

**T.C.
BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

**CONTENT MARKETING AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CUSTOMER
ENGAGEMENT**



**MASTER'S THESIS
Badreddine KHARRO**

ISTANBUL 2023

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

CONTENT MARKETING AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

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Master's Program in BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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This study investigates the impact of content marketing on online customer behaviors, focusing on Facebook as a primary platform. Content marketing is essential for modern communication strategies, but academic research in this area is limited, relying heavily on commercial reports. To fill this gap, this research explores content relevance in sponsorship activation strategies and its effect on online customer engagement.

Four key variables: content type, relevance, perception, and engagement are analyzed to understand Facebook content's influence on customer behavior and perception of sponsored material. To illustrate this, a multinational pharmaceutical company's marketing campaign is studied, addressing the asthma crisis and raising awareness.

Data is collected using a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative insights come from Facebook Studio, providing campaign metrics and audience engagement data. Qualitative data is collected through a focus group, including individuals with respiratory conditions. The findings emphasize content relevance's role in shaping customer perceptions and engagement, vital for successful sponsorship activation.

Additionally, the study examines the influence of publication relevance on customer engagement, highlighting content relevance as the primary driver of engagement behaviors. By analyzing content relevance on Facebook, this research contributes to

understanding content marketing on social networks and provides insights to optimize strategies.

Finally, this study addresses the research problem of content relevance in sponsorship activation on Facebook. Analyzing those four key variables offers valuable insights and recommendations to enhance content marketing strategies on social platforms, emphasizing the importance of relevant content, especially on Facebook, contributes to understanding its impact on social media.

Keywords: Content marketing, Facebook, Relevance, Perception, Engagement.

ÖZ

İÇERİK PAZARLAMASI VE MÜŞTERİ ETKİLEŞİMİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

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Bu çalışma, birincil platform olarak Facebook'a odaklanarak içerik pazarlamasının çevrimiçi müşteri davranışları üzerindeki etkisini araştırmaktadır. İçerik pazarlaması modern iletişim stratejileri için çok önemlidir, ancak bu alandaki akademik araştırmalar sınırlıdır ve büyük ölçüde ticari raporlara dayanmaktadır. Bu boşluğu doldurmak amacıyla bu araştırma, sponsorluk aktivasyon stratejilerinde içeriğin uygunluğunu ve bunun çevrimiçi müşteri katılımı üzerindeki etkisini araştırmaktadır.

Facebook içeriğinin müşteri davranışı ve sponsorlu materyal algısı üzerindeki etkisini anlamak için içerik türü, alaka düzeyi, algı ve etkileşim olmak üzere dört temel değişken analiz edilmiştir. Bunu örneklemek için, çok uluslu bir ilaç şirketinin astım krizini ele alan ve farkındalığı artıran pazarlama kampanyası incelenmiştir.

Veriler karma yöntem yaklaşımı kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Nicel içgörüler, kampanya ölçümleri ve kitle etkileşim verileri sağlayan Facebook Studio'dan gelmektedir. Nitel veriler ise solunum rahatsızlığı olan bireyleri içeren bir odak grup aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Bulgular, başarılı bir sponsorluk aktivasyonu için hayati önem taşıyan müşteri algılarını ve katılımını şekillendirmede içerik uygunluğunun rolünü vurgulamaktadır.

Buna ek olarak, çalışma yayın alaka düzeyinin müşteri katılımı üzerindeki etkisini inceliyor ve içerik alaka düzeyinin katılım davranışlarının birincil itici gücü olduğunu

vurguluyor. Facebook'ta ierik alaka dzeyini analiz eden bu arařtırma, sosyal ađlarda ierik pazarlamasını anlamaya katkıda bulunmakta ve stratejileri optimize etmek iin igrler sađlamaktadır.

Son olarak, bu alıřma Facebook'ta sponsorluk aktivasyonunda ierik uygunluđu arařtırma problemini ele almaktadır. Bu drt temel deđiřkenin analiz edilmesi, sosyal platformlarda ierik pazarlama stratejilerini geliřtirmek iin deđerli igrler ve neriler sunmakta, zellikle Facebook'ta alakalı ieriđin nemini vurgulayarak sosyal medya zerindeki etkisinin anlařılmasına katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İerik pazarlaması, Facebook, Alaka dzeyi, Algı, Etkileřim.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Marketers prioritize content marketing as their top online activity, as per a study conducted by eMarketer in 2016. This strategy is a modernized version of traditional marketing tailored to suit present-day society (Mallet et al. 2013). In the past, the objective of marketing was to target individuals to generate a desire for a particular product or service (Gunelius, 2011). However, the excessive practices of conventional marketing led to an overflow of advertisements, which ultimately caused customer weariness. This situation made it challenging for a company to distinguish itself through its communication approach.

Therefore, in this contemporary landscape, content marketing emerges as the "sole remaining marketing" strategy (Godin, as cited in Pulizzi, 2008, p. 1).

According to its definition, content marketing entails "a marketing approach of generating and disseminating relevant and high-quality material to allure, acquire, and involve a target audience in order to generate profitable customer action." (Content Marketing Institute, 2016b, p.1). In other words, it embodies the art of communication without the explicit act of selling. This marketing technique inherently attracts customers by publishing valuable content that is pertinent to their inquiries, thereby fulfilling their requirements (Baltes, 2015). As a result, the primary objective of content marketing shifts from selling to assisting and educating (Jefferson & Tanton, 2013). It is a comprehensive and enduring strategy that aims to captivate customers (Gupta, 2015) by offering tailored content that aligns their needs with the goals of the company (Cohen, 2011). In 2017, over 70% of companies expressed their intention to increase their creation of content marketing compared to the previous year (Content Marketing Institute, 2016a).

The proliferation of content marketing has occurred in several sectors, including sponsorship. Companies use it as an advertising medium to bring a new form of visibility for the brand (Ruel, 2014) and, thus, promote interactions with customers (Bowdin et al., 2006). Among the different forms that this can take is event sponsorship. Evolving with trends, the sponsorship industry is experiencing significant changes in brand activation

strategies (Ruel, 2014). According to the IEG Sponsorship Report, a sponsorship activation is, by definition, " In addition to the rights fee given to the sponsored property, a firm may spend additional funds on activation and marketing to promote their sponsorship." (O'Reilly & Homing 2013 p. 426). In other words, activating a brand brings it to life. In the latest sponsorship industry report, branded content creation is the activation tactic that would bring the best results for companies. Thus, content marketing is the solution to successful sponsorship (Ruel, 2104).

When it comes to content marketing can only be approached by incorporating social media. In fact, according to a study by the Content Marketing Institute (2016a), 85% of marketers say that social media represents their primary method of using content marketing. These platforms are growing in popularity, driving business interest (Luarn et al., 2015). Specifically, social networks account for 19% of all screen time (Coëffe, 2016). Most social network users use Facebook, making it one of the most popular social networks (eMarketer, 2015). It is also the most used platform by marketers for content marketing delivery (Content Marketing Institute, 2015).

Social networking platforms have emerged as the primary medium for information dissemination (eMarketer, 2016a). Consequently, advertising has gained significant prominence in these channels in recent times. In 2016, expenditure on advertising within social networks witnessed a growth of 16%, reflecting a 2% increase from the previous year (eMarketer, 2016b). Consequently, many enterprises perceive social networks as a novel and unparalleled avenue for nurturing customer connections (Angeles Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2014). Furthermore, several research studies have presented evidence of the favorable impact of social networks on customer engagement behaviors (Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Yang et al., 2016).

However, even though companies recognize the importance of having their presence on social networks (Levy, 2010), most have the main challenge of using them effectively (Hanna et al., 2011). In relation to content marketing on social networks, one of the major obstacles reported by 49% of marketers is the lack of a comprehensive strategy (Content Marketing Institute, 2016a). This assertion is reinforced by East (2016, p. 45), who suggests that "although content marketing may seem like a straightforward concept at its core, it does not necessarily equate to being effortless to execute

successfully.". This issue is also felt in the sponsorship industry, where sponsors will demand a minimum number of posts on the social network of the sponsored property. This raises several questions. How do you properly implement a content marketing strategy? How do you create relevant communications to maintain a long-term relationship and engage customers with the brand?

Despite the growing interest in utilizing content marketing on social networks as a means to engage customers, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there still needs to be more studies exploring this area. Previous research pertaining to social networks has predominantly focused on the analysis of posts shared on company pages and their impact on customer responses (Khan et al., 2016). Investigations into these publications have centered on various characteristics, including media type and content type (De Vries et al., 2012; Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Sabate et al., 2014; Tafesse, 2015). However, the concept of relevance, which denotes "the perceived pertinence of a message to the recipient, based on their goals, values, and interests" (Andrews et al., 1990, p. 31), remains unexplored as the primary attribute of a publication and its influence on customer engagement. No study has specifically examined the effects of publication relevance on customer engagement.

This research investigates how content marketing during sponsorship activation affects customer engagement behaviors. In addition, the study examines how a company's social media publications influence customer online behavior and perception.

From an academic perspective, this research tries to analyze and elaborate on this subject, in a better way, from a new perspective and enhances our comprehension of content marketing and its association with relevance. Furthermore, it serves as a significant contribution to the field of social networks, specifically focusing on social media, by examining the impact of publication relevance on customers' online engagement behaviors. It also addresses potential avenues for future research on this subject. This analysis will provide insights into the type of content posted on social media that influences customer engagement, considering the product category. Also, this study

validates the correlation between customer engagement and other marketing concepts, including relevance.

At a managerial level, this study highlights that content marketing has the potential to amplify customer engagement online's behaviors. Additionally, it underscores the significance of ensuring the relevance of content in communication strategies.



CHAPTER 2:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This section introduces the theoretical underpinnings of the principles that form the basis of this study, which aims to illustrate the impact of content marketing on customer engagement behaviors. The review of existing literature commences with an exploration of social media and networks, followed by an examination of content marketing, relevance, and engagement.

2.1.Social media and social networks:

2.1.1. Social media:

First and foremost, it is essential to mention that media is, by definition, a medium that allows the dissemination of information (Larousse, 2012). Therefore, social media platforms are digital channels characterized by interactive communication that facilitates the sharing of various forms of content, such as images, videos, thoughts, viewpoints, interests, and news, among others (Drury, 2008). These channels encompass diverse mediums through which content can be transmitted, including blogs, vlogs, podcasts (e.g., Flickr), forums, social bookmarking platforms (e.g., Del.icio.us), social networking sites (e.g., Facebook), and more...

Several definitions have been proposed in the literature to define social media (Su et al., 2015). The description chosen in this study is provided by Ahlqvist et al. (2010, p. 4), i.e., "the method through which individuals communicate through the creation, sharing, exchange, and commenting on the material in online communities and networks." Kaplan and Haelein (2010) proposed a classification of social media along two dimensions: social presence/media richness and self-presentation/self-disclosure.

2.1.1.1. Changes in marketing practices and strategies in social media:

The rise of social networking platforms, which has gained widespread acceptance among enterprises and consumers alike (Tafesse, 2015), has brought about a revolution in marketing methodologies and approaches (Boyd & Ellison, 2007), particularly in the domain of communication (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2014). Unlike traditional media such as print, television, and radio, social media allows the receiver to interact (Angeles Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2014). Indeed, the concept of interaction differentiates social media from traditional communication tools. Before the arrival of digital, communication was unidirectional from the company to the customer, where the latter acted as a message receiver (Muk, 2013). Nevertheless, customers have transitioned into active participants who can now actively engage in communication processes. This shift has resulted in what is commonly referred to as two-way communication, fostering interaction between brands and their audiences (Drury, 2008). Consequently, this transformation has fundamentally altered the dynamic between companies and customers, with the latter now being recognized as co-creators (Sawhney et al., 2005). In fact, the interactions between companies and customers generate value for the brand, particularly when customers engage with publications (Sashi, 2012).

