

**Gordon Institute
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An exploration of Positive Marketing in practice

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Abstract

Positive marketing is an emerging construct aimed at transforming marketing practice. The nascent literature on positive marketing identifies different types of this construct. The literature on positive marketing says very little on the nature of the value created by practitioners or how practitioners should implement this construct in practice. The purpose of this study is to explore the conceptualization and implementation of positive marketing in practice. We explore the views and experiences of marketing practitioners that have demonstrated the adoption of positive marketing using a series of in-depth interviews. We find that value created by the positive marketing practice is relative to the user experience and that leadership orientation is a key enabler to the adoption of positive marketing.

Keywords

positive marketing, practice, enablers, barriers, value creation

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The construct of positive marketing is gaining traction due to its potential to raise the profile of the marketing profession. More importantly, it is an avenue to find solutions to societal issues that are causing businesses to be pressured by stakeholders. Positive marketing has been well defined in the literature as ‘marketing in which parties exchange value such that individually and collectively they are better off than they were prior to exchange,’ (Krush, Pennington, Fowler, & Mittelstaedt, 2015, p.2503). Positive marketing encourages organisational behaviour of giving forward instead of giving back (Gopaldas, 2015), by driving initiatives that provide societal value while generating profit for the firm. Positive marketing can be summarised as the sweet spot between ensuring the economic sustainability of a firm and delivering societal value by meeting the needs and demands of public interest. For those adopting positive marketing in practice, there is an opportunity to learn from the literature of conscious capitalism (Sisodia, 2009) and stakeholder theory (Minoja, 2012). This chapter will commence by providing a literature review focused on exploring the theory and practice of positive marketing. It will then aim to understand the concept of value which is central to the definition of positive marketing. Finally, stakeholder theory and conscious capitalism will be examined as part of the process to identify the risks and barriers of adopting positive marketing.

2.2 Positive marketing

Marketing has come under attack in recent times and has developed a negative reputation as depicted by anti-marketing memes that suggest associate marketing with manipulation, the creation of false needs and ultimately as a practice that is evil at heart. (Gopaldas, 2015 , p.2446. The theory of positive marketing is gaining traction as its seen to lift the marketing profession to a higher standard and an avenue to find solutions to the societal issues that are pressurising organisations. Positive marketing has been well defined in the literature as “marketing in which parties exchange value such that individually and collectively they are better off than they were prior to exchange,” (Krush, Pennington, Fowler, & Mittelstaedt, 2015, p.2503). Positive marketing encourages organisational behaviour of giving forward instead of giving back (Gopaldas, 2015, p.2447), by driving initiatives that provide societal value while generating profit for the firm. Positive marketing can be summarised as the sweet spot between ensuring the economic sustainability of a firm and delivering societal value by meeting the needs and demands of

public interest. The theoretical contribution provided by Gopaldas (2015) assists in differentiating positive marketing from other pro-social marketing concepts such as cause marketing (Robinson, Irmak, & Jayachandran, 2012), social marketing (Summers & Summers, 2017) and green marketing (Ko, Hwang, & Kim, 2013).

Mittelstaedt et al., 2015 has reviewed the relationship between positive marketing and macro-marketing and suggest a developmental and critical approach to further research on this theory. The developmental approach requires further interrogation of the benefit of positive marketing if a single measure is used to assess its effectiveness, the advantage of an organisation incorporating positive marketing theory into strategy development and finally how can organisations use marketing technologies to promote the usage of positive marketing. The critical approach to positive marketing could “offer some insight into how we separate the benefits of consumption from the benefits of growth. Mittelstaedt et al., 2015 posed the question of whether it is possible to de-market consumption without affecting growth, or vice versa? “The ability to separate the benefits of consumption from the consequences of growth would be a significant contribution from positive marketing research and practice,” (Mittelstaedt et al., 2015, p.2516).

Tadajewski (2016) questions the existence and validity of positive marketing and examines if this theory is fundamentally different to the concept of societal marketing. Societal marketing is an old construct in the marketing academic literature as it is defined as a “concept of marketing that recognises profit as a major business motive and counsel firms to market goods and services that will satisfy consumers under circumstances that are fair to consumers and that enable them to make intelligent purchase decisions, and counsels firms to avoid marketing practices that have deleterious consequences for society”. (Abratt & Sacks, 1988, p.500). Societal marketing concept, which has been defined as a "customer orientation backed by integrated marketing aimed at generating customer satisfaction and long-run consumer welfare as the key to satisfying organizational goals" (Lusch, 200, p. 26). These definitions highlight that the value exchange between firms and consumers need to be equitable and that no stakeholder is abused in the transaction or exchange.

Societal marketing literature provides a foundation for the emergence of positive marketing as it has similar origins. Societal marketing was topical during an era when consumers were putting pressure on brands to do more social good, in response to the consumerism phenomena. Societal marketing emphasised the need for brands to act in the need and interest of the public, (Gaski, 1985). Businesses at the time were not concerned or convinced with the societal marketing theory due to the profit-making objectives of the time and perhaps the societal pressure of driving sustainability was limited. The philosophical challenge of whether societal marketing would contribute positively to society was

constantly debated. Together with whether marketing practitioners would be compromising on maximum consumer satisfaction in the development of the product or service, challenged the adoption of societal marketing (Gaski, 1985; Takas, 1974). The theory was not fully adopted by corporations due to the tensions between generating profits and doing what is good for society. (Takas, 1974). A study conducted by Lawley (2007) demonstrated that companies that employ societal marketing programs using corporate communication, creates a positive consumer attitude towards the organisation. This evidence although limited, shows the positive impact of societal marketing and poses the question of why organisations did not adopt this concept in the seventies. If firms were not listening to stakeholder concerns in the past it is debatable on whether they do so now. The philosophy of positive marketing articulates that value exchange includes economic success for the organisations - this may enable the adoption of positive marketing.

The societal marketing construct demonstrates the birth of marketing concepts that aim to drive sustainable business growth. One could argue that although societal marketing does not emphasize the profit-making aspect of value creation, it has the same essence as positive marketing. “Macro-marketing describes the role of markets as provisioning systems for society, intended to improve the general welfare of humanity through networks of exchange that maximize the value derived from a division of labour”, (Mittelstaedt et al., 2015, p.2513). This concept started to gain traction with scholars in the eighties, indicating an evolution from societal marketing to macro-marketing. Although the definitions of these concepts are not entirely the same, both could be classified as having a similar crux. Mittelstaedt et al (2015) confirm that “positive marketing shares the same worldview as macro-marketing, that marketing's purpose is to improve the assortment of goods and services that solve human problems” (p.2513). The literature seems to present an evolution of concepts that are advocating for marketing practitioners to see value creation as multi-faceted and more than just the financial indicators of performance.

2.2.1 Describing positive marketing in practice

Gopaldas, (2015) has classified positive marketing into two categories, namely material meaning and practice innovation. Positive marketing that is executed using practice innovation, changes the consumption practice of consumers via the introduction of the new product or service. An example of this type of positive marketing is General Motors' Volt, a hybrid gas electric vehicle which meets the requirement for positive marketing because it benefits the consumer with lowering the fuel cost; meets the environmental need of cleaner energy by reducing the net energy use per mile and the firms economic

need to increase revenue and profit as this innovation can be retailed at a premium due to few players and low competition in this space, as this is a 'green fields' or 'blue ocean' innovation (Gopaldas, 2015). Material meaning innovation is the most common form of positive marketing as it takes an existing product or service and reconfigures it to have less material, more environment-friendly materials or more humanitarian materials. Material meaning innovations don't change the consumer or customer practice with the product or service. Examples of material meaning innovations are demonstrated by brands like Dove with the 'Real beauty campaign'. This campaign celebrates age and beauty diversity and gives Unilever value as it "builds the company's pro social brand reputation", (Gopaldas, 2015, p. 2448) in the market. The customer value is achieved with the affirmation of the fact that beauty comes in all shapes and sizes, so the traditional image portrayed by models in the marketing of personal care products does not equate to beauty. The value of this campaign to society is that it "expands the notion of beauty" (Gopaldas, 2015, p.2448) and gives young girls and women more images that define beauty. The literature has identified fifteen organisations in the United State of America (USA) that have implemented positive marketing, what is of interest to study is understanding how organisations in other markets have adopted this practice and what drives the firms' adoption. In South Africa, Fredericksz (2015) mentions how South African Breweries (SAB) invests in initiatives that can be classified as material meaning. SAB reduces its carbon footprint and the negative environmental impact of the beer brewing process by innovating the bottling process, so it consumes less water and using returnable bottles (Fredericksz, 2015). Using less water in the bottling process benefits society as it conserves water and the decision to market returnable bottles benefits the consumer as it makes the product more affordable as the packaging costs are reduced.

2.2.2 Pro-social marketing philosophies

'Conscious Capitalism'(CC) is defined as a privately owned economic system that is aware of and responsive to the surroundings where it exists. Rajendra Sisodia (2009) stated that:

"Companies that practice conscious capitalism embody the idea that profit and prosperity go hand in hand with social justice and environmental stewardship. They tap into deeper sources of positive energy and create greater value for all stakeholders. They continuously innovate to create and deliver ever greater value each one of their stakeholders." (p.189).

Conscious Capitalism is different in that it requires positive actions by the business to spread the business mission and since social justice is ingrained in the business mission, positive actions will permeate in the operations. This concept will be used to briefly outline other pro-social marketing philosophies that have emerged.

Given the ethical foundation of capitalism, related to the principle of voluntary exchange between business and customers - CC is fundamentally entrenched in business ethics (Fyke & Buzzanell, 2013). Trends in the business realm that have sought to address criticism to the greedy and 'profit hungry' nature of capitalism have adopted programs like the Triple Bottom Line (3BL) and alignment to social ventures." The 3BL ideology consists of profit, people, and planet, also known as financial, social, and environmental performance", (Merriman & Sen, 2012, p. 851). "Social ventures run like traditional for-profit organizations, state that their mission is to create substantial social change or benefit society versus generating profit for shareholders. These missions or higher purposes are lofty, such as reducing poverty through job creation or empowering the blind through reading capabilities" (Simpson, Fischer, & Rohde, 2013, p.20). Pro-social philosophies such as cause related marketing, represent the actions taken by marketers in businesses that align to social business ventures. Cause related marketing (CRM) "is the commitment by a business to make a financial contribution to a cause for each sale that is made," (Corbishley & Mason, 2011). This is the idea of growing a brand by attaching a benefit for consumers and/ or their community. This philosophy does not emphasize nor encourage creating value for the business.

Social marketing is another form of pro-social marketing philosophy, but its efforts aims to solely benefit a target audience which is society, there is no consideration to drive value for multiple stakeholders with the initiatives undertaken (Andreasen, 1994). Social marketing is associated mostly with non-profit organisations, who don't have a commercial imperative to sustain their existence. Positive Marketing is not green marketing as this type of marketing focuses on creating value that will specifically drive the sustainability of the environment and may not generate value for the customer or the firm (Ko, Hwang, & Kim, 2013). Positive marketing is the tool necessary to ensure that businesses achieve the goal of repositioning their role in society. Sustainability advocates have encouraged the adoption of reporting that reflects the 3BL and adoption of initiatives that invest or support social ventures. These actions have attracted reproach as they are perceived to be 'window dressing' and public relations efforts that aim to improve the reputation of businesses, but not changing the fundamental actions of the business that cause harm to society (Simpson et al., 2013).

Sisodia (2009), stated that a conscious business fosters peace and happiness in the individual, respect and solidarity in the community, and mission accomplishment in the organization. This concept ensures that all stakeholders benefit and a win-win relationship is maintained. (Simpson et al.2013) supports the notion that CC creates value for business because operating with a higher purpose and creating goods and services that have real meaning appeals to the emotional and social side of. This type of appeal created brand love, loyalty and entrenched trust among stakeholders. The trust then makes these stakeholders advocates and ambassadors for the business, resulting in sustained financial performance - all driven by the purpose and not obsessed with profit. "A conscious business recognizes that you can have an expanding pie, and potentially everyone can get a larger piece". (Simpson et al.2013, p.21). Examples of successful companies that can be classified as operating consciously include Whole Foods, Patagonia, Southwest Airlines and Panera Cares (Eckhardt & Dobscha,2014). These companies are highlighted in business school case studies for their focus on stakeholder relationships, the environment, conscious cultures, and conscious pricing (Eckhardt & Dobscha,2014). Aligned to the concept of conscious capitalism the inherently societal nature of marketing underpins the necessity of understanding positive marketing in practice.

Aside from (Bublitz & Peracchio, 2015; Krush et al., 2015) the literature on positive marketing has captured very little on how marketing practitioners should approach its adoption. The construct of Conscious Capitalism (CC) (Sisodia, 2009) provides interesting insight into how positive marketing could be adopted. Since 1999 and even more so after the collapse of economic systems in 2008 the capitalist system has been received more scrutiny and criticism. Fyke & Buzzanell (2013) believed that "CC's core is a struggle against unbridled greed and political economic systems that advantage few in a turbulent global world; a struggle against the wicked problems", (p.1634).

