Content Marketing's Role in Company Branding and Business in Zimbabwe - A Case of Truworths

Shuli Song, Ph. D.[1], Clement Nyasha Simunyu, M.A[2]

[1]Professor, Zhejiang International Studies University, Major: International Economics
Email: *songshuli2012[at]126.com*

[2]Zhejiang University of Science and Technology, Major: International Business
Email: *cnsimunyu[at]outlook.com*

Abstract: *The main purpose of this study was to get a deeper knowledge of the role of content marketing in building company branding and business. Further, the aim was to find out how content marketing performance can be measured and how content marketing actions can affect sales. Because the thesis is conducted in co-operation with Truworths, one of the objectives was to create content marketing strategy and give clear quide-lines to the case company based to the earlier theory and the inquiry. The theoretical part provides the necessary academic research information from the empirical discussion that follows. In the empirical part of the thesis, the case company and its content marketing actions and used platforms at the moment are presented. Suggestions for the content marketing guidelines and actions are presented. The research methods are both quantitative and qualitative. The data for this study were gathered partly through a questionnaire and partly through interviews and observation. The results of the study revealed the importance of content marketing. With content marketing, companies can increase their brand awareness, engagement and loyalty by sharing valuable and interesting content. Based on the findings, clear guidelines were given to the case company on how to utilize different techniques and content in the most effective way in order to build brand awareness, brand engagement and loyalty, to acquire new customers and increase sales.*

Keywords: content marketing, social media marketing, digital marketing, brand

1. Introduction

The environment in marketing has changed drastically in a few years. Social media has become more common as a marketing tool. Most of the company's uses content marketing in their webpages and in social media. (Cagnon 2018) However, all potentials of the content marketing have not yet really been understood properly. (Pulizzi 2017; Jefferson & Tanton 2018) In a new media environment, consumers have more control of contents they desire to utilize. Ever firm can and should be its own media. (Holliman & Rowley 2018; Haeusermann 2019) The traditional advertising is losing its grip, so companies are forced to find new ways to promote their brand. Thus, it is necessary to understand how content can be used in marketing and customer engagement. (Holliman & Rowley 2018) Companies try to seek for new ways to keep current customers and bring in new ones. Content marketing can inform, educate, and deepen connections with consumers. Creating online marketing community is a way to build and develop corporate brand and it can be necessary for a business to stay alive in many branches contemporarily. (Jutkowitz 2018) People buy differently than earlier, so there is also a huge need to sell differently. (Jefferson & Tanton 2018) The purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of content marketing and what could be the role of content marketing in company branding and business. The research has been done in co-operation with Truworths. Content marketing is the method companies just now are increasingly interested in. Content marketing is the marketing technique of creating relevant and valuable content to a clearly defined customer target group. (Pulizzi 2018; Jefferson & Tanton 2018) Content marketing has increased widely because of social media. Social media offers a great option to distribute a company's messages. It is easy to direct this message at the right focus group in order to increase brand awareness, customer loyalty and brand credibility. Even though most of the companies already have presence on social media, the deep understanding of contents is still missing. Traditional marketing is becoming less effective and entering content marketing can be a solution for the companies. (Pulizzi 2018) Social media platforms allow companies to talk to their customers directly, without any other media or distributor.

If the company is using social media tools, it is essential to use them well and utilize all the benefits they can offer. Because of the Internet, information is everywhere and available to everyone. When before advertisements were meant to appeal to the general public, now a company can get the attention of the individuals all over. (Juslén 2009; Budikova 2018)

Companies have to be where their customers are if they want to deliver their messages to the right audience. It is important to remember that customers demand value for their time and money. They will use the Internet to get what they want; interruptions will not be well tolerated. Customers appreciate the stories and narratives instead of a traditional advertising. (Chiu, Hsieh & Kuo 2017)

The first objective of the thesis is to get a deep theoretical knowledge of content marketing concepts, techniques, trends and statistics. The second objective is to define the content marketing audience of the case company and understand its problems, needs, interests and preferences.The third objective is a try to understand the concept of content marketing in relation to company branding. The process will include examining the corporate image or company brand outside the target group.

Even if the Truworths has operated very actively in content marketing, the essential plan for strategy and actions has missed before that study. This study is planned to fill this gap using earlier research and data gathered from the inquiry. The biggest challenge, however, is to understand the creation of truly engaging content. This can happen by knowing the clients' preferences.

The research will not go in deep detail into financial elements of content marketing. However, it is touched on shortly in order to understand what kind of inputs content marketing requires. Furthermore, the measurement of the content marketing will be conducted only in the limits of the case company's earlier measures.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Content Marketing

It has been said that content marketing is more than pure advertising, it is like storytelling of a company. (Chiu et al 2017; Pulizzi 2017). Pulizzi (2017) even sees that the future of marketing is not marketing at all, but publishing. "So, as content marketing and storytelling become a larger part of the marketing organization in general, we are seeing an evolution of the marketing department transform itself into more of a publishing department" (Pulizzi 2017). What is content marketing? Why is it so important momentarily? Shortly said, content marketing can be defined as publishing content that empowers, engages, educates and connects consumers. (Jefferson & Tanton 2018) There are tremendous changes in marketing, it has already shifted from the mass communication model to more personal and mobile communication. Social conversations-based marketing favors lasting partnership between brands and consumers. (Budikova 2018)

Social media should be a part of marketing but it is very different from mass media and it has different codes for advertising. Marketing on social media can almost only be cost-effective when followers freely and willingly share contents forward. It happens when the message is so interesting that they want to share it. It is about customer relationship and creating a community. (Taylor, Levin & Strutton 2017; Erdogmus & Cicek 2017)

Additionally, social media enables consumers to share information with their peers about the product and services. The conversations between the peers provide companies cost effective way to increase brand awareness and brand loyalty – at least if it is positive. (Erdogmus & Cisek 2017) Thus, when brands and consumers co-create brand stories together, brand owners do not have any more complete control of their brands. Consumer created stories can spread as rapidly as those created by company itself (Singh & Sonnenburg 2017), and these stories are not always exact the same what company wants to emphasize.

2.2 Marketing communications and branding

Content marketing differs from other types of marketing communications. Marketing communications means the exchange of information between a company and its customers, it is like conversation but at its best it can affect emotionally to a customer. (Hollensen 2016) It is about sharing points of view and forming relationships. (Naik & Raman 2003) Due to social media, modern marketing communications are becoming more interactive and continuous. (Stone & Woodcock 2018).

The classic marketing mix defines the 4Ps of marketing, price, place, product and promotion. (Kotler & Armstrong 2016) In this study, content marketing is explored in a context of social media and building a company brand, in this study promotion is what marketing communications is all about. Marketing communications represent the voice of the company and its brand. (Chiu et al. 2017) The modern marketing mix defines 7Ps of marketing as classic price, promotion, product and place, also people, process and physical evidence. (Kotler & Armstrong 2016).

The influence resulting from personal conversation is very powerful. Consumers are not isolated individuals; they are members of social systems and social network systems. (Holliman & Rowley 2018) Satisfied and loyal consumers communicate their positive attitudes toward the brand or toward the company both online and offline. But also dissatisfied and disgruntled customer share their negative attitudes toward the brand effectively. (Hoffman & Fodor 2016). Companies have not a total control of their own brands because also consumer created contents can spread rapidly: and these consumer-created stories can be useful or harmful to the brand. (Singh & Sonnenburg 2017).

