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The Impact of Social Media Use on Sports Fans' Relationships with Professional Athletes: An Analysis of Parasocial Relationships

By

Jamaal Brown

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Jamaal Brown presented on May 3, 2013

Tracy Worrell
Professor Directing Thesis

Andrea Hickerson
Thesis Advisor

Patrick Scanlon
Department Chair

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine how social media impacts the relationship between professional athletes and sports fans. Social media and communication technologies enhance how people share, communicate, and interact with audiences. Social media allows sports fans to communicate with professional athletes who want to enhance their public image and good reputation in the process of developing relationships with sports fans. My research examines parasocial interaction and how the relationship between professional athletes and sports fans has grown. Results suggest that some sports fans and viewers have the ability to use social media to develop the relationship with professional athletes.

Introduction

When watching a television show, it is possible for the fans to become attached to a particular character or celebrity (Cole & Leets, 1999). The sports viewers love watching favorite professional athletes perform on the court or field on television. Professional athletes who perform on the court on television attract sports fans and can cause the sports fans the desire to develop a relationship with professional athletes. Therefore, the fans form bonds with specific celebrities (Rubin & McHugh, 1987).

Social media provides great communication tools to develop the relationship with professional athletes. Social media and the Internet allow the fans to stay connected with professional athletes. Sports fans want to utilize social media to follow professional athletes' and concentrate on their past and current happenings. Social media are becoming more meaningful tools to celebrities for creating and strengthening relationships with consumers and fans alike (Ballantine & Martin, 2005). The Internet provides interactivity, giving users the opportunity to correspond with other users, share information, and form personal relationships (Hambrick, Simmons, Greenhalgh, and Greenwell, 2010). Thanks to this Internet and social media technology, the fans can bridge the communication gap between them and their favorite television personalities (Ballantine & Martin, 2005). For example, NFL star, Chad Ochocinco, utilizes social media (Twitter) to interact and communicate with sports fans from across the world.

Before the existence of social media, the relationship between professional athletes and sports fans was limited. In Web 1.0, the sports fans visited various media without interacting directly with professional athletes. In Web 1.0, Pegoraro claimed that "the sports fans could visit a team, league or athlete website and peruse the content posted on the site" (Pegoraro, 2010, p. 502). Professional athletes and sports fans did not have the opportunity to reach out to each other.

After the start of web 2.0, social media finally gives the viewers or sports fans the opportunity to share, communicate, and interact directly with one another. Social media allows sports fans to get closer to professional athletes and the game. Social media also allows professional athletes to exhibit their personalities to the sports fans. With the increase of social media usage, using traditional media such as radio, newspapers and magazines may become less relevant.

Professional athletes also use social media for marketing purposes. In 2010, Liodice referred to social media as a technology that "marketers can't live without" (Liodice, 2010, para. 3). In addition, Liodice describes that social media websites are a channel that allows the marketers dialogue and interactions with the consumers that traditional media could not provide (Liodice, 2010). Social media plays an important role in developing the relationship with professional athletes and the community. In

order for professional athletes to reach out and communicate directly with sports fans through social media usage, they may be viewed as products and brands.

The purpose of this study is to examine how social media facilitates sports fans' relationships with professional athletes. In order to understand the relationship between celebrities and fans, the study will draw on the communication theory of parasocial interaction.

Literature Review

Parasocial Interaction

Parasocial interaction describes how media users relate to and develop relationships with media figures (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Horton and Wohl (1956) describe parasocial interaction as the illusion of a "face-to-face relationship" with celebrities and performers through mass media. With the recent growth of social media technologies, the constructs of the parasocial relationship have begun changing (Eyal & Cohen, 2006). People or the fans may never meet celebrities physically however social media allows consumers to follow them and become friends. Horton and Wohl argued that "the relationship is one-way, without obligation on behalf of the consumer, and controlled by the celebrity" (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p.215).

