

*Research Paper***The role of trustworthy and entertaining content marketing in e-Commerce: Unveiling the key strategies for engaging consumer***Submitted in 26th, November 2023**Accepted in 18th, December 2023**Evaluated by a double-blind review system***INÊS GONÇALVES¹**
ANTÓNIO ROSINHA^{2*}**ABSTRACT****Purpose:**

The main objective of the research is to study the impact of content marketing on e-commerce. The study focuses on the elements of entertainment, Trustworthy, value, and purpose of content marketing and their impact on e-commerce use.

Design/methodology/approach:

The research follows a quantitative methodology with an inductive approach, using a questionnaire. In the initial phase, metrics were adapted and validated for the Portuguese context. The results were analysed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software.

Findings:

After construct validation of the questionnaire results, it can be asserted that the elements of content marketing are Entertainment, Trustworthy, Valuable, and Purpose. This outcome simplifies the study by Sandelowski and Barroso (2007), which identifies intrinsic elements of content marketing as Valuable, Relatable, Trustworthy, Entertaining, New, Coherent, Shareable, and Purposeful.

Regarding the second specific objective, aiming to comprehend which elements of content marketing influence e-commerce, we can infer from the validation of the study hypotheses that among the content marketing elements, trustworthy has the most significant impact on e-commerce usage. Thus, it can be affirmed that individuals are more inclined to engage in online purchases when exposed to content that instils and conveys trust.

Research limitations/implications:

Primarily stemming from the fact that it was only possible to evaluate content marketing in the production phase. The measurement of e-commerce was also a limitation as there

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was no study of a specific case. Additionally, the lack of found studies in the area under investigation proved to be a limiting factor.

Practical implications:

The gathered information has provided relevant insights for a better understanding of content marketing and e-commerce. This data can be utilized by companies and marketing agencies to enhance the effectiveness of their content marketing strategies. For example, creating marketing content that instills trust can be crucial in influencing online purchasing decisions. In conclusion, businesses and agencies aiming to develop marketing content with the goal of encouraging consumers to make online purchases should prioritize content that builds trust, as it is highly valued by consumers.

Originality/value:

This topic was chosen considering its growing importance in society and the lack of specific studies in this area in the Portuguese context.

In future studies, it is recommended to use this type of research focusing on a specific company or agency. This would allow for the examination of consumers' opinions and reactions to the produced content and also verify the outcomes. This approach would lead to more well-founded conclusions and contribute further to the study of the topic.

Keywords: Content Marketing, E-commerce; Marketing Elements; Trustworthy.

1. Introduction

Bill Gates in 1966 already stated that "content is king," as "content is where I expect much of the real money will be made on the Internet" (Gates, 1996). He could not have imagined the evolution that content has undergone to this day.

In the last 5 years, there has been an increase in knowledge in the field of content marketing (Dias, 2018). This term has had various definitions and has been used in different ways in past studies. For example, Rose and Pulizzi (2012) define content marketing as a "strategy focused on creating a valuable experience." In turn, the Content Marketing Institute (2012) defines content marketing as a marketing strategy focused on creating valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain an audience – aiming to drive profitable customer action.

This evolution has made this type of strategy fundamental because it not only works to build trust, generate leads, and cultivate customer loyalty but also because content marketing has gained new importance for the customer (Brenner, 2018). The ease of internet access and the close relationship with social channels have made customers increasingly demanding about what they expect from brands (Abreu, 2020).

Considering the technological changes that have led to the growth of e-commerce, along with other global circumstances, both companies and consumers have seen e-commerce as an advantage. For example, the buying and/or selling process is faster, companies can reach new customers, there is a low cost of operation, and there is the possibility to customize online experiences or products (Duarte, 2020).

The importance of content marketing in e-commerce has been gaining relevance. According to Sickler (2021), when we delve into the sales funnel to understand which metric brings the most ROI, we realize that all point to content marketing.

Greaves (2022) asserts that content marketing is the driving force that supports all other marketing activities. With the right content, e-commerce companies can strengthen their brand image, increase traffic, and improve conversion opportunities.

Holland (2021) acknowledges that content marketing is effective when used on e-commerce websites; the target audience receives engaging and relevant information.

Despite being a researched topic and advocating that content marketing is vital for e-commerce, there is still a need to understand how content marketing variables influence online purchases.

This research aims to verify the relevance of content marketing in e-commerce, and to address the main objective of this investigation, the following specific objectives have been defined:

- Determine the factorial structure of content marketing elements;
- Understand which content marketing elements can influence online purchases.

The research is divided into 5 parts: literature review, methodology, results analysis, discussion, and conclusions. The first part, the literature review, presents the concepts and variables necessary to justify the study. The second part presents the study model and its objectives. In the third part, the results are demonstrated. In the fourth part, the results obtained are discussed based on the literature review. Finally, the fifth part, titled conclusion, presents a summary of the work's argumentative line as well as the theoretical and practical implications.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Content Marketing

2.1.1. Concept

It is noted that the first successful content marketing strategy was in 1895 when John Deere started printing its quarterly magazine – The Furrow. This magazine sought to build a relationship with customers through the sharing of agricultural articles and tips. This marketing strategy demonstrated the importance of content quality over time and prioritizing the customer (Speiser & Matthew, 2020). Regarding the concept, Joe Pulizzi (2012), founder of the Content Marketing Institute, defines it as "a marketing strategy focused on creating valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain the audience – to drive profitable customer action."

