An Investigation into Email Marketing Success: What Drives Recipient Engagement?

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Affidavit

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

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Abstract

Owing to the rise of the internet, emails have become a tool that almost everyone uses. This has been leveraged by corporations in their marketing quests, giving way for emails to become an undeniably powerful method of marketing. With that being said, the popularity of emails as a key component of marketing strategies has shown signs of counterproductivity due to their saturation. Companies must carefully curate and devise their email marketing strategies and their execution in order to achieve effective engagement from their target audience.

This research is built on the framework of the theory of reasoned action, relating it to the drivers of engagement with marketing emails amongst recipients. This was done by surveying 61 participants to screen for factors that both, encourage and discourage engagement with marketing emails. The primary data collected was then analyzed quantitatively to investigate the relationship between various factors of email anatomy and recipient engagement. It was found that the variables were correlated, and the most significant factors were identified. The findings of the study act as a guide for marketers looking to devise an email marketing strategy or improve the performance of an existing one.

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List of Abbreviations

ARPANET – Advanced Research Projects Agency Network

CTA – Call to Action

CTR – Clickthrough rate

E-commerce – Electronic Commerce

GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation

KMO – Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

GIF – Graphic Interchange Format

H0 – Null hypothesis

H1 – Hypothesis 1

ISP – Internet Service Provider

KPI – Key Performance Indicator

MSA – Measure of Sampling Adequacy

ROI – Return on Investment

TRA – Theory of Reasoned Action

1   Introduction

1.1   Background

Emails are all around us: from signing up for weekly newsletters about how to keep your cat happy to receiving that flight confirmation, it is undeniable that emails are a pillar for communicating with anyone, anywhere, easily. With virtually everyone seeming to have at least one email account, it has become a standard form of reaching out to someone, whether it be that recruiter who's hiring for the gardener position you've always dreamed of, or your classmate to share with them your notes on the accounting class they missed. Thinking of a world before emails seems impossible, but relatively speaking, emails are somewhat of a new advancement, having earned their place in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1979 (OED, 2012). Since then, emails have developed slowly but surely to infiltrate all aspects of our daily lives; no longer are they limited to research or academic purposes, nor are they restricted to those who could afford a hefty desktop computer to access them on. They have become as common as the internet and expecting the stranger next to you to have an email account is the default. Without access to emails, one can expect to be shunned from countless activities, including creating a social media profile, starting a university application, and even purchasing a gym membership. Knowing their prevalence, it was only a matter of time before companies leveraged emails to their advantage, more specifically through means of email marketing. Email marketing has become an invaluable tool for the brands of today, and a solid money-maker for many. This begs the question of just how effective emails are, and what makes them so. Ultimately, engagement with emails is what drives the oh-so-desired conversions—however, there are blurred lines regarding marketing emails. Is sending out just any old email enough? Or is there a recipe behind success?

By virtue of its name, email marketing describes the marriage of two concepts: marketing and emails. Marketing is defined as the processes to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings of value for customers, clients, partners, and society (American Marketing Association, 2017). Email, short for electronic mail, is a method of exchanging messages through the internet (Sampson, 2003). Simply put, email

marketing is the activity of sending emails to current and prospective customers (Email Marketing, 2011).

Email marketing is part of a bigger picture – electronic marketing – and is used as a means to increase site traffic and acts as sales support (Kriš & Harper, cited in Hudak et al., 2017). While emails can be compared to traditional letters, they are less obtrusive and are a much swifter way to communicate in writing (Dürscheid & Carmen, 2013). The nature of emails as an electronic tool means that they can incorporate sophisticated aspects that traditional forms of communication cannot compete with. For example, emails tend to have links accompanying their call-to-action (CTA); this means that a "Visit our website today!" CTA is linked to a button that, when pressed, will send you directly to the landing page that the sender designated (Els, 2018). This eases the consumer journey for recipients as they are not required to exert any complex effort to engage with the brand through email. For companies, this has uncovered a stream of revenue opportunities and a chance to reach their target audience directly.

It must be noted, however, that the benefits of email have made it skyrocket in popularity to an almost counterproductive extent. This can be seen with the abundance of brands attempting to grow their mailing list, with little regard for those on the receiving end potentially feeling bombarded with the number of marketing emails flooding their inbox. Unsubscribing from emails is arguably easier than subscribing to them in the first place, and with recipients having all the power in terms of deciding whether to engage or not, companies are desperately attempting to keep up with just what makes them tick exactly.

1.2 Email Prevalence Today and Success Measures

In 2017, the figure for emails being sent each day stood at 269 billion and it has increased gradually every year since; this trend is expected to continue, with a projected number of 376.4 billion emails a day being sent in 2025 (Ceci, 2022). This averages at a yearly marginal increase of 4.29% over the eight years (Ceci, 2022). With the numbers being so substantial and showing no signs of slowing down, emails are a dominant form of communication that businesses can – and do – leverage. However,

the abundance of emails can be counterproductive as they begin to compete for recipients' attention.

The average open rate of marketing emails across all industries stands at 21.33% (Mailchimp, 2019). This is a key performance indicator (KPI) that is descriptive of the number of emails that receivers open compared to the number sent out. Another KPI that can be considered is the amount of time receivers spend reading emails once they have been opened. In 2018, it was 13.4 seconds; this fell to an estimated 10 seconds in 2021 (Ceci, 2021).

The clickthrough rate (CTR) is also another significant KPI of email marketing. It can be attributed to the CTA: a high CTR indicates an effective CTA in that the readers' attention has been piqued enough for them to want to clickthrough the email and onto whatever page is linked, usually the company website, for more information (Singh & Kumari, 2019). CTRs on emails can be extremely significant and accountable for the greatest number of conversions across the board, in relation to other marketing efforts (Singh & Kumari, 2019). Conversions are the ultimate goal of many marketing efforts; they happen when an action deemed as valuable by the company has been taken—anything from visiting the landing page to making a purchase (Google, 2022).

The average open rate of emails with the ample number of them going out daily, as well as the declining amount of time spent reading them, adds up to form a war for readers' attention. All aspects of an email must be carefully curated for them to stand a chance of being opened, much less read, in a sea of competing emails. From the subject line to the images used, copywriters and marketers alike must carefully take into account all components to elevate the probability of email marketing success. This raises the question of exactly what a winning formula for email marketing entails, if one even exists— after all, perhaps sheer luck runs the show.

1.3 Relevance of the Study

While emails are a part of the everyday lives of the majority, and we find ourselves opting in for promotional emails or newsletters more often than not, there is a lacuna in research investigating the anatomy of a successful email. This thesis will delve into recipient perception of emails, studying ways to improve various KPIs, from email frequency to length and layout. The results will act as a starting point for companies looking to begin implementing an email marketing strategy or improve on an existing one.

The main research question of the study is: Which factors influence receiver engagement with marketing emails?

This will facilitate for the following secondary questions to be simultaneously studied:

- Is there a correlation between factors that influence marketing email engagement?
- How can marketing email receiver engagement be improved?

Here, "engage" refers to activities correlated to marketing emails, which involve KPIs such as open rate. These are the same KPIs that concern the secondary research question regarding improving marketing email receiver engagement. Factors influencing the un-subscription rate will also be investigated and related to marketing email frequency, length, and calls to action. A 2020 global study conducted by the Statista Research Department (2022) found that maintaining an engaged list was the most common challenge amongst marketers, with 45% of respondents identifying it as a difficult objective to achieve (Statista Research Department, 2022).

By determining the motivators and deterrents of email marketing success, companies can have a benchmark insight into how marketing emails are perceived. This can act as a guide to establishing a successful email marketing strategy, and what to avoid when sending out marketing emails.

This research adopts a deductive theoretical approach, studying the impact that the theory of reasoned action (TRA) has when used within email marketing. The data

collection was done in a quantitative manner through an online survey. Results were then analyzed using Jamovi and RStudio, before conclusions were drawn and suggestions were made.

2 Literature Review

2.1 A Short Trip Down Internet History Lane

American computer programmer Ray Tomlinson is credited for sending out the world's very first email, which was in 1971 (Swatman, 2015). Not only that, but Tomlinson is also widely recognized as the inventor of the email, for which he chose the "@" symbol in its addresses to link together the username and domain (Metz, 2012). Not long after, an engineer named Larry Roberts developed the world's first email management program. This was in response to complaints arising in 1973 about the difficulty of managing receiving a significant number of emails each day, when the email was not as optimized or sophisticated as it is now (Stanford, 1999). This program enabled features such as deleting, listing, forwarding, and responding to messages (Left, 2002). Both Tomlinson and Roberts worked on the ARPANET system, short for Advanced Research Projects Agency Network, which came about in 1969 (Left, 2002; Hauben & Hauben, 1998). The ARPANET was the first system for exchanging messages near-instantaneously regardless of geographical location, and is often referred to as the precursor to the internet as we know it today (Left, 2002). The ARPANET's unprecedented accomplishments were recognized by another one of its pioneers, Vinton Cerf – in a poem that was published in Tracy LaQuey's book Users' Dictionary of Computer Networks (1990) – describing the change the network has had on computer science research.

> "Like distant islands sundered by the sea,
> We had no sense of one community.
> We lived and worked apart and rarely knew
> That others searched with us for knowledge, too…"

The world began to see more widespread access to the internet with the introduction of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) (Downs & Greenstein, 2000). ISPs were supported in their development from the mid-1990s by university computer science and engineering programs, as well as federal and government research; they offer the internet to the masses, mainly medium and small-sized users (Downs & Greenstein, 2000). ISPs are known to provide services across the internet, with the most critical one being the provision of a connection to the internet—this is in exchange for a fee. The first ISP, The World, had its first user in November of 1989 (Ilacqua, 2016). Fast forward to the modern day, and the USA has a total of 2,885 internet service providers across the nation (BroadbandNow, 2022).

2.2 Marketing Strategies

Marketing has evolved from a functional management focus to a strategic element within the overall corporate strategy (Furrer, 2006). Globalization has impacted the economy in that it is now more open, consumers' tastes are not confined or limited to borders, and markets across the globe are more interconnected and interdependent than ever, owing to the world wide web (Furrer, 2006). The development and execution of a marketing strategy is critical in the realm of marketing (Morgan et al., 2019). An effective strategy involves making decisions concerning goals and how they are to be accomplished; this is regarding aspects including but not limited to target market selection and positioning (Morgan et al., 2019). A marketing strategy encompasses deliberate strategic decisions – such as which and how many segments to target – and tactical marketing decisions—such as the channel selection and merchandizing platform design (Morgan et al., 2019).

As information technology and internet availability increase in prevalence, companies have no choice but to digitalize their processes, and marketing is no exception (Durmaz & Efendioğlu, 2016). By shifting communication to a digital format, companies can interact with customers easily and efficiently (Durmaz & Efendioğlu, 2016). While this is also possible with traditional marketing methods, digital marketing has the added benefit of being able to reach the desired target audience through means such as search engines and social media (Durmaz & Efendioğlu, 2016).

Traditional marketing, unlike digital marketing, uses tools that reach a wide audience range; these tools include television, newspapers, magazines, and radio, for example (Bhayani & Gghh, 2014). The two-way communication feature that the internet enables allows for any activities or exhibited behaviors to be traced (Bhayani & Gghh, 2014). This means that firms are able to collect data on consumer behavior, which can then be used to optimize the digital marketing process and its targeting (Bhayani & Gghh, 2014).

