

**A Content Analysis of Non-Profit Organizations' Social Media: Through the Lens of
Compliance-Gaining and Persuasion**

by

Meredith D. Kiljan

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Strategic Media

School of Communication and the Arts

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ABSTRACT

Non-profit organizations utilize social media platforms like Instagram to reach the community, fundraise, convey their mission and vision, establish themselves, and educate others. This study examined whether the communication artifacts of selected nonprofit organizations employed Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining strategies through an eight-week qualitative digital content analysis on Instagram to address the problem of understanding how non-profit organizations use Instagram tools to influence and persuade their audience. Compassion International (@compassion), CARE (@careorg), and Direct Relief (@directrelief), the three non-profit organizations chosen in this study, demonstrated the usage of Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining strategies within their digital media communication strategy.

Non-profit organizations operate in a highly competitive environment, with many organizations vying for attention and resources from donors and supporters. They must understand how to effectively use Instagram and compliance-gaining theory to influence and persuade their audience, ultimately increasing their impact and reach. How are these three non-profit organizations engaging and mobilizing their audience through this influence and persuasion to support their respective cause? Are there commonalities in how each non-profit organization is using Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining framework? This study showed that the three non-profit organizations chosen effectively used Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining framework on Instagram to influence and persuade their audience, while also contributing to the existing literature on social media marketing, compliance-gaining theory, and digital content analysis. The analysis provided valuable insights for communication professionals, marketers, and non-profit organizations seeking to create compelling social media campaigns.

Keywords: compliance gaining, persuasive communication, nonprofit strategic media

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Matt, whose unwavering support, encouragement, and belief in me has driven my academic journey. Matt, your unconditional love and sacrifices have been my inspiration and your constant encouragement and belief in my abilities have given me the strength to pursue my dreams and overcome challenges. This dissertation is a testament to your unwavering support throughout the years. I love you.

To my dissertation chair, Dr. Wes Hartley, this accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine. Your support and understanding during the long nights of research and writing have meant the world to me. I would like to dedicate this dissertation to you because you have paved the way for knowledge and learning. Your contributions to academia and society have laid the foundation upon which this research was built. Lastly, I would like to dedicate this dissertation Dr. Sears, Dr. Mott, and every professor that has paved the way throughout this journey and made my time here at Liberty University special and profound.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Non-profit organizations are using new social media tools and websites to reach followers, engage with followers, and gain influence in communities locally and globally. Punch (2014) discussed that online platforms and social media tools allow non-profit organizations to express their mission and motivation, raise awareness, build community, fundraise, promote advocacy and activism, and provide transparency and accountability. This research investigated compliance-gaining theory and persuasion through Cialdini's (2021) framework to understand how three non-profits use Instagram in their social media posts to influence their followers. The positive impact of Cialdini's (2021) work identified which principles were being used, the relation to communication traditions, and which persuasion and influence principles received the most engagement and why.

The compliance-gaining theory and persuasion outlined by Cialdini (1984) have been widely applied in various fields to understand and analyze social influence and persuasion. In the context of non-profit organizations, it was essential to understand how these techniques are being used to encourage donations and support for their causes. With the increasing prevalence of social media, it was important to first explore how these communication artifacts are utilized to employ compliance-gaining strategies in non-profit organizations. As Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) pointed out, communication is multimodal, and non-profits can use various modes and media to communicate their message. Therefore, this paper investigated the social media sites of selected non-profit organizations to explore how they employed compliance-gaining strategies in their communication. Through a content analysis approach, this study identified commonalities in how these techniques were used to persuade and influence their audience. This investigation

helped to provide insight into the effectiveness of non-profit organizations' compliance-gaining strategies in social media.

Littlejohn et al. (2017) discussed compliance-gaining techniques as an essential component of persuasive communication, often employed by non-profit organizations to achieve their goals. This proposal expanded upon previous studies by conducting a digital content analysis of Instagram, focusing on compliance-gaining in non-profit organizations. Although compliance-gaining in non-profits has been examined in previous research, this study offered a fresh approach by updating the scholarship through the analysis of digital content on Instagram.

An examination of the communication artifacts of the selected non-profit organizations provided insights into the effectiveness of various compliance-gaining techniques used in digital rhetoric. Therefore, the research question of this study was twofold. First, do the communication artifacts of the selected non-profit organizations appear to employ compliance-gaining strategies? Second, are there commonalities in how Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining techniques are utilized in the communication practices of the selected non-profit organizations? By investigating these research questions, this study shed light on the presence and patterns of compliance-gaining techniques employed by the selected non-profit organizations in their communication efforts. Through this analysis, the study sought to provide insights into the use of Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining techniques in digital rhetoric by non-profit organizations and their effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes.

This study used a qualitative research methodology, analyzing the communication artifacts of selected non-profit organizations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The analysis focused on the language and images used in the communication artifacts and how they related to compliance-gaining techniques. This study also provided valuable insights into the use of

compliance-gaining techniques in digital rhetoric and their effectiveness in non-profit organizations.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), compliance-gaining strategies have been a longstanding focus of communication studies, particularly in the context of non-profit organizations. Cialdini's (2001) compliance-gaining framework provides a comprehensive model for understanding the persuasive techniques used to influence others. In addition, Craig's (1999) seven communication traditions offer a framework for analyzing communication in various contexts, including non-profit organizations. McKerrow (2015) discussed the pertinence to ask whether the communication artifacts of selected non-profit organizations employ compliance-gaining strategies and whether there are commonalities in how such techniques are used. Such an analysis provided insights into the effectiveness of various techniques and helped to inform future communication strategies. According to Bali (2015), considering the growing role of digital rhetoric in communication, it is essential to analyze compliance-gaining techniques in digital contexts. Cialdini (1984) played a pivotal role in the contribution that consolidated and expanded upon existing research, resulting in a comprehensive framework of persuasive techniques which have been crucial in advancing the field of compliance gaining.

Cialdini identified seven core principles of influence: (1) reciprocity, (2) social proof, (3) authority, (4) scarcity, (5) commitment and consistency, (6) unity, and (7) liking. These principles are based on psychological mechanisms and social dynamics that influence human behavior. Cialdini's research drew from a wide range of disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and communication, to develop a robust understanding of compliance gaining. His work not only contributed to the theoretical foundation of persuasion but also provided practical insights into how these principles can be applied in various contexts, including marketing, sales,

and activism. Cialdini's principles have become widely recognized and applied in fields where persuasive communication is essential.

Cialdini's (1984) contribution to the study of compliance gaining has had a lasting impact, inspiring subsequent research and influencing practitioners in diverse fields. His work continues to serve as a fundamental reference for understanding and utilizing effective persuasive strategies. Therefore, Cialdini's role in the process of compliance gaining's development and evolution is significant. His research and theoretical framework have not only shaped the field but have also provided a foundation for further exploration and application of compliance-gaining techniques.

Cialdini's (1984) compliance-gaining techniques include *reciprocation*, which is a technique that is based on the principle of mutual give-and-take. When someone does something favorable for us, we feel obliged to return the favor. For example, a non-profit organization might send personalized thank-you notes to donors, creating a sense of reciprocity and encouraging future donations. *Social proof*, the second technique, relies on the idea that people tend to follow the actions of others when they are uncertain about what to do. Non-profit organizations can use social proof by showcasing testimonials or displaying the number of people who have already donated, which influences others to contribute as well.

Authority, the third technique, leverages the influence of credible and knowledgeable figures to persuade others. Non-profit organizations can feature experts, influencers, or respected individuals in their campaigns to enhance their credibility and persuade potential donors to act. The fourth technique, *scarcity*, plays on the perception that limited availability or exclusivity increases the desirability of an offer. Non-profit organizations may create a sense of urgency by

emphasizing limited-time donation opportunities or highlighting the urgent need for support to motivate individuals to donate.

The fifth technique, *commitment and consistency*, is based on the idea that people have an inherent desire to act consistently with their previous commitments and beliefs. Non-profit organizations can encourage small initial commitments, such as signing a petition or joining a mailing list, which can lead to larger commitments, like making a financial donation. The sixth technique, *unity*, emphasizes the idea of shared identity and belonging. Non-profit organizations can foster a sense of unity by highlighting the shared values and goals between the organization and potential donors, which creates a sense of connection and encourages support. The seventh technique, *liking*, focuses on promoting interactive and engaging activities, displaying inspirational images that connect to the audiences' values, and showing behind-the-scenes footage of how people come together to give a sense of trust, shared compassion, and willingness to be part of the cause. This foundational understanding of how these compliance-gaining techniques are utilized by non-profit organizations to engage and persuade their target audience was the basis in which this study was aligned. Cialdini created updated versions of his (1984) seminal work on compliance-gaining techniques in future literature including updated and expanded versions in 1992, 1995, 2000, 2001, 2008, 2014, 2016, and 2021.

This research focused on the possibilities and persuasive moments used in digital media within three non-profit agencies to understand how persuasive communication is used within Craig's (1999) rhetorical tradition and to form connections between compliance gaining. This research focused on the techniques of reciprocity, commitment and consistency, unity, scarcity, social proof, liking, and authority, as well as Cialdini's (2021) framework of influence, to communicate persuasion as a positive form of communication within the digital arena. The aim

of this research was to show the communicate persuasive communication within a digital communication space through content analysis. This study broke down Cialdini's (2021) seven principles into two of Cialdini's (2021) techniques: foot-in-the-door (FITD) and door-in-the-face (DITF). The worldviews of this research proposal, both theoretical and philosophical, brought a significant focus on Craig's (1999) communication traditions. A qualitative digital content analysis explored how three established non-profit organizations use persuasive communication through Cialdini's influence.

Background of Non-Profit Usage of Digital Media

Non-profits use social media platforms to build community, fundraise, and raise awareness for activism, advocacy, transparency, and accountability. Swart (2021) showed that social media content, messaging, outreach, and communication between the organization and the community could help mobilize followers, increase fundraising, and support a sense of belonging. McKerrow (2015) showed that non-profit organizations utilize social media as a powerful tool to communicate, engage, and mobilize their audience to support their mission and cause. Social media provides a cost-effective way to reach a broader audience, engage with supporters, and build a strong community around the organization.

DiLauro et al. (2019) investigated the importance of non-profit organizations using social media to build fundraising campaigns and create social media posts. However, they noted that there had yet to be any conclusive studies on whether persuasion theory and effectiveness have been studied. DiLauro et al. discussed increased transparency and accountability, operational involvement, engagement, and improved corporate image, though noting that much more is needed in the field. Stenstrom and Haycock (2014) utilized Cialdini's model of compliance gaining to examine and understand the social influence of digital media amongst non-profit and

public libraries in Canada. They found relationships between decision-making, commitment, and authority when exploring how non-profit organizations use social media.

Building from the work of DiLauro et al. (2019) and Stenstrom and Haycock (2014), researched exploratory metaphors and messaging on social media for non-profit organizations to understand the transportation of digital traffic and digital media engagements. Bringing in rhetoric and focusing on the power of social media, Tiggemann and Slater (2014) discussed how influencing external stakeholders and connections between the organization through digital media does have meaning and value to non-profit organizations. Later, Swart (2021) investigated how non-profit organizations have produced relevant content, marketing, and communication within social media content. Within South African non-profit organizations, the study provided insight into sourcing content and the possibility of benefits based on content marketing.

Non-profit organizations have a digital presence on social media but focusing on influence and persuasion within social media are two factors yet to be studied through Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining theory. Cialdini's instant influence concept within the digital media arena fills a crucial gap in understanding how persuasion operates in the digital age. Cialdini aimed to address this gap by drawing on seminal works from various researchers who explored how persuasion operates in digital contexts. Albarracin (2001), Carr (2010), Chajut (2003), Conway (2001), Easterbrook (1959), Hills (2019), Sengupta (2001), and Tversky (1974) have all made notable contributions to the study of persuasion in digital contexts. However, despite these efforts, there remains to be more research on how non-profit organizations use persuasion on social media platforms. Therefore, there is a pressing need to continue studying this topic, as it has significant implications for communication scholarship and non-profit organizations seeking to make an impact through digital campaigns.

Introduction to the Problem

Non-profit organizations utilize social media platforms like Instagram to reach the community, fundraise, convey their mission and vision, establish themselves, and educate others. The problem addresses whether the communication artifacts (i.e. social media postings) on Instagram from three non-profit organizations, Compassion International, CARE, and Direct Relief, are employing compliance-gaining strategies within their digital media communication strategy. According to Direct Relief (2023):

Since 1948, Direct Relief has worked to help people who confront enormous hardship to recover from disasters and improve the quality of their lives. The tradition of direct and targeted assistance, which respects and involves the people served, has been a hallmark of the organization since its founding.

Direct Relief (2023) provides aid in response to emergencies and refugee populations. They have consistently responded with targeted medical aid following major emergencies, beginning with postwar refugee assistance in Eastern Europe. Today, Direct Relief provides appropriate and specifically requested medical resources to community-based institutions and organizations worldwide and across the United States. Just as in 1948, Direct Relief's humanitarian assistance is provided respectfully, in partnership with local groups, and without regard to ethnicity, politics, religion, gender, or ability to pay.

According to Forbes (2021), CARE was founded in 1945 and fights global poverty, delivering broad-spectrum emergency relief and planning long-term international development project". Forbes (2021) noted that CARE runs out of Atlanta, Georgia. As of 2023, Michelle Nunn is the CEO and CARE is ranked at 38 on the list of the 100 largest charities of 2022.

According to Devex (2020), “CARE believes in urgent action, innovation, and the necessity of transformation—within the world and their organization”. According to CARE’s website (2023):

At the end of World War II, with much of the world in ruins, Arthur Ringland and Dr. Lincoln Clark approached 22 American charities to propose a non-profit corporation to funnel food packages from Americans to loved ones in Europe. The charities agreed, and on November 27, they incorporated the Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe (CARE). After negotiation with multiple government agencies, CARE takes possession of 2.8 million “10-in-1” military food rations. These rations become the world’s first CARE Packages® and an American symbol is born.

The history of Compassion International's ascent to digital media platforms and strategic media includes successes and challenges (Compassion International, 2023). Compassion International was founded in 1952 by Reverend Everett Swanson in response to the needs of children living in poverty in South Korea. The organization initially focused on providing food, shelter, and education to vulnerable children in Korea. Over the years, Compassion International has expanded its reach to other countries, including the Philippines, Thailand, and Brazil.

Today, Compassion operates in over 25 countries, serving over 2 million children (Compassion International, 2023). The non-profit partners with more than 8,000 local churches in 27 countries, delivering a blend of physical, social, economic, and spiritual care to over two million babies, children, and young adults in poverty. “Compassion's child development program helps children fully mature in every facet of life and transcend what is often a generational legacy of poverty”. PR Newswire (2021).

By exploring this topic utilizing digital qualitative content analysis, this research focused on ascertaining if there are commonalities in how compliance-gaining techniques are used in

communication in these three non-profit organizations. Digital rhetoric is a rapidly evolving field that has significant implications for contemporary communication practices. The use of digital technologies to communicate and persuade presents new opportunities and challenges for rhetorical theory and practice. Understanding digital rhetoric is critical for effective communication in today's digital age, and it is important to continue exploring the various dimensions of digital rhetoric, including its relationship to traditional rhetorical concepts, its impact on society, and its ethical implications.

Compliance-gaining strategies refer to the deliberate use of communication tactics by individuals or organizations to influence others to change their attitudes or behaviors. Compliance-gaining strategies have been widely studied in the context of marketing and advertising, where businesses employ various tactics to persuade potential customers to buy their products or services. According to Jhangiani and Tarry (2022), “compliance-gaining strategies are also relevant to the nonprofit sector, where organizations use communication to persuade donors, volunteers, and other stakeholders to support their cause”.

This study examined whether the communication artifacts of selected nonprofit organizations employ compliance-gaining strategies. The study focused on three nonprofit organizations operating in different sectors, including healthcare, education, and poverty alleviation. The communication artifacts analyzed included three Instagram pages and the social media feed posting, Instagram stories, call-to-actions, as well as likes, shares, and comments from the non-profits' Instagram followers.

To conduct the analysis, the study drew on compliance-gaining frameworks developed in the field of communication, such as Cialdini's (2021) principles of persuasion and Craig's (1999) seven traditions. The study used Cialdini's framework and seven principles as the main

framework, and then went a step further to include the compliance-gaining techniques of FITD and DITF to observe the three non-profits' persuasive communication practices in their social media.

Problem Statement

Non-profit organizations use social media platforms like Instagram to promote a cause and engage with their audience. This is achieved through call-to-action campaigns, the creation of visual content, and the reach of a vaster audience. Zimmer and Proferes (2014) discussed that persuasion and influence within the non-profit communication digital arena have yet to focus on how this occurs within social media platforms. Since it is still being determined how non-profits use Instagram to influence and persuade their followers to support their cause, it is essential to understand if and how Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining theory can be applied in this context. This qualitative digital content analysis study addressed the problem of understanding how non-profit organizations use Instagram to influence and persuade their audience using Cialdini's compliance-gaining theory. While previous research has explored the use of social media by non-profits, more research needs to be conducted specifically on Instagram and how non-profits leverage this platform to create persuasive content.

Non-profit organizations operate in a highly competitive environment, with many organizations vying for attention and resources from donors and supporters. Therefore, non-profit organizations must understand how to effectively use Instagram and compliance-gaining theory to influence and persuade their audience, ultimately increasing their impact and reach. By conducting a qualitative digital content analysis on how three non-profit organizations use Instagram with Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining theory and influence, this study addressed this problem by providing insights into the strategies and tactics non-profit organizations use to

create persuasive content on Instagram. The findings of this study can be helpful for non-profit organizations seeking to optimize their social media presence and increase their effectiveness in promoting their cause.

Purpose Statement

This qualitative digital content analysis study explored how three non-profit organizations use Instagram to influence their audience through the lens of Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining theory. The research investigated the various types of content posted on Instagram to influence a digital audience, the strategic use of visual elements to persuade the audience, and the messages employed within posts, stories, and persuasive messaging within those posts and stories. Additionally, Instagram highlights were considered using Cialdini's framework to interpret the persuasive value of the curated stories. Specifically, the study identified and analyzed the various strategies and tactics used by these non-profits to create engaging Instagram content that effectively persuades their followers to support their cause. To achieve this purpose, this research looked at how non-profit organizations are or are not incorporating Cialdini's compliance-gaining principles into their respective Instagram content. If so, how are they engaging and mobilizing their audience through this influence and persuasion to support their respective cause?

By answering these research questions, this study aimed to provide insights into how non-profit organizations can effectively use Instagram to influence and persuade their audience, ultimately helping them increase their impact and reach. This study contributed to the existing literature on social media marketing, compliance-gaining theory, and digital content analysis, providing valuable insights for communication professionals, marketers, and non-profit organizations seeking to create compelling social media campaigns. The research also shed light

on communication artifacts on Instagram, the compliance-gaining techniques employed, and the engagement that these digital artifacts (i.e. social media postings) receive.

Significance of Study

This qualitative digital content analysis is significant in several ways. The study analyzed artifacts from the Instagram accounts of three non-profit organizations, including Compassion International, Direct Relief, and CARE. The revealed insights ascertained how non-profit organizations use digital media to their benefit to determine which Instagram social media posts receive engagement. The growth of social media within the digital age focuses on various strategies, such as influence and persuasion. The lens of Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining theory in this study produced an effective strategy to explore whether compliance-gaining is at work on non-profit Instagram sites, how it is being used within the Cialdini framework, and how this could impact non-profits who wish to increase their impact and presence. The findings of this study are significant because they provide valuable insights into how non-profits use Instagram and Cialdini's compliance-gaining theory to achieve their social goals, ultimately helping them to maximize their impact and reach.

Research Questions

RQ1: What compliance-gaining strategies are observed in the communication artifacts of the selected organizations?

RQ2: Are there commonalities in how compliance-gaining techniques are used in communicating with the selected non-profit organizations?

Definitions

- *Call-to-Action*: A call-to-action (CTA) is a message or prompt that encourages the audience to take a specific action, such as making a purchase, subscribing to a newsletter, or filling out a form. CTAs are commonly used in marketing and advertising to motivate the target audience to engage with a brand or product. Guidry et al. (2014) stated how CTAs “seem to be an obvious candidate for types of verbal messages strongly associated with social movements, and they are known to be effective means of mobilization in social networks” (p. 242).
- *Digital Artifact*: A digital artifact is any digital object created, stored, and shared in a digital environment. It can include a wide range of forms such as text documents, images, videos, audio files, software programs, website content, social media posts, and other types of digital media. MBSE (2023) described a digital artifact as a bringing together of wisdom, knowledge, and professional and personal data that is easily exchanged within a digital ecosystem.
- *Engagement*: The level of interaction and activity on an Instagram post, including likes, comments, and shares. Newberry (2022) discussed how Instagram engagement is a measure of how many people interact with the content you post on Instagram, as well as a collection of metrics.
- *Feed*: The chronological display of posts from accounts a user follows on their Instagram homepage. Instagram (2023) illustrates an Instagram Feed as a mobile-sharing exploration destination which can be utilized for brand stories, inspiration, the showcasing of products, or for human connection.

- *Story*: A temporary visual or video post that appears at the top of a user's Instagram Feed and disappears after 24 hours. Buffer Library (2023) described an Instagram Story as an in-app feature allowing users to post videos and photos that can appear for up to 24 hours.

Summary

While non-profit organizations have a digital presence on social media, influence and persuasion within social media are two factors that were analyzed in this study through Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining theory. This introductory chapter highlighted the introduction to the problem, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, as well as the significance of the study. The two research questions focused on compliance-gaining techniques used within digital media communication. The following literature review dives deep into Craig's (1999) seven communication traditions, digital storytelling, and literature based on the seven principles of Cialdini's (2021) framework and seminal work in communication.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter establishes a connection between the previous one by ensuring a seamless transition and digging deeper into the foundation of this study. This chapter revisits the purpose of this research, reminding the reader of the overarching objectives and goals that drove this investigation. This serves as a reinforcement of the central focus of the study and the significance of the research questions the researcher addressed. This chapter analyzes the literature that informed the research, specifically focusing on Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining framework, influence, persuasion, and Craig's (1999) seven communication traditions. This literature is highly relevant to Craig's (1999) communication traditions, which focus on several aspects of understanding the audience and adapting communication strategies to achieve specific goals. By examining these concepts, this research delved into how compliance-gaining techniques can effectively persuade and influence individuals in diverse contexts. Additionally, Craig's (1999) seven communication traditions provided a framework for analyzing and comprehending how communication can be employed to attain specific outcomes. This literature review offers valuable insights into the ways in which effective communication successfully achieves various rhetorical goals. By accomplishing these three objectives, this chapter seamlessly connects with the previous chapter, reestablishes the purpose of the research, and comprehensively explores the literature that shaped and informed this study.

The literature on Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining framework, influence, persuasion, and Craig's (1999) seven communication traditions is highly relevant to the rhetorical communication tradition. The rhetorical tradition emphasizes the importance of understanding the audience and adapting communication strategies to achieve specific goals. This literature

review deeply explains how compliance-gaining techniques can persuade and influence people in various contexts. Moreover, Craig's (1999) seven communication traditions offer a framework for analyzing and understanding how communication can achieve specific outcomes. By exploring these concepts, this literature review provides valuable insights into how effective communication can achieve various digital storytelling and strategic communication goals.

Situation to Communication Tradition

This literature review examined the compliance-gaining framework developed by Robert Cialdini (2001), the broader topics of influence and persuasion, and how they relate to Craig's (1999) seven communication traditions. Specifically, this review explored how the seven traditions offer insights into the use of rhetoric in various communication situations. This research sought insights into the mechanisms employed by non-profit organizations to motivate their audience to act. Alternatively, one could argue that the sociopsychological tradition could also provide valuable insights. However, in this case, the intention was to emphasize that the researcher was examining the topic through the lens of communication traditions, digital storytelling, and utilizing compliance-gaining theory as a framework to facilitate that examination. Cialdini's updated compliance-gaining framework was discussed by Gass and Seiter (2019), who noted how “persuasion has long been a key concept in the rhetorical tradition”.

Cialdini's (2001) framework provide a valuable framework for understanding the strategies that can be used to influence others. Similarly, the seven communication traditions described by Craig (1999) offer a practical perspective on the role of rhetoric in different communication situations, including how different practices may be more effective in specific contexts. Craig (1999) provided insights into the effectiveness of different communication

traditions in various contexts. For instance, he suggested that the argumentation tradition holds value in persuasive cases, emphasizing logical reasoning and evidence-based arguments (p. 16). On the other hand, the dramatism tradition was highlighted as being more suitable for situations where emotions play a significant role, allowing for a more impactful and emotionally resonant communication approach (p. 18).

Craig's Seven Communication Traditions

Craig (1999) argued that various intellectual traditions have influenced communication scholars, each offering a unique perspective on the nature of communication. These traditions include the rhetorical tradition, semiotic tradition, phenomenological tradition, cybernetic tradition, sociopsychological tradition, sociocultural tradition, and critical tradition. Each tradition provides a unique way of looking at communication and contributes to a better understanding of the complex nature of human interaction (Craig, 1999). The rhetorical tradition, for example, emphasizes the importance of persuasion and the use of language to create meaning and influence others. The semiotic tradition focuses on the study of signs and symbols, and how they are used to communicate meaning. The phenomenological tradition explores the subjective experience of communication and how it shapes our understanding of the world. The cybernetic tradition examines how information is transmitted and processed, and how communication systems can be designed to optimize efficiency (Wiener, 1948). The sociopsychological tradition emphasizes the role of individual psychology and behavior in communication. The sociocultural tradition focuses on how communication is influenced by cultural norms and values. Finally, the critical tradition takes a more critical and reflexive approach to communication, examining power relations and questioning dominant cultural narratives. Craig (1999) introduced this framework as a means for scholars to enhance their analysis and critique of communication

practices across diverse contexts by comprehending the distinct communication traditions. In the upcoming sections, we dive deeper into each tradition, meticulously examining its core principles and the valuable insights it offers for our comprehension of communication processes. In the following sections, the detailed examination of all of Craig's (1999) traditions explore his fundamental tenets and contributions to the understanding of communication.

Overview and Introduction of Craig's Traditions

According to Craig (1999), communication traditions refer to the cultural patterns of communication that exist within specific communities. These traditions are based on shared beliefs, values, and practices that shape communication patterns. Communication traditions focus on how communication is produced, maintained, and transformed within a particular cultural context. Craig (1999) argued that various intellectual traditions have influenced communication scholars, each offering a unique perspective on the nature of communication. These traditions include the rhetorical tradition, semiotic tradition, phenomenological tradition, cybernetic tradition, sociopsychological tradition, sociocultural tradition, and critical tradition. Each tradition provides a unique way of looking at communication and contributes to a better understanding of the complex nature of human interaction (Craig, 1999).

The Rhetorical Tradition

Craig's (1999) approach emphasized the importance of understanding the social and cultural contexts in which communication occurs, as well as the complex relationships between speakers and audiences. His approach emphasized the importance of analyzing both the content and context of communication and has been influential in shaping contemporary research on rhetoric and communication.

Craig's (1999) work aimed to bring clarity and structure to the multitude of communication theories by offering an organizational framework that categorized them into distinct families or genres. His goal was not to extend rhetorical theory per se, but rather to create an orderly system for organizing theories that adhered to his criteria and included a focus on audience, context, and persuasive processes. Therefore, it is advisable to reframe the presentation of Craig's (1999) work as the creation of a comprehensive descriptive category rather than research that specifically contributes to rhetorical theory. This perspective emphasizes the broader goal of establishing a systematic framework for understanding and categorizing various communication theories based on their shared characteristics and thematic orientations.

This plays into social media and digital media postings from non-profit organizations, where the followers of such organizations may be following them online because their own values, beliefs, and attitudes are aligned with the organization. Having a mutual understanding and creating respect between the audience and speaker brings together the purpose of a message to communicate rhetorical practice that is both ethical and responsible. According to Langmia and Haddad (2015), the “divine (ontological), the natural (epistemological), and the social (axiological) are the tripartite concepts that this article attempts to weave into the sociocultural and the rhetorical traditions of communication that Craig (1999) has outlined” (p. 2).

Craig (1999) could only contribute a little work on how his communication traditions could take hold on digital media, as it happened after his studies were completed. There needs to be more in terms of both the context and the audience as well as how messages are interpreted and received on social media and networks. That being said, understanding how digital media provides several opportunities for building and fostering dialogue across cultural boundaries and

geographic areas is one area Craig (1999) did study. The ethics of rhetoric can also be applied to deception or manipulation online. Ethical communication practices within the digital age, such as respect, authenticity, and transparency to the audience, are part of the forefront and future of communication studies.

Cybernetic Tradition

The cybernetic tradition focuses on understanding communication as a dynamic system of information processing, feedback loops, and control mechanisms. By incorporating this tradition, researchers can explore the complex interplay between persuasive digital content, audiences, and the feedback processes that occur within digital environments. Digital content operates within a dynamic and interactive ecosystem where communication is characterized by rapid information flow, audience engagement, and feedback loops. The cybernetic tradition enables researchers to examine how persuasive messages are transmitted, received, and interpreted within this dynamic system. It allows for an analysis of the feedback mechanisms that shape the effectiveness of persuasive digital content, such as audience reactions, engagement metrics, and online discussions. Jan (2017) discussed how Craig's (1999) cybernetic tradition underscores the importance of understanding communication as a process of information transfer and control, where individuals and systems engage in reciprocal interactions to achieve goals and maintain systemic balance.

The cybernetic tradition provides a framework for understanding the interdependence and mutual influence between persuasive digital content and its audiences. It recognizes that the success of persuasive strategies relies on the reciprocal relationship between content creators and receivers. Cybernetic researchers investigate how audiences' responses and interpretations of digital content shape subsequent persuasive efforts, as well as how content creators adapt and

refine their strategies based on audience feedback. Maguire (2006) analyzed Craig's (1999) cybernetic tradition, highlighting the interdependence of communication processes and systems, and focusing on the ways in which communication shapes and is shaped by feedback loops, circular causality, and the flow of information.

By embracing this tradition, research offers insights into the complexities of persuasive communication within digital environments, identifying the reciprocal influence between content creators and audiences, as well as the role of algorithms and platforms in shaping persuasive strategies. This holistic perspective enhances our understanding of the multifaceted nature of persuasion and influence in the digital realm, facilitating the development of more effective and socially responsible communication strategies.

Semiotic Tradition

The semiotic tradition provides a lens through which researchers can explore the symbolic meanings and signs embedded in digital content. It allows for an investigation of visual and textual symbols, as well as their interpretation and effects on audiences. This tradition helps researchers uncover the hidden persuasive elements within digital content, such as visual imagery, metaphors, and symbolic representations. The semiotic tradition, developed by Robert Craig (1999), focuses on the study of signs, symbols, and meanings in communication. By adopting this tradition, researchers explore the symbolic elements embedded in persuasive digital content and how they shape the persuasive process. Moriarty's (2002) study focused on the semiotic tradition and provided insights into the processes of meaning-making and interpretation, exploring how signs and symbols convey messages and shape understanding in interpersonal, organizational, and societal communication.

Digital content relies heavily on visual and textual symbols to convey messages and influence audiences. The semiotic tradition allows researchers to analyze the signs and symbols used in persuasive digital content and their interpretive potential. Researchers investigate how visual imagery, design elements, color schemes, and typography contribute to the persuasive impact of digital content. Additionally, the analysis of textual symbols, such as linguistic devices, metaphors, and narratives, provides insights into how persuasive messages are constructed and conveyed to elicit desired responses. The semiotic tradition enables the researcher to examine the cultural and social meanings associated with symbols used in digital content. Symbols carry cultural connotations and evoke certain emotions or associations within specific contexts. By analyzing the cultural codes and shared meanings embedded in persuasive digital content, researchers gain insights into how persuasion and influence are shaped by societal norms, values, and cultural practices. Catt (2017) looked at Craig's (1999) semiotic tradition and drew attention to the ways in which signs and symbols are used to communicate, mediate relationships, and construct social reality. In this way, Catt emphasized the interplay between language, culture, and communication.

The semiotic tradition allows researchers to explore the interplay between verbal and non-verbal signs within persuasive digital content. Understanding the relationship between text and visuals helps researchers uncover how different modes of communication work together to enhance persuasive strategies. This tradition also facilitates an examination of the potential contradictions or inconsistencies between the verbal and non-verbal elements of persuasive digital content, which may impact its effectiveness. This semiotic perspective enhances scholars' comprehension of the complex and nuanced nature of persuasion and influence in the digital realm, aiding in the development of more effective communication strategies.

Sociocultural Tradition

The sociocultural tradition recognizes the influence of broader social and cultural contexts on persuasive communication. Researchers adopting this tradition examine how societal norms, values, and cultural practices shape the persuasive strategies employed in digital content. This tradition allows for an exploration of the social dynamics and power structures that impact persuasion and influence within digital contexts. The sociocultural tradition focuses on understanding communication as a product of social and cultural contexts. By adopting this tradition, researchers explore how sociocultural factors influence the production, reception, and impact of persuasive digital content. Pederson (2018) looked at how the sociocultural tradition emphasizes the importance of understanding communication as a dynamic process that takes place within specific cultural contexts, recognizing the reciprocal relationship between culture and communication.

Digital content exists within a complex sociocultural landscape, where norms, values, and cultural practices shape the persuasive strategies employed. The sociocultural tradition allows researchers to investigate how societal and cultural factors influence the construction and reception of persuasive messages. Researchers analyze how cultural values, beliefs, and ideologies shape the persuasive content, and how audiences interpret these messages within their own sociocultural contexts. The sociocultural tradition enables researchers to explore the impact of digital platforms, social media, and online communities on persuasion and influence. They examine how these digital environments shape the production, distribution, and reception of persuasive messages, and how they foster engagement and interactions among users. This tradition also facilitates an understanding of the social and cultural consequences of persuasive digital content, such as its role in shaping public opinion, fostering social movements, or

perpetuating inequalities. Pera and Viglia (2016) found that within the sociocultural tradition, communication is viewed as a site of cultural production and negotiation, where individuals draw upon shared cultural resources, norms, and practices to construct meaning and navigate social interactions.

This tradition allows for research in the exploration of how societal and cultural factors shape the construction, reception, and impact of persuasive messages in digital content. By examining power dynamics, social structures, and the role of digital platforms, researchers gain a deeper understanding of how persuasion and influence operate within social and cultural contexts. This sociocultural perspective enhances scholars' comprehension of the broader social implications of persuasive digital content, informing the development of more contextually sensitive and socially responsible communication strategies.

Sociopsychological Tradition

The sociopsychological tradition focuses on understanding how individuals process and respond to persuasive messages. Researchers adopting this tradition investigate the psychological mechanisms involved in persuasion and influence, including cognitive processes, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior change. By examining the psychological factors at play in digital content analysis, researchers gain insights into the persuasive impact on individuals. This tradition understands communication as a psychological process influenced by social factors. By investigating the sociopsychological tradition, one could look at the psychological mechanisms involved in persuasive digital content and how social factors shape individuals' responses. Burgoon (2002) looked at how Craig's (1999) sociopsychological tradition emphasizes the significance of understanding how social influence, interpersonal relationships, and individual psychological factors interact to shape communication behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes.

