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## Emotional Engagement of Consumers: A Case Study Between Peloton and ClassPass and their Differences in Branding Initiatives on the Facebook Platform

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EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT OF CONSUMERS: A CASE STUDY BETWEEN  
PELOTON AND CLASSPASS AND THEIR DIFFERENCES IN BRANDING  
INITIATIVES ON THE FACEBOOK PLATFORM

by

Meredith Stephens

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for a Degree with Honors  
(Marketing)

The Honors College

University of Maine

May 2020

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates two companies whose products offerings are alike, yet their branding via the Facebook platform is different. Throughout this thesis, there will be research gathered from organic Facebook posts between the two companies' brand pages on the Facebook Platform. The research consists of total reactions as well as comments on a per post basis for various posts throughout September of 2018 and 2019. The raw data that this thesis will be using will be positive emotionality scores from LIWC<sup>1</sup> (after comments are entered and run through the software) as well as the total number of reactions (likes, loves, WOWs, etc.) that correspond to the post the comments are drawn from. Following the collection of this data, the coding software R<sup>2</sup> will be used to determine significances between the two companies LIWC scores and total reactions, assessing which company received higher reaction rates and more positive emotionality. There are two hypotheses that are associated with this data. The first one is that because Peloton uses a single Facebook page for both of their product offerings, then Peloton will have more overall reactions on their organic content than ClassPass and ClassPass Live have individually. The second hypothesis is that because ClassPass and ClassPass Live choose to separate their product offerings on Facebook into two identities, then ClassPass and ClassPass Live will each individually receive comments on their organic posts that reveal more positive emotions than Peloton. This thesis is informative because it presents a clear answer as to which branding strategy is the most effective for gaining the optimal

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<sup>1</sup> Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count Software

<sup>2</sup> The coding software R is a statistical analysis software computes numerical data to determine statistical significances between means

number of reactions as well as positive emotionality on comments on organic content via the Facebook platform. Additionally, the research this thesis presents can aid in further studies for branding initiatives not only on the Facebook platform, but across all social platforms whose metrics are different yet equally important for a brand's effectiveness with consumers.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincerest and utmost gratitude goes to my parents, Catherine and Spencer Stephens. Their endless time and devotion to my academic journey and happiness in life has shaped me immensely. I am forever grateful for their constant support, love, and acceptance.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction   | 1  |
| Research Question  | 2  |
| Hypotheses   | 3  |
| Research Design  | 3  |
| Chapter 1  | 7  |
| Social Psychology of Human Interaction                               | 7  |
| Online Social Interaction  | 12 |
| Chapter 2  | 17 |
| Communicating a Marketing Message                                    | 17 |
| Chapter 3  | 24 |
| Consumer Emotion on Social Media                                     | 24 |
| Chapter 4  | 33 |
| Integrated Marketing Communications between Paid and Organic Content | 33 |
| Consumer Privacy with Sponsored Content                              | 39 |
| Data Analysis  | 42 |
| Results  | 45 |
| Follow-Up Analyses   | 48 |
| Conclusion   | 51 |
| Limitations  | 53 |
| References   | 56 |
| Author's Biography   | 59 |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Figure 1: Consumer Impact on Brand Stories         | 19 |
| Figure 2: The Marketing Communications Tetrahedron | 34 |

## LIST OF TABLES

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 1: Weighted Reactions (ClassPass)  | 42 |
| Table 2: Total Reactions (ClassPass)   | 42 |
| Table 3: Weighted Reactions (ClassPass Live)   | 43 |
| Table 4: Total Reactions (ClassPass Live)  | 43 |
| Table 5: Comments per Post (ClassPass)   | 43 |
| Table 6: Comments per Post (ClassPass Live)  | 43 |
| Table 7: Positive Emotionality LIWC Scores (ClassPass)   | 44 |
| Table 8: Positive Emotionality LIWC Scores (ClassPass Live)                                      | 44 |
| Table 9: ClassPass Live versus Peloton Weighted Reactions T-Test                                 | 45 |
| Table 10: ClassPass versus Peloton Weighted Reactions T-Test                                     | 46 |
| Table 11: ClassPass versus Peloton, Number of Comments T-Test                                    | 46 |
| Table 12: ClassPass Live versus Peloton, Number of Comments T-Test                               | 47 |
| Table 13: ClassPass versus Peloton, Positive Emotionality of Comments                            | 47 |
| Table 14: ClassPass Live versus Peloton, Positive Emotionality of Comments                       | 48 |
| Table 15: Total Reactions Unweighted for ClassPass + ClassPass Live versus Peloton '18 + '19     | 49 |
| Table 16: ClassPass + ClassPass Live versus Peloton '18 + '19, Number of Comments T-Test         | 50 |
| Table 17: ClassPass + ClassPass Live versus Peloton '18 + '19, Positive Emotionality of Comments | 50 |

## INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, the health and wellness industry has skyrocketed. Consumers are being drawn into successful marketing ploys in an effort to achieve their dream body as well as a means of preventative health. Though many fads have arisen promising for quick results and unrealistic goals, two companies who have continuously focused their exercise-related marketing on hard work, determination, and grit have been Peloton and ClassPass. These two companies are unique due to the similarity in their business structures because they both have a chief product that is premium and more expensive as well as an affordable, less expensive product offering. Peloton became famous for their at home studio-level bicycle and treadmill with live workout classes from state-of-the-art instructors. However, Peloton recognized that the average consumer cannot afford a piece of exercise equipment that ranges from \$2200-4300 (OnePeloton, 2020), so they created an affordable version of their product: The Peloton Digital Application. With the application, consumers can still join the Peloton community and partake in all of the classes on their own equipment. Peloton created a strategy where consumers can chase their fitness goals at a fraction of the price of their premium product.

The second company this thesis will be studying is ClassPass. ClassPass is a subscription service where members pay \$159 a month to receive 100 credits (ClassPass, 2020). These credits can then be used towards 32 exercise classes per month (ClassPass, 2020) in independent studios that have partnered with ClassPass. Though for some this is an affordable product, for others this rate is a bit too pricey, which makes it difficult for many to afford. Noting this, ClassPass created ClassPass Live, where consumers can tune



into live and recorded classes put on by ClassPass trainers and do workouts at home with their own equipment. ClassPass Live is an affordable version that allows consumers to still participate in ClassPass services without paying for their premium product<sup>3</sup>. With these business models, Peloton and ClassPass have found strategic ways to compete in two very different markets with little additional cost.

Though the similarities in business strategy and structure between Peloton and ClassPass are overwhelming, their strategies with branding on the Facebook platform are different. Peloton chooses to compile both product offerings under one brand identity, “@OnePeloton” (Peloton, January 29, 2020), whereas ClassPass separates their product offerings into two different Facebook entities: “@ClassPass” (ClassPass, January 29, 2020) and “@ClassPassLive” (ClassPass Live, September 1, 2019). By choosing this strategy, Peloton is forced to cater their organic content to their two different market segments: premium bicycle and treadmill users and digital application subscribers. ClassPass’s strategy allows each business profile to reach their two distinct audiences without having to compromise on which content to post.

#### Research Question

The official research question that is studied by this thesis is as follows, “ClassPass’ affordable offering, ClassPass Live, has its own identity on Facebook, whereas Peloton’s affordable offering, Peloton Digital Application, does not; will this difference in branding initiative show discrepancies in consumer’s emotional engagement of organic content on the Facebook Platform that ultimately will reveal a stronger branding strategy?”

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<sup>3</sup> See limitations section for information on ClassPass Live cost data

## Hypotheses

H1: Because Peloton uses a single Facebook page for both of their product offerings, then Peloton will have more overall reactions on their organic content than ClassPass and ClassPass Live have individually.

H2: Because ClassPass and ClassPass Live choose to separate their product offerings on Facebook into two identities, then ClassPass and ClassPass Live will each individually receive comments on their organic posts that reveal more positive emotions than Peloton.

## Research Design

Delving into the data from organic content started by choosing 4 posts from each business site on Facebook. Since ClassPass Live only had substantial content from 2018, 4 posts were drawn from September of 2018 for “@ClassPass Live” (ClassPass Live, September 1, 2019) and 4 posts were drawn from “@OnePeloton”<sup>4</sup> (Peloton, January 29, 2020) in September of 2018 to keep things consistent. Next, 4 posts from “@ClassPass” (ClassPass, January 29, 2020) were chosen from September of 2019 and 4 posts from “@OnePeloton” (Peloton, January 29, 2020) from September of 2019 were chosen for this study. Thus, having 8 total posts from Peloton, 4 posts from ClassPass, and 4 posts from ClassPass Live.

On each post, the comments were compiled on a per post basis into 16 different “.txt” files for upload into LIWC. After uploading the files into LIWC, each post received a score called “POSEMO” in LIWC terms, which gave an overall positive emotionality score based on the verbiage in the comments. After compiling 16 separate positive

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<sup>4</sup> See Limitations for further clarification about Peloton’s posts from both 2018 and 2019

emotionality LIWC scores into excel sheets that specified which score corresponded with which company's post, the scores were entered into R. From there, the coding software R was used to compare ClassPass Live's positive emotionality scores with Peloton's positive emotionality scores as well as ClassPass's and Peloton's positive emotionality scores. Since ClassPass Live's and Peloton's posts were tested against one another, R determined a p-value<sup>5</sup> for the difference between these means. Additionally, R determined a p-value for the difference between the means for the positive emotionality scores for the posts from ClassPass and Peloton. These p-values will be further analyzed in the *Data Analysis* section of this thesis.

In addition to testing the positive emotionality of comments between ClassPass Live and Peloton, and ClassPass and Peloton, the coding software R was also used to test if there was a significant difference in the number of comments each post received. The number of comments for ClassPass Live posts were tested against the number of comments from the Peloton posts. Additionally, the number of comments for ClassPass posts were tested against the number of comments for the Peloton posts. The purpose of these tests was to determine significances in the difference in the number of comments in order to support the positive emotionality tests for the potential instance of drastic inconsistencies.