In addition, social media has brought about a paradigm shift in the dynamics between businesses and customers, as well as in customer communication practices (Parsons, 2013). These dynamic and interactive platforms empower customers to seek information, share it, and express their opinions with fellow internet users. With the emergence of these platforms, companies no longer have exclusive control over the initial dissemination of information (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Previously, they dictated the "where" and "when" of customer message exposure. Consequently, social media has fundamentally transformed the creation, distribution, and consumption of communicative messages (Tsai & Men, 2013), exerting a profound influence on a company's information management processes.

Social networking platforms have empowered customers with significant influence over companies (Muntinga et al., 2011). Additionally, as per Hoffman and Fodor (2010), customers now wield control over the information disseminated on these platforms, thereby relegating companies to a secondary position as a source of brand-related data (Berthon et al., 2008). In fact, recent research indicates that customers perceive social media as a more trustworthy information source compared to traditional communication channels employed by companies (Karakaya & Ganim Barnes, 2010). According to Kim and Ko (2010), any alteration in the information control process can have a profound impact on a brand's reputation.

Despite the transformations in marketing communication practices and strategies, social media allow us to learn more about target markets and their needs (Parsons, 2013). In addition, compared to traditional media, they offer the possibility to segment and personalize communication, making it possible to reach a large audience at a low cost (Angeles Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2014). This is why using these tools is now an integral part of the communication strategy of companies. Among the diversity of platforms, social networks represent the driving force of online media (Angeles Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2014).

2.1.2. Social Networks

Social networking platforms are frequently conflated with social media, although their meanings are distinct (Parsons, 2013). Unlike media, a network is characterized as an assemblage of elements or entities connected to one another (Newman, 2003). However, social networks represent a subset of social media, as they constitute one of the platforms utilized for disseminating information (Drury, 2008). Social networks are defined as "an online service that facilitates users in creating public profiles, connecting with other users, and exploring their own as well as others' lists of connections" (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 214).

Social networks can be classified into two primary categories based on their primary function: contact networks and content networks (Ellison et al., 2007). Contact networks enable users to expand their connections across various networks, such as social networks (e.g., Facebook) or professional networks (e.g., LinkedIn). Content networks, on the other hand, provide the means to share diverse forms of content, including photos (e.g., Instagram), videos (e.g., YouTube), links (e.g., Delicious), among others (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). A social network can belong to both a contact network and a content network simultaneously. For instance, Facebook, while primarily used for developing a contact network, also facilitates content sharing.

From an organizational standpoint, each social network serves a distinct purpose based on its scope and functionalities (Su et al., 2015). Consequently, Kietzmann et al. (2011) proposed a classification system for social networks based on their functionality.

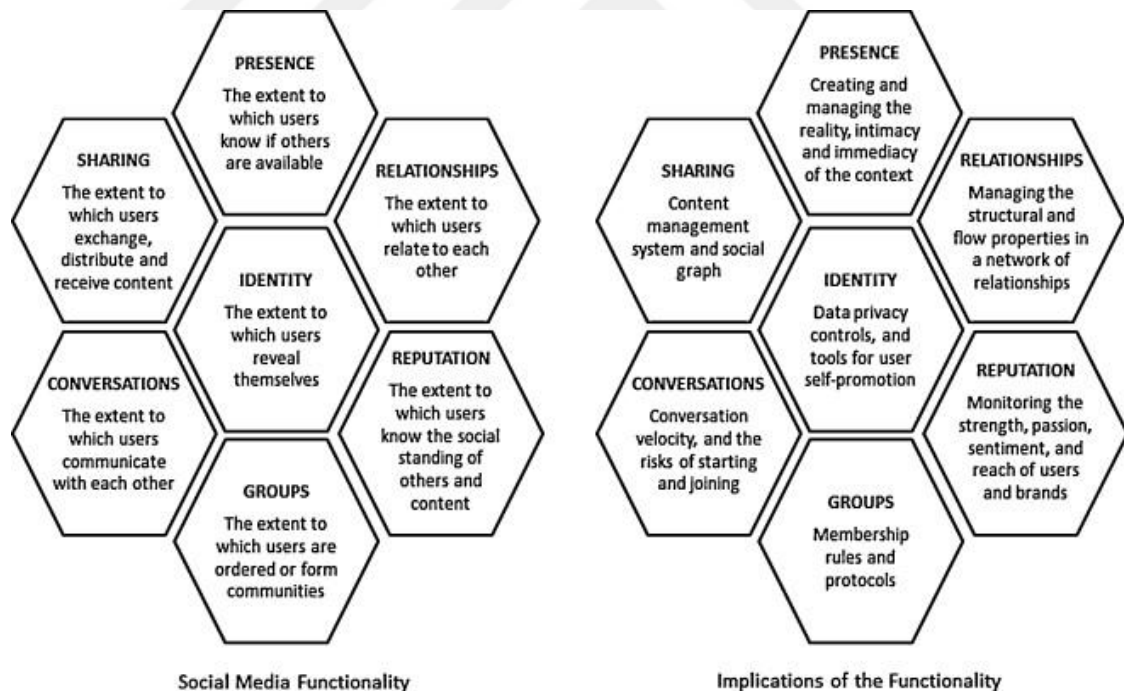


Figure 1. Categorization of social network functions by Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre (2011)

Identity is the function at the center of the figure since it represents the core of social networks (Kietzmann et al., 2011). In other words, it is their *raison d'être*. Indeed, to be

defined as a social network, the platform must allow the user to create a profile and thus identify themselves. This profile will enable them to be visible to other users and maintain a connection with them (Ramade, 2013).

Radcliffe-Brown conducted the earliest research on social networks in anthropology around 1940 when Radcliffe-Brown was studying social structure (Scott, 2012). According to several authors, the term social network originated from Bames in 1954 (Wasserman, 1994). Academic studies on marketing on social networks are divided into audience and business perspectives (Tafesse, 2015). Research from an audience perspective has predominantly studied customers' motivations and outcomes for engaging with the brand on social networks (Chu & Kim, 2011; Muntinga et al., 2011; Tsai & Men, 2013). Academic research from a corporate perspective is more recent (Tafesse, 2015). Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish two streams of research, namely those on the approaches to adopting social networks by companies and then the publication strategies carried out on social networks (Tafesse, 2015). The results on adoption approaches show that companies adopt different social networks depending on their communication objects and the platform's functions (Kietzmann et al., 2011). exploration of posting strategies conducted on social networks has substantially concentrated on the goods of posts on followership online responses (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; De Vries et al., 2012; Sabate et al., 2014). Publications were studied by medium and content types (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013). According to Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013), the study of medium class, frequently used in online advertising exploration, is grounded on the generalities of intensity (vividness) and commerce (interactivity). The conception of intensity is also called content uproariousness (De Vries et al., 2012). It is a measure that allows us to estimate the stimulation of the senses caused by the medium of a publication (Steuer, 1992). For illustration, according to this description, videotape advertising is vibrant since it stimulates several senses. The conception of interactivity is "the extent to which two or further communication mates may affect one another, the communication channel, and the dispatches, as well as the synchronization of these impacts" (Liu & Shrum, 2002, p. 54). The content type was studied according to the Uses and Gratification Theory (U&G), generally used in technology and media exploration to understand the reasons and provocations that drive the followership to engage with different content (Cvijikj &

Michahelles, 2013). The content studied has substantially been distributed according to its type of exposure, i.e., instructional, entertainment, social, and paid (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; De Vries et al., 2012). Eventually, among the exploration conducted on these platforms, several have concentrated on the virtual social network of Facebook.

2.1.3. Facebook:

2.1.3.1. History:

Conceived by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 during his time at Harvard University, the fundamental concept behind its creation aimed to expand students' network of connections beyond their university (Ellison et al., 2007). Consequently, the platform initially catered exclusively to Harvard students and later expanded to include other American universities, becoming accessible in September 2006 (Gonzalez-Lafaysse & Lapassouse-Madrid, 2016). Facebook's mission statement is "to empower people to share and make the world more open and connected" (Facebook, 2016a, p. 1). What sets Facebook apart from other social networks is its primary emphasis on user interaction within their existing social network (Angeles Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2014).

2.1.3.2. Operation:

Facebook allows people to create a profile to tell their story by sharing personal information, photos, interests, etc. (Facebook, 2016b). The profile's private or public privacy is up to the account holder. Each time a person logs on to Facebook, a homepage consisting of the News Feed is a continuously updated list of the publications of the person's friends and the pages liked by the person (Facebook, 2016b). The profile also contains a log where all the publications, better known as posts, made by the person and those in which he or she has been identified are grouped (Facebook, 2016b).

Companies, brands, organizations, and public figures can also establish their presence on Facebook through a page (Facebook, 2016b). The page is one of five opportunities for businesses to use the platform for marketing (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013). In addition, it is a digital tool where customers interact with the brand (Tsai &

Men, 2013). This page can have single or multiple administrators (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013) and an unlimited number of members commonly known as fans.

When Facebook users visit a company's page, they have the option to express their support by clicking the "like" or "subscribe" button, thereby becoming fans (Angeles Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2014). This action enables the company to distribute communication content on its page, which will subsequently appear in the news feed of its fan base (Angeles Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2014). The company's publications, or the content it generates on its page, serve as a means of communication with both existing and potential customers (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Moreover, customers engage with the brand by utilizing response options such as the "like," "comment," and "share" buttons (Kabadayi & Price, 2014).

2.1.3.3. Facebook for business and insights:

Facebook offers significant benefits for brands and campaigns seeking to establish an online presence. With its expansive user base and robust advertising capabilities, Facebook provides a powerful platform for reaching and engaging with target audiences. One key advantage lies in the availability of Facebook Studio, which serves as the back office for advertisers. Facebook Studio offers a comprehensive suite of tools and metrics that enable brands to track and analyze campaign performance, audience engagement, and demographics. Marketers can leverage these insights to make data-driven decisions and optimize their content marketing strategies on the platform.

Within Facebook Studio, valuable insights can be derived from various features and metrics. For instance, the Ads Manager provides detailed information on ad reach, impressions, clicks, and conversions, allowing brands to evaluate the effectiveness of their advertising efforts. In addition, the Audience Insights tool offers a wealth of demographic and behavioral data about Facebook users, empowering marketers to understand their target audience better and tailor their messaging accordingly. The Facebook Pixel feature also enables brands to track user actions on their websites, providing valuable data for remarketing and conversion optimization.

The availability of such comprehensive insights within Facebook Studio is instrumental in guiding brands' online campaigns. Marketers can better understand their audience's preferences, behaviors, and engagement patterns by utilizing the data and metrics provided. This knowledge enables them to craft more relevant and compelling content, refine their targeting strategies, and ultimately enhance the overall effectiveness of their online brand presence.

In summary, Facebook's robust advertising platform and the presence of Facebook Studio as the back office provide brands and campaigns with invaluable resources for establishing a solid online presence. In addition, the insights and tools available within Facebook Studio empower marketers to make informed decisions, optimize their content marketing strategies, and effectively engage with their target audience on the platform.

2.2.Content Marketing:

2.2.1. History

Content marketing, as the title of Bauer's (2015, p. 1) article states, "it is not as new as you think," has been around for many years. The pioneer of this concept would be John Deere, who 1895 launched the first magazine with informational content under the name The Furrow. This magazine informed farmers of new technologies and advised them on the industry to improve their profitability and, in turn, the success of their farms. John Deere's success in the agricultural machinery manufacturing industry can be attributed to the impact of a certain publication (East, 2016). This publication continues to reach a vast readership of over two million individuals across forty countries and in twelve different languages. Another example of early content marketing initiatives can be seen in the efforts of the Michelin company in 1900. The Michelin brothers published the first free French-language guide for motorists, providing valuable information on vehicle maintenance and travel tips. Despite the relatively low number of automobiles in France at that time, the guide was distributed in an impressive 35,000 copies (Bauer, 2014). The guide's popularity has endured, with current annual sales reaching nearly 400,000 copies (Nadeau, n.d.). Additionally, in 1904, the Jell-O company employed a door-to-door approach to distribute a cookbook showcasing various recipes that incorporated their

product. This innovative promotional campaign resulted in sales surpassing \$1 million within a span of two years (Pulizzi, 2013b). Similarly, in 1982, Hasbro and Marvel collaborated to revitalize the G.I. Joe action figure, employing new distribution channels such as television and comic books to promote the product (Bauer, 2014). This duo made the action figure one of America's most beloved toys. This revolutionized the toy marketing world and brought the comic book world into existence (Pulizzi, 2011). Since that day, content marketing has become more and more present in the heart of companies.

