
Annie Olsson & Anna Berg

---

#### Please read the following statement about Electrolux

Text 1	Electrolux is a global leader in home appliances. The products we create are based on deep consumer insight and developed in close collaboration with professional users.
Text 2	At Electrolux, we want to create world-class consumer experiences by helping you achieve amazing taste experiences, with technology inspired by professional users.
Text 3	Electrolux is a leading global home appliances company with a strong position worldwide, and the only manufacturer offering complete solutions for both consumers and professional users. At Electrolux, we want to be the best home appliance company in the world.

#### Please answer the following questions

Please consider the following statements about the text you just read

(1 = do not agree/ 10 = agree completely)

- Electrolux has a clear purpose
- Electrolux aspires for something more
- Electrolux has a reason for existing and being
- It is clear why Electrolux exists
- Electrolux is a purposeful company
- Electrolux is a meaningful corporation
  
- Age (open-ended)
- Gender (Male/Female/Other)
- Occupation (open-ended)

## 11.6 APPENDIX 6

### Study 1 – Social Media

#### *Inspirational Facebook post: Electrolux*

**Electrolux**  
2 augusti · 🌐

Du vet allt det där som är bra med slow cooking? Då fattar du grejen med slow mixing! Sänk hastigheten för att behålla kylan och smakerna på varma sommardagar!



**Ta det kallt!**  
En nygjord förrättssmoothie? Låt dig insp... [Läs mer](#)





197      11 kommentarer   18 delningar

 Gilla

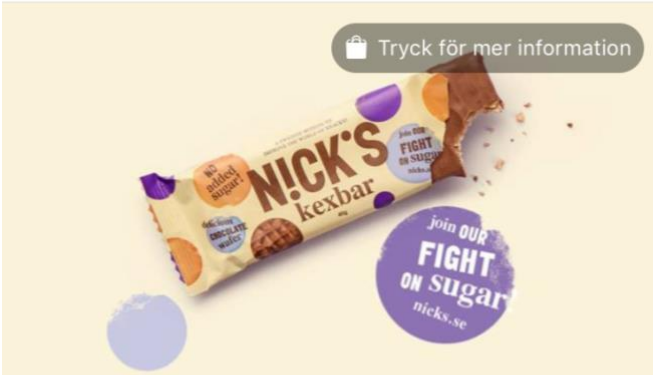
 Kommentera

#### *Inspirational Facebook post: Example of a communicated corporate purpose*

**Nicks.se** har uppdaterat sitt omslagsfoto.      

We're on a Swedish mission to improve the world of snacks. Join Our Fight on Sugar at [www.nicks.se](http://www.nicks.se)