Table 1.

The advantages and disadvantages of a selection of traditional and digital marketing tools.

Marketing Category	Marketing Tool	Advantages	Disadvantages	Reference
Traditional	Television	- Encourages viewers to visit online or physical stores - Can target audience via slots purchased for certain times - Able to create a captive audience	- Complex to develop and deploy - Costly - Not as effective for targeting certain generations (millennials and generation Z)	Kuyucu, 2020
Traditional	Radio	- Leverages the trusting environment that stations create - Less costly than other platforms e.g., television - Frequent mentions i.e., "brought to you by X" help create a positive brand image	- Temporal—cannot be kept for future reference like with websites or magazines - Possibly less impactful due to lack of visuals - Cannot be played back by audience since it is live	Kuyucu, 2019
Traditional	Newspaper	- Print marketing is perceived as trustworthy - Coupon-users turn to newspapers to obtain them - Various advertisement options and sizes, with a range of costs	- Facing a decrease in readership - Short shelf-life, with many being released on a daily basis - Non-intrusive ads on a cluttered page mean that the highest impact is on those already looking for them	Elliot, 2017
Digital	Newsletter	- Support branding and customer relationship development - Flexibility in format and content - Essential aspect of today's promotional strategies	- Require effort from number of departments to design, produce, and distribute - Low visibility - Limitation of audience to certain segments	Zbuchea & Mocanu, 2013
Digital	Social media marketing	- Customers can be easily targeted - Reduced cost - Greater reach	- Time-intensive to successfully execute due to its nature of two-way communication - The use of third-party platforms must be carefully considered for adherence to policies - Potential for negative posts from unsatisfied customers or industry competitors	Nadaraja & Yazdanifard, 2013
Digital	Emails	- High return on investment (ROI) - Can be customized - Able to be measured for relevant KPIs	- Junk-mail filters may result in undelivered mail - Difficulty with sustaining engagement - Email overload due to number of emails in receivers' inbox	GetResponse by implix, 2009; Jenkins, 2009; Fusion, 2011; Business Marketing Plan, 2011, cited in Fariborzi & Zahedifard, 2012.

Note. Table 1 shows the advantages and disadvantages of a range of marketing tools. (Created by the author, 2022).

Table 1 touches on a range of marketing tools, traditional and digital. Although the pros and cons mentioned are not a comprehensive list, they do provide a general guide to the tool in question. When considering the information presented, it becomes apparent that the advantages and disadvantages are closely interlinked since they can be traced back to the category of the tool: traditional or digital. For example, traditional tools such as newspapers or television do a less effective job of segmenting the audience. Digital tools, like social media marketing and emails, have a lower cost of execution. With overlapping advantages and disadvantages, the lines can become blurred between various tools; however, it is evident that tools must be carefully considered prior to adoption since they serve differing purposes.

2.2.1 The Rise of Email Marketing

Email marketing is a direct form of marketing in which commercial or fund-raising communications are relayed to an audience (Fariborzi & Zahedifard, 2012). It is regarded as one of the tools utilized by electronic commerce (E-commerce) to gain competitiveness globally (Fariborzi & Zahedifard, 2012). The very first use of this tool can be traced back to Gary Thuerk, a marketing representative that sent out an unsolicited mass email to ARPANET users along the west coast of the United States in May of 1978; it was an invitation to a product presentation. This was an evident violation of ARPANET's policy, which, at the time, limited its use to support education and research (Delany, 2006).

Speaking of the email, Thuerk stated the following: "I knew I was pushing the envelope. I thought of it as e-marketing. We wanted to reach as many people as possible to let them know about our new product…"(Jurberg, 2021). Due to KPI tracking not being as developed or sophisticated as it is nowadays, the exact impact of this first-ever email marketing campaign could not be gauged (Jurberg, 2021). Thuerek, however, estimates that it resulted in $12 million worth of sales, which is equivalent to $80 million today (Jurberg, 2021). The open rate was also estimated to be around 50%, with a CTR of 10%. The success of the email can be attributed to the innovative – at the time – and targeted nature of emails (Jurberg, 2021). Thuerk's

predicted open rate, compared to the current average open rate across all industries, is significantly higher.

Fast forward to today and emails have become a staple for marketers, with 87% of marketers using them to circulate content in an organic way—the figure places emails in second place as the most popular channel for content distribution, behind social media which stands at 89% (Content Marketing Institute, 2020; DMA, 2019, cited in Mohsin, 2022). This comes as no surprise when taking into account the consistently high-performing ROI that email generates; a $1 spending on email marketing can be expected to result in an average return of $42 (Content Marketing Institute, 2020; DMA, 2019, cited in Mohsin, 2022). The CTR across all industries is 2.62% (Mailchimp, 2019). This is a major drop compared to Thuerk's email, and can be expressive of the prevalence, almost saturation, of emails.

Emails have become such an integral part of business' marketing strategy, and the statistics are telling of that. It has been shown that 37% of companies are upping their email budget; 33% send weekly marketing emails and 26% send out multiple each month; and 77% of marketers have had a rise in email engagement over the last year (Kirsch, 2022).

Figure 1.

The worldwide email marketing revenue from 2020 to 2027.

Global Email Marketing Revenue from 2020-2027
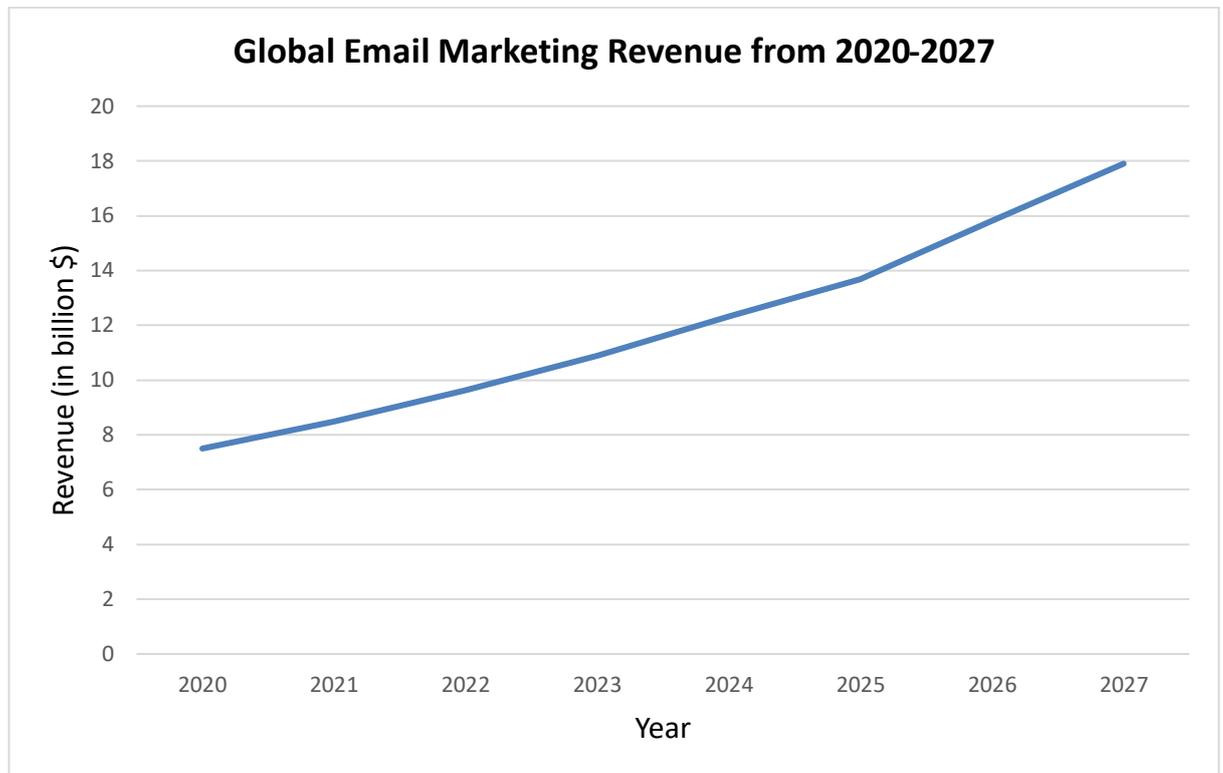
Note. Figure 1 is based on the statistics published by the Statista Research Department (2022). The numbers from 2021-2027 are predicted; the annual compound growth rate is expected to equate to 13.3%.

Figure 1 is descriptive of the impact of emails as a critical aspect of companies' marketing strategies. The positive correlation between the years and revenue indicates that the effects of email marketing are not expected to slow down any time soon, with a positive trend towards emails being a source for generating substantial revenue. This can be linked to the power of emails to raise awareness about business activities, as well as create conversions by means of users clicking through and following CTAs.

Figure 2.

The return on investment (ROI) of email marketing from 2014-2019.
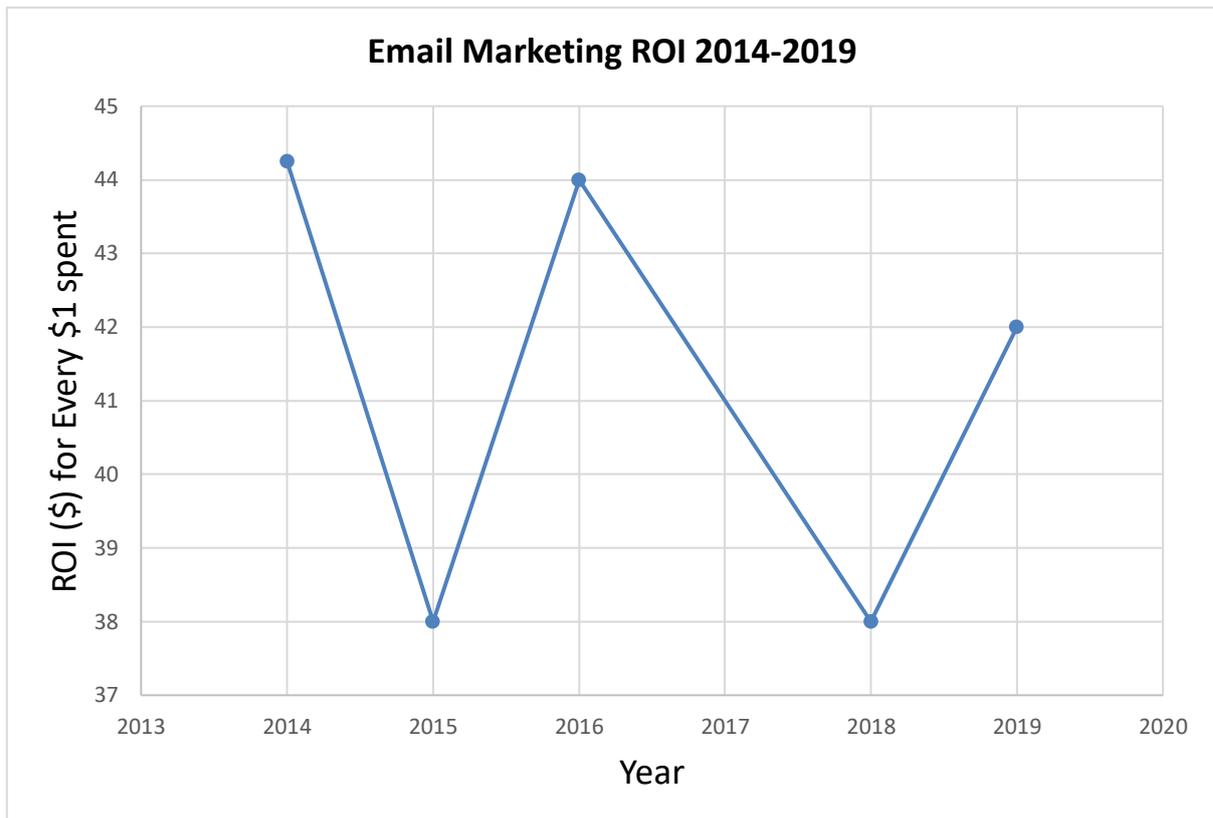
Note. Figure 2 is a depiction of the ROI of email marketing from 2014-2019. Data from 2017 is unavailable. Based on Compu-Mail, 2014; van Rijn, 2015; Campaign Monitor 2016; Hatch, 2018; Freedman, 2019.