2.2.2. Concept and definition:

According to Baltes (2015), content marketing lacks a universally accepted definition. In 2008, Pulizzi and Barrett presented an initial definition: "The creation and dissemination of educational and/or compelling content in multiple formats to attract and/or retain customers" (Holliman & Rowley, 2014, p.270). Subsequently, Rose and Pulizzi (2011, p. 1) introduced another definition: "Content marketing is a strategy focused on delivering a valuable experience." For this study, the definition chosen aligns with the most recent definition from the Content Marketing Institute (CMI) (author, 2016b, p. 1):

Content marketing entails the strategic creation and distribution of valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a specific audience. The ultimate objective is to drive profitable customer action.

Content marketing can take various forms, including but not limited to images, videos, white papers, e-books, instructional guides, and storytelling (eMarketer, 2014). Gunelius (2011) proposes categorizing content marketing into long-form, short-form, conversational, and shared formats. Long-form content provides extensive and valuable information to customers, such as blogs. Short-form content communicates helpful information with only a few sentences, such as Twitter messages. Conversational and sharing content results from conversations or publications, such as Facebook responses.

In academic literature, previous research on content marketing has focused mainly on marketing content distributed online. In this particular context, content has been examined in three distinct forms: content generated by users, content generated by

companies through paid means, and content generated by companies through unpaid means (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Content marketing can take on diverse manifestations, encompassing but not limited to images, videos, white papers, e-books, instructional guides, and storytelling, among other possibilities (eMarketer, 2014). Gunelius (2011) proposes categorizing content marketing into long-form, short-form, conversational, and shared formats. Long-form content provides extensive and valuable information to customers, such as blogs. Short-form content communicates helpful information with only a few sentences, such as Twitter messages—conversational and sharing content results from conversations or publications, such as Facebook responses.

In academic literature, previous research on content marketing has largely focused on marketing content distributed online. In this particular context, content has been examined from three perspectives: content generated by users, content generated by companies through paid means, and content generated by companies through unpaid means (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). User-generated content has gained increasing attention in recent years, with several authors delving into this topic (Christodoulides, 2009; Iglesias et al., 2013). Research focusing on content created by companies through paid methods often pertains to the online industry, encompassing products and services such as online newspapers (Koiso-Kanttila, 2004; Rowley, 2008). Content created by unpaid businesses online refers to content marketing, which seeks to foster customer engagement (Holliman & Rowley, 2014).

Little research has studied online content marketing (Gunelius, 2011). Therefore, the existing understanding of content marketing and its impact on customer engagement behaviors is largely derived from studies conducted by business research organizations such as the Content Marketing Institute and eMarketer (Jarvinen & Taiminen, 2016). However, there is limited qualitative academic research on content marketing in a business-to-business (B2B) setting, as only a few authors have explored this area (Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Jarvinen & Taiminen, 2016).

There has been some research that has focused on the study of content marketing on blogs. These argue that blogs are a great content marketing tool (Lee et al., 2006). Unsurprisingly, these networks are characterized by periodic publications where the

content revolves around a given topic. Research has mainly studied the type of content published and the frequency of publication (Wiersma, 2015). Content is a significant source of information for customers (Wachstein, 2015). Previous research has also studied the characteristics of blogs and their effects, their results on purchase intent, and the factors that lead customers to engage with blog content (Koenig & Schlaegel, 2014).

2.2.3. Enterprise Content Marketing:

2.2.3.1. Culture:

Content marketing differs from traditional marketing because it focuses on creating content that appeals to customers, rather than simply promoting organizational goals (Gunelius, 2011). This approach often requires companies to develop expertise in publishing, as marketers become content creators themselves. To succeed in this space, it's important for marketing teams to have skilled professionals with experience in content creation and publishing (Maddox, 2015).

A plan must be in place and follow a strategic structure for a higher likelihood of success. It's essential to incorporate the plan into a marketing communication strategy and to consider multiple approaches for planning (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Furthermore, it should seamlessly integrate into all departments within the company (Gunelius, 2011).

2.2.3.2. Measure:

Primarily, a content strategy must be grounded in predetermined goals to facilitate result measurement. It is essential to establish two types of objectives: one that the content marketing strategy should achieve for the company and another that the content of a publication should convey (Salenne, 2015). The goals of overall content marketing strategy and content creation differ. To measure content marketing, it is vital to prioritize quality over quantity (Gunelius, 2011, p. 279). A rule proposed by East (2016) suggests that for every six publications, four should be customer-relevant, one about the company, and one promotional. Key performance indicators (KPIs) can help measure the strategy once quantifiable goals are defined. These KPIs can be categorized into visibility,

resonance, and relationship created (Salenne, 2015). The extent of visibility can be assessed through metrics such as website visits, referral sources, and social media clicks. Resonance can be gauged by quantifying likes, shares, and mentions of the company across social media platforms. Finally, the level of engagement can be measured by considering factors such as the number of community members, comments, bounce rate, returning visitors, and pages per visit. The Content Marketing Institute (2014) states that website traffic, sales, and high customer conversion rates as the most commonly used measures of success. Other methods used by marketers include search engine rankings, time spent on the website, quality of customer feedback, and subscriber growth.

Content size= (total revenue that the content helped to achieve + total value of conversions that the content helped to achieve) / Number of unique page views of content before e-commerce conversions or transactions

Finally, content marketing must be linked to relevance to be profitable for the company and thus increase customer engagement behaviors.

2.3. Relevance:

Relevance is one of the topics on the MSI's research agenda from 2016 to 2018. Its growing interest is significantly associated with that content marketing (Wang, 2006). Indeed, by its definition, what differentiates content marketing from traditional marketing is the addition of the words "value" and "relevant" to describe the content (Content Marketing Institute, 2016b). That being said, content marketing must produce valuable content, i.e., content that is relevant to customers' searches to meet their needs (Holliman & Rowley, 2014).

There have been various explanations put forward to define relevance. Celsi and Olson (1988, p. 211) state that relevance is "the degree to which individuals perceive something as being directly related to themselves or helpful in attaining their objectives and values." For their part, Andrews et al. (1990, p. 31) define this concept as "the perceived relevance of a message by the message recipient, given that person's goals, values, and interests."

The definition used in this study is the one proposed by Vamali (2014, p. 341) since it deals with the relevance of an advertisement in communication, i.e., "relevance of a message refers to the relevance of the message content to the target customers' current cognitive and/or affective needs."

Previous research has conceptualized relevance in three ways: subjective, objective, and contextual (Holmes, 2008). In this study, the concept of relevance is based on subjectivity. According to Petty et al. (1981, p. 20), "It is the individual's interest level of the information presented by the visuals, text, and overall advertisement that define subjective relevance." Thus, subjectivity is closely linked to personal relevance, which is the same as personal relevance, which is "the degree to which the commercial's message is relevant to the viewer's present activities, interests, and needs."

In their article, Eisingerich and Rubera (2010, p. 66) define personal relevance as "the perceived image of a brand that customers use to establish self-connections."

In the literature, relevance was first studied concerning other marketing concepts. In particular, Celsi and Oison (1998) studied relevance as a component of motivation. Subsequently, it has been studied as a concept in its own right. Among the authors who have researched this concept, some have argued that the relevance of an advertisement can influence customers' reactions to it (Campbell & Wright, 2008; Drossos & Giaglis, 2005; Pavlou & Stewart, 2000) and then, more recently, Vamali (2014) studied the effects of a publication's relevance on customers' attitudes.

The results showed that a publication's relevance is essential in predicting the perceived value of content and guiding customers' behaviors regarding marketing communications (Ducoffe & Curlo, 2000).

In their research, Yeh et al. (2013) argue that the effectiveness of the communication process is based on the publication's relevance.

2.3.1. Relevance and Other Marketing Concepts:

The concept of relevance is closely tied to perception, as it plays a significant role in customers' decision-making process (Darley & Lim, 1992). When customers perceive a brand as relevant to fulfilling their instrumental or identity needs, they are more likely to make a purchase or engage (Park et al., 2010). This highlights the interconnectedness of relevance and perception. According to Salomon et al. (2014), perception starts with sensory stimuli, such as visual cues received through the eyes. The exposure stage follows, where customers come into contact with these stimuli. Due to the overwhelming number of communicative messages, customers must selectively process stimuli. Factors that influence this selection stage include attention, which can be influenced by message characteristics (e.g., intensity), the receiver's characteristics, and the environment. Motivation, which reflects the customer's current needs, also affects the selection process. Previous experiences also shape the selection of stimuli.

Relevance is also associated with motivation, specifically involvement (Celsi & Olson, 1988). Relevance is considered a component of motivation (Jahn & Kunz, 2012). Motivation refers to how individuals perceive the importance of an object based on their inherent needs, values, and interests (Zaichkowsky, 1985, p. 342). In other words, publications that elicit higher customer motivation are perceived as more relevant (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979).

2.3.2. Relevance in business:

Chevret (2014) suggests six steps for companies to publish relevant content. The first step is targeting relevance, i.e., determining whom the communication will address. A target market may seem attractive without being relevant to the company. To proceed, you need to establish the purpose of your communication. Next, the company must make the content relevant. To do this, it must be effective by being precise and simple for the target. When the message is adapted to the target and its objective is known, it is more obvious to adapt the communication with a suitable medium (Rodgers, 2003). Then, the

third step is to tailor the message to the different needs of the target markets. In its communication, the company must become a solution for customers looking to solve their needs. The fourth step is to differentiate. In this step, the company must know the key elements differentiating it from its competitors. The fifth step is to create a lasting relationship. The company must accompany customers in discovering their needs until they are resolved. The sixth step is to be authentic. In content marketing, authenticity is essential to complete the communication process, so the company must be valid to its customers.

2.3.2.1. Measuring the relevance in business:

Since the relevance of a publication on social networks is a new topic of study in the marketing literature, it still needs to be determined to measure its impact. Moreover, according to Heinonen and Strandvick (2002), creating relevant content in marketing communication is difficult since relevance is unique to everyone. Facebook offers to measure the relevance score of ads. The ad must have been shown more than 500 times to do so. The score is evaluated on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 represents the lowest relevance. "The relevance index [...] is calculated based on our estimates of the positive and negative feedback it may receive from people who see it based on its performance" (Facebook, 2016b, p. 1). Positive returns refer to the number of actions customers take, such as liking, sharing the ad, and visiting the company's website. Negative feedback is, for example, the number of times that users hide the ad or report a negative experience. The score will be calculated differently depending on the objective chosen for the ad. One of the primary objectives of measuring the relevance of a publication when it comes to content marketing is to know if this strategy favors customer engagement behaviors.

2.4. Engagement:

The understanding of engagement can be divided into two significant stages, as noted by Brodie et al. (2011). The first phase traces its origins back to the 17th century and encompasses ideas related to social science, management, and business practices (Brodie et al., 2011). Engagement has been explored in various fields, including sociology, where it is known as civic engagement, psychology, which focuses on social engagement, political science, which examines the engagement of nations, education, which studies student engagement, and business, where it is analyzed in terms of employee engagement in management and stakeholder engagement in business practices (Brodie et al., 2011).

The second stage pertains to the domain of marketing literature (Brodie et al., 2011). While marketing has long been intrigued by engagement, its presence in the literature is relatively recent (Gambetti & Graffigna, 2010). In marketing, engagement is conceptualized as "who is committed to what" (Angeles Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2014, p. 333). Hence, the concept of engagement can encompass an individual as a customer, client, or user, while the entity being engaged with can be a corporation, brand, product, business endeavor, or medium (Hollebeek, 2011). This research specifically examines the interaction between customers and the company as the focal point of engagement.

