

MASTER'S THESIS

**ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING OF CLOTHING
RETAILERS**

A longitudinal study on
measurement practices and legitimacy

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract <p>The sustainability of the clothing industry is a topic of frequent discussion in the media. However, the discussion seems to be more focused on social issues in the supply chain rather than on the environmental impacts that the clothing industry causes. In addition, there seems to be a lack of research concerning the environmental impacts of the clothing industry. This thesis studies the environmental reporting of clothing retailers. The thesis compares the reporting practices by studying the sustainability reports of four multinational clothing retailers operating in Finland. The aim is to find out how the case companies measure their environmental performance and what environmental data they provide. Furthermore, the thesis takes a look into legitimacy by studying the potential use of strategies for legitimacy. The development of environmental reporting practices, measurement practices and the use of strategies for legitimacy are analyzed and the case companies are compared to each other. The research is of qualitative nature and is conducted as a longitudinal content analysis where the changes throughout the years of reporting can be seen.</p> <p>The results of the study indicate that sustainability reporting is not common among multinational clothing retailers operating in Finland. The environmental reporting seems to follow common guidelines, mainly the GRI reporting framework. The measurement of environmental aspects has a focus on product- and material-related data, especially on organic cotton and chemical use. In the case of legitimacy, the most commonly used strategy was to repair legitimacy. Despite the frequent variations in chosen indicators, base years and other approaches, the development of both environmental reporting practices and the presenting of measurement data has been somewhat positive. Thus this study builds an optimistic future for environmental reporting as some development can already be seen, but as long as the fashion retail industry is founded on mass consumption, environmental reporting bears a minimal role in reducing environmental impacts.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

The sustainability of the clothing industry is constantly under media scrutiny when it comes to social aspects such as rights of factory workers or use of child labor. For example, “some high-profile multinational clothing and sports retail companies have been repeatedly exposed to media criticism about the exploitation of workers in their supply companies in developing countries” (Islam & Wise 2012: 100). Despite the media exposure to social defects and the increased attention to ethical consumption (Goworek 2011), the environmental impacts of the clothing industry have been left with little attention.

This thesis tries to clarify the situation by studying the environmental reporting of clothing retailers. The actual state of environmental impacts of the clothing sector can be somewhat challenging to study and therefore the thesis focuses on the how the clothing retailers themselves report, what environmental data they choose to present and how their environmental reporting has developed throughout the years of reporting. The thesis also looks into the communication used in the environmental reports and provides conclusions on whether the environmental communication of the companies can be seen as strategies for legitimacy. A comparison of the studied companies based on their environmental reporting practices, presenting of data and use of strategies for legitimacy is also provided. The research is conducted in the form of a longitudinal content analysis where the changes in a time frame can be seen.

Motivation for the research originates from the negative media coverage of certain clothing retailers that has brought especially the social problems of garment manufacturing to the table. For example H&M is claimed to be one of the most exposed fashion companies to the public (Caniato 2012). The ‘truth’ behind the news is not simple to find as the stakeholders and the company might have opposing views on the subject at hand. Another motivation stems from the emergence of environmental labeling in garments which makes the environmental responsibility of clothing retailers even more open to discussion. Also in practice, it is time-consuming – if not impossible – for the consumer to find out which clothing retailers are better in terms of managing their environmental responsibility. Another reason for the study is the absence of

sustainability reports published by the clothing retailers. As described in more detail later, having sustainability reports does not seem common among clothing retailers and the level of sustainability information available varies widely between companies.

1.1 Environmental sustainability of the clothing industry

The environmental impact of the clothing industry is considerable, as the industry involves almost one tenth of the world's employees and 4% of the world's exports (Caniato 2012). All of the stages throughout the whole life cycle of a piece of garment have negative impacts to the environment of varying scales. The impacts in the life cycle of a garment start with pesticide and water use in cotton and other natural fibre cultivation as well as the energy use in producing synthetic fibres (Caniato 2012). The clothing industry also uses a great deal of transportation (Caniato 2012) as both the fibre growing and manufacturing of synthetic fibres are located globally (Fulton 2013). In general, it can be said that the sourcing of clothing is usually done in Asia or other more under-developed and low-labor-cost part of the world, whereas the sales are more often done in more developed countries. The production of garments consumes a lot of chemicals and natural resources, especially water, in dyeing, drying and finishing the products (Caniato 2012, Fulton 2013). The purchasing of "fast fashion" (Caniato 2012) or "throwaway fashion" (Birtwistle 2007) also raises concerns with the use and disposal of clothing as customers are spending more on disposable fashion (Fulton 2013) than on durable and more expensive products. Garments might be disposed after they have been worn only a few times (Birtwistle & Moore 2006). The disposal can be done by re-using, recycling or simply destroying the garment (Birtwistle 2007), which each have different level of impact on the environment.

Despite both the environmental and social impacts, it seems that the reporting of sustainability information within the clothing industry remains low. An increase in ethical consumerism can be seen among fashion consumers, probably due to the various "scandals" within the clothing industry (Goworek 2011), such as the Greenpeace Detox -campaign exposing clothing retailers' use of harmful chemicals and the pollution of water in manufacturing (Greenpeace 2014), the organic cotton "fraud" where certified organic clothes were found to be contaminated with genetically modified cotton (Chua 2010) and multiple reports of textile factory fires especially in Bangladesh (Burke 2013). Both the increase in demand for ethical clothing and the media attention on the negative social and environmental impacts of the industry might have contributed to raising awareness for sustainability reporting within the clothing industry but in the absence of common guidelines and legislation for reporting there are still vast differences between clothing retailers in their levels of social and environmental reporting.

1.2 Research aim

The aim of the research is to describe the situation of environmental reporting of multinational clothing retailers operating in Finland. The thesis studies the environmental sections of sustainability reports of four clothing retailers and attempts to find out how the environmental reporting practices change and evolve in general throughout the years of reporting. More specifically, the aim of the research is to find out how the case companies measure their environmental performance, what data they provide and how the presented data changes throughout the years of reporting. In addition, to get a more deeper insight on the strategies behind the reporting, the communication of environmental reporting is analyzed based on whether examples of strategies for gaining, maintaining or repairing legitimacy can be found from the reports and how the use of strategies change throughout the years of reporting.

Next the research questions are presented. In the case of all of the research questions, a comparison between the case companies is done in order find out what kinds of distinctions can be found from the environmental reporting practices between the companies.

The research question is:

1. How do clothing retailers report their environmental performance in their sustainability reports and how the methods change during their years of sustainability reporting?

The sub-questions are:

2. What environmental data do the case companies present in their reports and which environmental measurement areas are prioritized?
3. How have both the reporting practices and the data presented developed during the years of reporting?
4. Which strategies for legitimacy can be found from the environmental reporting of the case companies and how the choice of strategies changes during the years of reporting?

The thesis produces four results. First, the study sheds light on the environmental reporting practices of the case companies and what data they present. Second, the thesis provides results on whether the environmental communication of the companies can be seen as strategies for legitimacy. Third the study presents tendencies and development of environmental reporting practices, the presentation of data and use of strategies for legitimacy. Fourth and finally, the study provides a comparison of the studied companies based on their environmental reporting practices, presenting of data and use of strategies for legitimacy.

1.3 Outline of the thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, discusses the motivation behind the research and presents the aim of the research. Chapter 2 proceeds by presenting prior research on sustainability and environmental reporting in the clothing sector followed by a presentation of the main concepts of the study: sustainability reporting, environmental reporting and related standards and guidelines for reporting. Chapter 2 finishes with defining legitimacy theory and the role of legitimacy in sustainability reporting. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological choices behind the study, clarifies the process of data acquisition and presents a framework for data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study and compares the case companies with each other. Chapter 5 discusses the results and provides contributions and limitations of the study as well as ideas for further research. Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by summarizing the main findings of the study.

2 LITERATURE AND THEORY

“Research in the area of CSR in fashion retailers is sparse and concentrates mainly on ethical sourcing by fashion retailers and brands, in addition to consumers’ views on purchasing ethical products.” (Goworek 2011: 79)

The sustainability-related research on clothing sector is not common and in general seems to be focused on ethical consumption rather than to the environmental concerns that the clothing sector faces. There also seems to be a tendency to focus on clothing retailers that claim to be providing ‘eco-fashion’. An absence of research related particularly to sustainability reporting within the clothing sector can be seen. A few studies try to fill the gap in the research on sustainability reporting in the clothing sector. Fulton and Lee (2013) researched the online sustainability initiatives of clothing retailers that sell sustainable apparel (Fulton 2013). Islam and Wise (2012) studied the online social and environmental reporting of major clothing suppliers in Bangladesh. Another related study by Islam and Deegan (2008) studied the management attitudes and motivations of clothing retailers for sustainability reporting. Caniato (2012) on the other hand studied the environmental sustainability in fashion supply chains.

When talking about the environmental reporting of organizations studies that concentrate on the measurement of environmental impacts are rare. The research on social and environmental reporting seems to focus more on studying the communication used in the reports, such as ‘greenwashing’ (e.g. Delmas & Burbano 2011, Mason & Mason 2012) and how the environmental communication reflects the actual corporate behavior (Cerin 2002). More comprehensive studies on environmental reporting focus on how environmental reporting is related to the broader discourse on environmentalism (Buhr & Reiter 2006) or how environmental reports respond to institutional pressures (Laine 2009).

However, despite the lack of prior studies this chapter presents the main concepts of the study: sustainability reporting and environmental reporting. The chapter also specifies some of the relevant standards and guidelines for sustainability reporting and how environmental performance can be measured.

The chapter concludes with a presentation of legitimacy theory and the role of legitimacy in sustainability reporting.

2.1 Sustainability reporting

Sustainability reporting covers the economic, social and environmental areas of an organization's performance (Hubbard 2011). Sustainability reporting has been seen to have evolved from environmental reporting as the content of environmental reports started to contain more and more information, such as health and safety information (Buhr & Reiter 2006). As a result, the reports started to use the language of sustainable development (Buhr & Reiter 2006). Sustainability can be thought of being part of accounting as it represents mechanisms for accountability (Buhr & Reiter 2006). 'Accounting' as a term can be seen to cover the whole process from gathering data to reporting. Reporting is the final visible stage of the sustainability accounting process and also the part of the process that has been studied the most perhaps due to the public availability and visibility of reports (Laine 2009). Measuring sustainability performance can be challenging but some techniques from social science from economic and financial analysis can be used (Epstein & Rejc Buhovac 2014). The end result, the sustainability report, can be published online, as a separate report or together with financial information in the annual report (Laine 2009).

Sustainability reporting is a voluntary measure and thus there are no commonly agreed standards to guide the reporting process (Epstein & Rejc Buhovac 2014, Hubbard 2011, Hubbard 2009). Some specific sectors in some specific countries might have special requirements for reporting practices (Deegan 2002, Laine 2009). For example, in the Paris and Johannesburg stock exchanges sustainability reporting is compulsory (Hubbard 2009). The most commonly used framework for sustainability reporting is the Global Reporting Initiative (referred as GRI from now on) (GRI 2011, Hubbard 2011, Törnroos 2005). There are many other standards, guidelines, frameworks and management systems for the planning, managing and reporting of sustainability performance that will be presented shortly later on.

In Finland, social and environmental reporting has been mainly obligatory but nevertheless somewhat common. For example in 2013, 81% of the 100 largest Finnish companies provided Corporate Responsibility Reports (KPMG n.d.). Some development in legislation can be seen as the European Union set a new directive in 2014 for the reporting of non-financial information of businesses (Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2015). The new directive requires businesses to publish information on their actions towards the environment as well as social issues concerning employees, human rights, and anti-corruption policies for example (Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2015). The directive concerns large companies, such as exchange -listed companies, credit institutions and insurance companies and is to be

promulgated in Finland by October 2016 (Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2015).

Many characteristics can influence the reasoning behind why organizations choose to report social and environmental information. Often the organizations that choose to report sustainability information are of Western origin and operating in environmentally-sensitive industries, such as chemicals, mining or oil (Laine 2009). According to Adams (2002) other features that can influence whether an organization reports on sustainability or not are such as corporate culture, size and age, as well as the political, social and economic conditions in the country of origin.

The reasons for publishing sustainability reports have been widely studied. The common reasoning behind why organizations choose to publish sustainability reports is related to enhancing corporate image or responding to social pressures from various stakeholder groups in order to gain credibility (Adams 2002, Deegan 2002, Islam & Deegan 2008, Islam & Wise 2012). The role of the global media can be significant in influencing the managerial decisions to report on sustainability, as media can influence and shape public concerns for example by bringing forward various scandals and accidents that organizations face (Islam & Wise 2012). Likewise, the increase in media attention has been directly linked to the increase in community concern (Deegan, Rankin & Tobin 2002) and organizations tend to want to be accountable to the broader global community for their social and environmental performance (Islam & Wise 2012). Some specific events, such as oil spills or other environmental incidents, may influence the amount of reporting published in the entire industry, not only in the case of the company in question (Adams 2002, Deegan 2002, Islam & Deegan 2008). In addition to media, NGOs are also essential stakeholders that can demand for transparency and work via various networks (Islam & Wise 2012) to gain more leverage over the organization. However, image is not everything, as financial gains can be another motivation for publishing sustainability reports. It is said that sustainability reports might bring additional value to the investors and the financial markets (Islam & Deegan 2008, Laine 2009).

Some criticism towards sustainability reporting can be detected among researchers. For example, Deegan (2002) questions whether sustainability reports are really what they claim to be and whether they cover all of the aspects of the triple bottom line, referring to the integration of economic, social and environmental aspects. Sustainability reports therefore have been criticized of being too focused on environment and “eco-efficiency” and thus social sustainability is not seen to be reported as thoroughly (Deegan 2002, Hubbard 2009). Sustainability reports are also criticized for not being integrated with economic reports (Hubbard 2011, Hubbard 2009). One of the reasons for the lack of integration might be that the sustainability benefits are more long-term in nature which makes them more challenging to integrate to the organizational performance (Epstein & Rejc Buhovac 2014). Another reason for critique has been that the frameworks used for gathering sustainability information are too

focused on meeting management needs leaving other stakeholder groups outside the reporting process (Hubbard 2009). Other problems that have been raised among researchers are that the reports are claimed to focus too often on descriptive outcomes with little attention to providing specific targets or figures or relativities between presented information (Hubbard 2009). Similarly, sustainability reports often focus on reporting the positive (Adams 2002, Comyns 2013, Hubbard 2011, Laine 2009, O'Dwyer 2001) rather than taking a neutral or realistic approach. A term 'greenwash' has been used for overly positive and unrealistic information in sustainability reports (Hubbard 2011).

2.2 Environmental reporting

Environmental reporting is one of the three aspects of sustainability reporting. Environmental reporting refers to the public part of the environmental accounting process and has been claimed to be the most important part of the process (Laine 2009). The end result - the environmental report - is a rather new tool in corporate communication originating from the early 1990s (Buhr & Reiter 2006) and is a mostly voluntary disclosure of a business's environmental performance. Environmental reporting has "evolved through a series of random voluntary initiatives" (O'Dwyer 2001: 18) from initially focusing on technical matters to including more inclusive issues such as environmental management (Törnroos 2005). Törnroos (2005) states that environmental reporting is "integrally linked with the expanding range of environmental management tools such as auditing, life-cycle assessment (LCA) and full-cost accounting" (Törnroos 2005: 3).