In addition to the LIWC analysis for positive emotionality of comments, this thesis also dives into reaction behaviors of consumers via a "like", "love", "Wow", "Haha", "Sad", or "Angry" reaction (Hunersen, 2016) on the Facebook platform. The reactions entered into the coding software R represent the total number of all possible

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<sup>5</sup> A value that indicates probability of getting the observed results in a test, if  $p < .05$  then the means are statistically significant in their difference

reactions that consumers have the option to click on per post. When choosing which post's total reactions to include in the R analysis, every single total reaction number for each post from “@OnePeloton” (Peloton, January 29, 2020), “@ClassPass” (ClassPass, January 29, 2020), and “@ClassPass Live” (ClassPass Live, September 1, 2019) were chosen throughout their respective months being studied. After pulling those numbers and compiling them into a list, the companies with more reaction data (due to greater number of posts in a month) were then randomly cut down so that each comparison, ClassPass versus Peloton and Peloton versus ClassPass Live, had an even number of reaction scores. Not only was this decision of randomized cutting down reaction scores for the efficiency of the coding software R, but also for continued consistency purposes. Once the compilation of data was complete, the total reactions from Peloton posts were compared against ClassPass Live posts using R to determine the means and p-value associated with the difference in means. Additionally, ClassPass and Peloton posts were also compared against one another using R, which revealed means that were further analyzed by the p-value of the test; all of which is further explained in the *Data Analysis* section of this thesis. In addition, since the 3 different business sites had a different amount of page likes<sup>6</sup>, the total reactions were divided by the total page likes for each study, which caused for a more even and weighted comparison of reactions. The purpose of weighting the reaction scores was because ClassPass Live had a drastic difference in page likes; therefore a post from ClassPass Live with 200 likes for their ~6,000 page likes

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<sup>6</sup> Number of people who were exposed to organic content from the company on their newsfeed

was quite different than a Peloton post with 200 likes for their ~500,000 page likes and the analysis needed to reflect this difference.

After these 4 different tests were done with the coding software R, some of the results left unanswered questions. Instead of running the same study for the month of October and gathering more of the data already analyzed, additional tests using R were done to try and explain some of the inconsistencies seen in original studies. The first of these tests was the combination of the “POSEMO” data from LIWC for ClassPass and ClassPass Live versus Peloton 2018-19. The combination of the positive emotionality scores for each brand and their product offering were then run against one another using R. The second test combined the number of comments for ClassPass and ClassPass Live versus the combination of total comments for Peloton posts in 2018-19. The coding software R was used again to compare the two companies and their product offerings based on their number of comments. Finally, the total reactions for ClassPass and ClassPass Live posts were combined and tested against the total reactions for Peloton 2018-19 posts. For this test, the reactions were unweighted, and the coding software R was used for the last time to determine if there were any changes in significance when combining the data in such a way. These 3 additional tests aided in forming conclusions about the original analyses and will be further discussed and evaluated in the *Data Analysis* section of this thesis.

## CHAPTER 1

### SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF HUMAN INTERACTION

By the fourth quarter of 2019, Facebook had 2.5 billion active monthly users (Clement, 2020). According to Facebook, an active user is someone who “logged in and visited Facebook through our website or a mobile device, used our Messenger app or took an action to share content or activity with his or her Facebook friends or connections via a third-party website” (Cohen, 2015). That means nearly 33% of the global population are using Facebook on a regular basis (Roser, Ritchie, Ortiz-Ospina, 2019). Since Facebook content has the opportunity to be shared amongst such a large number of active users, it is important to understand how these users communicate surrounding such content. The social relationship between users who are mere acquaintances is suggestive to this study about emotionality when responding to content. After studying the organic content from Peloton, ClassPass, and ClassPass Live, it is clear how social psychology concepts such as arousal, signaling, social talk, and goal-oriented behavior affected the reactions and comments on the organic content studied in a substantial way.

It is commonly said that with the increase of social media, online content has the ability to spread like wildfires. This is especially important for business sites on Facebook, where a mere comment, reaction, or share can cause catastrophe to a brand’s reputation because of its ability to spread at a rapid rate. However, taking a step back, it is key to understand what causes users to engage, comment, or share content in the first place. Content that induces arousal is more likely to spread than content that does not induce arousal (Berger, 2011). In a study that researched arousal with social transmission

of information, there were two groups studied: those that were exposed to a neutral clip and those that were exposed to an emotional clip. After exposure, the participants rated how aroused they were using 7-point scales, which revealed that participants who were exposed to the emotional clip were more likely to transmit social information by 40% (Berger, 2011). While this study may sound as if arousal is a successful marketing strategy, arousal includes a lot of different emotions. Arousal can be exposure to content that invokes interest, happiness, disgust, surprise, sadness, anger, fear, or contempt (Peters, Clark, Kashima, 2009).

Most business sites will strive for arousal that positively affects their consumers, such as happiness, feelings of contempt, and sometimes feelings of surprise. However, it is inevitable that these sites will fail at some point, causing for arousal that invokes negative emotions<sup>7</sup>. When consumers feel sad, angry, or fearful, there is the potential for rumors to start. When there is an angry reaction, comment, or share, rumors can start to spread in “the 3 C’s: conflict, crisis, and catastrophe” (Berger, 2011). The explanation for understanding why rumors start is because of consumer’s anxiety and trepidation for a negative outcome (Berger, 2011). When looking at ClassPass Live specifically, several of their posts had comments about the difficulty when trying to cancel the service. There was one user who commented the same angry comment about inability to cancel across numerous posts. This user was negatively aroused by ClassPass Live’s organic content, which increased her desire to socially transmit information about the brand. Negative reactions that can be copied and pasted across a company’s business site on the Facebook

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<sup>7</sup> An example of negative arousal includes a recent Peloton commercial that showed the journey of how the exercise equipment changed a woman’s life. Though critics said the woman was too skinny to represent an actual fitness journey and their negative opinions were reflected all over social media (Jhaveri, 2019).

platform is an imminent danger for every business profile. While arousal is a very important concept for businesses when creating online content, it is also a hazard for the spread of rumors and negative information.

Humans are accustomed to sending emotional signals when they have the opportunity to interact with others. Before learning how to talk, babies “signal all their discomfort and needs by emitting emotional signals” that will only stop once their emotional state is satisfied (Rimé, 2009). As humans develop and mature, these interpersonal processes that help them convey and express their emotions have helped them develop skills to verbally share their emotional experiences with others (Rimé, 2009). These experiences can be shared by the “exchange of comments and point of view on such experiences, and by the same token, to contribute, in their turn, to the shared knowledge of emotion” (Rimé, 2009). Sharing experiences through emotion was commonly seen through comments on Peloton’s organic content. Consumers would engage with one another regarding their happiness over a new instructor hired to teach classes, even if they were strangers. The shared positive experiences of these consumers caused them to emotionally engage with one another that led to greater reaction rates on Peloton’s posts.

When humans share experiences with one another, “emotional social talk leads to emotion sharing” (Rimé, 2009) which leads to “three simultaneous social consequences: coalition, configuration, and coordination” (Rimé, 2009). Coalitions are formed because emotion sharing may create social bonds” (Rimé, 2009). Such social bonds form relationships among humans which creates groups, or *coalitions*, that promotes emotional social sharing. While the Peloton example is a perfect instance of promoting positive



social emotional sharing, the ClassPass Live example is an instance of what can happen when coalitions are not formed due to a brand's inability to arouse their consumers. ClassPass Live did not give consumers organic content that sparked an emotional aspect to bond over, and therefore their positive emotionality of comments suffered. The configuration of relationships is also a vital aspect to emotional sharing because "emotions are processes that detect personally relevant events and mobilize appropriate responses" (Rimé, 2009). Relationships from emotional sharing are formed based off of individual applicability of humans and their ability to relate with one another (Rimé, 2009). A brand's job when creating content is to do so on the basis of unity. When a brand's users feel unity amongst content, emotional sharing is foreseeable. Finally, coordination among group members occurs when "group members seek to conform to critical group attributes" (Rimé, 2009). Group coordination is relevant to the process of emotional sharing because when group members are harmonized with their feelings, attention and behavior, it allows humans to respond in a way that is more effective than individuals would be able to respond (Rimé, 2009). Referring back to the examples previously used, Peloton has a coordinated group of consumers who strive to coincide their qualities with one another, which is seen in the way they bond together over happiness and excitement. However, ClassPass Live's consumers do not have the same type of bond or coordination. There is no thread of commonality among any positive emotion shared, the only emotion shared that was overarching was negative, and there was no coordination amongst negative-sharing consumers.

Humans, especially those who are interested in fitness, are goal-oriented beings (Rimé, 2009). When humans chase goals it is in hopes that goal will be achieved.

However, “when circumstances interfere with these goals, negative emotions will occur” (Rimé, 2009). There are a multitude of factors that can stand in the way of a human and their fitness goal. Since Peloton, ClassPass, and ClassPass Live are all fitness-related offerings, this risk of failure to meet goals is one they must be cautious toward. It is so important because “if a goal is slowed down or blocked, a negative emotional state arises” (Rimé, 2009). If such a state arises, it “stimulates a social exchange” (Rimé, 2009). When humans feel that their goal has been tampered with, they are going to be upset, and they are going to want to share that information socially. These product offerings, Peloton, Class Pass, and ClassPass Live are so unique to this social psychology concept because so many people who purchase their products have a common goal in mind that the products will help them achieve. There are few other industries of product offerings whose consumers purchase their product based on a specific goal, such as a fitness goal. Reactions and commenting can be directly affected if the organic content messaging does not match with the quality or effectiveness that a consumer experiences when consuming the brand’s product or service.

After understanding how human beings, as consumers, react the way that they do to content, it lays the foundation to understanding why they communicate the way that they do. Human beings are drawn into conversation by social topics, especially for conversations between acquaintances (Dunbar, Marriott, Duncan, 1997). In a study done that focused on the conversational behaviors of humans, 3 samples of 19 conversations were done between males and females between the ages of 18-25 (Dunbar, Marriott, Duncan, 1997). The study revealed that conversation serves two functions for social domain: speakers can convey information about themselves as a person and listeners can

gain knowledge about others within the social group (Dunbar, Marriott, Duncan, 1997). The idea of learning about others based off the way they carry themselves in conversation is important regarding reactions and comments on Facebook. Since the social anecdotes that humans are most likely to share include interest, surprise, disgust, and happiness (Peters, Clark, Kashima, 2009), this means that consumers are more likely to comment or engage on a basis of these anecdotes. Using these emotions to interact with content will shape what consumers reveal about themselves as well as what they learn about others, thus influencing the conversational comments in a way that resonates with these key anecdotes as well as aspects as specific as verbiage and word choice.