CC aims to assist businesses in re-assessing how they currently operate and provide a framework than enables them to take steps towards positively contributing to society. This concept should not be confused with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as "CC emerges naturally from within the organization and is not a bolt-on corporate social responsibility (CSR) program", (Simpson, Fischer, & Rohde, 2013, p.27). This is echoed by Eckhardt and Dobscha, (2014) highlight that CC "is when an organisation's progressive values are embedded in all aspects of doing business, not just relegated to the corporate social responsibility (CSR) wing of the company, and which should result in win-win outcomes for all stakeholders 9p.104). Simpson et al. (2013) asserts that, "A sense of a higher purpose is integral to Conscious Capitalism, a concept that has no place in CSR (p.20). Conscious Capitalism represents a way of doing business and not just a business program (Simpson et al. 2013, p.20).

The four elements include operating with a higher purpose, taking a total stakeholder orientation, conscious leadership, and establishing a value driven culture (Fyke & Buzzanell, 2013; Pillav & Sisodia, 2011). Pillav and Sisodia (2011) expand on these elements highlighting that the higher purpose needs to supersede profit, the business must be managed for the benefit of all stakeholders and create an interdependence and an ecosystem among stakeholders. The leaders of the organisation must be servant leaders that are spiritually evolved with the ability to create an environment that enables and supports operations that promote positive actions.

2.2.3 A critique of positive marketing

Simpson et al (2013) warn that adopting CC is by no means a panacea, as it faces challenges. An inherent tension within CC is the need for efficiency, profit, and pragmatism while solving the world's 'wicked problems'. These wicked problems may have emerged because of the efficiency, profit and pragmatism. This appears antithetical to hope for a more humane form of capitalism. This same challenge demonstrated in the implementation of conscious capitalism, provides insight into some challenges that positive marketing may face. The intentions of practitioners may be inclined to meet the needs of society but, in solving these needs using innovation and technology more harm is inflicted.

The literature encourages conceptual contributions, but a critical approach should be adopted by academics when these new theories emerge so that it is understood if there are ulterior motives and whether the theories are serving interests that may not aligned to developing academic theory. "This world is not rosy. business practice reflects, refracts, moulds and magnifies the best and worst traits of humanity. It invokes sexist, racist, colonial and any number of other distasteful discourses to cement market positions," (Tadajewski, 2016, p.10). The research conducted to date in the field of positive marketing does not propose how organisations should implement this philosophy into practice when faced with the reality and pressure of businesses operating in a capitalist environment.

2.3 Positive marketing and value creation

The definition of positive marketing provided by Gopaldas (2015) shows value creation is at the core of the positive marketing construct, as it indicates that it is marketing activity that is aimed at creating value for society, the consumer and the firm. Value is an elusive concept, but Grönroos and Voima (2013) have

attempted to define value as a benefit or gain developed or exchanged by mutual partners. Lusch (2007) discusses that value is multi-dimensional in nature and that the broader perspective of value incorporates viewing value in-exchange and value in-use. Holbrook (1999) contributed to this discussion of value by identifying eight types of consumer value: efficiency (output to input ratios or output less input) which can benefit a business (Doyle, 2000) and consumer can be categorised as economic value. Then excellence (quality), status (fashion), esteem (materialism), play (fun), aesthetics (beauty), ethics (justice, virtue, and morality), and spirituality (rapture and ecstasy) can be categorised as social value. The examples of social value that Holbrook (1999) identified, refer to value created for the individual consumer. Societal value is only achieved when multiple, interdependent stakeholders derive positive outcomes from the social value that was intended to meet the needs of one individual consumer. Any positive contribution towards nature and the planet can then be categorised as environmental value. Given that we share planet earth, by virtue of this, environmental value created benefits multiple stakeholders.

Shared value has been defined by Porter and Kramer (2011), “as policies and operating practices that enhances the competitiveness of a company while simultaneously advancing the economic and social conditions in the communities in which it operates” (p. 6). An organisation can bring to life the concept of shared value by applying the framework developed by Matinheikki, Rajala and Peltokorpi (2016). It ensures that at a strategic level, a vision that is entrenched in creating value for multiple objectives and stakeholders is developed. This should be shaped and owned by the leadership of an organisation (Smith, 2016). The vision is shared throughout the organisation to build legitimacy and motivate all employees to buy-in and believe the vision. Anchoring the vision by ensuring that the plan is simple to adopt and implement.

Given the definition and examples provided, this study will examine value as it is central to theory and practice of positive marketing. Due to the multi-dimensional nature of value this study will examine, through the lens of the positive marketing initiatives - what value is created for the multiple stakeholders and the business and why the initiatives undertaken were selected to create value. Minoja (2012) makes emphasis to the fact that the key responsibility and long-term survival of a firm is inextricably linked to the value created for stakeholders.

A key and critical stakeholder to consider when developing ‘in-exchange’ and ‘in-use’ value via positive marketing is society (Lusch, 2007; Takas, 1974). It may be beneficial to organisations if the marketing practices adopted reflect the belief in the equal exchange of value across stakeholders.

Today organisations are continuously under demand to reform business practices, by their stakeholders. These stakeholders expect firms to drive good in the society and undo the decades of social and environmental harm caused by creating positive value through their products or services. The increasing pressure on businesses and the development of positive marketing as a philosophy, presents an opportunity to investigate the key factors enabling or preventing the implementation of positive marketing.

2.4 The adoption of positive marketing in practice

Creating positive value for the firm and society simultaneously, is complex (Fassin, 2012). Positive marketing is centred on overcoming this complicated situation. The limited research on how to implement positive marketing in practice presents an opportunity to explore the enablers and barriers of positive marketing adoption, using literature from the concept of conscious capitalism (Sisodia, 2009) to provide insights in examining these forces. The literature aims to understand the definitions, benefits and challenges of practicing CC. The four tenets of CC, namely stakeholders, leadership, purpose and culture are explored as they may provide practical insight for the adoption of positive marketing practice.

2.4.1 Balancing stakeholder wants and needs

Stakeholder theory emanates from the strategic management literature and most research conducted in this space draws insight from the foundation laid by Edward Freeman in 1984. Stakeholder theory aims to assist business managers in broadening “the focus to groups that are considered central to the success of a firm”, (Lusch, 2007) builds on this notion by highlighting that the groups identified internally and externally, guided by stakeholder theory are segmented in order to understand which stakeholders are worthy of management attention at a point in time that decisions are made. Stakeholder theory has drawn a lot attention to business ethics studies to date as literature has tended to “focus on the consumer side of the equation but more recently the concept of stake holdings has broadened and firms are more widely regarded as having responsibilities that extend much further into the community and the environment,” (Clulow, 2005 p.979). This increased focus on stakeholder theory in business management is driven by the increased visibility and vocality of multi-faceted stakeholder representatives. Stakeholder theory challenges the role of business as Minoja (2012) asserts that “the purpose of the firm is to create and distribute value to a plurality of stakeholders and that the achievement of this purpose depends on the cooperation and support of the stakeholders themselves’ (p.67).

For a business to create and distribute value for its stakeholders it needs to learn how to identify its stakeholders. Clulow (2005), defines “a stakeholder as any individual or group who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’ objectives” (p.981). Lusch (2007) and Clulow (2005) provide a process of how to effectively use stakeholder theory in practice by incorporating this theory into the strategic planning of a business. Firstly, the business needs to identify who the relevant stakeholders are for the firm and can classify the stakeholders into primary, secondary and tertiary groupings or cluster stakeholders based on the environment where they operate like social, technological economic and political. Once the stakeholders have been identified then the business managers need to specify the stakeholder interests and needs and understand the existing relationship that exists with these stakeholders and the firm. Business managers must then assess the power relationship between the firm and the stakeholders as well as among the stakeholders- this will enable the managers to know how much emphasis should be placed on each stakeholder.

Post the stakeholder mapping the difficult aspect of stakeholder theory is related to the management of these stakeholders. Businesses will find that stakeholders have extremely diverse perspectives and therefore the balancing of stakeholder requirements becomes complex and problematic, especially if the stakeholder views are at odds e.g. how does a bank deal with the dilemma of appeasing the following three important stakeholders that are key to the success of the bank’s business: the government needs bank financing to build a nuclear power station that relies on unsustainable source of energy which due to the cost will ensure a lucrative return on investment for the shareholder, meanwhile the millennial bank client is expecting the bank to be a responsible corporate citizen that supports green energy initiatives (Fassin, 2012). Lusch (2007) recommends that businesses be clear on who will be observing and taking care of the stakeholder needs and when conflicts arise among stakeholders then the business knows who and how to deal with the issues arising.

Minoja (2012) has emphasized to the fact that the key responsibility and long-term survival of a firm is inextricably linked to the value created for stakeholders. Stakeholder theory is useful not just for guiding business strategy but also for its operations as it assists in guiding the actions of managers. Since Freeman’s seminal work on stakeholder theory in 1984, “the concept has been integrated into academic business research, reviewed in terms of its influence and applied to disciplines such as marketing” (Clulow,2005, p.980).

“The importance of stakeholder theory and its influence on the evolving role of business and marketing is supported by the writings of Minoja (2012) and Fassin (2012) who highlight that meeting the needs of

a multitude of stakeholders, contributes towards increasing the firms competitive advantage or improved financial performance.

A large criticism of Conscious Capitalism is that stakeholder interests do not always align perfectly, and at times these interests can even differ from one another (Simpson et al.,2013). In response to this criticism, Rauch (2011) indicated that, “not all stakeholders have the same demand upon, or even value to the business.” Indeed Simpson et al. (2013) also acknowledged that a Conscious Capitalism business usually focuses on customers or employees, but interests rarely clash forcibly. If a clashing of interests does occur, Conscious Capitalism businesses must acknowledge them and pursue mutually beneficial options before resorting to trade-offs (Strong, 2011).

Based on Mackey and Sisodia’s explanation and support for the capitalist system, Conscious Capitalism relies heavily on the roots of capitalism. Conscious Capitalism is not meant to serve as a new economic system, and it does not seek to do away with the cornerstones of many countries’ economies. Rather, Conscious Capitalism seeks to enhance capitalism and inject social justice into the economic system that has led to prosperity for countless countries.

2.4.2 Leadership

Leadership is required to successfully implement CC. The construct stresses that leadership style and behaviours influence how an organization adopts CC. ‘, leader behaviour is powerful because followers tend to emulate role models. Further, Fyke & Buzzanell (2013) note that, the more leaders translate values and moral convictions to behaviour (i.e. “walk their talk”), the more followers trust and respect leaders and follow their lead’, (p.1622)

Adopting a servant leadership style that embraces mindfulness has been identified as a necessary ingredient for leaders at the helm of businesses that adopt CC. Mindful leaders need to constantly be aware of and reappraise their beliefs, values and worldviews. This will enable them to better engage with stakeholders and reflect on why their businesses exist. ‘Recognizing marketplace interdependence requires an elevated level of mindfulness on the part of leaders, and deep systemic change to organizational cultures.’ (Fyke & Buzzanell, 2013, p.1623). Being mindful is essential for conscious leadership although this cannot occur in isolation. Simpson et.al (2013) declare that ‘a conscious leader would appear to be very reliant upon one’s ability to take concrete action, versus playing a bystander role or acting in their own self-interest. It seems as though conscious leadership leans towards a collectivist

way of thinking' (p.22). This type of leadership is essential for driving a conscious culture which includes qualities such as trust, authenticity, care, transparency, integrity, learning, and empowerment (p.22).

2.4.3 Purpose

Working towards a higher purpose is a key tenet in the adoption of CC. As business needs to also deliver on the commercial demands expectations of shareholders – a business that is rooted in a higher purpose and prioritises the purpose beyond the profit will benefit through the long term sustainability of the firm (Fyke & Buzzanell, 2013). Businesses that take the time to consciously define their higher purpose, provide an operational tool that aligns the business functions while inspiring employees to work toward objectives that benefit society (Pillav & Sisodia, 2011). Operating towards a higher purpose translates into a business developing goods and services that provide real meaning to stakeholders and therefore creating an emotional connection which builds strong brand loyalty (Simpson et al., 2013). 'Conscious Capitalist companies set themselves up for financial success without focusing on the bottom line', (Simpson et al., 2013, p.21).

2.4.4 Culture

Peter Drucker pronounced that 'culture eats strategy for lunch' (Whitzman, 2016). This phrase confirms the need for conscious businesses to adopt a conscious culture. Culture is the embodiment of procedures, processes, norms, values and practices that underpin the social fabric of the business. Fyke and Buzzanell (2013) created the acronym TACTILE, which stands for Trust, Authenticity, Caring, Transparency, Integrity, Learning, Empowerment (Simpson et al., 2013). These values and characteristics have been identified as necessary ingredients for the successful adoption of conscious capitalism. The combination of these qualities creates a business environment that builds goodwill with employees and this drives profit (Pillav & Sisodia, 2011). A culture of fear and anxiety poses a risk to operations and financial sustainability as it stymies employees' creativity and their ability to perform (Pillav & Sisodia, 2011). The contrary applies to businesses that adopts a conscious culture, employees become free of fear thus resulting in increased employee performance driven by employee satisfaction (Simpson et al., 2013). A conscious culture creates an environment that enables the leadership to serve the firm and society and fulfil the higher purpose of the organisation.

2.4.4 Stakeholders

Lastly, conscious capitalism requires that the business adopt a holistic acknowledgement and view to stakeholders (Simpson et al., 2013). Firms need to invest in creating an ecosystem that ensures value is delivered and exchanged amongst all stakeholders and not just the shareholder (Sisodia, 2009). Customers, employees, society, shareholders, suppliers and the environment are recognised as stakeholders to the firm (Pillav & Sisodia, 2011). The concept aims to create an interdependence among all stakeholders, including the investors (Simpson et al., 2013).

