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Master thesis

# **The effect of content marketing in online retailing**

A study on the effect of content consumption and its intensity on  
customer engagement

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I hope you enjoy reading it.

Lisanne Brinkman

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## Management summary

Marketing is facing a new paradigm. The focus of marketing activities is shifting away from short term transactional marketing towards long-term relationship marketing in which sound customer relationships provide the opportunity to deal with challenging market developments (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner & Gremler, 2002; Kumar, Bohling and Ladda, 2003; Berry, 1995). Within relationship marketing, customer engagement is an important element as the concept can create many benefits and it goes beyond other conventional marketing metrics (Vivek, Beatty & Morgan, 2012; Fernandes & Esteves, 2016). As a result, literature on customer engagement is increasing but only limited studies are focused on strategies or tools to create or enhance customer engagement (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef, Reinartz & Krafft, 2010; Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric and Illic, 2011; Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie, 2014). In this regard, it is assumed that content marketing is a proper tool to enhance customer engagement as the degree of customer engagement is expected to increase when customers consume content created by content marketing (Bunpis & Haron, 2014). However, these assumptions are not based on empirical evidence which is in line with the limited empirical studies on engagement strategies as well as the limited empirical insights on role of content marketing. Therefore, this study is focused on empirically analysing the effect of content marketing with regard to customer engagement by use of the research problem: *what is the effect of the intensity of content consumption on the degree of customer engagement for online retailers?*

The effect is examined by analysing content consumption as well as the intensity of the consumption which is indicated by consumption comprehensiveness and frequency. Also, the analysis is focused on the direct effects of content consumption on customer engagement and the more advanced moderator effects via the relationship of customer engagement with its antecedents: customer satisfaction and customer involvement. Hence, these analyses contribute to a comprehensive analysis of content consumption and the study adds knowledge to literature on customer engagement antecedents as well. Research on customer engagement antecedents is mainly based on social media, while this study is conducted outside a social media setting. More specifically, the study is applied to a real-life case study in which an European online retailer launched an online magazine as a new content marketing platform. The role of the magazine with regard to customer engagement is not specifically known by retailer yet, which corresponds to the lack of academic knowledge on this subject.

The case study is examined by use of a quantitative study in which online surveys are distributed among the retailer's customers. The data is based on 315 respondents and statistically analysed by multiple regression analysis, one-way ANOVA's and t-test, after it is prepared for by factor analyses. By doing so, the results show that in line with literature, both customer involvement and in particular customer satisfaction have a positive effect on customer engagement even beyond a social media setting. With regard to content consumption, findings do not support literature as no direct effect of content consumption on customer engagement can be found. Though, when elaborating on the engagement dimensions, content consumption tends to have a significant effect on the behavioural dimension. Readers spend significantly more time on the retailer's website relative to other retailers, compared to the non-readers. Additional analysis also shows that the magazine readers purchase significantly more frequent compared to the non-readers, which is in line with Schijns (2008) and Pulizzi & Barret (2009) who mention that content marketing including online magazines are effective for enhancing sales. With regard to the consumption intensity no convincing direct effects can be found. Consumption comprehensiveness is not likely to enhance engagement while there is weak evidence of a positive effect of consumption frequency. The higher the number of total visits, due to either the period of familiarity with the magazine or the frequency of comebacks, the higher the engagement scores. As a result, content consumption can be relevant, if people consume the content frequently. Also, with regard to the moderating effects of content consumption and its intensity, no convincing effects can be found. The relationships of customer satisfaction or customer involvement with customer engagement are not significantly different for readers or non-readers, nor for any of the different consumption intensity levels. As far as there are small

differences, the effects even diminish when customers are highly satisfied or involved. Hence, with respect to customer engagement the consumption of the magazine's content tends to be less important compared to the role of customer satisfaction and customer involvement.

Content marketing is likely to be important for online retailers but mainly in terms of sales rather than engagement. Online retailers that imply content marketing, can stimulate sales by enhancing its reach (i.e. the number of customers who consume the content) or subsequently optimise the quality of this reach (i.e. frequency by which these customers consume the content) which might result in stimulating customer engagement which is known for its many benefits that can go beyond sales. Whether marketeers use the insights of this study for optimising content marketing strategies, customer engagement strategies, for support during sales pitches on content marketing or in other situations, the particular directions of the relationships mentioned in this study should be taken into account. The relationship directions are specifically formulated based on literature, but it cannot be ruled out that other deviating directions might exist as well.

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# 1. Introduction

The introduction chapter of this study will describe the background of the research, followed by the research problem, a research model and the subsequent research questions. Thereafter, a justification of the research will be given in both the academical and practical scene. The section will then focus on a short description of the methodology, the delimitations and scope of the research and a list of definitions of central concepts. The chapter will end with an outline of the remainder of the study.

## 1.1 Research background

*British Airways' worldwide executive club grew from 100.000 to 1.3 million members in two years from launch. Starting as a lounge at the Heathrow airport, the club later introduced card ownership and now provides its members with many benefits. The member cards are linked to a customer database which gives the airline insight in customer flying history or the preference regarding seats and food or products purchased on board. As a result, British Airways can better understand booking and customer profiles and maximize pleasure and yield on a flight by creating the right promotional offers for each customer.*

*Heavy investments are made in the French baby-food marketing programme of Nestlé. The firm regularly sends emails with information and special offers to young mothers. Also, the firm employed qualified dietitians who are deployed at the customer service centres and a chain of baby cafes are runned to facilitate families away from home. As a result, the market share of Nestlé increased from 20% to 40% in 7 years during the 90's. (Buttle, 1996)*

These stories are symbolic to the changing nature of marketing over the last decades. As the examples show, marketing is no longer solely about developing and selling products or services. Since the customer is put at the centre of marketing, marketing is more and more about the development and maintenance of long-term relationships with customers (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995; Buttle, 1996). While most companies used to mainly focus on attracting as many customers as possible in order to achieve as many transactions as possible, the majority of organisations now concentrate on retention and building long-term customer relationships (Berry, 1995; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995; Buttle, 1996; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). Although transactional exchanges are still important, the relevance of relationship building is recognized and practitioners move more towards value-laden relationships based on frequent interactions with customers (Li and Nicholls, 2000).

The rationale underlying this revolution is the shift from transactional marketing towards relationship marketing, illustrating the change in focus from short-term transactions to long-term customer relationships (Kumar et al., 2003). Berry, who first mentioned the concept of relationship marketing in 1983, described the paradigm as attracting, maintaining and enhancing relationships with customers (Berry, 1995; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995; Bendapudi & Berry, 1997). This is confirmed in more recent studies of Li and Nicholls (2000) and Kumar et al. (2003) who also suggest that it can include relationships with other relevant parties.

The shift towards relationship marketing is driven by conditions like intense global competition, increased product quality, rapidly changing buying patterns and more demanding customers (Buttle, 1996). These developments force companies to seek for unique and sustainable competitive advantages to deal with the developments. As a result, companies become closer with customers and they are focused on building enduring customer relationships that are hard to be duplicated by competitors (Buttle, 1996; Kumar et al., 2003). Lifelong customers are important, as according to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2002) and Berry (1995) they are likely to create the competitive advantage needed and perform positive word of mouth activities due to better customer experiences which are ultimately evaluated on the basis of the company's overall profitability.

This study will focus on customer engagement which is currently one of the most important elements in

marketing literature, especially within relationship marketing (Vivek et al., 2012; Fernandes & Esteves, 2016). Customer engagement not only earned a central role in the relationship marketing paradigm, the concept is often viewed through the broad lens of the relationship marketing perspective as well (Ashley, Noble, Donthu & Lemon, 2011; Vivek et al., 2012). Accordingly, the essence of customer engagement is about relations and refers to an individual customer's connection or bond with an organisation or its offerings. It comes down to context-specific, deep, meaningful and sustainable interactions or connections with organisations that can result in long-term relationships (Sashi, 2012).

However, customer engagement is more than just a connection. Engaged customers can also identify themselves with an organisation or brand, as engagement is more than a bond, a feeling of trust or commitment and more than being satisfied with a product or an organisation. Customer engagement reflects a psychological state on customer's connections or interactions that go beyond mere purchase behaviour (Fernandes & Esteves, 2016; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Its relevance comes from the fact that customer engagement focuses on deep beyond-purchase relationships, while other conventional marketing metrics as customer satisfaction, trust or customer experience fail to capture the depth of relationships customers have with brands or offerings (Fernandes & Esteves, 2016).

Although the essence of customer engagement is clear, no single definition is universally accepted. The exact definition is ambiguous due to its context dependent character, the interchangeable names and the different perspectives which are used to describe and interpret the concept, not to mention the several dimensions on which the concept can be based. Within this study the definition of customer engagement is viewed through the relationship marketing lens and refers to a context-dependent state of mind of an individual existing customer characterized by three dimensions that best suit the context of the study. The definition of Hollebeek (2011a, p.790) properly covers the concept and illustrates how the concept of customer engagement will be used in this study:

*Customer engagement is 'the level of an individual customer's (...) brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity in direct brand interactions.*

In line with the powerful research stream on customer engagement that emerged over the last fifteen years, the Marketing Science Institute (MSI) explicitly requested a more comprehensive understanding of customer engagement in the research priorities of 2006-2008 and 2010-2012 (Vivek et al., 2012). The majority of research on customer engagement however, is focused on the definition and the conceptualisation of the concept (e.g. the studies of Vivek, 2009; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2014 or Vivek, Beatty, Dalela and Morgan, 2014) or the consequences and antecedents (e.g. studies like Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010; Brodie et al, 2011). At the same time, there is only limited focus on studies in which strategies or tools are mentioned that firms can initiate or use to create or enhance customer engagement (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011b; Bumpis & Haron, 2014). Within the restricted amount of studies regarding such strategies or tools, the empirical insights and evidence are especially lacking behind. In this regard, Bumpis & Haron (2014) for example hypothetically expect that one of the best tools that firms can use to create or influence customer engagement, is content marketing.

Content marketing is an umbrella term that encompasses all marketing activities that involve the creation and distribution of relevant content that a specific customer audience is seeking for (Pulizzi & Barret, 2009; Rose, 2012; Content Marketing Institute, 2015; Patrutiu Baltas, 2015; Swieczak, 2017). The broad concept describes the conscious and strategic management of any possible content product (e.g. websites, social media pages, blogs, newsletters, emails, posters or magazines) that is distributed via relevant contact points. Based on



the definitions of the Content Marketing Institute (2015) and Patrutiu Baltes (2015, p.112), this research will refer to content marketing as:

*“a marketing and business process for creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience (...)”.*

A powerful research stream on content marketing emerged as it has become a weapon within the online marketing arsenal of successful businesses (Lieb, 2011; Patrutiu Baltes, 2015). Wuebben (2011) mentions that content marketing powers the connection, as it can enhance the reach of prospects and stimulate existing audiences. Content marketing is focused on engaging customers which can reinforce referrals and enhance existing relationships that transcend transactions (e.g. upselling, cross-selling, renewals or upgrades) (Pulizzi & Barret, 2009; Lieb, 2011; Wuebben, 2011). Also, Bunpis & Haron (2014) thus assume that content marketing activities can create or enhance customer engagement. They expect the degree of engagement to be higher for customers who read the content that is created by an organization's content marketing activities compared to customers who do not read the content (from this moment on, reading is referred to as consuming content). However, the argumentation is not supported in an empirical way and therefore is in line with the lack of empirical research on the role of content marketing with regard to marketing performance metrics.

To fill the gaps of empirical studies on both customer engagement strategies and the role of content marketing, this study will focus on the effect of content consumption with regard to customer engagement. The question whether customers consume content or not will be taken into account, as well as the intensity by which the content is consumed. Based on the studies of Levy (1997), Prast (1998), Brown (2002), Oversteegen & van Wijk (2003), Liu (2005) and van Grinsven, de Weerd & Elphick (2015a), it appears that the activity of reading (also known as content consumption) is a complex and variable behavioural activity, rather than a single consistent activity and therefore worth analysing its possible effects.

Additionally, this study will go beyond the direct effects of content consumption and its intensity. In order to analyse the effect of content consumption in the most comprehensive way, a more advanced strengthening or weakening effect is analysed as well. To analyse this moderating effect of content consumption and its intensity, relationships of customer engagement with concepts present prior to the expression of customer engagement are taken into account as well. Hence, specific customer engagement antecedents are also analysed within this study. The relationship of customer engagement and its antecedents and the effects of content consumption on this relationship is likely to give extra meaning or context to the relation of content marketing and customer engagement.

Literature on customer engagement antecedents is often categorized as customer, context or firm related antecedents of which the majority is focused on customer related antecedents (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010; Brodie et al, 2011). For example, van Doorn et al. (2010) and Verhoef et al. (2010) mention factors like satisfaction, commitment and trust and Sashi (2012) mentions the customer engagement cycle in which achieving customer engagement requires facilitating customers' transition through several stages including connection, interaction, satisfaction, retention, commitment, advocacy and engagement. In addition to this, authors like Hollebeek (2011a), Hollebeek et al. (2014) or Pansari & Kumar (2017) mention factors like customer involvement or emotions as relevant customer related antecedents. Although these insights are relevant to literature, Little and Little (2006), Gambetti & Graffigna (2010), Hollebeek (2011a) and Arapakis, Lalmas & Valkans (2014) mention that results are mainly descriptive and the empirical results of customer engagement antecedents are lacking behind. As far as there are any empirical studies, like the studies of Hollebeek et al. (2014) and Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann (2005) these studies are only conducted in social media settings (e.g. online brand communities) (Fernandes & Esteves, 2016).

Analysing the moderating effect of content consumption and its intensity by use of an interaction effect, will therefore not only contribute to a more comprehensive analysis of content consumption, it will also make another contribution to literature. By focusing on empirical insights on customer engagement and its antecedents outside the social media setting, this study will go beyond existing social media based literature. The antecedents which will be analysed within this research are customer satisfaction and customer involvement as both concepts can be considered as important marketing performance metrics and they are frequently mentioned in literature. To illustrate, customer involvement is mentioned in the research of Hollebeek (2011a), Hollebeek et al. (2014a) and Pansari & Kumar (2017). Also, the research of van Doorn et al. (2010), Sashi (2012) and Pansari & Kumar (2017) emphasize the role of customer satisfaction as an engagement antecedent.

Altogether, this study will empirically test whether there is a direct or moderating effect of content consumption and its intensity on customer engagement. While contributing to the existing literature on content marketing and customer engagement, this study will give insight in the importance of content marketing for the performance for online retailers.

### 1.2 Research problem & research questions

Recognizing the increasing importance of customer engagement and content marketing, but especially the literature gap that exists around the observed insights on those concepts, this study aims at empirically testing the effect of content marketing with regard to customer engagement. The effect of content consumption and its intensity on customer engagement and its relationship with customer satisfaction & customer involvement will be analysed and is expected to provide insight in the following research problem:

**Research problem:** *What is the effect of the intensity of content consumption on the degree of customer engagement for online retailers?*

Based on the theory and corresponding the research models of van Doorn et al. (2010, p. 256), Hollebeek (2011a, p.796), Hollebeek et al. (2014a, p.9) and Pansari & Kumar (2017, p.300), a research model is developed in which the central concepts are included (Figure 1) (See Appendix A.1 for the conceptual models of abovementioned authors).

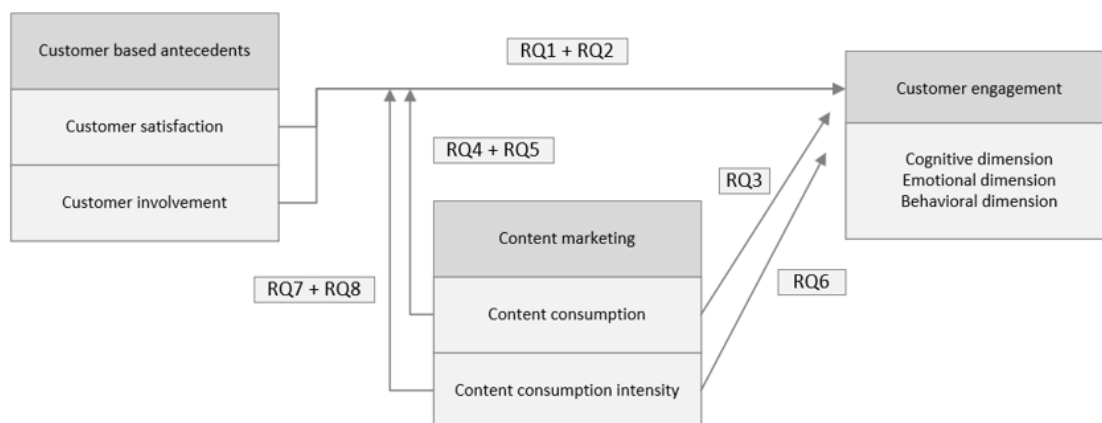


Figure 1: conceptual research model

Resulting from this specific research model, the following eight research questions are formulated to come up with relevant insights regarding the research problem:

- 1. What is the effect of customer satisfaction on customer engagement?*
- 2. What is the effect of customer involvement on customer engagement?*
- 3. What is the effect of content consumption on customer engagement?*
- 4. What is the effect of content consumption on the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer engagement?*
- 5: What is the effect of content consumption on the relationship between customer involvement and customer engagement?*
- 6. What the effect of the intensity of content consumption on customer engagement?*
- 7. What is the effect of the intensity of content consumption on the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer engagement?*
- 8: What is the effect of the intensity of content consumption on the relationship between customer involvement and customer engagement?*

The beginning of the analysis is focused on the relationship of customer engagement with its antecedents, so the remainder of the analysis can be mainly based on the effects of content consumption and its intensity. The sequence of the research questions is also expected to contribute to a sound structure of a literary review and a logical way of diminishing the sample along the analysis (e.g. the first five questions are based on the total sample while the last questions are based on a smaller sample). However, due to the sequence, the concepts will function as different variables along the analysis. Customer engagement is the dependent variable for all analysis and content marketing (i.e. content consumption and consumption intensity) is the independent variable for the analysis of the third and sixth question while it functions as a moderating variables for question four, five, seven and eight. In these latter questions, customer satisfaction or customer involvement are the independent variables, just like in question one and two.

The previously specified analysis, will be applied to a real-life case study which is an European online retailer that requested to remain anonymous. From now on, this retailer will be referred to as retailer X which is a fictional name. The webshop of retailer X has more than one million visitors a day and offers more than 16 million products to its customers, including books, DVDs, electronica, toys and items on home & living, sports and beauty & health. Retailer X recently launched an online magazine which is a content marketing platform that provides a well-defined target audience, with inspiring beauty and health information which is additional to the information on the website of retailer X. Since the retailer or its publishers create the content for the target audience itself, the magazine cannot be considered as social media which is mainly characterized by consumer-generated content (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). The target audience can be characterized as females, aged from 15-45 with an above average interest in beauty and health. They can consume the content of the magazine by different devices and via channels like the magazine's website, social media pages and the website of retailer X. While the business goals of the magazine are clear and focused on becoming an inspiring and relevant content platform which enhances brand/product awareness, long-term relationships, customer engagement and eventually sales, the e-retailer is not sure about the magazine's role and its possible effects. It is not known yet whether the online beauty and health magazine enhances customer relationships, customer engagement or has any positive effects for retailer X. As this is in line with the lack of academic knowledge on the role of content marketing, it is expected that this research will add value in both the academic and practical scene.

### **1.3 Academic research justification**

Due to the growing importance of customer engagement and content marketing, as mentioned earlier, research in these areas is not entirely new. Prior research has already focused on the definition of the concepts, its conceptualisation as well as the consequences or its antecedents (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Calder et al., 2009; Pulizzi & Barret, 2009; van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011a; Hollebeek, 2011b; Lieb, 2011; Wuebben, 2011; Gummerus, Liljander, Weman & Pihlström, 2012; Sashi, 2012; Bunpis & Haron, 2014; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Kumar & Pansari, 2016). However, results of former research have not always been completely conclusive and had its shortcomings or limitations. Therefore, from an academic point of view, this paper will contribute to the existing body of research in five different ways.

First of all, as mentioned in the introduction, the majority of research on customer engagement and its antecedents can be characterized by its descriptive nature (van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010; Sashi, 2012). As this research will empirically test the relationship of customer satisfaction and customer involvement with customer engagement, it will contribute to the gap of empirical insight on customer engagement and it will add insight to the limited understanding of the concepts and its measurement of relationship. Besides, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the combination of customer satisfaction and customer involvement as customer related antecedents has not been mentioned before as well.

Secondly, the context of this study is related to the next contribution to existing literature. This study is conducted outside the social media setting, while the majority of the scarce empirical studies on customer engagement and its antecedents is conducted within a social media setting (e.g. online brand communities). Due to the social media focus of former research, the definition and conceptualisation of previous studies was adjusted to and focussed on social media as well. To illustrate, in the studies of Hollebeek et al. (2014) and Algesheimer et al. (2005) there is a strong focus on the interactivity and social aspects of customer engagement. Also, the conceptualisation of customer engagement performance in these studies was often focused on likes, shares and comments (Lee, Hosanager and Nair, 2014). As the context of this study is different, the definition and conceptualisation of customer engagement will be deviating from existing studies as well. Due to a wider range of context, this study will diminish the existing gap in literature on customer engagement outside the social media setting and contribute to a more effective understanding of the concept (Sashi, 2012; Bunpis & Haron, 2014; Fernandes & Esteves, 2016).

Thirdly, the introduction of content marketing which is conceptualised as content consumption and intensity of content consumption, is another contribution of this research. Limited research is focused on tools and strategies regarding creating and enhancing customer engagement, nor is there a sound base of empirical studies on content marketing. This empirical study will go beyond the existing body of knowledge and is therefore expected to contribute to the ambiguity on whether content marketing is an effective tool. An empirical analysis on content consumption with respect to customer engagement is expected to be unique, especially with the addition of the intensity of content consumption as it has not been mentioned before yet.

The fourth contribution can be made regarding the case study firm which operates within a business-to-consumer environment. With regard to the existing research on content marketing, the majority is focused on the business-to-business environment in which the most often used forms of content marketing and the most common goals or challenges are analysed, rather than the business-to-consumer environment, (Le Duc, 2013; Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Swieczak, 2017).

The final contribution has to do the specific form of content marketing that has been introduced by retailer X. Although there are many forms of content marketing, Swieczak (2017) considers online magazines as one of the least used content marketing tactics. This is confirmed by Patrutiu Baltes (2015) who states that content platforms beyond the organisation's websites (e.g. digital magazines) which are used for lead generation, are the type of content that most companies have yet to discover. The limited literature on online magazines also

state that online magazines tend to be more popular among B2B marketers and they are less used by B2C marketers (Lieb, 2011).

Apart from the abovementioned arguments on the academical relevance of this study, the relevance is also confirmed by the interest of the Marketing Science Institute (MSI) who mentioned customer engagement as a research priority since 2006 (Vivek et al., 2012). Also, the application to online retailing reinforces its relevance as well. Due to the growing role of online retailers, as part of the total retailer market, research in the online retailing context is expected to be relevant (Ecommerce foundation, 2017). Building on the existing literature and using real data from a European online retailer, this study is therefore expected to yield new insights that can also serve as a reference point for future research.

#### **1.4 Practical research justification**

The growing market share of online retailers is a meaningful occasion of the fact that next to the academic relevance, this study can serve as a reference point for practical implementations as well. As the number of online retailers is expected to increase in the future, it is likely to assume that some of those many online retailers might get inspired by or learn from the results of this study in different ways.

First of all, from a practical point of view, this study can serve as a framework for companies who are trying to increase customer engagement or are considering about implementing customer engagement strategies in the near future. Insights in the possible effects of customer satisfaction and customer involvement on customer engagement can be used as useful handles for strategy development regarding customer engagement.

Also, by investigating the effects of content consumption in relation to customer engagement, this study can serve as a framework for companies who are considering about implement content marketing in the near future. Empirical evidence from this study might then influence the decisions made by marketing practitioners regarding the implementation of content marketing activities. Marketeers might reinforce or diminish the role of content marketing for example with regard to customer engagement. Since proper degrees of customer engagement have many benefits that enhance organisational performance and low customer engagement can be detrimental to organisational success due to lowered sales or negative word-of-mouth, these insights are expected to be beneficial to practitioners (Kumar, Aksoy, Donkers, Venkatesan, Wiesel & Tillmans, 2010). It is likely that the results can steer future efforts and strategies regarding both content marketing and customer engagement as the results from this study are based on actual data.

Also, due to the large array of the Beauty & Health products offered by Retailer X, the general nature of the subjects covered in the beauty & health magazine and the fact that the retailer X' customers are average European customers, it is expected that this research will provide insight for many other European online retailers as well. In this way, several comparable retailers can benefit from the insights of this study and possibly enhance customer engagement to build long-term customer relationships. While building long-term relationships with customers is relevant in all types of businesses, it is especially relevant within the fast moving and competitive online retailing environment. As the market share of online retailers and the subsequent competition among these retailers is exponentially growing and expected to keep growing within the coming years, the results of this study are useful for marketing managers. Using the results of this study might give insight in the role of content marketing and how to enhance customer engagement which results in an increased likelihood of building long-term relationships which due to their competitive advantage, can possibly to beat the intense competition in the retailing industry.

#### **1.5 Methodology**

With regard to the methodology, a quantitative research is conducted by use of online surveys that are send and exposed to retailer X's customers via email and Facebook advertising. The surveys are based on generally

accepted measurement models of which the number of items is reduced due to customer protection policies of retailer X.

The data of 315 customers, including 78 magazine readers (consume content) and 237 non-readers (do not consume content) are analysed by use of SPSS version 24.0. The first analyses regarding customer engagement, the antecedents and content consumption are based on the total sample. Subsequently, the analysis on intensity of content consumption is based on a diminished sample, including readers only.

