

DISSERTATION

ONLINE CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT:
UNDERSTANDING THE ANTECEDENTS AND OUTCOMES

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Summer 2012

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ABSTRACT

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Given the adoption rates of social media and specifically social networking sites among consumers and companies alike, practitioners and academics need to understand the role of social media within a company's marketing efforts. Specifically, understanding the consumer behavior process of how consumers perceive features on a company's social media page and how these features may lead to loyalty and ultimately consumers' repurchase intentions is critical to justify marketing efforts to upper management. This study focused on this process by situating online consumer engagement between consumers' perceptions about features on a company's social media page and loyalty and (re)purchase intent. Because online consumer engagement is an emerging construct within the marketing literature, the purpose of this study was not only to test the framework of online consumer engagement but also to explore the concept of online consumer engagement within a marketing context. The study refined the definition of online consumer engagement as an attempt to align the industry and academic definitions of the construct.

The social networking site, Facebook, was utilized to test the online consumer engagement framework. Specifically, the study examined whether and how perceived Facebook company page features (i.e., perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity) predicted online consumer engagement, and further investigated whether and how online consumer engagement with companies on Facebook related to loyalty and ultimately (re)purchase intent. First, focus groups were conducted to get a better understanding of the "liking" behavior on Facebook and to refine the survey questionnaire. Next, 233 online surveys

were collected from U.S. adult Facebook users who “like” companies on Facebook to test the online consumer engagement framework. Hypotheses were tested through structural equation modeling. Findings suggest that perceived Facebook characteristics (i.e., perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity) influence online consumer engagement, which influences loyalty and ultimately (re)purchase intent. Results also revealed that online consumer engagement is a multidimensional construct that encompasses both cognitive/affective and participative dimensions. This study provides the first steps in understanding the role that online consumer engagement plays within a mediated environment that includes both consumers and companies. Implications both academically and for the industry are discussed, and directions for future research endeavors are presented.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to acknowledge all of the people who have helped and supported me through my doctoral journey. First, I want to thank all of my committee members – Dr. Jamie Switzer, Dr. Ruoh-Nan Yan, Dr. Jennifer Ogle, Dr. Donna Rouner, and Dr. Peter Seel – for their continuous guidance, direction, and invaluable contributions to my dissertation. A special thanks to my two co-advisors – Dr. Jamie Switzer and Dr. Ruoh-Nan Yan for dedicating so much of their time to this project. Without Dr. Jamie Switzer’s attention to detail and editing skills and Dr. Ruoh-Nan Yan’s mastery of statistical analysis, this project would not have been completed. Additionally, my co-advisors provided enthusiasm, good cheer, and unfaltering support throughout the entire process, which made the completion of this work enjoyable.

Secondly, I want to acknowledge my two dear friends, Melodee Bachman and Darcie Geenen for enriching my educational experiences throughout my undergraduate and graduate degrees. Their support as well as lively academic discussions and enjoyable personal adventures have made the journey memorable. Specifically, I to want acknowledge Darcie’s efforts in editing this work.

Most of all, I want to acknowledge my family for their love, support, and encouragement throughout my entire academic career. First, I want to acknowledge my parents – Jerry and Debra Wilson – who are the most amazing parents in the world. They have taught me so many valuable lessons throughout my life, one of which is to have the confidence and tenacity to go after your dreams. If they had not instilled this in me, I may have not had the courage to pursue my doctoral degree. Secondly, they have taught me the importance of working hard. They are two of the hardest working people I know and have taught me that hard work is needed to accomplish your goals, which was definitely needed to complete this dissertation. Specifically, I

want to acknowledge my mom for being my rock, pillar of strength, and inspiration throughout my academic career. She is the most amazing woman I know and a wonderful role model to me.

Secondly, I want to acknowledge my brother, Jeremy Wilson, who has always been there for me, especially during this research endeavor. He was instrumental in keeping me on track to complete this goal while helping me laugh and see the fun and excitement in my journey. I also want to acknowledge my sister-in-law, Gina Wilson, who I could count on to not only listen and provide sound advice but also to share her industry expertise, which kept my work grounded. Additionally, I want to acknowledge my lovely niece, Madeline Wilson, who I could always count on to have a smile on her baby face, which made me happy and kept me inspired.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge my loving husband, Philip Reitz, and my precious son, Wilson Reitz, for their contributions to this research work. My husband's never-ending support, love, and confidence in me are what kept me going. His hard work and sacrifices helped me complete this research project, which I am forever grateful. Furthermore, I want to acknowledge my baby boy who was with me every step of the way throughout this project. He gave me the drive and motivation I needed to work on the project while providing endless entertainment, loads of laughter, but mostly his love and sweetness.

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ONLINE CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT:
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Social Media Background

Social media have forever changed the way we communicate, interact, share, and ultimately conduct our relationships with family, friends, co-workers, politicians, the media, celebrities, and companies alike. Social media, which can be described as collaborative environments focused on the exchange of content (Universal McCann, 2008), provide us with unique platform not only to receive content similar to traditional media outlets but also to actively participate in the creation, development, and dissemination of content. Universal McCann states, “social media represent a big improvement over Web 1.0 as a term to describe the changes that have impacted the Internet in its most basic sense – a shift in how people discover, read and share news, information, and content” (p.10).

Social media can be described as a fusion between sociology and technology, altering communication from monologue (one to many) into dialog (many to many), and transforming people from content readers into publishers (Universal McCann, 2008). According to Kamel Boulos and Wheeler (2007), “the second incarnation of the Web (Web 2.0) has been called the ‘Social Web’, because, in contrast to Web 1.0, its content can be more easily generated and published by users, and the collective intelligence of users encourages more democratic use” (p. 2). Universal McCann considers social media to have as much of an impact on society as other media platforms have had in the past including newspapers, radio, television, and Web 1.0 because of their “collective application.” Similarly, Shirky (2009) states that because social media are “flexible enough to match our social capabilities” (p. 20), they are responsible for the rise of the “new ways of coordinating group action” (p. 20). He goes on to say that social media

have “radically altered” the way groups communicate, assemble, and manage one another. As such, division lines are disappearing between the content providers and content consumers as the consumer also is assuming the role of information provider (Giurgiu & Barsan, 2008). Social media applications include social networking sites, video sharing sites, blogs, message boards, virtual communities, massively-multiplayer online games, and instant messaging (Bulik, 2008).

This unique user-generated environment seems to be what fuels the success, continued adoption, and exponential growth of social media use. To illustrate, a recent study conducted by eMarketer (2011a) found that adult Americans are increasing general daily media use by approximately 30 minutes a day – up only five percent from 2010. However, Americans are spending more time online than previous years – nearly three hours per day more than previously reported. According to Ostrow (2010a), of the nearly three hours a day adult Americans spend online, almost half of the time is spent on a social media site – a 25% increase from 2009. Furthermore, a recent poll conducted by Harris Interactive (2011) found that 65% of American adults are using social media on a regular basis, compared to only 26% in 2009 – nearly a 40% increase in social media adoption in only two years. These numbers demonstrate the principle of relative constancy in that time spent with media in general remains relatively the same year-over-year but the allocation of the time may be spent with different media as new media evolve (McCombs, 1972; Gaerig, 2012).

The simultaneity of communication and the unique opportunity to create content published on a public stage seem to be the underpinning of the adoption of this new technology. According to Idugboe (2012), social media adoption will continue to grow at a “scorching rate.” As Idugboe illustrates, it took radio 38 years, television 13 years, Internet four years, and Facebook (a social media site) six months to reach 50 million users.

Company Adoption of Social Media

According to Idugboe (2012) social media are not a “fluke or fad.” Based upon the adoption rates and continued use of consumer, companies (e.g., Starbucks, Nike, Gap, and Coca-Cola) are adopting social media applications as new and innovative marketing tools used to connect to their consumers (Evans & McKee, 2010; Gillin, 2007; Li & Bernoff, 2008; Swedowsky, 2009; Wong, 2009). In the Social Media Examiner’s (2011) annual report on businesses’ use of social media, it was reported that 93% of the 3300 marketers surveyed are employing social media for marketing purposes. According to the Social Media Examiner this is a huge change from just a few years ago when businesses were uncertain about social media. The report goes on to say that “social media are here to stay and companies are rapidly responding to new social media” (Social Media Examiner, pg. 2).

In a recent poll conducted by Pivot Conference (2011), 81% of the marketers studied stated that social media are central components to their brand success’ moving forward. In addition, marketers are allocating specific budget lines to social media. eMarketer (2011c) estimates that by the end of 2012, marketers will allocate over three billion dollars in social media marketing, up 85% since 2007. Lastly, marketers’ job responsibilities are changing with 64% of marketers’ major job responsibilities falling under social media marketing. The increase in the number of companies using social media, the increase in marketing dollars allocated to social media, and the shift in job responsibilities toward social media marketing demonstrate the impact social media are having on brand strategy and how important social media are considered for company success.

The opportunity for companies to tell “their story” about their history, brands, and products and to get their message out in times of a crisis have been identified as reasons

companies have turned to social media as a new marketing function (Gillin, 2007; Swedowsky, 2009; Wong, 2009). Another reason companies are utilizing social media as a new marketing function is that social media may help establish emotional connections with consumers, and in turn to foster strong consumer relations (Gillin; Swedowsky; Wong). Gillin states that building and maintaining strong consumer relations through social media allow companies a chance to engage with their customers in a whole new way – akin to a system of “conversation.” This means creating a dialogue between a company and its customers where useful information is exchanged so that both parties build and benefit from the relationship (Gillin). As a result of the dialogue, loyal consumers can transform into passionate and outspoken brand and business advocates (Swedowsky; Wong).

Social Networking Websites and Facebook

Social networking sites have become a popular social media application adopted by both consumers and companies. According to Hampton, Goulet, Rainie, and Purcell (2011), nearly 60% of U.S. American internet users use at least one social networking site, which has nearly doubled since 2008. Furthermore, Lipsman (2011) states that social networking sites become more engrained in our daily activity with each passing month. He goes on to say that in 2007 users spent one minute on a social networking site out of every 12 minutes spent online, but in 2011, users spent one minute on a social networking site out of every six minutes spent online (Lipsman).

Social networking sites are virtual communities composed of members with similar interests (Singh & Cullinane, 2010). Members gather in these social networking sites to meet one another, organize, communicate, and seek and offer advice on numerous topics including brands, products and services, causes and foundations, careers, politics, and the like (Singh &

Cullinane). Social networking sites provide consumers with profile space to highlight personal information including education, work, activities, and hobbies. Additionally, facilities are provided for users to upload various content including photos, music, videos, or website links (Joinson, 2008). Perhaps one of the most popular features of social networking sites is the opportunity for users to make connections with other people, which has been argued to be the core function of a social network site (Donath & boyd, 2004; Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006; Joinson).

Social networking sites provide value for businesses as well. Because of the sheer popularity of these sites among consumers (Hampton et al., 2011; Lipsman, 2011), businesses can reach a rather large, global audience for brand building purposes in new ways that traditional media could not yield (Singh & Cullinane, 2010). Consumers can self-select to be in a brand community and can actively participate in the community by posting comments and opinions about companies, brands, and products (Singh & Cullinane). This “clearing house of information” (Singh & Cullinane) mentality provides companies with rich, unfiltered data directly from their consumers, which in turn may shape brand and product developments in the future to meet consumer needs and wants.

In particular, the social networking site that is the most popular for both consumers and companies is Facebook (Lee, 2009). Facebook can be considered a “social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently with their friends, families, coworkers and companies” (Facebook, 2011a). Facebook's mission is to “give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected” (Facebook, 2011b). Because Facebook strives to be an open and connected platform, companies use Facebook for marketing purposes as an attempt to form personal and ongoing relationships with their consumers. The “Facebook Pages” feature is a

popular application for companies to create a way to keep consumers updated on brands, products, and services. The feature gives consumers the option to “Like” the company’s page, which allows the company a unique opportunity to communicate to consumers who have chosen to connect to the brand. Originally, consumers could “fan” a company’s Facebook page but in spring of 2010 Facebook switched to the “like” terminology. According to Internet Marketing Inc. (2010), “liking” carries the same connotation as “fanning” but Facebook made the change “to promote consistency throughout the site.” Throughout this dissertation, both terms will be used interchangeably as past literature cited often uses the “fanning” terminology. By connecting to the brand through the brand page, consumers can interact with the page by posting stories, opinions, and testimonies about the brand (Singh & Cullinane, 2010). This in turn is posted on the consumer’s own personal page visible to the consumer’s Facebook friend base, providing a company extended brand awareness and word-of-mouth opportunities (Facebook Media Kit, 2011). ExactTarget’s (2011) report on Facebook “liking” behavior found that 64% of Facebook users “like” at least one company on Facebook.

Engagement

In addition to brand awareness and the word-of-mouth opportunities, several trade publications have deemed Facebook a strategic marketing platform with which companies can use to engage with their consumers. Marketers have argued that the opportunity for consumers to view, discuss, forward on, and upload their own content regarding a brand within Facebook is why Facebook is so valuable to companies (Evans & McKee, 2010; Solis, 2010; Swedowsky, 2009; Wong, 2009). For example, in 2010, Adidas (the apparel and footwear company) launched a campaign on Facebook with its sole purpose to increase engagement (Facebook Media Kit, 2011). The brand hoped that increasing engagement would lead to brand loyalty and

an increase in traffic in its stores and website. Every month Adidas would post audio/video content of its apparel and footwear in action and would encourage consumers who “liked” Adidas on Facebook to watch and listen to the content, comment on the content, forward the content onto friends, and upload their own content. Adidas reported that the activity on Facebook did lead to an increase in store traffic with patrons requesting products that had been seen on the brand’s Facebook page (Facebook Media Kit). In addition, Adidas reported an increase of website traffic, once the Facebook activity started (Facebook Media Kit). Adidas attributed the increase in store and website traffic to the increase of engagement on the brand’s Facebook page, which was defined solely by the participation activity on the Facebook page.

Marketers believe that Facebook’s inherently flexible utilities and rich user experience provide companies a unique opportunity to engage with their consumers at an unprecedented level (Evans & McKee, 2010; Solis, 2010; Swedowsky, 2009; Wong, 2009). Marketers have stated that engagement is the most important online process companies need to deliver online to achieve competitive advantages as a way to create “loyalty beyond reason” (Roberts, 2005). In fact, in an EConsultancy (2008) consumer engagement survey, 90% of companies deemed online engagement “essential” or “important” to their companies (Mollen & Wilson, 2010, p. 919).

Gaps in Knowledge

Even though there seems to be consensus among marketers that online consumer engagement is crucial to the success of an company’s social networking site (Evans & McKee, 2010; Roberts, 2005; Solis, 2010; Swedowsky, 2009; Wong, 2009), an agreed upon definition of what engagement means is lacking in the trade literature. According to the Advertising Research Foundation, “engagement is turning on a prospect to a brand idea enhanced by the surrounding media context” (Meskauskas, 2006, p. 1). The EConsultancy (2008) consumer engagement

survey defines engagement as “an outcome of repeated interactions that strengthen the emotional, psychological, or physical investment a customer has in a brand” (Mollen & Wilson, 2010, p. 919). Still others view engagement as the simple act of participating in an online environment (Evans & McKee, 2010; Harden & Heyman, 2009; Solis, 2010). Although marketers have yet to agree upon a definition of engagement, the term is being recognized in the industry as a key factor with which to measure online marketing success.

The engagement construct has been studied in a variety of academic disciplines (e.g. advertising, education, narratives, psychology, and sociology), but it has yet to be well-established within the academic literature as a key marketing construct to study, specifically within an online context. Several scholars have attempted to define the construct, and individual themes regarding the construct are emerging; however, these definitions lack consistency. Scholars have defined engagement as one dimensional (i.e., cognitive, affective, or behavioral) (Douglas & Hargadon, 2000; Heath, 2007; Marci, 2006; Mathwick & Ridgon, 2004; Rappaport, 2007; Wang, 2006), whereas others have defined it as two dimensional (i.e., cognitive and affective) (Mollen & Wilson, 2010; O’Brien & Toms, 2008). Some have even defined it as a multidimensional construct that includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Hollebeek, 2011; Patterson, Yu, & de Ruter, 2006), but have considered engagement with the company as “physical contact” and dismiss the possibilities that engagement can be applicable in a mediated space. Additionally, scholars have yet to consider the antecedents and outcomes of engagement. Consequently, a need to explore the engagement construct is warranted to fill the gap between industry definitions and academic definitions of engagement, as well as a need to explore the antecedents and outcomes of online consumer engagement. By aligning the industry and academic definitions of engagement in addition to understanding the antecedents and

outcomes of engagement, the aim is to progress engagement from an emergent theme in the literature to a more mature construct. Furthermore, confirming past researchers claims (although limited in number) that engagement consists of cognitive, affective, and participative dimensions will hopefully provide supporting evidence of its complexity.

Because engagement is a relatively new term within an online marketing context, there has yet to be an established benchmark of how online consumer engagement leads to positive brand and marketing objectives. Marketers proclaim that online consumer engagement can build relationships between a company and its consumers and positively impact brand loyalty, brand evangelism, brand identification and affinity, brand learning, and sales (Evans & McKee, 2010; Li & Bernoff, 2008; Meskauskas, 2006; Rappaport, 2007; Solis, 2010). However, scant literature exists that tests the relationship between online consumer engagement and positive brand and marketing outcomes such as brand loyalty or (re)purchase intent, which suggests a need to understand the relationship between the two.

To explore online consumer engagement, an understanding of the antecedents that lead to online consumer engagement is necessary. Because online consumer engagement is initiated within a social media application (i.e. Facebook) via a website, the current study specifically looks at the constructs of perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity because these constructs are frequently cited within the website design literature as imperative characteristics to include when designing an effective company website (Cao, Zhang, & Seydel, 2005; Koufaris, 2002; Ou & Sia, 2010; Zhang & von Dran, 2000). Website design literature supports that perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity are appropriate constructs to consider as influences on online consumer engagement. Additionally, an understanding of the outcomes of online consumer engagement is important to

study as an attempt to fully explore the online consumer engagement concept. As discussed above, several brand and marketing objectives have been identified as outcomes of online consumer engagement including, and of specific interest to this study, loyalty and (re)purchase intent (Meskauskas, 2006; Rappaport, 2007).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the concept of online consumer engagement and to test the proposed conceptual model of online consumer engagement. The first aim of the study is to refine the definition of engagement as an attempt to align the industry and academic definitions of the construct. By putting forth that online consumer engagement is a multidimensional construct with cognitive, affective, and participative components, the second aim of the study is to explore measures and dimensions of online consumer engagement that incorporate the three dimensions. The third aim of the study is to test the proposed conceptual framework of online consumer engagement that situates online consumer engagement between the antecedents and behavioral outcomes associated with “liking” companies on Facebook. Specifically, the study examines whether and how perceived Facebook company page features (i.e., information quality, enjoyment, and interactivity) predict consumer online engagement (i.e., cognitive, affective, and participative) and further investigates whether and how online consumer engagement with companies on Facebook relates to loyalty and ultimately (re)purchase intent as these are two constructs considered to be key factors in achieving company success and long-term sustainability (Casalo, Flavian, & Guinaliu, 2007; Flavian, Guialiu, & Gurrea, 2006; Keating, Rugimbana, & Quazi, 2003).

Facebook Justification

Facebook was chosen for the context of the study for multiple reasons. Facebook has unprecedented popularity and adoption rates among consumers and companies. Facebook is one of the most popular websites visited and is overtaking Google and Yahoo in total time spent online (Ohren, 2011). Among other popular social media sites including Twitter and YouTube, Facebook ranks as the most popular social media site and, specifically, the most popular social networking site among consumers and companies (Lee, 2009). Presently, Facebook has over 800 million active users, up 250 million from just a year ago (Facebook, 2011c). Burson-Masteller (2011) conducted a study and found that 61% of all Fortune Global 100 companies use Facebook pages, an increase of 13% from 2010.

In addition to its popularity among consumers and companies, Facebook was selected for the study because of its numerous options for consumers and companies to interact with one another. Through a Facebook company page, companies can invite themselves into consumers' lives and promote brand learning and brand bonding through special offers, promises of exclusive content, and compelling campaigns (eMarketer, 2011b). Additionally, consumers can interact on a company's Facebook page by posting comments, pictures and web links, playing games, and entering contests. The ability to participate on a company's Facebook page provides consumers a unique opportunity to create ongoing, interactive discussions with a company (Facebook Media Kit, 2011). Furthermore, this study investigates consumer goods companies on Facebook because they are the most "liked" companies on Facebook (eMarketer, 2012). Consumer goods companies are defined as companies that "sell goods that satisfy human wants through direct consumption or use" (FreeDictionary.com, 2011a). Examples of consumer goods

companies with Facebook company pages include Gap, Bath and Body Works, and Victoria's Secret.

Contributions of the Study

Theoretical Contributions

This exploratory study seeks to provide a definition of online consumer engagement that will serve as a benchmark definition as well as to test the conceptual framework proposed to explain the antecedents and behavioral outcomes of online consumer engagement. This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, the operational definition of engagement is enhanced from previous scholarly attempts (Mollen & Wilson, 2010; O'Brien & Toms, 2008) through the inclusion of "presence" within the cognitive and affective dimensions and the inclusion of the participative dimension. Mollen and Wilson and O'Brien and Toms (2008) recognize the importance of including cognitive and affective components in their definitions of engagement but have not considered "presence" as part of these dimensions. Additionally, they have not included the participative dimension in their definition, which is considered a key component of engagement in the industry literature (Evans & McKee, 2010; Jaffe, 2005; McConnell & Huba, 2007; Solis, 2010). By including presence within the cognitive and affective dimensions and the participative dimension in the present definition of engagement, the first steps in bridging academic and industry perspectives is taken given that other academic disciplines have included presence as part of their definition of engagement and industry definitions of the term include participation.

Second, the framework presented expands upon existing consumer engagement models (Mollen & Wilson, 2010; O'Brien & Toms, 2008) as an attempt to understand the antecedents and outcomes of online consumer engagement. As suggested by Mollen and Wilson, research

investigating the experiential and content components of a website is needed to understand the drivers of engagement. Per Mollen and Wilson's suggestion, the framework for this study attempts to understand the relationship between the antecedents – perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity – with online consumer engagement. Additionally, the framework for this study identifies loyalty and (re)purchase intent as behavioral outcomes of engagement; however, past research has yet to consider outcomes of engagement (O'Brien & Toms, 2008) or has not specifically identified outcomes of engagement (Mollen & Wilson). By specifically identifying and testing outcomes of online consumer engagement, a better understanding of the construct can be achieved.

Third, the study attempts to answer Mollen and Wilson's (2010) call for research to develop a scale of engagement. The study tests a modified version of and expands upon O'Brien and Toms (2008) engagement scale. This expansion includes measures of presence, which are based on Busselle and Bilandzic's (2009) scale of narrative presence, and participation, which are loosely based on Burns' (2010) scale of engagement. The scale in this study attempts to align the scale with the current industry perspectives (Evans & McKee, 2010; Jaffe, 2005; McConnell & Huba, 2007; Solis, 2010).

Lastly, to this researcher's knowledge, this study is the first in its kind to investigate a possible relationship between Facebook users' perception of website characteristics (information quality, enjoyment, and interactivity) and engagement. Additionally, to this researcher's knowledge, this is the first study that identifies and tests possible behavioral outcomes of online consumer engagement (loyalty and (re)purchase intent) as they potentially relate to consumers who "like" companies on Facebook.

By investigating the proposed relationships, a better understanding of how Facebook

enables companies to achieve online consumer engagement through companies' Facebook pages and how online consumer engagement leads to behavioral outcomes will be achieved.

Industry Contributions

In addition to the theoretical contributions, the study also contributes to the industry's understanding of online consumer engagement in several ways. First, the industry has defined engagement mainly from a behavioral standpoint through the notion of participation (Evans & McKee, 2010; Jaffe, 2005; McConnell & Huba, 2007; Solis, 2010) with a few definitions encompassing elements of affect, including the frequently cited Advertising Research Foundation definition of engagement as "turning on a prospect to a brand idea" (Meskauskas, 2006, p. 1). The definition of online consumer engagement put forth in this study includes participation and the sometimes recognized affect dimension identified in the industry literature, but it also includes cognition in its definition. By including cognition in the definition, practitioners can view engagement as a richer marketing metric. This in turn can lead to more engagement measures and a better understanding of return on investment within social media and specifically social networking efforts (e.g., Facebook).

Second, the relationships proposed in the conceptual framework can help practitioners obtain a better understanding of what predicts online consumer engagement and the outcomes of online consumer engagement. If the relationships are confirmed in that perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity lead to online consumer engagement via a company's Facebook page, practitioners can focus their efforts in developing Facebook pages that have appropriate content, are fun and enjoyable to access, and encourage two-way communication. Additionally, if it is confirmed that online consumer engagement predicts loyalty and (re)purchase intent, practitioners can create Facebook pages that are cognitively

stimulating and emotionally satisfying while also providing a chance to actively create, disseminate, and comment on content.

Given that several companies have shifted marketing dollars and efforts toward social networking sites, specifically Facebook, it is important for them to understand if their presence on Facebook is valuable both financially and resourcefully. Practitioners have noted that they do not know if the company's presence on Facebook is of value to the company (Holzner, 2009; Levy, 2010; Solis, 2010); therefore, the last managerial contribution of this study is to help companies assess the value of managing a company page on Facebook. If the study confirms that online consumer engagement leads to loyalty and ultimately sales, practitioners can be assured that, if strategically created and managed, Facebook company pages can achieve marketing objectives and can contribute to overall company success.

Organization of the Study

This manuscript has six sections dedicated to describing the research project. The first section begins with the introduction of the study that provides the context of the problem and describes the need to conduct the research through a study statement. The second section provides a literature review of the relevant works related to the study, including general information on social networking sites with specific attention paid to Facebook. A historical overview of Facebook is provided as well as a discussion on the industry and academic perspectives pertinent to the research. The chapter then explores the online consumer engagement construct and provides an operational definition of the construct that discerns online consumer engagement from other related constructs in the marketing, communication, and technology literature. This section also provides examples of other studies focused on engagement. The section then moves into describing a company's Facebook page characteristics

– information quality, enjoyment, and interactivity – as they relate to online consumer engagement. Lastly, the section focuses on the purposed outcomes of online consumer engagement, which are loyalty and (re)purchase intent. Section three introduces the conceptual framework proposed for the study and reviews the hypotheses tested. Past research is presented to justify the framework and hypotheses by citing works that have linked the variables together in other contexts. Specially, research is presented that links the perceived website characteristics of information quality, enjoyment, and interactivity with the cognitive, affective, and participative dimensions of online consumer engagement. Additionally, research is presented that links cognition, affect, and participation with loyalty. Lastly, literature on the relationship between loyalty and (re)purchase intent is reviewed. Section four is dedicated to outlining the methodological steps taken for the investigation. The chapter includes discussions on sampling, data collection and procedures, and questionnaire development including the operationalization of the variables. Next, section five focuses on the findings of the study with a discussion on the data analysis procedures and the results of hypothesis testing. Lastly, a discussion of findings and relevant theoretical and managerial implications are presented in section six.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides relevant literature related to the study, which first includes a general discussion on social networking sites and presents relevant academic literature. The second section focuses on the specific social networking site Facebook. This section describes the social networking site and discusses the benefits of using Facebook from an industry perspective. This section also reviews pertinent academic research on Facebook. Next, the engagement construct is explored and defined from both industry and academic perspectives with relevant research presented. The chapter then describes the purposed antecedents (perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity) and outcomes (loyalty and (re)purchase intent) related to online consumer engagement.

