WHY DO I WANT TO BE YOUR FRIEND? ENGAGING WITH BRANDS IN

EPHEMERAL MEDIA

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of ephemerality and marketing orientation on consumer engagement. Ephemeral applications, particularly in social media, constitute an emerging technology that allows marketers and users the capability to predetermine the lifespan of their online content. Since many consumers are adopting ephemeral applications, the purpose of this research was to investigate the effects of ephemerality and marketing orientation on consumer engagement with brands as well as to explore fan engagement of sports teams relative to other product categories. Explicitly, an ephemeral environment and relational orientation of the marketer were hypothesized to increase consumer engagement with a chosen brand.

A quantitative, 2 marketing orientation (relational/transactional) x 2 medium (ephemeral/non-ephemeral) x 4 category of brand (sports teams/restaurants/clothing/musicians) experimental research design was used in this study. Participants (N=281) received random assignment into one of the four orientation x medium groups and self-selected the category of brand. The manipulations involved consumers' choice of favorite brand within the chosen category in the context of a hypothetical new mobile app. After receiving the condition, the questionnaire was completed using online software.

Univariate analysis of variance was used to examine the hypotheses. Results revealed that consumers are more likely to engage in an ephemeral context, regardless of the marketing orientation, yet an interaction occurred that shows ephemeral, relational messages regarding musicians prompted the highest level of consumer engagement. The

research, including the implications, future paths, and limitations are detailed in

subsequent chapters.

DEDICATION

For my wife, Lindsey Wakefield

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Though the dissertation may be seen as the crowning achievement for a doctoral student, there were many small triumphs that preceded it and can be credited to the outstanding teachers and coaches that I have had through the years. Since my mother

walked me to Mrs. Namarato's kindergarten class in 1993, I have had the pleasure of receiving excellent guidance from a number of people. Mrs. Caldwell (1st grade) reinforced the seriousness of school and education through her stern attitude, clog and ruler. Mr. Wallace (3rd grade) introduced me to the scientific method and the K.I.S.S. (keep it simple, stupid) acronym. Coach West (8th grade) and Coach Redwine (college) told me that I wasn't the best, but I didn't have to be. Coach Brown and Coach Waggoner (high school) convinced me to have confidence in the abilities that I do have.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Marketers have relied on traditional media such as television or radio as a
conventional medium to effectively communicate to consumers (Shultz & Barnes,
1999). The proliferation of the Internet has created new outlets for marketers to advertise
(Edelman, Ostrovsky, & Schwarz, 2005), sponsor (Drennan & Cornwell, 2004), and
promote (Chatterjee & McGinnis, 2010). Most recently, marketers enacting an online
strategy are reaching consumers through their presence in social media, or "a group of
Internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user generated
content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61).

Social media applications are being used for various purposes, but some of the
most popular are meant for sharing. Sharing in the form of video (e.g. YouTube),
interests (e.g. Pinterest), photos (e.g. Instagram), status updates (e.g. Twitter), or in a
variety of ways (e.g. Facebook) allow people to connect with others through content
creation and exchange, some of which may reach an extremely high number of users in a
short time period. Marketers take on the task of understanding the sharing process in
order to design effective campaigns (Berger & Milkman, 2012), creating content for a
wide array of social media applications. Creating content for multiple platforms is a
challenge as competition in the social media space has led to the development of unique
and sometimes over-lapping features. As an example, Instagram was one of the first to
offer filters for users' pictures. Now, filters are a primary feature in other social media

applications, like Snapchat, whose "lenses" allow users to add animations to their filters (Chaykowski, 2015). Features are one way that social media competitors differentiate their platforms, often providing multiple features to create unique ways for consumers to share.

One emerging feature is ephemerality, or self-deletion of user content. Ephemerality was pioneered by Snapchat, a platform that facilitates the creation and sending of hundreds of millions of messages per day (Morrison, 2015). On Snapchat, a mobile-only service, users can send visual messages with a predetermined time limit of 1-10 seconds. Users can also post pictures and/or video to their "Story" for others to consume for up to 24 hours. When the time is up, content disappears from recipients. The popularity of Snapchat has led to ephemerality becoming a separate category of social media that specializes in transient messaging. Ephemeral messaging has been characterized as "the digital equivalent to a face-to-face conversation" (David, 2014) as it offers users social media with a reduced digital footprint, making the conversations more life-like.

Since a high volume of consumers use social media and may share about products or services, marketers should "learn to navigate and integrate these multiple platforms, while understanding differences among consumers in the various social behavior segments" (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011, p. 269). It is especially important to understand how consumers may respond to brands advertising their presence in the ephemeral social media environment as there is limited paid advertising and no organic exposure. Organic exposure has been important for brands hoping that

traditional social media could be used to create viral content in which a retweet or share by a follower results in exposure to their followers.

While scholars conceptualize social media use (e.g. Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, & Shapiro, 2012; Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012), there are very few that actually test marketing activity rather than provide descriptive studies (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). The swelling popularity of ephemeral mediums among consumers necessitates further testing of marketing activity of brands attempting to garner a following in this emerging class.

Statement of the Problem

While marketers are spending more in social media (Sass, 2015), marketing research has not invested enough resources to heed Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden's (2011) call for learning about consumer's behavior across platforms. Unlike the vast amount of information collected from "big data" in traditional social media projects and analyses (e.g. LaValle et al., 2010), consumer behavior related to ephemeral social media is not there for the collecting. Ephemeral social media leaves little to no evidence of content or activity for evaluation by marketers or academicians.

Ephemeral social media shares similarities with other social media (online communication with friends) and offline communication (transient), but it is unknown if consumers behave more like they may in other social media or in offline communication when considering a proposition from a brand. Chandler and Lusch (2015) suggest that consumers react differently to brand propositions based on a combination of environmental and/or personal factors. The consideration of brand engagement within an

ephemeral environment, while taking marketers' orientation towards customers into account, is the focus of this study.

Traditional social media allows unwanted brand exposure (i.e. advertisements) which is irritating and intrusive (Edwards, Li, & Lee, 2002). This is a common occurrence on Facebook and Twitter as ads are often placed in the middle of the page or to appear as if it is a user's post. The evidence of consumer reactance to brand exposure in social media may be the purpose behind ephemeral apps' adopting a business model devoid of traditional advertising. For example, Snapchat, the leading ephemeral platform, is shrewd in monetizing its service. Rather than subjecting users to unwanted content, Snapchat produced the "Discover" page that is home to paid content provided by select brands. Current brands include EPSN, Comedy Central, National Geographic, Cosmopolitan, People Magazine, Daily Mail, Buzzfeed, Food Network, iHeart Radio and Vice. With this strategy, advertisers must pay high rates (Lightbody, 2015) or cooperate with those Discover channel members for exposure. Even after striking a deal with a member, marketers must develop a campaign without knowing the exact demographic data of the audience (Snapchat users are not required to give such details to sign up) which can be provided by other social media platforms (O'Brien, 2015). In addition, users only see the branded content if they choose to swipe over to the Discover page, which is not incorporated with the home or chat screen, which is the visual or text messaging function, respectively. Outside of the Discover pages, there are few paid options. One example are sponsored "geofilters" that appear when consumers are within the bounds of a sponsor's physical store location. Another is called "lenses" and are

another type of filter that are made available to all Snapchat users at any location, going at a rate of $700,000 per day (Lightbody, 2015). In sum, without large investments, brands have little exposure to consumers in Snapchat that are not their friends.

Acquiring a social media following in ephemeral social media will require a different strategy. Organic, or earned media (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011; Stephen & Galak, 2012), exposure found in traditional social media is non-existent in ephemeral platforms. Whereas friends' Facebook or Twitter activity with a brand are included in their friends' news feeds, ephemeral platforms are not designed to display the activity of others. This free exposure in traditional social media allowed brands to gain exposure to friends of friends using fewer resources. Without that exposure, the only non-paid route to reaching consumers in ephemeral social media is through inviting users to engage with the brand, giving permission to marketers to share content with them. The approach to attracting engagement by permission is challenging, especially as consumer orientation towards brands is subject to change (Chandler & Lusch, 2015), a bad message can decrease response rate (Marinova, Murphy and Massey, 2002), and research of consumer behavior related to brands in ephemeral social media is scarce. Previously, the bulk of brand strategy in social media is focused on creating content, such as story-telling (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) and brand performances (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012). However, such stories are irrelevant in ephemeral social media before the initial engagement from users. The unfamiliar territory of ephemeral messaging makes it difficult to know what approach may lead to engagement between a

consumer and a brand. Thus, there is a problem for brands to effectively market their presence in ephemeral social media platforms.

Theoretical Background

Relationship marketing is the practice of initiating, developing and sustaining relational exchanges between brands and consumers (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). A plethora of literature on the subject suggests a number of mediators and moderators are important in such exchanges (for a review, see Palmatier, Dant, Grewal, & Evans, 2006). For example, a customer's willingness to exhibit word of mouth (WOM) behavior as a result of a relational exchange with a brand is mediated by relationship satisfaction. The role of satisfaction may be integral to the success of a brand investing in relationship marketing. The assumption in developing relational exchanges to increase satisfaction, or any other latent construct, is that consumers desire a relationship with the brand in that particular environment. Thus, relational exchanges are a moot point until a relationship is initiated. A marketer interested in meeting the needs of their consumers ought to be wary of assuming the desire for a particular interaction, especially within the confines of ephemeral social media where individuals must give permission to the brand and then has the power to stop receiving content from them at any time (i.e. opt-in or opt-out).

Grönroos (1997) suggests that consumers and marketers may have transactional or relational intents, or orientations. For consumers, a transactional intent may be found in the process of considering making a purchase while a relational orientation may constitute interactions with a brand that are not tied directly to a purchase, such as consuming branded media. For marketers, a transactional intent is any activity with the

goal of directly resulting in a purchase behavior while a relational intent may be found in activity not directly leading to a sale (e.g. storytelling, brand performances). Applying the findings of Grönroos (1997), a sports fan interested in consuming more media about their favorite team are likely to respond favorably to the team's offerings of behind-the-scenes footage or content that may be relationally oriented.

It is common for each party to fluctuate between orientations, particularly when consumers' environments change (Chandler & Lusch, 2015). Within the ephemeral social media environment, relationships are likely to be prevalent. A recent study found that Snapchat is used primarily within small groups and close family members (Piwek & Joinson, 2016). Therefore, relationship marketing is likely to be the better fit (i.e. compared to transactional) in an ephemeral social media environment as relational interactions should be the primary purpose of social media marketing (Andzulis, Pnagopoulos, & Rapp, 2012). Furthermore, if relational exchanges are the norm in a particular space than that will be the expectation for users in the future (Lewin, 1939). Sports brands, in particular, have been enacting relational marketing for years (Williams & Chinn, 2010), reinforcing the use of relationship marketing in the sport context. A further review of relationship marketing literature is found in Chapter II.

