The influence of cultural background on content marketing practices: the approach of Turkish and Lithuanian youth to the main components of content marketing[*]

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This research paper mainly aims to illuminate the influence of cultural differences on certain components of the content marketing process. The study has a descriptive research approach. In order to collect research data, a digital survey, also in print, was applied to university students both in Turkey and Lithuania. Within the framework of the study, responses of the individuals revealed cultural influences on three vital main content marketing components: the distribution channel, the types of the messages and formats of building engagement with the target audience. Results proved that individuals from both countries have slight differences when it comes to reaching content, consuming it and interacting with it. It is possible to explain this situation on the basis of two factors. The first factor is globalism and the second one is that internet tools create their own usage culture and that individuals have been integrating with those cultures.

Keywords: content marketing, digital marketing, digital communication, culture, cultural differences

The History and Definition of Content Marketing

With the rise of the information era and new technologies, individuals have been bombarded with messages by different establishments via different channels. Those channels have been diversifying from traditional concepts to new and interactive concepts. As a result of interactivity, the amount of media consumption has gradually been increasing. The standard amount of media consumption of an average person

on a daily basis is calculated as 100.500 words and 34 gigabytes (Bohn & Short, 2012). Regarding this, individuals are less likely to engage with a branded message. In this chaotic atmosphere, content marketing offers new opportunities for establishments to engage with their target audience.

Content marketing has increased its popularity in today's digitally transformed atmosphere due to its customer-centric nature, which allows to create either brand awareness or loyalty, educate the customers, achieve better ranks in search engine result pages and increase the traffic of a web site or generate lead in an atmosphere which has message chaos. Content marketing is a practice-oriented issue that requires a theoretical

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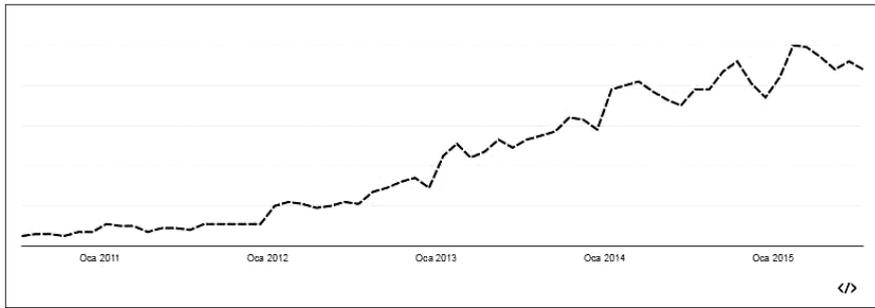
*Graphic No. 1: **Search popularity of the term "content marketing" on Google, July 2010-July 2015***

framework and needs to be addressed in an academic context. The practice of content marketing is used by various institutions of different kind and scales, such as NGO's, holdings, SME's and start-ups. According to a research, which was conducted and published in North America in 2014 by the Content Marketing Institute and Marketing Profs, 55% of all B2B marketers, who had participated in the research, plan to increase their content marketing budget in the following year (Content Marketing Institute, Marketing Profs, 2014). Additionally, the search popularity of the term "content marketing" on Google (see Graphic No. 1) proves that popularity of this practice has been increasing steadily since 2011[1].

Content marketing practices have come into prominence after digital developments and the emergence of new digital channels. However, observing certain content marketing practices is possible even in the late 19th century. *Furrow Magazine* provides one of the first examples of content marketing practices that started to be published in 1895. *Furrow Magazine* provides content about agriculture, which is useful for its target audience. The circulation of the

magazine increased to 4 million consumers in 1912, and today it has reached 2 million readers globally (Gardiner, 2013). Other cases similar to *Furrow Magazine* do exist. For instance, *Michelin*, the tire brand, published 35.000 copies of guidebooks that contain information about car maintenance. In 1904, *Jell-o*, a gelatine dessert brand, started to distribute free copies of its own cookbook and raised its sales to over $1 billion (Moon, 2013). Based on these cases, it is possible to suggest that core concepts of content marketing provide useful information to consumers and they are available in case any information about products/services is needed. On the other hand, today, different content distribution channels are available as a result of Web and Web 2.0. According to Lieb (2012), digital channels and social media reduced costs of content curation, circulation of content and physical/logistic difficulties. Regarding this proposition, first, web content is more shareable and spreadable; second, thanks to new possibilities (e.g., Facebook Ads) delivering content to a relevant target audience on the web is easier compared to old techniques (e.g., posting mails to address).