The preparation analyses are based on the principal component factor analysis. The majority of the main analyses is based on standard multiple regression analysis, but they sometimes function as a confirmatory check for specific hypotheses which are mainly based on independent sample t-tests or one-way ANOVA's.

## **1.6 Delimitations of scope and key assumptions**

Due to the aforementioned literary relevance of the concepts central to this study, a tremendous amount of literature can be found. Whether the information is relevant or not, not all information can be used by the researcher. As a result, this study has a clear scope which will contribute to the quality of the analysis and its results.

First of all, the nature of the firm on which this case study is based, is one of the factors which determines the planned and justified scope of the research beyond which generalization of the results is not intended. As a matter of course, it is expected that the results would only be applicable to similar European e-commerce firms. This is based on the underlying thought that customer engagement can be considered as highly context dependent. The level of customer engagement may vary by factors like industry type, service and product attributes, customer type, customer needs or customer interests (Heath, 2007; Hollebeek, 2011). To illustrate, in the research of Wetpaint & Altimeter (2009) the engagement levels of different industries are analysed and the authors concludes that the engagement score in the retail industry is relatively high, especially in comparison to the financial and manufacturing industry<sup>1</sup>.

The second assumption is related to the case study as well. The online retailer launched an online magazine content marketing platform, rather than a social media content platform which is mostly talked about. Since the focus of this study is based outside a social media setting, the definition of customer engagement needed to be adjusted as well. The many definitions focused on the social and interactive aspects are therefore omitted and the specific definition of Hollebeek (2011a) is used that fits the context.

The third and the remaining assumptions of this study stem from the context dependent characteristic of customer engagement, as mentioned in the study of Bowden (2009). Bowden (2009) revealed that customer engagement is different for new and existing customers due to the differences in experiences and expectations of those customer groups. This study will solely focus on existing customers. The choice for this specific focus is based on the idea that it is more important to engage and build long-term relationships with certain existing customers than to acquire or engage as many potential customers as possible. This is in line with the argumentation that firms should not focus on one-time transactions only, since it is relevant to go beyond the purchase. In this regard, Vivek et al. (2014) mention that customer engagement involves interactions all of which are more than purchases. Hence, customer engagement will be considered beyond purchase and therefore the focus is on existing customers who already made at least one purchase. Customer engagement takes place after conversion and therefore will be viewed as part of a final stage of the marketing funnel as illustrated in more recent digital marketing funnels or the inbound marketing funnel. Although this perspective may not be in line with traditional marketing funnels in which customer engagement is considered as part of interest or consideration phase preceding conversion, the sequence of the digital and inbound marketing funnel seems to be applicable within this study.

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<sup>1</sup> The insights are based on a combination of both offline and online retailers.

The fourth assumption determines the direction of the relationship between customer engagement, customer satisfaction and customer involvement. In accordance with Bowden (2009) and van Doorn et al. (2010), Brodie et al. (2011) consider satisfaction as an antecedent of customer engagement. However, they emphasize that it is only the case for existing customers, since satisfaction may act as a consequence for new customers. Since this study is focused on existing customers, it is justified to consider customer satisfaction as an antecedent of customer engagement rather than a consequence. Hence, other contradicting research directions which are likely to be based on deviating customer types are not taken into account. Similar argumentation is applicable for the research direction regarding the relationship for customer involvement and customer engagement.

Fifthly, regarding the direction of content marketing and customer engagement, it is assumed that the consumption of content has an effect on customer engagement rather than the other way around. This specific research direction is used, although the researcher is aware of the idea that it might also be possible that people who are more engaged with an organisation are more likely to consume content. In this case, readers consume read the content while having a higher level of engagement at first instance.

Finally, this study is specifically focused on customer related antecedents while the firm and context related customer engagement antecedents are beyond the scope of this research. While the nature of the firm and the context in which it operates are likely to remain stable during the case study analysis, the personal characteristics of the respondents might be different per individual. Hence, this study will focus on the customer related antecedents and will not take into account the other antecedents.

Altogether, all of these assumptions narrow down the scope of the study which is solely focused on online magazines as a form of content marketing. The specific scope is expected to contribute to the quality of the in-depth analysis, ultimate results and subsequently the entire research.

## 1.7 List of definitions

**Relationship marketing:** *the practice of attracting, maintaining and enhancing customer relationships (Berry, 1995)*

**Customer engagement:** *‘the level of an individual customer’s (...) brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity in direct brand interactions (Hollebeek, 2011a, p. 790)*

**Customer involvement:** *an individual's level of interest and personal relevance in relation to a product or purchase decision (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Zaichkowsky 1985; Mittal, 1995; Hollebeek, 2014; Pansari & Kumar, 2017)*

**Customer satisfaction:** *‘a customer’s overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with a good, service or firm over time’ (Anderson, Fornell & Lehmann, 1994, p.54)*

**Content marketing:** *‘a marketing and business process for creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience (...)’ (Patruti Baltes, 2015, p. 112)*

**Content consumption:** *the process by which customers (or other relevant parties) read or absorb content that is created by organization’s content marketing activities*

## **1.8 Outline of the thesis**

The remainder of this study is structured in 5 chapters which all describe subsequent elements of this study. Chapter 2 provides an extensive overview of the theoretical and empirical literature on customer engagement, customer satisfaction, customer involvement, content marketing, content consumption and the intensity of content consumption. Based on the theory of the concepts, every section ends with a corresponding hypothesis and a description of the conceptualisation. Chapter 3 describes the methodology in which the research method, the method of sampling, the process of data collection and data analysis are extensively specified. Chapter 4 starts by describing the descriptive statistics of the sample. Subsequently, the results regarding the degree of customer engagement are analysed, followed by the analyses on the results of the research questions. Finally, chapter 5 provides a conclusion to each hypothesis and the contribution of the research in both the academic and practical scene. Furthermore, limitations of the study are mentioned which are followed by some worthwhile suggestions for future research. What is left is a list of references used during the study and the appendices which are supportive to the main text.



## 2.0 Literature review

Within the next chapter, a literature review will be given in which all central concepts mentioned in the introduction chapter will be comprehensively explained. Based on theoretical knowledge and scientific theories, the concepts, conceptualisation and possible relationships will be described to subsequently formulate hypotheses. The hypotheses will function as the foundation for the statistical analysis of the study.

### 2.1 Relationship marketing

Marketing is facing a new paradigm. Until the 1990's marketing was mainly focused on transactions and marketing activities were solely about selling products or services. Marketing was focused on attracting as many customers as possible to achieve as many transactions as possible. However, the focus of marketing evolved over time and shifted away from attracting customers to activities focused on having customers and taking care of them. More specifically, the transaction-based marketing activities slowly evolved into relationship marketing focused activities (Li and Nicholls, 2000; Pansari & Kumar, 2017).

Berry (1995) described relationship marketing as attracting, maintaining and enhancing relationships with customers which is confirmed in more recent studies of Ravald & Grönroos (1996), Li and Nicholls (2000) and Kumar et al. (2003) who also mention that it can include relations with other relevant parties. The customer is put at the centre of marketing and firm's marketing objectives are now focused on developing and maintaining positive long-term relationships with customers (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995; Buttle, 1996; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Relationship marketing is based on the idea that organisations earn customer's loyalty by adding value for them, all of which results in the creation and enhancement of stable, mutually profitable long-term relationships (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996). By improving the quality of the products but especially by offering better supporting services, organisations try to add superior value and satisfy their customers to create strong relationships (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996; Pansari & Kumar, 2017).

Customer satisfaction therefore once was a central aspect to relationship marketing. It was believed that satisfying customers would create sound relationships and make them loyal and profitable (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). However, both the academics and the practitioners realized that simply satisfying customers was not enough to build strong relationships and make customers profitable (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). All of this needed to go to a higher level, a level beyond satisfaction. Another level truly characterized by a sustainable competitive advantage was needed. As a result, the concept of customer engagement was introduced and earned a prominent role within relationship marketing literature (Pansari & Kumar, 2017; Hollebeek, 2011a).

Engagement, referring to a certain connection, a sense of being connected with someone or something that results in frequent interaction or usage, has been discussed in literature in many different ways. The concept has been described by different point of views and its relevance has not only increased within marketing literature (Calder et al., 2009). Engagement has been examined across disciplines like psychology, sociology, political science, management and organisational behaviour as well, however within the marketing field the concept is specifically called customer engagement (Bunpis & Haron, 2014; Hollebeek, 2011a; Vivek et al., 2012).

Customer engagement thus earned a central role within marketing literature as it is focused on deep beyond-purchase relationships, while other conventional marketing metrics as customer satisfaction, trust, customer experience fail to capture the depth of relationships customers have with brands or offerings (Fernandes & Esteves, 2016). According to Hollebeek (2011a) and Hollebeek et al. (2014a), the analysis and application of the customer engagement concept in the marketing discipline specifically follows the [*who* subject, e.g. customer engages with *what* object, e.g. organisation, brand, offerings or organizational activities or interactions] approach.

This approach is often used within marketing literature, and especially within the literature on relationship marketing. Not only became customer engagement a vital component of relationship marketing, the concept is often viewed through the broad lens of the relationship marketing perspective as well (Ashley et al., 2011; Vivek et al., 2012).

The majority of studies views customer engagement from a relationship marketing perspective (Bowden, 2009; Ashley et al., 2011; Vivek et al., 2012; Vivek et al., 2014) In these studies, the focus is put on the notion that a strategy of customer engagement is about the creation of experiences that allow companies to build deep, meaningful and sustainable interactions and relationships with customers. These sound relationships between customers and organisations eventually create additional value for organisations and customers (Sashi, 2012). All of this is supported by the idea that frequent interactions or ongoing communication between customers and organisations can result in relationships or bonds that are based on a customer's deep attachment or connection with a brand, product or service (Vivek et al., 2014). It is known that customer engagement is fundamental to building long-term relationships, but it also enhances customer retention, repeat patronage, cross-buying and word of mouth activities (Ellonen, Tarkiainen & Kuivalainen, 2010; Hollebeek, 2011a; Fernandes & Esteves, 2016). Also, Brodie, Ilic, Juric & Hollebeek (2013) and Fernandes & Esteves (2016) suggest that engaged customers experience lower price sensitivity and can therefore generate sales growth, all of which results in enhanced corporate performance.

Organisations try to create engagement among their customers that results in creating, maintaining and enhancing deep and meaningful relationships that go beyond purchase (Vivek et al., 2012; Vivek et al., 2014). Building on these thoughts, customer engagement is that connection or interaction a customer has with an organisation or brand which creates long-term relationships and sustainable competitive advantages, all of which has more meaning than frequent purchases.

## **2.2 Customer engagement**

Customer engagement thus is an important concept to relationship marketing literature and its theoretical roots offers a further enhancement to the current theorisations of organisation's customer relationships (Vivek et al., 2012). In this regard, the essence of customer engagement is always related to relationships and bonding or connecting of individual customers with organisations or brands. However, the exact definition of customer engagement which is also referred to as customer brand engagement, customer engagement behaviour or just engagement, is still somewhat ambiguous. The interchangeable names, the different interpretations as discussed below and dimensions that academics use to describe the concept (section 2.2.1) put emphasize on other aspects and core elements. All of this contributes to its ambiguity and lead to the fact that not just one particular definition is universally established nor accepted (Higgins & Scholer, 2009; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011a).

The first interpretation can be recognized in the study of Brodie et al. (2013). They focus on the process of interactive experiences and value co-creation within the relationships between customers and organisations that results in mutual benefits. By use of the service-dominant logic theory developed by Vargo and Lusch (2004), Brodie et al. (2013) interpret customer engagement as a collaborative and co-creative process among customers and other actors based on interactive experiences.

A second interpretation, is the one recognized in the work of van Doorn et al. (2010). They focus on the behavioural aspects of the relationships between customers and firms. According to this behavioural perspective, customer engagement can be interpreted as specific behaviour that goes beyond purchase. Hence, the behavioural manifestation is solely reflected by recommendations, word-of mouth activities, blogging or writing reviews that support customers or firms (van Doorn et al., 2010).

Another often used interpretation, which is central to this study as well, is the one recognized in the work Hollebeek (2011a) and Kumar & Pansari (2016). These authors consider customer engagement as a customer's

state of mind, a sense or feeling of connectedness with an organisation. Elaborating on this idea, Patterson, Yu and de Ruyter (2006) state that the customer's individual mental state represents the emotional, cognitive or behavioural presence in their relationship with an organisation. The more positive the state of mind or the feeling of connectedness, the higher the degree of customer engagement (Kumar & Pansari, 2016).

Being engaged however is more than having the abovementioned connection, as engaged customers can even identify themselves with a brand or organisation. A feeling of engagement is more than a bond, a feeling of trust or commitment, it is more than being satisfied with a product or organisation. To illustrate, a satisfied customer may consider repurchasing a product or service in the near future while an engaged customer would go beyond this purchase by positive word of mouth and is likely to have that special connection with a brand (Pansari & Kumar, 2017).

Although all interpretations fit within the relationship marketing perspective, this study will specifically consider customer engagement as a customer's state of mind. This is based on the argumentation that within this study the focus is on customer engagement from a customer's point of view due to the emphasize on customer related antecedents. The first process-oriented interpretation is focused on the co-creation process that includes both the customer and the organisation. In order to contribute to a deep, detailed and full analysis of customer engagement, it is relevant to have a focus on just the customer's perspective and therefore the first interpretation is not fully suitable within this study. The second interpretation however, is focused on the customer but it only focuses on the behaviour of customers. Hence, the behavioural interpretation is not appropriate within this study as well, as it is believed that customer engagement is more than just a behaviour. Being engaged is not only determined by behaviour, since the reasons and attitudes behind that specific behaviour are important as well. As a result, the author refers to customer engagement as a state of mind that includes behavioural, emotional and cognitive aspects all of which are described in detail in section 2.2.1. In this regard, the definition of Hollebeek (2011a, p. 790) covers the concept accurately and resembles how the concept of customer engagement will be used in this study:

*Customer engagement is "the level of an individual customer's (...) brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity in direct brand interactions.*

The level of customer engagement between customer and a brand can be different for every individual, hence the concept refers to an individual state of mind. Not only the level of engagement can be different per individual, the type of industry or the size of the firm can also have an influence on engagement. Accordingly, the concept is featured by a context specific character. In addition to this, the customer's mindset is based on direct brand interactions which refer to customer's deliberate direct interactions, rather than indirect brand interactions that may occur due to mass communication activities (Hollebeek, 2011a). These interactions stimulate a customer's cognitive, emotional and behavioural activities, which are comprehensively described in the next section.

### **2.2.1 Customer engagement dimensions**

In general, it is stated that customer engagement comes from enjoyable experiences and not from utilitarian activities that customers undergo (Vivek et al., 2014). Although, as confirmed by Calder et al. (2009), utilitarian activities may contribute to customer engagement but only if a pleasant effect is created or a strong emotion is provoked. More specifically, in the recent years there have been studies on the origin of customer engagement and its related drivers. Although there are many different studies and opinions about the dimensions of customer engagement, the majority of scholars use the generally accepted cognitive, emotional or behavioural dimensionality (Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek, 2011a). However, a systematic conceptualisation and a general

consensus has not been reached yet due to its context specific character (Little & Little, 2006; Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek, 2011; Vivek et al., 2012).

First of all, there is a discussion about whether the concept is unidimensional or multidimensional. The minority of the authors, including van Doorn et al. (2010) and Sprott, Czellar & Spangenberg (2009) believe in a unidimensional concept. Out of the frequently used cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions, the behavioural dimension appears to be dominant (Brodie et al., 2013; Fernandes & Esteves, 2016). However, engaging in relationships is not only determined by behaviour, since the reasons and attitudes behind that specific behaviour are just as important. It is noticed that the role of emotions or cognition within the customer behavioural literature was not recognized or underestimated by some authors (Bowden, 2009). Subsequently, Dick and Basu (1994) explicitly asked to be aware of emotions. Hence, most authors take into account the role of emotion and cognition now and therefore the multi-dimensionality of the concept is supported in general (Venetis & Ghauri, 2004; Brodie et al., 2013; Fernandes & Esteves, 2016).

With respect to the nature of the specific dimensions, the cognitive and emotional dimensions incorporate customer's feelings and experiences (Vivek et al., 2012). To illustrate, cognitive processing is defined as a customer's level of brand-related thought processing, concentration, elaboration and engrossment in a particular consumer-brand interaction (Hollebeek, 2011a; Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek et al., 2014a). Aligned variables are therefore focussed on 'learning' and 'obtaining information' (Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek et al., 2014). The emotional dimension is expressed by a customer's psychological and positive closeness to a brand, illustrated by enjoyment and feelings of gratitude and pride (Bowden, 2009; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a; Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek et al., 2014). The third dimension is the behavioural dimension, which captures the participation of customers in customer-brand interactions (Vivek et al., 2012). It represents a customer's level of effort, energy and time spent on a brand and is illustrated by variables like actions, recommendations or retention (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a; Hollebeek et al., 2014).

There are no clear agreements upon which specific combination of the cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions to use. While Pham and Avnet (2009) focus on the cognitive and behavioural dimensions, Mollen & Wilson (2010) adopt a cognitive and emotional conceptualisation and Norris, Pignal & Lipps (2003) propose an emotional and behavioural perspective, the majority adopts a cognitive, emotional and behavioural conceptualisation (Bowden, 2009; Higgins and Scholer, 2009; Vivek et al., 2012; Hollebeek, 2011). Consequently, the three-dimensional perspective, has found widespread acceptance within the marketing literature (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a).

Based on this argumentation, this study will also conceptualize customer engagement as a multidimensional concept comprising the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimension. Apart from the general acceptance, the choice is based on the idea that although the unidimensional perception possesses the benefit of simplicity, an unidimensional perception falls short in reflecting the richness of the concept (Brodie et al., 2011).

### **2.2.2 Conceptualisation customer engagement**

The conceptualisation of customer engagement will be based on three dimensions. More specifically, customer engagement will be conceptualized based on the measurement model of Hollebeek et al. (2014), as illustrated in Figure 2. The model covers the three cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions, referred to as respectively cognitive processing, affection and activation, in an extensive way.

Although, Hollebeek et al. (2014) concluded that the 10-item customer engagement model represents a stable valid and reliable measurement instrument, the measurement scale will be adjusted within this study. The number of items that can be used in the conceptualisation is limited by retailer X, as it tries to promote the interest of its customers. Due to customer protection policies, retailer X explicitly asked to use a limited measurement tool that is customer friendly, easy to understand and all but time-consuming. As the measurement tool should be scientifically justified at the same time, the selection of limited items was based on particular

arguments. First of all, the specific selection is based on the factor loadings of the factor analysis in the research of Hollebeek et al. (2014). It tried to include the items with the highest factor loadings, as it is expected that those items explain the variance of the dimension in a proper way. Also, the specific items should cover the total definition of the dimension properly in order to contribute to the content validity. Furthermore, the researcher paid attention to the suitability of the items regarding the context of the case study.

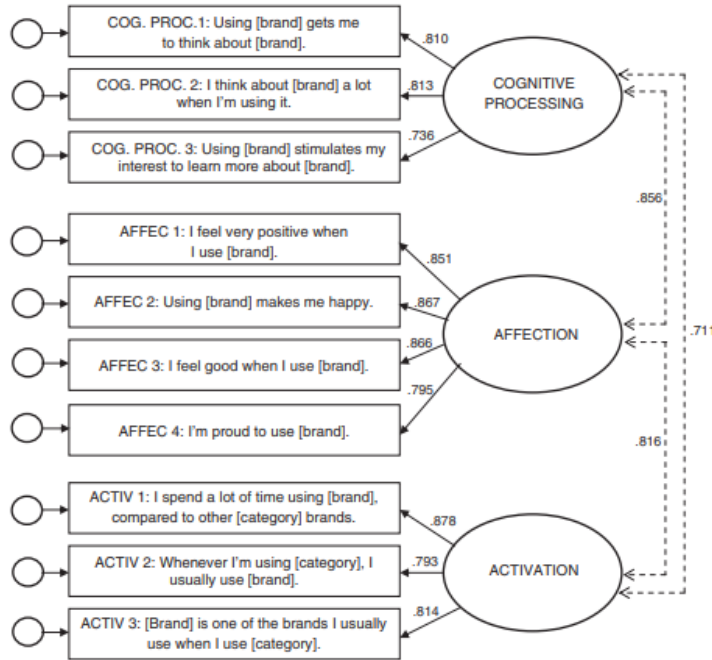


Figure 2 – Confirmatory factor analysis of three dimensions of Customer engagement (Hollebeek et al., 2014, p.8)

Altogether, the customer engagement model within this study is based on the COG. PROC1, AFFECC3, AFFECC4 and ACTIV1 items. Customer engagement is based on three dimensions, represented by the following statements: ‘Using retailer X gets me to think about retailer X’, ‘I feel good when I use retailer X’, ‘I’m proud to use retailer X’ and ‘I spend a lot of time using retailer X compared to other retailers’ in which the first item represents the cognitive dimension, the second and third item belong to the emotional dimension and the fourth item represents the behavioural dimension.

### 2.2.3 Customer engagement antecedents

Continuing on the origin of customer engagement, there can be many different reasons why customers are more engaged with one particular brand compared to another brand. According to literature, these factors which are also called antecedents, are required to be present prior to the expression of customer engagement. The antecedents can be categorized as context related, firm related, or customer related antecedents as described below (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011).

Context related factors affecting customer engagement may mainly arise from political, economic, environmental, social or technological aspects from within the environment in which the firm operates (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010). For example, with regard to the legal aspects, the publication of mandatory energy efficiency information may result in more engaged customers since they may dwell on the fact that they bought energy-efficient products that represents their norms and values (Van Doorn et al., 2010).

The firm related antecedents refer to factors like brand characteristics, firm reputation, firm size, type of firm, type of industry or firm initiatives (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). For example, Wetpaint & Altimeter (2009) showed differences in engagement scores among different industry types in which retailers score high, especially in comparison to the financial and manufacturing industry. This is confirmed by a more recent study of Affinion group (2016) which shows that the engagement scores of retailers are high, especially in comparison to the banking and mobile industry.

The customer related antecedents are subject to this study and reflect different factors that form the identity of a specific customer and its attitudes (Verhoef et al., 2010). These factors include attitudinal antecedents like trust, satisfaction and commitment or involvement (Hollebeek, 2011a; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Also, according to van Doorn et al. (2010) and Verhoef et al. (2010), personality, age, gender, customer's resources or consumption goals can act as personal antecedents as well. To illustrate, He, Inman, and Mittal (2008) found out that gender is related to agentic or communal focus. Females tend to have more communal focus and therefore are more likely to be motivated by the common good of a group. As a result, women are more likely to become engaged with groups, organisations or brands (van Doorn et al, 2010).

In general, all categories are considered as important and can have direct impact on the degree of customer engagement (van Doorn et al., 2010). However, this study will solely focus on the customer related antecedents. This can be explained by the fact that within the time this specific case-study is conducted, all possible context or firm related factors are expected not to change. The nature of the firm on which this study is conducted or the context in which it operates are stable and are assumed to be constant and will therefore not be analysed within this study. However, the personal characteristics of the respondents who are part of this study, are expected to be different per individual customer. Hence, this study focusses on the customer related antecedents, in particular customer satisfaction and customer involvement as described in the next sections. These concepts are considerably important and often mentioned as attitudinal antecedents in marketing literature, since customer satisfaction is mentioned as an antecedent in the research of van Doorn et al. (2010), Sashi (2012) and Pansari & Kumar (2017). At the same time, Hollebeek (2011a), Hollebeek et al. (2014a) and Pansari & Kumar (2017) mentioned customer involvement of which the latter considers involvement as a mediating variable.

### **2.3 Customer related antecedents of customer engagement**

With regard to the customer related antecedents of customer engagement, the definition and conceptualisation of customer satisfaction and customer involvement will be extensively described in the following sections.

#### **2.3.1 Customer satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction has always been important within marketing literature, as the least companies can do is try to satisfy their customers. However, the concept has been overruled by customer engagement in some situations, as engagement goes beyond satisfaction which fails to capture the depth of relationships (Fernandes & Esteves, 2016). According to Mittal, Katrichis & Kumar (2001) and Juhl, Kristensen & Ostergaard (2002), customer satisfaction is still an important factor within the process of customer retainment and relationship building. Whether customer satisfaction is seen as a final marketing metrics or as a stepping stone to create customer engagement, its role is still central in marketing literature but its exact definition has not always been clear (Juhl et al., 2002).

Some academics have argued that customer satisfaction is a transaction specific measure, indicating that customer satisfaction should be defined as a post-choice evaluative judgment regarding a particular purchase situation (Churchill & Suprenant, 1982; Bearden & Teel, 1983; Homburg & Giering, 2001; Pappu & Quester, 2006). Other more recent authors view customer satisfaction as an overall evaluation based on the total purchase consumption and experience (Pappu & Quester, 2006). In this regard, customer satisfaction is not solely about a product or service anymore, as it includes a firm's past, current and future performance (Anderson et al.,

1994). More specifically, overall satisfaction might include dimensions referring to the product itself (e.g. monetary value or ease of use), the sales process (e.g. communication with personnel) and after sales (e.g. additional services). In other words, customer satisfaction is more than a purchase situation. Hence, the satisfaction judgment is related to all possible experiences made with a particular brand concerning its products and services, the sales process and the after-sale service, all of which are based on cognitive and emotional judgements (Homburg & Giering, 2001).