Rationale for the Study

Social media communication is in need of further research (Ratchford, 2015), especially as marketers increasingly spend their budgets in this area (Bennett, 2015). Even as social media is becoming more understood and scholars are devoting research to this topic, the changing nature of social media provides ample opportunities for further

investigation. Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden (2011) note that "not all participants in the social media ecosystem engage in the same manner, nor are actions on the same platforms equivocal"(p.269). Integrating marketing strategy across multiple social media is a challenge, especially as new social media applications are launched (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). There is a need not only for understanding of consumer behavior and marketing action in social media, but the understanding that such findings are not likely to hold across other social media environments.

The birth of social media shifted communication from, "ephemeral, transient, unmappable, and invisible" to "permanent, mappable, and viewable" (Manovich, 2009, p. 324) especially as the Library of Congress began archiving Twitter posts in 2010 (Eversley, 2011). Data generated by social media has been the subject of much research in tracking user sentiment as predictors of brand performance (e.g. Asur & Huberman, 2010). The high volume of data in social media has contributed to the concept of "big data", defined by Boyd and Crawford (2012) as "a cultural, technological and scholarly phenomenon that rests on the interplay of technology, analysis, and mythology" (p. 663). The role of social media within the concept of big data is important for marketers. Collecting social media posts from consumers responding to marketing initiatives can assist in strategy evaluation and development. New technology startups in recent years assist brands in funneling relevant social media data (e.g. www.helpsocial.com) to their marketing, public relations and management teams, respectively. Twitter has responded by charging a fee to such companies utilizing this business opportunity (H. Leal, personal communication, March 9, 2015). Although it merits such attention, big data is

currently limited to relatively permanent social media platforms. As more users flock to ephemeral messaging, particularly younger demographics (Prigg, 2015), social media as a part of big data may become increasingly difficult to collect. It is essential for marketers and scholars to be ahead of the curve in beginning to investigate behavior of brands and users in an ephemeral media environment.

Consumer orientation towards brands may not be the same in differing environments. This suggests that marketers may benefit from developing social media strategy unique to certain settings. The social media environment has been logically associated with relational marketing to the extent that some suggest that "Social media, when properly adopted, makes the concept of transactional marketing obsolete" (Andzulis, Pnagopoulos, & Rapp, 2012, p. 310). While this assertion may be argued, the general proclivity towards relational marketing in social media has merit. Whichever orientation, marketing efforts are well-received when their intent aligns with the consumer (Grönroos, 1997).

Sports marketers have utilized relational marketing techniques (Lapio & Speter, 2000; Stavros, Pope, & Winzar, 2008), but most research in social media related to sports are limited. Studies determining how fans are using social media can provide valuable sport marketing implications (Clavio, 2011; Blaszka et al., 2012; Clavio & Walsh, 2014), yet such studies provide opportunities to study ephemeral messaging users. Williams and Chinn (2010) suggest that relationship marketing in social media has value for sports brands to garner attention from "prosumers", or those seeking a relationship with a team.

There are also no current studies in sport marketing that juxtapose relational marketing with transactional marketing, a topic found in multiple places in the marketing literature (e.g. Gronroos 1997; Pels, Coviello, & Brodie, 2000; Styles & Ambler, 2003;) It is widely agreed upon that relationship marketing is linked to transactional consumer behavior, but it is unknown whether some sports fans are more likely to engage with teams that exhibit relational or transactional behavior. Furthermore, this contrast in marketing orientation has been neglected in all social media environments regarding sports teams, even though teams may heavily focus their resources in cultivating social media engagement.

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the effects of marketing orientation and message medium (i.e. ephemeral/non-ephemeral) as predictors of engagement with brands as well as to compare engagement with sports teams relative to other product categories. In this process, the widely championed relationship marketing orientation of brands was explored as well as the emerging ephemeral social media environment. Specifically, users were measured as to their willingness to engage with a brand based on the brand's marketing orientation and message medium. As people's orientation towards a brand, particularly one offering a service product, may shift depending on the environment (Chandler & Lusch, 2015), this study offers theoretical and managerial implications.

Operational Definitions

Traditional Media: media that does not explicitly use Internet access, such as television, radio, and newspapers.

Social Media: Internet-based applications for the purpose of creating and exchanging content with other users (Manovich, 2001).

Traditional Social Media: a group of non-ephemeral social media (e.g. Facebook)

Ephemeral Social Media: a class of social media that allow users to predetermine the lifespan of content before auto-deletion.

Relationship Marketing: "all marketing activities directed toward establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges" (Morgan & Hunt, 1994, p. 22).

Transactional Orientation/Intent: customer value is found in the one-time exchange of a good or service for financial consideration (Grönroos, 1997).

Relational Orientation/Intent: value for customers is built in an ongoing relationship with a brand without focus on sales (Grönroos, 1997).

Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation has five chapters. This chapter explains the topic of research, introduces the theoretical underpinnings that guide the project, as well as the rationale for the investigation. Chapter II is an introduction to ephemeral social media and a review of the literature relevant to aspects of the study. Within Chapter II, two hypotheses are included as informed by the literature relative to the research questions of the study. The study's methodology is found in Chapter III and describes the details of the experimental design utilized in hypothesis testing. Chapter IV includes the study

results. Chapter V is a discussion of the findings relevant to theory and practice, with

particular focus towards answering the research questions proposed in this study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is a concise review of the related literature available from the disciplines of sport, communication, and marketing. Within the discussion, there are three hypotheses constructed that are informed by the literature and related to the concepts of this study. The first section introduces ephemeral social media while comparing and contrasting it to offline communication and media as well as traditional social media. The next section outlines the literature in permission marketing, laying out its historical findings and its relevance to ephemeral social media. The third section describes and provides examples of relational marketing in sports, showing how brands behave as if they are individuals and that some consumers desire a relationship. The fourth section consists of literature related to transactional marketing, the predominant marketing orientation before the mid 1990's. At the end of the chapter is a summary.

Ephemeral Social Media

Ephemeral applications are growing at an exponential rate. Each of these "apps" features a predetermined time limit for all sent messages. Snapchat, the market leader, allows users to choose from 1-10 seconds for messages sent person-to-person and content shared with all friends is available for 24 hours. Snapchat users sent approximately 60 million photos daily in 2013 (Watson, 2013), and 700 million per day in 2014 (Shontell, 2014). Astoundingly, Snapchat users send the most total picture messages of any application with only 200 million users, while competitors Instagram

(300 million users), Whatsapp (700 million users), and Facebook (1.39 billion users) are sending less (Morrison, 2015). Jott, a recently launched ephemeral messaging application, acquired over 500,000 teen users in its first few months (Prigg, 2015). The growth of ephemeral messaging is widespread, from the market leader down to its newest entrants.

The earliest literature related to ephemeral messaging is devoted to the topic of sexting in Snapchat, where users utilize the brevity of content to share explicit photos and text (Hasinoff, 2012; Poltash, 2012). Lewd content is not the norm for most Snapchat users (Roesner, Gill, & Kohno, 2014), providing more opportunities for scholars to investigate ephemeral platforms' efficacy for mass marketing. An initial step in that direction may be to explain why ephemeral messaging is experiencing growth. Ephemeral messaging investigations are scarce in the literature, but prior work in social media and communication may provide some suggestions as to its popularity.

Of social media and messaging applications available to users, ephemeral messaging has been suggested as a user's highest priority in order to keep from missing out on content that will disappear or have less importance in the future (Beese, 2013). Research on the fear of missing out suggests that those who are increasingly fearful of missing out on social activity spend more time on Facebook, experience more emotions when doing so, and look at content while in class and while driving a vehicle (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell, 2013). It stands to reason that those individuals may be even more prone to prioritize an ephemeral message, because of the certainty of missing out after a predetermined time period.

Prior literature may offer another suggestion for the trend towards ephemeral messaging. Aimed at social media in general, Hogan (2010) suggests that social media users can perform an ephemeral act that draws in viewers/friends because of the aura surrounding a seemingly live presence. For example, watching a clip of a friend at a football game while they are actually at the game is a different experience than viewing the same clip days after the game ended. The recording may illicit memories and feelings, but part of the exhibition will be lost (Hogan, 2010) because the context, the game, will forever be over. The appeal of receiving social media content in the present is truly found in livestreaming applications like Periscope or Meerkat, yet those are broadcasted to mass, unknown audiences rather than limited groups of friends. Thus, ephemeral apps that are used to communicate with known audiences (e.g. Snapchat) are ideal for social media users interested in recent performances from friends.

While the fear of missing out or the experience of a live performance is intriguing, the most compelling reason behind the frequent use of ephemeral communication may be more related to its connection to offline communication. Berger (2013) suggested that online communication differs from offline communication on five factors: reduced social presence, larger audiences, anonymity, written content, and vague recipients. Ephemeral messaging, although online communication, may not fit all of these assertions.

Piwek and Joinson (2016) found that Snapchat is primarily visual and used for private communication directed at close family, friends, or small groups. These findings clearly stray from the expectations of online communication. Rather than reduced social

presence and written content in online communication, social presence is increased through visual media (Tu, 2002; Aragon, 2003) and written content is secondary. Furthermore, Piwek and Joinson (2016) suggest that messages are sent to smaller, known and targeted recipients rather than large, unknown and vague recipients. Snapchat, as well as similar ephemeral applications, may share more similarities with offline communication than online.

Offline communication is not documented, unlike traditional online communication (e.g. Facebook, Twitter). Traditional social media users create content that is accessible even years after it is created. Ephemeral communication provides users a unique environment that is more consistent with offline communication that is inaccessible after the predetermined time is expired. As people see traditional social media as a 'permanent chronicle of people's lives' (Solove, 2007, p. 11), ephemeral messaging services may be the future of social media by mimicking the short-lived nature of offline communication.

Offline communication, or talking, in personal relationships is categorized into six different talking events: "gossip, making plans, joking around, catching up, small talk, and recapping the day's events" (Goldsmith & Baxter, 1996). These common, routine talking situations are what establishes relationships between individuals (e.g. Duck & Pond, 1989). The inconsequential nature of regular offline communication makes it a poor fit for the permanency of traditional social media (i.e. who needs to see a picture of what they had for lunch 5 years ago?). Championed by 3rd party applications (e.g. Timehop) or referred to on Facebook as "memories", permanency has become the

expectation of traditional social media. However, ephemeral communication can allow for typical talking events to occur without being tied to the future.

Relevance to the audience is also a concern. Ordinary talk in traditional social media may be quickly irrelevant for the sender and the audience. For example, asking around for a last-minute ride to an 8am class (making plans) or commenting about television events (small talk) are examples of communication that may quickly have no significance to the general social media audience, if they ever did. In offline communication, such common conversation is not meant for the future and its future relevancy is not likely a consideration for the sender. However, traditional social media users expect some level of scrutiny from those viewing their content (Krämer & Winter, 2008). A Facebook user posting for an 8am ride and getting no response could expect negative evaluations from those viewing the post at a later time (e.g. this person must not have any friends). A comment about how great a sports team is performing in the third quarter may not look as good for the sender if they end up suffering a heartbreaking loss in the fourth quarter. Ephemeral and offline communication, unlike traditional social media, offer people the luxury of communicating about topics that will not matter minutes from the time the message was sent without as strong of a need for considering future scrutiny.

