Conceptualizing Flow for Content Marketing Effectiveness

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The paper explores and consolidates the concept and experience of flow regarding its implications for content marketing in the digital marketplace. Technology-supported content marketing in the e-market has become increasingly important for customer satisfaction. The flow experience has also been shown to be an important aspect of online consumer behavior and linked to beneficial market outcomes. At the same time, the conceptualizations of flow have been evolving and no clear established framework for it exists. Through a qualitative review of current academic and practitioner research on the usage of content marketing for engaging consumers the paper consolidates findings. It creates a framework to advance the conceptualization of flow for content marketing and an understanding of how brand content usage and promotions in the digital sphere can determine the characteristic of flow and work with it to positively impact beneficial market outcomes.

Keywords: content marketing, flow, influencer marketing, social media marketing, digital marketing, customer engagement

INTRODUCTION

Globally, consumers now spend significant time on digital media, watching, reading, hearing, playing, socializing, and sharing. This trend has motivated brands to utilize content marketing. Content marketing strategy is about understanding consumers' wants and problems they face, and then actively engaging them on multiple digital channels with brand content-based solutions. A significant part of this rests on highlighting solutions to conflicts and problems through storytelling by synergistically consolidating different types of content. In the US, more than 70% of brands have claimed to have content marketing strategies in place and across the world, this trend is fast picking up, with video content showing the fastest growth (Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2020). This has resulted in increased competition for the customer on the web and a glut of brand content.

Flow is understood to be a multidimensional phenomenon of immersion in the consumption of content. Flow is initiated when something in the content attracts and holds active attention (indicates comprehension) which then triggers an interest and desire to engage further with the content, resulting in a state of deeper immersion. Research has shown that brands slowly realize that just communicating on the web will not guarantee liking and engagement. For a positive attitude to emerge, active behaviors such as purchase and repeat purchases and sharing brand stories to happen, content marketing must lure consumers into a state of flow.

Success in content marketing depends on repeatedly engaging customers in brand contents to positively impact attitude and behaviors. Many studies have found the positive impact of flow in online consumer

behavior across multiple channels (websites, virtual communities, social networking sites and online stores) on outcomes such as attitude, satisfaction, gratification from both online and offline purchase, and other behavioral intentions such as sharing and downloading, (Cuevas et al., 2021; Dailey, 2004; Gao et al., 2014; Hsu et al., 2012; Kang et al., 2018; Korzaan 2003; Lee and Wu, 2017). Given the absorptive, exploratory and emotional nature of the flow experience it is not surprising that it has also been found to influence unplanned purchases (Koufaris, 2002; Lee and Wu, 2017). The significance of the impact of flow in the digital marketplace on the above mentioned marketing outcomes makes it important to holistically understand flow in the context of content marketing operations. This becomes even more critical given the rapid change in web capabilities, the multitude of ways consumers use it, and the increase brand content marketing efforts. This research is a small step in understanding this. This is done by consolidating findings from existing research on content marketing strategies and flow based on which flow is conceptualized for content marketing, leading to the development of a framework of flow enhanced content marketing. In the author's knowledge this is the first review that tries to holistically identify and explain flow in relationship to content marketing.

THE CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF FLOW

The concept of flow was first developed by Csikszentmihalyi (1975) to represent a psychological state of complete immersion in a certain activity or behavior. This state is characterized by an overarching narrow focus on a goal-directed activity, feedback from the behavior, control over the activity, and a passage of time being engaged in the activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Hoffman and Novak (1996) brought the concept of flow into online commerce and consumer behavior. They proposed that brands can provide flow opportunities to consumers by providing brand-related content and experiences. Researchers have found that flow happens both for goal-directed activities such as finding a solution to a consumption problem, and for non-goal-directed activities where the motivation is to explore for fun and for the experience (Hoffman and Novak, 2009). This has led researchers to divide flow experience into utilitarian and hedonic (Lee and Wu, 2017).