Defining the content marketing concept of today and describing the main aspects of it is of paramount importance. At this point,

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[1] The graphic is made with Google Trends and it includes searches from all over the world between July 2010 and July 2015

the statement written for Public Relations must be remembered: "…definitions shape people's expectations of what PR could or should be about" (Tench & Yeomans, 2009). The same reason explains why content marketing needs a definition within the context of this research. There are several definitions of content marketing. One possible definition, according to the Oxford Dictionaries (N.D.), is as follows: "A type of marketing that involves the creation and sharing of online material (such as videos, blogs, and social media posts) that does not explicitly promote a brand but is intended to stimulate interest in its products or services." The Content Marketing Institute (N.D.) has a different approach when it comes to defining content marketing: "Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action". Profitable action does not necessarily mean sale, its description can be varied as brand awareness or visibility, engagement and creating brand ambassadors.

The importance of content within communication efforts is described by Lieb (2012) as follows: "It's being there when consumers need you and seek you out with relevant, educational, helpful, compelling, engaging and sometimes entertaining information." According to Lieb (2012), content marketing aids in brand recognition, trust, authority, credibility, loyalty and authenticity. In addition to these factors, it helps to make customers more educated and informed. Complementally, the goals of content marketing are portrayed as generating value, emotional connections and creating an environment where stories, which define the brand, are born (Clerck, 2014).

Additionally, it is important to emphasise the fact that individuals tend to search for information on the web before a shopping decision process and the contribution of content marketing practices in order to increase visibility on search engine result pages is significant.

As mentioned above, content marketing should have a strategic approach and an integral role in organisations. On the other hand, content marketing has a clear consumer-centered philosophy. Instead of using "hard sell" language, the philosophy and practice of content marketing considers real needs of individuals and aims to establish empathy. However, the research which was conducted in Turkey and Lithuania shows that sales metrics still have an important role in measuring the success of content marketing process (Kuş, 2015).

Three key parameters have a vital role for attaining the desired outcome in the end of the content marketing process: identifying the target audience, the qualification of content and the distribution of content channels. Thus, in the process of content marketing, channels, where content is delivered, are enormously important; also, creating effective content in accordance with features of those channels is a key component of the efforts in order to reach consumers who have different backgrounds and profiles. Different channels allow to reach different target audiences. According to Duggan et al. (2015) on social media, the major age group among online adults who use LinkedIn is an age group of 30–49 years, whereas the major group of adults aged 18–29 years are active on Facebook. Other data indicates that more black users exist on Instagram than Pinterest. On the other hand, there are more women on Pinterest than Instagram. For instance, from the

perspective of given data, it is possible to suggest that the content of a brand which sells cosmetics made for black people has a better chance to be reached by its target audience on Instagram. This proves that channels of information flow and consumption are vital for content marketing.

The Paradigms and Key Components of Content Marketing

Even though the channels and understanding towards consumers have been transformed, it is simply possible to describe content marketing as a combination of pull strategies. Another certain point of content marketing is that the content marketing technique is, significantly, a web-based approach at the present time. In other words, content marketing is conducted on different web channels – mainly on social media and blogs. It is basically possible to state that blogs form a ground for all content marketing actions and the content created for blogs is delivered to related target audiences via different social media channels and newsletters.

Besides aforementioned content marketing definitions, developing a structural approach for content marketing has substantial importance. Based on this point of view, the model which is named as the *B.E.S.T Formula of Pulizzi and Barrett* is quite relevant to the context of the study. According to the Pulizzi et al. (2009), *B.E.S.T. Formula* includes four different elements:

"*Behavioural:* Everything that you communicate with your customers has a purpose.

Essential: Deliver information that your best prospects really need if they are to succeed at work or in life.

Strategic: Your content marketing efforts must be an integral part of your overall business strategy.

Targeted: You must target your content precisely so that it is truly relevant to your buyers".