Eyal and Choen (2006) describe parasocial interaction as, "a set of feelings consumers develop toward media characters that allow viewers to think and feel

toward celebrities as if they know and have a special connection with them" (Eyal & Choen, 2006, p. 504). Celebrities acknowledge that the fans want to know everything about what the celebrities are doing in their lives. The viewers may simply be interested in the celebrity's private life because it makes the parasocial relationship so much stronger when the viewers feel as if they know the celebrity on a much more personal level (Horton & Wohl, 1956). The longer this interaction continues, the stronger the bond becomes (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). However, the celebrities should be aware of how they respond to the fans. Horton and Wohl (1956) claimed that the "best approach for celebrities is to create their private lives in public as they attract the viewers but the celebrities' image should be carefully chosen and monitored" (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p. 216).

According to Horton and Wohl (1956), in the process of viewers accepting the parasocial relationship, "the celebrities or performers need to develop his or her performance and interactions ability with the audience based on the audience's response to that performer" (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p. 221). The celebrities want to be known and seen as unique and extraordinary people. The celebrity needs to relate to the fans so that the parasocial relationship compliments normal, everyday social life (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Horton and Wohl (1956) claimed that "most characteristic is the attempt of the persona to duplicate the gestures, conversational style, and milieu of an informal face-to-face gathering" (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p. 217).

The viewers want to be entertained and informed by the celebrities. Rubin and McHugh (1987) also argued that, based on past uses-and-gratifications research, a viewer will have great kinship with a celebrity or performer that the viewer follows as well as the medium through which they feel connected to that performer. Consumers want to use social media to connect with celebrities for information and entertainment. For the viewers, developing a relationship with the celebrities or performers can make them feel worthy. Parasocial relationships that develop on the basis of attraction (not necessarily physically, but social too) are especially rewarding for the viewer (Rubin & McHugh, 1987).

Lastly, parasocial relationships feel actual (real) to the viewer because they copy the movements of a genuine personal relationship (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). While these relationships may be weaker than true social relationships, they still "create the illusion of intimacy at a distance" (Ballantine & Martin, 2006, p. 198). Social media "[offer] a platform for celebrities to conduct personal public relations campaigns," which includes getting closer to the fans (Shepherd, 2009, p. 156). Therefore, social media such as Twitter are beginning to take the "para" out of parasocial relationships because celebrities can now step out of the screen and give intimate details of their formerly private lives, "such as friends and family, memories and recollections, and even provide intimate details about such things as their sex lives" (Trammell, 2004, n.p., para 3).

Social Media

In order to understand social media, the researcher offers a definition of social

media and how social media can be utilized to share, interact, and communicate with

one another. Social media uses web-based technologies to turn communication into

interactive dialogue (From the Social Media Guys, 2010). Andreas Kaplan and Michael

Haenlein (2010) provide an outstanding definition of social media: "a group of Internet-

based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web

2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (p. 60). The

Social Media Guys (2010) provide many different social media examples such as,

"Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, micro blogging, pictures, video, and social

bookmarking" (p. 3). According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), there are six different

types of social media: "collaborative projects, blogs and micro blogs, content

communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual communities"

(Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 60). The definition and examples of social media are

crucial to understand how people utilize communication technologies to share, connect,

and interact with an online audience.

Understanding the capabilities of social media usage to develop the interactive

relationship with one another is also significant. Kietsmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and

Silvestre (2011) mentioned that "social media employ mobile and web-based

technologies to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and

communities share, cocreate, discuss, and modify user-generated content" (p. 241).

They provide an interesting framework they use for social media. The framework they

use is a honeycomb of seven functional building blocks: identity, conversation, sharing,

presence, relationships, reputation, and groups (Kietsmann et. al., 2011). The social

media analysis is fundamental to understanding how people use it to communicate

directly with others. The honeycomb of social media analyzes the experience of a given

social media platform in relationship to each functional block and then identifies the

implications for a firm in developing its social media strategy using those platforms

(Kistsmann et. al., 2011).