Social Networking Sites

Interacting in social networking sites has become a popular online activity for many consumers (Hampton et al., 2011; Lipsman, 2011). According to Nielsen Wire (2009), accessing social networking sites have now surpassed email as the most popular online activity. A report by Pew Internet & American Life Project found that “more than 70% of online users between 18 and 29 years old use social networking sites, with Facebook (73%) being the most popular social networking website, followed by MySpace (48%) and LinkedIn (14%)” (Chu & Kim, 2011, p. 49). Social networking sites can focus on different topics. For example, Facebook, MySpace, QQ, and Orkut focus primarily on socialization, whereas LinkedIn, Visible Path, and Xing have more of a professional networking focus (Singh & Cullinane, 2010). Social networking sites can even have a “passion-centric” focus, such as Catster (cats), AlwaysOn (technology), and LastFM (music) (Singh & Cullinane). Based on their popularity, educators, researchers, and practitioners have taken note and have started examining social networking sites (boyd & Ellison 2008; Chu

& Kim; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Thelwall 2008, 2009; Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009).

In a study examining why adolescents use social networking sites, Reich, Subrahmanyam, and Espinoza (2012) found that out of the 250 adolescents studied, staying connected with others is the main reason why teens use social networking sites, in particular MySpace and Facebook. They also found that teens stay connected with people they knew from an offline context more than those they meet online. Based on this, the researchers concluded that social networking sites are used among teens to strengthen offline relationships. The conclusions made by Reich et al. (2012) support findings by Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, and Zickuhr (2010) and Lenhart and Madden (2007), which found that youth used social networking sites to connect with friends, support and cultivate emotional ties, and sometimes create new relationships (Lenhart et al.; Lenhart & Madden).

In a study examining 106 StudiVZ (social networking site in Germany for college students) user profiles and survey data, Haferkamp, Eimler, Papadakis, and Kruck (2012) considered why men and women used social networking sites and the particular elements used for self-presentation. The researchers found that women used social networking sites to search for information and to compare themselves to others whereas men used social networking sites to build relationships with friends.

Given that Facebook is considered the most popular social networking site, this study specifically examines online consumer engagement solely within Facebook. The following section provides the general background of Facebook and relevant industry and academic literature.

Facebook

History and Overview

In March 2004, Mark Zuckerberg, a then Harvard University undergraduate, created Facebook (originally named thefacebook), an online platform meant to facilitate communication among students at Harvard (Steinfeld, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008). Within a month of inception, Facebook expanded to all Ivy League universities, then to Boston-area universities/colleges, and by 2006, consumers and companies could access Facebook (Vasalou, Joinson, & Courvoisier, 2010). After Facebook provided open access to both personal and commercial entities, the social networking site grew exponentially, and by April 2008, Facebook was the largest social networking site in both number of members and page visits as well as the market leader in all social media entities including Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube (Treadaway & Smith, 2010).

According to Donath and boyd (2004) and Ellison et al. (2006), the core functionality of social networking sites is the opportunity for members to make connections with each other. It is apparent given Facebook's membership size that the company has mastered the art of facilitating connections amongst its members. Facebook provides numerous opportunities for members to connect with one another easily and effortlessly, no doubt the reason for much of Facebook's success. Facebook members set up a profile page that provides a detailed account of their interests, hobbies, education, work history, and basic information (relationship status, city of residence, date of birth, and an "about me" section) (Facebook, 2011a). In addition to the profile page, members have a Facebook Home Page that provides a continuous RSS (real simple syndication) feed of their friends and the companies that they "like" so members can stay informed. Facebook members also have access to applications including "photos, events, videos, groups, and pages" (Joinson, 2008). Members correspond with one another through a variety of

means such as instant chat, personal messages, wall posts, pokes, and status updates (Facebook, 2011a).

As of November 2011, Facebook had over 800 million members worldwide (Facebook, 2011d). Members of Facebook are very active according to Facebook (Facebook, 2011d). An average member is connected to 80 community pages, groups, and events and creates 90 pieces of content every month (Facebook, 2011d). Members who are 18–24 years old represent the largest demographic segment on Facebook and had the largest growth of 74% over a one-year period (iStrategy Labs, 2011). However, the member segment 35 years old and up is rapidly growing, which is specifically due to an increase in members 55 years old and up (Digital Buzz Blog, 2011). Even though the college-age segment still dominates Facebook, these statistics show that Facebook is expanding to a more diverse audience, specifically an older crowd with increased purchasing power. Members do not just access Facebook from their computers; Facebook is accessed by over 350 million people through their mobile devices (Facebook, 2011d), which illustrates the flexibility and ease with which members can stay connected to their friends and companies.

Industry Perspective

A large number of companies are using Facebook for marketing purposes due to Facebook's growth and popularity among consumers. Since 2006, when Facebook granted access allowing companies to join the site, companies using Facebook have increased exponentially. The E-tailing Group conducted a study of consumer goods companies and found that 96% of them have launched or intend to launch within a year a Facebook fan page (Deatsch, 2009). Companies from all industry sectors are using Facebook including food and beverage, entertainment, fashion, cosmetics, automobiles, and technology. Coca-Cola, Disney, and

Starbucks are considered the three top companies using Facebook based on the number of consumers that “like” the brand on Facebook (Harbison, 2011). These brands have millions (Coca-Cola has over 31 million) of consumers plugged into their marketing communications via Facebook (Harbison). As stated previously, the present study is focused on consumer goods companies, which, according to FreeDictionary.com (2011a), can be defined as companies that “sell goods that satisfy human wants through direct consumption or use.” Examples include Nike, Ulta, and Target.

Similar to consumer profiles, companies create Facebook fan pages, of which consumers can “like” to receive information and promotions from the companies. Facebook fan pages are free public spaces companies can utilize to continually update their consumers about company news, products, and events (Facebook Media Kit, 2011). Facebook fan pages allow companies to provide basic company information, including when the company was founded, its background and history, mission statement, and information regarding products offered. Companies also have the “Wall” feature similar to the one offered to consumers. The “Wall” provides companies and their consumers a chance to post status updates, upload photos and videos, and share website links. In addition to the “Wall” feature, companies can utilize a variety of other applications on their Facebook fan page including discussion boards (a space consumers can carry on a conversation), events (schedule and promote upcoming company events), photos (destination to upload product, event, or consumer photos), reviews (specific place where consumers can post reviews about the company, its products, or brands), videos (location to upload videos), and notes (similar to a blog, the company and its consumers post notes so they appear on the consumers’ fan pages) (Treadaway & Smith, 2010). Additionally, companies can use third party applications on Facebook including badges (opportunity for

companies to create small widgets to inform consumers about their Facebook presence), contests (companies can run contests on their Facebook page to involve consumers in branding and naming of products), games (users play games on a company's Facebook page and buy virtual goods from company to be used in the game), gifts (users can buy gifts from companies to give to other users), and quizzes and survey polls (companies can conduct quizzes and polls on their site to learn more about users). Consumers decide if they want to participate in the third-party applications, which provide companies a chance to connect with their consumers on Facebook in a unique way (Treadaway & Smith).

Companies are using Facebook as a marketing tool for several reasons. One reason is the popularity of Facebook among consumers. The sheer number of consumers on Facebook provides companies with an unprecedented opportunity to target their message to a variety of consumers in one space (Singh & Cullinane, 2010). Additionally, consumers actively choose to "like" the company on Facebook so they are presumably more willing to receive and listen to marketing messages because they self-select to be involved with the company (Singh & Cullinane). On a related note, because consumers choose to acquaint themselves with a brand, they are more active on Facebook, sharing their experiences and opinions about brands, products/services, and companies (Singh & Cullinane). The sharing of experiences and opinions are important to companies because the posts are visible to other consumers on Facebook. These posts can have profound effects on the company because research has shown that posts among peers can influence consumer purchase decisions (Universal McCann, 2008; Singh & Cullinane). Additionally, when a consumer "likes" a company on Facebook, the "like" is included on the consumer's Facebook profile for other consumers to see, which provides companies additional visibility to consumers on Facebook. Furthermore, consumers who "like" companies on

Facebook are more willing to discuss the company and its products offline with friends and family, which advances the awareness of companies and products even more (Syncapse & hotspex, 2010). Lastly, it is easy for companies to create fan pages on Facebook (Singh & Cullinane), and it is a low-cost marketing tool (Treadaway & Smith, 2010).

Facebook provides companies with a variety of means to market to consumers that are initiated and controlled by the consumer, conversational, and non-aggressive, which are crucial requirements for successful marketing in the new technology arena (Holzner, 2009).

Practitioners have to relinquish control to the consumers and have to find a way to fit into the consumer-led and consumer-driven environment of Facebook. PetSmart provides a good example of a company utilizing Facebook to encourage interaction among consumers. During the Halloween and Christmas seasons, PetSmart encourages consumers to upload photos of their pets dressed up in costumes (Hill, 2010). When the photos are posted, fans comment about the photos, encouraging interaction among consumers, which bolsters a sense of fan community. Once the consumer comments are posted, PetSmart will mention a limited-time offer on products, which incentivizes consumers who may feel a sense of community to purchase the offer (Hill).

Another unique example of a company utilizing the marketing features inherent in Facebook is 3M. 3M launched a campaign on Facebook to bring awareness to its new product, the Scotch Shoe, a tape dispenser that looked like a Mary Jane shoe. On a limited budget, 3M ran a contest that required users to provide commentary and feedback about the Scotch Shoe on 3M's fan page (Treadaway & Smith, 2010). The company offered gift certificates to shoe stores and a free Scotch Shoe tape dispenser to consumers with the most posts (Treadaway & Smith). Not only did this provide 3M with invaluable feedback about the product, it also provided heavy

exposure to the Scotch Shoe because the comments posted by fans of the 3M's Facebook company page showed up in the fans' news feeds, which were visible to all of the fan's Facebook friends (Treadaway & Smith). As a result of the Facebook campaign, the Scotch Shoe tape dispenser was sold out at most of the stores that stocked the product.

Companies are starting to deploy commerce transactions through Facebook. 1-800 FLOWERS.COM was one of the first companies to allow Facebook users the opportunity to select products and purchase directly from its Facebook fan page (Wauters, 2009). Delta Airlines allows customers to book flights directly from Facebook through its "social media ticket window." Delta states that Facebook is a "natural launching point" as Facebook is the most commonly frequented site while customers are in flight (Markieapowicz, 2010). Additionally, Cold Stone Creamery has launched an eGift program on Facebook. Customers can select Facebook friends to send a Cold Stone Creamery eGift to, personalize the gift with a message, and purchase the eGift card all through the Cold Stone Creamery Facebook fan page. The recipient gets a message about the eGift along with a redemption code to be redeemed at any US Cold Stone Creamery store location. This unique strategy that combined social networking interaction with store sales increased Cold Stone Creamery's profitability per franchise by thousands of dollars within a few weeks of the campaign's launch (Baird & Parasnis, 2011; "Cold Stone Creamery eGift program," 2010).

Academic Perspective

General Facebook Research

Facebook's popularity and the increasingly social aspects of the site have attracted the interest of researchers due to its potential influence on the economic, political, and cultural communication of contemporary society (Fuchs, 2009). Researchers have investigated

personalities (Ryan & Xenos, 2011), usage and motivations (Chiu, Cheung, & Lee, 2008; Gangadharbatla, 2008), specifically with linking patterns (Baek, Holton, Harp, & Yaschur, 2011), online impression management and online identity (Hum, Chamberlin, Hambright, Portwood, Schat, & Bevan, 2011; Underwood, Kerlin, & Farrington-Flint, 2011; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008), and self-disclosure (Park, Jin, & Jin, 2011).

Ryan and Xenos (2011) conducted research on the type of people who use Facebook based on personality traits. The researchers found that compared to non-users, Facebook users are different in that they are more extroverted and narcissistic, but less conscientious and socially lonely (Ryan & Xenos), which is important for businesses to consider when marketing to Facebook consumers.

Chiu et al. (2008) investigated why people use Facebook. Using social influence theory and social presence theory as the theoretical underpinnings of the study, the researchers found that the social presence of others is the main reason why people use Facebook (Chiu et al.). The researchers concluded that individuals socialize with people who are similar to them segmenting themselves into groups, which makes it easy for companies to target their marketing messages to like-consumers on Facebook (Chiu et al.). Similarly, Gangadharbatla (2008) found that Internet self-efficacy, the need to belong, and collective self-esteem, positively influences users' attitudes toward Facebook.

Baek et al. (2011) considered why people engage with certain functions on Facebook, specifically user motivations to share external links. The researchers were interested in determining how external link sharing may affect other behaviors on Facebook. By understanding the motivations to share links and how this activity may affect other behaviors, the researchers were hoping to better understand how news media producers could expand their

digital reach in Facebook. The study found that information sharing, convenience, entertainment, passing time, interpersonal utility, control, and promoting work were motivations for link sharing on Facebook. Additionally, the researchers found that a user's motivation to share information significantly predicted a user's frequency of link sharing on Facebook. Baek et al. concluded that Facebook is an "information hub" and plays an increasingly important role in spreading information. This study provides further support that Facebook users utilize the site to digitally and socially interact (Lasorsa, Lewis, & Holton, 2011).

Another focus of Facebook research has been on online impression management. Underwood et al. (2011) considered personality, behavior, and Facebook activity as variables to help explain how individuals' interactive style on Facebook may lead to differing patterns of deceptive behaviors. The researchers identified three interactive styles on Facebook – broadcasters (self-promoters), communicators (relationship maintenance), and interactors (interacting with many groups). It was found that the style of interaction predicted deceptive behavior in regards to impression management on Facebook. Specifically, the researchers found that communicators used "white lies" to support group cohesion while broadcasters' and interactors' deceptive behavior centered on self-promotion or embellishment (Underwood et al). Likewise, Park et al. (2011) found that honesty within self-disclosure on Facebook was not linked to intimacy, which contrasts key claims of social penetration theory. The researchers concluded that the opportunity for users to readily craft self-presentation on Facebook creates a situation that is highly deliberated and fabricated, unlike face-to-face interactions.

Similarly, Zhao et al. (2008) examined identity construction of Facebook users in nonymous environment (identified space). The researchers found that identities presented on Facebook tend to be embellished as individuals present their offline identities they aspire to have

but have yet to achieve. Furthermore, the researchers discussed how Facebook users may provide a trail of personality traits as clues for other users to get a better sense of the user as a whole based on how he/she wants to be presented. The researchers conclude that Facebook users “show” rather than “tell” (Zhao et al.).

In another study focused on identify construction as well as gender roles, Hum et al. (2011) compared profile photographs of male and female college student Facebook users to determine if the number of photos posted on Facebook and photo content differed significantly by gender. The researchers analyzed 150 college students’ Facebook pictures (40% male and 60% female), and examined the photos for six criterion measures: sex, quantity of profile photos in the participant’s profile picture album, level of physical activity, candidness, level of appropriateness, and the number of subjects. The researchers concluded that college student profile pictures showed they were involved in very little physical activity, lacked candidness, were appropriate for all audiences (e.g., lacked consumption of alcohol and nudity), and contained the user whose profile was examined in the picture, suggesting that college students are crafting online profiles through profile pictures that are professional and appropriate perhaps in anticipation for entering the job market (Hum et al.). Additionally, the researchers concluded that the quantity and quality of photographs did not differ by sex, which suggests that gender within social networking sites, specifically Facebook, may not influence behavior, but rather social norms may play a bigger role in influencing behavior.

“Liking” Companies on Facebook

Studies about Facebook and its members continue to be of interest among researchers, including the emerging practice of consumers “liking” companies on Facebook. Research has found that for utilitarian reasons such as the up-to-date information about discounts, promotions

and sales, the exclusive coupons offered, the opportunity to publicly support brands, the ability to learn about the company, and the continuous information about the companies' activities are reasons consumers "like" companies on Facebook (Ostrow, 2010b; Paglia, 2010; Porterfield, 2010). Additionally, researchers have found consumers "like" companies for hedonic reasons such as having fun and to be entertained (Ostrow; Paglia; Porterfield). Because of the many benefits available, studies have found that overall consumers' sentiment toward the "liking" experience is very positive (Clark, 2011).

In addition to investigating why consumers "like" companies on Facebook, recent research has been dedicated to understanding how consumers who do "like" companies may differ from those who do not. Burns (2010) discovered that fans (those who "like" the company on Facebook) reported higher levels of brand commitment and self-disclosure than non-fans (those who did not "like" the company on Facebook). Whereas Dholakia and Durham (2010) found that consumers who fan are more likely than those who do not to visit the retail establishment, to recommend the store or brand to a friend, and to report greater emotional attachment to the brand or company.

With a research agenda dedicated to investigating the motives underpinning fanning behavior on Facebook, researchers Hyllegard, Ogle, Yan, and Reitz (2011) found that market mavenism (the propensity to gather and share information about companies) has a positive relationship with the decision to fan a company. Additionally, the group conducted research on how women of different generational cohorts vary with respect to fanning of consumer goods companies on Facebook. Collecting data from three generational cohorts – Gen Y, Gen X, and Baby Boomers – the researchers found that motives to fan differed among generational cohorts but utilitarian (e.g., desire to search for information, communicate with others) and hedonic (e.g.,

desire to be entertained, share identities) motives emerged as the most salient among the three groups (Hyllegard, Ogle, Yan, & Reitz, 2012). For example, female Facebook users with utilitarian motives fan companies to gain and share information in regards to consumption and/or important company information (i.e., sales, coupons), whereas female Facebook users with hedonic motives fan companies for the experiential value, specifically entertainment and enjoyment. Additionally, the group looked at the outcomes of fanning consumer goods companies on Facebook and found that product/brand consumption emerged as the most likely outcome of fanning, which suggests that fanning on Facebook can influence related consumption (i.e., store/website visits, product purchasing, and brand loyalty). Based on this, the researchers concluded that Facebook does have the potential to offer great value to companies, specifically to generate revenue.

Because Facebook has been widely adopted by consumers and companies alike, it is clear that Facebook has become an important environment to investigate as evidenced by the previous studies cited. Specifically, Facebook is becoming an important environment to study in terms of consumer behavior and can help researchers explore consumer behavior constructs such as online consumer engagement.

Online Consumer Engagement

Next, the engagement construct is presented. In this section, engagement is explored from an industry perspective as well as an academic perspective. The section concludes with a proposed definition of engagement that reconciles the practitioner and scholarly definitions of the construct and is meant to serve as the benchmark definition of this emerging term.

The construct “engagement” can have several meanings. Perhaps the most common understanding of the construct is the period of engagement between proposal and marriage where

a couple promises to marry each other (Free Dictionary, 2011b). Engagement can also be described as an arrangement or a promise to be somewhere (Free Dictionary, 2011b). Another meaning of engagement is the act of participating and sharing (Free Dictionary, 2011b). Finally, engagement can mean “having one’s attention, mind or energy” (Free Dictionary, 2011b). The definitions capture the versatility and vastness of the meaning of the term engagement.

Practitioners and academics have begun to use the engagement construct when discussing online consumer behavior, but practitioners and academics have different meanings of the term when applying engagement to the online environment. Practitioners have focused on the “the act of sharing” (Gillin, 2007; Swedowsky, 2009; Wong, 2009) while academics focus on “having one’s attention, mind or energy” (Douglas & Hargadon, 2001; Guthrie et al., 2004; Mollen & Wilson, 2010; O’Brien & Toms, 2008, 2010; O’Brien, 2010). This section presents both the industry and academic perspectives of the term engagement and attempts to bridge the gap between the two perspectives by presenting a redefined definition of the engagement construct.

Industry Perspective

Social media, specifically platforms like Facebook, have changed the way practitioners market to consumers and how consumers respond to marketing efforts. Marketing no longer uses a one-way, monologue approach where companies have control over the message. To be successful in the new media landscape, marketers have to embrace a two-way dialogue approach where power and control are shared with consumers. Social media marketing is about companies engaging consumers through connections and conversations. Evans and McKee (2010) state that the number one objective for practitioners marketing in the social web should be engaging customers. In fact, in his book titled “Engage: The Complete Guide for Brands and

Businesses to Build, Cultivate, and Measure Success in the New Web,” Solis (2010) states that practitioners either “engage or die” when marketing in the social web.

According to Wang (2011), who is the Principal Analyst and CEO of Constellation Research, engagement means giving consumers a voice (Wang). Practitioners believe the best way to let consumers be heard is to provide them with opportunities to participate (Evans & McKee, 2010; Harden & Heyman, 2009; Wang; Solis, 2010). Evans and McKee state that engagement means customers become participants rather than passive viewers and take the time to talk to and about companies. Furthermore, they state that engagement is defined as active participation within the social web, moving consumers beyond consumption to collaborators integral to the success of the company (Evans & McKee). Similarly, Atherley (2011) defines engagement as active participation. Atherley states that engaged consumers respond and create conversations, discussions, and discourse. Elwood (2011) considers engagement to be a consumer’s purposeful decision to interact with other consumers and companies. This is achieved by creating content as well as commenting and responding to other consumers’ and companies’ news and updates (Elwood).

Online consumer engagement can take on many participatory forms. Consumers can download, read, watch, or listen to content provided by a company (Evans & McKee, 2010). Consumers can also sort, filter, rate, or review a company’s content (Evans & McKee). Additionally, consumers can comment, respond, provide feedback, and give opinions to companies’ posts and other consumers’ posts. In addition to the opportunities of online consumer engagement listed above, Facebook provides unique engagement opportunities for consumers including the ability to “accept” an event invite, the option to partake in contests,

games, and third-party applications (i.e., accepting gifts and voting), and the chance to participate in surveys, polls, and questionnaires (Levy, 2010).

Consumers do embrace the participatory functions available in the social web. A recent study found over 40% of males and nearly 40% of females in the United States consider themselves to be content creators in the social media environment (Forrester, 2007). Over 50% participate in consumer specific functions including company discussions, reading, and posting ratings and reviews and providing feedback and opinions on a social media site dedicated to companies (Forrester). Consumers also are embracing the consumer participation opportunities on Facebook. Of all of the posts generated by companies on Facebook, on average more than two-thirds will receive feedback from consumers (Askanase, 2011). Specifically, company posts will generate over 50 likes and nearly 10 posts from consumers (eMarketer, 2011b).

It is clear that many marketers view engagement in the social web as a distinct “participation-centric place” (Evans & McKee, 2010, p. 21). However, others are starting to give depth to the meaning of engagement by applying cognitive and affective concepts to the term. The Advertising Research Foundation includes an affect component in its definition of engagement by stating that engagement is “turning on a prospect to a brand” (Meskauskas, 2006, p. 1). Similarly, EConsultancy (2008) considers engagement to be “an outcome of repeated interactions that strengthen the emotional, psychological, or physical investment a customer has in a brand” (Mollen & Wilson, 2010, p. 919). Dave Smith, founder of Mediasmith, regards engagement as a cognitive function, stating that engagement is “an unconscious tick of the mind that causes a consumer to think differently about and notice a brand differently in the future” (Harden & Heyman, 2009, p. 211).

Even though industry literature is considering cognition and affect within the engagement experience, most still feel that engagement is the act of participating in the social web. Academics, on the other hand, regard engagement as an affective and/or cognitive driven construct. However, recent academic research is beginning to include the behavior side of the term by including participation. The next section discusses the academic perspective of engagement and online consumer engagement.

Academic Perspective

The engagement construct has been investigated in a variety of academic disciplines including, education (student engagement), psychology (social engagement), sociology (civic engagement), political science (political engagement), organizational behavior (employee engagement), advertising (engagement with the ad), computer systems (systems engagement), literacy (narrative engagement), and most recently consumer behavior (consumer engagement both on and offline). Definitions of engagement are vast and vary within the academic literature. They range from a unidimensional perspective of engagement (that being either cognition, affect, or behavior) to a multidimensional perspective of engagement that encompasses cognitive, affective, and/or behavioral. However, defining engagement as a unidimensional behavioral construct dominates the literature in non-marketing areas (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric, & Ilic, 2011), which severely limits the potential richness and complexity of the construct.

Education Literature

Coates (2007) defines student engagement from a multidimensional viewpoint and considers it to be active and collaborative learning, participation, involvement, and feeling legitimized. Zhu (2006) considers student engagement to be a cognitive process with student efforts focused on analyzing and synthesizing information critiquing and reasoning through

various opinions and arguments and ultimately making decisions. Kuh (2003) and Robinson and Hullinger (2008) consider engagement to be a behavioral construct that focuses on the participation expended by students, stating that engagement “pertains to the efforts of the student to study a subject, practice, obtain feedback, analyze and solve problems” (p. 101). Ultimately, scholars consider student engagement to produce useful outcomes, such as learning (Coates; Stoney & Oliver, 1999; Zhu).

Psychology/Sociology Literature

From a psychology perspective, social engagement is a behavioral construct (Huo, Binning, & Ludwin, 2009). Achterberg et al. (2003), believe that engagement is the act of participating in social activities by interacting with others. Furthermore, the researchers state that engagement is a response to a social stimulus that results in a high sense of initiation and involvement (Achterberg et al.). Similarly, the sociology perspective considers engagement a behavioral act (Jennings & Stoker, 2004). According to Jennings and Stoker, civic engagement is concerned with voluntarily involving oneself in organizations to perform volunteer work. Likewise, Hogan, Andrews, Andrews, and Williams (2008) state that engagement is “actively participating in community or public affairs, not only by voting, but also by keeping up with the news, discussing issues with fellow citizens, and participating in civic and volunteer activities” (p. 15).

Political Science Literature

Political science considers engagement to be an iterative process focused on generating political behavior such as voting (Resnick, 2001). Additionally, engagement can be viewed from an engaging political campaign perspective that encompasses three key elements: mind-set

change (cognitive), mechanism for change (emotional), and possible staff change (behavioral) (Kane, 2008).

Organizational Literature

Organizationally, engagement has been considered from all three perspectives – cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally. For example, Frank, Richard, and Taylor (2004) consider engagement as the additional effort employees are willing to exhibit such as extra time or brainpower/energy. Luthans and Peterson (2002) consider employee engagement to be the meaningful connections employees make with others and the degree of awareness an employee has for his/her mission and role in the work place.

Computer Science Literature

Engagement has also been explored in the literature on computer-mediated interaction with an emphasis on moving beyond usability to more involved experiences (Hassenzahl & Tractinsky, 2006; Jacques, Preece, & Carey, 1995; Laurel, 1993). Within this context, engagement is considered “a desirable – even essential – human response to computer-mediated activities” (Laurel, p. 112).

O’Brien and Toms (2008) state that developers of computer systems and applications need to move their thinking beyond simply system functionality and action to system engagement. To explore engagement within computer systems, they conducted several studies and published three papers based on their findings. In the first paper, the researchers deconstructed the term engagement through a multidisciplinary literature review and conducted an exploratory study consisting of semistructured interviews of users’ web searching, online shopping, webcasting, and gaming. Through an extensive literature review, the researchers identified flow theory, aesthetic theory, play theory, and information interaction as theories that

underpin user experience. Based on this, the researchers combined the attributes from each of the four theories that related to online engagement and the findings from the semistructured interviews to develop an operational definition and to identify the attributes of engagement.