Levels of arousal, emotional signaling, goals, and conversational patterns are all important when understanding the ways consumers interact with brands. With the constant potential for virality of information, social media managers must be vigilant that their content and engagers are not sending the brand's image into a downward spiral. The way the human brain reacts and conveys that reaction is substantial and imperative to all marketing efforts. As noted earlier, emotions can either be overwhelmingly positive for a brand or devastatingly negative. Fluctuations in emotions must also be monitored in conjunction with messaging and overall product effectiveness and quality. For consumers to react emotionally positive with a brand, there are several levels of internal support that must work together to perform a perfectly crafted product and message that leaves little room for scandal and failure that could lead to consumers interacting negatively.

#### Online Social Interaction

While social psychology is a very important discipline to study when understanding the online social behavior of Peloton, ClassPass, and ClassPass Live's

users, understanding the psychology behind how humans interact online is equally important. For the brands studied throughout this thesis, it was easy to discover, while conducting primary research, that they each have their own unique brand community. For Peloton, the brand community is set by the Peloton instructors; these are individuals that consumers look to for every type of fitness instruction. The instructors who teach the Peloton classes appear all over the organic content for Peloton's Facebook, and consumers react, and comment based off their desire to attain their goals, which seem unobtainable without these instructors. For ClassPass and ClassPass Live, the brand communities form from the members who participate in classes at the same studios, for ClassPass, and for members who take the same online classes, for ClassPass Live. Though, ClassPass partners with too many independent studios to highlight all of them on their organic content, and therefore the brand community does not have any form of arousal to spark a conversation via a reaction over a ClassPass post. Similarly, for ClassPass Live, none of the organic content showed specificity to a particular class offered through the subscription service, therefore they were not arousing their users to engage in a conversation amongst their brand community. The organic content displayed across the ClassPass and ClassPass Live sites are not engaging their brand community of users, and therefore their reactions and comments suffer because there is no common thread to arouse their users. That is not to say that that the thread does not exist, but there is no strategy currently in place that is creating content that ignites arousal amongst these communities. A brand community is what draws in new users, and maintains a brand's reputation, it is the "consciousness of kind" (Muniz, O'Guinn, 2001) which is "the intrinsic connection that members feel toward one another, and the collective sense of

difference from others not in the community” (Muniz, O’Guinn, 2001). Therefore, with the rise of social media, new brand communities have formed, Social Media Brand Communities, or SMBC, (Khobzi, Lau, Cheung, 2019) that are equally as important as the traditional ones. Social Media Brand Communities are essential to boosting consumer reaction and positive conversations on a brand’s content.

For many, Facebook is a place where a user’s friends, family, long and distant relatives, in-laws, and etc. have the opportunity to see everything that person engages with, whether it be a reaction, comment, or share. These friends, family, and etc. of the user will see notifications on their homepage, or newsfeed, that show what their Facebook friends are engaging in. Due to this feature of Facebook, users “may either choose to interact with or view the post without any meaningful interaction” (Khobzi, Lau, Cheung, 2019). If a user does not resonate with a brand’s community, their likelihood to engage with a post from that brand is very low due to the fact that once they do, there is the potential for their Facebook friends to see. However, if a user resonates highly with the brand, or they desire to, they are more inclined to engage with the post because they either do not care if their Facebook friends see, or because they specifically want them to.

There are multiple levels of reaction that users can take online when engaging with a brand. The first type of reaction is liking; this engagement is considered the lowest level since only one click is needed (Khobzi, Lau, Cheung, 2019). The next level of engagement is commenting because cognitive effort is used when users decide what to comment (Khobzi, Lau, Cheung, 2019). The third and final level of engagement is sharing, this is the highest level because it uses the highest amount of cognitive energy

when compared to the 2 other types of engagement (Khobzi, Lau, Cheung, 2019). Users partaking in any of the 3 levels of engagement can impact a brand as well as other consumers.

Brand communities also take form on organic content when it comes to replying to other's comments on a post. When a user is leaving a reply to a comment on a post, it can either be to another user or to the brand itself, depending on who the original comment came from. However, no matter which form of replying a user does, any response can positively affect a brand's name (Khobzi, Lau, Cheung, 2019). In a study of user engagement behavior on Facebook, researchers supported that both positive and negative comments can increase the engagement behavior of other users (Khobzi, Lau, Cheung, 2019). The more engagements a post has when a user comes across it, the more likely that user is to also engage with the post. However, if a user comes across a post that has few engagements, their motivation to engage with the post, even if it is a brand within their community, is very low. This conclusion is meaningful because online "interactions can positively influence the purchase behavior of customers" (Khobzi, Lau, Cheung, 2019) which is the underlying reason brands are concerned with their user's behavior online. Therefore, a user's engagement in any form can affect not only other users, but also the profitability of the company.

Social interaction between humans, whether in-person or online, is a vast field that can be studied in many different perspectives. Understanding the what, the how, and the why behind how the users engage with the brands studied by this thesis are essential to understanding the results in the *Data Analysis* section. Since engagement on Facebook has a direct relation to the profitability of any given business, it is important to

understand and determine motives behind each individual engagement, both positive and negative. Inferences from social psychology are critical in brand management on social media platforms to develop broader depictions of consumer's engagement practices with other consumers as well as with the brand and even studies that predate the rise of social media can help when understanding social abilities of human interaction.

## CHAPTER 2

### COMMUNICATING A MARKETING MESSAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

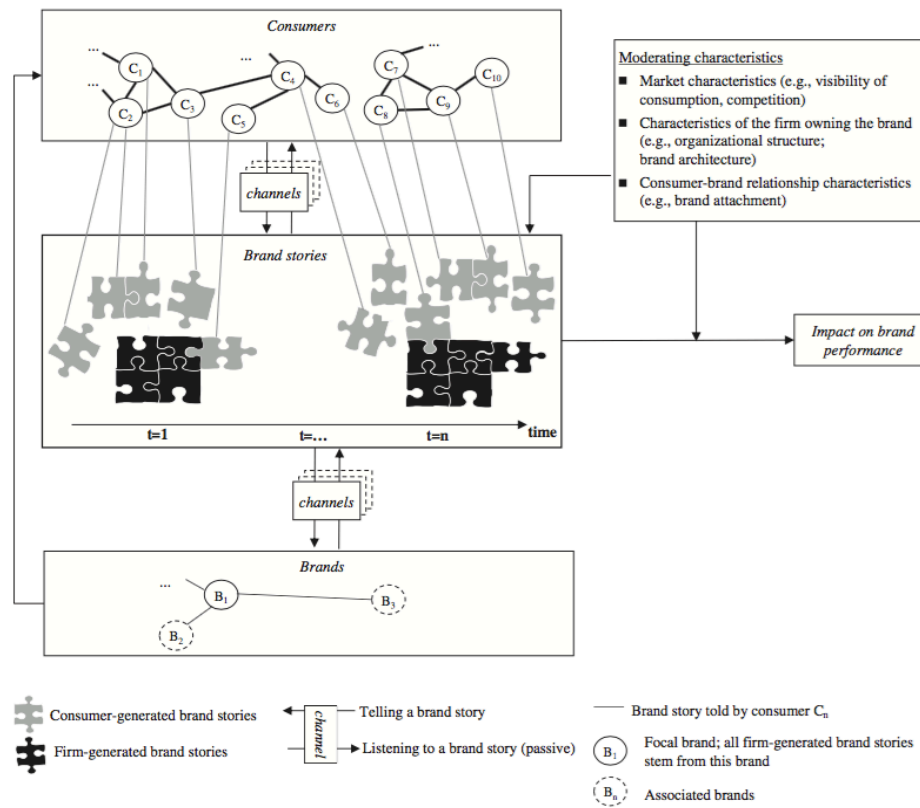
The rise of social media has created new difficulties and struggles for brands of all kinds. With platforms that evolve at a rapid rate, many brands find it difficult to keep up with the challenges “related to managing brands in this new environment” (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, Wiertz, 2013). These difficulties, however, start at identifying where and what these challenges actually are. Managing a successful brand on a social media platform involves identifying every challenge that comes into your brand’s space, and delivering a clear, concise marketing message despite any challenges that were not present with old-school, traditional marketing. The purpose of facing and overcoming these challenges is to emphasize to consumers the value that a brand can bring to their life (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, Wiertz, 2013). When a brand successfully messages to a consumer something of value, the consumer will place it in their memory, and will think of that brand when their life requires a product or service that brand can deliver. From a marketing perspective, there are key challenges surrounding messaging that are at the top of the list when managing a successful social media presence; those challenges include building a story around the brand, learning and understanding the co-productivity brands have with consumers on social media, being honest with consumers and using social media for informative purposes, and matching a message to a company’s buyer. These tactics are overwhelmingly difficult, at best, but that is why there are brands that stick out amongst others for their impressive strategic use of social media to create lasting memories in the minds of consumers.



Consumers love when a brand has a good story, whether it be heart-felt, funny, or anything of the sort, a story that resonates with consumers can aid in creating a positive reputation for a brand. For example, the beauty brand Dove created a story for their brand through their “real-beauty” campaign (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, Wiertz, 2013) which emphasized the beauty of physical variation between women. The campaign spread rapidly across social media because it contained a plot with characters who played a crucial role, and ended in a climax, which was “an outcome that causes empathy in listeners” (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, Wiertz, 2013). The outcome of this campaign was that women of all shapes and sizes viewed Dove as an inclusivity brand that saw beauty in all women, regardless of their height, weight, or any physical features. Women resonated with this brand’s story and when it came time to buy any sort of beauty product, the Dove brand was the first one to pop into a consumer’s memory.

While creating such a memorable and valuable brand story, such as the Dove case, is a wonderful strategy, social media changes the realm of brand stories. Long before the rise of social media, consumers had “always appropriated and modified these firm-generated brand stories to create their own versions of relevant brand stories” (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, Wiertz, 2013). However, with the rise of social media, these consumers can no longer be ignored because brand managers “have lost their pivotal role as authors of brands’ stories” (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, Wiertz, 2013). Social media changes these stories because consumers now have the opportunity to co-produce brand stories through the inevitability of rapid word-of-mouth on social media.

**Figure 1: Consumer Impact on Brand Stories**



(Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, Wiertz, 2013).

