

## ABSTRACT

### Intimacy Issues: A Content Analysis of Intimacy Levels and Engagement Rates Between Celebrities and Influencers on Instagram

Carlye Elizabeth Thornton, M.A.

Mentors: Mia Moody-Ramirez, Ph.D.

The development of social media marketing has amplified the value of peer recommendations, leading brands to utilize the inclusive nature of Instagram to employ celebrity endorsement and/or influencer marketing techniques. Though the two strategies are different, individuals outside the industry often confuse them, resulting in lower engagement rates and credibility. The purpose of this research is to establish the type of relationships celebrities and influencers have with their followers and to recognize their differences. By using Consumer-Brand Relationship Theory, Social Influence Theory and Para-Social Interaction Theory, the researcher identified key components of online intimacy and analyzed Instagram content from three celebrities (Kendall Jenner, Ariana Grande and Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson) and three influencers (Miranda Sings, Lilly Singh and Tyler Oakley). The researcher examined N = 320 Instagram posts to determine the presence of intimacy and calculate engagement rates.

*Key Words: consumer-brand relationship theory, social influence theory, para-social interaction theory, intimacy, celebrity endorsement, influencer marketing, social media*

Intimacy Issues: A Content Analysis of Intimacy Levels and Engagement Rates  
Between Celebrities and Influencers on Instagram

by

Carlye Elizabeth Thornton, B.A.

A Thesis

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Sara Stone, Ph.D, Chairperson

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Approved by the Thesis Committee

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Mia Moody-Ramirez, Ph.D., Chairperson

---

Elizabeth M. Bates, Ph.D.

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James Roberts, Ph.D.

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Eric Ames, M.A.

Accepted by the Graduate School  
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J. Larry Lyon, Ph.D., Dean

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## DEDICATION

To Carl and Marjorie Cummings, my inspiration and connection to higher education; my amazing parents, my beloved sisters, and the Mallard Pointe Family for the endless support and w(h)ine; and the bright futures that await Maggie and Andrew.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Inspiration and Introduction

#### *Fyre Festival*

In 2017, rapper Ja Rule and Billy McFarland launched promotional efforts for Fyre Festival, a luxury music festival. Unlike popular music festivals such as Coachella, Austin City Limits or Bonnaroo, Fyre Festival was boasted as the “cultural experience of the decade,” by offering a remarkable, one-of-a-kind adventure including exclusive chartered transportation to the Bahamas, luxurious lodging, personal chefs and intimate concert settings.

Ja Rule and McFarland hired an array of celebrities (called Fyre Starters), including Jamie Foxx, Kendall Jenner and Brandon Flowers, to promote the festival on social media. These individuals – who became famous by trade – were chosen because of their popularity among the general public. They targeted the millennial demographic in hopes of changing the reputation of music festivals for good.

The first official post for Fyre Festival featured supermodels “frolicking and dancing on a beach” with mysterious text describing “an immersive music festival . . . on the boundaries of the impossible” (Burrough, 2017). Similar videos surfaced throughout the winter months, provoking consumers to engage and entertain the idea of purchasing a ticket. The production value of the social content was incredible. Many music industry managers admitted it was “one of the greatest social media campaigns [they’d] ever seen” (Burrough, 2017).

Even so, Fyre Festival would soon be called “the biggest scam of the year” (Burrough, 2017). The first day of the festival did not even get underway before social media erupted with evidence of an excursion-gone-wrong. Instead of an exotic, exclusive musical experience, it was described as “Lord of the Flies dystopia meets social-media hysteria, circa 2017” (Burrough, 2017). The luxury cabanas appeared to be disaster-relief tents ordered from Amazon; they were not completely constructed, either. The lavish culinary spread turned out to be wedges of whole-wheat bread, sliced cheese and other offerings resembling garbage scraps. In addition, guests lost their luggage between overbooked flights and were stranded on an unfamiliar island. It was a scene of unfulfilled promises.

Between personal accounts of the event and surfacing lawsuits, the press took to their platforms, shaming the Fyre Starters for the stranded and misled festival-goers. Instead of labeling Fyre Starters as celebrities (like Ja Rule and McFarland had intended), articles claimed it was influencer marketing that led consumers to their demise (Burrough, 2017; Simpson, 2017; Roberts, 2017; Levin, 2017).

Up until this point, the popularity of and appreciation for influencer marketing had been on the rise. Brands were ditching tone-deaf celebrity endorsement strategies and turning to the fresh-faced influencer with a following all their own (Veissi, 2017). The misuse of terminology and the lack of precise definitions threatened to invalidate influencer marketing credibility forever (Friedman, 2017).

### *Intimacy Over Idolatry*

The development of social media marketing has amplified the value of peer recommendations, so much so that “consumers feel empowered to share their opinions

and experiences one-to-many” (De Veirman, 2017). In contrast to traditional advertising, social media paves an avenue for two-way dialogue and encourages community rather than conformity.

Though there are many ways to execute a social media campaign, celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing tend to be the most prevalent marketing techniques (Knoll, 2015). Over time, influencer marketing tactics have become favored within the advertising industry. Consumers once exalted celebrity endorsement spots, leaping at any chance to be like the rich and famous. This method is primarily utilized by big-name corporations, but it is often upstaged by the authentic actions of influencer marketing (Callahan, 2017). Many studies have indicated this is due to the personal nature of influencer content versus the sponsored structure of celebrity endorsement (Abidin, 2014; Ots, 2015; Pedroni, 2016). Regardless of preference, brands are opting for a more intimate approach when pitching to consumers (Abidin, 2014).

While research gauging the effects of social media marketing expands, operational definitions for celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing have yet to be solidified. Several studies indicate brands use both tactics, but are often unable to differentiate between them. The press continues to misuse and confuse the methodologies (as in the case of Fyre Festival), resulting in lower engagement rates and credibility (Knoll, 2016). The primary researcher does not know of any study that focuses specifically on the type of relationship these esteemed personalities have with their followers. The lack of literature in this area marks the present study necessary.

### *Structure of Study*

Through a content analysis of the most popular celebrity and influencer Instagram accounts, this study evaluates the levels of intimacy and engagement rates to establish distinct operational definitions for celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing. This way each technique can be used and analyzed appropriately and efficiently by industry professionals. The qualitative data (levels of intimacy) were quantified through thematic analysis and then assimilated through SPSS, a statistical program. The quantitative data (engagement rates) were generated using calculations established by industry professionals. Based on a review of the literature and preliminary results, conclusions implicate that while there is no correlation between intimacy levels and engagement rates, influencers generally rank higher in terms of intimacy and engagement than celebrities.