Return on investment (ROI) is a performance indicator related to investment; it is expressive of the extent to which the amount invested in a particular action creates a profit or loss, thereby measuring its profitability (Zamfir et al., 2016). The ROI can be either a positive or a negative figure; a negative ROI is indicative of an unprofitable action and the higher the ROI, the more profitable the action (Zamfir et al., 2016). Figure 2 showcases the ROI based on each $1 invested in email marketing. This can be comparable, more retrospectively, to the data presented in Figure 1. While the data in Figure 2 appears to fluctuate over the years, it is important to note that the highest ROI was $44.25 in 2014, and the lowest was 38 in both 2015 and 2018—this gives a range of $6.25, which is relatively insignificant when looking at the ROI as a whole. Instead, it can be deduced that despite the fluctuations, email marketing has

consistently had a profitable ROI in that it is positive over the years in Figure 2. Furthermore, the ROI has been a minimum of $38 for every $1 invested, meaning that email marketing is a highly profitable tool for companies to generate revenue. The ROI could be based on the number of conversions that, for example, equated to a purchase being made. The troughs can be attributed to internal or external factors that negatively influenced email marketing, such as poor strategy execution or a reduction in the recipients' disposable income, in turn lowering purchase-based conversions. The peaks can be a result of promotional email marketing campaigns that promoted a sale for example, which then drove an influx of visitors to the company website through a high clickthrough rate, and as a result equated to a great number of purchase-based conversions, therefore increasing the ROI.

2.3 Email Perception

2.3.1 The Theory of Reasoned Action

Developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1975, the reasoned-action theory is regarded as a highly influential approach to predicting and understanding intentional behavior and has established its effectiveness in predicting individuals' behavior across many contexts (Hagger, 2019). The theory centers around the construct of intention—a strong determinant of behavior. Intention is indicative of the likelihood of an individual to plan to participate and invest effort in following a certain behavior; it can be explained as the result of the following constructs: attitudes and subjective norms (Hagger, 2019). Attitudes are the positive or negative perceptions of engaging in the behavior in the future, whereas subjective norms are reflective of beliefs that significant others would want them to engage in the given behavior (Hagger, 2019).

Fischbein and Ajzen (1975, p. 216, cited in Myresten & Setterhall, 2015) define attitude towards a specific behavior as "[…] a person's general feeling of favourableness or unfavourableness toward some stimulus object". Attitude is related to three aspects of an individual: their belief that conducting the behavior will result in a desired outcome; this outcome's evaluation; and the number of beliefs regarding conducting this specific behavior (Fischbein & Ajzen, 1980, cited in Myresten & Setterhall, 2015). The subjective norm is described as "[…] a person's perception that

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most people who are important to him or her think he should or should not perform the behaviour in question" (Fischbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 302, cited in Myresten & Setterhall, 2015). They explain it to be made up of the following components: perceived expectations from others; the motivation to meet these expectations, performing the behavior; and the number of reference group beliefs. This behavioral intention will ultimately determine the pursuit, or lack thereof, of the behavior (Sathapornvajana & Watanapa, 2012).

Figure 3.

The theory of reasoned action.
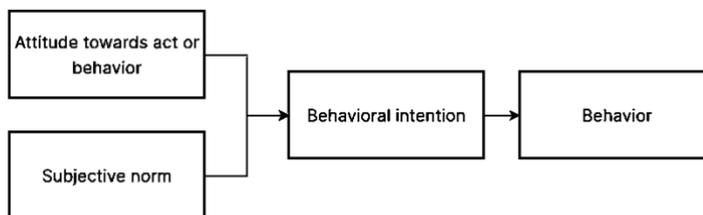
Note. Figure 3 showcases how the factors of attitudes and subjective norms come together to shape the behavioral intent of an individual, which then impacts the behavioral outcome. From "Factors Affecting Student's Intention to Choose IT Program," by Sathapornvajana, S. and Watanapa, B, 2012, *Procedia Computer Science.* 13. 60–67.

It has been acknowledged by the developers of the theory, Fischbein and Ajzen, that it is limited to dealing with behaviors that are under an individual's volitional control, where volitional control is described as one's ability to reasonably express the will to perform a behavior (Sheppard et al., 1988; Fischbein & Ajzen, 1980, cited in Rawstorne, 2005). This means that any external factors that transcend the individual's voluntary control fall beyond the conditions of the theory of reasoned action (Sheppard et al., 1988). These external factors include but are not limited to any knowledge, resources, or cooperation from others, which would be a prerequisite of performing a certain behavior—regardless of the strength of the intention (Sheppard et al., 1988). Sheppard et al. (1988) elaborate on this limitation with several examples, such as an individual being unable to purchase a house due to their purchase offer being refused. This showcases that intention is not the defining factor for the execution of behaviors, as there are many external factors that can also play a part.

Rawstorne (2005) also refers to the theory's limitation of considering external factors, stating that volitional control is dependent on subjecting elements – which concern the individual – and objective elements, which concern the behavior in question; an example of climbing Mount Everest to be an activity only within the reach of a select number of people – those with the needed skill, conditioning, and experience – is given. The theory of reasoned action claims that a high level of volitional control corresponds to a strong relationship between behavioral intention and behavior (Rawstorne, 2005). In addition to the level of volitional control being a factor for the correspondence between behavioral intention and behavior, the time lapse between the behavioral intention and the execution of behavior also plays a role (Rawstorne, 2005). Taking the theory of reasoned action's components and limitations into account, it becomes clear how this can be tied to marketing, and email marketing to be more specific.

Figure 4.

The theory of reasoned action in relation to email engagement.
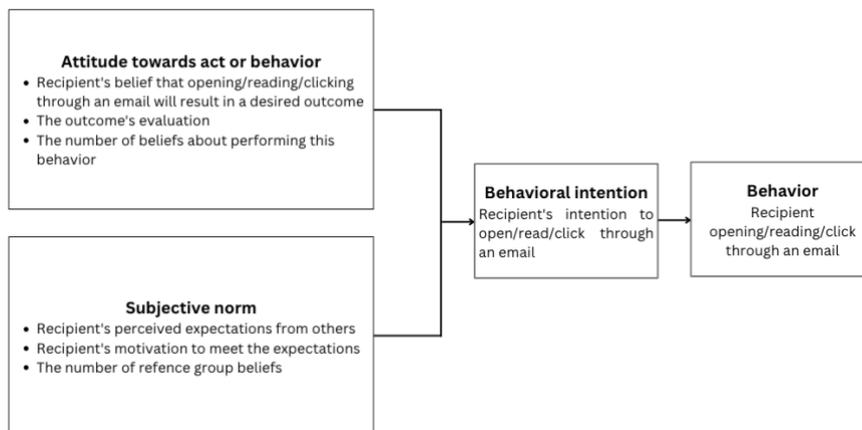
Note. Figure 4 showcases how the attitudes towards act or behavior and subjective norm can be impacted by factors relevant to a recipient engaging with an email, as well as behavioral intention and behavior concerning email engagement. Based on "Factors Affecting Student's Intention to Choose IT Program," by Sathapornvajana, S. and Watanapa, B, 2012, *Procedia Computer Science.* 13. 60–67; Fischbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 302, cited in Myresten & Setterhall, 2015.

In Figure 4, email engagement is referred to as the act of opening, reading, or clicking through an email. This is because these can be KPIs used to measure marketing email

engagement and, ultimately, success. Email engagement is the goal of marketing emails, and by devising Figure 4, email engagement can be operationalized with regard to TRA for the specific purposes of this research.

2.3.2 Emails, Safety Concerns, and the Law

The nature of advancements in information technology brings along with them the potential for behavioral, social, and ethical issues (Eining, 1997, cited in Duggal, 2002). This can be attributed to the realm and amount of data stored by organizations, thereby subjecting it to the possibility of theft, destruction, or misuse—this is a threat to not only personal privacy, but also corporate intelligence and national security (Apte, 1990, cited in Duggal, 2002). In their study regarding internet privacy, The Consumer Reports National Research Center (2008) found that 35% of those surveyed provide an alternative email address online in an attempt to avoid providing real information. This shows that internet users have reservations about how their personal information will be used by organizations, and raises questions regarding the accuracy of companies' email databases and in turn, the real extent of their reach.

A common concern regarding email safety is the presence of malicious emails. Choudhary and Ghusinga (2013) mention three types of malicious emails: spamming, phishing, and spoofing.

Table 2.

Types of malicious emails.

Malicious Email Type	What it is	Associated Safety Concerns
Spam	Unsolicited/unwanted mass email message, often related to advertisements of services of questionable legality. There are two types: 1. Intentional: stems from fraud spammers or solicited products. 2. Unintentional: stems from virus-infected computer systems, sent out without the computer owner's knowledge.	These are generally not dangerous to the recipient, although they are undesirable. Some email systems are able to automatically block spam, however due to them often changing addresses, it is difficult to fully prevent them.
Phish	A type of spam email that includes the sender's banking information with the intention of data theft and fraud. They often mimic well-known organizations, enhancing their credibility and increasing their chances of success.	This can result in theft of identity, money, etc., as the recipient's personal data is collected and misused.
Spoof	An email originating from a fraud or imposter but appearing to be from a legitimate source; this is done by altering the "FROM:" email address.	Spoof emails can have a number of malicious intentions, including spreading viruses or collecting sensitive information e.g., passwords.

Note. Table 2 encloses three types of malicious emails: spam, phish, and spoof, as well as their definitions and related safety concerns for their recipients. Based on "E-mail Security: Issues and Solutions," by Choudhary, M. and Ghusinga, R., 2013, *Procedia Computer Science. 7*(4). 42–46.

From Table 2, it is evident that there are several ways in which malicious or unwanted emails can reach the inbox of a recipient. These can pose serious safety concerns regarding monetary theft, identity theft, or otherwise. According to Dixon (2022), spam emails made up approximately 84% of all emails sent out worldwide in September 2021; this is a significant volume of emails, amounting to 88.88 billion spam emails. The number is a testimony to prevalence of email misuse and can therefore explain the reservation of users to disclose their email addresses. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Avanan (2019), in which over 55 million emails were analyzed by security scientists, it was found that one in every 25 branded mails is phishing, and that over half of phishing emails contained malware. When it comes

to spoof emails, it is approximated that there are thirty thousand attacks on a daily basis (Jonker et al., 2017).

