

# **Return on Investment of Social Media: an exploratory study on the impact of message intention to the trust of followers on Twitter.**

Author: Laura Klaver  
University of Twente  
P.O. Box 217, 7500AE Enschede  
The Netherlands  
l.c.j.h.klaver@student.utwente.nl

**ABSTRACT.** Nowadays companies often use Twitter to communicate and create interaction with business partners and end-consumers. Question however, remains whether the use of Twitter is effective and results in a positive Return on Investment (ROI). On the basis of a provided ROI model by Favier (2012), this paper will explore the influence of the message intention of a Tweet on the trust level of the Twitter followers. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to explain the influence of the five types of message intention; expressive, conative, informative, phatic & meta-linguistic, and trust.

**Supervisors:** Dr. A.M. von Raesfeld Meijer  
Ms. A. Ridder, MSc.

## **Keywords**

Twitter; trust; message intention; social media; B2B; ROI

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The rise of Web 2.0 and the worldwide embracement of Social Media have opened up new ways of social interaction. E-marketers predicted a 12% growth in Social Media users in 2012 as to 2011, which has led to 1.43 billion Social Media accounts (Arno, 2012). It is obvious that businesses have to follow this trend and acknowledge that Social Media is a mainstream business platform and an essential part of the social landscape (Constantinides, 2009). Especially firms in a Business-to-Consumer (B2C) context already make use of this new medium, after witnessing the rapid growth of Social Media (Andzulis, Panagopoulos & Rapp, 2012). Business-to-Business (B2B) firms are following B2C firms and start using Social Media, however, little is known on how firms in a B2B context can benefit from the use of Social Media and whether or not it is suitable for the B2B market.

Social Media knows many different forms. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) mention several categories including; collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds and virtual social worlds. This paper will highlight a popular medium that falls within the category of a micro blog, Twitter. Twitter is a content-based social medium which allows its users to post short messages (140 signs), called Tweets, and enables 'followers' to comment to or retweet these messages.

A general concern, for both B2C and B2B companies, is whether or not Twitter practices are effective and how to measure this effectiveness, or in different words, the Return on Investment (ROI) of the Twitter practices. Several ROI models are proposed in literature (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010), yet in this research the author will make use of the ROI model as proposed by Favier (2012). Favier suggests that the Return on Investment of Twitter depends on four different variables; time, trust, sentiment and income. This research will elaborate on the variable *trust* as proposed by Favier (2012).

This research will argue that the message intention, thus, the reason for creating a message and airing it, contributes positively to the trust level of followers. Therefore the research question that has been the focus of this research is: "*What is the effect of Message Intention on the variable Trust from the ROI Model?*" Message intention normally gets retrieved automatically from the marketing strategy and communication (Rowley, 1998; Kotler, 2005; Ho & Dempsey, 2010) and is often taken for granted. A content analysis and different message intentions, as proposed by Janssen & Zhang (2009) and Jakobson (1960) should indicate whether there is a positive relationship between the message intention and the trust level of follower-to-follower and sender-to-follower in Twitter. The analysis will be retrieved from four case studies, all Twitter accounts from the B2B companies Intel & Oracle.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### *Trust*

The factor trust is one that has been described extensively over the past decades in different fields of study. According to the definition of Favier (2012), trust entails trustworthiness between the marketer and follower and between follower-follower. The level of trust is essential in assessing whether or not someone trusts a Tweet and whether or not the followers will accept the message and perhaps even will get involved with the Tweet. Many scholars acknowledge the indispensability of

the trust factor within the marketing field (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Miyamoto & Rexha, 2004). Moreover, trust is not only important in marketing transactions and interaction, trust is the basis for every human social interaction, notwithstanding online social interaction (Abdul-Rahman & Hailes, 2000).

In an offline context, there is much information available on the construction and determinants of trust. One thing that has been stated in literature is that, in case of personal selling in a B2B context, the salesperson is a key factor in the trust development of consumers, due to affect (e.g. confidence of relying on the salesperson) and cognition (e.g. salesperson's competencies and benevolence) (Swan, Bowers & Richardson, 1999). Factors as communication, expertise of the salesperson, the benevolence of the salesperson, and cooperation seem to have a positive effect on the development of trust of buyers (Crosby et al., 1990; Lagace et al., 1991; Swan et al., 1988). Doney, Barry and Abratt (2007) add that also service outcomes, technical, functional and economical quality, influence the trust level of the buyer.

However, in an online context, it is unknown how trust is developing. Some studies have been conducted towards the determinants of trust for e-commerce and general websites (Lee & Turban, 2001; Roy, Dewit & Aubert, 2001), yet there is not much literature on the construction of trust on Social Media, and in particular, Twitter.