Companies can report on environmental aspects via various media such as web pages, annual reports, newsletters, media releases and separate environmental reports (O'Donovan 2002, Törnroos 2005). The audiences for separate environmental reports are different from the audiences of annual reports (O'Donovan 2002) since annual reports are usually targeted to financial stakeholders (Milne 2002), whereas environmental reports might draw the interest of stakeholders on a larger scale. Thus one of the reasons why organizations choose to report their environmental performance is the pressure from stakeholder groups. For example customers increasingly demand information on the environmental issues related to products and the organization (Cerin 2002). Another motivation for environmental reporting can be the potential to increase profit or shareholder value by appearing responsible towards the environment (Cerin 2002). There is also some evidence that environmentally conscious or "green" companies perform better in economic terms than their "non-green" competitors (Adams 2002). Thus appearing to do the right thing can be a considerable business advantage (Deegan 2002).

Similar to sustainability reporting, environmental reporting has some drawbacks. Some claim that environmental reports are only public relations stunts (Cerin 2002) and that environmental reporting decisions are often made

to present the company in a positive light (O'Donovan 2002, O'Dwyer 2001). Also the same problems with the lack of legislation apply. The absence of common guidelines and regulations for environmental reporting can be confusing to the stakeholders that read the reports. Gray et al. (1996) state that this freedom makes it difficult for the reader to define whether the presented information applies to the whole organization or only to a certain segment of the company and whether the overall picture of the environmental aspects is being presented. In addition, the lack of standards can make the comparison between companies based on environmental reporting difficult (O'Dwyer 2001). However, some standards and guidelines for the reporting of social and environmental information have been created and commonly accepted. Some of these are presented next.

2.2.1 Standards and guidelines

There are many standards, guidelines and frameworks that can be utilized to support sustainability reporting. They can help the companies to incorporate sustainability as an integral part of the business as well as facilitate communication to stakeholders about the impacts that the business operations have on society (FIBS 2013), but it needs to be remembered that it is unlikely that one standard or code will cover all the social, environmental and economic challenges that a company may come across (Epstein & Rejc Buhovac 2014) sufficiently. The standards and guidelines that have importance to the study are presented below.

The Global Reporting Initiative

The most commonly used framework for sustainability reporting is provided by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). GRI is an international non-profit organization that provides guidelines and a framework for the sustainability reporting of organizations of all sizes, sectors, or locations (Epstein & Rejc Buhovac 2014, GRI n.d.). GRI has a strategic partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme, the UN Global Compact, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Organization for Standardization and others (GRI n.d.). The latest version of the framework is the G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines, which was launched in May 2013 (GRI n.d.). The G4 guidelines have an emphasis on materiality therefore making the organizations analyze what information and data is critical to their business and for the stakeholders (Epstein & Rejc Buhovac 2014).

ISO 14 000 standard series

The ISO 14 000 standard series covers various aspects of environmental management by providing organizations a set of tools for controlling and continually improving their environmental performance (ISO n.d.) and help in creating and implementing an environmental management system (or an EMS)

(Epstein & Rejc Buhovac 2014). By having a functional EMS, organizations can better improve their environmental protection as well as better communicate their performance to their stakeholders (ISO n.d., Suomen Standardisoimisliitto n.d.). The ISO 14 001 is the most widely used standard of the 14 000 series (Epstein & Rejc Buhovac 2014). The ISO 14 001 and 14 004 standards focus on environmental management systems in general whereas the other standards of the 14 000 series focus on more specific issues such as life cycle assessment, eco-labels, environmental protection and greenhouse gas emissions (ISO n.d., Törnroos 2005).

Codes of Conduct

Industries can have specific codes of conduct for companies with the help of which they can address stakeholder concerns (Epstein & Rejc Buhovac 2014). A code of conduct can help in solving problems in the industry as well as help companies compare their performance to each other (Epstein & Rejc Buhovac 2014). With codes of conduct, companies can achieve the trust of the public as well as have less need for government regulation (Epstein & Rejc Buhovac 2014).

2.2.2 Measurement of environmental performance in reports

Organizations can measure the impacts that their operations have on the environment. The measurement of environmental performance is particularly vital in the case of clothing sector as especially the production of clothes has a high environmental impact due to the heavy use of chemicals, natural resources and transportation (Caniato 2012). In the measurement of environmental performance, continual improvement should guide the process. Continual improvement refers to environmental management work resulting in better environmental performance (Piper, Ryding & Henricson 2003) and having a constant aim for improvement. Objectives and targets should be revised on a regular basis.

The key in measuring environmental performance is to have measurable indicators that are material to the organization in question (GRI 2011). Indicators should be chosen so that they enable continual improvement (Piper et al. 2003). The precision and reliability of indicators (Barrow 1999) needs to be addressed when choosing what information to measure and it needs to be remembered that not all environmental indicators can be measured in a similar precision (Barrow 1999). What environmental indicators are integral, most probably differs between organizations based on their size, business and area of operation. GRI offers a range of environmental indicators from which organizations can choose the most material to them (GRI 2011). The GRI G3 framework provides indicators for measuring environmental performance in nine categories: Materials; Energy; Water; Biodiversity; Emissions, Effluents, and Waste; Products and Services; Compliance; Transport; and Overall (GRI 2011). The GRI G4 framework in addition entails two categories: Supplier

Environmental Assessment and Environmental Grievance Mechanisms (GRI 2013).

After the indicators are chosen, data is collected and analyzed. The challenge in collecting data on environmental performance is that the data might not be readily available and in some cases the 'intangibles' need to be converted into quantitative form (Hubbard 2009). Intangibles are aspects that cannot be measured directly such as 'innovation' (Hubbard 2009) or the 'value of clean air'. Moreover, stakeholder attitudes towards the organizations' environmental responsibility can be much more difficult to quantify than the amount of environmental training (GRI 2011) or environmental certificates received. Thus, organizations might face some practical challenges in measuring environmental performance concerning for example the availability of data, legal concerns, or the reliability of gathered information (GRI 2011). All in all, environmental performance measurement should be a continual process so that the development of performance can be seen.

2.3 Legitimacy theory

Legitimacy theory can be used as one basis for analysis in this research, as it tries to explain the efforts that organizations do in order to legitimize their actions and appear trustworthy in front of their stakeholders. Legitimacy theory is based on the idea of a social contract between an organization and the society (Cho 2009, Deegan, Rankin & Tobin 2002). Legitimacy is gained when an organization is in compliance with the existing social values and norms of its environment and therefore gains a so called "right to exist" (Suchman 1995). As legitimacy is defined by the shared beliefs of a social group (Suchman 1995), legitimacy can be considered as a resource (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, Milne 2002) that can be gained from the members of the organization's operating environment (Milne 2002) - the stakeholders. The operating environment can also be considered as a threat (Milne 2002), as legitimacy can be lost. Thus, even though an organization may not meet the values of an individual, its actions are considered legitimate as long as the actions do not attract the disapproval of the greater public (Suchman 1995). However the "relevant public" (Suchman 1995) is not a homogeneous group but various stakeholder groups have different levels of importance to the organization and therefore the organization might have different approaches for more powerful stakeholder groups such as financial stakeholders and for less powerful groups such as environmentalists (O'Dwyer 2001).

Legitimacy can be studied from two perspectives: from a strategic or from an institutional perspective (Suchman 1995). According to Suchman (1995) the difference between these two perspectives is that in the first managers are looking "out" whereas in the second society is looking "in". Strategic or managerial legitimacy refers to managers making strategic decisions to perform legitimating efforts (Milne 2002). It can be seen as an operational resource that

organizations use in order to meet their goals (Suchman 1995). Institutional legitimacy on the other hand refers to outside pressures such as culture, ceremonies and rituals controlling the behavior of managers (Milne 2002).

This study focuses on the strategic side of legitimacy. The legitimation process is ongoing. At any time new legitimacy threatening incidents can occur or earlier events can reappear (Islam & Deegan 2008). Suchman (1995) has identified three approaches to managing legitimacy: 1. gaining, 2. maintaining, and 3. repairing legitimacy.

1. Gaining legitimacy

First legitimacy has to be earned or gained. The process of gaining legitimacy starts in a situation where an organization starts a new line of activity (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, Suchman 1995). It is called the "liability of newness" meaning that the managers try to gain legitimacy either for the new activity or for themselves as practitioners (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, O'Donovan 2002). Suchman (1995) presents the gaining or building legitimacy as a proactive management effort whereas Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) and Comyns (2013) argue that managers are more likely to present symbolic guarantees of legitimacy rather than take extensive action towards gaining legitimacy as symbolic actions are less expensive and more flexible.

According to Suchman (1995) there are three strategies that managers can take towards gaining legitimacy. They can try to either 1. conform, 2. select or 3. manipulate environments. The first strategy of conforming takes upon a case when a pre-existing environment, for example a business market, is entered. The strategy is to adapt the organization's own structures or appearance and in that way conform to the environment. The second strategy is more proactive and does not require any modification of the organization's own structures. It focuses on selecting among environments the one that suits the organization best and the one that seems the most hospitable. The choosing of the environment requires market research, but when done successfully it makes the organization's activities seem desirable and convenient. The third and less common strategy for gaining legitimacy is about manipulating the environment. This strategy is very proactive as it tries to manipulate the existing culture to better suit the organization's needs. The aim is to have new audiences and legitimating beliefs. The strategy is also called "institutional entrepreneurship". (Suchman 1995)

2. Maintaining legitimacy

The second challenge according to Suchman (1995) is to maintain the legitimacy once it is gained. It is said that maintaining legitimacy is a more easier effort than gaining or repairing legitimacy, as once legitimacy is gained, it can be taken for granted and the legitimizing efforts can become rather routine (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, Suchman 1995). Therefore according to Cho (2009), the

focus of organizations is usually on gaining or repairing legitimacy rather than on maintaining it. Suchman (1995) recommends that legitimacy should not be taken as a completed task, since the organization is constantly vulnerable to changes in its environment. Therefore the organization should be flexible and able to adapt and respond to shifting conditions in the environment. In addition, legitimation projects tend to attract attention especially from opposing parties and this attention can be even hostile (Suchman 1995). O'Donovan (2002) reminds that: "the less "legitimacy" an existing organisation has to begin with, the less it needs to maintain" (O'Donovan 2002: 350).

Suchman (1995) presents two kinds of strategies for maintaining legitimacy: 1. perceiving future changes and 2. protecting past accomplishments. With the first strategy the managers try to anticipate future challenges and market reactions by monitoring the cultural environment and in that way they can conduct the right precautionary actions to maintain legitimacy (Suchman 1995). The second strategy is a more subtle method where managers can focus on internal operations and make sure that all activities seem responsible and in addition try to gather positive attention and support (Suchman 1995). This allows occasional deviations as there is a reserve of positive attention that enables the organization to maintain its position (Suchman 1995). Managers can also protect past accomplishments by enhancing their image through providing positive and optimistic communication to stakeholders via for example trade shows, donations to charity, speeches, advertising and plant openings (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990) or by presenting their accomplishments (Cho 2009). On the other end, managers can also try to avoid highly visible legitimation efforts. The more legitimation efforts an organization practices, such as seeming to be an industry leader in sustainability, the more attention and expectations the public has on the organization (O'Donovan 2002).

3. Repairing legitimacy

The third challenge according to Suchman (1995) is repairing legitimacy, which is a similar method to gaining legitimacy but is reactive rather than proactive. In this case, the legitimacy is lost due to an unforeseen crisis (O'Donovan 2002, Suchman 1995). Many of the same strategies for maintaining legitimacy can be used after a crisis, but Suchman (1995) provides three specific strategies: 1. offering normalizing accounts, 2. restructuring, and 3. avoiding panic. The goal behind the first strategy is to separate the certain crisis event from the organization as a whole through communication. Managers can try to deny the negative event (Cho 2009, Suchman 1995) or excuse it by rolling the blame on individual employees or some external authorities (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, Cho 2009, Suchman 1995). They can also try to justify the negative event or they can try to explain the event in a way that makes it more understandable and acceptable (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, Suchman 1995). In addition, managers can try to enhance their image by redirecting and distracting attention to less

significant issues (Cho 2009, Comyns 2013). Another tool is to avoid the negative issue by not entering into any public discussion regarding the negative incident (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, O'Donovan 2002). The second strategy by Suchman (1995) of restructuring can be an effective re-legitimation effort, as the organization admits blame and shows clear procedures and corrective actions in rectifying the mistake by rearranging some of its operations. Methods for restructuring can be to appoint inspectors and other authorities or to disassociate the organization from certain processes or geographic locations and thus show a clear want for change (Suchman 1995). With the third strategy Suchman (1995) recommends that managers should avoid panicking by being sensitive to the reactions of their operating environment. Even though re-legitimation requires vigorous reactions and strategies, Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) also suggest that managers remain patient and restrained in their efforts to avoid mistakes.

2.3.1 The role of legitimacy in sustainability reporting

Legitimacy theory comes up frequently in the literature and research on sustainability reports and their communication. Social and environmental reports can be appropriate tools for gaining, maintaining and repairing legitimacy from stakeholders. Legitimacy theory can explain why organizations choose to publish sustainability reports. It is said that the motivation to report social and environmental information is to answer to the society's expectations and thus gain a license to operate – a social contract (Islam & Wise 2012). Organizations are responsible and accountable to their stakeholders and therefore might try to legitimize their actions by reporting social and environmental information. The motivation to report sustainability information derives from major stakeholders demanding information, from various institutional pressures or from specific incidents that might threaten the legitimacy, such as major media campaigns or environmental incidents (Islam & Deegan 2008, Islam & Wise 2012). Especially stakeholder groups such as socially responsible investors, consumers that want “green” products or environmental NGOs might have a special interest on sustainability performance (Laine 2009).

The lack of sustainability reporting can have a negative effect on an organization's credibility. Even though a company meets the society's expectations or at least does not show any major signs of not conforming, their legitimacy might still be threatened as they have not stated clearly that they do conform (Islam & Deegan 2008). According to Törnroos (2005), companies that operate in an environmental manner also want to show it and therefore by providing environmental reports the companies assure their stakeholders that they are operating in an environmentally responsible way (Törnroos 2005). Comyns (2013) on the other hand questions whether the quality and trustworthiness of sustainability reports as the reports contain different types of information which might not be verifiable by the report reader.

The role of positive reporting especially in the case of repairing legitimacy is evident and social and environmental reports can therefore be seen as more symbolic marketing efforts than actually presenting the organizations' performance (Comyns 2013). One of the reasons why organizations do not prefer to publish negative information or bad news could be the fear of unknown reactions of the public (Adams 2002). Organizations can try to "offset" negative public image by producing positive disclosures (Cho 2009, Milne 2002) and therefore divert attention from the negative incident (Comyns 2013) to a more positive incident such as environmental awards received (Cho 2009, Milne 2002). There is also evidence that publishing positive environmental disclosures can increase the investments made in a company (Milne, 2002).

3 METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES

3.1 Research design

The research was conducted as a qualitative research. Qualitative research is the analysis of data as comprehensively as possible as the focus is on quality, not quantity (Eskola & Suoranta 1998). The underlying assumptions, values and objectivity of the researcher have more influence in a qualitative study than in a quantitative study as qualitative study tries to explain and discover rather than confirm prevalent “truths” (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2007). Qualitative analysis method seemed most appropriate for the research as the objective of the research was to describe the environmental reporting practices of clothing retailers as thoroughly as possible.

The research was conducted in the form of a longitudinal content analysis where the changes in the content in a time frame were analyzed. Longitudinal study is chosen when the aim is to follow the development of a phenomenon or to see how things change from one moment to another (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2007). All of the available sustainability reports of the clothing retailers were analyzed to see the development of their environmental reporting practices.