More consensus among scholars is needed to establish a comprehensive definition of engagement in the field of marketing (Angeles Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2014). Currently, there is no universally accepted definition for engagement. Most definitions take a multidimensional approach, incorporating dimensions such as cognitive (experience), emotional (feeling), conative or behavioral (participation), and social (interaction and sharing of experiences or content) (Islam & Rahman, 2016). Among the definitions with a unidimensional perspective, the behavioral dimension tends to be the most prominent (Brodie et al., 2011). Alternatively, engagement can be viewed as a psychological or behavioral process (Islam & Rahman, 2016). The table provided summarizes the primary definitions of engagement identified in previous research within the marketing literature.

Table 1

Definitions of Engagement in the Marketing Literature

Concepts	Authors	Definitions
Customer engagement	Patterson et al., (2006)	The level of customer's physical, cognitive, and emotional presence in their relationship with a service organization.
customer engagement	Vivek et al., (2012)	The intensity of an individual's participation and connection with the organization's offerings and activities initiated by either the customer or the organization.
Customer engagement behavior	Van Doom et al., (2010)	Customer's behavioral manifestation toward a brand or form, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers.
Customer engagement process	Bowden, (2009)	A psychological process that models the underlying mechanisms by which customer loyalty forms for new customers of a service brand as well as the mechanisms by which loyalty may be maintained for repeat purchase customers of a service brand.
Customer brand engagement	Hollebeek, (2011)	The level of customer's motivational, brand-related, and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity in brand interactions.
Brand engagement in self-concept	Sprott et al., (2009)	An individual difference representing customer's

		propensity to include important brands as part of how they view themselves.
Online brand engagement	Mollen et Wilson, (2010)	The customer's cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value.
Ad engagement	Phillips et al., (2010)	Modes of engagement are routes to persuasion.
Media engagement	Calder et Malthouse, (2008)	A motivational experience; being connected to a specific media.

The definition used in this study is provided by authors Van Doom et al. (2010) as it focuses on engagement behaviors. This definition relates to the behavioral variables that are the focus of this research compared to the attitudinal variables of engagement. Thus, commitment includes all of the behavioral activities of a customer towards the company.

2.4.1. Engagement and Other Marketing Concepts:

Numerous scholars have dedicated their research to distinguishing engagement from other concepts explored in the marketing literature (Bowden, 2009; Mollen & Wilson, 2010; So et al., 2012; Spielmann & Richard, 2013). Participation and involvement are frequently linked to engagement, and these terms are increasingly being replaced by the concept of engagement in the literature (Brodie et al., 2011). Furthermore, interactivity, motivation, experience, and loyalty are among the other concepts associated with engagement.

Table 2

key definitions of concepts associated with customer engagement (Hébert Larouche, 2015).

Concepts	Auteurs	Definitions
Participation	Bolton et Saxena- Iyer, (2009)	The degree to which the customer produces and delivers the service.
	Bijmolt et al., (2010)	Various participation (both online and offline) that a customer has with the brand organization or other customers outside of purchase
Interaction	Bolton et Saxena- Iyer, (2009)	A variable characterized by some form of customer-firm interaction.
	Vivek, (2012)	Sharing and exchanging ideas, thoughts, and feelings about experiences with the brand.
Motivation	Zaichkowski, (1985)	An individual level of interest and personal Relevance in relation to a focal object/decision in terms of his or her basic values, goals, and self-concept.
Experience	Brakus et al., (2009)	A subjective, internal customer response

		(sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli (design, packaging, identity, communication, and environment).
	Calder et Malthouse, (2008)	A specific set of belief that customers have about how some media brand fits into their lives.
Fidelity	Sashi, (2012)	The result of calculative commitment to a product, brand, or company while customer delight is the result of affective commitment to a product, brand, or company.
	Guest, (1944); Day, (1969)	Repeated purchases (behavioral loyalty) prompted by a strong internal disposition (Attitudinal loyalty) over a given period of time.

Participation represents the level of interest a customer has in performing actions (Bolton & Saxena-Iyer, 2009). Interaction occurs with customer participation (Angeles Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2014). According to these authors, interactions represent the means to achieve engagement. While interactions serve as a foundation, it is important to distinguish them from the concept of engagement (Brodie et al., 2011). In terms of

motivation, it is a concept that precedes the purchase instead of commitment, which encompasses the action of buying. Therefore, motivation influences the customer's purchase decision process (Pansari & Kumar, 2016). Experience is a cognitive measure that results from the company's actions. Conversely, engagement measures actions toward the company (Pansari & Kumar, 2016). Then, loyalty assesses customers' repeated purchase behaviors. That said, its interest is mainly in the company's profits, whereas commitment can be analyzed from non-transactional behaviors (Pansari & Kumar, 2016).

Previous studies in the literature have examined the factors that lead to and result from customer engagement. Van Doorn et al. (2010) classified these factors into three focal areas: the customer, the company, and the context.

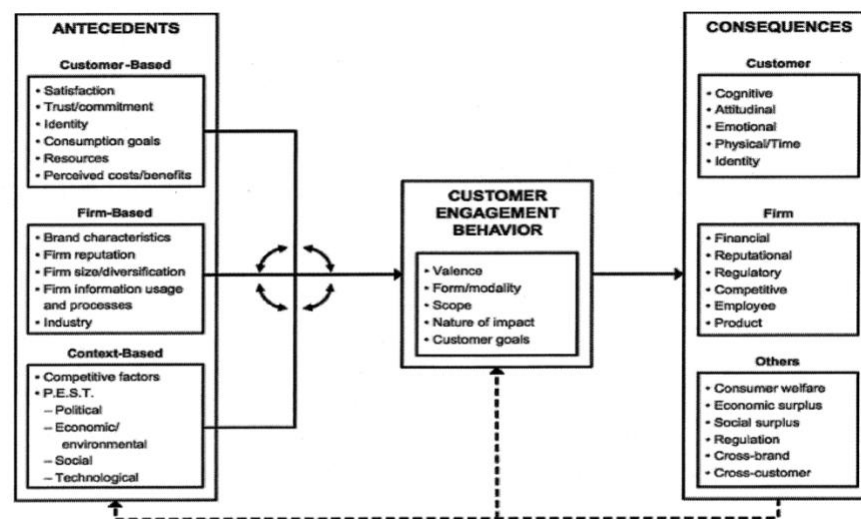


Figure2: Antecedents and consequences of customer engagement by Van Doorn, Lemon, Mittal, Nass, Pick, Pimer, and Verhoef (2010)

Of the antecedents of engagement related to customers, attitudinal factors influence customer engagement the most. These include satisfaction, brand dedication, trust, brand attachment, and perceptions of performance. Regarding company-related antecedents, brand-related factors such as brand equity and reputation are the most important. Contextual antecedents include political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal factors. Van Doorn et al. (2010) argue that engagement leads to customer, corporate, and other outcomes. Among the consequences related to customers, the best known are cognitive, affective, and conative. Satisfaction, trust, and dedication fall into

this category. Nevertheless, as stated earlier, these notions can also serve as precursors to engagement in a scenario where customers are already established as clients (Hollebeek, 2011). In addition, value co-creation and loyalty are also seen as customer-related consequences of engagement. Financial types are the most well-known factors of the consequences that affect the company. There is also reputation and competitiveness. Subsequently, with regards to the context, all the remaining outcomes are unassociated with either the customer or the company, encompassing aspects that impact the product itself, such as the introduction of new products (Van Doorn et al., 2010).

2.4.1.1. Commitment and attachment:

Attachment emerged from studies on interpersonal relationships and then developed regarding relationships with objects (Lacoeuilhe, 2000). The convergence of these two research streams has facilitated the examination of the concept of attachment in the context of individual-object relationships (Ellison et al., 2010). More specifically, to date, it is part of the research on customer behavior.

Attachment is a psychological bond that links the customer to an object (Lacoeuilhe, 2000). Additionally, it refers to "the intensity of the connection between the brand and the self" (Park et al., 2010, p. 2). The commonly acknowledged definition describes it as "a psychological construct that reflects a long-lasting and unchangeable emotional attachment to the brand (separation is distressing) and signifies a sense of psychological closeness with it" (Lacoeuilhe, 2000, p. 66). This definition proposes a unidimensional aspect contrary to the multidimensional definitions proposed by other authors such as Cristau (2001) and Heilbrunn (2001), cited in Lacoeuilhe (2000).

Attachment is perceived as a predictor of customer commitment behaviors (Goueron, 2006). Although customers interact with many brands, they develop an emotional attachment only to a few of them (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Thus, commitment, which is intended to sustain a satisfying long-term relationship, is explained by attachment. As cited by Goueron (2006), Aurier et al. (2001) explain that attachment represents the final stage in the sequential progression of the following relational sequence: perceived excellence, value, accumulated contentment, trust, and attachment.

2.4.1.2.Engagement and perception:

Customer engagement is a key aspect of content marketing and refers to the level of involvement, interaction, and connection between customers and a brand. It encompasses various dimensions, including cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects (Hollebeek, 2011).

One crucial factor that influences customer engagement is the perception customers have of the brand. Brand perception is shaped by customers' cognitive and emotional responses to various brand-related stimuli, such as content (Keller, 1993). Perception is a subjective process influenced by the customers' individual experiences, beliefs, and attitudes (Bigne et al., 2005).

Content marketing plays a significant role in shaping customer engagement and perception. By creating and disseminating relevant, valuable, and targeted content, brands can attract and capture the attention of their target audience (Hollebeek, 2011). This engagement-inducing content encourages customers to actively interact with the brand and its offerings.

According to research conducted by Liang et al. (2018), personalized and tailored content increases customer engagement by enhancing the sense of relevance and individual connection. Content that is aligned with the customer's preferences, needs, and values generates positive emotional responses, which in turn, influences their perception of the brand.

Furthermore, the study by Yoo et al. (2000) highlights that online communication channels, such as social media and interactive websites, can significantly impact brand perception and customer engagement. These channels provide opportunities for brands to create interactive and immersive experiences that foster engagement and shape customer perception.

2.4.2. Customer engagement in business:

Sashi (2012) developed a cyclical customer engagement model to better understand this concept for marketing managers. The figure shows the customer engagement cycle.

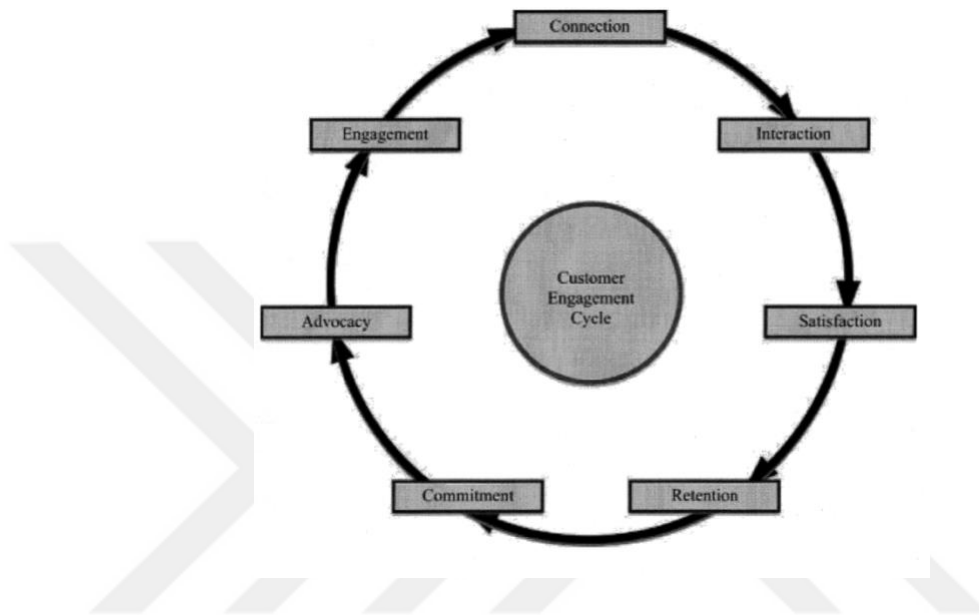


Figure 3: Sashi's customer Engagement Cycle (2012)

The model encompasses the following phases: connection, interaction, contentment, retention, loyalty, advocacy, and involvement (author, year). The connection is seen as exchanging information between the company and the customer. This can be done using traditional communication tools or new online digital methods. Then comes the action of interacting between the two participants. This step is the point of value creation. Satisfaction must be positive to maintain a connection with the customer. Retention refers to the customer's memory. The latter memorizes the experiences of the past. This is also when the company tries to keep its customers for the long term. Dedication can be divided into two categories: emotional and calculative. Trust and mutual exchange in the relationship between a company and its customers contribute to the former, leading to customer satisfaction or delight. The latter perspective, on the other hand, is driven by practical considerations such as limited options or price fluctuations. For its part, it results in customer loyalty. The recommendation is to share a customer's experience with other customers. Finally, these steps lead to customer engagement. The four types of

relationships that result from this cycle, according to Sashi (2012), are transactional customers, satisfied customers, loyal customers, and fans.