Relatedness of content to target audience and looking through strategic lenses at the whole process are the key components when content marketing is approached from the frame that Pulizzi and Barrett have formed. Based on the formula, it is also possible to suggest that content marketing is a tool which aims to build engagement between a target audience and a brand. Starting from this point, it is an obligation for any content marketer to learn specific characteristics of the target audience in order to produce related content and develop an effective content marketing strategy. For instance, some of the target audience might react to entertaining content, while others interact with the educational content; or, sometimes, the audience would like to hear stories from brands or organisations, while others would wish to read direct information on the benefits of the product. Other important aspects of the content marketing are pointed out by Bar-Joseph. According to Bar-Joseph (2014), content marketing consists of four interconnected components: "message, format, distribution and promotion channel". It is possible to say that first two of the four elements are about content and the other two are related to marketing of the content. According to Bar-Joseph, content consists of message and format. Format determines the channel where content will be distributed. Bar-Joseph's formulation can be explained as follows:

Message: This parameter is clearly the most important component of content marketing. The message is what a brand would like to convey to its target audience and what has a direct effect on the result of the process.

Format: The format of the content might be either sound, text or visuals. Accordingly, this parameter is important for determining the distribution channel and promotion.

Distribution Channel: Based on the features of the target audience, distribution channels might vary from search engines to social networks.

Promotion: Promotion is the overall campaign, which is conducted in order to distribute the content effectively.

Within the framework of this study, the type of the content message can be categorised under two titles. The first is the rational-oriented message and the second is the emotional-oriented message. A rational-oriented message can be defined as content that has educating features. This type of message aims to provide useful information on a product and the message of the content is tailored with the purpose of responding to certain informational needs of the individuals in the target audience. However, emotional-oriented content aims to trigger emotions of the target audience and attempts to surprise or entertain them. The content message can include only one type of orientation or both types of orientation at the same time. This issue appears in engagement (with target audience) formats too. Some of the individuals tend to engage with the content which provides details on daily advantages of content or only expect a technically understandable language. However, some of the individuals are inclined to engage with the content which touches the feelings: building a connection with an individuals' persona or tells an engaging story. Since content marketing has been emerged as a pull-strategy, orientations of the message and engagement formats have enormous importance.

Influence of the Culture on Content Marketing

An adequate level of research and planning can be described as the spine of the efficient content marketing process due to the fact that results of the research phase lead to further steps. In terms of the research phase, it is necessary to develop a deep understanding on target audiences. Tenderich (2014) states, "Creating spreadable content first requires a deep understanding of target audiences and their cultures." In order to compose successful content, target audiences might be analysed from two different perspectives: content consumption habits and technology usage habits. Content consumption habits can be described as issues which are related to the message or story to be conveyed to target audience, while technology usage habits are more related to medium and devices which are used by individuals in a target audience in order to reach to content or message.

Content marketing is one of the key digital communication strategies which are used to create brand awareness and story. It is possible to indicate this by developing an understanding on the cultural codes of target audience, since it is one of the vital points when it comes to creating brand awareness, engagement or brand story by using content marketing. It is so because the emotions, as well as meaning, that are to be conveyed via content on different channels, have various bonds with the culture of the target audience. At this point, it is important we remember definition of culture, which is proposed by Hofstede (2011): "Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others." This definition significantly reveals that different kinds of content should be prepared to

engage with target audiences with different cultural backgrounds, since the success of any content marketing strategy counts on having knowledge on how to create widely read content and meaning – in other words, the aura or story of a brand. Creating a meaning is clearly interconnected with the "programming of the mind" of individuals.

On the other hand, the definition of culture which is proposed by Williams (1960) is also remarkable: "The history of the idea of culture is a record of our reactions, in thought and feeling, to the changed conditions of our common life. Our meaning of culture is a response to the events which our meanings of industry and democracy most evidently define. But the conditions were created and have been modified by men." Based on this description it is possible to state that culture has an interactive manner, because reaction has been shaped by modification and creation of conditions. In other words, the term *conditions* might be defined as external factors which can be effective on reactions. Indirectly, culture might be shaped by changing conditions. The message, content or story of a brand are attempts to change a specific condition or a specific perspective of a consumer towards a product, service or organisation. Consequently, individuals who have different cultural backgrounds react in various ways to content, message or brand myth.