Numerous celebrities and consumers utilize mobile technology to stay connected

with each other. Elizabeth Wright, Nile Khanfar, Catherine Harrington, and Lee Kizer

(2010) stated that "the use of smartphones, like iPhones and Blackberries, allow the

consumers to be connected to their favorite social media outlets 24 hours a day." The

fans can choose any social media outlets like Twitter to follow celebrities or well-known

individual. For instance, celebrities or well-known individuals, ranging from President

Obama Barack to singer Justin Beiber, to professional football player Chad Ochocino

use Twitter accounts (Marwick & Boyd, 2010; Sanderson & Cheong, 2010).

Today, the consumers are using communication technology such as smartphones

to seek professional athletes' brands they promote through social media usage.

Following professional athletes through social media usage gives consumers (fans) the opportunity to connect with professional athletes' brands and products they promote. Through social media, professional athletes have a marketability advantage to promote and build the relationship with consumers.

Relationship Marketing and Celebrities' Brands

Several marketing researchers offered definitions of relationship marketing. Leonard Berry (1983) first recommended the perception of relationship marketing and defined it as "attracting, maintaining, and enhancing customer relationship." Casalo, Flavian & Guinaliu (2008) call this "relationship marketing" as the concept of relationship and parasocial interaction with the celebrities and consumers. Gronroos (1991) defined the term of relationship marketing as "establishing relationships with customers." Gummesson (1994a) claimed, "Relationship marketing emphasizes a long-term interactive relationship between the provider and consumers" (p. 6).

Celebrities consider the brand as relevant to the fans. The celebrities possess the ability to market themselves as brands and inform the fans who they are. The consumers want to connect to celebrities because they promote their brand name to the consumers. The celebrities want to brand themselves to attract the fans. A marketing researcher found that the name of the brand can be unique to the consumers. Celebrities will promote that brand to the consumers (Casalo, Flavian, & Guinaliu, 2008). Creation of a brand means developing a unique style and name (Schroeder, 2005). In the eyes of

consumers or fans, the celebrities are the products that consumers and fans want to buy and watch them perform on the court or stage. The viewers consider celebrities as "brands as they strive to promote and market themselves as a product" (Schroeder, 2005). Celebrity brands reach out to consumers in a variety of ways (Schroeder, 2005).

The media has the power to control and foster the parasocial relationship between the celebrities and viewers. Therefore, it is practically impossible for the celebrities and viewers to ignore the media. This study examines the relationship between social media and parasocial interaction with professional athletes and sports fans and the effect of social media on the relationship between professional athletes and sports fans.

Research Questions

RQ1: What is the relationship between social media use and parasocial interaction with professional athletes and sports fans?

RQ2: What is the relationship between branding and parasocial interaction with professional athletes and sports fans?

Methodology

Participants

As a part of the study, the questionnaire concentrated on Rochester Institute Technology (RIT) undergraduate and graduate students from the 9 colleges. The 9

colleges include: Applied Science and Technology (CAST), College of Business (COB), College of Computing and Information Sciences (CCIS), College of Engineering (COE), College of Health Science and Technology (CHST), College of Imaging Arts and Sciences (CIAS), College of Liberal Arts (COLA), and National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID). There were numerous RIT participants who have various social media platforms to follow celebrities today. The question is whether or not they use social media to interact and communicate with professional athletes.

RIT participants (all students from the 9 colleges) were selected. The survey is utilized to find out how effectively RIT students use social media to interact and communicate directly with professional athletes. In order to find out information from participants regarding their relationship with professional athletes through social media usage, the survey is also utilized to examine and determine how many and how often RIT students follow professional athletes through the usage of social media. The research survey provided the (n=100) participants to read this study and complete the survey regarding their relationship with professional athletes through social media use.

Procedure

The convenience sample of 113 participants (undergraduate and graduate students) completed the survey. A survey was utilized to measure participants' social media use, and sports leagues preference, and their perceived relationship with professional athletes. In response to the survey questions, all questions were multiple

choices. The survey was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Paper surveys were distributed in classrooms and computer labs. The participants read the letter about the study and understood that there was no risk in this research. Once they agreed, then they were able to complete the survey. The participants had ten minutes to complete the survey. After collecting participants' surveys, the survey utilized statistics to find out about the participants' reactions regarding their relationship with professional athletes via social media.