Researchers have had a difficult time finding a consensus on what constitutes flow. This is because of the broad nature of what constitutes flow and the different constructs that researchers have used to measure flow. Flow has been conceptualized in multiple ways, both as a unidimensional construct where multiple antecedents are used to measure flow or constructs are aggregated to measure an overall flow construct, as well as a higher order multidimensional construct which results from combining separate components through structural equations into an overarching factor of flow (Hoffman and Novak, 2009). These differences have resulted in meshing between the antecedents of flow and the component elements of flow itself. Table 1 below underscores this diversity by providing a short non-comprehensive list of how researchers have conceptualized and measured flow (Hoffman and Novak, 2009).

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF FLOW

Publication	Antecedents	Flow Component Constructs
Agarwal and Karahanna (2000)	Playfulness, personal innovativeness	Cognitive absorption (curiosity, control, temporal dissociation, focused immersion, heightened enjoyment)
Bridges and Florsheim (2008)	Telepresence, time distortion, arousal, challenge, skill, control, interactivity, importance.	Not directly measured
Huang (2003)	Complexity, interactivity, novelty	Multi-dimensional construct (control, attention, curiosity, and interest)
Huang (2006)	None	Higher order constructs: 1) Flow (control, curiosity, enjoyment, interest); 2) Situational Involvement (curiosity, interest, risk, attention focus, personal relevance); 3) Enduring Involvement (enjoyment, interest, personal relevance, self-relevance
Luna, Perrachio, and de Juan (2003)	Attention, challenge, interactivity, attitude toward site	Unidimensional
Novak, Hoffman, and Yung (2000)	Online tenure, skill, control, interactivity, challenge, arousal, importance, focused attention, telepresence, time distortion	Unidimensional
Richard and Chandra (2005)	Reasons to visit, OSL, skill, challenge, interactivity, navigational cues, need for cognition, site involvement	Not directly measured
Sanchez-Franco (2006)	Usefulness, ease of use	Higher-order construct (enjoyment and concentration)
Shin (2006)	Skill, challenge, concentration, goal, gender	Higher-order construct (enjoyment, telepresence, focused attention, engagement, time distortion)

THE PROCESS OF FLOW: THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Multiple theories can be used to explain how consumers come to be in a state of flow (attention, interest, desire and interaction).

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) explains how and why the internal processing system of consumers create flow experiences for both goal-directed and experiential activities by highlighting consumers' dual information processing routes. The cognitive route requires significant information processing putting a heavy burden on the human brain whereas the alternative peripheral route

relieves that burden by falling back on heuristics to process information. A consumer with goal-directed motivation would likely use the cognitive route, and others browsing the internet for a non-goal-directed experience would tend to utilize the latter. Brands can alter their message strategy (informational vs transformational) to align with the type of information processing (cognitive vs peripheral) (Laskey et al. 1989; Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2020).

Research has found that both content quality (visuals and text) and media quality (intuitiveness and interactivity) positively impact flow (Cuevas et al., 2021). Combining the Use and Gratification (U & G) Framework (Cuevas-Molano et al., 2022; Katz et al., 1973) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Lin et al., 2017; Venkatesh et al., 2007) help explain these impacts by highlighting underlying consumer motivations for consuming certain type of contents through adopting certain media (Florenthal, 2019). U&G theory is a widely used framework to identify and understand consumer motivations for using marketing communications media ((Halaszovich and Nel, 2017) Florenthal, 2019). The theory aims to understand and explain cognitive, affective and social need gratification in consuming certain content and media channels (Florenthal, 2019). Users select media and content that help them gratify their motivations the most. Research has showcased a diversity of motivations for digital media consumption. To consolidate, these motivations can be put into two broad categories: informativeness and entertainment (Florenthal, 2019). Informativeness relates to learning motivation which is cognitive, and entertainment to emotional enjoyment.

TAM supports the U & G framework in explaining flow by determining what makes consumers actively select it for content consumption in the media. According to TAM both usefulness of media, and its ease of use are necessary for media acceptance and adoption (Lin et al., 2017). To accommodate evolving capabilities of digital media and consumer usage trends, TAM has been extended to include media characteristics such as enjoyment, playfulness and social influence for flow to happen (Curran and Lennon 2011; Florenthal, 2019; Rauniar et al. 2014).