Despite the potential misuse centered around emails, a study conducted by Google found that almost a third of customers are willing to share their email without an incentive (Southern, 2022). In exchange for an incentive, however, this figure increases to 90% (Southern, 2022). A survey conducted by the Advertising Research Foundation (2019, cited in Swant, 2019) found consumers to be reluctant to share their email addresses with companies, with 54% stating that they would be willing to do so. Paul Donato, the Chief Research Officer of the Advertising Research Foundation, claimed that a reason behind consumers' reluctancy to share information is related to them not understanding how the data is used (Advertising Research Foundation, 2019, cited in Swant, 2019).

There are laws in place concerning emails, in order to protect users. For example, in the European Union's ePrivacy Directive, marketers are told that they must obtain prior consent from users; the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) elaborates on this further by stating that the consent must be freely given, specific, informed, and unambiguous (Kubíček et al., 2022). The GDPR regulates the protection of data regarding people living within the European Union, namely its collection, processing, and use, through its regulations, to which every organization must adhere; this includes organizations that are outside of the European Union but offer their products or services for those in it (Savić & Veinović, 2018). The GDPR is relevant when it pertains to data that is processed in a fully automated manner, or partially manually in some cases; it describes personal data to be that which is linked to an individual's behavior, including identification numbers; online identifiers; and location data (Blanchard et al., 2016, cited in Savić & Veinović, 2018). Compliance with the GDPR is heavily monitored, and fines for non-compliance reach up to 20 million Euros, or, if higher, 4% of the organization's global annual revenue (Savić & Veinović, 2018). With the GDPR, individuals also have rights regarding their data, including the right to revoke consent of its processing, and the right to information regarding any personal data concerning them being processed and its erasure, provided that the legal requirements are met (Austrian Data Protection Authority, 2021).

Under the GDPR, organizations are only able to send out marketing emails to individuals provided that they have obtained their active, specific, consent (GDPR EU, 2022). When it comes to existing customers, the regulation lays out a rule which is at times referred to as a "soft opt-in"; what it means is that the individual was a previous customer, provided their details, and did not choose to opt out of receiving marketing messages—they ought to have been offered a simple and easy way to opt-out (GDPR EU, 2022). The United States' CAN-SPAM Act is a law in place to regulate commercial emails; its requirements include having a clear and conspicuous way for recipients to opt-out of any future emails from a business (Federal Trade Commission, 2022).

2.4 Neoclassical Economics: Where Do Emails Stand?

Thorstein Veblen, an economist that took an interdisciplinary approach, coined the term "neoclassical economics" (Behrent, 2022). Generally speaking, neoclassical economics centers around the factors of supply and demand (Weintraub, 2023). Its core is concerned with utility maximization (Simon, 2001). Utility maximization can be traced back to a paradigm established in the eighteenth century: a classically rational subject is a utility maximizer i.e., they choose the best alternative(s), based on utility function (Aleskerov et al., 2007). In other words, buyers seek to maximize their gains from the goods they purchase, which is achieved by increasing their purchasing of a good until a certain point is reached—that point is where their gain from an extra unit is equivalent to the opportunity cost, which is what they must give up in order to obtain it; this, in turn, maximizes their utility: the satisfaction attributed to the consumption of goods and services (Weintraub, 2023). Opportunity cost is also known as alternative cost, and represents the association between scarcity and choice; without it, all demands for all needs would be met, and individuals would not be faced with the prospect of choosing between options, nor would there be a need to prioritize demands (Buchanan, 2008). As is widely discussed within economics, consumers must make choices at the margin, which means that they must consider gains and opportunity costs; this is what builds the theory of demand when it comes to goods, and supply in terms of production (Weintraub, 2023). Within neoclassical economics, it is believed that agents – households or firms – optimize, or maximize, value subject to constraints; value is associated with unlimited desires faced with

limited constraints or scarcity—here, prices are the determining signal (Weintraub, 2023). A high demand from consumers is balanced by a price increase by producers, allowing demand and price to be optimized under constraints, thereby reaching an economic equilibrium; this is the neoclassical vision (Weintraub, 2023).

Figure 5.

Market equilibrium.
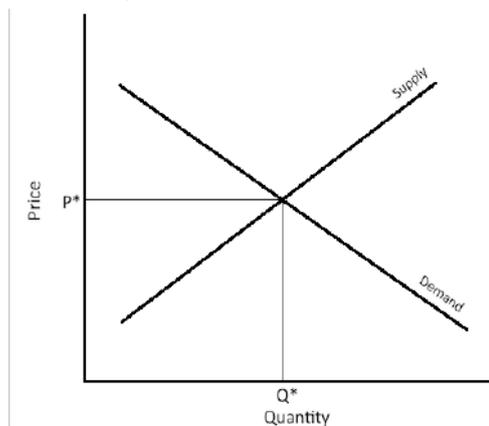
Note. Figure 5 showcases the relationship between supply and demand, and the point at which an economic equilibrium is reached. From "Homo Economicus in Neoclassical Economics: Some Conceptual Curiosities about Behavioural Criticisms," by Khandakar, E., 2015, *Homo Oeconomicus.* 32. 23–51.

From Figure 5 it can be established that the market equilibrium is achieved by the collaboration of both, supply, and demand. Subject to constraints that make consumers choose at the margin and weigh up their opportunity costs, the demand is variable depending on consumer behavior. As seen in Figure 5, high demand is associated with a low price and vice versa. This is because, as mentioned previously, price is a determining signal. It is a widespread constraint amongst consumers, who often weigh up their options and opportunity costs depending on the price. In a similar vein, companies are profit-seeking entities, i.e., their goal is to maximize profits. This explains the supply curve increasing in quantity as the price increases: for greater returns, companies are willing to produce more. It must be noted here that because constraints also apply to companies, in terms of production resources and the like, an optimal point is reached—that point is the market equilibrium.

Neoclassical economics is related to email marketing. After all, email marketing is a tool that companies use to meet their goals, which are often related to maximizing revenue, hence the aim of marketing emails being to generate conversions. This introduces the point of external factors impacting email engagement: beyond the anatomy of the email, recipients' resources, or lack thereof, can pose a constraint that limits email engagement. For example, a marketing email promoting a new product at a certain price may fail to generate significant engagement due to it being beyond the recipients' financial resources. This, in turn, implies that companies must take neoclassical economics into consideration when marketing their products or services through emails as they may be insufficient in creating value beyond the opportunity cost or limitations of the target audience.

2.5 The Power of Content: Personalization

Personalized marketing is also known as one-to-one marketing, a concept in which customers' desires and needs are studied, thereby enabling the creation of a personalized experience for them (Pine et al., 1995, cited in Dewan et al., 1999). The rise of the internet has facilitated the development of one-to-one marketing, owing to its tracking abilities, which allow companies to build a relationship with customers directly and send out specific messages to a selected audience (Hagel & Rayport, 1997; MeKenna, 1995, cited in Dewan et al., 1999). Personalization can be described as a process in which customer preferences are learned, allowing offerings to be matched to them and firms' efforts in doing so to be evaluated (Murthu & Sarkar, 2003; cited in Chandra et al., 2022). Blom and Monk (2003, cited in Chandra et al., 2022) added to this by describing personalization as a process that involves altering aspects such as functionality, interface, and information access, to be relevant to individual customers.

The internet has been pivotal in significantly scaling up the amount of data available, as well as how the data is processed; the large volume of a diverse range of digital information that requires specific technology and analysis to be converted into information of value is referred to as Big Data (De Muro et al., 2016, cited in Pinarbasi & Canbolat, 2019). Big data generated from the internet can be derived from various

sources including social networking websites, search engines, and transaction history (Romanowski et al., 2014). Using big data, personalization can be offered to customers without their direct involvement, i.e., without active or conscious efforts from their side; the only prerequisite would be that they are frequent users of the internet (Romanowski et al., 2014). Customer profiles, and therefore preferences that are taken into account to accommodate for personalization, can be created through monitoring of activities such as website visits, social network interactions, and online purchases (Romanowski et al., 2014). Personalization can be seen in advertising, wherein the form of the message can be adapted to the profile of the particular recipient, as well as the ad content; for example, the same product could be advertised to customers differently depending on their profiles—this is said to be "deep" personalization and should be provided for every customer (Romanowski et al., 2014).

According to McKinsey & Company (2021), the value of personalization from a customer perspective is high, with 71% expecting personalized interactions from companies and 76% becoming frustrated when this is not delivered. Personalized actions include recommending relevant products/services, offering targeted promotions, tailoring messaging to customers' needs, and personally addressing communications to customers (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Companies that personalize increase their likelihood of customers purchasing, repurchasing, and recommending their products; it was also found that companies that excel at personalization generate 40% greater revenue than those that are average (McKinsey & Company, 2021). When it comes to emails, those with a personalized subject line are 26% more likely to be opened compared to their non-personalized counterparts (Experian, 2013).

In their research, Sahni et al. (2018), conducted several experiments by collaborating with three companies with a diverse product portfolio and experimentally tailoring email ads. It was found that by adding the recipient's name to the subject line, the probability of opening it increased by 20%—this translated into a sales lead increase of 31% and a 17% reduction in the number of those unsubscribing from the email campaign (Sahni et al., 2018). The successful impact of personalization within emails

can be attributed to the notion that information associated with oneself attracts attention; it has been shown that people automatically divert their attention to their own name when in environments filled with distractions (Wolford & Morrison, 1980, Cherry, 1953, Tacikowski & Nowicka, 2010, cited in Sahni et al., 2018).

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This section covers the methodology conducted in order to answer the research questions of this study, as well as the research model that formed the foundation of the survey. The research used a questionnaire to obtain qualitative primary data, which was then quantitatively analyzed. The data was then analyzed quantitatively to establish relationships, or lack thereof, with the variables studied. This was primarily done through RStudio to create a correlation matrix between the various questions and draw any relationships. Jamovi was also used to illustrate frequency and paired contingency tables of various questions. Additionally, a SWOT (strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis was created using the findings of the survey, thereby creating a cohesive image of the data to enhance the identification of email engagement and the various factors surrounding it, as well as to expose further possibilities for companies to better their recipients' engagement with marketing emails. A SWOT analysis can help in the creation of an actionable plan, drawing attention to key areas for improvement (Gavril, 2014).

3.2 Research Model

Figure 6.

The research model.
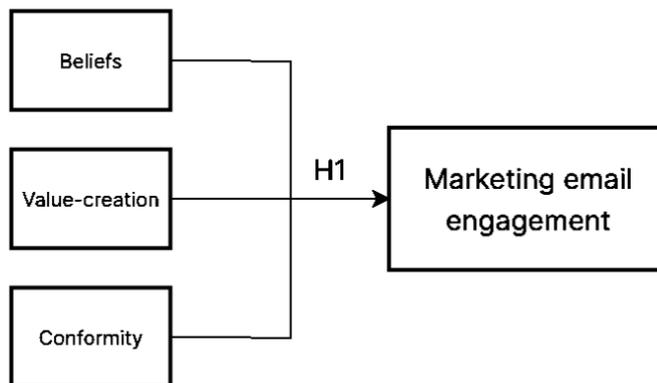
Note. Figure 6 shows three categories: beliefs, value-creation, and conformity, which combine to form the hypothesis that they directly impact recipients' engagement with marketing emails. (Created by author, 2022).

