



**Linnéuniversitetet**

Kalmar Växjö

Bachelor's Thesis

# Aristotle on social media?

*Investigating non-profit organizations' usage of persuasive language on Twitter and Facebook*



*Author:* Amanda Nelzén  
*Supervisor:* Ibolya Maricic  
*Examiner:* Fredrik Heintat  
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**Abstract**

This study investigates four non-profit organizations' use of persuasive language in their Facebook and Twitter posts. The aim is to understand if, how and what linguistic means are used in the posts through *Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric*. His theory consists of the three appeals: *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos*. These three appeals all hold a number of individual features. The research was carried out by classifying the posts by the three appeals and their features. These defined what linguistic means were used and how. All three appeals are equally important when persuading an audience through a text as they are necessary to raise an understanding and interest in the text's focus. Aristotle argued that when including all three appeals, the text has reached its full potential of persuasion. The appeals have their unique attributes and may also persuade when used individually. An author's credibility and trust applies to the appeal *ethos*, logic and reasoning in a text applies to *logos*, and a text that moves its reader's emotions applies to *pathos*. The research found that a text's length matters for its persuasion, through a comparison of the two social media platforms. Non-profit organizations do not strive for any profit which makes it a challenge for them to persuade their audiences in order to be able to continue their work. Many of the analysed posts included the appeal *pathos* which aims mainly to evoke emotions with the readers.

**Keywords:** Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric, ethos, logos, pathos, non-profit organizations, persuasive language, social media platforms

# Table of contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Aim, scope and research questions .....	2
<b>2. Theoretical background</b> .....	<b>3</b>
2.1 Aristotle’s triangle of rhetoric.....	3
2.2 Persuasive language .....	5
2.3 Online and offline communication .....	6
2.4 Previous research .....	6
<b>3. Material and Method</b> .....	<b>10</b>
3.1 Material .....	10
3.2 Method .....	12
<b>4. Results</b> .....	<b>15</b>
4.1 Oxfam .....	16
4.2 Greenpeace.....	17
4.3 UNICEF .....	19
4.4 WWF.....	21
4.5 Comparison of the appeals on the two social media platforms .....	24
<b>5. Discussion</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>6. Conclusion</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>List of references</b> .....	<b>29</b>

## 1. Introduction

Non-profit organizations can often be associated with groups that are striving to make a difference. They operate without involvement of any government and most of them engage in social or political issues (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2017, NGO). They function to inspire and engage their audience and operate mainly by donations which enable them to continue their work. It is necessary for them to make people aware of certain matters and also, in a way, to actually persuade people to contribute with donations and support. However, for non-profit organizations it is important to communicate in a neutral way not to be perceived as if the focus is on gaining profit, and not on the actual matter. This, is one of many challenges for the organizations which makes it crucial for them to approach their audience and express themselves in a strategic way.

With social media platforms being a big part in the way people interact today, more information is distributed through them. Social media platforms are an arena used to advertise and inform the world. Private people engage and interact more online which make it necessary for companies and organizations to also be present there in order to reach and connect with their target groups. They create their own pages where they make updates about their organization. Their pages are open for the public which allows anyone to see their posts. Some people choose to “follow” the page of the organization to receive notifications about the activity. Social media platforms are important tools of communication. They provide information and allow ways to present oneself in a context where others actively have chosen to listen which put their language usage in focus (Agresta, et al., 2010:2). Two of the most well-known and largest social media platforms are *Facebook* and *Twitter* where posts are focused on text but also allow their users to share and post photos, videos, and more. According to statistics from 2017, Facebook had 2, 047 million users and Twitter had 328 million (Statista 2017 [www]). Social media allows organizations to communicate with people all over the world at the same time. The way the organizations express themselves in their social media posts affect the organizations’ brand as it reaches a wide audience.

The Oxford English Dictionary (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2017) defines persuasion in a linguistic context as expressions which are good at making someone believe something through reasoning or the use of temptation. The Greek philosopher Aristotle established the art of rhetoric which allows a writer to make a text persuasive by implementing three kinds of arguments referred to as *appeals*. He claimed that these are persuasive strategies that support a writer’s statement in a text. *Logos*, is the appeal which depends on a text’s logic and rationality. *Ethos* relies on the character of the author and his/her credibility and

trustworthiness. *Pathos* is the appeal based on the reader himself/herself and on the emotions evoked in the reader from the text. These appeals build *Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric* which is a rhetorical model used as a persuasive strategy. In order to achieve the maximum effect of persuasion all three appeals should be applied. It is a recognized technique within sales and marketing (Bonn, n.d. [www]), but has not yet been studied if non-profit organizations use it on social media.

*Greenpeace, Oxfam, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)* are organizations active on social media. They have their own Twitter and Facebook pages which are open to the public. Their social media pages contribute in helping them continue their work through their followers' engagement. This study examines these organizations' persuasive strategies as well as, if and how they have used Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric and the three appeals, *logos, ethos, and pathos* in their posts.

### **1.1 Aim, scope and research questions**

Social media platforms are effective tools to use to persuade since they reach a wide audience quickly. A post's structure can be a way of persuading an audience. The aim of this study is to examine whether the non-profit organizations have engaged Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric in their posts on social media in order to persuade their audience. This study investigates if the posts show instances of *logos, ethos* and/or *pathos* and, if so, how they are depicted. The focus is on the persuasive strategy of the posts and a comparison between the social media platforms: *Twitter* and *Facebook*. The study does not go further into details to examine if the persuasive strategies have succeeded or not; the focus is on how and in what way language is used. The organizations' different focuses have been in consideration to examine whether their focuses have affected their persuasive strategies. Otherwise, the organizations are not compared to each other. This study concentrates on the text in the posts from the organizations' pages on the social media platforms. Multimedia features in the posts such as photos, videos, emoji, hashtags or similar have not been analyzed when conducting the research since they cannot be represented in Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric. Examining the persuasive strategies in non-profit organizations' posts will reveal its effect on the language used on social media and detect if a longer text necessarily is more persuasive.

1. How do the non-profit organizations use *Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric* as persuasive strategies in their Facebook and Twitter posts?
2. What linguistic features have the non-profit organizations used to express *logos, ethos, and pathos* in their social media posts?

3. What differences are there in their usage of the appeals between the two social media platforms and between the non-profit organizations, if any?

## **2. Theoretical background**

This section begins by giving a description of Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric and its appeals. To understand the relevance of this study an overview of what previous researchers have found on the usage of Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric and linguistic persuasion is covered.

### **2.1 Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric**

A focal point within rhetorical analysis is to understand the technique of what it is in the language that actually persuades people. The Greek philosopher Aristotle was one to examine this. He developed the art of rhetoric where he studied persuasion in language and showed evidence of its arguments (Salmi-Tolonen in Halmari & Virtanen, 2005:71). By defining and identifying important parts in a text he formulated a theory of persuasion which is referred to as a triangle due to its three main characteristics, or *appeals*. According to Aristotle a text receives its persuasion when all three of these appeals have been included and the strategy has then been carried out. If an audience's opinions have changed or been influenced after reading a text, it is persuasive. It is therefore important to analyze the language used (Halmari & Virtanen, 2005:3).

Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric includes three appeals of persuasion namely *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*. A text that consists of conclusions based on facts and statistics shows proof of the appeal *logos*. It emphasizes reasoning, and involves the text in itself in terms of length, arrangement, complexity, and other factors (Hyland, 2005:65). *Logos* focuses on that the content of a text should consist of clearly understandable arguments to achieve its persuasive effect. Scientific research, figures, numbers, facts and similar are all evidence of the appeal *logos* (Connor & Gladkov, 2004:261ff). According to Aristotle, logical persuasion in rhetoric often include *enthymemes* where the aim is to make an impact on the audience's thoughts (Halmari in Halmari & Virtanen, 2005:118f). *Enthymeme* is the arrangement of opinions or information. It is a rhetorical device where a certain part is chosen not to be expressed because it is seen as obvious; where some may rely on preconceptions. It consists of a conclusion made from at least two premises, as seen below:

Premise 1. "Drunk driving hurts innocent people."

Premise 2. "Hurting innocent people is wrong."

The conclusion of the enthymeme and underlying message is therefore “drunk driving is wrong” (Literary Terms [www] n.d., *enthymeme*).