The researchers proposed that there are four levels of online engagement. First is the point of engagement, which is when the users invest themselves in the interaction by going beyond the routine level (Norman, Ortony, & Russell, 2003). Second is the period of sustained engagement where the “user feels a part of the interaction through an awareness of what the system is doing and feeling connected to the technology and other users” (O’Brien & Toms, 2008, p. 948). Another level a user can experience is disengagement when the user “signs off” and moves back into the routine level void (O’Brien & Toms, 2008). Lastly, as the name implies, users can become reengaged by situating themselves in the interaction (O’Brien & Toms, 2008). O’Brien & Toms (2008) state that engagement can pertain to the user, the system, and the user-system interaction (O’Brien & Toms, 2008). Based on the four levels, the researchers define engagement from a multidimensional perspective as a “quality of user experience characterized by attributes of challenge, positive affect, endurance, aesthetic and sensory appeal, attention, feedback, variety/novelty, interactivity, and perceived user control” (O’Brien & Toms, 2008, p. 949).

As an attempt to further explore the online engagement concept, in their second work, O’Brien and Toms (2010) developed a multidimensional scale to measure user engagement. In a series of two studies, the first using reliability analysis and exploratory factor analysis and the second using structural equation modeling, the researchers identified six attributes of user engagement: perceived usability, aesthetics, focused attention, felt involvement, novelty, and endurance (O’Brien & Toms, 2010). After the researchers confirmed the identified attributes

of engagement, they tested the relationships among them. O'Brien and Toms (2010) found that the attributes are "highly intertwined" amongst each other, confirming that the engagement construct is quite complex and vast.

In O'Brien's (2010) third piece dedicated to user engagement, the researcher explored the relationship between motivations – utilitarian and hedonic – and the attributes of user engagement. Using online shopping as the test environment, O'Brien (2010) conducted an online survey to understand the impact motivations, both pleasure and function-driven, have on the level of user engagement. Using the shopping motivation scale (Kim, 2006) and user engagement scale (O'Brien & Toms, 2010), O'Brien (2010) found that hedonic and utilitarian motivations do impact different aspects of engaging. O'Brien (2010) concluded that understanding user motivations and the impact the motivations have on the quality of user experience can help developers create more "robust" systems that engage users both cognitively and affectively in their experiences.

Pagani and Mirabello (2011) and Calder, Malthouse, and Tambane (2007) consider engagement to be the qualitative experiences with the medium, which means the thoughts, emotions, activities, and appraisals that occur during the experience. Lastly, Calder, Malthouse, and Schaedel (2009) consider engagement to be either personal or social. They define personal engagement by the users' qualities, values, and state of mind or states of cognition and affect (e.g., seeking stimulation and inspiration, speaking about content with other users and having fun). They consider social interactive engagement to be more behavioral where users receive benefits from socializing and participating on the website.

Douglas and Hargadon (2001) considered the role engagement has in interactive narratives and video games. Using schema theory as the underpinning theoretical framework,

the researchers describe how different narratives can influence a user's cognitive state. If a narrative is predictable then the user becomes immersed in the text and may not draw upon critical, content challenging processing skills due to the expected narrative plot present. However, if the narrative is unexpected the user becomes engaged in the narrative and is cognitively "tuned in" due to the disruptive and contradictory schemas presented. The researchers state that when unconventional schemas are present, users become highly engaged and are forced to assume an "extra-textual perspective" in order to follow the narrative and make sense of the work. In sum, Douglas and Hargadon view engagement as the "patina of cognitive activity."

Advertising Literature

Contradictory to Douglas and Hargadon's (2001) heavily cognitive view of engagement, Heath (2007) views engagement as a "subconscious emotional construct" that is different from attention. According to Heath, attention is cognitive and can be considered "the amount of 'thinking' going on when an advertisement is being processed" (p. 1). He states that attention is the "conscious thinking" directed at the ad (p. 3). Engagement, according to Heath, is subconscious and affective and can be defined as "the amount of 'feeling' going on when an advertisement is being processed" (p. 8). He states that engagement is entirely about feelings and emotions.

Engagement has also been investigated in neuro-physiological terms. Marci (2006) proposed a biologically-based approach to measure audience engagement with advertising. In this context, Marci defines engagement as "the combination of audience synchrony (attention, cognition) plus intensity (emotional impact, affect) where synchrony is defined as 'the degree to which an audience's physiological state changes when exposed to a media stimulus' and

intensity is defined as ‘the cumulative strength of physiological response to a media stimulus’ ” (p. 383). The study proposes a new method to measure overall levels of emotional engagement, which consists of monitoring participants’ biologically-based responses (skin conductance, heart rate, respiratory rate, and motion). In the study, participants were responding to advertising commercials that were either aired “in context” (the participants were watching a television show and then the commercial was aired in the middle of the episode) or “out of context” (participants were placed in front of a blank screen for 60 seconds and then were showed the commercial). Additionally, the study considered whether emotional engagement is affected if a commercial is presented in the middle of a “successful” television show (15.2 million viewers) or an unsuccessful show (1.8 million viewers). Marci found that the level of engagement was significantly different depending on context in which the television commercial was presented. Specifically, the study revealed that viewers are more emotionally engaged with advertising commercials when the commercials are presented “in context” and when they are presented within the context of a successful television show.

In a paper recognizing the changes that are happening in the advertising arena, Rappaport (2007) argues that advertising is no longer about interruption and repetition, rather advertising is about relevance. Rappaport suggests that one model marketers can use to build relationships with consumers is the engagement model, which he considers to be cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The engagement model proposed by Rappaport centers on two key ideas: “the high relevance of brands to consumers and the development of an emotional connection between consumers and brands” (p. 138). The emotional connection is based on the consumer experience of bonding, sharing meaning, and identifying with brands. Based on this, Rappaport urges marketers to follow Edelman’s (2007) notion of engagement which is to provide engaging

experiences that “inform, educate, or entertain” so consumers feel like the experience has “come to life” in a way that they can call it their own. Further, Rappaport points out that engagement occurs in a social setting, so marketers need to develop consumer experiences that foster conversations as a way to influence the level of engagement.

Literacy Literature

From a different perspective, literacy literature considers how engaged readers can become with a narrative – meaning how readers can be “immersed in the story” or “lost in a book” (De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders, & Beentjes, 2009, p. 385). Given that “narratives can be powerful means of persuasion” (De Graaf et al., p. 385), researchers considered the role narratives have on influencing readers. Researchers have found that the level of engagement a reader has with a narrative can influence beliefs, (e.g., Appel & Richter, 2007; Strange & Leung, 1999) attitudes (e.g., Dieckman, McDonald, & Gardner, 2000; Lee & Leets, 2002), and behavioral intentions (e.g., Massi-Lindsey & Ah Yu, 2005; Slater, Rouner, & Long, 2006).

Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) consider engagement as being “engrossed in the story” (p. 325). They believe the construct is multidimensional and includes the four dimensions of narrative understanding (ease of comprehending the narrative, plot, and characters), attentional focus (how much attention is directed at the narrative), emotional engagement (feeling for and with characters; overall emotional reactions to the narrative), and narrative presence (“intense focus resulting in loss of awareness of self and surroundings” and “entering another space and time”) (p. 341). The dimensions proposed by Busselle and Bilandzic are somewhat similar to the ideas put forth by other researchers in other subject areas discussed, but the notion that is different and is worth exploring is the notion of presence.

Presence. Lombard and Ditton (1997) define presence as the “perceptual illusion of nonmediation” (p. 4). They consider the term perceptual to mean “the continuous responses of the human sensory and cognitive and affective processing of the system’s objects and entities in a person’s environment” (p. 4). Additionally, they state that “illusion of nonmediation” occurs when a person fails to recognize the existence of the medium and operates as if the medium is not there. Similarly, Gerrig (1993) considers presence to be the state of “being there” within the mediated environment. Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) define presence as the sensation of “being there” in the mediated world due to the comprehensive processing occurring. Furthermore, the researchers state that people can lose awareness of self and surroundings as a result of the intense level of focus being exuded.

Researchers have linked presence with transportation (Gerrig, 1993, Lombard & Ditton, 1997). Transportation has been seen as the sensation of traveling into the narrative world while leaving the “real world” (Gerrig). According to Green and Brock (2000, 2002), transportation is a “convergent mental process in which attention, emotion, and imagery become focused on events occurring in the narrative” (p. 701). The construct can be considered a “highly absorbing, flow-like state” (Vaughn, Hesse, Petkova, & Trudeau, 2009, p. 447) that combines attention, emotion, and thought so a reader can converge and get “lost in” a story. Research has found that people engage with narratives experientially through mental immersion and transportation (Green & Brock, 2000, 2002; Vaughn et al.). Given this, research has found that people who are transported into the narrative are not critical nor do they challenge the persuasive implications of the story (Green & Brock, 2000; Slater & Rouner, 2002). Meaning, the more focused readers are on a story, the more accepting they are of the story’s credence; therefore, negative responses and counter thoughts/ideas about the story are reduced.

Marketing Literature

As stated earlier, the engagement concept is starting to emerge in the marketing literature. As with other disciplines, definitions in the marketing literature range from one- to multiple-dimensions. From a unidimensional perspective, van Doorn et al. (2010) consider engagement as strictly the consumer behaviors manifested toward a brand (i.e., word-of-mouth, recommendations, writing reviews, blogging, and helping other customers). Similarly, the Marketing Science Institution (2010) defines engagement as “customers’ behavioral manifestation toward a brand or firm” (p. 4). Moreover, Vivek, Beatty, and Morgan (2011) consider engagement to be a behavioral construct that focuses on the intensity a consumer puts forth to participate in organizational offerings and activities. Pham and Avnet (2009) view engagement to be a cognitive construct and suggest that engagement “seems to be inferred from a pattern of action or withdrawal with respect to a target object (i.e., brand)” (p. 116).

Scholars have started recognizing the complexity of engagement within a marketing lens and have proposed defining engagement from a multidimensional perspective, mainly cognition and affect. Higgins and Scholer (2009) define engagement as a consumer’s cognitive state (i.e., involved, occupied, fully-absorbed, engrossed) toward something that generates a level of attraction or repulsion (i.e., affective feelings) for the engagement object (i.e., brand). Bowden (2009) considers engagement to be the underpinning of loyalty, stating the engagement is the “psychological process” (i.e., both cognitive and affective) that is responsible for forming consumer loyalty.

Additionally, scholars have defined engagement from a cognitive, emotional, and behavioral perspective albeit these definitions are very sparse in the marketing literature. For example, Patterson et al. (2006) consider engagement to encompass four main elements:

absorption, concentration on a brand (cognition); *dedication*, sense of belonging to a brand (affect); *vigor*, level of energy and mental resilience in interacting with the brand (cognitive and affective); and *interaction*, two-way communication between a consumer and brand (behavior). Moreover, Hollebeek (2011) defines engagement as “the level of customer’s motivational, brand-related, and context dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity in direct brand interactions” (p. 6). Even though Hollebeek is recognizing engagement as three dimensions, she states that engagement is “direct, physical contact” with the brand and does not consider engagement from indirect contact, which she defines as “observing the brand through mass communications” (p. 790). This view seems to fall short in recognizing the ever-increasing interaction between consumers and brands not only with traditional mass media (e.g., television, magazines, radio, and newspapers) but within mediated contexts as well (e.g., web sites, social media).

Online consumer engagement. Considering engagement within an online consumer context, Mollen and Wilson (2010) attempted to reconcile the engagement construct and propose a working definition that describes the online consumer experience. Using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model to better understand the consumer online experience, Mollen and Wilson situate engagement in the “internal state” portion of the model. The researchers describe the internal state portion of the model as “a dynamic, tiered perceptual spectrum” (p. 920). They believe consumers respond to a company’s website or other computer-mediated entity through interaction and then undergo an experiential construct of telepresence (considered presence in this study), which is defined as cognitive immersion in the medium and website, before consumers feel engaged. Given that Mollen and Wilson place engagement after

interaction with the website and telepresence and before attitudes and behavior, the researchers define online engagement as follows:

Online engagement is a cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value. It is characterized by the dimensions of dynamic and sustained cognitive processing and the satisfying instrumental value (utility and relevance) and experiential value (emotional congruence with the narrative schema encountered in computer-mediated entities). (p. 923)

To further explain the experiential value portion of the online engagement definition proposed, Mollen and Wilson (2010, p. 923) state that brands strive to “generate a dynamic and pleasurable state in consumers” which comes from “cognitive access to a wide range of scripts and schemas both inherent in the brand communication and derived from the consumers’ own cognitive and affective framework” (Douglas & Hargadon, 2001, p.156). Furthermore, Mollen and Wilson argue that within this state tension exists between the internal and external scripts and schemas, which “generates cognitive and affective dissonance and in its drive to find utility and emotional congruence with the brand, disrupts the immersive, mechanical experience” (p. 923) and encourages engagement.

Mollen and Wilson (2010) ascertain that engagement is a distinct construct given its active relationship with a brand and the fact that it focuses on satisfying both instrumental (cognitive) and experiential (affective). They go on to state that engagement should be considered different from other constructs, specifically involvement, which is the same position adopted for this dissertation.

Mollen and Wilson (2010) point out that engagement goes beyond involvement. Drawing upon Thomson, MacInnis & Park's (2005) definition of involvement as "a state of mental readiness that typically influences the allocation of cognitive resources to consume an object, decision, or action" (p. 79), Mollen and Wilson state that engagement trumps involvement. They state that engagement trumps involvement because an engaged consumer is actively committing to the brand both cognitively and affectively via its website, whereas an involved consumer is mentally ready to consume the information cognitively but is not necessarily actively making the commitment. Based on this, engagement is more dynamic whereas involvement is more passive (Mollen & Wilson). Additionally, Mollen and Wilson state that although sometimes involvement can contain affective components (Zaichkowsky, 1985), most of the time the construct is considered purely cognitive (Thomson et al., 2005). However, engagement, from Mollen and Wilson's perspective, as well as in this study, is defined both cognitively and affectively. Lastly, for this study, engagement includes the dimension of participation, which is not included in definitions of involvement.

Furthermore, Mollen and Wilson (2010) recognize that there is limited research on online consumer engagement; specifically, research is lacking showing support of a relationship between engagement and optimal consumer behaviors (e.g., word of mouth, purchase intent). However, they state that a relationship is "both plausible and consistent with the available data" (Mollen & Wilson, p. 924). They urge researchers to investigate the relationship thus further validating the need for this study.

Lastly, Burns (2010) considered engagement to be an online behavior similar to the industry's definition of engagement. In one study, Burns measured engagement behaviors (e.g., read wall postings by brand, read fan comments, posted comments on the brand's wall, and

played games or other activities) by comparing Facebook users who had “fanned” brands and those who had not. Burns found users who “fanned” a brand and exhibited more engagement behaviors scored significantly higher on inner self-expression and self-disclosure indices and were more willing to tell a friend about the brand’s profile, continue the Facebook relationship with the brand, and friend the brand again. Based on this, Burns concluded that the more a consumer is engaged on Facebook with a brand, the more positive outcomes occur for a brand.

Although no agreed upon definition of engagement exists, several consistent themes seem to emerge from the literature to describe the construct. First, engagement is a complex cognitive process that requires focus, sustained attention, absorption, and thoughtfulness (Douglas & Hargadon, 2001; Guthrie et al., 2004; Herrington, Oliver, & Reeves, 2003; Jones, 1998; Kearsley & Schneiderman, 1998; Marci, 2006; Mathwick & Ridgon, 2004; Mollen & Wilson, 2010; O’Brien & Toms, 2008, 2010; O’Brien, 2010; Shih, 1998). Second, engagement encompasses an affective component that involves connection and bonding with the brand (Heath, 2007; Marci; O’Brien & Toms, 2008, 2010; O’Brien, 2010; Rapport, 2007; Wang 2006), emotional congruence (Douglas & Hargadon, 2000, 2001; Mollen & Wilson), and pleasure and satisfaction (Fiore, Jihyun, & Hyun-Hwa, 2005; Mathwick & Rigdon). Lastly, engagement is participating, interacting, and co-creating experiences (Burns, 2010; Evans & McKee, 2010; Harden & Heyman, 2009; Lusch & Vargo, 2010; Wang, 2011; Solis, 2010).

Deriving from the persistent themes that have emerged, the definitions of engagement provided by both industry practitioners and academics, and the frameworks proposed by academics, the following definition of online consumer engagement reconciles the practitioner and scholarly views of the construct and puts forth that engagement is a multidimensional construct that encompasses cognition, affection, and behavior. It is different than previous

definitions presented in the marketing literature of engagement as it includes cognitive and affective presence and participation. The definition is meant to serve as a benchmark to define online consumer engagement:

Online consumer engagement is the state of being present in a mediated branded space where the consumer is immersed in the brand's offerings meant to deliver purpose and value. Cognitive engagement requires intense levels of focus and concentration in seeking, interpreting, analyzing, and summarizing information to a point where consumers may lose themselves in the process and may lose a sense of time and space. Additionally, brand learning (e.g., mission, goals, product offerings, philanthropic efforts, and promotions) occurs while negative responses toward the brand are minimized. Furthermore, online consumer engagement requires affective feelings, which involves emotional bonding and connection with the brand, products, and other users that leads to overall satisfaction. Lastly, consumers must invest themselves within the online vehicle by participating through sharing, conversing, and co-creating with the brand and/or other users.

In sum, online consumer engagement could be described as the three H's – head, heart, and hands (K. Hallahan, personal communication, March 21, 2011). The “head” represents the cognitive aspect of engagement that is thoughtful and process oriented. The “heart” represents the affective aspect of engagement that is and emotionally driven. And, the “hands” represent the participative aspect of online consumer engagement that is active and transactional.

Proposed Antecedents of Engagement

The following section describes the proposed antecedents of online consumer engagement including perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived

interactivity. The three concepts are proposed antecedents of online consumer engagement as each of these concepts has been heavily studied in website design literature and has been deemed an appropriate feature to include on a company's website (Bhatti, Bouch, & Kuchinsky, 2000; Cao, Zhang, Seydel, 2005; Cyr, Head, & Ivanov, 2009; Ou & Sia, 2010; Perkowski & Etzioni, 1999). Furthermore, research has found that the presence of these three constructs on a company's website can help shape consumer perceptions that eventually can lead to a more loyal consumer base, which can ultimately influence consumer behavior, such as (re)purchase intent (Bhatti, Bouch, & Kuchinsky; Cao et al.; Cyr et al., 2009; Ou & Sia; Perkowski & Etzioni).

Perceived Information Quality

Because providing information is the basic goal of a website (Bhatti et al., 2000), information quality has drawn considerable attention in the website development and design literature. Similar to other studies, this study defines information quality as “a consumer's perception of product and company information based on a set of judgment criteria that cover accuracy, relevance, helpfulness, up-to-datedness, and unbiased measures” (Ou & Sia, 2010, p. 918). Information quality has been addressed in the consumer behavior literature as a key website trait influencing consumer evaluation and attracting online customers (Ou & Sia). Research in this area has suggested that information quality plays a key role in consumers' assessment of a company's website (Cao et al., 2005; Ou & Sia; Zhang & von Dran, 2000). In fact, Huizingh (2000) argues that information quality is one of the most important website features, as illustrated in his well-known slogan “content is king.” Huizingh's slogan emphasizes the importance of information quality, which he derived from his work based on the substantial role content has on consumer's positive upward and negative downward judgments of a website. In this study, a company's profile page on Facebook is considered one of a

company's websites that is maintained and operated by a representative of the company, and information quality on Facebook is considered information about upcoming sales, coupons, product launches, discontinuations, and stories about the products or stories about consumers using the product.

Day (1997) and Iyer (2001) reason that site content attracts a company's target audience so content must be at the forefront of design and development. Lin and Lu (2000) found that a customer's acceptance of a company's website is contingent on the information presented. Cao et al. (2005) found that online customers are attracted to websites based on the quality of information presented on the site. In addition, Ou and Sia (2010) found that consumers who perceived information quality negatively on a company's website distrusted the site, which ultimately led to low purchase intent.

As research has suggested (Cao et al., 2005; Day, 1997; Huizingh, 2000; Iyer, 2001; Katerattanakul & Siau, 1999; Ou & Sia, 2010; Zhang & von Dran, 2000), information quality is extremely important to the development of a company's website to draw in and continue to attract online customers. It is crucial for customers seeking information about a company have up-to-date, relevant, and accurate information in order to meet their needs.

Perceived Enjoyment

Research has found that the quality of information included on a website can be regarded very highly among consumers, but if the site is not enjoyable, consumers will lose interest and vacate the site (Cao et al., 2005; Smith & Merchant, 2001). Perceived enjoyment moves consumers beyond the fundamental to the hedonic (Ou & Sia, 2010), where the consumer experiences emotional involvement while using the vendor website (Zhang & von Dran, 2000). Research has found that enjoyment – website features that are fun, interesting, exciting and

entertaining (Zhang & von Dran) – has a positive effect on a customer’s evaluation of a company’s website (Chang, Cheung, & Lai, 2005; Hwang & Kim, 2007; Ou & Sia). Eighmey (1997) verified that statement, finding that by including enjoyable features within a site not only sets it apart from other sites but also contributed to overall customer satisfaction. Additionally, research has confirmed that enjoyable website features such as online games, software downloads, and Q&A heavily shaped online consumer experiences (Hwang & Kim).

Watson, Akselsen, and Pitt (1998) state that online consumers visit companies’ websites to seek gratifications, including enjoyment. Given this, Liu and Arnett (2000) suggest that website features that promote consumer excitement (e.g., online games, software downloads, and Q&A) be included in website design and development to attract consumers and to help them enjoy and enrich their online experience. By providing an enjoyable online experience, Schmidt (1996) found that online customer activities increase, including participation, promotion, excitement, and concentration. Furthermore, Ou and Sia (2010) discovered that consumers who enjoy their website experience tend to trust the company’s website more, which positively shapes repurchase intent.

Perceived Interactivity

Another website feature that has been found to produce favorable attitudes toward a brand and its online presence and ultimately influence purchase intent is interactivity (Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Although no agreed upon definition exists for interactivity (Wu, 2006), there are agreed upon assumptions to describe the term. First, interactivity is usually associated with new technology platforms, including the Internet, World Wide Web (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989; Lanham, 1993; Stromer-Galley, 2000), and social media. Secondly, interactivity facilitates two-way communication similar to interpersonal communication that produces feedback (Walther &

Burgoon, 1992; Kiousis, 2002; Williams, Rice, & Rogers, 1998). Lastly, interactivity can be characterized by the user's feelings of control (Mollen & Wilson). Steuer (1992) defines interactivity as "the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of the mediated environment in real time" (p. 84). Drawing from past research, perceived interactivity in this study is defined as "the degree to which the users perceive that the interaction between the brand and themselves to be two-way, controllable, and responsive to their actions" (Mollen & Wilson, p. 921).

Interactivity has been studied from two different perspectives. First, interactivity has been considered variable to describe a medium's (e.g., website) interactive capabilities (Kayany, Wotring, & Forrest, 1996; Kiousis, 2002). This approach views interactivity from a website's design and features perspective and is considered "the hardwired opportunity of interactivity provided during an interaction" (Liu & Shrum, 2002, p. 55). Secondly, interactivity is considered a dependent variable measuring users' perceptions (Kiousis; Wu, 1999). This approach is a more experiential approach that considers perceived interactivity as "a psychological state experienced by a site user during his or her interaction with the website" (Wu, p.91). The later perspective has recently been a popular approach adopted among researchers (Mollen & Wilson, 2010) who have come to a consensus among the key perceived interactivity dimensions including perceived user control, two-way communication and perceived responsiveness (McMillian & Hwang, 2002; Song & Zinkhan, 2008; Wu; Yadav & Varadajan, 2005).

Perceived interactivity is critical to online marketing success (Lee, 2005). Ha and James (1998) concluded that interactivity is of the utmost importance in an online commerce environment. Additionally, Lee, who identified user control, responsiveness, personalization,

and connectedness as crucial components of perceived interactivity, found that control, responsiveness and connectedness lead to trust and eventually consumer behavioral intentions. Furthermore, Cyr et al. (2009) introduced a model proposing a relationship between perceived interactivity (user control, connectedness, and responsiveness) to cognition, affect, and trust. After conducting an experiment where participants were required to browse destination vacation websites that varied in levels of interactivity, the researchers verified that all of the proposed relationships in their model were supported, providing further support of the role perceived interactivity has on loyalty through cognition and affect.

Proposed Outcomes of Engagement

The next section describes the proposed outcomes of online consumer engagement – loyalty and (re)purchase intent. Loyalty and (re)purchase intent are considered important consumer behavioral outcomes of companies' online marketing efforts and therefore are considered outcomes to consumers engaged on a company's Facebook page.

Loyalty

Loyalty has drawn considerable attention in the marketing literature (Dick & Basu, 1994; Evanschitzky, Gopalkrishnan, Plassmann, Niessing, & Meffert, 2006; Harris & Goode, 2004; Oliver, 1999). It is considered to be a key factor in achieving company success and long-term sustainability (Casalo et al., 2007; Flavian et al., 2006; Keating et al., 2003). Loyalty is considered a crucial marketing issue because research findings suggest loyalty leads to increased word-of-mouth (Hallowell, 1996), lower price sensibility (Lynch & Ariely, 2000), more company stability and larger profits (Knox & Denison, 2000), reduced marketing costs (Griffin, 2002), and decreased levels of customers switching to competitors (Yi & La, 2004). Past research found that it costs approximately five times more to acquire a new customer than to

retain an old customer (Srinivasan, Anderson, & Pannavolu, 2002). In sum, the more loyal a consumer is, the more profit the business can generate from this single customer (Griffin).

Loyalty has been generally considered from two different perspectives: behavioral and attitudinal (Auh, Bell, McLeod, & Shih, 2007; Bloemer & de Ruyter, 1998; Hallowell, 1996). Behavioral loyalty refers to consumers' repeat purchase intentions (Shang, Chen, & Liao, 2006). Oliver (1999) states that loyalty from this perspective reflects a deeply held commitment to re-buy a preferred product or re-patronize a service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand purchasing despite situational influences and marketing efforts. Furthermore, loyalty from this perspective is considered "a non-random behavior, expressed over time, which depends on psychological processes and closeness to brand commitment" (Casalo et al., 2007, p.779). As Griffin (2002) points out, non-random is the key as a "loyal customer has a specific bias about what to buy and from whom" (p. 5). Hallowell states that loyalty behavior can be explained by a situation when other alternatives exist but the consumer considers these alternatives to be of lower value than the value considered for the original seller. This implies that although satisfactory alternatives exist, loyal consumers give preference to a particular brand or company (Casalo et al., 2007).

Recently, however, there has been a shift in how loyalty is measured, from the behavioral perspective to an attitudinal perspective. An attitudinal perspective, which is how loyalty is defined in this study, is a positive attitude toward a company that exists based on an internal evaluation and is distinguishable between "real" loyalty and "spurious" loyalty due to high switching costs (Fuentes-Blasco, Saura, Berenguer-Contrí, & Moliner-Velazquez, 2010). "Real" loyalty means that the consumer has a strong preference for the brand (Mowen & Minor, 2006), and that purchases of the brand are guided by "concomitant" strong attitudes toward the brand;

whereas “spurious” loyalty is considered unauthentic and transient (Dick & Basu, 1994). Even though “like” alternatives exist, loyal consumers make clear distinctions among the alternatives and purchase the brand they have a strong positive attitude toward (Dick & Basu). Several researchers believe that the behavioral approach does not truly explain how and why loyalty is created and sustained (Dick & Basu; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Jacoby & Kyner, 1973). Because attitudinal loyalty is considered to be a psychological link with the brand, based on consumer feelings that motivate brand commitment or preference when considering brand values (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Hallowell, 1996), it is considered more stable than behavioral loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook).