Content marketing is a longstanding practice in advertising, dating back to the early days (Lou et al., 2019). As of 2019, it has evolved into a substantial industry, projected to reach \$300 billion. A significant percentage of both B2C (86%) and B2B (91%) organizations employ content marketing, with an increasing number allocating a considerable portion of their budgets to it. Notably, successful organizations allocate around 40% of their marketing budget to content strategy. However, a challenge persists for B2B marketers, as an average of 70% of the content they create goes unused (Marketing Insider Group, 2018).

In the contemporary era, with pervasive technology and digital integration, the extensive use of the Internet has given rise to a new facet of content marketing known as digital

content marketing. Online platforms, especially social networks, play a crucial role in various aspects of people's lives, serving purposes such as work, entertainment, and information gathering. In this digital landscape, consumers are consistently exposed to digital messages, emphasizing the importance of creating relevant and value-rich content that can stand out amidst the noise (Lou et al., 2019).

According to Michael Brenner (2018), CEO of the Marketing Insider Group, content marketing focuses on over-delivering the content that the audience is seeking. It is the effective combination of created, curated, and distributed content. Ho et al. (2020) state that this type of marketing is more than simply creating and sharing content with marketing objectives; otherwise, it wouldn't make sense to segment marketing into different forms and typologies with distinct objectives.

According to Du Plessis (2017), what distinguishes content marketing from other types of marketing is its lack of concern for direct sales. It focuses more on building a closer relationship with potential consumers through relevant and pertinent content. Granata and Scozzese (2019) argue that content marketing is the creation and distribution of relevant and high-quality content to reach stakeholders and potential consumers within the target audience. Pulizzi (2014) states that content marketing involves the economic and marketing process in which valuable and attractive content is created and distributed.

In essence, content marketing aims to lure a targeted audience by providing value-rich, relevant, and consistent content across various channels. The concept extends to digital content marketing, where the focus is on creating, communicating, distributing, and exchanging digital content with value for customers, clients, partners, and the firm (Holliman and Rowley, 2014).

The literature on digital content marketing suggests its positive role in brand building, including generating electronic word-of-mouth, building trust and credibility, and cultivating engaged and loyal customers. Notably, scholars differentiate between digital content marketing and advertising, highlighting that while both share the goal of promoting product sales, content marketing takes a more educational, informative, and entertaining approach, in contrast to the more persuasive tactics employed in advertising (Quy & Sun, 2021).

2.1.2. Importance and Advantages

To understand the impact that content marketing has on various variables, it is necessary to first grasp its importance and advantages. Hawlk (2018) argues that content should be the foundation of any marketing strategy, and every company should have a content marketing strategy. Brenner (2022) asserts that content marketing is crucial because it builds trust, generates leads, and fosters customer loyalty. It helps understand what customers expect from the brands they interact with. Neglecting this marketing strategy is much riskier than investing in it. Brenner (2021) proposes the following advantages of a good content marketing strategy in an article for the Marketing Insider Group:

- 7.8 times increase in website traffic;
- 3 times more leads than paid search for every dollar spent;
- Thought leadership. Brands offering relevant and useful content are seen as thought leaders in their industry, building trust and brand authority;
- Higher conversion rates. Companies using content marketing achieve 6 times higher conversion rates;

- According to Demand Metric, it costs 62% less to launch and maintain a content marketing campaign than any other type of campaign;
- Greater brand attention. 20% of internet users' time is spent consuming content.

2.1.3. Metrics

According to Rez (2018), all content marketing is measurable, as everything produced online can be measured, verified, and calculated. The best way to measure these results is through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Rez (2018) classifies KPIs into the following categories:

- Usage Indicators – Used by the analytics team;
- Secondary or managerial indicators – Used by management;
- Primary indicators – Due to their high importance, they are commonly used by the marketing department and business owner.

Rancati Elisa and Nicollo Gordini (2014) argue that metrics for evaluating content marketing can be divided into 4 categories: 1) Consumption; 2) Sharing; 3) Leads; 4) Sales.

Consumption metrics help measure brand awareness and website traffic generated by content. Examples include page views, downloads, visitors, time on page, and social chatter. These metrics are intuitive and easy to use, providing a wealth of useful information.

Sharing metrics measure the level of consumer content sharing with their network and the engagement that this sharing creates. Examples include likes, shares, links, and emails. This category of metrics is crucial for measuring content diffusion and sharing. However, as consumption metrics, they do not provide information on the actual economic return generated by content marketing.

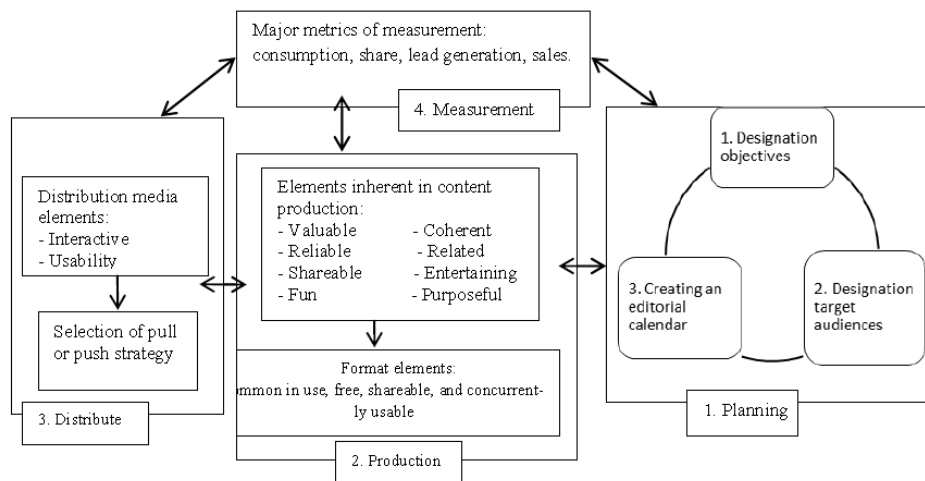
Lead metrics measure how often consumption generates a lead. Examples include form completions, email, newsletters, cookies, RSS feeds, and conversion rates. Lead generation assigns an economic value to content marketing.

