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Pennsylvania Communication Annual Guide for Authors

The Pennsylvania Communication Annual is dedicated to advancing our undertaking of human communication. Manuscripts should be original and should discuss instructional, theoretical, philosophical, and/or practical aspects of any area of communication. Reviews of recent books and/or video tapes in any area of communication are also considered at the editor's discretion. While articles authored by Pennsylvanians and articles covering Pennsylvania topics are especially welcome, manuscripts on all topics and from all regions, including international submissions, are invited and will receive full consideration for publication.

The Pennsylvania Communication Annual is a refereed journal of the **Pennsylvania Communication Association**. Manuscripts for the 2015 issue are now being received. The acceptance rate for the 2014 journal was slightly over 22%. Submission should follow the latest APA style sheet. Please format your papers for blind review and remove anything that may give away your identity. *Manuscripts should not exceed 8000 words including references, notes, tables and other citations. Also book reviews should not exceed 2000 words.* Please submit your articles to *The Pennsylvania Communication Annual* at my.ejmanager.com/pca website. The submission deadline is 3/30/2015. PCA Annual is indexed by the EBSCOHost service.

Some important details to follow when submitting your manuscripts: Endnotes only and without formatting, no footnotes; no superscript font to indicate an endnote, just regular numbers and we will superscript upon editing; insert tables and illustrations as images only or send separate PDF files of these portions of the documents; and formatted hanging indents only on references or no formatting at all (no "return" and "tab" to create the look of a hanging indent).

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The Pennsylvania Communication Association (PCA) promotes teaching, scholarship, service, and an ongoing commitment to the discipline of human communication.

The Association believes in:

Teaching

- Advancing and developing communication curricula
- Responding to student and societal needs
- Attending to and caring for the student inside and outside of the communication classroom

Scholarship

- Promoting communication scholarship within the Keystone State
- Providing a disciplinary commitment to Pennsylvania scholars, reaching out to the larger discipline
- Being a dwelling place of Pennsylvania communication scholarship history

Service

- Connecting the larger community to the communication discipline
- Supporting efforts to professionalize students in communication fields
- Serving our students inside and outside of formal institutional structures

Commitment to the Discipline

- Nurturing the grassroots application of communication in the wider community
- Caring for the discipline on the local academic campus
- Supporting the larger discipline at the regional, national, and international levels

The Organization

The Pennsylvania Communication Association was originally founded as the Speech Communication Association of Pennsylvania (SCAP) in 1939. Its current title, the Pennsylvania Communication Association (PCA), commenced in 2003.

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From the Editor

Cem Zeytinoglu
East Stroudsburg University

Another exciting and productive year for the journal. The year 2014 has been full with new opportunities and it is a very special occasion for our organization. This year's convention in September at Duquesne University will mark the 75th anniversary of *Pennsylvania Communication Association*. Because of this important milestone, this year *The Pennsylvania Communication Annual* will be published as multiple issues.

Alongside with this regular issue, we will have three additional online-only special issues. The first and most significant special issue will be about this year's convention theme: "PCA's Diamond Anniversary and the Dimensions of Communication." This issue will feature four significant scholars of communication who have been the recipients of the PCA's *Julia T. Wood Scholar/Teacher Award* during the past six years. Another special issue will feature manuscripts submitted by students from various graduate schools. The last, but not the least, is an issue which I am very excited about. This online-only issue will feature articles on the theme of the last year's pre-convention gathering: "Albert Camus & Philosophy of Communication: Making Sense in an Age of Absurdity."

This year, we also continued to work with *ScopeMed's* online journal management system eJManager.com with some noteworthy improvements. I am hoping that these improvements will make the submission, reviewing, and publishing process more convenient and useful. We are also still in the process of providing digital copies of *Annual's* past and current copies to EBSCOhost in order to be included in their online databases. The first issue that was sent to EBSCOhost index services was the last year's issue and this current one will be indexed once it is physically published.

We have received several manuscripts from authors who live and work outside of our state. I believe that this shows the growing reputation of the scope and frame of the *Annual* within our field. As a result, authors of two manuscripts out of the five published

in this edition have come from out-of-state scholars. Our reviewers and associate editors also represent states outside of Pennsylvania. We had six of our colleagues outside of Pennsylvania who served in one of those roles for the *Annual* this year.

Again, the articles published in this issue are closely related to this year's convention theme. The acceptance rate for this issue is just over 22%, a drop from 27% from last year. The submission process was highly competitive resulting in a high quality group of submissions. Thus, some strong research articles had to remain outside of this issue. I hope that the authors of such manuscripts will consider resubmitting their research next year.

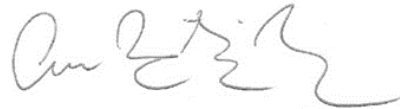
The articles in this issue come from multiple aspects of the study of communication, which is evidence of the breadth and richness of our field. Schmidt's article looks at the dimensions of journalism education. He investigates how the changing nature of media and journalism has heightened the importance of quality journalism education and the hands-on experience that students gain while working at campus newspapers. Schmidt's research includes a content analysis of six of the nation's top student newspapers and a survey of student newspaper staff members across the country. McKenzie and Halstead investigate how seven successful women leaders in higher education have constructed and implemented an active voice in developing their leadership skills, despite barriers that traditionally impede leadership attainment for women in higher education, in order to advance opportunities for future women leaders.

Lucas argues that while brands are often seen by consumers in much the same way relationships are considered (elements of trust, promises, broken promises, and comfort), they differ in the sense that brands need enduring immortality. He demonstrates how brands are extensively linked to memory and live on in a way that is not reliant on physical lifespan. Bressler examines whether or not there is a connection between television networks and their representation of siblings on family sitcoms. By connecting both the fields of interpersonal communication and media studies, she examines media representations through an interpersonal communicative approach. Lastly, Haijing Tu's article focuses on Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). His research finds that the Twitter network "Coursera" is loosely connected

with low-closeness centrality and high-betweenness centrality in term of user interaction.

Finally, I would like to thank those that made this journal possible. I thank, sincerely, the authors for these exciting submissions as well as the associate editors for their professionalism and skill in reviewing their articles. I am greatly indebted to the assistant editor, Dr. Kristen L. Majocho, for her priceless contribution. I am very much obliged to my colleagues in the Communication Studies Department at East Stroudsburg University for their never-ending support. I am thankful to all friends and peers, too numerous to mention, for encouraging and helping me when needed to serve to the *Pennsylvania Communication Association* in this capacity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cem Zeytinoglu', with a stylized, flowing script.

Cem Zeytinoglu, PhD
Associate Professor of Communication Studies
East Stroudsburg University

Training Tomorrow's Journalists: An Analysis of Student Newspaper Content

Hans C. Schmidt
Pennsylvania State University, Brandywine

The changing nature of media and journalism has heightened the importance of quality journalism education and the hands-on experience that students gain while working at campus newspapers. To better understand what skills journalism students are developing, this study involved a content analysis of six of the nation's top student newspapers and a survey of student newspaper staff members across the country. Results demonstrate that student journalists cover certain topics frequently, neglect other topics, and use limited sources.

More than a century ago, George W. Ochs, publisher of the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, suggested, "Journalism has become a very potential, if not a chief, factor in the world's affairs" (1906, p. 38). This statement is as true today as it was at the dawn of the 20th century; the early decades of both centuries have seen tremendous cultural, political, and economic change. Furthermore, both eras have seen technological developments that led to shifts in the nature of publishing. Just as electronic media both improved and competed with print 100 years ago, Internet-based new media offer challenges and opportunities for contemporary journalists today.

This evolving media landscape means that journalists today are faced with the need to continually develop and master new skills. The necessity of such continued professional development is evidenced by a poll conducted for the *Online Journalism Review*, which suggested that mid-career journalists commonly reported that they felt the need to develop new media skills related to photography and photo editing, videography and video editing, sound recording and editing, HTML design, and Web programming (Niles, 2010). But technological savvy is not all that today's journalists need. Studies by Dupagne and Garrison (2006), Magee (2006), Pierce and Miller (2007), and Fahmy (2008) have found that while such new media skills are now considered necessary, traditional skills related to writing, editing, and interviewing remain crucial as well. Accordingly, the fundamentals of

writing and reporting remain necessary. Journalists today must be sophisticated enough to both understand and report on the complex issues facing today's global society, and also package their reports in a format that is appropriate for the modern media consumer.

When it comes to adjusting to the modern world of journalism, the stakes could not be higher. It is well known that journalism organizations – both traditional and Web-based – face tremendous financial pressures that threaten to undermine the quality and substance of reporting (Dates, 2006; Pew Research Center, 2008). As such, adaptation to new media and techniques is necessary for survival.

Clearly, the complexity of modern journalism highlights the ever-increasing importance of quality journalism schools. As of 2012, there were over 400 journalism programs in the United States (American Society of Newspaper Editors, 2012). Of these, 108 were accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) for their best practices in the field of journalism education (Accrediting Council, 2012). Such journalism programs, and the countless other journalism courses offered at universities and colleges across the country, are central to the existence of a trained professional journalism corps.

To address some of the many professional challenges facing the over 12,000 journalists in the United States (Cohen, 2001), university-level media and journalism programs continue to refine themselves by offering new courses and adapting existing courses to focus on new trends and technologies. Yet, despite the changing nature of modern journalism (Adams, 2008; Greenwald, 2004; Henry, 1999) and the increasing importance of new technologies and techniques, the campus newspaper continues to hold a central role in the training of journalism students.

Campus newspapers serve a dual role. First, they serve the college or university by providing news about the campus and local community. In this regard, many campus papers are quality journalistic enterprises that rival the local professional press (Bodle, 1992), and develop a large and loyal readership (Collins & Armstrong, 2008). Second, campus newspapers are an important

proving ground that provides the opportunity for journalism students to hone their skills in a hands-on environment. Indeed, the first reporting done by many journalists is for their school's student newspaper (Wickham, 2004). Accordingly, campus papers offer unique experiential learning opportunities and play a critical role in shaping the practice of professional journalism.

Campus Newspapers and Experiential Learning

The usefulness of campus newspapers in journalism education can be explained by considering the experiential learning model (Greenberg, 2007). Based on Vygotsky's social constructivism and Piaget's theories of development (Roberts, 2011), experiential learning has been defined as a "direct encounter with the phenomena being studied, rather than merely thinking about the encounter, or only considering the possibility of doing something about it" (Borzak, 1981, p. 9). Specifically, Kolb and Fry (1975) established that there are four cyclical stages of experiential learning: concrete experience (engaging in a core skill), reflective observation (talking or writing about the experience), abstract conceptualization (building a theory based on the reflection), and experimentation and repetition (repeating the concrete experience, and applying the theory to improve). In turn, practice is reflected on, individual "theory" is generated on the basis of that experience, and individuals can return to practice and apply what they have learned is most effective (Fried, 2012; Zull, 2002).

Experiential learning is often applied within educational settings in the form of internships, project-based learning (Marienau & Reed, 2008), cooperative learning, and service learning courses (Nunez, 2012), and has been proven to be an effective way to prepare students to enter a variety of professional fields (Smith, 2001) such as medicine (Hughes, 1994; Yardley, Teunissen, & Dornan, 2012), psychology (Beard & Wilson, 2013), occupational therapy (Baptiste & McMahon, 2013), social work (King, 2003), accounting (Cornell, Johnson, & Schwartz, 2013; Dellaportas & Hassall, 2013) and law (Maranville, 2001). In such fields, Schon (1987) contended, professionals need to not only learn a body of information, but also to be able to use this knowledge in applied settings to solve problems and engage in professional practice.

Such a model might also be applied to the process of working on a campus newspaper, where students learn through experience how to deal with real-world challenges such as technical difficulties, group work, anxiety, and meeting deadlines (Brandon, 2002; Steel et al., 2007). In the first stage, classroom instruction provides background knowledge and initial involvement in campus newspaper production helps students to first experience the practice of news reporting and writing (concrete experience). This is followed by observing which techniques work and which do not (reflective observation), developing general guiding principles for future newspaper assignments based on these observations (abstract conceptualization), and then applying these principles when researching, writing, or editing future stories (experimentation and repetition). As this cyclical process continues, student journalists progressively transform their experience into “colloquial knowledge” (Glasser, 2006, p. 148; see also Kolb, 1984) based on the fusion of theory and practice (Beard & Wilson, 2013). As such, educational theory confirms the relevance of campus newspapers within the learning process as a way to help individuals develop usable skills and competencies that transfer to life beyond the classroom (Sibthorp & Furman, 2013). Campus newspapers also have an important influence on the practice of professional journalism in general.

Why Student Newspaper Content Affects the Professional Practice of Journalism

Schoemaker and Reese (1996) highlighted a variety of factors that affect media content. While these factors range from internal – such as personal beliefs, ideologies and relationships – to external – such as advertiser influence, governmental control, or institutional affiliations – one especially relevant factor is the educational background of journalists.

Of course, the role of journalism education is nothing new. Washington and Lee University launched an early journalism program in 1869, and the University of Missouri launched the first journalism school in 1908. Since that time, what Ochs once referred to as the “complex vocation” (1906, p. 38) of journalism has gradually developed into a professional field (Brandon, 2002).

Today, journalism programs range in focus and organization. Some programs take a liberal arts approach, focusing on research and theory, while others are narrowly focused on developing skills (Bacon, 1998). Some programs are organized around professional tracks, such as broadcast journalism, public relations, magazine writing, or news writing, while others are organized around more general tracks such as media theory, media management, and media production (Christ & Blanchard, 1988). Further, journalism programs are housed within several disciplines. While a majority of journalists have a degree in a field related to communication (McCombs, 1988), others have degrees in other disciplines such as English, political science, or American studies (Gaunt, 1992; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1991).

Such differences in focus or disciplinary affiliation can affect the type of reporting conducted by journalists. Further, the practices and standards to which student journalists are exposed while working at their school's newspaper are often carried along with them throughout their later careers. As Schoemaker and Reese (1996) wrote, educational experiences can have "a potentially far-reaching effect on what is selected to report and on how it is reported" (p. 98).

Additionally, the college educational experience has an unusually dramatic impact on professional practice because many professional journalists are in an early stage of their career. The median age of journalists is lower than that of all US civilian workers (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1991), more than half of journalists in the US are younger than 35 years of age, and just 10% are over the age of 55. This is not a new phenomenon; journalism has traditionally been a profession of the young. For many, it is a first career. This is the case for several reasons. First, the traditionally youthful value placed on excitement and discovery is naturally suited to journalism. Additionally, many leave journalism to pursue careers with higher salaries and better benefits. As a result, the profession is constantly replacing experienced journalists with new, freshly trained journalism school graduates.

As such, the experiences students have while working for their student newspaper and studying in mass communication and journalism programs dramatically affect the way in which news is reported in professional publications. Because student newspa-

pers serve such an important function in the training of future journalists, these news organizations deserve consideration.

Yet, while existing scholarship has considered theoretical explanations of why campus newspapers offer effective experiential training for student journalists, and how the educational experiences of student journalists have a dramatic effect on the professional practice of journalists, less is known about the specific journalistic practices of campus newspaper reporters. By considering this topic, and studying the experiential component of journalism education, it becomes possible to learn more about the ways in which journalism education programs are – or are not – preparing students to enter the profession after graduation. As Reese (2001) emphasized, such a reflective consideration that involves turning “scholarly scrutiny upon our educational practice” (p. 5) is necessary for journalism educators. Accordingly, this study involves an analysis of campus newspaper content and journalism student perspectives, in order to present a snapshot view of student journalism across the United States and learn about several key factors associated with quality journalism education.

Research Questions

The first two research questions consider the nature of reporting at campus newspapers. To understand the extent to which campus publications are helping journalism students to develop a mix of journalistic skills associated with reporting and writing about different types of stories, the first research question considers if a balanced mix of topics are reported in student newspapers.

RQ1: What are the characteristics of articles published in student newspapers?

Because researching a story is an important skill for journalists, the second research question considers the number and type of sources used by student journalists in their articles.

RQ2: What sources are used when writing articles for university student newspapers?

The final question involves a consideration of how well journalism students perceive that they are being prepared.

RQ3: To what extent do journalism students feel that their experiences in college prepared them to work as professional journalists after graduation?

Method

Sample

This study involved both a content analysis of campus newspapers and a national survey of campus newspaper staff members. To conduct the content analysis, 797 articles were sampled from six of the highest rated student newspapers (Princeton Review, 2011) to form a constructed week in 2011. Newspapers included in the sample were the *Chronicle*, published at Duke University, the *State News*, published at Michigan State University, the *Daily Collegian*, published at the Pennsylvania State University, the *Daily Bruin*, published at the University of California Los Angeles, the *Independent Alligator*, published at the University of Florida, and the *Daily Tarheel*, published at the University of North Carolina.

For the questionnaire, participants were drawn from a sample of staff members at 393 university student newspapers. Email addresses for student newspaper staff members were obtained the newspaper Web sites, and invitations to participate were distributed. A total of 267 participants responded and completed the questionnaire indicating a response rate of 16.19%. The average age of participants was 21.43 years ($SD = 3.32$), 64.5% ($n = 144$) of participants were between 18-22 years of age, 2.6% ($n = 7$) were first-year students, 18.0% ($n = 48$) were sophomores, 18.0% ($n = 48$) were juniors, and 39.7% ($n = 106$) were seniors (58 respondents did not indicate their academic year). Newspaper editors completed 42.3% of the questionnaires, staff writers completed 12%, and the remaining questionnaires were completed by contributing writers and other staff members.

Of the student newspapers represented in the sample, 63.3% ($n = 169$) were affiliated with a public college or university, and 24.3% ($n = 65$) were affiliated with a private college or university. Regarding frequency of publication, 44.2% ($n = 118$) were

published daily, 20.6% ($n = 55$) were published weekly, 7.1% were published biweekly ($n = 19$), 0.4% ($n = 1$) were published monthly, and 7.9% ($n = 21$) were published at some other frequency. Most newspapers had a circulation of either 5,000-9,999 (24.7%, $n = 66$) or 10,000-19,999 (24.0%, $n = 64$), while 16.9% ($n = 45$) had a circulation of 1,000-4,999, 9.7% ($n = 26$) had a circulation of 20,000 or more, and just 1.5% ($n = 4$) had a circulation below 1,000. Additionally, most papers were published in a variety of media. A total of 49.8% ($n = 133$) of newspapers in the sample published both print and Web editions, 26.6% ($n = 71$) published print, Web, and mobile editions, 3.7% ($n = 2$) published only a Web edition, and no newspapers published a print-only edition.

Measure

Two coders, including the lead researcher, read and coded each article for type, section, theme, author sex, and sources cited. To check intercoder reliability, both individuals coded an overlapping 23.21% of the sample ($n = 185$), and analysis showed an acceptable 94.6% agreement (Lombard et al., 2010). Additionally, the test for Cohen's Kappa indicated a substantial agreement between coders, Kappa = .746 ($p < .001$).

A Web-based questionnaire was also designed to study the perceptions of journalism students regarding their experiences in class and working for their campus newspaper. The use of a Web-based questionnaire allowed a national sample of journalism students to participate conveniently and anonymously. The questionnaire consisted of four categories of items (perception of coverage, importance of coverage, comfort interviewing, and professional preparation) which used a Likert-style scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

The questionnaire was tested in a trial study, and the Cronbach's alpha test was used to establish the reliability of the measure. Analysis during the trial study ($N = 41$) indicated that there was good internal consistency ($\alpha > .70$), with an overall alpha coefficient of .838. During the study, analysis again indicated that there was good internal consistency for the measure, with an overall alpha coefficient of .832.

Results

Types of Stories Covered

The first research question asked about the characteristics of stories that are published by university student newspapers. This question can be answered by considering the geographic focus, theme, and topic of articles.

Regarding geographic focus, 69.3% ($n = 552$) of articles were campus-focused, 13.0% ($n = 104$) were about local events, 5% ($n = 40$) were about state or regional events, 4.4% ($n = 35$) were about national events, 1.4% ($n = 11$) were about international events, and 6.9% ($n = 55$) were about topics with no geographic focus. Specifically, campus-focused topics accounted for 68.8% ($n = 274$) of news articles, 71.8% ($n = 56$) of features, 50.6% ($n = 88$) of opinion-editorial articles, 98.4% ($n = 120$) of game reports, 71.4% ($n = 5$) of interview question and answer articles, and 25.0% ($n = 1$) of advice columns.

The most commonly addressed theme (Table 1) in all articles was campus news, which was addressed in 33.0% ($n = 263$) of articles. Sports was also a commonly addressed theme, and was addressed in 28.0% ($n = 223$) of articles. The theme of politics and government was addressed in 8.8% ($n = 70$) of articles, local off-campus news was addressed in 6.0% ($n = 48$) of articles, health, fitness, and medicine, was addressed in 3.5% ($n = 28$) of articles, and education was addressed in 2.6% ($n = 21$) of articles. Data from the questionnaire confirmed these findings, and student journalists reported feeling that campus news ($M = 4.90$, $SD = .40$) was more important than any other type of newspaper content.