Measurement

Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between parasocial interaction, social media, and branding. The survey measured participants' social media preference and time spent on social media usage, which is the independent variable. The survey also measured the participants' parasocial relationship with professional athletes, which is the dependent variable. The correlation analysis helped to determine how social media and branding (independent variables) influence parasocial interaction.

The survey was broken down into four sections. The survey concentrated heavily on close-ended measurement and Likert scale questions for the participants. For part I, the participants were asked whether they are sports fans and how many hours a week they spend using the Internet and social media technology to communicate directly with professional athletes. "Are you sports fans?" and "how many hours per day do

you spend using Internet and social media?" are the examples of questions. For part II, the participants were asked about their relationship with professional athletes through social media. The participants' relationship with professional athletes is measured by their responses on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree), asking participants questions in a Likert scale such as, "Using social media has improved my relationship with professional athletes." For part III, the participants were inquired which professional sports leagues participants follow and which social media platforms they use for their preference such as, "Which social media platforms do you prefer to follow professional athletes?" For part IV, the nominal measurement was used for demographic and psychographic data, genders and college attendance.

Results

Demographic

Individual variables were utilized to measure how many respondents attend the colleges are sports fans, and how often they use the Internet and social media. Through using display descriptive statistics, 62 males (55%) and 51 females (45%) responded to the survey. The highest percentage of respondents attended National Technical Institute for the Deaf (38%) and College of Business (26%). Moderate percentage of respondents attended College of Applied Science and Technology and Liberal of Arts (13%). The lowest percentage of respondents attended College of Imaging Art and Sciences (8%),

College of Computer and Information Science (7%), and College of Sciences (2%). None of respondents attended College of Engineering, and College of Health Science and Technology.

Respondents were mostly sports fans (42%), while other respondents were somewhat sports fans (39%), and others respondents are not sports fans (18%). (See Appendix B). Some respondents are Internet savvy; they have the Internet knowledge and experience. Respondents (35%) use the Internet for more than 12 hours a week. Respondents (26%) personally use social media for 3-4 hours. The respondents (20%) use social media to communicate directly with professional athletes for 1-2 hours. Some respondents (43%) read professional athletes' messages posted through social media, while other 39% of respondents did not read professional athletes' messages posted through social media.

Psychographic

The majority of respondents that follow the popular professional sports league follow the National Football League (24%), National Basketball Association (23%), and Major Baseball League (12%). Few of respondents followed National Hockey League (7%), NASCAR (6%), Major League Soccer (5%), Professional Golfer Association (4%), and Tennis (3%). Respondents followed other professional sports leagues (8%). In addition, 8% of respondents did not follow professional sports leagues. The majority of respondents follow professional athletes through social media such as Facebook (33%),

Twitter (17%), Instagram (16%), and YouTube (15%). Very few respondents followed

professional athletes through LinkedIn (4%), and Google Plus+ (2%). Respondents

follow other social media (3%). Respondents (11%) did not follow professional athletes

through social media. (See Appendix E).

Correlation

Correlation analysis was utilized to investigate the relationship between social

media (independent variable) and parasocial interaction (dependent variable) with

professional athletes and sports fans. Respondents that follow professional athletes

through social media such as Facebook and Twitter are significant (r = -.212; p-value

0.024 < 0.05). It concludes that when spending time on social media the relationship to

communicate with professional athletes increases, using social media to improve their

relationship with professional athletes decreases.

Through correlation analysis, this section discusses <u>how often</u> respondents use

<u>social media</u> to develop relationship with professional athletes. The respondents that

use social media to improve relationship with professional athletes is significant (r = -

.358; p-value 0.00 < 0.05). It concludes that the relationship is not weak. Non-significant

results were discovered (r = .50; p-value 0.60 > 0.05) displaying that professional

athletes' ability to inform the respondents through social media is weak and the

relationship is no longer significant. Professional athletes who want to entertain the

respondents show that the relationship is not significant. (r = -.009; p-value 0.93 > 0.05).