The research model is depicted in Figure 6. It brings together a range of factors that are hypothesized to result in engagement with marketing emails, noted in the model as Hypothesis 1 (H1). H1 can also be referred to as an alternative hypothesis, and is often referenced in conjunction with H0, which is a null hypothesis (Zhang, 2020). Whereas H1 predicts a relationship between the variables in question, which in Figure 6 are the three categories of belief, value-creation, and conformity, with all of them impacting marketing email engagement, H0 would be that there is no correlation between the variables and that they do not lead to marketing email engagement. The categories are based on adaptation from the theory of reasoned action, relating them directly to the behavior of recipients to engage with marketing emails. As seen in Figure 6, it is hypothesized that three categories of factors impact engagement with marketing emails: beliefs, value-creation, and conformity. The survey questionnaire was developed based on the categories in Figure 6, in order to investigate their impact and relationship, if any, between them and marketing email engagement.

Beliefs are descriptive of recipients' beliefs that engaging with a marketing email will result in a desired outcome. The outcome, in this case, can differ from one individual to another, depending on what they, subjectively, deem to be a desired outcome; for example, it could be by making a purchase during a promotional period, therefore believing to have gained in a monetary sense, which could be a desired outcome for some recipients. For others, a desired outcome may be to obtain more information regarding the company's products, and in that case, their belief that by engaging with a marketing email will result in their education on the company's products would be the desired outcome that they seek. This is presented in the questionnaire of this study through means such as including "Discount or promotional offer" and "Your interest in the brand" as response options in the multiple-choice questions.

The category of value-creation can be interlinked with that of beliefs, as it pertains to the value that recipients gain by engaging with the marketing email, whether it be informative, economic, or otherwise; this can manifest as a marketing email with information on an upcoming product launch, or with a discount code, for example— these are factors represented in the questionnaire through multiple-choice responses. This is also explored in questions investigating personalization within emails, as well as the use of emojis and GIFs, which can be perceived similarly and associated with a more personalized tone. GIFs, short for graphic interchange formats, are quick-moving images that loop over a momentary period (Eppink, 2014).

When it comes to the final category – conformity – the recipients' desire to conform with expectations to engage with a marketing email is the focus here. This can be tied to factors such as feeling an obligation to engage as they opted in to receive marketing emails from that particular company, or as a way to showcase their loyalty to the brand. This is explicitly investigated in the questionnaire in question 15, which asks participants if they feel obligated to engage with emails that they subscribed to.

3.3 Research Design

When acquiring data, there are three main methods that can be utilized: a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approach. The nature of the data and the research question being investigated will determine the chosen approach.

Qualitative data collection involves words and sentences that often capture thoughts and feelings, revealed through open-ended questions aimed at establishing the 'how' and 'why' (Kabir, 2016). A qualitative research design is suitable for a deeper analysis of the topic in question and can contribute to the establishment or support of a hypothesis. Common ways of obtaining qualitative data are through in-depth interviews and case studies (Kabir, 2016).

The quantitative approach on the other hand is for the acquisition of numerical data, addressing the 'what' aspect of a research question, mainly through the measurement of a variable (Kabir, 2016). The data collection process is based on random sampling and collection through surveys and questionnaires that are designed to allocate the data to predetermined categories (Kabir, 2014).

Mixed methods is a combination of both, the qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection. This can be beneficial in improving the validity and reliability of the research and drawing on the benefits of each research method whilst minimizing their weaknesses (Kabir, 2016). However, a drawback of this approach is its time-intensive nature (Kabir, 2014).

Since this research aims to investigate pre-existing key performance indicators, and their relationship with email engagement, a qualitative survey was conducted. The research followed a deductive approach as it was based on the theory of reasoned action, with a formulated hypothesis, as seen in section 3. This means that upon the data collection and its subsequent analysis, the hypothesis will then be rejected or accepted accordingly. The main research question of the survey is: which factors influence receiver engagement with marketing emails? With the following sub-questions:

- Is there a correlation between factors that influence marketing email engagement?
- How can marketing email receiver engagement be improved?

For this, as further explored in section 3.4, the questions of the survey were focused on various factors of marketing emails, establishing their like/dislike. This is to gauge the impact of various factors and determine recipient preferences. The correlation between the factors can then be studied, with those showcasing significant levels of preference made clear in the analysis portion of the study.

When it comes to recruiting participants for a study, there are two strategies to gather a sample: probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Etikan et al., 2016). In probability sampling, each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected as a participant, whereas with non-probability sampling, not everyone in the population has an equal chance of being selected (Etikan et al., 2016). A drawback of probability sampling is that it is costly and time-consuming, and at times may not be feasible since a complete list of everyone in a population is unavailable (Wilson, 2014).

Types of nonprobability sampling include quota sampling, dimensional sampling, convenience sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling (Wilson, 2014). Convenience sampling, sometimes referred to as Haphazard or Accidental Sampling, involves the inclusion of participants that meet certain criteria, such as ease of access, geographical proximity, or willingness to participate (Dörnyei, 2007, cited in Etikan et al., 2016). Participants of convenience sampling may be subjectively selected based on their proximity, spatially or administratively, to the data collection (Etikan et al., 2016). Although a drawback of convenience sampling can be its bias, benefits of this method include its affordability, ease, and how readily available the participants are (Etikan et al., 2016).

3.4 Questionnaire Design

Testing the relationship between a range of variables and their impact on email engagement was the aim of this research. Therefore, various factors were considered as variables; some of these factors were devised by the researcher, while others were

based on SendGrid's 2019 Email Benchmark and Engagement Study. The questions and their source can be seen in detail in Appendix A.

The introductory portion of the questionnaire included a purpose statement, citing that the survey will contribute to research in its respective domain, as well as a statement regarding confidentiality: no personal data was being collected, and the information obtained was solely for academic and research purposes. This was specified with the purpose of encouraging individuals to participate and warding off any potential privacy or confidentiality concerns that they may have. It was also stated that the questionnaire takes 5-10 minutes to complete; this is to ensure prospective participants that it is relatively fast to contribute to this study, and that it does not call for a significant time investment. Participants were also reminded that they were able to discontinue the questionnaire at any point.

The questionnaire consisted of 16 questions, namely structured questions with a multiple-response option, Likert scale questions, choice questions, and yes-no questions. The knowledge level of participants was taken into consideration, with terms in some questions being defined to ensure clarity. This was the case for the following terms: "personalization", "engage", and "call to action"; to avoid confusion and promote accuracy in the response, a short definition was embedded in the question.

A Likert scale was used to measure four of the questionnaire questions. The Likert scale allows for attitudes to be measured in a way that is scientifically accepted (Joshi et al., 2015). In a questionnaire, following a statement, the Likert scale presents itself as a set of answer choices to gauge the level of participants' agreement, from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Joshi et al., 2015).

3.5 Research Ethics

This study strictly adhered to the research code of ethics concerning privacy. No personal data was collected from any of the participants, as their participation was confidential and entirely anonymous, meaning that the responses could not be linked

back to the participants in any way. Furthermore, the data or findings obtained were not in any way altered or manipulated, nor were they shared with a third party.

3.6 Data Collection

To collect data, a non-probability sampling strategy, namely convenience sampling, was followed. The researcher leveraged their personal social media accounts, such as Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, as well as messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp as a means to share the questionnaire, including on Facebook and WhatsApp, where posts asking for participation and further circulation of the questionnaire were made. The efforts made to expand the sample beyond the author's direct network, by asking for further circulation amongst acquaintances' networks; the diverse range of platforms also allowed for the sample bias to be reduced, since LinkedIn, for example, had a different demographic to the population of those on the researcher's Instagram reach. Furthermore, the direct network ranged in age and background, from university classmates to senior work colleagues. By widening the reach and diversifying the pool of participants, the external validity of the data collection was heightened. The advantages of convenience sampling, such as its low cost, efficiency, and ease of access to participants made it a good choice for the researcher, considering their resources. The total number of participants in the questionnaire was 61.

3.6.1 Data Collection Limitations

The main methodological limitations that impacted the survey is the sample size of 61, which is evidently a modest sample. This can raise concerns of it being too small of a sample size to effectively extrapolate the collected data, thereby impacting the internal validity. In order to reduce or omit any possible bias and obtain a more representative sample, a larger sample size would have been ideal. However, despite exhausting several avenues of the chosen method of convenience sampling for the data collection, a larger sample size was not able to be obtained. It is also important to note here the time limitation for the study to be completed, which meant that prolonging the window for data collection was no longer possible beyond a certain point.

Another data collection limitation is that the questionnaire asked for the self-reporting of data, which is subjective to the respondents. For example, one question asks, "How frequently do you check your personal email inbox?" and another asks, "How many minutes (approximately) do spend per day reading marketing/promotional emails?". This calls for the participant to use their judgement to report the frequency and minutes, respectively. As a result, the answers may be inaccurate due to the inability to independently verify them. Answers may be subject to biases such as exaggeration, wherein the participant overestimates the number minutes they spend reading marketing emails, for example.

3.7 Data Analysis

The nature of the study and survey was aligned with the aim of the data analysis being to establish the relationship, or correlation, between various aspects of emails, from the perspective of recipients. A primary way to do this is by creating a correlation matrix, which in this case was done using RStudio. This was in combination with Jamovi in order to support the process. Initially, the questionnaire data was exported as an Excel file directly from Google Forms before being imported into Jamovi. For the multiple-choice questions, which were questions 5, 7, 8, and 9, the various response options were divided to create chronological sub-questions, with yes and no responses based on participants' choices. This then enabled for the creation of frequency and contingency tables. Before importing the same data set into RStudio for further analysis, the data was transformed into numeric data in Jamovi. This was to simplify the process and avoid having to deal with converting what would be string data in RStudio.

After loading the data onto RStudio, it was standardized using the z-score in order to improve its comparability. The next step was to investigate the correlation between the variables and determine if a factor analysis is feasible. The correlation matrix created showed the degree of correlation between the various factors. A factor analysis was also conducted to deduce the number of factors in the dataset.

4 Results

This section analyses the responses to the various questions from the survey. Some of the questions that had nominal or ordinal scales are presented here using frequency tables created by analysis using Jamovi, showcasing their count, total percentage, and cumulative percentage. Paired sample contingency tables were also created to establish the relationship between various questions. The correlation matrix was developed using RStudio, and a Barlette's test was conducted as well as a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) factor adequacy test. This was followed by a common factor analysis since the study aims to summarize the underlying factors of email engagement.

Table 3.

Frequency table for questions 1 and 2.

Question 1. How frequently do you check your personal email inbox?			
Levels	**Counts**	**% of Total**	**Cumulative %**
Many times a day (5 times or more)	16	26.2%	26.2%
A couple of times a day (2-4 times)	20	32.8%	59.0%
Once a day	11	18.0%	77.0%
Less than once a day	9	14.8%	91.8%
As they arrive (every time a notification is received)	5	8.2%	100.0%
Question 2. Do you have notifications enabled for your personal email inbox?			
Levels	**Counts**	**% of Total**	**Cumulative %**
No	21	34.4%	34.4%
Yes	40	65.6%	100.0%

Note. Table 3 presents the response findings of questions 1 and 2 as a frequency table.

Table 3 shows that 77% of respondents check their emails once a day or more. The data in Table 3 also shows that, at 65.6%, having notifications enabled for one's personal email inbox was the more common response.