The method chosen for the analysis of the data was content analysis, as it is the analysis of documents, such as books, articles, reports or interviews. Content analysis tries to describe the contents of a document verbally. It is usually of qualitative nature, but quantitative methods can be used for example in the form of counting the use of certain phrases (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009) as was done in this study in the case of legitimacy. A document has three dimensions: creators, users and settings (Prior 2003). Creators are such as writers, publishers, agents and so on and users are the readers (Prior 2003). Documents are not absolute and one-dimensional as they can be created to represent the creator’s viewpoint but also interpreted by the users in many different ways depending on the different setting where document is created or read (Symon & Cassell 2012).

According to Eskola (2010) and Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009), there are three options for forming an analysis framework in a qualitative content analysis. The analysis can be either based on data (inductive) or theory (deductive) or a combination of the two. In a data-based analysis, the prior theories, concepts and other information related to the research topic are not taken into account as the analysis framework is formed based on the data at hand (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009). Therefore, the researcher needs to be as objective as possible when analyzing the data and to make sure their own bias does not affect the analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009). In the analysis phase, various theories and concepts can be brought in and utilized in the interpretation of findings (Eskola 2010). According to Eskola (2010), this technique can be rewarding as it allows the researcher to divide the topic to different phenomena and study the topic from various perspectives. In the second option - the theory-based analysis - the main idea is to test prior knowledge in a new context. It is based on a specific theory, model or concept and the research phenomenon is defined based on what is already known of the topic (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009). As a result, the theory-based study finds out whether the hypothesis based on the theory is supported by the findings from the empirical data (Eskola 2010). The third option combines some aspects of both the data- and theory-based methods. In this option, the analysis is primarily based on the data, but the theory and prior knowledge of the topic guide the analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009). The prior knowledge is thus used as a supporting factor that can open pathways to new ideas (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009). The third option does not utilize any specific theory, but the theory chapter of the study usually combines various materials such as prior research results, theories and concepts (Eskola 2010).

In the case of this thesis, the third option that combines theory and data was chosen for creating the analysis framework. The data-based method did not seem appropriate in this study, due to the fact that sustainability-related reporting is still in its infancy in the clothing sector and therefore comprising the analysis framework solely based on the content of the sustainability reports seemed not enough to define what the reports *should* contain. The inclusion of reporting criteria from literature and prior research thus improved and completed the analysis framework. The theory-based option on its own did not seem appropriate either for this case as the analysis is more based on the related key concepts and prior research, rather than theory. In the case of legitimacy however, a more theory-based method was used as legitimacy theory was used as a basis of the analysis framework.

3.2 Data collection

The analysis focused on sustainability reports of clothing retailers that are publicly available online. Therefore, the data source was secondary. Google search engine was used to find suitable clothing retailers for the study. The companies chosen were multinational clothing retailers that operate in Finland and that provide fashion for women at reasonable prices. The main criteria for choosing the case companies were that the companies have sales in Finland and that they provide more than one sustainability report on their website in order to be able to compare the reporting practices in a time frame. Another criterion was that the reports should be separately downloadable as a pdf since the information in separate files is usually not changed and cannot be lost whereas the information on a website can be altered or deleted at any time without the reader noticing it.

The data acquisition process turned out to be rather problematic and the criteria for choosing the case companies varied throughout the process. The websites of most of the major women's clothing providers operating in Finland were checked and only four companies had yearly sustainability reports available. There were great differences in the levels of sustainability information that clothing retailers provided on their websites. A few of the companies studied provided a lot of information on sustainability on their websites, but did not publish separate reports (e.g. Esprit, United Colors of Benetton and Gina Tricot). Some of the companies studied provided limited information on sustainability focusing on certain areas such as environmental policy (Zara) or ethical trade (Cubus). However, from all the studied companies, only one appeared to have no mention of sustainability issues on their website (Carlings). Some of the fashion retailers (e.g. Zara, VILA) were part of a larger chain called Bestseller, which publishes a centralized report. These retailers were not included as a sustainability report of a larger chain does not provide an exact image on the one company's performance. The list of all the retailers that were studied can be found from Appendix 1.

Four companies were chosen for the analysis: Hennes & Mauritz, Mango, Kappahl and Lindex. The case companies vary in size and turnover. H&M, Kappahl and Lindex are of Swedish origin (Lindex n.d., H&M n.d., Kappahl n.d.), whereas Mango is Spanish (Mango 2015). The market presence of the three Scandinavian companies in Finland is rather extensive whereas Mango has only seven stores in Finland. Lindex is nowadays a subsidiary of the Stockmann Group (Lindex n.d.), but nevertheless has continued to publish their own sustainability report. Table 1 presents a comparison of the four companies on some key figures.

TABLE 1 Company profiles

Company	Sales countries	Stores worldwide	Stores in Finland	Employees worldwide
H&M	55	3,500	56	132,000
Mango	105	2,731	7	13,456
Lindex (Stockmann)	16	~500	62	~5,000
Kappahl	4	377	n/a	~4,000

The final data collected for analysis consisted of 31 sustainability reports (see Appendix 2). H&M has published sustainability reports since 2002 (12 reports), Mango since 2004 (10 reports), Lindex since 2006 (5 reports) and Kappahl has reports from 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2013 (4 reports). All of the reports are available online and can be downloaded as a separate pdf -file. Lindex differs from the rest of the companies as they published pdf -reports until 2009. After that, their sustainability information was provided only on their website. Therefore, the reports from 2010 to 2011 were not available for this study as no information could be found. Lindex was originally excluded from the study due to the fact that they provide some of their reports only as a website version, but since there was a lack of suitable companies they were accepted as a case company in the end. Lindex's 2012 report was also a website version and it was originally included in this study, but in 2013 Lindex switched back to publishing a separate pdf sustainability report and therefore the 2012 online report did not seem fitting for the study no longer as it would have made the comparison of data challenging. Mango's latest 2013 sustainability report was also excluded from the study as it is available only in Spanish.

3.3 Data analysis

An initial document analysis was made to gain a comprehensive picture on the data. After the initial analysis, the framework for the analysis was formed. The analysis framework was comprised based on the information arising from the data, in this case the sustainability reports of the case companies, as well as the central themes and concepts arising from research on sustainability and environmental reporting and existing reporting guidelines. Towards the end of the analysis, the environmental sections of the reports were further analyzed from the viewpoint of the use of strategies for legitimacy.

3.3.1 Analysis framework

The analysis was divided into three topics: 1. Reporting practices, 2. Measurement data, and 3. Legitimacy. Throughout the analysis the focus was on the environmental sections of the sustainability reports, but with some exceptions. If relevant environmental information could only be found from other parts of the report, such as in the case of product-related information, other sections of the sustainability reports were taken into consideration as well. In the analysis on legitimacy, only the environmental sections were analyzed in order to keep the scope of the analysis reasonable. After the analysis of the three areas, a comparison of the companies was made in order to gain an understanding on the differences in the companies' approaches towards environmental reporting.

1. Reporting practices

The general environmental reporting practices of the case companies were analyzed to get an overall picture of the main characteristics of the report and whether the approaches change during the years of reporting. The themes and questions for the analysis of reporting practices were gathered based on the initial document analysis, from GRI guidelines (GRI 2011) and from prior studies on environmental reporting (Epstein & Rejc Buhovac 2014, Hubbard 2011, Hubbard 2009). Table 2 presents the topics and questions for the analysis of the reporting practices related to environmental reporting. The development of the issues between years is analyzed in all cases.

TABLE 2 Analysis topics related to reporting practices

Topic	What is analyzed?
1. Scope	Is the report scope presented? Do the boundaries change between years?
2. Objectives and targets	Are yearly environmental objectives and targets provided in order to maintain continual improvement?
3. Auditing and inspections	Is internal or external auditing conducted on a yearly basis? If yes, what is the role of environmental issues in the auditing process?
4. Environmental management systems	Are environmental management systems used and to what extent?
5. Global Reporting Initiative	When has the company started to report according to GRI criteria? What is the level of compliance to GRI and is it verified by a third party?
6. Verification	Does the report have external verification?

2. Measurement data

After the analysis of general reporting practices, the reports were analyzed based on eight measurement data categories that are relevant to be covered in an environmental report. This was done to see which environmental aspects the clothing retailers consider important in their reporting and whether the priorities change between companies and between their years of reporting. The categories were gathered from prior research on environmental reporting (Caniato 2012, Epstein & Rejc Buhovac 2014, Hubbard 2011, Hubbard 2009) and the GRI G3 framework (GRI 2011). The categories of analysis and what they contain were:

1. Products and materials: indicators on chemical use, use of sustainable materials, use of eco-labels and packaging.
2. Energy: indicators on energy consumption and energy saving.
3. Water: indicators on water use and water saving.
4. Biodiversity: indicators on the organization's damage to natural habitat and its management.
5. Emissions: indicators on greenhouse gas emissions.
6. Waste: indicators on waste amounts and recycling.
7. Compliance to law: monetary fines and sanctions received from non-compliance to environmental requirements.
8. Transport: indicators on logistics and distribution, not including emissions.

Questions that were covered in each of these areas were:

1. What is measured and how the data is presented?
2. Is data compared and is it comparable between years?
3. How has the presenting of data changed between the years of reporting?

3. Legitimacy

In the third part of the analysis, environmental sections of the sustainability reports were analyzed on whether the communication provided can be seen as a strategic choice for gaining, maintaining or repairing the legitimacy of the company. The analysis is based on Suchman's (1995) three strategies: gaining, maintaining and repairing legitimacy provided above with the exception of "Don't panic" in repairing legitimacy as it cannot be straightforwardly analyzed since it is more of a recommendation for managers than a distinct strategic choice. In practice, the analysis was done as a content analysis by finding concrete mentions and then categorizing the mentions to the most suitable category. Only the environmental sections were analyzed in the light of

the three strategies of legitimacy in order to keep the focus on environmental issues. The framework of analysis is presented below on Table 3.

TABLE 3 Analysis of the use of strategies for legitimacy

Strategies for legitimacy	Examples
Gaining legitimacy	1. Conforming to existing environment 2. Selecting among environments 3. Manipulating environments
Maintaining legitimacy	4. Perceiving future changes 5. Protecting past accomplishments monitoring cultural environment, taking corrective action positive communication; gathering positive attention, publicity and support
Repairing legitimacy	6. Offering normalizing accounts 7. Restructuring operations and taking blame denial, excuses, blaming others, justification, redirecting attention, avoid discussion appointing authorities, disassociation

4 RESULTS

The results of the study are presented from the three main areas of the analysis: reporting practices, presentation of measurement data and use of strategies for legitimacy. In addition, the chapter provides conclusions on the development of environmental reporting practices in general as well as an overall comparison of the companies based on the three analysis areas.

4.1 Reporting practices

In the analysis of reporting practices, the scope of the analysis was the whole sustainability report, as some information of a more general nature regarding issues such as scope or auditing could not be found merely from the environmental sections of the reports. The results are presented next from all of the six analysis areas: scope; objectives and targets; auditing and inspections; EMS; GRI; and verification in the case of each case company.

All of the case companies have a separate environmental section in their sustainability reports. The analysis of the reporting practices suggests that even though the differences are not huge, H&M has been performing the best, Mango the second best and Kappahl and Lindex the weakest. Table 4 presents the placing of the case companies in regards of their reporting practices in general. The placing is presented so that the one who has reported most thoroughly got a "1", the second best got a "2", the third got a "3" and the one who reported the least thoroughly got a "4" thus giving an overall score and overall placing of the companies. Hence, the one with the least points performed the best and vice versa.

TABLE 4 Comparison of case companies based on reporting practices

	H&M	Kappahl	Lindex	Mango
1. Scope	1	4	2	3
2. Objectives and targets	1	3	2	4
3. Auditing and inspections	2	1	3	4
4. Use of EMS	4	1	3	2
5. Global Reporting Initiative	2	4	4	1
6. Verification	2	4	4	1
Total	12	17	18	15
Overall placing	1st	3rd	4th	2nd

Scope

The precision of providing the scope of the sustainability report varies between the case companies. However, it appears that H&M is performing the best out of the four and Kappahl the weakest regarding scope precision. In their first few reports H&M provided little or no information about the report boundaries but from 2005 onwards, H&M has been providing a rather detailed description of both the reporting period and the reporting boundaries. H&M's report scope initially covered the group as a whole and its global operations without a more detailed description. From 2008 onwards however the company has in addition included supply chain monitoring data. Lindex has variations in their choice of stating the report scope. In their first report in 2005/2006, they have no mention on the scope. After that they state either both the reporting period and the boundaries or only the reporting period. In 2013 the company reports both scope and reporting period in a detailed way. Lindex clearly mentions not reporting supplier data, until in 2013 when they claim to include all activities except franchise activities. Mango has a separate chapter for presenting the scope of their report but seems to present it on a rather general level. They state that the whole group is covered and that the reporting period is the previous financial year. There is no specific mention on what is the level of coverage concerning for example the supply chain. For example in 2012 Mango states in a somewhat confusing way: "No limits have been placed on the scope and coverage of the report with regard to the financial, environmental and social impact of the organisation" (Mango 2012: 19) but does not explain in more detail what is meant by this. Kappahl states in their first two reports only the reporting period. In 2012, the report states the reporting period, but also: "This report describes KappAhl's work in our central business areas from the perspective of sustainability" (Kappahl 2012: 3), which can be considered somewhat vague. In 2013 however, Kappahl states the report covering all activities and describes the reporting period as well.

Objectives and targets

H&M is performing the best also in terms of presenting clear objectives and targets of their environmental work on a yearly basis. All of the other three companies either have some sort of confusion in their terminology or do not present environmental targets whatsoever. In their reports, H&M provides a review of the fulfillment of previous targets, specific targets for the following year, persons responsible as well as time frames for each target. This was done consistently from 2002 until 2009. The targets are specific, some more measurable than others. In the first five reports they provide clear environmental objectives as well. In 2010, H&M retitled their sustainability work into "H&M Conscious" and divided their report into seven long term sustainability commitments three of which are related to environment: "Be Climate Smart", "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" and "Use Natural Resources Responsibly". The division has been used ever since. Each of the three commitments contains more specific environmental targets. The targets are rather specific and some measurable while some are more abstract. The fulfillment of targets is monitored in the following year's report.

Lindex also reports on their environmental objectives and targets in all of their reports except the latest 2013 report. What is positive is that Lindex does have some objectives that they follow, but the reporting lacks a clear and continuous structure in order to see whether anything has been improved. Their terminology changes in every report from "environmental goals" (2005/2006) to "environmental objectives" (2007 and 2008). The 2009 report provides only a link to their website for more detailed information, which is problematic as the website information tends to disappear in time. The follow-up of past targets varies too as in some years they clearly present the status of previous targets (2005/2006 and 2008) and in some they do not mention anything about whether they have met the targets set in the previous report (2007).

Both Kappahl and Mango have not presented clear yearly environmental objectives or targets in their reports. The only exception is Kappahl's 2012 report that contains overall environmental objectives but then again they are not monitored in any way. Both of these companies therefore could put more effort in monitoring their environmental performance in a longer time-period.

Auditing and inspections

All of the case companies follow up the performance of their suppliers by monitoring the compliance to a code of conduct on a yearly basis. There are differences in when the companies have taken a code of conduct for suppliers in use. H&M, Kappahl and Lindex all have had a supplier code of conduct since 1997, whereas Mango's code has been in use from 2002 onwards. The companies also provide information about their code of conduct of varying degrees. H&M's code of conduct is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at

Work. Lindex's code is based on the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI), meaning that they monitor their suppliers on three levels: Level 0 ('non-compliant'), level 1 ('improvements needed'), and level 2 ('good'). Kappahl also has based their code to the BSCI guidelines but in 2010 the company became a member of the Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) instead of BSCI, as they felt BCI suits them better as it does not require external auditing of suppliers. Mango's code of conduct is based on the guidelines and recommendations of the International Labour organization (ILO).