One thing regarding trust that influences the way trust is perceived in online context, is the fact that trust has to be build on three different platforms. Abdul-Rahman & Hailes (2000) propose three forms of trust; interpersonal, system and dispositional trust. The authors define interpersonal trust as the trust between one agent and another. System trust refers to the trust that a person perceives when using a certain system. At last, the dispositional trust is someone's intuitive trust that is at the basis of one's personality. This research will focus on the interpersonal trust, however it should be kept in mind that the other two trust forms could affect a person's perception towards overall trust of using social media and interacting on social media (Urban et al., 2000; Abdul-Rahman & Hailes, 2000). System- and dispositional trust play a major role, especially in Social Media in which privacy matters are still a point of discussion (Gross & Acquisti, 2005).

The trust level between the sender and the receiver, so in this case, the sending company and receiving follower, is one that is difficult to establish. Due to the fact that companies use Social Media mainly for marketing purposes, followers could experience trust issues and are more likely to trust opinions from a follower-to-follower level (Cha & Haddidi, 2010), which should be overcome since trust is the basis of the customer-company relationship and eventually brand loyalty (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Also, from a more B2B perspective, trust in a strategic partner is essential to compensate the vulnerability that comes with a partnership and commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Therefore it is essential for companies to know how to cope with this potential problem and how to win the follower's trust on Twitter.

### *Message Intention*

The message intention is the "raison d'être" of a Tweet, so the reason why a Tweet is created and aired. Normally, a message intention is retrieved from the marketing strategy (Rowley, 1998; Kotler, 2005; Ho & Dempsey, 2010) without even thinking about it deliberately. The message intention could be seen as the basis for the message content and the way how a message will be framed.

Scholars have different views on how a message gets its intention, especially in the context of Twitter where Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM) plays a major role. Some argue a top down approach, which indicates that the message intention is a natural consequence of a company's marketing strategy (Rowley, 1998; Kotler, 2005; Ho & Dempsey, 2010). These authors argue that a marketing strategy indicates the communication objectives and the message intention will be retrieved from the marketing strategy or social media strategy. When the intention is established, the message can be designed and the right communication channel can be chosen. Another perspective could be named as the bottom-up approach. In this perspective the message intention is subjected to the target audience and its communal norms and the medium that is used (Kozinets et al., 2010). These scholars question whether a message intention can be send out by the company. The evolvement of a message on Twitter over time exposes a Tweet to opinions and desired intentions from outside the company (Kietzmann et al., 2011) and a Tweet will get subjected to the range of external intentions and will be used for different purposes by the external network.

Twitter offers marketers a wide range of message intentions that could be taken into account when writing a message and seeking for the right purpose. Jansen & Zhang (2009) identified 23 different message intentions that were found to be used on Social Media. The 'action codes', as Jansen & Zhang call them are a wide range of Twitter-specific message intentions that fit the unique functionalities of the medium.

These 23 message intentions could be categorised in a six-step framework proposed by Jakobson (1960), initially for novel writing. However, it seems that the six categories as indicated by Jakobson (1960) are still relevant and could be applied to the message intentions used at Twitter. This categorisation by Jakobson (1960) and the action codes by Janssen & Zhang (2009), together make a consolidated classification of message intentions<sup>1</sup>. Yet, this classification only considers the message intentions from a top-down approach and does not cover the possibility of the bottom up approach as suggested by Kozinets et al. (2010). In the method section the categorisation will be explained in-depth.

After reviewing the variables in this context it could be argued that the literature available on the relationship between these variables is quite poor. Apparently there is room for a different angle to these variables. It does not seem from literature that marketing scholars question the way of designing a message on Social Media.

Marketing Communication literature advocates for the use of Integrated Marketing Communication in which marketers think deliberately about the message and the way how to design such a message for marketing communication purposes (Kotler & Bowen, 2005; Rowley, 1998). These scholars mention a bunch of practical steps to undertake to work towards an effective offline marketing message. According to Kotler and Bowen (2005), a message becomes successful when factors as message structure, format, content, communication channel and the AIDA model are combined. A message should create *Attention, Interest, Desire* and should lead to *Action*. To polish the mentioned aspects of a message, the message intention should be clearly stated. All of these steps could be taken to optimise the effectiveness of the five forms of marketing communication messages; advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, Public Relations, personal selling.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1, figure 1 for the classification scheme.

Therefore it can be argued that marketers do pay attention to the content and the intention of offline marketing communications, however nowhere in literature can be found that these practical steps could be applied to Social Media marketing, nor that it has been applied to Social Media before. Perhaps there is a reason for the fact that there has been little attention to the message design and effectiveness of Social Media, yet this research intends to explore the importance of message intention on the trust level of followers on Twitter. As proposed by several authors, a more in-depth understanding of the use of Twitter could be beneficial to marketing performance of a company, and could even lead to a better overall business performance.

## 2.1 Six Intentions Framework

In 1960, Roman Jakobson did research on the several functions and purposes of messages in novel writing. His work led to six different general writing purposes that apply to the process of message sending. He believed that all parts of the classical communication model; sender, receiver, message, code, contact and context, all possessed a different writing purpose. Due to the fact that Jakobson's work initially was appointed to novel writing, one of the six purposes, poetic, will be excluded from this research since it is assumed to be irrelevant in this context. For this research, this framework has become an ideal categorisation for the 23 different action codes, the idea behind taking the action of airing a Tweet.