Regarding the most common topics within each thematic category, student events accounted for 44.5% ($n = 117$) of articles in the campus news category (Table 2), college or university sports was the focus of 98.6% ($n = 215$) of articles in the sports category, elections were covered in 15.8% ($n = 12$) of articles in the politics and government category (Table 3), and mental health was covered in 20.7% ($n = 6$) of articles in the health, fitness, or medicine category (Table 4).

Sources Cited

The second research question asked about the sources cited within campus newspaper articles. Data from the content analysis showed that stories in this sample included an average of 2.01 source citations. Specifically, 27.2% ($n = 217$) of articles cited no sources, 12.4% ($n = 99$) cited one source, 17.9% ($n = 143$) cited two sources, 25.1% ($n = 200$) cited three sources, 12.4% ($n = 99$) cited four sources, and 4.9% cited five or more sources.

Male sources were cited much more often than female sources; 57.9% ($n = 462$) of articles cited male sources, and 38.4% ($n = 306$) of articles cited female sources. Even more dramatically, a total of 1009 male sources and 549 female sources were cited overall, indicating that men were cited more than women by a ratio of nearly 2-1. This disparity was less prevalent in front-section news articles, but much more apparent in other sections.

In front-section news articles there was near parity; men were cited 238 times, and women were cited 222 times. However, in sports articles, men were cited 265 times and women were cited 128 times; in lifestyle/arts/entertainment articles, men were cited 166 times, and women were cited 97 times; in weekend section articles, men were cited 78 times, and women were cited 18 times; in opinion/editorial articles, men were cited 16 times and women were cited two times.

Students were the most common source identified in the articles, and were cited as the primary source in 23.6% ($n = 188$) of articles (Table 5). Coaches were the second most common primary source, and were cited in 13.2% ($n = 105$) of articles. Other common sources include professionals, who were cited in 8.0% ($n = 64$) of articles, faculty members, who were cited in 3.8% ($n = 30$) of articles, spokespersons, who were cited in 2.9% ($n = 23$) of articles, and university administration officials, who were cited in 2.8% ($n = 22$) of articles. Elected officials were cited in 2.1% ($n = 17$) of articles, and non-elected government officials were cited in 1.4% ($n = 11$) of articles. Other news agencies were cited in 1.1% ($n = 9$) of articles.

Data from the questionnaire addressed student journalists' perspectives regarding their interviewing skills. A Pearson correlation was conducted to determine if reported interview skills im-

proved while progressing from first-year to senior status. In some instances, perceived interviewing skill did increase over time. Correlations at the .05 level existed between academic year and comfort with and regularity of interviewing other students (.151), staff members (.223), faculty members (.158), and individuals in the community (.256). However, other areas did not show improvement over time, indicating that students do not improve their skills related to interviewing coaches, members of the university administration, politicians, or elected officials (Table 6). As such, this finding suggests that students do improve as interviewers over time, but generally gain little experience interviewing individuals in positions of power and authority.

Participants reported considering it important to conduct original research or interviews when writing articles ($M = 4.60$, $SD = .62$), and reported that most of the articles they write involve original investigation, interviewing, or research ($M = 4.19$, $SD = .84$). Yet, while students recognize the importance of original journalistic investigation, many continue to rely on second-hand sources; 51.9% ($n = 92$) of participants reported that “most” articles they write are based primarily on information found on Web sites and 37.2% ($n = 66$) reported that “most” articles they write are primarily based on reports from other publications. As such, there is reason to believe that weak journalistic sourcing practices may be quite common among student journalists.

Professional Preparedness

The third research question asked about perceptions of professional preparedness. Overall, students reported feeling only marginally prepared to work professionally as a journalist. Students had mixed perceptions regarding how well their classes prepared them to work after graduation as a news writer ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.18$), copy editor ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.23$), or managing editor ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.24$). Yet, students reported not feeling prepared to work as a sports writer ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 1.23$), news photographer ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 1.22$), videographer ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.23$), news Web site designer ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 1.16$), or layout editor ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 1.27$). As such, students noted the same concerns recognized by mid-career journalists; they lack skills related to new media production, which are increasingly necessary for modern journalists. This suggests that journalism students may not be learning enough about some of the important

skills needed for journalists today (Cremedas & Lysak, 2011; Fahmy, 2008).

Discussion

Results from this study demonstrate that while campus newspapers do a good job of helping students to develop a limited set of journalistic skills, the limited nature of topic coverage and sourcing, and the minimal focus on using new media technologies, leads only a portion of students to graduate feeling prepared to pursue a career in journalism. Additionally, data analysis led to the identification of several key findings.

Heavy Emphasis Placed on Sports Reporting; Other Topics Neglected

Findings from this study suggest that university student journalists place an emphasis on covering stories related to sports. This emphasis is understandable in some respects. First, athletics play a central role in campus life at many universities. This is especially the case in schools with nationally ranked FBS football and Division I basketball programs. Second, there has been a growing emphasis on the coverage of college athletics, evidenced by the growing coverage on ESPN, which broadcasts NCAA sports, has entire programs devoted to college sports analysis, and operates an entire cable channel specifically for this purpose.

Nevertheless, despite the understandable nature of this focus, the emphasis placed on college sports means that other stories and events are being neglected. While sports reporting is important and relevant, society is not served if students leave journalism programs with expertise related to writing about sports, but little or no exposure to covering civic, governmental, or policy-related stories. As Claussen (2009) suggested, it is necessary for journalism schools to graduate journalists with a broad array of journalistic skills and “not just sports or other forms of entertainment” (p. 286) writers.

Frequently Apolitical

Much debate has surfaced in recent years regarding the political leanings of student newspapers. Some have asserted that most campus newspapers favor a liberal viewpoint (Sanford, 1996), while others have pointed to efforts of conservative political

groups to influence campus newspapers (Curtis, 1989; McMurtrie, 2002; Smith, 1993; Toch, 1996).

However, this study found that news coverage is largely apolitical. Few news stories are published which deal with any political topic. This trend is true even on the opinion page, where most stories deal with campus news and events (33.3%) and just 15.2% consider political issues. This trend is disturbing for two reasons. First, this trend is in contrast to the growing involvement of college students in politics in recent years. Student voter turnout has increased steadily since 2004 (Kingkade, 2012), and college-age voters are now responsible for casting a record 19% of all ballots. Similarly, research has also shown a growing interest in political and public policy issues among college students (Pryor et al., 2009). Accordingly, the need exists for student journalists who are capable of, and interested in, providing relevant political news to the student body.

Second, the limited coverage of politics in student newspapers is alarming because it suggests that student journalists are not gaining experience writing about substantive political stories. If students do not learn to report on politics while writing for their campus newspaper, they may be disinclined, or unable, to cover important political news after graduation. In a democratic society, the sharing of information is essential, and the continuation of such a trend could be very harmful.

Health Issues Largely Ignored

One category of reporting which is largely unrepresented in university student newspapers is that of health-related reporting. Such reporting serves an important purpose in society for several reasons. First, existing research has demonstrated that media are essential in promoting public health interventions (Guttman, 2000), informing consumers about health issues (Dutta-Bergman, 2006), and influencing consumers' health behaviors and attitudes (Haider, 2005). Further, objective health reporting is increasingly important in light of the growing use of direct marketing and advertising campaigns for both medical products (Almasi et al., 2006; Bradley, 1997) and procedures (Shepperd et al., 1999) across a variety of media including student publications (Rosenberg, 2013). Finally, health-related reporting is especially important for college-age populations who require information

regarding a host of health problems that are especially rampant among young adults, including issues related to mental health, infectious disease, sleep, exercise, and substance use (Wyckoff, 2010; see also Tierney, 2003). For all of these reasons, health-related stories are an important part of modern news coverage and serve an important purpose (Eng, 2001).

Yet, the extremely low number of articles devoted to health-related topics shows that student newspapers are not meeting this need. This has a negative effect on the students who read the campus newspapers, and who may not receive all of the highly relevant information that could affect their wellbeing (Baker, 2014). Furthermore, this dearth of reporting also indicates that most student journalists are not developing skills related to health reporting. Traditionally, medical journalism has been a specialization that is addressed in detail only at journalism schools with programs focused specifically on health reporting (Linden, 2003). However, in a world in which society increasingly depends on media outlets for information about health-related matters, it is increasingly important that more journalists have at least some exposure to this type of writing and reporting (Schraeder, 2003).

Limited Sourcing of Articles

Several issues regarding article sourcing emerged from this study's findings. These relate to the limited number of sources that are cited and the heavy reliance on both students and men as sources. First, regarding limited sourcing, previous research has suggested that attributions are frequently lacking in campus newspapers. Bodle (1992) found that 35.4% of sentences in campus newspapers included attributions, and that 85.4% of "fact sentences" were based on the opinion of the writer or editor (p. 8). Bodle concluded that this style of interpretive reporting is common. Findings from this research support these claims; a full 27.2% of articles in this sample did not cite any sources.

Second, students were cited as primary sources in articles more often than any other source. It is, certainly, a good thing when journalists do not rely entirely on official sources and press releases to write news stories. However, the quality of student journalism does come into question when so many articles are based on interviews with peers. This may not have an especially detrimental effect on the quality of campus news reporting; students

are often the newsmakers on campus, and are important to interview. However, it does raise questions regarding the extent to which journalism students are gaining experience dealing with individuals in positions of power, including administrators and governmental officials. Developing the ability to conduct interviews is important for journalism students. Learning to speak with, and ask difficult questions of, individuals in positions of power and prominence is similarly important. If students are not gaining this experience when researching articles for their campus publication, it is possible that important skills are being inadequately developed.

Third, data suggest that more male sources were cited than female sources in campus newspapers by a ratio of nearly 2-1. A similarly disproportionate representation of male and female sources has also been demonstrated in professional media. A study found that just 13.5% of guests interviewed by prominent network and cable news anchors were women (Lovley, 2010). Additionally, an analysis of programs on MSNBC, Fox News Channel and CNN found that 67% of guests were male (Media Matters, 2008). Even on NPR, which boasts prominent female hosts, just 26% of all interviews were with women (Shepard, 2010). While this trend does not necessarily suggest that journalists are intentionally avoiding female sources and privileging male sources, it does raise questions regarding if journalism education programs are adequately encouraging students to seek out a diverse group of perspectives and avoid reinforcing gender-role stereotypes in their reporting. Because focusing on inclusiveness and developing a professional ethic that values “global diversity and serves and reflects society” (Accrediting Council, 2013) are recognized as best practices by the ACEJMC, continuing to emphasize such issues remains highly important.

Implications for Instructional Practice

Overall, data from this study suggest that student journalists are very narrowly focused on certain types of reporting. This speaks to the need to continue refining the practice of journalism education. Some relevant suggestions have already been proposed. For instance, among the 13 principles outlined by Stephens (2006), three are especially relevant to the issues raised in this study. Stephens wrote:

Universities should provide a home for the stories that should be reported, not just the stories that might get published. . . . Prospective journalists should be taught to obtain more searching perspectives on the topics they are covering. . . Journalism courses should attempt to broaden the focus, as well as the style, of journalism.

Focusing on addressing these three principles could serve to help expand the scope of campus news reporting, and encourage students to explore in greater detail topics associated with civic and governmental issues.

As Dates (2006) suggested, a goal of journalism education should be to improve journalistic standards in order to improve democracy (Gans, 2004; Megwa, 2001). The benefits of such changes are two-fold: students learn more about different types of reporting and critical inquiry, while also providing a community service.

Wrote Mensing (2010):

Historically, journalism has been about community. Restoring that focus and developing a community-centered model of education would honor the obligations that journalists and educators have towards their communities. In the same way that the goal of engineering programs is not to prepare students for their first jobs at large engineering firms, but to build safe bridges and highways, the goals of journalism education should be about building functioning communication structures within communities. (p. 516)

In some cases, such a community model of journalism could involve students partnering with existing local journalism organizations to help fill in gaps of coverage (Mulvihill & Bergantino, 2009; Robinson, 2009). In other instances, as Bloom (2006) suggested, it could be possible for student journalists to step in on their own, and fill a void by covering stories in the local off-campus community which might otherwise be ignored due to shrinking newsrooms at traditional newspapers, or the closing of local papers altogether.

Such partnerships do exist across the country (Roush, 2009), and are encouraged by the ACEJMC, whose accrediting standards suggest student involvement in professional media outlets and require accredited programs to serve both “community . . . and the greater public” (Accrediting Council, 2013). For instance,

some journalism schools, such as the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland, operate wire services that provide stories to other newspapers including local professional publications. Similarly, many universities, like the University of North Carolina, which partners with the *Carrboro Citizen*, the University of Illinois which partners with the *News-Gazette*, and Florida International University, which partners with the *Miami Herald*, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, and *Palm Beach Post*, have developed content-sharing relationships with nearby professional publications. The University of Alabama goes even further, and, in collaboration with the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation's community journalism fellowship program, has partnered with the local *Anniston Star* to create a professional "teaching newspaper" program for students earning a graduate degree in journalism.

Such models benefit students, who gain on-the-job training in community reporting and multimedia production, have the opportunity to work with and learn from professional journalists, and ultimately get to see their work published for a wider audience. In addition to providing students the opportunity to develop a broad array of journalistic experiences, such partnerships also prove advantageous for community newspapers, which benefit from the additional perspective provided by student reporters, and have the opportunity to expand their scope of coverage (Kolowich, 2010).

An additional implication for instructional practice involves the role of educators in the training of student journalists. Findings from this study demonstrate the importance of faculty newspaper advisors and journalism instructors in helping to improve the quality of the experience that students gain while working with their student newspaper. Admittedly, in matters related to determining the content and style of the student newspaper, advisors walk a fine line between guidance and censorship. Editorial independence is a valuable element of student newspapers, and undue influence by faculty advisors can stifle student creativity, expression, and professional development. Yet, such advisors, and the instructors who teach journalism in the classroom, can use their positions of influence to encourage students to give more thought to the importance of including diverse content and expanding the scope of reporting. By focusing classroom discussions and activi-

ties on the topics and groups that are frequently underserved by student newspapers, journalism instructors can help to raise awareness of the professional standards to which student journalists can, and should, aspire.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While the use of a student survey and content analysis proved beneficial in addressing the stated research questions, there were some limitations associated with this study's design. The first limitation involved the scope of the sample used for the content analysis. Specifically, this study focused on top-ranked student newspapers that represent some of the best journalism being done by students at colleges and universities across the United States. Yet, this sample was not representative of all student newspapers. For instance, many student newspapers have significantly fewer human and capital resources available and are published on a weekly or monthly basis at small colleges and universities without journalism schools or programs. Accordingly, future research might build on this study by considering a broader sample of publications in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of the different ways in which student journalism is practiced.

Second, this study focused on student experiential learning associated with campus newspaper involvement. However, a significant portion of the student learning process also occurs within the traditional classroom setting. As such, additional research might build on this study by investigating the connection between classroom-based instruction and student newspaper content. Such comparative research could help uncover the reciprocal relationship between experiential and classroom learning, and ultimately lead to an increased understanding of what educational strategies are most beneficial for journalism students.

Third, this study used a survey instrument in order to gather perspectives from a broad sample of individuals at colleges and universities across the United States. However, the use of a survey did not allow for follow up questions to be asked, and limited the details that could be gleaned from the participants. Accordingly, future research might involve conducting in-depth interviews in order to gather more detail regarding the educational experiences of journalism students. Such interview-based research might be

useful in explaining more about why many students feel unprepared to pursue careers in journalism, or uncover more regarding why certain topics and sources are avoided.

In addition to these limitations, findings from this study suggest the need for future research into the efficacy of experiential learning for journalism students. Existing educational theory suggests that experiential education is likely well suited to the training of journalism students, and professional education standards developed by the ACEJMC similarly advocate the use of such hands-on educational strategies (Accrediting Council, 2013). However, data suggest that there may be limits to the educational benefits that can be derived from working at a student newspaper. Yet, because this research study was not specifically designed to measure the outcomes of an educational intervention, more research is needed before generalizable conclusions can be reached. Future research might involve conducting a quasi-experiment to measure the extent to which experiential journalism educational opportunities lead to gains in knowledge and competencies. Such future research could prove valuable, and provide journalism educators with empirical data to inform future curricular planning and the integration of both classroom and experiential learning.

Conclusion

There is no question that the nation's leading journalism schools are capable of training qualified new journalists. Further, such programs have published long running, respected, and commercially viable campus newspapers. Such newspapers serve an important role, informing their campus communities about relevant news while also providing student journalists an opportunity to hone their craft in a paraprofessional setting.

However, it is important to continually evaluate if students are focusing on the areas that are most important to their future professional development, and the continued health and relevance of the field of journalism. It is especially important to continue making sure that a balanced approach is taken in the training of student journalists, thus ensuring that the next generation of journalists has well-rounded professional interests and skills. Areas that may need to be focused on more in the future include governmental reporting, local off-campus reporting, health reporting,

and improved sourcing techniques. By continuing to observe trends in student journalism coverage, it is possible to identify both the many ways in which journalism educators are serving the field, and ways in which they can focus on making tomorrow's journalists even stronger.

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Appendix

Table 1.
Frequency of Themes Addressed in all Articles

Article Theme	%	n
Campus news	33.0	263
Sports	28.0	223
Politics/government	8.8	70
Local off-campus news	6.0	48
Health/fitness/medicine	3.5	28
Education	2.6	21
Popular music	2.1	17
Arts	2.1	17
Ordinary people	1.8	14
Police/crime/courts/legal	1.6	13
Movies	1.4	11
War/international conflict	1.3	10
Fashion	.9	7
Business/economics/finance	.6	5
Parenting/relationships/dating	.6	5
Environment	.6	5
Jobs/career	.6	5
Food	.5	4
Science/technology	.4	3
Religion/spirituality	.4	3
Travel	.3	2
Home/garden/real estate	.3	2
Community announcements	.3	2
Language	.3	2
Video games	.3	2
Alumni news	.1	1
Television	.1	1
Other	1.3	10

Table 2.
Most Frequent Article Topics in Campus News Thematic Category

	% of stories within category	n
Student events	44.49	117
Campus crime	10.2	27
Academic programs	10.2	27
Faculty news	9.8	26
Salary	4.2	11
New buildings	4.2	11
University budget	3.0	8
Student profiles	2.6	7

Table 3.
Most Frequent Article Topic in Politics/Government Thematic Category

Topic	% of stories within category	n
Elections	17.14	12
Budget	15.71	11
Legislation in progress	15.71	11
Education	14.28	10
General government	7.14	5
Business/economics	7.14	5

Table 4.
*Most Frequent Article Topic in Health, Fitness, Medicine
 Thematic Category*

Topic	% of stories within category	n
Mental health	20.7	6
Sexual health	13.8	4
Eating practices	10.3	3
Health insurance	6.9	2
Cancer	6.9	2

Table 5.
Most Frequent Types of Sources Cited

Primary Source	%	n
Students	23.6	188
Coach	13.2	105
Professional in related field	8.0	64
Faculty members	3.8	30
Spokespersons	2.9	23
Other	3.0	23
University administration	2.8	22
University staff	2.1	17
Elected officials	2.1	17
Police officers	1.9	15
Heads of institutions (CEO, Presidents, etc.)	1.8	14
Unelected government officials	1.4	11
News services	1.1	9
Press release	.9	7
Academic/medical/professional institutions	.8	6
Government agencies	.8	6

Table 6.

Average Scores and Correlations between Academic Year and Interviewing Items

	First Year		Sophomore		Junior		Senior		Pearson <i>r</i>	Sig.
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Interviews with students	3.40	1.67	4.34	.96	4.53	.79	4.52	.82	.151*	.048
Interviews with coaches	3.40	1.67	3.24	1.24	3.76	1.19	3.71	1.14	.139	.070
Interviews with staff members	2.80	1.48	4.03	1.06	4.29	.86	4.36	.93	.223**	.003
Interviews with faculty members	3.40	1.67	4.21	.99	4.34	.78	4.43	.90	.158*	.039
Interviews with members of the university administration	3.40	1.67	4.13	.96	4.11	.98	4.25	1.02	.106	.166
Interviews with elected officials	3.40	1.67	3.34	1.09	3.58	1.03	3.76	1.19	.143	.061
Interviews with individuals in the community	3.40	1.67	3.68	1.23	3.92	1.024	4.31	1.00	.256**	.001

*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Women Leaders in Higher Education: Constructing an Active Voice

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Despite a substantial increase in the number of women with advanced degrees in higher education, women leaders remain underrepresented in top leadership positions. This continued underrepresentation in numbers and status indicates that having more women in the university pipeline is not enough to improve the leadership status of women in higher education. Therefore, a fundamental change is needed in the approach that women take when considering and pursuing leadership positions. This qualitative study proposes that an essential component of this change should be an increase in women's use of an "active voice" on college campuses. This study investigates how seven successful women leaders in higher education have constructed and implemented an active voice in developing their own leadership skills, and advancing opportunities for future women leaders, despite barriers that traditionally impede leadership attainment for women in higher education. Collectively, the stories of the seven women leaders depict higher education as a complex environment in which women struggle not only for equality, but also for their voices to be heard by both men and women.