The role of managing environmental issues in the codes of conduct of the case companies vary. In the case of H&M, environment has its own section in the code – even though somewhat vague. H&M expects suppliers to act in an 'environmentally responsible way' and comply with the related laws and regulations. In 2006 however, the environmental requirements are presented in detail with special emphasis on suppliers with wet processes and their handling of wastewater according to Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) guidelines. Lindex's environmental requirements in the code are not explained in any of their sustainability reports, but merely referred to on a general level such as: "Environmental and safety issues" in the 2005/2006 report. In 2009 however, Lindex presents a separate environmental code for suppliers with wet processes that sets requirements for water treatment, chemical handling, waste handling and emissions. The only information that Mango provides of the role of environment in their code of conduct is: "Manufacturers and workshops will carry out all their activities in the most environmentally friendly way possible" in all of their reports until 2011. This definition is not too detailed, but in 2011, Mango updated the environmental requirements to include compliance with planned legislation and regulation as well as committing to Mango's chemical restrictions and continued this in the later reports. In their first 2008 report, Kappahl states to have created new environmental guidelines for suppliers with wet processes. The guidelines cover three focus areas: chemicals, waste and water. However the environmental requirements are not presented in any of the later reports.

Kappahl performs the best in regards of auditing of internal processes. Kappahl has ISO 14 001 certification which requires for both internal and external auditing of their internal operations. The internal audits are done as yearly follow-ups on environmental performance. The external audits are done by SP Certifiering. The operations are recertified every third year. H&M provides information about the internal and external auditing processes of their own operations to a varying degree, but some progress can be seen. H&M mentions internal audit in 2003 and 2004, but does not specify it more. In 2011 H&M states: "For several years, we have had an internal audit system in place to monitor compliance with different internal policies and guidelines in all our in-house operations" (H&M 2011: 50). In 2012 and 2013, H&M also presents the internal auditing system in a similar way. Neither Lindex nor Mango provide any information about the auditing of their internal operations.

When talking about the auditing of supplier activities, all other companies except Mango report on the amount of yearly supplier audits. Lindex and Mango report having both internal and external supplier audits, whereas H&M and Kappahl only report on audits done by themselves. Mango's internal supplier audits are done by the company's own auditing department and external audits by Auren Auditors-Consultors Barcelona – the same consulting firm that verifies Mango's sustainability report. Lindex reports on the number of audits conducted by their own auditors and by external companies approved by the BSCI. Lindex also performs the best in reporting on audit amounts, as they report on how many audits, both initial and follow-up audits, they have conducted during the year in all of their reports. H&M also reports the amounts of audits done each year and how many of them were unannounced from their first sustainability report onwards. Kappahl provides figures on how many auditing inspections they have made to suppliers and how many of those were follow-up visits in all of their four reports. Mango provides no figures on how many audits they conduct yearly, like the other companies do. In general, Mango provides the same information in all of their reports, and not many updates are added during the years.

Even though the case companies provide numbers on how many supplier audits they conduct, Mango is the only company that provides a percentage figure of how large a proportion of the suppliers the auditing process covers. Since 2007 Mango started to provide the percentage of production plants and workshops that have been audited. The coverage is between 80 and 95%, except in 2011 and 2012 the percentage is 100%. Generally Lindex does not specify how large a proportion of the suppliers they audit. However in 2007, Lindex states: "All factories are audited at least once a year to ensure that they are complying with Lindex demands and are making continuous improvements until they reach level 2 according to the BSCI criteria." (Lindex 2007) Kappahl also has only one mention about the proportion of suppliers audited. They state in 2010 that each production unit is covered by the inspection and monitoring system and each of them has to undergo yearly follow-up visits in order to continue manufacturing for Kappahl. No such specifications are provided in any other report. It remains unclear how large a proportion of suppliers H&M audits on a yearly basis.

The results of audits regarding the environment were also analyzed. H&M seems to perform the best. They present overall data on the results of audits from 2003 to 2008 in the form of number of rejected suppliers. In 2013 the number of rejected *potential* supplier factories is reported. Specifically regarding environmental requirements, H&M provides figures on the non-compliance to environmental requirements from 2005 to 2008. From 2009 forward, the company switches to a more positive note and reports about the level of compliance to environmental requirements. In 2013 however, no results or compliance levels to environmental requirements are reported. Lindex also provides data on the environmental compliance levels of suppliers. From 2006 to 2009, they provide environmental compliance levels of suppliers with the

exception of 2007 when environmental compliance is not separately reported. In 2013 only the compliance levels of suppliers with wet processes is reported. Kappahl does not provide any actual figures on the results of their supplier audits. However, results on internal audits are provided in the three latest reports. Kappahl presents the amount of deviations or non-conformances of internal audits, but does not reveal the non-conformances in more detail, except in 2010 they provide some examples, such as having no information sheets for the management of cleaning chemicals. Mango does not provide measurement data either on their audits until starting from 2008. From then onwards the company reports on general results of the audits in the form of number of breaches of their code of conduct each year. No environmental breaches are specified.

Environmental management systems

All of the companies have some form of an environmental management system (EMS) in place. Kappahl is the only company whose EMS is certified according to the ISO 14001 standard. Kappahl has had ISO 14 001 certification since 1999 and claims to be the first fashion chain to have obtained the certification. Kappahl's environmental management system covers the whole life cycle: design, production, transportation to distribution center and distribution to stores as well as the operations of head office, distribution center and stores in Sweden and in Finland.

The other three companies claim to have used the ISO 14 001 standard as a basis for their EMSs, but have opted not to certify them. Mango has had their own "Mango Environmental Management System" (SGAM) in operation since 2008. The company claims to have included all of the aspects of ISO 14 001 in their own system, but has chosen not to certify it. Lindex also has an environmental management system that is based on the principles of ISO 14 001 and also is not officially certified, which they mention in all reports except in 2009. Oddly in the 2009 report, Lindex has no mention of the EMS or ISO 14 001 but again in 2013, the company website states: "Lindex environmental management has been developed in line with the ISO 14001 methodology" (Lindex 2013: 29). H&M mentions having an environmental management system only in their 2004 and 2005 reports in one sentence. In the reports from 2002-2005 H&M recognizes the importance of ISO 14 001 but has chosen not to use it. Since the 2006 report onwards, H&M has no longer any mention of EMS or ISO 14 001 in their reports.

All of the three companies: H&M, Lindex and Mango seem to recognize the importance of ISO 14 001 certification but provide criticism towards the bureaucracy of the certification process and offer reasoning on why they are not using the system. Mango claims that their own system is more specific than the system in ISO standard. Lindex's reasons for not certifying the management system are such as preferring to use "simple and practical methods" in the reduction of environmental impacts (2005/2006, 2007). Also H&M seems to

prefer simplicity as their reasoning includes: customers not requiring the system (2002), the bureaucracy required by ISO certification (2003), and ISO being not compatible with H&M's working methods (2004), which the company wants to keep "simple and viable" (2005).

GRI

All of the case companies use the GRI reporting guidelines. Mango and H&M have been using the guidelines the longest. Mango has been officially reporting according to the GRI guidelines starting from 2006. Before that they have been using GRI but do not indicate how officially. H&M states to have used GRI as a reference from 2002 onwards and officially from 2007 onwards. Both companies have provided an index of GRI contents as an appendix in all of their reports even when the GRI standard has not been used officially. Lindex states it has been reporting according to GRI G3 guidelines from 2007 onwards. Lindex provides an index of GRI indicators in their report only in 2007 and 2008. In the case of Kappahl, only two of the four reports (2008 and 2013) state that the company is using the GRI G3 guidelines. Kappahl has provided no information on what indicators they cover in their reporting.

Two of the four companies have started to use the newest version, the GRI G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines published in 2013 (GRI 2013). In their 2013 report, H&M has used the GRI G4 guidelines, being the only company to have fully reported according to the new guidelines. In their latest report Kappahl uses the G3 guidelines but approaches some of the G4 aspects and is going to report according to G4 in the following 2014 report. Lindex has no mention of G4 and Mango's 2013 report is not analyzed due to it being in Spanish. H&M is the only company that has included the GRI Footwear and Apparel -sector supplement, which is a voluntary pilot version available on request (GRI n.d.). H&M took part in the formulation of the sector supplement and has been including indicators from the supplement from 2008 onwards.

The GRI guidelines require the report preparer to state their level of application, which tells the report reader the extent to which the GRI guidelines have been applied. The application level is done as a self-assessment and can be verified by GRI. Mango claims their level of application being 'A+' in all of their reports. H&M's level of application is stated as 'C' in 2007 and 'B' from 2008 onwards. Lindex's compliance level has been 'C' from 2007 onwards. In Kappahl's 2008 and 2013 reports that mention GRI, the level was 'C'. None of the companies have had official verification of the GRI compliance by GRI.

Verification

External assurance or verification of sustainability reports seems to be of little importance to clothing retailers. Mango seems to be doing best in terms of having their report reviewed by a third party - a consulting firm and therefore the self-declared '+' has been added in their level of GRI compliance. Mango has had their reports externally verified since 2006. H&M has had no assurance

of their reports until a partial assurance in their two latest reports in 2012 and 2013 by two public accountants, covering only a few specific GRI indicators chosen by H&M. Both Lindex and Kappahl have had no verification with the exception of a post-graduate student following the development of Kappahl's 2012 sustainability report.

4.2 Measurement data

The sustainability reports were analyzed on the eight measurement areas: products and materials; energy; water; biodiversity; emissions to air; waste; compliance to law; and transport. The focus of the analysis was on the environmental sections of the reports with some exceptions. For example products and materials -related issues were often presented in the social responsibility -sections of the reports and in these cases the analysis was extended to include these sections. The analysis focused on the concrete measured data provided. Some of the companies provided estimated numbers or numbers for future development but these were not included in the analysis.

In the comparison of the measurement data presented, again H&M seemed to report the most thoroughly of the companies and Kappahl the least. Lindex and Mango almost tied on the second place. The analysis was based on the extensiveness of data provided yearly as well as on the consistency of reporting practices. Table 5 presents how the companies position themselves compared to each other in all of the measurement categories. The placing is presented similarly to Table 4 so that the one who has reported most thoroughly got a "1" and the least thoroughly a "4" thus giving an overall score and placing.

TABLE 5 Comparison of the case companies based on measurement area

	H&M	Kappahl	Lindex	Mango
Products and materials	1	4	2	2
Energy	2	4	3	1
Water	1	4	3	2
Biodiversity	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Emissions	1	4	2	3
Waste	3	4	2	1
Compliance to law	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Transport	2	3	1	4
Total	10	23	13	13
Placing	1st	4th	2nd	2nd

Only two of the measurement areas were left with little or no attention: biodiversity and compliance to law. Surprisingly no information was found from any of the reports on biodiversity. Even though the GRI G3 guidelines

include five biodiversity indicators: EN11 - EN15 (GRI 2011), none of the companies included these indicators in any of their reports. In the case of compliance to law, the case companies did provide some information but nothing related to monetary fines or other sanctions for non-compliance to environmental requirements. The information on compliance to law was mainly concentrated on chemical restrictions and environmental laws. H&M provided the most information on their compliance to law and stated on many occasions going 'beyond the law' and having their own additional legal requirements to those of production countries. Kappahl and Lindex stated applying the laws of the country in question whereas Mango provided no information on legislation concerning the environment.

Based on the analysis, three most important environmental performance measurement areas for the case companies were clear: products and materials; emissions; and energy. The fourth place was shared between water, transport and waste, if biodiversity and compliance to law are not taken into account. The priority was analyzed mainly based on the amount of environmental data presented and the consistency of presenting the data in each measurement category, but also some relevancy and importance factors had to be taken into account. For example, even though Mango reports on "other waste" in a consistent manner, the amount of batteries might be a rather trivial issue compared to for example the amount of total emissions. Another relevancy factor to be considered was whether something was reported on a group level or only concerning specific locations.

Table 6 presents the priorities that each of the case companies had on the different measurement areas. The priorities were placed so that each of the companies had priorities from 1 to 6, '1' being the first priority and so on. For example in the case of H&M 'Products and Materials' was the main priority in their environmental reporting whereas 'Transport' was left with the least attention. Each of the measurement categories are discussed next from most popular to least. Compliance to law and biodiversity were left out as explained above.

TABLE 6 The priority of measurement data

	H&M	Kappahl	Lindex	Mango	Total	Total priority
Products and materials	1	2	1	2	6	1
Emissions	2	1	2	3	8	2
Energy	4	3	3	1	11	3
Water	3	6	6	5	20	4
Waste	5	6	5	4	20	4
Transport	6	4	4	6	20	4
Compliance to law						
Biodiversity						

Products and materials

The most important measurement category for the case companies was products and materials. After the analysis of the sustainability reports, four specific sub-categories related to reporting on products or materials were identified: chemical use, use of sustainable materials, use of eco-labels and packaging.

In the case of all the companies, the data concerning the use of chemicals was focused on the number and results of chemical tests. All of the companies except Mango provided the amount of chemical tests conducted in a year. Kappahl reported the amount of chemical tests in all of their reports either as a total number or as a percentage of products. H&M provided the number of chemical tests conducted in all but two of their reports (2004 and 2006). Lindex provided numbers of their chemical tests in percentage of or as a total number of tests conducted in all of their reports except the latest. The number of restricted chemicals was reported only by H&M. H&M reports the number of restricted substances from 2007 onwards with the exception of the years 2009 and 2013. The results of chemical tests are reported by all other companies except H&M. Mango reports on the results the most consistently. In all of their reports Mango reports on the number of substances that they test and the amounts detected. Mango also publishes data on the number of problem cases, where the limits of certain chemicals have been exceeded. The reported chemicals vary somewhat between years but the idea is the same. Kappahl provides the amount of approved tests in percentages in their two latest reports. Lindex reports on the percentage of rejected products in the chemical tests in three of the reports.

The data concerning the use of sustainable materials seems to be focused on organic cotton and recycled materials. H&M has the most materials-related data on both of these areas and is especially focused on organic cotton. From 2004 onwards, H&M reports on the total use of organic cotton in tonnes or as a percentage of the total cotton used. The use of recycled materials is reported only by H&M in 2010 and 2013. The recycled materials included are recycled wool, recycled cotton and recycled polyester, recycled tetrapacks and recycled polyamide. H&M in addition reports on many more minor material-related aspects in some of their reports such as the use of certified leather, the use of water-based adhesives in leather, savings in pesticide use due to organic cotton, the number of plastic bottles used in polyester production and used garments collected in stores. The problem is that the data is presented in various not-so-common units, such as in pairs of shoes or number of leather bags or in number of plastic bottles, which can make the conceptualization of the amounts rather challenging. Lindex reports on organic cotton use only in 2008 and the number of garments made from "sustainable material" in 2013. Kappahl does not report on material use except in 2012 and 2013 when they report on total purchased cotton. Kappahl does not measure their use of organic cotton. Instead they report organic cotton via how many eco-labeled garments they sell therefore

reporting the total number and not specifically how many organic garments they sell. Mango states in their reports from 2007 to 2010 that they are researching the possibility of using organic cotton in the future, but after 2010, there is no longer any mention of the issue. The only data that Mango provides on materials is the consumption of natural and synthetic fibres which are reported in 2011 and 2012.