Another appeal in Aristotle’s triangle of rhetoric is *pathos* which refers to the Greek word for experience or emotion. It involves the audience’s feelings. A common way of using *pathos* in argumentation is to include real life stories or common memories. These make it easier for an audience to relate to the text and therefore feel empathy or sadness (European Rhetoric [www] n.d.). When involving the audience through *pathos*, it is important for the author to consider the audience’s background, knowledge, ethnicity, educational level, etc. in order to find a connection (Hyland, 2005:65). Östman (2005, in Halmari & Virtanen, 2005:192f) states that people make conscious choices to create a message which reflects on the receivers’ knowledge and the socio-cultural aspects. However, it depends on the audience how the utterance will be interpreted and therefore the level of persuasiveness in a message can be argued to rely on the receiver as well. An anecdote is a useful literary device to attain *pathos* as it can create empathy in the readers by including a story about a person or a real life situation. Humor is another way which emphasizes *pathos* in a text (Gayle et.al. 2012, *pathos* [www]). *Pathos* is used to trigger an audience’s emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, etc. To make the audience feel a connection is of great importance in the appeal of *pathos*. If the author knows their target audience, the author can use certain values and beliefs to achieve a connection. By including anecdotes, it engages the audience and it is an easier way for the audience to relate to the text’s context (ibid [www]). Emotions have an important part within persuasion as they may trigger a certain response or reaction with its audience (Connor & Gladkov, 2004:268f).

*Ethos* is associated with the word character in the Greek language. The argumentation technique of *ethos* relies on the credibility of the character. That is to say the person who expresses the statement, the speaker or author. Aristotle argues that competence, good intention and empathy are strong factors to achieve credibility. *Ethos* is a proof of trust and refers to the author’s values. Hyland (2005:64) suggests that *ethos* are attributes of a person, such as expertise, reputation, and similar, but the results of them depends on the interaction between the author and audience received through the text. When including *ethos* in a text the focus is on word choices, to make it sound as convincing as possible. Showing expertise in a topic is one way to state credibility and gain trust. Politeness and respect, expertise, emphasizing similarities, and being self-critical are indicators of an author’s usage of *ethos* in a text (Higgins and Walker, 2012:195ff). The intention of *ethos* is for a text to give an impression of noteworthiness so that the audience perceives it as reliable. If the author of a

text cites its source or uses an unbiased language where the language shows respect to other opinions as well, it has instances of *ethos*. It does not put emphasis on using emotional and descriptive language as *pathos* (Lumen Learning, *Evaluating Appeals to Ethos, Logos, and Pathos* [www]).

Corbett and Connors (1990, in Burke, 2008:296) examined if Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric is applicable for rhetoricians of the twentieth century, specifically approaching advertisement designers. The researchers note that the most common form of persuasive language is used in advertisements today. The study was conducted through questionnaires applying features from Aristotle's rhetorical triangle to advertisements. It resulted in the conclusion that advertisement designers apply rhetorical tools when they are aware of who their target group is and can then adapt the language and design towards them. In their study the persuasion was mainly expressed through the use of style figures, such as *homonyms* which is playing with the feature where a word can have different meanings but the same spelling, or *style description* which is how a certain target group has been depicted through the advertisement. Specific advertisements were used to persuade a specific type of group and were seen in a specific context (ibid 301f).

## **2.2 Persuasive language**

Persuasion is an underlying concept in all languages. When openly trying to persuade someone the result will most certainly not be as wanted. The more aware the audience is of the persuasion, the less interesting it becomes for them (Östman, 2005 in Halmari & Virtanen, 2005:199). Halmari and Virtanen (2005:5) argue that persuasion can be found in any feature of language and when going further into details, it is a change or effect in a behavior which was affected by the linguistic means. Persuasion originates in Greco-Roman culture based on communication and is still used today. Persuasion within social media strives to send messages which aim to achieve certain objectives such as to convince, seduce, please, or move. Berlanga et al. (2013:3ff) suggest that every text shared on social media platforms has the aim to achieve a certain reaction among followers. The authors argue that online persuasion is stronger due to the creative opportunity of including sounds, videos, and other multimedia in a post. Creativity and attention-drawing are two main factors in persuasive language which also can consist of catchphrases, commands, rhetorical questions, emotional words, and metaphors. The most dominant persuasive strategy used in online advertisements is the way of addressing a mass audience as if they are individuals by using inclusive language, such as personal pronouns (Berlanga, et al. 2013:40).

Texts from non-profit organizations use promotional language in the way of selling a product which in their case is the selling of “a good cause”. According to Connor and Gladkov (2004:257) there are “how to” guides for the organizations to use, although most of them seem to only apply to the appearance of a publication and do not mention any directions on linguistic usage.

### **2.3 Online and offline communication**

The 1960's introduced a new way for people to interact namely through online communication. The Internet allows countless number of people to be in contact through various communicational means such as thorough e-mails or on social media platforms. (Crystal, 2004:3ff). Today researchers and psychologists have started to develop recommendations on how to use language online. There is a need for a more expected and familiar language in online communication. Pringe (1999, in Crystal, 2004:205) argues that a text which is found online has more competition than a text offline. When publishing a text online the author has to compete for the readers' attention since sounds, motions and other attraction are often visible at the same time and can be distracting. Both the content and surrounding of an online text can therefore be argued to include a more persuading language than a text found offline, as in a newspaper for example. Online texts catch its public's attention quicker and may obtain it for longer because of different kinds of information and design appearing around it (Crystal, 2004:196). Letter-writing has a long history of knowledge on how it should be outlined and written, however online texts do not have this equivalent long tradition. Netspeak is a term which can be used as an alternative to language used online (ibid 15ff). Crystal argues that the language used on the Internet relies on the reaction to written messages which creates a recognition of its audience due to its potential interactivity (ibid 18). A known feature of Netspeak is that the users write in the same way they speak which can be a challenge when people from all over the world who speak in different ways interact online. It is not possible to predict changes in a language; it is only recognized when it already has taken place. A crucial point when communicating online is that the interaction is not face-to-face and it is easier for misunderstandings to appear. Therefore, it is important to know how to structure the message so it will be understood correctly (ibid 28).

### **2.4 Previous research**

Previous research on Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric and persuasive strategies in a linguistic perspective has mainly focused on politics or advertisements. To my knowledge persuasive

strategies used online by non-profit organizations have not yet been researched. It is relevant to study since non-profit organizations are not supposed to promote and gain profit to the same extent as profit earning organizations. This can be a challenge for non-profit organization and is therefore a relevant study in the mass-consumption culture today.

Halmari and Virtanen (2005:5f) show evidence that *logos* is frequent in the newspaper genre since it demands a rational approach where the readers are provided facts, data and research. It is common for judicial arguments to appeal to a combination of *logos* and *ethos* with the aim to affect the emotions of the readers and provide its rationality. *Pathos* is the most popular appeal used in media and especially in the linguistic context of advertisements. The most prominent genre where all three appeals are commonly used is within political speeches. Politicians play a role in convincing their audience through emotions (*pathos*). They need a credible character to connect and interact with their audience (*ethos*), and they need to be able to argue for facts (*logos*). The characteristics of the three appeals makes Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric a favorable strategy for politicians to use (ibid 5f).

Many of the previous studies that focus on political topics have analyzed campaigns or speeches. The studies have been made on both spoken and written texts. Twitter is known for being an efficient social media platform for compelling rhetoric within politics (Johnson, 2012:57f). Johnson argued in his study that Mitt Romney, the Republican candidate in the US election of 2012, used *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos* in his Twitter posts. Romney wanted to increase his connection with his followers and used Twitter to share his arguments. According to Johnson the usage of Twitter together with a political campaign can build a stronger contact with the voters. He bases this on that followers send and share information from the politician to their individual followers. This makes the interactions go further and the followers receive information directly from the politician which establishes connection and credibility (ibid 54).

Online communication is used frequently today and influences people in their everyday lives. Berlanga et al. (2013) analyzed communication strategies on social media platforms. Their aim was to reveal that classical strategies of rhetoric, such as Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric, are used on social media platforms, particularly Facebook. Social media platforms include strong persuasion where messages seek to obtain objectives, either consciously or subconsciously, such as confirmation, empathy, etc. (ibid 2f). For users to reach their objectives to inform, convince, or attract attention, *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos* have been used in their messages. Their results conveyed that each user have used persuasion through a rhetorical strategy. As an example, the authors argued that their choice of examining posts on

Facebook per se was a strategy of *pathos*. The way that users receive “likes”, congratulations and so forth publicly in posts on Facebook enhances empathy from other users. *Pathos* is a dominant appeal on social media platforms due to this kind of transparency. Users often aim to achieve empathy and reactions from others. The study proved that rhetorical strategies have found new channels online and that they are visible in posts on social media platforms. Facebook, in particular, is structured in a way that accentuates persuasive strategies and Aristotle’s rhetorical triangle. *Ethos* is conveyed through the assumption that many of the user’s contacts online also are their contacts in real-life consisting of friends, family, co-workers, etc. The user receives a prestige when the relationships which are established in the real world also are present online where more people see the number of friends a person have which boosts a user’s character and credibility. Berlanga et al. (2013:5ff) argue that using *logos* within the type of social media platform as Facebook can be seen as a bit out-of-place because *logos* refers to a more professional appeal. They claim that it is an appeal more used on professional social media platforms, such as LinkedIn.