Figure 1, above, maps out the ways in which consumers have an impact on social media brand management. In the channel between consumers and brand stories, the firm-generated brand stories are dark black, implying that their stories stay the same over time (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, Wiertz, 2013). The consumer-generated brand stories are grey and more transparent looking, implying that they are relative to change and manipulation (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, Wiertz, 2013). With social media, both the consumer and the brand are responsible for the telling and the listening of brand stories, which is very different from traditional marketing. Before social media, even though consumers created their own brand stories, it did not impact a brand's performance. However now that a mere comment or re-share by a consumer can generate

virality and uproar, brand performance is always at risk. The variability of a brand's story due to social media is something that brand managers have to constantly concern themselves with because of how quickly and drastically it could impact a brand's reputation. With the long-term goal in mind of creating value and instilling a brand in the intrinsic memory of consumers, brand stories must be handled strategically and carefully on social media platforms with specific tactics that are relevant to a manager's brand.

The meaning that consumers derive from a brand's message subtly comes from other consumers. Before deciding to buy from a brand, consumers are interested and concerned with who else may be using that brand and what they are saying about it. While a brand's content and advertisements are important in informing the consumer about the brand, consumers also derive meaning from what other consumers are saying (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, Wiertz, 2013). With social media, the lines between brands and consumers are becoming increasingly blurred (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, Wiertz, 2013) due to the increase in communication from consumer to consumer as well as consumer to brand and vice versa. Having content on social media allows for insight into a vast "amount of details provided about a brand's followers" which causes consumers to make "inferences about and attitudes toward the brand" (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, Wiertz, 2013). This is a challenge for brand managers because their content is no longer solely about what message they are putting out for consumers to see, but also who their consumers are and what they are saying. While this is an obvious threat to brands, it is also an opportunity. Instead of being afraid of how consumers can affect a brand's meaning, brand managers should be adjusting their messaging so that consumer's engagement can be co-productive with their message.

An example of this is when a brand's caption to an organic Facebook post says: "what's your favorite thing about [product]?", this represents a call to action, in which people are more likely to comment on a brand's post because the brand explicitly asked them to (Martins, 2019). By starting the conversation, instead of allowing the consumer to, the brand has the power to steer the conversation in the direction that they want it to go in, thus emphasizing the original message they were trying to convey and allowing their consumers to generate its meaning.

The purpose of generating a message that entices consumers is so that consumers can be educated on a brand's purpose. While advertising, both paid and organic, is supposed to be clever and original, the bottom line is that consumers do not know what they want until a brand tells them what they want by creating a need and want for their product or service. Therefore, content that brands put on social media has to be informative in some manner (Grossman, Shapiro, 1984). Whether or not consumers know the configuration of the product market is unimportant, because consumers can understand that a product with certain features exists in the market but does not know which firm manufactures and retails commodities of a given specification (Grossman, Shapiro, 1984). It is up to the firm to inform the consumer what their product is and how it is different from every other similar product that gains the attention of consumers. Informative messaging is so important on social media because any type of messaging that is not truthful "would be deceptive advertising" (Grossman, Shapiro, 1984). Social media has evolved so much over the past couple decades that consumers have the ability to see right through messaging that is promising false outcomes. Avoiding the falsification of copy is especially relevant and important for brands such as ClassPass and

Peloton where consumers have seen time and time again fitness companies promising for unrealistic results. Consumers are more concerned with the genuine, raw facts that companies have as an advantage above their competitors. For brand managers, it is so important that their brand's messaging is still original and creative in the way that they tell an honest and informative story about their brand's offerings. Without honesty and reliability, consumers lose trust in brands which negatively impacts their ability to perform in the market.

Informative messaging also serves the purpose of matching products to buyers. Firms are able to match consumers to their product or service by the way they are able to communicate quality (Gardete, 2013). For example, "high-type firms would rather attract high-type consumers who buy a few units at a high price, whereas low-type firms may prefer to attract low-type consumers and sell more units at a lower margin" (Gardete, 2013). These different firms want to attract consumers who have value and interest in their type of market. By successfully messaging toward consumers that match to a brand's value, brands generate credibility amongst their target consumers (Gardete, 2013). This credibility "arises because an advertisement can be attractive to a customer segment while unattractive to another one, leading the firm to make tradeoffs across messages" (Gardete, 2013). Credibility is the ultimate goal of the brand because it happens when their message perfectly aligns with consumers who are right for their offerings. This type of messaging often includes the use of vertical characteristics. Vertical characteristics are when a brand differentiates itself on the basis of quality and are ranked in a consumer's head from high to low from best to worst (Gardete, 2013). Credibility messaging with vertical characteristics is so important on social media

because brands want their content to be engaged with by their matched consumer, who is going to be able to give the most positive and beneficial engagement. When a brand's message does not align them with their target consumer, engagement as well as performance can greatly suffer. Though social media is so vast, that makes it ever-more important for brand managers to figure out who their consumers match is and then tailor their message to meet their wants and needs. Trying to encompass too wide of a group of consumers can cause a brand to lose credibility and for its message to be inconsistent ultimately impacting their reputation and profitability.

The challenges that surround a brand's message on social media are vast and complex. Story-building, co-productivity with consumers, informative intentions, and finding consumers match are struggles that brand managers face every day with the use of social media. Though, without social media, brands fall behind their competitors and find it difficult to keep up. Figuring out a brand's toughest challenges with a marketing message and determining strategies on how to overcome these challenges is one of the savviest situations that managers are faced with. If overcoming these situations were easy, every brand would have a successful social media presence. However, they are far from easy, which is what makes studying them so significant and relevant to marketing in today's digital realm.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONSUMER EMOTION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Whether consumers are aware of it or not, every time they log onto any social media site they are immediately confronted with the emotions of their friends and followings (Seiter, 2019). Whether it is a relative of a consumer who shared a news article and their reaction to it, or a business site consumers follow who shared the launch of a new product, each post invokes an emotional reaction from their connections on that platform, and consequently, their own personal emotional reaction to the content. Understanding the arousal consumers experience, in relation to content seen on social media, and how their emotions are expressed in regard to such content, are so important to content creators and managers because it gives constant insight as to how to better entice and retain their own consumers. Though content can entice consumers in a multitude of ways, from happiness to sadness to surprise and everything in between, content invokes different emotions from consumers and those emotions affect the way consumers choose to interact with the content. There are several explanations as to why and how content invokes the emotions that it does, though brand managers have to pay specific attention to a few specific factors such as the importance of consumer power, the attachment theory, brand transparency through their followers, customer retention relating to emotional engagement, content engineering and its relation to a brand's personality, and the prominence of content virality. Understanding these unique factors that help to shape a consumer's emotional experience with a brand's organic content is key to optimal emotional engagement of all kinds.

Over the course of what is now known to be the digital age, there has been a significant shift in power between brands and consumers. Before the rise of social media, consumers did not have the ability to use their voice the way that they do today. In today's digital realm, "consumers gained access to vast amounts of information and developed opportunities to influence their own lives, in the marketplace and beyond" (Labrecque, von dem Esche, Mathwick, Novak, Hofacker, 2013). Consumer power is vital to content a brand produces because they want consumers to emotionally react to it a certain way. With the rise of the digital age and social media in particular, brands no longer have the luxury of releasing content without any emotional feedback of their consumers. For example, Peloton released an advertisement that demonstrated a very thin woman receiving a Peloton bicycle for a gift (Jhaveri, 2019). Critics were appalled that producers chose such a petite actress to demonstrate a Peloton fitness journey, since she clearly did not need exercise to stay so skinny (Jhaveri, 2019). In today's world, if consumers do not support the content a brand puts online, the damage that can be done to the brand's reputation by consumers can be catastrophic. Relating the concept of consumer power to the company ClassPass, it is apparent how much influence their emotional reactions can have on other consumers. On each negative comment from a ClassPass consumer, the brand would immediately respond with a proposed solution or possible next steps to tackle the dilemma. ClassPass saw how a negative emotional response could tarnish their brand's reputation and took adequate action each time to fix any and all problems. ClassPass taking the time to answer their unhappy consumers is a perfect example of how a negative aspect of the rise of social media can be turned into a positive one.



Consumer power comes in several different levels, though the ones relevant to the data presented by this thesis are demand-based, information-based, and network-based power (Labrecque, vor dem Esche, Mathwick, Novak, Hofacker, 2013). Demand-based power is the total consumption as well as the purchase behavior that arises from social media content (Labrecque, vor dem Esche, Mathwick, Novak, Hofacker, 2013). Consumers actions on social media, such as Facebook likes, serves as implications for projected demand (Labrecque, vor dem Esche, Mathwick, Novak, Hofacker, 2013). Though a like on Facebook is far less measurable than an action such as a search on Google or an application download, it still has significant effect on brand approval and loyalty (Labrecque, vor dem Esche, Mathwick, Novak, Hofacker, 2013). Therefore, positive emotional engagements on social media have significant associations to consumption and purchase behavior of consumers. Information-based power refers to the ability that consumers have to access information, both firm-generated and consumer-generated (Labrecque, vor dem Esche, Mathwick, Novak, Hofacker, 2013).

Information-based power is a savvy yet dangerous tool consumers can use due to the fact that electronic word of mouth, or “eWOM, can elicit greater responses and persist long beyond the impact of traditional marketing communications, suggesting that it is a promotional *gift* that keeps on giving” (Labrecque, vor dem Esche, Mathwick, Novak, Hofacker, 2013). The ability consumers have to both generate negative eWOM as well as being exposed to it is very high. Brands have to be wary that their content is not going to spur a negative emotional storm amongst angry or dissatisfied consumers.

The final form of relevant consumer power is network-based power which comes from the capability consumers have to alter content through sharing, commenting, or

repurposing (Labrecque, vor dem Esche, Mathwick, Novak, Hofacker, 2013). This type of power can be both advantageous as well as detrimental to a brand's goal with their social media content. While an increase in virality of a brand's content amongst a consumer's network of friends and followers can be promotive and profitable, it is only to the extent that it promotes positive emotional responses from consumers. Negative commenting and sharing can dull a brand's presence on social media and ultimately make them less lucrative. Consumer power is only dangerous to a brand if they do not have the right strategies and policies when approaching it. Brands can amplify their presence and reputation from the power that social media has given consumers. Carefully crafted organic content can give consumers an outlet for positive eWOM and many other emotional engagement capabilities.