The voice of women leaders in higher education is currently in a nascent state of development wherein women are becoming more educated but still remain underrepresented in top leadership positions. Research shows that women now outnumber men in the number of degrees conferred at professional and doctoral degree-levels (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). However, despite the increasing number of women with advanced degrees, women are not moving into the most influential top leadership positions. For example, only 26 percent of college presidents are women—an increase of only three percent since 2006 (American Council of Education, 2012).

Increasing the numbers of women on college campuses has not resulted in an increasing number of women in top leadership positions (Madden, 2011). Apparently, a systematic change is required to realize an equal representation of female leadership in higher education (Madden, 2011). This study makes the case that such change should be driven by women constructing an “active voice” that is heard across all facets of university life—women in leadership positions, and women seeking leadership positions. An active voice is defined as a woman who is comfortable expressing her opinions and ideas honestly and openly; who is not willingly silenced by others; who uses her own experiences to share her lived reality; and, as a result of her active voice, is accepted and acknowledged for the insight and wisdom she possesses across the scope of her profession.

It is essential that university life include women with active voices because "whether women's unique qualities are derived from sex-role socialization, from actual experiences, or are biologically determined, women are different and view the world differently from men" (Ballenger & Professor, 2010, p. 5). In other words, women leaders with active voices have the potential to improve the entire campus community by providing a different perspective and world-view. Furthermore, women with active voices have far-reaching influences not only on educational institutions, but on societal knowledge in general (The White House Project, 2009).

However, constructing active voices on college campuses is challenging for women leaders because they continue to face entrenched barriers to attaining top leadership positions (Christman & McClellan, 2012), which has denied them the experience of developing communication skills to work within bureaucracies and institutions (Cameron, 1985). Therefore, this study asks: How can women construct an active voice to secure leadership positions despite organizational barriers? In order to answer that question, the researchers interviewed 7 women in top leadership positions. What follows is: (1) a literature review of relevant studies; (2) a description of the methodology of this study; and (3) a paradigm derived from the interviews that will help future women leaders construct an active voice.

Literature Review

Women's self-expressions, experiences and voices have traditionally been silenced and trivialized by the valuing of patriarchal language (Hynes, 1998). Hence, "the major metaphor of the contemporary American women's movement is 'voice'—speaking, naming, and breaking silence" (Richardson, 1997, p.122). This particular metaphor of voice focuses on women feeling empowered to tell their own stories through the use of their own active voices and their own words (Richardson, 1997), which moves them from being objects to being subjects (Hooks, 1989). As subjects, women speak, but as objects, they remain voiceless—defined and silenced by others (Hooks, 1989). By breaking the silence, women may provide a positive change toward emancipation of sociopolitical oppression (Jaworski, 1992). Unfortunately, this change is difficult because women's voices are often unequally represented in discourse due to power relationships specifically related to gender (Graddol & Swann, 1990; Rush & Allen, 1990). If women's world views are not equally heard in discourse, then the male view is normalized and becomes the literal, emergent world view (Graddol & Swann, 1990) because communication is the means by which existing power relations dictate how social reality is negotiated (Graddol & Swann, 1990).

This feminist perspective toward women's voices investigates women as communicators by focusing on (1) the oppression that perpetuates the silencing of women; (2) the systems that contribute to the silencing of women; and (3) the communicative strategies available to women to be heard in contexts where their voices are silenced (Griffin, 1993). Thus, it should be a goal of communication scholars to continue to investigate the conditions and processes that enable women in a particular context, such as top leadership positions in higher education, to fully articulate their lived experiences and to investigate the ways in which women are silenced.

Unfortunately, the literature shows that women continue to be silenced by attitudinal and organizational barriers that keep them from obtaining top leadership positions. One barrier is that both men and women leaders have a tendency to favor male leaders over female leaders, even when females have achieved similar accomplishments and credentials (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, &

van Engen, 2003; Eagly, & Karau, 2002; Eagly, Makhijani, Klonsky, 1992; Schein, 2001). Essentially, both men and women have a mindset of “think leader, think male” (Schein, 2001; Schmalting, 2007).

In a meta-analysis of studies related to women and leadership, Eagly and Karau (2002) found that male leadership is rated more positively than female leadership primarily due to “role congruity,” or the tendency that when people think of “leadership,” they usually think of so-called “agentic” qualities, defined as male behaviors and traits of confidence, aggressiveness and self-direction (Eagly, 2007; Powell, Butterfield & Parent, 2002; Schein, 2001). Conversely, women are expected to exhibit more “communal qualities,” including kindness, warmth, and gentleness—traits and behaviors that are typically not associated with leadership positions (Eagly, 2007). Because of role congruity, women seeking leadership positions face a double-bind in which they are expected to be communal because of the expectations inherent to their gender role, but they are also expected to be agentic because of the expectations inherent to widely-held perceptions of leadership roles (Eagly, 2007). As a result, women leaders typically resort to emulating men in order to prove their competence (Appelbaum, Audet, & Miller, 2003). When women leaders act like men, they tend to be perceived by both men and women as less female (Appelbaum et al., 2003). Conversely, when male leaders act like women, their “female” approach tends to be given more merit (Appelbaum et al., 2003).

The double-bind for women leaders is also found in the ways that women leaders communicate. In Tannen’s (2001) study, findings reveal that when women speak assertively as a leader, they are respected but not considered adequately because they are not meeting the expectations of their gender role. When women do meet the expectations of their gender role by behaving in a lady-like manner, they are often ignored or disliked (Hynes, 1998; Tannen, 2001). Hynes (1998) points out that many women have the experience of offering an idea or a solution to a problem only to be ignored while a male offers the same idea or solution and is heard.

Furthermore, women experience a double-bind related to their appearance as a performance of their gender role (Flicker, 2013).

That is, women who dress and perform in a feminine manner are more likely to be thought of as “soft,” and those who dress and perform in a masculine manner are likely to be thought of as refusing to emphasize a gender shift where women are seen as equally as powerful as men. Tannen's (2001) study found a double-bind also exists where women who talk in ways that are normally expected of men are disliked, while those who talk in ways expected of women are not as well-regarded. Moreover, she found that women tend to use conversational strategies designed to appear less boastful and to take other's feelings into account in making decisions, which makes them appear less confident. In essence, women tend to modify their speech to take into account the impact of what they say on the other person's feelings and talk about their accomplishments in ways that draw attention away from themselves. However, men have developed strategies to stay in the one-up position by using a more competitive communication style. These collective tendencies of communication prevent women from being recognized and result in them being labeled as a “bitch” if their communication style is too aggressive and forward. Thus, it is "difficult for women to depart from expected norms of linguistic behavior without incurring penalties," which results in women often mimicking the style of the “more powerful” speaker, the male (Graddol & Swamm, 1990, p. 142).

Such differences in men's and women's styles of communicating put women in a subordinate position where they tend to take on the role of listener, encouraging men take on the role of lecturer (Tannen, 1996). Men, on the other hand, tend to approach communication as a contest, often interrupting women when they speak. Tannen (1996) contends that these behaviors, which are most often associated with males, are not intended to dominate women and are not solely motivated by power. If they were, then women would be perceived as far more negative than men because those same behaviors would be seen as pushy and aggressive in women.

Such gendered expectations of communication and leadership behavior can be traced back to social role theory, which postulates that individual behavior is predicated on societal expectations (Carless, 1998). In relation to gender and leadership, social role theory espouses that the female socialization process naturally provides women with participative, collaborative, and interper-

sonal relationship skills, whereas the male socialization process naturally provides males with self-directed, aggressive, dominant and task-orientated skills. The skills that females develop during the socialization process are more strongly correlated with transformational leadership, while the skills males develop are more strongly correlated with transactional leadership (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003). A transformational leader will mentor, empower, and innovate (Eagly, 2007), whereas a transactional leader will institute exchange relationships, establish responsibilities and expectations, and use rewards to accomplish tasks (Eagly, 2007). Partially due to the acculturation process, women also tend to develop more effective listening, team building and communication skills than men (Hynes, 1998).

Furthermore, Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003) found that women's leadership styles are positively correlated to leadership effectiveness, while male leadership styles have a negative or null relation to leadership effectiveness. This contrast—women's leadership styles being positively correlated to leadership effectiveness, and male leadership styles being negatively correlated to leadership effectiveness—creating a paradox wherein women leadership styles tend to be more effective but males are viewed more often as leaders. This paradox is made even more perplexing when considering that female leadership styles have been found to result in a more positive work environment than male leadership styles (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003). In essence, given the socialization process and the positive impact of women leaders, women have a greater potential for acquiring transformational leadership skills to lead effectively.

A similar line of research examines the behavioral and attitudinal patterns related to female leadership, which are expressed on a daily basis through the communication that takes place within the culture of an organization (Forbes, 2002). In organizations numerically dominated by men, women tend to change their interpersonal participatory style in order to communicate authority (Stelter, 2002). However, when women leaders engage in communication that is tough and confident in order to be taken seriously, it can result in them being negatively perceived by others because their voices are seen as too aggressive (Stelter, 2002). For example, a woman who is the only female on a search com-

mittee discussing a woman candidate might silence her support for the female candidate so she is not seen as “the woman who defends the woman” (Ely, Insead, & Kolb, 2011, p. 484). One of the main reasons women feel compelled to change their style of communication is that “women have not been, and are still generally not, accepted as legitimate meaning makers if their interpretations of reality differ significantly from established, male-based notions of truth” (Forbes, 2002, p. 273). Forbes’ (2002) conclusions are reaffirmed by Eagly’s (2007) findings that women continue to face prejudice and resistance against their assuming leadership positions.

Another area of research on women’s leadership communication shows that women leaders spend a great deal of time and energy carefully choosing how to respond to a particular situation based on how they think they will be perceived specifically as a woman (Christman & McClellan, 2012). This tendency for women to respond cautiously may be due to the reality that there are correct and incorrect ways of using language and that those who do not use language correctly are subject to social sanctions (Milroy & Milroy, 1986). For example, participants in a study conducted by Christman and McClellan (2012) described themselves as being cautious and careful about whether to express themselves as either “feminine” or “masculine” in a particular situation. In general, women find themselves “focused on how they are coming across to others, thus diverting “emotional and motivational resources away from the larger purposes at hand” (Ely, Insead, & Kolb, 2011, p. 479). This same sentiment is expressed in a study by Ely, Insead and Kolb (2011), in which the female participants demonstrated a tendency to cautiously select words according to which, of the many possible leadership actions, they choose to employ. The participants identified themselves as not always responding to situations based on their perceived absolute best response to the situation, but instead based on how the chosen strategy will be viewed by others because of their status as females.

Along those same lines of research, Fine (2009) explored women’s discursive representations of leadership to suggest new directions for defining and theorizing leadership. Fine asked 15 White women who had achieved significant leadership positions to tell

their leadership stories. Their narratives revealed a moral discourse of leadership with a sole purpose to make a positive contribution in the world accomplished through teamwork and open communication. Fine's (2009) research shows that women become leaders because they believe they have the personal skills and the characteristics necessary to lead and they want to make a positive contribution in the world. When asked about their leadership behaviors, the women emphasized the importance of working as part of a team and engaging in open communication. They also focused on treating people with respect and care. Fine concludes that their responses suggest a moral construction of leadership grounded in open, honest, and collaborative behavior, which is primarily motivated by an ethic of care.

A different area of research focuses on how women leaders in higher education are likely to experience "microaggressions," which are "brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities—whether intentional or unintentional—that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target group or person" (Sue & Rivera, 2010, p. 5). Microaggressions are likely responsible, at least in part, for the gross inequity that currently exists in higher education, wherein 80 percent of tenured positions are held by males (Sue & Rivera, 2010). This astonishing fact suggests that women are not able to advance at the same rate as men due to discriminating circumstances driven by the silencing effects of microaggressions. One scenario in which microaggressions lead to women being accepted into leadership positions occurs when educational institutions are operating in a crisis mode. During times of crises, organizations are more likely to hire women leaders because they are perceived to be more understanding and intuitive about an institution's problems (Madden, 2011). Women who are in leadership positions as a result of this type of microaggression may not be successful in the long-term because women leaders are expected to behave in a manner that is perceived as congruent with their gender role, which is simultaneously perceived as incongruent with a leadership role. Thus, microaggressions in academia continue to erect barriers for women through the creation of a chilly that is hostile to women leadership (Sandler & Hall, 1986).

One strategy that women typically use to deal with microaggressions is to interact in a polite manner so as to not risk sanctions for counter-stereotypic behavior (Schmaling, 2007). Another strategy that women tend to use to counter microaggressions is to seek each others' input. In their study of women in leadership positions, Christman and McClellan (2012) found that women leaders rely on dialogue with other women for help in overcoming barriers that impede their ability to lead. Women leaders also identify "helping" as a significant reason for becoming leaders, and as a fundamental component of their leadership styles. Hassan and Silong's (2008) study, which consists of interviews with women leaders, found that women join leadership ranks as a way of helping their communities and empowering other women to develop their own leadership trajectory. Ballenger and Professor (2010) argue that "it is crucial that women help others to understand obstacles and show appreciation for each other by realizing women's resources, strengths, and skills" (p. 8). This is particularly important for women because "the composition of one's informal network can open doors to leadership opportunities, determine who will see and grant one's leadership claims, and shape what one learns in the process" (Ely, Insead, & Kolb, 2011, p. 478). Similarly, Madden (2011) found that collaboration, forming coalitions, and networking are key strategies for women who seek leadership success because women are not generally granted the same level of power that is granted to males in leadership roles, and therefore must rely on collaboration to influence academia.

This literature review has shown that women leaders in higher education face entrenched institutional barriers that make it difficult for them to ascend to leadership positions. The literature has shown that women are likely to find themselves in a culture where: (1) leadership is associated with male traits; (2) subtle forms of discrimination impede female leadership advancement; (3) a female leadership style is undervalued; and (4) a woman ultimately cannot fully utilize an active voice. Given these factors, there is a need for research to focus on how women leaders in higher education can construct active voices in order to increase the potential of women being valued in leadership positions. As such, this study sought to investigate how a group of successful women leaders in higher education have constructed their own active voices. From this investigation comes a para-

digm that women leaders in higher education can follow to significantly enhance their potential for exceling in leadership positions.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study are seven women in leadership in higher education. The ages of women interviewed range from their early 40s through their early 80s. Two are women of color. Following is general information about each of the participants. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the privacy of participants:

Laura is a senior scholar in the field of women's leadership in higher education.

Kate is a vice president at a small liberal arts college in the northeastern United States.

Carol is a benefits manager at a state university in the northeastern United States.

Debra is the president of a state university in the northeastern United States.

Kristin is an associate vice chancellor and professor at a large Midwestern university.

Sarah is a vice president at a state university in the northeastern United States.

Joan is a dean at a community college in the northeastern United States.

Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) found that essential overarching themes emerge with a minimum of six participants. This served as the basis for selecting seven women for this study.

A purposive sampling technique was used when selecting participants to ensure that a variety of backgrounds and perspectives would inform the research findings. The criteria for selection were: (a) women serving in upper administrative positions in higher education; (b) women with long-term experience at both

four-year and two-year institutions of higher education; and (c) women representing a diversity of positions, ages and ethnicities.

Data Collection

This study consisted of in-depth, multidimensional, structured interviews with seven women leaders in higher education. Women leaders were invited to participate via email correspondence from the researchers. Informed consent was obtained prior to conducting the interviews. The interviews were recorded via telephone and then transcribed. The interviews ranged in length from 20 to 60 minutes, with most of the interviews lasting about 45 minutes. The seven women leaders were asked a standard set of questions (see Appendix) related to the following four areas: (1) the path of finding a voice as a leader in higher education; (2) the challenges faced by female leaders during times of change and crisis; (3) the impact of the female voice on the implementation and interpretation of institutional policies; and (4) the effective means of incorporating the female voice in the culture of an institution. Follow-up questions were asked as needed for deeper understanding and further clarification of participant responses.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis for this study was conducted in accordance with traditional qualitative methodology. The qualitative data analysis included coding the data into categories related to the interview questions, identifying patterns across respondents' answers to the questions posed, and determining emergent themes. The process of data analysis involved performing simultaneous data collection and using a constant comparative method to identify codes as they emerged from the data, which then were constructed into themes. After the interviews were transcribed, the interviewees' responses were placed in a database according to the standard questions used for the interviews (see Appendix). The responses were also placed in a separate database according to the four previously mentioned areas of analysis. After the initial stage of organizing the data, the two researchers engaged in independent open coding by separately examining the texts broken down into words, phrases, and sentences. Once open coding was completed, the researchers re-arranged the data to draw new connections between the original categories and the transcribed texts. Then, the researchers used a selective coding process to compare, integrate, and reformulate emerging themes from the

testimony that served as the basis of a paradigm for constructing an active voice. These themes are illuminated in the next section through the interpretation of excerpts taken from the interviews.

The excerpts in the following sections, which are presented in the women's voices (with names changed), underscore the importance of the participants' decisions to strive for leadership positions in higher education and their commitment to attain a level of success in those leadership positions as the motivation for their developing an active voice. The excerpts inform our understanding of why and how women in this study actualize an active voice that helps them grow as leaders.

Path to Leadership

Findings from this study show that constructing an active voice and creating a path to leadership often begins with the articulation of a transformative and communal voice as well as a desire for social equity. The desire to bring about social equality or to be a "change agent" demands a commitment to action and compels expression of an active voice. According to participants in this study, the path to leadership may also include some aspects of happenstance. The accounts that follow illustrate that women sought and obtained leadership positions, in part, due to a desire to help and empower others. Such a pathway for women to construct active voices in leadership appears to have begun with a first step of wanting to utilize a transformative and communal voice in order to seize opportunities to be heard.

Sarah shares how a desire for social justice inspired her to develop an active voice as a path to leadership. She describes growing up "surrounded by a lot of passion about social justice issues, particularly as these issues related to women" and goes on to say that the passion she had for others being treated equitably was the catalyst for her becoming a leader. That catalyst propelled her towards leadership, where she expressed her active voice by openly speaking out against being silenced. Similar sentiments, resulting in a commitment to an active voice, are echoed by Carol, who describes her path to leadership as "a combination of my desire to be a leader and the opportunity to be in a position where I could act as a change agent." Kristen comments on becoming a change agent for social justice:

I would say it probably has a lot to do with recognizing that women like myself, in this case Latinas, were underrepresented or not at all represented in leadership in higher education. As a college student—even as a high school student—I was always involved in activities where I assumed leadership, where I stepped into opportunities or created the opportunities, so that I could have some presence. And I just thought that if people weren't going to invite me, I would kind of figure out a way of making an inroad to assume leadership.

While commitment to equality and betterment serves as a catalyst to action and a catalyst for the use of an active voice, for two participants, happenstance also played a role in the path to leadership. Joan recognizes the role of happenstance in her own leadership trajectory, "...it was not a conscious effort that I said 'Oh I'm going to be dean someday,' it was, I believe, the way in which I worked—energy, enthusiasm, and interest in betterment." Another participant, Laura, states: "I don't think I ever defined what I was doing as 'leadership,' so I never made a decision that I would be involved in leadership. I sort of walked into women's issues."

Multidimensional Voice

This study shows that developing an active voice requires a style of leadership where both collaborative and agentic qualities of communication are enacted, offering women a view of communication characterized by a recognition of power differences, and a commitment to publically supporting the professional value of other women. In essence, the seven women in this study recognized that collaboration, the use of particular agentic qualities, and networking are unique strengths of women's leadership voices. Moreover, the participants identify that the collaborative nature of their active voices has been instrumental to their ability to successfully maintain leadership positions. Kristin, for example, describes her leadership style as follows:

I have a style that in the old days they would call 'walk around management.' But I would say it's very walk around leadership. It's very engaging; it's a leadership style that invites other people's voices. As a leader, I can convene groups to ensure that their voices and representations on any set of issues gets heard.

Carol also recognizes the collaborative nature of her leadership style:

I would describe it [leadership style] as collaborative—that just about anything I do involves creating a collaborative relationship with other people within the university community. I also find ways of building collaboration with others on campus so that when an issue needs to have attention paid to it that there's a collaborative voice at the table whenever possible, or multiple voices representing different areas of the same concern.