2.5 Conclusion

The conclusion is that the overall investment performance of the Conscious Capitalism company's analysis suggests that good companies may finish first, provided that their management also performs capably. The combination of happy employees, satisfied customers, trusting suppliers, a healthy environment and an appreciative community, and rewarded investors is a force that is gaining traction in the business world. It is likely to be one of the next dominant organisational paradigms. (Simpson et al., 2013). As this study explores positive marketing in practice, the initiatives adopted by businesses will be assessed with the view of what value has been created for society and the firm. The insight from stakeholder theory will be the point of reference to understand who the businesses identify as stakeholders and how they are balancing the needs. The four tenets of conscious capitalism will be considered when exploring the barriers and enablers of adopting positive marketing.

As this study explores positive marketing in practice, the first question that this study aims to answer is; what does positive marketing look like in practice? Once the positive marketing practices adopted by the businesses have been identified, the study will assess the type of value created by these practices and who the intended recipient of the value was. The final question that the study aims to resolve is; what are the enablers and barriers when marketing practitioners adopt positive marketing in practice?

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The exploratory nature of this study warranted the use of a qualitative research method, as this extracted rich, valuable and insightful data from the in-depth interviews conducted (Creswell, 2012). Understanding the intimate characteristics of positive marketing in practice and discovering the enablers and barriers of its adoption, informed the selection of a qualitative research approach (Neuman, 2014). Authenticity is essential to understanding the barriers and enablers of adopting positive marketing, making qualitative research the appropriate methodology for this study as detailed information based on the perspectives of the participants was generated (Creswell, 2012).

The research used an inductive approach as it aimed to gain a deeper understanding of positive marketing by exploring the practice together with the enablers and barriers of its adoption (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The inductive approach was appropriate for this study because it allowed the themes and abstract concepts, informing the theoretical relationships, to be derived from the answers provided by the participants (Neuman, 2014).

4.2 Research Design

To gain insight into the enablers and barriers of the adoption of positive marketing concept, this research used in-depth, semi structured interviews “so that it does not restrict the views of participants” (Creswell, 2012). The base questions used in the interviews were structured in a manner that aimed to understand the barriers and enablers that underpin the adoption of positive marketing philosophy and practice. This choice in strategy demonstrates that the study will stay true to the exploratory qualitative research process, recommended by Strauss & Corbin (2008), Creswell (2012) and Neuman (2014). This research applied a mono method design, as it only used qualitative data to address the objectives identified, and answer the research question (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Due to the limited time to conduct this study, the primary qualitative data that was collected provided a ‘snapshot’, thus classifying this research as cross-sectional.

4.3 Population & Sample

The population for this research was comprised of senior executives and managers responsible for marketing and or sustainable business strategy development and execution in their respective organisations. The population was limited to organisations that espoused and adopted the positive marketing philosophy, reflected by the activity captured in their annual sustainability reports. Due to time and financial constraints, the research sampled ten of the twelve senior executives from the population. Multiple attempts were made to secure an additional three participants from organisations adopting positive marketing, but given the emergent nature of the positive marketing practice, participants were not willing to conduct the interviews based on the information required to answer the questions shared in the interview schedule. The researchers took heed of Ko et al's, (2013) advice to researchers, relating to conducting as many interviews as necessary until the data reached a point of saturation. Given the unavailability and disappearance of potential participants, the researcher leaned on the perspective provided by Creswell (2012), highlighting that the data generated from the ten participants was useful in learning about positive marketing.

The non-probability sampling method was adopted because, the researcher did not have the complete list of the population, therefore no random sampling could occur (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). This research aims to understand the adoption of positive marketing in practice. Therefore, a purposive sampling technique was applied by recruiting executives and managers responsible for strategy development and execution, from organisations that demonstrate the adoption of positive marketing practice (Ko et al., 2013). The purposive sampling approach was selected because it assisted to intentionally approach individuals that would provide rich information which assisted to gain a deep insight about positive marketing (Creswell, 2012).

4.4 Data collection

Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted as the data collection tool in this qualitative study. "Open-ended responses to a question allowed the participant to create the options for responding", (Creswell, 2012). This approach was beneficial to the study because it allowed the participants to share detailed, confidential business information that would have otherwise been extremely difficult to decipher using observations from public reports and artefacts. The semi-structured

approach to the data collection, allowed the researcher to maintain a structure to the interview but also provided flexibility to elicit specific probing and clarification questions.

The interview questions were structured in a manner that aimed to answer the objectives as stated in the appendix 2.

The semi-structured interviews made use of the executives' thought process and feelings related to positive marketing. This questioning technique allowed the researcher to obtain more detail from the executive by allowing the executive to answer freely with their own views. Adopting this style of questioning was adopted to prevent the researcher from imposing the answers that the researcher may have anticipated, but given the limited experience of the researcher, passion and excitement towards the phenomena prevented the researcher from maintaining this questioning style one hundred percent.

4.5 Unit of analysis and response

The study targeted for profit businesses that implement and practice positive marketing via practice innovation or material meaning as the unit of analysis. The individuals interviewed, which the researcher has classified as 'positive marketer', are the unit of response used for this study. The differences and similarities among the positive marketers interviewed, together with the insights derived from them were assessed and analysed to address the research objectives and answer the research question.

4.6 Data collection process

The first step in collecting the data required developing an interview guide. The interview guide used the themes identified in the literature review. Given the sensitivity of the business information that was required to understand positive marketing in practice, the finalised interview guide sent to the ethical clearance committee at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, for approval. A pilot interview (Saunders & Lewis, 2012) was conducted with one positive marketer from a positive firm to understand if there were any gaps in the guide or areas that required clarification. The pilot interview highlighted that one of the questions was not articulated clearly so the researcher had to be cognisant of how this question was expressed. No changes were made to the interview guide after the pilot interview.

Post the pilot interview the researcher searched for businesses that adopt positive marketing by first identifying whether they had sustainability reports that suggested that they practiced positive marketing. Secondly the researchers reviewed the type of marketing activities highlighted in the reports. Once the businesses were identified the researchers sent positioning emails with the interview scheduled to individuals that held management positions in those organisations via introduction, ensuring that the participants understood the background and purpose of the study. One telephonic and nine face-to-face interviews were conducted with the positive marketers, at a location that was convenient and comfortable for the positive marketer. The participants were requested to sign a consent form to ensure that the interview was anonymous, but not confidential and that the data acquired in the interview will only be used for the specified study. Prior to the interview date permission was requested to record the interview as advised by Saunders & Lewis (2012).

All ten interviews were recorded using Voice Recorder, an audio recorder application on an iPad device. Each interview was saved as a separate audio recording “wav.” file and saved in a manner that maintains the anonymity of the respondent e.g. Positive Marketer 1. The researcher had planned to have 45-minute interviews with each participant, but resulted with six of the interviews lasting for a duration between 45minutes and 53 minutes, two of the interviews were 40minutes long and in an instance where data saturation was reached the interview lasted for 30:55 minutes

The interviews were used to gain a deeper understanding of the enablers and barriers when opting to adopt positive marketing philosophy and practice. Table 1 provides an overview of the interviews:

Table 1:
Overview of participants

Industry	Business Head Quarters	Position In Organisation	Number of Participants	Gender of Participants
Automotive	Germany	Product Manager	1	Female
Sports Footwear and Apparel	USA	Marketing Manager	1	Male
Alcoholic Beverages (FMCG)	USA	Brand Director	1	Female
Alcoholic Beverages (FMCG)	Netherlands	Marketing Manager	1	Male
Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG)	United Kingdom	Inclusive Projects Manager	1	Female
Financial Services	South Africa	Marketing Manager	1	Male
Financial Services	South Africa	Senior Manager	1	Female
Technology	USA	Director	1	Male
Non-Alcoholic Beverages (FMCG)	USA	Marketing Manager	2	Female
		Reputation Manager		Male
Total			10	

4.7 Data Analysis

The audio recordings from the interviews were prepared for analysis by transcribing the audio recordings using a third-party company which applied the appropriate standards as recommended by (Creswell, 2012). To ensure integrity of the data the transcripts were checked against the audio recording. Any discrepancies between the transcript and audio such as unclear words and spelling errors were corrected on the transcripts before the analysis process could commence. Preliminary exploratory analysis was conducted by carefully reading the first two transcripts, to get a sense of the emerging themes and underlying meaning behind the data.

The prepared data was loaded on a 'computer-aided qualitative data software application called Atlas.ti version 7 and 8, (Saunders & Lewis, 2012), where initial codes were identified. Saldana, 2016 defines a code in qualitative inquiry as most often a word or short phrase, that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing and or an evocative attribute for a portion of language based or visual data. The researcher identified and extracted initial codes namely open, in vivo and concept codes from the transcripts (Creswell, 2012). Given the depth of the interviews 192 initial codes were identified, comprised of in vivo and open codes. The researcher then followed the non-linear process of qualitative research and reverted to review and analyse these initial codes to establish axial codes. Saldana (2016) describes axial codes as extending the analytic work from the initial codes and reassembling the data that may have been split during the initial coding process. The researcher applied axial coding to the 192 initial codes to allow for the grouping and re-labelling of similarly coded data ensuring that the coding is sharpened and could achieve its best fit Saldana (2016). The codes were reduced from 192 initial codes to 103 codes. This simultaneous coding approach identified categories and themes in the codes Saldana (2016). "Coding allows for data to be reorganized, grouped or divided to consolidate meaning or develop explanation", Saldana (2016).

Given the inductive approach of the research the codes were grouped and represented on the Table 2 below based on the patterns that arose during the synthesising (Creswell, 2012). The second order interpretation (Neuman, 2014) enabled the identification of categories which were used to identify the themes. These categories were grouped further to identify major and minor themes Saldana (2016). which were tested against the theory identified in the literature review.

Table 2 :
Demonstration of coding process

Source	Quote	Level 1 Code	Emerging Themes
PM1 : 52	We gave Uber a whole fleet of electric cars and literally when you were looking at your Uber X, Uber Black, whatever it is, they were still the green for a while, depending on where the location was.	Economic Value Environmental Value “Practice Innovation”	Environmental and Economic value created for stakeholders and business via mutually beneficial partnerships.
PM7 : 64	What Company G does really well is that we incentivise better behaviour, so we have lower claims.	Social Value Economic Value Environmental Value “Practice Innovation”	Positive Marketing, creating social, environmental and economic value for all stakeholders
PM8 : 80	In East Africa the idea is to see whether or not you could increase the internet penetration without having to dig cables into the ground. So, they have literally got balloons that are floating around that broadcast	Economic Value Environmental Value Social Value “material meaning innovation”	

Reliability and validity are ideas that help to establish the truthfulness, credibility, or believability of findings (Neuman, 2014). The researcher ensured that the data gathered was reliable by standardising the interview as far as possible with the same semi-structured questions posed. Validity was maintained by ensuring that the study measured what it was set to measure (Saunders & Lewis, 2012), as listed in the research question and sub-questions. Consistently checking the transcripts against the audio recordings before analysing the data ensured that the data was trustworthy.

4.8 Limitations

Qualitative research has a high propensity to be subjective driven by potential biases that may emerge during the data collection process (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). During this study the following limitations were experienced:

- The target sample was senior marketing managers or executives and given the resistance of some organisations to participate in the study as marketing professionals, the study should have set out to target marketing, strategy and sustainability senior managers within each of the identified businesses. This would have provided a holistic picture of the enablers and barriers of adopting positive marketing as it is a practice that affects many parts of the business. The contrasting or congruent views of the managers would have provided a richer and diverse collection of data.
- Given that the researcher is also a marketing professional, her presence may have affected how the positive marketers responded (Creswell, 2012), although all attempts were made by the researcher to remain neutral and allow free expression.
- The limited experience of the researcher in conducting and interpreting qualitative research, may have resulted in researcher bias.
- Due to the limited sample size findings cannot be aggerated or generalised.

Chapter 5: Results

The presentation of the findings is structured in a manner that aims to answer the research questions. In line with the practice of reporting qualitative research (Strauss & Corbin, 2008), quotes are used to capture the analysis of the data set and reflect the breadth of the findings.

5.1 Adoption of Positive Marketing

Respondents indicated that their businesses have been practicing positive marketing based on the initiatives described below, although they do not refer to these practices as positive marketing - some refer to the practices as marketing with a purpose or CSR or social marketing or sustainable business practices. Most initiatives described provide social and economic value, with very few providing environmental value or all three types of value. Businesses want to tackle the big socio-economic issues to ensure that they can differentiate and drive business growth and impact. Social and economic need seem to be the focus for the businesses that participated in the study. This could be as a result of the increasing socio-economic challenges that countries need to address.

5.2 Value creation through positive marketing

In articulating how the businesses were delivering value to their stakeholders through their positive marketing practices, most of the participants stated what the business or individual believed to be of value to their stakeholders and conceded that value was relative to the needs of the stakeholder. The idea that value is relative means that the business or participants are using their own definitions and measurements of value - which may result in biased and partial considerations. Perhaps we need a standardised approach to determining value in the context of PM.

We are making people healthier, and we are enhancing and protecting their lives. And just because it's our clients and our member base what's wrong with that, because at least we are doing something.

Senior Manager - Financial Services

It depends on what value you are looking for.