Eyman (2015 in Liu 2016:15) claims that rhetoric has the power to be an analytical method and serve as a guide to produce persuasive communication. It is a combination of knowledge production and wish to reveal a power in a text or speech. Liu (2016) examines President Trump’s Twitter posts and his usage of the rhetorical appeals. He claimed that Trump has used rhetorical arguments in his Twitter posts in order to assure his reputation (*ethos*), express rational arguments (*logos*) and create an emotional relationship with his followers (*pathos*). The study focused on the concepts of political communication on social media and their rhetorical strategies (Liu, 2016:14f). Liu categorized Trump’s Twitter posts by the three appeals. *Logos* was applied to posts that consists of enthymemes and facts. *Pathos* was applied to posts that evoked emotions with the reader. *Ethos* included the features: expertise, trustworthiness and goodwill. Expertise was conveyed by stating social status. Credibility was shown when the author did not aim to delude the audience. If a post included a personal experience, it received its trustworthiness (Heo & Park, 2016 in Liu, 2016:19).

In 2004 Connor and Gladkov researched rhetorical appeals used in direct mail letters for fundraising purposes. Their research was carried out firstly by collecting a number of fundraising letters which had characteristics of the three rhetorical appeals. They examined the letters using a system which they had developed based on previous research made by Connor and Lauer in 1985 (2004:259). Connor and Gladkov’s study was developed further by

sending out the letters and researched its responses with consideration to the rhetorical appeals. Figure 1 shows Connor and Gladkov’s typology of the rhetorical appeals.

- Rational Appeals**
- R1. Descriptive Example
  - R2. Narrative Example
  - R3. Classification
  - R4. Comparison
  - R5. Contrast
  - R6. Degree
  - R7. Authority
  - R8. Cause/Effect – Means/End – Consequences
  - R9. Model
  - R10. Stage in Process
  - R11. Ideal or Principle
  - R12. Information
- Credibility**
- C13. First-Hand Experience
  - C14. Showing Writer’s Respect for Audience’s Interests and Points of View
  - C15. Showing Writer-Audience Shared Interests and Points of View
  - C16. Showing Writer’s Good Character and/or Judgment
- Affective**
- A17. Appealing to the Audience’s Views
  - A18. Vivid Picture
  - A19. Charged Language

**Figure 1.** Connor and Gladkov’s rhetorical appeals (Connor & Gladkov, 2004:259).

In 2012 Higgins and Walker (2012:195) compiled a study where they discussed Aristotle’s rhetorical appeals in social/environmental reports. They analyzed *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* in reports based on persuasive aspects and studies in strategic communication. Their research revealed that persuasive strategies, consisting of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*, simplify businesses’ understanding and development of social responsibility and sustainability to more easily be approached as reasonable and trustworthy. Higgins and Walker compiled a table of Aristotle’s rhetorical appeals where they incorporated persuasive strategies from studies in strategic communication. Figure 2 shows Higgins and Walker’s categorization of analyzing the rhetorical appeals.

Appeal	Examples of persuasive techniques:
<i>ETHOS</i> : credibility (perceived character of the speaker)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Similitude</li> <li>Ingratiation</li> <li>Deference</li> <li>Expertise</li> <li>Self-criticism</li> <li>Inclination to succeed</li> <li>Consistency</li> </ul>
<i>PATHOS</i> : emotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metaphors</li> <li>Identification, especially through cultural references such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport</li> <li>• Under-privilege</li> <li>• Health, well-being</li> <li>• Hope, aspiration</li> <li>• Loyalty</li> <li>• Friendship</li> <li>• Sympathy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>LOGOS</i> : reason (the appearance of rationality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Argumentation</li> <li>Logic</li> <li>Warrants/justifications</li> <li>Claims</li> <li>Data</li> <li>Evidence/examples (e.g. historical)</li> </ul>

**Figure 2.** Features of rhetorical appeals in Aristotle’s triangle of persuasion (Higgins & Walker, 2012:198).

For this study the second typology of rhetorical appeals from Higgins and Walker (Figure 2) is used as a basis with a few additions from Connor and Gladkov's typology (Figure 1). Some of the features of the appeals have been named differently since some features have been divided to be more specified and some have been joined together.

### **3. Material and Method**

This section presents the material analyzed to conduct this study followed by a description of the method used. This study is primarily qualitative and is therefore interpretative and relies heavily on context. The methodology of the research is inductive and is therefore generalizations made from researched data.

#### **3.1 Material**

Twitter and Facebook are the two social media platforms that have been used as primary sources for the collection of the data. They are popular platforms where many organizations have created their own pages to present and promote their organizations and matters. Twitter is a so-called micro-blogging platform where users, at the time when the data was collected, only were allowed to post updates that consist of 140 characters. All of the organizations' pages are public and users can choose to follow a page to receive the updates through pull-technology, which is the process where the public has asked to receive the information (Brown, 2009:10). Facebook is a leading social media platform and call themselves a "social utility". There is no limitation of characters in posts and it is common that they contain either a video, picture or a link to another source (ibid 7). The material consist of 200 posts from the non-profit organizations *Greenpeace*, *Oxfam*, *UNICEF*, and *WWF*'s Facebook and Twitter pages. These organizations have different aims which gives the study a broader perspective and therefore more reliable results. *Greenpeace* and *WWF* are more focused on nature and wildlife, while *Oxfam* and *UNICEF* are more focused on humanitarian aid. The 200 posts consist of twenty-five posts from each social media platform resulting in fifty posts from each organization. Since Twitter has the word limitation, the posts from Facebook were longer. Below follows Table 1 presenting the total and average number of words per post for each organization.

**Table 1.** Number of words in the organizations’ posts on the two social media platforms

	Oxfam	Greenpeace	UNICEF	WWF
<b>Facebook (total)</b>	1 231	1 218	889	<b>1 382</b>
<b>Facebook (average)</b>	49	49	36	55
<b>Twitter (total)</b>	<b>550</b>	466	420	501
<b>Twitter (average)</b>	22	19	17	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 023</b>	1 684	1 309	1 883

Oxfam is an international organization whose aim is to end poverty and injustice. They have umbrella organizations around the world and work together with locals to influence and affect more people to support their actions. Oxfam’s Facebook page has 704,593 followers. Their posts vary in length and they post once per day (Facebook, n.d., *Oxfam*). Many posts include an image, video or a link, however these have not been accounted as it has not been necessary for the results. Oxfam’s Twitter page has about 841,000 followers. They post more frequently on Twitter than on Facebook (Twitter, n.d., *Oxfam*).

Greenpeace has offices in over 40 different countries. Their objective is to preserve the environment and to promote peace. On their Facebook page they post several posts a day and have a total of 2,744,834 followers (Facebook, n.d., *Greenpeace*). On Twitter they have 1,71 million followers and post updates frequently throughout the day (Twitter, n.d., *Greenpeace*).

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) was founded by the United Nations. They strive to provide humanitarian care to children in developing countries. They have 6,899,925 followers on Facebook and post updates several times a day (Facebook, n.d., *UNICEF*). On Twitter UNICEF have 6.68 million followers and update their Twitter page several times per day (Twitter, n.d., *UNICEF*).

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) support natural resources around the world. They promote sustainable living and ways of supporting the Earth’s wildlife and nature. On their Facebook page they post about one update per day and have 2,935,295 followers (Facebook, n.d., *WWF*). The WWF’s Twitter page has 3,85 million followers and they post several updates per day (Twitter, n.d., *WWF*).

The posts collected are from 2017 and the researcher has strived to collect posts which refer to the same topics in order to clearly see how the language usage differ on the two social media platforms. The posts are asynchronous messages which mean that the organizations do not wait for responses to post another update. However, all four organizations provide the possibility to answer the posts which makes it a two-way communication.

### 3.2 Method

This study uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. The focus is on qualitative methods, but the study has features of quantification such as counting the appeals for comparison. Aristotle never specified a method of how to examine persuasion in communication, therefore the typologies from Connor and Gladkov (2004) and Higgins and Walker's (2012) are used. Some adjustments of the typologies were made such as additions or removals of features in the appeals. The adjustments made were elaborations of the features or compounds of features in order to be more suitable for online communication. Table 2 below illustrates the typology of the appeals and features used in this study.