Sarah points out that the collaborative leadership style often displayed by women leaders is not new and that many women have, in fact, always demonstrated a collaborative leadership style, long before it was recognized as good practice. A lot of the things that now are really touted as part of the whole relational advantages of leadership...that was something that women did. Women connected with people culturally before it was ever made popular in leadership roles.

While Joan acknowledges the importance and centrality of collaboration, she also speaks to the reality of power differentials as an important additional dimension of active voice:

I ask them to be in partnership with me. They need to give me the ammunition to advocate for them to the people that we all eventually report to. So in some sense, I operate in tandem with the folks in my division. They recognize it's not so much of an equal partnership, but that they think we're both running the show.

Just as Joan found that an awareness of power differentials adds an important dimension to her active voice, Debra identifies persistence and vision as key elements that add dimension to her active voice: "I'm very collaborative, and I think dogged. I get a vision. I want to work with people to make it happen, and I'm pretty persistent. So I guess I have a collaborative-persistence style." Debra goes on to share:

I think women are more collaborative. I think over time, more and more women have gotten involved and are more likely to ask a question before they start doing something. They try to build teams, ask a lot more questions and lead with a different kind of heart.

Not only do participants identify collaboration as a key dimension of the predominant leadership style of women, but also see

collaboration as a tactic that women can use to construct an active voice in leadership.

Specifically, participants point to mindful and meaningful inclusion and development of a close-knit network as a way that women can engage in collaborative activities that will help build their own active voice and the active voice of future female leaders. For example, Kristin speaks about mindful and meaningful inclusion, saying:

I have an inclusion and engagement committee that is about ten people and represents different parts of the school. So they come together to represent each other and to help address any climate issues at the school. The way of incorporating voice is to engage each other and let them know that you care about their voice and then you help them really give their voice at the workplace.

Joan also describes the creation and use of a close-knit network, but focuses on networking as a strategy for developing an active voice, promoting the active voice of others, and developing leadership acumen.

A close-knit network appears to be a type of networking support that is often effective in male-centric leadership communities, and which may be an important practice for female leaders to adopt as they strive to utilize an active voice to build their own leadership path, and to foster the leadership path of other women. This observation points to a perception that men are freer to publicly express close-knit relationships with other men while accomplishing tasks. In contrast, women tend to silence their public support for other women because they have not yet built a similar network of openly close-knit relationships. This missed opportunity is alluded to in the following passage where Joan articulates a desire to have the same freedom as men to openly express her close-knit relationships with other women. She shares:

There is a network, a male network, or a male unwritten codebook that exists through a glad-handing and back-slapping kind of behavior that gets business done. And I would like to be able to see that across gender. So I want to be part of that network that says 'I know her and she's a good person, and beyond just being a good person, she's damn qualified in her position.'

In general, the participants expressed that networking and collaborative leadership are important aspects of their own active voices and are dimensions pivotal to leading. Therefore, it seems then that women have their own qualities of voice—qualities that are not relegated to men—best described as collaborative and communal.

While the active female voice incorporates communality, transformation, and social justice, women also believe that aspects of traditional male leadership qualities can be adopted by female leaders as part of the development of their active voice. The women in this study identified “male” qualities of leadership as generally problematic, but in times of crises as valuable to organizational goals. Specifically, women in this study believe that the construction of an active voice necessitates cautiously incorporating agentic qualities into “female” communication during a time of crises. As Joan states, the traditional male voice is “very aggressive, very warlike, very me versus you.” However, participants also perceive that these same “inherently male qualities” make it easier for men to step into a situation and respond quickly and assertively. They identify the ability to respond quickly in times of crises as vital to success in leadership.

Participants note that one reason male leaders may be more readily able to respond quickly and assertively in times of crises than female leaders is that they are willing to take action without necessarily having all the information needed to substantiate their case. This capacity was expressed as a positive aspect of how men use an active voice, and something from which women could learn. Sarah says:

I've seen more men bullshit in the context of something that was going on, knowing full well they had nothing underneath this argument, and I've seen women kill themselves trying to get all the facts together, and then lose the argument because they didn't respond as quickly enough or as assertively as they could have in the situation.

Another aspect of the traditional male voice from which women could learn is the value of autonomy.

Carol perceives that the male voice is not only assertive and quick minded, but is also independent: “The male style is more

about just stepping out and doing,” without thinking much about “what collaborations need to be built in order to achieve a goal.”

Echoing this sentiment Debra states:

In any kind of situation, women have to be very aggressive in getting their voice heard, and I do think that women have a tendency not to push themselves out in front of the camera, if you will—not to be the ones to step up.

We have a tendency to wait. We like to listen, see what’s going on and then step up.

These comments reinforce that participants look to agentic qualities of discourse as an area of growth for the active female voice.

Kristin sums it up:

Male leaders are very succinct in what they have to say and they don’t have to give you a whole thesis around their point of view. So I think there’s a communication style of brevity and succinctness that I believe has some benefit because then they speak with more confidence and authority.

This acknowledgement of the potential value to be gained by incorporating agentic qualities into female voices should not diminish the centrality of community and collaboration to multidimensional voices. Rather, recognizing that adding an agentic dimension to their active voice, especially in times of crises, can enhance leadership.

In the following excerpts, participants speak to the value of purposefully using agentic voices and their authentic collaborative voices. Debra says:

Women really tend to shy away from the numbers side, and I guess not be right-brained. I think it’s important that we learn to read numbers and documents, and be sure that we can fully understand them. Women have a tendency to go more to the people side, and we need to be sure that we can balance and talk both sides. And I think by talking on both sides, we will be way ahead of the men.

Similarly, from Laura:

A lot of men think that leadership is authoritarian like the coach on an athletic team, while women have generally learned to be collaborative. Women are interested in working together and hearing others. I think both kinds of leadership are appropriate, depending on the situation.

If there's a fire in the office, you don't want to say 'Now which of us is taking turns putting water on the fire?' One participant, Debra specifically cautions that women should take care that their voices are not so agentic that their own authentic voices are rendered ineffective:

I have run into women in leadership roles that are a little starker, very aggressive, and for me, it makes me glad I'm not like that, because it's rather negative. If anything, it pushes me to be much more collaborative and involved with the organization I'm leading. It makes me disappointed and it makes me want to be sure that I'm never like that.

Interestingly, the use of an agentic voice appears to be perceived by women as being borrowed from men, rather than as being an inherently female quality, insofar as agentic leadership qualities have thus far been seen as exclusively male. This sentiment supports the notion that women may use an agentic aspect of voice at certain times, and in specific circumstances, but then revert back to the collaborative voice that is more authentic to them. That agentic voice is a mechanism borrowed from males is clearly and succinctly expressed in Debra's statement: "When I first started in higher education, there were virtually no women leaders. They just weren't there. And if they were, they played a very masculine role. They dressed like men, worked like men, thought like men."

Microaggression

Women in this study have experienced microaggressions and have felt, at times, that they were silenced because they were female. In general, participants in this study felt that an atmosphere of silencing women on college campuses was fostered and maintained by a lack of female presence in leadership. This appears to be why they suggested that constructing an active voice requires a purposeful resistance against silencing and microaggressions. As Sarah states, "I still am often the only female in the room." Most participants express that the climate for women on college campuses has gotten better, however they identify microaggressions as significantly contributing to a climate in which women are still being silenced. Women in this study experienced a variety of microaggressions throughout their leadership careers.

The excerpts presented below highlight how women's voices are silenced by both men and women, primarily through the discriminatory use of microaggressions. Some attempts at silencing were seen as blatant and direct. For example, Sarah stated that her all-female work team has been called, "The Witches of Eastwick." However, a majority of the participants describe attempts to silence their voices as more subtle and subconscious—that is, as microaggressions. Kristin explains that these attempts are "interpersonal insults that people don't necessarily do consciously, but it's slight; for example, it's ignoring an e-mail; it's kind of giving you lip-service." Sarah states:

I have had men come in and literally try to pat me on the head early in my career. I had experiences where the athletic director made very rude comments about women in front of me. It was not a pleasant environment for women, and being the only woman in a lot of leadership meetings, there were days when it was really difficult because you would say something in a meeting, make an observation or make a suggestion, and it's like the person didn't hear what you were saying. Then three speakers later somebody said the exact same thing, but it happened to be a male person, and it was the best idea since sliced bread.

Carol also tells us:

I face that challenge all the time, that there's a possibility that it may be dismissed because of gender, or that it may be minimized or trivialized because it's a woman bringing the concern. That's still underlying to some extent, although I think it's better than it used to be.

Of particular significance to this study, the participants perceive that, in addition to microaggressions enacted by males, they also have the experience of other women attempting to silence their active voices. Joan states: "The women who work for me gave me a harder way to go than they did with the man who was my predecessor." She elaborates: "Women don't empower women to empower ourselves because we pit ourselves against each other. We're still having those kinds of tribal warfares amongst ourselves."

Another type of silencing that emerges from this study involves women being divided into categories of those with children and

those without children. Kate describes this phenomenon as “gender plus,” an informal designation used in previous workplaces to label women employees who have children. Joan states: “We don’t talk about what a man does with his children because there’s an expectation that there’s a partner to take care of them. Women are still viewed as the caregiver or the primary caregiver. Only women who have no children can advance, by choice or by the fact that they’re out of the house.”

In describing her experiences with microaggression, Laura shares: “Women get called by their name less, they get less eye contact, they get interrupted more often, and the interruptions are often trivial.” Further, she says: “Men are the ones who get to decide whether they’ll take credit for your decision or not.” Participants in this study agreed that to stop the silencing of women on college campuses, women must purposefully resist attempts at silencing and colleges and universities need to hire qualified women in the highest ranks of leadership. As Joan states, “You want to see the dynamics change? Hire the qualified people that bring diversity to the table in ways that will push the agenda forward.”

Participants suggest that attempts to silence an active voice can also sometimes be overcome or at least counter-balanced by networking with and mentoring other women. Debra states: “You see women much more likely to be mentoring than you ever did with male leaders. Although male leaders mentor, I think women are more likely to reach down and try to pull others up.” Carol describes how mentoring could be done by requiring “meticulous attention to who’s at the table all the time,” and that there must be a “very strong mindfulness around making sure that they’re at the table.”

In some instances, resisting being silenced may involve a one-on-one follow up after a microaggression has occurred. Sarah says, “I didn’t make a scene during the whole thing, but I did go up to them afterwards and I said ‘we need to get straight about this thing’”. Another form of resistance utilized by participants in this study was addressing the situation directly, in the moment, “I did stop the action in the room and I did redirect things”. Joan describes her experiences with microaggressions and how she

resists silencing by bolstering her authority and clearly and directly articulating her qualifications and experiences:

For us, you've gotta start ticking off your qualifications. And I see people doing that. For men, they don't list their qualifications, but this is what you get—he is a really good guy; he's on top of his game. Whereas with women, you have to give your pedigree. You have to give your credentials up front, and to even kind of say 'I belong here.' And even when you do get your pedigree, you're still on the margins.

For Laura, simply becoming aware and acknowledging that she was experiencing microaggressions allowed her to feel she was resisting being silenced. She says, "I was able to say this is not me...this is a pattern, which was very empowering." Choosing humor as a way to resist being silenced is another strategy identified by Laura, who recounted a preference for making a joke on occasion in the face of a microaggression as a way to send a message while not unnecessarily increasing the level of tension in the room.

Conclusion: Proposing a Paradigm for Constructing an Active Voice

It is clear that female leadership in higher education occurs in a complex environment that warrants the creation of a paradigm to help future leaders construct an active voice thereby fostering movement into leadership roles in higher education. Derived from the stories of participants, the paradigm proposed by this study identifies important strategies that may be useful for women seeking to construct an active voice as they develop their leadership styles.

This paradigm consists of four strategies:

1. Develop a moral leadership of discourse.
2. Develop a multidimensional voice.
3. Communicate freely and openly to resist microaggressions and attempts at silencing.
4. Seek out other women to mentor them.

In exploring the development of their own active voices, female leaders and females aspiring to leadership may purposefully seek to incorporate these strategies of this paradigm into their leadership voices, building their confidence to clearly articulate, demonstrate, and live the paradigm of an active female voice. The specific strategies are explored in more detail below.

First, an active voice should convey a moral discourse of leadership. This moral discourse of leadership incorporates being an agent of change, having a passion for social justice and social equity, and using both a transformative and communal voice. As was highlighted in the literature review and substantiated in the current study, women's leadership is embedded in a strong moral discourse of leadership where there is an ethic of care (Fine, 2009). This is evidenced by women seeking leadership positions, in part, due to their concern for helping others and their interest in working together to make meaningful contributions and significant changes for the betterment of others (Ballenger & Professor, 2010; Fine, 2009). In this study, incorporating others' voices when addressing issues was central to developing a moral discourse. Not only was incorporating others' voices in daily decision making necessary; so was letting others know that their voices were valued. As one participant in this study stated, "women mentor and reach down to pull others up."

However, publicly supporting and expressing close-knit relationships with other women without feeling a loss of power appears to be more difficult for women than for men. The challenge is that women sometimes feel hesitant to fully express themselves in this way, particularly in a larger, more public venue where they are at risk of being silenced. Therefore, suggestions for publicly affirming the leadership of another woman without feeling a loss of power may be most feasible within smaller groups or within groups that are less likely to try to silence women. As female leaders become more comfortable with their voices in these settings, they can expand to larger, more diverse or less-known groups. Moreover, openly and honestly expressing a moral discourse of leadership is essential to normalizing female discourse so that women's world views and leadership styles are legitimized and valued.

Second, an active voice should also be multidimensional in that both agentic and communal qualities of voice are purposefully expressed but are also dependent upon the context in which they are utilized. Women in this study do not aspire to emulate a male style of communication. Though the women expressed that male voices are automatically perceived as more credible than women's voices, these women do not believe that female leadership credibility can be achieved solely by taking on male qualities of voice. Rather, a communal voice tends to be the central dimension of an active voice for women. However, participants in this study suggest that the agentic voice is most effective when quick action is required and in times of crises. Recognizing the onset of a crisis and being willing to temporarily step away from a communal voice to take action would be necessary to developing a multidimensional voice. Moreover, women should see the value of autonomous action in certain circumstances. Building awareness around this value may increase the likelihood that female leaders will take autonomous action when circumstances call for it.

Another suggestion from this study for developing a multidimensional voice is for women to take action without having all the details, and to do so with confidence. Thus, as was mentioned by participants in this study, women need to develop a style of communication wherein they step up and speak out with confidence and authority, and balance that side with the people side. As one participant, Kristin, suggests, if women were able to do this "we would be way ahead of them (men)." Unlike previous studies in communication literature, which found that women who talked like men were ignored and that women tended to be seen as having a communication disadvantage (Tannen, 1996; Flicker 2001; Hynes 1998), this study finds that women utilize and openly celebrate a multidimensional voice, which is most effective as a leadership strategy when the communal voice is in the foreground and the agentic voice is in the background. This appreciation of a multidimensional voice may prevent women from incurring penalties for departing from expected linguistic norms (Graddol & Swamm, 1990). Moreover, it may benefit women by moving them away from mimicking the communication style of male leaders whose style is often perceived as more powerful than that of women (Graddol & Swamm, 1990; Tannen 2001). This study shows that women now have a more nuanced understanding of

the double-bind experience, perceiving themselves as successfully leading in a way that does meet the expectations of both their social role and their leadership role, yet they do not feel this accomplishment is recognized by others.

Third, an active voice should communicate freely and openly to resist microaggressions and silencing. This is vital to the construction of an active voice because male world views are normalized if women are silenced (Graddol & Swamm, 1990). Additionally, the silencing of women perpetuates oppression (Griffin, 1993). The women in this study expressed that microaggressions exist in institutions of higher education when men are automatically seen as credible, while women have to prove themselves, which causes women to be more cautious and careful than men in expressing their opinions. Participants of this study shared a variety of suggestions for demonstrating a resistance to being silenced. In some instances they directly acknowledged the silencing attempt and drew attention to it. For example, if the female voice was not being heard in a meeting, the female drew awareness to the microaggression by communicating directly and openly about the microaggression right away during the meeting. However, participants acknowledge that a direct claim of microaggression is sometimes not possible and may need to be dealt with at a later time.

Additional suggestions for resisting being silenced include the incorporation of humor as a way to get a message across indirectly (e.g. “did I lose my PhD on the way in the door?” when a female is not addressed as Dr. but her male colleagues are), being vocal about stating professional qualifications, and encouraging others to listen to the voices of rising female professionals. Thus, to overcome microaggressions and attempts at silencing their active voices, these women utilize networking and collaboration. Moreover, they suggest that in order for female leaders to move forward, they need to feel free to openly and publicly express their admiration for other women’s leadership qualities. This type of communication creates opportunities for women to have a presence, which moves them from objects to subjects (Hooks, 1989).

Fourth, an active voice openly expresses a willingness and eagerness to mentor other women both informally and formally, which

can be implemented in the workplace every day. Perhaps the simplest suggestion for developing this strategy is to commit to listening to fellow women, providing them with an opportunity for their voices to be heard, and encouraging them to expand the circle in which they share their voice. Helping others and networking are strategies that women often use to overcome microaggressions (Sue & Rivera, 2010).

Supporting and mentoring other women is often part of a formal supervisory task, but women can mentor, encourage, and support women with whom they do not have a formal professional relationship. Perhaps the most important suggestion for mentoring other women that came from this study is for women to recognize that when silencing occurs they should stand up to it and allow other women to see the resistance against silencing. Essentially, women breaking silence with open and honest communication and through collaboration advances emancipation from oppression (Jaworski, 1992; Fine, 2009).

From the words of highly successful women leaders in higher education, this study has constructed an important paradigm to help women develop strategies to overcome barriers to leadership by pursuing an active voice. However, due to the small sample size in this study, some of the participants' responses and corresponding recommendations may reinforce potential stereotypes. Future studies should be expanded to include additional interviews investigating whether women tend to perceive other women as shying away from data, and to investigate whether women who express agentic qualities are seen as ineffective leaders. Additionally, future studies that consider women's negative perceptions of female leaders may be a valuable research area, as well as how and why women silence other women. Future research should also explore how the male active voice is developed, the extent to which the expression of a collaborative and communal voice are important leadership strategies for males, and what perceived struggles males face as they construct their own active voices. Finally, future research could explore how women with children can construct an active voice and discern whether the path is different for women with children compared to women without children.

The overarching finding of this study is that increasing the number of women in top leadership positions, necessitates women constructing a more active voice in order to have a better chance of their perspectives being heard across all facets of university life. Women who utilize the paradigm proposed in this study and the strategies aligned with the paradigm should increasingly feel more comfortable expressing their opinions and ideas honestly and openly; not be willingly silenced by others; and expressing their own experiences to share their lived realities. Thus, their active voices are more likely to be rightfully accepted and acknowledged for the insight and wisdom they possess.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1. What impacted your decision to pursue a career in leadership in higher education? Please share a brief synopsis.
2. How would you describe your leadership style?
3. What has been your experience of the role of gender in leadership during your career? Has it changed?
4. What significant contributions have women made to the definitions of leadership?
5. Have you experienced a female leadership style that is counter to your own leadership style? How did it impact you?
6. In times of change or crisis what challenges have you faced due to gender?
7. What can we learn from male leadership styles that would improve female leadership styles?
8. Has the female voice had an impact on the implementation of institutional policies? If so, how and on which policies?

The Brand Immortal: How Communication Keeps Brands Alive

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Brands are created with the purpose of having staying power, meant to thrive in their longevity, eventually leading to long-term yields. For this reason, brands are something of a living entity, kept alive through marketing efforts directed toward consumer exposure. There is, however, a predicament in the way brands “live,” since brand names often attach themselves to products that will eventually rot, break, get used up, or deteriorate; that will eventually “die.” The role of rhetoric, in its ability to instill impressions, is what makes brands immortal and less susceptible to this kind of death.

Brands are, undoubtedly, created with the purpose of having staying power. Unlike marketing practices geared toward short-term results, brands are meant to thrive in their longevity, eventually leading to long-term yields. For this reason, brands are something of a living entity, kept alive through marketing efforts directed toward consumer exposure. Marketing practitioners make consumers aware of products and brands through various aspects of marketing, but they also remind us of those brands long after initial exposure. When marketing practitioners engage such efforts, they are assisting consumers in negotiating feelings and thoughts toward the brands themselves—in a way, keeping the brand alive in the consumer mindset.