In general, satisfaction is always conceptualized in terms of whether the product or service meets the consumer's needs and expectations. This is due to the fact that the concept is based on the confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm, or more specifically the expectancy–disconfirmation theory (EDT) (Olshavsky & Miller, 1972; Homburg & Giering, 2001; Pappu & Quester, 2006; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). The EDT theory is described as a theory for measuring customer satisfaction based on a connection between expectations and outcomes towards products or services and satisfaction. In this way customers can end up being satisfied (positive disconfirmation due to a perceived performance of a product/service which exceeds expectations) or dissatisfied (negative disconfirmation due to perceived performance of product/service which falls short of expectations) (Sashi, 2012). Additionally, some authors state that customers can also experience confirmation (perceived performance of product/service meets expectations) which also leads to satisfaction but to a lesser extent (Lewin, 1938; Pansari & Kumar, 2017).

In compliance with recent views on customer satisfaction, the definition of Johnson and Fornell (1991) as referred to in the research of Anderson et al. (1994), covers the concept in a suitable way and therefore illustrates how the concept of customer satisfaction will be used in this study:

*“A customer's overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with a good, service or firm over time” (Anderson et al., 1994, p.54).*

The definition captures customer satisfaction ‘over time’ as the essence of customer satisfaction will always come down to its overall cumulative experience of specific product, service or brand (Homburg & Giering, 2001). The cumulative character is based on the idea that it might be too restrictive to conceptualize satisfaction as an outcome of one single transaction or experience. To illustrate, dissatisfaction based on a single transaction is unlikely to have a long-term decisive effect (e.g. switch brands), while the same feeling based on several situations would be more likely to create such an effect. Also, a customer who is satisfied with one single transaction is not going to be a long-term customer per se (Homburg & Giering, 2001). These cumulative thoughts are in line with relationship marketing perspective of today's marketing literature.

Within relationship marketing literature, the concepts of customer satisfaction and engagement are sometimes mentioned together. Customer engagement, however is more detailed and deep and goes beyond customer satisfaction. Satisfaction is considered as an antecedent of customer engagement among existing customers, while new customers may experience it as a consequence (Bowden, 2009; van Doorn et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a). This is in line with Sashi (2010) who by use of the customer engagement cycle, explains that the satisfaction stage is a requirement for achieving customer engagement. According to Sashi (2010) customer engagement turns customers into fans, but in order to become fans, existing customers need to progress through the different stages of the customer engagement cycle, including satisfaction. Only if interactions between two parties result in certain degree of satisfaction, they stay connected and continue to interact with each other and progress towards engagement (Sashi, 2010). More specifically, if a customer is satisfied with brand or offering, he or she may consider repurchasing the offering. However, if that same customer is engaged as well, he or she would go beyond purchases and is likely to have that special connection (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). In line with this argumentation, Van Doorn et al. (2010) proposed that customer satisfaction has a positive effect on customer engagement. Although, these studies are conducted within a social

media context, the insight derived from these studies are convincing and expecting to give direction to the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer engagement. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

*H1: Customer satisfaction has a positive effect on customer engagement*

### **2.3.2 Conceptualisation customer satisfaction**

With regard to the operationalization of customer satisfaction, the concept is based on three items mentioned in the study of Ryan, Buzas & Ramaswamy (1995) and Juhl et al. (2002). The authors empirically observe customer satisfaction based on three questions which according to them, dominate practice and theory within customer satisfaction measurement literature. All three questions mentioned by Juhl et al. (2002) can be considered as suitable and relevant within the context of this study.

First of all, overall satisfaction is measured based on the question “Considering all your experience with company X, how satisfied are you in general?” (Juhl et al. 2002, p.328). This question seems to be one of the most common measurement items in customer satisfaction measurement literature (Ryan et al., 1995; Juhl et al., 2002). The second question refers to its expectation by “To what degree did company X fulfil your expectations?” (Juhl et al., 2002, p.328). The final question compares the company to an ideal company by “Imagine a company which is perfect in all aspects, how close to this ideal do you consider company X to be?” (Juhl et al., 2002, p.328).

According to Juhl et al. (2002) the combination of the abovementioned questions is an accurate measure of customer satisfaction, especially since it is known that the measurement of satisfaction is often limited to just the first overarching question. This is confirmed by Johnson & Fornell (1991) and Ryan et al. (1995) who state there is sufficient empirical support for using the 3-item approach. The authors mention that each of the three questions, which are adjusted to statements about retailer X, captures a different aspect of the underlying principle which contributes to content validity. Also, it is expected that using multiple questions is likely to increase the precision of estimating.

### **2.3.3 Customer involvement**

The second customer engagement antecedents used in this study, is customer involvement. According to Coulter, Price & Feick (2003) and Hollebeek et al. (2014) customer involvement’s current role within marketing literature is growing and the concept gained significant attention within research on customer relationships. Customer involvement can be conceptualized or implicated in a variety of ways. Individual customers can be physically, emotionally or cognitively involved in for example advertisements, purchase decisions, brands or specific products (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Also, Goodman, Fichman, Lerch & Snyder (1995) or Lagrosen (2005) view customer involvement as a customer’s behaviour, reflecting activities or type of activities in which customers interact with organisations beyond their regular transactions in for example new product development. At the same time, other authors view the concept as a state of mind reflecting a customer’s considerable interest of being or becoming involved with a brand or product by comparing, purchasing or evaluating the brand or product (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Coulter et al., 2003; Vivek et al., 2012).

In essence, the concept of customer involvement is used to categorize products or purchase decisions based on personal basic values, relevance, excitement, interest, inherent needs or goals (Zaichkowsky 1985; Mittal, 1995; Hollebeek, 2011a; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Involvement can therefore be derived from the perception that a specific product or purchase decision is related to a customer’s centrally held values or needs which define one’s identity (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985). Based on this argumentation, the concept should be considered as an affective, cognitive or motivational state of mind, rather than specific behaviour only (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Vivek et al., 2012). This is in line with the statement of Coulter et al. (2003), indicating that irrespective



of what specific conceptualisation is used to define the concept, the essence of customer involvement is related to a feeling or thought of self-relevance. This argumentation corresponds the focus of this study, indicating that customer involvement, is an attitudinal customer related antecedent which is viewed from a state of mind perspective rather than a behavioural perspective. As a result, this study will focus on the state of mind perspective reflecting a feeling of relevance and interest and the following definition based on the studies of Laurent & Kapferer (1985), Zaichkowsky (1985), Mittal (1995), Hollebeek (2011b) and Pansari & Kumar (2017), will resemble how the customer involvement will be conceptualized in this study:

*Customer involvement is an individual's level of interest and personal relevance in relation to a product or purchase decision.*

Zaichkowsky (1985) states that involvement with purchases or products leads to more search for information and more time spend searching for the right selection. This is in line with Pansari & Kumar (2017) who state that involvement also has to do with a customer's level of motivation to seek information that can be used to control, manage and moderate any potential risk in the decision-making process. Involvement with products is expected to lead to greater perception of product relevance, enhanced perception of attribute differences and greater commitment to a brand choice (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). To illustrate, Kumar, Ghosh & Tellis (1992) state that products which can be categorized as low involvement, are bought more often as a habit or routinized response. Low involvement products require minimal thoughts as they are based on an uninterrupted sequential process and the emotional intensity towards these repeated actions is relatively low (Wood, Quinn & Kashy, 2002; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). All of this is based on the idea that habitual behaviour is less likely to encounter any difficulties or surprises, hence this behaviour is not expected to be highly associated with active emotional or cognitive processes (Pansari & Kumar, 2017).

On the contrary, customers do not frequently purchase high involvement products that increase their expectations, reduce repurchase intentions and therefore make them more sensitive to emotional feelings (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Customers invests more resources and time in understanding the high-involvement products and its details, as these products require more information due to the relevance of the products and the related thought process. This leads to higher motivation, heightened arousal and emotions and increased cognitive elaborations (Vivek et al., 2012; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). More specifically, Pansari & Kumar (2017) mention that customers who invest time in understanding products, are more likely to notice its (dis)advantages which result in experiencing high sensitivity to emotions. All of this is supported by the theory of Mind and Emotion of Mandler (1975) in which is mentioned that emotions arise whenever there is an interruption in organized behaviour sequence.

So, customer involvement is a state of mind reflecting the interest and relevance regarding products or purchase decision and the motivation to seek information that may manage any potential risk in the decision-making process. Customer involvement thus occurs before customers make a purchase, while customer engagement occurs after, due to its beyond-purchase character (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). As a result, it is expected that the emotional and cognitive factors of customer involvement have an influence on the dimensions of customer engagement. In line with this, Hollebeek (2011a) assumed that there is a positive relationship between customer involvement and customer brand engagement which is confirmed by Hollebeek et al. (2014) who found empirical evidence that customer engagement is positively affected by customer involvement within a social media setting. Despite the contextual deviations, the insights of these studies are convincing and are therefore used to give direction to the relationship of the concepts. Hence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

*H2: Customer involvement has a positive effect on customer engagement*

### 2.3.4 Conceptualisation customer involvement

With regard to the conceptualisation of customer involvement, the concept will be based on the items of the involvement scale model of Foxall and Pallister (1998) as illustrated below.

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The purpose of this study is to measure your involvement in "\*\*\*\*". If you feel closely related to one end of scale, please place your check mark as follows:

interesting to me \_\_\_\_\_ boring to me

interesting to me \_\_\_\_\_ boring to me

If you feel quite closely related to one end of scale (but not extremely) please place your check mark as follows:

interesting to me \_\_\_\_\_ boring to me

interesting to me \_\_\_\_\_ boring to me

If you feel only slightly related (but not neutral) to one end of scale, please place your check mark as follows:

interesting to me \_\_\_\_\_ boring to me

interesting to me \_\_\_\_\_ boring to me

Buying of ..... is:

1. important to me	_____	unimportant to me
2. boring to me	_____	interesting to me
3. relevant to me	_____	irrelevant to me
4. exciting to me	_____	unexciting to me
5. means nothing to me	_____	means a lot to me
6. appealing to me	_____	unappealing to me
7. fascinating to me	_____	mundane to me
8. worthless to me	_____	valuable to me
9. involving to me	_____	uninvolving to me
10. not needed by me	_____	needed to me

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Figure 3: Revised customer involvement scale (Foxall and Pallister, 1998, p. 182)

Foxall and Pallister (1998) revised the original customer involvement model consisting of 20 items, to a more limited 10-item based model mentioned in studies like Pansari & Kumar (2017). Despite the revision of Foxall & Pallister, the number of scale items had to be limited further within this study to warrant the customer protection policy of retailer X. As a result, this study will use 3 items of the scale which is expected to be a proper in terms of customer friendliness and scientific foundation. The specific selection is based on the results of van Doorn et al. (2010) in which items 1, 3, 4 and 7 were purified since the 10-item scale suggested an inadequate model fit. According to van Doorn et al. (2010), omitting these items would retain the construct's theoretical integrity and a good model fit. The content of the remaining six items showed some overlap to the opinion of the researcher and therefore item 6, 8, and 9 were omitted as well. Therefore, the focus is on item 2, 5, and 10 as these items are expected to best cover the loading of the concept. Also, these items are expected to contribute to the degree of content validity while supporting the customer protection policy at the same time. Hence, customer involvement is based on three items, 'purchasing beauty & health products is interesting to me', 'purchasing beauty & health products means a lot to me', and 'purchasing beauty & health products is necessary to me'.

### 2.4 Content marketing & content consumption

"Content is King" is once quoted by the Microsoft founder Bill Gates in 1996, as he described the way in which he expected the real money to be made by properly managing content. Content, as describing the words, images, videos and all other forms of information that users or customers wish to read, learn, see or experience on organisation's marketing channels, is created by organisations to support their products, service and business processes (Rose, 2012). In the next section, the concepts of content marketing, content consumption and online magazines will be described, followed by the intensity of content consumption.

### 2.4.1 Content marketing

The concept of content marketing has been around for decades already, but it might not have been recognized as it has gone under names like ‘custom publishing’, ‘corporate media’ or ‘branded content’. Famous examples of successful content marketing initiatives like Oetker or John Deere, go back to the 19th century. Via Oetker’s Baking powder recipes in 1891 and the Furrow Magazine of John Deere in 1895, both organisations managed their content strategically, created value for customers and became a professional source of information that helped their customers to enhance and improve the experiences with the brand and its offerings (Pulizzi, 2012; Patrutiu Baltes, 2015). More than 100 years later, content marketing is still important and has a prominent role in today’s online marketing literature as it has become a weapon within the online marketing arsenal of successful businesses (Lieb, 2011).

Content marketing is an umbrella term encompassing all marketing activities that involve the creation and distribution of valuable and relevant content that a specific customer audience is seeking for (Content Marketing Institute, 2015). Content is created and distributed to get the attention of customers, pull them closer to learning more about a brand and most importantly get them engaged (Pulizzi & Barret, 2009; Rose, 2012; Content Marketing Institute, 2015). According to Pulizzi & Barret (2009) content marketing can be described as the art of understanding exactly what customers need to know and providing this relevant information in a compelling way. Content marketing is based on the idea that organisations, need to think and act like media companies in order to attract, retain or engage customers. In essence, the focus of many of its definitions is on creating and distributing valuable, consistent and relevant information that customers are seeking for, to deliver additional value for customers, nurture relationships and bring measurable success for the organisation (Content Marketing Institute, 2014; Georgieva & Djoukanova, 2014). In line with this, is the definition of the Content Marketing Institute which covers the concept accurately and resembles how content marketing will be referred to in this study:

*‘Content marketing is a marketing and business process for creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience (...) (Patrutiu Baltes, 2015, p.112).*

The relevance of the content that is created lies at the heart of content marketing practices. The content created by content marketing practices and read by customers or other relevant parties, needs to be relevant since the more demanding and critical customers request for useful information to support them in their decision-making processes (Lieb, 2011). It is suggested that the usefulness of the information is one of the factors which affects the utilization of information by customers in their purchase decisions (Sachs, Martin & Moyer, 1977; Scammon, 1977; Patrutiu Baltes, 2015; Swieczak, 2017).

In today’s information-driven era, a tremendous amount of content flows in every direction through an extremely high number of different channels, but still it is hard to gain people’s attention. It is difficult to gain customer’s attention, as people are critical, experience time pressures and therefore become extremely selective (Lieb, 2011). Not all customers can be exposed to all available information and thus customers are selectively exposed to information. Subsequently, these customers selectively pay attention to the information they are exposed to and only interpret the information they want to interpret (Sheth, Mittal & Newman, 1999). This selective behaviour (e.g. shifting focus or zapping away) also has to do with the limited information processing perspective and the information overload paradigm as mentioned in the study of Schroder, Driver, and Streufert (1967). Today’s intelligent customers are capable of processing fairly large amounts of information and they are aware of their rights to choose what, how and how much content to consume and what to think of it. However, these customers are information processors who can only process a limited amount of information at a specific time without becoming overloaded (Lang, 2000). Customers have a limited capacity for processing

information and when the capacity is exceeded, it is most likely that the task performance is adversely affected and dysfunctional consequences might arise (e.g. confusion, cognitive strains or difficulty in locating information which can be detrimental to the quality of the customer's' decision or the overall experience with a brand or offering (Sachs et al., 1977; Malhotra, 1984; Lee and Lee, 2004; Zha, Li & Yan, 2013). In order to overcome any of these dysfunctional consequences, organisations should focus their content marketing practices solely on creating relevant information (Jacoby, Speller & Berning, 1974a; Malhotra, 1984; Hansen, 2000).

#### **2.4.2 Relevant content**

What can be considered as relevant content was once subject to discussion. Companies and customers had other desires regarding the provision of information and their understanding of what information was relevant. While customers wanted to consume content about the value that offerings of organisations could create for them, organisations used to focus on pitching about the quality of their products and services. However, within the last decades the customer centric perspective became vitally important and companies started to recognize the importance of focussing on, listening to and understanding customers (Brown, Jones & Wang, 2016). Instead of pitching products or services, organisations now deliver information that make customers more intelligent. Content is therefore no longer about an organisation's offerings but it is about the stories that organisations tell (Holliman & Rowley, 2014).

Organisations are now trusted expert resources for customers rather than a provider of products and services (Pulizzi & Barret, 2009; Wuebben, 2011; Holliman & Rowley, 2014). This is based on the belief that just like individuals who must gain trust among others, companies need to gain the confidence of their customers as well (Patruti Baltes, 2015). Marketeers need to provide customers with educational content which makes them more intelligent, as customers are seeking to learn about products, services or specific issues involving the marketeer's products before making well-informed purchasing decision (Lieb, 2011).

In addition to the informational and educational non-product character of content, Lieb (2011) states that good content should be entertaining as well. This is in line with Swieczak (2017) and the Content marketing institute (2015) who mention that the content to be consumed by customers, should be relevant, informative, entertaining, inspiring, reliable and unique. Content should be catching, since the story told by organisations should prosper the organisation's brand into the mind and heart of its customers (Holliman and Rowley, 2014; Patruti Baltes, 2015; Swieczak, 2017).

#### **2.4.3 Online magazines**

While content marketing describes the conscious and strategic management of any possible kind of content (e.g. social media pages or articles, blogs, case studies, in-person roadshows or events, print or online newsletters, emails, videos portals, white papers, webcasts/webinars, microsites podcast, virtual conferences), this study is solely focused on the less applied online magazines (Wuebben, 2011; Patruti Baltes, 2015; Swieczak 2017).

Online magazines are increasingly capturing the attention of marketeers within the last couple of years, (von Berg & Pralle, 1999; Silva, 2011). Online magazines, also referred to as digital magazines, e-magazines, e-zines or zines are electronic publications in which publishers or organisations create interactive content (e.g. text, images, video or audio) by use of editorials or advertorials and distribute it to multiple readers or subscribers (Lieb, 2011; Puro, 2013).<sup>2</sup> In first instance, it was thought that a digital magazine was a high-tech version or replica of the traditional paper-based magazine (Silva 2011). However, these thoughts were adjusted soon as it was recognized that an online magazine is a separate magazine that is interactive and solely created for digital platforms or devices (Silva, 2011). In contrast to the traditional magazines, online magazines provide

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<sup>2</sup> Due to the fact that the content is created by organisations or publishers, rather than customers, online magazines cannot be considered as social media which is mainly characterized by consumer-generated content according to Xiang and Gretzel (2010).

readers with the ability to view, read and re-read content without delay and with instant access from all over the world (von Berg & Pralle, 1999; Williamson & Johnke, 2014). Also, online magazines are different from traditional magazines as they can integrate various types of media (e.g. audio or video) and benefit from the fact that traditional constraints involving high costs for paper, printing and distribution are not central to the electronic area (von Berg & Pralle, 1999; Silva, 2011).

#### **2.4.4 Content marketing consequences**

It is known that many organisations think little about their content marketing. They spend all their energy, money and time thinking about the appearance and the architecture of their websites, magazines or other content products. They are failing to look at content from a strategic point of view and see their content product as something they need to fill quickly (Wuebben, 2011). Every single company can create content, but in order to have an impact on both customers and the organisation's bottom line, organisations should create relevant content and manage it properly (Lieb, 2011).

Regarding the customers, proper content marketing implementation will ensure that customers get their questions answered throughout the buying cycle and they feel supported in making purchase decisions (Rahim & Clemens, 2012; Gupta, 2015). Consuming relevant content will therefore ensure that customers better understand or use the products or services offered by organisations (Lieb, 2011).

With regard to the organisation's effect, helping customers through their decision-making process will give organisations the opportunity to create commitment and honest relations based on trust (Rahim & Clemens, 2012; Gupta, 2015). Content marketing can serve as a cornerstone for enhancing and stimulating existing audiences since content is the currency that powers the connection (Wuebben, 2011). Content marketing can attract, engage and retain audiences on a long term and has the ability to create a positive brand image and a privileged relationship with the targeted audience (Bunpis & Haron, 2014; Patrutiu Baltes, 2015; Brown et al., 2016). Customers can reward organisations with reinforcing existing relationships, positive advocacy and long-term loyalty (Sachs et al., 1977; Scammon, 1977; Swieczak, 2017). Subsequently, relevant information provision is likely to motivate online purchases of customers in terms of repurchasing, cross-selling, upselling or upgrades all of which affects the customer lifetime value and organisation's performance (Sachs et al., 1977; Scammon, 1977; Lieb, 2011; Rahim & Clemens, 2012; Patrutiu Baltes, 2015; Swieczak, 2017). This line of thought is conforming the argumentation of Pulizzi & Barret (2009) and Rahim & Clemens (2012) in which is stated that content marketing is about engaging with customers and creating relationships that transcend transactions, especially when organisations are established as an authority within their particular business.

In this regard, online magazines are expected to have positive effects as well. Although it is known that the visual and haptic pleasures of reading a physical magazine are part of the reading and consumption experience, it is assumed that online magazines contribute to firm performance and make a difference in business models (Silva, 2011). Also, Schijns (2008) found that online magazines are effective for improving brand image, stimulating customer relationships and enhancing sales since readers of the magazines are expected to have a more positive view of the company.

Although the consequences and relevance of content marketing are universally acknowledged, organisations can have deviating motives or specific goals on why to apply content marketing practices. While some companies focus on sales as the immediate goals, others common goals are increasing trust and brand awareness, nurturing relationships with customers, exploring their pain points, creating a need for a specific product or improving loyalty and retention of customers (Patrutiu Baltes, 2015). Whatever the specific organizational goal for their content marketing activities is, content marketing is about getting the attention of customers and building long-term and fruitful relationship with customers (Bunpis & Haron, 2014). This is in line with Swieczak (2017) who states that the content delivered should be able to capture the attention of the target audience and provide value that drives further contact and engagement. The central role of engagement

is confirmed by Pulizzi & Barret (2009, p. xv) arguing that ‘‘most of all, content marketing is about engagement’’.

Based on the argumentation above, this study assumes that the consumption of content will contribute to the degree of customer engagement. This is in line with the argumentation of Bumpis & Haron (2014) who state that content marketing seems to be one of the best tools that firms can use to create or enhance customer engagement. People who consume the content of the online magazine are therefore expected to be more engaged with retailer X compared to people who do not read the content of the magazine. In line with this, it is expected that the relationship of customer engagement and its antecedents is affected by the consumption of content as well. Hence, the following hypotheses are formulated:

*H3: Content consumption has a positive effect on customer engagement*

*H4: Content consumption has a positive effect on the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer engagement*

*H5: Content consumption has a positive effect on the relationship between customer involvement and customer engagement*

#### **2.4.5 Intensity content consumption**

Apart from the fact that some people consume the content of the magazine and some do not, readers can also consume the content in different ways. It is known that individuals can have different reading patterns all of which relates to specific reading goals or situations (O’Hara, 1996). In line with this, it is stated that reading studies should not only focus on its reach since the reading pattern characteristics of the readers are relevant as well. Also, the activity of reading is described as a complex and variable behaviour rather than a single activity and therefore asks for a comprehensive analysis of the reading patterns (Liu, 2005).

The complexity of reading is confirmed by Levy (1997) and Brown (2002) who state that the act of reading is not univocal and reading patterns have changed over time due to the growing amount of digital media. Levy (1997) and Liu (2005) argue that the development of digital libraries contributes towards a trend of shallower, more fragmented and less concentrated reading resulting in a threat towards sustained reading. In line with this, Dyson & Haselgrove (2000) state that reading behaviour of people online is more often characterized by rapid scanning or skimming. All of this has to do with the idea that attention becomes a scarce resource in today’s information-abundant world and people are more selective when facing an overwhelming amount of information. As far as today’s smart people can control this process, they try to determine what, how much, how and with what intensity to consume content at a specific moment (Jacoby et al., 1974a; Jacoby, Speller & Kohn, 1974b). As a result, a great variance in reading patterns or intensity can be recognized.

The intensity of reading refers to the proportion of all the reading material that one reads and the comprehensiveness by which the material is read. To the best of the author’s knowledge, there is a lack of scientifically models on reading intensity and its effectiveness within marketing literature while there are many practical reading studies in which reading patterns are analysed via surveys. The practical studies however, mainly focus on describing the reading patterns or intensities, rather than analysing the effects of the intensity with regard to certain metrics. To illustrate, according to Prast (1998), Oversteegen & van Wijk (2003) and van Grinsven et al. (2015a) reading intensity can vary among people, as people describe their behaviour by reading the entire magazines, most of the magazine, half of the magazine, just a few articles etc. This is confirmed by studies of Borleffs (2003) and van Grinsven, van der Woud, Beliaeva & Elphick (2015b) in which the intensity of reading is analysed by checking what proportion of the entire magazine is read, referring to the number of articles. Also, the authors analyse the reading intensity by checking how comprehensive a specific article is read, referring to reading an entire article, half of the article, the headlines, introduction or just the pictures. This

is line with the studies on reading behaviour like Bronner, Dekker, Olivier, van Raaij, Wedel & Wierenga (2000), Oversteegen & van Wijk (2003) or van Grinsven et al. (2015a) who assume that while reading a specific article, the intensity can vary across variables like comprehensiveness of reading (e.g. superficial or thorough) or the time spent on reading (e.g. seconds, minutes or hours). Subsequently, the time spend on reading is also used to provide insight on reading intensity in the studies of Dyson & Haselgrove (2000) and Brandt-Dominicus & van Harten (2006). Furthermore, in the studies of Brandt-Dominicus & van Harten (2006) and Verploegh (2017), the frequency of reading repetition (e.g. once a day, week or month) and the period that an individual is familiar with a magazine or is a subscriber to a magazine (e.g. several days, weeks or months) are mentioned to be part of reading patterns as well.

In general, the variance in the content consumption intensity can thus stem from the frequency or repetition by which content is read and the comprehensiveness by which customers read the content. Although some studies above provide fundamental argumentation on what elements to include when analysing the intensity of reading, little is known about the effect of the intensity of reading. As an exception, Dyson & Haselgrove (2000) found out that an increase in reading speed, so a decrease in time spend on reading, results in an overall decline in the level of comprehension. When the speed of reading decreases, people tend to better understand a text. Also, Anand & Sternthal (1990) performed a relevant study outside the context of this study in which they mention that repetition has an ambiguous effect on the effectiveness of advertisements. The effect of repetition can be considered as ambiguous, as many authors state that the relation between the number of exposures and the effectiveness can be characterized by an inverted U-model. Increasing the number of exposures is expected to increase effectiveness, but only till a certain number of exposures that is different per study due to deviating context and circumstances (Cacioppo and Petty 1979; Anand & Sternthal, 1990; Lee & Briley, 2005).