Premium Brand Director- Alcoholic Beverage

Like the value is going to be different for everyone, which is why we always say, user first.

(PM-8)

Table 3 below has captured the positive marketing practices adopted by the brands within the businesses that participated in the study. The table classifies the practice as material meaning or product innovation, before identifying the type of value created for the consumer, society and the firm.

Table 3:
Positive marketing practices described, and value created.

Brand	Positive Marketing Practice	Industry	Type of Positive	Value for society	Value for consumer	Value for firm
Brand G	incentivising better behaviour through various insurance products and services	Financial services	Practice Innovation	Healthier lifestyles, cautious and responsible drivers and reduced reliance on fossil fuels	Economic and social value in the form of loyalty points	Decrease the number of claims paid out
Brand A	electric automobiles made from 90% recycled materials	Automotive	Practice Innovation	Reduced carbon emissions and reliance on oil	Economic value gained from reduced expense of fuel	Long-term continuity of business
Brand H	Reducing the cost of data via solar balloon trials	Technology	Material Meaning Innovation	Connectivity and Access to family, friends and services	Reduced data costs	Access to information to arrange, analyse and organise.
Brand D	Partnering with government to create roadblocks to check for drunk drivers during the weekends with major events	Alcoholic Beverages	Material Meaning Innovation	Safer roads with reduced number of drunk drivers	Moderating alcohol consumption	Ethical reputation and Licence to trade
Brand C	Purposeful activities aimed at attacking issues related to alcohol abuse e.g. 0% ABV beer	Alcoholic Beverages	Practice and Material Meaning Innovation	Decrease in issues and costs related to alcohol abuse	Moderating alcohol consumption	License to trade & Alignment to Business Purpose
Brand E	A crowd sourcing platform connecting donors and students	Financial services	Material Meaning Innovation	Increasing the number of educated people in the country without relying on tax and state financing	Financing of education and a passport to a better future	Future clients, Reputation and Licence to trade.
Brand B	Breathable soccer jerseys made from recycled bottles	Apparel	Material Meaning Innovation	Reduced environmental impact of plastic bottle litter	High quality soccer jersey with a reduced carbon footprint	Reputation for being Ethical and Innovative
Brand I	Free WiFi available in-store without the purchase of anything.	Beverages	Material Meaning Innovation	Access to free WiFi	Access to Wifi and a place for meetings for business or school or social gathering	Brand Building and aligning to business purpose
Brand F	School Program educating children on hand hygiene	FMCG	Practice Innovation	Healthier and hygienic children	Clean hands preventing a illness	Brand Building and Long-Term Business Sustainability

In understanding why these businesses were adopting positive marketing it was evident that the mandate to change business and marketing practices to be more conscious and drive shared value, was led by the corporate strategy which seeks to address a societal challenge. The participants across all the businesses were very clear that the senior leadership at the helm of the organisation globally was primarily the driver of the corporate strategy and execution.

The table below captures the top five themes that emerged when participants were asked why they adopted the positive marketing practices.

**Table 4:
Rationale to adopting positive marketing practices**

Rank	Rationale for implementing positive marketing	Frequency (Number of Mentions)
1	Tackling a challenging societal problem	53
2	Leadership Orientation	41
3	Obsession to solve consumer need	37
4	Globally mandated	10
5	Licence to Trade	5

Businesses are increasingly become conscious and pro-active in solving the broader issues affecting society, as society is made up of their target consumers or clients. Based on the responses from the participants businesses are focusing their efforts on societal issues that are relevant and important to their consumers/clients and not just the business requirements. Today's business leaders are showing the conviction to identify what the right business actions need to be to positively impact the societies that they operate within.

So, it's increasingly becoming more and more important, and I have got examples but there are also initiatives where there is a global mandate to say, guys, you will do good in your markets and you will spend x amount in order to do that.

Marketing Manager - Alcoholic Beverage

we have an opportunity not only to wow and excite consumers with our brand for financial and volume gain, but to do good. And once again, once it comes from the top, it's non-negotiable.

Premium Brand Director- Alcoholic Beverage

I think the bigger aim is we are getting involved in the causes that are important to you- So it forces us to always make sure that we are in touch.

Marketing Manager - Financial Services

its taken a lot of courage for him to come and push for these initiatives which normally, I think, are seen as just expenses, and almost dual tax for doing business in countries.

Project Manager - FMCG

our CEO is part of the CEO Initiative so he sees his role within society and addressing society issues as quite important, and I think increasingly so, with the state of our nation.

Senior Manager - Financial Services

In exploring the perceived positives of adopting and implementing PM initiatives, the three strong themes that emerged were centred on the orientation and model behaviour of the senior leadership in the businesses, the emphasis and focus on long-term business sustainability and obsession on consumer/client needs and wants.

5.3 Adopting positive marketing in practice

The table below captures the themes that emerged when participants were asked about the positive results of practice positive marketing. Leadership, long-term business focus and being obsessed with addressing and solving stakeholder needs emerged as the most mentioned outcomes of positive marketing adoption.

Table 5:
Positive influences and outcomes of practicing positive marketing

Rank	Enablers of adopting Positive Marketing	Frequency (Number of Mentions)
1	Leadership	41
2	Long- Term Business Focus	40
3	Obsession to solve consumer need	37
3	Understanding stakeholder needs	37
4	Organisational culture	35
5	Compelling Business Purpose	26

5.3.1 Leadership

In understanding why these businesses were adopting positive marketing it was evident that the mandate to change business and marketing practices to be more conscious and drive shared value, was led by the corporate strategy which seeks to address a societal challenge. The participants in the study across all the businesses were very clear that the senior leadership of the organisation, globally, was the primary driver of the corporate strategy and execution. Businesses are increasingly becoming conscious of, and pro-active in solving, the broader issues affecting society (which includes their target consumers). Based on the responses from the participants, businesses included in the study are focusing their efforts on societal issues that are relevant and important to their consumers and not just the business requirements. Today's business leaders are showing the conviction to identify what the right business actions need to

be to positively impact the societies that they operate within. In exploring the perceived positives of adopting and implementing PM initiatives the three strong themes emerged. These themes centred on the orientation and model behaviour of the senior leadership in the businesses, the emphasis and focus on long-term business sustainability and obsession on consumer/client needs and wants. The following quotes demonstrate the importance of leadership in the adoption of positive marketing.

Our CEO, very much lives up to the core purpose and asks critical questions as to how businesses, business units, teams are fulfilling that core purpose. He is invested and aware.

Senior Manager- Financial Services

you know they also lead by example, so championing something that isn't the most profitable thing that we do but maybe does good, and saying, you know what, we are going to just show that we can do this and let me show you that we can do it and that it's okay. And then by seeing that it gives everybody else the opportunity to say, you know what, I can do that kind of stuff as well.

Brand Director Alcoholic Beverages

this is driven by our global CEO, he really does believe our vision in the sense that in order to grow our business we need to be growing people around us.

Project Manager – FMCG

It's driven from the top down, they encourage you to do that, to be curious.

Business Unit Director – Technology

All the participants attributed their investment into positive marketing initiatives to the senior leadership. As it is evidenced in the quotes above the senior leaders in these positive firms have the courage to pursue business strategies that may not be the most popular or expected, they can continuously inspire

their employees to work towards achieving the selfless business purpose and most importantly they lead by example.

All the participants attributed their investment into positive marketing initiatives to the senior leadership. As it is evidenced in the quotes above the senior leaders in these businesses have the courage to pursue business strategies that may not be the most popular or expected, they can continuously inspire their employees to work towards achieving the selfless business purpose and most importantly they lead by example.

5.3.2 Long-Term Business Focus

The quotes below demonstrate how the participants identified a long-term business focus as a favourable outcome to the adoption of positive marketing, which we infer as a key enabler for business. Most of the participants state that they need to act positively now, to preserve and sustain their businesses in the future.

see how we are merging doing good for the right reason, it does make business sense but it's also a long-term play to make South Africa a better financially literate country.

Marketing Manager - Financial Services

if we don't create athletes we run out of business.

Marketing Manager - Sports Footwear & Apparel

we haven't even been around for 30 years, but in the next couple of years we may not exist because there might be something that's better at organising information, that's better at giving people value, security, connectivity.

Business Unit Director – Technology

to do things differently, and to take something off, of the assembly line that maybe takes down your efficiency a little bit, even if it's the right thing to do for consumers in the long run.

Brand Director - Alcoholic Beverages

Making it sustainable over a long period of time is not only good for our business but for the country and for the individual.

Marketing Manager - Alcoholic Beverages

So it's a more sustainable way of doing business because at the end of the day if your environment around you is collapsing or the people can't afford to buy your products there will be no business to carry on with.

Project Manager- FMCG

It's a long-term investment- it's not quick wins.

Product Manager – Automotive

A key enabler for business to adopt positive marketing in practiced is premised on the long-term sustainability of the entities. Most of the participants state that they need to act positively now in order to preserve and sustain their businesses in the future.

5.3.3 Balancing stakeholder needs

Table 6: Challenges in faced in the adoption of positive marketing practices

Rank	Barriers of adopting Positive Marketing	Frequency (Number of Mentions)
1	Utility for stakeholders	52
2	Rigid and entrenched mindsets and processes	14
3	Prioritising Business resources	9
4	Multiple stakeholder management	7
4	Credibility	7
5	Partnering Government	6
6	High Financial Investment	6

The table above captures the themes that emerged when participants were asked about the challenges results of practice positive marketing. Utility for stakeholders, rigid mindsets, process and prioritising resources emerged as the most mentioned outcomes of positive marketing adoption.

Most of the participants in the study highlighted the importance of understanding the needs and desires of their consumers and society, as this would inform the practices that the business would focus on and invest resources. Participants recognised their duty to deliver value to consumers and society as their primary task, but acknowledging the tension and difficulty of achieving that together with economic value for the business. The evident obsession with solving consumer needs by providing practical solution, products and choices is reflected in the responses captured below.

So I feel like the role of marketing will grow in importance because you cannot create solutions in isolation without knowing what people generally want.

Marketing Manager - Financial Services

it's very important to understand what's going on in the mind-set of a consumer, of the athlete. We say, let's help people become better athletes because once they become better athletes then they will be more open to buying our products, as opposed to buying more airtime, for example, or another beer.

General Manager - Sports Footwear & Apparel

But I think the biggest stakeholders, even more importantly than our own internal stakeholders are the consumers. And as soon as you stop solving consumer problems then we have no business.

Business Unit Director – Technology

From a marketing business perspective, I guess as well the consumer is the boss. As long as you keep the consumer at the forefront of what you do in the end you should win that battle.

Brand Director - Alcoholic Beverages

customer is at the centre

Product Manager - Automotive

giving consumers choice.

Marketing Manager – Beverages

I need to look at your farm, do you need help with water, do you need help with filtration, what is it that you require assistance with? Because if we are going to do proper business

you need to be in a position to supply me with the best product because I need to supply the best product to my customer, and that's where it came from.

Marketing Manager - Beverages

The participants in the study were concerned with providing meaningful value to their key stakeholders. The responses below show how the positive marketers may not fully progress with some positive marketing practices due to the lack of utility delivered to any one of their stakeholders. Implementing positive marketing requires marketers to have the ability to identify what will provide meaningful value to the key stakeholder while maintaining value for the business. The practical challenge in adopting positive marketing is figuring out the critical needs of all stakeholders and balancing the business' approach in delivering value so that the value delivered is beyond one stakeholder. The quotes below highlight the challenges faced by the participants in executing positive marketing practices that result in meaningful value to their relevant stakeholders.

it's about finding something that's meaningful and can make a difference.

Brand Director - Alcoholic Beverages

we started to challenge our thinking on some of these initiatives that we are running and whether they are truly sustainable in bringing value to the business

Project Manager – FMCG

we can make it more meaningful for you - we are in the business of changing lives.

Marketing Manager - Financial Services

Because it's the utility, you can organise all that information if people don't have access to it and they don't find use in it then it's really
pointless.

Business Unit Director - Technology

but we are making people healthier, and we are enhancing and protecting their lives. And just because it's our clients and our member base what's wrong with that, because at least we are doing something. I would love to get involved in developing products for, not the bottom of the pyramid, but the emerging middle class. Like products that are affordable that fundamentally bolster their financial life or their health and access to health.

Senior Manager - Financial Services

to find that right balance of emotional while making sure you are underpinned by the functional,

Brand Director - Alcoholic Beverages

5.3.4 Culture

A cultural barrier to implementing positive marketing is the bureaucracy of existing processes that exist in the businesses, which demonstrate the inability to evolve and adapt to the constantly changing requirements of the business environment. It is interesting to note that the businesses that noted this barrier are manufacturing and financial services businesses that have been in existence for more than a century. The technology business which is less than thirty years old did not seem to face this barrier of adapting business mindsets and processes to constant change. Convincing people within the business that may be more conservative and traditional was also highlighted as a barrier to adopting positive marketing in practice.

And that continues to be an ongoing struggle now, because we need to get approval and there's a queue system and there's a lot of internal red tape, and they are saying, no, your role is to make it as simple as possible. Especially if you

are in the business of changing lives, because every minute you lose you are missing out on someone else you could have helped.

Marketing Manager - Financial Services

Change is challenging, and the nature of an organisation is always to take the easy way and not always to do the hard things because the hard things, even if they have big results, are hard to do.

Brand Director - Alcoholic Beverages

So not that people don't believe in what we are doing, but often you are stuck in a rut of doing things the same way.