All of the companies provide some information on the use of eco-labels, but there is a clear lack of actual measurement data. The focus is on the EU Flower eco-label and certified organic cotton. Again, H&M has the most information available, but the only data that H&M reports is the amount of garments that carry the EU Flower label, which is reported in all of their reports except the two latest. H&M also reports on certified organic cotton, the GOTS standard, the Global Recycling Standard, cosmetics certification by Ecocert, and paper from FSC-certified forests, but provides no data on these issues. Kappahl's approach is consistent as they provide data on how many million eco-labeled garments they sell each year in all of their reports. The labels that they use are: Öko-Tex Standard 100, The EU Flower, and Organic Cotton. Lindex provides measurement data on their use of eco-labels only in 2013 when they state the amount of increase in environmentally labeled garments compared to the previous year. Mango only states from 2007 onwards that all of their paper bags are FSC-certified or made from recycled paper.

Packaging seems not to be a focus area for the case companies. Lindex performs the best in providing data on packaging as their whole materials reporting focuses mainly on packaging materials. They provide data about their packaging materials from the first report until the 2008 report. The data that is provided is about the total tonnes of cardboard and plastic used in their packaging as well as the change compared to the previous year. Strangely in 2009 and 2013 no packaging information is provided. The only data that Mango provides is that the boxes used in packaging are of 100% recycled material which is stated in all of their reports. In 2011 the company presents a measurement tool for reducing packaging but provides no data related to it. H&M starts to report packaging-related data from 2010 onwards. The information provided changes between years from the use of recycled materials in their consumer bags (2010, 2012) and using recycled cardboard in mail order packages (2011) to how many trees are saved due to the use of reusable transport boxes (2011). Kappahl provides no information on their packaging.

Emissions

The focus in emissions reporting seems to be on carbon dioxide (CO₂). Kappahl is the only company that specifies some other greenhouse gases in addition to just CO₂. This is done only in the 2013 report. Many of the companies have changed the emissions reporting from reporting the tonnes of CO₂ to using CO₂-equivalent, which is used so that the various greenhouse gas emission amounts can be compared with each other using their global warming potential in the

calculation (EPA 2013). This could suggest that the companies measure the emissions of more gases than just CO₂ but that seems not to be the case as explained below. Lindex is the only company that has not reported in CO₂-equivalents at any point, but opted to report emissions in CO₂ tonnes. In the case of all companies, the emissions indicators are mostly concentrated on transport.

H&M provides the most emissions indicators but it seems to be challenging for them to find any continuity or similarities in their chosen indicators. In all of their reports they provide the total CO₂ emissions either as total tonnes, divided by source or scope or compared to turnover. In all years the data is compared to some of the previous years, baseline years changing to some extent during the years. From 2010 onwards the emissions are presented in the form of CO₂ equivalent with a specification on what greenhouse gases are included, but offering no specific emission amounts on them, only a total figure. H&M's latest report only presents the increase in total emissions and the CO₂ impacts of each stage of the value chain. When talking about emissions from transportation, H&M has the most data available. Between 2007 and 2013, they report on the percentage changes in emissions from transport, travel emissions and CO₂ emissions from transport. Again after 2010, they report in CO₂ equivalents.

Both Mango and H&M have divided their emissions reporting into three scopes: 1. direct, 2. indirect, and 3. other indirect emissions. Mango's emissions reporting starts from 2009 onwards. Mango reports their GHG emissions first in tonnes and from 2011 onwards in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent. Just like H&M, Mango does not specify any certain greenhouse gases they emit and only reports on total GHG emissions. Also from 2009 onwards, Mango reports on the percentage reductions in GHG emissions in stores. Mango has no specific data on emissions caused by transportation.

Kappahl does not provide an overall figure on their emissions. They report the CO₂ emissions of a t-shirt and a pair of trousers as well as the CO₂ emissions resulting from transportation in 2008 and 2010. The 2010 report provides the most data on emissions including the CO₂ emissions per garment, the emissions from distribution centre to stores and the amount of emissions from business travel that has been offset. Kappahl is the only company to report the amounts of specific greenhouse gases (CO₂, NO, Hydrocarbons, CO, and particles). This is reported in their 2013 report in the form of reduced emissions.

Lindex has a consistent overall approach as they report the total CO₂ emissions in all of the reports except the latest and compare the amounts to one or two previous years. Lindex also reports on the CO₂ emissions from transport in all of their reports and compares it to one or two previous years.

Energy

Energy use was also a category of importance to the case companies. The focus seemed to be on electricity use. Mango performs the best in energy related

reporting. They have a clear and consistent structure in their energy reporting and their focus areas are: lighting, gas consumption and electricity consumption. H&M also provides a rather extensive amount of data on total energy use and electricity use, but has some variations in their chosen data. Both Lindex and Kappahl focus on electricity use but Kappahl provides a more limited amount of measurement data on their energy use.

The consumption of electricity was a priority area for all the case companies. Mango reports in all of their reports the electricity consumption in offices and distribution centers. Electricity consumption in stores is reported from 2005 onwards having the same indicator in all reports. Mango reports in all of their reports the amount of electricity saved when more efficient lamps are installed in stores. Both Lindex and Kappahl are focused mainly on electricity use on their energy use reporting. Lindex has a lot of variation in the chosen data on display. The first two reports present electricity from emissions point of view, electricity bought and electricity used. In the next two reports (2008, 2009) Lindex only reports on total electricity used. Kappahl's 2010 report provides one specific figure on the electricity consumption of the company per square meter and how much it is less than in the previous year. In the 2012 and 2013 reports, they provide an estimation of how large proportion of the company's electricity in Sweden comes from hydro power. The 2013 report presents additional data on electricity use: how much electricity consumption decreased. H&M puts a lot of emphasis on electricity production from installed solar panels which is reported from 2008 onwards. It can be debated whether the amount of electricity from the panels is worth the attention. On a more general level they report on electricity-related measures such as electricity use and electricity from renewable sources, but only in 2013.

H&M and Mango provide some other measurement data on energy use in addition to electricity use. H&M reports on the total energy use in their first two reports and again from 2010 to 2013. In the meantime, they report energy-related information mainly from emissions point-of-view. In these later years, energy use is reported first in two and then in three scopes and also the reductions in energy use are reported. Mango does not report on total energy use. Their reports contain the same indicator on yearly gas consumption. From 2009 onwards, Mango also reports on the reductions in energy consumption of their stores using 2008 as a base year. In their 2012 report, Mango has added fossil fuels as a category reporting about the liters of diesel consumed annually.

The figures on energy use are compared to a varying degree. Given that Mango provides the same indicators in basically all of their reports, they compare the figures very little. Only some comparison to the previous year is presented in 2004 to 2008 regarding electricity consumption but a lot more could have been done. H&M also provides many energy indicators in their reports but unfortunately they do not compare their data much to previous years either. This is probably due to the changing approaches, emphasis and measurement methods during the years. The only energy use data that is compared to previous years are the reductions in energy use, which are

compared to a few of the preceding years and also to a 2020 target. In the first four reports Lindex always compares the ongoing year's figures to the previous year's figures, therefore some comparison between the years can be done even though the continuity of reporting methods is only two years. Kappahl seems to have no clear measurement methods or any continuity in their provision of data and seems to provide only random figures on energy and as a consequence no comparison of data.

Water

Water seems not to be a top priority area for the case companies. H&M provides the most data related to water. In their first reports, H&M clearly states that they do not measure or report water-related information due to the complexity of collecting data. From 2005 to 2006 water issues are included in audits, but no figures are provided in the reports. From 2007 onwards the company starts to report on supplier water use, as they provide water quality parameters measuring the biological oxygen demand (BOD), chemical oxygen demand (COD) and total suspended solids (TSS) of suppliers with wet processes. This data is provided constantly in every report until 2012 and the development is seen between years in each of them. The amount of suppliers is stated clearly in some reports but then again rather vaguely in some. In 2012 and 2013 H&M reports the amount of suppliers in full compliance with their water quality requirements. From 2008 onwards H&M provides data on suppliers' water use efficiency and in the three latest reports the data is also compared to the previous years. Other issues reported from 2010 onwards are water saved in denim production, water saved through their use of Better Cotton and the amount of rainwater harvested. Again some unusual measures are used such as "litres of water" or "bathtubs of water" that might not have a real resemblance to the reader. The 2013 report offers two additional measurement areas: water footprint across value chain and facilities with water-efficient equipment.

Mango has been performing best from the other three companies. They have consistently reported water use throughout their years of reporting but the scale of reporting seems to be diminishing from good coverage to not-so-good. It needs to be noted that the company only reports on the water use of their own operations (central offices and warehouses) and no supplier- or store-related data is provided. At first, the company provides a total water consumption figure and compares it to the previous year. From 2007 to 2010, the company reports the water consumption produced at central offices and warehouses. From 2011 to 2012 Mango has changed their reporting to the consumption of running water for non-industrial use in central headquarters and warehouses in Spain. Therefore, even though data is provided on a yearly basis, the scale of it changes making Mango's development negative. Lindex measures their suppliers with wet processes in their two latest reports in 2009 and 2013, but no measurement data is provided other than the division of

suppliers in three categories: “good”, “improvements needed” and “no compliance”. Kappahl provides no figures or data related to water.

Waste

Waste seems not to be a priority in the environmental reporting either. The amount of data is very limited and some of the companies have even included paper use (Mango in 2004-2010) or cardboard use (H&M in 2003-2005) in their waste-related reporting. It is debatable whether they should be in the waste category or in material use but since the companies have chosen to report them as waste, the analysis follows their example. Mango is performing the best in terms of reporting waste-related indicators. Mango’s approach to waste reporting can be divided into two distinct categories: before and after 2010. Before 2010, Mango reports waste-related data on paper use and in addition also some rather trivial data on other waste, such as toners, batteries and fluorescent tubes. Again, no comparison between years is made in the reports but the data is comparable if the indicators are gathered from each of the reports. In the second category from 2011 to 2012 Mango provides data on the total yearly waste amounts and a division between different waste categories, therefore having a more overall approach and adding ordinary waste in the data. In their first three reports, Lindex provides the percentage of waste separation in their stores. It needs to be noted that not all stores are included in the figures. The 2013 report presents no data on waste. H&M has an opposite approach to Lindex. They state in their first two reports that waste is not measured due to varying methods of disposal in different countries. After reporting on cardboard use from 2003 to 2005 H&M switches their focus to reporting the recycling of hangers and continues this in 2005 and from 2007 to 2009. The 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2011 reports have no data on waste. In the 2012 and 2013 reports though, H&M for the first time presents some data on waste handling. They report the percentage of waste recycled in their distribution centers. Kappahl provides no data concerning waste in none of their reports.

Transport

In the case of all the clothing retailers, data related to transport is usually reported from emissions point-of-view. A limited amount of data is provided related to the use of transport modes. Lindex has the most consistent approach as they present the modes of transport used in all of their reports but the first. H&M provides a lot of various rather limited transport indicators. There is no consistency in the measurement data and different data is presented almost every year. Examples of indicators that H&M has reported: the increase in the use of audio and web conferencing systems (2008), the decrease of volumes shipped by ocean and air (2009), the development of rail freight in different markets (2010), and volumes shipped by sea or rail (2011, 2012). In 2013, all the transportation data is related to emissions. Kappahl reports their transportation issues mainly in the form of emissions. In 2010 however, they report the total

number of shipped garments and compare the numbers between 2005 and 2010. Also in 2012 and 2013, they report the percentage of shipments that sea transport accounts, but more coherent picture is not given. Mango provides very limited information on transport. The only concrete figures in addition to emissions are not provided until the 2012 report, when Mango reports on deliveries by different transportation modes from suppliers and deliveries to points of sale.

4.3 Legitimacy

The environmental sections were analyzed in the light of the three strategies of legitimacy: gaining, maintaining and repairing. Suitable mentions to the three strategies and their sub-categories were searched from the environmental sections of the reports. Each mention was put in the most suitable category once. The analysis indicates that the most widely used strategy by the case companies was repairing legitimacy, then gaining and maintaining. Table 7 presents the amounts of mentions that each of the categories had in the case of each company.

TABLE 7 Mentions of strategies for legitimacy

Strategies of legitimacy		H&M	Kappahl	Index	Mango	Total mentions
1. Gaining legitimacy	1a. Conforming to existing environment	0	0	0	0	0
	1b. Selecting among environments	0	0	0	0	0
	1c. Manipulating environments	48	14	4	0	66
2. Maintaining legitimacy	2a. Perceiving future changes	3	2	4	0	9
	2b. Protecting past accomplishments	20	17	3	6	46
3. Repairing legitimacy	3a. Offering normalizing accounts	31	6	12	43	92
	3b. Restructuring operations and taking blame	1	1	4	0	6
Total mentions		103	40	27	49	219

Gaining legitimacy

Gaining legitimacy turned out to be a challenging category to analyze as it concerns a situation in which a new line of activity is started and that kind of a situation is not too often presented directly in the reports. No mentions were found fitting to selecting environments or conforming to existing environments

but clear examples were found on manipulating environments where companies tried to influence the clothing industry, change the common practices and have new legitimating beliefs and new audiences. For example in the case of a water collaboration in India, Kappahl quite ambitiously described their effort to influence the industry: "The ambition is to make a perceptible difference to humans and the environment in India" (Kappahl 2013: 10). There were two distinct strategies identified for manipulating environments, which were to present networks or other forms of collaborative actions and to lead by own example to pursue change in the industry.

The most popular way of manipulating the fashion industry was presenting collaborative actions such as networks and working groups. All of the companies except Mango opted to emphasize multiple collaborative actions, with the aim of influencing and changing some area within the fashion industry. The main areas for collaborative actions were: transportation, cotton and water management. H&M had clearly the most mentions (48), but their amount of reports is also the largest. Kappahl also had quite many mentions (14) despite them having the least reports - only four. The companies mentioned many specific initiatives, the most popular being the Clean Shipping, which is a Swedish initiative to improve the environmental performance of transportation services. In addition, membership in the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) was mentioned by H&M and Kappahl, the aim of which is to improve conventional cotton growing. In addition, H&M presented other initiatives or projects. They were such as the BSR Apparel Water Working Group, the CEO Water Mandate, the European Retail Round Table on energy, SmartWay programme and Roadmap to Zero. Kappahl mentioned the Swedish Textile Water Initiative (STWI) for sustainable use of water, the SWAR water initiative and the Bangladesh Water Partnership for Cleaner Textiles, PaCT. In addition, many other collaborations and agendas to influence the industry were mentioned in a more vague way such as H&M in their environmental policy from 2002 to 2005: "We shall also co-operate with our suppliers to improve the social and environmental standards in the factories that manufacture H&M clothing, thereby contributing to sustainable development in these areas".

The second strategy for manipulating environments was to lead by own example. The companies made themselves seem like an industry leader or pioneer with exceptionality and through their own success and example encouraged change within the industry. In these cases, the companies expressed a clear agenda for achieving change within their industry. The most popular approach was to position themselves as the first or best in doing something, using phrases such as: a "leading actor" (H&M 2011: 73), "the first of its kind" (H&M 2012: 73) or "the first training programme in Sweden" (Lindex 2007: 28). Another approach was to make initiatives seem exceptional by using phrases such as: a "game changer" (H&M 2012: 73) or a "unique model" (Kappahl 2012: 14). Through these examples, the companies provided agendas such as to "encourage" or "inspire" change within the industry (H&M) or "benefitting" the whole industry (Lindex). In addition to the above, H&M

provided many other occasions where they seemed to lead by own example. Industry-wise, they wanted to “increase demand” and “provide incentives” and “encourage change”. Stakeholder-wise, they emphasized influencing mainly customers by using phrases such as “raising awareness”, “setting an example”, “inspiring”, and “influencing”.