An important motivation for using digital media content is to gratify the need for socialization. This social interaction is an essential component of the flow experience. Attachment theory states that humans have a biological predisposition for attachment (Kyles 2021; Elaheh et al. 2018) that motivates them to seek out attachment to others or "attachment figures" (Elaheh et al. 2018, p. 2146). Once formed, humans tend to maintain such attachment. The interactivity of digital content and its capability to allow consumers to share and socialize can help form deep attachments with brands and brand-associated digital content and entities. This should facilitate repeated flow experiences.

In explaining why flow happens in digital media and how it happens, these theories together should also help brands determine how to think of flow and what it should consist of to support and enhance the content-media-consumer motivation alignment and create long-term attachment to brands.

METHOD

Academic research in flow in the digital marketplace in the context of content marketing is relatively new. Effectiveness in content marketing strategies themselves are changing given rapid changes in digital media capabilities and trends in consumer usage of it. Given this environment an exploratory research method such as a qualitative review was deemed appropriate. A review consolidates and categorizes findings from academic research, creates knowledge, helps conceptualize a structure of the phenomenon and sets future directions for academic research. All the above also benefits practitioners in implementing effective strategies.

Publications on content marketing, consumer flow and engagement in digital media were searched in multiple business academic databases using keywords that relate to the concepts of content marketing, flow and engagement. This resulted in 44 usable articles and dissertations from both scholarly and practitioner journals. This mix was deemed suitable given the relative newness of the field and practical orientation of this paper. Findings from these publications were then categorized under content marketing strategic areas and then integrated to provide a framework and a story of the impact of content marketing on flow in the digital marketplace.

REVIEW FINDINGS

The findings in this review is categorized along the strategic lines of content, media and consumer. All 3 areas are core to content marketing and should determine and impact flow when aligned facilitating the goal of conceptualizing flow for content marketing.

A majority of the selected publications discussed content strategies and tactics and the rest media and consumer characteristics. Some publications investigated more than one area.

Content Marketing Strategies and Tactics for Flow

To be effective at generating flow, digital brand content needs to be both product and consumer-centric, providing not only rational (functional) benefits but also relational (experiential and emotional) stories (Arrivé 2022). Content strategies will thus vary based on product market realities and dynamics (Kim and Ko, 2012; Waters and Jones, 2012; Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2020). In essence, to create flow content marketing should attempt to communicate without selling (Arrivé 2022). That will depend upon a combination of what the brand is communicating and how it is doing so: in short, both content (audio and text-based messages and images) and style of execution matter.

Content Messages

Despite the decreasing attention span of consumers, longer and richer message seems to be more impactful (Humphrys and Wang, 2018). This is likely because of the emotional and social aspects of digital and social media consumption. To achieve both, messages need to be informational and engage cognition as well as transformational and touch emotions. This makes the message more editorial than sales-oriented, facilitating engagement and absorption (Weerasinghe 2018).

Research finds that richness of message comes from a variety of message strategies. The message that is relevant and helpful piques interest (Hollebeck and Macky, 2019). To create desire and further draw the consumer into an absorptive state one needs to add entertainment and authentic components to the message (blogscoop 2021; Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2020). Authenticity and relevance create high resonance and persuasion, especially when it combines images and texts, motivating the consumer to immerse himself/herself in the content (Arrivé 2022; Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Weerasinghe 2019). Such messages have been shown to have the added advantage of increasing their share worthiness, allowing customers to gratify their social motivations in engaging with digital content (Arrivé 2022; Yuki 2015). True immersion comes with a deeper consumer-content connection, which is only possible with personalization and humanization of messages (Siddiqui and Warraich, 2021).