The sociopsychological tradition enables researchers to examine the social influence processes at play in persuasive digital content. They investigate how social norms, social comparisons, and reference groups shape individuals' responses to persuasive messages. By understanding the sociopsychological dynamics underlying persuasion and influence, researchers can uncover how digital content taps into individuals' need for social validation, conformity, or social identity. The sociopsychological tradition also explores behavior change and the factors that facilitate or hinder persuasive digital content's effectiveness. Researchers examine the role of motivation, self-efficacy, and perceived behavioral control in shaping individuals' responses to persuasive messages. This tradition also enables researchers to investigate the long-term impact of persuasive digital content on individuals' behavior and decision-making processes. Pederson (2018) studied how Craig's (1999) sociopsychological tradition examines the interplay between individual psychological processes and social structures, highlighting the reciprocal relationship between individual behavior and social influence in communication.

This tradition allows researchers to explore how persuasive digital content influences cognitive processes, emotions, attitudes, and behavior. By considering social factors and social influence processes, researchers gain insights into how individuals respond to persuasive messages encountered in digital contexts. This sociopsychological perspective enhances scholars' understanding of the complexities of persuasion and influence in the digital realm, informing the development of more effective and tailored communication strategies.

Phenomenological Tradition

The phenomenological tradition emphasizes the subjective experiences and meanings that individuals attribute to communication phenomena. By employing this tradition, researchers gain insights into the lived experiences of individuals who are exposed to persuasive digital content,

shedding light on their interpretations, emotions, and personal meanings attached to such content. Digital content often evokes various emotional and cognitive responses from individuals, which can significantly impact their susceptibility to persuasion and influence. The phenomenological tradition allows researchers to delve into the rich and nuanced experiences of individuals, uncovering how persuasive digital content resonates with their values, beliefs, and identities. Through qualitative methods such as interviews or participant observation, researchers explore the phenomenological dimensions of persuasion and influence within digital content, including the ways in which individuals make sense of persuasive appeals and the emotional reactions they elicit. Flynn and Korcuska (2018) looked at Craig's (1999) phenomenological tradition and how it calls attention to the richness and complexity of human experience in communication, exploring the ways in which individuals construct and interpret meaning, engage in sense-making, and navigate their social worlds.

The phenomenological tradition provides a means to examine the context in which persuasive digital content is encountered and interpreted. By investigating the situational and environmental factors that shape individuals' experiences with digital content, researchers can identify influential variables that contribute to the effectiveness of persuasive strategies. This tradition allows for a comprehensive analysis of the lived realities of individuals within their specific sociocultural contexts, unraveling the intricate interplay between digital content, persuasion, and influence. Julmi (2018) focused on how, within the phenomenological tradition, communication is viewed as an intersubjective and interpretive process, where individuals actively engage in the co-construction of meaning, which is influenced by their subjective perspectives and contextual factors.

The inclusion of Craig's (1999) phenomenological tradition in research on digital content analysis enables researchers to delve into the subjective experiences, interpretations, and emotional responses of individuals when confronted with persuasive content. By understanding the lived realities of individuals and the contextual factors that shape their interactions with digital content, researchers gain a more nuanced understanding of persuasion and influence in the digital realm, which informs the development of more effective and ethical communication strategies.

Critical Tradition

The critical tradition emphasizes the examination of power dynamics, social structures, and ideological influences within communication processes. By incorporating this tradition, researchers critically analyze the underlying power structures and ideological assumptions embedded in persuasive digital content. Digital content, particularly in the realm of persuasion and influence, often reflects and reinforces existing power imbalances and dominant ideologies. The critical tradition enables researchers to uncover and challenge these hidden power dynamics, exposing how persuasive messages may serve the interests of specific groups or perpetuate social inequalities. Through a critical lens, researchers can identify and deconstruct the persuasive techniques used in digital content to exert control, manipulate opinions, or marginalize certain voices. Bogna et al. (2020) experimented with Craig's (1999) critical tradition. Their study emphasized the need for critical consciousness, reflexivity, and social action in communication, recognizing the role of language, discourse, and power in shaping social reality and promoting social change.

The critical tradition provides an avenue to investigate the sociopolitical contexts and structures that shape the production and dissemination of persuasive digital content. Researchers

examine the role of media organizations, advertising agencies, and other influential actors in shaping the content's persuasive strategies and agenda. This tradition encourages a scrutiny of the economic, political, and cultural forces that underpin persuasive communication in the digital landscape. By employing the critical tradition, the researcher could also engage in a broader examination of the ethical implications of persuasive digital content. Critical researchers question the fairness, transparency, and potential harm caused by specific persuasive techniques, aiming to promote ethical communication practices. This tradition enables researchers to challenge and resist manipulative tactics, advocating for more democratic and socially responsible communication in the digital sphere. Kapoor et al. (2018) found that the critical tradition provides a lens for understanding how communication practices perpetuate or challenge social inequalities, emphasizing the role of critical analysis, advocacy, and collective action in transforming oppressive systems.

The integration of Craig's (1999) critical tradition in research on digital content analysis allows for a comprehensive investigation of power dynamics, social structures, and ideological influences inherent in persuasion and influence. By critically examining the underlying mechanisms of persuasive digital content, researchers expose and challenge dominant ideologies, power imbalances, and unethical practices. This tradition facilitates a deeper understanding of the broader social and political implications of persuasive communication in the digital age, guiding the development of more ethical and inclusive communication strategies.

Rationale For Exploring all of Craig's Traditions

In conducting a digital content analysis on persuasion and influence, it is beneficial to utilize all of Craig's (1999) communication traditions. The communication traditions framework encompasses four distinct approaches to understanding and studying communication: (1) the

rhetorical tradition, (2) the semiotic tradition, (3) the sociopsychological tradition, and (4) the sociocultural tradition. By incorporating all these traditions, researchers gain a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of persuasion and influence within digital content. In addition, researchers are able to adopt a holistic and multidimensional approach to exploring persuasion and influence in digital content analysis. This comprehensive framework enables a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between rhetoric, semiotics, sociopsychological factors, and sociocultural contexts, facilitating a more nuanced analysis of persuasive strategies and their effects in the digital realm.

Cialdini's framework of influence and Cialdini's (2021) traditions compliance-gaining, as well as the digital presence of nonprofit organizations and how persuasion is used through communication to persuade a digital audience. The rationale for the goal of this present study was to understand how these three non-profit organizations use their digital messaging to ensure their audience acts. This research focused on the central problem statement about Cialdini's persuasive communication and compliance-gaining framework.

Theoretical Framework

Compliance-Gaining Theory

Cialdini (2021) created an entire framework on influence based on seven principles. The rationale for using the compliance-gaining theory within this research was to ascertain how non-profit organizations employ compliance-gaining strategies and to see if there are commonalities within how the strategies are used among three non-profit organizations in their communications on Instagram.

History

O'Keefe's (1988) message design logic built a framework for the design of persuasive messages. Within communication, the message itself has significant value, and O'Keefe's (1988) message design logic created six necessary steps that discuss the creation of a compelling message to evaluate the effectiveness of the news. The target audience is first identified to understand their concerns and needs. Second, the message's objective, which focuses on the audience's behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs, is determined. To understand the audience, O'Keefe (1988) looked at variables such as behaviors, values, ideas, and attitudes, as well as any barriers that could prevent the audience from receiving or understanding the message. Next, the message strategy is developed, which focuses on message points, style, tone, and format. The message is created from all the data that is compiled and sent to the audience. In the final step, the evaluation of the message focuses on achieving direct objectives through testing.

Robert Cialdini and His Seminal Work

The seminal works of Cialdini began in 1974, which introduced society to seven key principles of influence: (1) reciprocity, (2) commitment and consistency, (3) social proof, (4) authority, (5) liking, (6) unity, and (7) scarcity. In 1984, Cialdini released an updated version of his book, incorporating new research findings and practical applications of the principles of influence. This work expanded on the original six principles and provided additional real-life examples and case studies. In 1993, Cialdini further refined his theories and incorporated recent research on persuasion and influence, including the influence of advertising, modern societal changes, and technology. Cialdini et al. (2001) created a collaboration of practical strategies and techniques for applying Cialdini's principles in various personal and professional situations. Once again, the same collaborators of the 2001 edition collaborated to provide 50 evidence-

based techniques for effective persuasion in 2007. The book combined Cialdini's principles with other research findings, offering a comprehensive guide to persuasive communication.

Cialdini (2016) then explored the importance of setting the stage for persuasion through strategic pre-suasion techniques. This research brought in a more favorable context to enhance the impact of persuasive messages. The most updated research was conducted in 2021, adding a new principle of “unity” into the influence and persuasion framework. Throughout the years, Cialdini's ideas and principles have been widely adopted and integrated into various disciplines and industries, including marketing, sales, advertising, politics, and negotiation. His work continues to inspire researchers and practitioners seeking to understand and harness the psychology of persuasion in their respective fields.

The Seven Principles of Cialdini’s Framework

Cialdini (2021) created a simple framework for persuasion and influence, building off compliance-gaining to show the science behind how psychological factors influence people and persuade them to act or make decisions. This strategic communication tool, which is outlined with relevant background literature throughout the following sections, is used to provide a glimpse into how to strategically and efficiently use these factors. Within these principles lie two distinctive techniques that were explored in this study: FITD and DITF.

Reciprocity

The first principle of Cialdini's (2021) persuasion framework is *positive reciprocity*, which refers to the human tendency to respond to a positive action with another positive action. The seminal works behind the concept of reciprocation were Leakey and Lewin's (1978) study on gift exchange among the Trobriand islanders and Tiger and Fox's (1989) research on the role of reciprocity in the evolution of social behavior. These studies showed that reciprocation is a

fundamental aspect of human social behavior and is critical in building and maintaining social relationships. Cialdini's principle of positive reciprocity built on these findings, emphasizing the importance of giving before asking and the power of small gestures in building relationships and trust. By incorporating the principle of positive reciprocity into their communication strategies, non-profits and individuals can develop more effective campaigns that resonate with their target audiences and inspire greater engagement and support for their causes. Reciprocation has necessary implications for understanding human social behavior and can help organizations and individuals develop more persuasive and effective communication strategies.

While Cialdini's (2021) principle of positive reciprocity has received significant attention in the literature on persuasion and influence, some works have focused on the negative aspects of reciprocity and have criticized Cialdini's work. Hugh-Jones and Zultan (2019) argued that reciprocity is more complex than Cialdini's framework suggests. *Negative reciprocity*, in which individuals respond to negative actions with negative actions, is also a significant factor in human social behavior. Similarly, Keysar (2008) argued that the emphasis on positive reciprocity in Cialdini's (2009) framework overlooks the negative aspects of human social behavior, such as retaliation and punishment. James and Bolstein (1992) looked at the before-the-act donations within reciprocation, suggesting that reciprocity can be triggered by a mere request or a reminder of a past interaction, even without an actual favor being done. Goldstein and Griskevicius (2011) also found that people, when reminded of past turns or positive interactions, are more likely to reciprocate with positive action, even if they were not directly asked for anything. These works highlight the complexity of reciprocity and the need for a more nuanced understanding of its role in persuasion and influence. By considering both positive and negative reciprocity, non-profits

and individuals can develop more effective communication strategies considering the full range of human social behavior.

Dibble et al. (2011) conducted research on sequential persuasion strategies, specifically focusing on the legitimization of the “little favors effect” and its potential to enhance compliance. Their findings indicated that sequential request strategies are effective in eliciting compliance across diverse contexts (Dibble et al., 2011, p. 63). This concept of reciprocity within non-profit social media campaigns is particularly relevant when exploring the dynamics of persuasion.

By offering something of value, such as informative content or a small donation, non-profit organizations may be more likely to elicit compliance from their audience when making a more significant request. “Consistency in the public domain is critical for building and maintaining one's reputation” (Dibble et al., 2011, p. 70). This statement highlights the importance of maintaining a consistent message and brand image on social media platforms. Milde and Yawson (2017) examined the use of social media by non-profit organizations and provided insights into how these organizations can optimize their social media strategies. Milde and Yawson (2017) suggested that non-profit organizations can use this concept in their social media campaigns by setting clear goals and providing incentives for engagement. They noted that “social media campaigns can be designed to create a sense of momentum and progress, encouraging supporters to contribute more as they see the campaign moving towards its goal” (p. 22).

Shipp and Phillips (2013) explored the relationship between social networks, interactivity, satisfaction, and technology acceptance. Their study identified social networks as an essential factor in determining users' technology acceptance and satisfaction with the

interactive features of social media platforms. The findings of this study have implications for non-profit organizations that utilize social media platforms to engage with stakeholders and promote their campaigns. “Social media platforms offer nonprofit organizations a powerful tool for creating interactive communication channels with their stakeholders, facilitating two-way communication and soliciting feedback to create more meaningful and effective campaigns”.

Commitment and Consistency

The second principle of Cialdini's (2021) persuasion framework is commitment and consistency, where cognitive dissonance is the psychological structure that commitment is built upon. The seminal work was completed by Festinger (1957). Festinger's findings are related to the theory of *cognitive dissonance*, which suggests that individuals experience discomfort, or dissonance, when they hold conflicting beliefs or attitudes. According to Festinger, when faced with such cognitive dissonance, individuals are motivated to reduce the discomfort by aligning their attitudes and behaviors. One of the keyways people strive to reduce cognitive dissonance is through the process of rationalization or self-justification. Festinger observed that individuals tend to modify their beliefs or attitudes to align with their behavior, rather than change their behavior to align with their existing beliefs. This phenomenon, known as the “post-decision dissonance” or “effort justification”, demonstrates the human tendency to rationalize and justify one’s actions to alleviate cognitive dissonance.

Now, connecting Festinger's (1957) findings to Cialdini's (2021) principles, there is a relevant connection with the principle of commitment and consistency. Cialdini's principle suggests that once individuals make a public commitment or take a certain action, they are more likely to remain consistent with that commitment or action to avoid cognitive dissonance.

In line with Festinger's observations, Cialdini's principle capitalizes on the human tendency to align attitudes and behaviors. By emphasizing consistency and commitment, Cialdini's principle leverages the psychological need to reduce cognitive dissonance and maintain congruence between beliefs, attitudes, and actions. Festinger's findings on cognitive dissonance and the role of self-justification connect to Cialdini's principle of commitment and consistency, where both concepts highlight the influence of reducing cognitive dissonance by aligning beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

The verbal communication portion of commitment and consistency also have seminal authors and scholars including Rubinstein (1985), Sherman (1980), and Greenwald (1987). Clifford (2016) produced evidence on how verbal communication falls within the commitment and consistency portion of this framework. Public commitments tend to create lasting relationships and responsibilities, which were focused on by Dellande (2007), Lockhorst (2014), and Matthier (2006), which led to a theory on loyalty to brands from the public. Within the non-profit world, this can also mean dedication and loyalty or a commitment and consistency to a non-profit that has roots in Khamitou's (2019) work on brand loyalty.

Cialdini et al. (1975) explored the effectiveness of the DITF technique in inducing compliance with requests. Their study offered important implications for non-profit organizations and their social media campaigns. One of their key findings revealed that “the door-in-the-face technique can induce compliance with a target request, provided that the initial request is large enough to elicit rejection” (Cialdini et al., 1975, p. 214). Non-profit social media campaigns have leveraged this finding by making initial requests for more considerable donation amounts and then following up with more reasonable requests that are still higher than the donor's initial intention. By doing so, these campaigns increase the likelihood of compliance with

the target request. The DITF technique involves making an initial large request that is likely to be rejected, followed by a smaller, more reasonable request. This technique takes advantage of the principle of reciprocity, as well as the commitment and consistency principle. When the initial large request is made and met with a refusal, it creates a sense of obligation and guilt in the recipient. This is because rejecting a request after it has been made can create a sense of cognitive dissonance, as individuals naturally desire to be consistent with their words and actions.

To reduce this cognitive dissonance and alleviate the guilt, individuals may be more likely to comply with the subsequent smaller request. By doing so, they can maintain a sense of consistency in their behavior and align their actions with their desire to fulfill societal norms of reciprocity and fairness. Therefore, the DITF technique effectively leverages the commitment and consistency principle by capitalizing on the human inclination to maintain internal consistency and avoid cognitive dissonance.

Feeley et al. (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of 99 studies on the DITF technique, which involves making an initial request so large that it is likely to be refused, followed by a more minor, more reasonable request. According to Feeley et al. (2012), “the DITF technique is more successful than controls for volunteering/research than other target behaviors (e.g., monetary donation)” (p. 317). Morgan and Hunt (1994) proposed a theoretical framework that can be applied to understand the dynamics of relationships between non-profit organizations and their donors. This presents a comprehensive framework for understanding and managing relationships between firms and customers. The key focus of their theory is on the concepts of commitment and trust, which are identified as critical factors in developing and maintaining successful long-term relationships. Morgan and Hunt proposed that commitment and trust are

interconnected and mutually reinforcing. They argued that commitment is essential for relationship continuity and involves both affective (emotional) and instrumental (economic) dimensions. Trust, on the other hand, is seen as the foundation of commitment and is built through consistent, reliable, and trustworthy behavior by the parties involved. Additionally, commitment and trust contribute to relationship performance by fostering cooperation, reducing opportunistic behavior, enhancing information sharing, and creating mutual satisfaction and benefits (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Their theory also emphasized the role of communication, satisfaction, and perceived value in strengthening commitment and trust.

Morgan and Hunt (1994) highlighted the significance of relationship marketing and the importance of developing long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with customers. They argued that successful relationship marketing strategies focus on building and maintaining commitment and trust over time, which will lead to increased customer loyalty, repeat business, positive word-of-mouth, and overall business success. Morgan and Hunt's work provided a theoretical foundation for understanding the role of commitment and trust in relationship marketing. Their framework highlights the interplay between these factors and emphasizes the importance of cultivating long-term relationships for organizational success.

The theory proposes that commitment and trust are the key factors that drive the success of long-term relationships between organizations and their stakeholders. The commitment-trust approach emphasizes building trust through repeated interactions and mutual commitments. Trust and commitment are crucial in building and maintaining relationships with donors in nonprofit social media campaigns. According to Morgan and Hunt (1994), "Commitment and trust serve as important precursors to longer-term relationship success" (p. 96). Non-profit organizations can use social media to create a sense of community and shared commitment

among donors, leading to increased trust and loyalty. By engaging donors in the organization's mission and values, non-profit organizations can create a sense of shared purpose and a commitment to supporting the cause. Overall, the commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing proposed by Morgan and Hunt provides a valuable framework for understanding the role of trust and commitment in non-profit social media campaigns.

An article by Oliveira et al. (2021) explored the role of social networks in the non-profit sector and how they facilitate social support practices. Their study was based on the perspective that social networks offer opportunities for building relationships and enhancing communication between individuals and organizations, which was similarly discussed by Cialdini (year). Cialdini's principle of commitment and consistency suggests that individuals have a strong desire to be consistent in their words and actions. When it comes to social networks within the non-profit sector, individuals who actively engage and participate in these networks tend to develop a sense of commitment to the causes and values they support.

Oliveira et al. (2021) explored how individuals within social networks demonstrate commitment to social support practices, such as volunteering, fundraising, or advocating for specific non-profit initiatives. By actively participating in social networks, individuals publicly express their support for these causes and thereby create a personal commitment to consistency in their involvement and contributions. The presence of social networks provides a social environment that reinforces and strengthens the commitment and consistency principle. Within these networks, individuals can witness the actions and behaviors of their peers, which may influence their own commitment to engage in social support practices. The social validation and influence derived from these networks play a crucial role in maintaining commitment and consistency over time. Oliveira et al.'s research shed light on the role of social networks in the

non-profit sector and how they facilitate social support practices. This aligns with Cialdini's principle of commitment and consistency, as active participation in these networks fosters a sense of commitment and promotes consistent engagement in supporting non-profit causes.

Oliviera et al. (2021) noted that social media platforms have become essential tools for non-profit organizations to disseminate information, engage with stakeholders, and mobilize resources. They argued that non-profits can leverage social networks to facilitate social support practices that enhance their effectiveness in meeting their goals. Non-profit organizations can use social networks to promote social support practices by conversing with their followers.

Additionally, the authors noted that non-profit organizations can “use social networks to respond to followers' requests for information or to provide support for those seeking help” (p. 15). This approach can help build trust and establish long-term relationships between the non-profit organization and its stakeholders. Oliviera et al.'s article also highlighted the importance of developing content that resonates with the audience. The authors noted how “authentic, relevant, and engaging content is more likely to capture and maintain the attention of social network users” (Oliviera et al., 2021, p. 23). Non-profit organizations can use this strategy to foster stakeholder engagement and increase their social media visibility. By creating content that reflects the values and mission of the organization, non-profits can build a community of followers who are passionate about their cause and are more likely to support their efforts.

Rustono et al. (2019) examined author compliance with Indonesia's Open Journal System of communication science. Although the study's focus was not directly related to non-profit social media campaigns, it may be relevant for understanding the importance of communication and adherence to norms in achieving successful outcomes. The concept of norms serves as a crucial connection between Rustono et al.'s (2019) study, non-profit social media campaigns,

and Cialdini's principle of commitment and consistency. Rustono et al. focused on the influence of social norms on individuals' behaviors and decision-making processes within specific contexts. Norms, both descriptive (i.e. perceptions of what others do) and injunctive (i.e. perceptions of what others believe should be done), play a significant role in shaping individuals' attitudes and actions.

In the context of non-profit social media campaigns, these norms can strongly impact individuals' commitment and consistency in supporting and engaging with the campaign's goals. When individuals perceive that a significant number of others within their social networks are actively involved in supporting the cause or demonstrating positive behaviors related to the campaign, a social norm is created that encourages them to conform and participate as well.

By leveraging social norms within non-profit social media campaigns, organizations can influence individuals' commitment and consistency in their support. The campaigns can highlight and emphasize the positive behaviors, actions, and contributions of others, which can lead individuals to perceive these behaviors as social norms and feel compelled to align their own actions with the perceived expectations of the community. According to Rustono et al. (2019), the “self-authority factor becomes the main one in seeing compliance gaining. Compliance can also be achieved through open and direct persuasion” (p. 6). The connection between Rustono et al.’s study and non-profit social media campaigns lies in the influence of social norms. By understanding and utilizing social norms effectively, non-profit campaigns can tap into Cialdini's principle of commitment and consistency and encourage individuals to align their behaviors and support with the perceived norms established within their social networks.

Freedman and Fraser (1966) explored the persuasive strategy known as the FITD, where individuals are more likely to comply with a more significant request after agreeing to a smaller

one. Their study suggested that the FITD technique effectively elicits compliance without explicit pressure. Their findings have significant implications for non-profit social media campaigns, where persuasion is essential for achieving goals such as donations or volunteer sign-ups. The FITD technique can be applied to social media campaigns by breaking the more significant request into smaller, more manageable ones. “The present findings indicate that individuals who refuse an initial request are likely to comply with a subsequent, larger request if they feel they are not being pressured or coerced into doing so” (Freedman & Fraser, 1966, p. 201). For example, non-profit organizations can use the FITD technique by asking individuals to sign a petition and then asking for a donation. This approach can increase the likelihood of individuals complying with the more significant request, leading to tremendous success for the organization's campaign. “If the initial request had been for a \$5 contribution, it is unlikely that the same percentage of subjects would have complied with the second request for a \$20 contribution” (Freedman & Fraser, 1966, p. 201). By asking for more minor requests initially, such as signing a petition or following the organization on social media, non-profits can increase the likelihood of individuals complying with greater demands, such as donating.

Freedman and Fraser's (1966) exploration of the FITD technique provided insights into the connection between agreeing to a small request and creating a requirement for consistency and follow-through in people's actions. The FITD technique involves making an initial small request that is easy to agree to, followed by a larger request. By securing initial compliance with the small request, individuals feel a sense of commitment and consistency with their previous agreement. This commitment then increases the likelihood of compliance with subsequent, larger requests to maintain internal consistency.

When individuals agree to the small request, they implicitly establish a behavioral pattern that aligns with their self-perception as helpful, cooperative, or consistent individuals. This self-perception then serves as a motivation to maintain consistency and follow-through with their actions by complying with the subsequent larger request. The principle of commitment and consistency, as proposed by Cialdini, helps explain the effectiveness of the FITD technique. Once individuals have committed to the initial small request, they experience a psychological drive to behave consistently with their past actions and self-perception.

By leveraging the FITD technique, persuaders capitalize on this desire for consistency and use the initial agreement as leverage to increase the likelihood of compliance with subsequent, more significant requests. The technique creates a sense of obligation and a perceived requirement to remain consistent with one's prior actions. Freedman and Fraser's (1966) exploration of the FITD technique demonstrated how agreeing to a small request establishes a requirement for consistency and follow-through in people's actions. The principle of commitment and consistency helps to explain this phenomenon, as individuals strive to maintain internal consistency by aligning their behaviors with their previous commitments and self-perceptions.

Social Proof

The third principle of Cialdini's (2021) persuasion framework is *social proof*, which emphasizes the impact of social norms and group behavior on individual attitudes and behavior. This principle is particularly relevant in the digital media and communication age, where social influence and social proof are increasingly important factors in shaping public opinion and behavior. Several theorists have explored the concept of social proof and its role in persuasion. Aramonick (2019) and Paluck (2009) studied the impact of social norms and group behavior on

moral decision-making, highlighting the importance of social proof in shaping attitudes and behavior related to morality. Aramonick (2019) argued that social proof can influence moral judgments by creating a sense of consensus and social pressure. Paluck (2009) showed that social norms can be a powerful tool for promoting positive behavior and reducing negative behavior. These studies both highlighted the importance of understanding the role of social proof in persuasion, as well as the potential for using social norms and group behavior to shape attitudes and behavior in relation to morality. By incorporating the principle of social proof into their communication strategies, non-profits and individuals can develop more effective campaigns that leverage the power of social influence to build support for their causes and promote positive behavior.

Dillard and Knobloch's (2011) explored interpersonal influence and provided a valuable framework for understanding how individuals can be influenced by persuasive messages in non-profit social media campaigns. One key concept from this research was *social influence*, which suggests that individuals are often influenced by the opinions and behaviors of those around them. This is particularly relevant in social media, where individuals are connected to large networks of friends, family, and acquaintances. As Dillard and Knobloch noted, social influence can be leveraged in various ways to increase the effectiveness of persuasive messages. Feng et al. (2017) investigated how social media strategies of non-profit organizations affect consumer donation intention by word-of-mouth. They surveyed 372 Chinese social media users and found that “social media strategies of non-profits, including interactivity, informativeness, and entertainment, are positively related to consumer donation intention and word-of-mouth” (Feng et al., 2017, p. 1784J). Jensen et al. (2013) explored the goal-gradient hypothesis and how it relates to compliance rate, donation size, and fatigue in a non-profit setting. Specifically, the

authors investigated the impact of goal proximity on these outcomes. They found that individuals are more likely to comply with a donation request and donate a more significant amount when the goal is closer in proximity. Jensen et al.'s study suggests that non-profit organizations can strategically use the goal-gradient effect to increase donations and support. Additionally, non-profits can effectively utilize the principle of social proof, as proposed by Cialdini, based on Jensen et al.'s findings on the goal-gradient hypothesis in non-profit settings.

Social proof refers to the tendency of individuals to look to others' actions and behaviors as a guide for their own behavior in uncertain situations. Jensen et al.'s (2013) study shed light on how social proof can influence compliance rates and donation sizes in the context of non-profit fundraising campaigns. The goal-gradient hypothesis suggests that individuals exhibit increased motivation and engagement as they progress closer to a goal. In the context of non-profit campaigns, the proximity to the fundraising goal can serve as a powerful social proof signal. When potential donors perceive that the campaign is nearing its goal, they are more likely to perceive social proof, indicating that others have already contributed and achieved a significant level of progress.

This perception of social proof can significantly influence individuals' decisions to comply with a donation request and donate a larger amount. When individuals observe others' donations and witness the progress toward the fundraising goal, it creates a sense of social influence and normative pressure to participate and contribute. Non-profit organizations can leverage social proof by strategically highlighting the progress made toward the campaign's goal, such as through progress bars, testimonials, or public acknowledgments of previous donors. By emphasizing the proximity to the goal and showcasing others' participation and contributions,

organizations can tap into the principle of social proof and increase compliance rates and donation sizes.

Jensen et al. (2013) study on the goal-gradient hypothesis demonstrates how the proximity to a fundraising goal can influence compliance rates and donation sizes in a non-profit setting. By effectively utilizing social proof, non-profit organizations can capitalize on individuals' tendency to be influenced by others' actions and behaviors, thereby increasing their engagement and contributions to the cause.

Moleskis et al. (2019) investigated the influence of signals and biases on the decisions of potential donors in the context of crowdfunding campaigns for either entrepreneurial or humanitarian needs. A study conducted by Liang and Scammon (2011) explored the potential of health social networking sites (SNS) as a platform for e-word-of-mouth (eWOM) and tailored health communication. The authors argued that these platforms can disseminate health information and influence individuals' health behaviors. Panic et al. (2016) explored how communication theory can be applied to non-profit social media campaigns to increase online fundraising. The study investigated the effects of message appeals, interactivity, and perceived message effectiveness on online donation behavior. In this way, Panic et al.'s study aligned with Cialdini's principle of social proof.

Social proof suggests that individuals tend to look to others' actions and behaviors as cues for their own behavior, especially in situations where uncertainty is present. In the context of non-profit social media campaigns, social proof can play a crucial role in influencing online donation behavior. Panic et al.'s (2016) exploration of interactivity and perceived message effectiveness also relates to social proof. *Interactivity*, such as enabling individuals to share their donation experiences or engage in discussions within the social media campaign, can further

enhance the perception of social proof. When potential donors see others actively engaging and interacting with the campaign, it reinforces the idea that donating is a socially accepted and valued behavior.

Perceived message effectiveness, which likely includes elements of credibility, clarity, and emotional appeal, can also influence social proof perceptions. If individuals perceive a campaign's messages as effective and persuasive, they are more likely to attribute credibility to the organization and view the social proof signals as more compelling, thereby increasing their willingness to donate. Panic et al.'s (2016) study on applying communication theory to non-profit social media campaigns highlighted the relevance of social proof in online fundraising. By leveraging message appeals, interactivity, and perceived message effectiveness, organizations can tap into social proof cues and influence individuals' online donation behavior.

Parsons' (2007) study investigated the influence of financial information and voluntary disclosures on donations to non-profit organizations. This research can be connected to non-profit social media campaigns, which often aim to raise awareness and donations through various communication channels, including social media. Parsons' study found that financial information and voluntary disclosures significantly and positively affected donations to non-profits. Specifically, the study found that “increased disclosure of financial information can significantly increase donations” (Parsons, 2007, p. 186). This finding suggests that non-profit social media campaigns may benefit from sharing financial information and disclosures to increase donations from followers and supporters. By incorporating financial information and voluntary disclosures into non-profit social media campaigns, organizations can leverage the principle of social proof to enhance their credibility, transparency, and perceived impact. This, in turn, can increase individuals' trust and willingness to donate, ultimately contributing to the campaign's success.

Parsons' (2007) study provided insights into how social proof operates within non-profit social media campaigns. By utilizing financial information and voluntary disclosures as social proof signals, organizations can enhance their persuasive impact and encourage individuals to contribute to their cause.

Liking

The fourth principle of Cialdini's (2021) persuasion framework is *liking*, which emphasizes the importance of social connections and personal relationships in persuasion and influence. According to Cialdini (2021), “we are influenced by people we like” (p. 73). This principle is particularly relevant to public celebrities and endorsements in communication strategies, which has become a foundational modern communication method. Seminal works and theorists that have explored the concept of liking include Taylor (1978) and Frenzen and Davis (1990), who studied the role of social connections in shaping attitudes and behavior. More recently, Arnocky (2018) focused on the use of celebrity endorsements to influence consumer behavior. These works highlighted the importance of social connections and personal relationships in persuasion, as well as the power of positive social feedback to shape attitudes and behavior. Overall, liking has necessary implications for understanding the roles of personal relationships and social connections in persuasion, which can help organizations and individuals develop more persuasive and effective communication strategies.

Sánchez-Torné et al. (2023) examined the importance of content in the digital media strategy of non-profit organizations. The authors argued that non-profit organizations should prioritize content creation as part of their digital media strategy and that this content should be tailored to their target audience's specific interests and preferences. “By using digital media to build relationships with their audience, nonprofit organizations can establish a sense of trust and

credibility that can lead to increased engagement and support” (Sánchez-Torné et al., 2023, p. 9).

The concept of Cialdini's (2021) liking principle can be connected to the findings of Sánchez-Torné et al.'s (2023) study through the importance of content in the digital media strategy of non-profit organizations.

Cialdini's (2021) liking principle suggests that people are more likely to be persuaded by and engage with individuals or organizations they like or feel a connection to. In the context of non-profit organizations, establishing a sense of trust and credibility is crucial to building relationships with an audience. This aligns with the findings of Sánchez-Torné et al.'s (2023) study, which argued that non-profit organizations should prioritize content creation to engage their target audience.

By tailoring content to the specific interests and preferences of their audience, non-profit organizations can tap into the liking principle. When individuals encounter content that resonates with their interests, values, or aspirations, they are more likely to develop a positive perception of the organization and feel a sense of connection or liking towards it. Cialdini's (2021) liking principle suggests that people are more likely to engage with organizations they like. Sánchez-Torné et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of content creation in the digital media strategy of non-profits, emphasizing the need to tailor content to the interests and preferences of the audience. By doing so, non-profits can establish trust, credibility, and a sense of liking among their target audience, which can result in increased engagement and support for their cause.

Saxton and Waters (2014) investigated how different messages posted by non-profit organizations on Facebook affect public reactions. Through a content analysis of 492 posts from 20 non-profit organizations, the study found that informational messages were the most common type of message posted. However, community-building messages received the most likes and

comments from the public. “We find that non-profit organizations' community-building messages are more likely to generate the most positive public reactions on Facebook, suggesting that social media has the potential to facilitate the cultivation of relationships between nonprofits and their stakeholders” (Saxton & Waters, 2014, p. 296). The authors suggested that non-profit organizations prioritize community-building messages over promotional or informational messages to increase engagement and build stronger stakeholder relationships. Saxton and Waters (2014) found that community-building messages posted by nonprofit organizations received the most likes and comments from the public on Facebook. These messages focused on creating a sense of community, fostering connections, and engaging the audience in conversations and activities related to the organization's cause. The positive public reactions to community-building messages align with Cialdini's liking principle. By focusing on building a community and facilitating interactions among stakeholders, non-profit organizations create an environment that fosters liking, connection, and engagement. When individuals feel a sense of belonging and connection with an organization's community, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward the organization and actively engage with its content.

Saxton and Waters (2014) suggested that non-profit organizations should prioritize community-building messages over promotional or informational messages on social media platforms. By doing so, organizations can leverage the liking principle to their advantage. Community-building messages create opportunities for individuals to connect, participate, and form relationships with the organization and other supporters. This engagement, in turn, strengthens stakeholder relationships and cultivates positive public reactions.

Saxton and Waters (2014) found that community-building messages posted by non-profit organizations on Facebook received the most positive public reactions. This is consistent with

Cialdini's liking principle, which emphasizes the importance of creating liking and connection with stakeholders. By prioritizing community-building messages, non-profits can tap into the potential of social media to facilitate relationships, increase engagement, and build stronger stakeholder connections.