Sales metrics help identify the impact of content marketing on a company. Examples include sales, customer retention, cost reduction, and content marketing ROI.

According to Elisa and Gordini (2014), marketing content should: 1) Generate interest, engage, and also provide information and educate consumers; 2) Identify all the values that define the brand or company in terms of uniqueness, consistency, quality, and relevance; 3) Be proactive, capable of developing over time.

The study by Naseri and Noruzi (2018) aimed to design and validate a content marketing process model (Figure 1). This model was derived from a sample of 652 documents for the implementation of Sandelowski and Barroso's seven-step approach (2007). The model comprises four phases: 1) Planning; 2) Production; 3) Distribution; 4) Measurement.

Figure 1 - Framework of the content marketing process model



Source: (Naseri & Noruzi, 2018, p13)

The planning phase involves three steps: Designation of business objectives from content marketing; Identification of the target audience; Creation of an editorial calendar. The planning phase is a cyclical process, with three stages, going back and forth to adjust the steps.

The production phase is about creating content. This phase produces content related to the intentions and concerns of the target audiences. It requires attention to the inherent elements of content production. The elements include value, relevance, reliability, sharing, entertainment, exclusivity, coherence, and intentional content. The format of the content is also crucial, considering prevalence and usage with various tools and platforms for users, allowing easy sharing.

The distribution phase is critical for choosing highly interactive media capable of being widely used among customers based on the type of content. The type of content distribution strategy (push, pull, or both) needs to be determined.

The measurement phase evaluates the experiences and activities of content marketing through key measures (consumption, sharing, lead generation, and sales). The results obtained in this stage are used for decision-making and planning for the effective implementation of content marketing. Table 1 specifies this approach.

Table 1 – Seven-Step Approach

Categories	Concepts	Codes
	Define the target audience	Identify demographic data of the audience (such as age, gender, marital status, education, occupation, income level); Identify needs, interests, and desires.
	Identify objectives	Increase brand awareness; Generate leads. Customer loyalty.

Content marketing planning elements	Define an editorial calendar	Determine topics, format, and type of content (decide what content should be created); Assign content producer(s) and responsible party(ies) for the content. Determine the distribution channel(s); Content distribution schedules.
	Valuable	Inform; educate; important; meaningful; satisfy information needs related to purchase; Respond; specialized.
Elements inherent to content marketing production	Relatable	According to customer interests; According to customer needs; Customization.
	Trustworthy	True; unbiased; authentic; reliable and accurate; Quality.
	Engaging	Engaging (lengthening, impressive, and exciting).
	Entertaining	Story-like, compelling (persuasion); Humorous; good and fun; intelligent.
	New	Creative; fresh; original and timely.
	Coherent	Coordinated with previous content; Consistency.
	Shareable	Reproducible; participatory. Accessible/available; Free.
Content marketing formation elements	Purposeful	Non-commercial; Not supportive; Useful; Effective; Clear; Inspiring and instructive.
	Format	Common use; Inexpensive; Shareable; Simultaneous use.
Content marketing Distribution elements	Interactive	Social and participatory; Owned media; Earned media.
	Usability	Accessibility; Free.
Content marketing effectiveness measurement elements	Consumption	Page views; Number of downloads; Average time on page.
	Sharing	Number of likes; Number of shares; Number of tweets; Number of re-tweets; Number of forwarded messages; Number of emails; Number of received links.
	Leads	Page views; Number of followers; Number of comments; Average time on page.

Sales Online sales; Offline sales.

Source: (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007)

2.2. E-commerce

2.2.1. Concept

E-commerce has been significantly developing, and increasingly, business transactions are conducted through the internet. The daily volume of e-commerce is remarkable and continues to grow. Numerous e-commerce platforms emerge to accelerate this new industry (Yu et al., 2018).

Regarding the concept, Wienclaw (2021) defines e-commerce as online commercial transactions such as sales and the exchange of information. E-commerce is supported by e-business activities and applications. Sampaio (2019) defines e-commerce as sales made through the internet, specifically those conducted by a single company, whether a manufacturer or retailer, through a virtual platform.

According to Khan (2016), e-commerce is the electronic buying and selling of goods and services on the internet. In addition to buying and selling, many people use the internet as a source of information to compare prices or view the latest products offered before making purchases online or in traditional stores. For Blumenthal (2021), e-commerce is a business model that enables companies and individuals to buy and sell products and/or services through the internet.

2.2.2. Types of E-commerce

Nemat (2011) and Turban et al. (2015) identify the following types of e-commerce: 1) Business-to-business (B2B); 2) Business-to-consumer (B2C); 3) Business-to-Business-to-Consumer (B2B2C); 4) Intrabusiness, Business-to-employee (B2E); 5) Business-to-Manager (B2M); 6) Business-to-government (B2G); 7) Consumer-to-consumer (C2C); 8) Consumer-to-business (C2B); 9) Collaborative Commerce (C-commerce); 10) Government-to-Business (G2B); 11) Government-to-Citizen (G2C); 12) Government-to-employees (G2E); 13) Government-to-Government (G2G); 14) Peer-to-peer (P2P).