Image

In the digital market place images are processed differently from text based contents (Kostyk and Huhmann, 2021; McShane et al., 2019) Taking advantage of a synergy of visuals and texts (Cuevas et al. 2021) makes for a more impactful content strategy. Together these two create more positive experiences of consumption of digital content and impact flow. (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2020). Part of the reason lies in increased availability of brain space for information processing when content consists of text and visual stimuli rather than only texts (Simmonds et al., 2020; Wickens, 2008). This allows for a higher combined processing capability. Thus, text-based messages, when complemented by images, have the advantage of grabbing automatic attention and generating active attention. Further a combination of visual esthetics and text facilitates flow through higher mental stimulation, fostering a brand-consumer imagined identity and providing the perception of implied motions (Cuevas et al. 2021; Lim and Childs 2020; Phillips and McQuarrie, 2010). Research has found that specific images have positive impacts. Both human and animal images increase attention and likeability of the content (Rajaram 2021) and images that are symmetrical and utilize high contrast show a positive impact on engagement with content and liking (Kostyk and Huhmann, 2021).

Video Contents

Videos for brand content marketing have significantly increased in popularity. Video brand contents have different impacts compared to non-video content because of the usage of a combination of audio-visual-movement (Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2020) and unlike non-video content, interaction is based entirely on video content (Burgess and Green, 2009; Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2020). The nature of videos makes them effective vehicles for cognitively and emotionally engaging the consumer. Brands, however tend to use emotionally focused transformational messaging more successfully on videos (Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2020).

Visuals, movement, and tone combine to attract attention and create a desire to interact with the video. The first 30 seconds have been found crucial in grabbing attention. Both attention and likeability significantly increase when videos feature brand, human images, human and animal sounds, and music in the first 30 seconds (Rajaram, 2021). In longer duration, however, where human speech positively impacts likeability music impacts it negatively.

Besides videos hosted by brands, influencer videos featuring brands within their own videos have increasingly become a unique and popular content marketing tool. Influencer videos tend to be longer than conventional brand videos with some more brand heavy (e.g. unboxing, hauls, product reviews) than others (e.g. vlogs, educational, gaming) (Rajaram, 2021). Influencer video facilitates flow through increased views and engagement through comments and likes. The kind of impact of influencer videos vary by the type of influencer. These types are based on the number of followers, with celebrity influencers having the largest following, followed by meso influencers and then micro influencers with less than 10,000 followers. This difference in impact is due to differing consumer perceptions of the level of expertise and credibility of each type of influencer (Pohzarliev et al., 2022). Celebrity endorsers are impactful for a vast range of products. Meso influencers who have made a name through their industry specific expertise are however seen as less credible than both celebrity and micro influencers because of the perception that these influencers are hired as brand ambassadors. Thus, Consumers tend to spend more cognitive processing on meso influencer video content, forcing these influencer types to strengthen their argument quality. Micro influencers on the other hand are more liked and trusted because of an authenticity perception (Pohzarliev et al., 2022). So brands using meso influencers vs. micro influencers must align brand content with influencer type for maximum effectiveness.

Content Execution Style

For content to become transformational from just informational needs creative execution of the message and visuals. Style of execution includes theme, storyline, structure, layout, flow, background, colors, and tone. Execution style supports and elevates content by creating an engaging environment and ambience that emotionally involves the consumer, enhancing absorption. An emotionally charged storyline with a strong narrative supported by animation, pop ups and flash sets the stage (Arrivé, 2022; Botha and Reyneke, 2013; Yuki 2015; Bowden and Mizraei, 2021; Keene et al., 2019; Simmonds et al. 2020; Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2020). It helps in garnering active (against automatic or passive) attention and build self-brand connection especially when the storyline includes an implicit implication (Keene et al., 2019; Simmonds et al. 2020) and helps make the content share-worthy (Arrivé, 2022; Botha and Reyneke, 2013; Yuki 2015). Without active attention the process of flow does not get started. Execution styles that try to persuade through usage of relevant and general borrowed interest appeal (such as cute puppies, beautiful women, animation), clarity of message, and an appropriate tone and sound have been shown to positively impact flow (Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2020; Weerasinghe, 2019). Finally, if such content can take advantage of the capabilities of the media to allow consumers to interact with it (greetings, interaction invites through pop-ups such as download, comment, purchase etc), and to facilitate access and search, it creates a perception of higher quality of the content holder (e.g. a landing page) facilitating flow (Arrivé 2022; Cuevas et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2015; Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2020)