Tantawi and Sadek (2001) explored the impact of celebrity endorsement in cause-related marketing campaigns on audience behavioral intentions in the Egyptian context. The study emphasized the importance of understanding the cultural context of the target audience when designing a cause-related marketing campaign that involves celebrity endorsements. Tantawi and Sadek connected with non-profit social media campaigns by highlighting the potential effectiveness of using celebrity endorsements to increase audience engagement with a cause. This finding is relevant to non-profit organizations that seek to increase awareness and support for their causes through social media platforms. As the authors noted, “Celebrity endorsements are an effective tool for enhancing credibility, capturing the attention of target audiences, and increasing the effectiveness of communication campaigns” (Tantawi & Sadek, 2001, p. 308). Tantawi and Sadek connected with non-profit social media campaigns by highlighting the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in increasing audience engagement and the importance of understanding the cultural context of the target audience when designing a communication campaign.

Willems et al. (2017) examined the role of formal third-party endorsements and informal self-proclaiming signals in non-profit reputation building. “Formal third-party endorsements serve as a substitute for personal experience and reduce uncertainty in the absence of experience, especially when a nonprofit's services are intangible and difficult to evaluate” (Willems et al.,

2017, p. 1094). These endorsements can be critical when stakeholders need more personal experience with the non-profit's services.

Nonprofits need to carefully consider which type of signal they want to use to build their reputation, as they may affect different stakeholder groups differently. While informal self-proclaiming signals can help create an emotional connection with supporters, formal third-party endorsements may be more effective in reducing uncertainty for potential clients and partners. (Willems et al., 2017, p. 1103)

Willems et al. (2017) argued that these two types of signals can affect stakeholders' perceptions of a non-profit's reputation differently. Their study found that while both signals can influence perceptions of reputation, the results differ depending on the stakeholder group. The authors concluded that non-profits should carefully consider the signals they send to their stakeholders and tailor their messaging to each group. In terms of the liking principle, the formal third-party endorsement can increase the likability of the non-profit organization in the eyes of the public. The endorsement acts as a social proof, indicating that respected entities or individuals endorse the organization. As a result, individuals are more likely to trust, like, and feel a connection to the organization, which can lead to increased engagement and support.

In summary, Willems et al. (2017) highlighted the significance of formal third-party endorsements in non-profit reputation building. The liking principle connects to this by emphasizing that people are more likely to engage with and support organizations they like and trust. Formal endorsements contribute to the likability and credibility of non-profits, increasing the likelihood of public engagement and support.

Authority

The fifth principle of Cialdini's (2021) persuasion framework is *authority*, which emphasizes the impact of expert opinion and knowledge on individual attitudes and behavior. Cialdini's authority principle and liking principle are distinct concepts that operate differently in the context of influence and persuasion. The authority principle suggests that people are more likely to comply with, or be influenced by, individuals who are perceived as authorities or experts in a particular domain. This influence stems from the belief that those with expertise possess superior knowledge, skills, or qualifications, and their recommendations or opinions are therefore more valid and trustworthy. In contrast, the liking principle focuses on the tendency of individuals to be influenced by and engage with individuals or organizations they like, feel a connection to, or admire. Liking can be influenced by various factors, including similarity, physical attractiveness, familiarity, or shared interests. Celebrity endorsements often tap into the liking principle by associating a well-known and liked figure with a product or organization.

Expert endorsements, on the other hand, utilize the authority principle to influence individuals. Rather than relying on the likability or popularity of a figure, expert endorsements emphasize the person's knowledge, experience, and qualifications in a specific field. Expert endorsements leverage the perception of authority to establish credibility and influence the opinions or actions of others. While both celebrity endorsements (liking) and expert endorsements (authority) can be influential, they operate through different mechanisms. Celebrity endorsements primarily focus on leveraging the likability and popularity of a figure to influence consumer behavior. On the other hand, expert endorsements rely on the perceived expertise and authority of an individual to influence opinions and actions, particularly in domains where knowledge and qualifications matter.

Cialdini's (2021) authority principle and liking principle differ in their mechanisms of influence. Authority relies on the perception of expertise, qualifications, and credibility, while liking is based on a sense of connection, admiration, or similarity. Expert endorsements utilize the authority principle by emphasizing expertise and qualifications, whereas celebrity endorsements primarily tap into the liking principle by leveraging the popularity and likability of a figure.

The authority principle is rooted in credibility and the idea that individuals are more likely to trust and follow the advice of those deemed to be authorities in each field. Several theorists have explored the role of authority in persuasive communication, with Wilson (1968), Higham (1992), Sorokowski (2010), and Diguide (2012) having all suggested that the use of authority figures can increase the likelihood of audience members giving to a cause. These authority figures can include experts, such as professors or doctors, who are deemed to have subject-matter expertise. However, there have also been criticisms of the authority principle within the persuasion framework, with scholars such as Friestad (1995), Law and Brown (2000), and Shu and Carlson (2014) arguing that the use of authority can sometimes lead to a loss of trust and credibility. These studies highlighted the importance of understanding the role of authority in persuasion and the potential for using expert opinion and knowledge to build trust and credibility with audiences. By incorporating the principle of authority into their communication strategies, non-profits and individuals can develop more effective campaigns that leverage the power of expert opinion and knowledge to build support for their causes and promote positive behavior.

Scarcity

The sixth principle of Cialdini's (2021) persuasion framework is *scarcity*, which highlights the idea that the perceived value of a product or participation increases when there is

limited availability or time to take advantage of it. This principle is rooted in the basic understanding of human behavior, where people tend to desire things that are rare or hard to obtain. Several scholars have studied the impact of scarcity on persuasion, with Lynn (1984), Dai (2008), and McKenzie and Chase (2010) being some of the most notable. These studies emphasized the importance of creating a sense of scarcity in communication efforts to increase the product's perceived value or participation being promoted. Within the scarcity principle, reactance theory also comes into play, which suggests that individuals may react negatively when their freedom to choose is threatened by limited availability or time constraints. This idea was supported by seminal work from Brehm (1966) and research by Burgoon (2002). By understanding scarcity and reactance theory principles, non-profit organizations and individuals can develop persuasive communication strategies that create a sense of urgency and encourage action while avoiding adverse reactions from their target audience.

Bhati and McDonnell (2020) explored the impact of social media on fundraising during online giving days. They noted that successful online giving campaigns require careful planning and execution, including targeted communication strategies. “Strategic communication is critical for non-profits to cut through the noise of the internet and social media and to ensure that their messages reach potential donors” (Bhati & McDonnell, 2020, p. 77). “Social media platforms allow non-profits to reach a wide audience quickly and efficiently and to engage potential donors in a two-way conversation about their cause” (Bhati & McDonnell, 2020, p. 77). This strategic communication can be connected to the scarcity principle by leveraging the concept of limited time or limited opportunities.

Non-profits can use social media platforms to communicate the urgency or limited availability of their fundraising campaigns or specific giving days. By emphasizing the time-

sensitive nature of the campaign or highlighting the limited window of opportunity to donate, organizations create a sense of scarcity. This scarcity, in turn, can motivate potential donors to take immediate action and contribute to the cause. Cialdini's (2021) scarcity principle suggests that people perceive items or opportunities as more valuable when they are scarce or limited in availability. This principle can be applied to non-profit fundraising by creating a sense of urgency or limited availability to motivate potential donors to act. Bhati and McDonnell (2020) discussed that social media platforms allow non-profits to reach a wide audience quickly and engage potential donors in a two-way conversation about their cause. This aligns with the scarcity principle, as the interactive nature of social media can facilitate real-time updates, countdowns, or reminders about limited opportunities to donate. These tactics enhance the perception of scarcity and can increase donor motivation and engagement.

Unity

The seventh principle of Cialdini's (2021) persuasion framework is an emerging concept that focuses on the power of *unity* in communication and persuasion, particularly in the digital age. Unity involves people coming together and creating a collective identity, which can promote shared goals and increase the impact of communication efforts. The foundational works in this area were conducted by Cadinu (1996), Mashek (2003), and Aron (1991), who studied the effects of social identity on persuasion. They found that people are more likely to be influenced by those who share a common identity or are part of the same group. In recent years, unity has gained increased attention in the digital communication sphere, which has been used to promote social movements and campaigns.

Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) examined the use of social media by non-profit organizations and how it affects their ability to gather information, build community, and act. Their findings

included that non-profits are more likely to use social media to foster a sense of community and promote action than for fundraising. Lovejoy and Saxton stated how “the ultimate goal of communication is to facilitate some type of action, whether it is to change attitudes or behaviors, to mobilize resources, or to advocate for social change” (p. 338). Furthermore, Lovejoy and Saxton's findings suggested that non-profit social media campaigns are more effective when they focus on building community and promoting action rather than just soliciting donations.

Priante et al.'s (2018) article examined the role of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in shaping identity and collective action in social movements. They highlighted the importance of identity and shared values in social activities, stating that “the emergence of a collective identity is a necessary condition for the development of a social movement” (p. 2650). This finding suggests that non-profit social media campaigns can benefit from creating a shared identity and values among their followers and supporters to encourage collective action and engagement. Priante et al. also discussed the role of CMC in facilitating collective action in social movements. The authors stated how “CMC enables collective action by providing a means of communication that allows for coordination and organization of activities” (p. 2656). Furthermore, Priante et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of storytelling and emotions in shaping identity and collective action in social movements.

Raman's (2016) article explored how social media, mobility, analytics, and cloud computing impact non-profit organizations. This research can be applied to technology in non-profit social media campaigns, which aim to create a shared understanding of the organization's mission and values through online communication. Raman suggested that social media can facilitate the creation of a shared identity among members of a non-profit organization, stating how “social media platforms can enable the formation of a collective identity, as members can

share their experiences and interests online” (p. 414). This finding suggests that social media can be helpful in non-profit social media campaigns to foster a sense of shared identity and mission among their followers.

Ranganathan and Henley's (2008) article explored the determinants of charitable donation intentions using a structural equation model. This theory can be applied to studying charitable donation intentions, as non-profit organizations aim to create a shared understanding of their mission and values to encourage donations. Ranganathan and Henley suggested that communication plays a crucial role in the donation process, stating that “the communication of information about the charity's activities and the use of the donation, and the reputation of the charity, are important factors that influence charitable giving” (p. 4). This finding suggests that effective communication strategies, including social media, can significantly promote charitable donations.

Vedel et al.'s (2020) study explored how non-profit organizations can leverage social media to promote health and well-being among the public. The authors conducted a multiple case study involving six non-profit organizations in Canada, analyzing their social media strategies for health promotion. “Non-profit organizations need to engage their audience on social media to build trust and credibility, which is critical to promoting healthy behaviors and encouraging participation in health-related activities” (Vedel et al., 2020, p. 11). Their study found that effective social media campaigns for health promotion should focus on three key areas: (1) audience engagement, (2) content creation, and (3) data analytics. Additionally, their case study revealed that non-profit organizations could use social media platforms to build relationships with stakeholders and foster a sense of community around health issues.

A study by Waters et al. (2009) explored how non-profit organizations use Facebook to engage with their stakeholders. The authors conducted a content analysis of 88 non-profit Facebook pages. They identified four ways non-profits use the social media platform: (1) building community, (2) communicating about events, (3) sharing organizational news, and (4) promoting fundraising activities. Their study also found that non-profit organizations with more significant followings tend to be more active on Facebook. Non-profits in the health and human services sectors are likelier to use the platform to build community.

Relationships are the foundation for social networking sites. Though no handbook exists to help an organization manage their social media presence, previous research on online relationship development offers insights into how social networking sites should be used to foster relationship growth. (Waters et al., p. 102)

Gibbon and Dey (2011) examined the role of social media in changing non-profits. The authors argued that social media has created new opportunities for non-profit organizations to engage with their audience, mobilize support, and achieve their non-profit goals. Another way that social media has changed non-profits is by facilitating engagement and participation. The authors argued that social media allows non-profits to create a sense of community among their followers and to mobilize support for specific campaigns or actions. By using social media to engage in deliberative non-profits, non-profits can work with their followers to identify shared goals and develop strategies for achieving them.

Cialdini's Techniques

Foot-In-The-Door

Cialdini's (1984) FITD technique is a persuasive strategy widely studied in the field of social psychology (Burger, 1999; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Freedman & Fraser, 1966). The

approach seeks to enhance compliance by employing a sequential process involving the initial presentation of a small request followed by a subsequent larger request. Cialdini's (1984) technique derived its name from the notion that once an individual agrees to the initial modest request, they have taken a step forward (i.e. a foot in the door) towards further agreement with subsequent, more substantial requests. Cialdini (1992) found that the core of the FITD technique lies in the principle of consistency, which posits that individuals tend to act in accordance with their prior commitments and behaviors. Cialdini (2000) discussed that when a person acquiesces to a small request, they perceive themselves as helpful and consistent individuals. Subsequently, this identity motivates them to maintain consistency in their actions by agreeing to larger requests.

Morgan and Hunt (1994) introduced a theoretical framework with broad applicability for comprehending the dynamics inherent in the relationships between non-profit organizations and their donors. Their framework presented a comprehensive model designed to facilitate understanding and effective management of interactions between firms and customers. Central to their theory are the pivotal concepts of commitment and trust, which they posited as being critical factors for establishing and sustaining successful long-term relationships. Morgan and Hunt asserted that commitment and trust are intricately interconnected, with each element reinforcing the other. They argued that commitment serves as a vital driver for relationship continuity and comprises both affective (emotional) and instrumental (economic) dimensions. Trust, conversely, serves as the foundational underpinning of commitment and is fostered through consistent, reliable, and trustworthy conduct exhibited by the parties involved.

Burger (1999) undertook a comprehensive investigation of the FITD technique, drawing upon the theoretical framework of self-perception theory to illuminate its underlying

mechanisms. The FITD technique involves obtaining initial compliance from individuals with a modest and relatively inconsequential request, which leads to their internalization of a self-perception characterized by helpfulness and cooperativeness. Burger focused on the assimilation of positive attributes, which in turn engender a heightened tendency to comply with subsequent, more significant appeals. The underlying motivation for this increased compliance stems from individuals' desire to maintain consistency between their behavior and their self-conception. As individuals perceive themselves as helpful and cooperative, they are inclined to act in a manner consistent with this self-perception, thereby accommodating subsequent requests of greater magnitude. Burger's exploration of the FITD technique shed light on the cognitive processes and psychological dynamics involved in compliance, providing valuable insights into the persuasive power of sequential requests and the influence of self-perception in shaping human behavior.

A study conducted by Freedman and Fraser (1966) delved into the persuasive strategy known as the FITD technique, which capitalizes on the propensity of individuals to be more receptive to complying with a larger request after having previously acquiesced to a smaller one. Freedman and Fraser (1966) suggested that the FITD technique effectively induces compliance without resorting to overt pressure tactics. The implications of their findings hold particular significance in the context of non-profit social media campaigns, where persuasion plays a crucial role in achieving objectives such as soliciting donations or securing volunteer sign-ups. By applying the FITD technique to social media campaigns, organizations can strategically divide a larger request into smaller, more manageable components.

Freedman and Fraser (1966) suggested that organizations can employ the FITD approach by initially asking individuals to sign a petition and subsequently following up with a request for a donation. This sequential approach enhances the likelihood of individuals complying with the

larger request, leading to notable success for the organization's campaign. By initiating with minor requests, such as signing a petition or engaging with the organization on social media, non-profits can effectively increase the likelihood of individuals adhering to subsequent and more substantial demands, such as donating. Freedman and Fraser's exploration of the FITD technique offered valuable insights into the psychological mechanisms at play when individuals agree to small requests and the subsequent implications for generating consistent and sustained compliance.

Cialdini's (1984) FITD technique has garnered significant attention within the realm of social psychology and has been extensively investigated by scholars such as Morgan and Hunt (1994), Freedman and Fraser (1966), and Burger (1999). This persuasive strategy aims to increase compliance by employing a sequential approach wherein individuals are initially presented with a small request, followed by subsequent, larger requests. The technique derives its name from the metaphorical notion that by agreeing to the initial modest request, individuals have taken a step forward (or placed a foot in the door) towards being more receptive to subsequent, more substantial requests. The body of research surrounding the FITD technique has contributed to our understanding of the cognitive processes underlying compliance and has practical implications for various domains, including marketing, public campaigns, and social influence.

Door-In-The-Face

Cialdini's (1984) DITF technique is a persuasive strategy that has been extensively studied within the realm of social psychology (Terrier et al., 2013; Feeley et al., 2012; Tusing & Dillard, 2000). This approach involves a sequential process of making a larger initial request, which is likely to be rejected, followed by a smaller, more reasonable request. Cialdini's

technique derived its name from the metaphorical notion of a door being metaphorically slammed in the persuader's face when the initial request is declined, only to be reopened when the subsequent request is presented. The DITF technique is grounded in the principle of reciprocal concessions, also known as the norm of reciprocity.

In a comprehensive meta-analysis, Feeley et al. (2012) systematically examined 99 studies investigating the DITF technique. The DITF technique aims to leverage the psychological phenomenon of reciprocal concessions, whereby individuals are more likely to comply with a moderate request after having rejected a larger one. Feeley et al.'s meta-analysis provided a rigorous synthesis of empirical evidence and offered valuable insights into the effectiveness and underlying mechanisms of the DITF technique across various contexts and populations. Their findings advanced our understanding of the DITF technique, specifically regarding its efficacy across diverse contexts. Feeley et al.'s scholarly contributions have contributed to the broader knowledge base surrounding persuasive techniques and relationship management, with implications for practitioners seeking to enhance their strategies for engaging and maintaining fruitful long-term connections with donors and customers alike.

Tusing and Dillard (2000) offered a comprehensive analysis of the DITF technique, elucidating its underlying mechanisms and the cognitive processes that drive compliance. The DITF technique operates by employing a contrast effect, wherein the presentation of an initial, large request serves to magnify the subsequent, smaller request, making it appear more reasonable and desirable in comparison. Compliance is heightened as individuals perceive the second request as a concession made by the requester. The contrast effect, as posited by Tusing and Dillard (2000), plays a pivotal role in the effectiveness of the DITF technique. When individuals encounter an initial, substantial request, their initial response tends to be influenced

by a range of cognitive factors, including perceptions of fairness, the perceived difficulty of fulfilling the request, and considerations of personal resources and commitments. However, upon subsequent exposure to the smaller request, the stark contrast between the two requests triggers a cognitive recalibration process. The smaller request, when juxtaposed against the initial larger request, appears comparatively more reasonable, manageable, and appealing to individuals, leading to an increased likelihood of compliance.

Tusing and Dillard (2000) looked at the second request and how it can be perceived as a concession by the requester, introducing an element of reciprocity into the persuasive interaction. Individuals interpret the presentation of the smaller request as an acknowledgment by the requester that the initial larger request was excessive or unreasonable. This perception of concession activates the cognitive norm of reciprocity, whereby individuals feel compelled to reciprocate the perceived concession by complying with the smaller request. The sense of obligation arising from the perception of a concession further reinforces compliance with the second request.

By shedding light on the contrast effect and the reciprocity norm, Tusing and Dillard (2000) provided valuable insights into the cognitive processes that underpin the DITF technique. Their analysis has contributed to our understanding of the persuasive strategies employed in social influence contexts and has offered practical implications for practitioners seeking to enhance compliance rates in various domains, including marketing, public campaigns, and interpersonal interactions. Understanding the mechanisms through which the DITF technique operates enables individuals to employ this strategy more effectively, considering factors such as request sequencing, timing, and framing to optimize persuasive outcomes.

Terrier et al. (2013) conducted an empirical investigation to assess the impact of requester consistency on compliance rates in the DITF paradigm. Their study aimed to expand the understanding of the DITF technique by exploring the role of the requester's consistency in the persuasive process. Terrier et al. used the technique involving presenting an initial large request, which is followed by a smaller, target request. Traditionally, both requests are assumed to originate from the same source or requester. However, Terrier et al. questioned whether the requester's consistency across the two requests a crucial factor for the technique's effectiveness is.

Terrier et al. (2013) conducted a series of experiments involving participants who were exposed to variations of the DITF technique. They manipulated the consistency of the requester by introducing a condition where the two requests were presented by different requesters. Compliance rates were measured to determine the influence of requester consistency on individuals' response to the subsequent smaller request. The findings of Terrier et al.'s study shed light on the role of requester consistency in the DITF technique. The results revealed that compliance rates were significantly lower when the two requests were made by different requesters compared to when they were made by the same requester. The scholars suggested that requester consistency plays a vital role in the effectiveness of the DITF technique (Terrier et al., 2013). When the requests are presented by different individuals, the persuasive impact of the technique diminishes, which is potentially due to reduced perceptions of reciprocity or commitment.

Cialdini's (1984) DITF technique has emerged as a prominent and extensively studied persuasive strategy within the field of social psychology. Building upon Cialdini's seminal work, subsequent research by Feeley et al. (2012), Tusing and Dillard (2000), and Terrier et al. (2013)

has further enriched the understanding of this technique. These studies explored various facets of the DITF technique, including its underlying mechanisms, the role of requester consistency, and the cognitive processes that drive compliance. Collectively, these investigations have advanced our knowledge of persuasive strategies, elucidating the factors that influence individuals' responses to sequential requests and providing valuable insights for practitioners seeking to employ effective persuasive techniques in domains such as marketing, public campaigns, and interpersonal interactions.

Gaps in Research Using Cialdini's Framework

Some gaps and limitations within Cialdini's (2021) framework are that the research is focused on tactics instead of message characteristics or situations. These gaps allow for a deeper dive into not only the theory of compliance-gaining but also how the quality of the message and the trustworthiness are viewed. While Cialdini's framework is simple and easy to follow for the researcher, some limitations are that it may not be transferrable to other cultures depending on their methods of persuasion. Additionally, changes in behavior and social norms can change through time. When focusing on non-profit digital communication, Cialdini's work has gaps because it has mainly focused on face-to-face interaction. Digital communication is not focused on heavily, nor are multimedia elements, digital visualization techniques, or social networks. There are other possible gaps, such as emotional appeals within digital communication strategy, persuasion, and how the online community dynamics differ from online platforms versus face-to-face interactions.

Related Literature

Related literature about the upcoming theory exploration and methodology includes information on non-profit organizations, the use of digital media, and digital communication strategies.

Digital Storytelling

Lambert and Hessler (2018) discussed several key applications of digital storytelling for persuasion that can be identified within the realm of social media. They also discussed how digital storytelling expands the boundaries of narratives by integrating various forms of media, such as images, audio, video, and interactivity, to create immersive and engaging storytelling experiences. Pera and Viglia (2016) discussed how companies and brands utilize digital storytelling to create narratives that establish a connection with their target audience. By sharing compelling stories about their brand, values, or products, companies aim to persuade consumers to develop a positive perception, emotional connection, and brand loyalty. Pera and Viglia's focus was on the strategic use of digital storytelling, which enables brands to humanize their image and foster a sense of identification among their consumers. Non-profit organizations and social activists leverage digital storytelling to raise awareness and gain support for their causes. Through sharing stories of individuals impacted by a specific issue or showcasing success stories, they aim to persuade others to act, donate, or support their cause. The emotive power of storytelling helps these organizations effectively communicate the urgency and importance of their mission, appealing to the emotions and values of the audience. Lambert and Hessler analyzed how digital storytelling empowers marginalized voices and communities by providing them with a platform to share their stories, challenge dominant narratives, and promote social change.

Davey and Benjaminsen (2021) looked at influencer marketing, which represents another area where digital storytelling is widely employed for persuasion within social media.

Influencers utilize personal narratives, experiences, or testimonials within their content to promote products, services, or brands. By integrating storytelling elements, influencers aim to persuade their followers to try or purchase the promoted items. The credibility and relatability of influencers play a significant role in enhancing the persuasive impact of their digital storytelling. Davey and Benjaminsen also examined how storytelling is employed in social and political campaigns to persuade and mobilize the public. Campaigners present stories that resonate with the target audience's values, emotions, or aspirations to influence opinions, change behaviors, or garner support for a particular candidate or cause. The use of narratives within these campaigns helps to create a connection between the cause and the audience, driving engagement and persuasive impact.

Additionally, Davey and Benjaminsen (2021) discovered that customer testimonials serve as a common application of digital storytelling in persuasion for brands and businesses. By featuring stories of satisfied customers, their experiences, and the benefits gained from a product or service, brands aim to persuade potential customers to make a purchase or engage with their brand. These testimonials tap into the power of social proof, leveraging storytelling to build trust and credibility among the target audience. Davey and Benjaminsen discussed that in the realm of digital storytelling, the process of creation becomes just as important as the final product, as individuals engage in collaborative and participatory storytelling practices.

Digital storytelling is a persuasive approach within social media that harnesses the power of narratives, visuals, and emotions to engage and influence audiences. The strategic use of storytelling techniques in brand communication, cause advocacy, influencer marketing, social

and political campaigns, and customer testimonials enhances persuasion and engagement. However, it is crucial to maintain transparency, authenticity, and ethical practices when employing storytelling for persuasive purposes within social media.

Summary of Non-Profits

Direct Relief, CARE, and Compassion International are three well-known non-profit organizations that focus on providing humanitarian aid and assistance to those in need around the world. Direct Relief provides emergency medical assistance and supplies to communities affected by natural disasters and other crises. CARE works to address poverty and social injustice by providing health, education, and economic opportunities to those in need. Compassion International focuses on child development and sponsorships, supporting children in impoverished communities by providing education, healthcare, and other essential resources. All three organizations share a common goal of improving the lives of individuals and communities in need, with a proven track record of making a positive impact through their various programs and initiatives.

CARE: Introduction and Mission

CARE (2023) discusses the works around the globe to save lives, defeat poverty, and achieve social justice. The organization delivers emergency relief and operates long-term international development programs. Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, CARE stands for Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere. CARE is a global leader within a worldwide movement dedicated to ending poverty. We are known everywhere for our unshakeable commitment to the dignity of people. According to CARE (2023):

The mission is to work around the globe to save lives, defeat poverty, and achieve social justice. The vision is to seek a world of hope, inclusion, and social justice, where poverty

has been overcome, and all people live with dignity and security. CARE is focused on helping girls and women who cannot escape poverty because of their lack of equal opportunities and rights. CARE has several core values, mostly centered around diversity, excellence, transformation, integrity, and equality.

CARE: History

According to the CARE website (2023):

At the end of World War II, with much of the world in ruins, Arthur Ringland and Dr. Lincoln Clark approach 22 American charities to propose a nonprofit corporation to funnel food packages from Americans to loved ones in Europe. The charities agreed, and on November 27, they incorporated the Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe. After negotiation with multiple government agencies, CARE took session of 2.8 million “10-in-1” military food rations. These rations become the world's first CARE Packages® and an American symbol is born.

According to CARE (2016):

After World War II, the original CARE Package harnessed the power of generosity in a box. It changed the world by delivering food that relieved suffering across a devastated Europe. Seventy years later, the CARE Package has evolved and today powers change in new, lasting ways for the people who need it most.

The background of the CARE organization came out of need and as the organization acquiesced, it discovered a need for more than just care packages; a life free from devastation was also needed. A video of standing up for lives free from violence and helping women out of abusive and destructive situations makes this mission clear within the CARE organization (CARE, 2018). According to another video on CARE's (2017) YouTube site:

20 million people face famine conditions in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Nigeria. The U.S. Administration has proposed a 21% cut in food assistance this year. Programs like food assistance represent less than 1% of the federal budget. That's 1 cent on every dollar.

CARE: Size and Impact

According to Charity Watch (2023a):

CARE has been issued an A grade on a scale of A+ to F based on a complex charity audit which includes financial statements, annual reports, state filing, and tax forms. 90% of CARE's cash budget it spends on programs, which means that 90% of the cash budget goes towards programs and 10% goes to overhead such as fundraising, management, and general expenses. It costs CARE \$13 to raise \$100 and has spent \$238,000,000 in total contributions, with 25% to 49% coming from government funding and resources within the United States.

According to CARE's (2019) tax filing for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2019, the non-profit received donated in-kind goods on which it placed a value of approximately \$23.0 million, including approximately \$22.0 million in donated food inventory (IRS Form 990, Schedule M). In addition, according to the CARE consolidated audit from June 30, 2019 (Note 2 re: Nonfood Gifts-in-Kind), "CARE recognized contributions totaling \$6.0 million... for public service announcements and donated professional services..." in fiscal 2019 (Charity Watch, 2023b).

CARE Communication History

In 2016, CARE marked the 70th anniversary of the CARE Package by having a handful of original CARE Package recipients (who were once child refugees in Europe) write heartfelt

letters of solidarity to Syrian refugee children in Jordan. This “Letters of Hope” campaign inspired more than 10,000 other people to write their messages of encouragement to refugees, culminating with former U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright, herself having been a child refugee during World War II, recognizing original CARE Package recipients and present-day refugee advocates from Syria at the CARE National Conference in Washington, D.C. According to Philanthropy New Digest, “Bloomberg Philanthropies has announced that it is partnering with CARE to expand existing Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) for agricultural funds in Tanzania, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo”.

According to CARE’s website (2023c):

In 2020, CARE's COVID-19 response has targeted more than 60 countries worldwide, including the United States. Our priority actions now include providing health and hygiene kits, installing handwashing stations in public places, and providing clean water where it is scarce. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CARE revived the CARE Package through donations sent to a global community and gift cards sent to front-line workers.

The Global Advisory Council comprises high-profile, purpose-driven influencers passionate about CARE's mission and programmatic work. It works on social media through social media influencers in digital communication.

Compassion International: Introduction and Mission

Compassion International's website (2023) states, “Compassion International is a non-profit organization that aims to end child poverty through holistic child development”. Founded in 1952, Compassion International has grown to become one of the largest child sponsorship organizations in the world (Compassion International, 2023a). Compassion International is a

Christian humanitarian organization that aims to release children from poverty by providing them with education, health care, and other resources to help them break the cycle of poverty. The organization was founded in 1952 by Everett Swanson and has since grown into one of the world's largest and most respected child sponsorship organizations. Today, Compassion International serves over two million children in 25 countries worldwide, with a staff of more than 7,000 employees and an extensive network of volunteers (Compassion International, 2023b). According to Forbes Magazine (2022), “founded in 1952, Compassion International is a Christian child sponsorship organization dedicated to the long-term development of children living in poverty worldwide”.

Compassion International has significantly impacted the lives of impoverished children and families. Through its child sponsorship program, the organization provides children with access to education, health care, nutritious food, and other essential needs for their growth and development (Compassion International, 2023c). The program also provides children with mentors and role models who can help them navigate the challenges of growing up in poverty and can encourage them to pursue their dreams. In addition to its child sponsorship program, Compassion International has also played a key role in disaster relief efforts around the world, providing food, shelter, and other support to families affected by natural disasters and other emergencies. Through its various programs and initiatives, Compassion International has helped improve the lives of millions of children and families worldwide, giving them hope for a brighter future (Compassion International, 2023).

Compassion International: History

“The history of Compassion International's ascent to digital media platforms and strategic media, including its successes and challenges through time” (Compassion International, 2023a).

Compassion International was founded in 1952 by Reverend Everett Swanson in response to the needs of children living in poverty in South Korea. The organization initially focused on providing food, shelter, and education to vulnerable children in Korea. Over the years, Compassion International expanded its reach to other countries, including the Philippines, Thailand, and Brazil. Today, the organization operates in over 25 countries, serving over 2 million children (Compassion International, 2023).

According to PRS:

Today, the organization partners with more than 8,000 local churches in 27 countries, delivering a blend of physical, social, economic, and spiritual care to over two million babies, children, and young adults in poverty. Compassion's child development program helps children fully mature in every facet of life and transcend what is often a generational legacy of poverty.

Compassion International: Size and Impact

According to Charity Watch (2023):

Compassion International has been issued an A grade on a scale of A+ to F based on a complex charity audit which includes financial statements, annual reports, state filing, and tax forms. 82% of CARE's cash budget it spends on programs, which means that 82% of the cash budget goes towards programs and 10% goes to overhead such as fundraising, management, and general expenses.

According to Charity Watch (2023), "it costs CARE \$14 to raise \$100. It has spent \$663,000,000 in total contributions, with 0 % to 24% coming from government funding and resources". Compassion International delivers stories about sponsorship of children through

Christ and how those children can thrive regardless of whom they were born to. According to Compassion International's (2022) YouTube:

A Compassion alumni. Her dreams were encouraged by her sponsor, and she is now a doctor! Children around the world dream of a future where they can thrive. Compassion Sunday is a special opportunity to share your experience as a sponsor with your church family, and help children see their dreams come true through sponsorship.

The release of children from poverty, sharing joy, and showing pictures of children who share the same birthday as possible sponsors are part of storytelling at Compassion International.

A Compassion International (2017) YouTube video asks the audience:

What's one thing we all have in common? A birthday! Sponsor a child who shares your birthday or try searching for a child with the same birthday as your child, grandchild, niece, or nephew. To sponsor a child and partner with us to release children from poverty in Jesus' name, contact us.

Compassion International: Communication History

Compassion International's social media strategy focuses on creating meaningful and authentic connections with its audience. The organization uses storytelling to highlight the impact of its programs and services on the lives of children living in poverty (Compassion International, 2023b). Compassion International encourages its audience to share their stories and experiences, creating a community around its cause. In the early 2000s, Compassion International recognized the potential of digital media platforms to expand its reach and impact (Compassion International, 2023c). In 2005, the organization launched its first website, which provided information about its programs and services. Over the years, Compassion International

has leveraged social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to engage with its audience and promote its cause (Compassion International, 2023c).

Compassion International has also leveraged strategic media to promote its cause and expand its reach. The organization has partnered with celebrities and influencers to raise awareness about child poverty and promote its programs and services. For example, in 2019, Compassion International partnered with Christian musician, Chris Tomlin, to promote its “Fill the Stadium” campaign, which aimed to provide food, water, and medical care to children impacted by COVID-19 (Compassion International, 2023a). Compassion International has also invested in traditional media, including television and radio ads. The organization's ads focus on creating an emotional connection with its audience and highlighting the impact of its programs and services on the lives of children living in poverty (Compassion International, 2023b).

Direct Relief: Introduction & Mission

Direct Relief (2022) works globally to help distribute medicine, equipment, and essential needs to people in low-resource areas. According to Direct Relief's website, their mission is to improve the health and lives of people affected by poverty or emergencies by mobilizing and providing essential medical resources needed for their care. Direct Relief works to equip health professionals in resource-poor communities to meet the challenges of diagnosing and caring for people in need”. Direct Relief (2023) states that:

The organization relies entirely on private contributions to advance its mission and perform a wide range of functions. Included among them are identifying key local providers of health services; working to identify the unmet needs of people in the low-resource areas; mobilizing essential medicines, supplies, and equipment that are requested and appropriate for the circumstances; and managing the many details inherent

in storing, transporting, and distributing such resources to organizations in the most efficient manner possible.

Direct Relief: History

According to Direct Relief (2023a):

Since 1948, Direct Relief has worked to help people who confront enormous hardship to recover from disasters and improve the quality of their lives. The tradition of direct and targeted assistance, which respects and involves the people served, has been a hallmark of the organization since its founding.