According to Sampaio (2017), the type of e-commerce can vary depending on the profiles of consumers and sellers and the sales channels. The types of e-commerce based on consumer and seller profiles are: 1) Business-to-business (B2B); 2) Business-to-consumer (B2C); 3) Consumer-to-consumer (C2C); 4) Consumer-to-business (C2B); 5) Citizen-to-government (C2G); 6) Business-to-government (B2G). The types of e-commerce based on sales channels are: 1) Social commerce (S-commerce); 2) Mobile commerce (M-commerce); 3) TV commerce (t-commerce).

2.2.3. Metrics

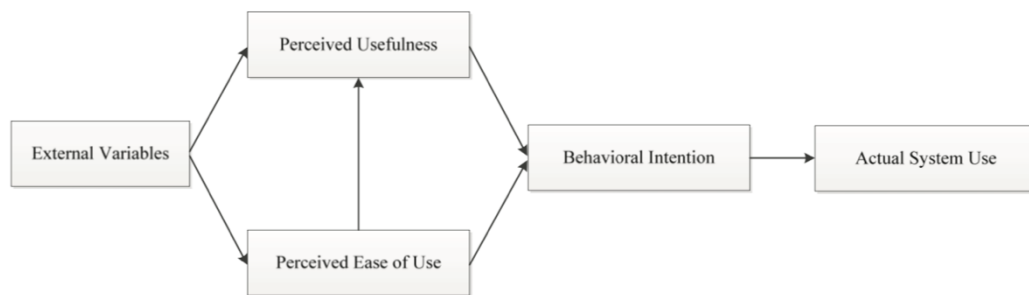
2.2.3.1. TAM Model

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM; Figure 2) is a model developed by Fred Davis in 1989. TAM is used to examine and measure factors influencing decisions to accept or reject information technology. The TAM model is derived from psychological theory, explaining that computer user behavior is based on belief, attitude, intention, and user behavior relationship. The goal of this model is to explain the key factors of user behavior regarding the acceptance of technology (Harryanto, Muchran & Ahmar, 2018).

The TAM theory posits that the acceptance and intention to adopt technology are determined by two key factors: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease-of-use (PEU) (Davis, 1989). Perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which an individual perceives positive outcomes from using the new technology, while perceived ease-of-use is the belief that using the technology will be effortless (Davis, 1989).

TAM serves as a foundation, asserting that PU has a positive impact on the attitude toward utilizing online applications (Mathew & Soliman, 2020). Previous studies by Chang et al. (2012) and Elkaseh, Wong, and Fung (2016) demonstrated the positive influence of PU on customers' attitudes toward technology use. In related research, Kanchanatane, Suwanno, and Jarernvongrayab (2014) found that PU affects personal attitudes toward adopting E-marketing. Additionally, Cho and Son's (2019) study revealed that PU significantly influenced human attitudes in the context of digital marketing content, specifically in social commerce.

Figure 2: TAM Model



Source: Davis, 1989

2.2.3.2 Main Variables in the TAM Model

Perceived Ease of Use:

According to Davis, perceived ease of use is defined as a measure of how easily a person believes a computer (in this case, an e-commerce platform) can be understood and used (Harryanto, Muchran & Ahmar, 2018). Research by Doshi (2018) indicates a positive and significant correlation between perceived ease of use and e-commerce, emphasizing that user-friendly e-commerce services contribute to positive interactions. Surendran's study (2012) highlights that perceived ease of use is crucial for understanding and explaining user behavior in an information system, impacting users' interactions with the system.

Perceived Usefulness:

Davis defines perceived usefulness as the subjective probability that the user will enhance their performance in work or life by using a specific application system (Davis, 1989, cited by Surendran, 2012).

Behavioral Intentions:

Behavioral intentions represent a person's tendency to use technology. The level of technology use can be predicted by attitudes and attention, reflecting motivation to continue using technology and the desire to influence others (Harryanto, Muchran & Ahmar, 2018).

Actual Use of System:

The actual use of the system is the culmination of the TAM model, where people engage with technology. This final phase results from the variables of perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and behavioral intentions. In this study, the use of the system refers to the use of e-commerce platforms. D'souza, Joshi, and Prabhu's study (2021) focuses on measuring e-commerce usage through questions like: 1) Would you buy online if an e-commerce platform were provided? 2) Would you recommend an e-commerce platform to friends or family?

2.3. Importance of Content Marketing in E-commerce

To comprehend the primary objective of this study, understanding the importance of content marketing in e-commerce is essential. Analyzing the impact of content marketing on consumer behavior, Granata and Scozzese (2019) argue that the recent interest in content marketing is attributed to changes in consumer habits, particularly during the digital revolution.

Subasinghe and Weerasisri (2019) agree that content is crucial for consumer behavior, capable of influencing consumers' minds, with a special emphasis on digital content. Scholz et al. (2018) state that content, whether created by users or marketing professionals, should impact economic variables, such as consumer purchasing behavior, indicating that content should yield financial returns.

Moraes (2021) emphasizes the importance of content marketing in e-commerce through various data points:

- 49% of consumers use Google to discover new products or services.
- 51% of consumers use Google to research before making an online purchase.
- 68% of e-commerce sessions are generated after web searches, with 33% via organic search and 33% via paid search.
- 19.7% is the annual growth in traffic for companies employing a content marketing strategy.
- Content marketing generates three times more leads than traditional marketing.
- 2.9% is the conversion rate for companies using a content marketing strategy.
- 52% of blog readers say that media influences their purchase decisions.
- 42% seek information in blogs before making a purchase.