2.4.2.1.Measurement of customer engagement:

Engagement, a challenging concept to define at its core, is challenging to measure (Hollebeek et al., 2014). However, this is paramount as it is the new measure of content marketing (Islam & Rahman, 2016). According to Haven (2007), engagement goals are creating awareness, building brand preferences, driving transactions, and increasing loyalty.

To measure engagement, the first strategy is not necessarily to assess return on investment (ROI) (Linn, 2010). Rather, the focus lies in discerning whether customers exhibit behaviors such as revisiting the company's website or social media platforms, seeking clarification, leaving comments, engaging with other members of the community, sharing content, discussing the content elsewhere, dedicating more time to the website or social networks, and actively participating in company events or initiatives (Linn, 2010). In other words, measuring engagement is not about numbers but about customers (Sosnow, 2010).

In their research, authors Angeles Oviedo-Garcia et al. (2014) evaluated engagement based on the Facebook communication channel. According to them, engagement measurement should be based on the interactions between the company and customers. To do this, the interaction on Facebook is done according to their interest, and a first formula is given to calculate this measure. Then, the effectiveness of the interest follows under another formula to then arrive at the following formula of engagement:

$$\text{Facebook Engagement Rate} = \frac{\frac{\text{Likes + Comments + Shares + Other clics}}{\text{Number of publications}}}{\text{Average impressions}} \times \text{Total Reach}$$

Chapter 3:

Methodology and research design

3.1.The subject and importance of the research:

The research focuses on content marketing, relevance, as well as their impact on customer engagement within the context of social networks, in order to elaborate and analyze the study questions.

This research holds significance in several aspects. Firstly, content marketing has emerged as a top priority for marketers, playing a crucial role in today's marketing landscape. By investigating the effectiveness of content marketing during sponsorship activation, this study elaborates the existing knowledge surrounding this emerging marketing strategy.

Secondly, the study addresses the issue of customer engagement, which has garnered considerable attention in marketing literature. Customer engagement is a vital factor in cultivating long-term relationships and fostering brand loyalty. Understanding the influence of content marketing on customer engagement behaviors can provide valuable insights that extend knowledge about customer brand engagement and content marketing which may be used to guide future study.

Thirdly, the research focuses on the concept of relevance, which has received limited attention in relation to social media publications. By exploring the impact of content relevance on customer engagement, this study fills a gap in the literature and sheds light on the significance of delivering pertinent and customized content to effectively engage customers.

Moreover, this research contributes to the field of social networks and social media marketing by providing insights into the effects of content marketing on customer behavior and perception within the context of social media platforms; this study will try to enhance our understanding of the dynamics of online interactions between customers and brands.

Finally, this research tries to elaborate and analyze this subject in a better way to offer valuable insights into the design and implementation of content marketing strategies

during sponsorship activation on social media platforms, particularly Facebook. The findings can show the importance of creating relevant and captivating content that resonates with the target audience, thereby enhancing customer engagement and driving desired customer behaviors.

In conclusion, this research investigates the impact of content marketing during sponsorship activation, with a particular focus on the relevance of social media posts and their effects on customer engagement behaviors. It contributes to the existing body of knowledge on content marketing, customer engagement, and social media marketing. The findings of this study have theoretical implications for academic research and practical implications for optimization of the content marketing strategies.

3.2.The aim of the research:

The main objective of this research is to explore the outcomes of content pertinence during sponsorship activation in content marketing initiatives on the Facebook platform. While content marketing on social networks has become widely adopted, there needs to be more academic research in this area, with most knowledge derived from commercial research institutions. Hence, the purpose of this study is to address this research void by investigating the impact of content relevance on customer perceptions and engagement behaviors towards sponsored content on companies' Facebook pages. The objective of this research is to make a contribution to the current academic discourse on brand engagement. The emphasis will be on online brand communication due to the increasing influence of the Internet and new media on communication processes. The digital realm has transformed into a virtual habitat that mirrors the real-life experiences of customers, serving as a gathering place for online users who participate in diverse communities and partake in various online engagements. In response, marketers and brand managers are shifting their focus to new media, recognizing its significance alongside traditional mass media (Chen, 2014).

Moreover, this study will prioritize the customers' perspective as they have become increasingly influential, particularly regarding their online presence. On the other hand, there has been a noticeable decrease in the influence of brands (Hennig-Thurau et al.,

2013). The objective of this study is to gain a comprehensive comprehension of how online brand communication affects customers' engagement processes, particularly during pivotal moments of truth in their online journey.

In summary, this study examines the influence of content relevance on sponsorship activation in content marketing campaigns on Facebook. This study aims to address a research void in the scholarly literature by examining the influence of content relevance on customer engagement behaviors and perceptions of sponsored content. Its goal is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this area. Through a mixed-methods approach, the study will provide valuable insights and recommendations that extend knowledge about customer brand engagement and content marketing which may be used to guide future study.

Additionally, it will contribute to the existing literature and try to elaborate this subject in a better and new way.

3.3. Research Questions:

The research questions establish the connections between the variables, which were derived from the data collected in this study. This section is divided into two sub-sections that represent the primary variables of interest in this research: relevance and commitment.

3.3.1. Type of content of the publication and relevance of the publication:

The objective of content marketing is to foster enduring customer engagement (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). This is achieved through effective communication, which possesses the capacity to influence the bond between the company and its customers (Brown & Forsythe, 2007).

As a result, social media platforms, characterized by their frequency, rapidity, and excellence in interactions (Sashi, 2012), have become an essential communication medium for businesses.

In the realm of social networking, companies engage in communication through the content they share on their respective pages (Luam et al., 2015). The nature of the content can exhibit significant variations (De Vries et al., 2012). For instance, certain posts may encompass details about products and prices, while others serve as calls for participation, event invitations, or platforms for photo sharing. In the realm of media, publications are frequently classified into four distinct categories: informational, entertaining, compensatory, and social (Luam et al., 2015). Alternatively, Parsons (2013) has devised a more comprehensive classification comprising twenty diverse categories.

This content fosters interactions between the company and users of digital platforms. Interactions can be achieved through two distinct approaches: communication or dissemination (Kabadayi & Price, 2014). As suggested by these authors, communication entails more personalized exchanges between individuals, whereas dissemination involves open communication between one person and many others. Consequently, customers engage with the online communications shared by a firm through these interactions (Trudeau & Shobeiri, 2016). Furthermore, these interactions offer customers an experiential encounter with the brand (Keng & Ting, 2009).

To sustain interactions and effective communication between a company and its customers, careful attention must be given to the creation of social media publications. According to Fink-Shamit and Bar-Ilna (2008), relevance is a key element that contributes to the quality of communication information. The research conducted by Holliman and Rowley (2014) reveals that a publication becomes influential when it adds value to customers, underscoring the importance of understanding the target market and their needs. A publication holds value when it is both meaningful and pertinent. Moreover, the findings from the study by Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013) demonstrate that traditional marketing publications with an overtly promotional nature generate fewer user interactions compared to other types of publications. This study highlights that many of the companies' publications releases are not directly focused on promotional or product-related content. This illustrates the significance for marketers to produce content marketing publications that prioritize assisting customers in meeting their needs, rather than solely focusing on sales. This notion is supported by Davis, as cited in Holliman and Rowley (2014, p. 273), who asserts, "You need to create content that your audience wants

and needs. Often that content will have little to do with the actual products you sell and more to do with the audience you are looking to attract”. This leads to the following question:

Q1: Does the type of content in a publication influence the online post? (Focus group)

3.3.2. Relevance of the publication and brand perception:

The relevance of a publication plays a crucial role in shaping brand perception. Several studies have explored this relationship and have provided insights into how the content's relevance influences how consumers perceive a brand.

One study by Smith and Johnson (2018) found that when consumers encounter relevant content that aligns with their interests and needs, it positively impacts their perception of the brand. The study emphasized the importance of delivering targeted and personalized content that resonates with the audience.

Similarly, a study by Chen et al. (2019) investigated the impact of content relevance on brand perception in the context of social media marketing. The researchers found that when social media posts were highly relevant to consumers' interests and preferences, it significantly enhanced their perception of the brand's credibility and trustworthiness.

These studies collectively emphasize that the relevance of the publication is a critical factor in shaping brand perception and underscore the importance of creating relevant and targeted content. By understanding the preferences and needs of the target audience and consistently delivering relevant content that aligns with those factors, businesses can enhance their brand perception, build stronger connections with consumers, and foster brand loyalty. This leads to the following question:

Q2: Does the relevance of the publication influence the customer perception toward a brand? (Focus group)

3.3.3. Relevance of publication and the generated engagement:

The emergence of content marketing has underscored the importance of communication relevance in driving customer engagement behaviors (Angeles Oviedo..Garcia et al., 2014). Therefore, it is crucial for company publications to deliver valuable information that offers significant benefits to customers (Malhotra et al., 2013). Ducoffe and Curlo (2000) assert that the relevance of a publication plays a vital role in predicting consumer responses to marketing communication. Not only does relevance make a publication enjoyable, but it also reduces its intrusive impact (Krishnamurthy, 2001). On social networks, the information shared about a brand should be relevant to customers to encourage their active participation (Schmitt, 2012). According to Ashley and Tuten (2015), compelling content is key to engaging the audience. This leads to the following question:

Q3: Does the publication's relevance influence customers' online engagement behaviors towards a brand?

3.3.4. Brand perception and commitment towards a business/ brand:

On social networks, the formation of customers' brand perception is intricately tied to company communication. Additionally, Karakaya and Ganim Bames (2010) highlight that customers view social media as a more trustworthy source compared to traditional media. It is therefore not surprising that marketers utilize these platforms to shape customer brand perception (Brodie et al., 2013). Moreover, the research conducted by Yoo et al. (2000) demonstrates a positive correlation between a company's communication efforts and brand equity, particularly when customer reactions to the publications are positive. Hence, it is crucial for companies to maintain strong brand equity through these communications to cultivate favorable customer perceptions and drive engagement behaviors.

Indeed, the brand is one of the factors in business that has the most influence on customer engagement behaviors (Van Doom et al., 2010). More specifically, the brand's characteristics, such as its image and awareness, can impact engagement. For example, the study by Hutter et al. (2013) shows a positive relationship between brand perception and customer engagement with the company's Facebook page. That said, customer

perception, which is formed from the communication made by the company on social networks, impacts customer engagement behaviors.

This leads to the following question:

Q4: does brand perception influence customer engagement behaviors toward a business/brand?



3,4, Research design:

This study adopts a causal research design and employs experimental methodology. This research design examines and analyzes the research questions concerning the impact of content marketing as a sponsorship activation strategy on customer engagement behaviors. Specifically, it focuses on examining the significance of company posts on its Facebook page in relation to customer engagement. The main area of focus for this research is advertising sponsorship. The company that served as a field of study is a multinational pharmaceutical company. This company has launched a new initiative to combat the asthma crisis affecting millions worldwide.