Maintaining legitimacy

Examples were found that fit the two strategies for maintaining legitimacy: perceiving future changes and protecting past accomplishments. Protecting the past seemed to be a more popular approach than perceiving future changes. There were three ways with which the companies tried to protect past accomplishments. Firstly, they tried to seem as the industry leader or being the first in the industry to do something. Secondly, they emphasized having done something environmentally beneficial for a long period of time to seem legitimate and thirdly, they presented specific awards or other recognitions received.

Emphasizing being an industry leader or the first to do something was a popular strategy. In this case, the companies merely focused on the achievement without presenting a clear intention of manipulating the industry as previously. H&M and Kappahl made their mark in this category. Both claimed to be either the first in the world or first/best in the industry. H&M stated being the first fashion company in the world to collect used garments (2012). Kappahl stated in all of their reports that they are the first fashion chain to receive ISO 14 001 certification. On the industry level, H&M claimed to have the most stringent chemical restrictions in the industry and Kappahl the first in the industry to carry out comprehensive climate analysis of garments. Other phrases used to describe superiority in certain issues were such as: a “leading actor”, “unique”, “pioneering” or “the first or its kind”.

The second option for protecting past accomplishments was to present the company as having done something environmentally beneficial for a long time. The phrases used were “for many years”, “for ten years”, “for more than ten years” and having done something “since 1999” for example. This approach was used by all of the case companies to some extent, but in relation to the total amount of sustainability reports, Kappahl used it the most. For example in 2010, Kappahl states: “And of course we use “green electricity” – with a guarantee of origin for electricity from hydropower. We have done this since 1999.” (Kappahl 2010: 36) Other issues for which these phrases were used were such as having certain environmental commitments or environmental requirements or initiatives. It is arguable whether having done something “for many years” is somewhat vague and can mean anything from two to however many years.

The third option for protecting past accomplishments was to present recognitions and awards received on environmental performance. H&M presented two and Kappahl one environmental award. H&M also presented themselves as one of the best in the world in consuming organic cotton and in

environmental supply chain management as according to another institution. H&M and Kappahl also took credit for environmental achievements not done by themselves but by one of their shipping carriers (H&M) or by being part of a project that got recognized (Kappahl) such as the Cleaner Production that was recognised as being “one of the three most valuable projects of the year at the World Economic Forum in Davos” (Kappahl 2013: 10). There were also other recognitions mentioned such as Mango receiving the CeroCO2 label for production and logistics operations.

Only a few mentions were found from the environmental reporting of the case companies on perceiving future changes. All of the examples found were about monitoring the cultural environment and taking necessary action. The case companies seemed to be especially focused on monitoring stakeholders and their reactions. Most of the mentions in relation to total amount of reports were from Lindex. Lindex makes it seem that they are aware of what is going on and act accordingly. For example Lindex’s Environmental Policy can be considered as an example of monitoring the environment, as they claim to inform employees, inform and follow-up suppliers, keep updated on laws and regulations and collaborate with other companies, authorities and NGOs therefore making it seem that they try to keep in track of what is happening in the different areas of their working environment. Lindex also discusses the “social debate” surrounding the greenhouse effect and the risk of potential criticism to all companies therefore addressing media. Similarly, Kappahl raises the issue of media image in 2010. H&M mentions the inclusion of their stakeholders in one of their reports. Both Kappahl and H&M emphasize responding to customer expectations and demand. For example Kappahl states:

“Our customers expect the right feeling for fashion, but also that we take responsibility for our operations from the point of view of sustainability. Here the environmental impact is central. We take this very seriously and regard it positively.” (Kappahl 2010: 29)

Repairing legitimacy

The most common strategy used was repairing legitimacy. The analysis of repairing legitimacy was challenging as the companies almost never mentioned a legitimacy threatening event. As the analysis was done merely based on the reports and no external media research was done, the analysis was made by finding mentions that fit the two sub-categories: offering normalizing accounts and restructuring operations and taking blame.

Many instances were found where the case companies offered normalizing accounts and tried to explain the poor performance in various ways. The case companies made it seem like the problems were out of their control. The phrases used for reasoning were such as “unforeseen circumstances” (H&M 2013: 57) or “logistical problems” (Kappahl 2010: 32). The most common strategy for making things seem out of direct control was the

presenting the lack of direct business relationships. H&M and Mango made it clear that transportation of their goods is not part of their organization but contracted to third parties. Mango stated this in all of their reports and H&M in 2002 and 2012. It was also made evident in the case of H&M, Lindex and Mango that sub-supplier activities such as raw material extraction, fabric production and dyeing were beyond the case companies' direct control and that the companies have limited influence on the environmental performance of these operators. For example Lindex states:

“Lindex has, however, limited scope for making environmental demands on these processes as they often take place at a sub-supplier with which the company does not have any business links.” (Lindex, 2007: 23)

Denial and understatement were also common approaches used by the case companies as they seemed eager to focus on their direct operations so that the environmental impacts would seem smaller. Mango especially excelled in this department stating that “the environmental impact of our internal activities is almost insignificant” (2004-2008), and that they “generate practically no greenhouse gases in the internal sphere” (2004-2010) and that they “don't generate special waste” (2004-2010). H&M understated their impacts on water by claiming that retailing is a low user of water and that their “direct operations have only a minimal impact on water from a value chain perspective” (H&M 2013: 70). In 2010, Kappahl understated the extensiveness of the environmental impact of the retail industry by claiming that when compared to other consumption items, fashion does not have major environmental impacts.

The case companies also provided various explanations and justifications for different issues. Most commonly explained issue was the increase in emissions and energy use. The explanations provided were such as problems with data acquisition, accuracy and comprehensiveness (H&M 2003-2005, Lindex 2009), increase in sales or expansion of operations (H&M 2004, Lindex 2009, Mango 2004-2008) and increase in travel – mainly air travel (Lindex 2007-2008). Some justifications for the lack of something were also provided. For example H&M and Lindex justified not using the ISO 14 001 environmental management system. The reasoning were: bureaucracy and complex methodology that comes with ISO (H&M 2003 & 2005, Lindex 2006-2007), no customer demand for certification (H&M 2002), or not being compatible with working methods (H&M 2004). Other justifications provided were such as profile and price structure (H&M 2004), problems with licensing (H&M 2005), and challenges with motivating suppliers (H&M 2011). Also a few examples were found where a certain negative issue was justified by being simply necessary or unavoidable.

The case companies also showed signs of rolling the blame someplace else such as governments or parent companies:

“We do not believe that only strict regulation and inspections will give the desired effect. Furthermore, the authorities in many of the countries where H&M's garments are produced do not monitor or audit the compliance of laws and regulations.” (H&M 2002: 27)

“The objective [introduce routines at the IT department] has not been achieved as Stockmann is responsible for procurement of IT equipment for the whole group.” (Lindex 2008: 14)

Only six mentions were found about restructuring operations and taking blame. Lindex was the only company that openly presented a problem and how it was solved. Three cases of this kind were found in their reports, one of them being:

“In September 2007, the Swedish magazine ICA-kuriren discovered the presence of lead in necklaces from Lindex and several others of the company's competitors' products. This led to Lindex withdrawing the necklaces in question and reinforcing checks on lead to ensure that it does not appear in the company's products.” (Lindex 2007: 24)

One example was found regarding a company disassociating themselves from a negative event by H&M:

“H&M will never accept forced and/or child labour and therefore, as long as the government of Uzbekistan continues to compel children to work in its cotton fields, Uzbek cotton cannot be an option for H&M and our supply chain.” (H&M 2010: 92)

4.4 Development of environmental reporting

The development of the three areas of analysis: reporting practices, measurement data, and legitimacy was analyzed throughout the sustainability reporting years of the companies. The actual development turned out to be challenging to discover, especially in the case of measurement data as the chosen data indicators on display, base years, as well as the comparison of data varied drastically throughout the years of reporting.

Development of reporting practices

Only one of the case companies showed clear development in their general reporting and measurement practices. H&M improved in four of six areas and regressed in one. Kappahl and Mango developed in one area of analysis, whereas Lindex did not show any significant overall improvement as they had development in one area and regression in one. Table 8 presents the improvement and regression of the case companies concerning the reporting

practices during their years of sustainability reporting. Positive development is illustrated with '↑' and regression with '↓', whereas '-' depicts a situation where no noticeable positive or negative development was seen and 'n/a' a situation where no information was available.

TABLE 8 Development of reporting practices

	H&M	Kappahl	Lindex	Mango
Scope	↑	-	↑	-
Objectives and targets	↑	-	↓	n/a
Auditing and inspections	-	-	-	↑
Use of EMS	↓	-	-	-
GRI	↑	↑	-	-
Verification	↑	n/a	n/a	-
Overall development	↑	↑	-	↑

H&M had the most areas of improvement as they developed in four of six areas of analysis. In the presentation of scope, they seem to have developed both in what they cover in their sustainability report but also in the precision of presenting the scope. H&M also shows signs of continual improvement through presenting overall as well as environmentally-specific objectives and targets throughout their reporting. With the switch to seven "Conscious Actions" from 2010 onwards the company increased the amount of their environmental targets considerably. The development in the case of GRI resulted from using the guidelines first as a reference and then from 2007 onwards officially. H&M also improved their application level from 'C' to 'B' in 2008, and was the only company to fully use the GRI G4 guidelines in their 2013 report. Verification was also an area with some improvement, as H&M had partial assurance in their two latest reports in 2012 and 2013. H&M's approach to auditing is rather consistent throughout their reporting and no noticeable development could be seen. The only area with clear regression was the use of EMS, as H&M initially provides criticism and reasoning for not having ISO 14001 certification and then after 2006 they no longer have any mentions related to EMSs.

Kappahl had improvements in one area: GRI. Kappahl's improvement is mainly due to the partial use of GRI G4 guidelines in 2013. Kappahl has not shown clear improvement or regression in the other areas of analysis. They do not present environmental objectives or targets with the exception of one report. In the case of auditing, Kappahl has a thorough and consistent approach probably due to having ISO 14001 in place. The consistency also continues in the reporting of the EMS itself. The only area that Kappahl does not have any information is verification.

Mango's measurement and reporting practices have been consistent and stable, except improvement in auditing practices. In the case of auditing, Mango presents measurement data from 2008 onwards as well as the proportion of suppliers audited. The other areas of analysis were presented in a consistent way. The scope is presented on a rather general level in all of the reports,

Mango's own EMS is presented in almost all of the reports as well as the GRI information is practically the same in all reports. Verification practices have been rather consistent, as Mango has had external verification from 2006 onwards. The consistency can be seen as positive, as the reports are comparable and the level of providing information is high to begin with, but not developing reporting practices further during nine years of sustainability reporting might make the company seem somewhat indifferent towards sustainability reporting. Also development-wise, having the latest report only in Spanish automatically eliminates a large proportion of potential report readers which consequently can be considered as a sign of regression in reporting practices.

Lindex developed in their scope reporting but regressed in reporting on objectives and targets. Lindex started by having no mention of the report scope and included some information in between and finally in 2013 they provided detailed information on the report boundaries. The slight negative development regarding environmental objectives and targets was due to Lindex failing to report on objectives and targets in their latest report, as all the previous reports had them. All the other analysis areas did not show clear signs of development or regression. In the case of auditing, information on both the auditing process and the results was provided in a consistent way. Of the use of EMS, Lindex provided information rather inconsistently and in one report has no information. The reporting of GRI is consistent when talking about the level of compliance, but information on GRI Index varies. Similarly to Kappahl, Lindex does not mention having had external verification of their sustainability reports.

Development of measurement data

When analyzing the development of presenting measurement data, both the amount and quality of data were considered in the assessment. The same three companies: H&M, Kappahl and Mango had positive development in their presenting of measurement data, whereas Lindex seemed to have negative development. H&M showed the most improvement among the case companies. Mango improved as well but had also regression in one area. Kappahl showed some improvement, but provided the least information as they had no data on water or waste. None of the companies provided any measurement data concerning compliance to law or biodiversity, as explained earlier. Table 9 depicts the development and regression of the case companies in presenting measurement data in their sustainability reports. As above, positive development is illustrated with '↑' and regression with '↓', whereas '-' depicts a situation where no noticeable positive or negative development was seen and 'n/a' a situation where no information was available.

TABLE 9 Development of presenting measurement data

	H&M	Kappahl	Lindex	Mango
Products & materials	-	-	-	-
Emissions	-	-	↓	↑
Energy	↑	↑	↓	-
Waste	↑	n/a	↓	↑
Water	↑	n/a	↑	↓
Transport	-	-	-	↑
Compliance to law	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Biodiversity	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total development	↑	↑	↓	↑

H&M developed in their data presentation in three categories: energy, waste and water. Two factors influenced H&M's improvement in the area of energy use: they reported on energy use in their first two reports and again from 2010 onwards and in addition their 2013 report contained more energy-related data than the previous reports. In the case of waste, in 2012 and 2013 H&M provided the first waste-related data. The reporting of water-related data developed from stating in the first reports not reporting on water-related information due to the complexity of data collection to increasing the amount of data from 2007 onwards and the latest report providing the most data. The data presented on products and materials, emissions, and transportation was rather inconsistent in each case, as a large amount of various indicators were used with no clear improvement.

Mango improved in three categories as well: emissions, waste and transport. Mango's emissions reporting improved as they started to report on emissions from 2009 onwards. The same was with transportation as they started to report data on transportation in 2012. Waste-related indicators were provided consistently, but from 2011 onwards Mango started to report more relevant data. Mango had regression regarding water-related data, as their approach was consistent but the scale of data diminished from total consumption to the consumption of running water. In regards of products and materials, Mango's data either was consistent or varied, therefore no apparent development could be seen. The energy related data was consistent to a point where all of the reports included the same figures with updated data.

Kappahl improved their data presentation in one area: energy. The amount of energy use indicators increased during their years of reporting. The data on products and materials was consistent in the case of chemical tests and use of eco-labels but virtually no information was provided on sustainable materials or packaging. In the case of emissions and transport, the inconsistency of data was a problem and also some not-so-relevant figures were provided instead of a complete picture.

Lindex had some development in their water-related reporting, as they started to present data in the two latest reports. Otherwise Lindex's development has been on the negative side in three areas: emissions, energy

and waste. Lindex's regression is mainly due to the lack of data in their 2013 report. In all of these three measurement areas, data is provided, but the amount of indicators presented diminished during the reporting years and finally the 2013 report contained almost no data on these areas. In regards of products and materials, no clear distinction between positive or negative development could be made as there was either a lack of data in the latest report or a variation in the data presented or data that was only presented in the latest report. In the case of transport, Lindex presented the same data consistently.

Development of legitimacy

The development of the use of strategies for legitimacy was analyzed rather straightforwardly based on the amount of mentions related to the three strategies: gaining, maintaining, or repairing legitimacy. Whether the legitimacy of the companies has strengthened or weakened is difficult to say as it would require a more thorough research on stakeholder and media perceptions and the investigation of the state of legitimacy is not in the boundaries of this study. However conclusions can be made whether there is an increase or decrease in the use of legitimation strategies in certain years. This might suggest that something negative or positive has occurred concerning legitimacy as the company in question feels the need to increase or decrease their legitimation efforts. Table 10 describes the increase or decrease in the mentions of the case companies concerning the three strategies for legitimacy and their sub-categories. Differing from the two above tables, this table describes '↑' as an increase in mentions, '↓' as a decrease in mentions, '-' as neutral and 'n/a' if no mentions were found. Hence the increase in mentions is not automatically a positive phenomenon as the increase in mentions actually might stem from an increase in threats to legitimacy and vice versa. The yearly amounts of mentions of each company to which the analysis is based on can be found from Appendix 3.