Direct Relief (2023b) has provided aid in response to emergencies and refugee populations. Direct Relief has consistently responded with targeted medical aid following major emergencies, beginning with postwar refugee assistance in Eastern Europe. Today, Direct Relief provides appropriate and specifically requested medical resources to community-based institutions and organizations worldwide and across the United States. Just as in 1948, Direct Relief's humanitarian assistance is provided respectfully, in partnership with local groups, and without regard to ethnicity, politics, religion, gender, or ability to pay.

Direct Relief: Size & Impact

Direct Relief has been issued an A+ grade on a scale of A+ to F based on a complex charity audit, which includes financial statements, annual reports, state filing, and tax forms. In addition, the audit includes 3% of Direct Relief's cash budget for programs, which means that 93% of the cash budget goes towards programs and 7% goes to overhead such as fundraising, management, and general expenses. Direct Relief spends \$2 to raise \$100 and has spent \$174,000,000 in total contributions, with 0% to 25% coming from government funding and resources. According to the Direct Relief and Affiliates' audited Consolidated Statement of

Activities for the year which ended on June 30, 2021, Direct Relief received in-kind contributed goods and services on which it placed a total value of approximately \$1,754,795,000. Of this amount, approximately \$1,750,554,000 consisted of donated “pharmaceuticals, medical supplies, and equipment” (Charity Watch, 2023).

According to Direct Relief’s (DR) tax filing for the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2021, the DR reports re: Grants or Assistance Benefiting Interested Persons, cash assistance for disaster relief for \$65,000 provided to Thomas Tighe, CEO (IRS Form 990, Schedule L, Part III) (Charity Watch, 2023). Related to the transaction, DR reports as supplemental information (Schedule L, Part V). According to Gamboa (2022), “Direct Relief provides aid for natural disasters, or for health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the logistics and the supplies for those helping out on the front lines”.

Direct Relief Communication History

Direct Relief (2023a) has long sought partnerships with businesses and organizations with essential expertise that can be leveraged for humanitarian purposes. This approach has led to more than 175 healthcare manufacturers and other corporations in sectors ranging from technology to transportation, providing contributions in the form of needed resources and services. A Direct Relief (2018) YouTube video shared how:

Direct Relief is a humanitarian aid organization with a mission to improve the health and lives of people affected by poverty or emergencies. People who cannot afford or obtain medical care have those needs met by Direct Relief in over 80 countries through tracking and supply chains.

Social media, including videos from YouTube and Instagram, has been part of Direct Relief’s communication history. According to a Direct Relief (2022) YouTube video, “to serve

people and improve the health of people living in high-need areas by strengthening fragile health systems and increasing access to quality health care is a goal of the organization”. “By building upon what exists. Removing barriers, identifying emergencies, supporting immediate needs, and aiming high, Direct Relief finds local parts that can respond, assess, and prepare for long-term recovery needs” (Direct Relief, 2022). According to Pacific Business Times (2021):

Mackenzie Scott's donation to Direct Relief equaled the largest in the organization's history, at \$50 million, and will go toward the Fund for Health Equity, a new project Direct Relief unveiled March 2. Scott announced in December that she was giving nearly \$4.2 billion to 384 charitable organizations in the United States. Direct Relief, a humanitarian aid nonprofit based in Santa Barbara, was listed as one of them. However, the organization did not disclose the amount or purpose of Scott's gift.

Summary

Persuasion and influence strategies in communication theory, communication effectiveness within digital media, and social media usage and communication are themes that were explored in this literature review. This review developed the foundation for compliance-gaining theory surrounding Craig's (1999) communication traditions to ascertain how effective non-profit organizations have become in digital media and how to create best practices within the industry to aid smaller and less-equipped non-profit organizations in their efforts to reach the public through digital media. The essential points are to tie relevant literature and background information on Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining, influence, and persuasion concepts with Craig's (1999) communications traditions to help fill the gap in the literature of how non-profit organizations are being successful with this type of strategic communication strategy in digital communication and media. This literature review helped to inform the researcher of the work

done within social media, digital storytelling, communication traditions, and compliance-gaining theory. In addition, it also revealed gaps and limitations in the literature and in Cialdini's (2021) framework when focused on non-profit organizations using compliance gaining on Instagram, which guided the direction of the present study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Overview

Instagram has emerged as one of the most popular social media platforms for non-profit organizations to engage with their audiences and promote their missions. Punch (2014) discussed that as the platform continues to evolve and new features are introduced, it is increasingly essential for non-profit organizations to understand how to effectively use Instagram to achieve their goals. Creswell and Poth (2019) demonstrated that a digital content analysis of non-profit organizations' Instagram accounts can provide insights into their strategies to communicate with their followers and advance their missions. In this chapter, the researcher proposes a methodology for conducting a digital content analysis of the Instagram accounts of three non-profit organizations. The objective was to identify the key themes, messaging strategies, and visual content employed by these organizations on Instagram. By analyzing the content of their posts and stories, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of how non-profit organizations use Instagram to engage with their followers, promote their causes, and achieve their goals. While Cialdini's compliance-gaining theory has been applied to studies of non-profits in the past, there remains a research gap that explores how non-profit organizations might be using Cialdini's principles in their communication on Instagram.

This qualitative content analysis examined the Instagram channels of Direct Relief, CARE, and Compassion International to determine if Cialdini's compliance-gaining principles were being deployed to promote positive change. To bridge the research gap surrounding the application of Cialdini's compliance-gaining theory in the context of non-profit organizations on Instagram, a purposeful sampling approach examined the Instagram channels of Direct Relief, CARE, and Compassion International. These organizations were selected deliberately due to

their involvement in promoting positive change and their active presence on Instagram. By purposefully sampling these organizations, the study explored how Cialdini's principles are being employed in their communication strategies on Instagram. Through a qualitative content analysis, the study delved into the Instagram data artifacts used by these organizations to determine if and how they utilized Cialdini's compliance-gaining principles to drive positive impact and inspire action among their followers.

The three non-profit organizations selected for this study all focus on humanitarian aid, hunger relief, and poverty. In addition, each of their Instagram accounts have a minimum of 10,000 followers. By examining their Instagram accounts, the researcher identified the similarities and differences in their messaging strategies and content. Creswell and Poth (2019) discussed that to conduct this type of analysis, the researcher can employ a qualitative method within a digital content analysis, which includes coding and categorizing the content of each organization's Instagram posts and stories. This chapter briefly overviews the literature on digital content analysis and its application to social media platforms (specifically Instagram), the research method and design, as well as the data collection methods, coding, and analysis procedures. The presentation of the data collected through possible vital themes and messaging strategies identified across the three non-profit organizations is also discussed.

Research Method and Design

Tiggemann and Slater (2014) focused on creating a method to analyze the content of Instagram images. They were among the first researchers who created an outline for a coding scheme that provided applicable examples for analyzing images for content. Building off Tiggemann and Slater's insights, Huan et al. (2017) focused on sampling strategies within all social media platforms. They looked at methods for selecting posts, tying research questions to

those posts and identifying specific posts and hashtags for geotagging locations. Building upon previous research, Lai and Chen (2018) further expanded the methodology by introducing qualitative content analysis to examine Instagram postings and artifacts. Their study focused on developing coding schemes, analyzing software tools and data, and implementing effective data collection techniques within the context of Instagram. By employing qualitative content analysis, Lai and Chen aimed to gain deeper insights into the nature of Instagram content and its underlying themes. This approach allowed them to systematically analyze and interpret the qualitative aspects of the Instagram posts, capturing the nuances and meanings embedded within the visual and textual content shared by users.

The use of coding schemes provided a structured framework for categorizing and organizing the data, enabling the researchers to identify patterns, trends, and recurrent themes within the Instagram postings. Lai and Chen (2018) also explored various software tools to assist in their data analysis, leveraging technological advancements to enhance the efficiency and accuracy of their research process. Overall, the researchers demonstrated the application of qualitative content analysis as a valuable research approach in the context of Instagram. Their work has contributed to the methodological advancements in studying social media platforms and has provided insights into the effective utilization of coding schemes, software tools, and data collection techniques within the realm of Instagram analysis. Stempfhuber et al. (2020) went a step further to dedicate research to Instagram solely within social media and how to conduct a qualitative content analysis on solely Instagram comments. By developing coding schemes, analyzing data with software tools, and taking a sample of comments, Stempfhuber et al. created a solid methodology for digital content analysis.

The content analysis and data collection included Instagram feed postings, stories, highlights, hyperlinks, reels, campaigns, and tags. Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed digital content analysis, noting that digital data is processed through a systematic analysis of images, text, and videos, which can be conducted through qualitative or quantitative methods. Creswell and Poth also acknowledged that there are significant benefits to digital content analysis because it allows for quick collection and analysis of data, consistent analysis, and higher accuracy. However, Creswell and Poth also discussed some pitfalls of this method, such as bias and possible errors in the analysis and collection processes. According to them, “there are methodological philosophical assumptions that can look at inductive logic and focus on topics within the emerging design” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 20).

Setting

Markham and Buchanan (2012) analyzed qualitative research on social media and looked at three topics: analysis, data collection, and interpretation. Their analysis provided some guidance on data collection. Boyd and Crawford (2012) then analyzed the challenges of social media platforms from the qualitative research perspective by looking at big data and the critical questions that are asked. Contextual media data, bias, and what is present within the data were all outcomes of this research. Considering the ethics and bias portion of Boyd and Crawford's work, Zimmer and Proferes (2014) moved further to understand how ethical challenges could quickly come into play without obtaining informed consent from participants. Their study drew on the privacy and ethical considerations of participants, which helped to define the methodology of this current research to focus on digital artifacts instead of research participants. Therefore, the setting for this current digital content analysis on Instagram was the platform itself, where the Instagram accounts of the selected three non-profit organizations were analyzed. Instagram is a

social media platform that allows users to share photos, videos, and text content with their followers. The setting for this digital content analysis on Instagram involved analyzing the content of Instagram posts, stories, reels, hyperlinks, CTAs, Instagram tags, and highlights from the selected nonprofit organizations' accounts.

The digital content analysis involved collecting and analyzing data from the Instagram data artifacts. Punch (2014) discussed the analysis of digital content and how it focuses on identifying key themes, messaging strategies, and visual content employed by non-profit organizations on their Instagram accounts. It is important to note that while the setting for the analysis was limited to Instagram, the broader context in which the platform is used was also considered. Emergent design, also known as flexible design or adaptive design, is an approach in research that allows for flexibility and responsiveness to unexpected findings or emerging opportunities during a study. This approach acknowledges the possibility of encountering unforeseen information or pathways that can potentially influence the research direction.

According to Pailthorpe (2017):

Emergent design refers to the ability to adapt to new ideas, concepts, or findings that arise while conducting qualitative research. In contrast to more structured approaches, an emergent design welcomes unanticipated information, often adding to the richness of the data. (p. 1)

In the context of studying the trails that a given Instagram post might take, emergent design becomes particularly relevant. Instagram is a dynamic platform where content can lead to various interconnected paths, such as links to external websites, related posts, or user-generated discussions. According to Pailthorpe (2017), “Although the emergent characteristic is an important part of grounded theory, emergent design is not limited only to the data collection and

analysis. An emergent approach to qualitative research is embedded within every stage from conceptualization to publication” (p. 1).

By employing an emergent design, researchers can adapt their study to explore these trails and incorporate new information and user experiences that were previously unknown or unplanned. When studying the impact of an Instagram post, researchers may begin with a predefined set of variables and research questions. However, as the study progresses, they may come across unexpected links or webpages associated with the post that provide valuable insights or alter the research trajectory. An emergent design allows researchers to embrace these opportunities and adjust their focus accordingly. To implement an emergent design effectively, researchers should embrace an iterative approach. They must be willing to revise research questions, data collection methods, and analysis strategies as new information unfolds. According to Pailthorpe (2017), “The researcher takes cues from the data, process, or conclusions, and the whole study reflects varying levels of emergent characteristics within that research process” (p. 1).

Maintaining clear documentation of changes made throughout the study is crucial to ensure transparency and rigor in the research process. An emergent design offers researchers the freedom to explore the trails that a given Instagram post might take in their study. By remaining open to new information and experiences, researchers can adapt their approach and incorporate unexpected findings, leading to a more dynamic and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. This flexible design approach allows researchers to leverage the inherent dynamism of platforms like Instagram, leading to richer insights and a more nuanced analysis of the research topic. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the academic standards of

the setting of the study align with scholarly research as they are based on grounded theory, digital content analysis, and sound qualitative research methodology.

Participants

Using purposeful sampling is a non-random approach where a sample is created from readily available population members. Creswell and Poth (2018) showed that qualitative research focused on text-based observations to collect data is used to create a thematic analysis using coding. Zimmer (2014) used convenience sampling as a non-probability sampling method in which participants are selected based on their ease of access or availability. In the context of a digital content analysis on Instagram, convenience sampling can be an acceptable method for selecting non-profit organizations to analyze.

There are a few reasons why convenience sampling is acceptable in this context. First, Instagram is a public platform, meaning that the content posted by non-profit organizations is available to anyone with an internet connection. According to Palinkas et al. (2015), “purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest” (p. 533). This makes it easier to access and analyze the content of non-profit organizations on Instagram compared to other contexts where access may be restricted. Non-profit organizations on Instagram vary widely in size, mission, and target audience. By using convenience sampling, researchers can select organizations that represent a range of these factors, providing a more diverse and representative sample of the non-profit sector on Instagram. However, this study used purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is often considered the best approach for thematic analyses within Instagram due to its ability to provide targeted and relevant data for the research objectives. Instagram is a vast platform with diverse content, and purposeful sampling helps researchers select specific Instagram posts or users that

align with their research focus. Here are a few reasons why purposeful sampling is advantageous for thematic analyses within Instagram.

Purposeful sampling allows researchers use a targeted selection to strategically select Instagram posts or users that are most likely to provide valuable insights related to the research question.

This approach helps to avoid collecting irrelevant or redundant data, saving time and resources.

Representation of diverse perspectives allows for a wide range of users with diverse backgrounds, interests, and experiences. Purposeful sampling enables researchers to intentionally include posts or users that represent different demographics, geographical locations, or relevant characteristics. This attribute enhances the richness and diversity of the data collected, and strengthens the validity of the thematic analysis.

Instagram is a platform that allows for access to specialized content, which caters to various niches, industries, or communities. Purposeful sampling allows researchers to identify and include posts or users who specialize in specific themes or topics of interest. This targeted selection ensures that the analysis captures insights from relevant influencers, organizations, or communities that are central to the research area. Thematic analysis aims to identify and explore recurring patterns, themes, or meanings within a dataset. Purposeful sampling facilitates a focused approach, enabling researchers to concentrate on specific themes or aspects of interest within Instagram content. By purposefully selecting posts or users that are likely to offer rich insights related to the research objectives, researchers can delve deeper into the identified themes and uncover meaningful interpretations.

Thematic analysis typically involves analyzing a manageable and representative sample of data. Purposeful sampling allows researchers to control the sample size and achieve data saturation, at the point at which no new themes or insights emerge from the analysis. By

purposefully selecting Instagram posts or users, researchers can ensure that they collect enough data to address their research objectives and reach data saturation efficiently. It's important to note that while purposeful sampling provides many benefits for thematic analysis within Instagram, researchers should still consider potential limitations, such as potential bias in the selection process or the challenge of generalizing findings to the broader Instagram user population. Careful planning, transparency in the sampling approach, and thoughtful interpretation of the results can help to mitigate these limitations and enhance the validity and reliability of the analysis.

Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed how convenience sampling can be a practical and cost-effective method for conducting a digital content analysis on Instagram. However, it is essential to note that convenience sampling can introduce biases into the sample. Boyd and Crawford (2012) discussed that non-profit organizations that are easily accessible or readily available may not represent the broader population of non-profit organizations on Instagram. Researchers should be aware of the potential limitations of convenience sampling and take steps to mitigate these biases, such as ensuring that the sample includes a diverse range of non-profit organizations and using appropriate statistical methods to account for the non-probability sampling method. As for purposeful sampling, it is a non-probability sampling method in which participants are selected based on specific characteristics or traits that are deemed critical to the research question. While purposeful sampling may be appropriate in some research contexts, other suitable methods for digital content analysis on Instagram may exist.

Research Questions

The research questions posed in this study served as guiding principles, shaping the inquiry into the use of compliance-gaining strategies within the communication artifacts of the

three selected non-profit organizations. By addressing these research questions, the researcher aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of how compliance-gaining techniques are employed and whether there are commonalities in their implementation across the selected organizations. The proposed methodology, which involves the analysis of communication artifacts such as social media posts and promotional materials, was designed to provide valuable insights and answers to these research questions. Through a systematic examination of the artifacts, the identification of the presence and patterns of compliance-gaining strategies offered valuable knowledge about the persuasive techniques utilized by non-profits. Additionally, by comparing and identifying commonalities among the organizations, the researcher uncovered shared practices and effective approaches in using compliance-gaining techniques. Overall, this research contributes to the understanding of compliance-gaining strategies in the non-profit sector and provides practical insights for organizations seeking to enhance their persuasive communication efforts.

RQ1: What compliance-gaining strategies are observed in the communication artifacts of the selected organizations?

RQ2: Are there commonalities in how compliance-gaining techniques are used in communicating with the selected non-profit organizations?

Procedures

The researcher collected digital artifacts to find commonalities or themes by observing three non-profit Instagram sites belonging to Direct Relief (@directrelief), CARE (@careorg), and Compassion International (@compassion). The rationale for choosing these organizations was that they all focus on non-profit humanitarian relief and poverty, have a presence of over 10,000 Instagram followers, and use Instagram feed postings, stories, and CTAs. The study

focused on the number of posts, types of posts, stories, shares, likes, and comments. Coding was used to search for commonalities between these organizational Instagram sites. When it comes to data collection, it is important to establish clear boundaries to ensure a focused and manageable analysis. In this case, data was collected within the specific time frame of 10 weeks. This duration allowed for a comprehensive observation of Instagram accounts while remaining practical. To capture the most up-to-date information, the Instagram accounts were checked several times daily for any new data artifacts that were posted during the designated time frame. By doing so, the researcher was able to gather a holistic view of the posts. This approach ensured that the data collection process was both time-bound and inclusive, enabling a thorough analysis of the observed Instagram accounts. After the data collection and identification of digital artifacts, the analysis looked for any links among the commonalities and used the lens of Cialdini's framework of influence, persuasion, and compliance-gaining.

Thematic Analysis

Punch (2014) discussed that relational content analysis focuses on relationships between concepts, the context they appear in, and how they are connected. This type of analysis employs proximity analysis by identifying terms, patterns, as well as exploring how they co-occur within images, text, and digital artifacts on Instagram. Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed how bracketing is part of identifying any present biases or preconceptions upfront and before the research begins. To not interfere with this present research, the biases found by the researcher included (1) a possibility of more passion towards one organization over the other, (2) the occurrence of diverse comments on Instagram social media postings within the comments, and (3) the possible emotional reactions from the researcher. The uncertainty of the digital artifacts

and how these artifacts affect the followers of these sites identifies a possible bias early in the research.

Since this was a digital content analysis, the researcher did not know what commonalities or themes would be brought forth from the research before it began. However, the research questions about commonalities fitting with Cialdini's (2021) theory of compliance gaining and influence may have caused bias moving forward, and the researcher was aware of this possible bias. To operationalize the variables, it was crucial to create a coding scheme that consisted of variables and how each was defined, the data analysis process, and how to code the data that was found. A relational analysis took place after all digital artifacts were collected, and proximity analysis was used. This may have affected extraction. Ascertaining this early on helped to ensure that data coding was done to maintain validity and reliability within the research.

The creation of categories was helpful when formulating concept or commonality relationships by grouping similar concepts and creating a code for patterns, words, or images that were present. This helped the researcher to determine what these words or images meant and if they existed. Punch (2014) discussed how the coding process can be systematic, allowing for digital artifacts and data transparency, hopefully leading to replicability. While there are some downsides to qualitative research being too subjective and not scientific enough, the relational aspects of the content in this study were assumed to be helpful in achieving good research results.

According to Holsti (1968), "A content analysis is any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages". While a relational analysis typically has a concept chosen to be examined, exploring the relationship between concepts could provide insight into whether these concepts are at play. The research

questions aided in this to allow for selection, analysis, and coding. The exploration of a relationship between concepts was conducted during analysis to see whether the concepts fit into Cialdini's framework and whether they showed the sign of the relationship between if and how these three non-profits use this framework. The initial time frame for the research was a 10-week period from July 2023 to August 2023 and included a minimum sample size of 300 posts and stories per organization, totaling a minimum of 900 digital artifacts (i.e. posts and stories). No more than 1,000 artifacts (i.e. posts and stories) were analyzed in this qualitative study.

Digital Artifacts

The Importance of Content

A qualitative analysis of the Instagram content of the three selected non-profits was essential for assessing communication strategies, understanding audience engagement, evaluating message consistency, identifying trends and patterns, and evaluating the content's impact on the audience.

Assessing Communication Strategies

Non-profit organizations use Instagram as a platform to communicate with their audience and promote their mission. By analyzing the content they post, researchers can gain insights into the communication strategies employed by these organizations. A content analysis also allows for an examination of the types of messages, visuals, and narratives used by non-profits to engage with their followers and convey their purpose effectively.

Understanding Audience Engagement

The content posted on non-profit Instagram pages provides valuable information about how the organization is connecting with its audience. By analyzing the engagement metrics such as likes, comments, and shares, researchers can assess the effectiveness of the content in

capturing attention, generating interest, and fostering audience interaction. This understanding can inform future communication strategies and content creation.

Evaluating Message Consistency

Non-profit organizations often have specific messages, values, and goals they aim to convey to their audience. A digital content analysis helps researchers evaluate the consistency of the messages posted on Instagram with the organization's overall mission and brand identity. The method also allows for an assessment of whether the content aligns with the intended image and desired impact.

Identifying Trends and Patterns

Analyzing the content posted on non-profit Instagram pages over a period of time enables researchers to identify trends and patterns in communication strategies. In addition, it helps in understanding how these organizations adapt their messaging, visuals, or storytelling techniques to different campaigns, events, or initiatives. This knowledge can contribute to the development of best practices and insights for effective communication in the non-profit sector.

Evaluating Impact and Effectiveness

A digital content analysis allows for the evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of non-profit Instagram pages. By examining the content and its reception by the audience, researchers can gain insights into the reach, influence, and outcomes of the organization's communication efforts. This assessment helps non-profits understand what resonates with their audience and make data-driven decisions to optimize their content strategy.

Conducting a digital content analysis of non-profit Instagram pages is important to gain insights into communication strategies, assess audience engagement, evaluate message consistency, identify trends and patterns, and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of

communication efforts. It provides valuable information for both researchers and non-profit organizations to enhance their communication practices and achieve their goals effectively.

Importance of Clickable Links

A qualitative analysis of the Instagram content of non-profit organizations is essential for assessing communication strategies, understanding audience engagement, evaluating message consistency, identifying trends and patterns, and evaluating the content's impact on the audience. Arifi et al. (2023) focused on the examination of external information and knowledge flow between companies and their visibility in social media networks. Arifi et al. aimed to gain a deeper understanding of company innovation to explore the variations, analyzing the influence of relational proximity measures and company characteristics on these strategies. The inclusion of clickable links within the context of Instagram holds significant relevance and serves as a vital feature for numerous reasons. Arifi et al. began to unveil that social media networks can effectively reflect the connection patterns of innovative companies, like their hyperlink counterparts.

Clickable links empower users to seamlessly navigate between different online platforms, websites, or resources, thereby facilitating information dissemination and enhancing connectivity. Fu and Shumate (2017) revealed that NGOs with higher visibility in news media and a larger social media following receive a greater number of hyperlinks. Additionally, NGOs with similar numbers of social media followers tend to hyperlink to each other. Fu and Shumate also found that the results of their research support the existence of integrated media effects, indicating that both news media and social media systems influence the configuration of hyperlink networks. The implications of these findings are discussed in terms of studying

hyperlink networks, understanding online organizational behaviors, and the field of public relations.

Himmelboim and Golan (2019) contended that social media hyperlink strategy is not only distinctive within the realm of viral advertising but also the most suitable strategy overall. These conceptual and methodological contributions extend beyond the domain of viral advertising and the marketing field. Himmelboim and Golan also looked at social media influencers and how they play a crucial role in content dissemination on online platforms, bearing implications that transcend disciplines and thus hold relevance for both scholars and practitioners.

By allowing users to directly access external content through these links, Instagram becomes an effective tool for promoting businesses, products, and services, as well as disseminating educational or informative materials. Moreover, clickable links enable users to conveniently explore additional details or engage in further interactions related to a specific post or topic, fostering a richer and more immersive user experience. This functionality also contributes to the growth of social networks and online communities by facilitating cross-platform interactions and promoting collaborations among users. Consequently, the integration of clickable links within the Instagram platform significantly amplifies its utility and expands its potential applications, making it an indispensable feature for both individual users and businesses alike.

Persuasion Techniques

Cialdini's framework includes seven principles including (1) Social Proof, (2) Authority, (3) Liking, (4) Scarcity, (5) Unity, (6) Reciprocity, and (7) Commitment and Consistency. By analyzing the clickable links, the researcher identified how these persuasion techniques are utilized by non-profits through the external sources they direct their followers to. For example,

links to testimonials or endorsements from authoritative figures demonstrate the use of the authority principle.

Influence Strategies

Understanding where the clickable links lead provides insights into the strategies that non-profits employ to influence their audience. By examining the destination sites, researchers can assess whether the organizations aim to influence followers' beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, or decisions. For instance, links leading to donation pages indicate the organization's intention to influence followers to contribute financially.

Source Credibility

Cialdini's principle of Authority emphasizes the influence of credible sources on persuasion. Analyzing the linked sources helped to evaluate their credibility and trustworthiness, which was vital for determining the impact they may have on followers' attitudes and actions. Non-profits may strategically direct followers to reputable sources to enhance their persuasive influence.

Consistency and Commitment

The principle of Commitment and Consistency highlights the human tendency to align their actions with previous commitments. By examining the linked content, researchers can assess how non-profits encourage followers to make commitments and engage in consistent behaviors. This may involve directing them to sign petitions, join campaigns, or participate in events that align with the organization's mission. The analysis of clickable links on non-profit Instagram pages allowed the researcher to identify how persuasion and influence techniques, as outlined in Cialdini's framework, are employed. The analysis also provided insights into how the

non-profits strategically use external sources to establish credibility, shape attitudes and behaviors, and foster commitment and consistency among their followers.

Coding

Coding for a digital qualitative content analysis on Instagram involves systematically categorizing and organizing the data to identify patterns, themes, and trends within the content. Through data collection of relevant digital artifacts on Instagram, which includes highlights, stories, posts, and clickable links, a familiarization of data could emerge. The familiarization of data through review of the collected Instagram content provided a comprehensive understanding of the content and any unique features or patterns within the data. The creation of a coding framework or a set of codes helped to categorize and analyze the data to be aligned with Cialdini's (2021) seven principles of compliance gaining, as well as the research objectives and research questions. The next step was to focus on the two Cialdini techniques analyzed in this study: FITD and DITF.

Finding Themes

Coding of the content was established within the framework which involves systematically applying the relevant codes to different data artifacts and then tagging and annotating them. The next step was organizing the collected data and analyzing it. Once the coding was complete, the coded data was analyzed to identify patterns, trends, and possible relationships or themes. During this thematic analysis of the content, the researcher investigated whether the themes fit into Cialdini's (2021) principles and techniques, and if so, which ones are being used.

Researcher's Role

There were no formal instruments for this study; however, the researcher's role served as the instrument of digital content analysis. Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed that reflexivity is the process of self-reflection and introspection that researchers use to identify and acknowledge their own biases and assumptions in the research process. One step the researcher took in this study was to examine the researcher's experience, background, and cultural assumptions, accounting for her ethnicity, gender, race, socioeconomic status, and religion. To identify any potential biases, it was essential to look at confirmation bias and selection bias. The researcher understood that when examining the research questions, they had to be both unbiased and open-ended to ensure that confirmation and/or selection bias was not involved.

The reflection of data collection is another area to consider with reflexivity: how the data is being collected and analyzed and even the research situation within the content. Punch (2014) discussed how this could be removing all economic, political, and social factors that could influence the research. By engaging in reflexivity and being aware of their biases and assumptions, researchers can improve the quality and credibility of their research. It can also ensure that the research is inclusive and ethical. Reflexivity is a critical component of qualitative research, including thematic analysis within Instagram. It involves the researcher's awareness of their own subjectivity, biases, and preconceptions, and the continuous examination of how their background and experiences may influence the research process and findings. By actively engaging in reflexivity, researchers can enhance the rigor, transparency, and objectivity of their study.

There were some key factors that were focused on, such as self-reflection and awareness, where the researcher engaged in introspection and reflection on her own experiences, beliefs, and biases. This included considering aspects such as ethnicity, gender, race, socioeconomic status,

religion, and any other personal characteristics that may shape her worldview. By recognizing and acknowledging these influences, researchers can be more mindful of potential biases that may arise during data collection, analysis, and interpretation. By bracketing these biases, reflexivity involves consciously setting aside personal biases during the research process. This requires researchers to be aware of confirmation bias, which is the tendency to seek or interpret information in a way that confirms pre-existing beliefs or expectations. By acknowledging this bias and striving to maintain an open-minded and unbiased stance, researchers can ensure that research questions are formulated in an unbiased and open-ended manner.

The researcher also critically examined her own assumptions, values, and theoretical perspectives that may have influenced the research process. This included questioning underlying assumptions or biases that could have shaped the data collection, analysis, and interpretation. By engaging in critical self-examination, researchers can minimize the potential impact of their own subjectivity on the research findings. Reflexivity in thematic analysis within Instagram involves the researcher's continuous self-reflection, critical examination of biases, and awareness of their own subjectivity. By actively engaging in reflexivity, the researcher in this study attempted to minimize the impact of her biases, maintain an unbiased and open-minded approach, and enhance the quality and validity of the research findings.

Data Collection

The data collection included digital artifacts on three Instagram non-profit accounts, including Instagram Feed and Instagram Story postings. The types of posts and stories were identified through a coding scheme of several categories that fit within Cialdini's (2021) influence framework. Within the framework, the principles of reciprocity, authority, liking, social proof, scarcity, commitment and consistency, and unity were all possible ways in which

themes were created if they were present. However, the digital content analysis collected the digital artifacts, coded those artifacts, and found themes for each organization on Instagram. While conducting the digital content analysis of Instagram posts, various principles were used to code and identify themes within the data. These principles included Reciprocity, Authority, Liking, Social Proof, Scarcity, Commitment and Consistency, and Unity. By applying these principles, the researcher uncovered patterns and themes that emerged from the content posted by different organizations on Instagram.

Robert Cialdini (1984) first played a pivotal role in advancing the field of compliance gaining. He consolidated and expanded upon existing research, providing a comprehensive framework of persuasive techniques. Cialdini identified seven core principles of influence: Reciprocity, Social Proof, Authority, Scarcity, Commitment and Consistency, Unity, and Liking. These principles are based on psychological mechanisms and social dynamics that influence human behavior. Cialdini's research drew from a wide range of disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and communication, to develop a robust understanding of compliance gaining. His work not only contributed to the theoretical foundation of persuasion but also provided practical insights into how these principles can be applied in various contexts, including marketing, sales, and activism. Cialdini's principles have become widely recognized and applied in fields where persuasive communication is essential.

Cialdini's (1984) contribution to the study of compliance gaining has had a lasting impact, inspiring subsequent research and influencing practitioners in diverse fields. His work continues to serve as a fundamental reference for understanding and utilizing effective persuasive strategies. Therefore, Cialdini's role in the process of compliance gaining's development and evolution is significant. His research and theoretical framework have not only

shaped the field but have also provided a foundation for further exploration and application of compliance-gaining techniques.

Cialdini's (1984) Reciprocity refers to the principle of exchanging value or favors. In the context of Instagram, it can manifest as organizations offering incentives, discounts, or exclusive content to followers in exchange for their engagement or support. The researcher identified themes related to reciprocal actions and the strategies employed by organizations to foster engagement and reciprocity with their audience. The second principle, Authority, focuses on the credibility and expertise of organizations. Instagram posts can reflect this principle using professional language, industry-specific knowledge, or endorsements from authoritative figures or influencers. Themes related to authority involved content that established the organizations' expertise or attempts to position them as leaders within their respective fields. The third principle of Liking involves creating content that is appealing, visually attractive, and aligns with the preferences of the target audience. Themes related to liking included posts that prioritized aesthetics, used visually captivating imagery, or evoked positive emotions to engage and resonate with followers. Next, Social Proof refers to the influence of others on our own behavior and decisions. Instagram posts employed social proof by showcasing user-generated content, testimonials, or displaying the number of followers, likes, or comments as indicators of popularity or endorsement. Researchers can identify themes that illustrate how organizations leverage social proof to establish trust, credibility, and influence among their audience.

The principle of Scarcity involves creating a sense of limited availability or exclusivity to increase demand and engagement. Themes related to scarcity included posts that highlighted limited time offers, exclusive access, or products/services that were presented as rare or unique.

Researchers can identify how organizations utilize scarcity to drive engagement and urgency among their followers.

The principle of Commitment and Consistency emphasizes the importance of aligning actions and values. Instagram posts reflected this principle by showcasing organizational values, social responsibility initiatives, or promoting campaigns that encourage followers to commit to a cause. Themes related to commitment and consistency involved posts that highlighted organizational values, community involvement, or initiatives that inspired followers to align with the organization's mission. Unity, formed by Cialdini in 2021, centers around creating a sense of belonging and community. Instagram posts can utilize this principle by fostering a sense of unity among followers through shared values, experiences, or identity. Themes related to unity involved content that celebrated diversity, inclusivity, or featured user-generated content that highlighted community engagement. By applying these principles during the coding process, the researcher was able to identify and analyze themes that aligned with the specific strategies used by non-profit organizations on Instagram. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the various tactics employed by non-profits to engage their audience, build brand identity, and promote their products or services.

Data Analysis

This study was conducted through a digital content analysis of three non-profit groups with a following of over 10,000 global digital followers online on Instagram. Direct Relief, CARE, and Compassion International were the three selected non-profit organizations. Littlejohn et al. (2017) discussed sampling and selecting the organizations based on their relevance and visibility. A thematic analysis of the organizations' digital media strategies was conducted, focusing on their use of social media, multimedia content, audience engagement,

and calls-to-action. Creswell and Poth (2018) showed that a study can be designed to systematically review research on social media and employ qualitative content analysis as a methodological framework. Content analyses aim to systematically compare, contrast, and classify a dataset, making them a systematic and replicable technique.

Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed that within data analysis, several specific areas focus on beneficence, justice, and respect for persons. In this digital content analysis, there were no human interaction or human subjects. However, an approach is to ensure that the content is assessed and investigated by the researcher (the instrument) through themes, engagements, and social media postings and campaigns. Data analysis in this study involved a systematic and comprehensive analysis of the Instagram content posted by the three selected non-profit organizations. According to Punch (2014), the data analysis involved the following steps: Data cleaning involved removing irrelevant or duplicate data and organizing the data into a format suitable for analysis. According to Tableau (2023), “Data cleaning is the process of fixing or removing incorrect, corrupted, incorrectly formatted, duplicate, or incomplete data within a dataset.”