This discussion also examines literature from previous studies regarding marketing strategies and their effectiveness and social media frameworks. Consumer-Brand Relationship Theory, Social Influence Theory and Para-Social Interactions Theory guide this course of study – each of which is reviewed for its relevancy and historical value. In all, this composition furthers the literature on determining the best marketing practices and shapes the conversation on the most effective way to engage consumers.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A Review of the Literature

To provide a deeper understanding of the evolution and usage of celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing on social media, this section explores terminology, applied theories and relevant findings. Since this discussion involves an examination of new marketing strategies, it is necessary to review the foundations of traditional marketing, social media marketing and their effectiveness. This overview will provide a brief history of marketing strategy and how it has been advanced.

The literature regarding celebrity endorsement far outweighs that of influencer marketing, enabling the misuse of both practices. Therefore, the characteristics of each practice will be evaluated to furnish a well-rounded comprehension of its purpose. Their inherent differences validate the researcher's strong case for establishing operational definitions.

In addition, there will be a brief dialogue regarding Instagram, its differences from other social media platforms and its application concerning marketing strategies.

All types of advertisement and promotion in the United States are regulated by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). With the evolution of new marketing strategies, the FTC has amended and generated new regulations and guidelines in order to protect consumers and brands. This review will impart a history of the FTC's early enforcement efforts and summarize the most recent revisions regarding social media marketing.

Lastly, the theories applied to this study will be outlined for their relevancy to this topic and historical value. Three theories guide this discussion: Consumer-Brand Relationship Theory, Social Influence Theory and Para-Social Interactions Theory.

### *Traditional Marketing and its Effectiveness*

Both celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing methods were derived through a series of improved marketing techniques, beginning with the earliest marketing concepts. Historians mark the first appearance of advertising schemes as far back as the early 1500s. The emergence of new platforms was recognized in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century with advertisements on radio and television. Throughout the late 1900s, advertising and marketing became interchangeable terms (as they will be for this study).

Marketing is traditionally defined as the action or business of promoting and selling products or services, including market research and advertising. It is a fundamental practice of any business plan and used to achieve a common goal or result established by a brand or corporation (Kahn, 2005). As such, the effectiveness of marketing services “is a recognized, important dimension of marketing performance” (Kahn, 2005).

The effectiveness of a brand’s marketing is contingent on the execution of an entire campaign. Industry professionals “determine goals, monitor and interpret the environment, and regulate actions” in campaigns prior to the end result (Kahn, 2005). Ultimately, it “depends on the ability to implement marketing plans successfully at various levels of the respective organization” (Kahn, 2005). These procedures mirror the RACE model (Research, Analysis, Communication, Evaluation) often implemented by those in the industry.

Traditional marketing – including print, radio and television – peaked in the 1990s (Davis, 2013). Technological advancements made it easier for corporations to strategize and deploy promotional campaigns. The promotional industry spent the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century primarily focused on the brand instead of the brand’s target audience, undermining the cornerstone of consumerism (Mickey, 2015).

It was recently concluded “the era of an advertiser buying an ad in a magazine remains, but [the publication] is not looking to put an ad in media property as much as [it] is trying to build a relationship with an audience” (Mickey, 2015). In short, brands and marketing professionals realized the consumer’s demand should be the focus of any production or campaign process.

At the turn of the millennium, the marketing industry geared up to “combine resources” with emerging digital platforms (Mickey, 2015). The advent of the world wide web and affordable home computers made way for online marketing opportunities.

### *Social Media Marketing and its Effectiveness*

Social media marketing models emerged in 2003 (Davis, 2013). While some agencies feared the fallout that could accompany a new trend, most professionals recognized the benefits of utilizing this new media (Papasolomou, 2012; Lipsman, 2012; Michaelidou, 2011). Industry professionals discovered that the social media marketing process was “inexpensive, delivers instant international reach, offers great real-time feedback and reach[es] millions of people” everyday (Papasolomou, 2012).

By and by, advertisers acknowledged social media supplied ability to foster user interaction (reach) “by sharing information, opinions, knowledge or interests” through social media (Papasolomou, 2012).



In contrast to traditional marketing vehicles, social media marketing allowed for a two-way dialogue between brands and consumers (Knoll, 2015). Firms and agencies noted traditional marketing models could not continue to rely on ads alone. From 2010 onward, social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter developed, offering unique features to each user. From this, brands recognized social media as a mandatory marketing method to generate authentic relationships with consumers (Papasolomou, 2012).

Marijke De Veirman noted “consumers are not only skeptical about traditional brand driven advertising, they are also empowered to bypass it because it is considered intrusive and disruptive to daily activities” (De Veirman, 2017). Social media marketing is interlaced in the lives of those who have created an account – it is second nature to the modern consumer (De Veirman, 2017).

Last, and most importantly, social media marketing allowed the industry to track the effectiveness of their content by using in-platform analytics. While traditional marketing tactics required hours of ROI calculation, social media statistics were rendered in real time with each new post (Knoll, 2015). With one report, marketers were able to look at how many people saw the content – impressions – and how many people interacted with the content via likes or comments – engagement (Boyd, 2008).

### *Brand Content on Social Media*

In recent years, scholars have concluded social media is a web-based service that enables users (famous or not) to not only meet strangers, but also relish in “connections that would not otherwise be made” (Boyd, 2008). The evolution of social media marketing allows brands to post intimate content by way of anecdotes, photos, videos or

other material related to their products. In return, brand fans voluntarily interact with the content available to them (Michaelidou, 2011). A brand's presences on social media has become an essential part of connecting brands and consumers (Papasolomou, 2012).

In 2011, it was reported more than half of social media users followed brands on social media. The same report indicated American brands were spending a total of \$4.3 billion on social media strategies (de Vries, 2012). Results indicated brand accounts on social media strengthen brand-consumer relationships, as well as provide a source of information and social benefits for the followers. Brand social media accounts and their content increases brand awareness and solidifies brand identity (Michaelidou, 2011).

### *Celebrity Endorsement*

The use of celebrities as part of marketing and advertisement strategies has been a common practice for decades (McCracken, 1989). A celebrity is modernly defined as an individual who enjoys heightened public recognition based on their trade, be it acting, songwriting, modeling, athleticism or other adept professions (Spears, 2013). These skills make a celebrity attractive to brand advertisers. The celebrity is able to impact and connect with audiences through a mutual partnership: a brand experiences an increase in sales while a celebrity receives monetary incentive (Callahan, 2017). A celebrity's clout could be the key to reeling in consumers to buy a particular product, or service. Recent examples of celebrity endorsements include:

- Britney Spears for Pepsi
- LeBron James for Sprite
- Adam DeVine for Best Buy
- Priyanka Chopra and Selena Gomez for Pantene
- Olivia Munn, Julianne Hugh, and Adam Levine for Proactiv
- Neil Patrick Harris for Heineken
- Tiger Woods for Rolex

The use of celebrity endorsement not only benefits the brand, but appeals to consumers. This phenomenon was first observed in 1989 by Grant McCracken. In three steps, he explains the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement through the meaning transfer model. First, it is assumed a celebrity's stature is embedded in societal spheres. Second, it is understood the celebrity's standing can be transferred to endorse a product or service. Third, consumers embrace the relationship between the celebrity and materials and use them for self-identification purposes (McCracken, 1989). This three-way relationship provides a stable foundation for celebrity endorsement.