The two previously mentioned definitions reveal inseparable aspects of culture and those elements have strong connections with content marketing. Hofstede's definition of culture reveals that content must to be programmed according to the mindset of the different groups. Those groups can be individuals from two different countries, sub-cultures or different segments in a specific target group. On the other hand, the

definition proposed by Williams indicates that external factors might be influential on the reactions of the people. This assumption means that external factors are crucial as much as the programming of content according to the mindset of groups. Therefore, the message and the connection of this message with external parameters such as agenda, needs of individuals, functionality in daily life have enormous importance. In other words, rational or emotional orientation of the message is important.

The study of Würtz (2006) reveals that there are differences between high-context cultures and low-context cultures when it comes to designing a web site. Those differences are categorised under five main categories: animation, promotion of values, individuals separate or together with the product, level of transparency and linear vs. parallel navigation on the web site. For instance, findings show that high context cultures use animations while a lower use of animation exists in low context cultures. Based on this point of view, the importance of the content format should be underlined, because in the context of content marketing, some cultures might consume content such as podcasts, while others might consume text and visuals.

Technology usage habits are another parameter which has been influenced by cultural background and external factors. Technology usage habits are critical for content marketing practice since several channels on the web have been used in order to distribute branded content. For instance, the study of Howard et al. (2007) suggests that "Income and education are important contextual factors that explain what people will get out of their Internet use." A recent PEW Report provides some pro-arguments on the aforementioned suggestion. Accord-

ing to the report (Pew Research Center, 2014), "Young people, blacks, Hispanics, the highly educated and those with a higher annual household income are more likely to use SNS on their phones than other groups". Starting from this point, information collection channels and the devices of consumers might depend on culture, level of education and income. In order to create successful content, it is important to know how (via which channel and device) the target audience reaches information.

The study of Goodrich et al. (2013) has set light on the influence of the individualism/collectivism aspect of culture on the usage of social media for purchase decisions. According to the results of the abovementioned study, individualistic countries, such as USA and Australia, are less likely to use social media, while collectivist countries are more likely to use it. Thus, content distribution channels might vary by cultural background. The same proposition might be valid for search engines. Search engine optimisation is one of the inseparable components of a content marketing strategy because it allows marketers to deliver relevant content to individuals. According to the Return on Now Search Engine Market Share Report (2015), the market share of search engines differs from country to country. For instance, the major search engine in Turkey is Google, with 96% of market share; however, South Koreans intensively use Naver with a 77% usage rate and the following search engine is Daum with 20%. It is clear that countries have different tendencies when it comes to reaching information via using search engines. Thus, search engine optimisation efforts in context of content marketing also vary from country to country.

Aim and Method

Detailed information on aim and method of the study is presented under this title. In addition, the frame of the population and sample are identified under this section.

Aim

As said, individuals tend to interpret the world with lenses provided by culture. Based on this, it is possible to suggest that the environment and culture have a clear effect when it comes to give a meaning to the world. Some of the individuals would like to acquire information by hearing stories, while some of them are inclined on reading it. This shows that individuals have different content consumption patterns. Accordingly, the process of establishing a content marketing strategy might be influenced from these factors too. Because these parameters have an influence on individual-content interaction, content distribution channels and consumption, the content message and meaning which is delivered by content might be diverse.

On the other hand, establishments have been getting beyond the borders as one of the results of globalisation. This situation urges establishments to develop an understanding on aspects of different cultures in order to conduct efficient operations in different countries. Various studies have been conducted on the effect of cultural differences (e.g., intercultural communication in interpersonal communication, organisational communication or advertising), content marketing has been raising its importance and it should be reviewed in this context too.

Regarding the concept, the primary aim of this study is illuminating the influence of cultural differences on the main components of content marketing: distribution

channels, types of message and formats of engagement building with target audience. Secondly, the study aims to contribute to content marketing literature with an academic perspective. Based on the concept, "What are the possible effect of cultural differences on components of content marketing process?" is a major research inquiry of this study. In addition, the study has three sub-questions:

1. How do content access channels, used before purchasing products, diversify amongst individuals who have different cultural backgrounds?
2. Should content be designed as to involve different message types according to different cultural backgrounds?
3. Should content be designed as to involve different engagement formats according to different cultural backgrounds?