Content analysis involved analyzing the content of the Instagram posts, including the text, images, and videos, using a predefined coding scheme. The coding scheme was developed based on the research objectives and grounded in the existing literature. According to Columbia University (2016):

Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data (i.e. text). Using content analysis, researchers can quantify and analyze the presence, meanings, and relationships of such certain words, themes, or concepts. (p. 18).

Data visualization involved using graphs, charts, and tables to visualize the data and identify patterns and trends. According to IBM (2023):

Data visualization is the representation of data through use of common graphics, such as charts, plots, infographics, and even animations. These visual displays of information communicate complex data relationships and data-driven insights in a way that is easy to understand. (p. 22).

This study's findings involved interpreting the analysis results within the context of the research questions and objectives. The findings were compared to existing literature, and their implications for practice are later discussed. According to Bengtsson (2016):

Data are presented in words and themes, which makes it possible to draw some interpretation of the results. The choice of analysis method depended on how deep within the analysis the researcher attempts to reflect the informants' statements about a subject. (p. 10)

Overall, the analysis for this digital content analysis of three non-profit organizations on Instagram was comprehensive and rigorous, using appropriate methods and statistical techniques to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a crucial aspect of conducting an academic content analysis. To ensure the validity and reliability of findings, the researcher established and maintained a high level of trustworthiness throughout the analysis process. Creswell and Poth (2014) discussed how the researcher must remain aware of potential biases or assumptions that could affect the analysis and take steps to address these issues. By maintaining a high level of trustworthiness, the researcher ensured that the findings accurately reflected the content being analyzed, drawing meaningful and reliable conclusions.

Credibility

Non-profit campaigns are critical to modern society, promoting and advancing a particular cause or issue. Tiggemann and Slater (2014) discussed that these campaigns can take various forms, from online petitions to grassroots movements and high-profile demonstrations. Given the widespread use and impact of non-profit campaigns, it is essential to have a systematic approach to determine their worthiness for study and potential emulation. A coding system must be in place beforehand to ensure the instrument's (i.e. the researcher) validity understands that what is being investigated is credible, identifies a rationale for the content analysis, and can find relevant coding themes to test credibility and validity. Content analysis focuses on three criteria including stability, reproducibility, and accuracy. According to Punch (2014), stability is the researcher attempting to consistently re-code the same data over time in the same way. Reproducibility is vital, as it allows for data classification in the same way. Accuracy fits a quality standard within the classification of text, images, and any digital artifacts.

Dependability and Confirmability

This content analysis needed to have the potential to be replicated in other contexts. Punch (2014) discussed that digital content analyses should have a transparent methodology that can be adapted and applied to other causes or issues. Punch (2014) researched the ability to increase the confirmability of the results, where researchers can use triangulation techniques by comparing and cross-referencing their findings with other data sources, such as interviews or surveys with the organizations or their followers. Overall, the employment of a rigorous design in this study ensured dependability and confirmability, allowing readers to trust the reliability of the findings and their generalizability to other non-profit organizations on Instagram.

Transferability

Social media platforms have become essential for non-profit campaigns, providing a

direct line of communication with large, diverse audiences. Huang et al. (2017) researched how digital non-profit campaigns on social media can take many forms, from online petitions to viral hashtags and influencer campaigns. However, the success of these campaigns is more than just the quality of the content, or the strategy used. Several external factors can significantly influence the effectiveness of non-profit digital campaigns on social media.

The methodology used in this digital content analysis of three non-profit organizations on Instagram is easily transferable to the study of other organizations and non-profit organizations, with some modifications. Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed how the sampling strategy can be adapted to suit the context of the study. Convenience sampling may be appropriate for studies where the target population is easily accessible, while stratified sampling may be used when the population is more diverse and prominent. By adapting this study's proposed methodology and theoretical framework, it is readily applied to different settings and market segments. The flexibility of this methodology allows for its effective implementation in diverse contexts, ensuring its applicability beyond the specific organizations and market segments originally considered. This adaptability will enable future researchers to explore similar research questions and themes across various industries or target audiences, broadening the scope and generalizability of this study's findings.

Punch (2014) studied how content analysis tools and techniques can be adapted to suit the study's specific research questions and context. For example, if a study focuses on visual content, researchers can use image recognition tools to analyze images on Instagram. The coding scheme developed for the analysis can be adapted or modified to suit the research questions and context of the study. Researchers can use existing coding schemes or develop their own based on their research questions and objectives. Findings and insights gained from the analysis can then be

used to inform and improve the communication strategies of other organizations and non-profit organizations on Instagram. The insights gained from the analysis can help organizations to understand what types of content resonate with their audience and how to communicate their message more effectively. Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed how the methods used in this study can be easily transferred to the study of other organizations and non-profit organizations, with appropriate modifications and adaptations to suit the research context. The insights gained from this analysis can help organizations to improve their communication strategies on Instagram and achieve their communication objectives more effectively.

Ethical Considerations

The research artifacts in this study were treated ethically; no interaction with humans occurred. The researcher attempted to have no cognitive bias against participants of these social media websites, the content, or the organizations themselves. Markham and Buchanan (2012) discussed ethics in online communication and how, in digital content analyses, there are no burdens on these organizations or followers. Additionally, since the setting is a digital environment, there are no human participants (Markham & Buchanan, 2012). This content analysis was conducted in a digital setting. The researcher, who was the instrument in this case, did her due diligence to ensure any ethical issues were dealt with promptly. However, since there was no interaction between the human participants and the researcher, bias was the highest priority when it came to assessing and retaining the goals of this study.

There was ethical consideration for using appropriate language for the research audiences. Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed ethics in grounded theory and any qualitative research focusing on social media posts, online reviews, or comments. In this study, the researcher focused on coding the data and identifying categories, concepts, and possible

commonalities that arose. This helped the researcher to develop a theoretical framework, thus explaining relationships between the concepts found.

Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology of this qualitative digital content analysis. The findings of the study are covered in Chapters Four and Five. The content analysis was presented, and reports were compiled and delivered to the dissertation committee. The proposed study addressed the research questions posed on how non-profit organizations use digital media to create influence, use persuasive and strategic communication, and stay within the boundaries of the research design.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter presents the findings of this qualitative digital content analysis of the three selected non-profits' Instagram pages – Compassion International, CARE, and Direct Relief. The analysis was conducted using Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework, including subcategories of the FITD and DITF techniques and Craig's (1999) communication traditions. The data artifacts included Instagram feed postings, stories, highlights, hyperlinks, reels, campaigns, and tags. This chapter provides an overview of the participants, research questions, and the findings derived from the analysis. The purpose of this study was to discern the usefulness and relevance of diverse compliance-gaining techniques employed within the realm of digital communication, as displayed through an examination of communication artifacts utilized by a carefully selected group of non-profit organizations.

This investigation aimed to address two research questions, which aimed to (1) identify whether the digital communication artifacts of the non-profit organizations demonstrated compliance-gaining strategies and to (2) ascertain if there were any commonalities within Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining techniques across the communication practices of these selected non-profits. By addressing these research questions, the study sought to explain the prevalence and structure of compliance-gaining techniques created within the communicative pursuits of non-profit organizations on Instagram.

This chapter discusses each organization's Instagram findings from the data collection period in the participant's section, then went on to discuss results and answer two research questions while segmenting the results into themes through Cialdini's (2021) framework, two techniques (FITD and DITF), as well as a section on Craig's (1999) communication traditions. In

pursuing this objective, the study focused on techniques within non-profit organizations' social media communication and their framework within persuasive communication. The analysis utilized Cialdini's compliance-gaining strategies within the digital communication framework, as used by non-profit organizations, and looked at how this could attain desired communicative outcomes.

This thematic analysis was aligned with Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining principles and techniques. The researcher focused on whether these principles and the themes identified during research and data collection aligned with these principles. Data coding, themes, Cialdini's principles and techniques, and Craig's (1999) communication traditions were all focused on to answer two important research questions.

Participants

The participants in this study were the three non-profit organizations of Compassion International, CARE, and Direct Relief. The Instagram pages of these organizations (i.e. @careorg, @compassion, @directrelief) were selected as the primary data sources for this qualitative content analysis. Purposeful sampling was used because it is nonrandom and provides accessibility to the followers of Instagram accounts within the population. Purposeful sampling was deemed the best choice for methodology when focusing on qualitative methods. To answer the two research questions, a codebook was created as themes developed throughout the data collection process. The starting date was July 3rd, 2023, and the end date was August 27th, 2023. While the study's design allowed for 10 weeks of data collection, the desired number of artifacts (between 900-1,000) were collected within eight weeks. Within eight weeks, 985 data artifacts collected, which included 392 for Compassion International, 301 for CARE, and 307 for Direct Relief. As noted previously, the data artifacts included Instagram feed postings, stories,

highlights, hyperlinks, reels, campaigns, and tags. See Table 1 to view the data artifact content types and descriptions.

Table 1

A Description of Data Artifact Content Types

Data Artifact Content Type	Description
Instagram Feed Post (IFP)	A post on an Instagram feed.
Instagram Story (IS)	Content posted on the Instagram Stories feature at the top of an Instagram account
Instagram Highlight (IH)	Collections of past Instagram Stories made accessible through the Highlights feature on Instagram
Instagram Tagged (IT)	Collections of past Instagram Stories made accessible through the Highlights feature on Instagram
Instagram Hyperlink (IH)	A link to a website, application, or page within an Instagram post, reel, story, highlight, or tag
Instagram Reel (IR)	A video post that is moved into the Reels area on Instagram, typically from another area on Instagram
Instagram Campaign (IC)	A short or long-term effort posted in any area of Instagram that contains visual or rhetorical prompts to create an action from followers

Findings

This chapter presents the findings of this qualitative study’s content analysis conducted on Instagram feed postings, stories, reels, highlights, campaigns, tags, and links to other sites of the three selected non-profit organizations. The aim was to examine the compliance-gaining strategies employed in these communication artifacts. To identify findings for the two overarching research questions, this section is organized by non-profit organizations' observable themes and focuses on them through the lens of the research questions.

Compassion International

Compassion International is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to child development and child sponsorship around the world. This organization uses Instagram in several ways to spread their mission and to connect with their audience. Many themes were identified through this qualitative analysis. Compassion International (@compassion) used many techniques, such as storytelling, immersive videos, inspirational quotes, and images, to encourage followers to click links, comment, share, and like their content. Some core themes that were discovered were:

Storytelling

Compassion International used the power of visual storytelling and created compelling, visible posts using real children's stories. Using high-quality video footage, the lives of these children, their struggles, their villages and communities, and the success they have attained because of the help of Compassion and its followers were highlighted. In Figure 1, storytelling is shown through an Instagram feed video depicting a young family that could not afford a place to live. However, once a Compassion sponsor provided the family with monetary gifts, the family was able to secure a safe home.

Figure 1

A Compassion-Sponsored Family Story of Gaining a Safe Home



Call-To-Actions

Compassion used CTAs within all of its campaigns, including Instagram stories, reels, and links. The prompts included “Learn More”, “Sponsor a Child”, and “Donate Now”, with hyperlinks within the prompts leading followers to Compassion’s main website or YouTube Channel. The direction depended upon whether there was a lengthier story for followers to learn more, to sponsor a child, or to donate. Figure 2 depicts an Instagram story with a link to Compassion’s YouTube page, which was also used as an Instagram reel that allowed followers

to continue watching the story about a man who defeated alcoholism and poverty with the help of Compassion International.

Figure 2

Compassion Instagram Story Video of a Man Who Defeated Alcoholism and Poverty



Sponsored Campaigns

Compassion International used the sponsored campaign strategy and updated its bio area twice during this study's data collection period to display new campaigns. This strategy was used primarily within Instagram stories and created a quick path directly to Compassion's website, where followers could simply click to donate or sponsor a child. Figure 3 shows a sponsored campaign with a hyperlink to learn more about a child who needs help.

Figure 3

A Sponsored Campaign Instagram Story with Link to Compassion Website



User-Generated Digital Artifacts

User-generated content was prevalent on Compassion’s Instagram page, where followers who believed in or had contact with the organization would tag Compassion. These personal stories would include events, testimonials, videos, and photos showing extreme passion and gratitude for Compassion. Figure 4 shows user-generated content that was a tagging data artifact, showing the coming together of students.

Figure 4

User-Generated Content Example

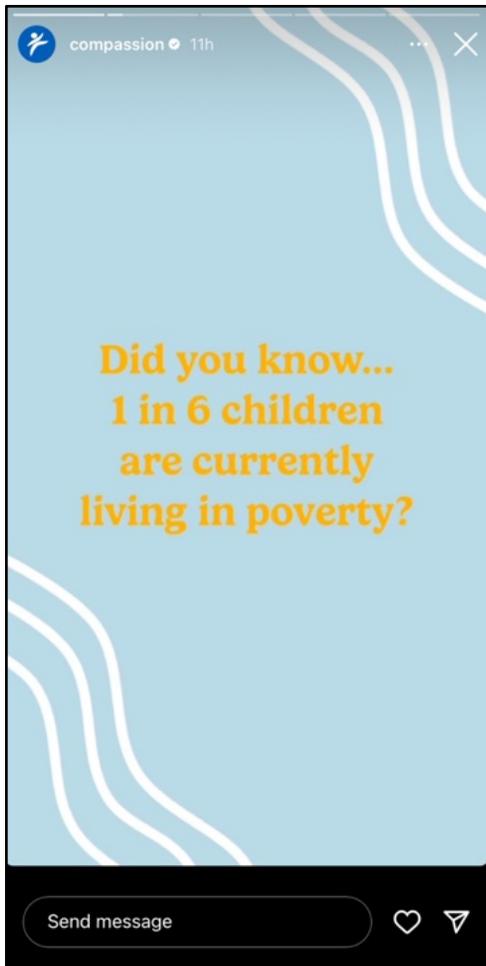


Interaction Through Questions & Prompts

Compassion used both questions and prompts within its Instagram stories to engage followers. Some examples included areas to write answers, participate in polls, and respond to emotional questions, which asked how deeply their passion was for the cause. Figure 5 shows a question created by Compassion that was featured in its Instagram stories to pique followers' interest.

Figure 5

An Instagram Story with an Engaging Question

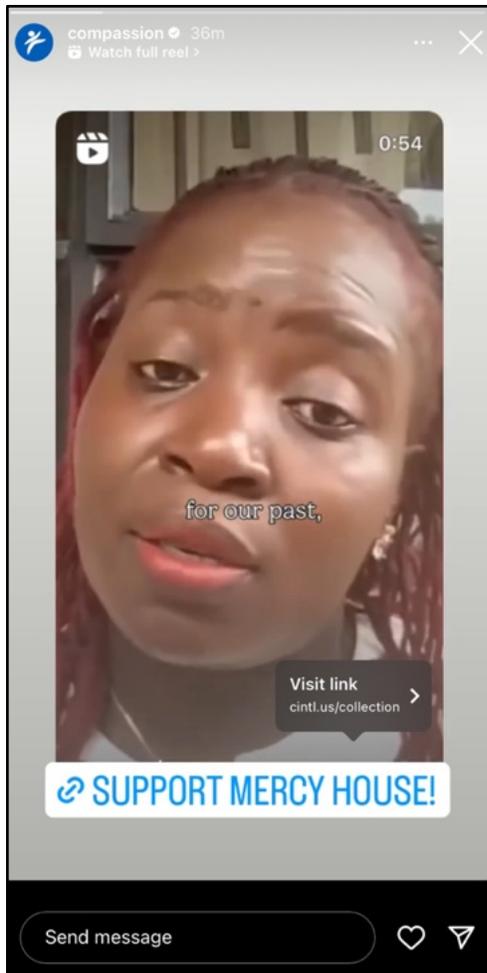


Partnerships

Compassion did not focus on partnerships or collaboration with influencers or ambassadors outright. Instead, within Instagram tagging, there was high usage of other organizations and influencers who tagged Compassion to connect and be observed as part of the cause. Figure 6 shows Mercy House, a partner of Compassion, discussing how the organizations work together towards a common goal in a hyperlinked Instagram story video.

Figure 6

An Instagram Story with a Partnership with Mercy House

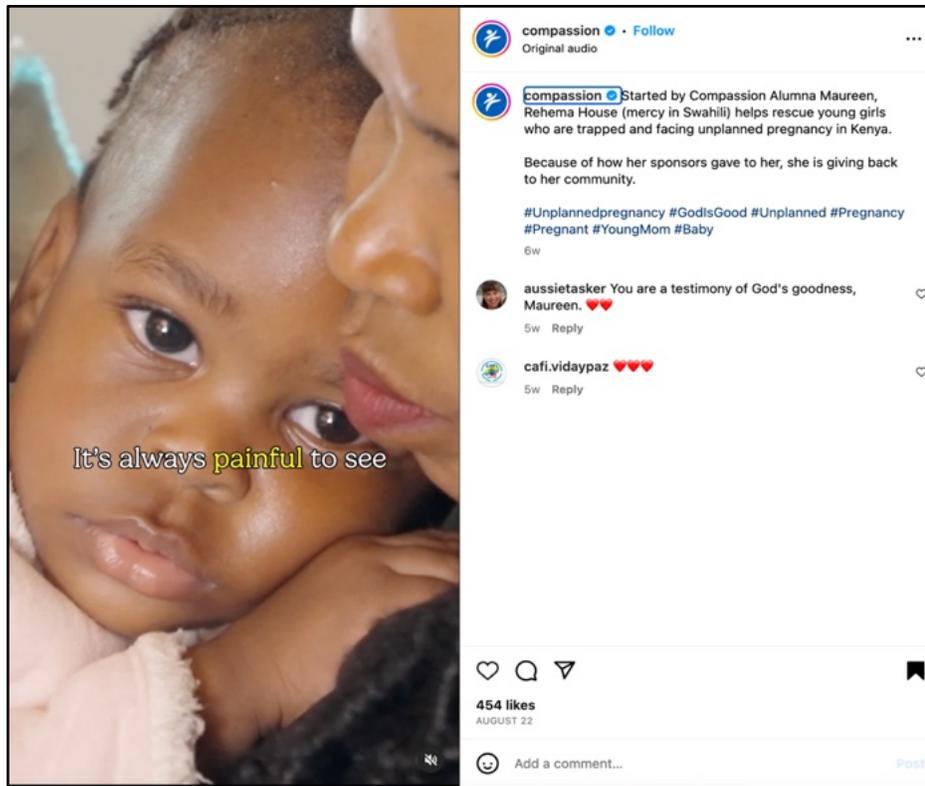


Appealing to Emotion

Compassion International did use some urgency within campaigns through extreme emotional storytelling. These emotional stories pulled in the researcher on a human level and were seen through all aspects of the organization's Instagram account, from stories to feed postings. Advocating for children in need throughout the world, these artifacts also showed how benefactors have helped children, how organizations have helped children, and the children who still continuously need help (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

Instagram Feed Posting from August 27th, 2023



The Instagram feed post illustrated in Figure 7 depicts storytelling by showing a baby being rescued by Compassion in Kenya and sharing how Compassion helps women who are facing unplanned pregnancies by connecting them with sponsors who are able to support them and give back to them once they are older. This post also evokes the many reasons to sponsor a child: reaching an entire family, experiencing love, and supporting education.

CARE

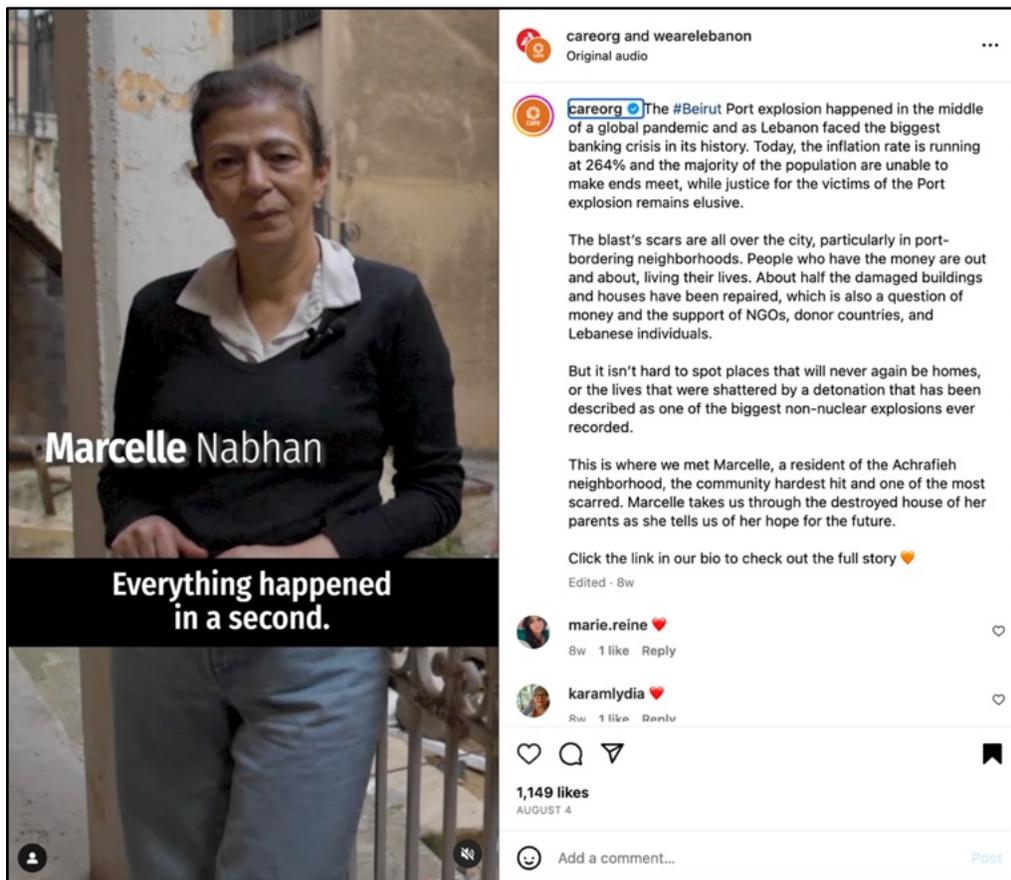
Care (@careorg), a non-profit organization focused on several global issues, from gender rights and saving lives to defeating poverty, tends to focus on trends as a strategy. This means producing timely and up-to-date trending content aligned with pop culture trends. Some key themes uncovered in this analysis were storytelling, caption usage, CTAs, user-generated content and tagging, and trending hashtags.

Storytelling

CARE uses visual storytelling on Instagram by crafting visually appealing and emotionally resonant content that reflects its mission and impact. Their feed features high-quality images and short videos showcasing their projects, beneficiaries, and the real-world challenges they address. Figure 8 depicts a unique storytelling example from Lebanon.

Figure 8

A Woman's Story about Her Plight in Lebanon



Caption Usage

Each CARE post is accompanied by a thoughtfully crafted caption that provides context, highlights the significance of the issue, and reinforces the urgency for action. The caption area serves as a descriptive area beneath the Instagram feed posting, which contains information

about the postings, hashtags, and narratives. Figure 9 shows World Humanitarian Day using captions.

Figure 9

An Instagram Feed Posting about World Humanitarian Day

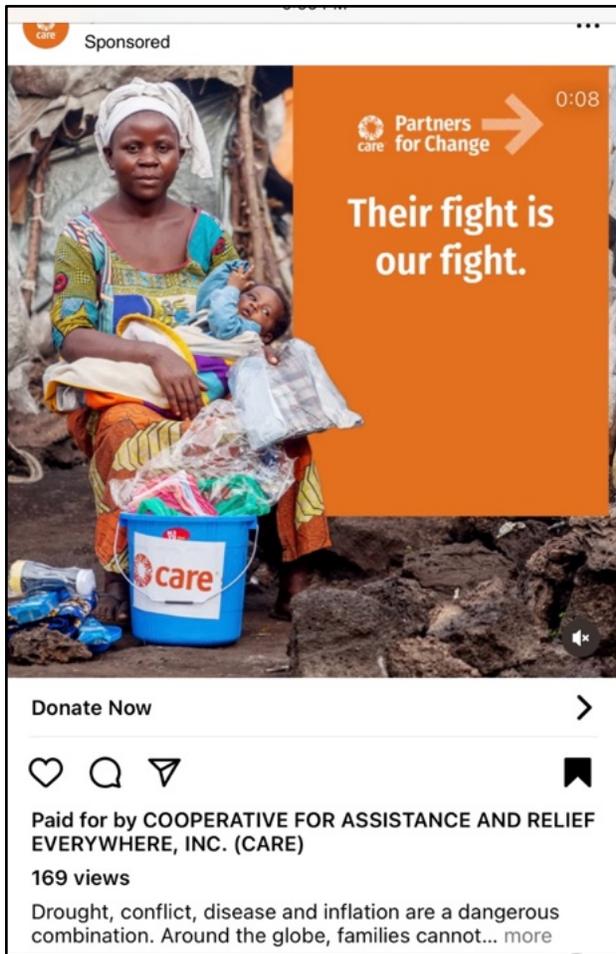


Call-To Actions

CARE employs strategic CTAs to guide their followers toward taking desired actions. They encourage users to “click the link in bio” to learn more, support their initiatives, or contribute to their campaigns. In Figure 10, an Instagram campaign is shown with a picture and a CTA at the bottom saying, “Donate Now”.

Figure 10

An Instagram Campaign in an Instagram Story with a CTA

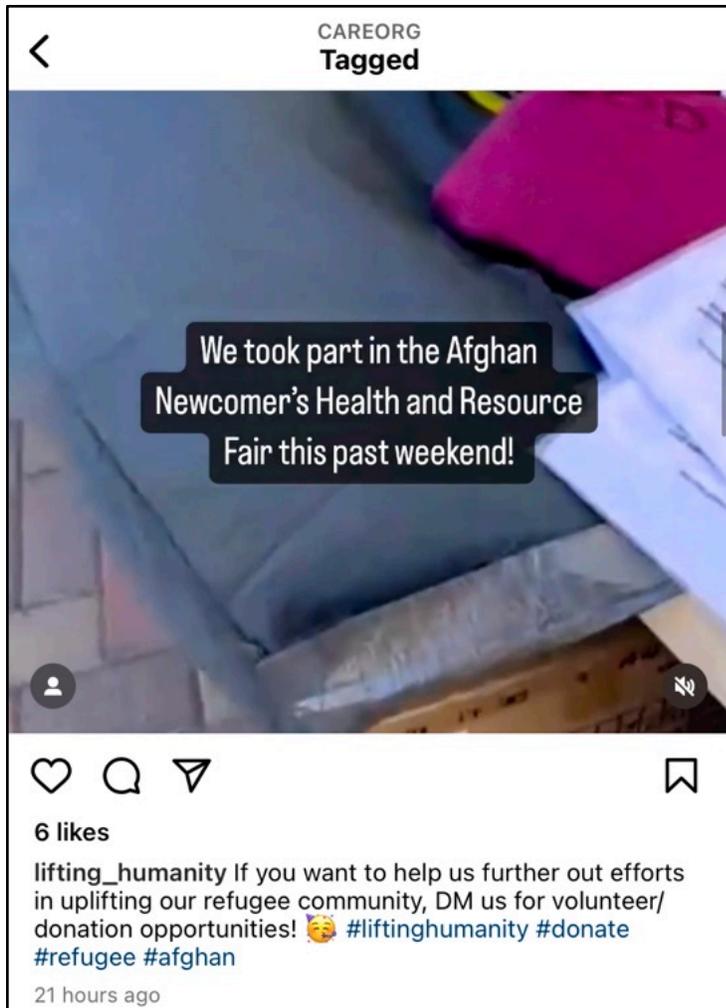


User-Generated Content & Tagging

CARE frequently shares user-generated content on their feed. They showcase the impact of their work by featuring posts from followers who have participated in their campaigns or supported their cause. Tagging, a feature located within the tagging section of Instagram and can be seen by any user, is done by users who may follow CARE. In Figure 11, users apply specific tags that CARE follows, with some users only tagging #careorg. These postings are sometimes shared by CARE within the Instagram stories area.

Figure 11

A User-Generated Video in Instagram Tagging Shared to CARE's Instagram Stories

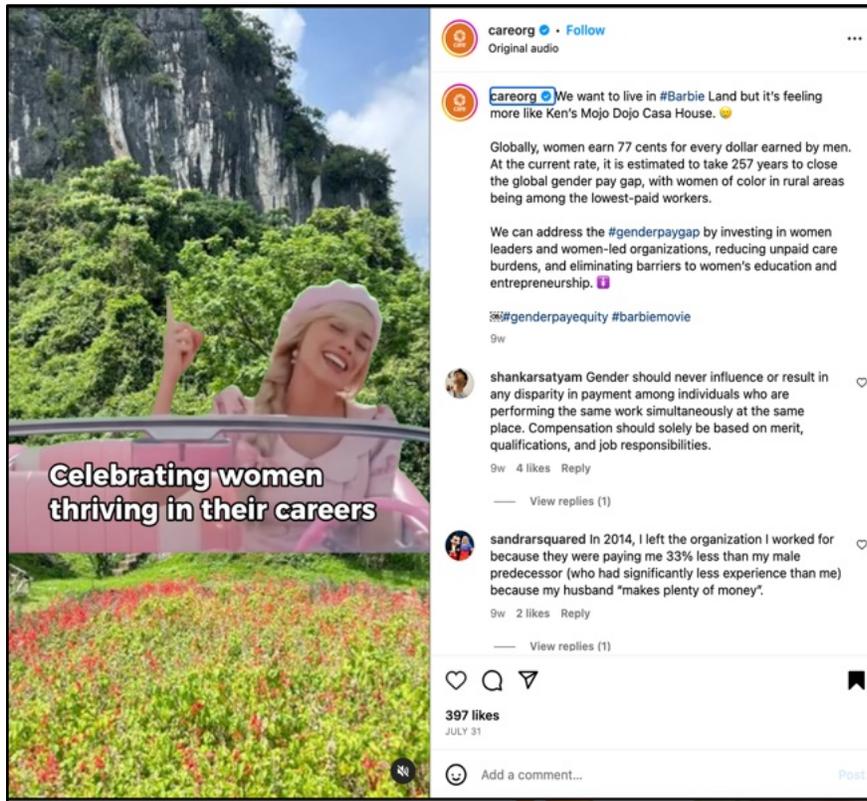


Trending Hashtags

CARE strategically uses relevant and trending hashtags to increase the discoverability of their posts. In Figure 12, an example identified within the data artifacts was the use of the Barbie trend that occurred during data collection, featuring hashtags such as “#WomensEquality”, “#BarbieTheMovie”, and “#barbiemovie”. The video discusses the global gender gap and the diversity of pay amongst those of color in rural areas using the Barbie theme and the hashtags #genderpaygap and #barbiemovie (see Figure 12). Instagram users can create their own list of hashtags that they would like to follow on Instagram, which allows followers to view the hashtags they follow even if they do not follow the organization that is using them.

Figure 12

Use of Trending Hashtags on @careorg



On-Trend Relevance (Popular Culture)

CARE develops content that seamlessly integrates trending topics into its message. They might create graphics, videos, or captions that either tie a trend to their ongoing projects, issues they address, or stories of beneficiaries. Figure 13 depicts the on-trend relevance that CARE uses to address popular culture. This connection resonates with their followers and demonstrates the organization's adaptability.

Figure 13

The Barbie On-Trend Instagram Feed Posting Showing Relevance within Popular Culture



Direct Relief (@directrelief)

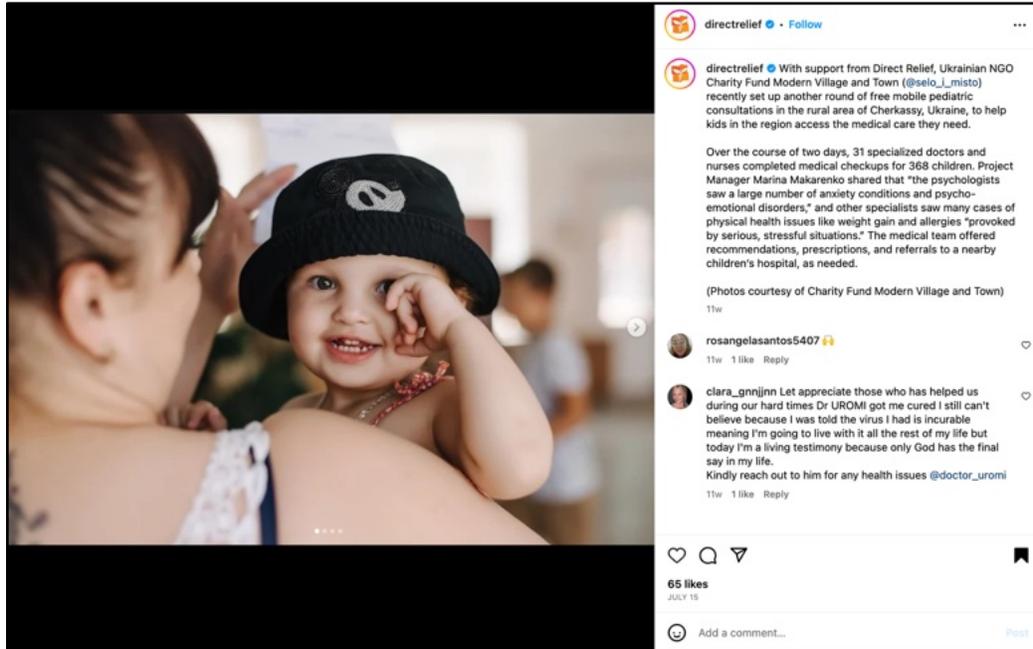
Direct Relief, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing medical assistance to improve the health and lives of people affected by poverty and emergencies, effectively utilizes Instagram stories to share user-generated content from individuals who tag them. This approach not only enhances their storytelling during disasters but also plays a significant role in increasing their fundraising efforts. Some key themes found were:

Humanizing the Impact

When users directly tag Direct Relief in their Instagram stories, it creates a direct link between the organization and the individual's real experiences. By re-sharing these stories, Direct Relief humanizes the impact of their work. In Figure 14, Direct Relief showed a mother and her infant demonstrating the connection and humanity between a woman and a child, and their need for pediatric medical help.

Figure 14

Mobile Pediatric Consultations and the Parent-Child Bond in an Instagram Feed Posting.