The relationships between consumers and brands are unique and have developed and expanded with the rise of social media. There are several emotions that consumers feel depending on what brand they are interacting with, whether it be one they favor or one they are dissatisfied with. These emotional connections made between brands and consumers is best described by the attachment theory, which states that "consumers develop emotional attachments with marketable entities," such as brands, because the attachments have the ability to fill the different needs of consumers (Dwivdei, Johnson, Wilkie, De-Araujo-Gil, 2019). A consumer's attachment to a brand has become amplified with the increase of social media use by both brands and consumers. For example, it is vital for a brand to strive to form emotional connections with their consumers because "emotional attachments can enhance individual well-being, and such attachments with social media brands likely lead to favorable social interactions" (Dwivdei, Johnson,

Wilkie, De-Araujo-Gil, 2019). These positive social interactions between brands and consumers “reinforces perceptions of superiority of a preferred brand *vis-à-vis* competing brands further leading to enhanced satisfaction” (Dwivdei, Johnson, Wilkie, De-Araujo-Gil, 2019). Forming emotional attachments with consumers via social media engagement can lead to greater fulfillment amongst consumers which leads to higher consumption and therefore profitability. The attachment theory, with regards to the social media realm, emphasizes the significance of a firm to give consumers the ability to form an emotional attachment with their brand and how important it is for that brand to reciprocate that attachment through the many tools and functions social media can offer to help the relationship flourish.

Transparency is another important factor when analyzing consumers’ likelihood to emotionally engage with a brand on social media. In a study done by Rebecca Naylor, Cait Lamberton, and Patricia West called *Beyond the “Like” Button: The Impact of Mere Virtual Presence on Brand Evaluations and Purchase Intentions in Social Media Settings*, it reveals how “social media can make the identity of a brand’s supporters transparent to prospective consumers.” Before consumers allow themselves to engage with a brand, they are interested in what other consumers have freely associated with the brand in the form of a “mere virtual presence” or any post that links a consumer’s identity to a brand’s identity (Lamberton, Naylor, West, 2012). The idea of mere virtual presence is where the importance of emotionality comes into play. Since there is research that supports the idea that individuals express attraction towards people who they are similar to, when a consumer is able to relate to a consumer’s post, comment, share, or mere virtual presence about a brand, they will have a stronger likelihood to allow themselves to

emotionally connect with that brand. For this reason, brands have a responsibility to be transparent about who their consumers are through their content, an example of this responsibility was discussed earlier in an advertisement used by Peloton. The Peloton commercial used an actress that many consumers thought was too skinny, from a western perspective, to be used as an example of a start to finish fitness journey (Jhaveri, 2019). Many consumers could not relate or connect to the woman who represented Peloton, and therefore there was a negative emotional response from consumers. Many Peloton consumers do not have the same type of body that this woman had at the *beginning* of her fitness journey, and therefore they grew frustrated with the brand for inaccurately representing them, causing for their inability to emotionally connect with a brand they had been able to connect with previously. If Peloton has presented a more real, transparent version of who their consumer was, the emotional response to the commercial could have been much different and could have benefitted their positive consumer engagement.

Emotional engagement is a key driver for overall customer retention. Consumers want to feel as though they have a channel to emotionally engage with a brand and that their engagement is met and reciprocated. One of the reasons brands see declining retention rates is because consumers do not feel engaged with the brand. In fact, “68% of customers leave because they do not think the company truly cares for them. Or, to put it another way, they are not emotionally engaged with the business” (Ferrante, 2012). Though it can be difficult with the vastness of social media for a brand to engage with *all* of its consumers, “every interaction is an opportunity to create emotional engagement, strengthen the customer relationship, and enhance the image of the business” (Ferrante,

2012). Creating content that encourages consumers to engage is going to make them feel a stronger connection and loyalty to the brand, which in turn increases retention rates of consumers. Additionally, brands need to strive to respond to as many engagements as they are able to, which causes consumers to feel as though they have a connection with the brand. Since customer retention is an important business aspect for all brands, social media content must be made with the strategic objective in mind of emotional engagement.

Emotional engagement starts with the content creators. Though it is noted earlier that consumers have immense power, the power truly begins in the hands of the brand and the strength of the content they are able to create. The idea of developing strong content for optimal emotional engagement can be defined as content engineering. Content engineering is when the development of creative content seeks to “better engage targeted users and drive the desired goals of the marketer from the campaigns they implement” (Hosanagar, Lee, Nair, 2018). Companies can understand why emotional engagement on content is beneficial to their brand, but if they do not understand *how* to create such content, they are nearly doomed. The best way for a brand to create emotionally engageable content is for them to “use content on a broad-range that is relevant to a brand’s personality, such as humor or emotion, resulting in higher consumer engagement meaning likes, comments, and shares” (Hosanagar, Lee, Nair, 2018). This broad-range content will vary depending on the brand creating it, but it ultimately should speak to the brand’s persona, which can be based upon virtues such as character, essence, identity, disposition, and so on. Since “recent studies report that only about 1% of an average firm’s Facebook fans (users who have *Liked* the Facebook page of the firm) actually

engage with the brand by commenting on, *Liking* or sharing posts by the platform” (Hosanagar, Lee, Nair, 2018) it draws attention to the fact that the formula needed for consistently quality content has not yet been discovered. Focusing on the consumer, understanding who they are and what they want, and relaying that into a brand’s message, is the best way to create content that will stick with consumers. Without a clear definition of *who* a brand is as well as *who* their consumer is, they will not be able to create content on social media that is emotionally engageable, which in turn will cause the brand to suffer on a variety of ways.

The ultimate form of exposure for organic content would be the potential for virality. Organic content differs significantly from paid content due to the fact that “the posts themselves encourage much more interaction than paid ads, such as commenting, liking, and sharing” (Mochon, Johnson, Schwartz, Ariely, 2017). However, brands have to encourage the correct forms of emotional expression on their organic content in order to invoke positive virality. There is no denying that negative news impacts a brands reputation far worse than positive news helps it, however, marketing communications and “transmission is more complex than mere valence alone. While awe-inspiring (positive) content is more viral and sadness-inducing (negative) content is less viral, some negative emotions are positively associated with virality” (Berger, Milkman, 2013). Additionally, there are “emotional aspects of content that may also impact whether it is shared. People discuss many of their emotional experiences with others, and there is evidence that extreme satisfaction generates more word-of-mouth than average experiences” (Berger, Milkman, 2013). Brands need to focus on content that invoke positive emotional responses, and avoid, at all costs, content that has any potential of invoking negative

emotional responses. Though the research from Jonah Berger and Katherine Milkman in *Emotion and Virality: What Makes Online Content Go Viral?* states that positive trends are more likely to go viral than negative trends, it is obvious how detrimental negative news could be for a brand if it were to go viral, such as a loss of trust from consumers or causing them to start buying from the brand's competitors. Focusing on content that attracts positive emotional reactions is the most strategic and forward-thinking approach for a brand's organic content.

No brand is going to be able to achieve totally positive emotional engagement at all times, in fact, they probably would not want to because it would look disingenuous. However, using the tactics discussed such as understanding the importance of consumer power, the attachment theory, brand transparency through their followers, customer retention relating to emotional engagement, content engineering and its relation to a brand's personality, and the prominence of content virality are key to receiving the optimal level of consumer emotional engagement. For many brands, social media is still a new realm where many lessons still have to be learned and their strategies solidified. There is a lot of data to consider when trying to understand how and why consumers emotionally engage the way that they do. For the present, brands have to focus on authentic, quality content that depicts who they are and how they meet the needs of consumers.

## CHAPTER 4

### INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PAID AND ORGANIC CONTENT

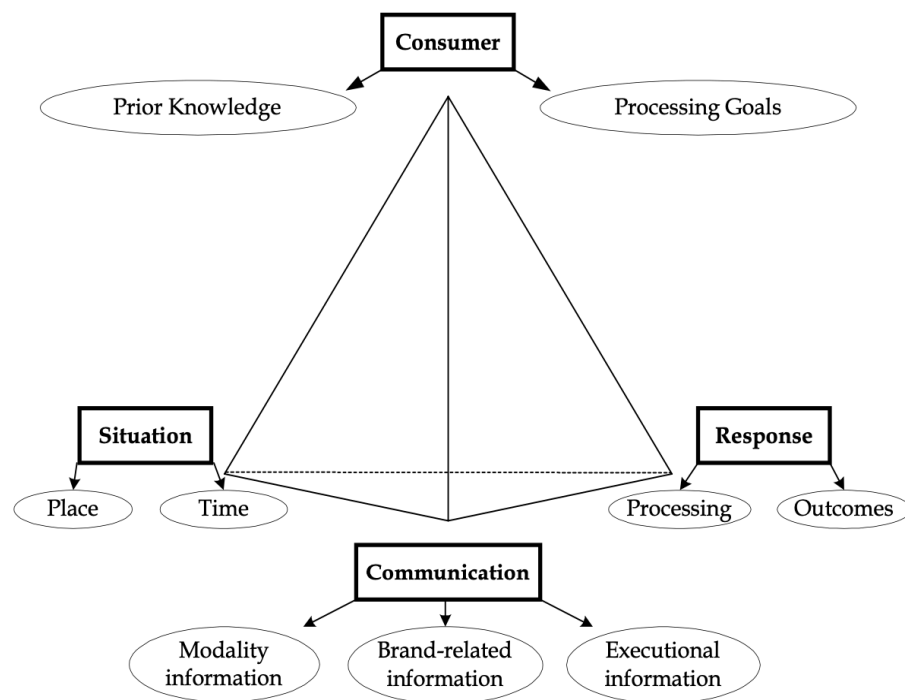
There are numerous concepts that, when combined, make up the broad field that is marketing communications. The umbrella concept of marketing communications serves as “the voice of a brand and the means by which companies can establish a dialogue with consumers” (Lane Keller, 2010). The content studied throughout the *Data Analysis* section of this thesis, focuses on emotional engagement on digital media and marketing communications plays a large role on this engagement. Marketing communications is what invites the consumer to engage with the brand in the first place, whether it be through messaging, creative, or other technology, brands have to be creative with their marketing communications by understanding the consumers and what they want to see from the brand. Though two decades ago marketing communications was the over-arching concept in which all marketing strategy was created around, in today’s world with the addition of dozens of channels for marketing communications with consumers, the concept of Integrated Marketing Communications, or IMC, has arisen. To understand the textbook definition of IMC is to understand that “communication options are designed in a way to reflect the existence and content of other communication options in the program” (Lane Keller, 2010). However, for all intents and purposes of the research this thesis focuses on, it is important to understand how IMC plays a role with the relationship of organic and paid content on the Facebook platform. In order to have optimal emotional engagement on both organic and paid advertisements, brands must



strategize toward “The Marketing Communications Tetrahedron” (Keller, 2010) and its four branches with a cohesive messaging strategy between the various forms of content.