The five message intentions which will be used are; expressive, conative, informative, phatic and meta-linguistic. An expressive message intention is writing to express feelings, ideas, opinions etc. This form is completely sender-centred, which means that the writer does not consider the reader while writing his message. An example on Twitter could be the documentation of daily activities by mostly young Twitter users (Java et al., 2007). The conative message intention is a broad term that entails all the writing that persuade or affect the reader emotionally. The affection is where marketers look for, so it is likely to come across this writing purpose on commercial Twitter accounts. The third message intention is the informative one. The informative message intention exists to inform the reader about something in which he or she might be interested in. A phatic message intention is the usage of colloquial and informal writing to establish and maintain contact with the follower. Asking how someone is doing could be an example of phatic messaging. At last, there is the meta-linguistic message intention. This message intention entails commenting on an initial piece of writing.

## 2.2 Propositions

With the knowledge retrieved from literature, it can be stated that there has been limited research conducted on the importance of message design, in particular message intention, and the perceived trust by followers. Although no explicit assumptions have been tested in previous literature, some scholars discuss several implicit factors of message intentions that would affect trust hypothetically.

The usage of the six intentions framework of Jakobson (1960), combined with the 23 action codes of Jansen & Zhang (2009) has led to five different propositions. Even though such a research has not been conducted, some scholars draw implicitly some connections between the concept of message intentions and the trust level of followers. Jakobson himself mentions that an expressive message intention does not consider the reader, so it could be argued that this does not

contribute to trust building and therefore has a negative effect to trust of followers. Cha & Haddidi (2010) argue that Twitter users are more likely to trust messages and reviews from a follower-to-follower level, rather than sender-to-follower level due to the commercial intentions of Twitter accounts of companies. This would mean that messages with an persuasive character or with an informative character could make followers suspicious and could affect the trust level negatively. Another indication for a possible connection between message intention and trust is given in literature. Commenting and reacting to a message could have a positive effect on the trust level, provided that it should be done properly (Utz et al., 2009; Zhang & Jansen, 2011). This message purpose aligns with the meta-linguistic message intention from the framework. Lastly, there is the phatic message intention left. The researcher has not been able to find literature that substantiate a cohesion between the trust level and a phatic message intention. However, a phatic message intention is defined as a colloquial message with the purpose of keeping in touch with the reader. Some marketing scholars mention that communication has a direct, positive effect to trust and eventually lead to relationship marketing (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Therefore it can be assumed that there is a positive correlation between the variables phatic message intention and trust.

This evidence in literature leads to the following propositions:

H1: There is a negative relationship between an expressive message intention and the trust of Twitter followers.

H2: Conative message intentions have a negative influence on the trust of followers.

H3: Informative message intentions have a negative influence on the trust of Twitter followers.

H4: Phatic message intentions have a positive influence on the trust of Twitter followers.

H5: Meta-linguistic message intentions have a positive influence on the trust of Twitter followers.

### 3. METHOD

#### 3.1 Twitter

Twitter is a content-based social medium that stands out due to the message mechanism that is used on this platform (Bulearca & Bulearca, 2011). The messages that are called 'Tweets' consist of 140 characters each and can be spread out and search for through the whole Twitter network and search engines. Twitter mainly is used to talk about daily activities or to share or seek information (Java et al., 2007). Twitter offers its users the possibility to react to Tweets of other Twitter users, which is called commenting. Furthermore users have the opportunity to share interesting Tweets of other users with their network by 're-tweeting' them. The Tweets and Twitter's ability to respond to a Tweet or re-tweet this makes this tool very interesting and a meaningful analysis tool.

Recently, many companies also embraced Twitter and are using it now as a communication tool for two-way communication with customers and to enjoy the reach of Twitter and its advantages in terms of brand awareness.

#### 3.2 Study Objects

##### *Intel*

Intel is a publically listed company that manufactures integrated digital technology platforms for computer systems.

The company was founded in 1968 in the United States of America and has grown to a multinational company with 105.000 employees worldwide. It owns multiple overseas subsidiaries and has been present in many different industries. Due to the products Intel offer, the company is operating in a Business-to-Business (B2B) environment, selling its products to computer manufacturers as Dell & Hewlett-Packard (HP).

Intel itself is only operating in one industry, namely the semiconductor industry, yet its products are used in many different industries ranging from communication equipment to IT services and IT consulting. On a yearly basis, Intel sells for about 53 billion dollar, its main customers are Lenovo Group Ltd., Hewlett-Packard Company & Dell Computer Corporation. Some of the major competitors of the company are IBM, Oracle & Texas Instrument Inc.

Even though Intel sells only in B2B industries, it does pay attention to the end consumer in its marketing strategy. Intel focuses on building brand awareness and tries to generate demand by marketing consumer and business audiences (Intel Annual Report, 2012). Marketing activities are executed in two different ways, company specific marketing activities and co-marketing with business customers as Dell and HP.