**Table 2.** *Features of Aristotle's triangle of persuasion based on Connor & Gladkov 2004:259*

<b>Logos</b>	
L1.	Declarative sentences
L2.	Clear and understandable language
L3.	Enthymemes
L4.	Facts, figures, numbers, statistics, etc.
L5.	Referring to historical events and background
L6.	Scientific research
L7.	Cause – Means - Consequences
<b>Ethos</b>	
E1.	Referring to an authority or status
E2.	Showing competence and consistency
E3.	Self-criticism and other's opinion
E4.	Politeness and respect appropriate to audience
E5.	Personal pronouns
E6.	Similitudes
E7.	Quotes
E8.	First-hand experience
<b>Pathos</b>	
P1.	Knowing the audience
P2.	Descriptive language
P3.	Figures of speech
P4.	Narratives/ Anecdotes
P5.	Referring to a memory or an experience in common
P6.	Emotional examples which trigger humor, sadness, etc.
P7.	Rhetorical question

Feature L1 applies to the usage of *declarative sentences* which are claims or statements ending with a period. It is the opposite to a question (Grammar Revolution, n.d. [www]). L2 applies when a post is presented logically and is understandable for anyone. This means that no advanced scientific terms or similar are used, even though it might discuss a complex topic. For example, saying water instead of the term H<sub>2</sub>O. L3 applies to enthymemes which have been explained earlier in section 2.1. *Logos* relies on reasoning and proof, and is often supported by facts and arguments discussed through numbers, statistics, data, and similar (L4). Other statements which belong to *logos* are when mentioning historical events and facts which applies to L5. Feature L6 refers to scientific research. Connor and Gladkov (2004) call

this feature “information” and explain the persuasive technique through Aristotle’s words “The speaker must, first of all, be provided with a special selection of premises (facts)... The more facts he has at his command, the more easily he will make the points” (Aristotle 1932:157, in Connor & Gladkov, 2004:265). Feature L7 (“Cause – Means – Consequences”) is when a text illustrates a matter, explains its causes or effects, and is followed by a presentation of the actions to be made, and stating its consequences (Connor and Gladkov, 2004:261ff).

*Ethos* relies on the author thus the emphasis is on how the text is expressed. The credibility of a text can be realized when a reference to a person of authority or a higher status is made (E1), such as a scientist or a well-known figure or an actor/actress. Stating the source of the text also reinforces the credibility. The feature implies a connection between the two parts (Connor & Gladkov 2004:263). Feature E2 presents a successful experience previously accomplished, for example if a President during a presidential campaign states that s/he has kept a promise and will therefore keep other promises. This shows competence in achieving the first promise and consistency that the next will be kept. E3 is achieved when including opponents’ opinions and/or being self-critical. It bolsters the text’s honesty which displays credibility and trustworthiness of the author (Higgins & Walker, 2012:197ff). Feature E4 applies to a polite language usage which entails respect towards the reader. It gives the text a credible approach as it creates an impression that the author has good intentions. It can be revealed when the author gives appreciation to the reader from earlier actions, as (1) shows.

- (1) In looking back at the last decade, we at the Indianapolis Zoological Sociert (IZS) wish to express our sincere thanks to all companies who have helped us to achieve so many successes at the Indianapolis Zoo and White River Gardens. (Connor and Gladkov, 2004:285).

Including personal pronouns gives the text a more realistic approach and influences the reader’s perception of its credibility. It is a way of interacting with the reader. If the text addresses the reader with “you”, the reader may feel as if they are seen and addressed directly. Using “we”, establishes a sense of belonging and inclusiveness (E5, personal pronouns) (Connor & Gladkvov, 2004:279). Only the posts where “you” emphasizes its personal sense of the pronoun have been counted to belong to feature number five, as in post (2) from Oxfam’s Facebook page where they address the reader through “tell us...” and “what is your...”.

- (2) As India celebrates 70 years of #Independence, share this Oxfam India post, and let us pledge to break free from the shackles of patriarchy. Tell us below...WHAT IS YOUR #FforFreedom?

*Similitude* (E6) emphasizes the similarities between the author and reader, which complements the author's identity and establishes a common ground between the two. It can be expressed through "you and I", "together", etc. Quotes emphasize the text's credibility as it refers to another source and is used to support the text (E7) (Higgins & Walker 2012:200f). Connor and Gladkov (2004:284) explain feature E8, *first-hand experience*, as information which comes directly from the writer's experience which establishes its credibility, illustrated in (3):

- (3) "Purdue has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. I was raised in West Lafayette. As I grew older, I realized more and more that Purdue isn't just a state institution; it is a public university. Moreover, it is a world-class university" (Connor and Gladkov, 2004:284).

*Pathos* emphasizes the use of emotions to persuade the reader. This is easier achieved if the author is aware of who their audience is and can therefore control the text's content towards their preferences (P1). It is applied when a text provides the effect the author wants the reader to experience. For example, if the reader is meant to feel nostalgic, the text should provide a memory (Connor & Gladkov, 2004:269). Photos and videos can be useful tools to achieve *pathos* as its creativity can evoke an interest. However, when only focusing on text a descriptive language can achieve the same effect. It can be created by using powerful and depicting adjectives to describe a situation such as "horrifying reality" or "incredible truth" (P2). *Figures of speech* (P3) are used to provide a clearer understanding and give a more descriptive language in a text. Examples of figures of speech are *metaphors* which are descriptions through comparisons, *similes* which also is a comparison but specifically using "like", "as", "seems", etc. and *puns*, which is a play on words that has more than one meaning (Study.com, *Figures of Speech: Definition, Types, Examples* [www]). Narratives and anecdotes (P4) make it easier for the reader to relate to a text, as it creates an emotion of recognition. Writing about a memory or an experience in common (P5) achieves the same response. For example stating that it is "the international day of peace" becomes an experience everyone can associate to. Referring to world news such as the terror attack on September 11<sup>th</sup> is counted as a memory. *Pathos* feature P6 (emotional examples) applies to a text that triggers the reader to laugh, cry, etc. It can be achieved through a joke for example. It involves the reader by connecting them emotionally (Connor & Gladkov, 2004:285f). *Rhetorical questions* engage the audience. Stating the answer to a question creates a way of persuasion where the audience is seduced to be involved and reflect upon the question or it can seduce them into a mutual agreement with the author (Halmari, 2005:116).

The research of this study started by categorizing the posts into the three appeals and further classified them with appropriate features which were matched through their attributes. This method examines the posts and their linguistic features to understand the persuasive strategy. It provides an understanding whether Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric has been used. Counting the instances in each appeal showed how the organizations used Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric and examined which appeal was the most prominent. It resulted in an understanding of the organizations' persuasive techniques. A comparison between the organizations and the two social media platforms could then be seen.

#### **4. Results**

The following section presents the results which are explained through examples and tables. The examples are posts from the organizations which indicate the appeals and their features. The section is divided between the four non-profit organizations. Furthermore, a comparison between the four organizations is presented with similarities and differences.

The results of the research are presented in two tables for each organization. One which presents the numbers and the percentages of each appeal and their combinations. Another which presents the results of the appeals' features. When an appeals' frequency is presented individually, the frequency of the appeal's features has been counted, hence the appeals may appear more than 25 times in the 25 posts per social media platform. The combinations consist of the appeals representation in the posts and the post can therefore only consist of one combination. For example, a post which contains the features E1, E2, E3, P4 and P5 results in the combination "*Ethos + Pathos*" where *ethos* is counted three times and *pathos* is counted two times, or a post which contain features E1, E2 and E3 is counted to belong to *ethos* three times and represented in the category "Single appeals". An appeal's individual percentage is calculated by its total number of appearance (which include the appearance of its features) and the percentage of the combinations are calculated by the total number of posts per social media platform (25).

The other table presents the results of the appeals' features. The tables are divided into three columns: a blue column which represents the organization's results from Facebook, green which represents the results from Twitter and a white column which illustrates the total results.

#### 4.1 Oxfam

In total, 118 appeals were found in Oxfam’s posts, as seen in Table 3.1 below. The 25 Facebook posts consist of 68 appeals which are more than the Twitter posts which had a total of 50. *Pathos* was the most prominent appeal on Facebook (42%) and *logos* on Twitter (38%).