In 2016, an article from the Strategic Content Marketing section of Medium analyzed the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements among consumers. Aside from pure idolatry, the article highlighted two points: 1) celebrities can appeal to a wide range of demographics; 2) people remember the advertisement after seeing it because they recognize the person ("5 Reasons," 2016). These modern adaptations reflect McCracken's initial findings.

Although prior research reinforces the connection celebrity endorsements pose between product sales and consumer ratio, new studies sense an oncoming change. In today's market, consumers recognize brand appreciation and expect endorsers to display an equal amount of affinity when promoting materials (Felix, 2014).

Recent analyses regarding celebrity endorsement methods evaluated the likeability of celebrities used and the perceived celebrity motive concerning specific products. A study by Bergkvist (2015) revealed positive brand attitude is conducive to consumers recognition of legitimate celebrity motive. Positive brand attitude is achieved by strong attention to detail, in which the brand is hyper-conscious of the voices and

appearances used to promote their products (Bergkvist, 2015). If consumers perceive the celebrity was purely invested in the product they are promoting, it would prove “a significant, positive effect on attitude toward the brand” (Bergkvist, 2015).

While consumers enjoy the allure of a celebrity figure using products, they also value integrity and transparency (Dom, 2016). For example, if Britney Spears promoted Pepsi products, consumers would expect her to actually prefer them to other soft drink products (this is known as celebrity motive). Research concludes “brand fit is a key determinant of celebrity endorsement effectiveness” (Dom, 2016). False appropriation of product usage could backfire on the celebrity and the brand. Consumers easily recognize if a celebrity prefers the products they endorse or promote. Even though celebrity endorsement strategies strongly influence consumer decisions, further research advised that brands “should put more [effort into] choosing endorsers who are well matched with products” (Silvera, 2004).

A report conducted by Johannes Knoll in 2017 analyzed 46 studies that evaluated celebrity endorsement return on investment (ROI). Research determined the popular and often glamorous strategy resonates as an effective marketing technique, but brands should be particularly selective about the celebrity they choose and that they complement the product they are promoting (Knoll, 2017).

In all, celebrity endorsement strategies remain a prominent feature in industry campaigns. In recent years, consumers have placed value on authentic and credible partnerships which do not always result in celebrity spokespersons, thus making way for influencer marketing tactics.

## *Influencer Marketing*

Influencer marketing stemmed from branded content marketing on social media throughout the early 2000s. In 2001, Theresa M. Senft coined the term “microcelebrity” as a means of branding one’s self online. Using images, video, blogging and broadcastings, Senft determined an individual had the ability to “present themselves as a coherent, branded package to their online fans” (Senft, 2008). This was influencer marketing in the making.

Bloggers were the first to adopt this strategy between 2003 and 2005. Their approach to promotional posts included long, detailed editorials, effectively boosting sales for the products they endorsed. Yet, by 2013 blog readership had decreased drastically due to the rise of social media platforms like Instagram. Social media allowed for the same type of promotional content in the blogosphere, but was more appealing to younger consumers and better fit mobile platforms. Its versatility went unmatched (Abidin, 2014).

Regardless of platform, this new era of influencer marketing eclipsed the usage of celebrity endorsement strategies. Bloggers embraced social media as an additional avenue for promoting their personal brand. The inclusive nature of social media structure enabled what was not possible before. Now, consumers could engage and influencers could respond, forming a type of virtual bond (Abidin, 2014).

Throughout this transition, studies were proving consumers preferred to make monetary decisions based on what their peers were purchasing. The allure of online companionship braced that idea. Now, consumers felt a part of a niche community rather than an overlooked point in corporate marketing campaigns (Ots, 2015).

As influencers continued to conquer promotional spheres, agencies took notice and initiated partnerships to make the influencer experience easier between brand and influencer. The agencies represented influencers and assisted with the negotiating processes between brands (Woods, 2016). During this stage of development, influencers began experimenting outside of their blogs and websites. Blogging platforms, such as WordPress or Medium, remained home-base for many influencers, but they also implemented their tactics on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, making for a multifaceted personal brand (Woods, 2016).

Influencer marketing rooted itself in social media marketing strategies, with the exception that brands no longer control the content – the influencers did. Influencers maintain an authentic and transparent persona, then promote products or services that hew to the personality they have cultivated. Normally, an influencer shares “content that resonates with a specific audience” (Callahan, 2017). This ranges from food to lifestyle, fashion to electronics. There is an influencer for everyone – and at a fraction of the price of a celebrity (Callahan, 2017).

This process is what makes influencers so attractive to consumers and brands. “Consumers are much more likely to positively perceive and react to a [product] message that comes from a trusted friend or persona over a sponsored post that comes from a company” (Woods, 2016). Woods determined “influencer marketing [had] the ability to trigger 11 times more return on investment than other forms of traditional advertising” (Woods, 2016).

A segment from CBS’s *60 Minutes* paralleled this finding, stating influencers were among the innovative elite and proficient with new strategies that impact people in

their respective spheres (Whitaker, 2016). Influencers have the ability to contribute to brand missions, innovations and equity, which makes the new method a mutual beneficiary to the brand as well as the consumer (Ots, 2011).

A Nielsen Global Survey from 2013 indicated influencer marketing is the most trusted source of consumer information. Additionally, consumers are more likely to engage and purchase an item when influencer marketing is at play. This method emboldens brands to shape their relationships with consumers in a less intrusive outlet. It produces higher levels of power when compared to traditional marketing schemes by allowing consumers to engage in a new experience on their terms (Weiss, 2014).

In 2015, it was reported that 85 percent of American companies had already implemented influencer marketing into their current strategies (Zietek, 2016). Of the 85 percent, these American brands are spending more than \$255 million on influencer marketing each month (Frier, 2016).

Each year, Edelman Public Relations generates Edelman's Trust Barometer, an assessment on worldwide trust. The 2018 report indicated consumers crave the truth and, in contrast to recent years, consumers are turning to industry experts for purchasing decisions. Influencers fall into this category due the variety of industries they represent, such as fashion, travel, technology and food (Edelman, 2018).

Most recently, influencers have been considered consumerism catalysts, driving consumers "to seek out information and share ideas, information, and recommendations with other people" rather than trust the plethora of knowledge circulating around the globe (Keller, 2015). Influencers generate impressive reach for an array of products and services, while also "building actual trust and purchase intent" (Callahan, 2017). Instead

of focusing on mass approaches, influencer marketing hones in on human-to-human relationships and connects consumers with brands they respect.

Influencer marketing is considered a new methodology. As such, there is very little research to examine. This study intends to add to the growing research regarding this type of marketing strategy.