2.3 Marketing tools and channels on social media

Consumers are on social media so it is a necessity for a company, also. Sometimes the biggest content marketing challenge for companies is the creation of engaging content. The majority of content marketing today needs to be performed in digital form. (Pulizzi 2018) Information is everywhere and available to everyone. The technologies and tools, which are referred to as social media all provide means for users to create content, interact and express opinions online. There are several social media platforms to use. Each platform has its own strengths and weaknesses but if being able to combine services and create several slightly different brand voices for each platform the company can reach different audiences. (Jefferson & Tanton 2018)

Content marketing on social media can reach a huge amount of people. There is an opportunity to share information for a large audience. Information is available around the world the moment it is published. (Taylor et al. 2017) This can be an advantage in publishing for example a sale in online store. Social media also provides information at the time when a consumer wants to consume it. (Pulizzi 2018). Thus, content marketing on social media needs resources and work time investments from the company when used properly.

The most popular social media tools used in content marketing point of view, are at the moment Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs and Instagram. Additionally, Pinterest, Snapchat, Periscope and WhatsApp are increasing their impact on audience in Zimbabwe. However, in many branches, newsletter by email or SMS

can still have a big role in marketing and in brand performances. (Singh & Sonnenburg 2017) The risk with applications and platforms are that they change their algorithms every now and then.

Search engine optimization (SEO), that will say getting found, should be an important part of a content marketing strategy. Any content could be effective if consumers do not know it or are able to find it. (Doctoroff 2018) In fact, it is so important for drawing targeted traffic to the site that there are companies that exist only to help to optimize sites for the search engines.

2.4 Content creation – what is valuable content

The biggest challenge in content marketing is the creation of valuable and above all engaging content. (Palazzi 2017) One way of creating engaging content, is storytelling. It is also a powerful branding method, because it resonates and builds positive emotion among customers. Strong branding can even decrease the need for price promotions – if branding and content marketing has some effects on sale. (Chiu et al. 2017). The Content a company produces can be viral, it may be advertised by customers through channels like Facebook shares, reviews, tweets and blogs. Internet users trust other internet users more than traditional media or advertising or the business that sell the products. That's why taking customer feedback into consideration can be a huge benefit. (Palazzi 2018) "Because information sharing on the internet has allowed everyone to express their opinions, people trust peers more than organizations. Furthermore, customers evaluate products differently, often because market offerings appear on a continuum ranging from easy to evaluate too difficult to evaluate." (Chiu et al. 2017).

2.5 Content marketing strategies

All technology tools available are worthless without a content marketing strategy at the center of marketing. One of the most important questions for any marketer is how to recognize if content marketing is really working for them. Therefore, it is extremely important to define how to measure content marketing and which actions should be done to create an effective content marketing strategy. The first thing in creating content marketing strategy is defining the organizational goals. (Palazzi & Barrett 2009).

As it was earlier said, the content must be relevant and valuable. Additionally, what is relevant and valuable is dependent on the target group. The real content marketing strategy often requires targeting demographics. (Jefferson & Tinton 2018) Content marketing can be a marketing strategy (Palazzi 2018) or as it is in this thesis, a way to react to things in the short run in a digital environment. (Altona 2007) The modern era of social media and content marketing has strengthened the need for companies to engage their customers in an interactive relationship. Companies should act on social media like media companies of today: respond to real-time news as the stories develop and be aware of the discussion there is on the air. (Palazzi 2017).

According to Jefferson & Tinton (2018) there is 10-step approach to a strategy on social media (table 2) you should remember and put together. There should be: 1) clearness on goals, 2) knowing a business field, 3) knowing customers, 4) finding the story behind the content, 5) recognizing sweet spot and vision behind the content, 6) setting content commitment and plan, 7) setting platform and tools, 8) organizing the content creation, 9) measuring and 10) refining content strategy over time.

2.6 Content marketing measurement

Audience research is a part of content strategy. Search engine optimization should be an important part of a content marketing strategy. Any content could be effective if consumers do not know it or are able to find it. (Doctoroff 2018) After s all these things are in order, it is time to think about measuring the effects of content marketing.

Eventually, it is a big must to use social media and it has considered to be very cost-effective way to do marketing. However, it is impossible to simply and very quickly to count on to contents benefits and its ability to increase sales or value. Returns and revenues are coming on delay. (Leano 2017; Kumar & Mirandaing 2016; Hoffman & Fodor 2016) To get some returns in the long run, there has to be a consistent presence on social media, not only to run a single project or campaign. (Redgums & Cicak 2017)

Social media return on investment is not like traditional marketing - in many ways, it is not even possible to focus solely on monetary returns within a fixed period (McCarthy 2018). However, content marketing can be measured by using collected data from various sources. On social media there is more need to consider metrics and value in the long run, such as brand awareness, word of mouth promotion, traffic driven to the website via social media, strengthening loyalty and engagement with existing customers. (Hoffman & Fodor 2016; McCarthy 2018).

3. Research Methods

3.1 Sample and Data collection

This research had two research methods. First, there was a quantitative survey, using a questionnaire that was been designed for this research and was conducted via Webropol. The questionnaire had both quantitative and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was based on research issues. Secondly, the empirical part of the thesis was also carried out with qualitative research in the form of interviews. The interviews implemented were semi-structured. The research methods were both quantitative and qualitative. The data collection was done partly made through a questionnaire, partly through interviews. In addition to questionnaires and interviews, enterpriseswere studied by observing their webpages and social media channels and above all, the content in these platforms. The inquiry was sent by email to members of loyalty register of Truworths. There are more than 60 000 members in this register and almost half of them have announced their email address. Truworths has together 1 700 followers in Facebook but it is already known that almost half of their clients have an own profile in Facebook.

Sometimes, consumers do not want to declare or follow any brand and sometimes they are not interested in any kind of content Truworths produces in its channels. However, for a company it is worth to know why customers do not follow them on Facebook even if they have already made a choice to be loyal and are in a loyalty register. Are they not engaged or do they not know about contents?

The second research method was a theme interview. After analyzing the facts from questionnaire there was an interview with some clients of Truworths. The aim of this study was toknow how to keep and engage clients and how to foster next generation to appreciate a brand of Truworths. The aim of this part of the study was to know, how customers have found the company and its product and how they estimate the brand and the image of the company.

In addition, the company was studied by observing. This is the third part of the empirical research. Observing has been done during the thesis process during two weeks, week 9 in February and week 1 in March. The ultimate target of this part was to recognize what kind of content marketing the company already had on social media. How the company used social media in marketing, what social media platforms were used and what are the benefits and disadvantages for using the social media tools in content marketing. Is there already someone who oversees content marketing and social media marketing strategies?

There are also recommendations based on earlier research and gathered data for this thesis. Guidelines for using content marketing on social media are done. It is possible to form a different approach to marketing campaigns in order to achieve a better positioning in the market and strengthen the brand in people's mind. Conclusions were based on the most important findings and the results of the questionnaire and interviews. The results are limited by the used data set, which is not representative for all industries and is cross-sectional.

3.2 Procedure

Before the actual data collection, pre-testing was done to make sure the questions operated well. Three people answered questions first and necessary improvements were made. Further, the Truworths had a possibility to do some changes, for example the name of the questionnaire was changed from content marketing 40 survey to customer satisfaction survey due to it. Moreover, before launching the questionnaire there were three preliminary interviews with Truworths, group interview with four persons in 9th of February and two telephone interviews in 12th and 24th of February.

The data was collected via Webroot survey, which was sent to the clientele by email over the course of eight days (14.-22. january.2021). The link for the surveys was also delivered through the company's Facebook page. Data gathering was implemented using an online survey until 8th of March. After that the questionnaire was on Facebook page couple of days. A total of 969 answers were received. Furthermore, a total of 1 021 respondents opened the survey link, thus resulting in an effective response rate of 94,8

percent. Totally 1 412 persons had clicked the email link that the company send to them. So, it is unclear if the link did not work or why the number of openers was different in Webroot than in company's processes.

The response rate was calculated by comparing the number of opened survey link to sufficiently filled survey responses. However, the email was sent to almost all clients of loyalty register in 17 areas: 29 205 persons. If using this number, the response rate is considerably lower, only 3,3 percent. Hence, the total number of 969 respondents is very good in this kind of study.