Ephemeral and traditional online communication do share at least one thing in common. Even ephemeral users are subject to their content being captured, shared and viewed by unintended parties in the future. "Anything you publish onto the internet is public in some way, shape or form" (England, 2015). Even for Snapchat content that is

viewable for one second, it can still be shared with others through a screen capturing process typically referred to as "screen-shotting". Keeping viewable content from being captured is impossible, and users are aware of this threat. The potential for 3rd party evaluation may be perceived as less of a threat in ephemeral communication as the size of the audience is limited to those who view the content before it expires. Reducing the size of the audience can obviously be done manually by limiting the number of recipients, but for untargeted content, ephemeral may be perceived as a way to handle that task automatically. When creating social media posts, the sender considers an imagined audience (Marwick, 2011) and as posts are more ephemeral (i.e. available for less time), users could consider the audience to be more limited. Ephemeral communication may offer the perception to users that there may not be a need to imagine audiences of their content past the designated time limit, even though no Internet environment can guarantee transience.

From a marketing lens, ephemeral communication has similarities to offline media and online social media. The synergies between "old" media (i.e. offline) and "new" media (i.e. online including social media) are what make ephemeral social media a new challenge for brands. Marketing campaigns cannot follow the same rules learned from either environment. For example, offline campaigns are suggested to have a limited life while online content can be shared on a continual basis (Scott, 2007). Ephemeral communication may be online, yet it shares the offline attributes of a limited lifespan and is not meant for sharing.

Offline media is similar to ephemeral media in that it is also limited to timed segments. For example, 30-second and one minute spots are common in television and radio. From this vantage point, ephemeral media may not seem as challenging as marketers have knowledge in planning, producing and delivering time delimited content that leaves no trace. However, unlike offline advertising, ephemeral messaging is not meant for repeated exposures to the same content due to the fact that the audience is defined. Brands in social media ought to appear as other users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010); this approach is much different than a repetitive ad campaign.

Ephemeral social media can also have similarities with traditional social media that are familiar to marketers. Each allows the user the ability to add others, including brands, from across the network that are not bound by geography. Brands can communicate with consumers on a one-to-one basis or to their entire following simultaneously. Content made available to all users is grouped into some form of a "news feed", or a stream of content that is automatically updated when new posts are created. Adding users, communicating and observing shared content are similar aspects between ephemeral and traditional social media.

While the major difference between ephemeral social media and traditional social media is the lifespan of content, another discrete difference is of importance to marketers. In many ephemeral platforms, but particularly in Snapchat, marketers must gain permission before any of their content is viewable in a consumer's news feed. Although permission is necessary for friendship in traditional social media, unwanted

exposure to brands is common through the actions of friends' sharing habits. This process is discussed in greater detail in the forthcoming sections.

There is much to be discovered as to how ephemeral media is being used and for what purposes. It shares attributes with offline and online communication as well as offline and online marketing. The ability to understand such nuances is challenging and important for brands that invest resources in marketing through various media.

Permission Based Marketing

The virtual presence of a brand is often the central focus of many marketers. Consumers using the internet, particularly through mobile devices, may interact with brands for a lifetime without setting foot in a store location. Rather than measuring consumer sensory responses in a brick-and-mortar retail setting (Spangenberg, Grohmann, & Sprott, 2005), recent research has included investigations conducted in the context of online stores (Cheng, Wu, & Yen, 2009) and virtual sports team pro shops (Ballouli, 2011). A consumer entering the brand environment online is a major shift from the traditional focus of consumers entering a physical store (Shankar, Venkatesh, Hofacker, & Naik, 2010), yet they share the concept of consumers electing to enter the brand environment. Conversely, advertising, offline and online, allows brands to enter the consumer environment. Whether seeing an ad for Nike in Sports Illustrated or on www.espn.com, advertising allows brands uninvited exposure to the consumer. Using technology to enter the consumer environment online is a challenge as initiating an unwanted interaction may face reactance (Edwards, Li, & Lee, 2002) especially through more personal mediums, such as social media accounts primarily used with mobile

devices. To curtail this issue, the concept of consumer engagement when opting in, or giving permission, to marketers to send material has become more prevalent.

Permission marketing is an approach that requires a consumer to allow the sending of advertising material directly to an individual. Beginning with email, gaining permission from consumers along with their personal interests has assisted marketers in cutting through advertising clutter with targeted messaging (Godin, 1999). This phenomenon is also used in other channels, such as SMS texting. There is much incentive for marketers who utilize permission marketing. Scholars have found increases in brand loyalty as consumers are exposed to messages over time (Dufrene et al., 2005) and those that receive e-mails from the brand are more likely to purchase and be retained (Jolley et al., 2013). The growth opportunity in permission marketing is demonstrable, but the initial hurdle is simply persuading the consumer to engage by giving their permission.

Antecedents to permission, also known as opt-in, have been well documented in e-mail, texting and web advertising contexts (see Table B-1). Relevance of the message is important to the consumer in determining participation (Krishnamurthy, 2001) and has multiple dimensions. A prior relationship with the brand increases relevance and is influential in consumer response (Tezinde, Smith, & Murphy, 2002). Trust is also a vital precursor for giving permission (Jayawardhena et al., 2009; Persuad & Azhar, 2012), especially as less trustworthy brands are known to sell personal information to other online advertisers. As technology has increased brands' ability to send relevant messages to a large user base (e.g. through the use of CRM tools), marketing resources can be used

to develop trust and other brand equity variables. The intensity of such resources, though, must be strategic. Consumers feeling inundated by a particular brand or by marketing communication in general are less likely to grant permission (Kumar, Zhang, & Luo, 2014). See Table B-1 for a literature review of pertinent works in permission marketing.

Prior studies in permission marketing focused on social media or the social media context are limited. New technology has been investigated, like smartphones (e.g. Watson, McCarthy, & Rowley, 2013), but the use of permission marketing in social media has been ignored. Permission marketing is ubiquitous for brands in social media as consumers are asked to follow them on Twitter and Instagram, "Like" their Facebook page, or add them as a friend in Snapchat. Instead of allowing direct messages to an e-mail inbox or in the form of a text message, permission in social media results in inclusion within their feed of content from friends.

Consumers have become familiar with permission marketing in e-mail and text messaging contexts for nearly two decades. For some users, marketing messages in those environments may be as commonplace as those sent from friends and family. Particularly for those who have grown up with e-mail accounts, finding a message from a brand in the inbox may be the norm. Social media users also receive messages from brands. However, unlike e-mail and texting, many social media allow for paid advertising messages to be included in social media message feeds.

Paid, owned and earned media have served as categories for brands to assess their use of resources (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011; Stephen & Galak, 2012).

Even in social media, which has been regarded as more personal and a "live diary" (Marwick, 2011, p.118), the presence of paid advertisers is prevalent. Social media advertising spending is expected to reach $24 billion in 2015 (Perlberg, 2015) and is assuredly a part of the expectations from actors in a particular environment (Lewin, 1939), for social media users. Paid media does not include money invested by brands in owned media, which is content that is only available to friends/followers (or on some platforms viewable through a topical search).

An advantage of owned media in traditional, non-ephemeral, platforms is the so-called "free" marketing opportunities for brands. While using human and other resources to create content is far from free, the notion that brands can reach consumers without upfront cost can be attractive. Owned media is the most important content for brands that have gained permission from, or become friends with consumers. In developing content and cultivating a following on social media, the use of owned media could spawn into earned media.

Earned media encompasses branded content that was not under the control of or purchased by marketers (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011). This media gains exposure in the market by consumer sharing, or word-of-mouth, which also may be promoted by the social media platform (e.g. your friend liked this post). It is common that platforms subject users to the activity of their friends and in the event that a friend interacts with a third party, that information can be broadcasted to their entire friend group. Of course, users in many social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) have the option of sharing, via copying, the content to their entire following in a couple of taps. This process rewards

exposure to brands that create viral content and marketers frequently craft social media campaigns in the hopes that the sharing becomes viral. Of the many benefits, the result of word of mouth is positive in the form of product adoption and increased sales (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Godes & Mayzlin, 2009). Even though consumer sharing and the antecedents of the sharing process are significant (Berger & Milkman, 2012) and viral sharing will continue to be the goal of many marketing campaigns, these goals conflict with the premise of permission marketing in ephemeral social media.

Ephemeral applications are engineered for posts to disappear, not to be shared. Snapchat founder and CEO, Evan Spiegel, said, "We don't want brands to act like people, because they're not people! So, we don't make it easy for them to do that" (D'Onfro, 2015, p.1). Current platforms, including Snapchat, do not permit users to instantly share or duplicate a post from other users. This lack of earned media in ephemeral contexts may present a significant problem for organizations relying on earned media, particularly those whose target market may be shifting towards ephemeral applications as their primary social media. In addition, paid advertising in ephemeral social media can be expensive. For example, Snapchat advertising is very exclusive and priced (i.e. $750k/day) to serve market leaders (Sloane, 2015). The lack of earned media and high resource demands of paid media points to permission marketing through owned media as an important focus for brands that are currently active in social media. Given this focus, this research is necessitated to uncover what may drive people to engage with brands in an ephemeral context.

Relational Marketing in Sports

Without the organic, reposting exposure available in traditional social media, the strategy to specifically attract new friends is more important for brands in ephemeral social media. One way that brands can communicate with consumers is in a relational marketing orientation (Grönroos, 1997). Relationship marketing can be defined as "all marketing activities directed toward establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges" (Morgan & Hunt, 1994, p. 22). Fournier (1998) argues that a consumer can have a legitimate relationship with a brand as long as it has some level of personification and exhibits contributions to the relationship. These practices can occur in multiple forms, some that are more distant (e.g. customer relationship management systems) and others that are very close, such as face-to-face interactions (Pels, Coviello, & Brodie, 2000). In any form, a relational marketing orientation is not centered on the exchange of goods and services, but rather a long-term relationship (Tuominen, Rajala, & Moller, 2000).

Sports fans have often been viewed "as highly involved consumers with a desire for long-term association with a team sport" (Shani, 1997, p. 9). Even for those teams who have been less successful, some fans will remain loyal (Bristow & Sebastian, 2001) and those that highly identify with a team consider events that happen to the team as if it happened to them personally (Wakefield, 2007). These attitudinal responses are signs of a long-term relational marketing orientation towards the team. The hope of the team is to reciprocate the desire for a relationship, yet this is not always the case. Some organizations may not offer communication channels with the customer (Grönroos,

1997), which may have deleterious effects on those fans that have relational orientations towards the team. For example, if a team does not care to solicit feedback from their season ticket holders, or make available a service representative, then the team is not enacting a relationship marketing intent. While those without relational orientations are not affected, season ticket holders that have relational orientations towards the team are likely to be discontented. Grönroos (1997) suggests that there is always a latent relationship between organizations and their customers, but either party may not activate it for one reason or another. If the team in the example sent out a survey at the end of the season to their season ticket holders, then their once dormant relational orientation would become active in cultivating relationships with the customers that respond with feedback, matching a desire to engage in relationship building activity.