For Arakelyan (2022), the main advantages of a good content marketing strategy applied to e-commerce include: 1) Lead Generation: Content across all stages of the customer journey facilitates conversion of visitors into leads, which can later be converted into customers; 2) Conversion and Lead Nurturing: Relevant content for the target audience is the easiest way to generate more website traffic and convert it into high-conversion leads, resulting in increased sales and revenues; 3) Increased Sales: Achievable when a product or service is targeted to the right audience; and 4) Upselling and Cross-Selling: One of the objectives of content marketing is to generate more sales from converted customers through upselling or cross-selling.

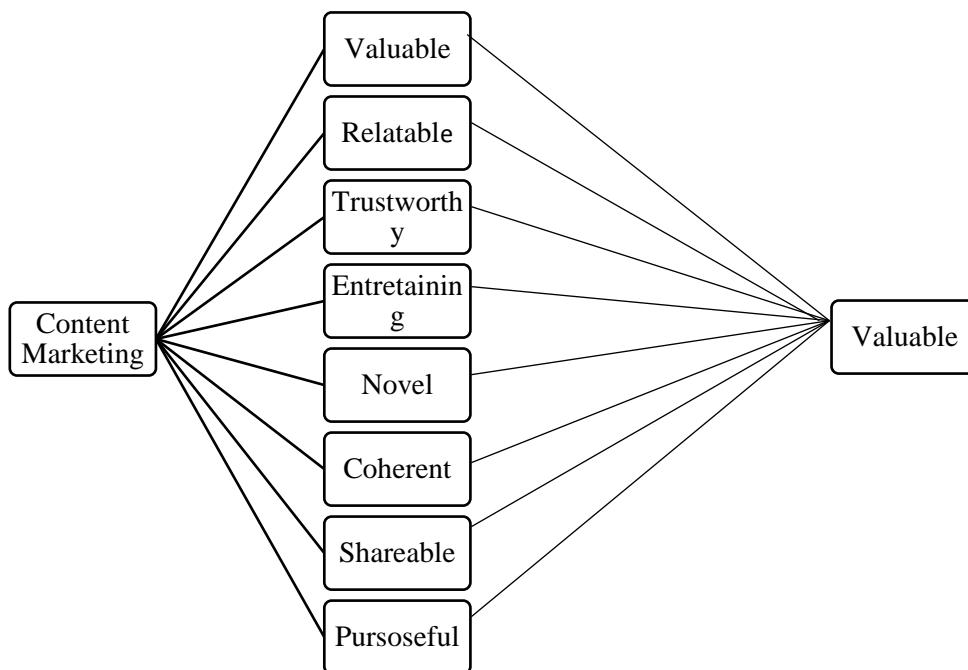
2.4. Initial Research Model

Based on the literature review conducted and the variables identified by Sandelowski and Barroso (2007) and D'souza, Joshi, and Prabhu (2021), the initial research model is presented in Figure 3. This model, still subject to validation, aims to demonstrate the importance of content marketing in e-commerce.

Due to the challenge of measuring the influence of content marketing in the planning, distribution, and measurement phases proposed by Sandelowski and Barroso (2007), this study will focus solely on utilizing content marketing measurement variables in the production phase.

The TAM model (Davis, 1989) also serves as the foundation for the research model in this investigation to assess consumers' willingness to use e-commerce.

Figure 3 – Initial Research Model



Source: Adapted from Sandelowski and Barroso (2007) and D'souza, Joshi & Prabhu (2021)

The overall objective of this research is to assess the relevance of content marketing in e-commerce. In order to address the main goal of this investigation, the following specific objectives have been defined:

- Determine the factorial structure of content marketing elements.
- Understand which content marketing elements can influence online purchases.

3. Methodology

In this study, a quantitative methodology will be employed, utilizing a questionnaire. This approach is necessary to establish and measure the effects between the independent variables and the dependent variable, confirming the study's objectives.

3.1. Participants

Given the objective of studying the impact of content marketing on e-commerce, the target population is the Portuguese population engaged in online shopping and aged 18 and above. For this study, 152 responses were collected, constituting the total sample. Of these, 110 respondents are female, 41 are male, and 1 person prefers not to disclose their gender. This results in a representation of 72% for females and 27% for males.

Regarding the age of the respondents, it is evident that the most represented age group is 18-24 years old, accounting for 49.3% of responses. The age group of 25-30 years old had a representation of 14.5%, the age group of 37-41 years old had 7.9% representation, the age group of >42 years old had a representation of 23.7%. The smallest percentage was 4.6%, representing the age group of 31-36 years old.

3.2. Procedures

According to Oliveira, Oliveira, Morais and Silva (2016), data collection can be considered one of the most crucial stages in conducting research because it is during data collection that the researcher obtains the necessary information for the study's development. The chosen method for data collection in this research was the implementation of an online questionnaire. This questionnaire was conducted through the Google Forms platform and shared on various social networks. Each respondent was asked to share it with individuals of the same age group to ensure the study's credibility.

The questionnaire consists of three groups with the purpose of obtaining data to analyse and respond to the study's objectives. These groups are as follows: 1st Group – Demographic questions about the respondent; 2nd Group – Questions about the elements of content marketing; 3rd Group – Questions about the use of e-commerce.