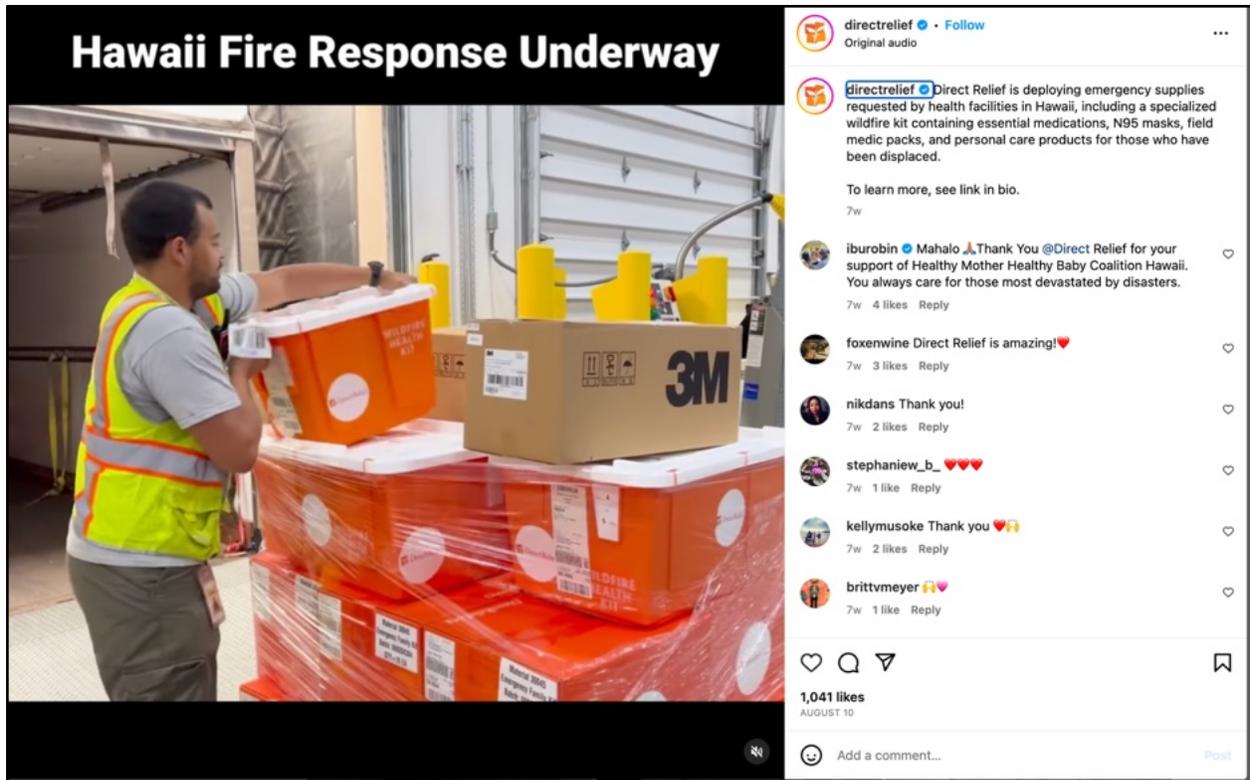


Real-Time Reporting

Instagram stories offer a dynamic platform for real-time reporting. During disasters, Direct Relief immediately reposts user-generated content that reflects the current situation, allowing followers to witness the organization's response and the actual impact on affected communities. In Figure 15, the direct reporting of the Hawaii Fire crisis, as well as the response that was underway on that day, shows real-time reporting and how Direct Relief reacts to crises.

Figure 15

An Instagram Feed Posting Showing Real-Time Reporting on the Hawaii Fire Response

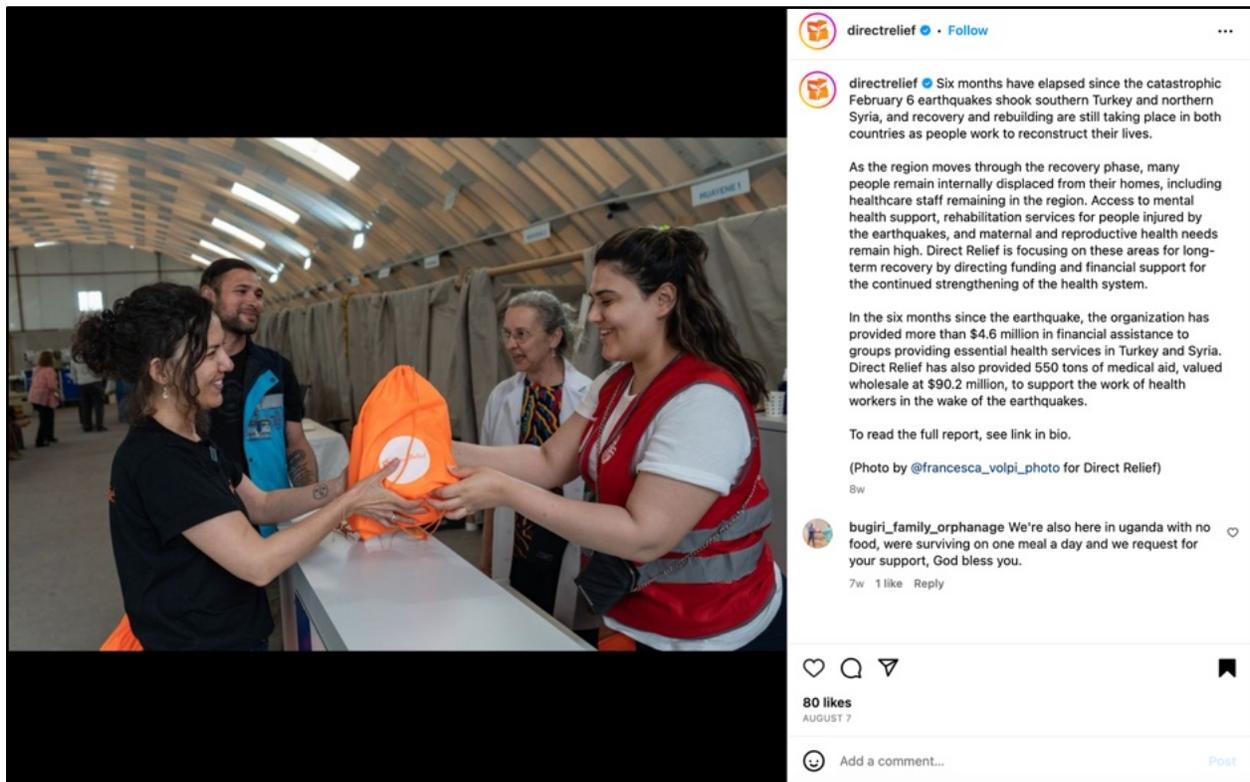


Emotional Connection

Emotional connections can be shown in a variety of ways, and Direct Relief has demonstrated this in several ways by showing pictures or videos of gratitude for assistance received or the portrayal of people coming together to help with a cause. In Figure 16, an emotional connection can be seen between Direct Relief volunteers and Turkish people in need after an earthquake.

Figure 16

An Instagram Feed Post Depicting the Giving of Supplies and Services to the People of Turkey

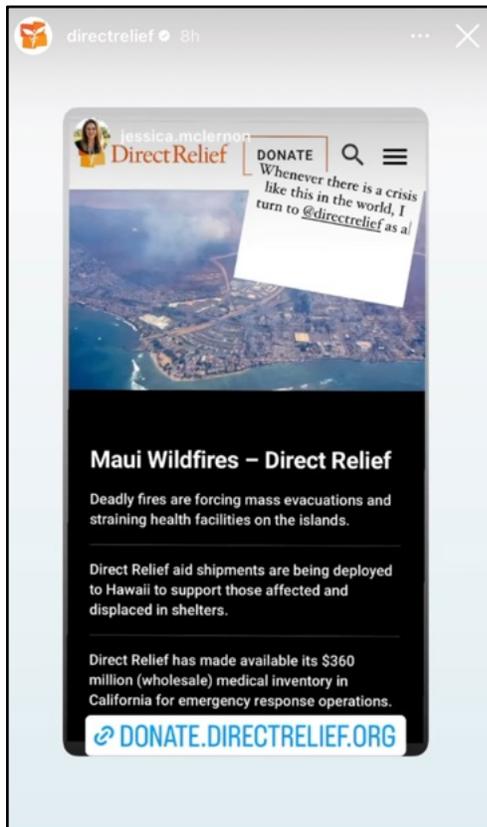


Call-to-Actions

Direct Relief leverages the momentum of user-generated stories by providing clear CTAs in their own stories. These CTAs can include links to donation pages, fundraising campaigns, or other ways followers can contribute to the ongoing relief efforts. This was particularly relevant during the Hawaii wildfires in August 2023 which occurred during the data collection period. Illustrated in Figure 17, a user-generated post was shared by Direct Relief to show not only a CTA to give funds and donate but also to show how organizations, users, and volunteers alike can use CTAs and tagging to share content.

Figure 17

A User-Generated Post of a CTA that was Shared on Direct Relief's Stories and then used by Direct Relief within an Instagram Story



Community Building

Re-sharing user-generated stories fosters a sense of community and collaboration. Figure 18 shows the building of communities from a user-generated post that tagged Direct Relief about their ability to be brought into a community, build a community, and achieve and share successes. These postings acknowledged the efforts of individuals who have contributed to disaster relief and highlighted their importance in the broader narrative of support.

Figure 18

An Instagram Tagged Post from a User Showing What Direct Relief Has Done for the User by Building Communities



Expressing Thanks

Direct Relief's re-posting of user-generated stories not only demonstrates their impact but also allows them to express gratitude toward those who have supported and tagged them. This appreciation reinforces positive interactions and encourages ongoing engagement. Direct Relief's strategy of sharing Instagram stories from individuals who tag them enhances their storytelling during disasters. In Figure 19, a tagged posting demonstrates an expression of thanks to Direct Relief volunteers. There are several examples of posts expressing thanks to Direct Relief within Instagram stories, tagging, and throughout the non-profit's Instagram page. These data artifacts demonstrated several trends and patterns, and the more time the researcher had to collect data,

the more the patterns and trends emerged. Moving forward, the researcher applied these artifacts and analysis to Cialdini's framework.

Figure 19

An Instagram Tagged Post Expressing Thanks



Application To Cialdini's Framework

This data collection was accomplished to move forward with each research question. Data artifacts were coded according to Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework. The non-profit Instagram pages included Compassion International (@compassion), CARE (@careorg), and Direct Relief (@directrelief). The seven code categories can be viewed in Table 2.

Table 2*Coding for Cialdini's Framework*

Cialdini's Framework Coding	Description
Reciprocity (R)	Content related to reciprocity, where the organization offers something of value to encourage followers to reciprocate
Commitment and Consistency (CC)	Content that focuses on encouraging followers to make public commitments or maintain consistency with their previous actions
Social Proof (SP)	Content that emphasizes the actions, endorsements, or support of others to influence followers' behavior or opinions
Liking (L)	Content that aims to establish likability and connection with followers through various means
Authority (A)	Content that highlights the organization's expertise, credibility, or association with authoritative figures or sources
Scarcity (S)	Content that creates a sense of urgency or scarcity to motivate followers to act
Unity (U)	Content that builds a community of individuals through facilitating engagement, trust, and a heightened sense of mutual understanding within the digital space

Each content type showed levels of engagement, and for the content-type data artifacts, the researcher could visualize engagement only within the Instagram feed posting area (which shows Instagram reel engagement, tagging engagement, highlights, and posting engagement) through likes and comments. Instagram stories and links did not have any engagement shown, as only the organization is able to visualize likes and shares within that content-type data artifact. The compliance-gaining strategies, as the researcher described and analyzed them, are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3*Compliance Gaining Strategies on Instagram*

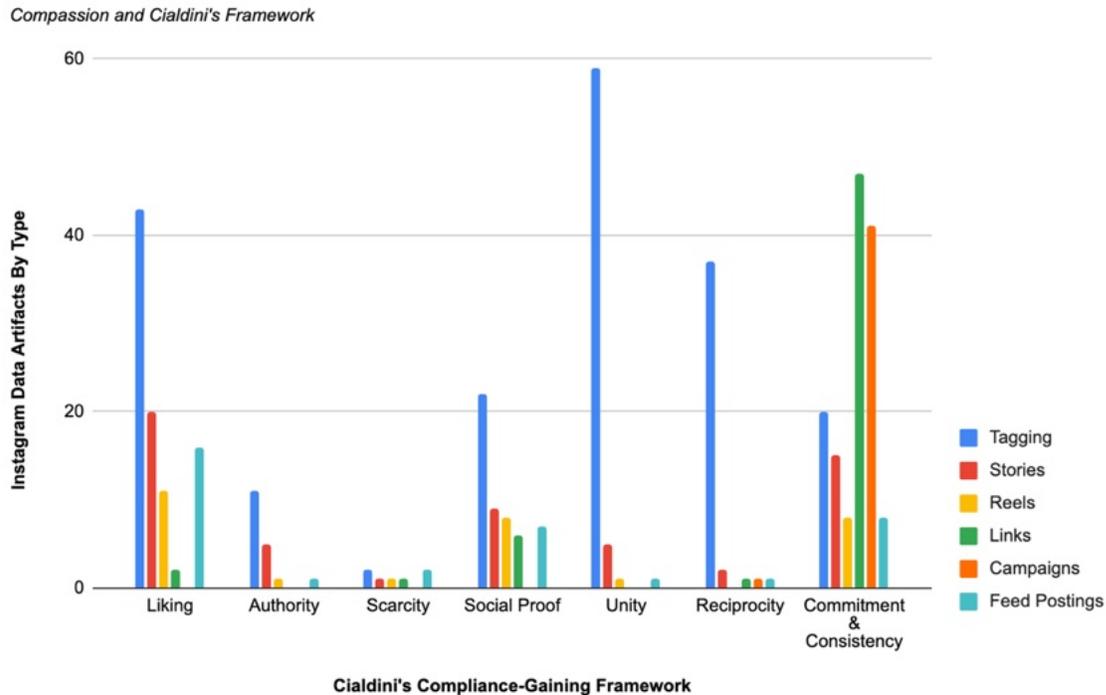
Compliance-Gaining Strategies on Instagram	Description
Reciprocity (R1)	Offering giveaways, incentives, exclusive discounts, or rewards for engagement, as well as sharing user-generated content and thanking contributors
Commitment and Consistency (CC1)	Encouraging followers to support or take a stance, showing consistency through past actions, and showing testimonials of those still committed
Social Proof (SP1)	Success stories, testimonials, beneficiary quotes, likes, showing the follower count, as well as endorsements from individuals or influencers
Liking (L1)	Behind-the-scenes action content, inspirational images and videos, personal stories, and interactive activities bring followers together for a common purpose
Authority (A1)	Expert opinions, expert research findings, partnerships with organizations that are reputable, recognized figures, and information about the cause
Scarcity (S1)	Urging immediate action due to time-limited campaigns or opportunities, highlighting limited availability of products, services, or opportunities, and promoting urgency by emphasizing the impact of delayed action
Unity (U1)	Identifying common values with followers on a meaningful level, facilitating engagement, trust, and a heightened sense of mutual understanding within the digital space

Compassion

Compassion (@compassion) showed a high prevalence for Cialdini's Unity principle, Liking principle, Reciprocity principle, and Social Proof principle. Figure 20 shows that Unity, Reciprocity, Social Proof, Consistency and Commitment, and Liking are all used within tagging. Links and campaigns showed the Commitment and Consistency principle as well, and feed postings predominantly demonstrated the Liking principle. Compassion's Instagram engagement was highest when the data artifacts were storytelling videos, followed by picture postings and inspirational quotes.

Figure 20

Compassion and Cialdini's Framework

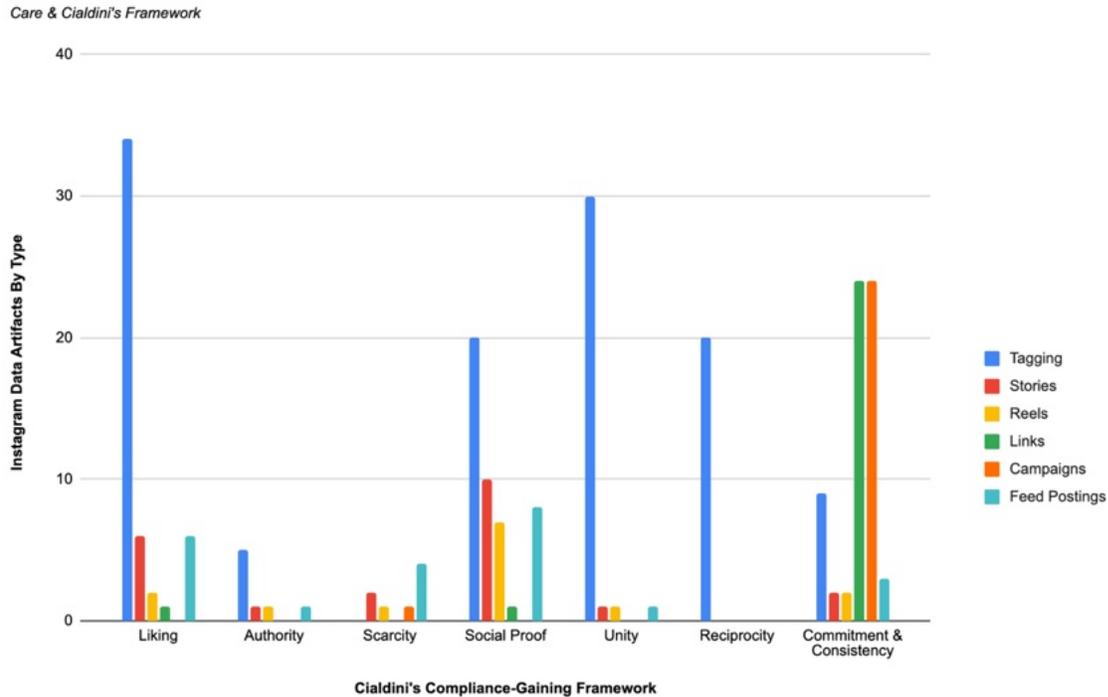


CARE

Looking at Cialdini's framework, CARE (@careorg) demonstrated Liking, Unity, Reciprocity, and Social Proof, and these were all seen mostly within tagging. Cialdini's principle of Consistency and Commitment was highly prevalent within Instagram links and campaigns. CARE demonstrated a large amount, over 50% of tagging, for its Instagram postings. Instagram campaigns and feed postings both accounted for about 20% of data artifacts within CARE's Instagram page. Instagram hyperlinks, reels, and stories followed with a lower amount of data artifacts collected. CARE's engagement showed a very large dominance for storytelling videos and the interaction of followers with them. Following that, picture postings within both the feed and story areas were also liked by followers.

Figure 21

CARE and Cialdini's Framework

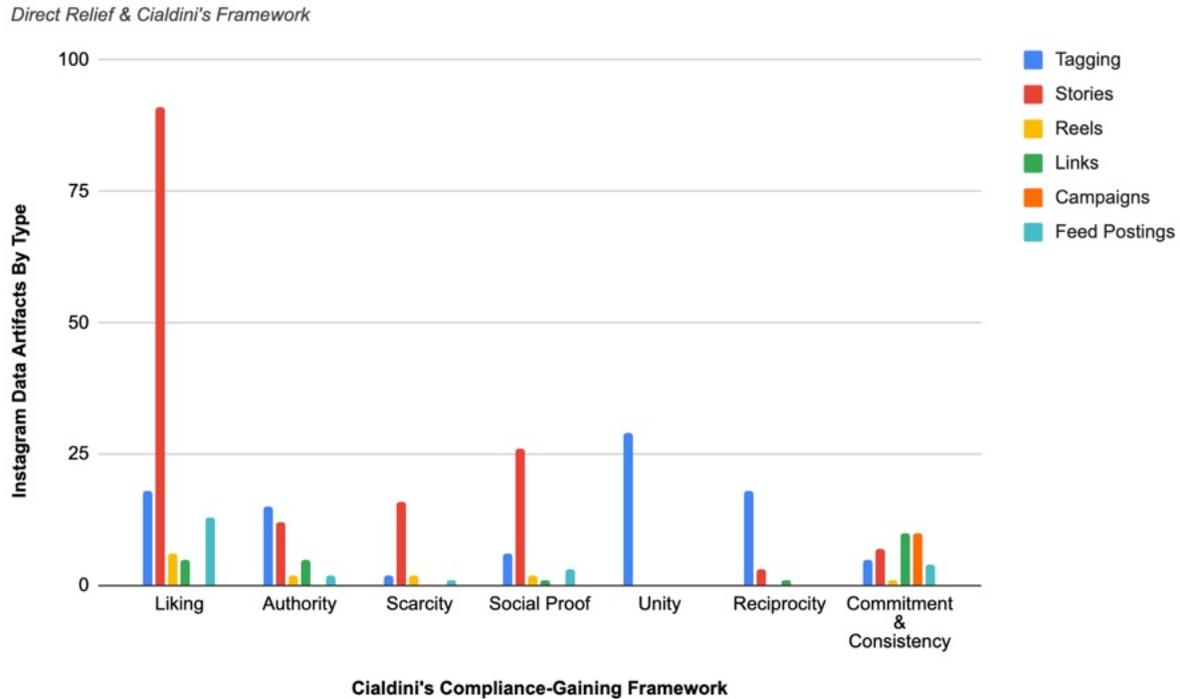


Direct Relief

Focusing on Direct Relief (@directrelief) and Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework, the data artifacts showed that Instagram stories focused on the Liking principle the most, followed by the Social Proof principle. Unity was seen as the highest prevalence within Instagram tagging, and Commitment and Consistency were seen as the highest within Instagram reels. Instagram hyperlinks provided dominance within the Commitment and Consistency principle as well as campaigns. In addition, Liking was of high prevalence in Instagram Direct Relief's feed postings. The types of data artifacts found within Direct Relief's Instagram page showed Instagram stories were being used the most, followed by tags and feed postings. There was a small usage of campaigns, hyperlinks, and reels by this non-profit. These findings are illustrated in Figure 22.

Figure 22

Direct Relief and Cialdini's Framework



Social Proof and Transparency

Re-posted stories shared by individuals who have directly benefited from Direct Relief's aid serves as Social Proof of the non-profit's impact.

RQ1: What compliance-gaining strategies are observed in the communication artifacts of the selected organizations?

All three non-profit organizations demonstrated key themes that were observed, including user-generated content, storytelling, and CTA prompts. Direct Relief's use of storytelling videos and the interaction of followers was incredibly high with the usage of storytelling videos. Picture postings also tended to have a high interaction of followers. The communication artifacts consistently included explicit CTA prompts, such as "Donate Now" and "Learn More". These prompts aimed to guide followers towards clicking applicable links.

The findings of RQ1 demonstrate that compliance-gaining strategies were observed in the Instagram communication artifacts of the selected non-profits. This portion of the research delved into the utilization of the FITD technique, primarily associated with Cialdini's principle of Commitment and Consistency within the Instagram content of Direct Relief, Care, and Compassion International. The research identified instances of the FITD technique across these non-profit's posts and provided a quantitative breakdown of its application. Findings revealed a varying degree of implementation, with Compassion showcasing the highest frequency of FITD posts. The utilization of the FITD technique, primarily associated with Cialdini's principle of Commitment and Consistency, within the Instagram content of three distinct nonprofit organizations: Direct Relief, Care, and Compassion. The research identified instances of the FITD technique across these organizations' posts and provided a quantitative breakdown of its application. Findings revealed a varying degree of implementation, with Compassion showcasing the highest frequency of FITD posts. There were no instances of the DITF technique observed. The FITD technique was observed when following a hyperlink from a campaign or sponsored campaign that took the researcher directly to Compassion's website. In Figure 23, an example is shown of a campaign on Instagram where the hyperlink would send the user to where the FITD technique was observed.

Figure 23

An Example of the Foot-in-the-Door Technique

The screenshot shows the website www.compassion.com. The navigation bar includes 'SPONSOR A CHILD', 'WAYS TO DONATE', and 'MENU'. The child's information is as follows:

- BIRTHDAY:** September 9, 2004
- GENDER:** Female
- LOCATION:** Colombia
- CHILD ID:** CO051901095

The main content area is blue and features the following text and icons:

- \$43/month will provide Angelly with**
- Malnutrition monitoring and intervention** (with a plate and cutlery icon)
- Medical care and regular checkups** (with a stethoscope icon)

The analysis revealed varying degrees of implementation of the FITD technique across the three non-profit organizations. Among the studied organizations, Compassion exhibited the highest frequency of posts featuring the FITD technique, with a total of 85 data artifacts identified. CARE followed with 63 data artifacts, while Direct Relief demonstrated a usage of 31 data artifacts. These data artifacts encompassed a range of content, from requesting users to take small actions, such as liking or sharing posts, to encouraging participation in challenges and campaigns. To further answer both research questions, the collected data was coded and another subcategory was created which included all of Craig's (1999) communication traditions.

Craig's Communication Traditions Subcategories

The researcher took the data artifacts and analyzed those against Craig’s (1999) communication traditions, which include semiotics, phenomenological, cybernetic, sociopsychological, critical, sociocultural, and rhetorical. A code was assigned for each tradition, and then each data artifact was assessed for the tradition in which it fit (see Table 4).

Table 4

Craig’s Communication Traditions

Craig's Traditions	Description
Semiotic (SE)	Symbols and signs with meanings conveyed through visual elements, language, and hashtags used in the content.
Phenomenological (PH)	Lived experiences, perspectives, and emotions of the audience and the nonprofit beneficiaries portrayed in the content
Cybernetic (CY)	Feedback loops and interactions between followers and the nonprofit
Socio-psychological (SP)	Psychological and social aspects that influence audience engagement, behaviors, and responses
Sociocultural (SC)	Societal, contextual, and cultural aspects within content, which included inclusiveness, diversity, and social norms
Critical (CR)	Ethical considerations or criticism of using compliance strategies to persuade the audience
Rhetorical (RH)	Persuasive and communicative strategies used by nonprofits to motivate action, donations, or participation

The summary of the codebook and its importance in the analysis focused on linking each of Cialdini's principles to the corresponding main category in the codebook, providing brief explanations of how they relate to Craig’s (1999) communication traditions. This portion of the study employed Craig's (1999) framework of communication traditions, specifically focusing on the rhetorical and phenomenological traditions. Findings revealed that Compassion and CARE predominantly employed the rhetorical tradition, while Direct Relief exhibited a higher utilization of the phenomenological tradition.

Table 5*Craig's Communication Traditions Within the Scope of Instagram*

Craig's Traditions (Instagram Scope)	Description
Semiotic	Symbols and Signs used in initial requests (FITD) and extreme requests (DITF) to influence the audience's response
Phenomenological	Emotions and experiences of the audience when they encounter the FITD or DITF techniques in the content
Cybernetic	Feedback and interaction loops between the nonprofit and the audience following the implementation of these compliance strategies
Sociopsychological	Psychological factors that could influence the effectiveness of FITD and DITF techniques on audience engagement and compliance
Sociocultural	Cultural and contextual that may influence the perception and acceptance of these techniques by the audience
Critical	Ethical considerations or criticism of using compliance strategies to persuade the audience
Rhetorical	Persuasive communication tactics and messaging employed in FITD and DITF scenarios

The analysis aimed to identify patterns in the utilization of communication traditions and determine the predominant tradition for each organization. The analysis revealed distinctive patterns in the utilization of communication traditions among the three non-profit organizations. Compassion and CARE predominantly employed the rhetorical tradition, characterized by persuasive and argumentative techniques aimed at motivating action and garnering support. These organizations frequently used emotional appeals, CTAs, and storytelling to engage their audiences.

Direct Relief exhibited a higher utilization of the phenomenological tradition, emphasizing shared experiences and meanings. The organization focused on conveying the lived experiences of beneficiaries, donors, and volunteers to create a sense of empathy and connection.

Direct Relief's messaging often highlighted the impact of actions and contributions on the lives of individuals and communities.

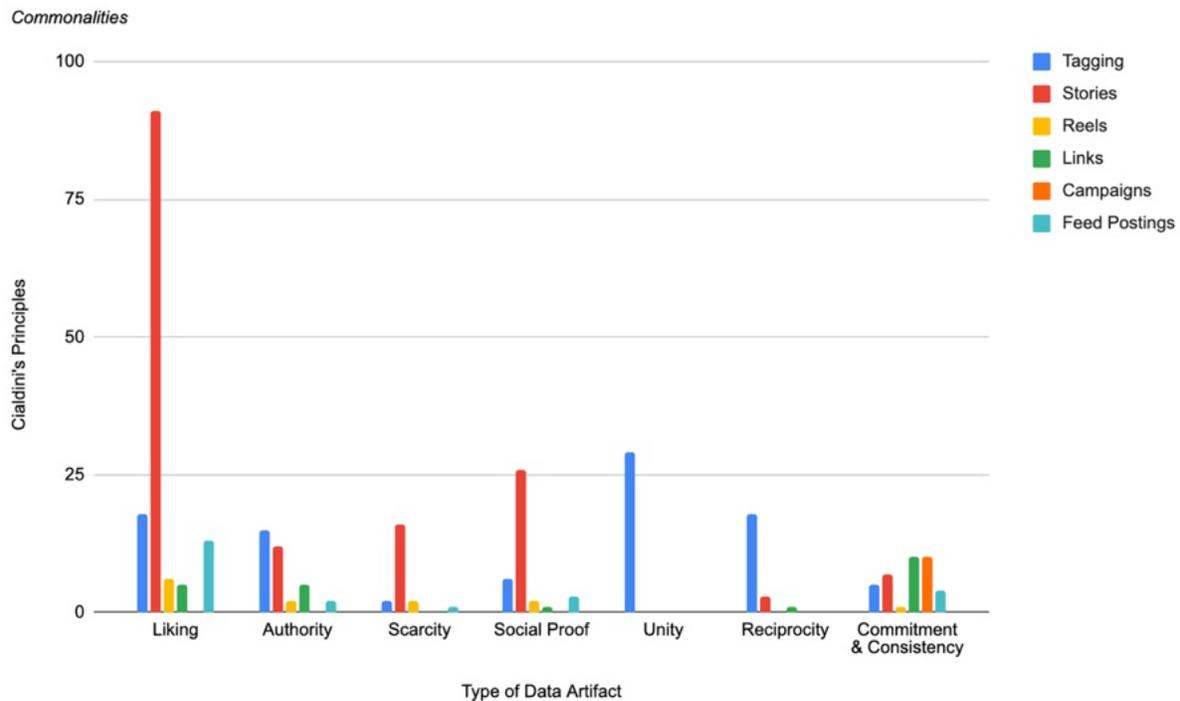
Research Question 2: Are there commonalities in how compliance-gaining techniques are used in communicating with the selected nonprofit organizations?

In addressing RQ2, the study aimed to identify commonalities in how compliance-gaining techniques were used in communicating with the selected non-profit organizations on Instagram. The analysis revealed the following shared characteristics.

Cialdini's Principles of Persuasion. The commonalities in the utilization of the Liking principle as a compliance-gaining strategy indicated a consistent and higher engagement rate for content aligned with the Liking principle as compared to other compliance-gaining strategies across all three non-profits. The implications of these results shed light on the importance of establishing interpersonal connections in online contexts and provide valuable insights for enhancing digital engagement strategies within the non-profit sector. As seen in Figure 24, the commonalities between all three organizations demonstrate a high usage of Cialdini's Liking and Social Proof principles within Instagram stories, the Unity principle within tagging, and the Commitment and Consistency principle with campaigns and hyperlinks. In addition, there was a high relevance of Liking on Instagram feed postings in all organizations. Below in Figure 24, the findings of commonalities between Compassion International (@compassion), CARE (@careorg), and Direct Relief (@directrelief) are demonstrated.

Figure 24

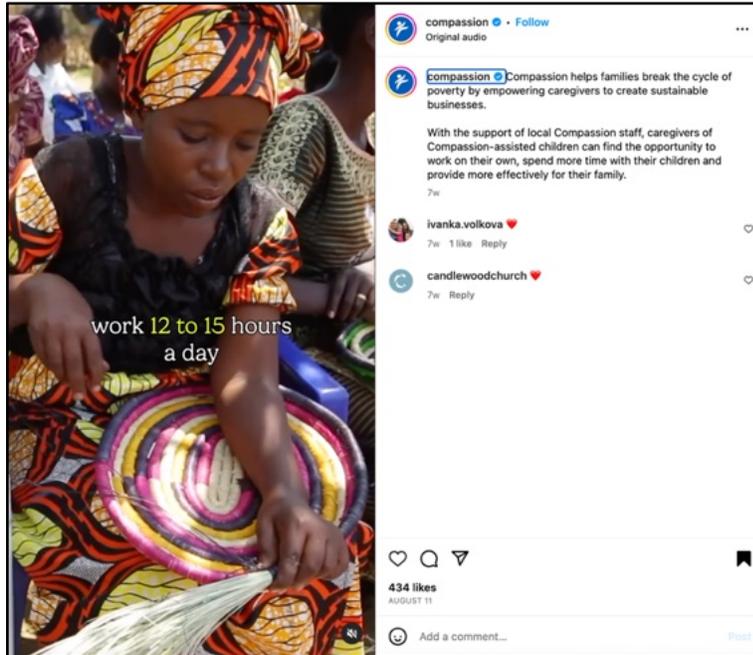
Commonalities of Persuasion Principles among Compassion, CARE, and Direct Relief



The Liking principle and its prevalence within Instagram content posted by three diverse non-profit organizations shows that individuals are more likely to comply with requests from people they like or feel connected to. This principle emphasizes the importance of establishing rapport, common interests, and relatable characteristics between the persuader and the target audience. The analysis revealed a substantial prevalence of the Liking principle within the content of all three non-profit organizations. Instagram stories and feed postings incorporated relatable narratives, personal stories, and Social Proof of how beneficiaries of the organization and of followers were most prevalent within Cialdini's compliance-gaining strategy framework. Higher engagement rates were seen with posts that were identified using the Liking Principle. One video posting depicted a woman and her family being able to break the cycle of poverty (see Figure 25).

Figure 25

Video of Compassion International Helping Families Break the Cycle of Poverty



The Instagram story about breaking the cycle of poverty discussed and highlighted how Compassion staff and caregivers provide empowerment that can change the lives of many through storytelling. The findings of this study underscored the importance of the Liking principle among the digital engagement strategies of non-profit organizations on Instagram. The ability to establish a connection and build rapport with the audience through relatable and personable content has a significant impact on user engagement.

Non-profit organizations seeking to enhance their digital engagement strategies should prioritize incorporating elements of the Liking principle into their Instagram content. Storytelling, relatability, and creating a sense of personal connection should be central to their approach. Organizations can benefit from ongoing audience analysis and content optimization to align with evolving user preferences and behavior.

Consistency and Commitment Principle on Instagram. Cialdini's Commitment and Consistency principle, a cornerstone of persuasion psychology, suggests that people have a

natural tendency to remain consistent with their past behaviors and commitments. When applied to the context of social media marketing, particularly understanding how consistent user engagement can lead to campaign success, Direct Relief campaigns utilize their consistent commitment in all areas of Instagram, showing a direct link with the Commitment and Consistency principle. Figure 26 depicts the experience of a seven-year-old son of a Direct Relief staff member who helped his family provide medical aid to Ukrainian non-profits after extreme missile damage. The video discussed how no matter what the damage, even a child is helping the cause.

Figure 26

An Instagram Feed Posting Video Showing the Consistency of Their Dedication



Instagram Hyperlinks. Cialdini's (2021) Commitment and Consistency principle explains that once people make a public commitment or take a small action, they are more likely

to follow through with larger actions that align with their initial commitment. Through Instagram hyperlinks and campaigns, an opportunity is provided to lead users from one piece of content to another, such as from a campaign post to a landing page, website, or donation area. These hyperlinks show the interactive nature of campaigns by guiding users through a journey that aligns with their initial commitment to engage with the content.