Project Manager - FMCG

But then you still have people that are in that old mindset.

Product Manager – Automotive

it's convincing people within the organisation.

General Manager - Sports Footwear & Apparel

They are a lot more traditional, a lot more conservative.

Senior Manager - Financial Services

5.3.5 Resource Prioritisation

Due to the long-term benefit of many positive marketing initiatives, a barrier that marketers are faced with is how to prioritise their resources. The responses below show the difficulty that marketers face when deciding to invest in positive marketing initiatives for the long-term versus meeting short-term shareholder needs. The participants also highlight the complexity of addressing a societal problem while ensuring that the brand needs are met.

it becomes a complex beast -to your stakeholder base which may be more about creating money and profit

Brand Director - Alcoholic Beverages

take this portion of the budget and I'm going to invest it into premium automotive manufacturers, where they are almost thinking, yes, we can build schools or we can do this, or we can do that.

Product Manager – Automotive

it's an interesting dilemma as you face looking at the world's problems and wanting to tackle them, how do you do it in a way that actually ties to your brand and in that space of enjoyment?

Brand Director - Alcoholic Beverages

Due to the long-term benefit of many positive marketing initiatives, a barrier that marketers are faced with is how to prioritise their resources. The response below shows the difficulty that marketers face when deciding to invest in positive marketing initiatives for the long-term versus meeting short-term shareholder needs. The participants also highlight the complexity of addressing a societal problem while ensuring that the brand needs are met.

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Appendix 1: Consistency Matrix

Title: An exploration of positive marketing in practice

Research Questions	Literature Review	Data Collection Tool	Analysis
A. What does positive marketing look like in practice?	(Gopaldas, 2015; Krush et al., 2015; Mittelstaedt, Kilbourne, & Shultz, 2015; Tadajewski, 2016)	Secondary data Questions 1,2,3,4,5 in the interview schedule.	Conduct content analysis of open ended and axial codes extracted from unstructured text data.
B. What type of value is created through positive marketing practices and for whom are they created for?	(Abratt & Sacks, 1988; Gaski, 1985; Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Lusch, 2007; Matinheikki et al., 2016; Smith, 2016; Takas, 1974b)	Questions 6,7 ,8,9,10,11 in the interview schedule	Conduct content analysis of open ended and axial codes extracted from unstructured text data.
C. What are the enablers and barriers when implementing positive marketing practice (s)?	(Clulow, 2005; Minoja, 2012; Simpson et al., 2013; Sisodia, 2009; Fyke & Buzzanell 2013)	Question 12 - 15 in the interview schedule	Conduct content analysis of open ended and axial codes extracted from unstructured text data.

Appendix 2: Interview Schedule

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What does positive marketing look like in practice?

1. What is your business' purpose?
2. Do you believe that your business purpose is solving a 'wicked problem' (social, economic or environmental)?
3. How is your business purpose integrated in the daily management and operation of the business?
4. Who or what drives the adoption of the business purpose?
5. Who are the stakeholders for your business?

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What type of value is created through positive marketing practices and for whom are they created for?

6. Does your business have a strategy or approach that determines how you will create social/economic/environmental value for all your stakeholders? If it does, please may you explain the approach?
7. What does your business do in practice to create this value for each stakeholder?
8. Given the function of marketing is to serve and satisfy human need via the 4P's (product, price, placement and promotion), what role do your business' marketing efforts play in creating social/economic/environmental value for your stakeholders?
9. What practical aspects of your marketing efforts create social/economic/environmental value for your stakeholders?
10. Are you able to share specific examples of initiatives undertaken by your marketing team/s that were intended to create social/economic/environmental value for all your stakeholders?
11. Why were these initiatives executed?

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: What are the enablers and barriers when implementing positive marketing practice (s)?

12. Please explain whether you believe that these initiatives benefit the business in any way?
13. What are the positives of executing the initiatives?
14. Please explain whether you believe that there are challenges in the implementation of these initiatives?
15. What are the negatives of executing the initiatives?

Appendix 3: Consent Form

Dear Participant

I am conducting research on positive marketing, and am trying to find out more about the enablers and inhibitors that influence marketing executives to adopt or reject the philosophy and practice of positive marketing. To better understand the practice of positive marketing, you have been selected to participate in an interview

Your participation in this interview is **voluntary** and **you may withdraw** from the process **at any time without penalty**. The collated results of the study will remain as property of the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science. While the collated results of the study may be published, your individual responses will always be kept anonymous. Our interview is expected to last about an hour and I am requesting to audio record the discussion. Your participation will help us understand how marketing executives operating in South Africa approach positive marketing.

Thank you for your time and contribution to this research study. Please do not hesitate to address any enquiries about the interview or the research study to:

Katlego Mahleka

k.makabate@gmail.com

+2782 940 6344

Prof. Nicola Kleyn

kleynn@gibs.co.za

+27 11 771 4329

Signature of participant: _____

Date : _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date : _____

Appendix 4 : Ethical clearance approval letter

**Gordon
Institute
of Business
Science**
University
of Pretoria

13 July 2017 Katlego Mahleka

Dear Katlego,

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved. You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project. Kind Regards

GIBS MBA Research Ethical Clearance Committee

An exploration of positive marketing in practice

Katlego Mahleka

An exploration of positive marketing in practice

Abstract

Positive marketing is an emerging construct aimed at transforming marketing practice. The nascent literature on positive marketing identifies several types of this construct. The literature on positive marketing says very little on the nature of the value created by practitioners or how practitioners should implement this construct in practice. The purpose of this study is to explore the conceptualization and implementation of positive marketing in practice. We explore the views and experiences, through a series of in-depth interviews, of marketing practitioners who work with brands that have demonstrated the adoption of positive marketing. We find that the value created by practising positive marketing is relative to the user experience and that leadership orientation is a key enabler to the adoption of positive marketing.

Keywords:

positive marketing, practice, enablers, barriers, value creation

Summary statement of contribution

Although positive marketing has been acknowledged as an important theme in marketing literature, there is limited literature on how it is delivered in practice. The purpose of this research is to explore the conceptualization and implementation of positive marketing by marketing practitioners.

Introduction

The world as we know it is changing fast, the 21st century has been characterised by the global attention given to matters of a social, environmental and economic nature. Issues related to income disparity, climate change and the negative social impact of a capitalist ideology capitalism have resulted in society placing pressure on the private sector to reform its practices. Movements such as 'Occupy Wall Street' (Hardt & Negri, 2011), the development of the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2014) and adoption of The Paris Agreement (United Nations, 2015), signal a rejection of corporate greed and a call for a more humane form of capitalism where social values are at the centre of business (Fyke & Buzzanell, 2013). Increasing pressure from business stakeholders such as customers, consumers, employees, regulators investors and suppliers requires businesses to be proactive and take the lead in resolving these worsening social, economic and environmental issues (Jose, 2016). The concept of maximising value has broadened from a linear focus on profit alone to a multi-faceted approach that emphasises operational efforts that deliver economic, social and environmental value for all stakeholders (Orr & Sarni, 2015). The Business and Sustainable Development Commission has identified a US\$12 trillion global economic opportunity, that can create 380million employment opportunities if the business world adapted business models and operations to be more sustainable and address the Sustainable Development Goals (Business Commission, 2017).

As societal pressure on business increases, the operations of the business are also challenged to evolve. The focus of this study will be in the business function of marketing.

Although marketing has been accused (sometimes with merit) of creating false demand by manipulating people's wants into needs, promoting products and services that are too expensive, of poor quality and even taking advantage of poorer members of societies; an alternative view sees marketing as a force that can be fundamentally positive, with the aim of enriching society via developing products and services with meaningful value (Stoeckl & Luedicke, 2015). Marketing is also placed under pressure to find sustainable media channels, so that the environmental impact of print adverts and billboards is minimised. The negative actions of marketers to date have contributed to a significant decline in society's trust of businesses (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2017). This has resulted in consumers' losing faith in information and messaging coming from businesses and rather choosing to trust a 'person like themselves' over a CEO or a business. This sentiment poses a significant risk to the marketing practice and the positive change it can bring about., Marketing needs to evolve progressively and find innovative ways of authentically connecting with consumers.

Marketing is not always seen as contributing constructively to the demands of this changing, new world. Positive marketing aims to implement marketing activity 'that creates value for the firm, its customers, and society at large', (Gopaldas, 2015, p.2441). This new construct and practice is beneficial in aligning the firms' strategy to the marketing practices of their brand(s), goods and services. Positive marketing is the tool necessary to ensure that businesses achieve the goal of repositioning their role in society. The inherently societal nature of marketing underpins the necessity of understanding positive marketing in practice.

There is very limited research available to contribute to the philosophy of positive marketing. Mittelstaedt, Kilbourne, and Schultz II (2015) and Gopaldas (2015) call for scholars to develop the theory further. Questions relating to positive marketing adoption influences such as measurement and leadership orientation, raised by the researchers highlight the need to conduct further research into positive marketing, to add to the understanding of this philosophy and its effect on marketing practice. In response to the call, the purpose of this qualitative study is to explore how positive marketing manifests in practice and understand the type of value created, for whom it's created for and finally the key enablers and barriers of its adoption. The academic contribution of this study is to add to the understanding of positive marketing, while providing practical overview of the opportunities and challenges encountered in the adoption of positive marketing.

Positive marketing is an emerging construct in marketing literature (Mittelstaedt et al. 2015), which aims to extend the role that marketing plays in creating value for the firm and the consumer. Although this construct is relatively new, the idea of marketing creating value for society is not new, as this was the aim of societal marketing (Abratt & Sacks, 1988). The developing construct of positive marketing presents interesting avenues of exploration for the field of marketing, but it is currently challenged by the limited academic literature available. For those adopting positive marketing in practice, there is an opportunity to learn from the literature of conscious capitalism (Sisodia, 2009) and stakeholder theory (Minoja, 2012). This paper will commence by providing a literature review focused on exploring the theory and practice of positive marketing. It will then aim to understand the concept of value which is central to the definition of positive marketing. Finally, stakeholder theory and

conscious capitalism will be examined as part of the process to identify the risks and barriers of adopting positive marketing.

Understanding positive marketing

Positive marketing

The construct of positive marketing is gaining traction due to its potential to raise the profile of the marketing profession. More importantly, it is an avenue to find solutions to societal issues that are causing businesses to be pressured by stakeholders. Positive marketing has been well defined in the literature as ‘marketing in which parties exchange value such that individually and collectively they are better off than they were prior to exchange,’ (Krush, Pennington, Fowler, & Mittelstaedt, 2015, p.2503). Positive marketing encourages organisational behaviour of giving forward instead of giving back (Gopaldas, 2015), by driving initiatives that provide societal value while generating profit for the firm. Positive marketing can be summarised as the sweet spot between ensuring the economic sustainability of a firm and delivering societal value by meeting the needs and demands of public interest. The theoretical contribution provided by Gopaldas (2015) assists in differentiating positive marketing from other pro-social marketing concepts such as cause marketing (Robinson, Irmak, & Jayachandran, 2012), social marketing (Summers & Summers, 2017) and green marketing (Ko, Hwang, & Kim, 2013).

Gopaldas, (2015) has classified positive marketing into two categories, namely material meaning and practice innovation. Positive marketing that is executed using practice

innovation, changes the consumption practice of consumers via the introduction of a new product or service. Material meaning innovation is the most applied form of positive marketing as it takes an existing product or service and reconfigures it to have less material, more environment-friendly materials or more humanitarian materials. Material meaning innovations don't change the consumer or customer practice with the product or service.

Mittelstaedt et al., 2015 have reviewed the relationship between positive marketing and macro-marketing and suggest a developmental and critical approach to further research on this construct. The developmental approach requires further interrogation of the benefit of positive marketing if a single measure is used to assess its effectiveness, the advantage of a business incorporating positive marketing theory into strategy development and finally how can organisations use marketing technologies to promote the usage of positive marketing. The critical approach to positive marketing could offer some insight into how we separate the benefits of consumption from the benefits of growth. Mittelstaedt et al., 2015 pose the question of whether it is possible to de-market consumption without affecting growth, or vice versa? 'The ability to separate the benefits of consumption from the consequences of growth would be a significant contribution from positive marketing research and practice,' (Mittelstaedt et al., 2015, p.2516).

Tadajewski (2016) questions the existence and validity of positive marketing and examines if this theory is fundamentally different to the concept of societal marketing. Societal marketing is an old construct in the marketing academic literature as it is defined as a

concept of marketing that recognises profit as a major business motive and counsel firms to market goods and services that will satisfy consumers under circumstances

that are fair to consumers and that enable them to make intelligent purchase decisions, and counsels firms to avoid marketing practices that have deleterious consequences for society. (Abratt & Sacks, 1988, p.500).

Societal marketing concept, has been defined as a 'customer orientation backed by integrated marketing aimed at generating customer satisfaction and long-run consumer welfare as the key to satisfying organizational goals' (Lusch, 2007, p. 26). These definitions highlight that the value exchange between firms and consumers need to be equitable and that no stakeholder is abused in the transaction or exchange.