In addition to the idea that content consumption is likely to contribute to customer engagement, it is expected that the variance in reading intensity has an influence as well. Although there is no clear theory about content consumption intensity in relation to effectiveness in terms of customer engagement, direction is given to the hypotheses. It is expected that the intensity of content consumption contributes to customer engagement, either direct or via a moderating effect. Customers who read the content of the magazine more intense, so more frequent or comprehensive are expected to be more engaged with retailer X compared to customers who read less intense. Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated:

*H6: The intensity of content consumption has a positive effect on customer engagement*

*H7: The intensity of content consumption has a positive effect on the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer engagement*

*H8: The intensity of content consumption has a positive effect on the relationship between customer involvement and customer engagement*

#### **2.4.6 Conceptualisation content consumption and intensity**

With regard to the conceptualisation of content consumption, this study will focus on the familiarity of the customers with the online magazine of retailer X first. Content consumption, referring to whether a customer reads the content of the magazine or not, is therefore conceptualized by asking the respondents about their familiarity. To illustrate, customers are asked ‘‘Are you familiar with the online magazine of retailer X?’’ Based on the answers of this question, in which respondents also indicate whether they actively read the magazine or not, the customers are grouped as either readers or non-readers, of which the readers will be subject to the deeper analysis about the intensity of content consumption.

The conceptualisation of content consumption intensity, is subsequently focused on several practical studies on reading behaviour due to a shortage of widely accepted scientific conceptualisation models on content

consumption intensity. Based on the studies of Prast (1998), Bronner et al. (2000), Dyson & Haselgrove (2000), Borleffs (2003), Oversteegen & van Wijk (2003), Brandt-Dominicus & van Harten (2006), van Grinsven et al. (2015a), Grinsven et al., (2015b) and Verploegh (2017), the intensity by which the content is consumed is measured by referring to frequency and the comprehensiveness of reading. Based on this argumentation, the frequency of reading is analysed by questions like ‘Since when are you familiar with the magazine?’ and ‘How often do you visit the magazine per month?’. The comprehensiveness of content consumption is referring to by ‘How many minutes are you reading the content on average when visiting the magazine?’, ‘How many articles do you read on average per visit?’ and ‘How extensive do you read an article on average?’. The combination of these questions is expected to provide proper insight in the overall intensity of content consumption. On the whole, the process of analysing content consumption followed by a deeper analysis on its intensity is expected to be appropriate based on advertising effectiveness literature. The ARF model of the Advertising Research Foundation mentioned in the study of Harvey (1997) evaluates the effectiveness of advertising. By use of specific phases, the model explains how the effectiveness of the advertisements is dependent on the proportion of people exposed a vehicle, the proportion of people exposed to an ad and the way in which they are exposed to and experience the ad content. In line with this study, the ARM model uses stages and elements that represent the size of the reach and exposure followed by the quality of this reach and exposure (Harvey, 1997).

## **2.5 Control variables**

In addition to the previously specified variables, demographic, customer and behavioural-related control variables are added to the analysis as well. Control variables, also known as test variables, are added to isolate the effect of the variables of interest and check whether there are any other external effects to clarify relationships (Babbie, 2010). The decision regarding the nature and the number of control variables is based on other literary studies, arguments of retailer X’s managers and the availability of data with reference to retailer X’s customer protection policy.

First of all, some demographic customer characteristics like age, education and income are analysed. These variables are straightforward and used in many other studies within and beyond the marketing field, and therefore do not need any specific clarification.

Other more complex control variables regarding the purchase behaviour are added that need some extra clarification. Regarding purchase behaviour, the customer lifetime period, the average amount of monthly purchases and the average value of the purchases are added. The choice of including these variables is based on the argumentation that for retailer X’s commercial and performance related insights, it is of relevance to know whether these variables have any effect on the degree of customer engagement. Retailer X is likely to analyse the conversion related insight in the near future all of which goes beyond the scope of this research.

In addition to this, some control variables are added regarding the content consumption behaviour of the customers. More specifically, the subjects of the article content and the devices as well as the channels used to read the content, are added. The choice for these variables is based on the fact that they are considered relevant for retailer X and likewise their role is mentioned in literature. In studies of Bronner, Dekker, Olivier, van Raaij, Wedel & Wierenga (2000), Oversteegen & van Wijk (2003) or van Grinsven et al. (2015a) the preference in subjects is mentioned as part of reading behaviour. Also, it is known that the different devices can be characterized by specific features. For example, mobile phones are more often used for entertainment while purchases are more done by desktops as these are considered as more trustworthy. With regard to the channels that customers use to reach the content of the magazine (e.g. social media, retailer X’s website and the website of the online magazine), it is known that the enormous amount of content channels through which content is distributed, is one of the four biggest challenges of online marketing. According to Odden (2012), Leeflang, Verhoef, Dahlström & Freundt (2014) and Patrutiu Baltas (2015) choosing which channel to use for disseminating content is a complex task for organisations but plays a significant role in the success of the content



marketing. Due to the argumentation above, the control variables are considered as relevant and can contribute in the clarification of any possible relationship.

**2.6 Research model**

Now that all concepts are described and direction is given to the relationships and the corresponding hypothesis, a comprehensive research model is developed based on these building blocks. In comparison to the conceptual model, the content consumption intensity within this model is divided into consumption comprehensiveness and consumption frequency and control variables are added.

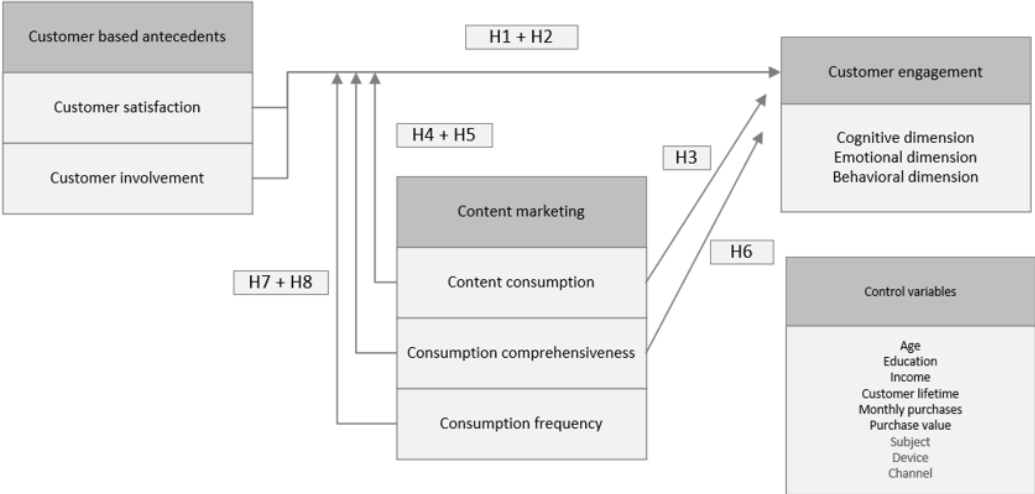


Figure 4 – Research model

## **3.0 Methodology**

In the following chapter the methodology of the research will be described. In the first section, insights will be provided in the research design and the research method in which the units of analysis will be specified. The section ends with extensive descriptions of the process of data collection and data analysis.

### **3.1 Research design**

In order to describe the effect of content marketing with regard to customer engagement, a deductive research approach is used in which general theories are tested by particular data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). More specifically, a quantitative field study is conducted which is based on a one-shot case study. A case study is a research method which focuses on understanding the dynamics of a phenomena present within one specific setting which is designed to illustrate a more general principle (Eisenhardt, 1989; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007; Babbie, 2010).

The choice for a case study can be explained by two reasons. First of all, it is widely known that case studies are suitable for research questions starting with ‘why’, ‘what’ or ‘how’ (Yin, 2013). Secondly, case studies can be based on quantitative data collection in which data collection methods such as archives, interviews, surveys or observations are used (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2013). As this study is focused on a research question starting with ‘what’ and the analysis is based on surveys, a case study seems to be a suitable research method and will help to achieve the research goals by providing a holistic and in-depth context specific view (Zainal, 2007; Cohen et al., 2007). Although, Babbie (2010) criticizes its limited generalizability, Cohen et al. (2007) state that case studies can truly establish effects or causes as it is their strength to observe effects in real contexts while taking into account the idea that context can be determinant. Hence, within this research the specific context will be taken into account and the generalisability or external validity, referring to the degree to which the results from this study can be applied beyond this specific situation, are considered as well (de Vaus, 2001).

### **3.2 Unit of analysis**

The unit of analysis refer to who or what is being studied in a research, which in social research is typically an individual person, social group, organisation or interaction (Ritchie & Lewis 2003; Babbie, 2010). Within this study, different unit of analysis can be recognized among the different stages of the research, which is in line with the theory on units of analysis described by Babbie (2010). First of all, individual customers are analysed. The analysis of the individual customers will provide insight in the level of customer engagement, its antecedents and the consumption of content. Based on this data the individuals will subsequently be segmented into two groups: (1) readers and (2) non-readers. From this point on, the two different groups can be regarded as the units of analysis. The group of readers, will subsequently be analysed further to check the intensity by which the individuals of this group consume the content of the online magazine. At this point, it might even be stated that the unit of analysis are interactions, as the behaviour or interaction of the readers with regard to reading the magazine content is analysed.

### **3.3 Research method**

While conducting a quantitative research, different types of data are collected. First of all, secondary literary data is collected in order to create a theoretical framework on which the analysis of this study is based. Secondly, the main quantitative analysis of this study is based on surveys. The survey, which is a document containing questions designed to solicit information appropriate for analysis, is conducted online (Babbie, 2010). The choice for online distribution is based on the idea that the study population can be reached online and according to Wilson (2014) market research of online companies should be conducted online. Also, online surveys have

relatively great access and have low costs in terms of money and time compared to conventional survey methods but due to its impersonal character online surveys have higher risks of incomplete or unacceptable responses compared to conventional methods (Schmidt, 1997; Babbie, 2010). The risk of incomplete responses is limited due to the fact that the survey questions are mandatory. Also, it is known that the anonymous character of the survey may stimulate unacceptable answers but it contributes the internal validity as well. It is expected that anonymity will increase honesty and therefore respondents are less likely to give socially desired answers (de Vaus, 2001).

Based on the conceptual models mentioned in the literary review, several questions and statements are formulated. These questions are mainly closed ended questions, in which the respondents are asked to select an answer from a list provided by the researcher (Babbie, 2010). While closed ended questions can generate greater uniformity of responses, they also limit the respondents in expressing their own opinion since the answer options are influenced by the researcher (Cooper & Schindler, 2006; Babbie, 2010). Within this study, the closed ended questions can be categorized as 'rating grid questions' or 'multiple choice single response questions' in which respondents should respectively rate attitudinal statements based on predetermined scales or answer questions by choosing one of the answer possibilities.

The attitudes on customer engagement, satisfaction and involvement are traditionally measured based on the summated rating scale Likert. The Likert scale which is the most frequently used scale, especially when respondents are asked about their opinion and attitudes, are easy and quick scales to construct and they are relatively reliable at the same time (Jamieson, 2004; Cooper & Schindler, 2006). While these features are acknowledged, some discussion exists regarding its measurement level and the number of scale points (Dawes, 2007; Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Despite the wide variety of opinions, as described in Appendix B.1, this study specifically uses a 5-point Likert scale (e.g. (1) fully disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree and (5) fully agree) considered at an interval level which is in line with Kohli (1989), Jamieson (2004), Dawes, (2007), and Norman (2010) and the customer protection policy of retailer X.

Next to the closed ended questions, some open-ended questions are added as well. Open questions give respondents the chance to answer in their own words and therefore these questions contribute to the possibility of discovering spontaneous responses (Mack, Woodson, Macqueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005; Babbie, 2010; Cooper & Schindler, 2006). At the same time, open ended questions have a risk in terms of data processing time, due to the endless answer possibilities.

In the end, a combination of both open and closed questions is expected to deal with the disadvantages and advantages of both question types and provide proper insights on the attitudes on customer engagement and its antecedents, content consumption and its intensity.

### **3.4 Sampling**

As mentioned in section 3.2, the research is based on individual respondents first. The selection of these respondents is based on probability sampling and involves some random-selection mechanism, as it suggests that each sampling unit has an equal chance of being included in the sample (Babbie, 2010).<sup>3</sup> Despite the equal chance, the survey sample consists of respondents who volunteer to fill in the survey based on their own accord, corresponding the principle of self-selection (Babbie, 2010). Subsequently, these individual respondents are deliberately and non-randomly assigned to either the group of readers or the group of non-readers based on their familiarity with the online magazine.

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<sup>3</sup> With regard to the sampling of the earlier described case study, a non-probability type of sampling is used, called purposive or judgmental sampling (Babbie, 2010). This indicates that the case study is specifically selected based on the researcher's judgment on the usefulness of the company.

Even though the sampling process was random, the respondents needed to meet some particular requirements as the sample was derived from a specific study population. Since the online beauty & health magazine is focused on female related content, male respondents are excluded. Also, the focus is on existing customers rather than visitors of retailer X's website, since retailer X wants to have the opportunity to also analyse any conversion numbers in the near future which is beyond the scope of this research. Hence, the respondents need to have purchased at least one product within the shopping segment that is related to the beauty and health content of the magazine, which is in line with the focus on existing customers. In addition to this, the purchase should be done within the period of 1 November 2016 till 31 October 2017 as the magazine was introduced just before the start of this period. Data from 12 months is expected to provide enough representative data, while also maintaining a workable dataset. In short, the sample within this study was derived from the following study population: *all female customers who bought at least one product in Retailer X's beauty and health segment within the period of 1 November 2016 till 31 October 2017.*

By use of the web analytic tools Google Analytics and Omniture, information is collected regarding the study population. It turned out that approximately 1.377.494 female customers purchased at least one product in the beauty and health segment within the specific period. Within that same period, 340.589 unique females visited the online magazine. Building on these numbers, it can be concluded that the percentage of female magazine readers is less than 25% of the female Beauty & Health customers.

### **3.5 Data collection & sample size**

In order to collect the right data from the predetermined study population, the survey was distributed by email in the period of 9 November 2017 till 23 November 2017<sup>4</sup>. This was done by retailer X's preferred survey tool MWM2. By use of retailer X's CRM system, 15.000 customers received an email out of which 350 customers completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 2.3%. From these 350 respondents, 220 respondents were female customers, from which the majority was not familiar with the magazine<sup>5</sup>. This group included 217 non-readers and only 3 readers. Although it was expected that the proportion of readers would be low, the actual number were insufficient for the analysis.

In order to reach more magazine readers, Facebook advertising was activated in the period of 4 December 2017 till 8 January 2018. Advertisements were designed and targeted at female Facebook users who visited the magazine's website at least twice. In this way, respondents were attracted to visit a magazine page with a survey created by the tool Qualtrics rather than the MWM2 tool due to privacy concerns of retailer X. While the program and the time period were different for both surveys, the content of the surveys was comparable. To be sure the respondents of both surveys would meet the requirements of the target audience and the exact same amount of information was collected by both surveys, additional questions were formulated for the Facebook survey. Also, some information about the respondents that was automatically recorded by retailer X's CRM system via the email survey, needed to be explicitly asked for in the Facebook survey. Hence, by use of a combination of both surveys, the researcher was able to reach the same audience and collect the same information but only in a different way. The Facebook campaign resulted 21.083 impressions and due to a CTR of 0.071%, 149 people clicked on the advertisement of which 120 respondents completed the survey. Out of 120 respondents, 98 respondents were actual customers of retailer X and 75 respondents met the requirements of the target group.

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<sup>4</sup> Before the survey was distributed among the sample, the survey was pretested. Four people including two colleagues with specific knowledge about the magazine and two friends with the age of the magazine's target group, tested the survey. As a result, some minor mistakes were solved and changes were made regarding question sequence.

<sup>5</sup> Retailer X's email system was not able to target only female customers meeting the target group requirements and therefore male customers did receive an email as well. However, as expected, the majority of these customers was female and thus the larger part of the reach was relevant.

The combination of the two data collection processes, resulted in a sample of 318 respondents from which the majority can be considered as non-readers (N=240) and the minority (N=78) as readers of the online magazine. These numbers are in line with the argumentation of Perry (2002) in which is stated that the amount of survey respondents of a Master Thesis should be in between the requirements of an honours research and a PHD research which are respectively 100 and 350 respondents. In order to represent the study population and contribute to the reliability of this research at a confidence level of 5 percent, Saunders et al., (2009) state that this study should have a minimum of 384 respondents. Although the sample size is slightly below this specific requirement and the absolute amount of readers might be considered as low, the readers & non-readers ratio is a proper ratio compared to real-life. Hence, the researcher considers the sample as a suitable representation of the reality.

### **3.6 Data analysis**

Once the data was collected, the data of both surveys was combined and stored in Excel. The additional customer information provided by retailer X and other irrelevant data was removed. Also, the dataset was cleaned, as the outliers, influential cases or unusual answers were checked, changed and removed if necessary. To illustrate, the years of birth were transformed to the corresponding ages, vocational education was considered as an answer possibility and any 'other', 'I do not know' or 'I prefer not to answer this' answers were transformed to a missing value. Also, three 'non-reading' respondents were omitted from the database, as some of their answers were outliers or influencing cases due to extreme values and unusual answer consistency. This was confirmed by a Mahalanobis distance that exceeded the critical value of  $X^2$  for that particular df. The subsequent statistical data analysis, based on 315 respondents was conducted by use of SPSS version 24.0.

To make sure valid and reliable measurement tools were used, the conceptualisation models of all concepts were checked and prepared by use of Factor Analysis. According to Field, (2013) the underlying structure of the items used to conceptualize the concepts can be clarified by proper factor analysis and therefore are expected to contribute to construct validity (Field, 2013). The principal component factor analysis is conducted on all concepts with the most common varimax rotation, as the goal was to summarize original data to a smaller amount of data (Field, 2013).

Based on the results of the factor analysis, the 4-item measurement scale of customer engagement was considered as suitable for measuring the degree to which customers are (dis)engaged and reliable at the same time with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.791. Also, the underlying structure of the 6 antecedent items of customer satisfaction and customer involvement was tested to overcome any problems related to similarity or overlap. Both scales were suitable for measuring the degree to which the customers are (dis)satisfied or (un)involved and also the reliability was suitable with a 0.817 Cronbach's alpha for customer satisfaction and 0.876 for customer involvement.

In line with the literature, the underlying structure of the 5-item content consumption intensity model showed that the intensity of content consumption should be divided into two factors, respectively frequency of content consumption and comprehensiveness of consumption. Both concepts were suitable for measuring the degree of content consumption but their reliability scores were below requirements. The researcher examined and confirmed that the reliability of the factors could not be improved without harming any other relevant indicators or scores. Hence, based on face validity, which is the degree to which a measure reflects what it is intended to measure indicating the appropriateness of the measurement, the researcher considers both concepts as valid (Hardesty & Bearden, 2004). While taking into account the unstable measurement scales, an index score of both content consumption concepts was used to analyse the consumption intensity.

Subsequently, in order to answer the hypotheses, the main analysis was based on a standard multiple regression analysis. The multiple regression analysis is suitable as it can estimate the relationship among the different variables in the analysis. Hypothesis 1-8 are all checked based on the regression analysis but for

hypothesis 3 and 6, the regression analysis is a check-up. These hypotheses were mainly based on respectively an independent sample t-test and an one-way ANOVA. These types of analysis are used to compare the means of groups, in which the ANOVA analysis is more suitable when the number of groups exceeds two (Field, 2013). With respect to the ANOVA analysis, the Gabriel's procedure post hoc analysis was used as this method assumes that the group sizes are unequal. (See appendix B.3 – B.6 for the assumptions and possible output of all statistical analysis).

## 4.0 Analysis of data

This chapter will outline the statistical results of the multiple regression analysis, t-tests and ANOVA analyses by which the hypotheses are subsequently supported or rejected. The first section is focused on the descriptive statistics of the sample, followed by a description of the customer engagement scores for retailer X's customers. This is followed by a comprehensive analysis on the relationship of customer engagement and its antecedents. The second section elaborates on the effect of content consumption on customer engagement, either direct or moderating via its antecedents. After that, the sample will be diminished and the third section will elaborate on the effect of content consumption intensity on customer engagement, either direct or moderating. The section will end with additional analysis that is an extension to the main analysis but worth to mention, according to the researcher.

### 4.1 Descriptive characteristics of sample

The descriptive statistics of the sample are divided into respectively the entire sample and the readers only. The demographic characteristics of the total sample (N=315) are as follows: the age of the respondents ranged from 15 to 85 years (M= 39, SD= 16.8) out of which 39.2% is aged between 20-30 years and 61.5% belongs to the online magazine's target group of 15-45 years. In terms of education, 42.4% of the respondents follows higher professional education (N=132), followed by 31.8% of secondary education (N=99) and 17.4% university studies (N=54), whereas the remaining 8.4% (N=30) follows elementary school or vocational education. With regard to the income of the respondents, the majority 49.2% (N=92) has an average monthly income of 1000-2500 euros, 21.4% (N=40) earns less than 500 euro's, 15.0% (N=28) has an income of 500-1000 euro, 13.9% (N=26) of the customers earns 2500-5000 euro and only one respondent earns 5000 euro or more.

By customer lifetime characteristics, 35.2% (N=111) of the respondents is customer for 4-7 years, 29.2% (N=92) is customer for 2-3 years, 21.6% (N=68) is customer for 8-15 years and the other 14.0% (N=44) is customer for less than one year or more than fifteen years. The greater number of customers, 72.7% (N=229) orders products less than once a month, 22.2% (N=70) mentions to order 1 or 2 times a month and just 5.1% (N=16) of the respondents orders three times or more. The average purchase value of these orders is 20 to 40 euro for 58.1% (N=183) of the respondents, followed by a purchase order of 40 to 60 euro for 24.8% (N=78), 8.9% of the respondents (N=28) orders below 20 euro and 8.2% (N=26) values their average orders at 60 euro or more.

In comparison to the entire sample, the group of readers can be characterized by different demographics and customer characteristics. The main difference is based on the idea that readers are younger and follow higher education levels. Due to the lower age, and education that might not have been finished yet, the average income of the readers is lower as well. With regard to the customer characteristics, the readers are customers of retailer X for shorter periods. Also, the readers tend to purchase more frequently, but the value of these purchases is lower compared to the total sample (see appendix C.1 for the descriptive statistics of the total sample and appendix C.2 for descriptive statistics of the readers and non-readers).

### 4.2 Customer engagement

The customer engagement scores can be considered as high, as the scores range from 1.25 to 5 with a mean above the neutral middle of the range, M=3.53, SD= 0.73. To illustrate, almost 60% of the customers is engaged with retailer X (i.e. agree with the positively formulated customer engagement statements), while more than

35% of the customers is neutral and only less than 5% of the customers is not engaged with retailer X. These numbers and Figure 5 illustrate that in general the customers of retailer X are engaged.

When the engagement scores are analysed any further, it turns out that the scores are related with some specific demographic and customer related characteristics. It is shown that the engagement scores are significantly different for the customers with deviating amounts of monthly orders, while the other variables do not significantly influence the levels of customer engagement.

The results of the ANOVA analysis indicate that the customer engagement scores are influenced by the amount of monthly purchases,  $F(2, 312) = 14.527$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The more monthly purchases, the higher the customer engagement scores. More specifically, post hoc analysis with Gabriel's procedure showed that the customers who purchase once a month or less ( $M=3.40$ ,  $SD= 0.71$ ) have significantly lower customer engagement scores compared to customers who make 1 á 2 purchases a month ( $M= 3.84$ ,  $SD= 0.66$ ) or customers who purchase 3 times or more time a month ( $M= 4.01$ ,  $SD= 0.75$ ). The difference between "1 a 2 purchases" and "3 or more purchases" however is not significant ( $p=0.721$ ), but this is based on a limited number of customers.

There are no other significant differences in customer engagement scores based on the remaining demographic or customer characteristics. However, some patterns and differences can still be noticed. First of all, customers who belong to the magazine's target group (i.e. 15-45 years) seem to be slightly more engaged ( $M= 3.59$ ,  $SD=0.72$ ) compared to the older customers ( $M= 3.51$ ,  $SD= 0.74$ ). In particular the customers aged between 23-28 have the highest engagement scores ( $M=3.68$ ).

In addition to this, the education level is nearly significantly influencing customer engagement  $F(4, 306) = 2.267$ ,  $p=0.062$ . Customers who went to university have the lowest engagement scores ( $M=3.2$ ,  $SD= 0.77$ ), especially compared to the elementary school customers ( $M=4.0$ ,  $SD= 0.63$ ). This difference is nearly significant  $p=0.050$ , but only based on 9 elementary school customers and 54 university customers. As a result, the different levels of income might be expected to be influential as well, but this is not the case as education and income do not strongly correlate. The weak correlation stems from the idea that 127 respondents did not provide any income related information. Also, almost 50% of the sample is aged 30 or less, so it is likely that these respondents did not finish their education yet or they did not reach the income level associated with the specific level of education yet.

With regard to the customer characteristics, a weak pattern can be recognized on engagement scores for the different customer lifetime periods. It is not the longer the customer lifetime, the higher the degree of engagement since customers who are customer for less than 3 years ( $M=3.58$ ) score similar compared to 4 till 7 years ( $M=3.57$ ) but higher compared to 8 years or more ( $M=3.42$ ). The value of the purchases that these customers make, does not represent the engagement scores. To illustrate, the engagement scores associated with high value purchases are not higher compared to the low value purchases (e.g. less than €40 purchases have an engagement score of  $M=3.54$  and orders of more than €40 score  $M=3.50$ ).