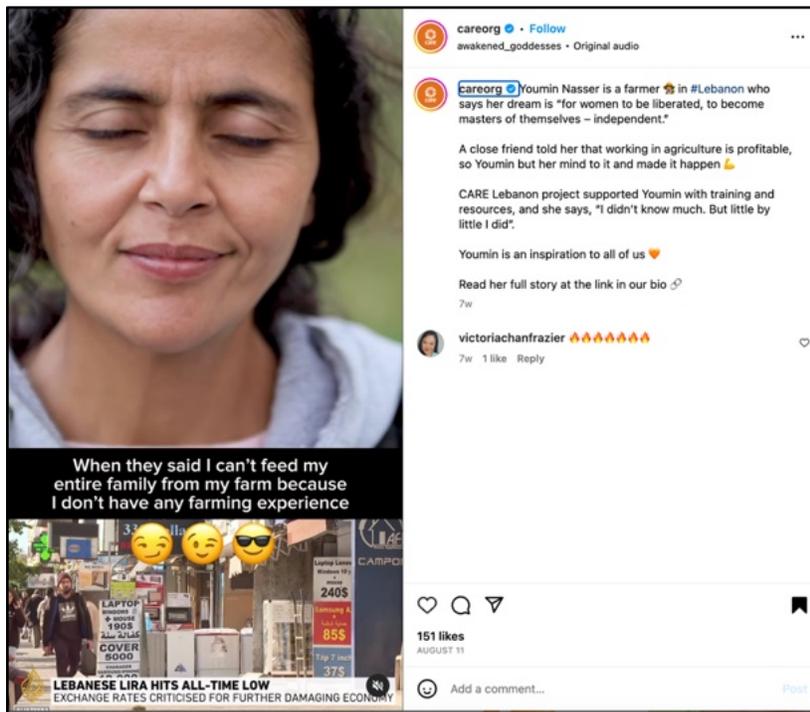
Instagram Campaigns. As this was a qualitative digital content analysis, the researcher was unable to visualize clicks and results of both the hyperlinks and campaigns. However, most links took the researcher, and any user who clicked the link, to the non-profit organization's website with click-to-actions, which included either “Donate Now” or “Find Out More”. While several sponsored campaigns were seen within Compassion and CARE, they were not seen within Direct Relief Instagram content. *Sponsored campaigns* are campaigns that appear while scrolling through Instagram as “paid campaigns” from the organization, and the content is very similar to the campaigns found within the Instagram page of each organization, except for a tagline that reads “sponsored campaign” to the audience. These campaigns were consistent and remained apparent every day through sponsored content on the researcher's feed. From the researcher's perspective, there was no way of knowing if those sponsored campaigns would have shown up if the researcher had not followed these non-profit organizations on Instagram, within the Instagram feed postings, as well as in the stories or reels area.

The unsponsored campaigns were shown every week, giving followers a chance to engage. The hyperlinks and campaigns used CTA video stories that pushed to evoke emotion from the user to learn more. Upon clicking the hyperlink and being taken to the website to “Donate” or “Learn More”, vital information about sponsorship of children and how to sponsor a child or donate to the organization was easily available.

Social Proof Principle and Instagram Stories. Cialdini's (2021) Social Proof principle asserts that individuals tend to conform to the actions of others when they are uncertain about how to behave in a particular situation. A connection between Social Proof and Instagram stories was seen within this research through user-generated content, highlighting reels, and storytelling. A feed posting from CARE's Instagram page showed an excellent example of a video that discussed a benefactor's ability to move forward with her life due to proof of her help from the organization and from followers (see Figure 27). A farmer in Lebanon, the video tells her story of liberation, independence, how working in agriculture has given her this opportunity, and how other women can make this happen through CARE. The Social Proof principle was seen throughout Instagram feed postings in both stories and pictures, and in all areas of the data artifacts collected.

Figure 27

A Lebanese Woman Was Given an Opportunity through CARE to Build Her Life.



Summary

The findings of this qualitative digital content analysis demonstrated that the non-profit organizations of Compassion International (@compassion), CARE (@careorg), and Direct Relief (@directrelief) effectively employ compliance-gaining strategies based on Cialdini's framework in their Instagram content. The FITD and DITF techniques were observed, and the organizations aligned with Craig's (1999) communication traditions. External website links were utilized to enhance the compliance-gaining strategies employed within the Instagram content. These findings have provided valuable insights into the persuasive techniques used by non-profit organizations on Instagram and shed light on the communication strategies employed to promote their causes and encourage audience engagement.

The emergence of a new Instagram platform emerged during this study's data collection, which Compassion International, CARE, and Direct Relief have all joined. This new application is its' own separate application, which is connected to Instagram through organizations' and individuals' Instagram profile name. Through it, users are allowed to reply to others' postings and post threads, as well as create short texts, replies, and even photos or videos. Compassion utilized threads, using it mostly for text, sharing Bible verses, and asking questions of followers. Direct Relief posted photos and a short amount of text, and CARE used it for photos and text as well. However, Compassion attempted to move forward diligently with threads and continued to post short pieces of text. This phenomenon was noted during the data collection and its implications for future research is discussed in Chapter Five.

The findings of this qualitative content analysis demonstrated the compliance-gaining strategies observed in the Instagram communication artifacts of the selected non-profit organizations. User-generated content, storytelling, and CTA prompts emerged as the primary

strategies to gain compliance on this platform. Commonalities in compliance-gaining techniques were identified, including the Social Proof, Liking, and Commitment and Consistency principles.

The findings of this study revealed several compliance-gaining strategies employed by non-profit organizations on Instagram. Organizations strategically utilize these strategies to gain compliance from their followers and promote their missions. The communication artifacts consistently displayed visual appeal, authenticity, transparency, and active engagement with the audience. High-quality visuals, authentic content, and interactive features were used to capture attention, evoke emotions, establish credibility, and foster a sense of community among followers.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings derived from the qualitative digital content analysis of the Instagram pages belonging to three non-profits including Compassion International, CARE, and Direct Relief. The analysis was conducted using Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework, FITD and DITF techniques, as well as Craig's (1999) communication traditions. The data sources included Instagram feed postings, stories, highlights, and external website links. Next, the implications of the findings are discussed. Additionally, methodological considerations, delimitations, and limitations of the study are addressed. Finally, suggestions for future research are presented.

The examination of Cialdini's (2021) persuasion framework through qualitative data collection from the Instagram pages of three non-profit organizations over eight weeks identified several themes that fell within his framework, showing there is not only a connection to Cialdini's framework but also that some techniques and principles were used more than others and that there are commonalities among all three organizations. Social Proof, Commitment and Consistency, and Liking were the main themes identified in this study. The FITD technique was also identified among all Instagram data artifacts. The following summary of findings discusses how these strategies emerged, as well as how Craig's (1999) communication traditions were used.

The compliance-gaining strategies identified in this study aligned with previous research on persuasive communication and organizational strategies. Reciprocity, Authority, Social Proof, and Scarcity were observed in the communication artifacts of the non-profit organizations, which is consistent with well-established compliance-gaining techniques in traditional communication

channels. However, the Instagram platform provided a unique context for organizations to employ these strategies in a visually compelling and interactive manner. The possible positive impact of Cialdini's (2021) work could identify which principles are being used, determine how they relate to communication traditions, and understand which persuasion and influence principles receive the most engagement and why. The compliance-gaining theory and persuasion outlined by Cialdini (1984) have been widely applied in various fields to understand and analyze social influence and persuasion. In the context of non-profit organizations, it is essential to understand how these techniques are used to encourage donations and support for causes.

Summary of Findings

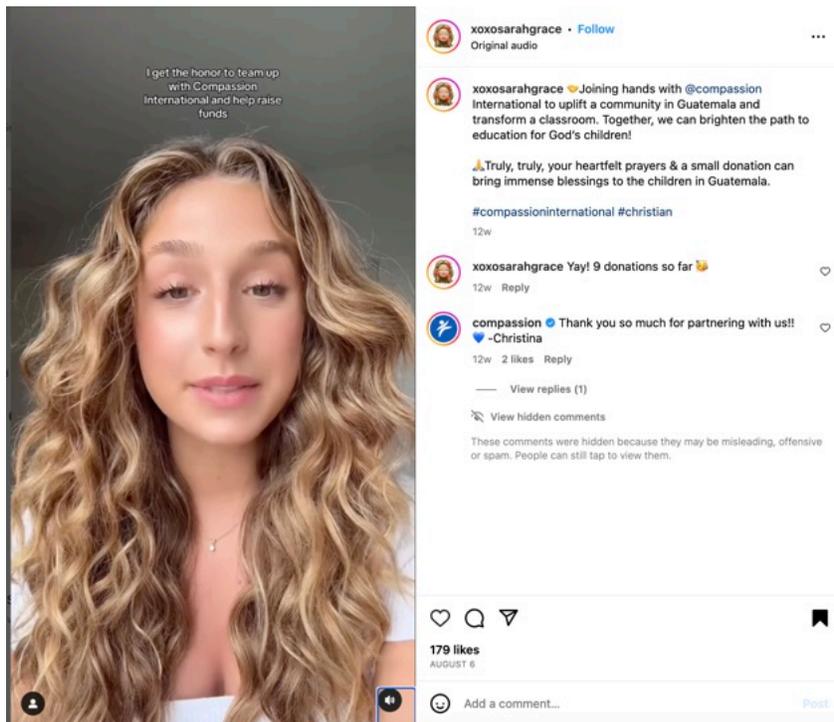
The findings of the qualitative content analysis revealed that all three non-profit organizations extensively employed compliance-gaining strategies based on Cialdini's framework in their Instagram content. Liking, Social Proof, and Commitment and Consistency were the main data artifacts and strategies being used. However, the principles of Reciprocity, Authority, and Scarcity were also used, across the organizations' Instagram feed postings, stories, highlights, and hyperlinks to external websites, though not as consistently. The FITD technique was observed where initial small requests were made, followed by larger requests during campaigns. However, the DITF technique was not observed. The organizations also aligned with Craig's (1999) communication traditions, utilizing the rhetorical, phenomenological, and semiotic traditions mostly through Instagram feed postings and stories. Instagram tagging is a tool used by followers, where users create a hashtag on their personal postings (e.g. #directrelief) on Instagram's feed page which shows feed postings and reels. There is also a publicly facing tag area that all viewers are able to see. The organization who owns the Instagram page has the ability to share those user postings that users have tagged to stories, reels, and to Instagram's

feed posts at the organization’s discretion. Tagging demonstrated a high relevance in this study, as user-generated content is automatically filtered into non-profit’s Instagram pages by using certain tags. Compassion International, CARE, and Direct Relief all shared user-generated content that was populated through this user-based tagging.

Cialdini’s (2021) compliance-gaining principles were used on Instagram in a variety of ways. Reciprocity was observed through offering giveaways, incentives, exclusive discounts, or rewards for engagement, as well as sharing user-generated content and thanking contributors (see Figure 28).

Figure 28

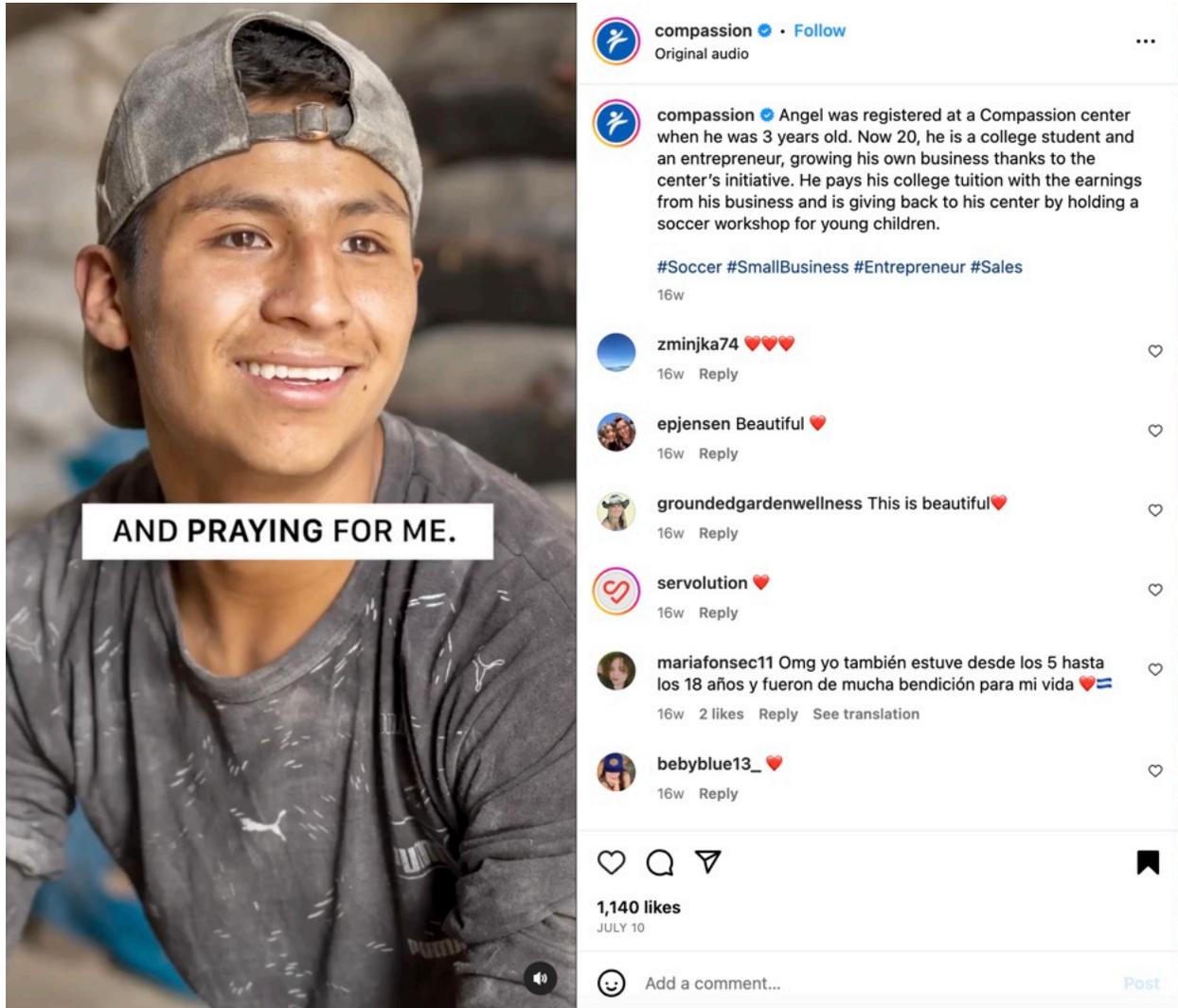
User-generated Tagged Video that Compassion Shared Offering to Pair with Fundraising Effort of User Demonstrating Reciprocity



Commitment and Consistency was demonstrated by encouraging followers to support or take a stance, showing consistency through past actions, and showing testimonials of those who were still committed to the cause (see Figure 29).

Figure 29

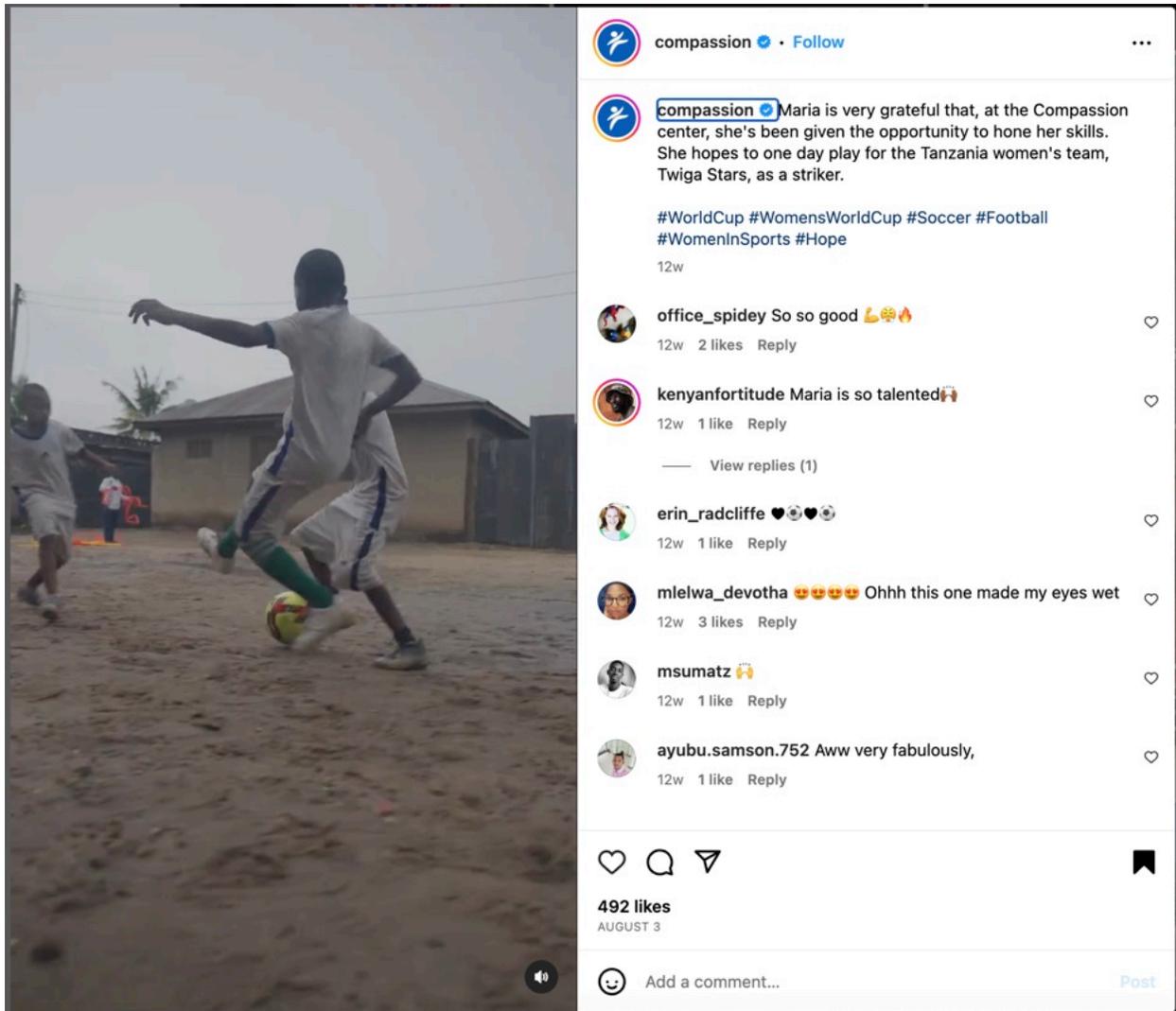
Reel and Instagram Feed Video of Commitment and Consistency



Social Proof was demonstrated through success stories, testimonials, beneficiary quotes, likes, showing the follower count, as well as endorsements from individuals or influencers (see Figure 30).

Figure 30

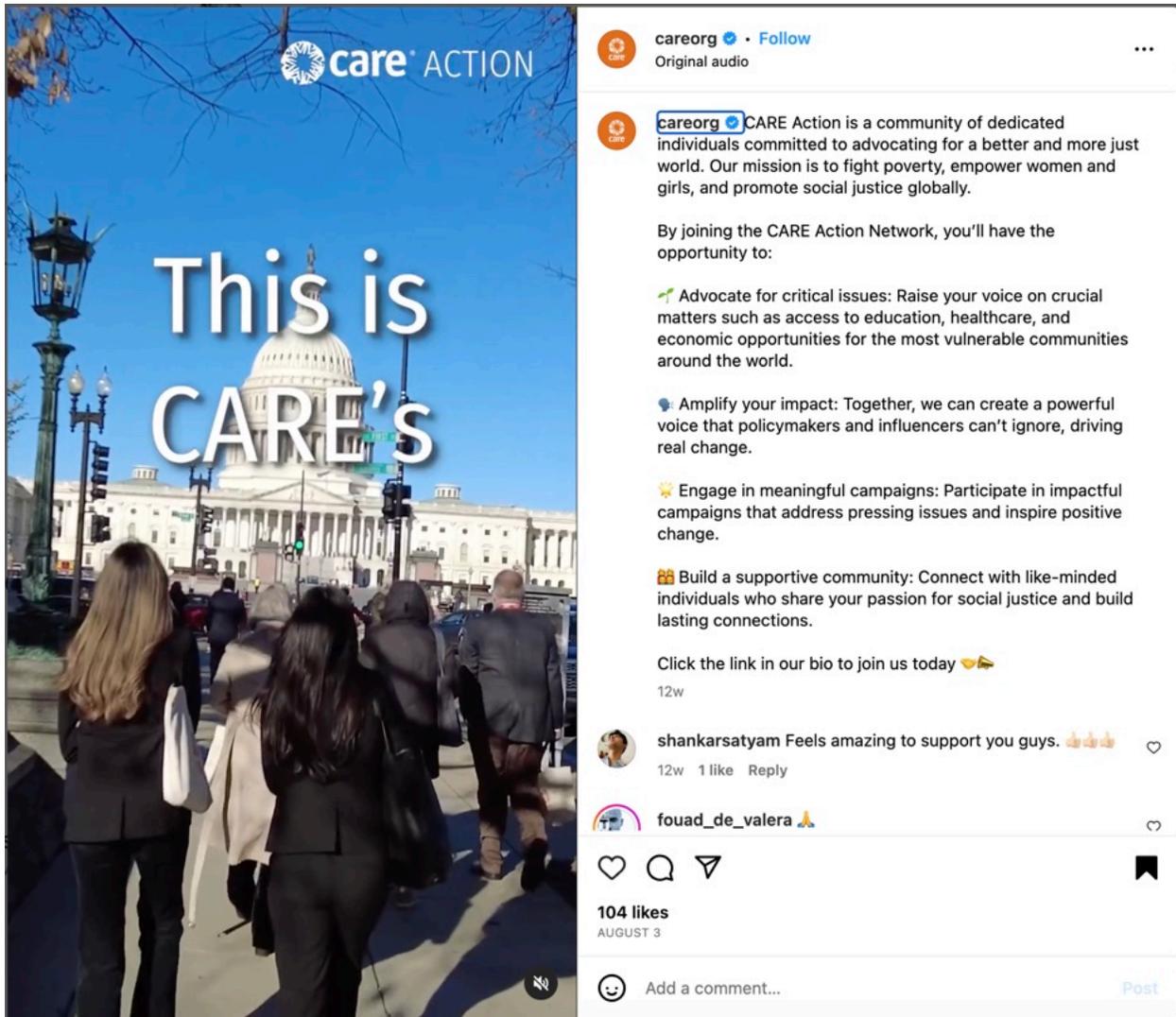
Social Proof Instagram Feed Video Posting and Reel



Liking was seen through behind-the-scenes action content, inspirational images and videos, personal stories, and interactive activities bringing followers together for a common purpose (see Figure 31).

Figure 31

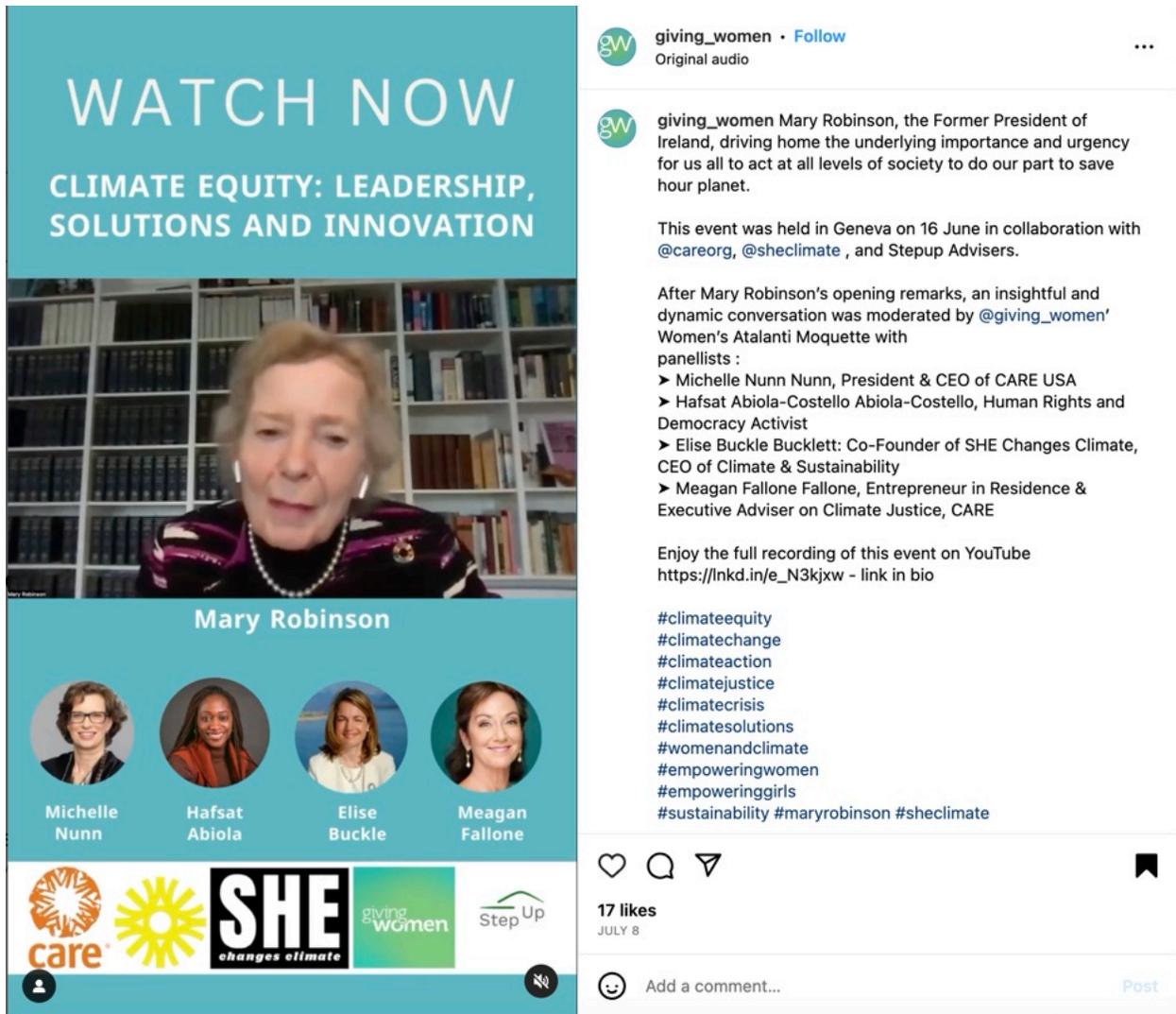
Instagram Facebook Feed Post Video



Authority was viewed as expert opinions, expert research findings, partnerships with organizations that are reputable, recognized figures, and information about the cause (see Figure 32).

Figure 32

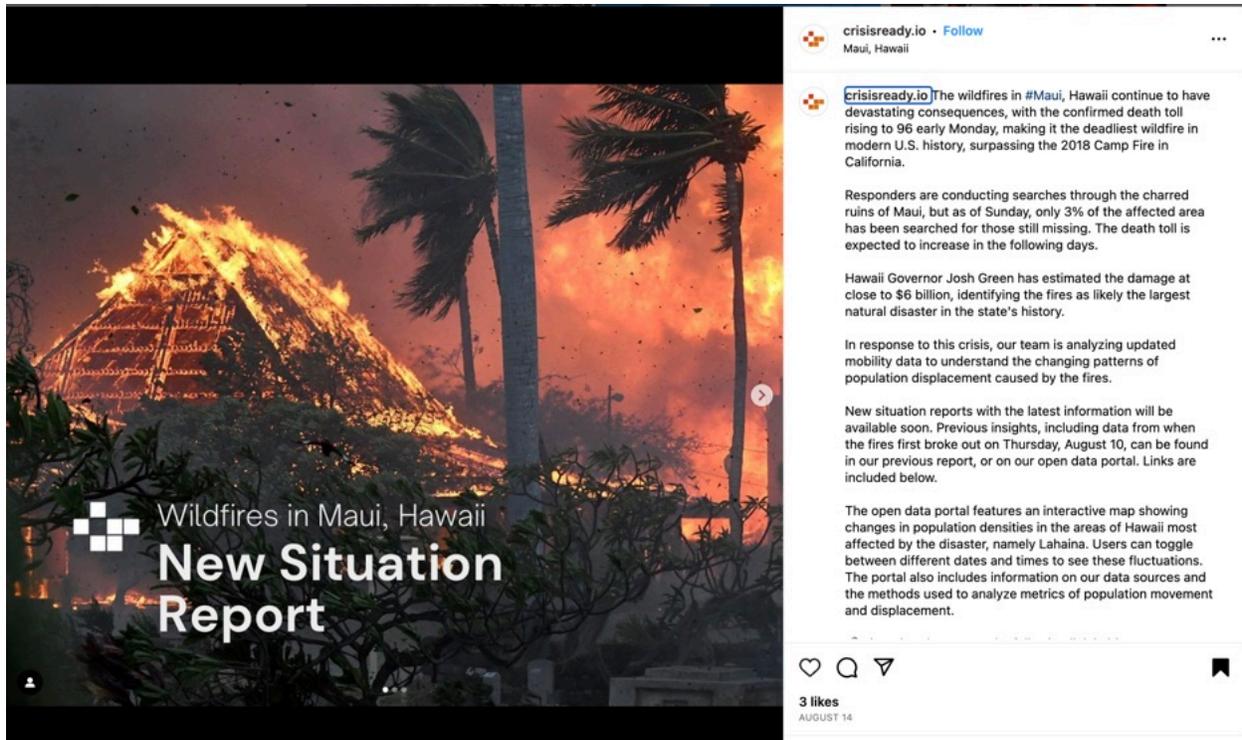
User-Generated Expert Reel Video in Partnership with Organization



Scarcity was shown through the urging of immediate action due to time-limited campaigns or opportunities, highlighting limited availability of products, services, or opportunities, and promoting urgency by emphasizing the impact of delayed action (see Figure 33).

Figure 33

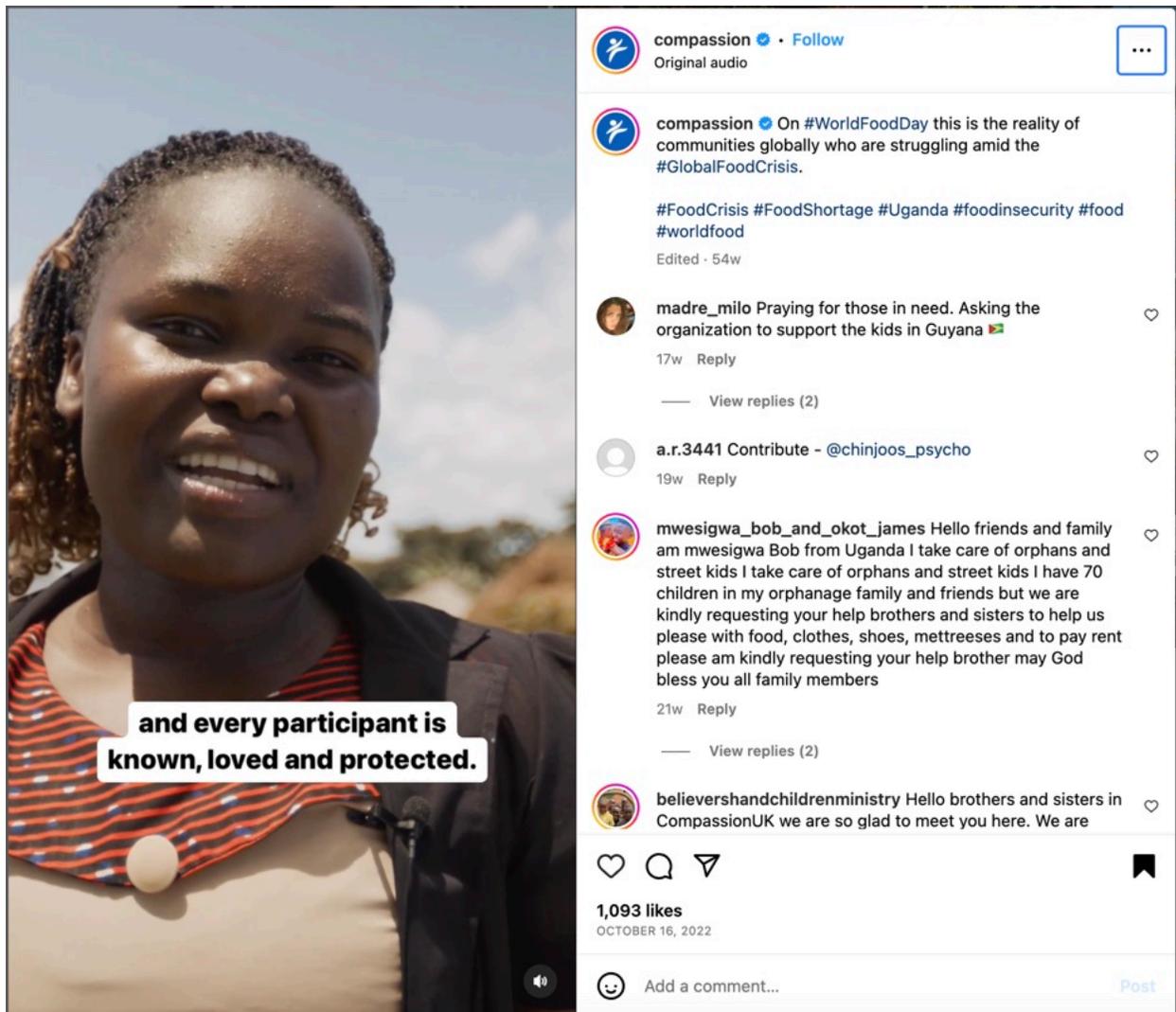
User-Created Content Tagged and Shared in Instagram Stories.



Unity was identified by a visualization of common values with followers on a meaningful level, a facilitation of engagement and trust, and a heightened sense of mutual understanding within the digital space (see Figure 34).

Figure 34

Instagram Reel Showing Unity



The compliance-gaining strategies identified in this study align with previous research on persuasive communication and organizational strategies. Reciprocity, Authority, Social Proof, and Scarcity were observed in the communication artifacts of this study's selected non-profits and are consistent with well-established compliance-gaining techniques in traditional communication channels. However, the Instagram platform provided a unique context for organizations to employ these strategies in a visually compelling and interactive manner.

The findings of this study revealed several compliance-gaining strategies employed by Compassion International, CARE, and Direct Relief on Instagram. These strategies included

partnerships with organizations, user-generated content, storytelling, and CTA prompts.

Organizations strategically utilize these strategies to gain compliance from their followers and promote their mission. The communication artifacts consistently displayed visual appeal, authenticity, transparency, and active engagement with the audience. High-quality visuals, authentic content, and interactive features were used to capture attention, evoke emotions, establish credibility, and foster a sense of community among followers. These findings also show the commonalities of what types of Instagram tools are being used across non-profits and how they (i.e. Instagram tools) relate to Cialdini’s (2021) framework (see Figure 35).