### *About Instagram*

Kevin Systrom and Mike Kreiger founded Instagram in 2010. It launched with a different approach to social media: visual storytelling. In contrast to other popular platforms like Facebook and Twitter, Instagram offered a minimalist template and allowed users to fill it with their creative pictures and videos (Abidin, 2014). Since its debut, Instagram has received several awards, including Apple's App Store App of the Year in 2011, and has continued to update and innovate.

In 2012, Systrom and Kreiger sold Instagram to Facebook for \$1 billion to decrease competition and instate stronger management styles. Since Facebook's acquisition, Instagram has introduced a variety of new features including video sharing, multiple photo uploads and Instagram Stories (Instagram.com, 2017). In 2016, a study found Instagram was considered the most important social network by American consumers. According to Statista, Instagram is the most popular networking site, boasting more than 500 million active users (Instagram.com, 2016).

In terms of social media marketing, "Instagram is less about making memories to keep around forever and more about catering to an audience" (Abidin, 2014). Since the platform leaves a lot of room for creative freedom, celebrity endorsers and influencers are encouraged to curate their content to lure a specific type of consumer. From there,



Instagram can act “as an innovative medium for advertising in the electronic market place” (Abidin, 2014). Instagram lends itself well to celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing techniques due to its photo and video sharing features – “products and brands can be visually imaged and named in the caption of the photo” (De Veirman, 2017).

As social media continues to garner industry attention “and concerns about ad-blocking grow, [social media] marketing has become increasingly important to brands” (De Veirman, 2017). Instagram has changed its algorithm several times since its conception, starting with various platform redesigns and – most recently – altering the order in which posts appear in a user’s feed. This change has challenged celebrities and influencers to be more intentional with their material (De Veirman, 2017).

Industry professionals discovered marketing on Instagram (and other social media platforms) does not rely on high follower counts, but rather the quality of content. It was reported that 43 percent of millennials rank authentic content as more important than brand popularity (Carlson, 2016). Focusing on extreme follower ratios instead of curating felicitous content “may lower the brand’s perceived uniqueness and consequently brand attitudes” (De Veirman, 2017).

While “relationships on Instagram do not always entail reciprocal activities,” previous research has revealed celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing strategies are better received on this platform (De Veirman, 2017). Consumers who engage with these high-profile users feel they are “accessible, believable, intimate and [relatable]” (De Veirman, 2017).

### *Federal Trade Commission Regulations*

The premise of this study is reinforced by the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) attempts to regulate the practice of celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing on social media.

By order of President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1969, the FTC made strides to regulate advertising methods with the consumer in mind. Dorothy Cohen's study from January 1969 discussed the reasoning for the FTC's involvement in advertising methods altogether. The Commission's purpose was (and is) to "protect the consumer" from information provided by advertising and marketing industries that consumers might consider "insufficient, false or misleading" (Cohen, 1969).

Just as marketing campaigns have adjusted to technological advancements, so have the FTC's restrictions and guidelines. From traditional marketing schemes, social media strategy and influencer marketing initiatives, the FTC has sought to protect the consumer from unethical methods and outright lies.

In 2015, the FTC published a list of endorsement guidelines for celebrities and influencers to follow to refrain from being fined or suspended from practice (Woods, 2015). The official FTC tip sheet states if an influencer has "a financial connection to the company that hires [them]. . . [their] audience has a right to know about [the] relationship (Cameron, 2016). Moreover, the FTC suggests endorsers should be overtly transparent about the presence of an incentivized relationship so "consumers can make informed decisions" about the products appearing on their social media feeds (Cameron, 2015). In short, paid content on social media must be disclosed. Advertisements or promotions of

any kind should be “so clearly commercial in nature that they are unlikely to mislead consumers” (Cole, 2016).

While the FTC’s efforts are in good faith for the public, brands fear the regulations “make [promotional] posts seem less authentic, reducing their impact” among target audiences (Schelmetic, 2016).

On social media – including blogs, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – influencers reference their branded relationship “by including the words or hashtags: #ad or #sponsored in the post” (Woods, 2015). Additionally, celebrities and influencers have adopted language such as “in collaboration with” or “partnered with” along with to the approved hashtags.

### *Applied Theories*

#### *Consumer-Brand Relationship Theory*

Consumer-Brand Relationship Theory (commonly referred to as C-BRT) was primarily developed by Susan Fournier throughout the 1990s. This theory focuses on the relationships brands cultivate with consumers. At its core, Fournier proclaims C-BRT as the understanding of people and their wants, needs and identities. It also suggests “brand relationships are meaning-laden resources engaged to help people live their lives” (Fournier, 2009).

In the realm of consumer sciences, it has been universally understood that “consumers have no difficulty in consistently assigning personality qualities to inanimate brand objects” (Aaker, 1997). This concept has evolved through the 2000s. Today, consumers personify products and place value on brand relationships. These actions are

rooted in the consumers' desire to belong to a particular group or community (Fournier, 2009). Whether a brand employs celebrity endorsement or influencer marketing procedures, "consumers' acceptance of [their] attempts to humanize brands . . . [suggests] a willingness to entertain brands as vital members" of their social spheres (Fournier, 1998). In the past two decades brands have graduated from household names to being a part of a consumer's identity and community (Coupland, 2005)

To date, it has been determined "consumers and their [brands] have strong interdependence tendencies" (Coupland, 2005). Fournier's C-BRT ideology states "consumers play [an] active role as meaning makers in their brand relationships [by] adapting the marketers' brand meanings to fit their life projects, concerns and tasks" (Fournier, 2009). In return, consumers perceive brands "as an active, contributing member of [consumer] relationships" and receive positive attitude ratings (Fournier, 1997).

C-BRT supports this research by providing a framework for the relationship between brands and consumers. Celebrity endorsers and influencers facilitate the means for this relationship by contributing a greater potential for brand affinity and connectedness.

### *Social Influence Theory*

Established by a study on social power by John R. P. French and Bertram Raven in 1959, Social Influence Theory and its power refers to the influence of one person produced by a social agent, which could be a person, role, norm or group. These agents could represent a person's opinions, attitudes, values and desires (French, 1959).

In a more modern definition, Social Influence Theory examines how one's emotions, opinions and behaviors are affected by others. As a result, the way a person perceives oneself in relationship to others determines their reality of societal stature and value (Li, 2012).

This type of theory can be applied to many subjects, including the present discussion. In their landmark case, French and Raven disclosed “the phenomena of power and influence involve a dyadic relation between two agents [and their behavior]” (French, 1959). From this basic concept, French and Raven identified five different types of power: Reward, Coercive, Legitimate, Referent and Expert. Power can be passive or intentional, but impacts the tendencies and preference of consumers nevertheless (French, 1959).

For this study, the researcher identified Referent Power as the most relevant theoretical basis. Generally, Referent Power pertains to an individual who is influenced by a person or thing of high stature and attractiveness. This is determined by the individual's specific preferences and likely stems from their respect for and desire to be closely associated with this certain agent (French, 1959).