The Marketing Communication Tetrahedron, or the MCT, is an IMC concept that focuses on four sets of factors that affect the success of marketing communications: consumer, communication, response, and situation (Keller, 2010).

**Figure 2: The Marketing Communication Tetrahedron**



(Lane Keller, 2010)

Each consumer is unique in their own way, whether it be demographics, characteristics, their behavior, and so on. Therefore, the way they will respond to content will vary. As seen in figure 2 above, consumers can come into contact with content, organic or paid, and have different levels of prior knowledge with the “product or service category, the company or organization that makes the product or provides the service for the brand, the brand itself, and past communications for the brand” (Lane Keller, 2010).

Prior knowledge of a consumer may be “a little or a lot – and what they know may reflect well or poorly on the brand” (Lane Keller, 2010). The attention span of a consumer for a digital advertisement is very low, a brand may only be able to obtain a few seconds, if that, of a consumer’s attention. Therefore, the brand’s content must be beneficial for consumers at each level of knowledge: awareness, consideration, and acquisition.

Awareness is when the consumer has little to no understanding of the brand and the brand must make them aware of who they are and what they offer. Consideration is when the consumers have already been exposed to the brand but have yet to go out of their way to become more educated; consideration content offers to the consumers a proposition to do their own research to deeper understand the brand. Finally, acquisition is when the consumer is well-versed in the brand and their purpose and identity, and the content they are being served is for those who are ready to purchase. Paid content has refined targeting abilities so that marketing managers can easily target these three phases of consumers’ experience and their prior knowledge of the brand. Since organic content does not have the same luxury, the brand has to ensure all content tells the same story in a unique way, so that consumers of all levels of knowledge can understand and engage with the brand and their content.

Consumers may also differ in their stages of processing goals. When consumers are exposed to any type of content, their “stage of readiness with respect to the brand or product category at the time at which they are exposed” (Lane Keller, 2010) will vary. These goals of consumers can range from “a need or desire to 1) make a purchase in the category; 2) identify appropriate candidate brands; 3) obtain benefit or feature information about specific brands; 4) judge or evaluate the merits of certain brands; or 5)

buy chosen brands” (Lane Keller, 2010). The goals of consumers are also relevant in conjunction with awareness, consideration, and acquisition tactics because the marketing manager must understand where the consumer is in the journey with the brand and the brand’s content. A well-known marketing expression states that “you can’t ask your consumer to go to a movie without showing them the trailer first,” just as a marketing manager cannot skip to step 5 in the consumer’s stages of goals, the advertisements served must coincide with where they are at in their journey. In addition, the organic content consumers see must also concur with the paid content. Since a consumer’s attention is limited, if a consumer sees a message that does not match the content they see on their newsfeed via an organic post, they will become confused and likely choose a brand who is clearer and more concise with their product or service.

The next factor of The Marketing Communication Tetrahedron is communication. There are three aspects of communication and all must be compatible. The first is modality information, which is the form of the offering in terms of “number (sight, sound motion, spoken, or written words, etc.) and nature (static, dynamic, interactive, customized, etc.)” (Lane Keller, 2010). The way that the content interacts with the consumer defines what type of response they will have to the content (Lane Keller, 2010). It is important that each piece of content has the same modality, or modality that complements each other. For example, a company cannot boast in their paid advertisements about modernity, only to take consumers to a website that is outdated and obsolete. Their modes of communications would be sending two entirely different messages to consumers. The second aspect of communication is brand-related information, which “may focus on tangible aspects (e.g. physical product attributes) or

intangible aspects (e.g. user or usage imagery, brand personality, the company behind the brand, etc.)” (Lane Keller, 2010). Whether or not a brand chooses tangible or intangible aspects to tell their story through, they must be consistent across content. If a company uses both, they must use copy that bridges the two concepts together, if not, consumers will not understand what the brand is trying to say about their product or service. The final aspect of communication is the executional information which is how a brand conveys their brand-related information. The executional process can be performed in “virtually an infinite number of different ways (e.g. throughout informational or emotional means; employing fear, music, sex, appeals, special effects, etc.)” (Lane Keller, 2010) but again, the brand must keep in mind consistency, and generate a flow from one piece of content to the next. If a consumer sees a piece of paid content using the appeal of fear, and the next organic post they see uses the appeal of sex, the consumer could draw opinions that are far from what the brand wanted them to think.

The next factor of The Marketing Communication Tetrahedron is the response consumers have to being exposed to content from a brand. There are two aspects of the response: the processing and the outcome. The processing refers to the psychological processes that humans go through when being exposed to a stimulus. For example, the responses can be a result of abstraction, evaluative nature, product- or brand-relationship, and etc. (Keller, 2010). The way in which consumers process a brand’s content is important because while experiencing the content, “a consumer may experience a certain emotion (e.g. warmth, pride, etc.), reach an overall judgement about the brand, and so on” (Lane Keller, 2010). Since judgement of a brand can be made so quickly, it is vital for a brand to have a clear message throughout all content, so that the consumer does not

have the opportunity to process each one differently and form conflicting opinions. The outcomes of consumer responses are the memory, judgement, or behavioral effects that happen and have the ability to be measured (Lane Keller, 2010). Memory measures recall and recognition, judgement measures attitude and perceptions, and behavioral effects measures preferences, quantity and frequency, and subsequent purchases of the brand (Lane Keller, 2010). Memory transfers to purchase behavior because the ability for recall and recognition when consumers are in the situation of purchasing a product, such as when they are at the shelf in the grocery store, consumers will likely choose the brand whose logo or colors they are able to recall from any type of content seen from the brand. Judgement is imperative too because once a consumer makes their initial perception of a brand, it is unlikely to be changed; therefore, the first impressions consumers make of a brand are imperative. Behavioral outcomes are important because every firm's goal is to attract and retain customers, and their behavior tells of their purchase frequency and repurchase intent. The bottom line in any marketing campaign is to, in some way, increase profits for the company. Consumer responses through their processing and outcomes tells a story of how purchase behavior and sales will be reflected due to cohesive IMC strategies.

The final factor of The Marketing Communication Tetrahedron are the situational aspects that affect the consumer's interaction with a brand's content. Broadly, these situational aspects are defined as place and time, however on a more specific level, the aspects "include exposure location; the extent and nature of competing stimuli (advertising or otherwise) at communication exposure; the amount of time lag involved with measurements of response or outcomes; the type of retrieval conditions present

during these measures, and so on” (Lane Keller, 2010). When understanding how the time and the place affect a consumer’s ability to comprehend a brand’s content, the issue to understand is “whether they facilitate or inhibit processing and, as a result, enhance or detract from communication effects in any way” (Lane Keller, 2010). The content served to consumers via organic or sponsored will always be subject to these situational factors, however there are things brands can do to control as much as possible. For example, from a paid perspective, brands can adjust the frequency their ad is shown to a consumer, so consumers do not become annoyed seeing the same ad come on five times while they are streaming a show. From an organic perspective, brands can use low-volume videos so that if a consumer is scrolling through their newsfeed in a place where they do not want a loud noise coming from their phone, such as at work or at a library, seeing the content while scrolling does not disrupt their surroundings. Though there are things that are uncontrollable, by understanding what types of situations could inflict negative emotions onto their consumers due to their content, brands can adjust their content across the board to deter from these unfavorable situations.

### Consumer Privacy with Sponsored Content

In the rise of the digital age, not only has the development of content shifted in light of IMC, but also in regard to a consumer’s increased demand for privacy. Corporations such as Facebook have had the ability to gather a massive amount of data from their consumers over the past few decades, and most consumers have not realized until recently. With the increased consumer awareness of this data collection, consumers have demanded an improved system for hiding and safeguarding their information from Facebook, and the brands advertising on the platform. The role of privacy on sponsored

content has affected IMC efforts because consumers have fluctuated their levels of engagement due to their concern for the privacy of their information (Tucker, 2014). Though organic content does not use any user-information for targeting, if a consumer receives an ad from a company they follow on Facebook, there is potential that they could become distrusting of a company that they once viewed as trustworthy and dependable for the product or service they provided that consumer.

In a research article published in the *Journal of Marketing Research* by Catherine Tucker called *Social Networks, Personalized Advertising, and Privacy Controls*, a study was done over a five-week period in which results were gathered from a non-profit's paid content on Facebook before and after Facebook updated their privacy settings. The study showed that "personalized advertising was relatively ineffective before Facebook introduced new privacy controls. However, personalized advertising was nearly twice as effective at attracting users to the non-profit's Facebook page after the shift in Facebook's policy which gave users more control over their personal information" (Tucker, 2014). Ultimately, the study revealed that "when a social networking website allowed customers to choose how their personally identifiable information was shared and used, there was no negative effect on advertising performance" (Tucker, 2014). Consumers are more accepting and responsive to personalized advertisements on Facebook if they feel as though they are in control of their privacy settings, even though throughout the entire study they were still being targeted to the same degree (Tucker, 2014).

Though these privacy concerns are entirely to do with paid content on Facebook, they are still relevant regarding the brand's reputation as a whole. When consumers feel

that they are being over-targeted, they lose trust in the brand and are reluctant to interact with the brand on digital platforms for fear of further compromise of their information. Even if brands use the same targeting tactics as others, they must make consumers feel as though they are in control of their information, even if they are not. This can be done by using broader, less personalized ad-copy; for example, instead of targeting a recent grad by saying “as a \_\_\_ graduate”, instead say: “you had the benefit of a great education” (Tucker, 2014). Even though both advertisements will target graduates of a specific school, the advertisement is not over-personalized to the point where consumers are creeped out that a brand knows so much about them. By achieving this optimal level of personalization, giving the consumer the perception that they are in control of their information, there is the potential for positive overlap of interaction with other forms of content, such as organic.



## DATA ANALYSIS

The first round of t-tests<sup>8</sup> evaluated by the coding software R were associated with solving the first hypothesis, which stated that: because Peloton uses a single Facebook page for both of their product offerings, then Peloton will have more overall reactions on their organic content than ClassPass and ClassPass Live have individually. Table 1, below, shows the weighted engagements that were entered into the coding software R where the total number of reactions on each post was divided by the number of “likes,” or subscribers, each business site had. Table 2, below, shows the engagements on their own, before being weighted.