Developing relationships between sport organizations or teams and fans can be enabled through online communication. Particularly related to social media, sport brands are wise to create content that is focused on relationship building as it has been argued to be the only legitimate focus of social media marketing efforts (Andzulis, Pnagopoulos, & Rapp, 2012). Sports brands are currently enacting relational marketing techniques with fans (Williams & Chinn, 2010), one of which is creating content as if they were a typical, single-person user.

A brand creating content for its followers could be viewed as more personal when interacting similar to non-branded accounts. For example, during DeAndre Jordan's dramatic NBA free agency during the summer of 2015, brands entered the conversation with social media posts very similar to normal users. These posts were

attached with pictures from notable movie scenes and edited seemingly like other, non-professional user posts. Brands are finding unique ways to interact with sports fans in social media that may be less interested in traditional marketing approaches (Kim et al., 2011) and more interested in relationship building.

Another strategy in building relationships through social media is in providing fans with exclusive content. Thompson, Martin, Gee, and Eagleman's (2014) case study found that fans were interested in behind-the-scenes content offered by Tennis New Zealand in the form of video clips with tournament staff as well as audio, video and pictures of players and tournament functions. Specifically, behind-the-scenes content may allow fans to feel a closer connection as it has been suggested that fans feel special when they receive exclusive content (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Snapchat may be optimal for offering behind-the-scenes content from players and organizations (Han, 2014), and fans desiring a relational exchange with teams are those that are likely to consume relational offerings, such as exclusive content.

Even with corresponding relational intent, it is unknown how fans will respond to solicitations for engagement in ephemeral social media like Snapchat. The environment of ephemeral social media may be different than that of other social media. Snapchat friends have close ties and share messages with those that they trust (Bayer, Ellison, Schoenebeck, & Falk, 2015) and use the service for the purpose of bonding (Piwek & Joinson, 2016). Billings, Qiao, Conlin and Nie (2015) suggest that Snapchat is frequently used by sports fans who see the experience as more personal. Instead of viewing content from a team, fans see messages as more exclusive, saying "the [team]

snapchatted me" (Silverman, 2014, p.1). It is expected that sports fans (and consumers of other products) are more likely to engage with a team (brand) when they are exhibiting a relational intent in an ephemeral medium.

Transactional Marketing

Transactional marketing is rooted in the early models of marketing based on exchange of tangible goods. Scholars originally borrowed from the field of economics and considered goods as standard outputs (e.g. Shaw, 1912). Vargo and Lusch (2004) chronicle the transition of marketing from economic-based schools of thought to marketing management (e.g. Drucker, 1954; Kotler, 1967) to the more recent shift in logic beginning in the 1980's towards marketing as a social process in addition to its economic procedures. Marketing as a means of creating value rather than merely exchanges has captured much attention over the last three decades.

Even with attention paid to relational marketing in the literature and in practice, transactional marketing orientations are common in the market place. Organizations may not activate a relationship with their consumers based on the transactional needs or goals of either entity (Bee & Kahle, 2006; Grönroos, 1997). From the organizational viewpoint, many brands take on a transactional orientation with their customers. For example, when the Golden State Warriors promoted and attempted to require the use of their partner, Ticketmaster (Rovell, 2015), they were choosing to meet their organizational goal of increasing revenue rather than considering the customers' (and lawyers') needs and wants. This transactional communication from the team in this

instance did not match with the relational orientation of the team's fans, as evidenced by negative reactions on social media.

Transactional orientations by brands can be received positively by consumers who exhibit a matching mindset. Couponing, discounting, or offering sales can all be communicated as transactional messages and can be well-received by corresponding segments of consumers who have a transactional orientation towards the brand. For example, those seeking a deal, also known as deal-prone consumers (DelVecchio, 2005), could be classified as exhibiting transactional orientations. Similarly, online shoppers with a coupon code have been found to experience greater satisfaction than those without (Oliver & Shor, 2003). The effectiveness of transaction-oriented marketing suggests that there are segments of consumers that desire transactional marketing communication from brands.

Although Bee & Kahle (2006) suggest that transactional marketing is only a short-term solution that should only give way to relational exchanges, Grönroos (1997) suggested that there are some brands (e.g. a brand of canned fruit juice) whose customers do not desire a relationship. In a crowded marketplace, consumers are inundated by increasing quantities of brand offerings and the process of choosing between them results in detrimental psychological and emotional effects (Schwartz, 2004). Consumers respond, according to Schwartz (2004), by reducing their choices to a number that is more manageable. Similarly, yet more subconsciously, consumers are likely to reduce the number of brands that they would consider having a relationship with to a number that is more manageable. This leaves out a set of products and services

that are still consumed, possibly often (e.g. brand of canned fruit juice), but a relational orientation may be undesired. However, given the desire to continue a transactional relationship (i.e. habitually buy and consume fruit juice), a transactional orientation may be the norm for many consumers of particular products.

Using ephemeral media to interact with brands in a transactional orientation is unlikely. It has been suggested that Snapchat is used primarily within small, close groups of friends and family for the purpose of bonding (Piwek & Joinson, 2016). Therefore, penetrating the friendship circle in Snapchat may be even more challenging for brands exhibiting transactional intent because that is not the purpose of use for the user. Consumers may not be interested in a relationship with a brand in the first place (Grönroos, 1997) and it has been suggested that a strong bond with a brand cannot be reached with 75% or more of its buyers (Rossiter & Bellman, 2012). Given the challenges for a brand exhibiting transactional intent within a relational ephemeral environment, engagement with brands may be difficult. Thus, it is expected that ephemeral users are not likely to engage with transaction-oriented brands.

Hypothesis 1: Consumers are more willing to engage with a relational oriented brand (H1).

Hypothesis 2: Consumers are more willing to engage with brands in an ephemeral medium (H2).

Hypothesis 3: Consumer engagement is positively related to relational brand orientations and ephemeral mediums (H3).

Hypothesis 4: Consumers are more willing to engage with sports team brands than other product categories (H4).

Summary

This chapter began with an introduction to ephemeral social media as well as an overview of the permission marketing and relational/transactional marketing literature. In doing so, the discussion of permission marketing was extended into the social media context and ephemeral media in particular. Support was given for the notion that social media should be limited to primarily relational marketing. Throughout the chapter, two problems facing marketers were underscored regarding ephemeral social media. The first was the lack of literature on ephemeral social media related to consumer behavior. Second, the fact that organic exposure to brands' social media content is non-existent in ephemeral applications has caused brands to focus on increasing engagement in permission marketing.

This chapter also offered a series of testable hypotheses which are summarized as: (a) Consumers are more willing to engage with a relational oriented brand (H1), (b) Consumers are more willing to engage with brands in an ephemeral medium (H2); (c) Consumer engagement is positively related to relational brand orientations and ephemeral mediums (H3); (d) consumers are more willing to engage with sports team brands than other product categories (H4). A visual model of these hypothesized relationships can be seen in Figure A-1.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In Chapter II, two hypotheses were proposed as informed by prior literature. This chapter contains the methodology. Included in the chapter is the research design and procedures used to test the hypotheses. First, the research strategy justifies the research design implemented. Then, the measures included as part of the independent variables in the design are given. Finally, the sampling frame, experimental procedure and study details are provided at the end of the chapter.

Research Strategy

Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods are the three most regarded research designs used to test hypotheses and answer research questions in academia (Creswell, 1994). Determining which design to use can be based on the approach of the researcher, or the way of thinking (Punch, 2013), but more accurately the "nature of the data is at the heart of the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research" (p. 4). The determination of collecting qualitative data or quantitative data should begin with the research questions (Punch, 2013). Many research questions in consumer behavior are measured quantitatively, but not all studies are best suited for a quantitative lens (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Thus, further understanding of the different data collected by qualitative design should be investigated before accepting the norm, or master narrative (Stanley, 2007), of quantitative methods.

Qualitative data is captured through a set, series, or combination of interviews, focus groups, field notes, video, and audio recordings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This data is useful to inform researchers conducting qualitative approaches to the analyses, such as a case study or ethnography. Studies of this type require rich narratives that include the culture and surrounding context of the data collection (Jick, 1979) to help the researcher and audience understand the phenomena that is occurring. Quantitative research is less interested in the context and more interested in measuring constructs in the form of numerical values, testing hypotheses and generalizing findings to a population (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Most studies in consumer behavior research have utilized quantitative methods (Jacoby, 1978) as a means to provide evidence for phenomena across wide stretches of the population. Of quantitative methods, experimental designs have been prevalent in order to give the researcher more control of the variables included in the study. Experiments allow for greater control (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000) as conditions are manipulated to allow for the observation of significant differences in participant responses to stimuli.

This study utilized an experimental design to best answer the research questions proposed. The questions in this study were informed by the purpose of the study which is to determine the effects of marketing orientation (i.e. relational/transactional) and ephemerality (ephemeral/non-ephemeral) on consumer engagement, as well as to compare fan engagement with sports teams relative to other products. The focus on two manipulations points to an experimental study as being most appropriate so that the marketing orientation and ephemeral nature of the message can be used as conditions in

a laboratory experiment. Laboratory experiments using theory applications comprise much of the consumer behavior literature (Winer, 1999) and are best suited for the purpose of this study. Lab experiments in general and especially those conducted online have raised some concerns.

Control over the experiment and the participants have been noted as potential issues for researchers conducting a study online (Reips, 2000). Issues for controlling participants include guarding against multiple submissions and guaranteeing sole attention to the study while control over the experimental situation includes the distribution of participants to conditions and self-selection (Reips, 2000). To combat these potential issues, Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk) was used to recruit a participant pool. Participant pools help to limit users to one submission and pools orchestrated through Mturk avoid the detriments of self-selection by gathering individuals across the world. Mturk is known to provide high quality panels that are more representative of the general population and share similar attentiveness, judgment and decision biases (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Goodman, Cryder, & Cheema, 2012). In addition, Mturk does not allow users to submit multiple surveys and offers time, date, and IP address information to the researcher.

While there is no complete guarantee that participants are giving their full attention to the survey, attention checks were included in the survey instrument. Attention check questions may be superfluous but have correct answers. An incorrect answer to an attention check resulted in exclusion from the study. Finally, the use of Qualtrics software to prepare the survey can distribute participants evenly and randomly

to the marketing orientation and medium conditions. Through these efforts, validity can be assumed as sufficient for empirical testing.