Aside from (Bublitz & Peracchio, 2015; Krush et al., 2015) the literature on positive marketing has captured very little on how marketing practitioners should approach its adoption. The construct of Conscious Capitalism (CC) (Sisodia, 2009) provides interesting insight into how positive marketing could be adopted. (Fyke & Buzzanell, 2013) believed that 'CC's core is a struggle against unbridled greed and political economic systems that advantage few in a turbulent global world; a struggle against the wicked problems', (p.1634). CC aims to assist businesses in re-assessing how they currently operate and provide a framework than enables them to take steps towards positively contributing to society. This construct should not be confused with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as 'CC emerges naturally from within the organization and is not a bolt-on CSR program', (Simpson, Fischer, & Rohde, 2013,p.27). This is echoed by Eckhardt and Dobscha, (2014) who highlight that CC 'is when an organisation's progressive values are embedded in all aspects of doing business, not just relegated to the CSR wing of the company, and which should

result in win–win outcomes for all stakeholders’ (p.104). Simpson et al. (2013), asserts that, ‘A sense of a higher purpose is integral to CC, a concept that has no place in CSR’ (p.20). ‘CC represents a way of doing business and not just a business program’, (Simpson et al, 2013, p.20).

The four elements of CC include operating with a higher purpose, taking a total stakeholder orientation, conscious leadership, and establishing a value driven culture (Fyke & Buzzanell, 2013; Pillav & Sisodia, 2011). Pillav and Sisodia (2011) expand on these elements highlighting that the higher purpose needs to supersede profit, the business must be managed for the benefit of all stakeholders and create an interdependence and an ecosystem among stakeholders. The leaders of the organisation must be servant leaders that are spiritually evolved with the ability to create an environment that enables and supports operations that promote positive actions.

Describing positive marketing in practice

Positive marketing and value creation

The definition of positive marketing provided by Gopaldas (2015) shows value creation is at the core of the positive marketing construct, as it indicates that it is marketing activity that is aimed at creating value for society, the consumer and the firm. Value is an elusive concept, but Grönroos and Voima (2013) have attempted to define value as a benefit or gain developed or exchanged by mutual partners. Lusch (2007) discusses that value is multi-dimensional in nature and that the broader perspective of value incorporates viewing value

in-exchange and value in-use. Holbrook (1999) contributed to this discussion of value by identifying eight types of consumer value: efficiency (output to input ratios or output less input) which can benefit a business (Doyle, 2000) and consumer can be categorised as economic value. Then excellence (quality), status (fashion), esteem (materialism), play (fun), aesthetics (beauty), ethics (justice, virtue, and morality), and spirituality (rapture and ecstasy) can be categorised as social value. The examples of social value that Holbrook (1999) identified, refer to value created for the individual consumer. Societal value is only achieved when multiple, interdependent stakeholders derive positive outcomes from the social value that was intended to meet the needs of one individual consumer. Any positive contribution towards nature and the planet can then be categorised as environmental value. Given that we share planet earth, by virtue of this, environmental value created benefits multiple stakeholders.

Given the interpretations and examples of value provided, this study will examine value as it is central to the theory and practice of positive marketing. Due to the multi-dimensional nature of value; this study will examine the concept through the lens of actual positive marketing initiatives, what value is created for the multiple stakeholders and the business and why the initiatives undertaken were selected to create value. Minoja (2012) emphasised the fact that the key responsibility and long-term survival of a firm is inextricably linked to the value created for stakeholders.

A key and critical stakeholder to consider when developing 'in-exchange' and 'in-use' value via positive marketing is society (Lusch, 2007; Takas, 1974). It is beneficial for organisations to adopt marketing practices that reflect the belief in the equal exchange of value across

stakeholders. The increasing pressure on businesses and the development of positive marketing as a philosophy, presents an opportunity to investigate the key factors enabling or preventing the implementation of positive marketing.

The adoption of Positive Marketing in practice

Creating positive value for the firm and society simultaneously, is complex (Fassin, 2012). Positive marketing is centred on overcoming this complicated situation. The limited research on how to implement positive marketing in practice presents an opportunity to explore the enablers and barriers of positive marketing adoption, using literature from the concept of conscious capitalism (Sisodia, 2009) to provide insights in examining these forces. The literature aims to understand the definitions, benefits and challenges of practicing CC. The four tenets of CC, namely stakeholders, leadership, purpose and culture are explored as they may provide practical insight for the adoption of positive marketing practice.

Balancing stakeholder wants and needs

Stakeholder theory is useful for guiding business strategy as well as business operations as it assists in guiding the actions of managers. Since Freeman's seminal work on stakeholder theory in 1984, 'the concept has been integrated into academic business research, reviewed in terms of its influence and applied to disciplines such as marketing' (Clulow, 2005, p.980). "The importance of stakeholder theory and its influence on the evolving role of marketing is supported by the writings of Minoja (2012) and Fassin (2012) who highlight that meeting the

needs of a multitude of stakeholders contributes towards increasing the firms competitive advantage or improved financial performance.

Stakeholder theory aims to assist business managers in broadening 'the focus to groups that are considered central to the success of a firm', Lusch (2007) builds on this notion by highlighting that the groups identified internally and externally, guided by stakeholder theory are segmented to understand which stakeholders are worthy of management attention when decisions are made. Stakeholder theory challenges the role of business as Minoja (2012) asserts that 'the purpose of the firm is to create and distribute value to a plurality of stakeholders and that the achievement of this purpose depends on the cooperation and support of the stakeholders themselves' (p.67). CC requires that the business adopts an inclusive recognition and attitude towards stakeholders (Pillav & Sisodia, 2011). Business needs to invest in creating an ecosystem that ensures value is delivered and exchanged amongst all stakeholders and not just the shareholder (Sisodia, 2009).

For a business to create and distribute value for its stakeholders it needs to learn how to identify its stakeholders. Clulow (2005), defines 'a stakeholder as any individual or group who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization' objectives' (p.981). Customers, employees, society, shareholders, suppliers and the environment are recognised as stakeholders to the firm (Pillav & Sisodia, 2011). The concept aims to create an interdependence among all stakeholders, including the investors (Simpson et.al , 2013).

A large criticism of CC is that stakeholder interests do not always align perfectly, and at times these interests can even differ from one another (Simpson et.al , 2013). In response to this criticism, Rauch (2011) indicates that, not all stakeholders have the same demand

upon, or even value to the business. Indeed Simpson et al. (2013) also acknowledge that a CC business usually focuses on customers or employees, but interests rarely clash forcibly. If a clashing of interests does occur, CC businesses must acknowledge them and pursue mutually beneficial options before resorting to trade-offs (Strong, 2011).

Leadership

Leadership is required to successfully implement CC. The construct stresses that leadership style and behaviours influence how an organization adopts CC. ‘, leader behaviour is powerful because followers tend to emulate role models. Further, Fyke & Buzzanell (2013) note that, the more leaders translate values and moral convictions to behaviour (i.e. “walk their talk”), the more followers trust and respect leaders and follow their lead’,(p.1622)

Adopting a servant leadership style that embraces mindfulness has been identified as a necessary ingredient for leaders at the helm of businesses that adopt CC. Mindful leaders need to constantly be aware of and reappraise their beliefs, values and worldviews. This will enable them to better engage with stakeholders and reflect on why their businesses exist. ‘Recognizing marketplace interdependence requires an elevated level of mindfulness on the part of leaders, and deep systemic change to organizational cultures.’ (Fyke & Buzzanell, 2013, p.1623). Being mindful is essential for conscious leadership although this cannot occur in isolation. Simpson et.al (2013) declare that ‘a conscious leader would appear to be very reliant upon one’s ability to take concrete action, versus playing a bystander role or acting in their own self-interest. It seems as though conscious leadership leans towards a

collectivist way of thinking' (p.22). This type of leadership is essential for driving a conscious culture which includes qualities such as trust, authenticity, care, transparency, integrity, learning, and empowerment (p.22).

Purpose

Working towards a higher purpose is a key tenet in the adoption of CC. As business needs to also deliver on the commercial demands expectations of shareholders – a business that is rooted in a higher purpose and prioritises the purpose beyond the profit will benefit through the long term sustainability of the firm (Fyke & Buzzanell, 2013). Businesses that take the time to consciously define their higher purpose, provide an operational tool that aligns the business functions while inspiring employees to work toward objectives that benefit society (Pillav & Sisodia, 2011). Operating towards a higher purpose translates into a business developing goods and services that provide real meaning to stakeholders and therefore creating an emotional connection which builds strong brand loyalty (Simpson et al., 2013). 'Conscious Capitalist companies set themselves up for financial success without focusing on the bottom line', (Simpson et al., 2013, p.21).

Culture

Peter Drucker pronounced that 'culture eats strategy for lunch' (Whitzman, 2016). This phrase confirms the need for conscious businesses to adopt a conscious culture. Culture is the embodiment of procedures, processes, norms, values and practices that underpin the social fabric of the business. Fyke and Buzzanell (2013) created the acronym TACTILE,

which stands for Trust, Authenticity, Caring, Transparency, Integrity, Learning, Empowerment (Simpson et al., 2013). These values and characteristics have been identified as necessary ingredients for the successful adoption of conscious capitalism. The combination of these qualities create a business environment that builds goodwill with employees and this drives profit (Pillav & Sisodia, 2011). A culture of fear and anxiety poses a risk to operations and financial sustainability as it stymies employees' creativity and their ability to perform (Pillav & Sisodia, 2011). The contrary applies to businesses that adopts a conscious culture, employees become free of fear thus resulting in increased employee performance driven by employee satisfaction (Simpson et al., 2013). A conscious culture creates an environment that enables the leadership to serve the firm and society and fulfil the higher purpose of the organisation.

As this study explores positive marketing in practice, the first question that this study aims to answer is; what does positive marketing look like in practice? Once the positive marketing practices adopted by the businesses have been identified, the study will assess the type of value created by these practices and who the intended recipient of the value was. The final question that the study aims to resolve is; what are the enablers and barriers when marketing practitioners adopt positive marketing in practice?

Method

Authenticity is essential to understanding positive marketing in practice. Therefore qualitative research is the appropriate methodology for this study as detailed information

based on the perspectives of the participants was generated (Creswell, 2012). The study used an inductive approach as it aimed to gain a deeper understanding of positive marketing (Neuman, 2014). This research used in-depth, semi structured interviews. This choice in strategy demonstrates that the study will stay true to the exploratory qualitative research process, recommended by Strauss & Corbin (2008), Creswell (2012) and Neuman (2014).

The participants for this research comprised of senior executives and managers responsible for marketing and or sustainable business strategy development and execution in their respective businesses. The participants were limited to businesses that espoused and adopted the positive marketing philosophy, reflected by the activity captured in their annual sustainability reports. Due to time and financial constraints, the research sampled ten of the twelve senior executives from the population identified. The researchers leaned on the perspective provided by (Creswell, 2012), highlighting that the data generated from the ten participants was useful in learning about positive marketing.

Executives and managers responsible for strategy development and execution were identified from businesses that demonstrate the adoption of positive marketing practice, using a purposive sampling technique. The study targeted for profit businesses that implement and practice positive marketing via practice innovation or material meaning as the unit of analysis. The individuals interviewed, which the researchers have classified as 'positive marketer', are the unit of response used for this study.

Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted as the data collection tool in this qualitative study. This approach was beneficial to the study because it allowed the participants to share detailed, confidential, business information that would have

otherwise been extremely difficult to decipher using observations from public reports and information. All ten interviews were recorded using Voice Recorder, an audio recorder application on an iPad device. Each interview was saved as a separate audio recording “wav.” file and saved in a manner that maintains the anonymity of the respondent e.g. Positive Marketer 1. The researchers had planned to have 45-minute interviews with each participant, but in an instance where data saturation was reached the interview lasted for 30 minutes. Table 1 below, provides an overview of the respondents.

Table 1: Overview of participants

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Business</i>	<i>Position In</i>	<i>Number of</i>	<i>Gender of</i>
	<i>Head</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Participants</i>
	<i>Quarters</i>			
<i>Automotive</i>	Germany	Product Manager	1	Female
<i>Sports Footwear and</i>	USA	Marketing	1	Male
<i>Apparel</i>		Manager		
<i>Alcoholic Beverages</i>	USA	Brand Director	1	Female
<i>(FMCG)</i>				
<i>Alcoholic Beverages</i>	Netherlands	Marketing	1	Male
<i>(FMCG)</i>		Manager		

<i>Fast Moving</i>	United	Projects Manager	1	Female
<i>Consumer Goods</i> (FMCG)	Kingdom			
<i>Financial Services</i>	South Africa	Marketing Manager	1	Male
<i>Financial Services</i>	South Africa	Senior Manager	1	Female
<i>Technology</i>	USA	Director	1	Male
<i>Non-Alcoholic</i> <i>Beverages (FMCG)</i>	USA	Marketing Manager Reputation Manager	2	Female Male

The audio recordings from the interviews were prepared for analysis by transcribing the audio recordings using a third-party company which applied the appropriate standards as recommended by (Creswell, 2012). To ensure the integrity of the data, the transcripts were checked against the audio recording. Preliminary exploratory analysis was conducted by carefully reading the first two transcripts, to get a sense of the emerging themes and underlying meaning behind the data. The prepared data was loaded on a 'computer-aided qualitative data software application called Atlas.ti version 7 and 8, where initial codes were identified (Saldana, 2016). The researchers identified and extracted initial codes namely open, in vivo and concept codes from the transcripts (Creswell, 2012). Given the depth of the interviews, 192 initial codes were identified, comprising in vivo and open codes. The

researcher applied axial coding to the 192 initial codes to allow for the grouping and re-naming of duplicate codes(Saldana, 2016). The codes were reduced from 192 initial codes to 103 codes. This simultaneous coding approach identified categories and themes from the codes (Saldana, 2016).