Table 1: Weighted Reactions

| sept.classpass | sept.peloton.2019 |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 0.0023714%     | 0.02462234%       |
| 0.0016600%     | 0.17356731%       |
| 0.0023714%     | 0.02502598%       |
| 0.0014229%     | 0.01210935%       |
| 0.0087743%     | 0.08799459%       |
| 0.0016600%     | 0.02159500%       |
| 0.0009486%     | 0.01634762%       |
| 0.0009486%     | 0.02341140%       |
| 0.0007114%     | 0.02058589%       |
| 0.0026086%     | 0.04056631%       |
| 0.0018972%     | 0.04177725%       |
| 0.0049800%     | 0.02199865%       |
| 0.0040314%     | 0.02684239%       |
| 0.0007114%     | 0.03067701%       |
| 0.0035572%     | 0.12936819%       |
| 0.0009486%     | 0.03471346%       |
| 0.0064029%     | 0.02684239%       |
| 0.0232401%     | 0.03208977%       |

Table 2: Total Reactions

| sept.classpass | sept.peloton.2019 |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 10             | 122               |
| 7              | 860               |
| 10             | 124               |
| 6              | 60                |
| 37             | 436               |
| 7              | 107               |
| 4              | 81                |
| 4              | 116               |
| 3              | 102               |
| 11             | 201               |
| 8              | 207               |
| 21             | 109               |
| 17             | 133               |
| 3              | 152               |
| 15             | 641               |
| 4              | 172               |
| 27             | 133               |
| 98             | 159               |

<sup>8</sup> A t-test is a statistical test that compares means between two data sets and assesses if the difference between means is statistically significant

Table 3: Weighted Reactions

| sept.classpasslive | sept.peloton.2018 |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 3.6148433%         | 0.0244205%        |
| 2.4312220%         | 0.0351171%        |
| 0.5758157%         | 0.0252278%        |
| 2.3032630%         | 0.0502538%        |
| 1.4235445%         | 0.0314843%        |
| 0.0639795%         | 0.1041404%        |
| 4.2866283%         | 0.0322916%        |
| 2.6871401%         | 0.0324934%        |
| 0.2079335%         | 0.0805272%        |
| 0.2079335%         | 0.0603449%        |
| 0.1759437%         | 0.0349153%        |
| 0.0016600%         | 0.05691393%       |
| 0.0037943%         | 0.08658183%       |
| 0.0004743%         | 0.02462234%       |

Table 4: Total Reactions

| sept.classpasslive | sept.peloton.2018 |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 226                | 121               |
| 152                | 174               |
| 36                 | 125               |
| 144                | 249               |
| 89                 | 156               |
| 4                  | 516               |
| 268                | 160               |
| 168                | 161               |
| 13                 | 399               |
| 13                 | 299               |
| 11                 | 173               |
| 7                  | 282               |
| 16                 | 429               |
| 2                  | 122               |

The two tables above are part of the analysis for the first hypothesis. Table 3 represents the data for the t-test done between Peloton and ClassPass Live, where the reactions have been weighted based on the number of “likes”, or subscribers, each business site had. Table 4 represents the total reactions each post had for Peloton and ClassPass Live, before they were weighted.

Table 5: Comments per Post

| comments.ClassPass | comments.peloton.2019 |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 7                  | 26                    |
| 8                  | 17                    |
| 1                  | 1                     |
| 2                  | 0                     |

Table 6: Comments per Post

| coments.ClassPassLive | comments.peloton.2019 |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 6                     | 5                     |
| 3                     | 6                     |
| 2                     | 6                     |
| 1                     | 14                    |

The second round of t-tests evaluated using the coding software R were associated with solving the second hypothesis, which stated that: because ClassPass and ClassPass Live choose to separate their product offerings on Facebook into two identities, then ClassPass and ClassPass Live will each individually receive comments on their organic posts that reveal more positive emotions than Peloton. For this analysis, 4 t-tests were required. On table 5, above, it shows the data for the t-test done between Peloton and ClassPass, where the number of comments were examined. On table 6, above, it shows the data for the t-test done between Peloton and ClassPass Live, where the number of comments were examined for these two entities.

Table 7: Positive Emotionality LIWC Scores:

| pos.emo.ClassPass | pos.emo.peloton.2019 |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 10.91             | 10.24                |
| 2.83              | 3.77                 |
| 0                 | 8.33                 |
| 0                 | 0                    |

Table 8: Positive Emotionality LIWC Scores:

| pos.emo.ClassPassLive | pos.emo.peloton.2019 |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 2.03                  | 7.41                 |
| 4.72                  | 12.2                 |
| 5.16                  | 6.38                 |
| 0                     | 5.88                 |

The third round of t-tests performed are for the analysis of the second hypothesis. On table 7, above, the coding software R was used to analyze the data between the positive emotionality LIWC scores, which had been generated by the LIWC software prior, between Peloton and ClassPass. On table 8, above, the coding software R was used to analyze the data between the positive emotionality LIWC scores, which had been generated by the LIWC software prior, between Peloton and ClassPass Live.

## Results

Based off of the t-test seen in Table 9, below, the data has shown that there is a significant statistical difference<sup>9</sup> between the means of ClassPass Live and Peloton's weighted reactions based off the fact that the p-value is less than .05. This t-test refutes hypothesis 1 because it shows that despite having 2 separate Facebook sites for each product offering, ClassPass Live has greater numbers of reactions per post than Peloton. The results of this t-test are unique because ClassPass Live has only 1.26% of the amount of page likes that Peloton has, therefore are captivating their audience more effectively. Additional analyses will be done in the *Follow-Up Analyses* section.

Table 9: ClassPass Live versus Peloton Weighted Reactions T-Test

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| t= 3.474                                | df= 10.006                        |
| p-value= 0.005976                       |                                   |
| Sample Estimates:                       |                                   |
| Mean of ClassPass Live Reactions: .0163 | Mean of Peloton Reactions: .00046 |

Derived from the t-test seen in Table 10, below, the data has shown that there is significant statistical difference between the means of ClassPass Live and Peloton's weighted reactions due to the fact that the p-value is less than .05. This t-test supports hypothesis 1 because Peloton's mean for number of reactions is statistically significantly greater than ClassPass' mean for number of reactions. Though ClassPass and Peloton have fairly similar number of page likes, Peloton is catering to two different market segments whereas ClassPass is catering to only one of their market segments, therefore it makes sense as to why Peloton has a higher number of reactions per post.

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<sup>9</sup> A significant difference would show a p-value that is < .05, if that occurs, the difference between means is statistically significant. If the p-value is > .05, there is no statistical significance between the two means.

Table 10: ClassPass versus Peloton Weighted Reactions T-Test

|   |  |
|---|--|
| t= -4.6539                                | df= 20.583                             |
| p-value= 0.0001428                        |  |
| Sample Estimates:                         |  |
| Mean of ClassPass Reactions:<br>.00003579 | Mean of Peloton Reactions:<br>.0004563 |

Acquired from the t-test seen in Table 11, below, the data has shown that there is not a statistical significance in the difference between the means of ClassPass and Peloton’s number of comments per post due to the fact that the p-value is greater than .05. This t-test neither refutes or supports hypothesis 2, but rather shows that the number of comments organic content receives does not play a significant role on the positive emotionality of consumers when faced with either 1 site for both offerings or 2 sites for each individual offering.

Table 11: ClassPass versus Peloton, Number of Comments T-Test

|   |   |
|---|---|
| t= -0.98837                                   | df= 3.4579                                    |
| p-value= 0.387                                |   |
| Sample Estimates:                             |   |
| Mean of ClassPass' Number of<br>Comments: 4.5 | Mean of Peloton's Number of Comments:<br>11.0 |

Pulled from the t-test below, shown in Table 12, the data has shown that that there is not a statistically significant difference between the means of ClassPass Live or Peloton’s number of comments per post because the p-value is greater than .05. This t-test refutes hypothesis 2, showing that neither Peloton or ClassPass Live’s decisions on how to brand their product offerings on the Facebook platform, 1 site for both offerings or 2 sites for each individual offering, affects the number the nature of commenting on organic content. However, the p-value is very close to .05, which leads to the belief that there was almost a statistical significance in the difference of the number of comments. This theory will be analyzed further in the *Follow-Up Analyses*.

Table 12: ClassPass Live versus Peloton, Number of Comments T-Test

|   |  |
|---|--|
| t= -2.014   | df= 4.4876                                 |
| p-value= 0.1066                                   |  |
| Sample Estimates:                                 |  |
| Mean of ClassPass Live's Number of Comments: 3.00 | Mean of Peloton's Number of Comments: 7.75 |

Based off of the t-test below, shown below in Table 13, the data has shown that there is no statistically significant difference in positive emotionality, since the p-value is greater than .05, based on the means of LIWC “posemo” scores between ClassPass and Peloton. This t-test refutes hypothesis two, because it shows that despite ClassPass separating their product offerings into two Facebook sites, they do not receive any greater positive emotionality in their comments than Peloton does, even though Peloton compiles both offerings under one Facebook site.

Table 13: ClassPass versus Peloton, Positive Emotionality of Comments

|  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| t= -0.62167                            | df= 5.925                            |
| p-value= 0.5573                        |                                      |
| Sample Estimates:                      |                                      |
| Mean of ClassPass POSEMO Scores: 3.435 | Mean of Peloton POSEMO Scores: 5.585 |

Gathered from the t-test below, shown below in Table 14, the data has shown that there is a statistical significance, since the p-value is greater than .05, in the difference of positive emotionality between the means of LIWC “posemo” scores between ClassPass Live and Peloton. This t-test refutes hypothesis two because it was predicted that ClassPass Live would receive greater positive emotionality in comments since their Facebook site is tailored to their specific market segment, however the t-test shows that in fact Peloton received statistically significant greater positive emotionality in their organic posts’ comments.