Additionally, open questions gathered 466-784 respondents. The survey was answered anonymously, but 905 respondents left their name and address for further interview. In addition, after submitting their responses, respondents were able to participate to the prize lottery by filling up a form. The responses were analyzed anonymously and the answers could not be connected to the respondents.

All questions were formulated so that respondents did not need to know concepts brand, brand awareness, loyalty, engagement and content marketing very deeply. The purpose was that respondents can give answers due to their own experience of the Truworths. The responses correspond to the target group that the company is pursuing: two largest age groups fell between 56-65 and 65-75 years. It represents a 71 percent share of the respondents. 44,3 percent of respondents were living in the area of Harare. There were three telephone interviews, which were semi structured theme interview and themes were following the pattern of questionnaire. The interviewees were selected by random from the group who left their name and number. Each interview lasted about 20 minutes and were conducted in a same day, 2nd of March.

The third part of the research was observation. The Truworths was studied by observing their webpage and social media channels and above all, the content in these platforms couple of times a week in February and August 2019. The purpose was to explore what kind of content Truworths has, how often it was published and what social media tools company uses. The short excel was filled in that purpose. Remarkable thing is that Truworths changed its agenda on social media and webpage at the same time they renewed online store in March 2019. So, these observation forms from February and August are not very well compatible. However, observation gave a certain glance at company's content marketing policy and the uncertainty that there may be when seeking for the right answer to the strategy. For that reason, the results of the observation are also shortly described in this thesis.

Persuasion knowledge was captured by using two measures corresponding to its conceptual and attitudinal dimensions. Conceptual persuasion knowledge was measured by asking participants for their recognition of advertising. Therefore, we adapted the procedure from Boerman and colleagues (2012) by asking participants to indicate on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) if they felt like the video, they saw was advertising. The original wording was slightly changed so that it fits the stimulus used in this study.

According to Rossiter (2011), this single item provides a sufficient measure for recognition of advertising.

In line with the procedure pursued by Boerman and colleagues (2012), we measured participants' attitudinal persuasion knowledge by adapting a scale for measuring trustworthiness. The scale originally constructed and validated by Ohanian (1990) as a subscale for celebrity endorsers' credibility asked participants to rate how they feel about the video they saw using a total of five items, including pairs such as dependable – undependable or honest – dishonest. Participants should indicate on a scale of 1 to 7 whether they agreed with one pole (e.g., honest) or the other (e.g., dishonest). The results were recoded so that a high score indicated a high trust and vice versa. The scale was slightly adapted in such a way that the wording of the initial statement fits the stimulus of this study. Its internal consistency was excellent with $\alpha = .92$. The mean of the five items was used to create a single score for attitudinal persuasion knowledge, with people with a high score trusting the video, indicating a low activation of attitudinal persuasion knowledge.

Brand attitude was assessed by adapting a validated scale from Spears and Singh (2004), asking participants to describe their overall feelings towards the game showcased in the video. They could then rate their feelings in a semantic differential on a scale from 1 to 7. Examples for the pair of poles are unappealing – appealing or unpleasant – pleasant. 15 Participants who got a high score on the scale had a positive attitude towards the game. The only change from the original scale included changing the wording of the initial statement so that it fit to the stimulus of this study. The internal consistency of the scale was excellent with $\alpha = .92$. The mean value of this scale was calculated and used as a single score for the brand attitude of participants.

4. Data analysis and Findings

4.1 Data analysis

The empirical data for the research was collected by quantitative survey methods. In addition, the analysis of content was used. In quantitative research method theories of earlier studies, presentation of hypothesis, the definition of the concepts and the collection of empirical Data to quantify issues numerically are the basic orientation. Attention was paid to the selection of an adequate target group and the sample, the formation of the tables and editing data into a statistically processable form. Analysis and conclusions of results were based on statistical analysis. (Harari et al. 2009)

In addition to the analysis of the data, l used content analysis. Content analysis can be used in both qualitative and quantitative data to describe the content of the text (Tumi & Sarajevo 2002). More specifically, this research used qualitative content analysis in examining the form and content of written and spoken language. (Seitamaa-Hakkarainen 2018) This analysis examined the contents of open answers, theme interviews and observation of content marketing in Truworths. The aim of the content analysis was to provide a concise description of where the material is connected to the results of previous research results. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002).

4.2 Content marketing in Truworths

The customer satisfaction surveys were answered by a total of 969 respondents, this was an online questionnaire using webropol survey tool. The amount of respondent was above the expected level, even if the email link was sent totally to 29 205 persons. Using this number, response rate was only 3,3 percent. But when considering openings of the link, the response rate was really high: almost 95 percent.

The responses correspond to the target group that the company is pursuing: two largest age groups fell between 56-65 and 65-75 years. It represents a 71 percent share of the respondents. 435 respondents belonged to the age group 56-65 years and 256 respondents belonged to the age group 66-75 years old (figure 3). This is in line with the customer profile of the studied company and the field in which it operates. It also reveals that without a good brand performance and increased brand awareness, there may be difficulties in acquisition of new customers in the future.

After background questions, the questionnaire was based on three themes: 1. Fashion and textile industry in general, 2. Truworths and its products and 3 Social media. The aim of the first question group was to explore how important sustainability and textile recycling are comparing to price to this group of clients, are they interested in mode and how important is the used money and time for shopping. One aim of these questions was to find out if content marketing can increase brand awareness and finally affects sales.

The second question group aimed to study the brand and image of Truworths. Is their brand well-known or not, are they known for good reasons and what is the image and reputation of the company? The purpose was to study if clients are engaged and loyal and what is the role of content marketing in company branding. Social media was the issue in the third question group. The Truworths is very active on social media but it is still looking for a good way to present its ideas and products on social media. Company had many experiments in launching content in different channels but the own voice was still missing. The aim of this question group was to find out how to engage a target group to follow a company brand and how to increase brand awareness amongst the next generation. Every company wants to keep its current customers but at the same time acquisitor new clients for its products.

4.2.1 Valuable content for customers

The majority of respondents, 75,8 percent considered the most attractive reason to get information was that they wanted to get tips from clothing, colors and style. The title question was *What kind of information do you want to get from dressing* and *clothing*. There was a possibility to choose three most important issues. All 969 respondents answered to this question and answers were chosen totally 2802 times. The 64,3 percent of respondents wanted to get information about reductions and 40 percent of respondents wanted personal advices.
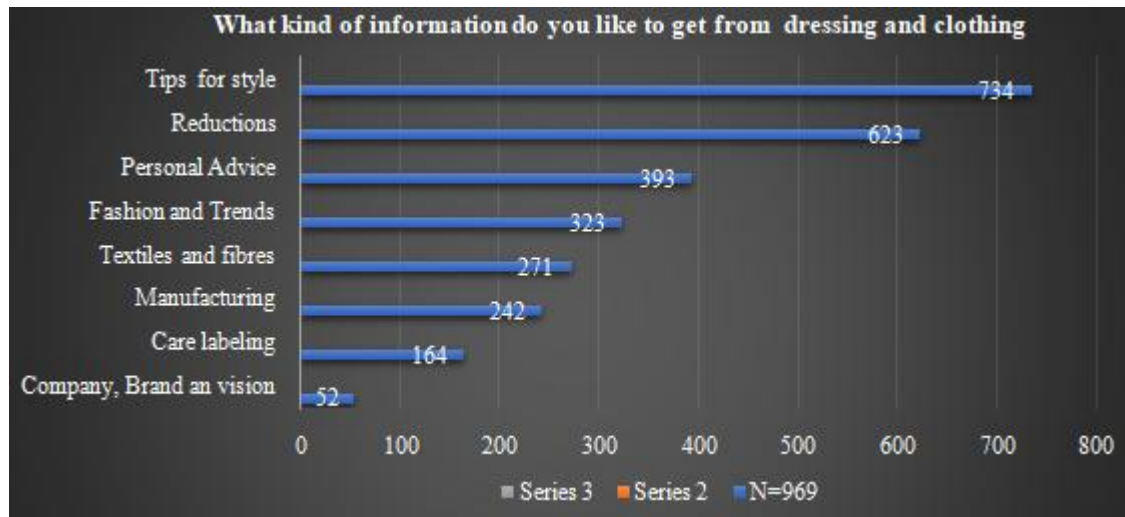
Figure 6: Valuable content in creating brand engagement

The second title question considering clothing and fashion was: *How important* are *these things in clothing and garment for you?*

There was a possibility to estimate six issues which were: price, quality, sustainability, design, country of manufacture and cutting. The scale was from 1 to 5: 1 for representing not important at all, 2 = some importance, 3= rather important, 4 = important and 5 = very important (table 4 below).