Figure 35

Use of Instagram Tools across Organizations and Cialdini’s (2021) Framework



Discussion

Compassion International

Compassion International's Instagram data artifacts demonstrated a link within Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework. Compassion's Instagram feed postings can be looked at as a strategic blend of compelling visual storytelling, clear CTAs, user-generated content, interactive elements, collaborations, emotional appeals, and relevance. While it is difficult to discern a strategy within a qualitative analysis, by looking at the consistency and patterns that were found during analysis, the use of rhetorical components and how the content was framed, a contextual understanding of this analysis may be deemed strategic. These emotional appeals in Instagram videos, stories, feed posts, or reels can have a profound impact on followers. Emotions are a powerful driving force in human behavior and, when effectively harnessed, can lead to increased engagement, deeper connections, and desired actions. Compassion's Instagram feed postings can be looked at as a strategic blend of compelling visual storytelling, clear calls to action, user-generated content, interactive elements, collaborations, emotional appeals, and relevance.

CARE

CARE's Instagram data artifacts also demonstrated a link within Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework. CARE employs a multi-faceted approach to leveraging Instagram as a persuasive tool. By combining visually captivating content, impactful storytelling, strategic CTAs, engagement with followers, shareable materials, and campaign-specific content, they effectively drive their audience to click on links, comment, share, and like their posts. Through their well-rounded approach, CARE not only garners attention but also encourages meaningful action and engagement in support of their humanitarian efforts. By staying current with social media trends and utilizing relevant hashtags, they connect with a wider audience, foster community engagement, and encourage their followers to participate in their mission.

By embracing new trends, using trending hashtags strategically, and incorporating these trends into their content with authenticity and purpose, CARE effectively engages and persuades their followers through likes. As a result, this humanizes their cause and makes it relatable to their audience. This approach not only increases their online presence but also enhances their mission's impact by reaching and inspiring a wider audience. However, the use of trends and the mixture of those with emotional appeals showed movement and disorientation throughout CARE's Instagram feed postings. Trends can be useful within Instagram for bringing in new followers who are following a specific hashtag. However, the trends identified in CARE's content did not always align with the mission of the organization.

Direct Relief

Direct Relief's Instagram data artifacts demonstrated a link within Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework. The utilization of phenomenological traditions in Direct Relief's messaging strategy can be attributed to several factors, including specific crises (e.g. the Hawaii crisis) and the organization's unique approach to engagement during times of natural disasters. Direct Relief's emphasis on the phenomenological tradition, which is characterized by conveying shared experiences and meanings, aligns with its mission and strategic approach to crisis response and assistance.

Mission Alignment

Direct Relief's mission centers around providing medical aid and assistance to those in need during emergencies. During crisis events, the organization's focus naturally shifts toward direct and immediate relief efforts. The phenomenological tradition enables Direct Relief to authentically share stories of their interventions, showcasing the real impact of their assistance

on people's lives. This aligns with their commitment to transparency and accountability, as well as their mission to provide essential support during critical moments.

Crisis-Centric Engagement

Direct Relief's strategy of intensively engaging with their audience during natural disasters reflects their commitment to providing timely and relevant assistance. By prioritizing communication and interaction, specifically during crises, the organization can foster a strong sense of community and solidarity. This approach highlights their core values of responsiveness and humanitarian aid, emphasizing the importance of immediate assistance when people are most vulnerable.

Creating Emotional Connection

The phenomenological tradition emphasizes creating emotional connections and shared understanding. In crises, emotional engagement is particularly powerful, as it can inspire action and support. By sharing stories of resilience, recovery, and the positive outcomes of their interventions, Direct Relief can evoke emotions that drive audience engagement and donations, which enable them to continue their vital work.

Balancing Communication Styles

While Direct Relief's crisis-centric engagement strategy aligns with the phenomenological tradition, it's essential to recognize that communication approaches can vary based on organizational goals, values, and the nature of the crisis. While the phenomenological tradition works well for creating emotional connections, other communication strategies such as the rhetorical tradition can also play a role in motivating immediate action and support. Direct Relief's use of the phenomenological tradition in its messaging strategy is driven by its mission, values, and unique approach to crisis response. By sharing first-hand stories of impact

and fostering emotional connections, the organization effectively conveys the urgency and importance of its work during times of natural disasters. This strategic alignment not only resonates with their audience but also helps drive support for their humanitarian efforts.

Commonalities

Compassion International, CARE, and Direct Relief all demonstrated commonalities within Cialdini's (2021) compliance-gaining theory. In this analysis, the inherent significance of this investigation manifests across multiple dimensions. By using Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework as a lens of analysis, this research found dynamics that facilitated compliance-gaining within non-profit Instagram platforms. This shows both instances where compliance-gaining mechanisms are used but also demonstrates the alignment of Cialdini's theoretical framework. The ramifications of such insights are helping to influence and change non-profits' presence within the digital realm. So, the significance of this study has the potential to show an understanding of how non-profit organizations strategically use Instagram and Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework to reach their social objectives, thereby contributing to the extension of their outreach and societal impact.

Findings revealed a significant positive connection between storytelling videos and engagement, with these videos consistently receiving higher likes and comments across all three non-profit Instagram pages. The high levels of engagement on these story postings demonstrate the effectiveness of storytelling videos in enhancing audience engagement on social media platforms, providing valuable insights for non-profit organizations that are aiming to optimize their content strategies.

The analysis revealed a consistent pattern of higher engagement for storytelling videos across all three non-profit organizations. Storytelling videos consistently received a substantially higher number of likes and comments compared to picture postings and quote postings. The findings showed the distinct advantage of storytelling videos in terms of generating audience engagement within the non-profit sector on Instagram. Storytelling videos are likely to create a more immersive and emotionally resonant experience for viewers, leading to increased likes and comments. The findings also suggest that while picture postings and quote postings hold value in conveying information, they may not generate the same level of engagement as storytelling videos.

The key theme within this research was that visual storytelling was used to create a strong connection and to motivate followers to act. Using user-generated content within feeds, all non-profit organizations were able to acknowledge their followers and share any engagements that they had enjoyed. While interactive content aimed to drive engagement within the posts, it also showed the interests of the audience by the amount of likes that were given to these interactive posts. Partnerships and collaborations were mostly indirect reliefs on the Instagram page and were also highlighted on their feed and within stories. This content only helped to reach new followers during times of crisis, show real-time collaboration, as well as bring organizations together along with their followers to donate supplies, demonstrate aid and helpfulness, and show the influence of their work promptly. Strategic emotional triggers aimed to show an increase in engagement through liking followers as well as trending hashtags usage, as observed on CARE's Instagram page. These trending hashtags and themes were very apparent in CARE's Instagram postings and stories. One example of this was CARE's Barbie campaign that trended during the release of the Barbie movie in 2023.

All three non-profits showed the ability to humanize the impact of disasters around the world and create a narrative that followers can understand and resonate with by building an emotional connection. This type of content helps followers take action and support the efforts of the organization by using Cialdini's principle of Social Proof, which showcases where donations go, how they are used, and how they are making a difference in the lives of others. The Social Proof principle was seen throughout the content of all three non-profits, demonstrating the benefactors of both the organization and the followers that have helped through the years.

Themes and Patterns

Sorting patterns and recurring themes within the communication artifacts of the selected non-profit organizations addressed the initial research questions and showed the building of compliance-gaining throughout the data artifacts. The findings showed the interconnection between concepts and an understanding of compliance-gaining strategies amongst non-profit organizations and within the field of persuasive communication strategies. By categorizing and organizing the data, sorting patterns allowed the researcher to (1) understand the meaning within the data artifacts, (2) pinpoint phenomena that have and are occurring, (3) manage the data since there were a large amount of qualitative data artifacts that were found, (4) draw conclusions, and (5) identify whether the data fell within Cialdini's framework. Sorting patterns can also create an important narrative about the data to create coherence, communicate findings, and create credibility for these findings for the communication scholar.

The connections are important because they identified that there were major themes that emerged within the data collection, which occurred over eight weeks. The patterns that were brought forth in each non-profit organization demonstrated that the concepts of Cialdini's framework are recognized across all organizations. These connections also showed which areas

of Cialdini's framework are being used more than others, giving a unique perspective into how the organizations are using Cialdini's framework.

Non-profit organizations seeking to enhance their Instagram engagement should prioritize the creation and dissemination of storytelling videos. These videos enable organizations to convey their narratives in a captivating and relatable manner, fostering emotional connections with their audience. While static images and textual quotes still serve a purpose, storytelling videos emerge as a potent tool for eliciting higher levels of interaction. The findings underscored this significance of visual storytelling in captivating audiences and fostering deeper connections. As non-profit organizations strive to maximize their impact in the digital realm, integrating storytelling videos into their content strategies can contribute to more meaningful engagement and a stronger online presence.

The use of other organizations' partnerships and user-generated content highlights the growing influence of social media and the power of Social Proof in gaining compliance. Collaborating with other organizations and encouraging user participation allowed the non-profits to tap into their followers' trust and actively engage them in their cause. Storytelling emerged as a powerful strategy, enabling organizations to create emotional connections with their audience. By sharing personal narratives and success stories, organizations aim to evoke empathy and motivate followers to support their mission. CTA prompts in the communication artifacts emphasized the importance of providing clear and actionable instructions to followers. These prompts directed followers towards specific actions, such as donations, volunteering, or spreading awareness.

Discussion of Cialdini's Principles Used within the Three Non-Profit Organizations

Liking

The use of the Liking principle to build a relational connection with the audience was clear in a post by Compassion from August 11 (see Figure 25 in Chapter Four). First, the imagery evokes an immediate emotional response by showing families working 12 to 15 hours a day, struggling with the generational cycle of poverty. The content shows children working, mothers gathering food and supplies, and families out in fields trying to break the cycle of poverty. The music elevates the emotional response, as Compassion uses spoken words overlaid on the video to bring into light how the organization understands there is no quick solution to poverty. However, showing the smiles of the children and their mothers towards the end of the video, as well as the spoken words of the narrator discussing how every contribution matters to create sustainable living and the generation of income, helped Compassion to reinforce how important it was for everyone who sees the video to contribute. The use of Liking truly shows the relational connection, as it gives an opportunity to (1) see how difficult the lives of these beautiful human beings are, (2) see how one (i.e. the viewer) can help, and (3) see how others have helped to make the lives of these families better through contributions.

In the phenomenological tradition, the principle of Liking relates to experiences and emotions within the content. This content can connect with an audience through shared values, create positive emotions, increase liking and sharing, and pique the audience's interest and connection. The findings of this study underscored the importance of the Liking principle in the digital engagement strategies of non-profit organizations on Instagram. The ability to establish a connection and build rapport with the audience through relatable and personable content has a significant impact on user engagement. This study's results suggest that while other compliance-gaining strategies hold value, the Liking principle consistently ranks higher in terms of engagement outcomes. The coming together of families, the connections between the audience

and the content, the embrace of loved ones captured in a video, and even captions discussing the strife and how donations can help are truly inspiring. This is how the phenomenological tradition fits into Liking, where it allows each audience member to truly connect with the content because they can share the values of understanding what it is like to work hard for one's family, to want the best for one's children, and to want to give that gift to another family or child as well.

Non-profit organizations seeking to enhance their digital engagement strategies should prioritize incorporating elements of the Liking principle into their Instagram content. Storytelling, relatability, and creating a sense of personal connection should be central to their approach. Organizations can benefit from ongoing audience analysis and content optimization to align with evolving user preferences and behavior.

Commitment and Consistency

The use of the Commitment and Consistency principle to build a relational connection with the audience was clear in a post by Compassion from August 7 (see Figure 6 in Chapter Four). The consistent campaigns, mixed with CTAs within those campaigns, are overwhelming and show children in desperate need of help and sponsorship. The content shows a child, standing alone, with the words "Alice only has a few more years" displaying a sense of closeness and loneliness. Having still pictures with words that not only serve to engage the audience but also have them feel the impact of persuasion, where they want to connect to the organization and sponsor, is critical for the rhetorical tradition in the examples of Commitment and Consistency. The picture of the child alone showed that this child is an individual who wants to break free and be part of something more, like joining a family. Allowing the audience to see this child, to want to embrace their plight and click the hyperlink in the CTA within the campaign because of both the picture and the words written, is truly inspirational. Cialdini's principle of Commitment and

Consistency, Instagram hyperlinks, and campaign success underscored the importance of maintaining a consistent user journey in digital marketing efforts. By strategically incorporating hyperlinks within Instagram campaigns, brands and non-profit organizations can guide users through a commitment-driven process, leveraging psychological principles to enhance engagement, conversion rates, and overall campaign effectiveness.

This synergy highlights the potential of aligning psychological insights with modern marketing strategies to create more compelling and successful Instagram campaigns. The confluence of Cialdini's Commitment and Consistency principle, Instagram campaigns, hyperlinks, and Craig's (1999) rhetorical tradition presents a unique blend of psychological persuasion, digital marketing, and classical rhetorical strategies. In the rhetorical tradition, the principle of Commitment and Consistency is related to persuasive strategies used by non-profits. The small and initial commitments, also seen in the technique of FITD, allow followers to follow hyperlinks to websites to donate, sponsor, volunteer, and join social media campaigns, which can further their commitment in the future.

Social Proof

The use of the Social Proof principle to build a relational connection with the audience was clear in a post by CARE from August 11 (see Figure 27 in Chapter Four). The video contains expressive and empowering music, showing Youmin Nasser share her dreams of becoming liberated and independent, and seeing other women enjoy that same freedom. The video shows Youmin walking through the fields, working and farming. The captions on the screen follow her as she shows her strength by standing tall and making things happen for herself. This testimonial shows that CARE was able to support and empower her to start a career in agriculture so that she could support herself in Lebanon. Through donations to CARE, she was

provided with the training and resources she needed to become an independent and empowered woman.

The positive connection between Cialdini's Social Proof principle and the utilization of Instagram stories underscored the powerful impact of social influence in the digital age. By strategically incorporating user engagement, collaborations, time-sensitive offers, and interactive elements within stories, these non-profits show a psychological phenomenon of Social Proof to expand their reach, engagement, and overall success. Bringing together Social Proof with the dynamic nature of Instagram stories demonstrates the efficiency of utilizing psychological insights to create compelling and influential digital communication strategies.

In the sociopsychological tradition, the principle of Social Proof can relate to the psychological and social factors influencing audience engagement. If there is support and involvement showing success stories and testimonials, this can help to persuade followers to contribute at this level by either taking part in a campaign or sponsoring a child or event.

Authority

The use of Authority to build a relational connection with the audience is shown within only a few postings throughout all three non-profit organizations' Instagram pages. During data collection, there was a low instance of authority postings. However, Authority can be a demonstration of positioning the organization as a leader in an area and the critical tradition can turn it into a power structure. In this light, social change can be emphasized. In the critical tradition, the principle of Authority relates to social issues and promotes social change. Credible experts, partnerships with other organizations, influential contributors, and scientific data can all show the critical tradition and connect it to persuasive strategic communication.

Even though few data artifacts were collected demonstrating this principle, the data artifacts that did demonstrate Authority and the critical tradition showed pictures of doctors who volunteered for Compassion and Direct Relief working throughout Ukraine and Africa helping children with medical care. By showing doctors, who are leaders in their fields and willing to give their time to provide free medical care in countries that truly need their expertise, Compassion and Direct Relief showed their use of the Authority principle for a positive reason, which was to bring to light those who not only care about the greater good and humanity but also endorse and believe in the cause they are volunteering for. This example emphasizes social change because it shows that these organizations are leaders in their field because of the level of expertise, education, and skill they bring to their volunteer staff around the world.

Unity

The use of Unity was shown within Instagram tagging, showing the relationship connection with the audience. Users tagged all three organizations within their own user-generated postings to show their connection to each organization. During the Hawaii Volcano Crisis of August 2023, many users tagged #directrelief in their postings. As a result, the postings were shared three times within the Instagram stories section of Direct Relief, showing the growth of sharing and unity across the page. Compassion International also took the time to share user-generated stories that tagged #compassion or #compassioninternational to show not only their interest in the stories of users or followers, but the acknowledgement of them as well.

Unity, within the context of this study, showed a true understanding of how non-profit organizations can work with users to generate more engagement with the public. The reason for this is that followers across the world on Instagram are able to not only follow users and organizations, but also follow specific hashtags that they are interested in without following the

Instagram page, user, or organization. Unity, used this way, brings light to the Cialdini principle, and shows that the coming together of users can have a direct effect globally through sharing.

Scarcity

The use of Scarcity was not shown as frequently as the other Cialdini principles, but the posts that were visible were able to build a relational connection with the audience. This was shown within only a few postings throughout all three non-profit organizations' Instagram pages, and the data artifacts that showed a semiotic demonstration of Scarcity did so by showing need. However, when put into Cialdini's framework and because the participants were all non-profit organizations, the sense of limited availability and urgency was considered more as a factor when discerning Scarcity. In the semiotic tradition, the principle of Scarcity relates to signs and symbols used in the content. If there is a sense of limited availability, urgency, and campaigns that are sensitive to time, this can create awareness for the audience to act quickly.

One example of this is the Hawaii Volcano Crisis of August 2023, where Direct Relief posted mostly with the Commitment and Consistency principle through Instagram feed postings. Another area where it was demonstrated was in the "bio" section of the Instagram page. A fundraiser began within the bio and showed the need for donations, how much was donated, and what need for donations was still left. While there was some tagged user-generated content, it was not typically shared by Direct Relief unless it was a user-generated post or organizational-generated post from another organization that was putting on a private fundraiser for the people of Hawaii, through which the donations were going towards Direct Relief.

The researcher was surprised how little the Scarcity principle was used through all three non-profit organizations. However, within Direct Relief, the demonstration of the immediate need for supplies because of the focus on disasters right after they occur, Scarcity was used

within a few limited postings during those crises. Since Scarcity was deemed more urgent as a need for donations and help immediately in the context of this study, and Direct Relief's model emerged as quick action just-in-time focused persuasion and need, the Hawaii crisis showed up as a solid emergence that this principle was used.

Principles of Persuasion

By incorporating Cialdini's principles of persuasion into the codebook, the researcher analyzed how these principles are utilized across different communication traditions to influence the audience's behaviors and responses to the non-profit's Instagram content. This research provided a more comprehensive understanding of the persuasive strategies employed by the non-profits in their digital communication efforts. The techniques within Cialdini's compliance framework aim to influence behavior by making initial requests (i.e. the FITD technique) or extreme requests followed by a more reasonable request (i.e. the DITF technique).

The observed variations in communication traditions among Compassion, CARE, and Direct Relief underscore the diversity in non-profit organizations' messaging strategies. The rhetorical tradition, as employed by Compassion and CARE, seeks to persuade and motivate audiences by invoking emotional responses and encouraging immediate action. In contrast, the phenomenological tradition, as evident in Direct Relief's messaging, aims to establish connections through shared experiences and values.

The findings emphasize the importance of aligning communication strategies with organizational missions and audience preferences. Non-profit organizations should consider their target audience and the nature of their cause when choosing communication traditions. Future research could delve deeper into how the selection of communication traditions impacts audience engagement, support, and overall organizational outcomes.

This study revealed the distinct utilization of communication traditions within the messaging strategies of three non-profit organizations: Compassion, CARE, and Direct Relief. While Compassion and CARE emphasize the persuasive rhetorical tradition, Direct Relief employs the phenomenological tradition to foster shared experiences and connections. Understanding and strategically employing these traditions offers non-profit organizations a valuable toolset to effectively communicate their messages and engage their audiences. As organizations continue to navigate the dynamic landscape of communication, embracing diverse traditions can contribute to meaningful impact and resonance.

Implications

This section discusses this study's theoretical, methodological, and practical implications. The theoretical implications discuss how the study's findings expand on Cialdini's compliance-gaining theory by focusing on how the data artifacts were collected and analyzed, as well as understanding the outcomes and how new perspectives have emerged from this study. The methodological implications focus on the research design and methods, the limitations, and strengths of the data collection process and analysis, the transferability of the findings to other studies, as well as the study's experiences and challenges. Practical implications cover the real-world application and consequences of the study's findings, as the researcher discusses how the qualitative findings can both impact and inform decision-making, policy, and practice within the field of non-profit strategic digital communication and the use of persuasion.

The following discussion focuses on the implications of the findings in both methodological and practical contexts by exploring the strategies utilized by non-profit organizations and their effectiveness in engaging followers and promoting their causes. The discussion also addresses the alignment with Craig's (1999) communication traditions, Instagram

trends, and a synthesis of findings across Compassion International, CARE, and Direct Relief. Furthermore, the discussion delves into the limitations and delimitations of the study and provides suggestions for future research.

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implications of this study, which incorporated both Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework and techniques as well as Craig's (1999) communication traditions, demonstrate that there is a framework within how non-profits use Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework and it can be useful when studying persuasion for non-profit organizations on Instagram. The extension of compliance-gaining to non-profit organization's social media suggests the ability for non-profit organizations to create a framework of their own within Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework. All of Cialdini's compliance-gaining principles were apparent within the study, which demonstrates the ability of a possible creation of a framework that is aligned with compliance-gaining through a positive lens within persuasive communication. The dominant themes, aligned with Cialdini's principles, showed the Liking, Commitment and Consistency, and Social Proof principles used at a similar level across all three non-profit organizations.

With these three principles being used, this could set a standard for theoretical implementation of Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework within Instagram non-profit organization pages. Unity was used mostly in user-generated content and within tagging, showing that this principle is relevant and non-profits could use this principle to bring a strategy together for engaging with user-generated content. The lower usage of Authority and Scarcity demonstrated that these may not be the best ways to use persuasion and compliance-gaining theory within the social media realm for non-profits. The usage of Social Proof, Commitment

and Consistency, Liking, and Unity brought forth not only a positive light on how persuasion can be used for the greater good, but also showed that the theoretical implications of Cialdini's compliance-gaining theory can be used within non-profit social media and that all the principles were seen across Compassion International, CARE, and Direct Relief.

The theoretical implications explore how the seven traditions offer insights into the use of rhetoric in various communication situations. This research found insights into the mechanisms employed by non-profit organizations to motivate their audience to act. The intention emphasized that the researcher examined topic through the lens of communication traditions, digital storytelling, and utilizing compliance-gaining theory as a framework to facilitate that examination.

Cialdini (2021) created an entire framework on influence based on seven principles. The rationale for using the compliance-gaining theory within this research was to ascertain how non-profits employed compliance-gaining strategies and to see if there were commonalities within how compliance-gaining techniques are used in the communication of three non-profit organizations on Instagram. Understanding the compliance-gaining strategies and their commonalities on Instagram provided valuable insights for non-profit organizations seeking to enhance their communication effectiveness on this platform. These findings have contributed to our understanding of persuasive communication in the context of a non-profit organization's social media presence and have offered practical implications for improving engagement and compliance behaviors on Instagram.

Cialdini identified seven core principles of influence: (1) Reciprocity, (2) Social Proof, (3) Authority, (4) Scarcity, (5) Commitment and Consistency, (6) Unity, and (7) Liking. These principles are based on psychological mechanisms and social dynamics that influence human

behavior. Cialdini's research drew from a wide range of disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and communication, to develop a robust understanding of compliance gaining. His work not only contributed to the theoretical foundation of persuasion but also provided practical insights into how these principles can be applied in various contexts including marketing, sales, and activism. These principles have become widely recognized and applied in fields where persuasive communication is essential.

The connection between Cialdini's framework and the usage of his seven principles within CARE (@careorg), Direct Relief (@directrelief), and Compassion International (@compassion) were apparent within this study's findings. The theoretical implications of this research show that Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework can be used within social media as a guiding framework and a theoretical foundation that can be recognized across other social media platforms, fields, as well as in any field applied to social media where persuasive communication is essential.

Methodological Implications

This study contributes methodologically through its application of a qualitative data content analysis to examine compliance-gaining strategies on Instagram. The findings have demonstrated the ability of this approach to analyze social media communication artifacts and provide insights into the unique strategies used within this context. Researchers can utilize similar methods to explore compliance-gaining techniques in other social media platforms and expand scholarly understanding of persuasive communication in the digital era. This qualitative digital content analysis provided valuable insights into the compliance-gaining strategies employed by non-profit organizations on Instagram. The use of Cialdini's framework, combined with the subcategories of the FITD and DITF techniques, as well as Craig's (1999)

communication traditions, allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the organization's content. Content analysis served as a useful tool for categorizing and analyzing the various content that the non-profit organizations presented via Instagram posts, stories, highlights, and hyperlinks.

Practical Implications

These findings have practical implications for non-profit organizations aiming to leverage Instagram as a platform for promoting their causes and encouraging audience engagement. Understanding and employing compliance-gaining strategies can help organizations enhance their persuasive efforts and foster positive connections with their followers. By aligning with Craig's (1999) communication traditions, organizations can tailor their content to appeal to different psychological and social factors. Furthermore, the utilization of external website links allows for the expansion of the compliance-gaining strategies beyond the Instagram platform.

The findings of this study have practical implications for non-profit organizations seeking to enhance their communication effectiveness on Instagram. By understanding the compliance-gaining strategies observed on this platform, organizations can develop more compelling and persuasive content to engage their followers and mobilize support for their cause. Strategies such as influencer partnerships, user-generated content, storytelling, and explicit CTA prompts can be leveraged to increase compliance behaviors and cultivate a dedicated community of supporters. The Instagram platform offers a visually appealing way to showcase non-profits' efforts, stories, and impact. By aligning their strategies with Cialdini's Liking principle, non-profits can establish genuine connections that drive both engagement and support.

Building Relationships

Non-profits that regularly share content on Instagram have the opportunity to build stronger relationships with their followers. By consistently showcasing their work, values, and

the individuals they help, they increase the likelihood of followers developing positive feelings towards the organization.

Fostering Familiarity

Frequent postings on Instagram can create a sense of familiarity because followers begin to expect to see posts from a particular non-profit, and they begin to feel a connection to the organization, which can align with the familiarity component of the Liking principle.

Visual Storytelling

Instagram's visual nature allows non-profits to tell their stories in a compelling way. By sharing both videos and images, these organizations can show how their work is having a real-world impact. This helps to build empathy and a clear connection with followers, which lays a foundation of connection to continue building upon.

Engagement as Reciprocity

Engagement with followers, especially within the tagging area (i.e. when user-generated content is tagged with the non-profit's Instagram page and is then “liked” by the organization), builds interaction. This is true reciprocity, which can enhance support, involvement, and mutual liking from followers when the organization posts. The positive connection between Cialdini's Liking principle and the frequency of Instagram feed postings by the three non-profit organizations highlights the significance of building genuine connections with supporters. By leveraging the visual storytelling capabilities of Instagram, non-profits can effectively showcase their work, evoke empathy, and create a strong sense of familiarity and liking among their audience. As these organizations continue to align their strategies with psychological principles, they can enhance their ability to drive engagement, raise awareness, and ultimately make a greater impact on their chosen causes.

Foot-in-The-Door

This analysis has shed light on how non-profit organizations strategically employ commitment-based tactics on Instagram to engage their audience and promote their causes. The findings suggest that non-profit organizations recognize the potential of the FITD technique in fostering audience engagement and commitment on Instagram. By gradually escalating requests and soliciting small actions, organizations can establish a pattern of consistency that encourages users to further engage and commit to larger actions. The varying frequency of FITD posts among the studied organizations underscores the flexibility of this strategy and its adaptability to different organizational goals and messaging.

Non-profit organizations can strategically leverage the FITD technique to enhance engagement and commitment on Instagram. By incorporating sequential requests and gradually escalating engagement levels, organizations can guide users toward deeper involvement and support. Organizations should carefully balance this technique with genuine communication and transparent messaging to ensure a positive user experience.

This research underscores the significance of the FITD technique, aligned with Cialdini's Commitment and Consistency principle, within the Instagram content of non-profit organizations. The varying frequency of implementation among Direct Relief, CARE, and Compassion indicates the strategy's adaptability to different organizational contexts. As non-profits continue to navigate the digital landscape, understanding and strategically utilizing compliance-gaining tactics like the FITD technique can contribute to more effective engagement and support for their missions.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study had certain delimitations and limitations that should be considered. The analysis focused solely on three non-profit organizations, which means that the findings may not be capable of being generalized within other organizations or sectors. The analysis was also limited to the Instagram platform, excluding other social media platforms and offline communication channels. While the qualitative nature of the analysis provided in-depth insights, it may not have captured the quantitative aspects of compliance-gaining strategies. The study also covered a specific time frame of eight weeks, and the findings may not have captured long-term trends or changes in the organizations' strategies over time. In addition, this study focused solely on the compliance-gaining strategies employed by non-profit organizations on Instagram. While these findings have provided valuable insights, they may not fully represent the strategies used on other social media platforms or in different sectors. Additionally, the sample size was limited to three non-profit organizations, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings.

The study relied on a qualitative data content analysis, which may be subjective to some extent. The interpretations of the researcher may have also influenced the identification and categorization of compliance-gaining strategies. Future studies should employ a mixed-methods approach or involve a larger sample size to mitigate these limitations. These boundaries and constraints are essential to acknowledge, as they may have impacted the implications and scope of this study.

Time

The study's restriction to an eight-week duration inherently limits the depth and comprehensiveness of the insights derived from the qualitative content analysis. There may have been a revelation of other trends, shifts in themes, new patterns, or a change of dynamics. This limitation could have also omitted variations that could have occurred over time.

Absence of Human Participants and Interactions

The exclusion of human participants in this study could have skewed the findings or not considered the human factor. Even though the data artifacts are visible to all, there could have been a lack of true reactions, attitudes, and perspectives of the audience, which could be a critical factor in the actual application of compliance-gaining strategies. In the pursuit of exploring compliance-gaining techniques through an extensive qualitative content analysis conducted on Instagram over an eight-week temporal span, it's important to discuss the scope, context, and effectiveness of understanding the techniques and traditions of Cialdini and Craig. However, there were limitations as well.

Future Research

Building upon the present study, future research can explore the effectiveness of compliance-gaining strategies employed by non-profit organizations on other social media platforms or across multiple platforms. Quantitative studies can be conducted to measure the effectiveness and outcomes of compliance-gaining efforts. Comparative studies could also become an interesting way to focus on different sectors or types of organizations, providing valuable insights into the nuances of compliance-gaining strategies within specific contexts.

There were some areas of interest for future research that could be incorporated together for a better understanding of observances. The analysis revealed a consistent trend across the three non-profit organizations, wherein no data artifacts were posted on weekends. Weekdays demonstrated a higher frequency of content distribution. This phenomenon indicates a deliberate choice by these organizations to refrain from posting during weekends, potentially reflecting a strategic approach to content scheduling.

The observed phenomenon of non-profit organizations refraining from posting on weekends presents intriguing avenues for further research. Future studies could delve deeper into the reasons behind this trend by examining audience behavior and engagement patterns during weekends. Exploring the impact of posting schedules on audience engagement, user sentiment, and overall message effectiveness could offer valuable insights. Additionally, investigations into whether this pattern contributes to increased engagement on weekdays are warranted.

Threads, the phenomenological platform within the Instagram ecosystem, exhibited intriguing nuances and patterns during this eight-week study, thereby presenting a compelling avenue for future research inquiries. This platform's distinctive experiential nature, characterized by its textual dialogues and interconnected series of posts, finds a rich landscape for probing the dynamics of human interactions within the digital realm. As such, Threads emerges as a promising subject warranting in-depth exploration within the purview of communication studies.

The phenomenological appearance of Threads during this study unveiled the lived experiences of users as they navigate the digital terrain. This experiential perspective shed light on the intricate interplay between user intentions, perceptions, and interactions. Threads, akin to a horizon of possibilities, invites users to engage in a continuous process of co-creation, where they contribute to the platform's communal meaning through their dialogues and interactions. The platform becomes a virtual milieu for intersubjective exchanges, wherein individuals construct their digital identities and partake in shared narratives.

This phenomenological exploration prompts several avenues for future research. One potential trajectory involves a deep dive into the way users' intentions and motivations converge with the platform's affordances, yielding specific patterns of engagement and interaction. This could encompass qualitative inquiries into how users conceptualize their engagement within

Threads, their perceived authenticity of interactions, and the construction of digital relationships within this unique landscape.

Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework provides an insightful lens through which to examine the phenomena observed within Threads. The synergy between this psychological framework and the experiential features of Threads underscores its potential as a persuasive communication platform. Future research endeavors could investigate the alignment of Cialdini's principles (e.g. Reciprocity, Social Proof, and Scarcity) with user behaviors and compliance patterns within Threads.

For instance, a study could explore how user engagement in Threads is influenced by the principle of Social Proof, wherein users conform to behaviors exhibited by others in the Threads community. This could involve quantitative analysis to ascertain connections between content endorsed by authoritative figures and subsequent user interactions. The principle of Commitment and Consistency could be examined within the context of Threads, investigating how initial small acts of engagement cascade into more substantial compliance behaviors. A longitudinal study might track users' evolving commitment patterns over time to uncover underlying mechanisms of consistency.

The phenomenological presence of Threads and its congruence with Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework propel it into the realm of suggested future research. The platform's experiential nature beckons exploration into user interactions and the co-construction of meaning, while Cialdini's principles offer a lens to analyze persuasive dynamics. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, the study of Threads within these theoretical frameworks holds the promise of enriching our understanding of contemporary communication phenomena. The implications drawn from this study's findings extend beyond the present investigation, inspiring

future research pursuits that promise to enrich the scholarship in compliance-gaining dynamics, digital rhetoric, and persuasive communication strategies within contemporary digital landscapes.

Summary

In summary, this qualitative digital content analysis revealed that the non-profit organizations of Compassion International, CARE, and Direct Relief effectively employed compliance-gaining strategies based on Cialdini's framework in their Instagram content. The utilization of the FITD and DITF techniques, aligned with Craig's (1999) communication traditions and the incorporation of external website links, further enhanced their persuasive efforts. These findings have methodological implications for qualitative content analysis and have provided practical insights for non-profit organizations seeking to engage their audience and promote their causes on Instagram. However, this study had limitations in terms of generalizability, its specific focus on Instagram, and its limited time frame. Future research can address these limitations and further explore compliance-gaining strategies in diverse contexts and platforms.

This study showed that persuasion can be used purposely as a positive technique through non-profit digital communication. The promotion of a cause, the interaction with followers, the use of persuasion to serve the greater good, and the themes found within the analysis show that Compassion International (@compassion), CARE (@careorg), and Direct Relief (@directrelief) are all using Cialdini's compliance-gaining framework, though in different ways. However, the presence of these principles and their usage within the digital space of Instagram showed promise for non-profit organizations that persuasion can be useful and communication traditions

can be tethered with compliance-gaining principles. The examples within the data collection showed that a framework can be developed from the data collected and examined.

This chapter discussed the findings of the study, highlighting the compliance-gaining strategies observed in the Instagram communication artifacts of non-profit organizations. The implications of these findings were explored, including methodological and practical implications. The chapter also acknowledged the delimitations and limitations of the study and proposed directions for future research. The insights gained from this study have contributed to our understanding of persuasive communication in the digital era, providing practical guidance for organizations utilizing Instagram as a platform for engagement and compliance.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 27, 2023
Meredith Kiljan
Wesley Hartley

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY22-23-1805 A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS SOCIAL MEDIA: THROUGH THE LENS OF COMPLIANCE-GAINING & PERSUASION

Dear Meredith Kiljan and Wesley Hartley,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds that your study does not meet the definition of human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study/project is not considered human subjects research because

(1) it will not involve the collection of identifiable, private information from or about living individuals (45 CFR 46.102).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application. Any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. **If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.** If you have any questions

about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair **Research**
Ethics Office