This study considers loyalty from an attitudinal perspective because the study is concerned first with the consumer’s internal evaluation of the company based on their experience with the companies’ Facebook page they “like”, and second how the evaluation of this experience with the company influences (re)purchase intentions. Based on the fact that this study is assessing the link between evaluations of a company (i.e., attitudinal loyalty) to see how this may influence purchase behaviors, the study considers (re)peat purchase intentions as a standalone outcome, not as a loyalty measure.

Because the Internet provides companies with many opportunities to connect to, message with, and sell products to consumers (e.g., websites, social media applications – blogs, forums, social networking sites), interest in how these mediated encounters influence consumer loyalty has increased among practitioners and scholars. Online loyalty or e-loyalty within an online context extends the traditional context of loyalty to online consumer behavior (Fuentes-Blasco et al., 2010). E-loyalty, like loyalty, is considered both a behavioral and attitudinal measure. From a behavioral perspective, e-loyalty is defined as a “customer’s intention to buy” from a website

and that users will not switch to other sites (Cyr, 2008). Additionally, e-loyalty from a behavioral perspective can be considered as the intention to revisit the site or the intention to (re)purchase from the site in the future (Cyr, Bonanni, Bowes, & Ilsever, 2005; Cyr, 2008). E-loyalty from an attitudinal perspective can be considered a positive attitude toward the companies' web entity (Srinivasan et al., 2002) that fosters a sense of commitment and attachment to the brand.

Recent research has begun to explore the antecedents of e-loyalty although research in this area still remains scarce (Balabanis, Reynolds, & Simintiras, 2006; Christodoulides & Michaelidou, 2011). One antecedent to e-loyalty heavily explored in the literature is trust. Several studies have confirmed the relationship between trust and loyalty (Casalo et al., 2007; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Cyr, 2008; Lau & Lee, 1999; Matzler, Grabner-Krauter, & Bidmon, 2008; Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Sabor, 2002). Trust within an online consumer context is considered a cognitive component and is based on the idea of a brand-consumer relationship (Matzler et al.; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995). It can be defined as the reliance of consumers on a brand to perform its stated function (Matzler et al.). Morgan and Hunt (1994) state that trust creates a highly valued exchange relationship between a consumer and a brand, which in turn contributes to high levels of brand loyalty.

Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) explored the linking role of brand trust to brand loyalty, both behaviorally and attitudinally, and found that brand trust contributed to both behavior and attitudinal loyalty. Similarly, Matzler et al. (2008) confirmed Chaudhuri and Holbrook's findings that there is a positive relationship between brand trust and brand loyalty, both behaviorally and attitudinally. Additionally, Cyr (2008) considered the role website design characteristics had on trust and satisfaction and ultimately brand loyalty across multiple cultures.

He found validation for this study's proposed model that website design characteristics lead to trust and satisfaction, which ultimately leads to brand loyalty. Lastly, Casalo et al. (2007) considered the relationship between trust and loyalty in a brand community, and found that a positive relationship between trust and loyalty exists within a brand community.

Brand affect is considered another antecedent to e-loyalty. Brand affect can be defined as "a consumer's overall favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the brand" (Matzler et al., 2008, p. 155). Additionally, brand affect can be considered the emotional response elicited from a consumer after using the brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Dick and Basu (1994) suggest that consumers under conditions of more positive emotional moods and affect should experience greater levels of brand loyalty. In sum, according to Chaudhuri and Holbrook (p. 84) "brands that are higher in brand affect should be purchased more often and should encourage greater attitudinal commitment."

Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) found that brand affect has a positive relationship with brand loyalty, especially when combined with brand trust. Additionally, Matzler et al. (2008) confirmed earlier findings by Chaudhuri and Holbrook in that brand affect is positively related to brand loyalty. Furthermore, the researchers state that because brand loyalty is strategically important to companies, companies need to foster a sense of brand affect through corporate identity, communication, and merchandising.

Another antecedent of e-loyalty studied is participation. Several scholars have considered the role participation has on e-loyalty within an online virtual community (Casalo et al., 2010; Koh & Kim, 2004; Shang et al., 2006). Participation in this context means "taking part in" or "contributing to" some specific activity or event online (Barki & Hartwick, 1994; Vroom & Jago, 1988). Koh and Kim recommend four factors to measure participation within a virtual

community: the motivation to interact with other community members, the effort to stimulate the virtual community, the contribution to the community with useful content and information in order to help other community members, and the excitement with which an individual posts messages and responses to the community.

Based on Koh and Kim's (2004) recommendation, Casalo et al. (2010) considered whether participation in a virtual community dedicated to software predicted loyalty toward the software. After conducting an online survey of virtual community members, Casalo et al. found that loyalty is directly influenced by participation within the virtual community. Not only were the members loyal to the online community but they were also loyal to the software brand the community was centered on. Thus, the researchers suggested that marketers consider developing virtual communities that encourage participation among members to influence loyalty (Casalo et al.).

Additionally, Shang et al. (2006) surveyed virtual community members of an Apple computer users' community as an attempt to explore the relationship between participation and loyalty. The researchers defined participation as the act of contributing to the community via posting as well as the more passive act of lurking (Shang et al.). The researchers justified including lurking within their participation definition because they stated that the purpose of lurking and posting is the same – to gain information (Shang et al.). The researchers found a positive relationship between participation and loyalty and more specifically, between lurking and loyalty (Shang et al.). Based on their findings, Shang et al. encourage companies to create online communities focused on their products, either hosted by the company or a third party vendor (e.g., Facebook), that are equipped to elicit participation by community members as a way to increase brand loyalty.

Lastly, in an effort to understand the antecedents of e-loyalty in an online shopping context, Christodoulides and Michaelidou (2011) proposed a model of motives for online shopping. The model proposes that social interaction will positively affect e-loyalty. The researchers define social interaction very similarly to how other researchers define participation. Specifically, they define social interaction as the opportunity for “consumers to socialize, interact, and exchange information” about a specific company’s products and about shopping experiences through social networks (e.g. Facebook), blogs and online communities (Christodoulides & Michaelidou). After conducting an online survey, Christodoulides and Michaelidou concluded that social interaction does positively affect e-loyalty. The researchers state that companies who provide opportunities for their customers to socialize online significantly enhance the shopping experience, which has the potential to increase levels of e-loyalty (Christodoulides & Michaelidou; Kozinets, 2002; Srinivasan et al., 2002)

In addition to understanding the antecedents of loyalty and e-loyalty, researchers are also exploring the outcomes of loyalty and e-loyalty. Past research has found that consumers with higher levels of loyalty have increased satisfaction (Petrick & Backman, 2002) and commitment (Fullerton, 2003). Based on this, Casalo et al. (2007) concluded that “loyalty helps build relationships with consumers,” which may lead to additional behavioral intentions such as repeat purchases.

(Re)purchase Intent

Historically, the notion of repeat (re)purchase has been associated with loyalty. In fact, several scholars have measured loyalty from a strictly behavioral standpoint in which brand loyalty is considered the act of re-buying a brand or re-purchasing a service consistently, thereby creating a pattern of repetitive same-brand purchasing (Oliver, 1999). However, as discussed

above, considering the loyalty construct from an attitudinal perspective is gaining credibility based on the premise that loyalty leads to behavioral intentions, which includes purchase decisions (Shukla, 2009). Because of this, the notion of repeat purchase, the act of buying again and again from the same business (Griffin, 2002), is considered a separate construct from loyalty in this study. (Re)purchase intent for this study is defined as a consumer's intentions to buy from a specific brand in the future whether that be a first time purchase or a repeat purchase.

Griffin (2002) explains that a consumer willing to repurchase from a company whenever an item is needed is considered the "ultimate consumer" for a company. Furthermore, a consumer willing to repurchase from a company is more profitable to the company compared to a consumer who is not because companies benefit from reduced marketing costs, lower transaction costs, reduced customer turnover expenses, increased cross-selling success, and reduced failure costs (Griffin). In sum, Griffin explains that a company should "seek out, court, serve, and nurture" customers who consistently purchase repeatedly (p. 12).

Because (re)purchase intent has been considered a brand loyalty measure within the behavioral perspective, limited research has investigated the link between brand loyalty and (re)purchase intent. However, recent work conducted by Shukla (2009) hypothesized that brand loyalty has a significant influence on consumers' purchase decisions. Shukla stated that if a consumer is not loyal to a brand, he/she will purchase different brands of that product; however, if a consumer is loyal to a brand, he/she tends to purchase that brand over and over. Furthermore, loyalty, described as a strong attitude and opinion about a brand, is crucial for repeat purchase intentions (Shukla). Based on this, Shukla conducted focus groups to determine brand loyalty levels and repeat purchase intentions and found that a positive relationship between brand loyalty and repurchase intent exists. In light of these findings, it is recommended that

brand managers focus on developing attitudinal brand loyalty as a way to influence repeat purchases (Shukla). This finding aligns with the work conducted by Balabanis et al. (2006) in that the more familiar consumers are with a brand, the more likely they are to exhibit brand loyalty, which in turn influences repeat purchases.

Recent research has been conducted that provides support for the brand loyalty/purchase intent relationship. Gomez and Rubio (2010) considered the relationship between a consumer's attitude about a brand and brand loyalty, where brand loyalty was defined as purchase intent. It can be inferred, based on their findings, that patronage behavior (i.e., (re)purchase intent) may be prompted by consumers who demonstrate strong brand loyalty (Dholakia & Durham, 2010; Hyllegard et al., 2011; Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh, & Kim, 2008).

Additionally, work by Filo, Funk, and O'Brien (2010) helps to establish the link between strong positive attitude toward a brand and purchase intent. Recent work investigated the relationship between attachment and purchase intent within charity sports events. The authors defined attachment as "a dynamic process in which a sport object can be used by an individual to develop strong attitudes and self-expression" (Filo et al., p. 626). The definition of attachment is similar to loyalty in that both constructs are concerned with a consumer's attitudes toward an object. In the work of Filo et al.'s, the attitude is toward a sporting event; in this paper the attitude is toward a brand. After surveying participants in a 3M (technology company) half marathon benefiting charity, the researchers found that participants with a favorable attachment toward the event sponsor were more likely to purchase products from the event sponsor in the future. From this, it can be deduced that consumers with favorable attachments (i.e., loyalty) toward a brand, will most likely purchase from that brand in the future.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The following section presents the proposed conceptual framework developed by this researcher for online consumer engagement. The framework is thoroughly described and a discussion on past models that the present framework draws upon are presented. Then the section moves into discussing the hypotheses for the study. The hypotheses are stated alongside relevant literature supporting the proposed relationships.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study is to explore the concept of engagement and to test the proposed conceptual model of online consumer engagement (Figure 1) constructed for this study. The framework integrates theories from website design, psychology, communication, and consumer behavior. Because engagement within an online consumer behavioral context is an emergent construct within academia, limited frameworks have been proposed to date outlining the process of online consumer engagement. The proposed framework for this study draws from the frameworks of O'Brien and Toms (2008) and Mollen and Wilson (2010) as starting points to help understand the online consumer engagement process. Relevant portions of O'Brien and Toms' (2008) and Mollen and Wilson's frameworks are reviewed to provide the groundwork for the present study's framework and hypothesized relationships. The proposed antecedents to online consumer engagement will be discussed first (perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity) followed by the components of online consumer engagement with an emphasis on the three components comprising online consumer engagement (cognitive, affective, and participative). Lastly, the outcomes of online consumer engagement (loyalty and (re)purchase intent) will be presented.

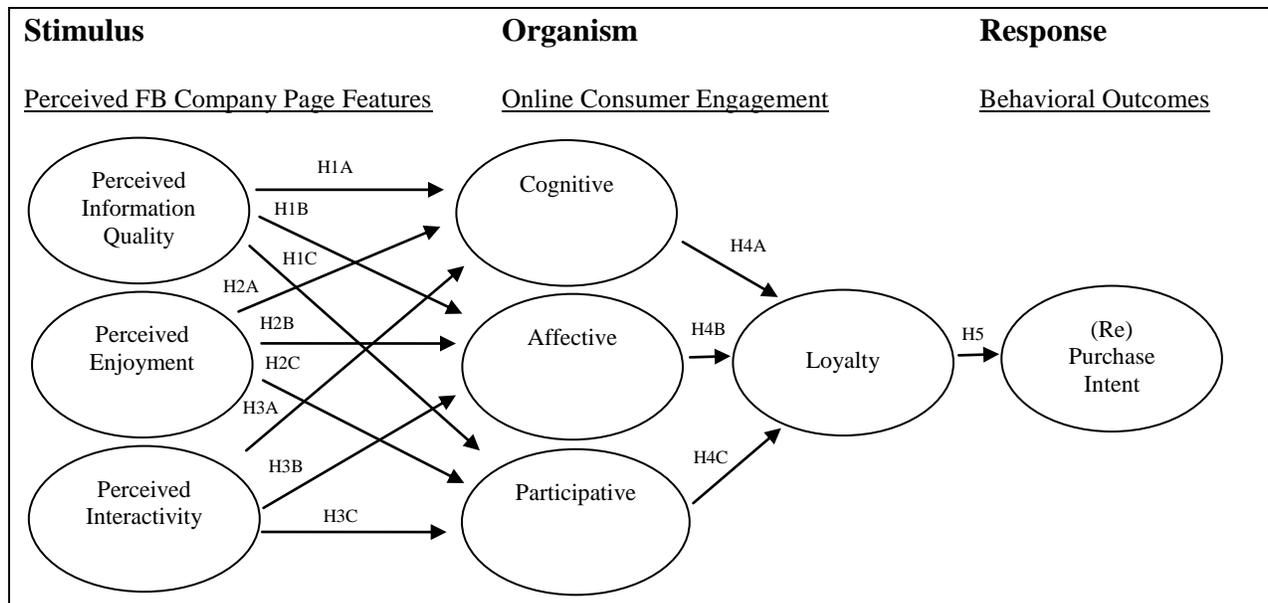


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework of Online Consumer Engagement

The foundation of the proposed conceptual framework is situated within the stimulus – organism – response (S-O-R) model adopted from Mehrabian and Russell’s (1974) environmental psychology model. The S-O-R model suggests that specific features of an environment provoke an individual’s emotional state, which causes a behavioral reaction (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). The S-O-R model has been applied to advertising (Pavlechak, Antil, & Munch, 1988; Olney, Holbrook, & Batra, 1991), voter preference (Christ, 1985), computer experience (Eroglu, Machleit, & Davis, 2003; Sautter, Hyman, & Lukosius, 2004), and marketing, specifically consumer behavior (Holbrook & Gardner, 1993; Verma, 2012).

Of relevance to this study, is the application of the S-O-R model within the consumer behavior literature. Researchers in this field seek to understand consumer behavior “by viewing a consumer as an organism capable of processing information” (Verma, 2012, p. 126).

According to Donovan and Rossiter (1982), the S-O-R model must consider three elements: taxonomy of stimulus, organism, and taxonomy of responses. The stimulus portion of the model

considers the set of environmental characteristics that affect the individual's internal state (Baker, Levy, & Grewal, 1992; Eroglu, Machleit, & Davis, 2001; McKinney, 2004; Sherman, Mathur, & Smith, 1997). Past research has considered potential store attributes as stimuli within the model, which include store atmosphere, store image, and store location (Arnold, Oum, & Tigert, 1983; Black, Ostlund, & Westbrook, 1985; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Lindquist, 1974; Martineau, 1958; Schuler, 1981).

Additionally, research has considered the potential virtual attributes present on a website to be stimuli within the model. The stimulus is the website itself, which consists of "its infrastructure and embedded mechanical stimuli" (Mollen & Wilson, 2010, p. 920). Researchers have considered a websites' design (e.g., architecture, decoration, color), layout (e.g., graphics, images, navigation), and information (e.g., amount, type, and importance) to be stimuli (Loureiro & Riberio, 2011). Given this, the current study considers the characteristics of a company's Facebook page to be the stimuli within the model, which include perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity.

The organism is the emotional and cognitive state of the consumer (Loureiro & Riberio, 2011). Once a consumer has experienced the environmental stimuli, the consumer processes the stimuli into meaningful information to help him/her understand the environment before making a decision (Koo & Ju, 2010; Loureiro & Riberio). Emotional states considered in previous research focused on consumer behavior are pleasure and arousal (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). According to Eroglu, Machleit and Davis (2001), arousal and pleasure tend to capture the range of appropriate emotional responses experienced by consumers. Pleasure can be defined as "the degree to which a person feels good, joyful, happy, or satisfied in a situation" (Menon & Kahn, 2002, p. 32). Additionally, arousal can be defined as "the extent to which an individual who

engages in online feels stimulated, active, or excited when navigating a web pages (Koo & Ju, p. 380). Because the definitions of pleasure and arousal have similar tenets to the definition of online consumer engagement, the current study considers online consumer engagement to be the emotional state influenced by a company's Facebook page features.

The last portion of the S-O-R model is the response. According to McKinney (2004), the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the consumer experience is reflected in the consumer's response. The response can be approach behaviors (e.g., purchasing, using, and positively communicating with others) or avoidance behaviors (e.g., no intention of returning/purchasing, negative word-of-mouth) (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). Loureiro and Riberio (2011), state that the response can be both behavioral and attitudinal. Taken from this, the current study considers loyalty and (re)purchase intentions as responses to online consumer engagement on a company's Facebook page.

As stated earlier, the stimulus portion of the model regards the perceived company Facebook features as the stimulus to online consumer engagement. O'Brien and Toms' (2008) framework begins with the point of engagement, which is described as the period before engagement occurs. At the point of engagement, O'Brien and Toms (2008) state that specific attributes are present on a website that center on the quality of the information presented and the enjoyment of the features. The researchers state that online participants are interested in and pay close attention to the content present on a site and the aesthetic attributes present on a site. Jennings (2000) defines aesthetics of a website as the interesting, pleasurable, and enjoyable attributes present on a particular site. O'Brien and Toms (2008) conclude that the informational content and the aesthetic attributes present on a website capture participants' attention (cognition) and interest (affect), which "moves them forward into engagement" (p. 943). Based

on this, the proposed framework for online consumer engagement for this study considers website features of information quality and enjoyment to be antecedents of online consumer engagement.

Another antecedent proposed in the present study's model is interactivity based on Mollen and Wilson's (2010) framework. Mollen and Wilson place engagement within the internal state portion of the S-O-R model following interactivity and telepresence. The researchers suggest that the consumers must interact with a website and perceive that the interaction is "two-way, controllable, and responsive to their actions" (Mollen & Wilson, p. 921). They state that after consumers interact with a website, they experience telepresence, which is the psychological state of "being there" in a computer-mediated environment (Mollen & Wilson). In other words, consumers perceive themselves to be "stepped in and interacting with an environment" (Mollen & Wilson, p. 921). Even though Mollen and Wilson place interactivity and telepresence as antecedents to engagement, this study considers only interactivity to be an antecedent of engagement. Drawing from the narrative engagement literature (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009), this study considers presence to be a part of engagement. In that, engaged consumers are cognitively and affectively immersed and transported in their online experience that they forget they are consuming media.

After the point of engagement in O'Brien and Toms' (2008) framework and after interactivity and telepresence in Mollen and Wilson's (2010) framework is engagement. Both O'Brien and Toms (2008) and Mollen and Wilson consider engagement to be a cognitive and affective construct based on the extensive research in various disciplines that have concluded that engagement comprises cognitive and affective elements (Douglas & Hargadon, 2000, 2001; Fiore et al., 2005; Guthrie et al., 2004; Heath, 2007; Herrington et al., 2003; Jones, 1998;

Kearsley & Schneiderman, 1998; Marci, 2006; Mathwick & Ridgon, 2004; Mollen & Wilson; O'Brien & Toms, 2008, 2010; O'Brien, 2010; Shih, 1998; Wang 2006). Specifically, engagement is considered to be a cognitive process that accompanies an active and sustained mental state as well as an affective state that involves emotional bonding, emotional congruence, satisfaction, and pleasure (Coates, 2007; Douglas & Hargadon, 2001; Heath; Mollen & Wilson; O'Brien & Toms, 2008; Marci; Rappaport, 2007; Zhu, 2006). Based on prior research this study considers online consumer engagement to be both a cognitive and affective construct.

However, this study expounds upon the definition and considers that online engaged consumers must be present in their online experience, based on the narrative engagement literature. By being present, consumers are psychologically immersed in their experience. Research states that immersed consumers are involved (Palmer, 1995), absorbed (Quarrick, 1989), and engrossed (Lombard & Ditton, 1997). Furthermore, Lombard and Ditton define presence by stating users "are engaged." Additionally, consumers who are present in their online experience are transported into the experience so deeply that they can forget they are consuming media (Lombard & Ditton). This intensity, which draws upon cognition and affect, can reduce the level of critical and/or challenging thoughts toward the experience (Green & Brock, 2000; Slater & Rouner, 2002). This is a critical point to consider within online consumer engagement in that engaged consumers who are present in their online experience get wrapped up in and immersed in the company's messages to a point that they may be less critical of or challenging to the company's promotional messages. Thus, the company's online promotional message can be successful in positively influencing the consumers' beliefs regarding the company. Based on this, certain attributes of presence are included in both the cognitive presence and affective

presence dimensions of online consumer engagement as a critical point of differentiating engaged users versus non-engaged users.

In addition to expanding this definition of online consumer engagement by including presence, this study enriches the definition of online consumer engagement by including the component of participation. Drawing heavily from the industry literature, most practitioners define engagement as the act of participating (Evans & McKee, 2010; Harden & Heyman, 2009; Solis, 2010; Wang, 2011). Practitioners believe consumers are engaged online when they become active participants that respond and create conversations, discussions, and discourse (Atherley, 2011; Evans & McKee). Furthermore, engaged consumers that participate online are integral to a company's online success due to the collaboration that can occur between a company and its consumers within a social media environment, specifically Facebook (Evans & McKee). As an attempt to align the industry definition of engagement with the academic definition of engagement, which is based on cognitively processing and emotionally bonding with a brand, the participation component was included in the online consumer engagement portion of the conceptual framework.

As mentioned earlier, online consumer engagement as defined in this study can be thought of as the three H's – head, heart, and hands (K. Hallahan, personal communications, March 21, 2011). Figure 2 showcases the three H's of engagement. The “head” represents the cognitive aspect of engagement that is thoughtful and process oriented. The “heart” represents the affective aspect of engagement that is emotionally driven. And, the “hands” represent the behavioral aspect of online consumer engagement that is the act of participating.

In Mollen and Wilson's (2010) framework, optimal consumer attitudes and behavioral outcomes follow engagement. The researchers state that the experiential state of engagement has

a positive relationship to optimal consumer outcomes due to the cognitive processing and affective bonding occurring toward a company. However, Mollen and Wilson do not identify specific optimal consumer outcomes of engagement. This study proposes that loyalty and (re)purchase intent are consumer outcomes of online consumer engagement, which furthers the framework proposed by Mollen and Wilson.

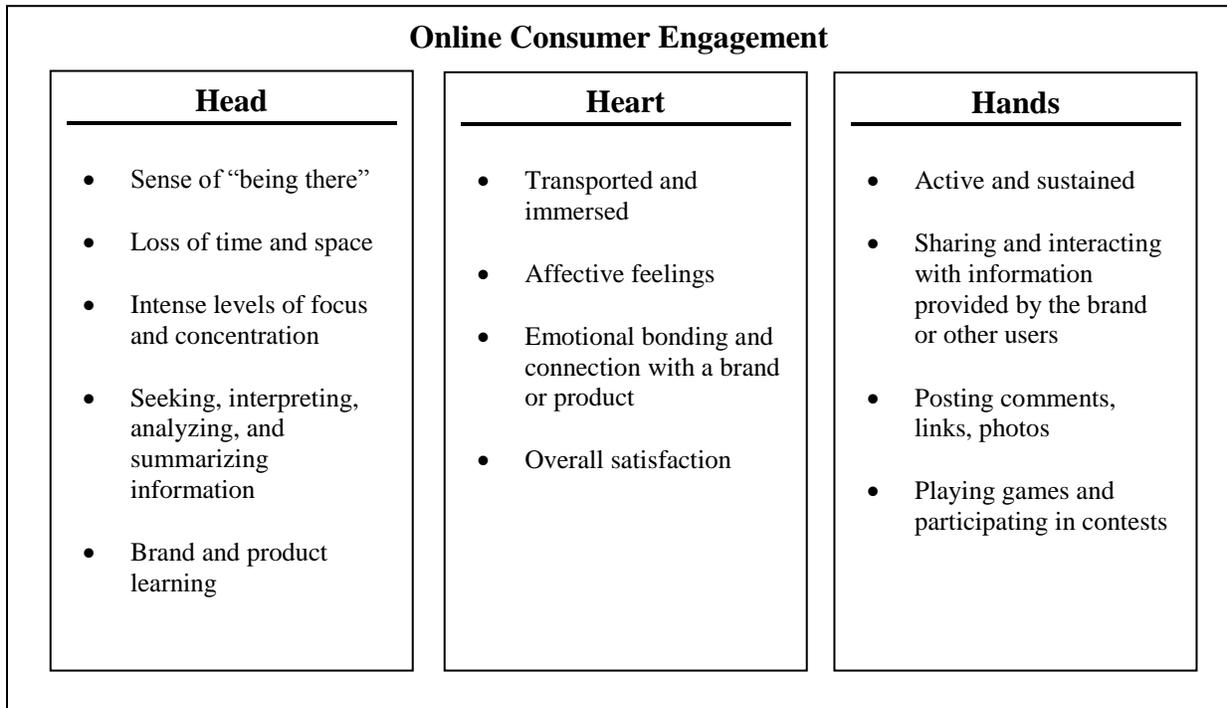


Figure 2. The Three H’s of Online Consumer Engagement – Head, Heart, and Hands

Loyalty is considered an outcome of engagement because past research has found a positive relationship between the elements of engagement – cognitive, affective, and participative – and loyalty (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005; Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Cyr et al., 2009; Howard & Sheth, 1969; Jang et al., 2008; Muñoz & O’Guinn, 2001; Shang et al., 2006; Tyebjee, 1977), which suggests that online consumer engagement may lead to loyalty. In addition, loyalty is considered to be a key factor in achieving company success and long-term sustainability (Casalo et al., 2007; Flavian et al.,

2006; Keating et al., 2003), suggesting that engagement leads to loyalty is considered an optimal consumer behavior for a company. Lastly, because companies want to increase sales through consumer (re)purchase behavior and past research has found a positive relationship between brand loyalty and (re)purchase intent (Balabanis et al., 2006; Filo et al., 2010; Shukla, 2009;), (re)purchase intent is the final component of the online consumer engagement framework.

To summarize, the conceptual framework considers consumer perceptions of Facebook company page features – perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity – to be major antecedents of online consumer engagement. The features represent the perceived attributes included on the website assessed by a consumer. Because this study is using Facebook as its test environment, the features assessed will be the features on a company's Facebook page. The perceived features are thought to predict online consumer engagement.