### 4.3 Customer satisfaction & customer involvement

With respect to the relation of customer engagement and its antecedents, customer satisfaction and customer involvement are analysed. Just like the customer engagement scores, in general the customer satisfaction and

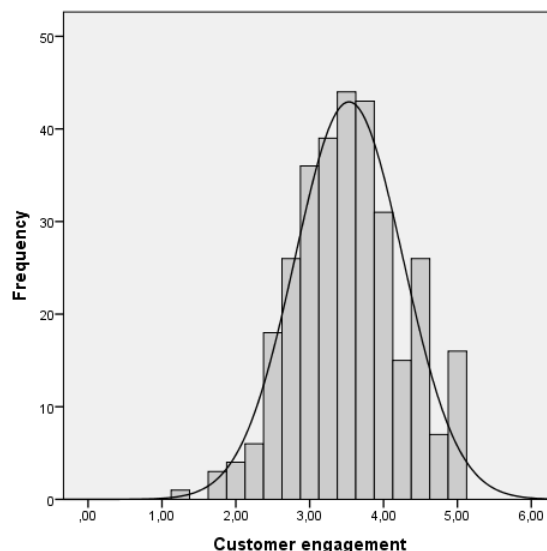


Figure 5: customer engagement scores of the total sample



customer involvement scores are high as well. While the scores of customer satisfaction range from 1.67 to 5.00 with  $M=4.14$ ,  $SD=0.32$ , customer involvement ranges from 1.00 to 5.00 with  $M=3.60$ ,  $SD=0.88$ .

In general customer thus are satisfied and involved, but it is important to also analyse their relationship with customer engagement. The results of the regression analysis show that customer satisfaction and customer involvement significantly explain some of the variance in the customer engagement scores. In combination, both antecedents account for a significant 41.9% of variability in customer engagement.

Model 1 of table 1 shows that the engagement score is significantly ( $p<0.01$ ) influenced by customer satisfaction in a positive way, as customer engagement scores increase by 0.54 once the customer satisfaction score increases by one unit. Also, customer involvement significantly ( $p<0.01$ ) and positively influences customer engagement, as customer engagement scores will increase by 0.28 by every unit increase of customer involvement. While both effects are positive, the effect of customer satisfaction is the strongest.

For verification, both antecedents are analysed within individual models as well. Similar results are shown and the individual models confirm the fact that the explained variance in variability of customer engagement is greater for customer satisfaction 31.4% compared to the 22.7% customer involvement (see appendix C.3 & C.4 for regression analysis on either customer satisfaction or customer involvement).

Despite the fact that the scores of all three concepts are high, it can be concluded that a strong positive relationship between the antecedents and customer engagement was found which is in line with the theory and therefore supports H1 & H2.

#### **4.4 Content consumption**

Even more important is the role of content marketing. As a reaction to the theory about the role of content marketing, an independent samples t-test was used to compare the engagement scores for readers and non-readers. On average, the customer engagement scores for readers are higher ( $M=3.63$ ,  $SE=0.08$ ) compared to the non-readers ( $M=3.50$ ,  $SE=0.05$ ). The small positive effect of content consumption, however is not significant ( $t(313) = -1.434$ ,  $p=0.135$ ).

These results are confirmed by the negligible difference of the explained variance of model 1 ( $R^2=0.419$ ) and model 2 ( $R^2=0.424$ ) in table 1 of the multivariate regression analysis. This indicates that the addition of content consumption is not meaningful. Also, for verification the effect of content consumption is analysed by the individual models of customer satisfaction and customer involvement as well. (see appendix C.3 & C.4) These models show the same results, but content consumption can be considered as significant ( $p<0.01$ ) within the customer satisfaction model. However, the addition of the content consumption in terms of the difference in explained variance of the model is small and therefore this effect is not convincing.

Overall, the effect of content consumption on customer engagement can be considered as slightly positive but insignificant. Therefore, it can be concluded that no direct effect of content consumption on customer engagement can be found, hence the results are not in support of H3.<sup>6</sup>

##### **4.4.1 Content consumption interaction effect**

Although there is no direct effect of content consumption, the interaction effects are still analysed for verification of any possible moderator effects. In this way, it is analysed whether content consumption has an effect on customer engagement as a function of its antecedents. In other words, the moderating function of content consumption is checked by also analysing its effect on the relationship of customer engagement to respectively customer satisfaction and customer involvement.

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<sup>6</sup> In contrast to customer engagement, the scores on customer satisfaction and customer involvement are significantly different for readers and non-readers. On average, readers ( $M=4.01$ ,  $SE=0.06$ ) have significantly lower scores on customer satisfaction compared to non-readers ( $M=4.18$ ,  $SE=0.04$ ),  $t(156,001) = 2.230$ ,  $p=0.027$ . Also, the average customer involvement score of readers is significantly higher ( $M=3.91$ ,  $SE=0.09$ ), compared to non-readers ( $M=3.51$ ,  $SE=0.06$ ),  $t(314) = -3.565$ ,  $p<.001$ .

With regard to the interaction effect of content consumption and satisfaction, a weak, negative and barely significant effect is recognized ( $p=0.038$ ). This implies that the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer engagement is affected by content consumption. However, the difference in explained variance of model 2 ( $R^2= 0.424$ ) and 3 ( $R^2= 0.433$ ) in table 1 is negligible, indicating that the interaction effect is not completely meaningful. The latter is confirmed by the analysis on the individual model of customer satisfaction (appendix C.3), in which the interaction effect is not significant anymore ( $p=0.124$ ). Based on the unstable results, it can be concluded that a slightly negative but not meaningful effect of content consumption on the relationship between customer engagement and customer satisfaction can be found. Hence, the results are not in support of H4.

Although there is no significant and meaningful differences, discrepancies and patterns can still be recognized. The relationship between customer satisfaction and customer engagement is slightly weaker for readers compared to non-readers.

However, as illustrated in figure 6, the minor difference in customer engagement scores for reader and non-readers even reduces when the satisfaction scores increase. So, as far as there is any effect of content consumption, the impact is even more negligible when customers are highly satisfied.

With regard to the interaction effect of content consumption with customer involvement, a small positive but insignificant effect can be recognized ( $p=0.283$ ). This implies that the relationship between customer involvement and customer engagement is not influenced by the consumption of content. These results are confirmed by the negligible difference in explained variance of model 2 ( $R^2= 0.424$ ) and 3 ( $R^2= 0.433$ ) of table 1. Also, the analysis on the individual model of customer involvement (appendix C.4), shows that the interaction effect is not significant ( $p=0.647$ ) and the additional explained variance is negligible. Based on the insignificant results, it can be concluded that a slightly positive but not meaningful effect of content consumption on the relationship between customer engagement and customer involvement can be found and therefore not support H5.

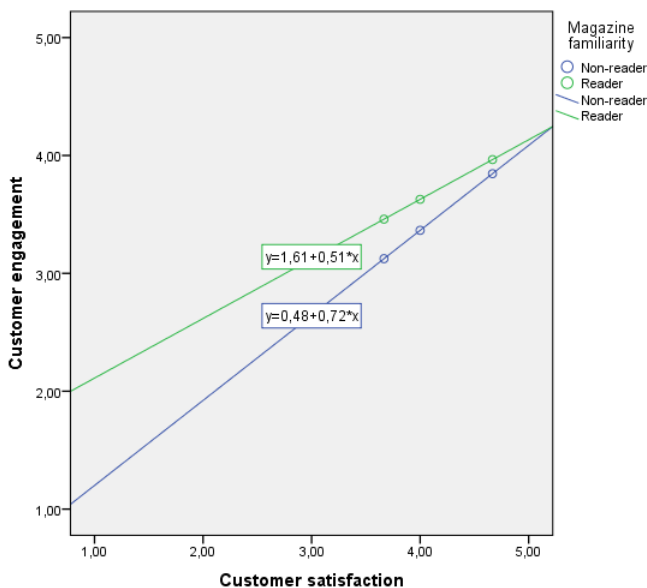


Figure 6: content consumption on customer engagement as function of customer satisfaction

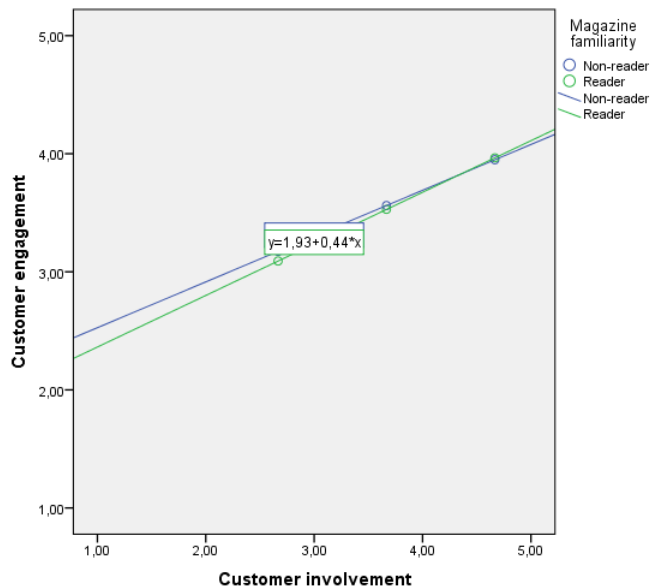


Figure 7: content consumption on customer engagement as function of customer involvement

Although there are no significant and meaningful differences, discrepancies and patterns can still be recognized. The relationship between customer involvement and customer engagement is slightly stronger for

readers compared to non-readers as illustrated in figure 7. The negligible difference in customer engagement scores among reader and non-readers even reduces when the involvement scores increase. So, as far as there is any effect of content consumption, the impact is even more negligible when customers are highly involved. Although the difference is minimal when customers are highly involved, the direction of the effect of content consumption changes in a positive way. To illustrate, reading the content has a negative effect on customer engagement when the customer involvement scores are low, but this effect becomes positive as the involvement scores increases. Despite the positive change, reading the content of the magazine is not influencing the engagement scores and certainly not when the customers are highly involved.

#### 4.5 Control variables

For further verification and to check whether the measured effects can be attributed to the variables used in the models itself rather than other missing variable, the previously specified control variables are added to the analysis. The models including the control variables show similar results, as customer satisfaction and customer involvement both have a significant positive effect on customer engagement and both the direct and moderating effects of content consumption are not noteworthy.

The addition of the control variables increases the complexity of the model and the explained variances of model 4 in table 1 enhanced as well ( $R^2 = 0.510$ ) since some variable have an effect on customer engagement. The first influencing control variable is age, as the age of the customers is negatively related to customer engagement ( $p=0.045$ ). In general, it can be stated that the younger the customers, the higher the customer engagement scores. This effect however is small and barely significant as illustrated by the negative line in figure 8.

Due to the fact that age seems to have an effect on customer engagement, another analysis is conducted based on retailer X's specific target audience of the online magazine to check whether the abovementioned results are the same for this specific audience. Based on the analysis of model 5 in table 1, it can be concluded that all previously specified results remain stable for the specific audience of the online magazine.

During all analyses, the second control variable which significantly explains some of the variance of the customer engagement scores is the monthly amount of purchases. As mentioned in section 4.2 the monthly amount of purchases has a positive relation with customer engagement. This effect remains stable during all multivariate analysis and is still positive and significant ( $p<0.01$ ). Figure 9 illustrates that the higher the amount of monthly purchases the higher the customer engagement scores.

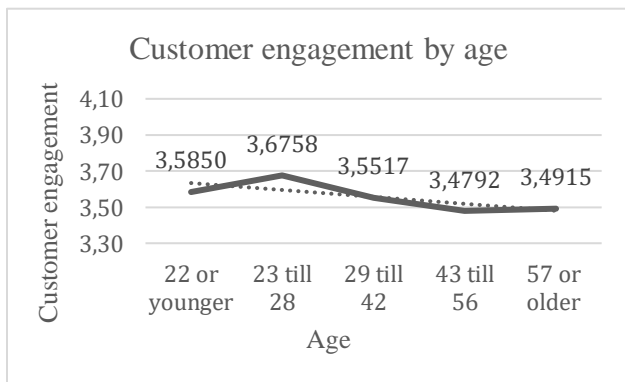


Figure 8: customer engagement per age categories

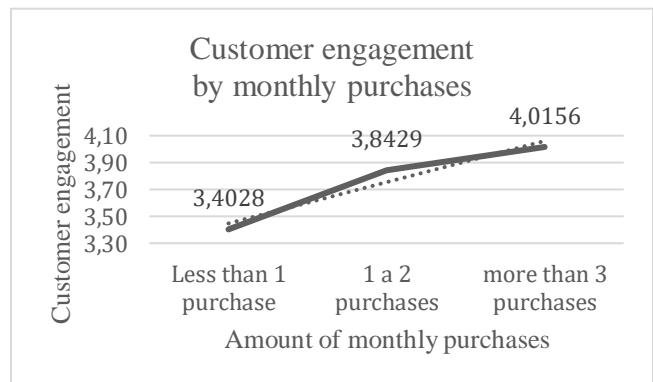


Figure 9: customer engagement per monthly purchase amount

### Multiple regression analysis on customer engagement

	Model 1 Main effects antecedents	Model 2 Main effects + moderator	Model 3 Full model	Model 4 Full model with control variables	Model 5 Full model Target audience
<b>Main effects</b>					
Constant	0.276 (0.219)	0.232 (0.304)	0.076 (0.760)	0.291 (0.482)	0.245 (0.508)
Customer satisfaction	0.541 (0.000)*	0.558 (0.000)*	0.610 (0.000)*	0.563 (0.000)*	0.562 (0.000)*
Customer involvement	0.282 (0.000)*	0.266 (0.000)*	0.248 (0.000)*	0.224 (0.001)*	0.278 (0.000)*
Content consumption		0.124 (0.102)	0.070 (0.388)	-0.165 (0.128)	-0.018 (0.851)
<b>Interaction effects</b>					
Content consumption * customer satisfaction			-0.181 (0.038)*	-0.178 (0.052)	-0.174 (0.080)
Content consumption * customer involvement			0.094 (0.283)	0.104 (0.281)	0.073 (0.475)
<b>Control variables</b>					
Age				-0.006 (0.045)*	-
Education				-0.013 (0.738)	
Income				0.012 (0.818)	
Customer life				-0.005 (0.917)	
Monthly purchases				0.302 (0.000)*	
Purchase value				-0.012 (0.828)	
<b>Observations (N)</b>	315	315	315	315	179
<b>R</b>	0.648	0.651	0.658	0.714	0.629
<b>R2</b>	0.419	0.424	0.433	0.510	0.396
<b>Adjusted R2</b>	0.416	0.419	0.423	0.477	0.378

Table 1: Results multiple regression analysis customer engagement, customer satisfaction, customer involvement and content consumption.

\*statistical significant at 5% level (two-tailed)

#### 4.6 Intensity of content consumption

Despite the fact that no meaningful effects can be identified regarding the consumption of content, the follow up of this study is still focused on the possible effects of the intensity of content consumption on customer engagement and the relationships with its antecedents. Since the customer engagement scores are high in general, differences between readers and non-readers might be hard to recognize. As a result, it is relevant to elaborate on the intensity of readers as deviating engagement score due to reading intensity might still exist. In order to check whether any effects of the intensity of content consumption exist, analyses based on consumption comprehensiveness and consumption frequency are conducted similar to the analyses above. To provide insight to research questions 6-8 which are related to consumption intensity, the focus is on readers only, rather than the entire sample. The characteristics of the diminished sample central to the remainder of this study are described in Appendix C.2.

##### 4.6.1 Customer engagement

As mentioned before, the customer engagement scores are high, especially for readers (M=3.63, SD=0.69). To illustrate, almost 65% of the readers are engaged with retailer X (i.e. agree with the positively formulated customer engagement statements), while more than 30% of the customers is neutral and less than 3% is not engaged with retailer X. These numbers and figure 10 illustrate that in general the readers of retailer X are relatively engaged.

When customer scores of the readers are analysed any further, differences can be recognized regarding the demographic and customer characteristics. In line with the results of the total sample, customer engagement is only significantly correlated to the amount of monthly purchases  $F(2, 75) = 4.056, p=0.021$ . There are no other significant differences in customer engagement scores based on the remaining demographic or customer characteristics, but still some patterns and relevant differences can be noticed.

First of all, customers who belong to the magazine's age target group (i.e. 15-45 years) are still slightly more engaged (M= 3.63) compared to the older customers (M= 3.50). In particular the customers aged between 23-28 have the highest engagement scores (M=3.71).

Also, the customers who have elementary school as highest education level still score the highest customer engagement degrees (M= 4.25), while customers who went to secondary school have the lowest customer engagement scores (M=3.40) rather the university students (M=3.63). In line with the total sample, the level of income does not have any influences and is not related to education.

Furthermore, with regard to the other customer characteristics, the customer lifetime is still not influencing the engagement scores. The unequal division of the specific lifetime periods (e.g. almost 85% of the sample is customer for 2-3 years or 4-7 years) makes it hard to recognize any meaningful differences. In contrast to the total sample, the purchase value now represents the value of the customers engagement scores. To illustrate, the engagement scores associated with high value purchases are higher (M=3.68 for the value of €40 or more) compared to the low value purchases (M=3.62 for purchases of less than €40).

During this introductory analysis the three control variables regarding the reading behaviour of customers are included as well. The difference in engagement scores for the different subjects (i.e. make-up, hair, perfume, accessories, care, body & mind or multiple subjects) is not noteworthy. The highest score (accessories) is based on only 3 readers and the 5 customers who prefer the perfume articles have the lowest engagement scores. Also, the particular devices (i.e. phone or computer/tablet) that customers use to read the content do not influence the customer engagement scores, but it is noticeable that more than 60% uses mobile phones. The channels that bring customers to the content do not have a significant effect either, however it is worth to mention that a slightly difference is recognized between the magazine's own URL (M= 3.69) and Facebook (M= 3.53).<sup>7</sup>

The results regarding the customer satisfaction and customer involvement scores for the readers are in line with the results based on the total sample. Both concepts still have high scores and positively influence customer engagement. The antecedents account for a significant 29.3% of variability in customer engagement. However, it is worth to mention that, in contrast to the previous analysis, the explaining variance of customer involvement (R<sup>2</sup>= 0.239) is now greater compared to customer satisfaction (R<sup>2</sup>= 0.157).

#### 4.6.2 Intensity of content consumption

The differences in customer engagement scores for the specific levels of consumption intensity, respectively consumption comprehensiveness and consumption frequency are analysed by use of ANOVA analysis. The differences in customer engagement for the specific level of consumption comprehensiveness are not significant,  $F(9,68) = 0.975$ ,  $p=0.468$ , indicating that the comprehensiveness by which customers read the content of the magazine does not influence the degree of customer engagement. Although the results are not significant, it is worth to mention that a weak negative pattern can be recognized, so the more comprehensive one reads, the

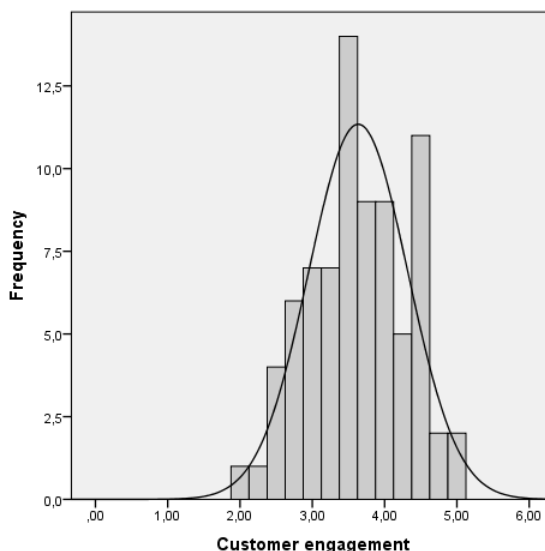


Figure 10: Customer engagement scores for readers

<sup>7</sup> Since the effects of the three additional reading behaviour characteristics are not meaningful, the variables are not included in the regressions analysis that follow all of which is expected to contribute to the focus of the analysis.

lower the engagement scores. To illustrate, the engagement scores for non-comprehensive readers (M=3.66) are slightly higher compared to comprehensive readers (M= 3.63).

With regard to the frequency of consumption, the differences in engagement scores for the specific levels of consumption frequency are significant,  $F=(7,70) = 2.556, p=0.021$ . This implies that the frequency by which customers read the content of the magazine positively influences the level of customer engagement. The more frequent one reads content, the higher the engagement scores. To illustrate, the engagement scores of frequent readers (M= 3.68) are significantly higher compared to non-frequent readers (M=3.60).

For verification, a multivariate regression analysis is conducted which calls the ANOVA results into question. The difference in explained variance of model 1 ( $R^2=0.293$ ) and model 2 ( $R^2= 0.343$ ) of table 2 is not convincing and the effect of content frequency is not significant in model 2 ( $p= 0.113$ ).

As a conclusion, the comprehensiveness of content consumption does not have a direct effect on customer engagement but there are indications that the frequency by which the customers read the content has a positive effect on customer engagement. As the latter is not completely convincing, it can be concluded that in general, no direct effect of the intensity of content consumption on customer engagement can be found and therefore the results are not in support of H6.

#### 4.6.3 Content consumption intensity interaction effect

Although there are no direct effects of the intensity concepts on customer engagement, the interaction effects are still analysed for verification of any moderating effects. In this way, it is analysed whether the intensity of content consumption has an effect on customer engagement as a function of its antecedents. In other words, the moderator function of the intensity of content consumption is examined by analysing its influence on the relationship of customer engagement to respectively customer satisfaction and customer involvement.

With regard to consumption comprehensiveness, no meaningful interaction effects with either customer satisfaction ( $p=0.472$ ) or customer involvement ( $p=0.611$ ) can be recognized. The insignificant results imply that the relationship of customer engagement and its antecedents is not affected by the different levels of consumption comprehensiveness. The negligible results are visualized in figure 11 and 12 which illustrate that for all levels of customer satisfaction and customer involvement, the engagement scores are higher for the less comprehensive readers.

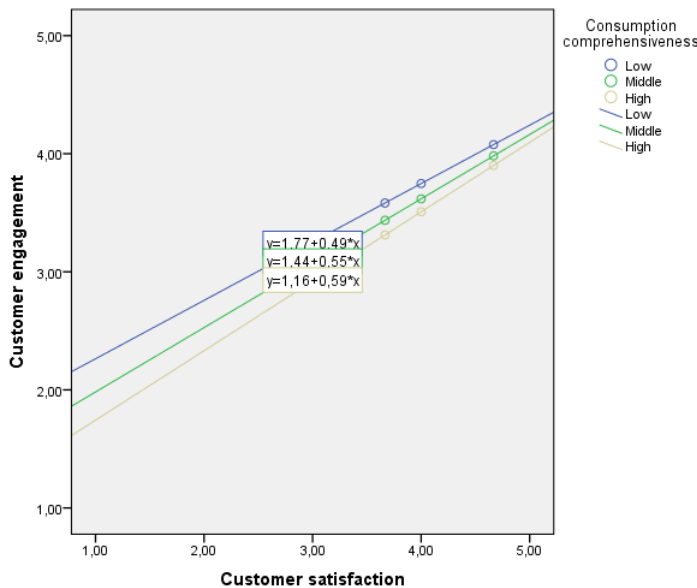


Figure 11: consumption comprehensiveness on customer engagement as function of customer satisfaction

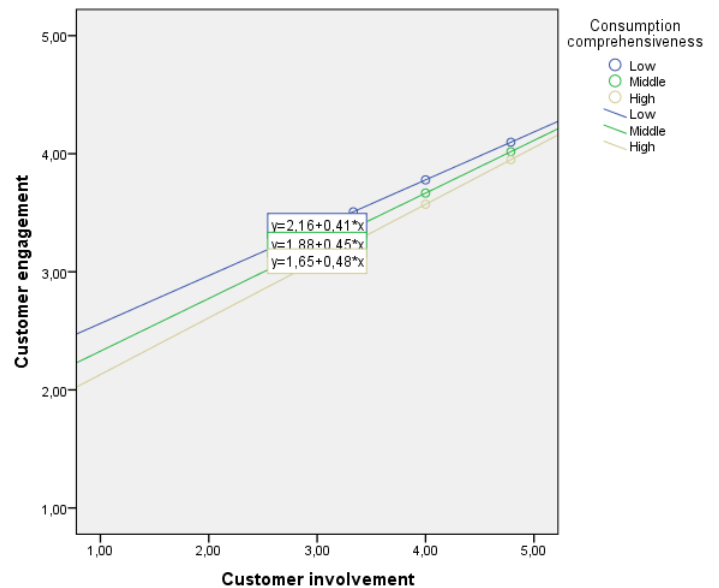


Figure 12: consumption comprehensiveness on customer engagement as function of customer involvement

The results are insignificant and also no other considerable patterns can be recognized. So, it can be concluded that no moderating effect of consumption comprehensiveness on customer engagement was found. In other words, there is no reason to say that the relationship of customer engagement and its antecedents is influenced by the comprehensiveness by which customers consume content.

With regard to the consumption frequency, no meaningful interaction effects can be recognized with either customer satisfaction ( $p=0.466$ ) or customer involvement ( $p=0.139$ ) as well. The insignificant results imply that the effect of consumption frequency on the relationship of customer engagement with its antecedents is not meaningful. Figure 13 and 14 illustrate that for the same level of customer satisfaction and customer involvement the engagement scores are higher for the more frequent readers.