The Intel Twitter accounts that are used as case studies in this research are @Intelsys, which is the account of Intel Intelligence Systems and @Intelinside. The first account mainly focuses on the promotion of Intel intelligence systems, but mainly tries to create a better understanding of intelligent systems for its followers by giving real-life examples of the usage of the Intel systems. Intelinside aims to inspire its followers by producing tweets on new inspiring innovations. According to the Intelinside Twitter profile, this account especially targets consumers.

##### *Oracle*

The corporation Oracle was founded in 1977 in the USA. Oracle entered the market in 1979 with the first commercial relational database. From this starting point, the company has transformed itself in one of the most renown companies for software solutions and hardware products, for both business and consumer use. The company has become a multinational company with subsidiaries all over the world. Today, Oracle employs over 100.000 employees worldwide and has an annual turnover of 37 billion dollars.

Oracle operates in the global software industry, together with its main competitors as HP, IBM and Microsoft. It is not possible to identify its main customers since the customer base of Oracle is very diverse and fragmented.

The Oracle Twitter accounts that have been used as case studies are @OracleProfit & @Oraclecommerce. Oracle Profit is named after the similar named Oracle magazine that publishes useful information for professionals in the IT sector. Furthermore, this account also is used as a promotional tool for Oracle. Oraclecommerce is the informative Twitter account that informs users, which either could be B2C and B2B related, about the Oracle commerce software solutions. These solutions are software tools to maintain, analyse and increase brand awareness via different ways. These solutions both cover the B2C as well as the B2B business models, so it is likely that the follower audience will be diverse.

These study objects have been chosen for several reasons. At first, since this research is trying to get results for a B2B context, it was best to use B2B companies. It is expected that B2B companies would use Twitter in a different way than B2C companies. Intel and Oracle, in particular, are chosen due to their reputation as being advanced Social Media users.

Especially Intel is mentioned frequently as “top-of-the-class” when it comes to Twittering for B2B companies.

#### *ROI Model*

The ROI model by Favier (2012) is a formula to measure the Return on Investment of different Social Media platforms, including Twitter. The model consists of four variables; time, trust, sentiment and income. From now on, the ROI model will be left aside, and this paper will continue with one variable from the model; trust.

### **3.3 Measurements**

The initial thought for this research was to use the variable sentiment as the dependent variable for this research. As suggested by Favier (2012), the sentiment should be retrieved from both the comments and re-tweets of followers. However, the research group did not have access to the comments due to privacy issues and the researcher found out that followers do not add sentiment to a re-tweet, so retrieving sentiment from re-tweets therefore turned out to be an irrelevant metric. With no data to analyse, the research group decided to shift the research to one of the other variables from the ROI Model, trust.

To collect data for this research, a Content Analysis of Tweets has been conducted. Most data that was retrieved from the Tweets were frequencies (e.g. # of followers, # of re-tweets) and content-based data as message intention, links and topics.

The trust level, as defined as the dependent variable in this research, is calculated by a formula used by Favier (2012) and created by Danzarella (2012), a marketing blogger. Danzarella suggests that trust can be formulated as the retweet-to-tweet ratio. The number of re-tweets would indicate the trustworthiness of the sender. In case a follower does not trust the follower, one would never re-tweet a message. So, Danzarella argues that the more re-tweets a Tweet get, the more followers perceive the Tweet as being trustworthy. His calculation is as follows:  $((\text{Average Re-tweets per day}) / (\text{Average Tweets per day})) / \text{Followers}$ . This metric results in one outcome per accounts. This research used this metric with a little adjustment. It was interesting to see the retweet-to-tweet ratio per day, so the research left out the ‘average’. The metric used in this research therefore is the following:  $((\text{Re-tweets per day}) / (\text{Tweets per day})) / \text{Followers}$ . The output from the metric was multiplied by 10.000, due to the small outcomes.

For the message intention, the six intentions framework was used. To calculate the “amount of intention” within a message, the 23 intention possibilities have been counted for every Tweet and were categorised into the five intentions afterwards. From these counts, percentages were conducted to make it a more standardised measure. The cases which were reported to have no intention at all were excluded due to the use of percentages. Including these zero intention cases would lead to an end percentage of less than 100%. This adjustment led to an exclusion of 8 cases, with an end result of 151 valid cases.

The categorisation of the action codes into the five general message purposes of Jakobson (1960) has been executed on the basis of the definitions from both the action codes and general message purposes that are stated in the two articles (Jakobson, 1960; Jansen & Zhang, 2009).