Method

This study has a descriptive research approach. This means that the study attempts to reveal a perspective of participants on main components of content marketing by categorising and comparing the similarities and differences in responses. The survey is used to collect data. Pinsonneault et al. (1993) underline the clear distinction between a survey and survey research. The survey is only used as a tool for collecting data within the scope of this study and survey as a tool is defined as "means for gathering information about the characteristics, actions, or opinions of a large group of people" by Pinsonneault et al. (1993). Within the framework of research, data was collected via survey and survey data was used in order to describe how the total sample has distributed itself on the response alternatives for a single questionnaire item (Knupfer et al., 2001).

The survey contains 25 closed-ended questions. Key parameters of content marketing, such as message, channel and interaction have been considered while preparing the survey questions. The urvey has been printed and uploaded on an online platform. Some of the questions are tailored to collect data on demographic features of the sample such as age, country of origin and gender. The questions were prepared in order to develop a perspective on what are the most popular channels to collect information before purchasing products. In this section, several statements were proposed to participants and they attributed a value to a certain statement from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Lastly, statements were proposed to participants for evaluation in order to understand how a content message influences consumer-brand interaction.

Population and Sample

The survey is conducted both in Vilnius, Lithuania and Istanbul, Turkey. The survey has been filled by over 110 individuals in digital and physical form in Lithuania. Besides Lithuanian participants, several participants have contributed from different countries such as Belgium, Spain, Korea, Ecuador and Brazil. However, only Lithuanian participants' responses were evaluated within the framework of the research. 54 of 110+ participants are Lithuanian. Other than that, 51 participants from Turkey have also filled the survey form. According to a report (Ipsos MORI, 2014), *Generation Y*, also called millennials (individuals born in between 1980–2000s), have been earnestly using the internet. Based on the given information, the age group of the sample has been chosen in this age range.

Starting from this point, the convenience sampling method was applied and the sur-

vey has been distributed among university students in Turkey and Lithuania. Etikan et al. (2015) define convenience sampling by quoting Dörnyei, "Convenience sampling (also known as Haphazard Sampling or Accidental Sampling) is a type of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study". Within the scope of the research, only age, which should be in accordance with individuals born during the 1980–2000s, was applied as a sampling parameter.

Findings

The following tables include findings on demographic features of participants. As it seems, the majority of the sample consists of the students who were born in the 90s.

and Turkey, as it is narrated above, is important in terms of the study. The following table shows the findings on participants' perspective on data collection orientation. In order to obtain data, the "I use […] to reach information about product/service before purchasing" statement is proposed to participants. The question is tailored in this form because individuals are inclined to look for information before purchasing behaviour. They indicated to what extent they agree or disagree with the statement.

For the purpose of this study, it is important to develop an understanding of which kind of content triggers the interaction, because interaction brings brand awareness and profitable action on digital media. Commenting, liking or sharing a post are just simple examples of user reaction to content. It can be simply stated that the re-sharing or re-tweeting of a brand post is the most valuable interaction between a consumer and a brand, because it is an opportunity to

Table No. 1: *Year of Birth of Participants*

Year of Birth	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	N/A	Total
Turkey	1	0	2	3	2	12	17	8	2	1	0	0	0	3	51
Lithuania	0	0	0	5	3	23	9	8	3	0	1	0	1	0	54

Table No. 2: *Gender of Participants*

Gender	Female	Male
Turkey	20	31
Lithuania	40	14

In general, the majority of the participants consist of females. However, there were more male participants in Turkey and more female participants in Lithuania. Collecting data on information consumption channels of the participants from Lithuania

spread word, reach new people and develop engagement. These parameters significantly show the efficiency of content. In order to understand which kind of content triggers the interaction, statements asking *"which kind of content shared by brands encourage them to re-share brand post"* on their social feed or other platforms were proposed to participants. Soon after, statements were proposed in order to enlighten how content should be designed. Then, participants indicated to what extent they agree or disagree with the statement.