Table 4.

Paired sample contingency table for questions 1 and 2.

Question 1. How frequently do you check your personal email inbox?	Question 2. Do you have notifications enabled for your personal email inbox?		Total
	No	Yes	
Many times a day (5 times or more)	8	8	16
A couple of times a day (2-4 times)	6	14	20
Once a day	4	7	11
Less than once a day	3	6	9
As they arrive (every time a notification is received)	0	5	5
Total	21	40	61

Note. Table 4 presents the response findings of questions 1 and 2 as a paired sample contingency table.

From Table 4, it can be seen that at the highest response level option for question 1, which is Many times a day (5 times or more), the responses for question 2 are equal for both options. This indicates that for the most frequent email checkers, the enablement of notifications is not a determining factor. When looking at A couple of times a day (2-4 times), Table 4 shows that the number of respondents that opted for yes is 133.3% more than those who opted for No. For the Once a day option, the figure for those who opted for Yes is 175% of that for those who opted for No.

Table 5.

Mean and median for questions 3 and 13.

Descriptives	Mean	Median
Question 3. How many minutes (approximately) do you spend per day reading marketing/promotional emails?	4.96	2.00
Question 13. How many marketing emails (approximately), do you receive per day?	6.42	5.00

Note. Table 5 depicts the mean and median for question 3, "How many minutes (approximately) do you spend per day reading marketing/promotional emails", and question 13, "How many marketing emails (approximately), do you receive per day?".

From table 5, it can be deduced that the average (mean) for approximate time spent reading emails is lower than the approximate number of emails received per day, at 4.96 minutes and 6.42 emails, respectively.

Table 6.

Mann-Whitney U test for questions 3 and 13.

Independent Samples T-Test		Statistic	p
Question 3. How many minutes (approximately) do you spend per day reading marketing/promotional emails?	Mann-Whitney U	381	0.553

Note. Table 6 showcases the Mann-Whitney U test conducted by Jamovi to test the relationship between question 3, "How many minutes (approximately) do you spend per day reading marketing/promotional emails", and question 13, "How many marketing emails (approximately), do you receive per day?".

Table 6 shows that the Mann-Whitney U test has a p-value of 0.553, meaning that the finding is statistically insignificant and that there is no relationship between the time spent per day reading marketing emails and the number of marketing emails received per day.

Table 7.

Frequency table for question 4.

Question 4. How much do you agree with the following statement : "I value personalization in an email". (Note: personalization can mean anything that tailors the email to you, from using your name to relating it to your latest purchase history with the sender).			
Levels	**Counts**	**% of Total**	**Cumulative %**
Strongly agree	8	13.1%	13.1%
Agree	30	49.2%	62.3%
Neutral	15	24.6%	86.9%
Disagree	7	11.5%	98.4%
Strongly agree	1	1.6%	100.0%

Note. Table 7 presents the response findings of question 4 as a frequency table.

In Table 7, it can be seen that the mode is "Agree", with 62.3% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that personalization in an email is valuable to them. This suggests its significant importance over non-personalized emails for readers, which is in line with the studies discussed in section 2.5 of the literature.

Table 8.

Paired sample contingency table for questions 10 and 14.

Question 10. How frequently would you like to receive emails from a mailing list you are subscribed to?	Question 14. Do you find that you receive too many marketing emails?		
	No	Yes	Total
Once a day	0	3	3
Several times a week (4-6 times)	0	2	2
A few times a week (2-3 times)	1	6	7
Once a week	4	20	24
Less than once a week	1	24	25
Total	6	55	61

Note. Table 8 presents the response findings of questions 10 and 14 as a paired sample contingency table.

From Table 8 it can be seen that around 90% of respondents find that they receive too many marketing emails, with approximately 80% stating that they would like to receive emails from a mailing list once a week or less.

Figure 7.

Correlation matrix for all questions.
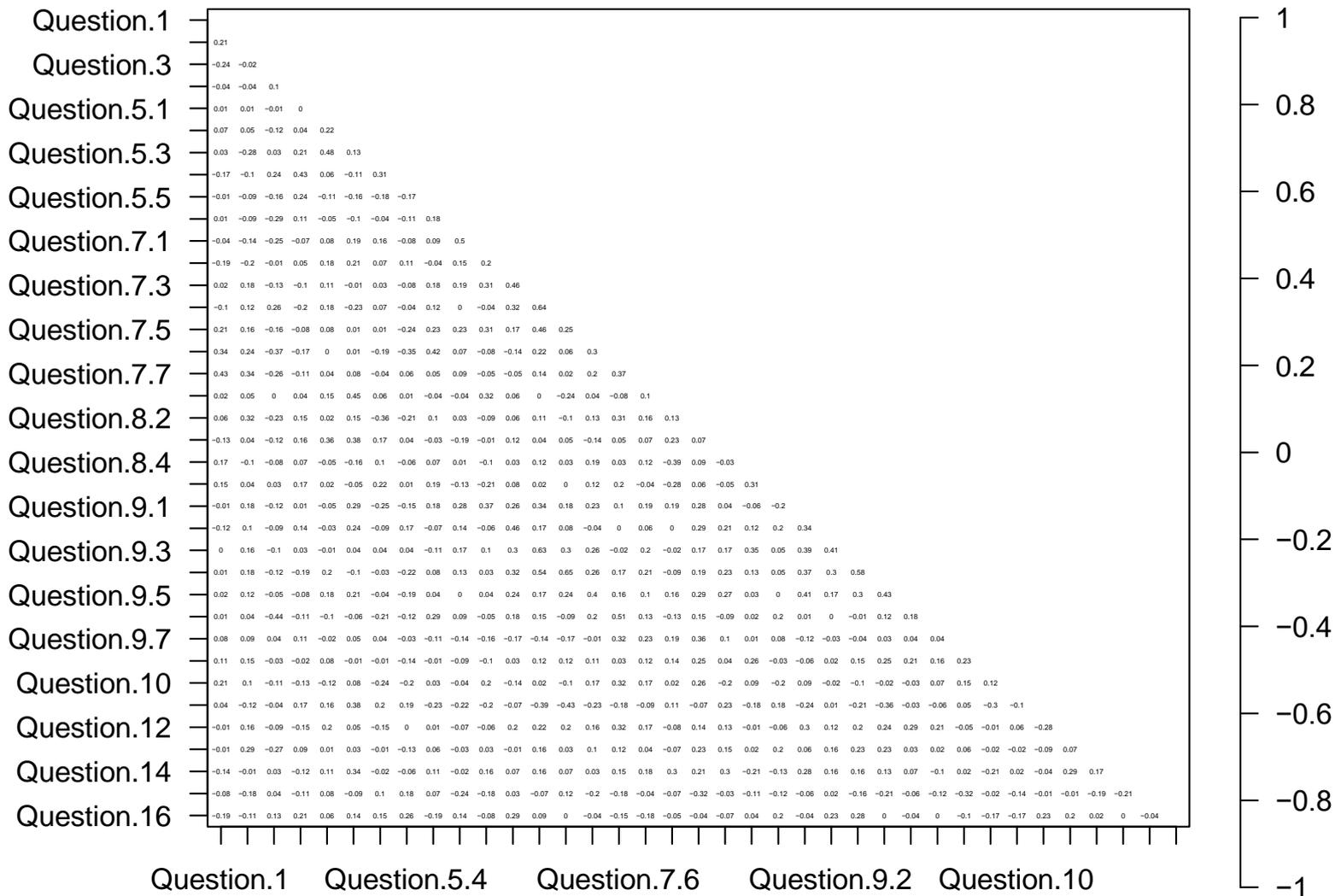
Note. Figure 7 is a correlation matrix, illustrating the correlations between all the survey variables and their strength from a scale of 1 to -1. As shown, this is color coded as a spectrum from dark blue for the most positive of correlations to dark red for the most negative.

When it comes to a strongly positive relationship between pairs of variables, there were several, as can be seen in Figure 7. The strongest correlation observed in Figure 7 is of that between questions 9.4 and 7.4, at 0.65. Question 9.4 is "Would the use of GIFs make you unsubscribe from a mailing list?", and question 7.4 is choosing "Would the use of GIFs make you not continue reading an email?".

Table 9.

Paired sample contingency table for questions 9.4 and 7.4.

Question 9.4. Would the use of GIFs make you unsubscribe from a mailing list?	Question 7.4. Would the use of GIFs make you not continue reading an email?		
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	8	0	8
No	8	45	53
Total	16	45	61

Note. Table 9 presents the response findings of questions 9.4 and 7.4 as a paired sample contingency table.

From Table 9 it is evident that there a strong correlation between questions 9.4 and 7.4 is for those that answered No for both questions, which is representative of approximately 74% of the sample population. 26% however do deem GIFs as a deterrent and would stop reading an email due to them—however only half of those would unsubscribe due to their use.

The second strongest correlation in Figure 7, at 0.64, was between questions 7.3 and 7.4, which, respectively, are "Would the use of emojis make you not continue reading an email?" and "Would the use of GIFs make you not continue reading an email?". From Table 9, it can be seen that 70% of respondents answered "No" to both questions.

Table 10.

Paired sample contingency table for questions 7.3 and 7.4

Question 7.3. Would the use of emojis make you not continue reading an email?	Question 7.4. Would the use of GIFs make you not continue reading an email?		
	Yes	No	Total
No	6	43	49
Yes	10	2	12
Total	16	45	61

Note. Table 10 presents the response findings of questions 7.3 and 7.4 as a paired sample contingency table.

Table 11.

Paired sample contingency table for questions 9.3 and 9.4.

Question 9.3. Would the use of emojis make you unsubscribe from a mailing list?	Question 9.4. Would the use of GIFs make you unsubscribe from a mailing list?		
	Yes	No	Total
No	2	48	50
Yes	6	5	11
Total	8	53	61

Note. Table 11 presents the response findings of questions 9.3 and 9.4 as a paired sample contingency table.

At 0.63, the third strongest correlation observed in Figure 7 is between questions 9.3 and 7.3: "Would the use of emojis make you unsubscribe from a mailing list?" and "Would the use of emojis make you not continue reading an email?", respectively. From Table 12 it can be observed that 75% of respondents selected No for both questions.

Table 12.

Paired sample contingency table for questions 9.3 and 7.3.

Question 9.3. Would the use of emojis make you unsubscribe from a mailing list?	Question 7.3. Would the use of emojis make you not continue reading an email?		
	No	Yes	Total
No	46	4	50
Yes	3	8	11
Total	49	12	61

Note. Table 12 presents the response findings of questions 9.3 and 7.3 as a paired sample contingency table.

In Figure 7, there are several pairs of variables that display a significantly negative correlation. The most negative correlation, at -0.44, is present between question 3, "3. How many minutes (approximately) do you spend per day reading marketing/promotional emails?" and question 9.6, "Would the saturation of emails make you unsubscribe from a mailing list?". Table 13 shows that the negative correlation can be attributed to 54% of respondents that answered Yes to question

9.6 spending an approximated two minutes or less a day reading marketing/promotional emails.

Table 13.

Paired sample contingency table for questions 3 and 9.6.