**Table 3.1.** *Oxfam’s usage of Aristotle’s rhetorical appeals*

Oxfam appeals	Facebook	Twitter	Total	Combinations	Facebook	Twitter	Total
Ethos	23 (34%)	13 (26%)	36 (31%)	Ethos+Logos	2 (8%)	6 (24%)	8 (16%)
Logos	16 (24%)	19 (38%)	35 (30%)	Ethos+Pathos	9 (36%)	6 (24%)	15 (30%)
Pathos	29 (42%)	18 (36%)	47 (39%)	Logos+Pathos	3 (12%)	7 (28%)	10 (20%)
				Ethos+Logos+Pathos	8 (32%)	1 (4%)	9 (18%)
				Single appeals	3 (12%)	5 (20%)	8 (16%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>68 (100%)</b>	<b>50 (100%)</b>	<b>118 (100%)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>25 (100%)</b>	<b>25 (100%)</b>	<b>50 (100%)</b>

Aristotle pointed out that the appeals are used most effectively when combined in a text, where at least two appeals are combined (Bonn, n.d. [www]). In a total of nine posts they have used the full triangle of rhetoric, where eight are Facebook posts. Only 16% of Oxfam’s posts consist of single appeals; however they may contain multiple features. Table 3.2 presents Oxfam’s usage of the individual features of Aristotle’s rhetorical appeals in the posts.

**Table 3.2** *Oxfam’s number and percentage of each feature*

Logos Features	Facebook	Twitter	Total	Pathos Features	Facebook	Twitter	Total	Ethos Features	Facebook	Twitter	Total
L1	0 (0%)	5 (26%)	5 (14%)	P1	1 (4%)	2 (11%)	3 (6%)	E1	8 (35%)	6 (46%)	14 (39%)
L2	2 (13%)	1 (5%)	3 (9%)	P2	5 (17%)	7 (38%)	12 (26%)	E2	7 (30%)	2 (15%)	9 (25%)
L3	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	P3	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	E3	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
L4	8 (50%)	8 (42%)	16 (45%)	P4	9 (31%)	1 (6%)	10 (21%)	E4	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
L5	1 (6%)	2 (11%)	3 (9%)	P5	5 (17%)	3 (17%)	8 (17%)	E5	6 (26%)	4 (31%)	10 (28%)
L6	3 (18%)	3 (16%)	6 (17%)	P6	6 (21%)	1 (6%)	7 (15%)	E6	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
L7	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	2 (6%)	P7	3 (10%)	4 (22%)	7 (15%)	E7	2 (9%)	1 (8%)	3 (8%)
								E8	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>16 (100%)</b>	<b>19 (100%)</b>	<b>35 (100%)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>29 (100%)</b>	<b>18 (100%)</b>	<b>47 (100%)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>23 (100%)</b>	<b>13 (100%)</b>	<b>36 (100%)</b>

Oxfam tends to use *ethos* and *pathos* together the most (30% in total). In Facebook post (4) below Oxfam has used the combination *ethos* and *pathos*. It contains feature E7 (quote) and since the post tells a story about someone else’s life it also contains feature P4 (narratives/anecdotes).

- (4): “I decided to take the risk,” says Samir about his innovative Pometto Apple Chips business. The young entrepreneur quit his job and started his own project, with support from Oxfam. Jezzine’s apple farmers needed an innovative solution for their unused production. Pometto is a healthy alternative to wasting tonnes of apples every year.

Oxfam's posts on Twitter primarily contained the combination *logos* and *pathos* (28%), which is illustrated in (5) below.

- (5) March 2015: 10.6 million Yemenis without enough to eat Sept 2017: 17 million Yemenis without enough to eat This has to stop #YemenCrisis

Post (5) contains features L4 (facts, figures, numbers, statistics, etc.) and P2 (descriptive language). P2 is illustrated through the 'powerful' and expressive language such as "without enough to eat" and "This has to stop".

Feature P4 (narratives/anecdotes) is used the most in Oxfam's Facebook posts (31%) and is illustrated in (6) below. Oxfam uses the persuasive technique of telling a success story about somebody else but which has a connection to the organization. It makes the readers feel inspired and associate the positive thoughts from the story with the organization itself.

- (6) Take a moment to read the inspirational story of Shireen, who escaped the conflict & is now helping people just like her. Please <3 if you are inspired by Shireen!

Feature L4 (facts, numbers, statistics, etc.) is used in many of their Twitter posts (42%), for example in (7) below. The persuasion is noticeable as Oxfam provides six reasons for the reader to engage in the cause which enhances the argument.

- (7) 6 good reasons to track inequality in your country: <https://oxf.am/2u7x8KY> #FightInequality #EvenItUp

*Ethos* was the appeal used the least on Twitter and Oxfam has only used four of its features namely E1 (referring to authority), E2 (showing competence and consistency), E5 (personal pronouns) and E7 (quotes).

- (8) Together, we can against #inequality. Join us in demanding fairer taxes, better wages & more protection for workers: <http://oxf.am/EvenItUp>

Post (8) is from Oxfam's Twitter page where feature E5 (personal pronouns) is used. This feature enhances the connection with the followers by using inclusive pronouns such as "we" and "us". Oxfam connects the readers to its campaign for a certain cause which emphasizes the persuasion for both the organization and the cause.

#### **4.2 Greenpeace**

Greenpeace is the organization which has combined all three appeals the most (22% in total). Eleven of the posts contain Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric: nine are Facebook posts and two are from Twitter. This indicates a high level of persuasion according to Aristotle (Halmari &

Virtanen, 2005:3). Table 4.1 shows that out of the 25 Facebook posts examined there were 81 appeals found and *pathos* was the most prominent (41%). On Twitter, *pathos* was used 23 times (44%). The most prominent combination overall was *logos* and *pathos* (28%). Out of the 25 Facebook posts only 12% included one single appeal, compared to the Twitter posts which resulted in 36%.

**Table 4.1** *Greenpeace's usage of Aristotle's rhetorical appeals*

Greenpeace appeals	Facebook	Twitter	Total	Combinations	Facebook	Twitter	Total
<b>Ethos</b>	25 (31%)	7 (14%)	32 (24%)	<b>Ethos+Logos</b>	4 (16%)	2 (8%)	6 (12%)
<b>Logos</b>	23 (28%)	22 (42%)	45 (34%)	<b>Ethos+Pathos</b>	4 (16%)	3 (12%)	7 (14%)
<b>Pathos</b>	<b>33 (41%)</b>	<b>23 (44%)</b>	<b>56 (42%)</b>	<b>Logos+Pathos</b>	5 (20%)	<b>9 (36%)</b>	<b>14 (28%)</b>
				<b>Ethos+Logos+Pathos</b>	<b>9 (36%)</b>	2 (8%)	11 (22%)
				<b>Single appeals</b>	3 (12%)	<b>9 (36%)</b>	12 (24%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>81 (100%)</b>	<b>52 (100%)</b>	<b>133 (100%)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>25 (100%)</b>	<b>25 (100%)</b>	<b>50 (100%)</b>

32% of the posts including *pathos* applied to feature P6 (emotional examples). 34% of Greenpeace's posts include *logos* where L1 (declaratives sentences) and L4 (facts, figures, numbers, statistics, etc.) are used the most. E1 (referring to an authority or status) is the most preferred feature from *ethos* (45%). Table 4.2 presents Greenpeace's usage of each appeal's features.

**Table 4.2** *Greenpeace's number and percentage of each feature*

Logos Features	Facebook	Twitter	Total	Pathos Features	Facebook	Twitter	Total	Ethos Features	Facebook	Twitter	Total
<b>L1</b>	4 (17%)	6 (27%)	<b>10 (22%)</b>	<b>P1</b>	5 (15%)	4 (17%)	9 (16%)	<b>E1</b>	<b>9 (36%)</b>	<b>5 (71%)</b>	<b>14 (45%)</b>
<b>L2</b>	2 (9%)	1 (5%)	3 (8%)	<b>P2</b>	6 (18%)	3 (14%)	9 (16%)	<b>E2</b>	5 (20%)	0 (0%)	5 (14%)
<b>L3</b>	1 (4%)	1 (5%)	2 (4%)	<b>P3</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>E3</b>	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
<b>L4</b>	<b>6 (26%)</b>	4 (18%)	<b>10 (22%)</b>	<b>P4</b>	8 (24%)	1 (4%)	9 (16%)	<b>E4</b>	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	2 (6%)
<b>L5</b>	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	<b>P5</b>	2 (6%)	2 (8%)	4 (7%)	<b>E5</b>	4 (16%)	2 (29%)	6 (19%)
<b>L6</b>	2 (9%)	<b>7 (32%)</b>	9 (20%)	<b>P6</b>	<b>9 (28%)</b>	<b>9 (40%)</b>	<b>18 (32%)</b>	<b>E6</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>L7</b>	<b>6 (26%)</b>	3 (13%)	9 (20%)	<b>P7</b>	3 (9%)	4 (17%)	7 (13%)	<b>E7</b>	4 (16%)	0 (0%)	4 (13%)
								<b>E8</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>23 (100%)</b>	<b>22 (100%)</b>	<b>45 (100%)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>33 (100%)</b>	<b>23 (100%)</b>	<b>56 (100%)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>25 (100%)</b>	<b>7 (100%)</b>	<b>32 (100%)</b>

Post (9) below is an example of a Facebook post where all three appeals have been used and the post has therefore achieved the full potential of persuasion.