A relatively new content marketing tool that utilizes Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) perceptions has shown to be effective in generating flow by being product centric, grabbing attention and showcasing high levels of friendliness and soft spokenness (Lee and Chen). ASMR is a perceptual condition

where exposure to a combination of audio-visual stimuli creates intense, pleasurable, and tingling sensations in the head which travel to the extremities (Fredborg et al., 2017). Despite the lack of research on this content marketing strategy, preliminary studies have shown that there are certain personality traits tied to success of ASMR marketing. Consumers with high openness to experience and neuroticism tend to react positively to ASMR advertising. Table 2 below highlights and categorizes content marketing messages and execution strategies that impact flow.

TABLE 2
EFFECTIVE CONTENT MARKETING MESSAGE AND EXECUTION STRATEGIES

Content		Execution Style
Message (text + image)	**Videos**	**Execution Style**
- Editorial - Longer and Richer-balancing quantity and quality - Product and Customer centric - Informational (functional) - Transformational (emotional) - Relevant (of value) - Authentic - High Resonance - Personalized - Humanized - Experientialized - Animal and Human Images - Symmetrical Image - High Contrast Image	- Transformational (emotional) - First 30 seconds: music, animal and human sounds, human faces, and brand name - Beyond the first 30 seconds: human speech - Influencer Videos: - Celebrity Influencer: - Meso Influencer: targets cognitive processing through strong product based argument quality - Micro Influencer: targets emotional processing through showcasing credibility and trustworthiness	- Emotionally charged storyline with unstated implications - Animation/Pop ups/Flash - Strong narrative - General borrowed interest appeal visuals and audio - Relevant and Clear message - Appropriate tone and sound - Interactive - Facilitate Access and Search - ASMR based: - product centric, - attention grabbing, - friendly and soft spoken

Media Capabilities and Effective Content Strategies for Flow

A discussion of marketing communication is not complete without considering the capabilities of media.

Digital media with its enhanced audio-video capabilities makes it an ideal vehicle to create flow through attention, interest, desire and interaction. Multiple resource theory states the brain has separate limited pools of cognitive resources to process audio and video and the resources for processing audio is less limited than that for processing video (Simmonds et al., 2020; Wickens 2008). When presented with both stimuli simultaneously, which is the case in digital media, consumers tend to increase their active attention (indicates comprehension) by utilizing more of the audio processing resources to process internal and external peripheral visual stimuli. Active attention because it allows for more cognitive processing helps in retention and increases the chances of generating interest, desire and interaction (Simmonds et al., 2020).

At the same time, given the diversity of available digital media, it is important to carefully consider media capabilities so that impact of content can be maximized through content-media alignment (Cuevas et al., 2021). To get consumers to take an interest and interact with that media it should create a perception of high quality. Intuitive (efficient in presenting information) and interactive (two way, responsive and

controllable) media has been shown to facilitate that (Cuevas et al., 2021). For example, where video media such as YouTube impacts flow by concentrating more on content than media functions especially on using transformational messaging and celebrity endorsers (Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2020), microblog sites such as tweeter take advantage of the nature of the media (short messages) to create specific personalities (e.g. Wendy's provocative, humorous and snarky comments targeted towards competitor McDonald) (Kyles 2021). Social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram on the other hand create impact through short taglines and captivating headlines that are meaningful, emotional and tells a story (e.g. Lush cosmetics "selfie preserving" tagline and Benefit Cosmetic's "Laughter is the best cosmetics") but that also include clear calls to action (Benefit Cosmetics' "Tonight's forecast: 99% chance of me buying more makeup online.") (Sharma 2018)

Consumer Motivations and Effective Content Strategies for Flow

On the consumer side, motivations to engage with digital brand content and processing capabilities together moderate the effectiveness of content strategies to impact the flow experience (Kostyk and Huhmann, 2021).

Cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of engagement with digital media that will determine flow indicate that consumer motivations to pay attention and engage with digital content should is focused on gratification of needs for practical solutions to problems faced, enhancement of self-image and socialization through building emotional connections to the brand and brand community (Irshad and Ahmad 2019). The research identified several motives of consumers that can be generalized. Both utilitarian and hedonic motives have been shown to impact attitudes toward the content and purchase intention (Irshad and Ahmad 2019). Utilitarian motives are product-centric and are geared towards securing easy-to-access product information. Hedonic motives make consumers seek fun, entertainment, and rewards (Hollebeck and Macky, 2019). The two biggest factors that underlie the gratification of these motives in the digital marketplace are 1) the extent to which contents are personalized, humanized, and experientialized to the needs and desires of individual consumers and 2) perception of credibility of the source of the contents (Benmamoun et al., 2019; Irshad and Ahmad 2019; Muda and Hamzah, 2021; Siddiqui and Warraich, 2021). These together help to strengthen self-brand identity and connection (Bowden and Mirzaei, 2021) and generate a perception of authenticity of the source and contents (Hollebeck and Macky, 2019), increasing the chances of getting into flow. Generations vary in relative importance, with Generation Y preferring experiential content and Generation Z preferring personalized ones (Siddiqui and Warraich, 2021). Two other areas where consumers differ in response and vary in their likelihood of getting into a flow are their extent of processing fluency and esthetic response (Kostyk and Huhmann, 2021). Both have been found to mediate the relationship between the processing of digital media content and positive attitude and liking of the content and thus can be expected to impact flow (Kostyk and Huhmann, 2021). Processing fluency is the ease of mental operations that provides a feeling of easy processing of stimuli (Brinol et al., 2006; Schwarz 2018), which then tends to impact responses. The esthetic response can be defined as the degree to which consumers find a stimulus attractive and has been shown to impact liking (Zarzosa and Huhmann, 2019).

CONCEPTUALIZING FLOW FOR CONTENT MARKETING

To conceptualize flow for content marketing, the paper tries to align current understanding of flow components with review findings of content market strategies and impact areas, consumer motivations to engage in digital brand contents, and media capabilities.

The current conceptualization of flow can be captured in four sequential connected components supported by two other components that crucially define flow. The 4-action sequence includes attention, curiosity, interest, and enjoyment. In flow, these mental states are governed and accompanied by an immersive concentration that feels time distorting and a sense of being in control throughout the interaction. Attention paid to and subsequent curiosity about the brand content and activity signals a certain level of concentration and focus; the interest in the content signals a situational involvement that includes a desire

to engage with it; and enjoyment with the content expresses a combination of attitudinal involvement and engagement. The dual presence of time erasing immersion but being in control during this sequence indicates conscious exploration.

These components indicate that the state of flow includes both cognitive and affective/experiential processing. This would indicate that digital content consumption, which is interactive and social, reflects underlying cognitive, affective, and social motivations and can become a flow experience if effective content strategies are utilized. Research has shown that a self-brand connection drives the desire to deeply engage and interact with brand content. When this happens it can go beyond simple engagement and create a sense of flow impacting outcomes such as loyalty (Bowden and Mirzaei, 2021; Kirmani and Dretsch, 2014). Conceptualization of flow for content marketing should thus include a broader and deeper view that includes engagement, exploration and a resulting absorption with multifarious brand contents. (Huang 2006; Shin 2006).

Findings indicate that this depth of absorption in exploration and engagement with a broad range of brand content would be heavily context (product and customer category) and platform-dependent (Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2020). Flow states have been found to vary from person to person based on perceptions of the ease and usefulness of using media (Novak, Hoffman and Yung, 2000). Flow in content marketing would thus be more or less potent across different combinations of types of content, media and consumer situations and contexts.