Social Influence Theory relates to Referent Power by focusing on “how an individual in a social network is influenced by the behaviors of others” (Li, 2012). There are two types of social influence: informational, which is the idea of accepting information from another as true fact, and normative, which is based on an inclination to belong and receive positive evaluations from those in a certain group or community (Kaplan, 1987). In addition to Referent Power, this research will also refer to normative influence when conducting content analyses since both celebrity endorsement and

influencer marketing strategies rely on the consumers' desire to connect with brands through personable relationships.

C-BRT will guide this study in the sense that both celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing strategies exert an immense amount of social power and facilitate spheres of influence.

### *Para-Social Interaction Theory*

In 1956, Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl determined the evolution of mass media resulted in the public's interest of the performers. Of course, in the 1950s Horton and Wohl were mainly referring to the advancements of radio, movies and television. Whether it be a radio host or a movie star, spectators attached themselves to these early media personalities as they made their way into the homes of millions. And though these connections were remote, to consumers, it appeared "they were in the circle of one's peers" and therefore a part of a performer's life on or off screen. This new phenomenon "gave the illusion of face-to-face relationship with the performer," thus establishing Para-Social Interaction Theory (PSI) (Horton and Wohl, 1959).

Early aspects of this theory were deemed one-sided since the receiver was always on the other end of a radio or television screen with no option of reciprocity. Horton and Wohl also indicated the relationship was "non-dialectal, controlled by the performer, and not susceptible of mutual development" (Horton and Wohl, 1956). Though it was fantasy, consumers of mass media derived these connections through "the primary relations of friendship and the family, characterized by intimacy, sympathy and sociability" (Horton and Wohl, 1959).

Indeed, the foundation of PSI is outdated in terms media growth. Even so, Horton and Wohl anticipated the effects of technological advancements such as online relationships. They predicted future forms of media would allow spectators to “make their feelings known to the performers” and inevitably develop a two-way conversation (Horton and Wohl, 1956).

Recently, scholars have incorporated this theory into research concerning social media marketing and the use of influencers as brand ambassadors. It has become more apparent that consumers make choices based on the opinions of their peers and friends (Domingos, 2001). With social media, celebrities and influencers embody this relationship, creating an intimate flow of discourse. This new type of strategy has resulted in a “new logic wherein media, marketing, and consumers are joined in friendships” (Colliander, 2011).

The modern effect of PSI allows for a seemingly transparent and unbiased relationship between consumer and brand. The use of celebrities or influencers in marketing techniques gives consumers a feeling of united interest with “‘people like [themselves]’ rather than a corporate-sponsored online presence” (Colliander, 2011). And further, brands experience an increased number of sales and overall positive attitudes with these strategies versus traditional marketing methods (Colliander, 2011).

### *Perceived Interconnectedness*

In 2015, Crystal Abidin contributed to PSI theory by introducing perceived interconnectedness, which explains how social media marketing appropriates and mobilizes intimacies across various consumer communities. While Horton and Wohl’s original framework pertained to television and radio, perceived interconnectedness

specifically focuses on the habits of high-profile social media accounts and the relationships they foster with their followers (Abidin, 2015). Social media content is “personal, direct and swift, and allow[s] for immediate interactivity and response from followers” (Abidin, 2015).

Through a revised model of communication, Abidin demonstrated that social media not only supports two-way dialogues, it also generates various levels of intimacy. These levels can be measured and applied to an array of tactics, strengthening the digital bond between brand and consumer. In association with PSI, perceived interconnectedness refers to the “closeness and relatability” consumers desire (Abidin, 2015). These findings make a new case for defining the effectiveness of social media marketing when comparing celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing strategies.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Hypotheses

Based on the review of prior literature, this study employs Consumer-Brand Relationship Theory, Social Influence Theory and Para-Social Interactions Theory to answer three hypotheses:

H1: Influencer content will contain more instances of intimacy when compared to celebrity content and interactivity on Instagram.

As the literature indicates, consumers seek opportunities for community on social media (Abidin, 2014; Michaelidou, 2011). May it be for personal connections or purchasing decisions, celebrities and influencers have shaped their online narratives to cater to the consumer (Knoll, 2015; De Veriman, 2017). The purpose of this hypothesis is to gauge the extent of personable dialogue celebrities and influencers include on their accounts. Since influencers are noted as a more trusted persona, the researcher predicted influencer content will have more instances of intimate content than celebrity content (Abidin, 2014; Ots, 2015; Woods, 2016).

H2: Influencers will have higher engagement rate averages when compared to celebrities.

Social media marketing effectiveness is not solely dependent on interpersonal relationship development (Papasolomou, 2012; Boyd, 2008). Previous research states professionals should consistently observe analytics and track content engagement in order to execute effective social media campaigns. Specifically,

engagement rates speak to the volume of interaction each post receives and legitimizes the strength of user-follower relationship (De Veirman, 2017; Knoll, 2015; Boyd, 2008). The researcher believed influencer accounts would enjoy higher engagement rates when compared to celebrity accounts.

H3: Higher intimacy level percentages will result in higher engagement rate percentages.

Since the success of social media marketing relies on intimate (or inclusive) relationships and positive analytics (i.e. engagement rates), the researcher wanted to explore the possibility of a connection between the two variables (Abidin, 2014; Ots, 2015; Woods, 2016; De Veirman, 2017; Knoll, 2015). The results of this hypothesis will determine if intimacy informs analytical data.

Regardless of the outcome, the conclusions from these hypotheses will reveal emerging marketing trends and mold future marketing procedures.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Methodology

This content analysis used a series of coding schemes and analysis of Instagram posts of selected celebrities and influencers from November 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017. The researcher studied the Instagram posts for levels of intimacy and engagement rates.

#### *Model Studies and Coding Scheme*

In a 2010 study on Twitter effectiveness, Meeyoung Cha focused on the behavior of Twitter users and their potential to persuade others. This research discovered three types of influence that could be translated into introductory levels of intimacy: indegree influence, retweet influence and mention influence. Indegree influence regards the number of followers a user has and signifies their social reach. Retweet influence measures the number of retweets a user receives and indicates their ability to be relatable to other individuals. Last, mention influence refers to how often a user's Twitter handle is mentioned, representing their approachability or lack thereof (Cha, 2010). This model provided a foundation for influence via social media and revealed that intimacy is a valued characteristic of online relationships.

Abidin's proposal for perceived interconnectedness is dependent on the presence of communicative intimacies (Abidin, 2015). For this study, "intimacy is understood as how familiar and close followers feel to an [online personality]" (Abidin, 2015).

According to Abidin, online intimacy can be expressed in four different ways based on

one's accessibility (how easy it is to approach a personality in digital and public spheres), believability (how convincing and realistic is the personality's depicted lifestyle and sentiment), authenticity (how genuine is the personality's depicted lifestyle and sentiment) and emulatability (how easy it is for followers to model themselves after a personality) (Abidin, 2015).