Given the inductive approach of the study, Table 2 demonstrates the process applied to synthesize and analyse the data from the in-depth interviews (Creswell, 2012).The 'source' in the table refers to the participant, this is followed by a 'quote' by the participant. A first level code was generated from the quote. A second order interpretation (Neuman, 2014) , titled 'emerging themes' enabled the identification of categories which were used to identify the themes. These categories were grouped further to identify major and minor themes (Saldana, 2016), which were tested against the theory identified in the literature review.

Table 2. Demonstration of coding process

SOURCE	QUOTE	LEVEL 1 CODE	EMERGING THEMES
PM1 : 52	We gave Uber a whole fleet of electric cars and literally when you were looking at your Uber X, Uber Black, whatever it is, they were still the green for a while, depending on where the location was.	Economic Value Environmental Value “Practice Innovation”	Environmental and Economic value created for stakeholders and business via mutually beneficial partnerships.
PM7 : 64	What Company G does really well is that we incentivise better behaviour, so we have lower claims.	Social Value Economic Value Environmental Value “Practice Innovation”	Positive Marketing, creating social, environmental and economic value for all stakeholders
PM8 : 80	In East Africa the idea is to see whether or not you could increase the internet penetration without having to dig cables into the ground. So, they have literally got balloons that are floating around that broadcast	Economic Value Environmental Value Social Value “material meaning innovation”	

The researchers ensured that the data gathered was reliable and valid by standardising the interview as far as possible with the same semi-structured questions posed.

Findings

The presentation of the findings is structured in a manner that aims to answer the research questions. In line with the practice of reporting qualitative research (Strauss & Corbin, 2008), quotes are used to capture the analysis of the data set and reflect the breadth of the findings.

Adoption of Positive Marketing

Respondents indicated that their businesses have been practicing positive marketing based on the initiatives described below, although they do not refer to these practices as positive marketing - some refer to the practices as marketing with a purpose or CSR or social marketing or sustainable business practices. Most initiatives described provide social and economic value, with very few providing environmental value or all three types of value. Businesses want to tackle the big socio-economic issues to ensure that they can differentiate and drive business growth and impact. Social and economic need seem to be the focus for the businesses that participated in the study. This could be as a result of the increasing socio-economic challenges that countries need to address.

Value creation through positive marketing

In articulating how the businesses were delivering value to their stakeholders through their positive marketing practices, most of the participants stated what the business or individual believed to be of value to their stakeholders and conceded that value was relative to the needs of the stakeholder. The idea that value is relative means that the business or participants are using their own definitions and measurements of value - which may result in biased and partial considerations. Perhaps we need a standardised approach to determining value in the context of PM.

We are making people healthier, and we are enhancing and protecting their lives. And just because it's our clients and our member base what's wrong with that, because at least we are doing something. (PM-7)

It depends on what value you are looking for. (PM-3)

Like the value is going to be different for everyone, which is why we always say, user first. (PM-8)

Table 3 below has captured the positive marketing practices adopted by the brands within the businesses that participated in the study. The table classifies the practice as material meaning or product innovation, before identifying the type of value created for the consumer, society and the firm.

Table 3: Positive marketing practices described, and value created.

Brand	Positive Marketing Practice	Industry	Type of Positive	Value for society	Value for consumer	Value for firm
Brand G	incentivising better behaviour through various insurance products and services	Financial services	Practice Innovation	Healthier lifestyles, cautious and responsible drivers and reduced reliance on fossil fuels	Economic and social value in the form of loyalty points	Decrease the number of claims paid out
Brand A	electric automobiles made from 90% recycled materials	Automotive	Practice Innovation	Reduced carbon emissions and reliance on oil	Economic value gained from reduced expense of fuel	Long-term continuity of business
Brand H	Reducing the cost of data via solar balloon trials	Technology	Material Meaning Innovation	Connectivity and Access to family, friends and services	Reduced data costs	Access to information to arrange, analyse and organise.
Brand D	Partnering with government to create roadblocks to check for drunk drivers during the weekends with major events	Alcoholic Beverages	Material Meaning Innovation	Safer roads with reduced number of drunk drivers	Moderating alcohol consumption	Ethical reputation and Licence to trade
Brand C	Purposeful activities aimed at attacking issues related to alcohol abuse e.g. 0% ABV beer	Alcoholic Beverages	Practice and Material Meaning Innovation	Decrease in issues and costs related to alcohol abuse	Moderating alcohol consumption	Licence to trade & Alignment to Business Purpose
Brand E	A crowd sourcing platform connecting donors and students	Financial services	Material Meaning Innovation	Increasing the number of educated people in the country without relying on tax and state financing	Financing of education and a passport to a better future	Future clients , Reputation and Licence to trade.
Brand B	Breathable soccer jerseys made from recycled bottles	Apparel	Material Meaning Innovation	Reduced environmental impact of plastic bottle litter	High quality soccer jersey with a reduced carbon footprint	Reputation for being Ethical and Innovative
Brand I	Free WiFi available in-store without the purchase of anything.	Beverages	Material Meaning Innovation	Access to free WiFi	Access to Wifi and a place for meetings for business or school or social gathering	Brand Building and aligning to business purpose
Brand F	School Program educating children on hand hygiene	FMCG	Practice Innovation	Healthier and hygienic children	Clean hands preventing a illness	Brand Building and Long-Term Business Sustainability

Adopting positive marketing in practice

Leadership

In understanding why these businesses were adopting positive marketing it was evident that the mandate to change business and marketing practices to be more conscious and drive shared value, was led by the corporate strategy which seeks to address a societal challenge. The participants in the study across all the businesses were very clear that the senior leadership of the organisation, globally, was the primary driver of the corporate strategy and execution. Businesses are increasingly becoming conscious of, and pro-active in solving, the broader issues affecting society (which includes their target consumers). Based on the responses from the participants, businesses included in the study are focusing their efforts on societal issues that are relevant and important to their consumers and not just the business requirements. Today's business leaders are showing the conviction to identify what the right business actions need to be to positively impact the societies that they operate within. In exploring the perceived positives of adopting and implementing PM initiatives the three strong themes emerged. These themes centred on the orientation and model behaviour of the senior leadership in the businesses, the emphasis and focus on long-term business sustainability and obsession on consumer/client needs and wants. The following quotes demonstrate the importance of leadership in the adoption of positive marketing.

Our CEO, very much lives up to the core purpose and asks critical questions as to how businesses, business units, teams are fulfilling that core purpose. He is invested and aware. (PM-7)

you know they also lead by example, so championing something that isn't the most profitable thing that we do but maybe does good, and saying, you know what, we are going to just show that we can do this and let me show you that we can do it and that it's okay. And then by seeing that it gives everybody else the opportunity to say, you know what, I can do that kind of stuff as well. (PM-3)

this is driven by our global CEO, he really does believe our vision in the sense that in order to grow our business we need to be growing people around us. (PM-6)

It's driven from the top down, they encourage you to do that, to be curious. (PM-8)

All the participants attributed their investment into positive marketing initiatives to the senior leadership. As it is evidenced in the quotes above the senior leaders in these businesses have the courage to pursue business strategies that may not be the most popular or expected, they can continuously inspire their employees to work towards achieving the selfless business purpose and most importantly they lead by example.

The quotes below demonstrate how the participants identified a long-term business focus as a favourable outcome to the adoption of positive marketing, which we infer as a key

enabler for business. Most of the participants state that they need to act positively now, to preserve and sustain their businesses in the future.

see how we are merging doing good for the right reason, it does make business sense but it's also a long-term play to make South Africa a better financially literate country. (PM-5)

we haven't even been around for 30 years, but in the next couple of years we may not exist because there might be something that's better at organising information, that's better at giving people value, security, connectivity. (PM-8)

Making it sustainable over a long period of time is not only good for our business but for the country and for the individual. (PM-4)

It's a long-term investment- it's not quick wins. (PM-1)

Balancing stakeholder needs

Most of the participants in the study highlighted the importance of understanding the needs and desires of their consumers and society, as this would inform the practices that the business would focus on and invest resources. Participants recognised their duty to deliver value to consumers and society as their primary task, but acknowledging the tension and difficulty of achieving that together with economic value for the business. The evident obsession with solving consumer needs by providing practical solution, products and choices is reflected in the responses captured below.

it's very important to understand what's going on in the mind-set of a consumer, of the athlete. We say, let's help people become better athletes because once they become better athletes then they will be more open to buying our products, as opposed to buying more airtime, for example, or another beer. (PM-2)

But I think the biggest stakeholders, even more importantly than our own internal stakeholders are the consumers. And as soon as you stop solving consumer problems then we have no business. (PM-8)

I need to look at your farm, do you need help with water, do you need help with filtration, what is it that you require assistance with? Because if we are going to do proper business you need to be in a position to supply me with the best product because I need to supply the best product to my customer, and that's where it came from. (PM-9)

The participants in the study were concerned with providing meaningful value to their key stakeholders. The responses below show how the positive marketers may not fully progress with some positive marketing practices due to the lack of utility delivered to any one of their stakeholders. Implementing positive marketing requires marketers to have the ability to identify what will provide meaningful value to the key stakeholder while maintaining value for the business. The practical challenge in adopting positive marketing is figuring out the critical needs of all stakeholders and balancing the business' approach in delivering value so that the value delivered is beyond one stakeholder. The quotes below highlight the

challenges faced by the participants in executing positive marketing practices that result in meaningful value to their relevant stakeholders.

it's about finding something that's meaningful and can make a difference. to find that right balance of emotional while making sure you are underpinned by the functional.

(PM-4)

we started to challenge our thinking on some of these initiatives that we are running and whether they are truly sustainable in bringing value to the business. (PM-6)

Because it's the utility, you can organise all that information if people don't have access to it and they don't find use in it then it's really pointless. (PM-8)

but we are making people healthier, and we are enhancing and protecting their lives. And just because it's our clients and our member base what's wrong with that, because at least we are doing something. I would love to get involved in developing products for, not the bottom of the pyramid, but the emerging middle class. Like products that are affordable that fundamentally bolster their financial life or their health and access to health. (PM-7)

Due to the long-term benefit of many positive marketing initiatives, a barrier that marketers are faced with is how to prioritise their resources. The response below shows the difficulty that marketers face when deciding to invest in positive marketing initiatives for the long-term versus meeting short-term shareholder needs. The participants also highlight the complexity of addressing a societal problem while ensuring that the brand needs are met.

it becomes a complex beast -to your stakeholder base which may be more about creating money and profit. it's an interesting dilemma as you face looking at the world's problems and wanting to tackle them, how do you do it in a way that actually ties to your brand and in that space of enjoyment? (PM-3)

Culture

A cultural barrier to implementing positive marketing is the bureaucracy of existing processes that exist in the businesses, which demonstrate the inability to evolve and adapt to the constantly changing requirements of the business environment. It is interesting to note that the businesses that noted this barrier are manufacturing and financial services businesses that have been in existence for more than a century. The technology business which is less than thirty years old did not seem to face this barrier of adapting business mindsets and processes to constant change. Convincing people within the business that may be more conservative and traditional was also highlighted as a barrier to adopting positive marketing in practice.

And that continues to be an ongoing struggle now, because we need to get approval and there's a queue system and there's a lot of internal red tape, and they are saying, no, your role is to make it as simple as possible. Especially if you are in the business of changing lives, because every minute you lose you are missing out on someone else you could have helped. (PM-5)

Change is challenging, and the nature of an organisation is always to take the easy way and not always to do the hard things because the hard things, even if they have big results, are hard to do. (PM-3)

So not that people don't believe in what we are doing, but often you are stuck in a rut of doing things the same way. (PM-6)

But then you still have people that are in that old mindset. (PM-1)

They are a lot more traditional, a lot more conservative. (PM-7)

Discussion & Implications

The results of the study indicate that the adoption of positive marketing practices is influenced by the societal pressures and needs that businesses can no longer afford to ignore. The participants indicated that creating value for consumers and society is a critical component of positive marketing, but the value created is relative to the stakeholder's experience of the product or service intended on creating value. The participants highlighted the influential role of leadership in driving the adoption of positive marketing and how culture can inhibit it. The observations related to the adoption of positive marketing in practice, value creation and the key enablers and barriers are now discussed in detail, contrasting the results to the literature.

Positive Marketing Adoption

The participants in the study clearly demonstrated the adoption of positive marketing in practice, with some businesses implementing product innovation (Gopaldas, 2015b) positive marketing and most of the businesses executing material meaning (Gopaldas, 2015b) positive marketing as they are at the elementary phase of adoption. The strategic rationale for the business adoption of positive marketing is aligned to the sentiment expressed by Sisodia (2009) who highlights the awakening of business to the fact that business success is interconnected to the success of society; therefore many of the businesses explored during this study have committed to new approaches to conducting business as they are committed to help to solve the many societal and environmental problems in the markets that they operate. Creating products and services delivering meaningful value to business

stakeholders, was critical to the participants. The complexity in creating value was demonstrated as most participants required a multi-dimensional approach to value creation (Lusch, 2007). Social value benefiting society and the consumer and economic value for the business, was the most common form of value created. The notion of driving value beyond the individualistic consumer view, although the benefit may be relative to the user experience, extends the idea of consumer value beyond Holbrook's (1999) eight categories of consumer value.