3. How many minutes (approximately) do you spend per day reading marketing/promotional emails?	Question 9.6. Would the saturation of emails make you unsubscribe from a mailing list?		
	Yes	No	Total
0.0	15	0	15
0.5	1	0	1
1.0	7	1	8
2.0	10	1	11
3.0	2	1	3
4.0	2	0	2
5.0	11	0	11
10.0	5	0	5
15.0	1	0	1
20.0	2	1	3
70.0	0	1	1
Total	56	5	61

Note. Table 13 presents the response findings of questions 9.6 and 3 as a paired sample contingency table.

4.1 Common Factor Analysis

A Barlette's test was conducted on RStudio to determine the correlation of the survey variables. The p-value was 4.496487e-20, which is much lower than 0.05, meaning that it was statistically significant and that the variables are correlated. A KMO test was also conducted to determine the measure of sampling adequacy (MSA). The result of the KMO determined an MSA of 0.5. Anything less than 0.5 is deemed unacceptable (Kaiser & Rice, 1974). A common factor analysis was then proceeded with, following the orthogonal model, meaning that it investigated the common factors that significantly impact all variables.

Figure 8.

Common factor analysis—without cutoff value.
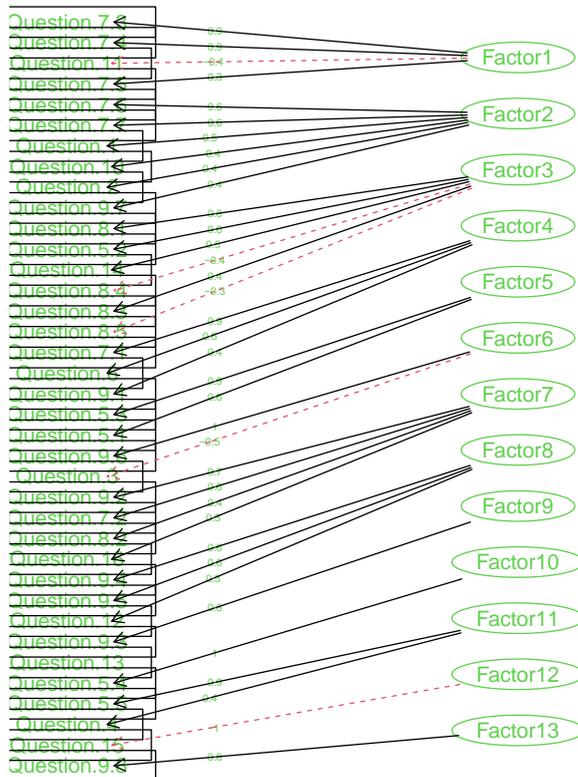
Note. Figure 8 represents the 13 established factors from the common factor analysis and their loading relation to various questions.

Factor loadings are essentially a measure of how much of an impact a variable has on a factor (Bandolas, 2018). The author's discretion was used to choose a cut-off value for loadings of 0.5 and above, which will be discussed in this section. Table 13 outlines the variables with a minimum loading of 0.5 and their associated factors. Factor 12 is omitted from Table 13 since it has a negative loading.

Figure 9.

Common factor analysis—with cutoff value.

	Factor8	Factor9	Factor10	Factor11	Factor12	Factor13
Question.1						
Question.2						
Question.3						
Question.4						
Question.5.1						
Question.5.2						
Question.5.3						
Question.5.4			0.952			
Question.5.5				0.935		
Question.6						
Question.7.1						
Question.7.2						
Question.7.3						
Question.7.4						
Question.7.5						
Question.7.6						
Question.7.7						
Question.8.1						
Question.8.2						
Question.8.3						
Question.8.4						
Question.8.5						
Question.9.1						
Question.9.2						
Question.9.3		0.844				
Question.9.4	0.588					
Question.9.5	0.558					
Question.9.6						
Question.9.7						
Question.9.8					0.844	
Question.10						
Question.11						
Question.12						
Question.13						
Question.14						
Question.15					-0.958	
Question.16						

Loadings:

	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5	Factor6	Factor7
Question.1		0.535					
Question.2							
Question.3							
Question.4							
Question.5.1					0.568		
Question.5.2			0.614				
Question.5.3					0.891		
Question.5.4							
Question.5.5							
Question.6				0.632			
Question.7.1				0.868			
Question.7.2							0.573
Question.7.3	0.875						
Question.7.4	0.863						
Question.7.5							
Question.7.6		0.624					
Question.7.7		0.587					
Question.8.1			0.760				
Question.8.2							
Question.8.3							
Question.8.4							
Question.8.5							
Question.9.1							
Question.9.2							0.708
Question.9.3							
Question.9.4	0.532						
Question.9.5							
Question.9.6						0.958	
Question.9.7							
Question.9.8							
Question.10							
Question.11							
Question.12							
Question.13							
Question.14							
Question.15							
Question.16							

Note. Figure 8 represents the 13 established factors from the common factor analysis and their loading relation, with a cutoff value of 0.5, to various questions.

Table 14.

Common factor analysis breakdown table.

Factor number	Factor identity	Impact on email engagement	Affiliated question numbers
1	Emojis and GIFs	Negative	Questions 7.3, 7.4, and 9.4
2	Email-checking frequency, lack of interest, lack of time	Negative	Questions 1, 7.6, and 7.7
3	Discount/promotional offer	Positive	Questions 5.2 and 8.1
4	Grammar and punctuation	Positive	Questions 6 and 8.1
5	Emojis and capital letters in subject line	Positive	Questions 5.1 and 5.3
6	Saturation of emails	Negative	Question 9.6
7	Lack of personalization	Negative	Questions 7.2 and 9.2
8	GIFs and poor-quality graphics	Negative	Questions 9.4 and 9.5
9	Emojis	Negative	Question 9.3
10	Personalization in a subject line	Positive	Question 5.4
11	Interest in brand	Positive	Question 5.5
13	Lack of resources (financial, internet access etc.)	Negative	9.8

Note. Table 14 showcases the common factor analysis with loadings of 0.5 or above. The factor number, its identity based on its associations, and its affiliated questions are outlined.

By omitting factor 12, the total number of shown factors in Table 13 is 12. 42% of the factors in Table 14 have a positive impact on email engagement and 58% have a negative impact.

From Table 14 it can be deduced that while the use of emojis in a subject line has a positive effect on email engagement; elsewhere, similarly to poor-quality graphics, it has a negative effect.

4.2 SWOT Analysis

The outcome of Barlette's test concluded that H1 is accepted since it is evident that there is a significant correlation between the studied variables of the survey. There are several factors from the survey that particularly stand out as motivators or deterrents when it comes to recipients' engagement with marketing emails. For that reason, a SWOT analysis has been created in order to outline the most significant and applicable findings of the primary and secondary data collected.

Figure 10.

SWOT analysis.

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Consent is obtained from recipients 2. Direct line of communication with target audience 3. Frequency/length/content is at discretion of sender 4. Correct grammar and punctuation 5. Use of emojis in subject line	1. Competing with other companies' emails 2. Lack of feedback on lack of engagement 3. Cannot capture the optimal window to send out emails as recipients have differing lifestyles 4. Use of emojis and GIFs
Opportunities	**Threats**
1. Personalize subject lines and content 2. Use capital letters in subject lines 3. Send out emails related to discounts and promotional offers 4. Ensure subscription by those genuinely interested in the brand	1. Saturation of emails 2. Lack of time from recipients to engage 3. Lack of resources from recipients to engage, i.e., financial

Note. Figure 10 is a SWOT analysis on the factors influencing email engagement.

5 Discussion and Recommendations

This section aims to discuss the results of the study in combination with the literature to draw conclusions from significant findings and provide recommendations accordingly. The research questions are also revisited and answered in a manner that is applicable to companies looking to strategize their marketing emails. It is divided into two sections in order to address discussions concerning both, the main research question and sub-questions in a cohesive manner.

5.1 Main Research Question

The main research question of the study concerned which factors influence receiver engagement with marketing emails. From the results, it is evident that personalization is a significant factor when it comes to marketing email engagement. Personalization is present in two ways in the common factor analysis of the data: its use in a subject line has a positive effect on email engagement, and a lack of it has a negative effect—this emphasizes the importance of personalization to promote engagement. This is in line with the literature in that personalization positively impacts receiver engagement with marketing emails. With the better half of respondents indicating that email personalization is of value to them, and a lack of personalization being deemed as a reason to unsubscribe from a mailing list, this is an important aspect for marketers to consider when devising marketing emails. While the study also pinpointed personalization in a subject line, it is important to consider that personalization is not limited to that. Beyond personalizing the subject line to grab the recipients' attention, personalization can involve any way that the email is tailored to the sender: from including their name in the greeting to relating the content to their latest search and purchase history.

The study indicated a strong connection between emojis and GIFs being perceived similarly, which is understandable as they are both used to express and evoke emotions in a casual way; it shows that those positively impacted by emojis are also positively impacted by GIFs, and vice versa. While it was found that emojis and capital letters leveraged in subject lines are a positive factor when it comes to marketing email engagement, emojis and GIFs can become a deterrent when included in the

email content—this is especially the case for GIFs. Based on this, it can be deduced that emojis should be used in subject lines only. This finding could be based on emojis' ability to stand out from ordinary text and in turn, make the email more lucrative to open, thus improving the KPI of open rate.

The poorer reception when it comes to GIFs, with just over a quarter stating that GIFs would make them discontinue reading an email, could be attributed to their more common use as a tool to evoke a friendly tone, since they are used in popular culture to express reactions in a light-hearted or humorous way to messages or posts between individuals, such as on Twitter, rather than from corporations. Their counterproductivity, when used in business-to-customer communication, suggests that GIFs should be avoided in email communication, and emojis should be kept out of the internal email content.

However, simultaneously, it must be considered that the greater majority do not see GIFs as a deterrent, and do not deem emojis and GIFs as a reason to unsubscribe from a mailing list. With that in mind, marketers can use their discretion when using emojis and GIFs in email content. Despite this, the study did not find them to be a positive influencer per say, so straying away from them may be the safest decision, although again, for a quarter of respondents, emojis are not a deterrent when it comes to unsubscribing from a mailing list or discontinuing reading an email, so sender discretion is advised. Brands can also monitor how their KPIs fluctuate when emojis and GIFs are used and adapt their content accordingly.

Another significant finding of this study in terms of factors that impact receiver engagement with marketing emails is in relation to their frequency, i.e., how often they are sent out to recipients. This was investigated from more than one angle, including the impact of notification enablement on email inbox checking. It was found that while enabling notifications positively impacts the action of checking one's mailbox, this is only the case until a certain extent, at which notifications no longer make a difference to the frequency of checking one's inbox. This could be attributed to those who check their email inbox highly frequently doing so regardless of whether or not they have notifications turned on, perhaps out of habit or due to their

prioritization to check their inbox so much so that a lack of notifications does not negatively impact this action. The relationship between the number of emails that recipients receive and the amount of time they spend receiving emails was also investigated. Since it was determined that respondents would have an average of less than one minute per email if they were to read every email they received in a day, it can be deduced that the time available for recipients is extremely limited. This suggests that not all of the information in emails is taken in even if viewed, due to the 0.77 minute time spending, and supports findings that emails are saturated and that there is a war for recipients' attention.