This section discusses how often the respondents read professional athlete's messages posted through social media. Respondents checked professional athlete's news every day, yet the relationship between them is not weak (r = -.499; p-value 0.00 < 0.05). Professional athletes tend to tell the story to consumers, which is significant but their relationship with respondents still remain weak (r = -.250; p-value 0.09 >.05). Professional athlete's ability to create interesting comments through social media is significant, yet the relationship is weak (r = -.469; 0.00 < 0.05). This is social media and parasocial variable (See Appendix C).

Correlation variables were also utilized to investigate the relationship between branding (independent variable) and parasocial interaction (dependent variable) with professional athletes and sports fans through social media. Through correlation analysis, this section discusses how branding influences parasocial interaction through social media usage. The results displayed that there is no relationship between branding and parasocial interaction through social media, therefore it is not significant (r = .152; p-value 0.10 > 0.05). Professional athletes promoting their brands or products to the community through social media is critical, but the result displayed that there is no relationship between branding and community; therefore the relationship is not significant (r = .130; p-value 0.169 > 0.05). (See Appendix D).

Discussion

These findings are critical for this study due to the results that can show how social media usage impacts professional athletes and sports fans relationships. Therefore, the correlation analysis helped to determine and examine how social media use impacts on sports fans' relationship with professional athletes.

The findings show that fifty-five percent of males and forty-five percent of females are sports fans. The popular sports professional leagues sports fans follow are the NBA and NFL. Twenty-six of respondents personally use popular social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to communicate with others for 3-4 hours. However, the results suggest that the relationship between social media and parasocial interaction with professional athletes and sports fans are not very strong. Seventy-two percent of respondents did not use social media to interact and communicate directly with professional athletes. The finding implied that professional athletes have the ability to inform, entertain the respondents, and create interesting comments but the respondents did not have the ability to stay connected with professional athletes.

Relationship marketing plays a role in developing relationship between professional athletes and sports fans through the usage of social media. However, the findings showed that the relationship between branding and parasocial interaction is not very strong. Respondents did not have the ability to interact and communicate with professional athletes' online community. Even though professional athlete's brand

names did not impact respondents, seventy-two percent of respondents agree that celebrities were viewed as brands to promote themselves as products. Professional athlete's brand name or product has the ability to bring sports fans to the community together. In the process of developing relationship with sports fans, as marketing researcher, Schroeder (2005) stated that professional athletes (celebrities) create brands names to promote themselves as products.

Conclusion

For methodology, this research has some limitation. The convenience sample of RIT undergraduate and graduate students were selected, so the survey was taken by students regarding their relationship with professional athletes through the use of social media. As a result, social media makes certain impacts of sports fans' relationship with professional athletes.

This study focused on sports fans' relationship with professional athletes through the use of social media. Today, social media such as Facebook and Twitter has changed the way viewers communicate and interact with one another. Based on the findings, the viewers (respondents) spend utilizing social media to communicate with others, however they did not utilize social media to develop the relationship, interact, and communicate with professional athletes.

The future study should investigate high school students and viewers from across the world that are heavy sports fans and utilize modern communication technology such as social media to stay connected with the sports celebrities. In addition, the future study should also investigate how social media impact two communication theories: the uses and gratification and parasocial interaction, and examine how uses and gratification and parasocial interaction differ from viewers' perception.

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Letters to Participants

Dear Students,

My name is Jamaal Brown. I am majoring in Professional and Technical Communication. I am currently taking a Senior Thesis in Communication course this quarter. For my thesis, I am concentrating on the impact of sports fans' relationship with professional athletes through the usage of social media.

I am eager to find out about your response regarding your relationship with professional athletes through the usage of social media. I will collect participants' response for statistical purposes. There is no right or wrong answer. Your opinion is very important for my study. I do not anticipate there is any risk in this research.

The survey is voluntary. You may stop taking the survey at any time. The survey should take no more than 5-10 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your time to fill out the survey. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at jdb7258@rit.edu.