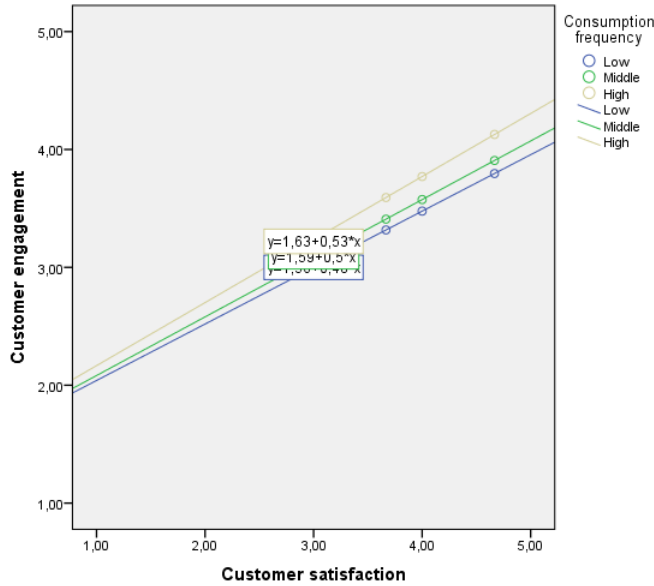


Figure 13: consumption frequency on customer engagement as function of customer satisfaction

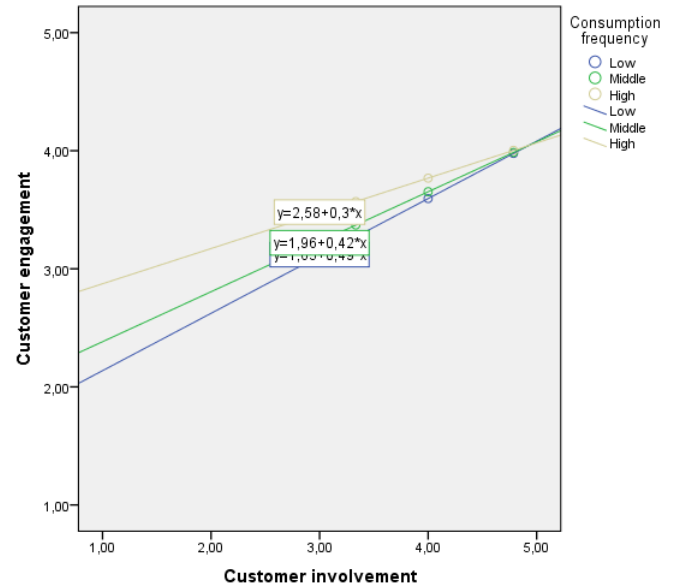


Figure 14: consumption frequency on customer engagement as function of customer involvement

While the results are not significant, some considerable patterns can be recognized especially regarding customer involvement. The relationship of customer involvement and customer engagement is different for the specific levels of consumption frequency, but the minor differences diminish as the involvement scores increases. So, the higher the customer involvement score, the less impact the frequency of consumption has on customer engagement. The differences in the relationship between customer satisfaction and engagement due to consumption frequency are not noteworthy.

Altogether, the effects of consumption comprehensives and consumption frequency on the relation of customer engagement and its antecedents can be considered as not meaningful which is confirmed by the negligible difference in explained variance of model 2 ( $R^2=0.343$ ) and 3 ( $R^2=0.373$ ) in table 2. Hence, it can be concluded that no moderating effect of consumption intensity on customer engagement can be found and therefore the results are not in support of H7 and H8.

#### 4.7 Control variables

For further verification of the relationships, the previously mentioned control variables are including into the multivariate analysis again. The models including the control variables show similar results, as customer satisfaction and customer involvement both still have a significant positive effect on customer engagement. Also, the direct and moderating effect of consumption comprehensiveness are the same. However, the direct

effect of consumption frequency is not significant anymore, all of which confirms and supports the idea of not considering the effect as meaningful.

The addition of the control variables increases the complexity of the model and the explained variances of model 4 in table 2 ( $R^2 = 0.519$ ) enhances as well. This is due to the fact that in line with the first regression analysis, the monthly amount of purchases still has a positive relation with customer engagement ( $p < 0.01$ ).

Although the age of the relatively young readers does not have an influence anymore, the analysis based on retailer X's specific target audience is still conducted. Based on the analysis of model 5 in table 2, it can be concluded that all previous mentioned results remain stable among the readers belonging to the specific target audience age of the online magazine.

<b>Multiple regression analysis on customer engagement</b>					
	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Model 4</b>	<b>Model 5</b>
	Main effects antecedents	Main effects + moderator	Full model	Full model with control variables	Full model Target audience
<b>Main effects</b>					
Constant	0.970 (0.070)	1.028 (0.082)	0.721 (0.337)	0.540 (0.529)	0.608 (0.436)
Customer satisfaction	0.319 (0.019)*	0.353 (0.009)*	0.404 (0.005)*	0.337 (0.024)*	0.362 (0.019)*
Customer involvement	0.354 (0.000)*	0.328 (0.001)*	0.285 (0.005)*	0.289 (0.005)*	0.310 (0.003)*
Comprehensiveness content consumption		-0.181 (0.076)	-0.189 (0.137)	-0.079 (0.616)	-0.078 (0.619)
Frequency content consumption		0.138 (0.113)	0.248 (0.046)*	0.095 (0.457)	0.204 (0.118)
<b>Interaction effects</b>					
Consumption comprehensiveness x customer satisfaction			0.064 (0.472)	0.115 (0.272)	0.143 (0.181)
Consumption comprehensiveness x customer involvement			0.046 (0.611)	0.011 (0.917)	-0.011 (0.912)
Consumption frequency x customer satisfaction			0.034 (0.664)	-0.063 (0.442)	-0.001 (0.994)
Consumption frequency x customer involvement			-0.141 (0.139)	-0.100 (0.281)	-0.133 (0.172)
<b>Control variables</b>					
Age				-0.008 (0.591)	-
Education				0.085 (0.237)	
Income				-0.061 (0.500)	
Customer life				-0.120 (0.376)	
Monthly purchases				0.304 (0.015)*	
Purchase value				0.138 (0.198)	
<b>Observations (N)</b>	78	78	78	78	71
<b>R</b>	0.541	0.585	0.611	0.720	0.609
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.293	0.343	0.373	0.519	0.371
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.274	0.306	0.300	0.391	0.290

Table 2: Results multiple regression analysis customer engagement, customer satisfaction, customer involvement and content consumption intensity. \*statistical significant at 5% level (two-tailed)



#### 4.8 Additional analysis

In addition to the previously specified analysis, supplementary analyses are conducted due to limited convincing effects of content consumption and its intensity on customer engagement. To identify other possible effects, additional analyses elaborate on the measurement scales of the dimensions of customer engagement and content consumption intensity as well as the relation of content consumption regarding sales.

First of all, to further analyse customer engagement's dimensions, additional analyses are conducted based on the specific dimensions of the concept. The results of the multiple regression analysis showed that the explained variance of customer satisfaction and customer involvement is the largest for the emotional dimension ( $R^2=0.476$ ), followed by the behavioural ( $R^2=0.142$ ) and cognitive dimension ( $R^2=0.238$ ). To overcome any problems regarding comparing unequal number of scale items, the behavioural and cognitive dimensions are summarized as a non-emotional dimension, resulting in a comparison of two 2-item concepts. Nevertheless, the explained variance of the emotional dimensions ( $R^2=0.476$ ) is still higher than the non-emotional dimension ( $R^2=0.235$ ). So, it can be concluded that both the antecedents have positive effects on customer engagement and especially on its emotional dimension (See appendix D.1-D.4 for the regression analysis results per dimension).

Furthermore, with regard to the content consumption, the t-test results show that on average the scores on the emotional, behavioural and cognitive dimensions for readers are higher compared to non-readers. The behavioural dimension shows the largest and only significant difference ( $p<0.01$ ) which indicates that compared to non-readers, the magazine readers spend significantly more time on the website of retailer X relative to other retailers (See appendix D.5 for t-test results per customer engagement dimension).

These direct effects of content consumption are confirmed by multiple regression analysis which also show that the moderating effects are not meaningful. Furthermore, these multivariate analysis shows results which are in line with the aforementioned effects of consumption comprehensiveness and consumption frequency as well. In general consumption comprehensiveness and consumption frequency have no meaningful direct or moderating effect on any of the dimensions. Although some dimensions are positively affected, their effects are not meaningful in terms of explained variance (See appendix D.6 – D.8 for results regression analysis per dimension).

Another additional analysis is focused on elaborating on the measurement scale of content consumption intensity. For verification of the unstable scales on consumption intensity, analyses are conducted again but based on one single overarching scale. Content consumption intensity is now based on 1 factor rather than separating it by comprehensiveness and frequency. The results of the ANOVA analysis show that there is a positive but insignificant effect of consumption intensity on customer engagement ( $p=0.779$ ). These results are in line with the negligible difference in explained variance between model 1 and 2 of the multivariate multiple regression analysis in Appendix D.9. Therefore, this analysis confirms the idea that no direct or moderating effect of consumption intensity on customer engagement can be found.

Finally, to elaborate on the possible effects of content consumption beyond customer engagement, an analysis is conducted based on the monthly amount of purchases that reflects sales. The t-test shows that on average readers ( $M= 1.76$ ,  $SE= 0.073$ ) tend to purchase significantly more often compared to non-readers ( $M=1.18$ ,  $SE=0.030$ ),  $t(103,285) = -7.262$ ,  $p<0.01$ . Hereby it is worth to mention that the number of purchases is only influenced by whether customers read the content or not, while the intensity of consumption has no influence. There is no evidence to say that more or less comprehensive or frequent content consumption has any effect on the amount of purchases.

## 5.0 Conclusion and discussion

The final chapter answers the main research question as introduced in the first chapter. Moreover, this chapter will do so by touching upon each hypothesis, to subsequently elaborate on the academic contribution and practical contribution in which practical recommendations are formulated. Furthermore, some limitations of this study and several fruitful recommendations for future research are mentioned in the final section.

### 5.1 Key findings & contribution

The analysis of this quantitative research has focused on the effect of content marketing on customer engagement in online retailing. The effect of content marketing on customer engagement is examined by analysing content consumption as well as the intensity of the consumption which is indicated by consumption comprehensiveness and frequency. To comprehensively analyse the effect of content consumption and intensity, the analysis is focused on the direct effects on customer engagement and the moderating effects of content consumption on the relationship of customer engagement and its antecedents, customer satisfaction and customer involvement. All of this is applied to an European online retailer that provides its customers with additional information via its new content marketing platform: an online beauty and health magazine.

The underlying theories come from literature on customer engagement, customer engagement antecedents and content marketing. This literature is characterized by the ambiguity on the concept of customer engagement, the limited empirical insights related to customer engagement and its antecedents especially outside a social media setting and the lack of empirical insight regarding the role of content marketing. Therefore, the goal of this study was to extend this existing body of knowledge by filling these research gaps. In this way, the research determines the importance of content marketing for the performance of online retailers and provides insight in the research problem: *What is the effect of the intensity of content consumption on the degree of customer engagement for online retailers?*

To provide an answer to the research problem, eight research questions were formulated. The first research question was concerned with the relationship of customer satisfaction and customer engagement. Based on the argumentation of Van Doorn et al. (2010), it was expected that the degree of customer engagement was positively affected by customer satisfaction. Although the expectations were based on a social media context, these notions were confirmed within the setting of this research as well and therefore hypothesis 1 is supported. The second research question was focused on the relationship of customer involvement and customer engagement. In line with the reasoning of Hollebeek (2011a) and Hollebeek et al. (2014), this study shows that customer involvement positively influences the degree of customer engagement and therefore supports hypothesis 2. Beyond a social media setting, both customer involvement and in particular customer satisfaction thus have a positive effect on customer engagement. In this regard, the results add knowledge since research across a wider range of contexts is expected to contribute to a further scholarly of understanding customer engagement (Fernandes & Esteves, 2016).

The customers of Retailer X score high on their engagement which corresponds to the argumentation of Wetpaint & Altimeter (2009) in which they consider engagement within the retailing industry as high in general. Retailer X performs well in terms of engagement and its performance fits the benchmark of the industry. Not only customer engagement scores were high, as customer satisfaction and customer involvement were considerably high as well. Despite the high scores, the effects of the antecedents were still recognized, implying a strong relationship between customer engagement and its antecedents.

The third research question is formulated with respect to content marketing and concerns the effect of content consumption on customer engagement. Different to the expectations of Bunpis & Haron (2014), the results show that people who consume the content of the magazine tend to be slightly, but not significantly more

engaged. Hence, hypothesis three is not supported. Hereby, it is worth to mention that the analysis is based on a limited sample of people reading the magazine which might influence the strength of the effect. The meaningless effect of content marketing implies that retailer X's engagement related business goals are not likely to be achieved by the magazine's current implementation. Retailer X will probably not improve the degree of customer engagement by stimulating the consumption of the magazine content. Accordingly, it is relevant to focus on the key issue of content marketing practice which is the relevance of the content (Lieb, 2011). Retailer X could reconsider whether the content of the magazine is relevant and really is what its customers are looking for. Additional research on what type of content its target audience is seeking, might enhance the effect on customer engagement. Also, content marketing strategies could be optimized by considering the most common demographic characteristics of readers to subsequently adjust the content to it. Responding to the low age of the readers of retailer X, they could use a specific writing style that attracts young people, include jokes and jargon often used by millennials or focus on selling particular products that their young readers can purchase based on their incomes.

Although no clear direct effect of content consumption is recognized, possible moderating effects of content consumption on customer engagement are analysed by the fourth and fifth research question. In line with the direct effect, the results show that there is no evidence regarding the presence of any moderating effect. No evidence is found that the relationship of either customer satisfaction or customer involvement with customer engagement is significantly influenced by content consumption and thus hypothesis four and five are not supported. While the results are not significant, the analysis show that the small effect of content consumption, is even more negligible when customer satisfaction or customer involvement scores are high. In other words, content consumption is not relevant in terms of customer engagement and certainly not when the customers are highly satisfied or involved. In this regard, the strong relationship of the antecedents is confirmed and customer satisfaction and customer involvement tend to be more important with regard to customer engagement than the consumption of the content of retailer X' magazine.<sup>8</sup>

The results of this study thus imply a strong relationship as well as the idea that enhancing customer satisfaction and involvement is likely to improve the degree of customer engagement. Despite the proper performance, retailer X could therefore improve engagement by making sure its customers are highly involved and especially satisfied. To illustrate, retailer X could focus on clear communication on what customers can expect regarding their products and services, its sales process and the process after conversion. Subsequently, it is important to keep and even exceed those brand promises since this will lead to satisfaction due a perceived performance that exceeds expectations (Sashi, 2012). When improving the satisfaction scores, engagement scores are likely to enhance as well and therefore Retailer X can benefit from its many consequences as mentioned by Ellonen et al. (2010), Hollebeek (2011a), Brodie et al. (2013) Fernandes & Esteves (2016).

The role of content consumption is further specified in additional analyses. With regard to the specific customer engagement dimensions, the results imply a significant positive effect of content consumption on the behavioural engagement dimension. So, despite the fact that readers are not significantly more engaged with retailer X, they tend to spend significantly more time on retailer X's website relative to other retailers, compared to the non-readers. So, people who visit the magazine also visit retailer X's website significantly more. In this regard, the magazine is a proper channel for generating traffic to retailer X' website, as it is likely to assume that the readers are directed to the webshop via the magazine. Hence, retailer X could perform relevant practices regarding the marketing of the magazine in order to generate more traffic. For example, targeting strategies

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<sup>8</sup> Elaborating on the positive effects of the antecedents, additional analysis show that the emotional dimension of customer engagement is particularly affected by the antecedents. Given the fact that the role of emotions is sometimes underestimated by authors, these results support Dick and Basu (1994) who explicitly state to be aware of the relevance of emotions in customer behaviour related literature (Bowden, 2009).

could be optimised or more specifically based on retailer X's reader characteristics. Also, search engine results approaches could be optimized in order to enhance the visibility and viewability of the online magazine.

Furthermore, the additional analyses also indicate that the magazine readers purchase significantly more frequent compared to the non-readers. This is in line with Schijns (2008) who found that online magazines are effective for enhancing sales. Assuming that the traffic on retailer X's website stemmed from the magazine, the magazine is likely to increase the number of purchases, since traffic is a requirement for purchases. In other words, reading the content of the magazine can result in enhancing sales and therefore the business goal related to sales is likely to be achieved by retailer X' current way of implementing the magazine. The content of the magazine is likely to support customer's purchase decisions as the readers purchase more often, but the information does not stimulate a positive state of mind regarding a connection or bond with the brand or offerings. Comparable online retailers, could therefore use content marketing as a tool to enhance sales, rather than customer engagement. The results are in line with Rahim & Clemens (2012) who state that customers who read content can reward organisations with repurchasing which effects an organisation's performance in terms of sales. The argumentation of Pulizzi & Barret (2009) on the idea that content marketing is about engaging with customers and creating relationships that transcend transaction, however is only partly confirmed.

Although the consumption of content is not influencing customer engagement, further analysis is still conducted and research question six is focused on the direct effect of the intensity of content consumption regarding engagement. Against expectations, results are not fully convincing as no meaningful direct effect of content consumption intensity on customer engagement can be found. Hence, hypothesis six is not supported. To illustrate, regarding consumption comprehensiveness there was no evidence that engagement enhances when people read more extensive, spend more time reading an article or read more articles per visit. Increasing customer's time spend on a magazine visit by ensuring that readers keep clicking through to other articles will therefore not influence retailer X's performance in terms of engagement. Meanwhile, extending the number of visits of a reader might be more important. Irrespective of the insignificant results, some weak evidence of a positive effect of consumption frequency on customer engagement can be recognized. The higher the number of total visits, due to either the duration of familiarity with the magazine or the frequency of comebacks, the higher the engagement. In other words, content consumption is likely to be relevant, only when people consume the content frequently. The results of consumption intensity contribute to the lack of literature regarding the patterns or intensities of reading and their effect. Also, frequent consumption or interaction fits the underlying ideas on relationship building which is known for its long-term character indicated by frequent interactions (Li and Nicholls, 2000).

As a consequence, retailer X should not only generate traffic to the magazine and enhance its reach in order to stimulate sales. Retailer X could also improve the quality of this reach by focussing on frequent come backs of its readers which might contribute to the degree of engagement. This could be done by for example story telling or retargeting. Stories told by use of different sequential articles and lifting a corner of the veil about what is coming next, might ensure that readers come back and thus increase consumption frequency. Retargeting people that visited the magazine before, is also expected to contribute to the frequency of visiting the magazine, all of which might at a certain level contribute to customer engagement.

The final research questions seven and eight concern the moderating effects of consumption intensity on customer engagement. The relationships of customer satisfaction or customer involvement with customer engagement do not significantly alter for the different levels of consumption comprehensiveness, nor can any influence of consumption frequency be found. There is no evidence for a significant moderating effect of consumption intensity and therefore hypothesis seven and eight are not supported.

Altogether, content marketing is important to online retailing, but mainly in terms of sales rather than engagement. The consumption of content tends to contribute to the amount of purchases, while the consumption of content or its intensity has no direct nor moderating effect on the degree of customer engagement. In this

regard, customer satisfaction and customer involvement seem to be more important for enhancing customer engagement. However, weak evidence implies that the frequency of consumption does contribute to degree of engagement. Online retailers that imply content marketing, can therefore stimulate sales by enhancing its reach (e.g. the number of customers who consume the content created by content marketing) or subsequently optimise the quality of this reach (e.g. frequency by which these customers consume the content created by content marketing) which might result in stimulating customer engagement which is known for its benefits that go beyond sales.

The insights to the study's research problem, give retailer X or other online retailers the opportunity to create more effective or efficient content marketing strategies. The business goals related to the content marketing activities could be adjusted based on the results of this study, as well as minor changes that build on other relevant insight or recommendations given in this study. More effective or efficient content marketing strategies are likely to contribute to the relevance of the content, the targeting as well as the final performance. Less irrelevant content is created and more irrelevant targeting is omitted which involves a cost reduction in terms of writing content or advertisement costs. Also, the clarified role of content marketing can be used for optimising customer engagement strategies as well as a support in sales pitches. The real-life data and insights are expected to be convincing and supportive for sales pitches towards the suppliers whose products are subject to the articles in the magazine.

Wherever marketeers use the results of this study for, it is of relevance to take into account the direction of the relationships and hypotheses. Based on literature, specific relationship directions are formulated and analysed. In this regard, it is assumed that the consumption of content has an effect on customer engagement or sales rather than the other way around. The specific research directions are deliberately chosen, although the researcher was aware that other possible directions might exist. It cannot be ruled out that people readers or frequent purchasers experience higher levels of engagement even before reading or purchasing and therefore relation directions can be different as well.

## **5.2 Limitations**

Apart from the relationship directions, other aspects should be taken into account as well. Like every other study, this study has some specific limitations which are important to bear in mind while reading the research and analysing any of the outcomes.

To begin with the limited sample size which is already shortly mentioned in section 5.1. The sample size with regard to the customers who read the content might be considered as limited. Although the amount of readers compared to the number of non-readers is in line with the real-life situation of Retailer X, it cannot be ruled out that the results would be different if the sample size of the customer reading the content of the magazine was enhanced.

Furthermore, possible drawbacks exist relating to the research design. The adjusted measurement tool by which the degree of customer engagement is measured only based on a limited number items, should be taken into account. The way in which the concept is measured due to customer protection policies, might be influencing the results. A measurement scale including more items could give other deviating insights. It cannot be ruled out that a reconsideration of the conceptualisation of customer engagement is relevant, especially since the results on the effectiveness of content marketing with regard to customer engagement are not fully supporting literature.

Also, the measurement scale of the concepts regarding content consumption intensity were based on face validity rather than any statistical validity or reliability. Due to a lack of conceptual models on these subjects, the scales were solely based on practical studies and insights of the research and the magazine's project

managers. Although it is assumed that the items represent proper face validity, it cannot be rejected that other statistically valid scales would provide slightly deviating results.

### **5.3 Future research**

Based on the results and the limitations of this research, some fruitful avenues for future research can be provided. First of all, future research could conduct a comparable analysis and examine the same questions but only in an experimental research design setting. The influence of content consumption and its intensity can be analysed by pre and post-tests in order to get grip on the direction and a causality of the relationship. For example, the levels of engagement should be measured, followed by exposure(s) to content marketing forms to subsequently analyse the engagement scores again. Based on such an experimental setting, which could be applied to the amount of purchases as well, any causal effects can be attributed in a proper way.

Also, with regard to the possible effect of consumption frequency on customer engagement, this study could be extended by clarifying this effect. Future research could focus on a meaningful edge of consumption frequency, which illustrates how often people need to consume content in order to have certain effect on customer engagement. This might be comparable to studies of Lee & Briley (2005), in which the effectiveness of advertising is analysed by checking how often people need to be exposed to an advertisement in order to experience any possible effect.

Furthermore, future research could focus on potential customers rather than existing customers to compare the degree of customer engagement, the effects of its antecedents and content consumption. Results might be different and worth to analyse as Bowden (2009) revealed that customer engagement is different for new and existing customers due to the differences in experiences and expectations of those customer groups.

Likewise, future research could take a closer look at the differences in results with regard to gender. Van Doorn et al. (2010) state that women are more likely to become engaged with groups of people, brands or offerings. Hence, it might be worth to analyse the relationships mentioned in this research for male customers and male related magazines. In the same way, this study can be extended to other industries or the business-to-business environment to check whether the argumentation of Wetpaint & Altimeter (2009) about engagement differences in different industries is recognized and whether the results found are applicable outside the business-to-consumer environment.

Finally, future research could elaborate on the different dimension of customer engagement. Proper explanations and clarifications on why some dimensions are more influenced by the antecedents or the consumption of content might be of relevance for the existing and future literature on customer engagement. The insights might eventually support, question or even explain the argumentation of Dick and Basu (1994) in which is stated that specific dimensions need extra attention.