For the expressive message intention from Jakobson (1960), the author looked at action codes that match the self-centred idea, so writing to express thoughts, ideas etc. without triggering others to respond. This characteristic was found in

the announcements, consuming, expecting, maintenance, missing and research. The conative messages are characterised by a strong affective character, completely focused on trying to affect the reader emotionally. Confirmation, negative commenting, ordering, patronising, positive commenting, questioning, recommendations, requests, responses and suggestions all are focused on affect the reader either positively or negatively. The main aim of the informative message purpose, is logically to inform people about something. Forwarding something, notifications, recommendations, suggestions, supplementing and providing research all are aimed at informing followers about something. Research is used twice, research provides information, so it is informative. However, research is defined as ‘examining objects’ and people could express their thoughts about that. In that case research is expressive. A phatic message intention focuses on informal interaction between sender and follower. Answering, chitchatting, questioning and responding are action codes to stimulate the informal interaction. Finally, the action codes that fall within the meta-linguistic message purpose should have the intention to add something to an initial message. Answering, commenting in all its forms, and supplementing fall within this category.

To analyse the relationship between the independent variable message intention and the dependent variable trust, the researcher chose a multiple regression analysis with the use of percentages. The variable message intention was divided into five categories, which led to a multiple regression analysis. The percentages result in a weighted balance of the different intentions within one Tweet. This approach provides the opportunity to differentiate between a high presence of a certain message intention and a low or no presence. A Tweet in which there are five message intentions reported, could lead to two message intentions that fall within the category of an expressive message intention and for example, three message intentions that fall within the category of an informative message intention. In this way a difference can be made between these little, though significant differences.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

The data was collected with an Content Analysis of the Twitter accounts for a period of one month (February 2013). This specific month was chosen due to the presence of an event, which gave insight in changing Twitter behaviour during events and normal days. The Tweets were retrieved by using an online export tool, [www.allmytweets.net](http://www.allmytweets.net).

To validate a rather subjective analysis as a Content Analysis, the research group decided to work in pairs of two, who independently from each other analysed the same set of Tweets. After the separate analysis, the inter-rator reliability was tested using a Cohen’s Kappa in SPSS. For the Twitter account of Intel Intelligent Systems, the Cohen’s Kappa was reported as 0.94, which means a significant reliability. For the accounts of Intel Inside, Oracle Profit and Oracle Commerce, which together account for the same amount of Tweets as Intel Intelligent Systems, a Cohen’s Kappa of 0.86, was reported.

In the Content Analysis 12 factors have been tracked. At first there are some frequencies documented; #Re-tweets, #Favourite status, # hastags and the usernames mentioned within the Tweets. Furthermore a closer look has been taken to the segmentation and targeting of the Tweets. For this point of interest, the following factors have been analysed; segmented audience, targeted vs. non-targeted tweet. The last category of

Correlations coefficients of model variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1 Retweet-to-Tweet ratio	1,36	1,6					
2 Expressive intention percentage	11,19	18,57	-,053				
3 Conative intention percentage	19,33	17,25	,027	-,230**			
4 Informative intention percentage	53,1	25,1	,089	-,387**	-,427**		
5 Phatic intention percentage	5,52	12,95	,030	-,077	-,071	-,277**	
6 Metalinguistic intention percentage	10,87	17,7	-,119	-,220**	-,076	-,393**	-,189*

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

**Table 1. Correlation coefficients.**

the researched factors are mainly content-based. For this reason an analysis was made of the Tweet sentiment, the Tweet direction, the type of Links used in a Tweet, the purpose of Tweets, the type of words used in a Tweet and finally the overall topic of the Tweet. This analysis has provided much interesting data, yet since this research is just focusing on the message intention and the trust level, the researcher used the data output from the purpose of Tweets and the number of Retweets.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The data was analysed with several statistical measurements. At first, descriptive statistics are used to give a brief, yet convenient overview of the data. Descriptive statistics will give an idea of the most frequent used message intentions.

Furthermore a multiple regression analysis of percentages of message intentions was conducted. The use of a multiple regression seemed the most suitable possibility because of the explaining character of a multiple regression with several predictor variables. A regression analysis estimates the relationship between a dependent and independent variable and also shows the explained variance in independent variables and its effect on the dependent variable. Furthermore some additional descriptive statistics are used to analyse the frequencies of the data. To check the assumptions for regression, several tests within SPSS are run.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1.1 Frequencies

At first, the frequency table will be discussed. The frequency tables show the accumulated percentages of the values for one of the independent variables and tells something about the frequency of certain values. From the descriptive statistics and the frequencies it can be said that 65,6%<sup>2</sup> of the cases did not have an expressive message intention. 60,3%<sup>3</sup> of the Tweets entailed one or more conative message intentions. Only 6%<sup>4</sup> of all Tweets did not include one or more informative message intentions, which thereby is the most common used message intention on the four accounts of Oracle and Intel. Phatic and meta-linguistic message intentions were less frequently mentioned, with respectively 82,1%<sup>5</sup> and 68,8%<sup>6</sup> in which none

<sup>2</sup> Appendix, table 1

<sup>3</sup> Appendix, table 2

<sup>4</sup> Appendix, table 3

<sup>5</sup> Appendix, table 4

of the both message intentions were reported. These statistics prove that the B2B Twitter accounts of both Oracle and Intel are mainly focused on informing their followers, less attention is paid on social interaction (phatic message intention) and using Twitter as a platform for feedback and commenting (meta-linguistic message intention).