Appendix A—Survey

Part I. I would like to know and learn how many hours a week you spend using the Internet and social media technology to communicate directly with professional athletes. Please answer by selecting the response that best describes you.

1. Are you a sports fan?

- o I am a sports fan
- o I am somewhat a sports fan
- o I am not a sports fan

2. How many hours a week do you spend using the Internet?

- o None
- o 1-2 hours
- o 3-4 hours
- o 5-8 hours
- o 9-12 hours
- o More than 12 hours

3. How many hours a week do you personally spend using social media?

- o None
- o 1-2 hours
- o 3-4 hours
- o 5-8 hours
- o 9-12 hours
- o More than 12

4. How many hours a week do you spend using social media to communicate directly with professional athletes?

- o None
- o 1-2 hours
- o 3-4 hours
- o 5-8 hours
- o 9-12 hours
- o More than 12 hours

How many hours a week do you read professional athletes' messages posted via social media?

- o None
- o 1-2 hours
- o 3-4 hours
- o 5-8 hours
- o 9-12 hours
- o More than 12 hours

Part II. I would like to know about your relationship with professional athletes through social media.

6. Using social media has improved your relationship with a professional athlete.

- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

7. You are a part of the professional athlete's (whom you follow via social media) community.

- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

8. Your thoughts are influenced by professional athletes' comments via social media.

- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

9. Communicating directly with professional athletes via social media makes you feel good.

- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

10. Interacting directly with a professional athlete via social media makes you feel good.

- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

11. You check professional athletes' news via social media every day.

- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

12. You trust professional athletes' comments via social media.

- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

13. Professional athletes tend to tell the whole story via social media.

- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree

o   Strongly Disagree

14. Professional athletes want you to be informed via social media.

   o   Strongly Agree
   o   Agree
   o   Neutral
   o   Disagree
   o   Strongly Disagree

15. Professional athletes want you to be entertained via social media.

   o   Strongly Agree
   o   Agree
   o   Neutral
   o   Disagree
   o   Strongly Disagree

16. Professional athletes consider themselves as brands or products.

   o   Strongly Agree
   o   Agree
   o   Neutral
   o   Disagree
   o   Strongly Disagree

17. Professional athletes read your comments via social media.

   o   Strongly Agree
   o   Agree
   o   Neutral
   o   Disagree
   o   Strongly Disagree

18. Professional athletes create interesting comments via social media.

   o   Strongly Agree
   o   Agree
   o   Neutral

o Disagree

o Strongly Disagree

19. Professional athletes are concerned with their reputation via social media.

o Strongly Agree

o Agree

o Neutral

o Disagree

o Strongly Disagree

20. Professional athletes you follow via social media are seen as extraordinary people.

o Strongly Agree

o Agree

o Neutral

o Disagree

o Strongly Disagree

21. Professional athletes (whom you follow via social media) are your friends.

o Strongly Agree

o Agree

o Neutral

o Disagree

o Strongly Disagree

22. You would like to physically meet the professional athletes you know via social media.

o Strongly Agree

o Agree

o Neutral

o Disagree

o Strongly Disagree

Part III. I would like to know which professional leagues you follow and your social media platforms preference. Please answer each question.

23. Which professional sports leagues do you follow? (You may check all that apply)

- o National Basketball Association (NBA)
- o National Football League (NFL)
- o Major League Baseball (MLB)
- o National Hockey League (NHL)
- o NASCAR/Auto Racing
- o Professional Golfers Association (PGA)
- o Major League Soccer (MLS)
- o Tennis
- o Others (please specify): _____
- o None

24. What social media platforms do you use to follow professional athletes? (You may check all that apply)

- o Facebook
- o Twitter
- o Instagram
- o YouTube
- o LinkedIn
- o MySpace
- o Google Plus+
- o FourSquare
- o Others (please specify): _____
- o None

Part IV. I would like to know about your demographics. Please answer each question.