Table 4: Factors in building a good brand story

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Price	7	62	470	289	141	969
Quality	6	3	83	450	427	969
Sustainability	5	9	136	521	298	969
Fashionable	15	185	397	284	88	969
Country of manufacture	12	51	259	374	273	969
Cutting	9	21	71	294	574	969
	60	341	1463	2604	2315	6783

In the table 4 there is estimation from 1-5. The majority of respondents chose estimations 3-5, from rather important to very important. All of the respondents answered to this question, only 6 percent of the respondents estimated not important at all (1) or of some importance (2) in any questions. The aim of this question was to explore new trends in clothing. Now, many customers consider sustainability, recycling and manufacturing countries to be very important things in textile industry. Even if the price is considered to be only rather important for many, there may be some limits for spender money in anyway.

Table 5: Factors in building a good brand story: average

How important is for you?	Average
Cutting	4,44

Design	4,44
Quality	4,33
Sustainability	4,13
Country of manufacture	3,87
Price	3,51
Fashionable	3,25

A good brand story can build the knowledge about products and build positive emotions and relationship between a company and clients. A good brand story can also allow the manufacturer to highlight its differences from other producers and reduce consumer's price sensitivities. (Chiu et al. 2017) Companies can add their own strong brand to their assortments and increase their attractiveness towards customer's needs. That may even decrease the need for price promotions. Branding is increasingly important for textile factories to differentiate companies from competitors that sell similar products but differently manufactured.

4.2.2 Brand familiarity and image of the Truworths
The second set of questions concerned the case company and its products. The first question of this set asked the respondents to choose the most suitable options for them which were the most important things in the case company. There was a possibility to choose two options from nine alternatives. There were total of 969 respondents and amount of 2067 answers were chosen (figure 7).

The question was *What is the most important thing in the Truworths for you*?

According to the results, four alternatives were the most important things for the respondents. Figure 7 shows that fashion trends were not considered to be important at all, only 1 percent of respondents chose this option.
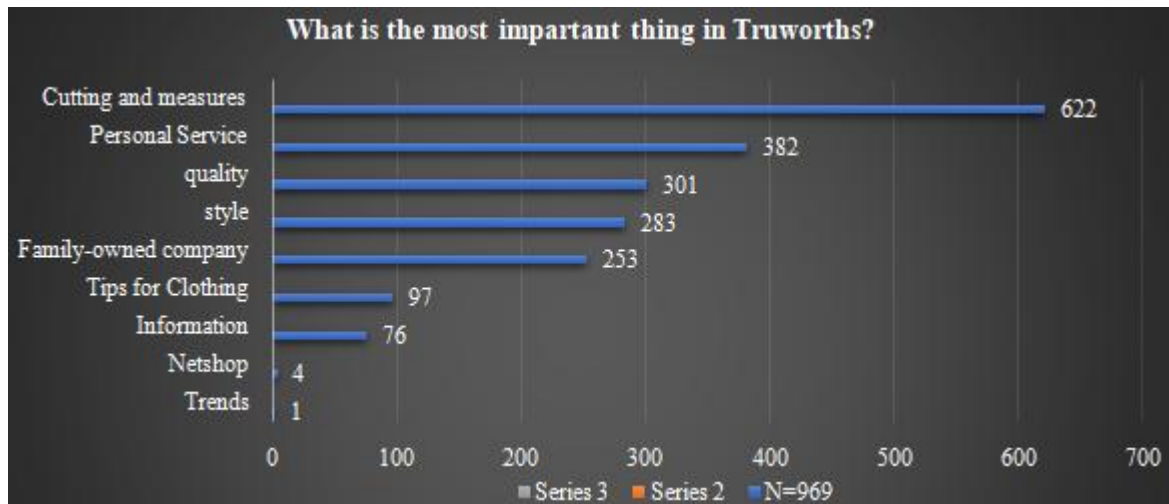
Figure 7: Brand familiarity and the image of the Truworths

64 percent of respondents considered cutting and measurement to be the most important for them. 39,5 answered that personal service is important. In addition, quality (31 percent) and style (29 percent) were estimated rather high. Every fourth respondent estimated that manufacturing country has importance. The case company is the Zimbabwean family-based firm that manufactures its clothes whether in Zimbabwe or in near areas.

Content marketing is all about communication (Pulizzi 2018) but in this question (figure 7) the communications and information did not seem to be very important for customers. Of course, telling from cutting, manufacturing and personal service is also communication and information. Is it rather

clear that there is no reason to choose communication and information in the survey, if you already know the brand and get all the information you need (figure 8)? All the respondents were already customers of the case company and they were members in the loyalty register.

When asked *How well are you aware of the mode and fashion by following the* Truworths*?* The half of the respondents considered to be well informed. 42 percent answered to be well informed and 11 percent considered to be very well informed by following the Truworths as it can be seen in figure 8.
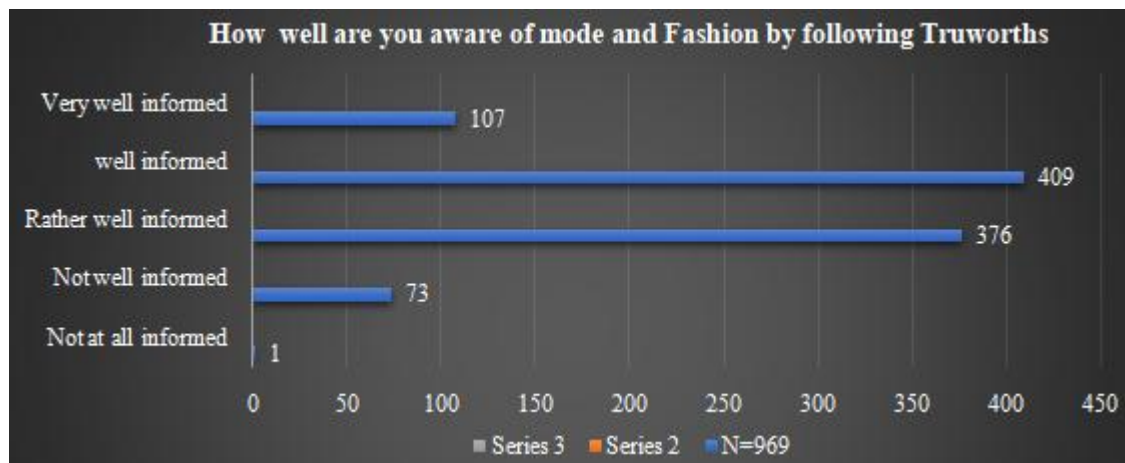

Figure 8: Sharing valuable and useful information

A company provides useful information to a customer (figure 8). As result, the most important part during the process will be an emotional bond between a seller and a buyer. Content marketing is not the initial goal in business, the goal is that the content works towards attracting new customers and retaining the old ones – and ultimately, bring the sales revenues. (Pulizzi 2018) However, the most

important source was not social media or internet page, it was email or SMS for 75 percent of the respondents.