### 4.1.2 Multiple Regression

From literature, it was suggested that there were negative relationships between expressive, conative and informative message intentions and the trust level of followers. Furthermore scholars argued positive relationships between phatic and metalinguistic message intentions and trust.

The table with the correlations (see the top of this page) provides much information on the strength of the relationship between one of the independent variables, message intention, and the dependent variable, trust. It also calculates the correlation between the different independent variables and tells whether or not the outcomes are significant. From the data analysis can be concluded that there have been found two negative, yet weak, correlations for the expressive message intention (-.053) and the meta-linguistic message intention (-.119). The rest of the correlations are positive, but also weak. Furthermore it should be stated that none of the correlations are found to be significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

From these observations, the hypotheses on the expressive and phatic message intentions seem to have the right direction. The other hypotheses are not justified by the observations from the correlation analysis.

Prior to the analysis of the multiple linear regression, the associated assumptions have to be checked first by using tests as Pearson correlation to test the multicollinearity and a Durbin-Watson test to check the assumption of independent errors. It can be argued that the assumptions of variable types, non-zero variance, no perfect multicollinearity are fulfilled. It is assumed that the predictors are uncorrelated with external variables. Furthermore, the variance of the residuals is overall constant and therefore passes the condition of homoscedasticity. The Durbin Watson test indicates a score of .869, which is significantly lower than the desired score of 2.0. This means that there is a cause for concern whether or not this data analysis fulfills this condition. It also does not seem that the condition of the normally distributed errors is met. Finally, the assumption for independence and linearity are fulfilled.

<sup>6</sup> Appendix, table 5

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	,144 <sup>a</sup>	,021	-.006	1,605654	,021	,776	4	146	,542	,869

a. Predictors: (Constant), Metalinguistic intention percentage, Conative intention percentage, Phatic intention percentage, Expressive intention percentage

b. Dependent Variable: Retweet-to-Tweet ratio

**Table 2. Model Summary of Regression Analysis**

Due to fact that not all of the assumptions are met with this data set, the researcher will not be able to generalise the results of this research and apply them outside of this test sample. Moreover, this conclusion gets intensified by the score of the adjusted  $R^2$  (-.006), which is a totally different score than the score for the  $R^2$  (.021). These data are retrieved from the model summary output from SPSS that is displayed at the end of the previous page. This table provides the researcher with all the information on the performed multiple regression. Especially the  $R^2$  and adjusted  $R^2$  are of interest, since these values tell something about the extent of influence of the tested independent variables, five forms of message intention, have on the dependent variable, trust and whether or not the results are representative and could be applied to a population instead of a sample.

The multiple regression has led to a correlation coefficient of  $R = 0.144$ . This outcome states that the relationship between the overall independent variable, message intention, has a rather weak, positive relationship on trust. The  $R^2$  is 0,021, which means that 2.1% of the explained variance in the trust variable is accounted for by the message intention. The small score for the F ratio<sup>7</sup> indicates that it is questionable if the use of a multiple regression is the best fitted model for this data. Furthermore, the coefficients table shows that the informative message intention is seen as the constant independent variable. It could be stated that only the informative message intention has led to a significant outcome with a strong Beta.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,588	,282		5,638	,000
	Expressive intention percentage	-.007	,008	-.084	-.958	,340
	Conative intention percentage	,000	,008	-.003	-.032	,975
	Phatic intention percentage	,000	,010	-.003	-.038	,970
	Metalinguistic intention percentage	-.013	,008	-.139	-1,595	,113

a. Dependent Variable: Retweet-to-Tweet ratio

**Table 3. Multiple Regression coefficients output.**

## 5. CONCLUSION

Social Media and marketing are a frequently mentioned combination. The rise of Social Media, its practical advantages and the enormous amount of users make Social Media a worthwhile marketing tool, and it seems to grow continuously in the coming years. Twitter and its ideal functionality for short communication is a perfect way of monitoring consumers and engage with them.

The crucial role of trust in communication, relationship building and maintaining has been widely established by scholars. Without trust, the use of Social Media

for the marketing field would not work. To make it become successful, the trust level of the followers of corporate Twitter accounts should be understood. As a dependent variable in this research, and suggested by the ROI model of Favier (2012), it is obvious that trust plays a major role in whether or not Twitter will be effective for a company. However, interesting is what factors do influence the trust level of followers. Once this is known, companies will be able to set up a practical marketing strategy that focuses on the optimisation of the explaining factors of trust and provides tools to affect those factors positively.

Message intention, on the contrary, is something that has been poorly researched within the marketing field. It is argued that message intention derives almost naturally from the marketing strategy and the executing marketer. The message intention is the basis for the content that someone writes and should be precise and clear to transfer the “real” message to the reader.