25. What is your gender?

- o Male
- o Female

26. Which of the RIT's 9 colleges are you attending?

- o College of Applied Science and Technology
- o E. Philip Saunders College of Business

- o B. Thomas Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences
- o Kate Gleason College of Engineering
- o College of Health Science and Technology
- o College of Imaging and Sciences
- o College of Liberal Arts
- o College of Science
- o National Technical Institute for the Deaf

Appendix B—Sports Fans

Question1: Are you sports fans?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	48	42.5	42.5	42.5
	2.00	44	38.9	38.9	81.4
	3.00	21	18.6	18.6	100.0
	Total	113	100.0	100.0	
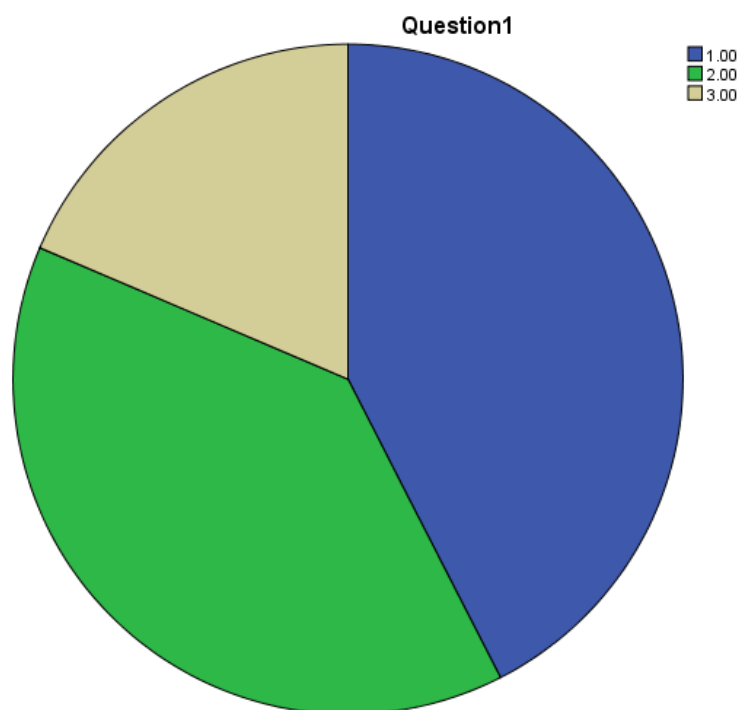
Appendix C—Parasocial Interaction

RQ1: What is the relationship between social media use and parasocial interaction with

professional athletes and sports fans?

Correlations

		How Often	Parasocial
Question4	Pearson Correlation	1	-.358**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	113	113
Question6	Pearson Correlation	-.358**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	113	113

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		How often	Parasocial
Question5	Pearson Correlation	1	-.499**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	113	113
Question11	Pearson Correlation	-.499**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	113	113

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		How Often	Parasocial
Question5	Pearson Correlation	1	-.298**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	113	113
Question13	Pearson Correlation	-.298**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	113	113

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix D—Branding

RQ2: What is the relationship between branding and parasocial interaction with professional athletes and sports fans?

Correlations

		Branding	Parasocial
Question16	Pearson Correlation	1	.152
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.109
	N	113	113
Question6	Pearson Correlation	.152	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.109	
	N	113	113

Professional athletes consider themselves as brands or products.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18%	52%	20%	8%	2%

Appendix E—Professional Sports Leagues

Respondents follow professional sports leagues via social media

Professional Sports Leagues

Percent of frequency

League	Percent
TENNIS	2.84553
PGA	3.65854
MLS	5.28455
NASCAR	6.50407
NHL	7.31707
OTHER	7.72358
NONE	7.72358
MLB	12.1951
NBA	22.7642
NFL	23.9837

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Percent within all data.

Respondents Follow Professional Athletes via social media

Follow Pro Athletes via Social Media

Percent of Frequency

Platform	Percent
MySpace	0
FourSquare	0
Google Plus+	1.94175
Others	2.91262
LinkedIn	3.8835
None	11.165
YouTube	15.0485
Instagram	15.534
Twitter	16.5049
Facebook	33.0097

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Percent within all data.