The second, net page/online store was far away, 8,3 percent of respondents considered it to be the most important channel to get information (figure 9).
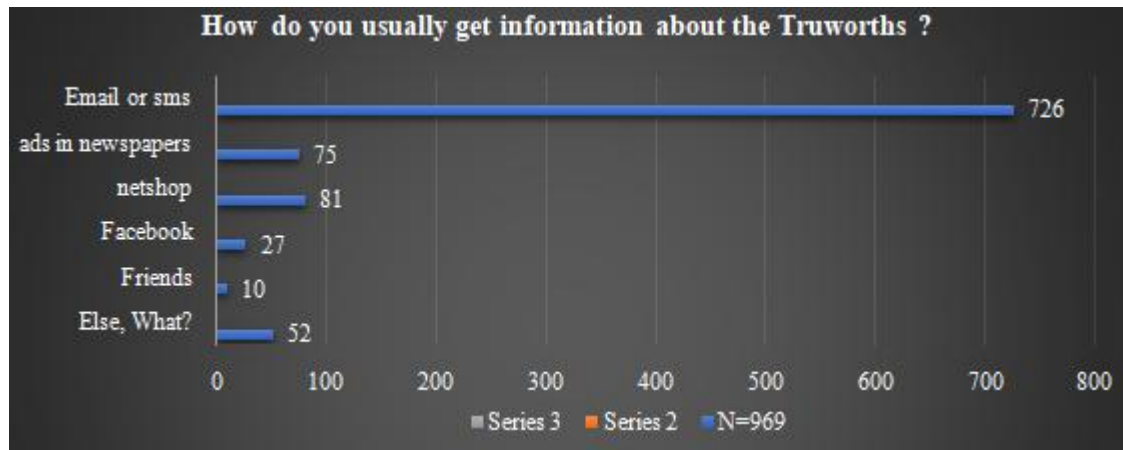
Figure 9: The most important source to get an information Facebook

The results show that even the great number of middle-aged women are actively involved on social media, it is not the relevant channel or source to get information when doing purchasing decisions (figure 9). Since brand fan pages are organized around a single brand, product, or company, they can be seen as a special kind of brand community or the place consumers can formulate together a network or a community. (Jahn & Kunz 2017) However, even if you like the Facebook page, it does not mean that you are deeply devoted to the company and its content or are ready to share these contents to your network on social media.

Most of the respondents wanted to purchase clothes mainly in store (figure 10). Over 89 percent of respondents choose this alternative while 3 percent purchased mainly on online store. 7 percent of respondents used the both. The reasons were mentioned in open questions: it is nice to try on clothes, see them and ask about them. A personal service was said to be very important.

Figure 10: Purchasing on online store and in

Remarkable was that the most respondents had never purchased from the online store, 84 percent of respondents.

15 percent of respondents had done shopping also on online store (figure 11).
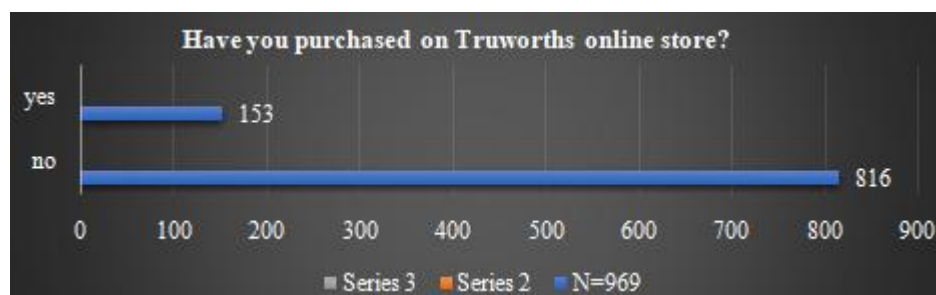

Figure 11: Distribution of customers on online store

Attitudes towards the company and its products were measured by asking a school grade from 4 to 10. The scale goes from 4 as weak to 10 as excellent including 5 = passable, 6 = moderate, 7 = satisfying, 8 = good, 9 = praiseworthy and 10 = excellent.

There were several alternatives to estimate, first the brand of the Truworths' brand as general, after that fashionable,

quality, sustainability and service. In the figure 12 below there is a grade as a company in general. 42,5 percent of respondents estimated Truworths to be praiseworthy, 11 percent as excellent and 41 percent as good. So, 94,5 percent of respondents were really satisfied with the company brand by giving a school grade from 8 to 10.
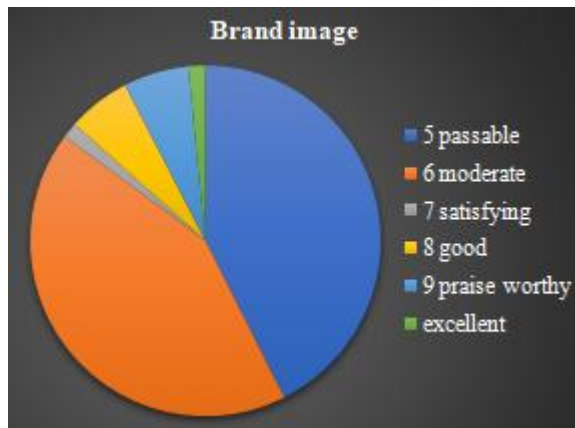
Figure 12: Truworths' brand and image. School grades 4-10

School grades were also asked from fashionable, quality, sustainability and service. 48 percent of respondents also estimated company's products fashionable by giving grade good and 34 percent gave a grade praiseworthy. 8 percent estimated company to be as excellent. Totally 90 percent of respondents estimated company's products as fashionable by giving a grade from 8 to 10. These school grades are to be seen in a table 6 in the next page.

**Table 6:** Truworths brand and image. School grades 4-10 for 5 factors

GRADES	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Brand	0	2	24	32	396	411	104	969
Fashionable	0	5	19	81	462	328	74	969
Quality	1	2	7	32	314	437	176	969
Sustainability	1	2	7	41	327	420	171	969
Service	0	6	4	20	191	415	333	969
	2	**17**	**61**	**206**	**1690**	**2017**	**858**	**4845**

About quality the company and its products gained 95 percent of respondents to give grades 8-10. And 95 percent of respondents estimated the company also to be sustainable and gave grades 8-10. And service, 97 percent of respondents estimated the service to be good, praiseworthy or excellent from 8-10. So, most of the clients of this company are very satisfied with their choice of the Truworths and its products. The image and brand of this company is seen as very positive amongst the current clientele. In this study all the respondents were selected from the loyalty register of Truworths.

4.2.3 Social media and contents

The third part of the questions asked about social media. Because the target group of the company is relatively elderly people, it was relevant to ask *Do you use* social *media? Which channels?* The most popular channels were given as options 60 and there was also possibility to choose *Something else* and *I do not use social* media. There were 969 responses, 1 413 chooses in this question.