Though some of the posts may contain promotional content, Abidin suggests these elements are often disregarded "as long as followers feel familiar, close and emotionally attached to the [personality]" (Abidin, 2015).

Building on these two studies, the researcher developed a coding scheme in which levels of intimacy could be recognized and acknowledged within a celebrity's or influencer's Instagram persona. Specific terminology used in coding the intimacy of Instagram content included five characteristics: accessibility, believability, authenticity, emulatability and none. Multiple characteristics could be chosen, resulting in a higher level of intimacy.

### *Engagement Rates*

Regarding social media marketing, analytics are generally calculated through the social media application itself or by a third-party. While profile specifics tend to be private to the account owner, it is possible to manually calculate an array of analytics such as impressions, reach, engagement and engagement rate. Engagement rate directly refers to the percentage of followers actively engaging with posts.

For Instagram, engagement rate is calculated by totaling the number of likes and comments, then dividing it by the number of followers. This formula was developed by

the app developers, as well as public relations professionals. It continues to be used industry wide (Morse, 2016).

### *Instagram Account Selection*

To effectively test the proposed hypotheses, the researcher elected to study popular Instagram accounts based on information gathered by well-established and relevant industry publications.

*Business Insider*, a financial and business news website, published a list of the top ten celebrities on Instagram in November 2017. Based on the highest number of followers, the list named the following: Selena Gomez, Cristiano Ronaldo, Arianna Grande, Beyoncé, Kim Kardashian West, Taylor Swift, Kylie Jenner, Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, Justin Bieber and Kendall Jenner.

*Forbes*, a leading business magazine, compiled a list of the ten most popular influencers on Instagram of 2017 in late December. Several different categories of influencers made up this list, spanning from travel to tech, fitness to pets. Since *Business Insider*'s celebrity list was comprised of actors and music artists, the *Forbes* list containing the top ten entertainment influencers was selected for this study. This list was arranged by the number of followers, as well. The index of influencers included King Bach, Cameron Dallas, Shane Dawson, Hannah Hart, Ariel Martin, Miranda Sings, Tyler Oakley, Logan Paul, Lele Pons and Lilly Singh.

Due to the overwhelming amount of Instagram content, three personas from each list proved to be an appropriate amount of data for the researcher to examine for levels of intimacy and engagement. The researcher uploaded the separate lists to an online random

selection generator ([www.random.org](http://www.random.org)) and selected three names from each list. The selected accounts were as follows:

- Celebrity
  - Arianna Grande
  - Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson
  - Kendall Jenner
  
- Influencer
  - Miranda Sings
  - Tyler Oakley
  - Lilly Singh

### *Task Procedure and Data Analyses*

Two months – from November 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017 – of Instagram content were collected from all six candidates and stored in 4KStogram, a software used to download and sort Instagram data exclusively. This particular period was chosen to reflect the general expectation of intimacy and consumerism surrounding the holiday season (Kasser, 2014).

In analyzing the collected data, the researcher employed the IBM program SPSS, a widely used statistical analysis program for the social sciences. Instagram posts from the six selected celebrities and influencers were coded for present levels of intimacy using the previously mentioned characteristics.

To assure more accurate coding and data results, an intercoder-reliability processes was used. Participants were presented with a packet upon beginning coding procedures. Each packet contained an explanation on the levels of intimacy and a profile of each selected candidate. The profiles provided a brief overview of the celebrity or influencer, their known brand partnerships and Instagram statistics. Intercoder reliability was 90.0 percent for Kendall Jenner, 96.2 percent for Tyler Oakley, 91.0 percent for

Ariana Grande, 86.5 percent for Miranda Sings, 91.8 percent for Lilly Singh, and 88.0 percent for Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson. These percentages were calculated after two graduate students coded 20 percent of all Instagram posts in the sample.

Following the coding process, the researcher evaluated the engagement rates for each selected account. Since the amount of Instagram content varied between each selected account, the researcher calculated an average engagement rate. The percentages were then compared to the coding percentages to determine if the levels of intimacy were directly related to the engagement rate.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Results and Discussion

#### *SPSS Testing*

The researcher chose SPSS as the analysis program for this study because of its unique application in the social sciences. In addition to descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, standard deviation), an independent t-test was conducted to compare the presence of intimacy – or lack thereof – between celebrities and influencers. The Instagram accounts were grouped by content type (1 for influencer, 2 for celebrity). This study used a p value < .05 to find the significance of intimacy between celebrities and influencers.

In all, N = 320 Instagram posts from celebrities and influencers were examined between November 1, 2017-December 31, 2017, a total of 61 days. These posts could contain one photo, several photos (due to Instagram’s multiple upload feature), or a video. N = 0 posts were omitted from this study. A total of N = 26 posts for Kendall Jenner, N = 12 posts for Tyler Oakley, N = 31 posts for Ariana Grande, N = 35 posts for Miranda Sings, N = 55 posts for Lilly Singh, and N = 161 posts for Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson were analyzed for research.

#### *Specifics of Instagram Content Analysis*

Kendall Jenner (@kendalljenner) is considered to be a celebrity figure due to her supermodel status and static appearance on reality television. She is an active social media user, especially on Instagram where she enjoys 88.7 million followers. The majority of her photos depict her luxury lifestyle with affluent friends and family.



Occasionally, she will post promotional content in partnership with various brands. During the period of this study, Jenner posted on Instagram 26 times. Out of these 26 posts, 12 included some sort of intimate content in relation to the categories set forth by Crystal Abidin's interconnectedness concept: accessibility, believability, authenticity and emulatability (Abidin, 2015). The statistical results of her Instagram account can be reviewed in Table B.1.

Tyler Oakley (@tyleroakley) is labeled as an influencer personality. In the late 2000s, he garnered a large following on YouTube. This following transferred and increased with the evolution of social media platforms after 2010. The majority of Oakley's content is first uploaded to YouTube and then circulated to his social media channels. To date, 6.5 million people follow Oakley's Instagram account. Of all the accounts examined in this study, his posts are the least frequent. His feed appears to portray elements of his day-to-day life with occasional brand advertising and self-promotion. During the two-month period of this study, Oakley posted to Instagram 12 times, 10 of which were marked as containing intimate content. The statistical analysis of his Instagram account can be reviewed in Table B.2.

Ariana Grande (@arianagrande) is a teen actress turned prominent pop star, thus considered a celebrity. She has 118 million followers on Instagram. Grande's images display her celebrity status, complete with high-end vacations and professional photos from her concerts. During this analysis, Grande posted to Instagram 31 times. 14 of these posts included intimate content. The statistical analysis of her Instagram account can be reviewed in Table B.3.