There is, however, a predicament in the way brands “live,” since brand names often attach themselves to products that will eventually rot, break, get used up, or deteriorate; that will eventually “die.” The role of rhetoric, in its ability to instill impressions, is what makes brands immortal and less susceptible to this kind of death. The brands gain unique identities through persuasive and marketing messages, which will then translate into consumer interpretation. Brands exist as abstractions, as ideas, and this is vital to motivating consumer behavior. Though brands are not always successful and positively viewed, when they are able to build relationships with consumers, their positive reputation can help make the immortal. Brands can communicate with consum-

ers in a whole host of ways, from early messages attempting to draw consumers to repeat messages reinforcing quality. Persuasion and impressions are ultimately what keep the brands going, which is essential, though in some cases can potentially lead to problematic connections to consumer goods resulting from human connections to brands and objects.

Brand Existence

As a basic rule of thumb, brands have presence in a way that products do not, as products are the physical manifestations of brands. Brands exist as abstractions, and are therefore not confined to a physical existence—they exist as thought, persuasion, and idea; they are concepts. By communicating brands, marketing practitioners lend to products certain distinctions that can assist consumers in purchase decisions. Brand identity is important since the marketplace allows many options for consumers to choose from, and the basis of consumer society is to consume the correct things (Leiss, Kline, & Jhally, 1990). Since consumers are constantly confronted with choice, from smaller purchases like toothbrushes and toothpaste to larger purchases like cars, brands must compete both for business and attention. The distinctions consumers are able to make, coupled with decisions they are presented with, allow brands to exist in a space that is separated from mere product.

Take, for example, the clothing brand *American Eagle* and how they tried to expand. Despite the fact that *American Eagle* is a clothing line, as a brand it carries its own sense of identity. Often *American Eagle* is targeted toward “teen clientele,” with an emphasis on “hanging out and showing off their preppy fashions” (Lindeman, 2014b). *American Eagle* has thus attached itself to youth culture, and therefore stands as a clear and ready choice for people within its target age demographic. On the other hand, *American Eagle* attempted other brand lines—at one point including *Martin & Osa*, *Aerie*, and *77 Kids*—which had different target demographics than the original *American Eagle* associated with them. *Martin & Osa* targeted “25- to 40- year olds” (Lindeman, 2006); *Aerie* often markets to “young women of different shapes and sizes” (Lindeman, 2014a); and *77 Kids* intended to reach “children ages 2 to 10” (Lindeman, 2009). By shaping consumer expectation and identity, *American Eagle*

strove to be known as more than just a clothing line, and, by keeping within its original space while expanding, instead became attributed to and recognized through youth and other cultures, even though clothing is in essence little more than fabric.

At its core, this kind of branding practice introduces “intangibles” which are designed to increase the value of physical assets (Travis, 2000, p. 7). A brand of clothing such as *American Eagle* could well attain additional value and worth simply because it stands for something outside of just “regular” clothes. Though marketing practitioners have a degree of control, consumers can certainly come to value products in different ways according to their own devices. If left to their own devices, however, consumers today will have a difficult time in determining specific identities around products, and so enters the role of the marketing practitioner.

Consumer Motivation

Humans have in them a certain need, a certain predisposition, for granting objects additional characteristics and identities because, while animals have the purpose of “living,” humans today have the purpose of “living well” (Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Rochberg-Halton, 1981, p. 232). Living well is characterized as the desire to better oneself beyond day-to-day survival. There is little satisfaction in the bare necessities.

The additional motivator of living well puts consumers in a precarious position that marketing practitioners can capitalize on. Consumers almost need to be the targets of marketing efforts, simply because they have the goal of living the best and most comfortable lives possible. Basic living conditions and basic well-being are not enough; consumers want more—bigger, better, faster, and of higher quality. Always looking to a better existence, consumers are driven to consumption. The “cultural pattern” (Williams, 1980, p. 185) of capitalism calls for meanings generated into products, and marketing practitioners are quick to fulfill the role.

The real power the marketing practitioner has is in making sure that specific products are marketed to specific consumers in specific ways. As marketing practices become increasingly geared

toward consumers, marketing practitioners are tasked with determining which audience is the best to reach (Fortini-Campbell, 2003). *Nike*, for example, chooses to emphasize athletes and competition in its ads, targeting audience members who either are athletes already, or who wish they were, and is therefore touted as a “sports brand” (Ozanian, 2012). Even just recently, *Nike* put more efforts into their “fitness tech,” trying to assist consumer in reaching “individual fitness goals” (Bornstein, 2014). The established, clear focus allows *Nike* to attempt to tap into certain audience bases while excluding or at least limiting others. The unique identity, though, as opposed to attempting to reach a more universal audience through appeals, is part of what makes *Nike* so strong.

As a result, consumers come to see themselves in their material possessions (Marcuse, 1964), forming a bond that can be tough to detach. For today’s consumers, “attitudes and behaviors [become] linked to where we shop, how we buy, and what we eat, wear, and consume” (Barber, 2007, p. 167). In fact, “branded lifestyles” can turn into “substitute identities—forms of acquired character that have the potential to go all the way down to the core” (Barber, 2007, p. 167); consumers can form a specific identity or persona connected to the kinds of brands they consume, being quick to adhere to what the brands intend.

There is an emotional connection to brands that consumers feel, which may well lead consumers to seek out certain brands over others (Travis, 2000)—this is true even if the consumer is unable to articulate why he or she made a certain brand choice. Brand loyalty may even develop based on consumer experience and interaction with the branded products. As an example, brands can make guarantees and promises of quality and experience to consumers, at which point issues of trust and comfort are on display (Travis, 2000). The brand must then attempt to deliver and make good on the promise, as consumer interaction is the basis for processing brand attributes (Davis, 2005).

DiGiorno brand pizza uses the slogan “It’s not delivery, it’s *DiGiorno*” as a way to make this kind of quality promise. The seemingly simple slogan makes a specific promise to consumers about *DiGiorno* being at the same level of quality of pizza that one might expect from delivery. As opposed to marketing prac-

tices geared toward making short-term profit, the guarantee of a brand is designed to allow consumers to judge the products for themselves after making the purchase. Hopefully, the brand assessment is positive, and consumers will continue to buy from the brand over time.

Building Brand Relationships

Central to a brand's power and success is the relationship it can foster with consumers, where the stronger the relationship, the more likely the brand is to succeed. The relationship is built over time, and cannot be fostered through marketing practice alone—consumer experience is a large part of the perception. Consumers, after all, need to feel trust (Jarvis, 2009), and the brand identities that establish themselves as unique are largely protected from competition, and will therefore invite more brand loyalty (Shiffman, 2008).

With the goal of building a relationship with consumers, brands are a bit removed from short-term profit, and marketing practitioners may need to wait some time before the brand becomes established. If a marketing practitioner hopes to trick or deceive consumers into purchases, it may well work. If a brand is to last, however, it must be more solid in the sense that it needs to show consumers quality over time—through its promises. Most brands can claim their fame and profit because they make life “easy” for consumers (Keller & Berry, 2003, p. 310) who do not have to constantly seek out and select new brands all the time—brand loyalty is often due to consistent perceptions of value, quality, and expectation. Since brands are thought to appeal to consumers well beyond practical reason (Travis, 2000), brands have the potential to engender a deeper connection with consumers than consumers may even realize.

Once promises and guarantees are taken to task, issues of “character and reputation” go to the forefront (Travis, 2000, p. 18). Brands simply cannot exist without reputation (Travis, 2000). Promises kept are beneficial to a brand, and promises that are not kept may well negatively affect brand image (Travis, 2000). Quite simply, not all brands succeed. Brands have the capacity to give consumers direction in terms of product worth, but certainly some brands are worth less than others.

A step further, the imbuing of objects with human characteristics and existing culture is fully dependent on consumer acceptance and reaction (Sennett, 1976). *American Eagle* does not succeed because the brand somehow creates or invents youth culture; rather, *American Eagle* succeeds because the brand shows itself as part of the youth which already exists. Brands are therefore valued according to the kinds of criteria we might otherwise associate with people (Sennett, 2008). There are fairly straightforward reasons why brands look to culture and human qualities for inspiration. Despite the fact that the United States has historically been a wealthy country financially, people are still thought to value their interpersonal connections over wealth and accumulation (Keller & Berry, 2003). The valuation placed on interaction and connection is what brands attempt to understand and subsequently prey upon.

Travis (2000), for example, spoke to how brands should function like nice guys, in the sense that men who claim to be nice guys should be able to prove it through their actions, as opposed to needing to communicate it verbally all the time. The test of a genuine “nice guy,” just like the test of a genuine “good brand” is that they both prove their positive attributes through action; repeated promises and self-appraisals do little without verification. Just as with a friend or an acquaintance, a brand that makes constant promises cannot hope to thrive without delivering on those promises through consumer experience—the notion, then, is that brands can be assessed in a way that is similar to how humans are assessed (Travis, 2000).

Consequences of Brand Relationships

We see these manifestations in other ways, as well—some consumers will take human connections with brands to an extreme, calling cars “she,” or even granting products names and other identities (Sennett, 2008, p. 137). Even though these sorts of characterizations are superficial, it shows the way in which consumers have a willingness in allowing human characteristics to be present in their everyday material possessions. The seemingly harmless approach of giving brands human traits, associations, and characteristics has a major downside. Brands—and branded products, for that matter—are by no means capable of taking the

place of human companionship, so their ability to connect with consumers has the potential for a whole host of consequences.

To this effect, Sennett (1976) stated that many facets of today's public life are geared toward making promises on the basis of intimate connection, however are truly incapable of producing it. Brands can make promises and guarantees that promote associations of the brand with love, sex, friends, and fun, but the reality is that consumer behavior in and of itself will likely not lead to any of these payoffs. Simply because consumers envision brands as producing certain results before a purchase does not mean that those results will be comparable once the purchase is actually completed (Hirschmann, 1982).

Still, the anticipation and expectation of what a brand or product might generate or yield through a purchase is a driving force for many consumers. As modern living becomes increasingly disconnected from genuine human interaction, and as fear of such disconnect creates more depression and uncertainty, brands are given the opportunity to take hold as a quick, easy, and superficial way to bond with others (Sennett, 1976), although it is technically a way nonetheless. Communication efforts through branding and marketing find a way to “suggest intimacy” and “reproduce comforts of physical and psychological proximity, and claim intimacy” (Hardt, 2004, p. 61), where consumers can subsequently use branded products as a means of communicating with others (Douglas & Isherwood, 1996). By creating powerful marketing messages, marketing practitioners are able to influence and even disrupt the thought processes of consumers (Ellul, trans. 1965). Ultimately, however, brands will fall short of producing such interpersonal satisfaction in any long-term or serious and fulfilling capacity.

Herein lies the central dilemma, considering that brands often have various product choices in their product lines. As brands appear to be vessels with which to connect with others—in addition to possessing the ability for consumers to “better” themselves—consumers have little reason not to make purchases at their discretion (Gossage, 1967). The trick of perhaps all marketing, though, is that products really cannot gain for the consumer the kinds of attributes consumption promises—such as friends, love, and sex—merely through the consumption itself.

After all, just because one purchase does not bring fulfillment will not encourage consumers to discontinue consumer behavior. In a way that differs from animals, humans are believed to be characteristically “unsatisfiable” and “insatiable” (Hirschmann, 1982, p. 11), and their desires are never really gratified. Obviously, consumers responsible with their finances will likely put extensive thought into purchase decisions that will affect their financial security; barring that, however, a product cost seems very little in comparison with the desired and expected result of a somewhat envisioned better life (Gossage, 1967)—one where the consumer is more appealing, more attractive, more popular.

Consumers today may well be more susceptible to these modes of thinking than at any other point in the past. Taylor (2007) pointed to how postmodernity sees cultures that are “fractured” and therefore looking to find their way through a complicated and confusing world (p. 299). Since humanity has no concrete direction at this moment (Postman, 1999), brands comprise a way to gain such direction easily (Morris, 1997). It stands to reason that consumers will gravitate toward brands which seem at face value to produce identities and significance that may well be lacking elsewhere.

We might consider brands as being alive simply because they force consumers into this kind of thought process. By constantly modifying and altering stories surrounding brands (Travis, 2000), marketing practitioners create a sense of unease within the consumer where meaning and therefore identity are not fully constant. Both consumers and marketers together “discover, create, translate, transform, and reconfigure meaning” (Sherry, 2005, p. 40). When consumers are pushed to constantly think and rethink about the brands they are exposed to, the brands stay alive in a cognitive sense. The path that would lead consumers to consume the meaning produced by the brands in addition to just the products is fully dependent on the consumer continuing to think about the brand and what the brand means.

In the marketplace, future consumer choice is just as important as today’s consumer choice. The mentality of today’s consumer, perhaps as a result of marketing efforts, is that possessing products is not good enough (Sennett, 2006). The consumer is driven

to want more, and will even dispose of products that have not yet worn out in favor of the newer, bigger, and better product on the market (Sennett, 2006). The lifespan of the product, then, is severely shortened, as many products are not even allowed to last to a point where they have outlived their usefulness.

Smartphones are a great example of products that are often not allowed to fulfill their lifespan. Hendrickson (2013) described smartphones as a technology that is “moving too fast” because they are so frequently releasing new versions. The aptly named throwaway culture of capitalism encourages consumers to rid themselves of obsolete or even less desirable items. Consumers are now barely even able to enjoy their purchases and possessions because they will quickly look to the next possession as the primary focus (Sennett, 2006).

Positive Brand Identity and Reputation

The brand, though, is not quite as vulnerable to the demands consumers have for the latest and greatest product on the market. Whereas a product can easily undergo a physical “death,” a brand can live on and does not have the same limits on durability; in fact, the latest and greatest product on the market might well come from the same brand the consumer currently utilizes. The goal of a brand is, after all, to continue to “stay” with consumers so their future purchase decisions are influenced. To this end, it is no surprise the majority of criticism is directed at the rhetoric surrounding the brand marketing (Leiss, Kline, & Jhally, 1990), showing the concern is not primarily located within the consumer or the product, but rather within the brand’s communication. A brand’s rhetoric is what keeps it alive, considering that without persuasion and communication products are relegated to their mere functions only.

Put simply, ethos must be central to a brand’s communication if the brand hopes to stay alive in a positive way. Hinging largely on ethics, a brand’s persuasion must be realistic and make a good impression on the consumer. Aristotle (trans. 1984) depicted ethos as “persuasion [that] is achieved by the speaker’s personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible” (p. 25). Applied to a brand, the brand’s character can be called into question and assessed during advertising and other

brand communication, and it is just this kind of persuasion that transforms the product into something more.

The best way to articulate why brands are able to exist and not “die”, and also why ethos is so central, is that brands last in memory. Marketing practitioners can use imagery and communication extensively to suggest human connections with brands—again, focusing on issues of intimacy, trust, reputation, etc. At face value, granting brands human characteristics would appear to give brands a limited lifespan, in much the same way humans have limited lifespans. We must remember, though, that brands do not have a physical substance, per se, and are therefore less likely to “die” when the physical product does.

Brands exist solely as abstract ideas, as concepts, so they lack a physical substance which would limit their supposed lifespans. Humans, too, while having physical lifespans, are able to exist in memory, thought, and feeling; so, too, can a brand. To articulate the point, we can look at Ricoeur’s (trans. 1988) idea of trace. Ricoeur (trans. 1988) discussed how “trace” suggests a way in which things can leave “marks” which extend beyond the physical lifespan of a thing (p. 119). When the thing is no longer around, it will still linger; that is to say, the thing leaves an impression (Ricoeur, trans. 1988).

Brands are capable of leaving such impressions, too. The communicated personalities and stories behind brands are linked with the physical thing, which is the product, yet even when the product is discarded or worn out, the brand can endure. Ricoeur (trans. 1988) meant for his idea of trace to extend primarily to family members, friends, or pets, for example, who might pass away and leave an impression on us. Since brands invoke a feeling for consumers, and can even have an emotional connection with consumers in a way that mimics interpersonal and human relationships, the brands are able to live on in a consumer’s mind. Hopefully for the marketing practitioner, the experience with the brand is a positive one, since consumers could have negative feelings toward a brand, as well. Linking to ethos, if the brand’s persuasion is unrealistic, the consumer is very likely to figure this out during an experience with the branded product. If the consumer experience is positive, though, the consumer may have the

trace, the memory, which in turn influences future buying decisions.

Take the earlier example of *American Eagle*. The product of *American Eagle* is primarily clothing. If a consumer were to purchase an *American Eagle* brand shirt, he or she may find the shirt to be comfortable and of a high quality. Since *American Eagle* additionally has a brand image tied to youth culture, the consumer may find positive feelings toward the brand. Eventually, the shirt will become worn out, and/or perhaps it will be discarded or donated. At that point, despite the fact the physical shirt is no longer present, the brand may last in memory. This is especially important when the consumer is faced with future buying decisions—if the memory is positive, the consumer could be inclined to buy *American Eagle* clothing again. Though the product is lost, the brand can exist as a namesake and unique identity for the product, but the brand has the full capability of existing without the product, as well. Perceptions and understandings of things can exist even if the things themselves are no longer present (Ricoeur, trans. 1988), and the brand which has no physical substance at all can exist in memory with or without physical presence.

In seeking out new products, consumers may be inclined to purchase from brands that have successfully established loyalty with them. A goal of gaining repeat business is to encourage consumers to seek out new products from within the brand's line. As Ricoeur (trans. 1988) stated, though, "the trace can be wiped out, for it is fragile and needs to be preserved intact" (p. 120). The marketing practitioner must utilize marketing to invite consumers into the brand identity. Without repeat marketing messages, and without different ways to develop a brand, consumers may lose interest or seek out different brands. Not all of *American Eagle's* expanded brand attempts met with the desired success. For example, American Eagle determined it was in their best interest to "give up on its efforts to create a children's brand" (Lindeman, 2012) and therefore dissolved *77 Kids*. Impressions of a brand are likely to exist for extended periods of time, but they can also be easily weakened in a marketplace characterized by options.

Brand Immortality

A brand that hopes to succeed must make sure that consumers are continuously interested, and should also strive for the most positive relationship and reputation possible. Brands may take on human characteristics and brands may even be capable of existing in memory, but brand connections are ultimately not the same as connections an individual may have with other people. Unlike with the life and memory of a loved one, a brand can easily be replaced; because of this, ethos and rhetoric are extremely important for lasting impressions and brand loyalty.

Brands can outlast products because they embody trust and emotion; trust is also key to the ethos surrounding the brand's rhetoric. Connection with brands is something few consumers can adequately explain, which is why marketing practitioners have difficulty in getting perspectives on purchase decisions from consumers. Because brands exist as abstractions, the persuasion must accomplish the task of motivating consumers toward the purchase; a strongly forged identity for the brand is therefore central. The emotional connection consumers feel can lead them back to brands—because of impressions. At the same time, negative impressions can be damaging toward the brand and also can be the determining factor in poor buying decisions and brand connections.

Ultimately, brand loyalty and that immortality allow companies time to adapt, as they will hopefully have buy-in from consumers. They would be able to adapt, innovate, and create in a sea of competition; with positive memories of the brands, consumers would be drawn to their latest and greatest product offerings. The brands would potentially have the best chance of success over time if consumers walk away with consistently positive feelings. Products and brands are both capable of living, and in doing so are able to generate relationships with consumers, but when products lose their physical life, the brand, if positive seen, likely will not: the brand memory makes the brand immortal.

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Examining Sibling Interactions and Conflicts Across Major Networks

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This analysis raises the question of whether or not there is a connection between television networks and their representation of siblings on family sitcoms. Because it is a popular form of media, adults and children may use television to gather information. Parents' desire to protect their children from violent and sexual content have led them to seek more family-friendly programming, such as those found on the Disney Channel. Domestic sitcoms on ABC, CBS, and Disney Channel were examined during the 2009-2010 television season using a quantitative content analysis methodology. The results found that positive interactions of television siblings outnumbered the negative 2 to 1. Types of sibling interactions, sources of conflict, and overall outcomes were also investigated. These results were further correlated with the network they aired on to determine if there was a relationship between the network and sibling interactions. By connecting both the fields of interpersonal communication and media studies, this study examines media representations through an interpersonal communicative approach.

Between network, cable, and subscription channels, television shows are constantly reaching a larger audience. The audience for "a popular TV show can reach 15-20 million households" (Holtzman, 2000, p. 34). With so many programs to choose from, television has become a major aspect of our society and our lives. Viewers expand their knowledge of the world through media and develop their ideas about all aspects of life. Television can be an influential socializing agent in our everyday lives. "By the time an average American student graduates from high school, she or he will have spent more time in front of the television than in the classroom. Viewers learn and internalize some of the values, beliefs, and norms presented in media products" (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003, pp. 14-15). In 2010, Americans watched an average of 34 hours per week of television, the largest number ever recorded (Stelter, 2011). Television, thus, has become an important way in which society gets its information

about the world. Through the stories that television produces, it also teaches us about society (Lewis, 1990).