A 5-point Likert scale was used, with measurements ranging from 1 "completely disagree" / "not at all important" to 5 "completely agree" / "extremely important."

After closing the questionnaire, data coding was performed using Excel, enabling analysis. For this analysis, the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software was employed to conduct the most suitable tests for different types of data (ordinal, nominal, or scale).

3.3. Measures

In Table 2, we can find the dimensions of content marketing included in the initial model and incorporated into the questionnaire.

Table 1 – Seven-Step Approach

Dimension	Concepts	Item
	Valuable	Inform; educate; important; meaningful; satisfy information needs related to purchase; Respond; specialized.
	Relatable	According to customer interests; According to customer needs; Customization.

Elements inherent to content marketing production	Trustworthy	True; unbiased; authentic; reliable and accurate; Quality.
	Entertaining	Engaging (lengthening, impressive, and exciting).
		Story-like, compelling (persuasion); Humorous; good and fun; intelligent.
	New	Creative; fresh; original and timely.
	Coherent	Coordinated with previous content; Consistency.
	Shareable	Reproducible; participatory. Accessible/available; Free.
Purposeful	Non-commercial; Not supportive; Useful; Effective; Clear; Inspiring and instructive.	

Use do e-commerce

Source: Own elaboration

Being valuable, relatable, reliable, novel, coherent, entertaining, shareable, and purposeful are all inherent elements in the production of content marketing and have an impact on the use of e-commerce.

3.4. Preliminary Analysis

As the variables under study have not been previously examined in Portugal, items were translated and adapted into Portuguese. Following the recommendations of Fabrigar and Wegener (2011), an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to analyse the structure and content of the factors. A principal component factor analysis was employed (Table 2), starting with 30 items and ultimately arriving at 25 items. This method is recommended to identify the minimum number of factors representing the maximum proportion of variance in the set of initial variables.

Table 2 – Factorial Analysis and Principal Components

Variable	Loading	% Extracted Variance	α
Entertainment		24,752	,93
Be humorous	,801		
Be intelligent	,769		
Be coordinated with the previous content **	,747		
Be consistent **	,730		
Be creative	,725		

Be participative	,720	
Be original, fresh, and timely	,691	
Be convincing	,688	
Be reproducible **	,680	
Be accessible/available **	,630	
Be engaging (prolong, impress, and excite)	,621	
Be free **	,525	
Trustworthy		17,754 ,96
Be truthful	,792	
Be reliable and accurate	,789	
Be authentic	,762	
Be unbiased	,754	
Have quality	,707	
Satisfy information needs related to the purchase	,647	
Value		15,496 ,92
Have meaning	,763	
Have importance	,719	
Educate	,712	
Respond	,645	
Align with interests	,603	
Inform	,593	
Align with needs	,585	
Purposeful		11,941 ,96
Be clear	,778	
Be effective	,769	
Be useful	,754	

Be inspiring and instructive	,679	
E-commerce use	6,992	,91
Would you recommend an e-commerce platform to friends or family?	,906	
Would you buy online if provided with an e-commerce platform?	,900	

Source: Own elaboration

****Removed Items**

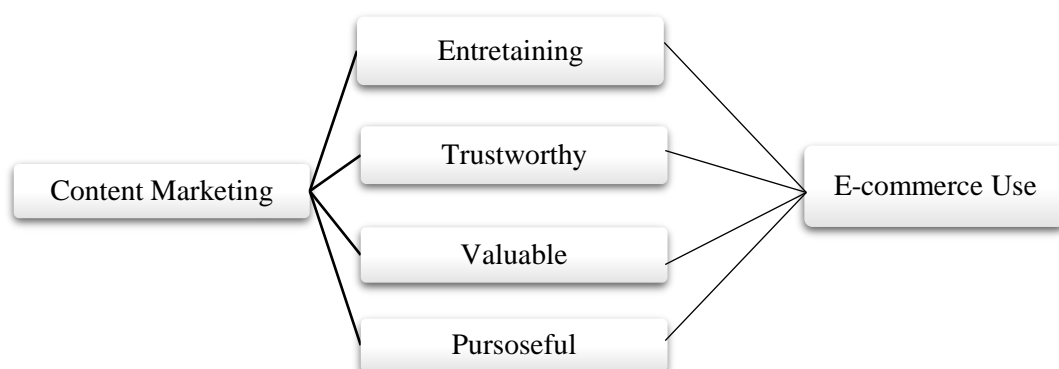
The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test was performed to determine the sample adequacy, requiring a minimum acceptable value of 0.5. Results showed a KMO value of 0.929, indicating the sample's adequacy for analysis. The Bartlett's test of sphericity suggested a chi-square value of 5218.108 with 465 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.000, confirming that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, allowing us to proceed with exploratory factor analysis.

For factor rotation, Varimax rotation was employed, as it is a technique that maintains the independence of factors (Pestana & Gageiro, 2014). The initial solution presented 5 factors with a cumulative variance percentage of 76.927%.

Five items were removed as they belonged to other factors and did not contribute to the intended content. To assess the reliability of the subscales, analysed through the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (α), it was found that values ranged from 0.91 (use of e-commerce) to 0.96 (Trust). This coefficient, is a benchmark for the metric analysis of a scale, regardless of its characteristics. According to the researchers, the Cronbach's Alpha index has a variance between 0 and 1 (Pestana & Gameiro, 2014) (Table 2).

As a result of the study on the metrological quality (content validity and reliability) of the initial measurement instrument, there was a need to reformulate the initial research model, proposing the following model composed of the dependent variable E-commerce Usage and the independent variables Entertainment, Trustworthy, Valuable, and Purposeful.