Online consumer engagement is characterized by three dimensions: cognition, affection, and participation. It is considered that these three dimensions of online consumer engagement are required for consumers to have an active relationship with a brand online. Again, because the study is focused on Facebook, online consumer engagement will be measured via companies' Facebook pages. This author hypothesizes that online consumer engagement influences brand loyalty.

Lastly, loyalty, considered from an attitudinal perspective (i.e., commitment), is theorized to lead to consumer behavioral intentions. The behavioral intention of interest for this study is (re)purchase intent. Considering brand loyalty and (re)purchase intent as outcomes of engagement are unique to this study, and if a relationship is found, this would be considered a contribution to the overall body of literature.

Hypothesis Development

Perceived Facebook Company Page Information Quality and Online Consumer Engagement

Perceived information quality refers to a consumer's assessment of the information presented on a website based on accuracy, relevance, helpfulness, currency (being up-to-date), and unbiasedness (Cao et al., 2005; Ou & Sia, 2010; Zhang & von Dran, 2000). Information quality is thought to be a key website feature that influences consumer behavior. Past research (Cao et al.; Day, 1997; Huizingh, 2000; Iyer, 2001; Katerattanakul & Sia, 1999; Ou & Sia; Zhang & von Dran) has found that information quality is extremely important to the development of a company's website to draw in and continue to attract online customers. Through in-depth interviews, O'Brien and Toms (2008) found that consumers become engaged when a system possesses the information that is sought. O'Brien and Toms (2008) further found that if consumers have the opportunity to locate information on a system that is relevant and appropriate to their needs, that captures their attention, defined very cognitively as the concentration of mental activity (Matlin, 1994) and focus, become engaged in the system.

Additionally, O'Brien and Toms (2008) found that the quality of information presented can be less cognitively tangible and more affect-provoking and experiential in that the consumers can "lose" themselves in the information presented, which can evoke a sense of excitement, pleasure, enthrallment, and satisfaction with the information. Lastly, O'Brien and Toms (2008) concluded that interacting with information provides the "connectivity" to engagement. Interacting with information is described as the "process people use in interacting with content" (Toms, 2002, p. 855), which is defined very similarly to the participation component of online consumer engagement used in this study. Drawing upon O'Brien and Toms' (2008) argument that the information presented within the technology is important for the engagement process to

occur, information quality is proposed as an antecedent to online consumer engagement.

Information quality is considered to influence the cognitive (seeking, attending, interpreting, and critiquing information), affective (excitement toward the information and ultimately the brand and satisfaction), and participative (interacting with the information) components of online consumer engagement. Thus, the following hypotheses are derived:

H1A: Perceived information quality on a Facebook company page that a consumer has “liked” positively predicts cognitive online consumer engagement.

H1B: Perceived information quality on a Facebook company page that a consumer has “liked” positively predicts affective online consumer engagement.

H1C: Perceived information quality on a Facebook company page that a consumer has “liked” positively predicts participative online consumer engagement.

Perceived Facebook Company Page Enjoyment and Online Consumer Engagement

Enjoyment, website features that are fun, interesting, exciting and entertaining (Zhang & von Dran, 2000), has been found to have a positive effect on a customer’s evaluation of a company’s website (Chang et al., 2005; Hwang & Kim, 2007; Ou & Sia, 2010). Past research has found that consumers who view their time on a company’s website as enjoyable also experience emotional involvement with the brand, which can lead to positive brand bonding (Zhang & von Dran) and increase overall satisfaction (Eighmey, 1997). Additionally, enjoyable online experiences can make users feel cognitively involved with a brand (Zhang & von Dran), which can promote branding learning and concentration (Watson et al., 1998). Enjoyable experiences can also increase online participation as consumers are more willing to stay on the site and provide their input (Watson et al.; Zhang & von Dran). O’Brien and Toms (2008) state that in order to encourage online consumer engagement, company’s sites must have a sensory appeal, which they consider to be aesthetics and novelty. The researchers found that websites with aesthetically appealing features – an experience that is interesting and pleasurable

(Jennings, 2000; O'Brien & Toms, 2008) – and novelty appealing features – features that are surprising that cause excitement and joy (Aboulaflia & Bannon, 2004; O'Brien & Toms, 2008) – move consumers forward into engagement. Based on this, the construct of enjoyment is proposed to be an antecedent to online consumer engagement. Enjoyment influences the cognitive (brand learning and concentration), affective (emotionally involvement, brand bonding and satisfaction), and participative (providing input) components found in online consumer engagement. Therefore, the following hypotheses are posited:

- H2A: Perceived enjoyment on a Facebook company page that a consumer has “liked” positively predicts cognitive online consumer engagement.**
- H2B: Perceived enjoyment on a Facebook company page that a consumer has “liked” positively predicts affective online consumer engagement.**
- H2C: Perceived enjoyment on a Facebook company page that a consumer has “liked” positively predicts participative online consumer engagement.**

Perceived Facebook Company Page Interactivity and Online Consumer Engagement

Interactivity is the extent to which a user perceives the communication in a mediated environment to be two-way, controllable, and responsive (Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Interactivity is thought to be a critical marketing feature on a vendor website or other web entities that contribute to favorable attitude formation for a brand, which ultimately can influence purchase intent (Ha & James, 1998; Lee, 2005; Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Cyr et al. (2009) define perceived interactivity as “allowing the consumer control and access to information on the site in a variety of ways, which is both personally satisfying and responsive” (p. 853).

O'Brien and Toms (2008) consider interactivity to be a part of engagement. They believe that users are engaged when feedback is present and when users feel they are in control of the interaction (Schneiderman & Plaisant, 2005). They consider that engagement occurs when there is interaction between the users and the system (O'Brien & Toms, 2008). However, in

their conceptual framework, Mollen and Wilson (2010) consider interactivity to be an antecedent to engagement. They state that a user must know the environment has a feedback loop and that he/she can control it before a user can become engaged with a system. Clearly there is a contradiction among researchers regarding the relationship between interactivity and engagement. This study will follow Mollen and Wilson's framework and consider interactivity to be an antecedent to engagement because interactivity can be defined as the "initiation" or starting point to something (i.e., communication, relationship, and partnership), whereas engagement is more involved and sustained (Webster's Universal College Dictionary, 2001). These definitions provide a foundation to the framework and suggest that interactivity initiates the engagement.

Because interactivity is two-way, controllable, and responsive, interactivity can lead to the three online consumer engagement components – cognition (processing, interpreting, and utility relevance), affect (personally satisfying and emotional congruence), and participation (providing input). Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H3A: Perceived interactivity on a Facebook company page that a consumer has "liked" positively predicts cognitive online consumer engagement.**
- H3B: Perceived interactivity on a Facebook company page that a consumer has "liked" positively predicts affective online consumer engagement.**
- H3C: Perceived interactivity on a Facebook company page that a consumer has "liked" positively predicts participative online consumer engagement.**

Online Consumer Engagement and Loyalty

Online consumer engagement can be described as the three H's – head, heart and hands. The construct is multidimensional and is comprised of cognitive (head), affective (heart), and participation (hands) dimensions. In order for consumers to be engaged online, they need to be cognitively and affectively present while also participating in an attempt to form a relationship

with a company online. The following section focuses on describing the three dimensions of online consumer engagement and how they relate to loyalty.

Cognition

Cognitive online consumer engagement is concerned with being present in the mediated environment. Consumers who are engaged online are highly immersed in the experience of seeking, interpreting, analyzing, and summarizing the information presented in the mediated space, so they can forget they are consuming media. Additionally, consumers are intensely wrapped up into the company's story and are learning about the brand and product.

Past research has shown that brand loyalty is stronger when consumers are psychologically or cognitively committed to a brand (Howard & Sheth, 1969; Tyebjee, 1977). When consumers are cognitively engaged in a brand, their knowledge/information and learning about the brand increases, therefore, promoting consumer loyalty (Shang et al., 2006). Cyr, Hassanein, Head, and Ivanov (2007) reported that social presence (experience of others being psychologically present) resulted in higher loyalty toward an e-Service website. Additional work by Cyr et al. (2009) found that higher levels of effectiveness, a cognitive term used to measure brand learning, resulted in higher levels of brand loyalty. Shang et al. found a positive relationship between cognitive involvement with a brand and loyalty. Even though involvement and engagement are different constructs, they have similarities and therefore citing the relationship between cognitive involvement and loyalty is pertinent to this study. Extrapolating from above, cognitive online consumer engagement is thought to influence loyalty. Based on this, the following hypothesis is put forth:

H4A: Cognitive online consumer engagement positively predicts loyalty toward the company a consumer has “liked” on Facebook.

Affect

Affective online consumer engagement is defined as a consumer being affectively present by emotional bonding and connecting with a company that leads to overall consumer satisfaction. Past research has considered the relationship between affect and loyalty. Dick and Basu (1994) proposed that the more positive affective feelings about a brand a consumer has, the more loyal that consumer should be to the brand. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) tested the relationship between brand affect and loyalty and found that a positive relationship between the two variables does exist. The researchers state that brands that are higher in brand affect should be purchased more (Chaudhuri & Holbrook). In a study testing the relationship between brand commitment, defined as an emotional attachment (similar to the notion of emotional bonding in this study), and loyalty, Jang et al. (2008) found that higher levels of brand commitment lead to higher levels of loyalty. The researchers stated that commitment is the foundation of loyalty, as commitment may help to shape positive attitudes toward a company that then positively shapes loyalty toward that company. Furthermore, Matzler et al. (2008) found a positive relationship between brand affect, defined as an emotional response to a brand, and loyalty after surveying mobile phone users. In considering the relationship between affect and loyalty in an online space, Shang et al. (2006) found that affect had a positive effect on brand loyalty. Based on past research that has continually found a positive relationship between affect and loyalty, it is proposed that affective online consumer engagement leads to loyalty and thus the following hypothesis is presented:

H4B: Affective online consumer engagement positively predicts loyalty toward the company a consumer has “liked” on Facebook.

Participation

Participation is the final dimension in the online consumer engagement construct.

Participation means “taking part in” or “contributing to” some specific activity or event (Barki & Hartwick, 1989, 1994; Vroom & Jago, 1988). Within a branded online space this means posting, sharing, conversing, and co-creating content with the company and/or other consumers.

Participation in a branded online space is considered to be one of the most important factors to the development and sustainability of the space (Casalo et al., 2007). Researchers have considered how participation in a branded online space fosters consumer loyalty toward the brand hosting the space (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Andersen, 2005; Casalo et al., 2010; Muñiz & O’Guinn, 2001). Many studies have found a positive link between participation and loyalty (Algesheimer et al.; Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Muñiz & O’Guinn). Algesheimer et al. believe this is because once consumers participate in an online space dedicated to a brand, their connection to the brand is elevated, which leads to brand commitment and eventually loyalty (Casalo et al.; Koh & Kim, 2004).

In researching the Jeep online community, McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002) found that consumer participation in the online community encouraged Jeep loyalty amongst its members. Furthermore, Casalo et al. (2007; 2010) found a positive relationship between consumer participation (i.e., effort to stimulate the community, motivation to interact, value of comments posted, and excitement to posting and responding on the site) in free software communities (several virtual brand communities developed around open-source products) and loyalty toward free software. In addition, Shang et al. (2006) found that participation (e.g., posting messages and lurking in the space) in the Apple Software virtual community influenced loyalty toward Apple software. Taken together, these studies show a relationship between participation in a branded space and loyalty toward the brand. This line of thought is carried out

in this study in that the participative dimension of online consumer engagement is proposed to influence loyalty. Thus, the following hypothesis is established:

H4C: Participative online consumer engagement positively predicts loyalty toward the company “liked” on Facebook.

Loyalty and (Re)purchase Intent

(Re)purchase intent is a behavioral construct that combines the concepts of repurchase and purchase. (Re)purchase intent is defined as the likelihood of purchasing from a company in the future (Putrevu & Lord, 1994). For the current study, (re)purchase intent considers both consumers who are first time buyers and consumers who have purchased from the company in the past. This study considers both types of consumers because consumers who “like” companies on Facebook can “like” a company they have not purchased from before but intend to purchase from in the future, as well as consumers who have purchased from the company before and intend to do so again.

Traditionally, loyalty has been defined and measured as a consumer’s (re)purchase intent (Oliver, 1999); however, a movement toward measuring loyalty from an attitudinal perspective is gaining momentum because it is considered a psychological link between the consumer and the company (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Because attitudinal loyalty is considered to be a psychological link, it is thought to be more stable measure of loyalty compared to the behavioral measure of loyalty. Based on this, (re)purchase intent is considered a separate construct from loyalty in this study. Past research has considered the relationship between loyalty and (re)purchase intent. Several scholars have situated loyalty before (re)purchase intent, stating that a loyal customer consistently purchases the same brand that they have a strong bond with (Bolton, Kannan, & Bramlett, 2000; Dick & Basu, 1994; Griffin, 2002; Shukla, 2009). Griffin considers the relationship between loyalty and (re)purchase intent within a purchase cycle.

Griffin states that if consumers are in the highest level of loyalty, which Griffin considers “premium loyalty,” their willingness to (re)purchase is high. In a study considering the influence brand loyalty has on purchase decisions, Shukla found, through focus groups and a questionnaire, that brand loyalty impacts purchase decisions. Taken together, prior research suggests that loyalty influences (re)purchase intent. Based on this, the following hypothesis is posited:

H5: Loyalty toward the company “liked” on Facebook positively predicts (re)purchase intent.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a detailed description of the methodology used to investigate the hypothesized relationships in Figure 1. The investigation was divided into two research phases – Phase One employed a qualitative methodology and Phase Two employed a quantitative methodology. This chapter opens with a discussion on Phase One, which includes details regarding recruitment and design for the qualitative component of the study. The chapter then describes Phase Two with a discussion of the sampling and data collection procedures used for the quantitative component of the study. Next, a discussion on survey development and the pretest process is presented. Lastly, the chapter concludes with the operational definitions of the variables considered in the online consumer engagement model.

Phase One

As stated above, to investigate the proposed relationships in the online consumer engagement model, the study consisted of two phases. Phase One employed a qualitative approach, using a focus group to help refine the survey used in Phase Two. Focus groups are considered a “group interviewing” technique used to understand consumer attitudes and behavior (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003, p. 124). The approach allows researchers an opportunity to interview several individuals at the same time about a specific subject to gain insight and understanding about individuals’ lived experiences (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Lunt & Livingston, 1996; Wimmer & Dominick). Conducting interviews in a group setting produces the “group effect” (Carey, 1994), which is a phenomenon that occurs in group interaction where members are “stimulated by the ideas and experiences expressed by each other” (Lindlof & Taylor, p.182). The group effect can uncover data and insights that would not be available if not for the group setting (Lindlof & Taylor; Morgan, 1988). Furthermore, focus groups are tools used to “probe”

people's responses to media messages and media use (Lindlof & Taylor). Thus, focus groups were used understand consumer experiences with social media, specifically consumer experiences with and thoughts about company pages on Facebook.

Additionally, use of focus groups can be considered an exploratory method used to gather preliminary information for research studies (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). When measures have yet to be developed, variables are unknown, or guiding frameworks do not exist, focus groups are a good starting point according to Creswell and Clark (2007). Merton (1987) states that focus groups can be a good approach for researchers to use initially as a way to help develop the quantitative portion of an investigation. Specifically, focus groups can help develop survey questionnaire items (Creswell & Clark; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Lunt & Livingston, 1996; Wimmer & Dominick). Creswell and Clark state that researchers can qualitatively explore a research topic with a few participants and then use the findings as a guide to develop items and scales for a quantitative survey instrument. Thus, the current study employed focus groups to help guide the development of the survey to be used in this study; a survey exploring all of the proposed variables in the context of company Facebook pages does not currently exist nor does an established survey exist in the literature pertaining to the main variable – online consumer engagement.

Sampling and Data Collection

Sampling

In order to capture data for the development of this study's questionnaire, two focus groups were conducted with a convenience sample of college student participants who have experience "liking" companies on Facebook. College students were an appropriate sample because college students make up the largest demographic of Facebook users (Burbary, 2011).

In fact, college students are the fastest growing demographic on Facebook, increasing 74% in one year (Digital Buzz Blog, 2011). Furthermore, college students are an appropriate sample because they have a greater tendency compared to other demographic cohorts to “like” companies on Facebook (Burns, 2010; Li, 2007). Specifically, Generation Y, those born between 1979 and 1994, show the greatest interest in “liking” brands on Facebook compared to any other age segment (Li).

In a recent study measuring engagement behaviors between Facebook users who had “liked” brands and those who had not, Burns (2010) surveyed college students because of their “extensive use of Facebook, propensity to become fans of brands online, and willingness to engage with brands” (p. 11). Additionally, in their work investigating the motives of fanning behavior on Facebook, Hyllegard et al. (2011) surveyed college students because the social networking site was originally created for college students and because college students constitute the largest segment of Facebook users. For this study, college students were utilized to help develop this study’s survey because of their Facebook knowledge and expertise.

A convenience sample is a nonprobability sample that selects participants readily available for the study (Henry, 2009; Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). The sample is derived from the “physical” proximity between the researcher and research participants (Bostrom, 1998). Convenience sampling is often used in qualitative research, specifically in focus groups (Henry; Reagan, 2006; Wimmer & Dominick). A frequently used and acceptable convenience sample in consumer behavior and communication studies is undergraduate college students (Reagan; Wimmer & Dominick). Given that an undergraduate student population is an acceptable population to draw from, the proximity of the undergraduates to the researcher, and their “liking”

habits on Facebook, employing a convenience sample with a college student population was an acceptable sampling approach to utilize for the focus group.

In order to obtain the sample for the focus group, the study was advertised in a Western city on a college campus through offline and online means. Because focus group participants needed to “like” a company on Facebook and needed to be at least 18 years of age, the call for participants specified these requirements. Print advertisements were placed on bulletin boards around the campus, specifically in the student centers, resident halls, and classrooms. In addition, with permission from the Facebook page administrator from the campus, recruitment efforts were conducted through the university’s Facebook page. As a way to generate more interest in the study, a \$20 American Express gift card was given away in a drawing during each focus group.

Focus Group Process

For the study, two focus groups – each consisting of 11 students, 22 in total – were conducted. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), six to 12 participants is the optimal size for a focus group because fewer than six may prohibit diverse comments and over 12 may limit the number of topics discussed and may hinder participation from all group members. Each focus group took approximately one hour to conduct, which falls within the recommended length of time (Lindlof & Taylor). By limiting the session to one hour, this researcher hoped to build trust and rapport with the focus group participants, which is crucial to the success of a focus group and the ability to capture data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The focus group took place in a “neutral” location, which was a conference room on the university campus. By selecting a “neutral” location, the researcher hoped that participants did not feel intimidated or hesitant to participate (Lindlof & Taylor). Furthermore, the focus group was conducted in a conference

room as a way to provide an informal setting that stimulated group discussion (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996). Additionally, each focus group was audio recorded with an “unobtrusive recording device” (Fielding, 1993; Lunt & Livingstone). Lindlof and Taylor state that “the use of tape recorders has one significant virtue: it enables researchers to capture the interview more or less exactly as it was spoken” (p. 187). They go on to state that recording focus groups can put the researcher’s mind at ease as she/he will not have to worry about remembering or missing remarks in case the “researcher’s mind wanders or being momentarily distracted” (p. 187).

This researcher was the moderator for the focus group. The moderator’s role was to move the focus group along and encourage all participants to contribute as an attempt to develop “good group feelings” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). This researcher worked from an interview schedule (Appendix A) when conducting the focus group. The questions asked were designed to understand consumers’ experience with “liking” companies on Facebook. Specifically, questions focused on how consumers interact and participate with companies on Facebook, feelings of time and space while on a company’s Facebook page, company Facebook page characteristics, loyalty and what loyalty meant to participants, and if consumers had changed their behavior since “liking” a company on Facebook. Example questions included: “How do you typically interact with companies you ‘like’ on Facebook?”; “If you ‘like’ more than one company on Facebook, how do the companies’ pages differ from each other in terms of site characteristics?”; and “What do you do when you go to a company’s page on Facebook?” Interview schedules are best for focus groups as they provide structure and formality to the focus group process and also allow “spontaneous follow-up probes as appropriate to clarify remarks or to ask for elaboration” (Lindlof & Taylor, p. 194). Additionally, each respondent filled out a personal data sheet (Appendix B), which provided basic demographic information (e.g., age,

gender, school, and major) and information regarding general Facebook usage and “liking” experience.

Data Analysis

After the focus groups were conducted, analysis of the data began. The first step in data analysis was to compute the sample means for the demographic, general Facebook usage, and “liking” experience data obtained from the personal data sheets. The second step in data analysis was to transcribe the focus group sessions. Transcription of the session provided a written account of the focus group, which allowed the researcher to “listen” to the focus group in a more studied way that lent itself to the data analysis process (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). After the focus group session was transcribed, the analysis moved to identifying categories within the data. Categorization is a way of “chunking” data together into like “concepts, themes or other ‘bins’ that are similar” (Lindlof & Taylor, p. 214). Spiggle (1994) states that categories “identify a unit of data as belonging to, representing, or being an example of some more general phenomenon” (p. 493). Categories that emerged from the inductive approach were reasons/motivations to “like” Facebook company pages, newsfeed vs. company page, companies’ Facebook page characteristics, presence, loyalty, and (re)purchase intent.

In addition to developing categories, a coding scheme was developed using the focus group data. A coding scheme served as a data management tool that “labeled, separated, compiled, and organized the data” (Charmaz, 1983, p. 111). According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), the “core purpose of coding is to mark the units of data as they relate meaningfully to categories” (p. 216). In essence, a coding scheme takes the categories posited by researchers and links them together (Lindlof & Taylor).

In this study, the coding scheme separated the data within the categories into meaningful, more defined groups. Specifically, the coding scheme narrowed the data related to companies' Facebook page characteristics into more specific labels of information quality, enjoyment, and interactivity. Additionally, the coding scheme helped narrow the data related to presence into specific groups consisting of cognition, affect, time, and space. The process of identifying categories and developing a coding scheme helped in the survey development process for this current study. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), through categorization identification and development of a coding scheme, researchers hope to "locate revealing moments" in the focus group data that can inform the development of the study's questionnaire items. Moreover, Reagan (2006) states that the categories and themes identified in focus group transcripts can be used to develop items for the study questionnaire. As discussed in the results section, the focus group data did "locate revealing moments," which helped refine the study questionnaire.

Phase Two

After Phase One was completed, Phase Two of the research plan was employed, which was administering an online survey. Surveys collect data from a population of respondents as an attempt to understand behavior in a variety of contexts (Negrine & Newbold, 1998). According to Bostrom (1998), surveys are an appropriate research approach to use to understand consumer behavior (Negrine & Newbold). Surveys make use of a formal set of questions to "estimate the distribution of characteristics in a sample (Dillman, 2000, p. 9). Additionally, surveys seek to provide empirical data to lend support or negate hypotheses or propositions (Negrine & Newbold). Furthermore, surveys are administered to "describe, find, or validate" specific proposed relationships (Reagan, 2006, p. 92). This study employed a survey to understand consumer behavior, specifically consumer "liking" behavior on Facebook. Moreover, this study

sought to validate relationships in the proposed online consumer engagement framework, and to lend support to the study's posited hypotheses.

Sampling and Data Collection

Sampling

The study recruited a sample of participants who were 18 years old or older, U.S. residents, and who "liked" companies on Facebook. Participants had to be at least 18 years old because at 18 they are considered adults who are in charge of their own purchasing choices. Because this study was concerned with (re)purchase intent, participants had to make their own purchasing decisions. Furthermore, a U.S. sample was collected because the United States ranks the highest in the number of Facebook users compared to other countries (Burcher, 2011). In fact, according to Burcher, the United States has over 150 million Facebook users. Over a quarter of U.S. Facebook users over 18 years old "like" companies on Facebook (Dyer, 2011) making the United States one of the highest ranked countries with Facebook users who "like" brands. Additionally, because Facebook is the environment with which online consumer engagement was explored in this study, it was appropriate to collect data from Facebook users who "liked" brands on Facebook.

A snowball sampling technique was employed to recruit participants for the survey. Snowball sampling is an approach that relies on referrals (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). The idea behind this technique is to find a few qualified research participants who are interested in the study that can also suggest other potential qualified participants (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The sample emerges through the referrals "made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest" (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, p. 141). Henry (2009) states that a snowball technique is an acceptable approach to use when

conducting surveys. He goes on to say that a snowball sample can “obtain evidence about individuals whose experiences are relevant to the study’s purpose” (p. 81). Additionally, Lindlof & Taylor state that a snowball technique works well when studying social networks (e.g., Facebook).

In a study exploring how people use Facebook for educational purposes, Mazman and Usluel (2010) employed a snowball technique to recruit participants for their online survey. By posting the survey on their Facebook profiles as well as acquaintances’ profiles, and asking study participants to forward the survey link on to potential participants, they received over 600 usable surveys. Additionally, Hyllegard et al. (2012) used a snowball sampling approach in their work exploring how women of different generational cohorts vary with respect to liking companies on Facebook. They recruited over 400 participants for their online survey by posting the survey link on their personal Facebook profiles and email accounts. Taken together, snowball sampling was an appropriate approach to recruit participants for this study given that the approach has been successful for other scholars whose research focuses on Facebook. Furthermore, given that snowball sampling is a suitable approach to use when studying social networks, it was an appropriate approach for the current study as Facebook is considered an online social network. Lastly, as suggested by Henry (2009), snowball sampling can help gain insight about individuals that is relevant for a study; snowball sampling for this study helped provide insight into consumers “liking” experience on Facebook.

Data Collection Procedures

The survey was administered online using Qualtrics technology. Qualtrics is a web-based survey tool that provides researchers the opportunity to create comprehensive surveys for academic purposes (Qualtrics, 2011). Qualtrics generates a unique URL after a researcher has

built a survey using Qualtrics software that can be easily distributed and accessed online (Qualtrics).

In order to get the snowball sample started, this researcher employed a similar approach as Mazman and Usluel (2010) and Hyllegard et al. (2011) did for their studies focused on Facebook. First, this researcher posted the survey link on her personal Facebook account and asked qualified (18 years old or older, U.S. citizens, who “liked” companies on Facebook) Facebook acquaintances to take the survey and also asked them to post the survey link on their Facebook accounts to forward the survey link along to potential participants. In addition, the survey was posted to several Facebook groups who the researcher had affiliations with, and permission was granted by the administrators. After two weeks, a reminder was posted to the researcher’s Facebook page and the affiliated Facebook groups. Lastly, advertisements were placed on a Western city college campus as a way to solicit survey respondents. A drawing for five \$20 American Express gift cards was conducted to incentivize survey participation.

After accessing the survey using the unique URL, participants were directed to the survey cover letter that briefly described the purpose of the study; stated that participants must “like” at least one company on Facebook; stated that survey participation was voluntary and could end at any time, and responses to the survey were confidential; discussed the incentives (a possibility of winning one of five \$20 American Express gift cards); and provided contact information of the researcher and Institutional Review Board if a participant would like to ask questions regarding the research study. Once the participants read through the cover letter, they were asked to complete the survey in its entirety.