The combination of these two variables in this research did not lead to revealing outcomes. The explained variance of trust by the influence of message intention is 2,1%, which is only a minor share. Furthermore, the propositions that were designed for this research on the basis of other scholars, are not all justified. There has been found a negative relationship between an expressive message intention and trust (-0.053), which defends proposition 1. The correlation direction for the relationship between the conative message intention and trust was found to be positive (0.027), however the hypothesis assumed a negative relationship, so H2 should be rejected. The correlation coefficient for the informative message intention and trust was positive (0.089), so H3 should also be rejected. A phatic message intention does have a positive relationship with trust (0.03) and therefore hypothesis four can be defended. The final relationship, a meta-linguistic message intention and trust, is found to be negative (-0.119), whereas literature proposed a positive relationship. Therefore hypothesis 5 should be rejected.

The significance levels of all five correlation coefficients are too high to presume that the correlations are significant and reliable. Furthermore the majority of the correlations are found to be quite weak.

The frequency tables resulted from this research, also showed some interesting insights. Whereas literature suggested that the use of corporate accounts mainly is focused on the improvement of fast interaction with consumers (Jansen & Zhang, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann et al., 2011), the outcomes of the frequency tables shows that there little evidence of an active use of phatic message intentions and meta-linguistic message intentions. The most frequently used message intention was the informative message intention, which indicates that Twitter, in these case studies, was mainly used to spread information instead as a medium for interaction and customer relationship management, as proposed by many scholars.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix, table 6

Not only in the frequencies, differences between practice and literature are found. A conative message intention has found to be positive for the trust level of followers, whereas scholars assumed a negative relationship due to the persuasive character of the message intention, most often used for marketing purposes. Furthermore, Cha & Haddidi (2010) mentioned that followers are more likely to trust information from fellows instead of tweeting companies, so information sent out by companies would be perceived as less trustworthy as information from other followers. Despite that, a weak, yet positive relationship was found during this research. This insinuates that information sent by companies does not necessarily have to have a negative influence on trust building. However, information is a broad term and perhaps the types of information spread by a company could make a difference in the level of trustworthiness, yet this has not been examined in this research. At last, the meta-linguistic message intentions seem to have a negative influence on trust in this research, whereas several scholars argued that providing feedback and giving comments to initial messages would improve the trust level between sender and follower (Utz et al., 2009; Zhang & Jansen, 2011).

### 5.1.1 Discussion

Even though the relevance of a message intention seems inevitable for the design of a marketing message, the outcomes of this research showed only a small explained variance in the level of trust. Furthermore the correlation coefficients have found to be insignificant and unreliable.

The lack of existing academic literature and previous research forced the researcher to build hypotheses on literature that was specifically focused on other forms of communication. Since Twitter is quite unique with the possibility of 140 characters per Tweet, one could argue that theories for novel writing (six intentions framework, Jakobson) would have a different application to Twitter message intentions.

Also the fact that the researcher did not have access to the private corporate profile of the companies, but just to the public timeline, excluded some important information from the data that was used for this research. The public profiles hide a share of comments and re-tweets that are sent by secured Twitter users.

The research conducted here was subjected to the above mentioned limitations and the researcher assumes that the outcomes would have changed if there was full access to the Twitter accounts and thus full access to all of the re-tweets. This would have changed the percentages used in both the correlations and multiple regression, and could make the difference between a significant and insignificant outcome. Furthermore, the data set which was used for this research is probably too limited to collect enough data for the categorisation that was designed for this research. A lot of the action codes were not used.

### 5.1.2 Further Research

This study has established that the literature on Social Media, and in particular, the practical use of Social Media is quite limited. Scholars are fully aware of the enormous potential of Social Media and its influence on human communication behaviour and on marketing practices, but up till now, scholars only described Social Media and its functions, yet failed to show the business potential of these media.

This also counts for Twitter. Previous writers and bloggers praise Twitter for its unique post mechanism with the 140 characters and mention the potential gain of the usage of such a medium for a company's marketing activities. However, the research on how companies could actually use Twitter and make profits via Twitter is still in the exploratory stage. Scholars do mention that that the use of Social Media has a tremendous business potential (Andzulis, Panagopoulos & Rapp, 2012). Starting with a Social Media strategy and an integration of the traditional marketing communication channels with Social Media will make the process more structured and creates a solid fundament (Hoffman and Fodor, 2010; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Andzulis, Panagopoulos et al., 2012). Furthermore it is said to be beneficial for the start up of the Social Media activities that already established forms of marketing communication channels are supporting and involving the new Social Media marketing communication channels (Kietzmann et al., 20011). The research, thus, have been highly exploratory and mainly descriptive, whereas marketing professionals will be looking for the translation from literature to clear steps to undertake to make Twitter marketing activities more successful.

From the limitations of this research, it can be stated that it is recommended that more research will be conducted in the near future to get an overall understanding of the functioning Twitter and Social Media in general from both a sender and receiver perspective. It would be interesting to examine how marketers use Social Media next to their traditional marketing activities, how they monitor the effectiveness of Social Media, their primary usage purposes, message design etc. Yet, before answers to these questions can be given, scholars should examine the Social Media usage purposes of consumers; how they perceive communication over Twitter, what factors influence their understanding of a relationship between a company and follower etc. There is a huge research gap that still can be examined. Furthermore, the difference between B2C and B2B usage should be further highlighted. In the current situation, the boundaries of B2C and B2B usage are blurred and researchers build further work on a mixture of B2C and B2B literature, yet it is not clear if the application of Social Media for marketing activities is the same in B2C and B2B industries.