Figure 4 – Final Study Model



Source: Adapted from Sandelowski and Barroso (2007); D'souza, Joshi & Prabhu (2021)

After presenting the final research model and the proposed variables for this investigation, hypotheses were formulated, which will be subsequently statistically tested to assess their empirical validity.

H1- The Entertainment element of marketing content has a positive impact on e-commerce use.

H2- The Trustworthy element of marketing content has a positive impact on e-commerce use.

H3- The Valuable element of marketing content has a positive impact on e-commerce use.

H4- The Purposeful element of marketing content has a positive impact on e-commerce use.

4. Results

The obtained results and their analysis are presented below. The data were studied using descriptive statistics, mean comparison, correlation, and regression.

4.1. Inherent Elements of Content Marketing

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the elements of content marketing. It is observed that the highest-scoring elements are Trustworthy (M=4.48; SD= .76), Purposeful (M=4.24; SD= .89), and Valuable (M=4.17; SD= .77). The lowest-scoring element, although above the mean value, is Entertainment (M=4.03; SD= .82).

Table 3 – Descriptive Statistics – Inherent Elements of Content Marketing

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Trustworthy	152	1,00	5,00	4,4846	,76035
Purposeful	152	1,00	5,00	4,2401	,89094
Valuable	152	1,00	5,00	4,1682	,77292
Entertainment	152	1,00	5,00	4,0345	,82052

Source: Own elaboration

4.2. E-commerce Usage

Descriptive statistics regarding e-commerce usage are presented in Table 4. It can be observed that e-commerce use is slightly above average (M=4.08; SD= .90).

Table 4 – Descriptive Statistics – E-commerce Use

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
<i>E-commerce use</i>	152	1,00	5,00	4,0789	,89536

Source: Own elaboration

4.3. Inferential Statistics - Relationships Between Inherent Elements of Content Marketing and E-commerce Use

Correlations between inherent elements of content marketing and e-commerce usage are presented in Table 5. A positive and statistically significant correlation is observed among all variables. The highest correlation value is between the Confidence variable and the Valuable variable (r=.79; sig<.001). It is also noted that all elements of content marketing are related to e-commerce usage, with Confidence having the highest value (r=.44; sig<.001).

Table 5 – Correlation between Inherent Elements of Content Marketing and E-commerce Use

	1	2	3	4	5
1- Entertainment	1				
2- Trustworthy	,705**	1			
3- Valuable	,703**	,794**	1		
4- Purposeful	,752**	,662**	,682**	1	
5- E-commerce use	,368	,442**	,393**	,330**	1

Source: Own elaboration

**The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.4. Mean Comparison

4.4.1. Gender Distribution

Table 6 presents the mean comparison for gender concerning the variables under analysis. Overall, there are no statistically significant differences between genders for the studied variables.

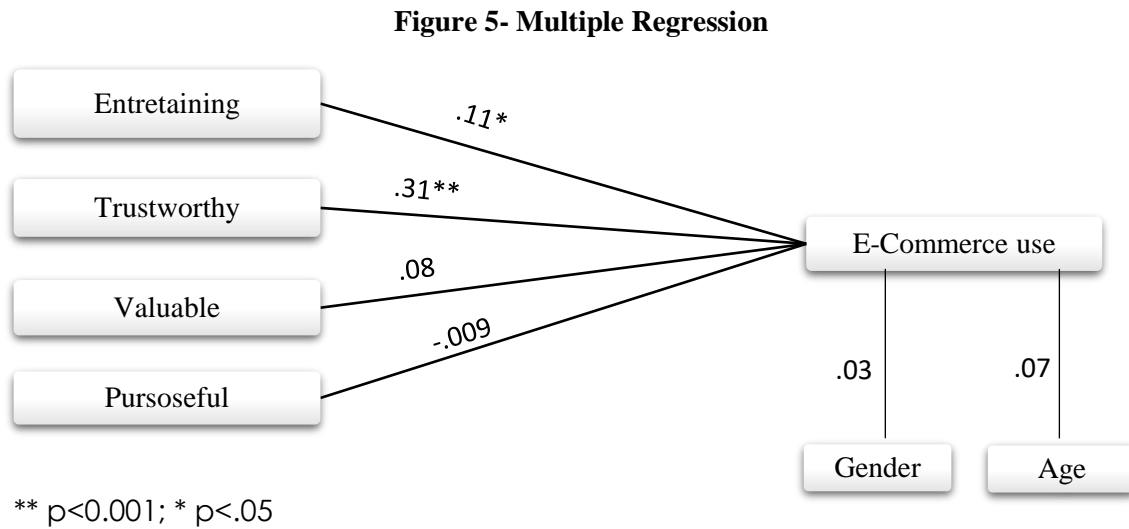
Table 6 – Mean Comparison - Gender

	Gender	N	Meana	SD	Sig
Entertainment	Female	110	3,9830	,83612	,838
	Male	41	4,1494	,76965	
Trustworthy	Female	110	4,4682	,80217	,262
	Male	41	4,5163	,64851	
Valuable	Female	110	4,1169	,80375	,899
	Male	41	4,2857	,67537	
Purposeful	Female	110	4,1795	,91880	,609
	Male	41	4,3841	,80641	
E-commerce use	Female	110	4,0545	,87876	,353
	Male	41	4,1220	,94724	

Source: Own elaboration

4.5. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to validate the hypotheses proposed in this study. Through this analysis, it is possible to assess the relationship between the variables (dependent and independent) and subsequently establish cause-and-effect relationships (Pestana & Gageiro, 2014) (Figure 5).