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# 7.0 Appendices

## Appendix A - Introduction

### A.1 Conceptual research models on customer engagement and related antecedents

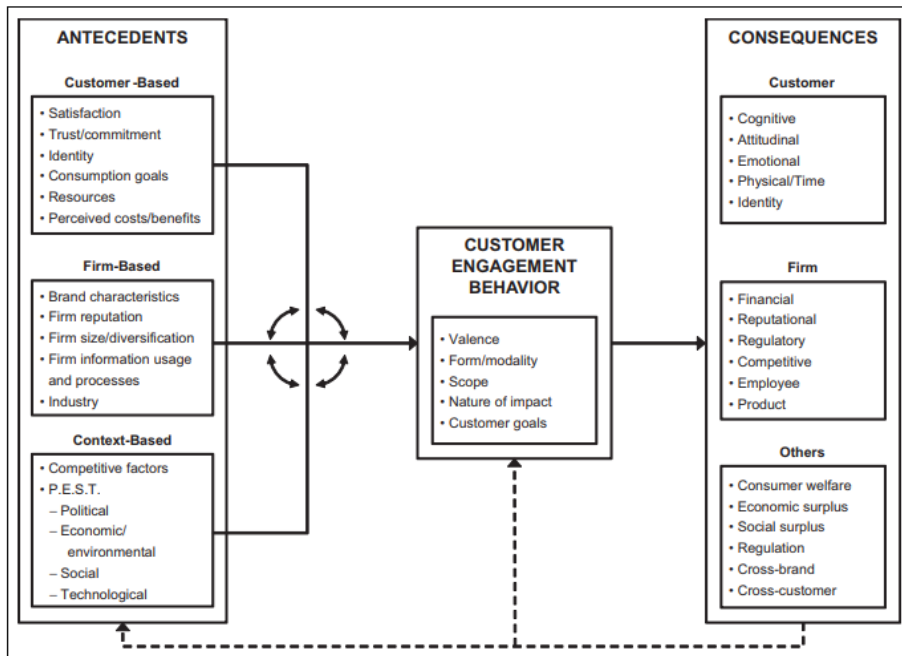


Figure 1: Conceptual model of customer engagement behaviour of research of van Doorn et al. (2010, p. 256)

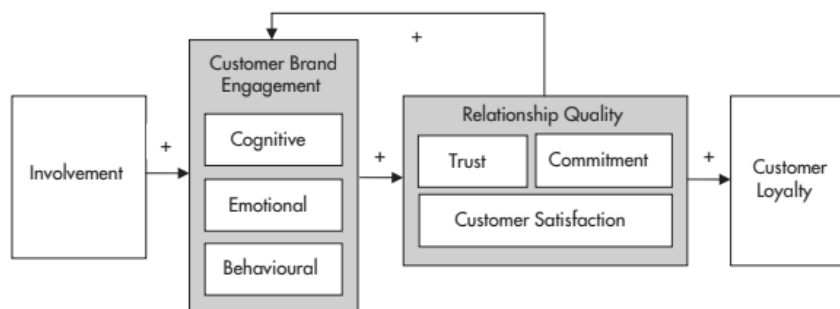


Figure 2: Conceptual model Customer brand engagement of research of Hollebeek (2011, p. 796)



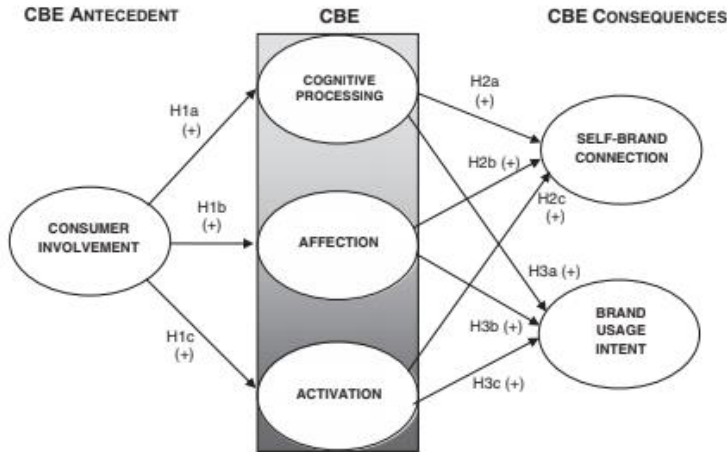


Figure 3: Customer brand engagement conceptual relationships of research of Hollebeck et al. (2014, p.9).

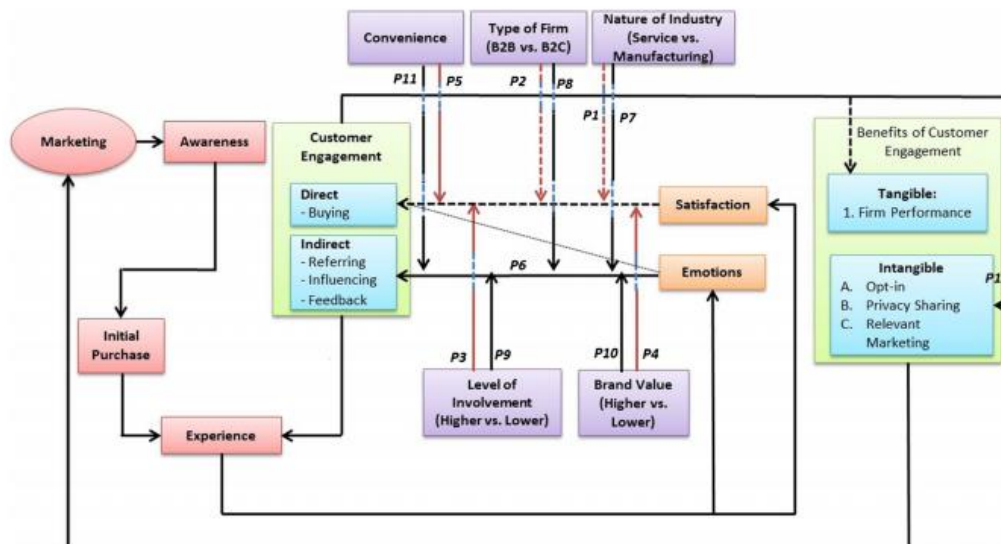


Figure 4: Antecedents and consequences of customer engagement of research of Pansari & Kumar (2017, p. 300).

## **Appendix B - Methodology**

### **B.1 Likert scale measurement**

The specific rating grid questions that measure the attitudes on customer engagement, satisfaction and involvement, need some further elaboration. The ratings grids questions are formulated based on the summated rating scale, Likert. The Likert scale is the most frequently used scale, especially when respondents are asked about their opinion and attitudes (Jamieson, 2004). In addition to the fact that Likert scales are easy and quick scales to construct, they are relatively reliable at the same time (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). While most authors agree on these features, some discussion exists regarding its measurement level and the number of scale points (Dawes, 2007; Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Although it is assumed that Likert scales are only suitable for ordinal data, it has become a more common practice to say that Likert-type categories constitute interval-level measurement as well (Jamieson, 2004; Norman, 2010; Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Here it should be mentioned that the scale itself cannot be considered as interval, as the response categories have a rank order but with unequal intervals. However, when the Likert scales consists of sums across many items, the scale can be analysed at interval level (Jamieson, 2004; Norman, 2010). Despite its controversy, the Likert scale will be considered as interval level within this study, as the concepts measured based on the Likert scale are measure by multiple items. All of this is in line with Kohli (1989) who states that within the marketing field, Likert scales are often considered as interval scales. With regard to the number of scale points, some controversy can be recognized as well (Dawes, 2007). Although some authors state that the more scales points, the better the approximation of a response curve and the more it contributes to response variability and scale sensitivity, this study is based on a 5- point Likert scale (Cummins and Gullone, 2000; Dawes, 2007). This choice is based on the idea that scales consisting of five answer possibilities is the most common scale and it compromises between the conflicting goals of offering enough choice and making things manageable for respondents (Dawes, 2007). To illustrate, fewer response options would result in measuring only direction rather than strength and more options would decrease the clarity of differences between for example the seventh and eighth point on a nine-point Likert scale. Also, a Likert scale consisting of 5 or more scale points can be considered as interval, which is in line with the previous discussion point (Allen & Bennett, 2010). Furthermore, a 5-point Likert scale that is arranged from negative to positive, including a neutral midpoint: fully disagree, disagree, neutral, agree to fully disagree, is in line with the customer protection policy of retailer X in which they explicitly asked the survey to be customer friendly and as meaningful and clear as possible.

### **B.2 Survey template MWM2 & Qualtrics**

#### **Survey template MWM2**

Welcome. Great that you want to share your opinion with us. With your feedback, we will make sure that retailer X becomes an even better webshop.

#### **Attitudinal statements**

Please indicate below to what extent you agree on the following statements

Statement	Fully disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Fully agree
S1. Retailer X meets all my expectations					
S2. Considering all my experiences with retailer X, I am generally satisfied					
S3. I consider retailer X close the ideal in which a company is perfect in all aspects					
EE4. I feel good when I use retailer X					
EE5. I am proud to use retailer X					
EB6. I spend a lot of time using retailer X compared to other retailers					
EB. 7 Using retailer X stimulates my interest to learn more about retailer X					

The statements below are about **'beauty & health products'** which refer to all products related to beauty & health, important examples are: make-up, perfume, vitamins, body-, hair-, mouth- and facial-care, (dish)washing detergents and other cleaning products.

Statement	Fully disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Fully agree
I8 Purchasing beauty & health products is interesting to me					
I9 Purchasing beauty & health products means a lot to me					
I10 Purchasing beauty & health products is necessary to me					

### Questions online magazine

#### 3. Are you familiar with the online magazine of retailer X?

- a) No, never heard of it
- b) Yes, I heard about it, but I do not read the magazine
- c) Yes, I read the magazine

#### 4. What is the reason you never read the magazine?

**5. What is the reason you read the magazine?**

**6. Since when are you familiar with the magazine?**

- a) a few days
- b) a few weeks
- c) a few months
- d) half a year
- e) a year or more

**7. How often do you visit the magazine per month?**

- a) 1 time or less
- b) 2 a 3 times
- c) 4 a 5 times
- d) 6 a 7 times
- e) 8 times or more

**8. How many minutes are you reading the content on average when visiting the magazine?**

... minute (s)

**9. How many articles do you read on average per visit?**

- a) 1 article
- b) 2 articles
- c) 3 articles
- d) 4 articles
- e) 5 articles or more
- f) I do not know

**10. How extensive do you read an article on average?**

- a) just a small part of the article
- b) half of the article
- c) almost the entire article
- d) the complete article
- e) I read the article multiple times

**11. Which subject is most decisive for you to actively read an article or not?**

- a) title
- b) pictures or videos
- c) introduction
- d) bold or italic words
- e) other ...

**12. What subject do you most often read in the magazine?**

- a) make-up
- b) hair
- c) care
- d) perfume

- e) accessories
- f) body & mind
- g) all subjects

**13. Which device do you most often use to read content of the online magazine?**

- a) mobile phone
- b) tablet
- c) laptop or computer
- d) other...

**14. Which channel do you most often use to read the articles of the online magazine?**

- a) the online magazine website
- b) Facebook
- c) retailerX.com
- d) other ...

**Demographic questions**

**15. What is your age?**

- a) ..... year
- b) I prefer not to answer this

**16. What is your gender?**

- a) male
- b) female

**17. What is your highest level of education?**

- a) elementary school
- b) secondary school
- c) higher education
- d) university studies
- e) other ...

**18. What is your average monthly income?**

- a) 500 euro or less
- b) 500 euro till 1000 euro
- c) 1000 euro till 2500 euro
- d) 2500 euro till 5000 euro
- e) 5000 euro or more
- f) I prefer not to answer this

**Questions and/or feedback**

**19. Do you have any questions or feedback?**

Thank you for your answers. We will use it to learn from.

## Survey template Qualtrics

Welcome. Great that you want to share your opinion with us. With your feedback, we will make sure that retailer X becomes an even better webshop.

### Attitudinal statements

Please indicate below to what extent you agree on the following statements

Statement	Fully disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Fully agree
S1. Retailer X meets all my expectations					
S2. Considering all my experiences with retailer X, I am generally satisfied					
S3. I consider retailer X close the ideal in which a company is perfect in all aspects					
EE4. I feel good when I use retailer X					
EE5. I am proud to use retailer X					
EB6. I spend a lot of time using retailer X compared to other retailers					
EB. 7 Using retailer X stimulates my interest to learn more about retailer X					

The statements below are about **'beauty & health products'** which refer to all products related to beauty & health, important examples are: make-up, perfume, vitamins, body-, hair-, mouth- and facial-care, (dish)washing detergents and other cleaning products.

Statement	Fully disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Fully agree
I8 Purchasing beauty & health products is interesting to me					
I9 Purchasing beauty & health products means a lot to me					
I10 Purchasing beauty & health products is necessary to me					

### Questions online magazine

**3. Are you familiar with the online magazine of retailer X?**

- a) No, never heard of it
- b) Yes, I heard about it, but I do not read the magazine
- c) Yes, I read the magazine

**4. What is the reason you never read the magazine?**

**5. What is the reason you read the magazine?**

**6. Since when are you familiar with the magazine?**

- a) a few days
- b) a few weeks
- c) a few months
- d) half a year
- e) a year or more

**7. How often do you visit the magazine per month?**

- a) 1 time or less
- b) 2 a 3 times
- c) 4 a 5 times
- d) 6 a 7 times
- e) 8 times or more

**8. How many minutes are you reading the content on average when visiting the magazine?**  
... minute (s)

**9. How many articles do you read on average per visit?**

- a) 1 article
- b) 2 articles
- c) 3 articles
- d) 4 articles
- e) 5 articles or more
- f) I do not know

**10. How extensive do you read an article on average?**

- a) just a small part of the article
- b) half of the article
- c) almost the entire article
- d) the complete article
- e) I read the article multiple times

**11. Which subject is most decisive for you to actively read an article or not?**

- a) title
- b) pictures or videos
- c) introduction

- d) bold or italic words
- e) other ...

**12. What subject do you most often read in the magazine?**

- a) make-up
- b) hair
- c) care
- d) perfume
- e) accessories
- f) body & mind
- g) all subjects

**13. Which device do you most often use to read content of the online magazine?**

- a) mobile phone
- b) tablet
- c) laptop or computer
- d) other...

**14. Which channel do you most often use to read the articles of the online magazine?**

- a) the online magazine website
- b) Facebook
- c) retailerX.com
- d) other ...

**Demographic questions**

**15. What is your age?**

- a) ..... year
- b) I prefer not to answer this

**16. What is your highest level of education?**

- a) elementary school
- b) secondary school
- c) higher education
- d) university studies
- e) other ...

**17. What is your average monthly income?**

- a) 500 euro or less
- b) 500 euro till 1000 euro
- c) 1000 euro till 2500 euro
- d) 2500 euro till 5000 euro
- e) 5000 euro or more
- f) I prefer not to answer this



**18. For what period are you customer of retailer X?**

- a) 1 year or less
- b) 2 till 3 years
- c) 4 till 7 years
- d) 8 till 15 years
- e) 15 years or more

**19. Have you purchased one or more beauty and health product(s) of Retailer X in the previous 12 months?**

- a) yes
- b) no

**20. What is your average amount of monthly purchases at retailer X?**

- a) less than 1 purchase
- b) 1 a 2 purchases
- c) 3 a 4 purchases
- d) 5 a 6 purchases
- e) more than 6 purchases

**21. What is your average order value?**

- a) less than 20 euro
- b) 20 till 40 euro
- c) 40 till 60 euro
- d) 60 till 80 euro
- e) more than 80 euro

Questions and/or feedback

**19. Do you have any questions or feedback?**

Thank you for your answers. We will use it to learn from.

### B.3 Assumption and output of Factor analysis

In this section the assumptions and output of the factor analysis on customer engagement, customer satisfaction, customer involvement and content consumption intensity are outlined. The assumptions are mainly based on the theory of Allen & Bennett (2010) and Field (2013).

#### B.3.1 Assumptions of factor analysis customer engagement

1. Independence: each participant should participate only once in the research, and should not influence the participation of others.

- *The respondents filled in the questionnaire independently of each other.*

2. Sample size: there should a minimum of five participants per variable in the study. Generally, there should be at least 100 participants from a reliable factor analysis.

- *The sample size (N=315) exceeds the ratio of cases to variables (5\*4 = 20) or the minimum of 100 cases. This is confirmed by a proper KMO score of .744 which also exceeds the minimum values of 0.5 (Kaiser, 1974; Field, 2013) and 0.6 (Allen & Bennett, 2010), indicating that the data is suitable for a factor analysis.*

3. Normality: each variable should be approximately normally distributed, although factor analysis is fairly robust against violations of this assumption.

- *The data of all variables is roughly normally distributed.*

4. Linearity: there should be roughly linear (straight-line) relationships between the variables, as factor analysis is based on the analysis of correlations.

- *Some of the combination of variables are tested and show a certain extent of linearity.*

5. Multicollinearity: multicollinearity can exist when there is a high squared multiple correlation between the variables. Squared multiple correlations that are close to 1 can be problematic.

- *The is proper correlation among the variables, as all items correlate reasonable well with all others; none of the items has many correlations below the minimum of 0.3 (Field, 2013). Also, no multicollinearity is present as none of the correlation coefficients are excessively large and exceeding the maximum of 0.8 (Field, 2013). This is confirmed by a significant Bartlett's test score which is below the maximum of 0.05 (Field, 2013). This indicates that the correlation matrix is significantly different from zero correlations and therefore the data is suitable for factor analysis. Also, the determinant of the R-matrix is 0.277 which exceeds minimum of 0.001 and illustrates the suitability of the data for a factor analysis (Field, 2013).*

#### B.3.2 Summary output factor analysis customer engagement

Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>	
	ustomer engagement
feel good when I use retailer X	<b>781</b>
am proud to use retailer X	<b>825</b>
spend a lot of time using retailer X compared to other retailers	<b>750</b>
using retailer X stimulates my interest to learn more about retailer X	<b>802</b>
mean values	496
of variance	1.399
	92

Rotation Method: Principal Component Analysis.

KMO = 0.742 & Bartlett's test = 0.000

Summary of factor analysis results for SPSS Customer engagement (N=315)

Table 1: Summary factor analysis customer engagement

The assumptions of Factor analysis mentioned by Field (2013) are all met, including the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin score (0.742) which verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis. Also, the Bartlett's test of Sphericity was

significant (0.000) indicating that a factor analysis is useful with this data as there is sufficient correlation between the items in the analysis. The analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues for each factor in the data. One factor had an eigenvalue over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and explained 62.399% of the variance. Table 1 shows that all factor loadings exceeds the minimum of 0.4 and therefore all items can be used to measure customer engagement (Field, 2013). Also, the factor of customer engagement has a high reliability score as the Cronbach's alpha is 0.791. The score indicates that the 4-item model is suitable for measuring the degree to which customer are (dis)engaged.

### **B.3.3 Assumptions of factor analysis customer satisfaction & customer involvement (Allen & Bennett, 2010)**

1. Independence: each participant should participate only once in the research and should not influence the participation of others.

*- The respondents filled in the questionnaire independently of each other*

2. Sample size: there should a minimum of five participants per variable in the study. Generally, there should be at least 100 participants from a reliable factor analysis.

*- The sample size  $N=315$  exceeds  $5*6 = 30$  or min of 100. This is confirmed by a proper KMO score of .750 which also exceeds the minimum values of 0.5 (Kaiser, 1974; Field, 2013) and 0.6 (Allen & Bennett, 2010) indicating that the data is suitable for the factor analysis.*

3. Normality: each variable should be approximately normally distributed, although factor analysis is fairly robust against violations of this assumption.

*- The data of all variables is roughly normally distributed.*

4. Linearity: there should be roughly linear (straight-line) relationships between the variables, as factor analysis is based on the analysis of correlations.

*- Some of the combinations of variables are tested and show a certain extent of linearity.*

5. Multicollinearity: multicollinearity can exist when there is a high squared multiple correlation between the variables. Squared multiple correlations that are close be 1 can be problematic.

*- The is proper correlation among the variables, as all items correlate reasonable well with all others, although some have few correlations below the minimum of 0.3 (Field, 2013). Also, no multicollinearity is present as none of the correlation coefficients are excessively large and exceed the maximum of 0.8 (Field, 2013). This is confirmed by a significant Bartlett's test score which is below the maximum of 0.05. Also, the determinant of the R-matrix is 0.057 which exceeds the minimum of 0.001 and illustrates the suitability of the data for factor analysis (Field, 2013).*

### **B3.4: Summary output Factor analysis Customer satisfaction & customer involvement**

The assumptions of factor analysis mentioned by Field (2013) are met, including the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin score (0.750) which verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis. Also, the Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant (0.000) indicating that a factor analysis is useful with this data as there is sufficient correlation between the items in the analysis. The analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues for each factor in the data. Two factor had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and together explained 77.473% of the variance. This is confirmed by the scree plot showing inflexions that would justify retaining 2 factors.

Table 2 shows the factor loadings after rotation. The items that cluster on the same factor, with a factor loading exceeding the minimum of 0.4 suggest that factor 1 represents customer involvement and factor 2 represents customer satisfaction (Allen & Bennett, 2010; Field, 2013). The results of the analysis are in line with the literature as both concepts are clearly distinguished. Also, both concepts have high reliability scores, the Cronbach's alpha is respectively 0.876 and 0.817. These scores indicate that the models are suitable for measuring the degree to which customers are (un)involved or (dis)satisfied.

<b>Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup></b>		
	<b>Customer involvement</b>	<b>Customer satisfaction</b>
Retailer X meets all my expectations	0.119	<b>0.870</b>
Considering all my experiences with retailer X, I am generally satisfied	0.099	<b>0.874</b>
I consider retailer X close the ideal in which a company is perfect in all aspects	0.165	<b>0.815</b>
Purchasing beauty & health products is interesting to me	<b>0.894</b>	0.142
Purchasing beauty & health products means a lot to me	<b>0.875</b>	0.181
Purchasing beauty & health products is necessary to me	<b>0.888</b>	0.079
Eigenvalues	3.009	1.639
% of variance	50.153	27.320
$\alpha$	.876	.817

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.  
Summary of factor analysis results for SPSS customer satisfaction & customer involvement (N=315)  
KMO = 0.750 & Bartlett's test = 0.000

Table 2 – Summary factor analysis customer satisfaction & customer involvement after rotation

### B.3.5 Assumptions of factor analysis content consumption intensity (Allen & Bennett, 2010)

**Independence:** each participant should participate only once in the research and should not influence the participation of others.

- *The respondents filled in the questionnaire independently of each other*

**2. Sample size:** there should a minimum of five participants per variable in the study. Generally, there should be at least 100 participants from a reliable factor analysis.

- *The sample (N=78) exceeds the ratio of cases to variable of  $5*5 = 25$ , however the minimum of 100 is not exceeded. The KMO score is 0.524 which exceeds the minimum values of 0.5 (Kaiser, 1974; Field, 2013) indicates that the data is suitable for the factor analysis.*

**3. Normality:** each variable should be approximately normally distributed, although factor analysis is fairly robust against violations of this assumption.

- *The data of the variables are roughly normally distributed.*

**4. Linearity:** there should be roughly linear (straight-line) relationships between the variables, as factor analysis is based on the analysis of correlations.

- *Some of the combinations of variables are tested and show a certain extent of linearity*

**5. Multicollinearity:** multicollinearity can exist when there is a high squared multiple correlation between the variables. Squared multiple correlations that are close be 1 can be problematic.

- *There is no multicollinearity present as none of the correlation coefficient is are excessively large and exceed the maximum of 0.8 (Field, 2013). However, the correlation among the variables is at a minimum and some variables have several correlations below the minimum of 0.3 (Field, 2013). Although some correlations at a bare minimum, the Bartlett's test is significant with a score which is below the maximum of 0.05 indicating that the data is acceptable (Field, 2013). Also, the determinant of the R-matrix is 0.738 which*

exceeds the minimum of 0.001, illustrates the suitability of the data for factor analysis (Field, 2013).

### B.3.6 Summary output factor analysis content consumption intensity

<b>Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup></b>		
	<b>Consumption comprehensiveness</b>	<b>Consumption frequency</b>
Since when are you familiar with the online magazine?	-0.308	<b>0.735</b>
How often do you visit the online magazine per month?	0.241	<b>0.704</b>
How many minutes are you reading the content on average when visiting the magazine?	<b>0.567</b>	0.373
How many articles do you read on average per visit?	<b>0.828</b>	0.054
How extensive do you read an article on average?	<b>0.609</b>	-0.171
Eigenvalues	1.556	1.181
% of variance	31.124	23.614
$\alpha$	.468	.233

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Summary of factor analysis results for SPSS customer content consumption (N=78)

KMO = 0.520 & Bartlett's test = 0.017

Table 3: Summary factor analysis content consumption intensity after rotation

The assumptions of Factor analysis mentioned by Field (2013) are met, including the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin score (0.520) which verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis. Also, the Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant (0.017) indicating that a factor analysis is useful with this data as there is sufficient correlation between the items in the analysis. The analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues for each factor in the data. Two factor had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and together explained 54.738% of the variance. The scree plot was ambiguous and showed inflexions that would justify retaining 1 or 2 factors. Based on the eigenvalues and the increased explained variance of two factors, this study retained two factors.

Table 3 shows the factor loadings after rotation. The items that cluster on the same factor with a factor loading exceeding the minimum of 0.4 (Allen & Bennett, 2010; Field, 2013), suggest that factor 1 represents consumption comprehensiveness and factor 2 represents consumption frequency which together provide insight in the intensity of content consumption. The concepts of consumption comprehensiveness and consumption frequency have relatively low reliability scores, the Cronbach's alpha scores are respectively 0.468 and 0.233. These scores are below the minimum value of 0.5 which will suffice in an early state of research according to Nunnally (1978). The low correlation between the items and the limited number of items included in the measurement scales put pressure on the Cronbach alpha score. According to Field (2013) the Cronbach's alpha can be considered as a sensitive score, as the score is affected by the correlation among items which represent the same content and the number of items on a scale.

In order to check whether the reliability could be improved, several checks are conducted. First of all, it is examined and confirmed that deleting items of the scales would not improve the reliability of the factors. To illustrate, the 2-items scale of consumption frequency could not be diminished as the entire scale would be measured on one single item then. The consumption comprehensiveness however, slightly improved to  $\alpha$ 0.507 if the item of 'how extensive do you read an article on average' was deleted. Although the reliability score is at the minimum level of adequacy now and the difference did not outweigh the importance of the item deleted and the idea of utilizing all possible data. Also, the deleting the item would do harm to the content validity according to the researcher.

Also, combining the items to one factor will not prevent any problems as illustrated the factor loadings

explicitly how an underlying structure of two factors. Also, by use of the Pearson correlation, the correlation is checked in order to confirm the structure of the content consumption items. As the correlation is relatively low (0.055), it is assumed that it is appropriate to divide content consumption in consumption comprehensiveness and consumption frequency rather than combining it to one variable.

Hence, the reliability could not be improved and therefore the researcher considers both concepts as valid based on face validity. While taking into account the unstable measurement scale, an index score of both concepts is used to analyse the consumption intensity.

#### **B.4 Assumptions of multiple regression analysis (Allen & Bennett, 2010)**

1. N (cases) : k (predictor) ratio: to produce a reliable regression model, a reasonable ratio of cases to predictors is required. It is suggested that N should ideally be  $50 + 8(k)$  for testing a full regression model, or  $104 + k$  when testing individual predictors.