TABLE 10 Increase/decrease in legitimacy mentions

Strategies of legitimacy		H&M	Kappahl	Lindex	Mango
1. Gaining legitimacy	1a. Conforming to existing environment	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	1b. Selecting among environments	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	1c. Manipulating environments	↑	↑	-	n/a
2. Maintaining legitimacy	2a. Perceiving future changes	-	-	-	n/a
	2b. Protecting past accomplishments	↑	-	-	↑
3. Repairing legitimacy	3a. Offering normalizing accounts	-	↓	↓	↓
	3b. Restructuring operations and taking blame	-	-	↓	n/a
Total increase/decrease		↑	-	↓	-

H&M was the only company that had increase in their use of legitimating strategies in more than one area. This was mainly due to the vast increase in mentions in their 2012 report, where the amount of mentions of manipulating environments and protecting past accomplishments was almost double than in other reports. Both Kappahl and Mango had no strong overall change. Kappahl had some increase in mentions regarding manipulating environments and some decrease in offering normalizing accounts, whereas Mango had a slight increase in mentions on protecting past accomplishments and more significant decrease in offering normalizing accounts. Lindex had a decrease in overall mentions, therefore it seems that their need for legitimating efforts reduced, at least in certain areas. The development of legitimacy is further discussed in chapter 5.

4.5 Comparison of the companies

When the companies are compared to each other, what can be concluded from the analysis is that H&M seems to pull through as the best reporter regarding both their reporting practices as well as their presentation of measurement data. Another distinct result from the analysis is that Kappahl seems to perform the poorest of the companies. The difference between Mango and Lindex is not too significant but Mango seems to be performing slightly better. Table 11 summarizes how the companies position themselves compared to each other on an overall note. The total points of the case companies are gathered from tables 4 and 5. Thus, again the one who got the least points performed the best. The comparison of the companies based on strategies for legitimacy is done separately below.

TABLE 11 Comparison of case companies (overall)

Topic	H&M	Kappahl	Lindex	Mango
Reporting practices	12	17	18	15
Measurement data	10	23	13	13
Total	22	40	31	28
Placing	1st	4th	3rd	2nd

In the case of development of both reporting practices and the presenting of measurement data, it can be concluded that the development has been positive in the case of all other companies except Lindex. Lindex had no evident development in their reporting practices and even some regression in their presentation of measurement data. Table 12 presents the overall development curves of the case companies. Again the data is gathered from previous tables 8 and 9.

TABLE 12 Comparison of the development of case companies (overall)

Topic	H&M	Kappahl	Lindex	Mango
Reporting practices	↑	↑	-	↑
Measurement data	↑	↑	↓	↑
Development	↑	↑	-/↓	↑

Thus, it can be concluded that when both the position and development are taken into account, H&M performs the best in their environmental reporting practices. H&M has the best score and some positive development can be seen as well. Mango performs the second best in points and they also have had positive development. Kappahl and Lindex seem to share the last place, but their order depends on what is considered important and valued. Kappahl is performing the poorest overall but has had some positive development whereas Lindex positions as third in their environmental reporting practices but has had slight negative development.

In the case of legitimacy it seems that H&M is a heavy user of legitimation strategies but if the amount of legitimacy mentions are proportioned to the amount of total sustainability reports, the relationships between the companies change. Kappahl has the most mentions of strategies for legitimacy (10 per report), H&M has 8.6 mentions per report, Lindex 5.4 and Mango 4.9. H&M is the only company that has increased their use of strategies for legitimacy and Lindex is the only one that has decreased it. Thus, it seems that Lindex and Mango are using strategies for legitimacy the least and in addition they both have had either a decrease in mentions or no change throughout their years of sustainability reporting. Kappahl has the most legitimacy mentions per report but they also do not have clear increase or decrease in the use of legitimacy strategies. H&M has the second most legitimacy mentions per report and furthermore their use of legitimacy strategies has increased during their years of reporting. Thus it can be concluded that H&M has probably faced threats to their legitimacy to an increasing amount and thus their need for legitimation efforts has increased.

Some simple profiles of the companies can be made based on the examples of strategies for legitimacy. H&M focuses on manipulating environments and clearly wants to seem as a forerunner in sustainability in the clothing industry. Kappahl focuses on protecting past accomplishments by being the first in the industry or having done something for a long time. Lindex and Mango both focus on repairing legitimacy by offering normalizing accounts. Lindex on the other hand emphasizes the lack of control over certain environmental issues, but also is the only company to take blame by openly presenting a problem and how it was solved. Mango also claims having lack of control over environmental impacts but is more focused on denying and understating the environmental impacts of their operations.

5 DISCUSSION

The aim of the thesis was to study the environmental reporting of clothing retailers operating in Finland. The study had four objectives. First, the aim was to study on the environmental reporting practices of the case companies and what data they present. The second aim was to study the development of environmental reporting practices and the presentation of data throughout the years of reporting. Another aim was to find out on whether the environmental communication of the companies can be seen as strategies for legitimacy. Fourth and finally, the study aimed at providing a comparison of the studied companies based on their environmental reporting practices, presenting of data and use of strategies for legitimacy. This chapter provides answers to each of the research questions and discusses the results in the light of prior research and other relevant issues.

5.1 Environmental reporting

1. How do clothing retailers report their environmental performance in their sustainability reports and how the methods change during their years of sustainability reporting?

The sustainability reporting of multinational clothing retailers operating in Finland is not common, as only four case companies were found that had sustainability reports from more than one year. Whether this is due to the consumers not demanding for transparency and information on sustainability efforts or whether the apparel industry does not see necessary to report such issues can be debated. There is a tendency among the case companies to have separate sections for the environment in their sustainability reports. All of the companies have environmental measurement data in the form of numbers and figures but of varying degrees and emphasizing different aspects.

When talking about the general reporting practices, three tendencies in the approaches of the clothing retailers were identified: the use of GRI, having and

EMS, and using a code of conduct for monitoring suppliers. First, all of the case companies have been using the GRI reporting framework as a basis for their reporting practices. This supports GRI being the most commonly used reporting framework for sustainability reporting. Hubbard (2011) also recognizes the importance of having a clear strategic framework for reporting, such as GRI, as with the help of a framework missing information can be more easily identified. On the other hand, Laine (2009) questions whether a standardized framework, such as GRI, actually helps to increase the transparency or accountability of businesses as having standardized reporting still might leave room for interpretation on the reporter's part. This dilemma of interpretation and objectivity became evident in the results of the study especially in the case of GRI application level. The results indicate that even though H&M seems to be performing better than Mango in their representation of environmental data, their level of application was 'B' at its best as opposed to Mango's 'A+' in all of their reports. Since the application level, as well as everything else, in a report is based on an organization's own estimations, the report reader should view the estimations critically especially when none of the companies have had their level of compliance officially verified by GRI.

The second finding concerning the reporting practices was that all of the case companies had some sort of an environmental management system in place, but only Kappahl has had their EMS certified according to ISO 14 001. The other three companies all chose not to and all provided criticism towards ISO certification at some point. However, no common ground was found in the criticism, as ISO was accused of being too bureaucratic and complex but on the other hand it was claimed not to be specific enough. Also in other research ISO 14 001 has been criticized for being too process-focused, as it only certifies the process and not the outcome and thus the outcome can be even undesirable (Epstein & Rejc Buhovac 2014, Hubbard 2011). In conclusion, it could be said that ISO 14 001 management system seems to be relevant to clothing retailers as all of the case companies felt the need to justify why they are not having it.

The third finding suggests that all of the case companies had a seemingly consistent approach to monitoring their suppliers. All companies have had a code of conduct with the help of which they audit their suppliers. Especially suppliers with wet processes were popular in being monitored in regards of their environmental performance. The results of audits were reported either as a compliance or non-compliance to environmental requirements or in the form of suppliers rejected. The choice might depend on what is wanted as the reporting of compliance might give a more positive picture than the reporting of non-compliance. Additionally, a tendency could be seen in all of the case companies providing numbers on how many supplier audits they conduct yearly. However, this does not give any indication to the reader on how large a proportion of the suppliers that is. Only Mango provided a percentage of their suppliers being audited. None of the companies presented any results of internal audits which might be due to Epstein's (2014) theory that at present the internal audit program on sustainability issues is developed and routine in

most organizations. Whether the internal auditing is routine or not cannot be said, but at least it is not visible in the case of clothing retailers as Kappahl is the only company that clearly reports having their internal processes audited. In any case, the inclusion of internal auditing data in the report could give a more transparent image of the companies.

Verification – or the lack of it – of the sustainability reports could be raised as a fourth issue for discussion, as even though verification seems to be an issue of little importance to the case companies, it has been a topic of discussion among researchers. Only one of the case companies, Mango, has had external verification for their sustainability reports even though for example Comyns (2013) highlights the importance of having verification at least for the issues most difficult for the readers to verify or comprehend themselves, such as emissions or biodiversity impact. Hence verification helps the reader to “trust” the information and data reported. As discussed however, there were some problems with the reliability of Mango’s verification as their level of compliance to GRI guidelines seemed to be somewhat too optimistic, if their reporting is compared to that of other retailers’ such as H&M. This raises the trustworthiness and objectivity of external auditors to the table. In fact, it has been claimed that there actually might not be completely independent verifications and the companies that are audited can control the publication of the audit results (Comyns 2013, Ball 2000) and thus the verification process can be merely a management consultancy effort than a guarantee of transparency (Cerin 2002, Ball 2000). In conclusion, having external verification does not make the report automatically ‘truthful’ as preconceptions from the auditor’s or auditee’s side always need to be taken into account.

2. What environmental data do the case companies present in their reports and which environmental measurement areas are prioritized?

In the case of specific measurement categories, products and materials was the category of most importance to the companies. In more detail, the emphasis seemed to be on organic cotton and chemical tests. The use of organic cotton was either thoroughly reported or at least it seemed to be a topic worth mentioning. The prominence of organic cotton is consistent with related research as the environmental GRI reporting of apparel retailers has been seen to have a strong focus on organic materials (Fulton & Lee 2013) and in general, cotton is claimed to be the most popular textile raw material that is produced organically (Goworek 2011). Also the use of organic cotton is said to be one of the most important methods for clothing retailers in their pursuit towards sustainability objectives (Caniato 2012). Whether the use of organic cotton actually lowers the impact on the environment is debatable as even though organic cultivation uses less pesticides and water, the amounts produced are not lowered, only the production method changes. In the case of chemical use, all of the companies except Mango provided the amount of chemical tests conducted per year. Also the results of chemical tests were reported by all other

companies except H&M. The tendency to report chemical data might be due to the increased media attention to chemical use via the Greenpeace Detox – campaign and others.

Other rather relevant measurement areas to be reported were emissions and energy. In the case of emissions reporting, the focus of all the companies was on carbon dioxide emissions and the emissions especially resulting from transport. Cerin (2002) supports the importance of CO₂ emissions as he emphasizes that it is the one accounting indicator that at least should be applied in environmental reporting. Kappahl was the only company that succeeded to specify the amounts of other greenhouse gases emitted in addition to just CO₂. In the case of energy use, even though there was a lot of variation between the data presented, the focus seemed to be on electricity use. This might be due to other energy related indicators being reported under emissions or transportation.

The measurement areas with least priority on the other hand were water, waste, and transport. Fulton and Lee's (2013) study on online sustainability initiatives of apparel retailers similarly found out that water usage and fabric waste were rarely addressed. Likewise, Hubbard (2011) identified water use as a 'sleeper' environmental issue in sustainability reporting as the focus might be more often on emissions and climate change. Why transportation is in such low priority might be due to transportation data being mainly reported under emissions. Especially in the case of waste and transport, the data that was presented seemed to be fixated on somewhat trivial issues such as cardboard use, recycling of hangers or volumes shipped by rail. Lack of waste measurement data was justified with different country-specific waste disposal methods and difficulties in collecting reliable data.

None of the companies presented any measurement data on two of the analysis categories: biodiversity and compliance to law. Even though the GRI G3 guidelines include five biodiversity indicators, none of the companies have included these indicators in any of their reports. The absence of legal data could be due to the unwillingness to share the monetary fines and sanctions received from non-compliance to environmental requirements or that there were none to begin with.

5.2 Development

3. How have both the reporting practices and the data presented developed during the years of reporting?

A slight positive trend can be seen in the overall development of both reporting practices and the presenting of measurement data. However, in more detail no conclusions can be made on why there is more data in certain reports than in others, as it would require a more thorough study on the operating environment of the companies, including media coverage and stakeholder

attitudes, but this is not in the boundaries of this study. Also as mentioned earlier, the variation in the chosen data made the analysis of the development challenging. In addition, it was difficult to analyze the relationship between the reported results and the overall picture as some irrelevant indicators were used and often no percentages or other indicators of relativity were used. Hubbard (2009) realizes the same problems with sustainability reports not providing relativities between presented information. For example, the amount of bathtubs of water saved (H&M) or the liters of diesel consumed (Mango) does not tell much to the reader about the overall situation of these issues.

In the case of environmental reporting practices, no major trends could be identified concerning the development, as companies were different in their approaches. However, the overall development seems faintly positive. First, improvement can be seen in the precision of presenting the report scope in the case of two companies - H&M and Lindex. Second, the use of GRI has developed mainly as the new G4 guidelines have been in use and also some improvements in the level of application could also be seen. The other analysis areas related to reporting practices had no major development of regression thus tilting the scale somewhat to the positive side.

In the case of measurement data presented, some overall development could be seen in the reporting practices on energy, waste and water. The development in all of the three cases was mainly due to the increase in indicators presented, but in some cases also the importance and relevancy of presented data improved. Especially the importance of water seemed to grow to some extent towards the later years of reporting. In the case of Mango, even though their development in both reporting practices and presenting of measurement data seems positive, the fact that the 2013 sustainability report is available only in Spanish affects the results and one could argue that due to the lack of data in English from 2013, Mango's overall development is negative.

5.3 Legitimacy

4. Which strategies for legitimacy can be found from the environmental reporting of the case companies and how the choice of strategies changes during the years of reporting?

The analysis of legitimacy brought another somewhat deeper side to the thesis, as now the communication and language used were being assessed. The sustainability reports were analyzed by finding examples of the three strategies for legitimacy by Suchman (1995): gaining, maintaining and repairing legitimacy. When looking at the strategies of legitimacy being used, the results of this study were clear.

The most commonly used strategy was repairing legitimacy. The results therefore are consistent with prior research that suggests that in most cases the focus is on gaining or repairing legitimacy rather than on maintaining it, as once legitimacy is gained, it might be taken for granted (Cho 2009, Suchman

1995, Ashforth & Gibbs 1990) and only after a crisis measures on re-legitimation are taken. The analysis of repairing legitimacy was challenging as the companies almost never mentioned the specific legitimacy threatening event to which they are responding to but in most cases the reason could be read between the lines. The companies provided various normalizing accounts in the form of justifications, explanations or even denial in their reports. Most popular approach was to emphasize the negative issues being out of the company's direct control for example by stating not having direct business relationship to the cause of the problem, such as sub-supplier activities. Another common strategic approach was to deny or understate the environmental impacts of operations by focusing merely on the direct operations of the company. Various explanations and justifications for negative environmental performance and lack of standards were also provided. The reasoning varied from problems with data or increase in sales to harmful processes being simply unavoidable. Some examples were also found on rolling the blame to some other entity.