As part of this initiative, this company has worked to raise awareness about asthma, encouraging people with the disease to take preventive measures to avoid asthma attacks. The company has also developed a range of affordable asthma medications, including metered dose inhalers and inhaled medications, to help patients control their condition. This initiative exemplifies the company's commitment to improving access to quality health care for all, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged populations.

As mentioned in the literature, the classification of a post distributed on social networks is usually done according to the type of distribution medium and the type of content of the post. Regarding the type of medium, Facebook offers five possibilities: text, photo, video, reel, and link. Considering previous academic studies, although video is a high-stimulus medium for the senses, it requires more time to view and understand than others (Luam et al., 2015).

As for the contents, it has been chosen to work according to the following categorization: influencer video campaign (with a doctor/influencer) and static posts. This category was chosen based on statistical information gathered from content marketing publications that have reached a large audience.

Qualitative and quantitative studies have been considered regarding research strategy, which may provide the necessary information.

An approach combining quantitative and qualitative analysis has been recommended to address the research questions' complexity. This mixed-method approach allows a better understanding of the parameters and the relationship between variables; Just to note, this methodology is used to elaborate and analyze the studies

questions; Esteemed experts such as Denzin (2017) and Creswell & Poth (2017) have asserted that this approach can enhance the research findings' credibility (The integration of quantitative and qualitative analysis facilitates triangulation, a methodological approach that enhances the credibility and reliability of research findings), validity (The integration of quantitative and qualitative analysis strengthens the validity of research findings), and practical implications (The combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis can lead to more meaningful and actionable recommendations). By utilizing both types of analysis, researchers can obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, resulting in robust and reliable outcomes. A focus group will be utilized to collect qualitative data. *[Focus groups are a systematic method for gathering data through group interactions, where participants engage in discussions guided by a moderator (Krueger & Casey, 2015). This approach has its roots in the groundbreaking work of sociologist Robert K. Merton and his colleagues in the late 1930s, who recognized the impact of group dynamics on shaping individual opinions and attitudes, leading to the development of the focused interview technique (Merton & Kendall, 1946; Merton et al., 1956)].* In addition, this first phase of data collection will be based on two predefined theoretical foundations: "The type of content in a publication influences the relevance of the publication" and "The relevance of the publication influences the perception." The following phase will be based on a predefined theoretical basis: "The publication's relevance influences customers' engagement behaviors towards a brand/ business" and "Brand perception influences customer engagement behaviors toward a business/brand." At this stage, it has been decided to work with a quantitative approach that will help deepen my understanding of the research questions and more relevant results.

3.5.Data collection and analysis:

3.5.1. Qualitative Research:

Collecting relevant data to understand how "content marketing" affects customer behavior and brand perception is essential. Furthermore, qualitative data is necessary since the customer's perspective is considered.

This suggests selecting a qualitative research method that makes it easier to gather data on how the content of a publication affects its relevance and, therefore, how relevance affects perception. To elaborate, the data that has been recently gathered will produce outcomes that will aid in pinpointing the specific information that the research is targeting. It is essential to consider that the topic of "content marketing" is multifaceted and open to interpretation. To address this, a qualitative research approach has been utilized to empower customers to express their viewpoints. Under the current circumstances, it is possible to collect qualitative data through questionnaires. Nevertheless, focus groups offer a more insightful approach to understanding how customers engage with materials. One benefit of focus groups is the interactive and dynamic environment for participants to express their opinions, experiences, and perspectives (Krueger & Casey, 2015). This fosters the exchange of ideas and insights, allowing individuals to build upon and respond to each other's contributions (Morgan, 1996). In addition, this group dynamic encourages diverse viewpoints and facilitates a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon by exploring complex topics from multiple angles (Kitzinger, 1994). Another advantage of focus groups is their ability to observe non-verbal cues, group norms, and dynamics (Barbour, 2007). Researchers can analyze participants' facial expressions, body language, and interactions, complementing the verbal data collected (Kitzinger, 1994). This holistic approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the topic, as non-verbal aspects contribute to the meaning-making process within the group (Kitzinger & Farquhar, 1999). In addition, focus groups facilitate the exploration of shared meanings and social norms (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Through group discussions, researchers can identify and understand collective experiences and beliefs (Morgan, 1996). This process unveils hidden or implicit attitudes, values, and cultural influences, shedding light on the research topic's social context (Barbour, 2007). Overall, focus groups offer researchers a valuable method for gathering rich and nuanced data by harnessing group dynamics, promoting interactive discussions, and exploring shared meanings and non-verbal cues.

Based on the compelling evidence gathered from previous data, a focus group methodology has been decided, as it provides detailed and precise insights into customer behavior and motivation. This approach is expected to provide a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the research findings, as it encourages the participants to engage

in interactive discussions and share valuable perspectives. In-depth information and insights that will significantly contribute to the overall comprehensiveness and accuracy of the research can be gathered by doing so.

3.5.1.1. Qualitative data collection method:

The rationale behind the choice of utilizing focus groups to obtain qualitative data in the first half of the research is as follows:

Assessing someone's behavior accurately requires in-person conversations; a study published in the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology revealed that people tend to make more accurate assessments of others' attitudes and opinions when they are in a group discussion, as opposed to solely relying on individual responses (Kerr et al., 1996). Therefore, the organization of a discussion group has been the most appropriate since the data collection procedure aims to obtain information on customers' online experiences and the behavioral models that result from their mental state.

The focus group was conducted in a group of 10 people with a voice memo to record the discussion. This led to a comfortable conversation, and the interviewees expressed their views on the area of interest without being influenced by the other participants. The second significant advantage of using a focus group is the diversity of perspectives it offers. By including individuals with different backgrounds, experiences, and ideas, the group discussion provides a more comprehensive and varied understanding of our subject compared to other qualitative methods.

3.5.1.2. Semi-structured focus group interview guide:

Furthermore, it has been decided to use a less structured interview guide, namely a semi-structured one, because of its flexibility and facilitation of dynamic discussions; unlike a rigid questionnaire, a semi-structured interview guide provides a framework of open-ended questions and prompts that guide the conversation while allowing for spontaneous responses and exploration of new topics (Krueger & Casey, 2015). It could be used, also, to capture critical ideas spoken by those being questioned. For example, an

interviewee may mention an example of one specific situation he/she has experienced. Changing from one question to another is possible if the interview situation requires this.

An interview guide has been prepared to avoid misunderstandings that may lead to incorrect responses. In addition, this guide makes obtaining precise qualitative data more accessible while providing a flexible communication field. The guide was written in French and Moroccan dialects to get closer to the people being interviewed and make it easier to obtain precise qualitative data while providing a flexible communication field. It includes all areas of interest that must be covered during the interview. By composing the research guide and to make sure that my questions are relevant, I based my focus group questions on Kircaburun, Jonason, and Griffiths (2020) (Q1) and Alalwan, A. A., Rana, N. P., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Algharabat, R. (2017) (Q2) focus groups questions. Hence, the defined questions aim at identifying the influence of the type of content on the publication's relevance and the relation between relevance and pertinence.

At this point, it must be mentioned that the core of the model we want to discuss in this focus group is constituted by relevance and brand perception. This core is directly related to the type of content that can be influenced by relevance, and on the other hand, the relation between the elements in this core is desired to be discovered. It should be noted that the content published on our Facebook page was visualized by the participants before the questions were initiated.

3.5.1.3. Selection of Interviewees:

A strategic decision has been made to conduct a focus group comprising ten individuals to ensure sufficient data acquisition and attain theoretical saturation. The process of selecting suitable interviewees involved the implementation of convenience sampling, considering the time constraints and feasibility. Participants were chosen based on predefined criteria, encompassing diverse social classes, age groups, genders, family backgrounds, and personal circumstances to ensure inclusivity and representativeness. Additionally, a deliberate choice was made to include half of the sample as individuals with respiratory diseases, allowing for a comparative analysis of perspectives depending on their level of interest in the topic. This approach was undertaken to mitigate potential

bias during the interview phase. The demographic information of the interviewees can be found in the table below.

Table 3

The demographic information of the interviewees

Participant number	Gender	Age	Profession	suffers from pulmonary diseases
1	M	26	Project holder	NO
2	M	23	business student	NO
3	M	62	Police officer	YES
4	M	51	Accountant	NO
5	F	23	community manager	NO
6	F	20	student	YES
7	F	25	microbiologist	YES
8	F	55	housewife	NO
9	F	47	project manager	YES
10	M	36	Athlete	YES

As shown in the previous table, it has been chosen to work on a multi-background and age community so that we can have the perception and point of view of different people (Those involved in the subject and others not).

3.5.1.4. Qualitative Research: Analysis

According to the research objectives, a focus group was chosen as the preferred method to gather valuable feedback and responses to validate the research question. The focus group session was conducted for approximately one hour and a half.

A semi-structured interview guide was designed to facilitate an interactive and reflective discussion, incorporating open-ended questions that encouraged participant engagement and promoted thoughtful responses. A total of ten individuals actively participated in the focus group. The interview audio and the focus group video were recorded and included in the appendix for documentation and reference. The questions posed during the session are detailed below:

- 1. How do you use social media (e.g., to communicate with friends, family, and acquaintances, follow the news, celebrities, and pages, and upload pictures and videos)?*
- 2. How often do you use social media, and for how long?*
- 3. What types of posts do you encounter on social media (e.g., text, photos, videos, advertisements, news, memes, jokes)?*
- 4. What makes a social media post relevant to you?*
- 5. How do you decide which posts to read or engage with?*
- 6. What characteristics of social media posts make you engage with them (e.g., like, comment, share, save)?*
- 7. What types of posts do you find most interesting or valuable in our case?*
- 8. What kind of content is relevant to you on social media?*
- 9. Do you think the relevance of a post is related to its source or the person who posted it?*
- 10. How does social media content influence your perception of a brand?*
- 11. Can you recall any specific social media post that has influenced your perception of a brand? What was it about that post that made an impact?*
- 12. What factors do you consider when evaluating social media content posted by a brand?*
- 13. How do you think social media platforms can improve the relevance of the posts you see?*

- The first, second, third, and sixth questions are introductory questions to the study.
- The fourth, fifth, seventh, ninth, and thirteenth questions are mainly related to the first research question and were extracted from the Kircaburun, Jonason, and Griffiths (2020) focus group questions.

NB: Q1: The type of content in a publication influences the relevance of the publication.

- The eighth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth questions are questions mainly related to the second research's question and were extracted from Griffiths (2020) and Alalwan, A. A., Rana, N. P., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Algharabat, R. (2017) focus groups questions

NB: Q2: The publication's relevance influences the brand's perception.

3.5.2. Quantitative research:

3.5.2.1. Quantitative Research: Evaluation Stage

Based on the theoretical foundation, quantitative research was conducted to fulfill the research objectives, evaluate the qualitative findings, and address the remaining two research questions: "The publication's relevance influenced customer engagement behaviors towards a brand/business" and "Brand perception influenced customer engagement behaviors toward a business/brand."

To ensure the accuracy of the data, a meticulous approach was selected for measuring marketing metrics. This choice aligned with the study hypothesis, which posited a correlation between quantitative variables such as engagement, relevance, and perception. By employing this comprehensive approach, the research aimed to establish a robust foundation for analyzing and interpreting the collected data.

The research utilized data from Facebook Pages Insights, such as engagement rates and reach, to assess the impact of social media content. These marketing metrics provided quantifiable data that could be used to evaluate the research questions using statistical analysis methodologies. Furthermore, by employing quantitative research methodologies, statistical evidence was presented to support or refute the study hypothesis. As previously mentioned, the engagement rate was a critical marketing metric that measured audience interaction with content.

Moreover, relevance and perception were critical marketing variables that influenced client perception and behavior. Therefore, evaluating these indicators offered a comprehensive picture of the success of social media content in engaging customers and affecting their impressions. Consequently, the acquired data was analyzed using statistical techniques such as correlation analysis to determine the strength and direction of the associations between the variables.

3.5.3. Quantitative Research: Analysis

Numerous research studies have thoroughly investigated the engagement rate per Facebook post and have successfully developed formulas or accurate calculations.