Participants were asked the qualifying question (i.e., if they “liked” a company on Facebook). If participants answered “yes,” they proceeded to the next set of questions in the

survey but if the participants answered “no,” they did not continue on with the survey. Next, participants were asked demographic questions and then were asked to think about the Facebook company page they visit most frequently before answering the remaining questions in the survey. Respondents were asked to provide their email address if they wanted to be included in the drawing. Respondents’ emails were placed in a different folder and were not connected to survey data. Emails were only used to contact winners of the drawing. Data collection took four weeks.

Instrument Development

The survey (Appendix B) contained five sections: qualifying question; demographic information; personal information regarding Facebook usage; questions pertaining to their perception of the companies’ Facebook page characteristics and questions regarding online consumer engagement, specifically questions focused on cognition, affect, and participation; and questions regarding brand loyalty and (re)peat purchase intentions.

The survey contained measurement items for the following variables: perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, perceived interactivity, online consumer engagement cognition, online consumer engagement affect, online consumer engagement participation, loyalty, and (re)purchase intent. In addition, the survey asked questions regarding the respondents’ prior experience with the brand to be used as a potential covariate. Respondents also were asked about their Facebook usage in general and specifically about their “liking” behavior. Lastly, the questionnaire contained demographic information including gender, age, ethnicity, education, and income. The demographic information provided a better understanding of the respondents taking the survey. According to Negrine and Newbold (1998), the

demographic questions – gender, age, ethnicity, education, and income – are standard questions included on consumer behavior surveys to “seek out basic socio-demographic data” (p. 244).

In order to develop the survey for the study, the following steps were conducted. The first step involved conducting a comprehensive literature review and creating a pilot survey. According to Reagan (2006), the first step in developing a survey is to conduct a comprehensive literature review to identify concepts and tested relationships as well as measures of related variables. Once this is conducted, Reagan states that a pilot survey can be created. Next, Phase One, which employed focus groups, was conducted. The last step in the development of the survey was to pre-test it. Reagan states that pre-testing a survey with “real” people can help the researcher identify any problems or potential failings with the survey. According to Negrine and Newbold (1998), pre-testing a survey can “iron out many of the potential difficulties with which the researcher, who is bound up intimately with the subject, cannot always anticipate” (p. 247).

Additionally, Reagan (2006) and Negrine and Newbold (1998) state that a researcher only needs a small sample of participants to pre-test a survey. For this study, a convenience sample of 20 participants consisting of college students, staff, and this researcher’s colleagues pre-tested the survey. The participants for the pre-test must have “liked” a company on Facebook to be eligible to ensure that they had the same qualifications ultimately as the participants used for this study. The participants completed the survey online and were asked to take notes on question coherency and understanding, flow of the questionnaire, technical mechanics of the survey, length of the survey, and grammar (Negrine & Newbold; Reagan; Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). Based on the participants’ feedback from the pre-test, the survey was modified. First, several page breaks and a progress bar were inserted to ensure flow and

usability of the questionnaire. Second, wording to questions and responses was modified to enhance clarity.

Operationalization of Variables

Next, the measures used in the study are presented. Each variable in this study is thoroughly discussed in terms of its operational definition as well as its scale items. The scale items have been modified to fit within the context of the current study – “liking” companies on Facebook.

Measures

Perceived information quality. Drawing from definitions cited in previous studies (Cao et al., 2005; Ou & Sia, 2010; Zhang & von Dran, 2000), information quality attempted to capture the consumer’s assessment of product and company information on the company’s official Facebook page that they “like” as it relates to information accuracy, relevancy, type, usefulness, and helpfulness. Information quality was measured with five items modified from instruments created by Cao et al.’s and Zhang and von Dran’s. Cao et al. and Zhang and von Dran used the items to measure company websites so the items were modified to fit this study’s context of “liking” companies on Facebook. All five items were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). Example statements measuring information quality include “The company’s page that I ‘like’ on Facebook provides useful information” and “The company’s page that I ‘like’ on Facebook provides accurate information.”

Perceived enjoyment. Using past definitions of enjoyment as a reference point (Cao et al., 2005; Ou & Sia, 2010; Zhang & von Dran, 2000), the enjoyment variable attempted to measure a consumer’s assessment of the features on a company’s Facebook page that they “like” based on whether they feel the features are fun, subjectively pleasing, and overall appealing.

Enjoyment was measured with five items modified from the instrument developed by Cao et al. and Koufaris (2002). Because those items measured websites, they were modified to fit this study's context of "liking" companies on Facebook. All five items were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). The following are examples of statements that were used to measure enjoyment: "The company's page that I 'like' on Facebook is fun" and "The company's page that I 'like' on Facebook is entertaining."

Perceived interactivity. Based on definitions previously identified (Lee, 2005; Mollen & Wilson, 2010), perceived interactivity attempted to assess the degree to which a consumer perceives the interaction or communication to be two-way, controllable, and responsive on a company's Facebook page that he/she "likes". Perceived interactivity was measured by six items. Items measuring the perceived interactivity dimensions of "user control" and "two-way communication" were modified from instruments created by Lee (2005) and Cyr et al. (2009). Modifications were necessary for the scale to be applicable within this study's focus of "liking" companies on Facebook because those instruments were used to measure company websites. Items measuring the perceived interactivity dimension "responsiveness" were based on previous research conducted by Johnson, Bruner, and Kumar (2006), who measured perceived interactivity within the context of a company's website. Items were altered for the current study to relate to the social networking environment of Facebook. All items were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). The following are examples of statements that were used to measure perceived interactivity: "The company's page that I 'like' on Facebook allows me to be in control of what I want to see" (user control), "Customers share experiences about products or services with other customers on the

company's page I 'like' on Facebook" (two-way communication), and "The company's page I 'like' on Facebook responds to my inquires in a timely manner" (responsiveness).

Online consumer engagement: cognition. Cognition was one of the online consumer engagement dimensions that were measured in this study. Cognition within the construct of online consumer engagement attempted to measure a consumer's presence within the mediated space and his/her ability to process and focus attention on seeking, interpreting, analyzing, and summarizing information on a company's Facebook page that he/she "likes" to the point where he/she forgets about the mediated space. Additionally, cognition within the online consumer engagement context sought to assess whether the consumer learned about the company, brand, or product on the company's Facebook page that he/she likes. The cognitive dimension of online consumer engagement was measured with six items based on O'Brien's (2010) engagement scale. The measures were modified from an online shopping context to fit the study's context of "liking" companies on Facebook. All items were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). The following are examples of the statements that were used to measure cognition as it relates to online consumer engagement: "I feel like I learned a lot about the brand and/or products featured on the company's page that I 'like' on Facebook" and "I was absorbed in the company's page that I 'like' on Facebook."

Online consumer engagement: affect. Affect is another online consumer engagement dimension that was measured for this study. Affect within online consumer engagement seeks to understand the hedonic presence of a consumer's experience. The construct attempted to measure a consumer's pleasure and satisfaction with his/her experience as well as the consumer's assessment of the brand bonding that is occurring with the company he/she "likes" on Facebook. The measures for affect within online consumer engagement were also based on

O'Brien's (2010) engagement scale. Again, the measures were modified from an online shopping context to fit the study's context of "liking" companies on Facebook. The construct was measured using five items. All items will be measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). The following are examples of statements that were used to measure affect as it relates to online consumer engagement: "I feel connected to the company I 'like' on Facebook because I use the company's Facebook company page" and "I found the experience of using the company's page I 'like' on Facebook to be pleasurable."

Online consumer engagement: participation. The last dimension measured for online consumer engagement construct is participation. The participative dimension as it relates to online consumer engagement attempts to measure how the consumer "takes part in" or "contributes to" by co-creating content within the company's Facebook page, as well as the types of activities the consumer engages in on a company's Facebook page. The two scale items measuring how the consumer "takes part in" or "contributes to" a company's Facebook page were modified from work by Casalo et al. (2010) on virtual brand communities to be relevant for the study's focus of "liking" companies on Facebook. The items were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). The following are examples of statements that measure participation as it relates to online consumer engagement: "In general, I am very motivated to participate actively on the company's Facebook page that I 'like' " and "In general, I frequently post messages and responses on the company's page on Facebook that I 'like.' "

The scale items measuring the types of activities consumers engage in on a company's Facebook page were adapted from Burns (2010) to reflect activities available for consumers who

“like” companies on Facebook. The five items were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “never” (1) to “very frequently” (7). The following are examples of statements that were used to measure the participation dimension of online consumer engagement: “I have posted a comment on a brand’s Facebook page,” “I read other fans’ comments on the brand’s Facebook page,” and “I have played games or other activities on the company’s Facebook page that I ‘like.’ ”

Loyalty. Similar to other studies (Reynolds & Beatty, 1999a), loyalty attempted to capture a consumer’s commitment to the brand he/she “likes” on Facebook based on the consumer’s positive attitude toward that brand. The scale to measure loyalty comprised five items from Reynolds and Beatty’s (1999a & 1999b) and Bettencourt’s (1997) instruments focused on retail shopping. The wording for the scale items were modified to align with the study’s focus of “liking” companies on Facebook and to adhere to the attitudinal definition of loyalty. The survey participants were asked to respond to the items in the scale using 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). Example statements are “I am very loyal to the company I ‘like’ on Facebook,” and “I am very committed to the company I ‘like’ on Facebook.”

(Re)purchase intent. Drawing from past studies (Putrevu & Lord, 1994), (re)purchase intent attempted to measure the degree to which a consumer intends to buy from the company he/she “likes” on Facebook in the future either for the first time or again. The scale measuring (re)purchase intent was made up of three items modified from instruments by Putrevu and Lord’s work on print advertisements and Taylor and Baker’s (1994) work on service industries (e.g., airlines). Again, the items were modified for the measures to be relevant to “liking” companies on Facebook. The three items were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from

“strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). The following are examples of the statements that were used to measure (re)purchase intent: “In the future, I would buy products from the company I ‘like’ on Facebook,” and “I will purchase from the company I ‘like’ on Facebook the next time I need a product/service it offers.”

Covariate measure: past experience with the company. Due to the fact that a consumer’s past experience with a company may play an important role in influencing his/her “liking” behavior on Facebook, past experience with the company was measured as well to potentially allow controlling for the effect of past experience on the construct online consumer engagement. In order to assess a consumer’s past experience, which includes past purchases and previous use of the company’s products or services, four items were used. The first item attempted to investigate whether the respondent had any experience with the company prior to “liking” the company on Facebook. The following statement was asked to understand the consumer’s familiarity with the company using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7): “I am very familiar with the company I ‘like’ on Facebook.”

The next items attempted to measure the respondent’s previous experience with the company using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “never” (1) to “very frequently” (7): “How often have you purchased from the company prior to ‘liking’ the company on Facebook?” and “How often did you use the company’s product prior to ‘liking’ the company on Facebook?” If the respondent said “yes” to using the product prior to “liking” the company on Facebook, then he/she was prompted to rate his/her experience. The following statement was asked to understand the consumer’s prior experience with the company using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7): “Would you rate your previous experience with the company prior to “liking” it on Facebook to be positive?”

Demographic Variables

Lastly, demographic variables were measured. The following is the list of demographic variables along with the operationalization definitions for each as defined by Yan (2005):

- Gender: Female/Male
- Age: Age of the respondent given in years
- Ethnicity: Ethnic group the respondent belongs to based on list provided
- Education: Highest level of formal education completed
- Income: Household income for the respondent based on list of ranges provided

Data Analysis

The following section describes the data analysis plan used for Phase Two of the study. Data analysis of Phase Two began after the survey was administered. This section starts with a description of the data screening process. Next, the section discusses the computation of descriptive statistics and the factor analysis that were completed for each variable. Structural equation modeling is then presented as the appropriate method used to test the relationships proposed in the online consumer engagement framework. This section concludes with a discussion on testing the hypotheses posited for the study.

Data Screening

The first step in the data analysis plan was to examine the data or “screen” the data. According to Hayes (2005), data screening “is the process of examining the data file for errors in the data file itself” (p.79). Hayes suggests that data screening is necessary to ensure that data are accurate and research conclusions are correct. Hayes states that the data screening process starts by generating a table of minimum and maximum values to find any errors in the data. The minimum and maximum values table reports what the lowest number entered for the data is and

what the highest number entered for the data is. For this study, every variable was examined by generating a table of minimum and maximum values. Because many of the items were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7), a minimum and maximum table showed if data were not between the 1 and 7 range, which suggested errors in the data. In addition, data screening identified any missing data.

Additionally, data screening included linearity and homoscedasticity, which revealed how the “residuals tended to be spread around the regression line” for each path estimate (Hayes, 2005, p. 298). If after plotting the residuals, this researcher found that the residuals did not spread across the regression line in a vertical direction in approximately the same amount, this researcher would go back to the data and check for errors to ensure that the “goodness of fit” was not overestimated (Hayes). Additionally, this researcher screened the data for multicollinearity, which is a test to determine how correlated the variables are to each other (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1992). According to Hayes, researchers should strive for higher tolerance rather than lower tolerance to ensure that the variables are unique and are not measuring conceptually similar things. This researcher looked for multicollinearity values greater than .10 to ensure that variables were measuring different conceptual constructs as suggested by Hair et al.

Descriptive Statistics and Measurement Model

The next phase in the data analysis plan was to compute the descriptive statistics on each variable. Descriptive statistics summarize the data and describe each variable (Hayes, 2005). Additionally, descriptive statistics provide information about the sample (Hayes).

After the descriptive statistics were computed, the data analysis plan followed Anderson and Gerbing’s (1988) two-step approach to analyzing structural equation modeling. The first

approach was the “measurement purification stage” (Badrinarayanan & Laverie, 2011). In this phase, the initial step was to conduct exploratory factor analysis to get a better understanding of the data. During the exploratory factor analysis, factor loadings were examined and removed if factors loaded lower than .60 to ensure unidimensionality as suggested by Nunnally (1978). According to Anderson and Gerbing, conducting exploratory factor analysis, which identifies poor psychometric properties and purifies the measurement model to ensure reliability, is necessary before testing the full model. Once the exploratory factor analysis was conducted, a confirmatory factor analysis was completed. A confirmatory factor analysis attempts to confirm that the exploratory analysis is a good fit by identifying a measurement model. The measurement model was then analyzed to see if the fit was good for the specified model.

Structural Equation Modeling

Once the confirmatory factor analysis was complete and the measurement model was confirmed, this researcher moved to testing the revised framework for online consumer engagement. Structural equation modeling was employed to test the framework. Structural equation modeling examines a “series of relationships simultaneously while providing statistical efficiency” (Hair et al., 1992, p. 427). Because the purpose of this study was to test the relationships proposed in the online consumer engagement framework, structural equation modeling was an appropriate approach to use because the approach was to test the relationships concurrently. Additionally, structural equation modeling has been used in a variety of disciplines, including marketing, to test proposed frameworks of consumer behavior (Hair et al.). Specifically, O’Brien and Toms (2010) used structural equation modeling to test the relationships of their proposed model of engagement. Because the approach has been used in similar studies testing engagement (i.e. O’Brien & Toms, 2010), it was an appropriate approach

to employ for this study because this study was focused on testing the relationships proposed in its online consumer engagement framework.

In order to employ the structural equation modeling approach to test the constructs within the proposed model, this researcher used LISREL 8.80, one of the most popular software packages used to test structural models (Hair et al., 1992). LISREL allows researchers to “empirically test theories” (Scientific Software International, 2011). LISREL 8.80 was used to fit the data to the model once this researcher had collected data for the observed variables (Scientific Software International, 2011).

Test of Hypotheses

After the LISREL analysis was complete, this researcher applied the data to the proposed model to examine the relationships in the online consumer engagement model. This final step in data analysis tested the hypotheses posited for this current study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter discusses the results from Phase One and Phase Two of the research project. This chapter is divided into four sections: focus group results, preliminary data analysis, overall model fit for the entire sample, and summary of results. The first section presents the focus group results with a discussion of the respondents' characteristics and their responses to the focus group questions. Additionally, refinements to the survey are discussed based on the data from the focus group regarding the antecedents of online consumer engagement and the construct of presence and how it relates to online consumer engagement within the "liking" environment on Facebook. The second section, preliminary data analysis, starts with an overview of respondents' characteristics and the descriptions of the variables in the proposed online consumer engagement model. Then the section discusses exploratory factor analysis followed by diagnostic tests and confirmatory factor analysis. Next, this chapter describes the overall model fit using structural equation modeling. Specifically, this section discusses the test of the hypothesis and structural equation modeling as a whole to determine the final structural model. Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary of findings associated with the hypotheses testing.

Phase One: Focus Group Results

Two focus groups were conducted to aid in the development of the survey used in this research project. Both focus groups, moderated by this researcher, were approximately one hour in length, and were voice recorded and later transcribed. A drawing for one \$25 American Express gift card was held at each focus group.

Participants' Characteristics

A convenience sample of college students who have “liked” companies on Facebook was employed. Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the focus group participants. Each focus group had 11 students for a total of 22 focus group participants; 68% were female and 32% were male. On average participants were 21 years old. In addition, 50% were seniors, 36% were juniors, and 14% were sophomores; no participants were freshman. The participants in the focus group had a range of majors including Business Administration, Communication Studies, Education, Journalism and Mass Communications, Nursing, Psychology, Sociology, and Sports Medicine.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Focus Group Participants (N=22)

Characteristics	Mean/Sample Percentage
Age	
M (Range: 19 – 34 years old)	21.4
Gender	
Male	31.9
Female	68.1
Year in School	
Freshman	0.0
Sophomore	13.6
Junior	36.4
Senior	50
Length of Facebook user	
Years	4.93
Number of Companies “liked” on Facebook	21.3
Time Spent on “liked” Companies’ Facebook Page per week	
1 to 5 hours	81.8%
6 to 10 hours	18.2%
11 to 15 hours	0.0%
15 to 20 hours	0.0%
21+ hours	0.0%

The focus group participants have been Facebook users for approximately five years and on average “liked” over 20 companies on Facebook. The most common types of companies “liked” were companies in fashion, food/drink, and retail industries. Furthermore, participants

“liked” a variety of companies, but Chipotle, Nike, Target, Toms, Victoria’s Secret, and Wal-Mart were referenced several times by multiple participants. Most respondents (82%) spend one to five hours per week on the companies’ Facebook pages that they “like,” while 18% spend six to 10 hours the companies’ Facebook pages that they “like.”

Focus Group Findings

Participants were asked why they “like” companies on Facebook. An overwhelming majority “like” companies on Facebook because of the incentives including exclusive deals, coupons, promotions, and “fun” contests. Moreover, participants “like” companies on Facebook because of the company updates regarding new products, product launches, and sales. One participant loved “being in the know,” especially regarding sales. Additionally, several participants have interacted with companies solely through their newsfeed. However, if companies’ newsfeed posts were “intriguing, interesting or entertaining,” participants have gone to companies’ Facebook page. In particular, one participant referenced a contest sponsored by Bath and Body Works where the company encouraged fans to post pictures of themselves with their Bath and Body Works products:

“It was crazy. Some fans had thousands of lotion bottles in their closet. Bath and Body Works would post the pictures on their newsfeed and then I would go to the Facebook page to see more pictures of these crazy fans. Once I was on the page [Bath and Body Works Facebook page], I was able to learn about a new product coming out this spring that I am very excited about.”

Additionally, several participants stated that they go directly to the company’s Facebook page. One participant described a time when he had one goal in mind when he went to a company’s Facebook page – to find out where the company was located and what hours the company was open. Several participants agreed, stating that they had gone to a company’s Facebook page because they were looking for specific information regarding hours of operation,

location, upcoming events, and dates of sales. Other participants have gone to a company's Facebook page because they have enjoyed looking at pictures the companies uploaded. Several participants have spent hours looking at pictures companies have posted, including pictures of products, employees, and other customers. For example, a participant discussed why she had visited the Lilly Pulitzer Facebook page:

“Lilly Pulitzer announced that a product was coming back by popular demand and I thought ‘Oh my God, I have to get it’ so I went to the company’s Facebook page and ended up spending lots of time looking at pictures of clothes ... I just got so excited!”

When asked what qualities the participants liked on a company's Facebook page, many referenced that they liked the page to have up-to-date information that mattered to them. In particular, one participant stated that a company's Facebook page cannot contain “clutter or fluff – just relevant information.” Furthermore, an overwhelming majority said that the page has to be “fun.” When further questioned as to what made a company's Facebook page “fun,” participants said that it has to be “surprising, interesting, and unique.” Several participants said that contests, pictures, video, and surprise promotions are elements that make a company's Facebook page fun.

Lastly, participants discussed the opportunity to interact with a company on Facebook as a favorable quality of a company's Facebook page. Most participants said they liked that they had the option to directly message a company, although most did say they rarely use the function. However, one participant mentioned that she “likes” Vibram Five Fingers on Facebook and has interacted with the company via its Facebook page:

“Vibram encouraged fans to post pictures with their shoes on so I did. The company actually ‘liked’ the photo and even messaged about it, which got me really excited.”

Another participant had a similar story about Toms:

“I posted a picture of my feet for ‘A Day without Shoes’ and uploaded it to Toms Facebook page. My feet were featured in the Toms’ ‘Barefoot Collage,’ which made me feel not only so connected to the company but I felt like I made a difference.”

Participants also discussed that they appreciated other fans' interacting with the companies they "like" on Facebook. One participant said "it's cool that other consumers like what I like." Participants varied in their responses to how they have interacted with other fans on Facebook, which ranged from simply reading their posts to "liking" their posts to actually commenting on their posts.

As an attempt to explore the concept of presence as it relates to engagement, participants were asked to describe their feelings regarding a sense of time and space when they were on a company's Facebook page. A few participants stated that they have not lost a sense of time or space while on a company's Facebook page, but they did note that they have spent a lot of time on a company's Facebook page in general. However, several participants did state that they have lost a sense of time and space while on a company's Facebook page, especially when they have been looking at company's photos. Additionally, participants stated that if they were reading posts on a company's wall and they found the posts to be entertaining and informative, they would continue to explore the company's page by reading the history of the company, mission statement, comments, and posts from other consumers. One participant described how she went to Toms' Facebook page because a friend of hers "liked" the company on Facebook. Once there, the participant said she learned about the company's "cause" so she said she read everything about the company on Facebook. She stated that she got wrapped up into the company's story, explaining that "if I am consuming their products, I am not just a consumer – I am helping ... that means a lot to me."

Additionally, participants were asked to describe their feelings of loyalty toward the company they "like" on Facebook. Nearly all of the participants had agreed that prior to Facebook they had a relationship with the company they "liked" but since they had "liked" the

company on Facebook and engaged with the company's Facebook page in a variety of ways, most of them felt more loyalty toward the company. Many participants stated that once they learned more about the company, understood what the company's mission was and how the company was giving back, viewed photos posted by the company, and interacted with the company, they felt a stronger connection to the company. For example, one participant described his feelings of loyalty with the company he "likes" on Facebook, stating:

"After learning the purpose behind Chipotle and understanding its story it made me loyal; reading stories over and over on Facebook about how the company helps out, makes me want to come back."

Lastly, participants were asked if they had done anything differently toward the company since "liking" the company on Facebook. Most of the participants said that they purchase from the company more because they know about the sales and utilize the exclusive Facebook coupons. Others stated that they recommend the company to their friends and family and talk about the company to their friends and family via Facebook.

Refinement of the Study Questionnaire

The focus group results helped refine the survey questionnaire used for this research study. Because the antecedents of online consumer engagement within a Facebook setting have yet to be researched, one of the main goals of the focus group was to see if this study's proposed antecedents – perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity – of online consumer engagement were relevant as well as to explore other possible antecedents of online consumer engagement. Based on the focus group results, the proposed antecedents of online consumer engagement appeared in the data, which warranted the next step in further research using the survey. Based on the focus group results, two items were added to the questionnaire to measure interactivity ("It is important to me that the company's Facebook page I

‘like’ responds to my posts in a timely manner” and “It is important to me that the company’s Facebook page I ‘like’ responds to other users’ posts in a timely manner”).

Another goal of the focus group was to determine if the “presence” construct could be considered a part of online consumer engagement. Based on the focus group results, it was determined that presence might be a part of engagement so further exploration of the relationship between the two constructs was deemed necessary. Given this, three items were added based on Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) narrative engagement scale, which includes presence. These items were added because they reflected the comments provided by the focus group participants regarding presence. The items were modified to fit the Facebook “liking” environment to measure presence within cognitive online consumer engagement (“When I am on the Facebook page that I ‘like,’ I lose track of time,” “When I am on the Facebook page that I ‘like,’ I get mentally involved in the company,” and “Overall my experiences on the company’s Facebook page that I “like” are intense”).

A final goal of the focus group was to gain a preliminary understanding of consumer “liking” behavior on Facebook to assess if the Facebook-related questions on the survey were applicable. The focus group results revealed that consumers spend less time on the companies’ Facebook page that they “like” than previously anticipated. Because of this, the responses to the question asking how much time respondents spend on companies’ Facebook pages that they “like” were modified by decreasing the time options to better suit “liking” behavior on Facebook. Responses were modified from 1-5 hrs.; 6-10 hrs.; 11-15 hrs.; 16-20 hrs.; and 20 + hrs. to Rarely; Less than an hour; 1-2 hrs.; 3-5 hrs.; 6-10 hrs.; and 10+ hrs.

Phase Two

Preliminary Data Analysis

A total of 291 online surveys were completed during the four-week data collection period. Out of the 291 questionnaires received, 24 were eliminated because the participants did not “like” a company on Facebook. Additionally, 34 more surveys were eliminated either because the respondents were not U.S. citizens, or they did not complete the survey in its entirety. As a result, 233 questionnaires were usable. According to Hair et al. (1992), when using structural equation modeling, researchers should strive for a sample size of around 200 participants. They state that too large of a sample becomes “too sensitive” and can detect all differences causing any goodness-of-fit measure to be poor within a structural equation modeling analysis (Hair et al.). Additionally, Hair et al. state that to analyze the model fit, there must be an “absolute” minimum of 50 participants. Given this, the 233 participants in this study is within the range of appropriate sample size for structural equation modeling.

Respondents’ Characteristics

Table 2 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. Respondents ranged from 18 years old to 69 years old, with a mean of 31 years old. Nearly 70% of the respondents were female, and close to 77% were Caucasian or White. Additionally, the sample population was well-educated. About 66% of the sample had attended some college, had an associate’s degree or had a bachelor’s degree; 30% had a master’s or doctoral degree. Reported household incomes varied among the sample. About 33% of the sample reported an annual household income of less than \$25,000; nearly 13% reported an annual household income of \$25,001 to \$55,000; close to 16% reported an annual household income of \$55,001 to \$75,000; 12.5% reported an annual household income of \$75,001 to \$100,000; and about 22%

reported an annual household income more than \$100,001. Compared to general demographic data, the survey respondents differed slightly from average U.S. Facebook users (Burbary, 2011; Skelton, 2012). More survey respondents were female, a bit older in age, and somewhat more educated, but less wealthy than the general U.S. Facebook user.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (N=233)

Characteristics	Mean/Sample Percentage
Age	
M (Range: 18 – 69 years old)	31.2
Gender	
Male	30.5
Female	69.5
Ethnicity	
American Indian, Alaskan or Hawaiian Native	2.6
Asian	2.1
Black or African American	5.6
Caucasian or White	77.3
Hispanic, Latino/Latina	6.4
Other	4.7
Do not wish to respond	1.3
Education	
High school diploma	3.9
Some college, no degree	39.2
Associate’s degree	9.1
Bachelor’s degree	17.7
Master’s or Doctoral degree	30.2
Annual Household Income	
Less than \$25,000	33.2
\$25,001 to \$50,000	12.9
\$50,001 to \$75,000	15.9
\$75,001 to \$100,000	12.5
\$100,001 to \$125,000	10.3
\$125,001 to \$150,000	4.7
\$150,001 to \$175,000	5.2
\$175,001 to \$200,001	0.9
More than \$200,001	4.3

Facebook Usage Statistics

Table 3 summarizes the Facebook usage statistics of the survey respondents. In regard to the length of time respondents have been Facebook users, responses ranged from one year to

seven years with a mean of just over four years ($M = 4.44$). On average, respondents spend nearly eight hours ($M = 7.75$) a week on Facebook. Additionally, respondents rated their Facebook experience level quite high, with a mean of eight on a scale from one to 10 (one = lowest, 10 = highest). Respondents reported that they spend nearly 55% of their time on Facebook reading others' posts, almost 21% of their time posting messages/profile information/pictures/video; close to 14% of their time reading posts by companies/groups that they "like" on Facebook; 6% is spent playing games; and over 19% of respondents time on Facebook is spent on other activities (e.g., Facebook stalking, "creeping," instant messaging).