Research Design

To test the hypotheses, univariate ANOVA was used to examine the effects of marketing orientation (relational/transactional), medium (ephemeral/non-ephemeral), and category of brand (sports teams/restaurants/clothing/musicians) as part of a 2 x 2 x 4 between subjects design. The marketing orientation manipulation and medium variables were entered into SPSS 22.0 as categorical factors (0, 1). The product categories were added to increase generalizability of the study and can be pooled for the analysis, if necessary. Categorical control variables were also included, such as gender and ethnicity. Consumer loyalty and the continuous control variables (age, household income) were entered as covariates. Acceptable alpha levels were set at .05, a general practice in consumer behavior research. Validity and reliability tests were conducted as suggested by Cohen et al. (2013), including the satisfying of assumptions.

Participants

A panel of participants were recruited through Mturk from across the United States. Mturk participant pools have been known to produce more diverse samples in terms of demographics than average groups of American college students and are regarded as equally reliable, if not more reliable, than traditional sampling methods (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Goodman, Cryder and Cheema (2012) compared Mturk samples with participants from a college and a community within a large city in the United States. They recommend Mturk to researchers and also note that

effect sizes were not significantly different across samples. A sample size of 285 was collected for this study, more than enough to satisfy the minimum of five times the number of independent variables used in the study (Bartlett, Kotrlik, & Higgins, 2001) and to maintain generalizability (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1995).

The between groups manipulation of a brand's marketing orientation was operationalized by the content of a hypothetical mobile application, or "app." Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four marketing orientation x medium conditions (i.e. transactional/ephemeral, transactional/non-ephemeral, relational/ephemeral, and relational/non-ephemeral) and given a written description and visual screenshot of the app. The graphics, font and colors of the ad were identical in all conditions. See Table B-2 for the written descriptions of the app given to participants in each condition. The visual screenshot did not include changes related to the category of product selected by the participant. Thus, Figures A-2 through A-5 display each of the conditions (i.e. 2 orientation (transactional/relational) x 2 medium (ephemeral/non-ephemeral), respectively.

Measures

The dependent variable was engagement intentions, characterized by consumer interest in the app. "How interested are you in signing up for the new [selected brand] app?" was the question used with a 7-point bipolar scale for three items ranging from, *Not interested—Very interested*, *I would not sign up--I would definitely sign up*, and *I would not download the app--I would download the app* (Cronbach's α = .987). Loyalty was measured with an established scale (Yoo & Donthu, 2001) and included as a

covariate. Items included, "I consider myself to be loyal to [selected brand]," "[selected brand] would be my first choice," "I will always (go to eat/buy clothes/buy albums/watch the team) from [selected brand] if it is (possible/available)," (Cronbach's α = .886). Analyzing loyalty allows for the possibility that participants may have selected a brand that they were not loyal to which would have produced inconsistent results if not accounted for in the model. Furthermore, the inclusion of the loyalty variable helps to account for the importance of the previous relationship with the brand in permission marketing studies (Tezinde, Smith, & Murphy, 2002; Jayawardhena et al., 2009). The following variables were also measured but not used as covariates in the model in order to focus on the effects of the manipulation: fear of missing out (Przybylski et al., 2013), trust (Sirdeshmukh, Singh, Sabol 2002), identification (Tropp & Wright, 2001) and length of the relationship with the brand. Table B-3 has a list of measures and scale items used.

Procedure

The experiment was performed using Qualtrics software within a pool of participants recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Participants chose to accept the assignment from Amazon and navigated to the Qualtrics platform. The survey was initially explained to the participants and they were asked to pay full attention while reading and answering the questions.

Participants chose a brand within one of the following categories: restaurants, clothing, musicians and sports teams. Using a variety of categories not only increased the generalizability of the research findings but also allowed for a wider net of

participants that may have had an interest in one category (e.g. music) but not in another (e.g. sports teams). The next item asked participants, "Write the name of your favorite brand within your selected product category." The response from each participant to the category and favorite brand questions were piped in (i.e. automatically inserted) to questions later in the survey using Qualtrics software features. Using a participants' favorite brand helped to increase the psychological realism by decreasing the psychological distance (see Trope & Liberman, 2010, for a review on psychological distance). Next, each participant was given random assignment into one of the four conditions. Each participant was given a visual representation of the new app as well as a written description of its purpose and functions. After being exposed to the treatment, participants were asked for their engagement intentions and loyalty to their selected brand, as well as their fear of missing out, trust, and identification.

Two manipulation checks were assessed to determine participants' understanding of the treatments. The first addressed the purpose of the app and the second addressed the ephemeral/non-ephemeral nature of the messages. Those that missed manipulation check questions were excluded from the final usable sample. In two instances during the survey, attention checks were employed. Those that were not paying enough attention, thereby incorrectly responding to the attention check questions, were excluded from the study.

Demographic questions were included such as gender, ethnicity, age, and household income. Before they finished, participants were thanked for their time and given final information. Within this final information was a unique code for participants

to copy and paste into the Amazon Mechanical Turk portal to receive credit for their

participation.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Sample Demographics

Participants for this study were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk online subject pool ($N = 281$). After removing participants that failed to correctly answer the manipulation check questions (n=20) and two outliers (i.e. studentized residuals less than -3), the total usable sample was 259. Caucasians composed the majority of the sample (n= 199, 76.8%), although African Americans (n= 12, 4.6%), Hispanics (n= 13, 5%), Native American (n= 1, .4%) and "other" races (n= 13, 5%) were also represented. Some participants (n= 21) did not disclose their racial information. There was a fairly even representation of gender in the sample, as 136 (52.5%) were male and 120 (46.3%) were female, with three choosing not to disclose their gender. Over half (52.7%) of the participants earned under $50,000 per year, while 32.8% earned between $50,000 and $99,999. The remaining 14.5% earned over $100,000 per year. The mean age of participants was 32.05 ($SD = 10.23$).

Hypothesis Testing

A 2 marketing orientation (relational/transactional) x 2 medium (ephemeral/non-ephemeral) x 4 category of brand (sports teams/restaurants/clothing/musicians) between subjects design was used. There was not a significant relationship between marketing orientation and engagement intentions ($F(1, 240)= .098$, p=.754, n.s.), lacking support for H_1. However, consumers were more likely to engage with brands communicating

through an ephemeral medium (F(1, 240)= 5.221, p=.023, η_p^2=.021), giving support for

H_2. Consumers were not more willing to engage with a brand that was relational and

communicating through an ephemeral medium (F(1, 240)= 2.212, p=.138, n.s.), lacking

support for H_3. Those in the transactional x non-ephemeral condition were most willing

to engage (M=5.25, SD=1.87), followed by participants in the transactional x ephemeral

condition (M=4.58, SD=2.20), the relational x ephemeral condition (M=4.46, SD=2.04),

and the relational x non-ephemeral condition (M=4.15, SD=2.09).

The product category did not have a significant main effect (F(3, 240)= .075,

p=.973, n.s.), lacking support for H_4. The marketing orientation did have a significant

interaction with the chosen product category (F(3, 240)= 8.289, p<.001, η_p^2=.094),

indicating that participants were most interested in engaging with musicians in a

relational orientation (M=6.27, SD=.66). A visual representation of this interaction can

be seen in Figure A-6. The means and standard deviations for each marketing orientation

and product category combination are in Table B-4. Higher order interactions involving

marketing orientation, medium and product category were tested and found not

significant.

The covariate included in the model, loyalty, unsurprisingly had a significant

relationship with engagement intentions (F(1, 240)= 38.765, p<.001, η_p^2=.139),

indicating that consumers more loyal to their favorite brand were more willing to engage

with the brand. Loyalty was also found to have a significant interaction with the

ephemeral medium (F(1, 240)= 4.790, p=.03, η_p^2=.020). In other words, more loyal

consumers were more likely to engage with the brand in an ephemeral context, rather

than the non-ephemeral condition. This relationship did not depend on the product category or marketing orientation; all higher order interactions involving loyalty were tested and found not significant. The main effects and covariate included in the condensed model accounted for 28.5% of the variance in engagement intentions.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate (a) the effect of ephemerality, (b) the effect of the orientation of the marketer on consumer engagement with brands, and (c) sports fan engagement relative to other product categories. Specifically, an ephemeral environment and relational orientation were hypothesized to increase consumer engagement and a non-ephemeral environment and transactional orientation were expected to decrease consumer engagement. This chapter delves into theoretical and managerial implications as well as limitations and future directions for research.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

The data were analyzed in order to answer the research questions originally put forth in this study and are as follows: What orientation (i.e. relational or transactional) should marketers enact to increase engagement in ephemeral social media? Are consumers more willing to engage with a brand in an ephemeral medium? Are fans more likely to engage with sports teams than other product categories? The answers to these questions have implications for both academicians and practitioners.

From a theoretical lens, there are two implications that can be drawn from the results of this study. First, relational marketing enacted by a brand may not result in any increased engagement by consumers (H_1, n.s.). This may seem to contradict opines of researchers that see relational marketing as the ideal orientation (e.g. Andzulis, Pnagopoulos, & Rapp, 2012). However, the implication could be that relational (or

transactional) marketing may be most effective within particular segments. The results

related to H_4 show grounds for this supposition (i.e. marketing orientation's effect on

engagement is dependent on product category), particularly as those who chose favorite

musicians were significantly more likely to engage with the brand in a relational context.

Of the product categories available, musicians are likely the best "human brand," or a

marketing effort surrounding a popular persona, because of the strong attachment and

resulting relationship (Thomson, 2006). In this experiment, musicians were likely the

choice that most resembled a human brand. The "sports teams" category could have

been similar if it were instead included as a "favorite athlete" category, thus clearly

introducing prior relationships with selected human brands. Brands that are seen as more

relational (e.g. human brands) by consumers are most likely to benefit from relational

marketing strategy. This assertion aligns with the research of Grönroos (1997) that some

customers may (not) enact a relationship orientation towards a brand resulting in a

(mis)match with a relationally oriented brand. In addition, Chandler and Lusch (2015)

suggest consumer proclivities towards an offering may be enhanced due to personal and

environmental fluctuations—which were not accounted for in this study. Therefore, the

perception of a particular brands' relational components may be integral. An individual

differences approach could assist in understanding the role of relational marketing by

accounting for the attitudes of consumers towards brands in addition to the analyses of

actions taken by marketers. Second, the medium in which branded communication is

enacted impacts consumer information processing. Specific to this study, an ephemeral

medium had a significant effect on consumers' engagement intentions (H_2). There is

currently a lack of theory to explain why consumers may prefer an ephemeral medium

when engaging with a brand, or with Piwek and Joinson's (2016) finding that people use

Snapchat (i.e. ephemeral social media) to engage in communication with relationally

close individuals. The finding of loyalty as a moderator between medium and

engagement in this study could be a step towards explaining the reasoning behind

consumers' preference of ephemeral communication. It could be that the medium is

selected with perceptions of the relationship with the recipient (brand or person) in mind.