Most of the respondent said that they use Facebook, 51 percent, but almost as many said (37 percent) that they do not use social media at all. The second popular social media channel after Facebook was YouTube, 160 respondents, 16,5 percent (figure 13). Relatively big group of clients do not use social media at all. In addition, WhatsApp, Pinterest, Skype and Messenger was mentioned in an open question: Else, what?
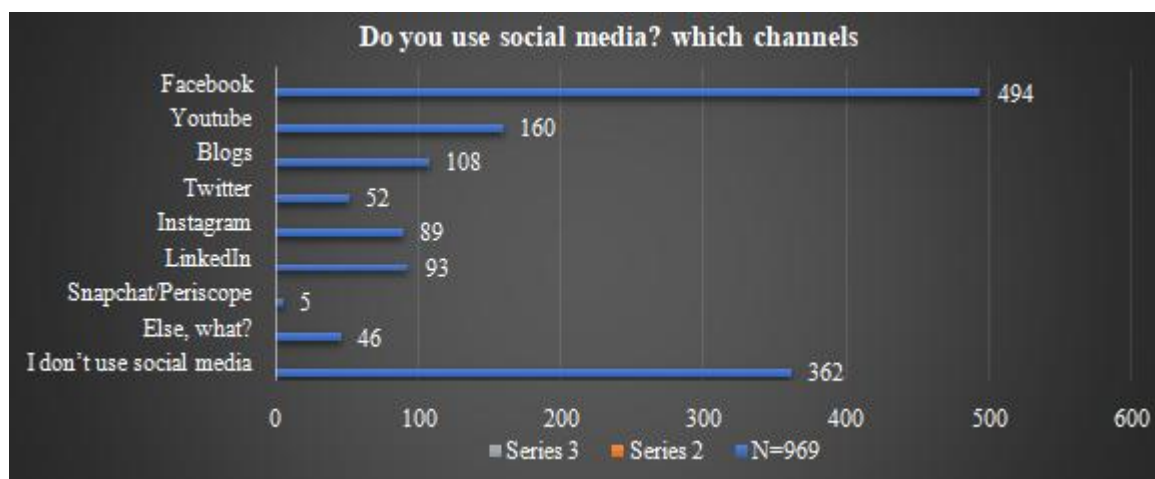
Figure 13: Respondents' activities on social media

In this survey, mostly used platform was undoubtedly Facebook and second popular was YouTube (figure 13). This finding tells that company's videos has reached their target group very well and maybe has learned clientele to use new ways to get information about clothes and fashion. The case company should possibly use these networking channels more actively in order to find new customers. Using these channels as an extra, is nothing away from loyal group of clienteles, who do not use internet and social media.

The second question in this theme was *How often do you use social media?* The majority of those who use social media (31 percent), answered that they use different social media platforms every day. Furthermore, according to the survey, 12 percent of respondents use social media several times a day and 14 percent of respondents use it couple of times in a week (figure 14).
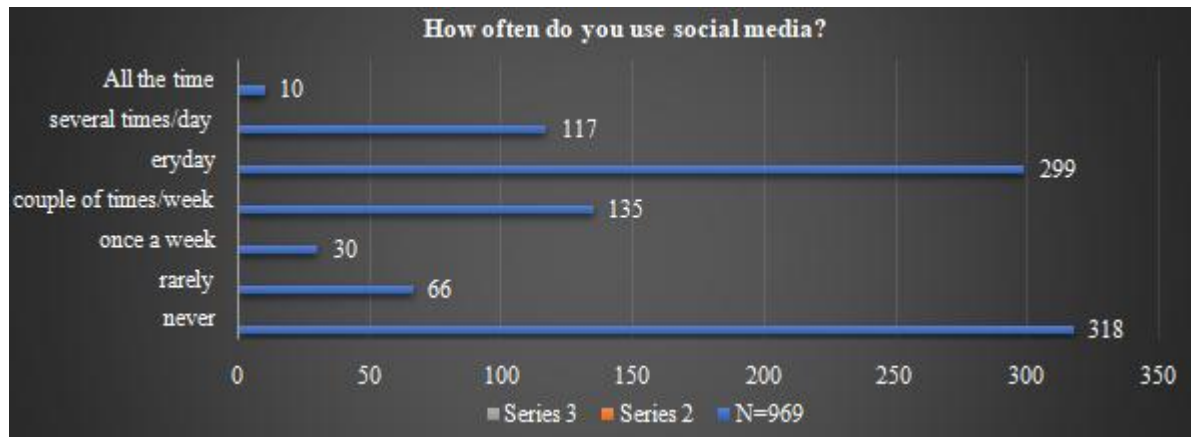
Figure 14: Usage of social media

The third question concerned about advertising on social media. The question was How *often do you want to get new updates from Truworths on social media?*

Almost half of the respondents (43 percent) answered that they want to see new updates only couple of times in a month. However, almost as many (41 percent) wanted to get a new post every time there is reductions and sales (figure 15).
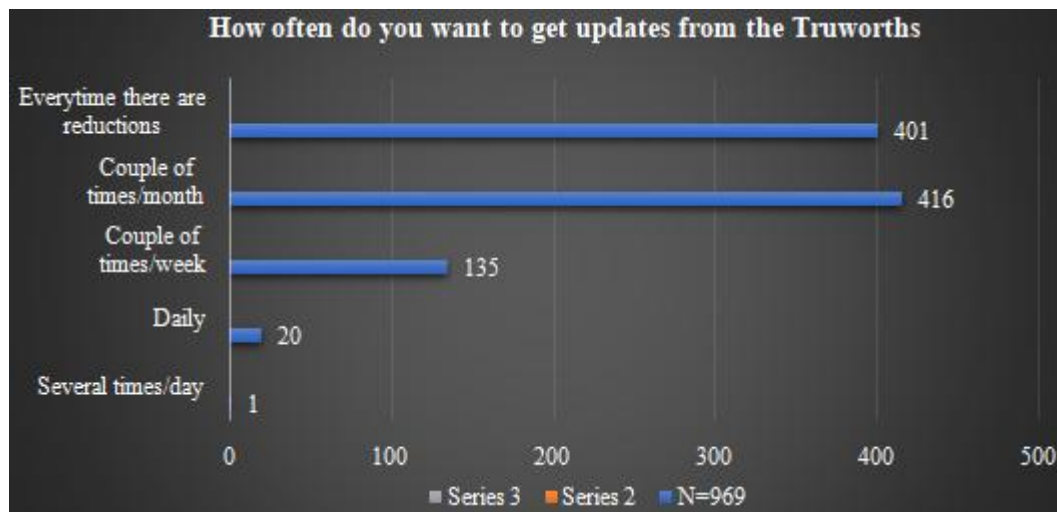
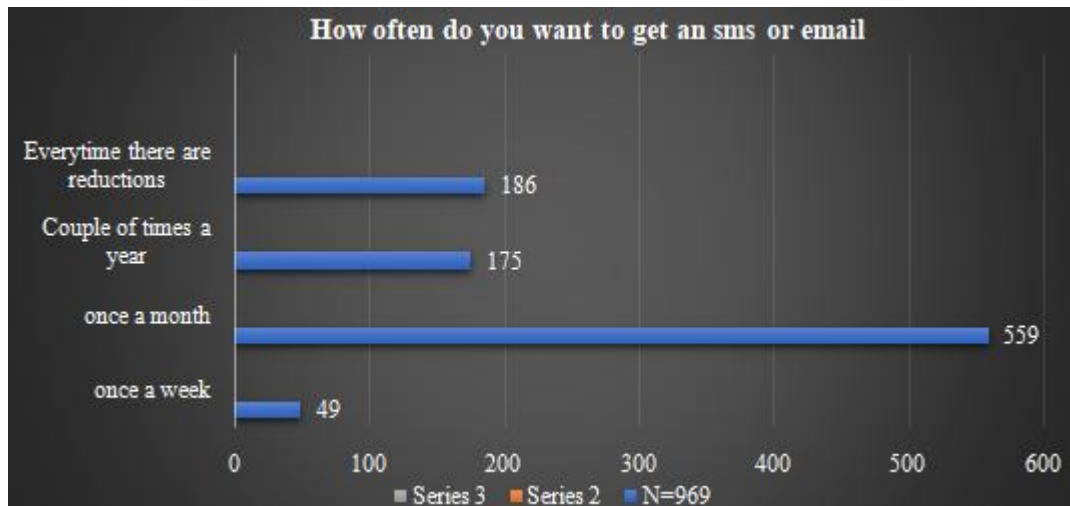**Figure 15:** Frequency of wanted information in general