- (9) This beach near Manila in The Philippines was covered in cheap, disposable, single-use plastic. For over a week, Greenpeace volunteers cleaned it up to find out the companies responsible. Spot the difference? #BreakFreeFrom Plastic >><http://act.gp/2r2Kcyh>

Feature P6 (emotional examples) is found in the first sentence. Greenpeace aim to evoke emotions in the readers through setting a certain tone to the post by providing a descriptive example of a trashed beach. It evokes a feeling of disappointment of what the beach in

example (9) was like. It is illustrated by a “before photo” which is not included here since the text itself explains it. Further on, a more proud and inspiring tone continues as they describe what Greenpeace volunteers has accomplished. Greenpeace put themselves in a good light here when describing that they have cleaned the beach which presents evidence of their good intention and action; E2 (showing competence and consistency). The rhetorical question “Spot the difference?” (P7) is an enthymeme (L3). The enthymeme is created by the two facts; first the beach was covered in plastic and then cleaned, which has the implied answer that there is a difference “spotted”. The rhetorical question establishes a mutual agreement and interaction between the readers and Greenpeace. All three appeals in Aristotle’s triangle of rhetoric are applied through the arouse of reactions and emotions in the reader (*pathos*), shown of the organization’s competence (*ethos*) and in the structure of the post (*logos*).

*Logos* has a high result in Greenpeace’s posts on Twitter (42%). (10) below include two of the appeal’s features.

- (10) This is a place where nothing will ever grow. It is a tundra covered with a layer of oil.  
<http://act.gp/2yj1Kwy>

Example (10) consists of L6 (scientific research) and L1 (declarative sentences) from *logos*. The post also includes P6 (emotional examples). It is found in the post’s first sentence which has a dramatic tone that triggers feelings of both disappointment and worry. Greenpeace has used feature P6 (emotional examples) the most both on Twitter and Facebook. Example (11) below from Twitter, demonstrates this through its word choices. The post also includes the two other appeals: *ethos*, E1 (referring to authority or status) and *logos*, L6 (scientific research). This indicates, again, that they have applied Aristotle’s triangle of rhetoric.

- (11) Recent news of penguins starving to death is a sign that something’s very wrong in the Antarctic, says @johnsauven <http://act.gp/2yMKiSy>

Greenpeace stands out as they have used the most appeals in total in their posts. They have applied Aristotle’s triangle of rhetoric the most compared to the other organizations.

### 4.3 UNICEF

In total UNICEF has used 97 features in their social media posts. The posts on Facebook included 42 features and on Twitter 55. *Pathos* was the appeal used the most. *Logos* has a lower frequency on Facebook (10%) compared to on Twitter (24%). This is also illustrated in their use of combinations. The Facebook posts only had one combination which included *logos*. On Twitter *logos* was combined in eight posts. UNICEF has not used the full triangle

of rhetoric in any of their posts, which resulted in a higher usage of the appeals individually (48%). Table 5.1 illustrates the number of appeals and combinations used in their posts.

**Table 5.1** UNICEF’s usage of Aristotle’s rhetorical appeals

UNICEF appeals	Facebook	Twitter	Total	Combinations	Facebook	Twitter	Total
<b>Ethos</b>	14 (33%)	15 (27%)	29 (30%)	<b>Ethos+Logos</b>	1 (4%)	5 (20%)	6 (12%)
<b>Logos</b>	4 (10%)	13 (24%)	17 (18%)	<b>Ethos+Pathos</b>	<b>12 (48%)</b>	5 (20%)	17 (34%)
<b>Pathos</b>	<b>24 (57%)</b>	<b>27 (49%)</b>	<b>51 (52%)</b>	<b>Logos+Pathos</b>	0 (0%)	3 (12%)	3 (6%)
				<b>Ethos+Logos+Pathos</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
				<b>Single appeals</b>	<b>12 (48%)</b>	<b>12 (48%)</b>	<b>24 (48%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	42 (100%)	55 (100%)	97 (100%)	<b>Total</b>	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	50 (100%)

On Facebook, *pathos* was used effectively and the combination *pathos* and *ethos* was dominant which post (13) below exemplify.

- (13) Today, Malala visited girls at a UNICEF Nigeria-supported school for children displaced by the Boko Haram crisis in northeast Nigeria. Her message? For girls to continue their education and follow their dreams.

In post (13) UNICEF refers to Malala who is a person perceived to have a high status which applies to feature E1 (referring to authority or status). E1 is used in order to add credibility to the statement. When Malala’s supporters see that UNICEF has mentioned her in its post they will associate the positive associations they have for Malala, also with UNICEF. Post (13) ends with a rhetorical question, feature P7.

Feature E1 (referring to authority or status) is the most prominent feature used on Twitter (59%) as seen in post (14) where they describe the actor Orlando Bloom’s involvement in the organization.

- (14) #FlashbackFriday: Goodwill Ambassador Orlando Bloom in Niger. RT to join 5m actions in support of #ChildrenUprooted.

UNICEF tends to use Aristotle’s appeals individually often (48%). It was common that only one appeal but several features were used in their posts. Table 5.2 illustrates UNICEF’s usage of the features in their posts on social media.

**Table 5.2 UNICEF's number and percentage of each feature**

Logos Features				Pathos Features				Ethos Features			
	Facebook	Twitter	Total		Facebook	Twitter	Total		Facebook	Twitter	Total
L1	1 (25%)	2 (15%)	3 (17%)	P1	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	E1	7 (50%)	9 (59%)	16 (55%)
L2	1 (25%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	P2	4 (17%)	8 (30%)	12 (24%)	E2	2 (14%)	1 (7%)	3 (10%)
L3	1 (25%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	P3	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	1 (2%)	E3	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
L4	0 (0%)	2 (15%)	2 (12%)	P4	13 (54%)	8 (30%)	21 (41%)	E4	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
L5	0 (0%)	3 (24%)	3 (17%)	P5	4 (17%)	2 (7%)	6 (12%)	E5	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	2 (7%)
L6	0 (0%)	2 (15%)	2 (12%)	P6	1 (4%)	6 (22%)	7 (14%)	E6	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
L7	1 (25%)	4 (31%)	5 (30%)	P7	1 (4%)	2 (7%)	3 (5%)	E7	4 (29%)	3 (20%)	7 (24%)
								E8	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	1 (4%)
<b>Total</b>	4 (100%)	13 (100%)	17 (100%)	<b>Total</b>	24 (100%)	27 (100%)	51 (100%)	<b>Total</b>	14 (100%)	15 (100%)	29 (100%)

In total, feature L7 (cause-means-consequences), P4 (narratives/anecdotes) and E1 (referring to an authority or status) are the features used the most on the two social media platforms. *Logos* is the appeal used the least although they have applied all features from it at least once.

(15) Since 1988, polio cases have dropped by 99.99%. Find out how far we've come:

Example (15) includes feature L5 (referring to historical events and background) as they mention the history of polio. It also applies to feature L4 (facts, figures, numbers, statistics etc.) and E2 (showing competence and consistency) since they encourage their followers to read more about how far UNICEF has come since 1988.

(16) Climate change is like a thief in the night. Profound words from Timoci, 12, who will speak to world leaders at #COP23. @unicefpacific

Post (16) above includes E7 (quotes) and E1 (referring to an authority or status) as UNICEF has included a quote from a child-speaker at an event. The post consists of feature P3 (figures of speech). It includes a *simile* through the comparison of what climate change is like. This simile evokes emotions such as sadness and empathy in the readers P6 (emotional examples). UNICEF's high usage of *pathos* has resulted in them using all seven features at some point on both Facebook and Twitter. On Facebook they have used all features except P3 (figures of speech). Feature P4 (narratives) has the pre-eminent frequency (54%). UNICEF has a high usage of *ethos* both on Facebook and Twitter (29%) although most of them apply to E1 (referring to authority or status) (55%). This might be because many of their posts refer to leaders or ambassadors of either the UN or UNICEF.