Table No. 3: **Channels used to obtain information before purchasing product/service**

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Turkey	Lithuania	Turkey	Lithuania	Turkey	Lithuania	Turkey	Lithuania	Turkey	Lithuania
I use **search engines** to reach information about product/service before purchasing.	45%	46%	35%	33%	14%	13%	4%	8%	2%	0%
I use brand **social network pages** to reach information about product/ service before purchasing.	18%	20%	25%	32%	39%	35%	14%	7%	4%	6%
I use brand **blogs** to reach information about product/ service before purchasing.	0%	6%	6%	17%	20%	33%	33%	24%	41%	20%
I use **forums** to reach information about product/ service before purchasing.	16%	19%	27%	40%	27%	12%	16%	23%	14%	6%
I use **friend recommendations** to reach information about product/ service before purchasing.	23%	35%	45%	46%	22%	11%	10%	6%	0%	2%

Table No. 4: **Message types that trigger the interaction**

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Turkey	Lithuania	Turkey	Lithuania	Turkey	Lithuania	Turkey	Lithuania	Turkey	Lithuania
Useful content	23%	11%	8%	20%	18%	26%	22%	13%	29%	30%
Content that is related to agenda	8%	7%	27%	9%	27%	30%	16%	26%	22%	28%
Content that is related to consumer needs	4%	15%	16%	17%	29%	22%	20%	18%	31%	28%
Entertaining content.	23%	7%	20%	31%	25%	28%	12%	17%	20%	17%
Surprising content	18%	19%	23%	26%	31%	24%	12%	9%	16%	22%
Educating content	16%	15%	27%	39%	25%	24%	22%	5%	10%	17%

Table No. 5: **Engagement formats of the content**

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Turkey	Lithuania	Turkey	Lithuania	Turkey	Lithuania	Turkey	Lithuania	Turkey	Lithuania
If the tone of the content, which is published by brands on social network or blog, contain something from my persona, it is more effective at building a relationship.	18%	13%	45%	48%	25%	28%	6%	9%	6%	2%
The content which is in level of my capacity of understanding regardless the type of productfor building relationship with me.	37%	11%	31%	56%	16%	24%	10%	5%	6%	4%
If the content has a story behind, it is more interesting to me.	33%	24%	27%	30%	28%	31%	10%	9%	2%	6%
Content about product/service must be more about daily advantages of them.	61%	41%	25%	17%	8%	18%	6%	15%	0%	9%

Discussion

As a result of the survey, some of the data points out to several important differences. On the other hand, despite the fact that Turkey and Lithuania have different cultural aspects, answers that have the same orientation still exist.

The first section of the survey investigates the participants' manner of reaching information before the process of purchasing products. The majority of participants from both countries clearly stated that they use search engines in order to collect information before purchasing products or services. According to the results, respon-

dents are mainly neutral when it comes to reaching information on social network pages of a brand. However, data shows that respondents from Lithuania have a bigger tendency to collect information on social network pages than respondents from Turkey.

What participants clearly disagree with is reaching information through blogs. As it is stated by the participants, they do not tend to gather information from blogs. Another statement was designed in order to learn to what extent do respondents agree or disagree with reaching information through forums. Participants from both countries

Table No. 6: **How do content access channels, used before purchasing products, diversify in different cultures?**

Channels	Turkey	Lithuania
Search engines	(80% agreement) - Search engines are the most reliable information source for participants from Turkey. This shows that the search engine optimisation process is a vital component of the content marketing process in Turkey.	(79% agreement) - Search engines are the most reliable information source for participants from Lithuania. This shows that the search engine optimisation process is vital component of the content marketing process in Lithuania.
Brand social network pages	(43% agreement) - People do not seek information on social network pages as much as through search engines. However, they still tend to obtain information from social network pages of brands and their communication channels are not totally closed.	(52% agreement) - People do not seek information on social network pages as much as through search engines. However, they still tend to obtain information from social network pages of brands and their communication channels are not totally closed. Furthermore, Lithuanian participants are more inclined to obtain information from this channel than Turkish participants.
Brand blogs	(74% disagreement) - Participants are strongly disagreeing with obtaining information from a brand blog.	(44% disagreement) - People are disagreeing with obtaining information from a brand blog. However, they do not oppose this channel as much as participants from Turkey.
Forums	(43% agreement) - Participants perceive forums as information sources. However, the success of the content distribution is still dubious.	(59% agreement) - Participants perceive forums as information sources. The success of content distribution is still dubious but Lithuanian participants tend to collect information from forums more than participants from Turkey.
Friend recommendations	(69% agreement) - After search engines, this is the most certain information source for Turkish participants.	(81% agreement) - After search engines, this is the most certain information source for Lithuanian participants. Lithuanian participants tend to collect information from friends more than participants from Turkey.

are positive in this issue. However, based on the responses, it is possible to suggest that participants from Lithuania are more inclined to gather information from forums. On the other hand, there is strong trust in friend recommendations in both countries.