According to this survey, there is no need to increase amount of information to a certain group of clients. 58 percent of respondents were satisfied to get information about the Truworths only once in a month even if this information channel was their favorite email or SMS (figure 15 and figure 16). 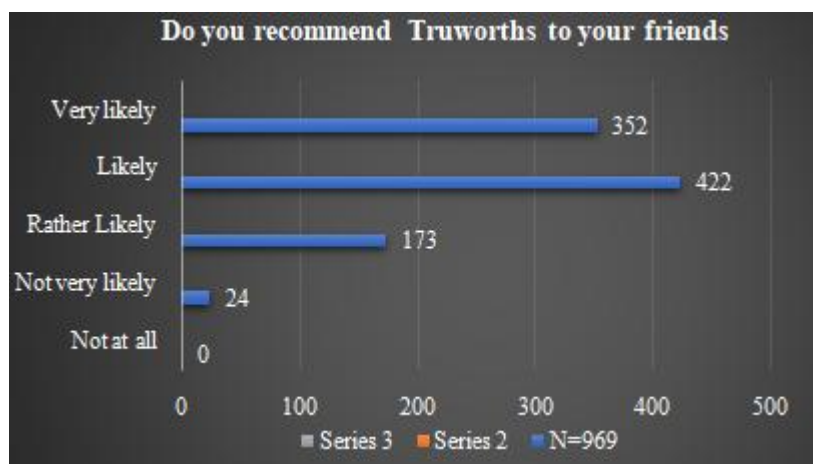Despite of this, respondents were very eager to recommend this company to their friends. 44 percent of respondents answered they would recommend company's products to their friends likely and 36 percent considered to recommend products very likely as we see the figure 17 below.

How often do you want to get an sms or email

Everytime there are reductions	186
Couple of times a year	175
once a month	559
once a week	49

Series 3 ■ Series 2 ■ N=969

Figure 16: Frequency of wanted information by email or SMS

Truworths has built an engaged mailing list and keep in touch with valuable email content with their customers almost every month. According to these findings the loyalty register customers can appreciate that.Email newsletters also tells something about the content. Usually, people delete most of their emails even without opening them. So, these newsletters will only be read if the content is valuable.

(Jefferson & Tanton 2018). Actually, consumers do not read or need textile companies' news, they want to get useful ideas and tips for clothing. If the email content is valuable, it can turn every contact into customer who will be motivated to buy something.

Do you recommend Truworths to your friends

Very likely	352
Likely	422
Rather Likely	173
Not very likely	24
Not at all	0

Series 3 ■ Series 2 ■ N=969

Social media platforms and applications will change all the time: there will be rises and falls but social media itself is here to say. Every tool and platform are different and needs different kind on communication. The best way to be in minds of customers, is to create content that is valuable for them. Direct sales messages only irritate people if they come too often to their newsfeed. Findings of this survey show that consumers are very loyal to Truworths. Customers appreciate the brand and are ready to recommend these products to their friends.

4.3 Brand story

The interviews gave an opportunity to the student to exchange views and ideas with respondents. Due to the scope of the thesis and given timeline of the project, three interviews were conducted. The theme interview was used by telephone and the informants were selected by random. They all were from the area of Harare and Chitungwiza and had been a client of Truworths about five years. Two of the persons belonged to the age group 55-65 years and one to

the group of 66-75 years old. The informants represent very well the clientele of the Truworths. However, when considering content marketing on social media and acquisition of "the next generation", the variety of interviews could have been expanded. The questions followed the same pattern than the survey, where also were open questions. The interview gave a possibility to go deeper and ask follow-up questions and clarifications.

What kind of image you have from Truworths and its products?
The first question was about the image or brand of Truworths. Both in interviews and in open questions, the quality of clothes was the most important thing. Many considered that it is important to have textile industry also in Zimbabwe – so that was one reason to buy clothes from Truworths. In a survey, 778 respondents answered to this question. Quotes have been picked both from survey and from interviews. The way quotes have been picked, represents wider scale of opinions, that will say that many answered at the same way.

The third question seemed to be little complex because respondents were not really active on social media. In a survey, 528 respondents answered to this question. However, this question can be important to the company when seeking ways to acquisitor new customers and planning a new content marketing strategy. Many respondents coitized this question about social media because they did not use social media at all. But there were also respondents who did not know anything about company's presence on social media.

The question about sharing content is also difficult. Some of the respondents said very clearly that they do not share any contents because there is no need to be involved in any kind of company's – even if the company is considered to be good and have a precious brand. This could be difficult to the case company's content strategy because the one of the ideas of content marketing is to get the benefit from content sharing. On the other hand, one of the interviewees mentioned word of mouth to be the best way to share contents.

The interviewees were quite satisfied with the communication. 466 respondents answered to this question in a survey. Some of the respondents in open questions wanted to get more information, some less. As we earlier noticed, most of the respondents were satisfied to get an email once or twice in a month. Of course, on Facebook there is need for more regular updates. But less is more, as one of the respondents formulated.

Posting information at too irregular intervals can be harmful. Consumers usually wants to get a new post or update in a regular base, once a week or once in a month. But also, over advertising can lose followers and repeating too much can become boring. An important thing is to keep a content relative to the audience. (Pulizzi 2018)

Even if the clientele seems to be very satisfied with current content, there could be many possibilities to increase useful information. Sometimes customers do not exactly know what they want or need. Therefore, it is very important to recognize the audience and the more essential is to recognize the buying process of consumers. (Pulizzi 2018)

4.4 Actions and contents

The case company is extensively analyzed based on its webpage and social media activities. Moreover, some management statements were to be noticed after the first interview in 9th of February. Case companies' content were observed twice: during a week 9 in February and a week 33 in August.

In this observation, there were three things to be noticed: amount of content in general, content divided by blogs, videos, other channels and content creation in general. This observation was only based on student's own interest but the purpose of this overlook is to connect the previous theory and collected data to the real-life use and creation of content marketing in corporate branding. The aim of this action was to understand better content marketing and its role in company's brand creation. Because the case company has very actively experimented different channels and different types of content, this analysis could also provide examples of how to produce good and valuable content.

All interviews were done in February by phone and/or by email. Information was given to this study by chief executive officer, sales manager, marketing manager, visual designer and social media expert.

The Truworths offers content marketing to its client mostly through email and SMS, webpage and Facebook. Company delivers content by offering the loyalty register clients the information they are usually interested in: new collections, reductions, campaigns, customer's nights and so on. The company was clearly active in searching for new ways to do their marketing and find the appropriate content niche for them.

At the moment, the content is created also with the mobile market in mind. At least important factors to consider, especially in net shop, are the length of the message, the formatting, visual elements, photos and links.

The first examples of Truworths' content marketing can be found from its website. The next example of content marketing is a webpage section called Living room - stories of everyday life. Some of the stories include video but most of them are plain articles with pictures. Separately, there are also lot of videos of different happenings concerning the Truworths. All those videos are to be found on a webpage and they seemed to be quite popular because many of the respondents mentioned these videos in open questions in a survey.

Case company's most important social media channel is Facebook. On Facebook Truworths is constantly publishing new content. The goal has been to engage customers by providing information, marketing and entertainment in a certain timetable. Nowadays, a Facebook page is a must for any business. The creation of a page on Facebook can make a brand more visible and can reach the people that may have never been interested in a company otherwise.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to provide a good understanding of content marketing by examining its benefits and objectives. All this was done by studying one case company. Moreover, the aim was to examine how a company can produce good content and what is the role of content marketing in creating a brand awareness, engagement and loyalty amongst customers. The choice of the case company was a good decision because the company was familiar with the topic of content marketing and acted quite actively on social media. In addition, the selected industry was optimal to the topic.