Furthermore, on average, respondents "liked" approximately 20 companies on Facebook in a variety of industries. Nearly 64% "liked" both apparel/accessories and food/beverage; 18% "liked" automotive; about 70% "liked" entertainment, close to 35% "liked" personal care; 30% "liked" technology; and nearly 24% "liked" other types of industries on Facebook including home décor/crafts, cleaning products, and cooking. These results were similar to past research that has found most consumers who "like" companies on Facebook "like" clothing, food, and entertainment companies (eMarketer, 2012). Additionally, results were similar to the results of the focus groups conducted in this study in that respondents "liked" a variety of companies on Facebook, but the most popular companies mentioned by multiple respondents include Coca-Cola, MAC Cosmetics, Nike, Starbucks, Target, Ulta, Victoria's Secret, and Wal-Mart.

Lastly, the majority of respondents (77%) spend less than an hour a week on the Facebook page of companies that they "like." However, almost 16% spend one to two hours a week on the Facebook page of companies that they "like," while another 6% spend three to five hours a week on the Facebook page of companies that they "like," and 1.3% spend six or more hours a week on the Facebook page of companies that they "like."

Table 3. Facebook Related Information about the Respondents (N=233)

Facebook Information	Sample Mean
Length of Facebook user	
Years (Range: 1 – 7 years)	4.41
Hours Spent on Facebook	
Per week (Range: 0 – 42 hours)	7.90
Facebook Experience Level	
On a scale from 1 to 10 (1=lowest; 10=highest)	7.73
Activities on Facebook	
Reading others' posts	54.08
Posting messages/profile information/pictures/video	20.99
Reading posts by companies/groups that you "like"	13.89
Playing games	4.67
Other activities	6.44
Number of Companies "liked" on Facebook (Range: 1 – 1000 companies)	19.4
Time Spent on "liked" Companies' Facebook Page per week	
Rarely	46.6
Less than an hour	31.0
1 to 2 hours	15.5
3 to 5 hours	5.6
6 to 10 hours	.90
10 plus hours	.40
Types of Companies' "Liked" on Facebook	
Apparel and Accessories	63.9
Automobile	18.0
Entertainment	69.5
Food/beverage	63.5
Personal care (e.g., grooming, beauty)	34.8
Technology (e.g., computers, cell phones)	30.0
Other	23.6
Familiar with company prior to "liking" on Facebook	5.39
Purchased from company prior to "liking" on Facebook	4.37
Use of product prior to "liking" on Facebook	4.79
Positive experience with product prior to "liking" on Facebook	5.59
Years of experience with company prior to "liking" on Facebook	
Years (Range: 0 – 44 years)	5.78

Most respondents were familiar with the company and had a positive experience with the company prior to "liking" the company on Facebook. However, most respondents rated their purchase and use of the company's product fairly low prior to "liking" the company on

Facebook. On average, most respondents had nearly six years of experience with the company prior to “liking” the company on Facebook.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analyses with Varimax rotation were conducted on each of the multiple-item scales, including the exogenous constructs (i.e., perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity) and endogenous constructs (engagement – cognition, affect, participation – loyalty, and (re)purchase intent) as a way to refine the measures in the study. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted prior to testing the full model to identify items with poor psychometric properties and to purify the measurement model for future testing (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). A priori designations for each of the proposed antecedents of engagement (information quality, enjoyment, and interactivity), for loyalty, and for (re)purchase intent were employed in the analyses, given that they have been confirmed in previous studies (Mollen & Wilson, 2009; O’Brien & Toms, 2008; Shang et al., 2006; Shukla, 2009). For online consumer engagement, an exploratory analysis with nineteen items was conducted given that an engagement scale that includes components of participation has yet to be confirmed in scholarly research. Results of the original factor analysis with specific factor loadings and variance extracted are included in Table 4.

Table 4. Original Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Items	Factor Loading	Reliability	Variance Extracted
Information Quality		.91	.73
The company’s page that I “like on Facebook ...			
provides useful information.	.91		
provides accurate information.	.77		
is informational.	.88		
Continued on next page.			

Items	Factor Loading	Reliability	Variance Extracted
is relevant to me.	.84		
is helpful to me.	.87		
Enjoyment		.94	.80
The company's page that I "like on Facebook ...			
is interesting.	.86		
is exciting.	.91		
is enjoyable.	.92		
is fun.	.91		
is entertaining.	.88		
Interactivity		.79	.47
The company's page that I "like on Facebook allows me to be in control of what I want to see.	.54		
Customers share experiences about products or services with other customers on the organization's page I "like" on Facebook.	.76		
The company's page that I "like" on Facebook shares information about the company (i.e., investments, philanthropic efforts, new hires) with users who "like" the company's page on Facebook.	.58		
The company's page that I "like" on Facebook shares information about the product(s) with users who "like" the company's page on Facebook.	.72		
The company that I "like" on Facebook responds to my posts in a timely manner.	.79		
The company that I "like" on Facebook responds to other users' in a timely manner.	.85		
It is important to me that the company I "like" on Facebook responds to my posts in a timely manner.	.89		
It is important to me that the company I "like" on Facebook responds to other users' posts in a timely manner.	.87		

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Items	Factor Loading	Reliability	Variance Extracted
Engagement			
Factor One		.75	.62
When I am on the company's Facebook page that I "like," I am absorbed in the page. ^a	.53		
When I am on the company's Facebook page that I "like," I lose track of time. ^a	.59		
When I am on the company's Facebook page that I "like," I get mentally involved in the company (its story, history, mission, goals). ^a	.70		
I am able to make product related decisions regarding the brand and/or product based on the information presented on the company's page that I "like" on Facebook. ^a	.78		
Overall, my experience on the company's page that I "like" are intense. ^a	.58		
I feel like I learn a tremendous amount of information about the company featured on the company's page that I "like" on Facebook. ^a	.70		
I have a much greater understanding about the company and/or products featured on the Company's page that I "like" on Facebook. ^a	.74		
I find the experience with the company's page that I "like" on Facebook to be pleasurable. ^b	.75		
The company's page that I "like" on Facebook is satisfying. ^b	.76		
I feel involved with the company page that I "like" on Facebook. ^b	.47		
I feel connected to the company that I "like" on Facebook. ^b	.53		
I have emotional feelings attached to the company that I "like" on Facebook. ^b	.58		
Factor Two		.79	.56
I am very motivated to participate actively on the company's page that I "like" on Facebook. ^c	.58		

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Items	Factor Loading	Reliability	Variance Extracted
I frequently post messages and responses on the company's page that I "like" on Facebook. ^c	.48		
On the company's Facebook page that I "like," I have ...			
Read fan comments. ^c	.75		
Responded to fan comments. ^c	.87		
Posted a comment on the company's page. ^c	.82		
Watched video. ^c	.75		
Played games or other activities. ^c	.67		
Loyalty		.90	.73
I am very loyal to the company I "like" on Facebook.	.93		
I am very committed to the company I "like" on Facebook.	.90		
I don't consider myself a loyal consumer to the company I "like" on Facebook.	.74		
I have a positive attitude toward the company I "like" on Facebook.	.85		
I hold the company I "like" on Facebook in high regard.	.84		
(Re)purchase Intent		.90	.78
I would buy products from the company I "like" on Facebook in the future.	.89		
In the future, I will actively seek out products from the company I "like" on Facebook.	.92		
I will purchase from the company I "like" on Facebook the next time I need a products/service it offers.	.92		
I will recommend the company that I "like" on Facebook to my family and friends.	.79		
Past Experience with the Company		.78	.71
I am very familiar with the company I "like on Facebook.	.74		

Continued on next page.

Items	Factor Loading	Reliability	Variance Extracted
How often have you purchased from the company prior to “liking” the company on Facebook?	.80		
How often did you use the company’s product prior to “liking” the company on Facebook?	.90		
My previous experience with the Company prior to “liking” it on Facebook was positive.	.68		

Notes:

- a. Online consumer engagement cognitive related items.
- b. Online consumer engagement affective related items.
- c. Online consumer engagement participative related items.

Eigenvalues greater than one and scree plots were analyzed to assist in determining the number of factors for each exogenous and endogenous construct. Additionally, the strength of factor loadings as well as face validity were analyzed to further assist in determining the items to be included for each exogenous and endogenous variables. Items with factor loadings of at least .60 were retained to ensure unidimensionality among factors; items with factor loadings lower than .60 and cross-loading issues were removed. Table 5 details the final results of the exploratory factor analysis with specific factor loadings and variance extracted.

Table 5. Final Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Items	Factor Loading	Reliability	Variance Extracted
Information Quality		.91	.73
The company’s page that I “like on Facebook ...			
provides useful information.	.91		
provides accurate information.	.77		
is informational.	.88		
is relevant to me.	.84		
is helpful to me.	.87		

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Items	Factor Loading	Reliability	Variance Extracted
Enjoyment		.94	.80
The company's page that I "like on Facebook ...			
is interesting.	.86		
is exciting.	.91		
is enjoyable.	.92		
is fun.	.91		
is entertaining.	.88		
Interactivity		.84	.57
Customers share experiences about products or services with other customers on the organization's page I "like" on Facebook.	.70		
The company's page that I "like" on Facebook shares information about the product(s) with users who "like" the company's page on Facebook.	.74		
The company that I "like" on Facebook responds to my posts in a timely manner.	.69		
The company that I "like" on Facebook responds to other users' in a timely manner.	.79		
It is important to me that the company I "like" on Facebook responds to my posts in a timely manner.	.81		
It is important to me that the company I "like" on Facebook responds to other users' posts in a timely manner.	.77		
Engagement			
CogAff		.90	.63
When I am on the company's Facebook page that I "like," I get mentally involved in the company (its story, history, mission, goals).	.75		
I am able to make product related decisions regarding the brand and/or product based on the information presented on the company's page that I "like" on Facebook.	.77		

Continued on next page.

Items	Factor Loading	Reliability	Variance Extracted
I feel like I learn a tremendous amount of information about the company featured on the company's page that I "like" on Facebook.	.87		
I have a much greater understanding about the company and/or products featured on the Company's page that I "like" on Facebook.	.87		
I find the experience with the company's page that I "like" on Facebook to be pleasurable.	.82		
The company's page that I "like" on Facebook is satisfying.	.83		
Participation		.83	.60
On the company's Facebook page that I "like," I have ...			
Read fan comments.	.75		
Responded to fan comments.	.87		
Posted a comment on the company's page.	.82		
Watched video.	.75		
Played games or other activities.	.67		
Loyalty		.90	.73
I am very loyal to the company I "like" on Facebook.	.93		
I am very committed to the company I "like" on Facebook.	.90		
I don't consider myself a loyal consumer to the company I "like" on Facebook.	.74		
I have a positive attitude toward the company I "like" on Facebook.	.85		
I hold the company I "like" on Facebook in high regard.	.84		
(Re)purchase Intent		.90	.78
I would buy products from the company I "like" on Facebook in the future.	.89		
Continued on next page.			

Items	Factor Loading	Reliability	Variance Extracted
In the future, I will actively seek out products from the company I “like” on Facebook.	.92		
I will purchase from the company I “like” on Facebook the next time I need a products/service it offers.	.92		
I will recommend the company that I “like” on Facebook to my family and friends.	.79		
Past Experience with the Company		.78	.71
I am very familiar with the company I “like on Facebook.	.74		
How often have you purchased from the company prior to “liking” the company on Facebook?	.80		
How often did you use the company’s product prior to “liking” the company on Facebook?	.90		
My previous experience with the Company prior to “liking” it on Facebook was positive.	.68		

Exploratory Factor Analysis of Exogenous Constructs

Perceived Information Quality

Exploratory factor analysis for this variable resulted in a one-factor solution with all of the original five items in the scale. Factor loadings of these items ranged from .77 to .91. Explained variance for this factor was 73% with a Cronbach’s alpha of .91. Additionally, a composite score was calculated for this factor using the average score of the five items.

Perceived Enjoyment

Exploratory factor analysis revealed a one-factor solution for perceived enjoyment that contained the original five items in the scale. Factor loadings ranged from .86 to .92. Internal reliability based on Cronbach’s alpha was .94, and the variance explained by the five items was 80%. A composite score was calculated for this factor using the average score of the five items.

Perceived Interactivity

Exploratory factor analysis produced a one-factor solution for perceived interactivity of the six items pertaining to the amount of sharing and responding that goes on between Facebook users and the companies they “like” on Facebook. One item was removed: “The company’s page that I ‘like’ on Facebook shares information about the company (e.g., investments, philanthropic efforts, new hires) with users who like the company’s page on Facebook.” Factor loadings for perceived interactivity ranged from .69 to .81, with 57% of variance explained. Internal reliability based on the Cronbach’s alpha was .84. A composite score was calculated for this factor using the average score of the six items.

Exploratory Factor Analysis of Endogenous Constructs

Online Consumer Engagement

The online consumer engagement construct is new in the marketing research literature so scales have yet to be confirmed for this construct. Because of this, this researcher took an exploratory approach in factor analysis with the engagement construct as opposed to the a priori approach taken with the other constructs. The exploratory approach allowed this researcher to analyze all of the proposed engagement components (cognition, affect, and participation) at the same time to determine the factor structure. Two factors emerged from the exploratory factor analysis instead of the three factors as expected (cognition, affect, and participation). Factor one consisted of six combined cognitive and affective measures (referred to hereafter as *CogAff*), and factor two consisted of five participation measures.

CogAff. The one-factor solution for *CogAff* combined tenets of cognition (mentally involved, product related decisions, learning and understanding about the company) and affect (satisfaction and pleasure). Three items were removed from the original cognition measures

because of low factor loadings: “When I am on the company’s Facebook page that I ‘like’ I am absorbed in the page,” “When I am on the company’s Facebook page that I ‘like,’ I lose track of time,” and “Overall, my experience on the company Facebook page that I ‘like’ are intense.” Additionally, three items were removed from the original affect measures because of low factor loadings: “I feel involved in the company that I ‘like’ on Facebook,” “I feel connected to the company that I ‘like’ on Facebook,” and “I have emotional feelings attached to the company that I ‘like’ on Facebook.” Internal reliability for the CogAff variable, based on the Cronbach’s alpha, was .90. Sixty-three percent of variance was explained by these six items with factor loadings ranging from .75 to .87. Additionally, a composite score was calculated for this factor using the average score of the six items.

Participation. The one-factor solution for this variable consisted of five items in the scale. Items were focused on the types of behavior consumers engage in on a Facebook page of a company that they “like,” such as “read fan comments,” “respond to fan comments,” “post comments,” “watch videos,” and “play games.” Additionally, two items were removed because of low factor loadings (“I am very motivated to participate actively on the company’s page that I ‘like’ on Facebook,” and “I frequently post messages and responses on the company’s page that I ‘like’ on Facebook.” Variance explained by the factor was 60% with factor loadings ranging from .67 to .82. Internal reliability for the factor was .83 based on the Cronbach’s alpha. Lastly, a composite score was calculated for this factor using the average score of the five items.

Loyalty

Exploratory factor analysis produced a one-factor solution for loyalty. The factor was composed of five items characterizing the respondent’s loyalty to the company they “like” on Facebook. Factor loadings for loyalty ranged from .84 to .93, and internal reliability was .90,

based on the Cronbach's alpha. Seventy-three percent of variance was explained by this factor. A composite score was calculated for this factor using the average score of the five items.

(Re)Purchase Intent

The exploratory factor analysis of (re)purchase intent showed that the variable had a one-factor solution. The (re)purchase scale, which consisted of four items, attempted to capture the likelihood that the respondents would (re)purchase from the company they "like" on Facebook. The Cronbach's alpha showed that the internal reliability was .90 with 78% of variance explained. Factor loadings for the four-item scale ranged from .79 to .92. Lastly, a composite score was calculated for this factor using the average score of the four items.

The exploratory factor analyses showed that the multiple-item scales ranged from .83 to .94 in regards to construct reliability. Given that the scales measured very high on reliability, all factors were retained for confirmatory factor analysis.

Exploratory Factor Analysis of Covariate Measure

Past Experience with the Company

Exploratory factor analysis produced a one-factor solution for past experience with the company. The factor was composed of four items characterizing each respondent's experience with the company he/she "like" on Facebook. Factor loadings for past experience with the company ranged from .68 to .90, and internal reliability was .78, which was based off of Cronbach's alpha. Additionally, 71% of variance was explained by this factor. A composite score was calculated for this factor using the average score of the four items.

Diagnostic Tests

A multicollinearity test was conducted with the composite scores calculated for each factor to determine how correlated the variables were to one another (Hair et al., 1992). Using

(re)purchase intent as the dependent variable and the proposed antecedents of online consumer engagement (information quality, enjoyment, interactivity), online consumer engagement and loyalty as independent variables, the variance inflation factor (VIF) for relevant regression models ranged between 1.4 and 2.6. Additionally, the tolerance values ranged between .39 and .73. Given that the VIF values did not exceed 10 and the tolerance levels all exceeded .10, it was determined that multicollinearity did not exist (Hair et al.; Hayes, 2005). Given this, the variables were unique and were not measuring the same conceptually similar things.

Additionally, two sets of single multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine whether past experience with the company “liked” on Facebook influenced the construct of online consumer engagement. Using the composite score of CogAff as the dependent variable and the composite score of past experience with the company as the independent variable, the analysis revealed that the relationship was not significant ($\beta = .05$, $t = .81$, $p > .05$). Next, using the composite score of participation as the dependent variable and the composite score of past experience with the company as the independent variable, the analysis also showed that the relationship was not significant ($\beta = -.03$, $t = -.38$, $p > .05$). Based on these results, past experience with a company “liked” on Facebook had no direct effect on online consumer engagement, thus this variable was not included in further analysis.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Preliminary analysis of the data was achieved through the exploratory factor analyses discussed above. Next a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to confirm that the factor structures from the exploratory factor analysis provided a good fit for the data. The maximum likelihood method was employed using LISREL 8.80 to confirm the proposed online consumer engagement model and to reveal potential low factor loadings (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996).

The factors from the previous exploratory factor analyses, which included perceived Facebook characteristics, engagement, loyalty, and (re)purchase intent, were retained and used as the basis for the confirmatory factor analysis. The confirmatory factor analysis established the measurement model, which in turn allowed for the assessment of discriminant and convergent validity (Yan, 2005). According to Anderson and Gerbing (1988), if an acceptable fit is achieved through the measurement model, nomological validity, which is the idea that a construct relates to other constructs as theoretically predicted from past research (Peter, 1981), can be assessed through the structural model. Given this, the hypothesized relationships were not analyzed until the measurement model was established.

Measurement Model for the Entire Sample

The measurement model was estimated for the entire sample of this study (N=233). The measurement model included the main latent variables for the study (i.e., perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, perceived interactivity, CogAff, participation, loyalty, and (re)purchase intent).

Validation of Scales

Five items retained based on the results of the exploratory factor analysis were removed during the confirmatory factor analysis to improve the reliability of the scales and the fit indices. The items were removed because of low factor loadings. As a result, one item was removed from enjoyment scale: “The company’s page that I ‘like’ on Facebook is interesting.” Two items were removed from the interactivity scale: “Customers share experiences about products or services with other customers on the organization’s page I ‘like’ on Facebook” and “The company’s page that I ‘like’ on Facebook shares information about the product(s) with users who ‘like’ the company’s page on Facebook. Lastly, “On the company’s Facebook page that I

‘like,’ I have watched videos” and “On the company’s Facebook page that I ‘like,’ I have played games and other activities” were removed from the participation scale.

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the measurement model for the entire sample (Figure 3) was a good fit for the data: [χ^2 (406) = 878.48, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .07, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .07, Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) = .97, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .98 and, Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) = .83]. Additionally, the normed chi-square was computed (χ^2/df = 2.16), which minimizes the impact of sample size on the Model Chi Square (Wheaton, Muthen, Alwin, & Summers, 1977), and was deemed an acceptable ratio at 2.16 because it was higher than the recommended 2.0 ratio (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

To further expound upon each indices, RMSEA tests how well the model fits the population’s covariance matrix (Byrne, 1998). The index is considered “one of the most informative fit indices to consult due to its sensitivity to the number of estimated parameters in the model” (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000, p. 85). According to MacCallum, Browne, and Sugaware (1996) and Steiger (2007), a RMSEA below .08 shows a good fit, which the measurement model in this study does. The SRMR is the “square root of the difference between the residuals of the sample covariance matrix and the hypothesized covariance model” (Hooper, Coghlan, & Mullen, 2008, p. 54). Hu and Bentler (1999) deem levels at .08 or lower acceptable levels, which the measurement model’s SRMR level of .07 does. The NNFI, compares the χ^2 value of the model to the χ^2 of the null model (Hooper et al., 2008), and the CFI, compares the sample covariance matrix with the null model (Hooper et al.). The measurement model values of .97 exceed the suggested thresholds of .95 for both indices (Bentler, 1990; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Lastly, the PNIF index, which adjusts for sample size, has yet to be assigned a threshold amount

but suggested good fit levels range from .50 to .90 (Mulaik et al., 1989). Given that the measurement model's .83 PNIF values falls within the suggested acceptable range, the model is a good fit.

These indices have been reported because they have found to be “the most insensitive to sample size, model misspecification, and parameter estimates” (Hooper et al., 2008, p. 56). Historically, the Goodness-of-Fit (GFI) and Normed Fit Index (NFI) have been used as measures of good model fit; however, research has found that these two indices are sensitive to sample size and therefore are no longer used as model fit indices (Bentler, 1990; Hooper et al.; Mulaik et al., 1989)

Psychometric Properties of Constructs for the Measurement Model

Table 5 examines the psychometric properties of the multi-item constructs in the measurement model. The procedures discussed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) were followed to calculate construct reliability. Reliabilities for all latent variables ranged from .84 to .91, which were based on the computations for standardized factor loadings and measurement error. As recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1988), all latent constructs possessed internal reliability exceeding the minimum criterion of .60. Additionally, variance extracted measures ranged from 60% to 75%, which exceeded the recommended 50% by Bagozzi and Yi.

Convergent and Discriminate Validity

Convergent validity, according to Bagozzi (1981), is the extent to which multiple measurements of a construct are in agreement. The convergent validity of the scales was supported, as seen in Table 6. By examining the *t* values, the estimated standardized factor loadings from the measurement model for the indicators measuring the same constructs were

statistically significant at $p < .05$ (i.e., all t values exceeded the critical t value of 1.98 for $p = .05$).

Table 6. Measurement Model Results for Entire Sample

<i>Construct/Indicator</i>	<i>Mean (S.D.)</i>	<i>Standardized Factor Loading</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t-Value</i>	<i>Construct Reliability^b</i>	<i>Proportion of Variance Extracted^c</i>
<u>Perceived Facebook Page Site Characteristics</u>						
Please select the number that best indicates your level of agreement with the following statements regarding your “liking” experience on Facebook (1= strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)						
ξ_1 (Information Quality)	3.04 (1.47)				.89	66%
x_1 (useful)	5.72 (1.21)	.91	-	-		
x_2 (accurate)	5.94 (.97)	.71	.05	13.20		
x_3 (inform)	5.76 (1.11)	.86	.05	18.23		
x_4 (relevant)	5.71 (1.23)	.77	.06	15.02		
x_5 (helpful)	5.42 (1.40)	.80	.06	15.77		
ξ_3 (Enjoyment)	5.51 (1.16)				.86	75%
x_6 (exciting)	5.11 (1.34)	.89	-	-		
x_7 (enjoyable)	5.48 (1.24)	.92	.05	21.72		
x_8 (fun)	5.11 (1.43)	.84	.06	17.68		
ξ_4 (Interactivity)	5.80 (1.16)				.88	65%
x_{10} (respds. to my posts)	4.60 (1.36)	.65	-	-		
x_{11} (respds. others posts)	4.67 (1.40)	.75	.08	14.72		
x_{12} (respds. to me impt.)	4.48 (1.63)	.91	.15	11.30		
x_{13} (respds. to others impt.)	4.53 (1.60)	.89	.14	11.21		
<u>Online Consumer Engagement</u>						
Please select the number that best indicates your level of agreement with the following statements regarding your “liking” experience on Facebook (1= strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)						
η_1 (CogAff)	5.71 (1.03)				.90	60%
y_1 (mentally involved)	3.94 (1.77)	.61	-	-		
y_2 (product decisions)	4.94 (1.52)	.67	.11	8.64		
y_3 (learn about company)	4.53 (1.60)	.72	.17	9.06		
y_4 (better understanding)	4.70 (1.64)	.74	.12	9.32		
y_5 (pleasure)	5.33 (1.22)	.94	.10	10.98		
y_6 (satisfy)	5.31 (1.23)	.90	.09	10.86		
η_2 (Participation)	5.29 (1.18)				.84	65%
y_7 (read)	4.11 (1.90)	.70	-	-		
y_8 (respond)	2.28 (1.80)	.83	.11	10.86		
y_9 (post)	2.85 (1.98)	.87	.17	10.99		
<u>Loyalty</u>						
Please select the number that best indicates your level of agreement with the following statements regarding your “liking” experience on Facebook (1= strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)						
η_2 (Loyalty)	4.57 (1.31)				.91	67%
y_{10} (loyalty 1)	5.41 (1.43)	.95	-	-		

Continued on next page.