This paper raises the question of whether or not there is a connection between television networks and their representation of siblings on domestic situation comedies. Grounded in social learning theory and socialization, this research will observe the types of sibling interactions, conflicts, and resolutions that are portrayed on domestic sitcoms. Through an examination of domestic sitcoms on ABC, CBS, and Disney Channel, this analysis will consider to what extent there is a relationship between the representation of sibling interactions and the network they air on. By connecting both the fields of interpersonal communication and media studies, this study will examine media representations through an interpersonal communicative approach.

Domestic Sitcoms

Within television studies, sitcoms have demonstrated that they are a long-lasting genre which is flexible enough to adapt to remain an entertainment format (Hamamoto, 1989). From the early years of television, sitcoms were a primary feature and quickly became the most popular genre on television networks (McQueen, 2009). A sitcom is defined as a half-hour series that features recurrent characters, a similar setting, and a narrative that is typically contained within one episode (Mills, 2008). Thus, researchers can examine sitcom representations not to evaluate specific shows or characters, but in an effort to understand what society views as normal. "In these ways, [the] sitcom becomes not only representative of a culture's identity and ideology, it also becomes one of the ways in which that culture defines and understands itself" (Mills, 2008, p. 9). Using comedy, media content can influence what can be laughed at and what should be excluded.

Within the genre of situation comedy, domestic sitcoms are a sub-category of situation comedy. While they still feature a recurring cast and a situation that needs to be resolved, domestic sitcoms tend to focus only on the family unit. Therefore, domestic sitcoms will solve the family's immediate problems in that episode, without continuing to address broader social or cultural issues. As Kutulas (2005) remarked "family is the one experience

to which virtually all viewers can relate. It evokes symbols and images advertisers like. And its plot possibilities are endless” (p. 49). Consequently, the depiction of families on television emphasizes some small aspect of recognizability for its audience members, even when the (re)presentations conceal deeply held ideologies (Bressler, 2014).

As a result, parents frequently choose family sitcoms to prevent their children from watching any violence or sexual content on television. The concerns over shielding children from the content of violence and sex on television lead parents to seek more family-friendly programming (Downey, 2008). Therefore, parents often seek more niche-oriented programming, such as those found on the Disney Channel. The Disney Channel, for instance, targets families with younger children through their specialized programming. The network has a reputation for providing more family-friendly shows than the major television networks. “Most of the family-friendly networks often get feedback from their viewers in focus groups, in surveys and online. And what they hear is that parents and kids enjoy watching TV together, notably squeaky-clean sitcoms of the past like Nick at Nite's *Cosby Show*” (Downey, 2008, para. 32).

However, in addition to Disney Channel, the Disney corporation also acquired ABC in 1995 (Stein, 2011). Today, Disney is second only to Time Warner as the largest media firm in the world (Belkhyr, 2012). Because the Disney corporation now owns major broadcasting stations, such as ABC, and cable networks, such as Disney Channel, the cultural values and depictions of the American family within its cultural products cannot be ignored (Tanner, Haddock, Zimmerman, & Lund, 2003).

Yet, ABC and Disney Channel also both attract a very different audience. While they both may be branded as “family-friendly”, Disney Channel repeatedly remains the #1 network for kids 6-11 and tweens 9-14 (Bibel, 2014). ABC and other mainstream networks, such as CBS, NBC, and FOX have median ages of late 40s or early 50s (Bauder, 2010). Therefore could the distinct demographics of each network’s desired audience impact its portrayals of sibling relationships? For instance, could Disney Channel, which is geared more toward children and families as a

whole, produce more prosocial sibling interactions, similar to those of the 1950s family portrayals?

In the early years of television, the typical American family portrayal featured a diligent father, a warm and caring mother, assiduous children, and no interpersonal problems that could not be resolved within one episode (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). While the overall appearance of the family on television may have changed over the last fifty years, what about the interactions between its family members? Since family provides some of the earliest developed interpersonal relationships, its value is immeasurable (Larson, 1991). Yet if misleading portrayals are continuing to appear on television, real-life families viewing these interactions could develop communication methods similar to what they observe, potentially hindering their own family relationships. Consequently, if Disney Channel does portray more wholesome sibling interactions, is that necessarily a positive idea? With the resurgence of popular sitcoms featuring families on major television networks, such as *Modern Family* and *Two and a Half Men*, a more recent analysis of the depictions of family interactions on all television networks is required.

Sibling Interactions and Conflicts in Real-life

This study specifically focuses on sibling interactions because of the influential nature of the sibling relationship. Because the sibling relationship is one of the earliest developed and one of the longest lasting, it can also be one of the most significant interpersonal connections that one makes (Bank & Kahn, 1997). During childhood, siblings use interactions with each other to experiment and develop how to behave in relationships (Yeh & Lemper, 2004). Dunn (1983) observed the parallel and complimentary relationship between sibling relationships and parent-child relationships, but also saw comparisons to peer relationships. While similar to both parent and peer relationships, the sibling relationship is a unique entity with distinct characteristics worthy of deeper research.

Past research has defined conflict as common resistance involving incompatible goals between two or more people (DeHart, 1999; Shantz, 1987). Throughout life, conflict is an inescapable and necessary part of life. Conflict should not be viewed as posi-

tive or negative, but a normative part of human interactions (Valsiner & Cairns, 1992). Because of the intimate characteristics of the sibling relationship, conflict is bound to occur (Shalash, Wood, & Parker, 2013). Unlike friendships in which one chooses his or her friends, the sibling relationship is unintentional because siblings are born into a particular family (Dunn, 2002). The first familial conflict children experience is often within the sibling relationship (Dunn & Munn, 1987; Perlman & Ross, 1997). Furman and Buhrmester (1985) further concluded that out of all the family relationships (parents, grandparents, and friends), young people have conflict most often with their siblings. Developing conflict management skills early in one's life is essential to cultivating other relationships, such as marital, later in life (Shalash, Wood, & Parker, 2013). This type of conflict provides siblings with guidance to balance their own personal goals with the wants and needs of others in socially acceptable ways (Crockenberg, Jackson, & Langrock, 1996). Thus, conflict is a normal component of the sibling relationship (Dunn, 1993; Shantz & Hartup, 1992).

The crucial distinction is not whether or not conflict is present within the relationship, but distinguishing between constructive and destructive conflict (Vandell & Bailey, 1992). "Conflict is constructive when it involves negotiation, reasoning, or perspective-taking. Constructive conflicts culminate in mutually satisfying outcomes and may enhance sibling relationship quality" (Perlman, Garfinkel, & Turrell, 2007, p. 619). Constructive conflicts can lead to a deeper understanding and socialization of familial and social rules and develop children's problem-solving skills (Brody, 1998; Dunn & Munn, 1985; Dunn & Slomkowski, 1992; Howe, Rinaldi, Jennings, & Petrakos, 2002). In contrast, destructive conflict is frequent and lingering, so it can negatively affect the sibling relationship; destructive conflict is marked by avoidance, coerciveness, and aggression (Emery, 1992; Vandell & Bailey, 1992). Thus, through sibling conflict, siblings can discover how to negotiate their own autonomy with socially acceptable rules (Hartup & Laursen, 1993).

While sibling conflicts have been shown to be prevalent, past research has also found that many conflicts are left unresolved (Howe, Rinaldi, Jennings, & Petrakos, 2002; Siddiqui & Ross, 1999). When a resolution is found, submission, particularly to

the older sibling, is more likely than compromise (Perlman, Siddiqui, Ram, & Ross, 2000). Researchers have questioned whether or not parents should intervene to assist in facilitating solutions. Dunn and Munn (1986) concluded that parental mediation can function as a guiding force in sibling conflict resolutions. Through sibling conflict, parents can socialize children to understand rules about equality within the family (Ross, Filyer, Lollis, Perlman, & Martin, 1994) and decrease familial tension (Valsiner & Cairns, 1992). Past studies have concluded that warm parent-child relationships also cultivate strong sibling relationships (Bryant & Crockenberg, 1980; Teti & Ablard, 1989). However, to intervene or not in sibling conflict is still a challenge for some parents (Kramer & Baron 1995). When the parents intervene, siblings cannot develop the relational skills and problem-solving skills on their own; rather, siblings take the socialization cues provided by their parents, thus impeding the development of these crucial skills (Perlman et al. 2007). Thus, parental nonintervention often fosters stronger sibling relationships (Kramer & Baron, 1995; McHale et al. 2000).

Socialization and Social Learning Theory

As mentioned above, socialization is a powerful process that all children experience throughout their lifetime:

Socialization is the process whereby we learn and internalize the values, beliefs, and norms of our culture and, in so doing, develop a sense of self. Through the socialization process, we also learn to perform our social roles as friend, student, worker, citizen, and so forth. The process of socialization continues throughout life, but it is especially influential for children and adolescents. If socialization proceeds smoothly, we hardly notice it. The dominant values, beliefs, and norms of our society become 'our' values and norms. The internalization of the lessons of socialization means that our culture becomes taken for granted. We learn to hold 'appropriate' values and beliefs. We learn to behave in socially acceptable ways (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003, p. 14).

Thus, this cognizant process isn't one that we are aware is occurring over time. Since it occurs at an unconscious level, it is all

the more crucial that research examines the messages that are socially and culturally inherent.

Socialization can be conveyed both by family members and media content (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). However, it is media content that will often (re)present social reality, displaying to the world what is normal and what is objectionable (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Furthermore, social learning theory argues that most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling and that audiences watch television to discover the social world around them. Instead of discovering what social behavior is best for them, social learning theory argues that people will model their behavior based on what they observe. "In other words, you can learn plenty about relationships, social norms, and acceptable behavior simply by taking note of what others do (and of the consequences) in particular situations" (Dainton & Zelle, 2005, p. 206). Rather than experiment with their own behaviors, people will instead act in a manner that has already yielded a positive outcome.

This outcome serves as positive reinforcement for the behavior, as people remember its association with a positive or negative result. If a positive outcome is perceived by doing the action, people are more likely to replicate the behavior in their own lives. Young children will imitate any behavior, but if they are positively rewarded by those around them, they are likely to continue the behavior. Consequently, since families on television frequently solve their problems in a positive fashion by the end of each episode, real-life families may perceive that the character's behavior has led to this happiness. Thus, by imitating those same relationship behaviors, the real-life siblings falsely believe that they can achieve those same results. However, most real-life children fail to coincide with the television children's perfect situational problems and could be left with feelings of inadequacy about their own self-identities.

For example, real-life siblings frequently utilize conflicts and resolutions to strengthen family interpersonal relationships (Comstock & Strzyzewski, 1990). Yet, sibling conflicts on television are often designed inaccurately and for sensationalism; as a result, real-life siblings who identify with the characters on their screen may subconsciously believe that these conflicts are

realistic. "Television may contribute to children's beliefs about the nature of emotions, how to express different emotions, and what emotions are appropriate to feel in particular situations. Television also may teach children how to control or regulate their emotional responses to various events in real-life" (Weiss, 1996, p. 2). As a result, many of the messages and conflicts that are presented between family members, particularly siblings, are still inadvertently immersed.

Previous Television Portrayals of Sibling Conflicts

As previously mentioned, domestic sitcoms, a sub-category within situation comedies, focus their storylines almost exclusively on the family unit. Yet, serious family conflicts are rarely addressed (Taylor, 1989) and the use of the comedic genre gives any problems that are raised a sense of artificiality and relative extraneousness (O'Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2002). "Situation comedies, while they raise issues relating to the family, relieve our tension through the safety valve of humor" (O'Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2002, pp. 216-217). Thus, if family problems are addressed, it is typically done insincerely within the genre; any sort of interpersonal conflict quickly had a joke right behind it to alleviate any uneasiness that the dialogue may have created. Consequently, the audience watching the television family could conclude that the family characters within the show had no serious problems worth adequately discussing. When the focus of the show is on the family and yet most problems are resolved in less than thirty minutes, how profound can the concerns really be? Conflicts and resolutions occur naturally in family relationships, yet neither was ever displayed. Even as recently as eight years ago, Heintz-Knowles' (2000) research revealed that when youth problems were shown, only 50% of the time was a solution even addressed. When solutions were featured, they were usually reached by the youth alone or with the assistance of friends; rarely did other family members play a role (Heintz-Knowles, 2000).

Comstock and Strzyzewski (1990) examined family conflict resolution behavior and deduced that while family sitcoms contained a lot of verbal aggressive communication, the overall result between siblings had prosocial resolutions:

Conflict, an inevitable and necessary element in the development of family relationships, occurs

among family members as a result of incompatible goals or violations of relational expectations. Numerous research efforts reveal that conflict affects relational satisfaction and distinguishes distressed families from non-distressed families. It is not the potential for conflict or even the presence of conflict that characterizes family relationships as distressed. Rather, how family members interact during conflictual situations determines the quality of their relationship (Comstock & Strzyzewski, 1990, pp. 265-266).

As a result, Comstock and Strzyzewski (1990) examined siblings within television portrayals.

Through observing television sibling interactions, Comstock and Strzyzewski (1990) identified three types of outcomes that result from conflicts and identified constructive outcomes as the best. "Constructive outcomes, those which facilitate relational growth and development, require the use of integrative strategies. Integrative strategies produce constructive outcomes because they illustrate cooperation and a willingness to disclose" (Comstock & Strzyzewski, 1990, p. 266). These prosocial types of behaviors were identified as the best outcome. They avowed that the negative outcomes, or destructive ones, result from power struggles and hostilities within the relationship. Finally, the third type of conflict are those that are unresolved, which leave nagging issues and drain the relationship; most often, people use avoidance strategies with these problems, so they could also be viewed as detrimental.

While the overall family relationship is vital to interactions, one must consider the powerful influence of the sibling relationship. Larson's (1991) study of television sibling interactions highlighted the significance of an overall positive sibling relationship. The relationship with one's sibling "is unique in that it is likely to be the longest interpersonal relationship one has, predating one's relationship with a mate, and outlasting one's relationship with parents...Thus, what television teaches about how to be a sibling has the potential to have impact on one's interpersonal relationships both within and outside of the family," (Bryant, 2000, pp. 163-164). Larson (1991) compared the sibling interactions on successful television programs. She concluded that siblings ex-

hibited more positive than negative communication. Positive communication was any behavior that fostered or sustained a relationship, while negative behaviors maintained the conflict (Larson, 1991). Moreover, while some problems were addressed, Larson (1991) commented, “family sitcoms will see sibling behavior which is very positive, but which is relatively unimportant and of limited function” (p. 386).

During this same time period, researchers Skill and Wallace (1990) were also studying how decision-making and problem solving were portrayed within television family relationships, particularly among siblings. They defined power processes as “the interactional techniques which individuals employ in their attempts to gain control in the negotiation or decision-making process” (Skill & Wallace, 1990, p. 243). They concluded that siblings' interactions were almost always portrayed as controlling toward one another. Unsurprisingly, children were the least assertive. Overall, there were more positive than negative power assertive interactions. Yet Skill and Wallace's (1990) study tended to reinforce the status quo in television family portrayals. Children automatically conform to the family hierarchy of power without ever questioning or challenging it. While that might be an attractive notion for parents, where does it leave the children who naturally use questions to examine the world around them?

In addition, Comstock and Strzyzewski (1990) further concluded that most family conflicts on television occurred between siblings. When siblings fought, they also tended to avoid solving problems and allowed the issues to fester. Yet, “the overall effect of the emotional predicament on the characters' relationships was more often helpful or 'facilitative' rather than harmful or 'debilitative’” (Comstock & Strzyzewski, 1990, p. 274). Consequently, they ascertained that family conflicts are typically portrayed on situation comedies in a limited capacity. In addition, these conflicts were also portrayed more negatively than real-life, since avoiding the issues was the main result; when issues were addressed, the main response was sarcasm.

Finally, Bryant (2000) agreed that sibling relationships contribute to one's self identity, and the way in which they communicate with each other is of vital importance. After studying three series from the 1990s, *Married with Children*, *Roseanne*, and *The*

Simpsons, Bryant (2000) concluded that most of the behaviors did not exhibit identification or differentiation functions. As a result, television children rarely defined their own self-identity and were all portrayed similarly and stereotypically. Bryant (2000) remarked “siblings contribute to the creation of one's self-identity in important ways that are not reflected on television. Furthermore, insofar as one's identity is shaped by the regulatory responses of a sibling, a viewer of television siblings would have reason to be fearful of trying out new behaviors in the presence of a sibling, because it would be reasonable to anticipate a negative rather than a face-saving response” (p. 174). Most of the communication behaviors in all three shows were affiliative more than conflictive, with most of the affiliative behavior attributed to informing communication. As a result, while the overall language of these series may appear harsher, the intent behind them remains more positive than negative. Bryant (2000), too, noticed a complete absence of siblings joining together to deal with parental conflicts. “In real-world families, useful interpersonal skills are learned as siblings band together to negotiate with parents, or to teach younger siblings how to avoid wrath or to gain favor from parents. They also come to understand the power of such things as blackmail and extortion as they threaten to divulge damaging information as leverage to gain favors from a sibling” (Bryant, 2000, p. 174). Overall, there were few examples of siblings offering support and loyalty to one another. Once again, television depictions present limited views of sibling interactions. Bryant's (2000) study, however, focused on only three television programs and is now 10 years old. His conclusions may no longer hold true for sibling portrayals in current family sitcoms.

Research Questions

Since past studies in this area are dated and the sampled television shows are decades old, there is a need for updated research on this subject. Today, there are new family sitcoms on television portraying a variety of humorous sibling problems and resolutions. In real-life, family dysfunction typically occurs and solutions are achieved through communicative strategies. Yet, overall there are very few representations of this on television today. The resurgence of family sitcoms in the past few years suggests that the conflicts and outcomes between siblings should once

again be examined. The present study addressed the following research questions:

RQ 1: Do ABC, CBS, and Disney Channel portray more positive or negative sibling interactions? Is there a relationship between the network and the valence of sibling interactions?

RQ 2: What types of sibling interactions are portrayed on ABC, CBS, and Disney Channel? Is there a relationship between the network and the type of sibling interactions presented?

RQ 3: What initiates sibling conflicts on ABC, CBS, and Disney Channel? Is there a relationship between the network and the source of sibling conflicts portrayed?

RQ 4: What solutions are portrayed on ABC, CBS, and Disney Channel? Is there a relationship between the network and the outcome of the sibling conflicts?

Method

Sample

Television sitcoms currently on television during the 2009-2010 television season were selected for this analysis. McQueen (2009) defined sitcoms as “narrative series comedy, generally between 24 and 30 minutes long, with regular characters and settings” (p. 53). He further clarified that the situation comedy involves a dilemma, an obstacle, and a resolution all within each episode. All family sitcoms currently in production and producing new episodes were included. Animated family sitcoms were not included in the study. Because NBC was not airing any domestic sitcoms and FOX was not airing any domestic sitcoms that were not animated, those networks were excluded from this study. In addition, all shows contained two or more siblings, ranging in age from young children to adult. The family sitcoms included in this study were *Gary Unmarried*, *Hannah Montana*, *The Middle*, *Modern Family*, *New Adventures of Old Christine*, *Suite Life on Deck*, *Two and a Half Men*, and *Wizards of Waverly Place*. The first four new episodes of each series were sampled between February 2010 and April 2010.

Coding

The unit of analysis for this research was the interactions between two or more siblings. An interaction referred to any verbal communication between two siblings. These interactions were divided into positive or negative interactions. All interactions

were further categorized by their type of interaction. Larson (1991) stated, "Positive behaviors were defined as those which initiated, built, or maintained a sibling relationship. These behaviors included, for example, giving information or support, accepting direction, and 'non-hostile teasing and joking'. Negative behaviors were defined as those that initiated, or maintained conflict. These behaviors included such things as opposing, attacking, criticizing, belittling, challenging, provoking, teasing maliciously and arguing" (p. 384).

Next, any negative interactions were further divided based on their initial source of conflict. Relationship conflicts were divided into ones within the family or relationships outside the family with other people, such as friends, mates, and colleagues. The negative interactions were also coded for conflicts about behavior and choices, work or schoolwork, and physical possessions, such as money, toys, clothing, and personal property.

Finally, conflicts were coded based on their conflict resolution outcomes. Constructive outcomes led to integrative strategies that include "emphasizing commonalities, accepting responsibility, initiating problem solving, showing empathy or support, and soliciting and disclosing information relevant to the conflict" (Comstock & Strzyzewski, 1990, p. 266). These behaviors ultimately facilitated communication within the sibling relationship and led to positive progress within the relationship (Comstock & Strzyzewski, 1990). Destructive outcomes involved the use of distributive strategies including "hostile questioning, hostile joking, avoiding responsibility for the conflict, making prescriptions for the other's behavior, and personal rejection" (Comstock & Strzyzewski, 1990). The final category of outcomes was unresolved, in which the siblings simply avoided or ignored any conflicts that arose.