Additionally, they have precisely defined a reasonable engagement rate, providing valuable insights for businesses and individuals seeking to optimize their social media strategies.

One commonly used formula to determine the engagement rate is as follows:

$$\text{Engagement Rate} = (\text{Total Interactions} / \text{Total Reach}) * 100$$

This formula quantifies the engagement rate by dividing the total number of interactions, such as likes, comments, shares, and other relevant engagement actions, by the total reach of the post. Then, the result is multiplied by 100 to express the engagement rate as a percentage (Kim, Song, & Tenzek, 2019).

When it comes to videos on Facebook, measuring the engagement rate involves considering specific metrics relevant to video content. The formula for calculating the engagement rate for videos is as follows:

$$\text{Engagement Rate for Videos} = ((\text{Likes} + \text{Shares} + \text{Comments} + \text{Clicks}) / \text{Total Reach}) * 100$$

Ps: Note that for social media platforms like Facebook, the reach can be determined by looking at the analytics or insights provided by the platform. These analytics usually provide information on the number of unique users or accounts reached by your posts or content.

This formula considers the number of likes, shares, comments, and clicks a video post receives and divides it by the total reach, representing the number of unique users who have seen the video. Multiplying the result by 100 provides the video engagement rate as a percentage (Kim et al., 2019).

According to the *2023 Social Media Industry Benchmark Report* made by the credible source *RIVALIQ*, one of the main factors influencing the engagement rate is the industry and the subject of the post; According to the same source, Health and beauty brands are facing a challenge when it comes to connecting with their fans and followers compared to other industries. As a result, their engagement rate is approximately 50%

lower than the median, and their average Facebook engagement rate per post is 0.03%. Note that the median engagement rate per Facebook post across all industries is 0.060%.

f Facebook engagement

Engagement rate per post (by follower)

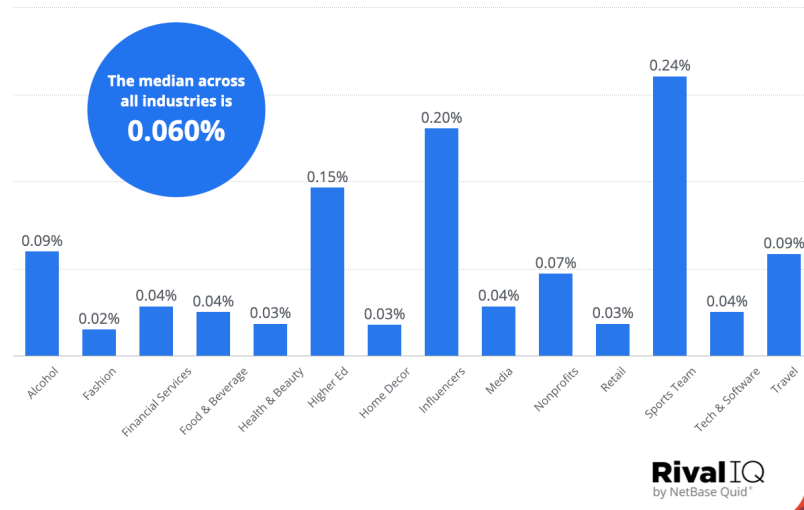


Figure 5: Average Facebook engagement rate per post

Before the analysis, particular attention will be devoted to examining the impact of influencer collaboration videos and static posts. This focus arises from the observation that videos and mini-motions yield lower retention rates and diminished engagement levels, as illustrated in the graph below. By acknowledging these patterns, the study aims to understand the dynamics and effectiveness of influencer collaborations within the context of video content and static posts. For example, according to the tool RIVALIQ, the videos on our Facebook page generate a low retention rate, which means a low engagement automatically.

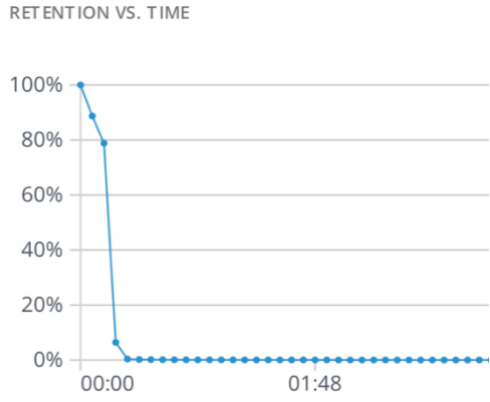





Figure 6: Graph showing the retention of videos vs. time on our Facebook page

To provide a comprehensive analysis of the performance and effectiveness of the content used on the initiative’s Facebook Page, the following table will examine each post and its key metrics in a concise and organized format showcasing likes, comments, shares, clicks, reach, interactions, and engagement rate to evaluate audience engagement, content visibility, and overall interaction levels.

The framework of this study will cover the content from the launch of the Facebook Page on the 23rd of January till the 9th of May, combining only the static posts and the influencer collaboration videos.

*Table 4:
Table showing all the insights of our Facebook posts.*

Content	Likes	Comments	Shares	Clicks	Reach	Interactions	Engagement rate
 <p>عرض الجهاز التنفسي</p>	3 605	29	1 3 8	8 649	417 879	13 925	3,34 %
 <p>تعرف معنا</p>	1 750	11	70	8 292	260 417	10 096	3,88 %
 <p>تعرف معنا</p>	1 501	31	26	8 281	221 740	10 153	4,58 %

	1 215	04	10	7 898	218 205	9 410	4,31 %
	1 176	02	08	6 912	329 985	8 449	2,56 %
	1 225	13	18	6 187	220 727	7 541	3,41 %
	1609	03	--	7 820	263 896	9 214	2,99 %



1 223 17 29 4 002 160 161 5 601 3,50 %



1226 05 17 4171 144 673 6618 4,57%



1 260 14 08 4466 129 702 6 593 5,08%



34 - 03 6 825 180 936 286 247 3,79 %



69

-

04

2369

112 898

101 844

2,13%



Chapter 4:

Findings

4.1. Findings of the qualitative research:

The focus group's discussion was instructive, and the participants engaged in a lively and insightful conversation. Ideas and perspectives were shared, each contributing to comprehensively exploring the topic. Through diverse viewpoints and experiences, the group uncovered the intricate nuances and exposed their opinion. The collected data, diligently recorded during the interview process, underwent a rigorous analysis to extract pertinent information. Through meticulous examination, the following insights were derived:

- The type of content influences the relevance of the content; the participants have claimed that they prefer, in our case, video campaigns (with a doctor/influencer) and static posts. (1)
- The emitter can influence the relevance of content. For example, viewers often prefer videos featuring influencers or professionals in a specific field, as they are considered trustworthy information sources. (2)
- Participants said they encounter videos more often on social media platforms but lose their relevance if they are longer and loaded with information. (3)
- The relevance of content is determined by the quality of the information presented and the individual's level of interest in the subject. Additionally, relevant content typically receives more engagement from the individuals involved (as presented in the focus group answers, half of the sample suffering from respiratory diseases, have shown a bigger willingness to engage with our content related to their case). (4)
- Altering the format of the content but maintaining the same content can impact its effectiveness. (5)
- The quality and relevance of a Facebook page's content can either enhance or damage the brand's image and perception. (6)

4.2. Findings of the quantitative research:

Based on Table number 4, the following analysis and findings were generated

- By analyzing the number of likes on each post, valuable insights can be gained into their popularity and appeal to the audience. After examining the data, it can be concluded that the first post received the highest number of likes, totaling 3,605. This post also generated a high engagement rate of 3.34% which exceeds the industry average for Facebook posts in the health and beauty industry which is 0.003%, as indicated in the 2023 Social Media Industry Benchmark Report by the credible source RIVALIQ, suggesting that the content was well-received and generated strong interest and engagement.

- Analyzing post comments can provide valuable insights into audience interaction and conversation generated by the content.


Based on our analysis, the third post which is a static post, received the highest number of comments, totaling 31 comments. This indicates active engagement, as supported by several research studies that have examined the correlation between the high number of comments on a Facebook post and the active engagement of customers.

For instance, Kim and Kim (2016) conducted a study on the antecedents of brand engagement behaviors in social media and found that comments on brand posts on Facebook played a significant role in fostering brand active engagement and the potential for fostering meaningful discussions. This explains why this post, focusing on showcasing the symptoms of Asthma that generated a good discussion in the comment section, had a high engagement rate compared to other posts.

- Analyzing shared posts allows us to gain insight into their viral potential and reach, as the act of sharing indicates that the content is valuable enough for audience members to share with their networks, which not only increases visibility

but also has the potential to reach new audiences. Analyzing the number of shares of all posts led us to notice that the first post generated the highest number of shares reaching a total of 138, which indicates that the content strongly resonated with the audience. This observation aligns with several studies that have investigated the correlation between the number of Facebook post shares and resonance with the audience. For example, Berger and Milkman (2012) conducted a study to examine the influence of social transmission, including Facebook post shares, on the virality of online content. Their findings revealed a positive relationship between the number of shares and the level of resonance with the audience. This suggests that posts with a higher number of shares are more likely to achieve greater reach and exposure.

- To get a complete picture of our audience's engagement with each post, we analyze various metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and more. This helps us identify which posts generated the most interaction overall. For example, our data analysis found that the last post shown below (an influencer collaboration video) had the highest number of interactions (286 247).

Content	Likes	Comments	Shares	Clicks	Reach	<i>Interactions</i>	Engagement rate
	34	-	03	6 825	180 936	286 247	3,79 %

- By calculating the engagement rate for each post, we can make a standardized comparison of the levels of audience engagement, taking into account the reach of the posts. The engagement rate formula, which is $(\text{Likes} + \text{Comments} + \text{Shares} +$

Clicks) / Reach * 100, provides a percentage value that represents the overall engagement relative to the post's reach. Through analyzing the engagement rate, we have identified the 10th post that achieved the highest level of engagement compared to the other posts, with a rate of 5.08%. This finding suggests that the content successfully captured the attention of the audience, motivated them to interact and engage with the post, and demonstrated patterns or trends that indicate effective content strategies. This conclusion is supported by several studies that have explored the relationship between a high engagement rate of a Facebook post and its ability to capture the audience's attention. For example, Wang and Sun (2019) conducted a study investigating the factors influencing user engagement on Facebook, and they discovered that posts incorporating attention-grabbing elements, such as compelling visuals or provocative headlines, were associated with higher engagement rates. Likewise, Li et al. (2020) examined the impact of post characteristics on user engagement and observed that posts utilizing attention-capturing techniques, such as thought-provoking questions or intriguing storytelling, resulted in increased engagement from the audience.

- To sum up, by examining each post's likes, comments, shares, interactions, and engagement rate, we have gained valuable insights into how our audience engages on Facebook. Our analysis shows that our posts have generated a high engagement rate (between 2,13% and 5,08%) since the average engagement in the health and beauty industry is considered to be low (0,003%) because it falls below the typical levels of engagement when compared to industry benchmarks where the average engagement rate across all industries on Facebook that, according to a study by the credible source Rival IQ (2023), was reported to be 0.06%; also, the analysis showed that our community reacts more often to static posts with links referring to our website, less to the videos' collaboration with influencers than regular videos and graphic designs according to interaction levels shown in the table below; on the other hand, these results support the findings we generated while analyzing responses of the focus group. (7)

Chapter 5:

Discussion and Conclusions

5.1. Discussion of Findings for Research Questions

Discussion of the first research question's findings:

There is considerable research that supports the claim that the type of content in a publication can influence its relevance. Focus groups are one method that researchers have used to investigate this relationship. In focus groups, a small group is brought together to discuss a particular topic or issue. Researchers use this method to explore participants' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions about the topic of interest. The following paragraphs provide examples of studies using focus groups to examine the relationship between content type and publication relevance.

A study by Tandoc, Ferrucci, and Duffy (2015) used focus groups of 18 participants to explore how people perceive the relevance of news articles. The researchers presented participants with news articles from different categories (e.g., politics, entertainment) and asked them to rate the relevance of each article. The study found that participants considered the content type a significant factor in determining relevance. Specifically, participants found articles related to their interests or concerns more relevant than those not.