Source: Own elaboration

Given the total sample, hypothesis 1, "The Entertainment element of content marketing has a positive impact on e-commerce usage (H1)," is supported by ($\beta=0.11$; Sig=0.05). Hypothesis 2, "The Trustworthy element of content marketing has a positive impact on e-commerce usage (H2)," is also supported ($\beta=0.313$; Sig=0.019). Hypothesis 3, "The Valuable element of content marketing has a positive impact on e-commerce usage (H3)," is not supported ($\beta=0.084$; Sig=0.533). Hypothesis 4, "The Purposeful element of content marketing has a positive impact on e-commerce usage (H4)," is not supported ($\beta= -0.009$; Sig=0.940).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Finally, the main results analyzed earlier are presented, comparing the confirmation of hypotheses with previous studies. The obtained results provided a clear response to the specific objectives proposed in this research. Regarding the first specific objective, which aimed to identify the elements of content marketing, it is possible to assert, after construct validation of the results obtained through the questionnaire, that the elements of content marketing are Entertainment, Trustworthy, Valuable, and Purposeful. This result simplifies the study by Sandelowski and Barroso (2007), which identifies the inherent elements of content marketing as Valuable, Relatable, Trustworthy, Entertaining, New, Coherent, Shareable, and Purposeful.

Concerning the second specific objective, which intended to understand which elements of content marketing influence e-commerce, it can be inferred through the validation of the study hypotheses that, among the elements of content marketing, trust is the element with the greatest influence on e-commerce usage ($\beta=0.313$; Sig=0.019). It can be affirmed

that, for individuals, content that is trustworthy and conveys trust has a greater propensity to induce online purchases.

To complement the study, the impact of age, location, and gender on e-commerce usage was evaluated, and it was concluded that these variables do not present statistically relevant values. Therefore, it can be stated that they do not have an impact on e-commerce use.

Regarding the overall objective of this research, which aimed to verify the relevance of content marketing in e-commerce, it is concluded, based on the literature review and the obtained results, that indeed content marketing has an impact on e-commerce, with trustworthy being the most influential element in content marketing.

The present study aimed to investigate the impact that content marketing has on e-commerce. The gathered information provided relevant insights for a better understanding of both content marketing and e-commerce. This information can be utilized by companies and marketing agencies to enhance the effectiveness of their content marketing strategies. For instance, creating content that instills trust can be a key approach when the goal is to encourage online purchases.

The study has successfully identified and validated key elements of content marketing (Entertainment, Trustworthy, Valuable, and Purposeful) and their impact on e-commerce usage. However, to enhance theoretical contributions, future research could delve deeper into the underlying psychological and behavioral mechanisms through which these elements influence consumer behavior. Additionally, exploring theoretical frameworks or models that can better explain the relationships observed in the study would contribute to the academic understanding of content marketing and its role in e-commerce. From a practical standpoint, there is an opportunity to provide more detailed insights into how businesses can effectively integrate the identified elements into their content marketing strategies, considering industry-specific nuances and practical implementation challenges.

In conclusion, companies and agencies looking to develop content marketing with the aim of influencing consumers to make online purchases should prioritize creating trustworthy content, as it is highly valued by consumers.

The study acknowledges several limitations, primarily arising from its exclusive focus on evaluating content marketing in the production phase and the absence of a specific e-commerce case study. Additionally, the identified lack of studies in the investigated area is recognized as a constraint. To address these limitations and enhance the study's depth, future research could adopt a more comprehensive approach. This might involve investigating content marketing across its entire lifecycle, from creation to consumption, and conducting detailed case studies within specific e-commerce contexts for a more nuanced perspective. Simultaneously, the scarcity of existing research in the field serves as motivation for future studies to contribute by exploring related topics, methodologies, or industries that intersect with content marketing and e-commerce.

Furthermore, the study suggests that a recommended approach for future research involves focusing on a specific company or agency. This would facilitate an in-depth examination of consumer opinions and reactions to the produced content, allowing researchers to validate their findings with real-world results. Such an approach is expected to lead to more robust conclusions, thereby making a substantial contribution to the broader understanding of the topic. Continuous monitoring and adaptation of research methodologies are also proposed to capture evolving trends in the dynamic field of digital

marketing, providing insights into emerging forms of content marketing and their evolving impact on e-commerce.

Future research endeavors should delve into the critical aspect of the accuracy and trustworthiness of data collected by artificial intelligence (AI), especially when juxtaposed against data gathered by human sales representatives. It is important to assess the reliability of AI-generated data and its trustworthiness in informing marketing decisions. One avenue of exploration involves scrutinizing the veracity of AI-derived data in comparison to human-generated data. Understanding the extent to which AI algorithms can outperform or complement the insights obtained through human interactions is crucial for determining the efficacy of AI applications in marketing contexts (Hsu & Liou, 2021). The research should not only concentrate on the technical capabilities of AI but also explore how well AI-generated data aligns with consumer expectations and perceptions of trust. Understanding the factors that contribute to the trustworthiness of AI-derived insights is paramount for building confidence among marketers and consumers alike.

In conclusion, a comprehensive investigation into the accuracy and trustworthiness of AI-gathered data holds the key to unlocking the full potential of artificial intelligence in shaping data-driven marketing strategies. This research will not only contribute valuable insights to the academic discourse but also provide practical guidance for marketers navigating the evolving landscape of AI-driven data analytics.

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