52      2 kommentarer   2 delningar

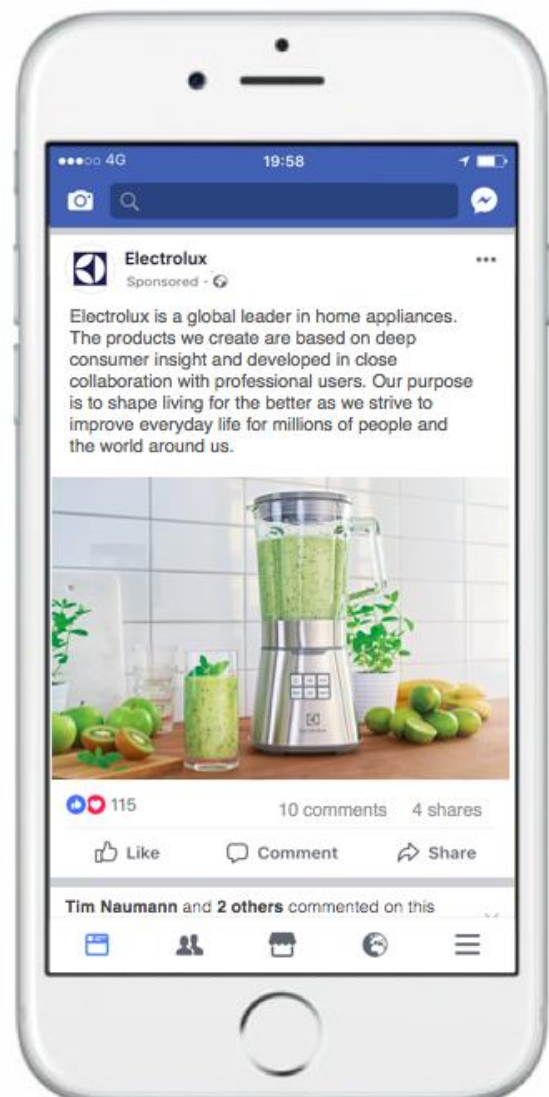
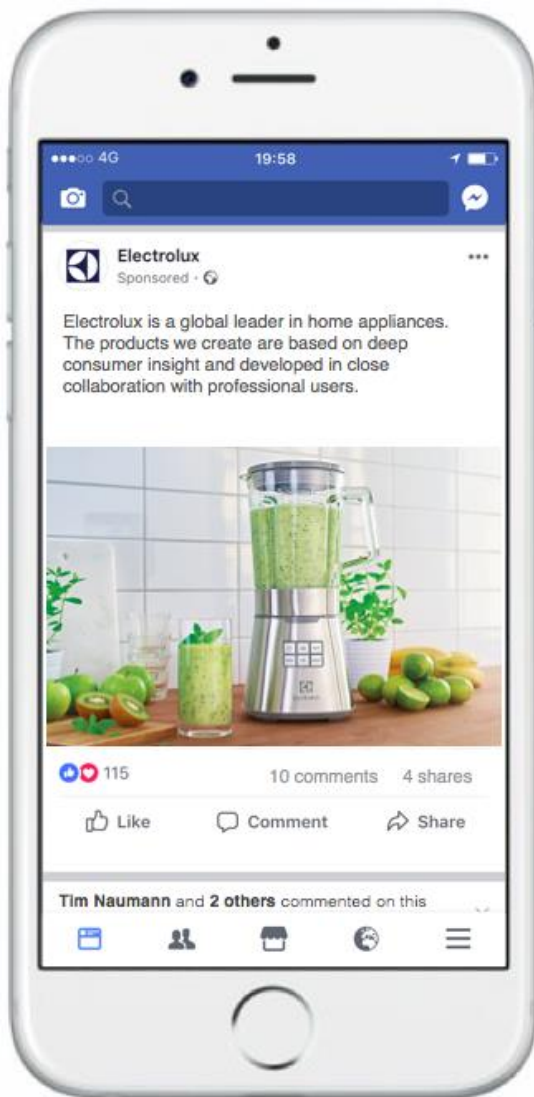
 Gilla

 Kommentera

 Dela



*The two Facebook posts used in the study*



## 11.7 APPENDIX 7

### Study 2 – Print Ad

#### *Inspirational print ad: Electrolux*



#### *Inspirational print ad: Example of a communicated corporate purpose*



*The two print ads used in the study*

**Electrolux is a global leader** in home appliances. The products we create are based on deep consumer insight and developed in close collaboration with professional users.



The image shows a silver and stainless steel Electrolux blender with a clear pitcher, filled with a green smoothie. Next to it is a tall glass, also filled with the same green smoothie and garnished with a sprig of mint. Both the blender and the glass are reflected on the surface they are sitting on. The background is a light blue gradient.



The Electrolux logo, consisting of a stylized 'E' inside a circle, followed by the word 'Electrolux' in a sans-serif font.

**Electrolux is a global leader** in home appliances. The products we create are based on deep consumer insight and developed in close collaboration with professional users. Our purpose is to shape living for the better as we strive to improve everyday life for millions of people and the world around us.



The image shows a silver and stainless steel Electrolux blender with a clear pitcher, filled with a green smoothie. Next to it is a tall glass, also filled with the same green smoothie and garnished with a sprig of mint. Both the blender and the glass are reflected on the surface they are sitting on. The background is a light blue gradient.



The Electrolux logo, consisting of a stylized 'E' inside a circle, followed by the word 'Electrolux' in a sans-serif font.

## 11.8 APPENDIX 8

### Study 3 – Product Packaging

#### *The role-play scenario (treatment in italics)*

Please imagine the following scenario:

You are on your way to buy a gift for one of your closest friends whose birthday you will celebrate during the weekend. Together with some of your friends, you have decided to buy a kitchen blender since your friend has an immense cooking interest. You have been given the responsibility to buy the kitchen blender and have beforehand made some research and taken down notes on your phone on the most interesting model and brand.

On your way down to the shopping district of the city centre you enter a home appliance store. Once inside the store, a shop assistant smiles at you and says hello. You ask where the kitchen blenders are found and the assistant answers you and points to the blenders.