- *The sample size (N=315) exceeds all the above-mentioned ratios of  $50+8(9) = 122$ ,  $104+9=113$  and also the ratios of Field (2013) in which 15 cases per predictor, is the guideline is exceeded by  $15*9= 135$*

2. Normality: Each continuous variable should be approximately normally distributed.

- *The data of the variables are roughly normally distribution as shown by the histograms. Also, the normality of the dependent variable 'customer engagement' is checked in a statistical way as well.*

3. Outliers: Multiple regression is sensitive to outliers and other influential cases, which should be removed or reduced to lessen their impact on the final regression solution.

- *With regard to the univariate outliers, there are several variables by which either an outlier or extreme value can be determined. The data on customer engagement, customer involvement, average monthly income, monthly purchases cannot be recognized as outlier nor extreme values, but the data on the remaining variables can. After an extensive analysis it turned out that there were some univariate outliers but these can be explained by other characteristics of the respondents. Hence, these scores cannot be considered as outliers in a theoretical way according to the researcher. By use of the Mahalanobis distance the outliers are checked in a statistical way as well. The Max Mahalanobis distance of 24.107 exceeds the critical value of  $X^2$  for  $df = 9$  (at  $\alpha = 0.001$ ) of 27.877 for any case in the datafile, indicating the multivariate outliers are not of concern.*

4. Multicollinearity: high correlations (e.g.  $r > .85$ ) between predictors render a multiple regression model unstable, and very difficult to interpret. Multicollinearity can be detected with the Tolerance and VIF (variance inflation factor) statistics.

- *The multicollinearity among the variables cannot be recognized as none of the correlation between the predictors exceeds the level of 0.8 (Field, 2013). Also, the VIF scores do not exceed the maximum of 5 and the tolerance scores are all far above the minimum of 0.1.(Field, 2013).*

5. Normality, Linearity and Homoscedasticity of residuals. It is assumed that the difference between the observed and predicted values on the criterion variable (referred to as 'residuals') are normally distributed, and that their relationship with the predicted values on the criterion is linear. Finally, it is assumed that the variance in the residuals is homogenous across the full range of predicted values.

- *The Normal P-plot of regression standardized residuals shows that the points clusters reasonably along the diagonal line and therefore it can be assumed that the residuals are normality distributed. Also, the scatterplot of the standardized residuals shows an absence of any pattern that could refer to non-normality, non-linearity of heteroscedastic.*

### **B.5 Assumptions of one-way independent ANOVA (Allen & Bennett, 2010)**

1. Scale of measurement: the dependent variable should be at interval or ratio data.  
*- Customer engagement is measured at interval scale.*
2. Independence: each participant should participate only once in the research, and not influence the participation of others.  
*- The respondents filled in the questionnaire once and independently of each other.*
3. Normality: each group of scores should be approximately normally distributed, Although ANOVA is quite robust with respect to moderate violations of this assumption.  
*- The data of all variables is roughly normally distributed.*
4. Homogeneity of variance: there should be an approximately equal amount of variability in each set of scores.  
*- The Levene' statistics score on the test of homogeneity of variance was not significant for all the variables.*

### **B.6 Assumptions of independent samples t-test (Allen & Bennett, 2010)**

1. Scale of measurement. The dependent variable should be interval or ratio data. Some authors (e.g. Clark-Carter, 2004) indicate that ordinal data are also acceptable, provided the scale has at least seven possible values.  
*- The measurement level of customer engagement can be considered as interval.*
2. Independence: each participant should participate only once in the research, and not influence the participation of others.  
*- The respondents filled in the questionnaire once and independently of each other.*
3. Normality: each group of scores should be approximately normally distributed.  
*- As previously specified, the scores are normally distributed.*
4. Homogeneity of variance: there should be an approximately equal amount of variability in each set of scores.  
*- The Levene' statistics score on the test of homogeneity of variance was not significant for all the variables.*

## Appendix C - Results

### C.1 Descriptive statistics of total sample

#### Descriptive Statistics

		Age	Education	Income	Customer life time	Monthly purchases	Purchase value
N	Valid	291	311	187	315	315	315
	Missing	24	4	128	0	0	0
Mean		39,07	3,40	2,57	2,85	1,32	2,35
Median		35,00	4,00	3,00	3,00	1,00	2,00
Std. Deviation		16,849	1,184	0,994	1,023	0,567	0,812
Minimum		15	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		85	5	5	5	3	5

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of total sample

### C.2 Descriptive statistics of readers & non-readers

#### Descriptive Statistics

			Age	Education	Income	Customer life time	Monthly purchases	Purchase value
Reader	N	Valid	75	78	69	78	78	78
		Missing	3	0	9	0	0	0
	Mean		25,92	3,94	2,20	2,69	1,76	2,19
	Median		23,00	4,00	2,00	3,00	2,00	2,00
	Std. Deviation		8,192	1,097	1,079	0,795	0,648	0,704
	Variance		67,102	1,204	1,164	0,631	0,420	0,495
	Minimum		16	1	1	1	1	1
	Maximum		60	5	4	5	3	5
Non-reader	N	Valid	216	233	118	237	237	237
		Missing	21	4	119	0	0	0
	Mean		43,63	3,21	2,79	2,90	1,18	2,40
	Median		45,50	4,00	3,00	3,00	1,00	2,00
	Std. Deviation		16,691	1,158	0,876	1,085	0,457	0,840
	Variance		278,597	1,342	0,767	1,176	0,208	0,706
	Minimum		15	1	1	1	1	1
	Maximum		85	5	5	5	3	5

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of readers & non-readers

The demographic characteristics of the readers sample (N=78) are as follows: the age of the readers ranged from 16 to 60 (M=26, SD=8.19). More specifically, almost 75% of the readers is aged between 20-30 years and more than 95% of the respondents belongs to the online magazine's target group ages 15-45 years.

In terms of education, 47.4% of the readers follows higher professional education (N=37), followed by 33.3% university (N=26) and 15.4% secondary school (N=12), while the remaining 3.9% (N=3) is focused on elementary school or vocational education. With regard to the income of the respondents, 37.7% (N=26) has an average monthly income of less than 500 euros, 34.8% (N=24) earns 1000-25000 euro's, 15.9% (N=11) has an income of 500-1000 euro and 11.6% (N=8) of the customers earn 2500-5000 euro.

By customer lifetime characteristics; 43.6% of the readers is customer for 4-7 years (N=34), 41.0% (N=32)



is customer for 2-3 years, 10.3% (N=8) is customer for 8-15 years, whereas the other 5.2% (N=4) is customer for less than one year or fifteen years or more. The greater number of readers, 52.6% (N=41) orders products 1 or 2 times a month, 35.9% (N=28) mentions to order less than once a month and just 11.5% (N=9) of the respondents orders three times or more on monthly basis. The average purchase value of these orders is 20 to 40 euros for 65.4% (N=51) of the respondents, followed by 20.5% for orders of 40-60 euro (N=16), 10.3% (N=8) for orders below 20 euro's and 3.9% (N=3) of the readers values their average orders at 60 euro or more.

### C.3 Results regression analysis customer satisfaction and customer engagement

	<b>Model 1</b> Main effects antecedents	<b>Model 2</b> Main effects + moderator	<b>Model 3</b> Full model	<b>Model 4</b> Full model with control variables	<b>Model 5</b> Full model Target audience
<b>Main effects</b>					
Constant	0.798 (0.001)*	0.649 (0.006)*	0.480 (0.062)	0.710 (0.088)	0.829 (0.025)*
Customer satisfaction	0.660 (0.000)*	0.681 (0.000)*	0.721 (0.000)*	0.646 (0.000)*	0.659 (0.000)*
Content consumption		0.253 (0.001)*	0.233 (0.004)*	-0.075 (0.500)	0.139 (0.147)
<b>Interaction effects</b>					
Content consumption * customer satisfaction			-0.134 (0.124)	-0.116 (0.204)	-0.107 (0.282)
<b>Control variables</b>					
Age				-0.007 (0.033)*	-
Education				-0.026 (0.549)	
Income				-0.001 (0.984)	
Customer life				-0.014 (0.793)	
Monthly purchase				0.364 (0.000)*	
Purchase value				0.029 (0.627)	
<b>Observations (N)</b>	315	315	315	315	179
<b>R</b>	0.560	0.580	0.584	0.656	0.536
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.314	0.336	0.341	0.431	0.287
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.312	0.332	0.335	0.400	0.275

Table 6: results regression analysis focussed on customer satisfaction. \*statistical significant at 5% level (two-tailed)

### C.4 Results regression analysis customer involvement and customer engagement

<b>Dependent variable: customer engagement</b>					
	<b>Model 1</b> Main effects antecedents	<b>Model 2</b> Main effects + moderator	<b>Model 3</b> Full model	<b>Model 4</b> Full model with control variables	<b>Model 5</b> Full model Target audience
<b>Main effects</b>					
Constant	2.108 (0.000)*	2.106 (0.000)*	2.139 (0.000)*	2.200 (0.000)*	2.098 (0.000)*
Customer involvement	0.395 (0.000)*	0.397 (0.000)*	0.388 (0.000)*	0.372 (0.000)*	0.411 (0.000)*
Content consumption		-0.025 (0.772)	-0.036 (0.687)	-0.230 (0.059)	-0.088 (0.393)
<b>Interaction effects</b>					
Content consumption * customer involvement			0.043 (0.647)	0.038 (0.713)	0.021 (0.843)
<b>Control variables</b>					
Age				-0.005 (0.217)	-
Education				-0.042 (0.367)	
Income				0.008 (0.885)	
Customer life				0.001 (0.989)	
Monthly purchase				0.343 (0.000)*	
Purchase value				-0.070 (0.274)	

<b>Observations (N)</b>	315	315	315	315	179
<b>R</b>	0.477	0.477	0.477	0.578	0.476
<b>R2</b>	0.227	0.227	0.228	0.334	0.226
<b>Adjusted R2</b>	0.225	0.223	0.221	0.299	0.213

Table 7: results regression analysis focussed on customer involvement. \*statistical significant at 5% level (two-tailed)

## Appendix D - Additional analysis

### D.1 Results regression analysis content consumption and emotional dimension customer engagement

	<b>Model 1</b> Main effects antecedents	<b>Model 2</b> Main effects + moderator	<b>Model 3</b> Full model	<b>Model 4</b> Full model with control variables	<b>Model 5</b> Full model Target audience
<b>Main effects</b>					
Constant	0.226 (0.299)	0.213 (0.331)	-0.023 (0.922)	0.390 (0.338)	0.049 (0.886)
Customer satisfaction	0.653 (0.000)*	0.658 (0.000)*	0.719 (0.000)*	0.701 (0.000)*	0.700 (0.000)*
Customer involvement	0.248 (0.000)*	0.243 (0.000)*	0.237 (0.000)*	0.182 (0.004)*	0.264 (0.000)*
Content consumption		0.035 (0.635)	-0.009 (0.910)	-0.207 (0.053)	-0.135 (0.130)
<b>Interaction effects</b>					
Content consumption * customer satisfaction			-0.210 (0.013)*	-0.226 (0.012)*	-0.225 (0.015)*
Content consumption * customer involvement			0.039 (0.648)	0.086 (0.361)	0.025 (0.793)
<b>Control variables</b>					
Age				-0.007 (0.021)*	-
Education				-0.024 (0.535)	
Income				0.034 (0.493)	
Customer life				-0.027 (0.574)	
Monthly purchase				0.172 (0.022)*	
Purchase value				0.007 (0.902)	
<b>Observations (N)</b>	315	315	315	315	179
<b>R</b>	0.690	0.690	0.698	0.728	0.694
<b>R2</b>	0.476	0.477	0.487	0.530	0.481
<b>Adjusted R2</b>	0.473	0.472	0.479	0.499	0.466

Table 8: results regression analysis focussed on content consumption and the emotional dimension of customer engagement. \*statistical significant at 5% level (two-tailed)

### D.2 Results regression analysis content consumption and behavioural dimension customer engagement

	<b>Model 1</b> Main effects antecedents	<b>Model 2</b> Main effects + moderator	<b>Model 3</b> Full model	<b>Model 4</b> Full model with control variables	<b>Model 5</b> Full model Target audience
<b>Main effects</b>					
Constant	0.719 (0.076)	0.578 (0.151)	0.483 (0.280)	0.807 (0.278)	1.026 (0.123)
Customer satisfaction	0.410 (0.000)*	0.463 (0.000)*	0.501 (0.000)*	0.354 (0.010)*	0.427 (0.005)*
Customer involvement	0.286 (0.000)*	0.237 (0.001)*	0.218 (0.005)*	0.189 (0.102)	0.196 (0.119)
Content consumption		0.394 (0.004)*	0.394 (0.018)*	-0.093 (0.634)	0.260 (0.130)
<b>Interaction effects</b>					
Content consumption * customer satisfaction			-0.132 (0.400)*	-0.053 (0.745)	-0.084 (0.636)
Content consumption * customer involvement			0.091 (0.561)	0.081 (0.639)	0.093 (0.611)
<b>Control variables</b>					
Age				-0.009 (0.100)	-
Education				0.049 (0.493)	
Income				-0.051 (0.572)	
Customer life				0.050 (0.576)	
Monthly purchase				0.614 (0.000)*	
Purchase value				-0.079 (0.430)	
<b>Observations (N)</b>	315	315	315	315	179
<b>R</b>	0.337	0.406	0.408	0.546	0.363

<b>R2</b>	0.142	0.165	0.167	0.298	0.132
<b>Adjusted R2</b>	0.136	0.156	0.153	0.252	0.107

Table 9: results regression analysis focussed on content consumption and the behavioural dimension of customer engagement. \*statistical significant at 5% level (two-tailed)

### D.3 Results regression analysis content consumption and cognitive dimension customer engagement

	<b>Model 1</b> Main effects antecedents	<b>Model 2</b> Main effects + moderator	<b>Model 3</b> Full model	<b>Model 4</b> Full model with control variables	<b>Model 5</b> Full model Target audience
<b>Main effects</b>					
Constant	-0.066 (0.845)	-0.078 (0.820)	-0.132 (0.727)	-0.422 (0.526)	-0.142 (0.802)
Customer satisfaction	0.447 (0.000)*	0.452 (0.000)*	0.500 (0.000)*	0.497 (0.000)*	0.420 (0.001)*
Customer involvement	0.346 (0.000)*	0.342 (0.000)*	0.299 (0.000)*	0.341 (0.001)*	0.387 (0.000)*
Content consumption		0.033 (0.776)	-0.049 (0.692)	-0.155 (0.373)	-0.063 (0.668)
<b>Interaction effects</b>					
Content consumption * customer satisfaction			-0.172 (0.193)	-0.205 (0.163)*	-0.162 (0.284)*
Content consumption * customer involvement			0.206 (0.120)	0.162 (0.296)	0.150 (0.339)
<b>Control variables</b>					
Age				-0.002 (0.728)*	-
Education				-0.054 (0.402)	
Income				0.030 (0.715)	
Customer life				-0.016 (0.843)	
Monthly purchase				0.250 (0.041)*	
Purchase value				0.017 (0.848)	
<b>Observations (N)</b>	315	315	315	315	179
<b>R</b>	0.488	0.488	0.495	0.559	0.494
<b>R2</b>	0.238	0.238	0.245	0.312	0.244
<b>Adjusted R2</b>	0.233	0.231	0.233	0.267	0.222

Table 10: results regression analysis focussed on content consumption and the cognitive dimension of customer engagement. \*statistical significant at 5% level (two-tailed)

### D.4 Results regression analysis content consumption and non-emotional dimension customer engagement

	<b>Model 1</b> Main effects antecedents	<b>Model 2</b> Main effects + moderator	<b>Model 3</b> Full model	<b>Model 4</b> Full model with control variables	<b>Model 5</b> Full model Target audience
<b>Main effects</b>					
Constant	0.326 (0.306)	0.250 (0.434)	0.176 (0.620)	0.192 (0.753)	0.442 (0.403)
Customer satisfaction	0.428 (0.000)*	0.458 (0.000)*	0.501 (0.000)*	0.4925 (0.000)*	0.424 (0.001)*
Customer involvement	0.316 (0.000)*	0.289 (0.000)*	0.259 (0.000)*	0.265 (0.006)*	0.291 (0.004)*
Content consumption		0.213 (0.048)*	0.150 (0.198)	-0.124 (0.440)	0.099 (0.471)
<b>Interaction effects</b>					
Content consumption * customer satisfaction			-0.152 (0.221)	-0.129 (0.339)	-0.123 (0.384)*
Content consumption * customer involvement			0.149 (0.232)	0.121 (0.394)	0.121 (0.406)
<b>Control variables</b>					
Age				-0.006 (0.235)*	-
Education				-0.002 (0.968)	
Income				-0.011 (0.885)	
Customer life				0.017 (0.816)	
Monthly purchase				0.432 (0.000)*	

Purchase value				-0.031 (0.708)	
<b>Observations (N)</b>	315	315	315	315	179
<b>R</b>	0.484	0.494	0.499	0.583	0.474
<b>R2</b>	0.235	0.244	0.249	0.340	0.224
<b>Adjusted R2</b>	0.230	0.237	0.237	0.296	0.202

Table 11: results regression analysis focussed on content consumption and the non-emotional dimension of customer engagement. \*statistical significant at 5% level (two-tailed)

### D.5 t-test results per customer engagement dimension

By use of independent sample t-test the following results are collected with regard the content consumption effects on the different dimensions of customer engagement.

On average, readers ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SE = 0.068$ ) score higher on the emotional dimension of customer engagement compared to the non-readers ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SE = 0.051$ ). This difference,  $-0.021$ , BCa 95% CI  $[-0.18927, 0.14691]$ , was not significant  $t(171.551) = (0.249)$ ,  $p = 0.804$ .

On average, readers ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SE = 0.123$ ) score higher on the behavioural dimension of customer engagement compared to the non-readers ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SE = 0.069$ ). This difference,  $-0.410$ , BCa 95% CI  $[-0.686, -0.135]$ , was significant  $t(313) = (-2.932)$ ,  $p = 0.004$ .

On average, readers ( $M = 3.10$ ,  $SE = 0.118$ ) score higher on the cognitive dimension of customer engagement compared to the non-readers ( $M = 3.01$ ,  $SE = 0.061$ ). This difference,  $-0.094$ , BCa 95% CI  $[-0.342, 0.154]$ , was not significant  $t(313) = (-0.748)$ ,  $p = 0.455$ .

On average, readers ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SE = 0.1071$ ) score higher on the non-emotional dimension of customer engagement compared to the non-readers ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $SE = 0.0576$ ). This difference,  $-0.25227$ , BCa 95% CI  $[-0.48383, -0.02071]$ , was significant  $t(313) = (-2.144)$ ,  $p = 0.033$ .

### D.6 Results regression analysis consumption comprehensiveness and frequency and emotional dimension customer engagement

	<b>Model 1</b> Main effects antecedents	<b>Model 2</b> Main effects + moderator	<b>Model 3</b> Full model	<b>Model 4</b> Full model with control variables
<b>Main effects</b>				
Constant	1.208 (0.009)	1.587 (0.001)*	1.535 (0.014)*	1.198 (0.101)
Customer satisfaction	0.382 (0.001)*	0.422 (0.000)*	0.466 (0.000)*	0.398 (0.002)*
Customer involvement	0.281 (0.001)*	0.272 (0.001)*	0.266 (0.001)*	0.293 (0.001)*
Comprehensiveness content consumption		-0.264 (0.002)*	-0.304 (0.004)*	-0.127 (0.338)
Frequency content consumption		0.068 (0.336)	0.065 (0.514)	-0.034 (0.753)
<b>Interaction effects</b>				
Consumption comprehensiveness x customer satisfaction			0.044 (0.538)	0.107 (0.224)
Consumption comprehensiveness x customer involvement			0.090 (0.223)	0.051 (0.556)
Consumption frequency x customer satisfaction			-0.014 (0.821)	-0.077 (0.267)

Consumption frequency x customer involvement			0.019 (0.807)	0.051 (0.515)
<b>Control variables</b>				
Age				-0.002 (0.891)
Education				0.056 (0.355)
Income				-0.004 (0.958)
Customer life				-0.185 (0.108)
Monthly purchase				0.236 (0.024)*
Purchase value				0.086 (0.339)
<b>Observations (N)</b>	78	78	78	78
<b>R</b>	0.581	0.650	0.677	0.742
<b>R2</b>	0.337	0.423	0.458	0.551
<b>Adjusted R2</b>	0.319	0.391	0.395	0.433

Table 12: results regression analysis focussed on consumption comprehensiveness and frequency and the emotional dimension of customer engagement.

\*statistical significant at 5% level (two-tailed)

### D.7 Results regression analysis consumption comprehensiveness and frequency and behavioural dimension customer engagement

	<b>Model 1</b> Main effects antecedents	<b>Model 2</b> Main effects + moderator	<b>Model 3</b> Full model	<b>Model 4</b> Full model with control variables
<b>Main effects</b>				
Constant	1.337 (0.160)	1.350 (0.211)	0.689 (0.618)	-0.093 (0.950)
Customer satisfaction	0.290 (0.227)	0.322 (0.184)	0.386 (0.139)	0.358 (0.165)*
Customer involvement	0.322 (0.058)	0.294 (0.089)	0.232 (0.201)	0.161 (0.376)*
Comprehensiveness content consumption		-0.165 (0.375)	-0.107 (0.647)	-0.071 (0.795)
Frequency content consumption		0.143 (0.367)	0.332 (0.146)	0.132 (0.556)
<b>Interaction effects</b>				
Consumption comprehensiveness x customer satisfaction			0.127 (0.438)	0.110 (0.545)
Consumption comprehensiveness x customer involvement			-0.032 (0.847)	0.022 (0.901)
Consumption frequency x customer satisfaction			0.061 (0.667)	-0.095 (0.510)
Consumption frequency x customer involvement			-0.249 (0.157)	-0.195 (0.232)
<b>Control variables</b>				
Age				-0.011 (0.675)
Education				0.249 (0.051)
Income				-0.265 (0.095)
Customer life				-0.079 (0.739)
Monthly purchase				0.598 (0.007)*
Purchase value				0.329 (0.081)
<b>Observations (N)</b>	78	78	78	78
<b>R</b>	0.311	0.340	0.379	0.643
<b>R2</b>	0.097	0.115	0.144	0.414
<b>Adjusted R2</b>	0.073	0.067	0.044	0.259

Table 13: results regression analysis focussed on consumption comprehensiveness and frequency and the behavioural dimension of customer engagement.

\*statistical significant at 5% level (two-tailed)

## D.8 Results regression analysis consumption comprehensiveness and frequency and cognitive dimension customer engagement

	<b>Model 1</b> Main effects antecedents	<b>Model 2</b> Main effects + moderator	<b>Model 3</b> Full model	<b>Model 4</b> Full model with control variables
<b>Main effects</b>				
Constant	0.127 (0.882)	-0.413 (0.665)	-0.874 (0.466)	-0.140 (0.924)
Customer satisfaction	0.223 (0.302)	0.247 (0.251)	0.299 (0.186)	0.194 (0.442)
Customer involvement	0.532 (0.001)*	0.475 (0.003)*	0.376 (0.018)*	0.447 (0.014)*
Comprehensiveness content consumption		-0.032 (0.846)	-0.042 (0.834)	0.011 (0.969)
Frequency content consumption		0.272 (0.056)	0.530 (0.009)*	0.316 (0.155)
<b>Interaction effects</b>				
Consumption comprehensiveness x customer satisfaction			0.039 (0.782)	0.134 (0.455)
Consumption comprehensiveness x customer involvement			0.036 (0.804)	-0.081 (0.646)
Consumption frequency x customer satisfaction			0.101 (0.414)	-0.003 (0.980)
Consumption frequency x customer involvement			-0.353 (0.022)*	-0.307 (0.058)
<b>Control variables</b>				
Age				-0.018 (0.492)
Education				-0.020 (0.871)
Income				0.031 (0.841)
Customer life				-0.030 (0.896)
Monthly purchase				0.156 (0.457)
Purchase value				0.050 (0.783)
<b>Observations (N)</b>	78	78	78	78
<b>R</b>	0.448	0.490	0.549	0.584
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.201	0.240	0.302	0.341
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.180	0.199	0.221	0.168

Table 13: results regression analysis focussed on consumption comprehensiveness and frequency and the cognitive dimension of customer engagement.

\*statistical significant at 5% level (two-tailed)

## D.9 Results regression analysis consumption intensity and customer engagement

	<b>Model 1</b> Main effects antecedents	<b>Model 2</b> Main effects + moderator	<b>Model 3</b> Full model	<b>Model 4</b> Full model with control variables
<b>Main effects</b>				
Constant	0.970 (0.070)	1.075 (0.077)	0.997 (0.197)	0.718 (0.405)
Customer satisfaction	0.319 (0.019)*	0.321 (0.019)*	0.329 (0.024)*	0.295 (0.039)*
Customer involvement	0.354 (0.000)*	0.359 (0.000)*	0.358 (0.000)*	0.336 (0.001)*
Consumption intensity		-0.050 (0.707)	-0.031 (0.871)	-0.033 (0.870)
<b>Interaction effects</b>				
Consumption intensity x customer satisfaction			0.015 (0.865)	-0.005 (0.958)
Consumption intensity x customer involvement			-0.010 (0.924)	-0.022 (0.835)

**Control variables**

Age				-0.007 (0.657)
Education				0.081 (0.265)
Income				-0.027 (0.759)
Customer life				-0.163 (0.233)
Monthly purchase				0.341 (0.005)*
Purchase value				0.114 (0.285)
<b>Observations (N)</b>	78	78	78	78
<b>R</b>	0.541	0.542	0.543	0.685
<b>R2</b>	0.293	0.294	0.294	0.469
<b>Adjusted R2</b>	0.274	0.265	0.245	0.364

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Table 14: results regression analysis focussed on one overarching scale of consumption intensity and customer engagement.

\*statistical significant at 5% level (two-tailed)