Procedures

The primary researcher and an assistant viewed each of the sampled episodes. Each episode was viewed twice by each coder separately and coded using the coding sheet provided in Appendix A. If there was any discrepancy, discussion between the two researchers commenced and the primary researcher made any final decisions. Final agreement indicated that the research contained understandable, clearly designed categories and operation-

al definitions based on previous research (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991; Neuendorf, 2002).

Data Analysis Techniques

Each episode was independently coded according to the variables above. Descriptive statistics were calculated for the number of interactions, types of interactions, source of conflicts, and resolutions. Additionally, the interactions, types, sources, and resolutions were also correlated with network using chi squares to determine if there was a relationship among them.

Results

Valence of Sibling Interactions

Across the sample of 32 episodes, 241 sibling interactions were recorded. Each interaction was coded as either positive or negative and resulted overall in 161 (66.8%) positive and 80 (33.2%) negative.

Network	Positive	Negative	Total
ABC	27 (49.1%)	28 (50.9%)	55
CBS	65 (72.2%)	25 (27.8%)	90
Disney Channel	69 (71.9%)	27 (28.1%)	96

Table 1: Valence of Sibling Interactions Across Networks

The first research question asked if ABC, CBS, and Disney Channel portray more positive or negative sibling interactions. Table #1 above shows the results from comparing each network to both positive and negative interactions. These results were statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 10.086$, $df = 2$, $p < .006$); thus, there was a significant relationship between network and valence of interactions.

Type of Sibling Interactions

All interactions were also coded for the type of sibling interaction. Overall, giving information was the most frequent with 91 (37.8%) interactions. The negative interactions were typically criticizing and belittling, 23 (9.5%) or opposing and attacking, 21 (8.7%). The least frequent turned out to be arguing with 1 (.4%).

Network	Giving Info	Giving Support	Non-hostile teasing/ Joking	Opposing/ Attacking	Criticizing/ Belittling	Challenging/ Provoking	Teasing Maliciously	Total
ABC	18 (32.7%)	8 (14.5%)	1 (1.8%)	5 (9.1%)	6 (10.9%)	9 (16.4%)	8 (14.5%)	55
CBS	38 (42.2%)	14 (15.6%)	14 (15.6%)	9 (10.0%)	8 (8.9%)	4 (4.4%)	3 (3.3%)	90
Disney Channel	35 (36.5%)	20 (20.8%)	15 (15.6%)	7 (7.3%)	9 (9.4%)	5 (5.2%)	5 (5.2%)	96

Table 2: Type of Sibling Interactions Across Networks

Research question #2 asked what types of sibling interactions are portrayed on ABC, CBS, and Disney Channel. Table #2 shows the results from comparing each network to the type of sibling interaction depicted. Each percentage represents the frequency with which that type of interaction occurred within all the sibling interactions on that particular network. These results were statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 25.692$, $df = 14$, $p < .028$); thus, there was a significant relationship between network and the types of sibling interactions represented.

Source of Sibling Conflicts

The source of the negative interactions was further measured. Behavior and choices, 28 (35.0%), proved to be the most frequent source. Relationships outside the family, 17 (21.3%) were a greater source of conflict than relationships within the family, 10 (12.5%). Finally, physical possessions, 5 (6.3%) proved to be the least frequent source of conflict.

Net- wor k	Rela- tionsh ip with Fami- ly	Rela- tionsh ip Out- side Family	Physi- cal Pos- sessio ns	Behav- ior / Choices	School work	Other	To- tal
ABC	4 (7.3%)	3 (5.5%)	0 (0%)	14 (25.5%)	1 (1.8%)	6 (10.9%)	28
CBS	3 (3.3%)	6 (6.7%)	3 (3.3%)	6 (6.7%)	2 (2.2%)	5 (5.6%)	25
Dis- ney Cha nnel	3 (3.1%)	8 (8.3%)	2 (2.1%)	8 (8.3%)	3 (3.1%)	3 (3.1%)	27

Table 3: Source of Sibling Conflicts Across Networks

The third research question asked what instigates sibling conflicts on ABC, CBS, and Disney Channel. Table #3 above shows the results from comparing each network to the type of sibling interaction portrayed. The frequency of each source of conflict within all the negative interactions on each network is represented by each percentage. However, these results were not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 11.576$, $df = 10$, $p > .05$).

Resolution Outcomes

The negative interactions were further divided based on their resolution outcomes. Overall, there were 9 (11.3%) constructive, 13 (16.3%) destructive, and 58 (72.5%) unresolved outcomes.

Network	Positive	Negative	Unresolved	Total
ABC	3 (5.5%)	0 (0%)	25 (45.5%)	28
CBS	4 (4.4%)	8 (8.9%)	13 (14.4%)	25
Disney Channel	2 (2.1%)	5 (5.2%)	20 (20.8%)	27

Table 4: Resolution Outcomes Across Networks

Discussion

Numerous significant findings and implications have emerged as a result of this study. First, television siblings had twice as many positive as negative interactions. This supports the early research that most sibling interactions are prosocial (Bryant, 2000; Comstock & Strzyzewski, 1990; Larson, 1991; Skill & Wallace, 1990). However, the notion that real-life siblings have no conflicts is highly unrealistic. Real-life siblings typically face conflicts between each other, while television siblings rarely do. Conflicts themselves are not inherently damaging to a family relationship. As past research has shown in real-life siblings, conflict does transpire (Shalash, Wood, & Parker, 2013). In fact, previous studies have found that sibling conflict is often the first familial conflict one experiences (Dunn & Munn, 1987; Perlman & Ross, 1997).

If conflicts have constructive outcomes, they can actually facilitate relationship growth between siblings (Brody, 1998; Dunn & Munn, 1985; Dunn & Slomkowski, 1992; Howe, Rinaldi, Jen-

nings, & Petrakos, 2002; Perlman, Garfinkel, & Turrell, 2007). Siblings can use conflict management skills that they cultivate during these conflicts to navigate interpersonal relationships throughout their lifetimes (Shalash, Wood, & Parker, 2013). Through conflict, siblings also learn to balance their own personal goals with the wants and needs of others (Crockenberg, Jackson, & Langrock, 1996). Yet, family sitcoms perpetuate the idea that consistently positive sibling interactions are the mainstream and the best form of family communication.

In addition, CBS and Disney Channel appear to emulate the overall positive results. Both networks have twice as many positive as negative sibling interactions. However, ABC yielded nearly an equal number of positive and negative interactions. This may imply that ABC presents more balanced sibling interactions, and displays some of the benefits of sibling conflicts. In contrast, CBS and Disney Channel are presenting more mainstreamed sibling interactions in which the potential to portray the advantages of sibling conflict is ignored. Moreover, while CBS had the greatest percentage of positive interactions, Disney Channel had the greatest number of positive sibling interactions. Therefore, siblings on Disney Channel depict more positive interactions overall and greater prosocial sibling relationships. In contrast, Buhrmester and Furman (1990) found that among real-life 3rd, 6th, 9th, and 12th graders, 6th graders had the greatest amount of conflict with siblings. They surmised that these findings were because of an increased desire for autonomy. While Disney Channel portrays its child characters with quite a lot of independence, there is very little interpersonal conflict that has led to this self-sufficiency.

The results further substantiated that the majority of sibling interactions produced an exchange of information. Giving information remains the primary type of interaction between television siblings. These results support the findings of Bryant (2000) who stated that giving information was the main function of sibling interactions on television. This new research shows that very little has changed in the types of sibling interactions a decade later. When siblings communicate with one another, they are commonly conferring information.

In addition, there was a direct relationship between network and the type of sibling interaction. Overall, all the networks in this study portrayed siblings as giving information most frequently. Yet, Disney Channel also depicted a greater number of sibling interactions that gave support and teased jokingly. These prosocial types of interactions outnumbered all the other interactions 2 to 1. These results did differ from Bryant's (2000) study, which revealed that television siblings rarely gave support to one another. However, while giving support resulted in 20% of the sibling interactions on Disney Channel, that is hardly innovative.

Furthermore, behavior and choices were the most frequent source of conflict among television siblings, while physical possessions were the least frequent source. These findings counter real-life conclusions that siblings most often fight over personal property or personal space (Dunn & Munn, 1987; McGuire et al., 2000; Raffaelli, 1997; Ross et al., 2006; Wilson et al., 2004). Real-life siblings also have conflicts surrounding fairness of time with personal possessions and time spent with other family members (McGuire et al., 2000). However, television siblings appear more concerned with helping one another make better choices, rather than arguing over toys or money. This prosocial approach to even the sources of conflict resonate with the positive nature of family sitcoms. However, it once again dismisses the opportunity to portray siblings engaging in constructive conflict. Sibling conflicts over possessions occur with younger siblings (Dunn & Munn, 1987), in which they learn problem-solving skills. As children grow older, conflicts focus on their interest in society and those outside the family unit (Shantz, 1987). Yet, even those findings counter the conclusions found in this study in regards to the representation of television siblings. Siblings on domestic sitcoms rarely argued about people outside their family, instead choosing to focus on their siblings behavior and choices.

Moreover, as a source of sibling conflicts, relationships within the family were compared to relationships outside the family with friends, mates, and colleagues. The overall results indicated that relationships outside the family caused more conflict among siblings. Once again, this contributed to a more harmonious environment within the family dynamic. Since television siblings appear to perpetuate a more prosocial environment, it is unsurprising that more relationship conflicts occurred outside of the

family as well. Siblings would rather criticize their sibling's friends or mates, rather than condemn their own family members. Overall, it perpetuates the image of a more congruent family dynamic when the siblings are not criticizing other family members.

While CBS and Disney Channel matched the overall results of the sources of sibling conflicts, ABC had some noticeable differences. Relationships inside the family slightly outnumbered relationships outside the family as a source of sibling conflicts. ABC, therefore, portrays that sibling conflicts can occur because of other family members more often than CBS and Disney Channel. In addition, Disney Channel also had the greatest number of relationships outside the family causing sibling conflicts. These results implied that Disney Channel is attributing sibling problems to sources outside the family in an attempt to sustain the core family relationships.

When analyzing the outcomes of the negative interactions, the overwhelming result was that the conflict remained unresolved. These findings do complement previous research on real-life siblings that found that siblings leave their conflicts unresolved (Howe, Rinaldi, Jennings, & Petrakos, 2002; Siddiqui & Ross, 1999). Yet, unresolved conflicts could be even more detrimental to a sibling relationship than destructive outcomes. With destructive outcomes, at least the issue is being directly confronted. Even if the end result is hostility and rejection, the problem has still ultimately concluded. However, when conflicts are left unresolved, these issues can fester within real-life family relationships. Since sitcoms are typically contained within one thirty-minute episode, there may be no mention of the conflict again in the next scene or in the next episode. Domestic sitcoms are rarely serialized and most episodes provide individual plots from one another. As a result, a conflict within one episode is rarely continued into the next. The television siblings have simply moved on to the next plot device; real-life families are not afforded that same luxury. Real-life siblings have no time limits with which to solve their conflicts. If their problems remain unresolved, they can have enduring consequences over the course of their relationship.

The outcome results of this study further support Heintz-Knowles' (2000) results. She found that half of sibling conflicts

go unresolved. This study revealed that 72.5% of sibling conflicts were left unresolved. As a result, it appears as though the number of avoided conflicts between television siblings is increasing. However, television siblings still remain happy by the next scene or next episode, implying that there are no residual family issues. While conflicts can occur as part of the narrative of a plot, there is very little interpersonal communication portrayed that can demonstrate constructive avenues for dealing with conflict.

In addition, ABC had the greatest number and largest percentage of unresolved conflicts. Yet, the network also had no destructive outcomes. As a result, while the majority of ABC siblings were still avoiding their conflicts, at least when they did confront them, there was positive progress detected in their sibling relationship. CBS and Disney Channel both resulted in a larger number of destructive than constructive outcomes. Consequently, those networks portrayed a greater number of siblings avoiding responsibility or rejecting the other sibling. While Disney Channel may have had a more prosocial approach to sibling interactions, there was greater avoidance when it came to the outcome of conflicts. Overall, CBS and Disney Channel siblings appeared less willing to constructively communicate with one another. By allowing these conflicts to fester, television siblings are actually hurting their relationship. Yet, the relationships between television siblings are magically happy, while real-life siblings may not be afforded similar conclusions.

While this study presented new information about television siblings, there were some weaknesses within the study. The lack of current family sitcoms airing new episodes limited the sampling of the research. During the timeframe of this study, only eight family sitcoms were currently airing new episodes and ABC and CBS were the only major networks airing domestic sitcoms. If the research could have included a greater number of television siblings, the results may have differed. Moreover, given a larger timeframe, the results may fluctuate if the sample is over a complete season or even multiple seasons of the television shows. Finally, there is no way to tell, with the research, whether or not the viewer truly perceives the interactions as fervently positive. Without analyzing the perceptions of real-life siblings after viewing these domestic sitcoms, one cannot determine if television

sibling interactions are actually having an effect on real-life siblings.

This study only initiates a wide variety of research that could be studied about sibling interactions on family sitcoms. Future research might analyze how parental influence affects sibling conflicts. Past research on real-life parental involvement in sibling conflicts has found mixed results. While some researchers argue that parental intervention in sibling conflicts can cultivate stronger sibling relationships (Dunn and Munn, 1986; Ross, Filyer, Lollis, Perlman, & Martin, 1994; Valsiner & Cairns, 1992), some researchers warned that it is best for parents to avoid interfering in the development of crucial problem-solving, developmental, and relational skills (Kramer & Baron, 1995; McHale et al., 2000; Perlman et al., 2007). However, research on how television parents intervene in sibling conflicts has not been addressed. One might hypothesize that parental interactions toward their children will sustain the positive nature of television sitcoms. In addition, including FOX's animated comedies could reveal different results. These family sitcoms could further change the results that this study found. How does the humorous nature of these parodies and satires affect the representation of sibling conflicts? Finally, future research might also seek to investigate the relationship between a sibling and his or her friends in television representations; is there a difference between how siblings interact with one another versus how they interact with their friends? An in-depth analysis of sibling interactions as opposed to friend interactions is warranted in future studies.

The implications of this study are vital to both the fields of media studies and family communication. The behavior of the television siblings serves as a model to real-life children. If this pattern of comparable positive behavior is replicated over decades, real-life children may interpret the interactions of siblings as factual. In actuality, the depictions of sibling interactions are very limited, overall prosocial, and readily avoid the benefits that sibling conflict can provide. It ultimately cautions that the lack of representation of diverse sibling interactions and conflicts can hinder interpersonal relationships. Consequently, this study provides a unique aspect of analyzing family relationships through the portrayals found on television and questions to what extent

these sibling portrayals will impact the viewers who regularly watch these networks.

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Appendix

Coding Sheet:

Program Name

Network

Episode

Inter. # Inter. # Inter. # Inter. # Inter.#

Positive / Negative

Type of Interaction

Source of Conflict

Outcome: Constructive, Destructive or Unresolved

Exploring the Pattern of Coursera Network on Twitter: How Far Are MOOCs Reaching Out?

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Simultaneous to Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) crossing cultural and geographical boundaries, their dissemination across social networks is intensifying. This research thus first maps the path of the spread of MOOCs using Coursera's Twitter account and explores the characteristics of this particular social network. Further, by conducting a social network analysis of the hashtag discussions about MOOCs, this research explores just how far-reaching MOOCs actually are. The research finds the Twitter network of Coursera to be loosely connected with a low closeness centrality and a high betweenness centrality. Because the pattern of this network shows that subjects (nodes) in the network are not clustered around the Coursera account, no obvious threshold was identified that plays a key role in its cascading of information. At the same time, the thematic discussion on MOOCs demonstrates a pattern in which relatively few influential players dominate the discussion, and the network is centralized around these dominant players without much interactivity between ordinary users with less influence.

Clicking on the Facebook page of Coursera, one of the most influential and fastest-growing platforms offering Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), the total number of “likes” as of the end of 2013 is just over 412,000. Under the “page insights” menu, the most popular age group is shown as 18-34 years old. On another social network site, Twitter, the official Coursera account has over 137,000 followers as of the end of 2013, and this number has been steadily increasing at roughly 3,600 per month throughout 2014. Topping both sites, Coursera has the most followers on Google+: 922,828 as of December 28, 2013. The spread of information about MOOCs has therefore pushed them into the general public's line of sight.

Higher education is closely watching the popularity of MOOCs, for coping with the alternative education platform is both a challenge and an opportunity for universities and educators. This research sets out to map the spread of MOOCs through online social networks by conducting a social network analysis, attempting to illustrate MOOCs' Twitter

networks, and explaining key characteristics of such networks and their implications for MOOCs' further dissemination.

Users within the same social network influence each other's behavior and decisions (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954). As people observe their network neighbors, they choose to copy or ignore their neighbors' decision in a sequential manner (Easley & Kleinberg, 2010). Watching the spread of MOOCs through social networks will show how online courses penetrate the boundaries between academia and ordinary people. First, using Coursera's Twitter account, the researcher expects to find an information cascade that occurs when people make decisions sequentially in this process. Second, an analysis of hashtag discussions regarding MOOCs will reveal how far-reaching they actually are.

Literature Review

As of 2013, Coursera, which launched in 2012 and is now one of the largest providers of MOOCs, claimed more than 4 million registered students (Booker, 2013, September 23). As MOOCs embarked on their aggressive journey to recruit students of all ages around the world, their spread onto social networks offered a virtual picture of the evolving transformation of higher education. Modeling diffusion through a network can be challenging. The existing literature on the diffusion of innovation, the small-world phenomenon, and the study of thresholds and cascade capacity illuminate this research and work as the overarching theoretical framework. Furthermore, social network analysis offers tools for describing and modeling the relational contexts in which behavior takes place (Butts, 2008).

In this research, MOOCs will be discussed in the context of Twitter to tease out the path of their diffusion. The definition of "diffusion" by Rogers (2005) is a "process by which (1) an innovation (2) is communicated through certain channels (3) over time (4) among the members of a social system" (p. 11). Over the years, there has been a great amount of research conducted based on the model Rogers developed in *Diffusion of Innovations*. The enormous range of topics of innovation diffusion includes agriculture, medicine, computers, marketing, public health, and communication. Social networks are not a new concept, nor are they exclusive to the Internet. Mapping the diffusion process is to understand the spread of words and ideas among people who are either strongly or weakly tied to each other in a social network made of links and nodes. It is also important to note that there is a crucial differ-

ence between learning about a new idea and actually deciding to adopt it. The cascading process is influenced by both information effects and network effects (Easley & Kleinberg, 2010).

Twitter

Twitter Inc.'s own definition says, "Twitter is a global platform for public self-expression and conversation in real time" (Twitter Inc., 2013). With a limit of 140 characters, Twitter has been offering a social network platform on which information propagates in a tremendous volume among individuals. After the exponential growth of Twitter users and tweets since 2006, Twitter now claims 218.3 million monthly active users who log in at least once every month (Grandoni, 2013, December 20). At times, there can be more than 400 million tweets on average generated everyday (Farber, 2012, June 6). Huberman (2009) found that Twitter users with more followers and friends will post more often, but the number of posts eventually saturates as the number of followers levels off at a certain point, which is around 500 followers in Huberman's research.

However, Twitter has a long tail in the number of followers to user accounts. As of the end of 2013, an active Twitter account had an average of 61 followers and followed an average of 117 users, and if all Twitter accounts are included, the average Twitter account has only a single follower (Bruner, 2013, December 18). The long tail of Twitter once again reinforced the idea that attention is a scarce resource. MOOCs have the natural advantage in striving for attention because they are also accessible through social networks that occupy the screens of individual Internet users. Registration is easy, and they are open to the public and free to access. Although this also means a high dropout rate, the number of those who finish a course is still stunning because of the very large base of enrollment.

Besides the strong presence of MOOCs accounts on Twitter, such as Coursera, EdX, and Udacity, the popularity of MOOCs is also evinced by thousands of hashtag discussions using #MOOCs. The hashtag (#) sign is used in conjunction with thematic abbreviations (e.g., #MOOCs) to create threaded thematic lists (Farhi, 2009). A thematic list is also a community for Twitter users who touch on the topic of MOOCs to continue their conversation.