Once we have a more general understanding of Twitter and Social Media and the way how both sender and receiver perceive these mediums, research could go more in-depth, and for example, examine the influence of message contents, message purposes etc. However up till now, there is too little knowledge on what factors are essential in online communication via Twitter and without this knowledge, research on more specific topics will continue to be vague. The ideal situation would be to provide marketing professionals with a set of tools which they can use to optimise and strategically classify the marketing activities via Social Media and Twitter. However, before we get there, a lot of research should be done first.

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Appendix

Figure 1

<b>Expressive</b>	<b>Conative</b>	<b>Informative</b>	<b>Phatic</b>	<b>Metalinguistic</b>
<b>Announcement</b>	Confirmation	Forwarding	Answer	Answer
<b>Consuming</b>	Negative comment	Notification	Chitchat	Comment
<b>Expecting</b>	Ordering	Recommendation	Question	Negative comment
<b>Maintenance</b>	Patronising	Research	Response	Positive comment
<b>Missing</b>	Positive comment	Suggestion		Supplement
<b>Research</b>	Question	Supplement		
	Recommendation			
	Request			
	Response			
	Suggestion			

Table 1

**Expressive intention percentage**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	99	64,7	65,6
14,30	1	,7	,7	66,2
16,67	4	2,6	2,6	68,9
16,72	1	,7	,7	69,5
20,00	12	7,8	7,9	77,5
25,00	9	5,9	6,0	83,4
33,30	10	6,5	6,6	90,1
33,40	1	,7	,7	90,7
40,00	4	2,6	2,6	93,4
50,00	8	5,2	5,3	98,7
100,00	2	1,3	1,3	100,0
Total	151	98,7	100,0	
Missing System	2	1,3		
Total	153	100,0		

Table 2

**Conative intention percentage**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	58	37,9	38,4
16,67	2	1,3	1,3	39,7
20,00	19	12,4	12,6	52,3
25,00	18	11,8	11,9	64,2
28,57	2	1,3	1,3	65,6
33,29	1	,7	,7	66,2
33,30	27	17,6	17,9	84,1
33,33	4	2,6	2,6	86,8
40,00	9	5,9	6,0	92,7
42,80	1	,7	,7	93,4
50,00	7	4,6	4,6	98,0
60,00	3	2,0	2,0	100,0
Total	151	98,7	100,0	
Missing System	2	1,3		
Total	153	100,0		

Table 3

**Informative intention percentage**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	9	5,9	6,0
20,00	6	3,9	4,0	9,9
25,00	5	3,3	3,3	13,2
28,60	1	,7	,7	13,9
33,29	1	,7	,7	14,6
33,30	11	7,2	7,3	21,9
33,33	2	1,3	1,3	23,2
33,34	1	,7	,7	23,8
40,00	12	7,8	7,9	31,8
42,85	1	,7	,7	32,5
50,00	40	26,1	26,5	58,9
57,14	1	,7	,7	59,6
60,00	13	8,5	8,6	68,2
66,67	1	,7	,7	68,9
66,70	22	14,4	14,6	83,4
75,00	6	3,9	4,0	87,4
100,00	19	12,4	12,6	100,0
Total	151	98,7	100,0	
Missing System	2	1,3		
Total	153	100,0		

Table 4

**Phatic intention percentage**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	124	81,0	82,1
14,29	1	,7	,7	82,8
16,67	1	,7	,7	83,4
16,70	1	,7	,7	84,1
20,00	6	3,9	4,0	88,1
25,00	6	3,9	4,0	92,1
28,58	1	,7	,7	92,7
33,30	1	,7	,7	93,4
33,34	1	,7	,7	94,0
40,00	3	2,0	2,0	96,0
50,00	6	3,9	4,0	100,0
Total	151	98,7	100,0	
Missing System	2	1,3		
Total	153	100,0		

Table 5

Metalinguistic intention percentage					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	,00	104	68,0	68,9	68,9
	14,30	1	,7	,7	69,5
	16,65	1	,7	,7	70,2
	16,66	1	,7	,7	70,9
	16,67	1	,7	,7	71,5
	20,00	8	5,2	5,3	76,8
	25,00	4	2,6	2,6	79,5
	33,30	1	,7	,7	80,1
	33,40	13	8,5	8,6	88,7
	50,00	17	11,1	11,3	100,0
	Total	151	98,7	100,0	
Missing	System	2	1,3		
	Total	153	100,0		

Table 6

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8,005	4	2,001	,776	,542 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	376,406	146	2,578		
	Total	384,412	150			

a. Dependent Variable: Retweet-to-Tweet ratio

b. Predictors: (Constant), Metalinguistic intention percentage, Conative intention percentage, Phatic intention percentage, Expressive intention percentage