#### 4.4 WWF

*Pathos* is the preferred appeal on both Facebook and Twitter for WWF (48%). *Ethos* is used the least on Facebook (11%) and *logos* the least on Twitter (24%). The combination of *logos* and *pathos* is often presented in WWF's Facebook posts (52%). On Twitter the combination *ethos* and *pathos* is more preferred (28%) but using the appeals individually is dominant

(60%). WWF has included all three appeals in three of their posts. Table 6.1 presents WWF’s usage of the appeals in their posts.

**Table 6.1.** WWF’s usage of Aristotle’s rhetorical appeals

WWF appeals	Facebook	Twitter	Total	Combinations	Facebook	Twitter	Total
<b>Ethos</b>	7 (11%)	16 (35%)	23 (22%)	<b>Ethos+Logos</b>	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
<b>Logos</b>	22 (36%)	11 (24%)	33 (30%)	<b>Ethos+Pathos</b>	1 (4%)	7 (28%)	8 (16%)
<b>Pathos</b>	<b>33 (53%)</b>	<b>19 (41%)</b>	<b>52 (48%)</b>	<b>Logos+Pathos</b>	<b>13 (52%)</b>	2 (8%)	15 (30%)
				<b>Ethos+Logos+Pathos</b>	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	3 (6%)
				<b>Single appeals</b>	10 (40%)	<b>15 (60%)</b>	<b>23 (46%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	62 (100%)	46 (100%)	108 (100%)	<b>Total</b>	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	50 (100%)

WWF has used many of the three appeals’ features. *Ethos* is used the least but they have dominantly used its feature E1 (referring to authority or higher status) (50%). *Pathos* which is the most commonly used appeal have a high usage of its features P2 (descriptive language) and P5 (referring to a memory or a common experience) on Facebook. WWF is the organization that has the highest frequency of P5 in total. Table 6.2 presents WWF’s individual usage of the features from the three appeals.

**Table 6.2** WWF’s number and percentage of each feature

Logos Features	Facebook	Twitter	Total	Pathos Features	Facebook	Twitter	Total	Ethos Features	Facebook	Twitter	Total
<b>L1</b>	2 (9%)	2 (18%)	4 (12%)	<b>P1</b>	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	1 (2%)	<b>E1</b>	<b>3 (44%)</b>	<b>9 (57%)</b>	<b>12 (50%)</b>
<b>L2</b>	3 (13%)	1 (9%)	4 (12%)	<b>P2</b>	<b>10 (30%)</b>	0 (0%)	10 (20%)	<b>E2</b>	1 (14%)	1 (6%)	3 (13%)
<b>L3</b>	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	<b>P3</b>	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	1 (2%)	<b>E3</b>	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	1 (4%)
<b>L4</b>	5 (23%)	<b>4 (37%)</b>	9 (27%)	<b>P4</b>	3 (9%)	4 (21%)	7 (13%)	<b>E4</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>L5</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>P5</b>	<b>10 (30%)</b>	7 (37%)	<b>17 (32%)</b>	<b>E5</b>	1 (14%)	4 (25%)	5 (21%)
<b>L6</b>	2 (9%)	1 (9%)	3 (9%)	<b>P6</b>	3 (9%)	1 (5%)	4 (8%)	<b>E6</b>	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	1 (4%)
<b>L7</b>	<b>9 (41%)</b>	3 (27%)	<b>12 (36%)</b>	<b>P7</b>	7 (22%)	5 (27%)	12 (23%)	<b>E7</b>	1 (14%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)
								<b>E8</b>	1 (14%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)
<b>Total</b>	22 (100%)	11 (100%)	33 (100%)	<b>Total</b>	33 (100%)	19 (100%)	52 (100%)	<b>Total</b>	7 (100%)	16 (100%)	24 (100%)

Post (17) below includes both features P2 (descriptive language) and P5 (referring to a memory or an experience in common). The post refers to a memory which many on Earth can associate to, namely the ocean. The descriptive language WWF has used consists of the “powerful” words as “exploited” and “the way they once were”, etc. which give rise to emotions.

(17) The oceans are being exploited. If we all contribute a little bit, we can bring the oceans back to the way they once were. Visit [www.oceanwitness.org](http://www.oceanwitness.org) and become an #Oceanwitness

*Pathos* combined with *logos* is WWF’s preferred combination on Facebook (52%). Post (18) below illustrates this combination and includes features P7, L4, L2 and L7.

- (18) Why should you take climate action? #WWFlivegreen Reason 2/3: To protect the amazing biodiversity of our planet! For example, climate change is negatively affecting the habitats of snow leopards. We share the earth with magnificent creatures which are impacted by our every action - we must act now to protect our planet, its wildlife and humanity. Are you convinced yet? Stick around for reason #3 tomorrow!

In order to engage their readers, they have started post (18) with P7 (rhetorical question). The post is structured through numerical sequences which applies to L4 (facts, figures, statistics, etc.). The language used is clearly understandable through examples and no use of complex words (L2, clear and understandable language). Feature L7 (cause-means-consequences) is obvious in the post's structure, as it provides reasons for the matter, how, and why people should take action to protect the planet.

The combination *ethos* and *pathos* was preferably used on Twitter where its result indicated 28%.

- (19) A great ocean witness story for Impac4: Emanuel is a fisherman, championing #MPA and fighting to save our ocean [oceanwitness.org](http://oceanwitness.org)

Example (19) applies to features P4 (narratives/anecdotes) as the post includes a story about somebody else's experience and E1 (referring to an authority or status) who is the fisherman Emanuel in this matter.

WWF's preferred appeal is *pathos* (48%) and more specifically feature P5 (referring to a common memory or an experience in common) (32%). In many of the posts WWF refers to "international days", which become a common occurrence for everyone on Earth. This is illustrated in their Twitter post (20) below.

- (20) Today is International day of #ClimateAction! What have you done to help fight #ClimateChange? Share it with us in 10 words! #WWFlivegreen

In post (20) they have stated that it is the "International day of Climate Action" and persuades the followers to support this day by explaining what they have done for the cause.

- (21) It's #WorldOrangutanDay! DYK that orang-utan means 'person of the forest' in the Malay language? Unfortunately, habitat loss, especially deforestation to make way for palm oil plantations is putting the survival of this animal, and many of our amazing wildlife at risk. Learn more: [Link](#)

Facebook post (21) above consists of the combination *logos* and *pathos*. It includes L6 (scientific research) which is applied by the research about the survival of the orangutans explained in the post. Aristotle argues that when presenting the truth in an argument, it reaches its persuasive effect (Connor and Gladkov 2004:265). The post also includes feature P7 (rhetorical questions).

#### 4.5 Comparison of the appeals on the two social media platforms

In total 457 instances of the appeals were found in the 200 posts analyzed. The results showed that *pathos* is the most prominent appeal overall (45%). In total, Greenpeace is the organization who has used the most appeals in their posts. The appeals are dominantly used in combinations but they are used individually as well, especially on Twitter (41%). In most cases the Facebook posts included more appeals than the Twitter posts. This may be because Facebook allows longer texts and the posts can therefore be more elaborated and include more appeals. Table 7.1 presents a comparison between the organizations' total usage of the appeals on Facebook and Twitter.

**Table 7.1.** Comparison of the usage of the appeals on the two social media platforms

	Facebook	Twitter	Total
Ethos	70 (28%)	51 (25%)	121 (26%)
Logos	65 (26%)	65 (32%)	130 (28%)
Pathos	<b>119 (47%)</b>	<b>87 (43%)</b>	<b>206 (45%)</b>
<i>Total</i>	<i>254 (100%)</i>	<i>203 (100%)</i>	<i>457 (100%)</i>
Ethos+Logos	8 (8%)	13 (13%)	21 (11%)
Ethos+Pathos	<b>26 (26%)</b>	21 (21%)	47 (24%)
Logos+Pathos	21 (21%)	21 (21%)	42 (21%)
Ethos+Logos+Pathos	19 (19%)	4 (4%)	23 (12%)
Single Appeals	<b>26 (26%)</b>	<b>41 (41%)</b>	<b>67 (34%)</b>

The Twitter posts had a higher usage of *logos* (32%) than the Facebook post (26%). It may be easier to present features of *logos* in shorter texts. The persuasion is then achieved through the rational and convincing effect from numbers or statistics for example. *Ethos* and *pathos* is the most preferred combination to use in total on both social media platforms (24%). As the non-profit organizations are concerned with matters where it is common for people to be emotionally involved, it is reasonable that *pathos* is the appeal used the most. *Ethos* is a way for the organizations to show their competence and credibility which is important to prove if their followers will donate or be involved with the organization's work. *Ethos* is an important appeal to include as it may increase the organization's followers to stay with them.