The results also show that sending out more marketing emails in an effort to increase the reading time by recipients is a redundant strategy. This implies that recipients do not adjust the time spent reading emails in relation to the number that they receive. This can be due to recipients dedicating an inflexible time slot for their email reading, such as on their morning commute to work. The finding that 9 out of 10 respondents answered that they receive too many marketing emails, in combination with 8 out of 10 stating that they would like to receive emails from a mailing list once a week or less, signals that marketing emails are being sent out far too frequently. This can be taken into account by marketers when scheduling their marketing emails and keeping in mind that less may be more here. It also suggests that sending out too many marketing emails can risk being received as an annoyance, and in turn counterproductive to achieving engagement. Further supporting this, the results also suggest a relationship between those that spend a lesser amount of time reading emails being more inclined to unsubscribe from a mailing list due to saturation.

From the common factor analysis it can be deduced that other factors, such as a lack of interest, and lack of time, have a negative impact on email engagement and further supports the notion that recipients are short on time when it comes to how much they can spend on their email inbox—again, this can be linked to the email saturation factor, which also has a negative impact on engagement. Interest in the brand and correct grammar and punctuation are two factors that positively impact email engagement. Discounts and promotional offers, both in an email subject line and in

its content, positively impact email engagement. By The final factor impacting email engagement negatively is a lack of resources, such as financial or logistical resources.

These findings can be tied to the TRA, which formed the foundation of this research. For example, promotional offers have a positive impact on email engagement because recipients deem the discounts made available to be in line with their beliefs that the email contents will benefit them, thereby driving their action to engage. Value-creation can be tied to the frequency of emails and the apparent lack of time amongst respondents to sufficiently read them. This can be attributed in readers perceiving their time to be better spent engaging in an action that would create a greater value for them. It is also apparent that there is a lack of conformity when it comes to mailing lists, with readers not showing a greater motivation to conform by engaging with emails simply because that is what brands expect; this in turn results in a lower level of engagement. Greater desire to conform and a higher weight placed on the value creation of emails would likely result in greater engagement by recipients.

5.2 Sub-questions

Since the finding of Barlette's test was statistically significant, it can be said that there is a correlation between the variables studied. As evident in the correlation matrix, pairs of variables exhibit differing correlations, with differing degrees of extent of correlation. This can be seen in the results section, and as discussed, above since the strong relationships translated into factors that impact marketing email engagement.

While ways to improve marketing email engagement by receivers have been discussed in section 5.1 in accordance with the significant factors identified, the SWOT analysis will be expanded on here to further discuss bettering marketing email receiver engagement.

Based on the results, correct grammar and punctuation is held in high regard by email recipients, meaning that they should be prioritized by marketers. Disregarding this could result in receivers discontinuing reading an email, thereby reducing engagement and conversions. To ensure this, checks and a proofreading system should be in place to avoid any errors of that kind.

Personalization must always be at the forefront of marking emails when it comes to their creation. This can be done through means such as including the recipient's name in the subject line, which can improve engagement by increasing the open rate, or by targeting the receiver in the message through the inclusion of products recommended to them specifically. The latter can heighten engagement by increasing the clickthrough rate.

Emojis being both a strength and a weakness in emails is further elaborated on in section 5.1 and using them predominantly in only subject lines can be a way to improve engagement.

Discounts and promotional offers present an opportunity to increase engagement with marketing emails, and can involve both, including them in a subject line and also within the actual email content. This could be leveraged through means such as including a discount code within the contents of the email.

Email frequency must be considered in that respondents generally perceived emails once a week or less as the optimal amount. Knowing this, marketers should avoid sending out too many emails as this can be counterproductive when aiming to promote engagement. Instead, by sending out emails less frequently, marketers can improve their recipient satisfaction and, collectively and in a combined effort with marketing emails from other companies, the marketing email frequency and saturation for recipients may lessen.

6 Conclusion

This study aimed to determine the factors behind recipient engagement with marketing emails, their correlation, and ways in which marketing email engagement can be improved. As emails are one of the most targeted digital marketing tools, more and more companies are valuing them within their marketing strategies. This raises questions of exactly what is deemed as valuable from the perspective of recipients, and in turn results in engagement and conversions.

The study was based on the theory of reasoned action, with its three components being used as a guide to categorize a portion of the survey questions. Beliefs, value-creation, and conformity were the foundation behind some of the questionnaire, and it was hypothesized that they are correlated, resulting in email marketing engagement.

The questionnaire of the study was designed so that the results obtained would give an insight from the audience's perspective, which is lacking in current literature. The findings were that a significant correlation does exist between the various variables studied through the questions, and certain factors that contribute to marketing email engagement were identified. Namely, personalization – which is in accordance with the literature found regarding customers valuing personalization from companies – and other factors such as promotional offers and including emojis in subject lines. The study also identified ways in which marketing email engagement can be improved, which expanded on its findings, including recipients' perception of email frequency. These ways included utilizing more of what respondents identified as positive contributors to email engagement and avoiding what was identified as the opposite.

In conclusion, the findings of the research included that the variables studied were correlated, with the most significant variables, such as personalization and email frequency standing out. The common factor analysis conducted showcased the most significant factors of the data obtained, allowing them to be identified upon further analysis. This then facilitated for the creation of a SWOT analysis, thereby enabling the author to make recommendations on ways to improve marketing email engagement, such as by means of personalizing content and sending out emails once a week or less.

6.1 Limitations of the Study

A notable limitation of this study is the lack of prior research on the topic. Although email marketing is a prevalent topic that is discussed in abundance within popular culture, there is a void in peer-reviewed research investigating the topic. This may be attributed to the proximity of the topic within the corporate and practical realm as opposed to academia; much of the exploratory email marketing research is conducted

by businesses internally, specific to their own target audience through a system of trial and error in order to devise their email marketing strategy. This makes the study of a generalized email marketing strategy, based on TRA, a unique avenue of research, and thus unable to build on any pre-existing studies.

The lack of a solid foundation to base this research on resulted in a lack of guidance for the formulation of the research question, hence it being a broad question rather than narrowed down to pre-established variables. This ties into another limitation of a failure in obtaining the exact survey questions of one study found that did have close similarities with this questionnaire. SendGrid's 2019 Email Benchmark and Engagement Study, as mentioned in section 4.3, based the foundation for several questions in the questionnaire. However, these questions were curated using a top-down approach: SendGrid (2019) published their study as a report, with the findings being noted without explicitly mentioning the questions asked to obtain the findings. The author attempted to contact personnel at SendGrid to obtain the survey questions, however to no avail. This meant that the author based their questions on the findings reported by SendGrid in their publication.

It is important to revisit the methodological limitation of the modest sample size of 61 respondents, which again could have resulted in a sampling bias, thereby impacting the construct and conclusion validity of the study.

6.2 Future Research

As mentioned in 6.1, there was a lack of previous literature to base this research on. With that in mind, and the completion of this study, future research can build on the findings of this study to further investigate them. With a greater sample size, more valid conclusions can be drawn on the findings of this study, and potential outliers or inconsistencies can be better identified. Furthermore, by segmenting questionnaire participants demographically, more specific findings can be established, making the results more industry-specific. Namely, gender and age-specific studies can be conducted to better understand which demographics better respond to alternate types of marketing emails; this will enable companies to improve their email customization to increase engagement.

Furthermore, the main findings of this study can be developed further to create a more specific image of what contributes to marketing email success. For example, personalization can be explored in an experimental manner to determine exactly which type of personalization is most effective, and how marketers should implement it within their email structure.

Another aspect that can be studied experimentally is email frequency. Since it has been established that many of the respondents find that they receive too many marketing emails, and that they would prefer to receiver fewer emails from their mailing subscriptions, this is an avenue worth exploring. This can be done through controlled experiments that allow for the most optimal frequency of marketing emails to be determined.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Survey introduction and questionnaire with question sources.

Hello,

You are invited to participate in this questionnaire to investigate the success factors of email marketing, as part of my BSc Thesis. The aim of this research is to identify the recipients' perspectives on emails that they receive as part of companies' marketing strategies - what would make them engage with the email or otherwise. Emails in this questionnaire refer to marketing-specific emails, in which companies send out communication to promote the brand.

This questionnaire will take approximately **5-10 minutes** to complete, and you are under no obligation to answer it at any point. The information collected will be strictly confidential and its use will be limited to academic research purposes. **No personal information will be collected during this survey**.

Thank you in advance for participating and contributing to bridging the gap in this area of research; it is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Raghda

BSc International Management Student

Research Question	Measurement Scale/Answer Options	Source
1. How frequently do you check your personal email inbox?	- Many times a day (5 times or more) - A few times a day (2-4 times) - Once a day - Less than once a day - As they arrive (every time a notification is received)	Based on SendGrid, 2019.
2. Do you have notifications enabled for your personal email inbox?	- Yes - No	Author's own.
3. How many minutes (approximately) do you spend per day reading marketing/promotional emails?	Short answer text option	Author's own.
4. How much do you agree with the following statement : *"I value personalization in an email".* (Note: personalization can mean anything that tailors the email to you, from using your name to relating it to your latest purchase history with the sender).	Likert scale, from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree"	Based on SendGrid, 2019.
5. What, in a subject line, would drive you to open an email?	- Emojis - Discount or promotional offer - Capital letters - Personalization - Your interest in the brand - Other	Based on SendGrid, 2019.
6. How much do you agree with the following statement : *"Correct grammar and punctuation in an email is important to me".*	Likert scale, from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree"	Author's own.
7. Which of the following factors, if any, would make you **not continue reading** an email? (Note: please consider internal and external factors) - create a table (most common factors).	- Poor grammar and punctuation - Lack of personalization - The use of emojis - The use of GIFs - Poor-quality graphics - Lack of interest - Not enough time - Other	Author's own.
8. Which of the following types of content, if any, do you value in a marketing email?	- Discount code - Information about a current or upcoming promotional offer - Reminders about the ending of a current promotional offer -Informational content about the brand's current products - Announcements or updates about the brand's	Author's own.

	products - Other	
9. Which of the following factors, if any, would make you **unsubscribe** from a mailing list? (Note: please consider internal and external factors)	- Poor grammar and punctuation - Lack of personalization - The use of emojis - The use of GIFs - Poor-quality graphics - Saturation of emails - Lack of interest - Lack of resources (financial, internet access etc.) - Other	Based on SendGrid, 2019.
10. How frequently would you like to receive emails from a mailing list you are subscribed to?	- More than once a day - Once a day - Several times a week (4-6 times) - A few times a week (2-3 times) - Once a week - Less than once a week	Based on SendGrid, 2019.
11. How much do you agree with the following statement : *"The presence of a call to action makes me more likely to click on any links in an email".* (Note: a call to action is a request to do something i.e., "visit our website today").	Likert scale, from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree"	Author's own.
12. Have you ever received marketing emails from a company that you didn't opt in for? (Note: "opt in" means that you have consented to/signed up for recieving emails in the past)	- Yes - No	Author's own.
13. How many marketing emails (approximately) do receive per day?	Numerical text option	Author's own.
14. Do you find that you receive too many marketing emails?	- Yes - No	Author's own.
15. Does subscribing to a mailing list make you feel obligated to engage with the emails you receive from it? (Note: "Engage" here refers to opening, reading, or clicking through on an email)	- Yes - No	Author's own.
16. How much do you agree with the following statement : *"There are emails that I would like to engage with, but I just don't have the resources".* (Note: please consider internal and external factors e.g., financial resources, to make a purchase).	Likert scale, from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree"	Author's own.