You go over to the section where the blenders are kept and pick up your phone to compare the name of the blender you had written down beforehand with the different models of blenders in front of. You recognise a model from Electrolux, it is the same blender that you and your friends have decided on. You pick up the blender and look at the packaging. On the box, there is a picture of the blender as well as Electrolux' logo. You also notice a short company description below the logo. The text says, "Electrolux is a global leader in home appliances. The products we create are based on deep consumer insight and developed in close collaboration with professional users. *Our purpose is to shape living for the better as we strive to improve everyday life for millions of people and the world around us*". You take the kitchen blender and go over to the cashier.

The same shop assistant who greeted you before stands behind the counter. You put the blender on the counter and ask the shop assistant to wrap it as it is a birthday gift. While standing and waiting for the wrapping, you notice a brochure about the store and pick it up. "You may take the brochure if you would like to" the shop assistant says. The gift has now been wrapped and you take out your wallet and pay for the blender. The shop assistant puts the wrapped gift together with the receipt and the brochure in a bag and thanks you for your visit. The shop assistant hands you the bag, you say thank you and leave the shop.

## 11.9 APPENDIX 9

### Main Studies Questionnaire

Hi,

We are two students from the Stockholm School of Economics, who are currently writing our master thesis. It would mean a lot to us if you could take 8 minutes of your time to answer this survey. There are no incorrect answers, please follow your instincts. The survey is anonymous.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our survey!

Many thanks,  
Annie Olsson & Anna Berg

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*(For Study 1; picture of the Facebook post)*

*(For Study 2; picture of the print ad)*

*(For Study 3; written role-play scenario)*

*(1 = do not agree/10 = agree completely)*

- The message in the Facebook post/in the print ad/on the product packaging was meaningful to me
- The message in the Facebook post/in the print ad/on the product packaging was appropriate to me
- The message in the Facebook post/in the print ad/on the product packaging was valuable to me

*(1 = low/10 = high)*

- I perceive the effort behind this Facebook post/print ad/product packaging on...

*(1 = do not agree/ 10 = agree completely)*

- Electrolux cares about their non-shareholders stakeholders

*(1 = do not agree/ 10 = agree completely)*

- What is your impression of Electrolux?
  - Good/Bad
  - Pleasant/Unpleasant
  - Favourable/Unfavourable

*(1 = do not agree/ 10 = agree completely)*

- What is your impression of Electrolux?
  - Electrolux is smart
  - Electrolux is likely to develop valuable products in the future

- Electrolux is good at solving consumers' problems

*(1 = do not agree/ 10 = agree completely)*

- I want to recommend Electrolux
- I want to talk about Electrolux

*(1 = do not agree/ 10 = agree completely)*

- For me, Electrolux would be a good place to work
- A job at Electrolux is very appealing to me
- Electrolux is attractive to me as a place for employment

*(1 = do not agree/ 10 = agree completely)*

- Electrolux has a clear purpose
- Electrolux has a reason for existing and being
- Electrolux is a purposeful company

- What product was featured? (open-ended)
- Have you ever had a deadly heart attack? (Yes/No)

- What do you think the purpose of this study was? (open-ended)

- Mother tongue (open-ended)
- Age (open-ended)
- Gender (Male/Female/Other)
- Occupation (open-ended)

## 11.10 APPENDIX 10

### Pilot Test Results

#### *Cronbach's Alpha for Pilot Test*

Measure	Number of Questions	Cronbach's Alpha
Message Relevance	3	.894
Brand Ability	3	.897
Brand Attitude	3	.916
WOM Intention	2	.856
Employer Attractiveness	3	.963
Corporate Purpose	3	.947

#### *Results from Independent Sample T-tests for the Pilot Test*

Measure	Control Group	Treatment Group	<i>p</i>
Message Relevance	3.19	4.72	.069*
Effort	4.50	4.57	.071*
Brand Ability	6.07	6.89	.229
Brand Attitude	6.69	6.91	.763
WOM Intention	4.04	5.79	.090*
Employer Attractiveness	4.38	6.03	.063*
Corporate Purpose	5.28	7.06	.076*

## 11.11 APPENDIX 11

### Cronbach's Alpha Values for the Three Main Studies

	<b>Study 1</b>	<b>Study 2</b>	<b>Study 3</b>
Message Relevance	0.877	0.952	0.916
Brand Ability	0.912	0.946	0.925
Brand Attitude	0.949	0.945	0.941
WOM Intention	0.780	0.828	0.777
Employer Attractiveness	0.973	0.973	0.961
Corporate Purpose	0.923	0.966	0.923