In order to understand how content messages should be tailored in order to trigger an interaction and provide content with more efficiency, several statements were designed and data gathered from the answers of respondents were analysed and their current point of view was identified. Statements mainly consisted of the phrase "I tend to share content of a brand on my own social feed or other platforms if it is ..."

because, as mentioned before, the re-sharing of a brand content shows the highest level of engagement with content, therefore, with the brand itself.

Concerning the process of developing an understanding towards developing engaging content in the previously explained chaotic branded message atmosphere, further statements were composed. This phase of the research consists of four statements. Firstly, statements about relatedness and understanding capacity were directed to participants. In the second part, respondents evaluated the statements "If the content has a story behind, it is more interesting to me" and "Content about product/service must

*Table No. 7: **Should content be designed as to involve different message types according to different cultural backgrounds?***

Type of the Message	Turkey	Lithuania
Useful content	(31% agree) - Participants do not tend to share useful content published by brands.	(31% agree) - Participants do not tend to share useful content published by brands.
Content that is related to agenda	(35% agree) - Participants indicated that they would not share a content on their social feed which is related to their needs. However Turkish participants have a tendency to share this kind of content.	(%54 disagree) - Participants indicated that they would not share content on their social feed which is related to their needs.
Content that is related to needs.	(51% disagreement) - Participants indicated that they would not share content on their social feed which is related to their needs.	(46% disagreement) - Participants indicated that they would not share content on their social feed which is related to their needs. However, Lithuanian participants have less disagreement with sharing this kind of content.
Entertaining content	(43% agreement) - Participants clearly indicated that they would share content on their social feed which has entertaining aspects. Turkish participants tend to share entertaining content more than Lithuanian participants.	(38% agreement) - Participants clearly indicated that they would share content on their social feed which has entertaining aspects.
Surprising content	(%41 agreement) - Participants from both countries have a tendency to share surprising content.	(%45 agreement) - Participants from Lithuania have a tendency to share surprising content.
Educating content	(%43 agreement) - Participants from Turkey are positive on sharing educating content on their feed.	(%54 agreement) - Participants from Lithuania are positive on sharing educating content on their feed. It is possible to indicate that they tend to share educating content more than Turkish participants.

Table No. 8: **Should content be designed as to involve different engagement formats according to different cultural backgrounds?**

Formats of Engagement Building with Target Audience	Turkey	Lithuania
Content related to persona of the consumer	(63% agreement) - Respondents clearly stated that they find content which is related to their persona engaging.	(61% agreement) - Respondents clearly stated that they find content which is related to their persona engaging.
Content which is in level of capacity of understanding of consumer	(68% agreement) - Respondents stated that they find content which is in their level of capacity of understanding engaging.	(67% agreement) - Respondents stated that they find content which is in their level of capacity of understanding engaging.
Content which has a story	(60% agreement) - Participants from both countries agreed that content which has a story is more engaging. However, Turkish participants are more sensitive and inclined to engage with this kind of content.	(54% agreement) - Participants from both countries agreed that content which has a story is more engaging.
Content which tells about daily advantages of a product/service	(86% agreement) - Participants from both countries agreed that content which has a story is more engaging. However, Turkish participants are more sensitive and inclined to engage with this kind of content.	(58% agreement) - Participants from both countries agreed that content which has a story is more engaging.

be more about daily advantages of them". Participants from both countries agreed on the statements in different levels. However, participants from Turkey are more sensitive to and agree more with those statements.