Content types and strategies directly affect flow. Thus, what is found to be effective in this review should enhance flow and any kind of conceptualization of flow for content marketing needs to consider this. The review highlights what makes content marketing effective. Contents that are both informational and transformational are impactful. Such content that includes emotional and humanized storytelling and product-based arguments personalized to the viewer comes across as authentic. Building interactivity engages the viewer. Further utilizing borrowed interest animal and human images, ASMR techniques, and symmetrical and high contrast images help with absorption and immersion. As the review finds, such content can result in flow only with the help of appropriate media.

Thus, determining and conceptualizing flow for content marketing will depend on effectiveness in content marketing strategies moderated by customer motivations, context, and media capabilities. Fig 1 below brings together findings discussed above to present a framework of content marketing strategies that facilitate flow and flow impacted outcomes.

FIGURE 1
FRAMEWORK OF CONTENT MARKETING-DRIVEN FLOW
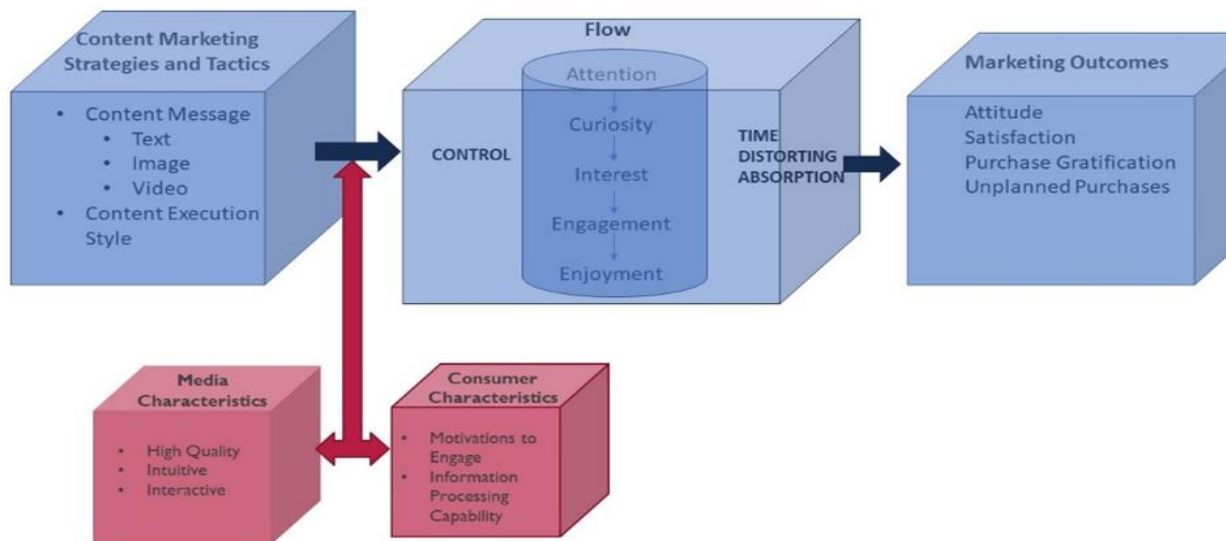
IMPLICATIONS

This research has theoretical and practical implications. In today's era of increasing use of digital and social media usage and decreasing attention span towards a host of me-too brand content this research shines the spotlight on flow in content marketing. It shows through consolidation of current research published in the last five years content strategies and tactics that effectively achieve beneficial marketing outcomes such as brand loyalty and how flow fits in. The research highlights how flow can be conceptualized by considering what makes content marketing strategies effective in engaging and absorbing consumers in brand content. A conceptualization of flow, particularly for content marketing, should also help enhance its effectiveness in achieving the marketing functions. The research builds a link between effective content strategies and flow, adds to theoretical advancement in this area, and presents new research avenues.

The research should also benefit practitioners by presenting a holistic and diverse range of content strategies that digital marketers can adopt to enhance flow. It also highlights the importance to marketers of creating content that aligns with context-consumer-media.

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