Ephemeral communication could be desired for communicating in loyal relationships. If

this is the case, then theoretical underpinnings related to ephemeral mediums of

communication may be informed by studies in other environments of ephemeral

communication between loyal parties, such as offline where personal relationships take

form in everyday talking events (Goldsmith & Baxter, 1996) which in turn strengthens

relationships (Duck & Pond, 1989). This theorizing should align with H_3 (i.e. consumers

are more willing to engage with a relational brand in an ephemeral medium), yet the

results were not significant. This inconsistency could be remedied by accounting for

individual differences in relational orientation, which as previously mentioned, may be a

key to unlocking the potential for relationship marketing. The finding of relational

marketing's effectiveness being dependent on the product and the extension of

relationship marketing within an ephemeral medium are two additions to relationship

marketing theory that also have implications for marketing managers.

Marketing managers, particularly those in sports, can draw implications from this

study. While the product category was not significant (H_4), the interaction with

marketing orientation reveal insights for sports marketers. First, in comparison to other categories, relational content did not result in a significant increase in engagement intentions for sports teams. Given the importance of relationship marketing in sports (Williams & Chinn, 2010) and the use of relational content in social media marketing (e.g. Thompson et al., 2014), the findings in this study may be discouraging for sport practitioners. Even though fans of sports teams may exhibit strong identification and passion (Wakefield, 2007), engagement intentions for fans in this study were similar to those evaluating their favorite restaurant or clothing brand and much lower than those evaluating their favorite musicians. Sports teams could attempt to relegate their relational in a way that is not focused on referencing the team as a whole. In this study, participants were assessing their favorite team, which may not be as relational as a particular player or coach on the team. Second, as an implication for marketers of any product, the role of loyalty can be a focus of permission marketing in ephemeral mediums (e.g. Snapchat). While it is not surprising that loyalty had a positive relationship with engagement intentions, the positive interaction with the ephemeral medium is interesting. Social media managers could target their most loyal segments (e.g. through loyalty programs or by frequent consumption) with ephemeral content in an attempt to strengthen those relationships. In terms of mass marketing, ephemeral social media may not be effective as engagement intentions were lower for those that were less loyal. For example, using all channels of communication for the purpose of increasing engagement in a Snapchat promotion may not be effective. In sum, (a) not all categories of products are equally effective in attracting engagement through relational

content and (b) ephemeral media may be more effective with more loyal consumer segments.

Limitations

There were limitations in this study. By nature of experimental design conducted in a laboratory setting, some level of external validity is lost (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). However, the tradeoff related to external validity may have been outweighed by the gains realized. In other words, detecting the same effects in a field experiment may have been difficult as there are other environmental considerations (e.g. social phenomena) that could be reduced or eliminated by a more controlled setting.

One goal of the manipulations was to keep the highest level of psychological realism for participants. An obvious limitation to reaching that goal was in the hypothetical nature of the mobile app in the manipulations. As scenarios are increasingly hypothetical, individuals' psychological distance increases (Trope & Liberman, 2010). According to Trope and Liberman (2010), increased psychological distance results in abstract rather than concrete construal of a given situation. In this study, participants' true engagement intentions may have been altered as they considered the purpose and content of the hypothetical mobile app.

Effect sizes for the significant findings in this study were in the small to medium range (Cohen, 1992). Perhaps with stronger manipulations and additional investigation of the topic, effect sizes may be larger. However, in that this was an exploratory study, such effect sizes were acceptable and provide reasons for optimism. Furthermore, the choice of dependent variable may have been difficult to influence, which could explain

some of the smaller effects (Prentice & Miller, 1992). Consumer interest in downloading the new app, or engagement intentions, could have been influenced by other variables, such as perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. These variables are integral to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Disregard to the information systems literature, particularly related to TAM, was a limitation to this study.

As mentioned in the discussion, the marketing orientation manipulation could have been reinforced by measuring individual differences. Including participants' relational and/or transactional intents towards the chosen brand could have resulted in significance for the first three hypotheses. While including multiple covariates may not be ideal in isolating an effect in a controlled experimental study, it could have helped to explain why the marketing orientation manipulation was not as strong as anticipated. Furthermore, the disproportional number of non-human to human brands available for selection by participants could also have been improved. For example, the number of participants selecting musicians was very low (n= 11), yet their group had a marked difference in engagement intentions than the other groups within the relational manipulation.

Future Directions

The results and the limitations of this study offer avenues for future research. First, effects in this study could be replicated in a field study. Rather than using hypothetical ephemeral and non-ephemeral mobile apps, Snapchat and Twitter could be used. If the same effects could be found in a realistic scenario, then the findings of this

study are more generalizable. A field study is also likely to remove the effects of psychological distance that were perhaps experienced by participants in this study. In a future field study, individual differences of relational and transactional orientations could be measured. Accounting for individual differences may strengthen the original model.

An additional investigation delving into the differences between products and/or product categories may be fruitful. As music brands outperformed clothing, restaurants and sports teams related to engagement in a relational context, future research could be conducted to ascertain the reasoning behind this result. There could be certain brand attributes that are perceived as more relational by consumers. Understanding what attributes are better received by consumers exposed to relationship marketing, relative to transactional marketing, could be a worthwhile endeavor.

A final direction for future research could be in discovering the efficacies of ephemeral media relative to traditional media. Ephemeral media is an area ripe for additional work due to accounts of increasing investments in social media (Perlberg, 2015) and an active user base (Morrison, 2015). Specifically, a better understanding of ephemeral media's similarities and differences with offline and other online media could provide considerable theoretical and managerial implications. Ultimately, "marketers must learn to navigate and integrate these multiple platforms, while understanding differences among consumers in the various social behavior segments" (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011, p. 269).

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to reveal the effects of marketing orientation and an ephemeral medium on consumer engagement intentions. In a general sense, the results have shown that the efficacy of relational marketing is dependent on product category and that more attention should be paid to ephemeral mediums. This investigation presented new theoretical insights into the wealth of relationship marketing literature by juxtaposing it to transactional marketing and by entering the new context of ephemeral media. In addition, insights were given to marketing managers considering ephemeral media as a part of their strategy to engage with customers. Finally, a primary focus was placed on the relatively new area of study of ephemeral media.

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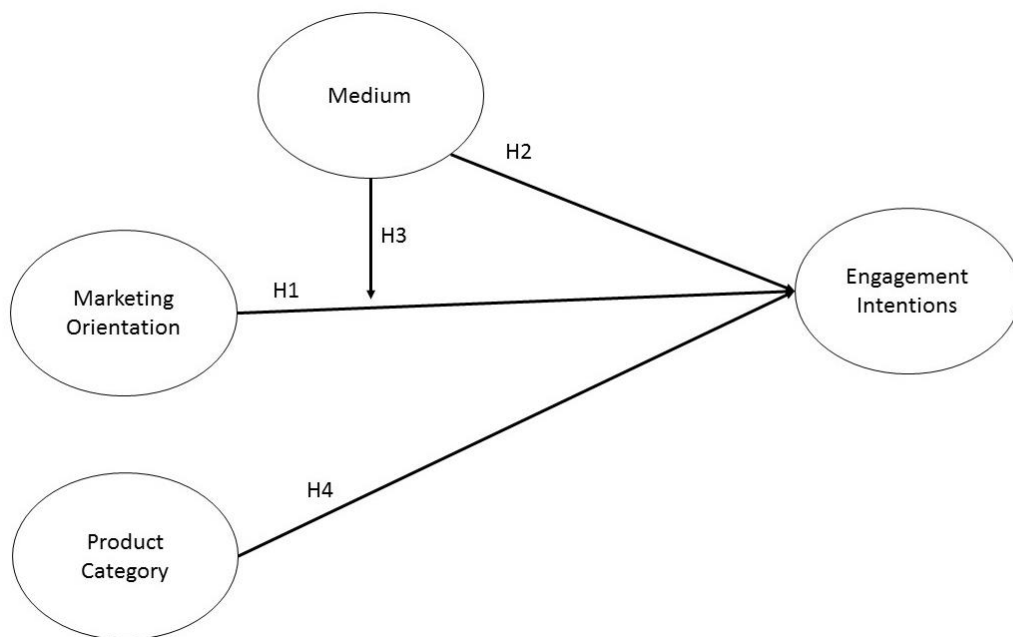based brand equity scale. *Journal of Business Research*, *52*(1), 1-14.

APPENDIX A

FIGURES
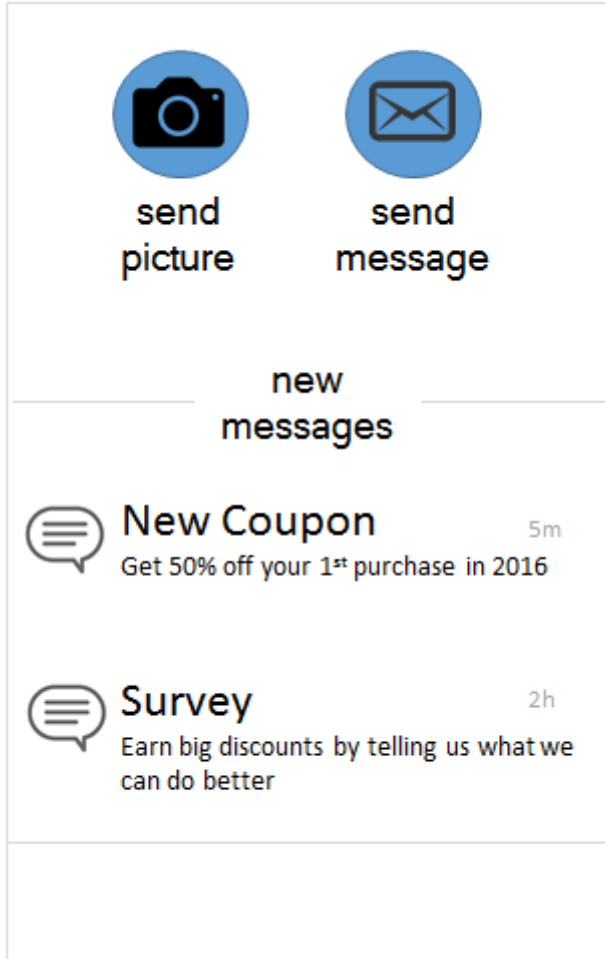
Figure A-1

Model of hypothesized relationships

Figure A-2

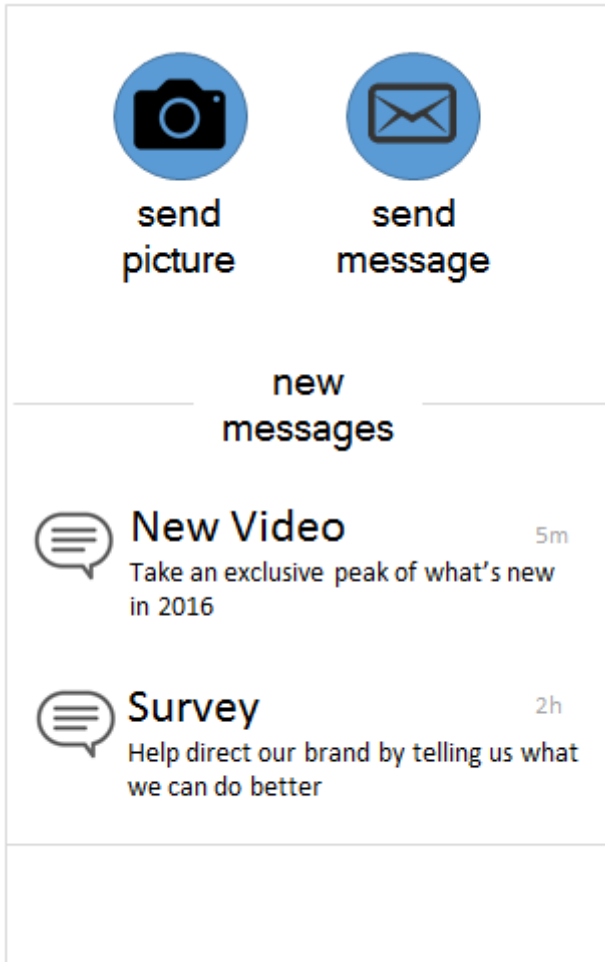*Transactional marketing orientation x ephemeral condition*