Conclusion

In terms of the study, these findings confirm that search engines might be used as an inseparable part of content marketing process both in Turkey and Lithuania. On the other hand, results show that social media channels might be used as content distribution channels, since participants agree with the statements. However, this is more feasible in Lithuania. Despite the fact that blogs are a vital component of the content marketing, people who use blogs in order to reach information are a relative minority. In this case, the first step could be in creating content on blogs and another further step could be in distributing the content created on blogs via search engines and social networks in order to pull visitors to the blog. Otherwise, mere blog posts are not efficient enough to reach prospective consumers. Furthermore, those results show that the blogging process without social networks is ineffective. The results illustrate that forums might be used as content distribution channels in the context of Turkey and Lithuania. In terms of the study, results prove that friend recommendations are still a reliable source of information before purchasing products. In the context of this finding, content marketing might be used in order to manage pictures in people's minds.

Participants clearly indicated that they would not share content on their social feed which is related to their needs. One of the probable reasons of this attitude is that this action seems like advertising and might disturb the people on their feed. In this case, it is possible to indicate that participants from Turkey tend to interact with emotional

oriented messages while participants from Lithuania interact with both emotional and rational messages.

Respondents stated that if any content of a brand posted on social networks or blogs includes a component related to their persona, they find the content more engaging. Individuals from both countries have the same attitude toward this statement. The analysis of the data revealed that respondents from both countries demand to consume content which is in the level of their capacity of understanding. Furthermore, it is possible to state that participants from Lithuania are far more sensitive to this issue. Within the framework of the study, it is found that Turkish participants pay attention to read content which is in their level of capacity of understanding. This means that the usage of terminological language in the content might decrease the engagement capacity of the content in Turkey. In addition, a brand aura which consists of emotions, stories, and practical information must be created to engage with the participants from Turkey.

On the other hand, findings in both countries have similarities. Two factors might cause this situation. On a macro level, globalisation is one of the strong factors. Another factor is the usage habit of information sources. Tools such as search engines or social networks are becoming a melting pot for different cultures. Those tools have their own culture and individuals are integrating with those cultures. As a result of these factors, the influence of cultural differences decreases and similarities come into scene. However, there are still minimal differences in content creation and distribution stages. Considering those minimal differences, it is possible to create the table below and evaluate differences in the content marketing process.

Last but not least, it should be noted that this study is a pilot study which is conducted in two different countries. In order to develop a 360 degree understanding on the effect of cultural background on content marketing process, this research should be conducted in several other countries.

*Table No. 9: **Differences in process of content marketing***

Creating Content				Distributing Content	
Message Types		Engagement Format		Content Distribution Channels	
Turkey	Lithuania	Turkey	Lithuania	Turkey	Lithuania
• Related to an agenda • Entertaining	• Surprising • Educating	• related to the persona of a consumer • in capacity of a consumers' level of understanding • Content has a story • Content that tells about daily advantages of product/service	• related to the persona of a consumer • in capacity of a consumers' level of understanding	• Search Engines	• Search Engines • Social Networks • Forums • Friend Recommendations

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KULTŪRINĖS APLINKOS ĮTAKA TURINIO RINKODAROS PRAKTIKOMS: TURKŲ IR LIETUVIŲ JAUNIMO POŽIŪRIS Į PAGRINDINES TURINIO RINKODAROS SUDEDAMĄSIAS DALIS

Oğuz Kuş

S a n t r a u k a

Pagrindinis šio mokslinio darbo tikslas – išsiaiškinti, kaip kultūriniai skirtumai veikia turinio rinkodaros proceso sudedamąsias dalis. Šis tyrimas yra aprašomasis. Siekiant surinkti duomenis, Turkijos ir Lietuvos studentams buvo pateiktos apklausos anketos, kurias buvo galima užpildyti arba popieriuje, arba internetu. Atliekant tyrimą respondentų atsakymai atskleidė kultūrinės aplinkos įtaką trims svarbiausioms turinio rinkodaros sudedamosioms dalims: sklaidos kanalui, pranešimų tipui ir bendravimo su tiksline auditorija formatui. Rezultatai parodė, kad dviejų šalių studentų požiūris į turinio paiešką, vartojimą, komunikaciją šiek tiek skiriasi. Šią situaciją galima paaiškinti dviem veiksniais. Pirmasis veiksnys – tai globalizmas, antrasis – internetas, kuriantis savitą naudojimosi juo kultūrą, į kurią įsitraukia vartotojai.