This research conjectures that the spread of MOOCs onto social networks contributed to their popularity across cultural and geographical

boundaries. After all, people now spend more time communicating with the help of technology platforms (Katona, Zubcsek, & Sarvary, 2011). Identifying influences of online social networks thus becomes more important. As data journalist Jon Bruner's analysis shows, Twitter "has an outsize influence on popular and not-so-popular culture, but that influence seems due to the fact that it's popular among influential people and provides energetic reverberation for their thoughts—and lots and lots of people who sit back and listen" (2013, December 18). Therefore, Twitter's power rests with the influential people who use it a lot, not on the masses who often times remain as lurkers and have few followers. Taking a closer look at the structure of social networks and the connections between individuals will underscore the study of the spread of information via Twitter.

Coursera

The launching of Coursera in the summer of 2012 marked a milestone for the rise of MOOCs. Coursera is among several big names that offer MOOCs, including Udacity and EdX. The slight difference between the three is that Udacity produces its own courses on technology and math, while Coursera and EdX work primarily with universities and cover a broader range of subjects (Booker, 2013, September 13).

With an explosive growth in enrollment, Coursera reinforced the idea that education can be available anywhere at any time. It opened the public's mind to a real alternative to traditional brick-and-mortar education and demonstrated that online classes could show quality similar to, if not better than, traditional classes. Online classes were no longer dull or serving only as a supplement to traditional education. MOOCs now provide infinite opportunities for self-learning in an online setting.

The explosion of online higher education poses new opportunities and challenges for educators. *Time* magazine conducted a series of reports in 2012 and explored ways these new breeds of online courses can "reinvent college." After the launch of Coursera in 2012, 10 editors and reporters from *Time* magazine signed up for Coursera courses, and at least one of them had been blogging about the gamification class he took with 76,000 other people (McCracken, 2012, September 24). Since then, there are several characteristics of MOOCs, positive and negative, that have been identified.

Positive experiences with Coursera include, first, that it turned learning into a lifetime endeavor as long as one is willing to learn. Second, it is a

global learning process with tens of thousands of people from more than 100 countries taking the course together, even if not all are willing to participate in the online learning community. Third, no question has been raised regarding the education quality. Courses are taught by qualified professors from elite schools, and they typically receive great comments from students, who express how much they appreciate the free learning opportunity.

However, there are certainly flaws with online classrooms. First of all, the dropout rate is high because it requires little effort and no cost to enroll, and commitment level is low among students. For example, only one out of ten students registered for a Udacity class typically makes it all the way to a course's last video. Second, cheating is certainly a concern because students share solutions to problems and often times plagiarize from the Internet. Third, it does not allow any flexibility for students with special needs or circumstances (McCraken, 2012, October 22).

The public is also concerned about whether online classrooms will pose a threat to current higher education, which might see a loss of students as free online education broadens its subjects from traditional computer science and calculus to human sciences such as sociology. But, there is no clue that suggests that free online classes will cut the cost of higher education in part because the campus experience is one of the most valuable components of higher education. Even Udacity co-founder David Stavens said in an interview with *Time* that the top 50 schools are probably safe because of the wonderful campus experience that cannot be replicated anywhere else (Ripley, 2012, October 29).

Second, although the platform creates great opportunities for free higher education, it does not seem to solve the cost crisis of traditional higher education. Analysts have pointed out that Coursera is built on and subsidized by incredibly high-priced elite academic programs (Young, 2012). As a result, the current model of Coursera is only possible because of the profitability of the academic institutions that run it. The two are therefore closely interrelated; one will not eliminate the other.

Third, online class providers' vision of the future of higher education is still based on a real campus. In order to generate interest, Coursera projected some monetization models. One of the contract items that Coursera had with one of its university sponsors listed selling courses to community colleges as one of their potential business models. Ac-

According to Young (2012), the contract mentioned the idea that Coursera held the right to offering the course content to community colleges for students to take for credits in those schools.

Social Groups and Information Cascade

In a social network made of groups, a group is formed based on spatial proximity (Zaniecki, 1954). As a result, every group has possessive claims to certain portions of space. Online groups are different from traditional groups because they are not as tightly clustered or well-structured as traditional clans or aristocratic families. Online groups are open, voluntary, and more or less random. However, this does not mean that online groups are free from racial and cultural group relations. According to Gordon (1954), the social structure in modern societies must go far beyond age and sex categories, and the life cycle of social units unfold within an “invisible but operationally functioning border” (p. 142). Structural goals are usually placed in the framework of the basic alternatives of assimilation and cultural pluralism (Gordon, 1954). These concepts that apply to subculture and social structure also apply to the formation of online social groups.

According to Easley and Kleinberg (2010), different reasons why individuals might imitate behaviors of others include informational effects and network effects. Information effects occur when people make decisions by watching what other people have adopted previously. This is also called information cascade. Network effects occur when the benefits one gets from a social networking site are directly related to the total number of people who use the website. Both information effects and network effects help to predict individuals’ conforming behavior even if these individuals have alternative opinions. This paper explores the information cascades of MOOCs before delving further into a content analysis on the direct benefits of MOOCs.

Homophily and Heterophily

Social network analysis takes homophily as the basic notion that governs the structure of social networks (Easley & Kleinberg, 2010). The principle of homophily was developed from the common adage that “birds of a feather flock together.” Working together with the triadic closure principle, homophily puts similar individuals into clusters that are weakly connected to each other.

Scholars have been seeking methods to test homophily in social networks to see if ideas flow better between people who are similar to each

other, which would explain the herding phenomenon. A simple test of homophily can be conducted by comparing the frequency of mixed connections in a social network with a baseline of random mixing using standard measures of statistical significance (Easley & Kleinberg, 2010). Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954) established a distinction between “status homophily” and “value homophily,” with the former being similarity in positions within a group and the latter referring to the values of friends. Based on the principles of homophily, equilibrium in the whole group will be constantly maintained even if some individual respondents change their positions.

Despite the importance of homophily in connecting people in a group, Rogers (2003) believed that the nature of diffusion demands a certain degree of heterophily as diffusion will not occur between individuals who have identical information (p. 19). In addition, according to the Schelling Model (Young, 1998), global patterns of spatial segregation can arise from the effect of homophily operating at a local level. These factors work together in the formation of clusters among the population, including online communities.

Threshold

A threshold is a value that each node in a network holds as the bar for comparison in order to make decisions. The threshold means that if an agent discovers that fewer than t of its neighbors are of the same type as itself, then it becomes an “unsatisfied agent” and has an interest in moving to a new cell. For example, assume there is a threshold t common to all agents. If an agent discovers that fewer than t of its neighbors are of the same type as itself, then it has an interest in moving to a new cell because s/he will be dissatisfied with the arrangement (Easley & Kleinburg, 2010).

The threshold rule in behavior adoption states that an individual could follow a certain behavior only if the threshold is met. This model explains mobility in the social world and its effort to maintain an equilibrium in which most individuals are satisfied. The threshold is calculated by comparing the fraction of neighbors following certain behaviors with the potential payoff. If it is a tightly-knit community formed by homophily, the threshold can work as a barrier to diffusion by making it hard for innovations to arrive from outside (Easley & Kleinburg, 2010). The spread of MOOCs on social networks will also explain the characteristics of the clusters that surround the account and indicate the potential for the discussion of MOOCs to go into further discussion online.

Heterogeneous Thresholds

The proposition of decision-making states that people in a network live in clusters, or densely connected communities, where thresholds serve as entry points. Each individual is a node, while clusters of nodes are connected in the social network with some people having more connections and influences than others. But, the thresholds become heterogeneous when “each node has a different requirement for the fraction of friends it needs to have in the cluster” (Easley & Kleinburg, 2010, p. 581). As a result, the spread of innovation in some clusters, for example, a blocking cluster, may be more difficult than in other clusters.

The Small-world Effect

Stanley Milgram first brought up the idea of six degrees of separation. In his famous experiment in 1967, arbitrarily selected individuals in Nebraska and Boston were asked to generate acquaintance chains to a target person in Massachusetts, and the mean number of intermediaries turned out to be 5.2 (1969). This means that it takes on average 5.2 people to reach a target person. This is one of the earliest examples of empirical evidence of the short story “Láncszemek” (“Chains”), written in 1929 by Frigyes Karinthy.

Using the entire social network of Facebook’s active users, researchers were able to build on the small-world effect and explore the degrees of separation in online social networks. Beckstrom, et al. (2012) calculated the number of intermediaries as 3.74 on Facebook, which supports the argument of a smaller world compared with just half a century ago. They also found that geographically restricted networks have a smaller average distance, and the Facebook social graph looks like a small-world graph, in which short paths exist between many pairs of nodes.

Research Questions

Using social network analysis, tracking digital footprints is getting easier because massive amounts of data are generated every second. However, in the meantime, such enormous volumes of data challenge the design of research in finding the clear path of propagation. This research explores the spread of MOOCs on social networks by looking at the network characteristics in the beginning stage of MOOCs.

RQ1. What is the pattern of the spread of MOOCs, in the example of Coursera, through Twitter?

RQ2. What is the pattern of the information cascade of topics related to MOOCs on Twitter?

Methods

Online Data Collection and Samples

As we enter the age of big data, online social networks not only provide a bridge for open communication, but they also diligently record data that track every communication behavior. Therefore, online data can be more easily accessed and collected with proper scraping tools compared with offline data.

The researcher followed the official Twitter account of Coursera to collect MOOCs data via social networks. Data collected by using NodeXL from social networks offers a precise view of information flow between the subjects involved, but NodeXL has a limit on how many subjects in the network can be selected at one time. The researcher selected a sample of 100 to show an overview of the Coursera network structure. The sampling of data was conducted on December 29th, 2013. The researcher then analyzed data scraped from Twitter using Gephi to find out about strong and weak ties, direction of connection, and the threshold for adoption in the network.

To find out the pattern of the information cascade of topics related to MOOCs on Twitter, the researcher collected data based on hashtag discussions. A sample of 1,386 tweets that included “#MOOCs” was collected in June of 2014, during the time period between June 6th and June 8th, when EdX held its global forum on the future of education in the Netherlands that involved numerous discussions about MOOCs on Twitter. The key parameters, such as average degree, network diameter, and average clustering coefficient, of the network formed by “#MOOCs” were calculated using Gephi statistics.

Measurements

Node and Edge

A node is a single individual in a network, while an edge is a connection between two nodes in either direction. According to the triadic closure principal, the connection between node A and node B is considered strong only when they are both connected to a common neighbor node C. The basic principle states that “if two people in a social network have a friend in common, then there is an increased likelihood that they will become friends themselves at some point in the future” (Easley & Kleinburg, 2010). If edges exist between A-B and B-C, but do not exist between A-C, then the connection between A-B is not considered strong.

Degree

The degree of a node measures the number of edges that are directly connected to the node. In a directed graph, indegree measures the number of head endpoints adjacent to the node, and outdegree measures the number of tail endpoints that point away from the node. The node with the highest indegree is the most popular node in a Twitter network, and the number of outdegrees in a Twitter network graph shows how many other nodes one is following in this network.

Centrality

Centrality is a measurement of the small-world effect. Closeness centrality and betweenness centrality are two centrality indicators that describe the characteristics of the network surrounding the center subject. Closeness centrality measures the average distance from a given node to all other nodes in the network, and betweenness centrality measures how often a node appears on shortest paths between nodes in the network. If most people in the network are directly connected to each other, betweenness centrality measurement will be low and closeness centrality will be high.

Average Clustering Coefficient

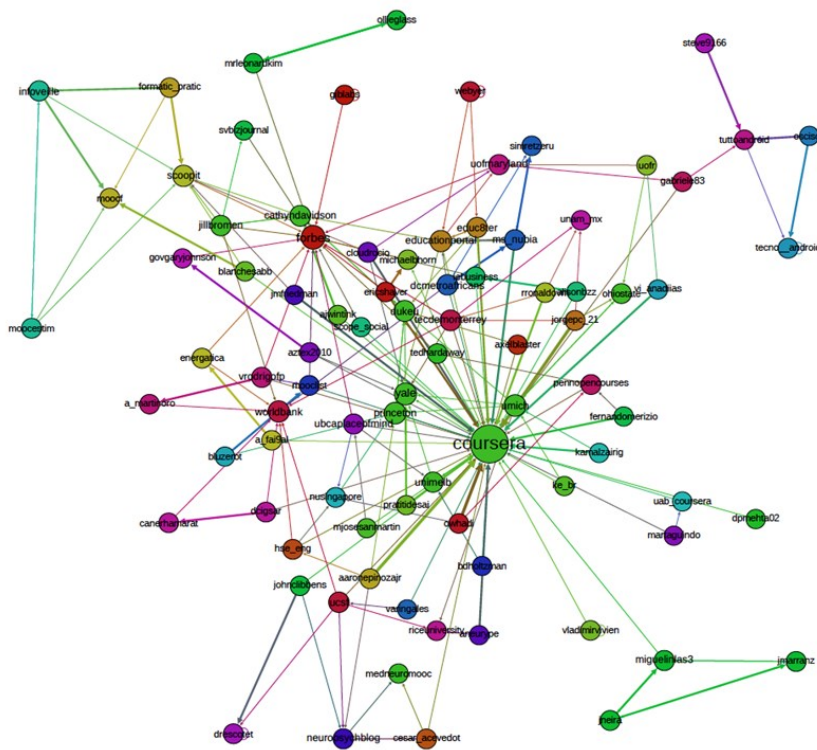
The clustering coefficient is another indicator of the small-world effect. The clustering coefficient of a node A is defined as the probability that two randomly selected friends of A are friends with each other. This measurement ranges from 0 to 1 and indicates the degree to which nodes in a graph tend to cluster together. The smaller the number, the fewer strong connections there are in the network. In contrast, the bigger the number, the more strong connections there are in the network. As Easley and Kleinburg (2010) explained, “the more strongly triadic closure is operating in the neighborhood of the node, the higher the clustering coefficient will tend to be” (p. 48).

Results

The Paths of Coursera on Twitter

As shown in Graph 1, the closeness centrality of Coursera’s Twitter account is calculated as 2.43, and the betweenness centrality is calculated as 816.7. This suggests that, on average, each subject in this social network is only 2.43 nodes away from any other node. Given the value of betweenness centrality, there are no obvious thresholds in this social network that play a key role in obstructing or facilitating the flow as in a clustered network.

It is noticeable that the average clustering coefficient value is calculated as 0.165, which supports the claim that the network surrounding the Coursera account is not clustered into small communities. The average clustering coefficient means that the nodes in Coursera's network are only moderately connected to each other. The clustering coefficient of a node has a range of $[0,1]$ and is defined as the probability that two randomly selected friends of this node are friends with each other. Lacking of clustering is also evinced by a modularity of 0.529, which measures how well a network decomposes into modular communities.



Graph 1.

Coursera's Twitter account. Graph constructed using the Hu Yifan Layout in Gephi. Indegree=60, outdegree=5, strongly connected=6, closeness centrality=2.42, betweenness centrality=816.7. Red=replies to, green=followed, purple=mentions, blue=tweet.

Hashtag Analysis on “MOOCs”

Graph 2 is based on a sample of 1,386 users who tweeted “#MOOCs.” After filtering out nodes with a modularity class of 1% or less, this graph shows a clear pattern of how MOOCs are tweeted about on Twitter. In this graph, blue nodes like Coursera send undirected messages, namely singletons, in which no specific recipient was suggested. Green nodes are those who use @ messages to indicate that they are intended or supposedly relevant for a specified user. Red nodes are users who replied to messages related to MOOCs.

Graph 2 shows that four major accounts sent singletons about MOOCs using “#MOOCs” on Twitter. Coursera is the most active one among them based on degree measurement (degree=56), followed by George Siemens @gsiemens (degree=42), Open Culture @openculture (degree=35), and EdX @edxOnline (degree=34).

Graph 2 also shows that four major accounts sent directed messages to others that included “#MOOCs.” They are Scoop.it @scoopit (degree=46), Harvard Biz Review @harvardbiz (degree=39), Edutopia @edutopia (degree=27), and Venture Beat @venturebeat (degree=23). Of the total users who participated in the hashtag discussion, 95% of them sent directed messages. Only 1.4% of selected users replied to tweets using the hashtag. Slate @Slate and U.S. News Education @USNewsEducation are the top two nodes that are the most active.

This network based on hashtag discussions has an average degree of 1.477, which indicates a very long tail in the number of edges that connect nodes. The size of the nodes in the graph corresponds to the influential power they have in the network. The network diameter, which introduces the maximal distance between all pairs of nodes, is measured to be 4.

Discussion

A Small-world that's Not Clustered

The characteristics of the Coursera network on Twitter, according to the results in this research, are twofold. First, this is an even smaller world, with 2.42 intermediaries for people to get in touch with one another. Second, in this small-world with close connections, there are no obvious clusters. The existence of clusters means that there is always a relatively few number of people standing on the threshold in between these clusters, and these people can filter the information that was spreading into the clusters.

Without the thresholds, the chance for everyone to learn about massive open online courses is relatively equal. There are three possible reasons to explain why the threshold is not obvious on Coursera's Twitter network. First, higher education does not present as many disputes or cause polarization in public opinion as politics does, and, for people to criticize such a subject, they have to first be educated about the topic. Second, free online higher education is still based on the resources from brick-and-mortar universities. This is shown by the close connections that Coursera has in this sample with established institutions: Yale, Princeton, the University of Michigan, and others.

Homophily and Heterophily

The triadic closure principle predicted that it is easy to form direct connections between two people who have a common neighbor. For the connections between these nodes to be strong, they should all be connected to each other to fulfill the triadic closure principle. Given the short path length (2.919) and close connection, the chance for subjects in the Coursera network to become friends with each other is low. This means that they typically surround the center subject, Courseara, and do not actively interact with each other. This reminds MOOCs operators that their network is not a particularly interactive one.

Speaking of heterophily, it is also worth noticing that the penetration of Coursera through social networks is challenged by its lack of interaction with other more active accounts. For example, the second most popular node in this particular network of Coursera is Forbes, which has a degree of 17, but Coursera is not even directly connected to this node. In the meantime, other nodes to which Coursera is strongly connected are less popular in this particular network, with degrees of 10 (@umich, @princeton) and 11 (@yale). It is obvious that Coursera is

more dedicated to its relationship with educators and universities by ignoring interactions with popular subjects in the network. Therefore, reaching out to individuals who are not specialized in higher education is still a challenge for Coursera.

The Spread of MOOCs and Influential Players on Twitter

Overall, Twitter still presents a platform in which relatively few influential accounts lead the discussion by speaking to the general public. The average degree for nodes in the hashtag network containing “#MOOCs” is only 1.44, which means that an average node in this network only has about 1.44 nodes directly adjacent to it. The network is largely centralized around these influential accounts. The results also supported the idea that the more popular an account is, the more likely it is likely to tweet (Huberman, 2009).

Compared with Facebook, Twitter users have a relatively small number of friends, who reciprocate by following (Huberman, 2009). Users tend to have far more followees and followers than actual friends on Twitter. Getting attention on Twitter is tough because the network is not necessarily established on personal connections. For the general public, Twitter is more about gaining information and participating in discussion on an issue of concern. In the network comprised of individuals using the hashtag “#MOOCs” in their discussion, nearly 80% of the nodes had zero degrees in the network. This means that they do not have any direct connection to other individuals talking about the same topic.

Attention is a scarce resource, and for ordinary people to speak up on Twitter, the results can be volatile. The network of “#MOOCs” presents a pattern in which the dominant players fulfill the role of educating the general public that surrounds them. The connections between individuals that surround the dominant accounts such as Coursera are weak connections.

Limitations and Future Research

This research used Twitter as the social network platform to analyze the spread of MOOCs. The advantage of using Twitter is that it is now the most popular social network tool for the general public to participate in discussions of public issues. The disadvantage is Twitter’s long tail in the number of followers to user accounts. The long tail is evinced in the hashtag analysis on “#MOOCs” as most nodes have less than two direct connections in the network. As a result, attention is mostly given to the

relatively few active users in the network, and active users in turn attract more attention in the network. The result is strongly related to how Twitter functions as a social network for the public. Therefore, it is not yet clear if the high centrality of Coursera and MOOCs network is due to the fact that higher education is not the most popular topic on Twitter.

There are other issues to be discussed but that were not touched on because of the limitations of this research. Social networking is ever-changing, and it is never static. A picture at one moment may not be the same picture the next moment. Getting a glimpse of the social network is only a one-time glimpse that is contextualized by a particular moment. As Holton (2012) suggested, it is necessary for research to continually monitor and analyze them for shifting and emerging patterns. It will be desirable if this research can continue to follow the account and draw a longitudinal picture of Coursera's social network or the accounts of other similar MOOCs.

Future research on hashtags should also involve content analyses if the discussion is strongly opinionated or polarized. Such analyses can touch on the network effects, which also cause people to adopt innovations along with information effects, and yield results that explain the direct benefits of adopting MOOCs. Content analyses on over one thousand tweets can be challenging, but it is well worth the effort as higher education is feeling real pressure from MOOCs.

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