Figure A-3

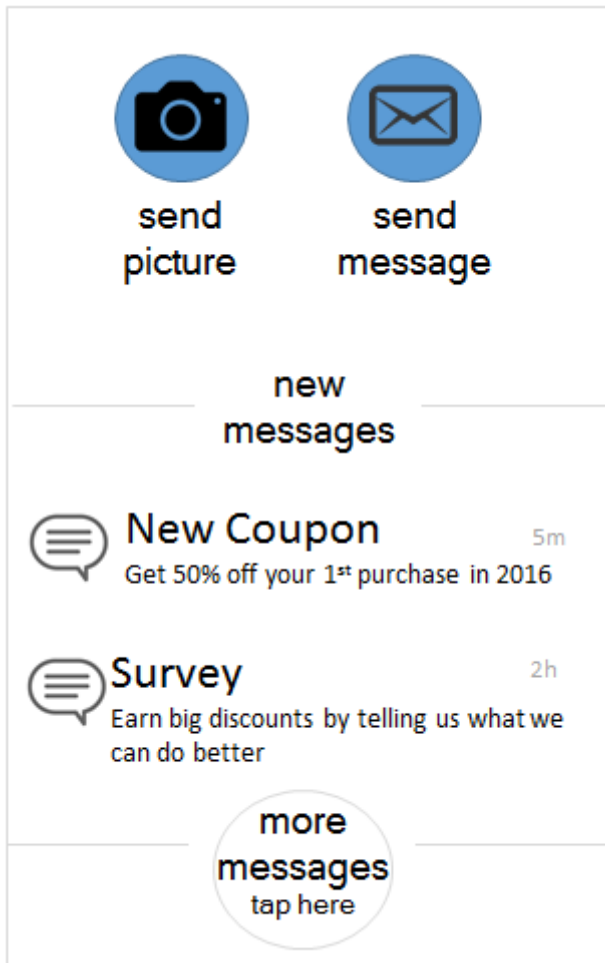*Relational marketing orientation x ephemeral condition*

Figure A-4

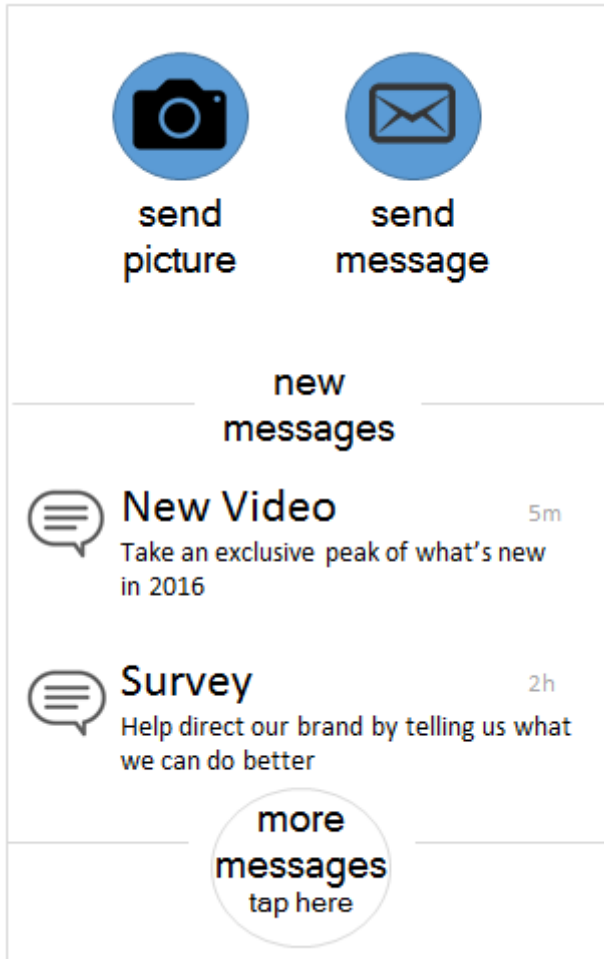*Transactional marketing orientation x non-ephemeral condition*

Figure A-5

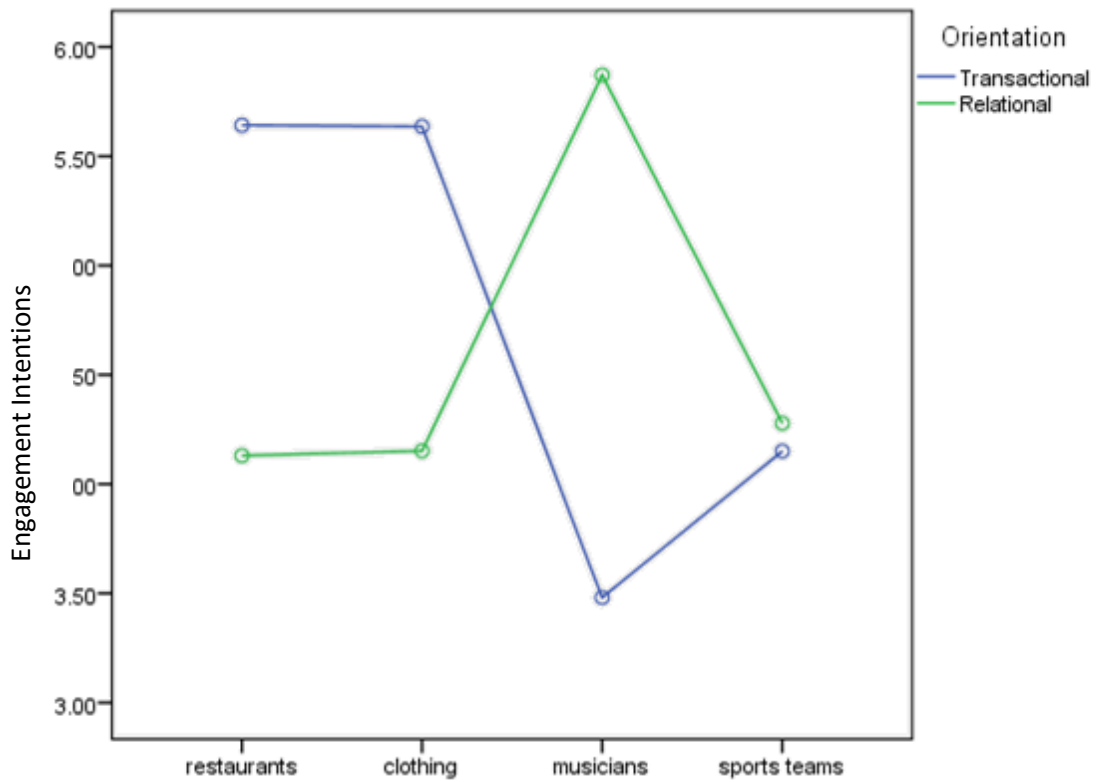*Relational marketing orientation x non-ephemeral condition*

Figure A-6

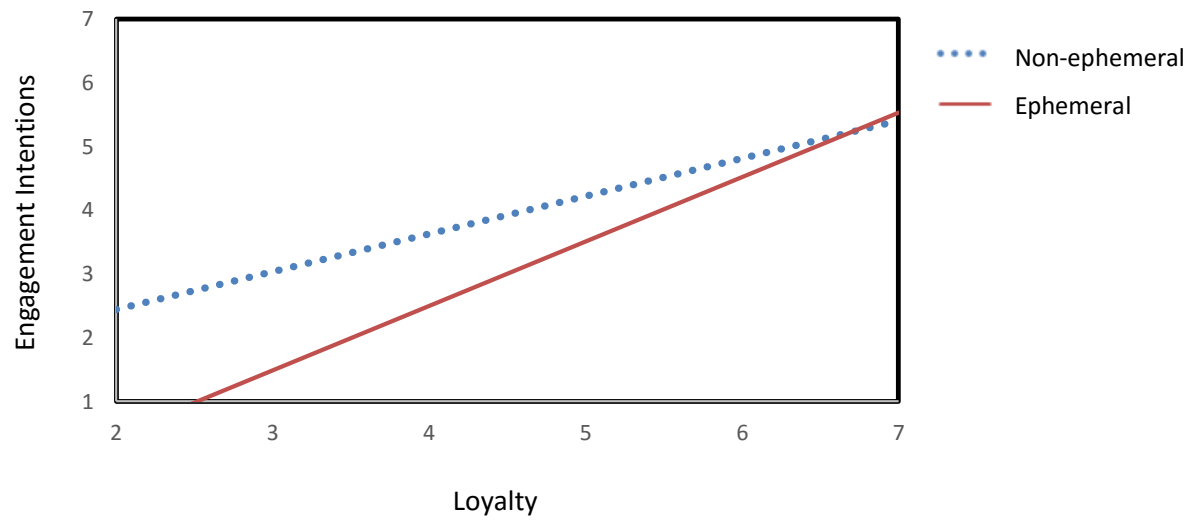*Interaction between marketing orientation and brand category on engagement intentions*

Figure A-7

Interaction between loyalty and medium on engagement intentions

APPENDIX B

TABLES

Table B-1

Permission marketing literature review (1999-2014)