Miranda Sings (@mirandasingsofficial) is a fictional account managed by Colleen Ballinger. Miranda (played by Ballinger) is an aspiring singer, but is unknowingly talentless and egotistical. Like Oakley, Miranda was first noticed on YouTube and her large internet following inevitably marked her as an influencer. She has since established social media accounts that portray the same quirky, neurotic personality. On Instagram, her photos reflect her curated lifestyle, promote her YouTube videos and periodically feature branded advertisements. Miranda has 6.5 million followers on Instagram. During this period of this study, Miranda posted 35 Instagram photos. 15 of these photos were considered to have intimate qualities. The statistical analysis of her Instagram account can be reviewed in Table B.4.

Lilly Singh (@iisuperwomani) is perhaps the only true Instagram influencer in this study. Her influencer status was acquired through her authentic and entertaining persona on Instagram. She has 7.3 million followers. During the period of this analysis, she posted 55 times, 46 of which were marked as having some sort of intimate content. The statistical analysis of her Instagram account can be reviewed in Table B.5.

Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson (@therock) is a well-known actor and public figure, placing him as a celebrity. He is very active on Instagram, featuring a mix of movie promotions, family outings and personal thoughts. Johnson boasts 102 million followers. During the period of this study, he posted to Instagram 161 times. 68 of these images included some sort of intimate content. The statistical analysis of his Instagram account can be reviewed in Table B.6.

## *Means and Significance*

### *Intimacy*

The first hypothesis claimed influencer content would have a greater presence of intimacy when compared to celebrity content. This is strongly supported when reviewing the frequency tables between each individual Instagram account. On average, between the specified dates, influencer accounts ( $M = 69.9$ ) contained a higher ratio of intimate content when compared to celebrity accounts ( $M = 44.5$ ).

However, when comparing the means of the two groups, results suggested there was no significant difference ( $p = .135$ ). This could be due to the small sample size of Instagram accounts. In all, the first hypothesis was not supported by test results. The full rendering of these results can be observed in Table B.1.-Table B.7. and Table C.1.

### *Engagement Rates*

The second hypothesis stated influencers would have higher engagement rate averages when compared to celebrities. This was supported by test results by way of descriptive statistics. Engagement rates only apply to a single post. After calculating the engagement rate of  $N = 320$  posts, an average engagement rate was computed for each of the six Instagram accounts. There was a marginal difference in the scores between influencers ( $M = 3.17$ ) and celebrities ( $M = 2.76$ ). These results can be reviewed in Table D.1.

### *Intimacy and Engagement Rates*

The third hypothesis predicted that higher intimacy means would result in higher engagement rate percentages. When calculating through Pearson's R correlation test, the

researcher discovered a low to moderate correlation result ( $r = .495$ ). This finding marginally supported the third hypothesis. This result can be found in Table E.1.

### *Discussion*

The lack of significant difference in means of intimacy between influencers and celebrities does not reveal that either variable is more intimate than the other. This result could be due to the low sample size within the two groups. Future research for this type of analysis calls for a larger sample of Instagram posts. With more posts, a more accurate count of intimate versus non-intimate posts could be determined, and therefore provide a more distinguished significance between the two variables.

The acceptance of the second hypothesis implies that the influencer's follower ratio is more engaged with influencer content than that of celebrity's follower ratio. This could reflect a stronger connection between consumer and influencer than consumer and celebrity.

Regarding the third hypothesis, results suggest there may be a connection between intimacy and engagement rates. Though the correlation is considered low to moderate, the presence may indicate there is a relationship between the demeanor of Instagram content and engagement rate.

The acceptance of the second and third hypothesis denotes a need for stronger operational definitions between celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing. Since influencer marketing appears to connect with the consumer more frequently and intimately, industry professionals should be diligent in their application of this technique versus celebrity endorsement.

Based on this research, the difference of definition for celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing pertains to the quality of brand affinity and the relationship with their followers. Celebrities can promote an array of products by primarily employing their heightened status as a means of reach. Influencer marketing should feature a range of social media personalities whose first priority is to be certain the brand they promote aligns with their personal values, and – further – the values of the followers.

In terms of academia, this study supports prior research implications that both celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing are effective strategies. However, the findings of this content analysis support that influencers are the more personable and authentic option when it comes to native content. Though they may be more recognizable and maintain greater followings, celebrity content still includes a heavy amount of self-promotion, be it for movies, music or branded products.

These results also add to the literature regarding social media marketing and its persistent evolution. Just as traditional marketing filtered more formats into the mix over five decades, it can be expected that social media marketing will garner multiple configurations – and at a much quicker pace.

In future studies, scholars should examine brand content exclusively to better understand and improve the use of celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing strategies. The results of this research could construct stronger definitions for celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Limitations and Conclusions

#### *Limitations*

Certain limitations and challenges should be discussed in order to effectively convey the more descriptive conclusions of this study.

In reference to the data collected, Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson’s sample size was much higher in comparison to all other selected accounts. This was due to the promotion of a new movie featuring Johnson. This difference in data amounts also could have contributed to the insufficient findings for the first hypothesis.

More broadly, there is not a standardized amount of social media content that produces successful research to the knowledge of the researcher. The development of digital scholarship has aided in the analysis of online resources and social media. Tools like data mining and word mapping programs are readily available for analyzing Twitter and Facebook content. However, there is not an official tool that is able to completely examine Instagram content. For this reason, data analysis was very time consuming, as the majority of analysis had to be recorded manually.

In all, the resources for exploring this ever-evolving industry are inadequate. Future studies like this one could shape and solidify methodologies for examining social media and its (seemingly) limitless applications.

## *Conclusions*

This research intended to demonstrate the differences between celebrity content and influencer content based on the presence of intimacy and engagement rates on Instagram. While the results do not supply enough data to announce revised operational definitions, they do provide a foreground for scholars to develop them in the future.

In the case of Fyre Festival, news outlets and spectators confused the promotional figures as influencers instead of celebrities. This led brands and consumers to question the credibility of influencers and their effectiveness as a marketing strategy, when in fact it was celebrities who promoted the festival. Not only did this cause a rift in multiple areas of trust, it revealed a methodological gap in the world of advertising. Industry professionals may be aware of the difference between celebrity and influencer, but fail to define the differences in the application, thus risking the extent of effectiveness.

In terms of the accounts used in this study, both celebrities and influencers portray friendly attitudes and convey a sense of transparency with the majority of their posts. These findings reflect the concepts that are a part of Para-Social Interaction Theory.

However, there are differences between the two content types that are worth noting. Influencer content is generally more intimate than celebrity content by encouraging followers to reach out in the comments or engage at public meet-ups. Moreover, results indicate celebrities use social media beyond inter-personal connection (i.e. album or movie promotion), whereas influencers place community before their own agendas.

The selected accounts for this study were listed based on high follower counts and not content. It is important to note that celebrities and influencers alike experience a

range of follower counts and engagement rates. To date, there is no way aggregate these individuals although some of their content may be just as (or more) effective. On the other hand, some influencers (like those mentioned in this study) may enjoy a type of celebrity status based on their popularity and prominence in their respective areas of expertise. This notion may be the very reason the significance levels in this study were marginal rather than outstanding. Perhaps there is a certain threshold in which an influencer becomes a celebrity and therefore becomes a different type of asset to the advertising industry.