Business purpose: an enabler and barrier

(Simpson et al., 2013) states that goods and services that offer real meaning and appeal to the emotional and social side of people tend to emerge from businesses that are operating with a higher purpose. The results of this study affirm this as most of the positive marketers were motivated to implement positive marketing initiatives because of the inspiring, selfless and people focused core purpose of the business. A clear and compelling business purpose aimed at benefiting the needs of society at large, is evidently the guiding principle that enabled businesses in the study to adopt positive marketing. This supports the proclamation of Sisodia (2009) stating that having social justice ingrained in the mission of a business will result in positive actions permeating to the operations of the business.

Although none of the positive marketers stated profit as the fuel necessary to fulfil the higher purpose, it was evident that financial stability and growth was expected. The courage to eliminate profit and financial supremacy from the reason why the business exists is admirable and aligns to the first tenet of conscious capitalism, highlighting that the higher purpose supersede profit (Pillav & Sisodia, 2011). However the need to maintain profit,

efficiency and pragmatism cause tension in the business (Fyke & Buzzanell, 2013) and a barrier to complete adoption of positive marketing practices because operations like marketing have a critical role in delivering the short-term commercial goals of the business

Stakeholders: enablers and barriers

The positive marketers in the study all identified the consumer as the key stakeholder for the marketing function, in line with the observations of Fyke and Buzzanell, (2013) that businesses that adopt conscious capitalism usually focus on the consumer or employee. The results of this study demonstrate that the positive marketers also showed a high level of passion and possible obsession to solve the problems and meet the needs of the consumer. This behaviour correlates with how Lusch (2007) depicts marketing's role , which is to skilfully make the business do what suits the best interests of the consumer. Obsessing about understanding the needs and wants of the consumer to be able to solve their problems and create an assortment products and services that provide meaningful value (Mittelstaedt et al, 2015) corresponds with the concept of 'marke-(ting) with' (Lusch, 2007) which aims to co-create value. Placing the consumer as the key stakeholder is an enabler to adopting positive marketing. This notion contradicts the belief held by (Clulow, 2005; Pillav & Sisodia, 2011) asserting that businesses should be managed to create an ecosystem of value and interdependence benefit all stakeholders. If the positive marketers identify the consumer as the key stakeholder then all efforts, resources and positive marketing initiatives will be adopted with the consumer as the primary beneficiary of value followed by the multitudes of stakeholders. The challenge of managing multiple stakeholder interests (Clulow, 2005;

Lusch, 2007) as they may have contradicting perspectives of value, was captured as a barrier in implementing positive marketing initiatives. Given the commitment to solving consumer problems and prioritising the consumer as the key stakeholder reduces the complexity and difficulty of managing multiple stakeholders, except in instances where the government is integral to the execution of the positive marketing initiatives.

Leadership, a key enabler

The orientation of the senior or executive leader was identified as a key enabler to these positive firms adopting positive marketing. The participants made reference to the inspiring leaders in their business by name and painted these leaders as being mindful and showing traits of servant leadership (Fyke & Buzzanell, 2013; Pillav & Sisodia, 2011). The participants mentioned the values and behaviour traits espoused by the leaders, which make it easier to buy-in to their efforts to drive the higher purpose for the business (Fyke & Buzzanell, 2013; Smith, 2016). Positive, mindful and servant leadership is a critical enabler in adopting positive marketing, because the leaders 'walk the talk' (Fyke & Buzzanell, 2013) by upholding the higher purpose of the business and stay mindful of creating meaningful value for the multitudes of stakeholders, the positive marketer followers are encouraged and motivated to trial and implement positive marketing initiatives.

Culture: enabler and barriers

The culture within a business is a critical component in adopting the conscious capitalism philosophy. Pillav & Sisodia, 2011 advise that conscious capitalism requires a value based culture within the business so that trust and love are fostered among stakeholders and

towards the business. The study showed that the leadership orientation influenced the values and approach to decision making of the positive marketers as they embraced the adoption of this concept. The culture fostered by the senior leadership is an enabler to adopting positive marketing, as it encourages positive marketers to be curious, explore different approaches to meeting consumer needs. A barrier highlighted in the study was the rigid, entrenched mindsets and processes and difficulty to adapt to change evident particularly in the more established and financial services businesses. The participants in the study were all passionate about adopting positive marketing but they demonstrated frustration with getting buy-in for these initiatives from other functions in the business as well as having to battle with systems and processes that are not aligned with the thinking required to meet the consumer needs.

The researchers have collated a framework capturing an overview of positive marketing in practice. Lewin's force field theory was used to develop this framework. Figure 1 below demonstrates the force field analysis, presenting the results and analysis of the study. To facilitate the adoption of positive marketing, businesses and marketing practitioners must focus time and investment in pushing the enabling forces with the longer arrows as they work on the barriers with the shorter arrows.

The findings of the study show that a business with senior managers that have a servant leadership orientation and prioritise the long-term sustainability are key enablers in the adoption of positive marketing. These two factors are not directly related to the responsibilities of the marketing function, but a more of an outcome of corporate strategy. This highlights that the adoption of positive marketing is preceded by the presence of a mindful and servant orientation senior executive that makes business decisions and manages operations for the long-term benefit of the business. The obsession to put the consumer as the number one priority and passion to identify and understand how the business can address their needs is key for how marketing practitioners can commence the process of adopting the positive marketing practice. A compelling purpose and positive organisational culture were also identified as enablers, at a corporate strategy level, when adopting positive marketing. The barriers identified in the study highlighted the challenge of creating meaningful utility for stakeholders and the art of prioritising resources and focus in the business, especially when managing multiple stakeholders. Entrenched mindsets and processes in heritage businesses challenge the enabler of a positive organisational culture

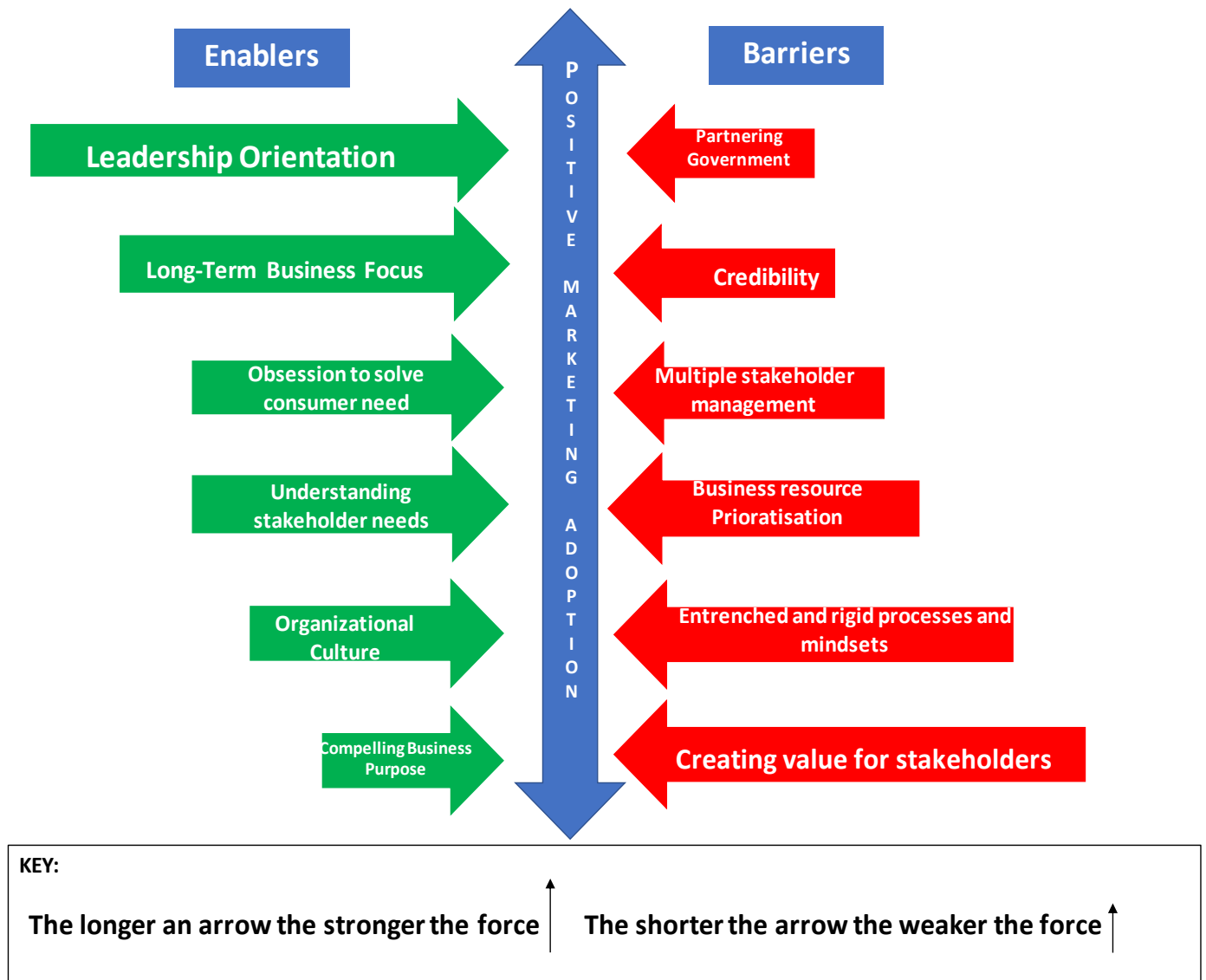


Figure 1 : Force field analysis demonstrating the barriers and enablers

This paper explored the enablers and barriers in the adoption of positive marketing focusing on practitioners. To date research on positive marketing has been conducted by Gopaldas, 2015; Krush et al., 2015; Mittelstaedt et al., 2015; Tadjewski, 2016. The focus of prior researchers was on the philosophy of positive marketing with Krush et al, 2015 focusing on the influence of positive marketing on sharing in the online community and Bublitz & Peracchio, 2015 exploring the outcomes in the healthy foods industry. The findings of this study contribute to our understanding of the philosophy in practice as it has explored positive marketing adoption practices. This has provided a practical overview of how marketing practitioners need to approach the adoption of positive marketing in practice. The emergent context of this study contributes towards our understanding of positive marketing in practice with emphasis on the barriers and enablers. Unlike studies that have been conducted by Krush et al, 2015 and Bublitz & Peracchio, 2015, this study has explored the adoption of positive marketing across multiple industries and sectors with the objective of gaining an understanding and practical insight in the process of adopting this construct.

Conclusion, Limitations & Future Research Guidelines

The purpose of this exploratory research is to understand the enablers and barriers of businesses that have adopted positive marketing and build on the work concluded by (Gopaldas, 2015; Mittelstaedt et. al, 2015). The study reveals that businesses are increasingly adopting positive marketing in practice, although they may not refer to the initiatives as positive marketing. The rationale for businesses adopting positive marketing was driven by the societal focus (Krush et al, 2015) of the organisations and long-term sustainability of the firm. The leadership (Sisodia, 2009) of the organisations played an

integral role in driving the adoption of positive marketing aligned with the obsession that the practitioners have to solve the needs of their consumers. Although the practitioners emphasised the importance of implementing these initiatives, the key barrier to adoption of positive marketing was whether the relevant and credible value would be created for the consumer. Rigid and entrenched process and mindsets in the organisation, are cultural factors which negatively affect the adoption of positive marketing.

The exploratory nature of this study, means that the findings cannot be inferred to other business functions, industries and countries. The participants were not all marketing practitioners as the responsibility to implement positive marketing practice was sometimes allocated to the sustainability or corporate strategy team or department. To expand the sample of this study, researchers could look at interviewing both marketers and sustainability managers. This would allow researchers to compare and contrast the views of two separate teams and departments and enable the triangulation of the data collected.

Further research into positive marketing should look to explore the leadership traits and characteristics of senior, middle and junior management at businesses that adopt positive marketing. To add to the understanding of positive marketing a quantitative perspective should be considered to test how businesses that adopt positive marketing leverage the enablers and overcome the barriers to fulfil the business purpose.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview schedule

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What does positive marketing look like in practice?

1. What is your business' purpose?
2. Do you believe that your business purpose is solving a 'wicked problem' (social, economic or environmental)?
3. How is your business purpose integrated in the daily management and operation of the business?
4. Who or what drives the adoption of the business purpose?
5. Who are the stakeholders for your business?

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What type of value is created through positive marketing practices and for whom are they created for?

6. Does your business have a strategy or approach that determines how you will create social/economic/environmental value for all your stakeholders? If it does, please may you explain the approach?
7. What does your business do in practice to create this value for each stakeholder?
8. Given the function of marketing is to serve and satisfy human need via the 4P's (product, price, placement and promotion), what role do your business' marketing efforts play in creating social/economic/environmental value for your stakeholders?
9. What practical aspects of your marketing efforts create social/economic/environmental value for your stakeholders?

10. Are you able to share specific examples of initiatives undertaken by your marketing team/s that were intended to create social/economic/environmental value for all your stakeholders?
11. Why were these initiatives executed?

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: What are the enablers and barriers when implementing positive marketing practice (s)?

12. Please explain whether you believe that these initiatives benefit the business in any way?
13. What are the positives of executing the initiatives?
14. Please explain whether you believe that there are challenges in the implementation of these initiatives?
15. What are the negatives of executing the initiatives?