Authors	Year	Method	Media	Focus	DVs	Context	Conclusion
Bamba and Barnes	1997	Field	SMS texting	Willingness to give permission	Permission	Graduate students	Relevance + control results in giving permission
Godin	1999	Conceptual	E-mail	Customers help marketers in targeting	n/a	Case studies	Permission offers reduced clutter and search costs to the consumer and precise targeting to the marketer
Krishnamurthy	2001	Meta-analysis	Multi	Information processing	Interest in Opt-in and Level of Participation	n/a	Relevance, monetary benefit, and costs (i.e. information entry, message processing, privacy) determine interest and participation
Barwise and Strong	2002	Field	SMS texting	Effectiveness	Satisfaction	Trial for new wireless service provider	Mobile is best suited for low-cost, everyday purchases aimed at younger consumers
Tezinde, Smith and Murphy	2002	Field	Direct and e-mail	Influencing online opt-in through offline marketing	Response rate	University alumni	Relevance (i.e. personalization, brand equity, prior relationship) influences consumer response

Table B-1 continued

Authors	Year	Method	Media	Focus	DVs	Context	Conclusion
Dufrene et al.	2005	Field	E-mail	Longitudinal changes in brand attitudes	Brand attitudes, trust, purchase intent	E-mails from tech companies	Exposure to e-mail increased brand attitudes, trust and purchase intentions
Brey et al.	2007	Field	Web and e-mail	Methods used in	Permission	Canadian tourists	Socio-demographics, online habits, trip specifics and web preferences determine willingness to offer information
Muk	2007	Field	Mobile phones	Attitude-intention relationship	Permission intentions	General	Attitudes towards SMS advertising affects intentions more than social influence
Barnes and Scornavacca	2008	Field	Smartphones	Exposure affects opt-in	Permission	Texting survey	Income, gender, volume of message received and prior purchases lead to opt-in
Jayawardhena et al.	2009	Field	Mobile phones	Antecedents of giving permission; gender effects	Permission	General	Institutional trust is the main factor; men desire control, women do not
Persuad and Azhar	2012	Field	Smartphones	Motivations to participate in mobile and/or location-based marketing	Permission intentions	General	Shopping style, trust, and value motivate intentions to participate

Table B-1 continued

Authors	Year	Method	Media	Focus	DVs	Context	Conclusion
Jolley et al.	2013	Field Experiment	E-mail	Content of messages	Retention	Online gambling	Permission email is effective in online retention
Watson, McCarthy, and Rowley	2013	Field	Smartphones	Consumer resistance to mobile marketing	Use of QR codes	General	Consumers still resist mobile marketing, but could use pull marketing if easy and includes benefits
Kumar, Zhang and Luo	2014	Lab	E-mail	Timing of customer opt-in and opt-out	Permission and opt-out	Retail customers of home improvement products	Consumers feeling high marketing intensity less likely to opt-in and be quick to opt-out

Table B-2

Passages given to each experimental group

Category	Manipulation	Passage
Sports Teams	Transactional	Imagine that the [sports team] have just created a new app for your mobile phone. The purpose of the new app is to offer you valuable coupons and exclusive promotional codes that will not be available anywhere else. For example, the [sports team] may select you to receive a coupon offering over 50% off of your next purchase from the team store.
	Relational	Imagine that the [sports team] have just created a new app for your mobile phone. The purpose of the new app is to help you have conversations with the [sports team] by sending and receiving pictures or chat messages. The app will also give users advance information on team events and offer exclusive access to select media content that will not be available anywhere else. For example, the [sports team] may select you to receive a link to a video of behind the scenes footage of the team's coaches and athletes.
	Non-ephemeral	The app works like Facebook Messenger in that communications from the [sports team] are saved in the app for you to access whenever you choose. Messages you send and receive with the [sports team] are archived and remain in the app permanently, unless you decide to delete them.
	Ephemeral	The app works like Snapchat in that your messages and those from the [sports team] will only be available for 24 hours. After 24 hours, if the message has not been opened, it will self-delete and disappear. If a message is opened by you or the [sports team] it can be seen for 10 seconds before it is permanently erased, unless users take a screenshot within 10 seconds to save the message.
Restaurants	Transactional	Imagine that [restaurant] has just created a new app for your mobile phone. The purpose of the new app is to offer you valuable coupons that will not be available anywhere else. For example, [restaurant] may select you to receive a coupon offering over 50% off of a new menu item.

Table B-2 Continued

Category	Manipulation	Passage
Restaurants	Relational	Imagine that [restaurant] has just created a new app for your mobile phone. The purpose of the new app is to help you have conversations with [restaurant] by sending and receiving pictures or chat messages. The app will also give users advance information on new menu items and offer exclusive access to select media content that will not be available anywhere else. For example, [restaurant] may select you to receive a link to a preview of new menu offerings that the restaurant is considering.
	Non-ephemeral	The app works like Facebook Messenger in that communications from [restaurant] are saved in the app for you to access whenever you choose. Messages you send and receive with [restaurant] are archived and remain in the app permanently, unless you decide to delete them.
	Ephemeral	The app works like Snapchat in that your messages and those from [restaurant] will only be available for 24 hours. After 24 hours, if the message has not been opened, it will self-delete and disappear. If a message is opened by you or [restaurant] it can be seen for 10 seconds before it is permanently erased, unless users take a screenshot within 10 seconds to save the message.
Clothing	Transactional	Imagine that [clothing brand] has just created a new app for your mobile phone. The purpose of the new app is to offer you valuable coupons and exclusive promotional codes that will not be available anywhere else. For example, [clothing brand] may select you to receive a coupon offering over 50% off of a new product or design online or in-store.
	Relational	Imagine that [clothing brand] has just created a new app for your mobile phone. The purpose of the new app is to help you have conversations with [clothing brand] by sending and receiving pictures or chat messages. The app will also give users advance information on new product designs and offer exclusive access to select media content that will not be available anywhere else. For example, [clothing brand] may select you to receive a link to a preview of new products and designs by the brand.

Table B-2 Continued

Category	Manipulation	Passage
Clothing	Non-ephemeral	*Same as "Restaurants"*
	Ephemeral	*Same as "Restaurants"*
Musicians	Transactional	Imagine that [musician] has just created a new app for your mobile phone. The purpose of the new app is to offer you valuable coupons and exclusive promotional codes that will not be available anywhere else. For example, [musician] may select you to receive a coupon offering over 50% off of a new album or concert ticket.
	Relational	Imagine that [musician] has just created a new app for your mobile phone. The purpose of the new app is to help you have conversations with [musician] by sending and receiving pictures or chat messages. The app will also give users advance information on new music and offer exclusive access to select media content that will not be available anywhere else. For example, [musician] may select you to receive a link to a preview of a new song that the artist is working on.
	Non-ephemeral	*Same as "Restaurants"*
	Ephemeral	*Same as "Restaurants"*

Table B-3

List of measure and scale items

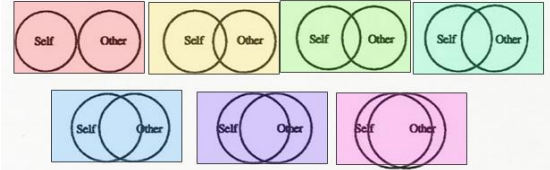| Scale	Items
Fear of Missing Out Adapted from Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell (2013)	a. I fear others have more rewarding experiences with [brand category] than I do b. I fear my friends have more rewarding experiences with [brand category] than I do c. I get worried when I find out there is a sale or special concerning my favorite [brand category] that I can't take advantage of d. I get anxious when I haven't seen the latest from my favorite [brand category] e. It is important that I have all the inside information from my favorite [brand category] f. Sometimes, I wonder if I spend too much time keeping up with what is going on with my favorite [brand category] g. It bothers me when I miss an opportunity from one of my favorite [brand category] h. When I have a good experience concerning my favorite [brand category] it is important for me to share the details online (e.g. updating status) i. When I miss out on a big event concerning my favorite [brand category] it bothers me j. When I go on vacation, I continue to keep tabs on what my favorite [brand category] are doing 5-point scale from (1) "Not at all true of me," to (5) "Extremely true of me."
Trust Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Sabol 2002	How would you describe [brand]? a. Very undependable—Very dependable b. Very incompetent—Very competent c. Of very low integrity—Of very high integrity d. Very unresponsive to customers—Very responsive to customers 7-point bipolar scale
Loyalty Yoo & Donthu, 2001	How loyal are you to [brand]? a. I consider myself to be loyal to [the brand]. b. [The brand] would be my first choice. c. I will always (eat/buy/watch) [the brand] if it is possible. 7-point scale from (1) "Strongly Disagree," to (7) "Strongly Agree."

Table B-3 Continued

Scale	Items
Identification Tropp & Wright, 2001	INSTRUCTIONS: Please highlight by clicking on the picture below that best describes your relationship with [brand] where "self" refers to you and "other" refers to [brand].

Length of Relationship	When was the first time you remember an interaction with the [brand]?
Engagement Intentions	How interested are you in signing up for the new [brand] app? Not interested—Very interested I would not sign up—I would definitely sign up I would not download the app—I would download the app 7-point bipolar scale

Table B-4

Means and standard deviations for the marketing orientation x product category interaction

Product Category	Orientation	Mean	SD	N
Restaurants	Transactional	5.27	1.95	37
	Relational	3.96	2.00	51
Clothing	Transactional	5.47	1.63	32
	Relational	3.92	2.24	37
Musicians	Transactional	3.23	2.52	14
	Relational	6.27	.663	11
Sports Teams	Transactional	4.69	2.06	42
	Relational	4.60	1.91	35

APPENDIX C

INFORMATION SHEET PROVIDED BY TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Lane Wakefield, a researcher from Texas A&M University. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to investigate how people use social media.

Why Am I Being Asked To Be In This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are competent with the English language.

How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?

260 people (participants) will be invited to participate in this study online.

What Are the Alternatives to being in this study?

The alternative to being in the study is not to participate.

What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Your participation in this study will last up to 10 minutes during a single online session.

Are There Any Risks To Me?

The things that you will be doing are no more risks than you would come across in everyday life. There is a minimal risk of a breach of privacy or confidentiality.

Although the researchers have tried to avoid risks, you may feel that some questions/procedures that are asked of you will be stressful or upsetting. You do not have to answer anything you do not want to.

Are There Any Benefits To Me?

There are no direct benefits.

Will There Be Any Costs To Me?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

Will I Be Paid To Be In This Study?

You will receive payment of up to $1. Disbursement will be conducted by Amazon and will occur after you have submitted the survey.

Will Information From This Study Be Kept Private?

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Lane Wakefield will have access to the records.

Information about you will be stored in computer files protected with a password.

Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Who may I Contact for More Information?

You may contact the Research Assistant, Lane Wakefield, MS Ed. and PhD Candidate, to tell him/her about a concern or complaint about this research at 979-845-3109 or lwakefield@tamu.edu.

 For questions about your rights as a research participant, to provide input regarding research, or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office by phone at 1-979-458-40671-979-458-4067, toll free at 1-855-795-86361-855-795-8636 FREE, or by email at irb@tamu.edu

What if I Change My Mind About Participating?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide to not begin or to stop participating at any time.   If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no effect on any status or relationship with Texas A&M University.

By completing the survey(s), you are giving permission for the investigator to use your information for research purposes.

No signature is required.

Thank you,

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College Station, TX 77843-4243
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