The second most popular strategy was gaining legitimacy. All of the examples found were concerned with manipulating environments and no mentions were found on conforming to environments or selecting among environments. Therefore the results were contradictory to Suchman's (1995) theory which places conforming and selecting as more common strategies than manipulating. The analysis of gaining legitimacy was also challenging as it requires a situation in which a new line of activity is started and that also is hardly ever addressed straightforwardly by the companies. Thus the results might be somewhat distorted as the analysis was made simply on the basis of finding mentions that try to influence the operating environment of the company without the background relation to a new line of activity. In the results on manipulating environments, the most common way to influence the industry was through collaborative actions such as networks. Emphasizing the membership of a network can be seen as a strategic choice to appear as the forerunner and an active member in the industry and thus to influence other actors in the industry. The other strategy for manipulation was leading by own example where the companies expressed a clear agenda for achieving change within their industry by making themselves seem like an industry leader in a certain area, such as organic cotton cultivation. Laine (2009) identifies the same leadership phenomenon where via reporting the business appear as a leader in sustainability by "(re)framing the current social order more broadly as one being on the environmentally right track" (Laine 2009: 42).

Maintaining legitimacy had the least mentions even though literature defines maintaining legitimacy as easier than gaining or repairing (Suchman 1995). The reason for the lack of mentions could be that the strategies for maintaining legitimacy cannot be seen as straightforwardly as the others as they might be rather routinized (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990). For example predicting future changes requires more than just symbolic legitimation practices, as managers are required "periodic scanning of the internal and external environments and questioning the working assumptions about those

environments” (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990: 183) from the viewpoint of the report reader. The results of maintaining legitimacy were focused on protecting past accomplishments rather than perceiving future changes. Past accomplishments were protected largely by again seeming as an industry leader or being the first in the industry in doing something good for the environment but this time no clear agenda for manipulating the environment was stated as above. Other approaches for protecting past accomplishments were to present environmental awards achieved or to seem as having done something good for the environment for a long period of time.

The development of the use of strategies for legitimacy was analyzed based on the amount of mentions in each strategy. No universal trend could be seen from the results, only some tendency for decrease in offering normalizing accounts which was seen in the case of all companies except H&M. Some slight increase could be seen in trying to manipulate environments and in the case of trying to protect past accomplishments. Especially H&M’s 2012 report had double the mentions in both areas than in other reports, therefore indicating that something legitimacy threatening might have happened during that time.

The underlying reasons for using strategies for legitimacy or the state of actual legitimacy of the companies remain unclear, as the study merely looks at what the companies are saying instead of what is happening around them, what is the viewpoint of stakeholders and therefore what motivates the companies to publish certain types of disclosures. Many other studies have realized as well that social and environmental reporting is done mainly due to external pressures (Laine 2009) such as the changing social and consumer pressures (Islam & Wise 2012). Also specific events can be seen to increase the reporting when companies try to legitimate their operations by responding to stakeholder concerns (Adams 2002). Islam and Deegan (2008) phrase this well:

“It has shown that unless we explore, in some depth, the social and environmental expectations and pressures being exerted on an industry - - then we will be unable to understand the rationale for particular disclosures.” (Islam & Deegan 2008: 87)

5.4 Comparison of the companies

In this study the reporting and measurement practices of case companies were analyzed rather straightforwardly. The comparison of the companies based on the environmental data presented turned out to be challenging, as the amount of data alone is not enough but the relevancy and importance of data should be taken into account as well. No conclusions could be made on which company has the most relevant or significant data as a tendency could be seen that the chosen indicators for display vary a lot. Also the chosen base years and the comparison of data between years changes throughout the reporting. One reason that can explain the difficulties in the comparison between companies

based on environmental reporting, which is the lack of standardization in reporting (O'Dwyer 2001, Törnroos 2005). In addition the differences in the company profiles questions the need for comparison as the companies have different market sizes, turnovers and thus different resources to be used for managing sustainability. Thus, perhaps the analysis of reporting practices should be proportioned to the overall impact that a company has on the environment.

However, based on the analysis it can be concluded that H&M seems to perform the best in their environmental reporting, Mango performs the second best and Kappahl and Lindex share the last place. Therefore, the level of environmental reporting seems to be directly linked to company size, as H&M is the largest and Kappahl the smallest of the four. All of the companies except Lindex had positive overall development trend in both their reporting and presenting measurement data. Lindex had slight regression in their presenting of data. However, what needs to be taken into consideration is that the comparison depends on what is valued. Consistency-wise Mango performs the best whereas in regards of extensiveness and diversity of data, H&M performs the best. On the other hand, Mango's consistency can be seen as negative as they provide the same information with some changes in data in almost every report even to the point of having the same spelling errors reoccurring in every report.

The comparison of the companies based on the use of strategies for legitimacy was not straightforward as one cannot simply say that one company is performing better when only the use of legitimacy strategies and mentions are assessed leaving the opinions of the larger public outside the analysis. It is debatable whether a decrease in mentions automatically means that the company is performing better in regards of legitimacy or that the company's legitimacy is strengthening. Due to the problems with comparison, company profiles based on the use of strategies for legitimacy were made. H&M seems to have a proactive approach to gaining legitimacy by manipulating environments and positioning themselves as a forerunner in sustainability in the clothing sector. Kappahl on the other hand seems to focus on maintaining legitimacy by protecting past accomplishments and both Lindex and Mango seem to focus on repairing legitimacy; Lindex by offering various excuses but also taking blame, and Mango by offering excuses and understating their environmental impacts.

5.5 Contributions, limitations, and further research

Contributions of the study

This study supplements the sustainability-related research on the clothing sector as neither the sustainability nor environmental reporting practices of clothing retailers are widely studied. More specifically, no other studies were found concerning the measurement of environmental impacts within the

clothing sector, as the focus seems to be more on the social side of sustainability or the communication used in reports. Thus, this study brings something new to the table, as there is a distinct focus on environmental reporting.

The research methodology can be extended to the analysis of a larger amount of companies to get a more comprehensive picture of the state of environmental reporting of the clothing sector. In addition, the research framework could be extended to the use of other stakeholder groups and interested parties for example to help consumers and other stakeholders in locating the most blatant attempts towards legitimacy from the companies' sustainability communication.

In practice, the results of the research could help the case companies and other clothing retailers to compare their environmental reporting to each other and consequently improve their reporting practices. Especially the use of legitimation strategies could be taken into more consideration when putting together the future sustainability reports so that the use of legitimating strategies would not be so apparent.

Finally, even though the comparison of companies might not help the consumer in finding the most sustainable company of the four, as the study concerns merely the reporting practices of the companies and does not find out which has the least negative environmental impact, it might give them some indication on the amount of efforts that each of the companies make towards sustainability.

Limitations

The study has some limitations. First, the reliability of data needs to be considered as the data source is secondary. Consequently, it needs to be remembered that the analysis is based solely on the information provided by the case companies and that it is their viewpoint on their environmental performance that is analyzed. As a result, the analysis states which company *reports* the best, not which company *performs* the best or has the least negative impact on environment. There is a difference between what companies report and what they actually do (Cerin 2002).

Second, there are limitations in the reliability of the results. The nature of the qualitative approach leaves room for interpretation by the researcher on what is important and what is not. Also the somewhat evident presumptions of the researcher need to be taken into account. Therefore, this research provides only one view on the environmental reporting of clothing retailers. Especially the analysis of legitimacy had plenty of room for interpretation as the mentions fit many categories and it was down to the researcher to decide what suited best. The analysis of environmental data on the other hand could be much more realistically replicated by another researcher.

Third, the transferability of the results is low as the study concerns only four clothing retailers with varying backgrounds and market shares. Therefore,

it might be challenging to make generalizations concerning the whole clothing retail sector based on solely this sample.

Fourth, there are problems with the comparability between the companies as they are of different sizes and from different countries of origin. The information presented is subjective to the cultural context within the country of origin and also the stakeholder perceptions on legitimacy are dependent on the cultural context. For example, the reason for Mango having a higher compliance level to GRI than the other companies might be due to the different cultural perceptions of Southern Europeans' compared to that of Scandinavians' on what is a good and what is a poor level of environmental management.

Fifth and finally, the longitudinal comparison of environmental data and measurement practices was left with less attention due to the variation in chosen indicators, time frames and base years of the case companies, which made the comparison between the different years difficult. If the comparison of data within a company was challenging, then the comparison between the case companies would have been even more difficult.

Further research

When taking into consideration the environmental impacts that the clothing industry causes, it is clear that more research could and should be conducted in the field of sustainability reporting of the clothing sector. First, the study could be extended to include more clothing retailers to have a more comprehensive idea on the situation of environmental reporting in the clothing sector on a global scale.

Second, it would be interesting to study the language of sustainability reporting in more detail. For example what kind of rhetoric is used, whether the focus is more on positive reporting or whether 'greenwashing' is being used. This could be applied into sustainability reporting in general and not just environmental reporting.

Third, in the case of legitimacy it became evident in many occasions that a thorough analysis of media sources and stakeholder impressions would be vital in order to make any conclusions on the actual state of legitimacy of the case companies. Thus, the reporting could be compared to the media visibility of the same time period and in that way the motivations behind using certain strategies for legitimacy could be analyzed as well as how the motivations are being affected by for example negative publicity or environmental incidents.

6 CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to examine the sustainability reports of multinational clothing retailers operating in Finland and find out how they report their environmental performance and how the methodology changes throughout their years of sustainability reporting. To be more specific, the aim was to find out what environmental data the companies present as well as what measurement areas are prioritized and how the reporting practices and presenting of data evolve during the years of sustainability reporting. With a focus on communication, another aim of the study was to find out whether examples of strategies for legitimacy can be found from communication used in the environmental reporting and if so, what kind of change can be seen in the use of these strategies. The study was conducted as a qualitative content analysis with a longitudinal approach. Therefore, the changes and development of reporting and measurement practices along the years of sustainability reporting could be identified.

The results of the study indicate that the development of both reporting practices and presenting of measurement data has been somewhat positive, despite the frequent variations in chosen indicators, base years and other approaches. Three of four case companies had some positive development in their environmental reporting practices, as well as an increase in their environmental indicators and what they cover. In general, it seems that the comparison of data between years is not too common in environmental reporting, as the base years and units change. Clothing retailers seem to follow common guidelines in their environmental reporting practices, mainly the GRI reporting framework and seem to have environmental management systems in place and codes of conduct for monitoring supplier performance. Product- and material-related data appeared to be the most common information reported with special focus on organic cotton and chemical use. Also emissions and energy use were frequent categories measured and reported.

The findings concerning legitimacy were consistent with other research since by far the most commonly used strategy for legitimacy was repairing legitimacy. This indicates that the clothing retailers remain more reactive than proactive in their environmental management and reporting. In the case of

legitimacy, no common development trend could be concluded from the results, only some tendency for decrease in offering normalizing accounts which was seen in the case of almost all companies. Also some slight increase could be seen in the case of manipulating environments and protecting past accomplishments.

It needs to be remembered that the results of the study do not tell which company performs the best towards the environment. The results tell only some tendencies in environmental reporting as well how the companies report in comparison to each other. Moreover, when thinking about the larger picture, the promotion of 'fast fashion', which all of the case companies can be accused of, is contradictory to sustainability itself and therefore it is debatable whether for example the use of organic cotton instead of conventional cotton is the most effective way to lower environmental impact or would perhaps the lowering of consumption in general be much more effective. Consequently it can be said that there is a fundamental inconsistency between the environmental reporting and the environmentally beneficial actions of clothing retailers.

Finally, the most apparent trend among clothing retailers was identified already in the beginning of the study: sustainability reporting does not seem to be very common among multinational clothing retailers operating in Finland. However, for those who do report, this study builds an optimistic future, as some development can already be seen in the field of environmental reporting proven by the case companies. Nonetheless, with the increasing interest of customers, NGOs and other stakeholders towards the sustainability of clothes, clothing retailers have no choice but to put more effort in both their environmental management and environmental reporting.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: List of all retailers in the initial data collection process

	Pdf-reports	Website report	N/a	Comments
1. H&M	2002-2013			
2. Lindex	2005-2009, 2013	2010-2012		
3. Mango	2004-2013			
4. Kappahl	2008-2013			
5. Vero Moda (Bestseller)	2014	x		separate downloadable report in 2014
6. Vila (Bestseller)	2014	x		separate downloadable report in 2014
7. Object (Bestseller)	2014	x		separate downloadable report in 2014
8. ONLY (Bestseller)	2014	x		separate downloadable report in 2014
9. Benetton		x		sustainability report online, some data
10. Esprit		x		no data, only commitments etc.
11. Gina Tricot		x		only sustainability projects presented online
12. ZARA			x	only environmental policy presented online
13. Cubus			x	Co-operation with UNICEF and organic cotton mentioned
14. Bik Bok			x	
15. Carlings			x	no information

Note: Online information re-checked on 10.3.2014

Appendix 2: List of all the reports in the analysis

Company	No	Report name	Report length (pages)	Length of env. section (pages)
H&M	1	Conscious Actions Sustainability Report 2013	92	24
	2	Conscious Actions Sustainability Report 2012	93	23
	3	Conscious Actions Sustainability Report 2011	89	21
	4	Conscious Actions Sustainability Report 2010	167	30
	5	Style & Substance Sustainability Report 2009	167	20
	6	CSR Report 2008	129	10
	7	CSR Report 2007	83	12
	8	CSR Report 2006	18	6
	9	CSR Report 2005	81	14
	10	CSR Report 2004	72	13
	11	CSR Report 2003	61	14
	12	CSR Report 2002	83	13
Mango	13	Sustainability Report 2013 (in Spanish)	-	-
	14	Sustainability Report 2012	114	8
	15	Sustainability Report 2011	115	10
	16	Sustainability Report 2010	86	8
	17	Sustainability Report 2009	134	10
	18	Sustainability Report 2008	134	10
	19	Sustainability Report 2007	134	8
	20	Sustainability Report 2006	132	8
	21	Sustainability Report 2005	102	8
	22	Sustainability Report 2004	73	6
Lindex	23	Sustainability Report 2013	38	1
	24	CSR Report 2009	32	6
	25	CSR Report 2008	32	6
	26	Corporate Social Responsibility Report 2007	36	9
	27	Corporate Social Responsibility Work 2005/2006	29	6
Kappahl	28	Sustainability Report 2013	36	3
	29	Sustainability Report 2012	32	4
	30	CSR Report 2010	54	8
	31	Ympäristö ja yhteiskuntavastuu 2008	26	5

Appendix 3. Development of legitimacy, yearly mentions.

	1. Con- forming	2. Se- lecting	3. Mani- pulating	4. Per- ceiving future	5. Pro- tecting past	6. Offe- ring norma- lizing acc.	7. Re- struc- turing	Total
H&M								
2002			1			3		4
2003			1			3		4
2004			1			7		8
2005			3	1		3		7
2006			2		1			3
2007			4		1			5
2008			5					5
2009			3	1	3	3		10
2010			5	1	4	4	1	15
2011			5			3		8
2012			12		7	2		21
2013			6		4	3		13
Total	0	0	48	3	20	31	1	103
Kappahl								
2008			1		4		1	6
2010			2	2	4	4		12
2012			5		3	1		9
2013			6		6	1		13
Total	0	0	14	2	17	6	1	40
Lindex								
2005/2006				1	1	4	1	7
2007			2	1	1	3	3	10
2008			1	1		2		4
2009			1	1	1	3		6
2013								0
Total	0	0	4	4	3	12	4	27
Mango								
2004						6		6
2005						6		6
2006						6		6
2007						6		6
2008						7		7
2009					1	4		5
2010					1	4		5
2011					2	2		4
2012					2	2		4
Total	0	0	0	0	6	43	0	49