A recent article from The Richards Group, a prominent advertising agency in Dallas, Texas, validates this idea, proposing that there are different levels of influencers based on follower counts and branded involvement (Mitchell, 2017). As the influencer phenomenon continues to gain traction within the industry, scholars should consider reviewing the effects of niche influencers.

Though certain limitations inhibited greater significance factors, this study is important when considering the future of social media marketing and the methods therein.

Based on the findings of this study, celebrity endorsement or influencer marketing methods parallel the concepts exhibited in C-BRT and Social Influence Theory. The presence of intimacy displayed in both celebrity and influencer content emits large amounts of Referent Power by giving followers/consumers a sense of belonging and inclusiveness. In return, these personalities receive praise for their authenticity and attention, strengthening their social influence.



Additionally, the two-way dialogue between these admired individuals and consumers reflects the common interdependence tendencies within C-BRT (Fournier, 2009). These unique bonds accentuate the consumers desire for attention and the brands need for affirmation – a connection that is quite attractive to brand strategists (Mitchell, 2017).

Although there is no relationship between the presence of intimacy and engagement rates, their individual results (H1 and H2) suggest influencers are the more relatable outlet by a small margin. This knowledge benefits the advertising industry by shaping its future efforts to produce effective and relevant campaigns. Subsequent research should investigate social media analytics – specifically how follower ratios effect engagement rates. It would interest brands to know whether this correlation (or lack thereof) directly effects awareness and sales.

The concepts of social media marketing will always be in flux. New application designs and algorithm updates will keep advertisers on their toes, but the use of celebrities and influencers as brand ambassadors is quickly becoming an industry staple. Most technological advancements have the potential to isolate humanity – from shopping online at home to virtual reality experiences. Social media fosters community and extends an outlet for inter-personal relationships worldwide. From a broader scope, this realm of research enables a deeper assessment of several topics including politics, sports, environment and entertainment. By examining social media, researchers can better understand the world and the people in it.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Examples of Instagram posts Used in Coding



Figure B.1. Example Instagram post from Kendall Jenner

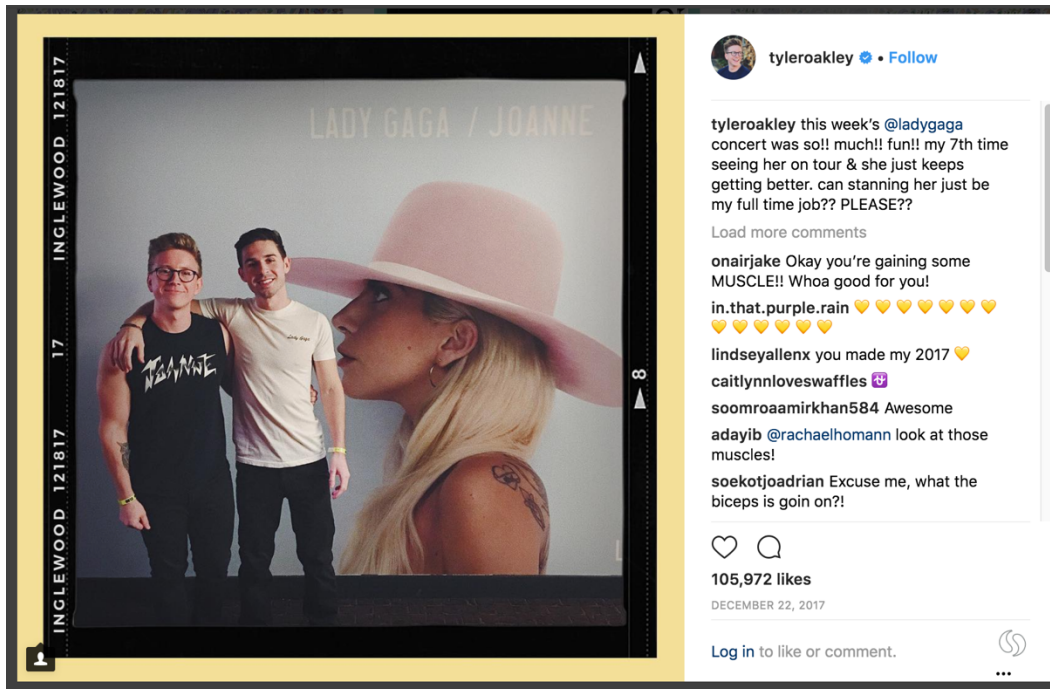


Figure B.2. Example Instagram post from Tyler Oakley



Figure B.3. Example Instagram post from Ariana Grande



Figure B.4. Example Instagram post from Miranda Sings



Figure B.5. Example Instagram post from Lilly Singh



Figure B.6. Example Instagram post from Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson

## APPENDIX B

### Frequency Statistics

Table B.1. *Kendall Jenner Intimacy Frequency*

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Intimacy	14	53.8	53.8	53.8
	Intimacy	12	46.2	46.2	100.0
	Total	26	100.0	100.0	

Table B.2. *Tyler Oakley Intimacy Frequency*

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Intimacy	2	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Intimacy	10	83.3	83.3	100.0
	Total	12	100.0	100.0	

Table B.3. *Ariana Grande Intimacy Frequency*

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Intimacy	17	54.8	54.8	54.8
	Intimacy	14	45.2	45.2	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Table B.4. *Miranda Sings Intimacy Frequency*

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Intimacy	20	57.1	57.1	57.1
	Intimacy	15	42.9	42.9	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table B.5. *Lilly Singh Intimacy Frequency*

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Intimacy	9	16.4	16.4	16.4
	Intimacy	46	83.6	83.6	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Table B.6. *Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson Intimacy Frequency*

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Intimacy	93	57.8	57.8	57.8
	Intimacy	68	42.2	42.2	100.0
	Total	161	100.0	100.0	

Table B.7. *Descriptive Statistics Comparing Celebrities and Influencers*

	Content Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Intimacy present	Influencer	3	69.9400%	23.46114%	13.54530%
	Celebrity	3	44.5167%	2.03284%	1.17366%



## APPENDIX C

### Independent Samples T-Test

*Table C.1. Independent Samples T-Test*

	Variance	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Intimacy	Equal variances assumed	.135	25.42333%	13.59605%	-12.3253%	63.17201%
	Equal variances not assumed	.201	25.42333%	13.59605%	-32.2543%	83.10093%

## APPENDIX D

Table E.1. *Descriptive Statistics for Engagement Rates*

	Content Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Engagement Rates	Influencer	3	3.1783%	2.26286%	1.30646%
	Celebrity	3	2.7633%	1.33520%	0.77088%

APPENDIX E

Correlation

Table F.1. *Correlation Between Intimacy and Engagement Rates*

		Intimacy	Engagement Rates
Intimacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.351
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.495
	N	6	6
Engagement Rates	Pearson Correlation	.351	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.495	
	N	6	6

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