In total 12% of the non-profit organizations' posts included Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric. 19% of the Facebook posts included all three appeals, and 4% on Twitter. This results in the conclusion that in order to be able to express full persuasion in a post, according to Aristotle, it is necessary not to have a word limit, such as Twitter's. Apart from this, no major differences between the social media platforms were found. The way that the organizations have used the appeals and features on the two social media platforms does not indicate a greater difference.

## 5. Discussion

With the Internet allowing anyone to easily publish a text it is important to question what it is truly saying and who the author is. This does not only apply to facts or news but also to advertisements and social media posts. If a text is persuasive and in that case to whom and how are necessary questions to keep in mind. These questions have been in focus when analyzing the non-profit organizations' posts in this study. Results show that Aristotle's rhetorical appeals stimulate emotions (*pathos*), assure credibility (*ethos*) and/or offer convincing evidence (*logos*) in all the posts analyzed. The appeals are either used individually or in combinations. Some posts have full persuasion due to their organization's usage of Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric (12% of the 200 posts) whereas some posts only include certain features but which still is used in a persuasive way. 34% of the posts include one individual appeal and 66% include more than one appeal (combinations). Higgins and Walker's (2004:195) results showed that when a business used Aristotle's rhetorical appeals, it indicated a better understanding of how that business has a more credible and rational approach. The outcome of their results may be the same reason why the non-profit organizations have used the appeals of Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric in their posts. The fact that all 200 posts analyzed contained at least one of the three appeals proves the organizations' usage of a persuasive language. The use of more than one appeal in a post makes the persuasion powerful. Three out of the four organizations have used Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric more than once. Although the full extent of Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric was not used as frequently as expected, the strategy seems to have been thought of by the organizations since they have used two appeals and multiple features often in their posts. The organizations therefore seem to strive to use Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric. Most of them have achieved this a couple of times, although focus has not been on using all three appeals in the same post. No specific patterns of how the organizations have used the appeals were noticed, apart from *pathos* being a preferred appeal to use. *Pathos* had overall a high frequency both on Facebook (47%) and Twitter (43%). It may be seen as a more complex appeal than the others, as it refers to emotions which demand explanations in order to be expressed correctly. To persuade an audience through emotions is an effective strategy for non-profit organizations due to its emotional characteristics, which may explain the high result of the appeal in the posts. Aristotle observed that when an audience receive certain emotions, they get a different reaction to respond to the text. An eager audience will perceive a proposal as more valuable than an audience who are distrustful and will therefore have the opposite approach (Connor & Gladkov, 2004:268). Connor and Gladkov's results indicated

that their examined fundraising letters used *logos* the most. The combination of using *pathos* together with *logos* creates emotions in the reader and through *logos* supports the reasoning of the post, which makes it convincing (ibid 271). This is seen in WWF's Facebook post (18) for example. *Pathos* and *logos* was WWF's preferred combination on Facebook (52%).

This study showed that *pathos* had the highest frequency in total and it is the appeal argued to be most frequently used in advertising texts (Halmari and Virtanen 2005:5f). Social media posts can be used as a tool for the non-profit organizations to advertise their organizations and work. Berlanga et al. (2013:3ff) confirm *pathos* to be a dominant appeal used on social media due to the acknowledgements sought and achieved through likes, and shares which posts receive. *Logos* is the appeal which Berlanga et al. (2013:5ff) claim to be out of place on social media platforms such as Facebook, however if combined with another appeal it is more appropriate. The appearance of *logos* on Facebook is low (26%), but on Twitter it is more average (32%).

Certain features of the appeals establish a connection between the followers and the organization. *Pathos* feature P7 (rhetorical questions) engages the reader through its way of triggering a reaction of wanting to answer the question and it may persuade the reader into agreeing easier with the author. Politicians use Twitter to support their political campaigns to establish a stronger relationship with their voters (Johnson, 2012:54). These non-profit organizations might have used Twitter as a tool in their campaigns to establish a better connection with their followers which persuades them to feel a connection. The usage of Twitter helps to persuade the reader. This was illustrated earlier in post (8) from Oxfam's Twitter page which includes the promotion of a campaign through the usage of E5 (personal pronouns).

UNICEF are the only organization who have not used the full triangle of rhetoric in any of their posts. They tend to use the appeals more individually compared to the other organizations. A reason for that might be that they have a deeper focus in their posts, where they are explaining further and concentrating on facts (*logos*) for example or on a personal story (*pathos*), etc. focusing on only one appeal's feature and characteristics. Greenpeace has completed Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric the most, especially on Facebook (36%). The difference between the social media platforms was that the Facebook posts most often contained more than one appeal (74%) and the Twitter posts more often only contained a single appeal (41%). Since Twitter only allow a certain amount of text, it was not a surprising result. The word limit gives the organizations a restriction on how and what they can write in their posts. A popular feature for all the organizations was E1 (referring to an authority or

status). It is used to give an image that the organization is related to the person mentioned which may create a reaction with the follower of the person mentioned to start to support the organization as well (Connor & Gladkov 2004:263). It was used to refer to a celebrity who supports the organization (see example 14) or an expert who made an utterance concerning a matter the organization focused on (see example 19).

Greenpeace and WWF who focus more on the environment and nature showed a higher frequency of using the combination *logos* and *pathos* compared to Oxfam and UNICEF who focus more on humanitarian aid, and preferred *ethos* combined with *pathos*. A conclusion may be that it is more comprehensible when stating facts and numbers (*logos*) to something concrete such as nature compared to emotional expressions associated to humanitarian aid hence the usage of *ethos*.

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine if non-profit organizations persuade their audience on Facebook and Twitter and to understand how and what linguistic means were used in order to do this. The two social media platforms were also compared to each other. The persuasion was examined using Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric which depicted the appeals presence in the posts. All three of Aristotle's appeals are important when persuading a public through a text as they are necessary to raise an understanding and interest of the issue concerned. *Ethos* is vital to include as it represents trust in the relationship between author and reader, without its credibility the text could be perceived as false. *Ethos* was present in the post through the fact that its features gave the organizations a character (E2, E3, E5, E6, and E8) and achieved their credibility showing connections with outside sources (E1, E4, E5, and E7). *Logos* is equally important in its way of providing information (L2, L4, L5, and L6) and a logic structure in a post (L1, L3, and L7). The focus on the rational and logical thinking is per se a method of persuasion. People often strive to find answers for things to make sense where *logos* is the tool assisting to achieve it. *Pathos* way of affecting people's emotions (P1, P3, P5, P6, and P7) and using a rich and descriptive language (P2, P4, and P5) results in its persuasion. The usage of *pathos* might be what actually trigger the audience's action as it moves people's emotions. The action is in this case a donation, response or support to the non-profit organization. *Pathos* was the most common appeal in the non-profit organization's posts.

The results revealed that the organizations do not focus on including all three appeals in their posts but tend to include features from at least one and often two of the appeals. The results indicated that it seemed to be a challenge for the organizations to include more than

two appeals in their Twitter posts due to its word limitation. This limitation of appeals and words is the major difference between the two social media platforms. Overall, the individually used appeals *pathos* or *ethos* were more prominent on Facebook. Twitter used *pathos* or *logos* the most. A conclusion is that the features of *logos* are easier to express in fewer words. One can argue that the language used to present *logos* is more direct as it does not include emotions which often need to be explained further.

The method in this study gave an understanding how each appeal was depicted in the posts and gave the result of the organizations' persuasive strategy which seems to be to include at least one or two of the appeals in each post and often to refer to emotions or find connections. The two typologies (Connor & Gladkov, 2004, and Higgins & Walker, 2012) were a great support to conduct this study in order to apply Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric. The adjustments of the tables were necessary as the material in this study is from the Internet. There are linguistic differences in social media posts online and their researches on offline communication in the form of reports, letters, etc. It was a challenge to know what features should be removed or added not to make the typology include too much nor be too narrow to be able to be applied correctly. Since this study only focused on the rhetoric of the texts in the posts, a recommendation for further studies is to also analyze multimedia links included in the social media posts and to examine their persuasive effect. To determine whether or not the multimedia affected the appeals, and to understand if the posts would be different without them was also a challenge. Another suggestion for future research is to study the reactions of the posts such as the likes, shares, and comments, and through those determine their effect and persuasion.

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