In this chapter, discussion is presented and the reflection between the literature review against the data obtained in the case study is done. The aim is at applying the theory in practice in order to give concrete advices for the case company. The aim of this thesis was to help the case company to use content marketing on social media as effectively as possible to increase brand awareness,

engagement, brand loyalty and to acquisitor new customers. The research objective was to explore if there is evidence that a company can create brand-related benefits by publishing content which is valuable for customers and is not company- or product-centered. The theoretical part combined marketing, content marketing and social media.

The results related to research about content attitude show that respondents liked the content the case company provided and felt that was relevant and interesting to them. However, the findings of this thesis provide new insights for the case company about content marketing. Content marketing needs to be understood as a long-term effort and all the marketing should be somehow integrated to content marketing. Good results can be reached when seeing new digital marketing channels as a tool for delivering company's message.

How content marketing can affect sales?
In the theory part of the thesis, it came clear that effective content marketing actions can have a positive influence on sales. However, without measuring, it is difficult to prove. Many of the companies do not exactly know, what impact content marketing have on sale and what effects came from traditional marketing. At least we know, that even if creating content costs both time and money, content marketing can lead to real cost savings. In addition, combining content marketing with traditional marketing it can be very even most cost effective. A marketer who wants to know immediate effect on sales of a particular content marketing or social media campaign can do so relatively easily by tracking the revenue generated from the money spent. There are some indications that digital content in marketing can increase sales when done properly. However, tying social media actions directly to sales is difficult. (Hoffman & Fodor 2016) In this case, we did not have any metrics from content marketing or social media campaigns the case company had done.

What is the role of content marketing in company branding?
Based on the theoretical part and empirical findings of the survey in this study, it can be answered that content marketing has a very important role in company's branding. As its best, content marketing communicates the brand story clearly and has many impacts on the perceived brand image. In this case, brand communication is no longer automatically perceived as disturbing advertising but as interesting and reasonable conversation among friends. Content that is shared by other consumers, has often bigger influence than paid advertising. Consumers 77 tend to trust more their peers and social networks than companies. (Jahn & Kunz 2017).

In the empirical part of this thesis, most of the clients of the case company were very satisfied with their choice of the Truworths and its products. The image and the brand of this company was seen as very positive by the current clientele. However, we have to remember that all respondents were selected from the loyalty register of Truworths. So, these clients were already fans and engaged with the company.

How to engage the target group to follow a company brand?
In this survey, most of the respondent said that they use Facebook, 51 percent, but almost as many said (37 percent) that they do not use social media at all. In the open answers it came clear that many customers did not even know that a case company had its own pages on Facebook. Findings of this study can help the company to understand what kind of content is valuable for their clients and how they can engage a target group to follow a company brand.

How to increase brand awareness among "the next generation"?
The case company has a very clear target group in women over age of 50. The responses of this study corresponded to the target group that the company is pursuing: two largest age groups fell between 56-65 and 65-75 years. It represents a 71 percent share of the respondents. Social media channels like Facebook and online store were not very widely used in this group of customers. However, the case company has the main strategy to expand an e-commerce.

Company's online store was open in February 2019. The customer profile on online store is mainly under 35-years old women, according to a telephone interview with companies marketing manager. There seems to be a number of potential clients who are used to do shopping on online store but have not joined to a loyalty register.

Sales on online store will increase 10-15 percent in this year. In the survey, only 15 percent of respondents had done some shopping on online store. The most of the respondents had never purchased from the online store, 84 percent of respondents. Even if the customers may still be scarce on online store, there is a clear direction upwards. It seems also that the online store appeals more young customers than stores.

Based both on the empirical and theoretical analysis, the case company should focus on developing certain social media channels as well as establish a dialogue with their customers. Findings of this thesis can help the case company to see some internal and external factors that helps content on social media to get more shares, likes and comments.

5.1 Theoretical implications

Websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, they can play a vital part of a content marketing strategy on social media. (Holliman & Rowley 2018) There is a lot of possibilities but in the same time the firms have to think about time. Do they really have time to be everywhere or should they first think about target groups and what kind of goals and objectives they have in content marketing. In many cases the big picture of how to use social media in different ways is still lacking a bit. (Jefferson & Tanton 2018)

Nevertheless, content marketing is not just advertising. It is not just shouting advertising messages. At its best, content marketing on social media is a conversation between the firm and the customer. (Pulizzi 2017) The social media tool can offer new opportunities to build relationships, engage with customers and increase sales. Accordingly, at the same

time, content marketing on social media can be so easy and so challenging. (Pulizzi 2018)

Companies should be present on those social media platforms their customers are using. However, presence must be very active. A Facebook page which is not updated frequently is no use for any company. (Jefferson & Tanton 2018) But of course, adequate resources must be dedicated to be present on social media. Patience is important, results will not show in a couple of weeks or even months. (Kumar & Mirchandani 2017) One of the biggest barriers for organizations to start content marketing activities may be resources.

5.2 Managerial implications

One of the objectives of the thesis was to present knowledge and suggestions for Truworths in order to improve their content marketing strategy in webpage and on social media. This action could help company to increase brand loyalty, engagement and brand awareness not to mention for customer acquisition. One of the questions facing this all, is *It is possible to affect positively sales via content* marketing.

Although return on investment ROI is maybe not the primary metric for companies when discussing content marketing, it is increasingly important to analyze all the effects on sales in the future.

The following plan and suggestions will be based mostly on theoretical research of this study. In addition, the empirical research is a good background information when planning strategies for content marketing. The case company knows relatively well their clientele but undoubtedly there are certain difficulties to find an own voice in storytelling on social media.

The case company operates in fields of business, which is quite active online. The case company offers women's fashion and accessories and also office and business wear. Company has managed to survive in difficult economic situation for clothing and textile industry in Zimbabwe. Job places has declined in this sector in Zimbabwe almost 50 000 places from the beginning of the 1970s to this day. For this reason, it is important to know own branch pretty well: what competitors do and what is the subject of discussion concerning textile industry at the moment. One of the benefits of content marketing is, that it can make a business and brand more visible and sellable. For example, many brands currently have to increase interest in sustainability, recycling and social conditions in the clothing industry. Safety of textiles and safety of workers in the factories are nowadays important issues for customers. Mode fashion and textile industries tendencies are now varying more on individual aspects and on lifestyle. Each client does their personal decisions, which widely indicates the changes in values.

5.3 Recommendations and suggestions for the further research

It has been stated also in this study that content marketing actions are strategically important and are currently one of the main tools for executing marketing. These 87 studies

have several delimitations. It focuses only on those content marketing channels the case company was interested in and was actively using. Accordingly, the further research could explore a detailed action plan on how to utilize those platforms and some new platforms in the most effective way. the results of the study cannot directly apply to other studies or target groups. This study concerns the needs of target organization. Some parts of the study are based on information from the company itself.

The case company has a very clear target group in women over age of 50. The responses of this study corresponded to the target group that the company is pursuing: two largest age groups fell between 56-65 and 65-75 years. Social media channels like Facebook and online store were not very widely used in this group of customers. However, the case company has the main strategy to expand an e-commerce. The customer profile on online store is mainly under 35-years old women, according to a telephone interview with companies marketing manager. There seems to be a number of potential clients who are used to do shopping on online store but has not joined to a loyalty register.

For further research, it is recommended to carry out a study on those online store customers who are not joined in loyalty register. This area of research will open up the issue of brand awareness and engagement more than this study has done. It would be also interesting to know how content marketing affects buying process and phases of customer relationship.

Moreover, further research should concentrate on examining the content marketing performance over time. What is the situation lately, if the Truworths are going to use content marketing strategy and social media actions more actively and more planned way?

It could be beneficial to study also content marketing by surveying companies from other industries. Connection between content marketing and brand would generalize the results across industries.

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