Table 14: ClassPass Live versus Peloton, Positive Emotionality of Comments

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| t= -2.6464                                   | df= 5.8183                            |
| p-value= 0.03935                             |                                       |
| Sample Estimates:                            |                                       |
| Mean of ClassPass Live POSEMO Scores: 2.9775 | Mean of Peloton POSEMO Scores: 7.9675 |

Follow-Up Analyses

Several of the t-tests done for the month of September left a lot of unanswered questions as to why the data showed certain significances. For example, why did ClassPass Live receive significantly more reactions than Peloton, but Peloton had significant higher reactions than ClassPass? Or, why did Peloton receive higher positive emotionality than ClassPass Live, but when testing Peloton versus ClassPass there were no significances? Or, why were there no significant difference in the number of comments between the t-tests of ClassPass versus Peloton as well as ClassPass Live versus Peloton? And, why did Peloton have significantly higher positively emotionality in LIWC scores when tested against ClassPass Live, but when tested against ClassPass there was no significant difference? Questions such as these revealed that more research and further t-tests were required in order to gain better insight as to why the results came to be what they were. The original primary data shown throughout Tables 2, 4, 5 ,6, 7, and 8 was readjusted and recalculated to create 3 new t-test that shed further insight as to why the original t-tests brought such results.

The first follow up t-test calculated was testing the total reactions, unweighted, between ClassPass and ClassPass Live versus Peloton '18 and '19. Table 15, below, shows that since the p-value is less than .05, Peloton in 2018 and 2019 for the month of September had significantly more reactions than the combination of reactions from

ClassPass in September of 2019 and ClassPass Live in September of 2018. The results of this t-test answered the question as to why Peloton had significantly higher reactions when tested against just ClassPass, but when tested against just ClassPass Live, they had significantly fewer reactions. When unweighting the reaction data, it is clear that Peloton '18 and '19 had significantly more reactions than ClassPass and ClassPass Live, not only was this telling from the p-value, but when looking at the raw, unweighted data, in table 2 and 4, it is clear Peloton receives more reactions than ClassPass and ClassPass Live.

Table 15: Total Reactions Unweighted for ClassPass + ClassPass Live versus Peloton '18 +'19

|   |   |
|---|---|
| t= -5.3763                              | df= 40.379  |
| p-value= .000003458                     |   |
| Sample Estimates:                       |   |
| Mean of CP + CPL Reactions:<br>45.03125 | Mean of Peloton '18 + '19 Reactions:<br>227.53125 |

The second follow up t-test evaluated the total number of comments between ClassPass and ClassPass Live versus Peloton '18 and '19. Table 16, below, shows that since the p-value is greater than .05, there is no significant difference in the number of comments each company got. Since the p-value is only .07 above the .05 threshold, with Peloton's average higher than ClassPass's average, which could be telling that Peloton was very close to being significantly higher than ClassPass in their number of comments. However, neither of the original t-tests showed significant differences in the number of comments and neither does this follow up test, therefore in this study, number of comments does not have an impact on a consumer's willingness to positively emotionally engage via commenting.



Table 16: ClassPass + ClassPass Live versus Peloton '18 + '19, Number of Comments  
T-Test

|   |  |
|---|--|
| t= -1.7024                                    | df= 8.384  |
| p-value= .1254                                |  |
| Sample Estimates:                             |  |
| Mean of CP + CPL Number of Comments:<br>3.750 | Mean of Peloton '18+'19 Number of<br>comments: 9.375 |

The third and final follow up t-test evaluated positive emotionality scores from LIWC between ClassPass and ClassPass Live versus Peloton '18 and '19. Table 17, below, shows that since the p-value is greater than .05, the positive emotionality scores for Peloton '18 and '19 have no statistical difference when tested against ClassPass and ClassPass Live. While this follow up analysis does not answer the question as to why Peloton has higher positive emotionality versus ClassPass Live, but not ClassPass, the p-value for this test is extremely close to .05 and therefore with more research from other months throughout 2018 and 2019, different results could be possible. When combining all of the scores for the company ClassPass (ClassPass + ClassPass Live) and testing them against all of the scores for the company Peloton ('18 + '19), the p-value shows that overall, neither company's branding strategy shows to be more effective on the basis of positive emotionality of commenting.

Table 17: ClassPass + ClassPass Live versus Peloton '18 + '19,  
Positive Emotionality of Comments

|  |   |
|--|---|
| t= -1.8987                                 | df= 13.998  |
| p-value= .07841                            |   |
| Sample Estimates:                          |   |
| Mean of CP + CPL POSEMO Scores:<br>3.20625 | Mean of Peloton '18+'19 POSEMO<br>Scores: 6.77625 |

## CONCLUSION

Human beings, as consumers, are complex individuals. Social psychology says that the way in which humans reveal their emotions is unambiguous based on defining factors of their demographics. However, as marketers, we still find it increasingly relevant to research to understand these consumers. Why? Because we do not know everything about our consumers' emotional reactions to our content. With the expanded use of social media within the last decade, marketing campaigns have become not only vast, but subject to the potential for hundreds of millions of consumers seeing it and having an opinion on it. Therefore, while social psychology is applicable in understanding how to formulate a marketing campaign based off of what a marketer knows about their market segment, the realm of digital marketing has become so enormous that alternative methods of studying consumers is necessary.

A successful social media strategy is vital to a brand's success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. At the end of the day, a brand's mission is for consumers to be able to inform themselves about the brand's identity, market position, and competitive advantage when that consumer comes across their social media sites. The way in which a consumer responds emotionally is telling of how effective a brand was in achieving these three aspects of their mission. The research presented throughout the *Data Analysis* section analyzes two distinct marketing strategies on the Facebook platform and shows how effective each one was. After analyzing the Data with two different software systems, LIWC and R, it is clear that Peloton's users are more engaged with their organic content on Facebook via their reaction rates and positive comments. Peloton's strategy seems more successful than

ClassPass's, if the goal of the company is to generate a higher number of reactions as well as higher positive emotionality among comments.

There are some key lessons to be taken from this research study. The first is that a “flashy” strategy is not always the best way to go. When I first started researching for this thesis, I assumed ClassPass had the perfect strategy: it was unique yet straightforward and stood out from their competitors. However, I soon learned this was not the case. Though ClassPass's strategy of having two separate sites for their product offerings was distinctive, it did not lead to higher reaction rates and positive comments from consumers. Peloton on the other hand, stuck to the strategy that was tried and true: one Facebook site for all of their products. Though initially it may seem boring comparatively, the data says otherwise. Additionally, I learned that consumers can react positively to a brand's content, even if that content does not align with their segment of the market, if they have a positive association with any of the brand's products. Before conducting research, I assumed that Peloton's digital application subscribers would respond negatively to organic Facebook content regarding the Bike and Tread, however, the opposite was true. Only one post, out of eight studied, for Peloton had a 0 for a POSEMO score, whereas ClassPass and ClassPass Live had three scores of 0 out of their eight posts. Additionally, I learned that a failure in any aspect of a business can impact an ad campaign. ClassPass Live suffered when it came to positive comments because many consumers had commented frustrated messages about their unaccommodating cancellation process. Consumers had gotten charged for the service after they thought they had canceled. This impacted ClassPass Live because their organic content

showcasing one of their top-level classes was deteriorated due to a different department of their business failing.

All in all, many lessons were learned from the production of this thesis. The overall purpose of this paper was to identify which strategy was more effective for overall reactions and positive emotional commenting, which was achieved. Peloton presented as a clear front-runner in strategy on the basis of reactions on organic content on the Facebook platform. However, neither of the companies showed to be consistently higher on the basis of positive emotionality of commenting; the only time there was a significant difference was in one of the three tests involving POSEMO data which was between Peloton and ClassPass Live. The data presented is a summation of the time and resources available to an undergraduate student. If more time were available, this research study would gain a lot of insight if additional months of content could be studied. Additionally, if more resources were available, this research study would benefit if the data from paid content was able to be studied. However, with the time and resources available, the result of this study is one that can aid marketers in developing strategies when dealing with a business that has multiple product offerings and is looking to have an organic Facebook site that is engaging to their users via reactions and positive commenting.

### Limitations

Though the research presented in this study was done using all of the possible data available, there are several things that are out of the control of the researcher that are vital to better understanding and interpreting the statistical findings. First, the demographic information of consumers who engaged with the organic Facebook content

could add context to the results of the analysis. Second, the comments of Facebook users with private accounts were not seen to the general public and therefore could not be included in the LIWC analysis. Third, this thesis was given around 4 months for the research process, therefore there was not enough time to collect multiple months' worth of data, which could have given the study a different end result. Fourth, ClassPass Live shut down its service during the middle of August, and therefore was not posting any new content. Since this information was not made public until after the proposal to this thesis was accepted, historical data from September of 2018 was used for ClassPass Live in order to get an accurate read of how consumers were engaged at a time of full operation. To make up for this scenario, the Peloton data that was tested against ClassPass Live was also gathered from September of 2018. Fifth, due to the lack of available information about ClassPass Live, cost structure for the subscription service was not available. Sixth, the chapter on social psychology is a limited scope of social psychology concepts. Though the subject is very relevant to this thesis, social psychology is a vast matter and only essential information relevant to consumer engagement was able to be added to the literature review. Sixth, since the number of ClassPass Live users is drastically different than the number of Peloton Digital Application users, their Facebook business site has a great deal less page likes. Therefore, in the tests to prove hypothesis 1, the reactions for each offering, ClassPass, ClassPass Live, and Peloton, were divided by their overall page likes. Seventh, in order to conduct t-tests in the coding software R, the two data sets had to have the same number of variables; since each Facebook site had a different amount of posts for the month of September, Excel was used to randomize the data so that each data set had an even number of variables. Eighth, this data was collected as a snapshot in time

for the month of September for the years of 2018 and 2019. If more time was available to be devoted to this study, there may be different results that could occur. Ninth, the size of the sample for this study was relatively small. Only 16 posts were studied, 4 from each product and its' offering. If more time was available, this study could benefit from having more posts studied. Tenth, there is the possibility that astroturfing was involved in the comments on either Peloton, ClassPass, or ClassPass Live. Astroturfing is the process of an organization's sponsors or employees masking their identity and commenting positive things in hopes of amplifying up the brand's image.

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Meredith Stephens was born on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1997 in Rockville, Maryland, where she lived her entire life. She graduated from Our Lady of Good Counsel High School in Olney, Maryland in May of 2016 and chose to attend the University of Maine as a marketing major. Throughout her time at the University of Maine, Meredith kept marketing as her major but added on a minor of graphic design during her sophomore year. While obtaining her marketing degree, Meredith participated in a cooperative internship where she lived in New York City during the spring semester of 2019 and worked at a digital marketing agency. Following Meredith's graduation in May of 2020, she hopes to return to this digital marketing agency to work full-time. Meredith is grateful to the University of Maine, the Maine Business School, and the Honors College to their immense dedication to her education and success.