Similarly, a study by O'Sullivan and Heinonen (2008) used focus groups with an unidentified participant number to explore how people evaluate the relevance of online news articles. Participants were presented with a series of articles and were asked to rate their relevance. The study found that participants evaluated the relevance of articles based on the content type, the writing quality, and the article's source.

Another study by Kircaburun, Jonason, and Griffiths (2020) involved 12 focus groups, each comprising 6-8 participants, to investigate how people perceive the relevance of social media posts. The researchers presented participants with posts from different categories (e.g., news, entertainment, personal updates) and asked them to rate the relevance of each post. The study found that participants considered the content type a

significant factor in determining relevance. In addition, participants were more likely to rate posts as relevant if they were related to their interests or if they provided new or valuable information.

Overall, these studies suggest that the type of content in a publication can influence its relevance.

In summary, the relevance of a Facebook post is greatly influenced by the type of content, as indicated by the results of previous studies and the first, third, and fifth statements made by the focus group.

Discussion of the second research question's findings:

Numerous studies have explored how the relevance of a publication influences customers' perceptions and attitudes. Several studies have used focus group methodology to better understand customers' perceptions and attitudes towards publications.

For instance, a study conducted by Kircaburun, Jonason, and Griffiths (2020) aimed to investigate how people perceive the relevance of social media posts. The study involved 12 focus groups, each comprising 6-8 participants, and found that participants judged the relevance of posts based on their interests, values, and needs, the source of the post, and the visual and textual content. The authors also found that perceived relevance influenced participants' emotional responses and engagement with the posts.

Another study by Cao, Liang, and Zhang (2019) aimed to investigate the relationship between perceived relevance and engagement on social media. They analyzed data from WeChat, a popular social media platform in China, and found that perceived relevance was positively correlated with perception and engagement, such as likes, comments, and shares. They also found that personal interests, values, and needs influenced the perceived relevance of posts.

Similarly, Alalwan et al. (2017) conducted a focus group study to investigate the use of social media in marketing and its impact on consumer behavior. The study involved a total of six focus groups, each consisting of six to eight participants from different age groups, genders, and backgrounds. And concluded that the relevance of social media content positively affects consumers' perception of the brand.

These studies highlight the importance of creating relevant content to engage customers effectively. The findings emphasize the significance of relevance in shaping customer perceptions and attitudes toward the content and the associated brand. Customers evaluate the relevance of the content in terms of their interests, needs, and preferences and are more likely to engage with content that is relevant to them.

To summarize, a Facebook post's relevance significantly impacts how the content is perceived (perception). This conclusion is supported by previous research and the fourth and sixth statements from the focus group.

Discussion of the third research question's findings:

Social media has become a crucial tool for businesses to connect with their customers, and engagement is a critical metric that companies use to measure the success of their social media marketing efforts. The relevance of social media posts is an essential factor influencing engagement on these platforms. Several studies have examined the relationship between relevance and engagement, providing evidence of a positive correlation between the two.

One study published in the *Journal of Advertising Research* analyzed over 500,000 Facebook posts and found that posts more relevant to users' interests generated higher levels of engagement (Bock & Derryberry, 2015). The study concluded that relevance is decisive in driving engagement on social media platforms. Another study published in the *Journal of Interactive Advertising* found that the effect of relevance on engagement was moderated by the user's level of involvement with the brand (Lee & Hong, 2016). The study analyzed data from a multinational retailer and found that highly involved users with the brand were likelier to engage with posts highly relevant to their interests.

Similarly, a study published in the *Journal of Marketing Research* found that posts highly relevant to users' interests were more likely to be shared on social media platforms (Berger & Milkman, 2012). The study analyzed data from a large social media site and found that users were likelier to share content relevant to their interests, providing value to their social networks.

In addition, a survey of social media users conducted by HubSpot found that the most common reason for unfollowing a brand on social media was because their posts were irrelevant (HubSpot, 2018). The survey also found that users were likelier to engage with posts tailored to their interests and needs.

Overall, these studies provide strong evidence that the relevance of social media posts directly influences engagement. Posts tailored to users' interests and needs are more likely to generate higher levels of engagement, be shared, and be remembered. Therefore, businesses should focus on creating relevant content that meets their customer's needs and interests to maximize engagement on social media platforms.

Previous studies have shown that Facebook's relevance significantly impacts customer engagement. Our post's high engagement rate indicates its relevance, and our quantitative results confirm that our Facebook posts consistently generate high engagement rates.

Analyzing the fourth research question's findings:

Engagement on social media platforms, such as likes, shares, and comments, can impact an individual's perception of a brand or product; In turn, positive perceptions can also influence social media engagement, according to the study made by Chou and Edge (2012). Substantial evidence suggests that social media engagement and perception have a bidirectional relationship. This relationship has been extensively studied, and the following paragraphs will detail the findings from some relevant studies in the field.

A study published in the Journal of Marketing Research found that social media engagement significantly impacts brand perception (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011). The study used data from a large social media site and found that users who engaged with a brand on social media had more positive perceptions of the brand than those who did not engage. The study suggests that social media engagement can lead to an increase in brand awareness and can also positively influence a consumer's attitude toward a brand.

Similarly, a study published in the International Journal of Advertising found that social media engagement can enhance brand image and consumer attitudes toward a brand

(Park & Lee, 2017). The study used survey data from social media users and found that positive engagement, such as likes and comments, can lead to higher trust, loyalty, and positive attitudes toward a brand. In addition, this positive engagement can also increase brand awareness, which can increase purchase intentions.

Moreover, a study published in the *Journal of Consumer Psychology* found that positive perceptions can also influence social media engagement (Escalas & Bettman, 2015). The study used survey data from social media users and found that users with positive attitudes toward a brand were likelier to engage with that brand on social media. The study suggests positive brand perceptions can increase brand loyalty and advocacy, driving social media engagement.

Another study published in the *Journal of Interactive Advertising* found that social media engagement can influence purchase intentions (Nambisan & Watt, 2011). The study used survey data from social media users and found that users who engaged with a brand on social media were more likely to intend to purchase from that brand. The study suggests that social media engagement can lead to an increase in brand awareness and can also positively influence a consumer's purchase decision-making process.

These studies provide compelling evidence that social media engagement and perception have a bidirectional relationship. For example, positive engagement on social media platforms can enhance brand image and consumer attitudes toward a brand, according to the previous studies mentioned earlier. In contrast, positive perceptions can lead to higher social media engagement and purchase intentions, according to the previous studies mentioned earlier.

To summarize, previous studies have shown a two-way connection between how Facebook posts are perceived and their engagement rates. Therefore, based on our post's high engagement rate, our posts are perceived positively.

5.2. Conclusion:

Based on the conducted qualitative and quantitative research, this study has provided valuable insights into the influence of content marketing on consumer engagement behaviors and brand perception within the context of a multinational pharmaceutical company's initiative to combat the asthma crisis. The findings shed light on important factors such as content relevance and the appropriate format that affect consumer engagement and brand perception.

The qualitative research conducted through focus group discussions uncovered key considerations for content relevance, including the type of content, the credibility of the source, and individual interest. These insights were further supported by the quantitative research, which analyzed engagement metrics and provided additional understanding of audience interaction and the performance of different content types.

The findings emphasize the significance of creating relevant and engaging content, taking into account the preferences and behaviors of the target audience, and effectively leveraging influencers and static posts to maximize engagement for the health and beauty sectors. These inputs can be particularly beneficial for multinational pharmaceutical companies and businesses in the health and beauty industry looking to enhance their content marketing strategies and drive consumer engagement.

While this study has provided valuable insights, further research is encouraged to delve deeper into specific elements of content relevance, explore the impact of different content formats, and conduct comparative analyses across industries. Such efforts would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of content marketing and its implications for driving consumer engagement and shaping brand perception.

In conclusion, this research significantly contributes to the existing knowledge of content marketing, consumer engagement behaviors, and brand perception. The practical implications derived from the findings can guide companies in their efforts to enhance engagement, foster positive brand associations, and effectively navigate the digital landscape of the present era.

5.3.Thesis limitations:

The findings of this study should be interpreted within the context of several limitations. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that the research focused solely on a specific multinational pharmaceutical company's asthma crisis initiative, which may restrict the direct applicability of the findings to other industries and target audiences since they have their own key parameters and standards. Consequently, caution should be exercised when attempting to generalize the results beyond this specific context. Additionally, the qualitative research relied on focus group discussions with a limited number of participants, which may have implications for the representation of diverse perspectives and experiences within the target audience. Similarly, the quantitative research solely relied on engagement metrics from a single Facebook page, potentially overlooking the full range of consumer behaviors and perceptions. Furthermore, as the study primarily focused on content marketing analysis on Facebook, it is important to recognize that consumer engagement behaviors and brand perceptions can vary across different social media platforms. Lastly, it is crucial to consider that the study was conducted within a specific time frame and digital environment, and the effectiveness of content marketing, consumer behaviors, and platform algorithms may evolve. Hence, the findings should be interpreted within the particular context of the study's timeframe and digital landscape.

5.4.Recommendations and axes of development

Based on the findings and insights obtained from the research on the influence of content marketing on consumer online engagement behaviors and brand perception, several recommendations can be proposed for multinational pharmaceutical companies and businesses in the health and beauty industry to optimize their content marketing strategies:

1. **Prioritize Content Relevance:** It is recommended to prioritize delivering content that is relevant to the target audience. Conduct thorough research to understand their interests, preferences, and needs. Tailor the content to address specific concerns and provide value. Continuously assess and refine the relevance of the content to ensure it resonates with the audience.
2. **Collaborate with Credible Content Creators:** Consider collaborating with influencers, professionals, or experts in the field who have credibility and expertise. Select content creators whose values align with the brand and who have a genuine connection with the target audience. Their endorsement and expertise can enhance the perception and relevance of the content.
3. **Experiment with Diverse Content Formats:** Explore different content formats, such as videos, static posts, infographics, and interactive elements. Take into account the preferences and behaviors of the target audience when selecting the appropriate format. Aim to strike a balance between engaging and informative content that aligns with the brand identity.
4. **Analyze Engagement Metrics:** Regularly monitor and analyze engagement metrics, such as likes, comments, shares, and clicks, to evaluate the effectiveness of the content. Look for patterns and trends in audience interaction and consider adjusting the content strategy accordingly. Use these insights to identify areas for improvement and experimentation.

5. **Continuously Improve Content Marketing Strategy:** It is essential to regularly evaluate and refine the content marketing strategy based on feedback, data, and market trends. Stay updated with the evolving preferences and behaviors of the target audience. Implement conduct surveys, gather feedback to gain insights, and adjust the approach accordingly.
6. **Learn from Cross-Industry Insights:** Analyze successful content marketing campaigns in other sectors to gain inspiration and identify innovative strategies that can be adapted to the industry.
7. **Utilize Data-driven Decision-making:** Leverage tools and platforms, such as Facebook Studio and Facebook Pages Insights, to gather valuable data and insights. Use data-driven decision-making to optimize content marketing strategies, audience targeting, and campaign performance. Regularly analyze the metrics provided by these platforms to track progress and identify areas for improvement.

To further develop this study, the following areas of future research can be considered:

1. **Long-term Impact:** Investigate the long-term impact of content marketing campaigns on consumer engagement behaviors and brand perception. Conduct follow-up studies to assess the sustainability of the observed effects over time.
2. **Comparative Analysis:** Conduct comparative analyses across different industries to understand the effectiveness of content marketing strategies in various contexts. Explore similarities and differences in consumer engagement behaviors and brand perception between industries.
3. **Personalization:** Explore the potential of personalized content marketing strategies to enhance consumer engagement and brand perception. Investigate the effectiveness of tailored content based on individual preferences and behaviors.

4. Measurement Tools: Develop or refine measurement tools and metrics specifically tailored to assess content relevance, consumer engagement behaviors, and brand perception in the context of content marketing campaigns.



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