<i>Construct/Indicator</i>	<i>Mean (S.D.)</i>	<i>Standardized Factor Loading</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t-Value</i>	<i>Construct Reliability^b</i>	<i>Proportion of Variance Extracted^c</i>
y ₁₁ (committed)	5.18 (1.54)	.89	.04	23.08		
y ₁₂ (loyalty 2)	5.44 (1.60)	.66	.06	12.24		
y ₁₃ (positive attitude)	5.91 (1.07)	.79	.04	17.33		
y ₁₄ (high regard)	5.61 (1.16)	.77	.04	16.12		
<u>(Re)Purchase Intent</u>						
Please select the number that best indicates your level of agreement with the following statements regarding your “liking” experience on Facebook (1= strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)						
η ₄ ((Re)Purchase Intent)	4.79 (1.23)				.91	71%
y ₁₅ (future purchase)	6.03 (1.24)	.84	-	-		
y ₁₆ (actively seek out product)	5.77 (1.28)	.92	.06	18.50		
y ₁₇ (purchase when need)	5.65 (1.35)	.89	.07	17.36		
y ₁₈ (recommend)	5.74 (1.41)	.70	.08	12.15		
χ ² (406) = 878.48 RMSEA = .07 SRMR = .07 NNFI = .97 CFI = .98 PNFI = .83						

Notes:

- The first λ path for each construct was set to 1; therefore, no SEs or t-values are provided.
- $$\frac{(\sum \text{Std. Loadings})^2}{(\sum \text{Std. Loadings})^2 + \sum \xi_j}$$
- $$\frac{\sum \text{Std. Loadings}^2}{\sum \text{Std. Loadings}^2 + \sum \xi_j}$$

Additionally, as described by Bagozzi (1981), discriminate validity indicates that in a research model, all constructs are empirically differentiated from each other. Discriminate validity was supported based on the results of the confidence interval test of which “no confidence intervals of plus or minus two standard errors around the correlation for the constructs included 1.0” (Yan, 2005, p. 112). Furthermore, the variance extracted estimates for the constructs exceeded the square correlation coefficients between constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Figure 3 shows the correlations among exogenous variables and Figure 4 shows the correlations among endogenous variables. Table 7 further illustrates the intercorrelations between constructs employed in this study.

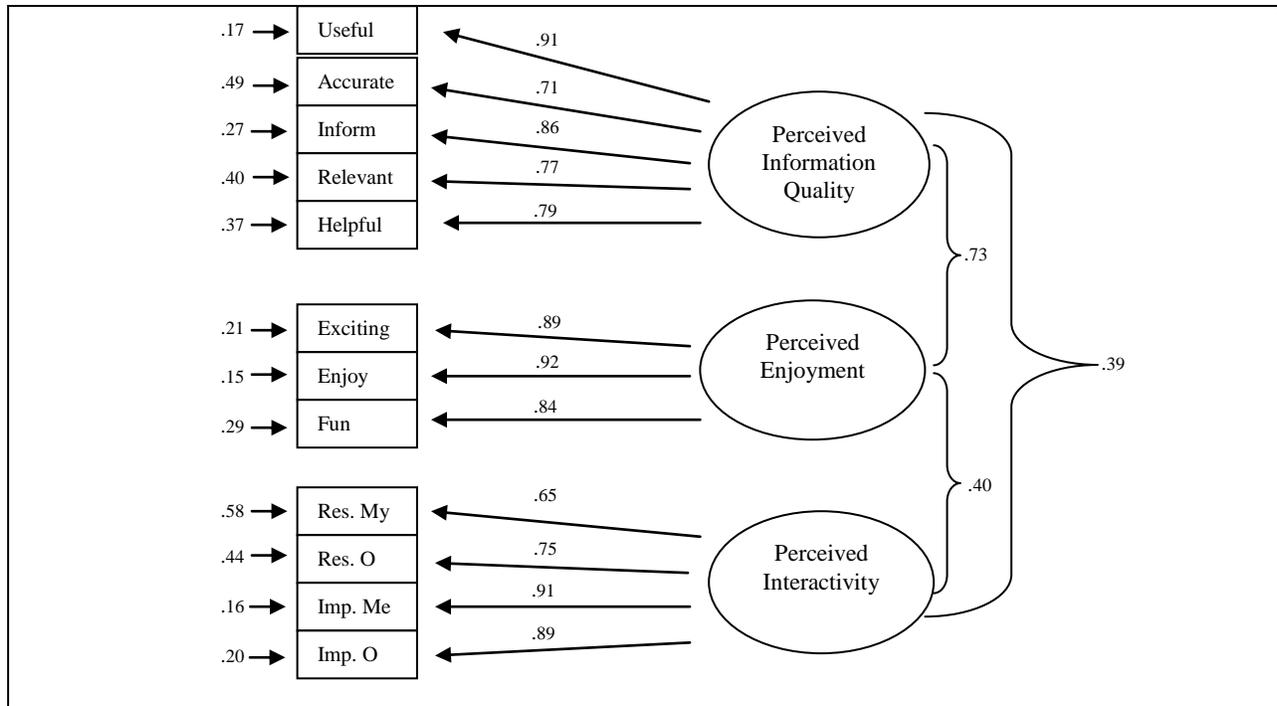


Figure 3. Correlations among Exogenous Variables

Revised Research Model

Because of the results of the measurement model, the original proposed research model of online consumer engagement was revised (Figure 5). The model was revised to reflect the results of the exploratory factor analysis, which revealed that the cognitive and affective dimensions of online consumer engagement be combined and measured as one dimension – CogAff. Based on this, the hypotheses proposed for this study that involved cognitive and affective dimensions of online consumer engagement were revised to incorporate the CogAff relationship (e.g., H1AB: perceived information quality on a Facebook company page positively predicts cognitive and affect online consumer engagement).

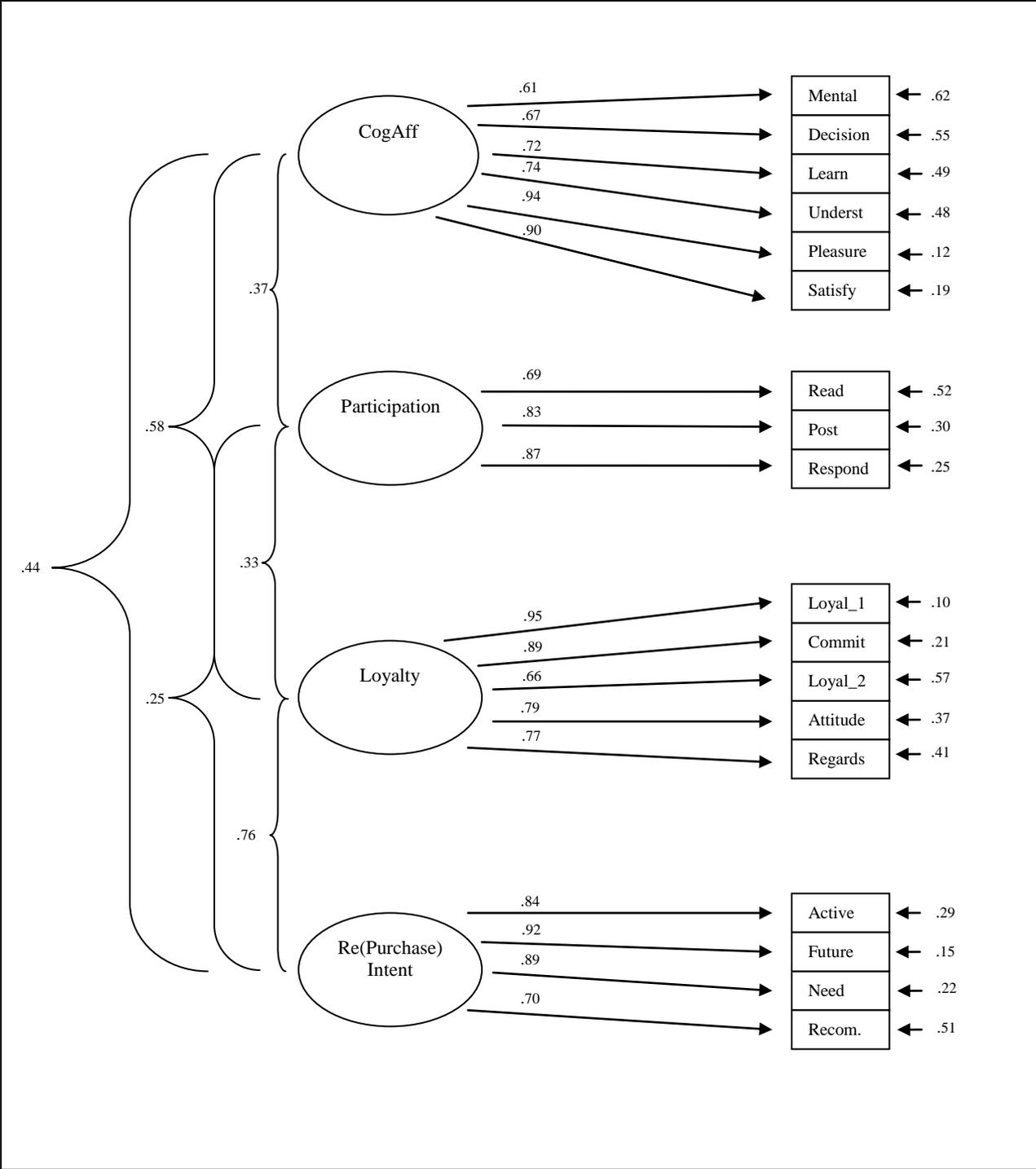


Figure 4. Correlations among Endogenous Variables

Table 7. Correlation Coefficients among Latent Constructs

	Mean (S.D.)	Alpha	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Online Consumer Engagement: CogAff	5.71 (1.03)	.90	1.00						
2. Online Consumer Engagement: Participation	5.29 (1.18)	.84	.37	1.00					
3. Loyalty	4.57 (1.31)	.91	.58	.33	1.00				
4. (Re)purchase intent	4.79 (1.23)	.91	.44	.25	.76	1.00			
5. Perceived Information Quality	3.04 (1.47)	.89	.68	.34	.41	.31	1.00		
6. Perceived Enjoyment	5.51 (1.16)	.86	.80	.42	.48	.37	.73	1.00	
7. Perceived Interactivity	5.80 (1.16)	.88	.41	.50	.29	.22	.39	.40	1.00

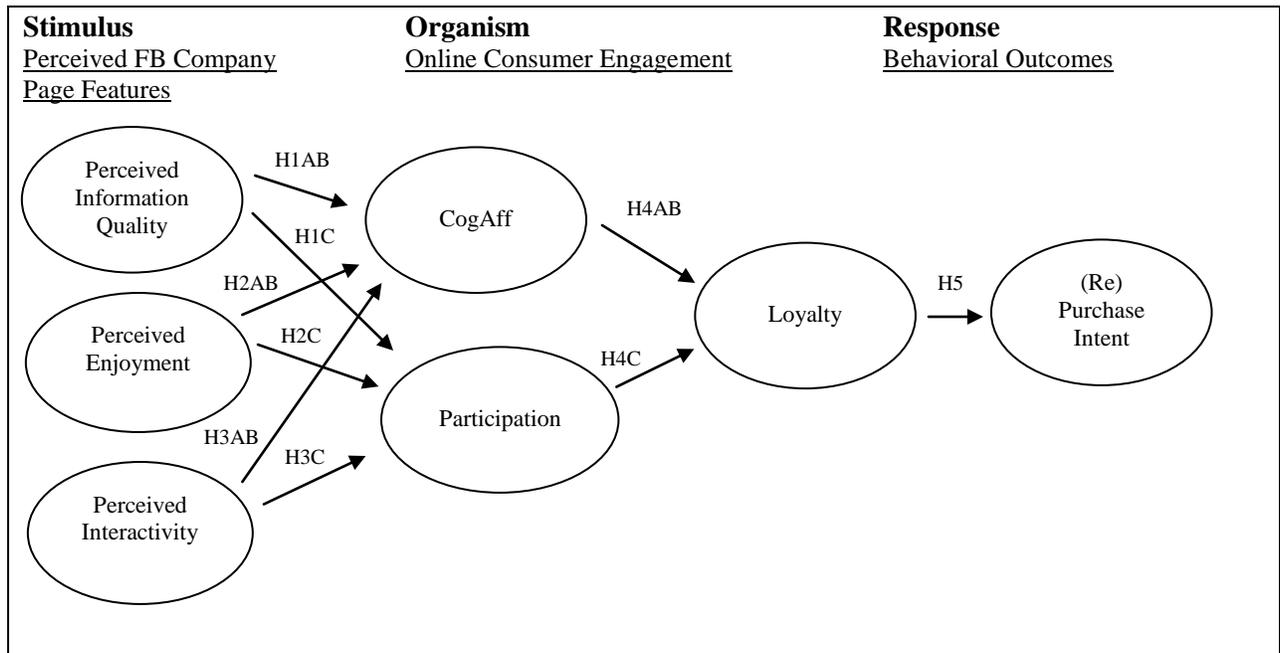


Figure 5. Revised Research Model with Modified Hypotheses

Overall Model Fit of the Revised Research Model

The next phase in the data analysis was to estimate the revised research model (see Figure 6). As previously stated, the revised research model was modified from the originally proposed research model due to the cognitive and affective factors of online consumer engagement being collapsed into one factor (CogAff). The structural model was analyzed using LISREL 8.80 to test all of the proposed relationships concurrently in the revised research model.

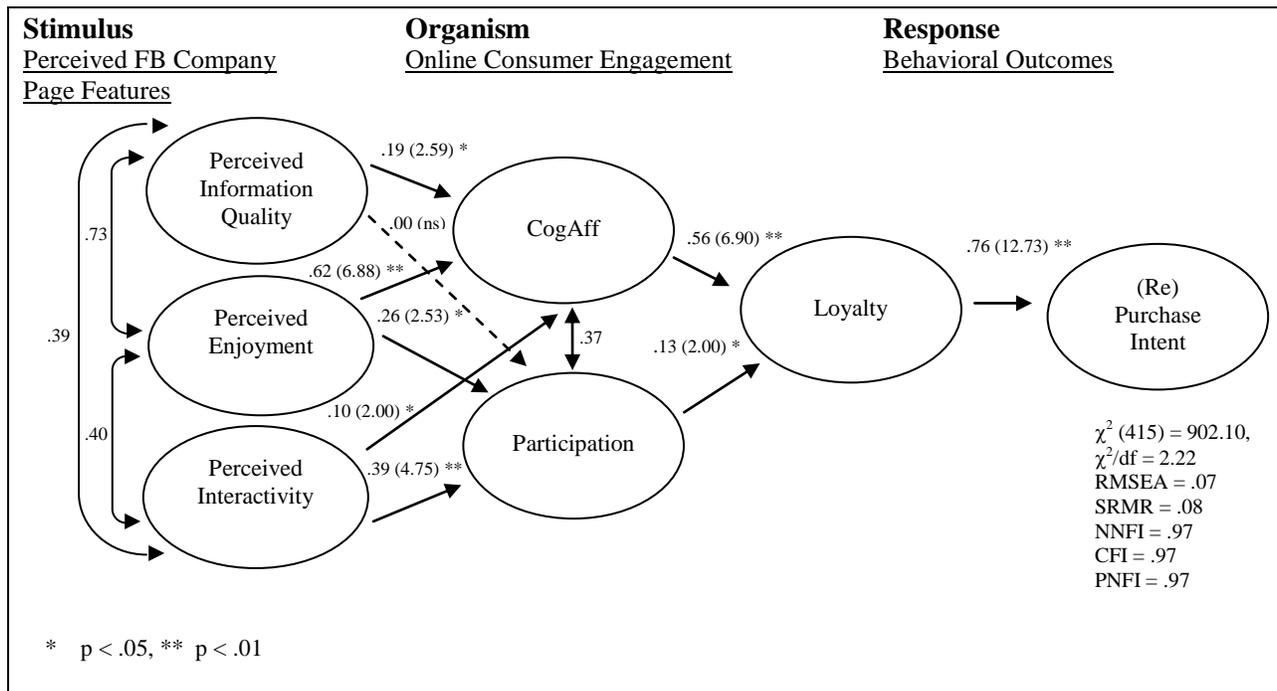


Figure 6. Revised Research Model (standardized coefficients, t -values in brackets)

Structural equation modeling using LISREL 8.80 was employed to test Hypotheses H1AB to H5. The structural model, based on the revised research model (Figure 4), was estimated by including the paths specified in the revised research model. Analysis of the research model (Figure 6) indicated a good overall model fit based on the goodness of fit indices (see the previous discussion of ranges and thresholds) [$\chi^2 (415) = 902.10$, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .07, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) =

.08, Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) = .97, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .97, Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) = .97]. Additionally, the normed chi-square was computed ($\chi^2/df = 2.22$) and was deemed an acceptable ratio at 2.22 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Researchers have suggested testing rival models if the proposed model does not yield a good fit (Bollen & Long, 1992; Hooper et al., 2008). However, because the structural model in this case did yield a good fit and to retain parsimony with the data, rival models were not tested (Bollen & Long; Hooper et al.). Next, hypotheses H1AB through H5 were tested using the research model (Figure 6).

Test of Hypotheses of the Revised Research Model

Hypothesis 1AB

Hypothesis 1AB, stating the perceived information quality on a Facebook company page positively predicted cognitive and affective online consumer engagement, was supported. Results based on the revised research model indicated a significant path ($\gamma = .19, t = 2.59, p < .05$) between information quality and cognition/affect engagement. Based on this, it could be assumed that consumers who perceive a company's Facebook page to possess information that is relevant, accurate, and helpful are likely to become cognitively engaged. This finding is supported by prior research (O'Brien & Toms, 2008). Additionally, it could be assumed that when a consumer perceives that the company's Facebook page includes information that excites them and is satisfying, then they may be more likely to become affectively engaged with the company. This finding is congruent with O'Brien & Toms' (2008) study proposing that information that evokes a sense of excitement, pleasure, enthrallment, and satisfaction may have an effect on consumers' engagement.

Hypothesis 1C

Hypothesis 1C, stating that perceived information quality on a Facebook company page positively predicted participatory online consumer engagement, was not supported. Results based on the revised research model showed a nonsignificant path ($\gamma = .00$, $t = -.005$, $p > .05$), implying that there was no effect on the level of participative engagement of customers who perceived the company's Facebook page to be high in information quality.

Hypothesis 2AB

Hypothesis 2AB, stating that perceived enjoyment of a Facebook company page positively predicted cognitive and affective online consumer engagement, was supported. The revised research model indicated a significant path between enjoyment and CogAff ($\gamma = .62$, $t = 6.88$, $p < .01$). The results suggested an enjoyable experience on a company's Facebook page can help the consumer cognitively connect with the brand through brand learning and concentration, which concurs with past research on consumers' assessment of enjoyment of a company's website (Zhang & von Dran, 2000; Watson et al., 1998). Additionally, this finding suggested that websites with aesthetically appealing features move consumers toward engagement, which also concurs with past research (Aboulaflia & Bannon, 2004; Jennings, 2000; O'Brien & Toms, 2008)

Hypothesis 2C

Hypothesis 2C predicted that a positive relationship between a consumers' perceived enjoyment of a company's Facebook page and participative online consumer engagement exists. As hypothesized, perceived enjoyment of a company's Facebook page had a positive effect on the participation components of online consumer engagement ($\gamma = .26$, $t = 2.53$, $p < .05$). Based on this, Hypothesis 2C was supported. When a company's Facebook page is perceived to be

enjoyable, consumers are engaged with the company's Facebook page via participation behaviors. This finding aligns with past research on website design reported by Watson et al. (1998) and Zhang & von Dran (2000).

Hypothesis 3AB

The prediction that perceived interactivity on a company's Facebook page influences cognitive and affective online consumer engagement (Hypothesis 3AB) was supported, given that the research model is tested cognitive and affective components together. Results based on the revised research model for the entire sample indicated that there is a positive relationship between interactivity and CogAff ($\gamma = .10$, $t = 2.00$, $p < .05$). This positive relationship confirms past research (Mollen & Wilson, 2010), which suggests that perceived interactivity on a company's Facebook page, where consumers process and interpret the page in their own controlled environment that is personally satisfying to them, lead to online consumer engagement.

Hypothesis 3C

Predicting the influence of perceived interactivity of a company's Facebook page on participative online consumer engagement, Hypothesis 3C was supported. The revised research model showed that there was a positive path between the hypothesized relationship ($\gamma = .39$, $t = 4.75$, $p < .01$). This finding is congruent with past research (Cyr et al., 2009; Ha & James, 1998; Lee, 2005; Mollen & Wilson, 2010) that has suggested a website's interactive capabilities can positively influence a user's participation behavior.

Hypothesis 4AB

Hypothesis 4AB, examining the expected positive relationship between predicted cognitive and affective dimensions of online consumer engagement and loyalty, was supported.

The results of the revised research model indicated a significant path between CogAff and loyalty ($\beta = .56, t = 6.90, p < .01$). These findings align with past research that has found a link between cognition and loyalty (Cyr et al., 2009; Howard & Sheth, 1969; Shang et al., 2006; Tyebjee, 1977) and affect and loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Dick & Basu, 1994; Jang et al., 2008).

Hypothesis 4C

The revised research model showed a significant path ($\beta = .13, t = 2.00, p < .05$) for the hypothesized relationship of participative online consumer engagement and brand loyalty toward the company “liked” on Facebook, so Hypothesis 4C was supported. When consumers participated on a company’s Facebook page, he/she might have felt stronger brand loyalty to that company. The notion that participation in a branded online space leads to brand loyalty is congruent with several past studies (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Muñiz & O’Guinn, 2001).

Hypothesis 5

Lastly, the predicted relationship between brand loyalty and (re)purchase (H5) intent was supported. The research model showed that there was a positive relationship between brand loyalty and (re)purchase intent ($\beta = .76, t = 12.73, p < .01$). Thus, when consumers felt loyal to a brand, he/she was more likely to (re)purchase from the brand. This finding is consistent with several past studies that have found loyal customers that have a bond with a brand tend to consistently purchase from that brand (Bolton et al., 2000; Dick & Basu, 1994; Griffin, 2002; Shukla, 2009).

Summary of Findings

Overall, this research confirmed all of the posited relationships, except one in the revised research model. The revised research model revealed support for the effect of perceived information quality on cognitive/affective online consumer engagement (Hypothesis 1AB), the effect of perceived enjoyment on cognitive/affective online consumer engagement (Hypothesis 2AB), the effect of perceived enjoyment on participative online consumer engagement (Hypothesis 2C), the effect of perceived interactivity on cognitive/affective online consumer engagement (Hypothesis 3AB), the effect of perceived interactivity on participative online consumer engagement (Hypothesis 3C), the effect of cognitive/affective online consumer engagement on loyalty (Hypothesis 4AB), the effect of participative online consumer engagement on loyalty (Hypothesis 4C), and the effect of loyalty on (re)purchase intent (Hypothesis 5). However, it failed to confirm the effect of information quality on participative online consumer engagement (Hypothesis 1C).

Additionally, a noteworthy discovery was that the online consumer engagement construct is composed of two dimensions – a combination of cognition and affect (CogAff) and participation – instead of the originally proposed three dimensions – cognition, affect, and participation. This finding is important given that the online consumer engagement construct is new to marketing research, and one of the goals of this study was to explore the engagement construct.

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the concept of online consumer engagement and to refine the definition of engagement to align the industry and academic definitions of the construct. Another goal of this study was to test the proposed conceptual framework of online consumer engagement that situated engagement between the antecedents and behavioral outcomes associated with “liking” companies on Facebook. Specifically, this study examined whether perceived Facebook company page features predicted consumer online engagement and further investigated whether online consumer engagement with companies on Facebook influenced brand loyalty and ultimately (re)purchase intent.

Focus groups were conducted to help determine if the hypothesized antecedents of online consumer engagement were relevant given that this particular topic is understudied. Also, the focus groups were conducted to determine if the “presence” construct relates to cognitive and affect dimensions of online consumer engagement, since few researchers have considered the relatedness of the two constructs. The focus group results confirmed that the antecedents were relevant to the study and the “presence” construct is a part of engagement. The second phase of the study consisted of administering a survey to test the originally proposed research model. Overall, the fit indices revealed that the data were a good fit for the revised research model, which was modified from the original proposed model due to the results of the exploratory factor analyses.

This final chapter presents a discussion on this study’s findings based on the proposed hypotheses and relevant implications for academic research and social media management. Lastly, the chapter concludes with the limitations associated with this study and recommendations for future research.

Discussion and Implications

The first aim of the study was to refine the definition of online consumer engagement as an attempt to align the industry and academic definitions of the construct. By including cognitive/affective presence and participation in the new definition, this definition is enhanced from previous attempts by scholars and practitioners alike. The second aim of this study was to explore measures and dimensions of online consumer engagement, which include cognition, affect, and participation. The third aim of this study was to test the proposed conceptual framework of online consumer engagement that situated engagement between the antecedents and behavioral outcomes associated with “liking” companies on Facebook. Specifically, the study examined whether perceived Facebook company page features (i.e., information quality, enjoyment, and interactivity) predict consumer online engagement (i.e., cognitive, affect, and participation), and further investigated whether online consumer engagement with companies on Facebook related to brand loyalty and ultimately (re)purchase intent. This section is dedicated to discussing the objectives of the study. It begins with a discussion of presence within online consumer engagement and then moves to discussing the modifications to the revised research model and the implications of these revisions. It is followed by a discussion of the findings and implications impacting each hypothesis.

Definition of Online Consumer Engagement

The first aim of the study was to refine the definition of online consumer engagement so the industry and academic literature definitions of the construct align. Much of the industry literature considers online consumer engagement critical to online marketing efforts, but only views the construct as a unidimensional term, which encompasses participation. Additionally, the academic literature is also exploring the role online consumer engagement plays in online

marketing efforts; however, the academic literature considers online consumer engagement to be a multidimensional (cognitive and affective) construct but fails to include the participative dimension heavily considered in the industry literature. Based on this, this study refined the definition of online consumer engagement to not only include cognitive and affective dimensions but also to include the participative dimension as well. In addition to aligning the industry and academic definitions of the term by including participation, the study aligned other academic disciplines' definitions of engagement by including the presence concept in both of the cognitive and affective dimensions.

By including both participation and cognitive/affective presence within online consumer engagement, greater understanding of the construct has been achieved. First, by including participation, the industry and academic definitions of the construct are more in agreement, which can help both sides as they pursue future research. Second, including presence within the definition of online consumer engagement contributes to both the academic literature as well as the industry as neither group has considered “presence” as a part of the construct.

Dimensions of Online Consumer Engagement

The second aim of the study was to explore measures and dimensions of online consumer engagement. The proposed framework suggested that perceived qualities of a company's Facebook page influenced online consumer engagement, which was defined by three dimensions – cognition, affect, and participation. The model then suggested that online consumer engagement consisting of those three components influenced loyalty and ultimately (re)purchase intent. A key to this model was that the three online consumer engagement dimensions were separated within the overall online consumer engagement umbrella; therefore, the hypotheses were constructed by identifying each component of online consumer engagement (e.g., perceived

information quality on a Facebook company page positively predicts the *cognitive* components of online consumer engagement and perceived information quality on a Facebook company page positively predicts *affective* components of online consumer engagement). However, when the exploratory factor analysis was conducted, the measures for cognition and affect loaded together as one factor (CogAff), which resulted in a revised research model that consisted of two factors – CogAff and participation – for online consumer engagement instead of the three factors initially proposed.

There are several reasons why this may have occurred. First, the two items that loaded for CogAff, originally from the affect scale, were based on the respondents' satisfaction (e.g., "The company's page that I 'like' on Facebook is satisfying") with their experience on a company's Facebook page. Research has found that cognition and affect significantly predict satisfaction (Homburg, Koschate, & Hoyer, 2006). Specifically, Oliver (1997, p. 319) states that affect "coexists alongside various cognitive judgments in producing satisfaction," and that it is central to understanding customers' consumption experiences. Further, Homburg et al. explain that researchers cannot understand satisfaction without investigating cognition and affect simultaneously due to the "dynamic nature of the phenomenon" (p. 21). For example, after accounting for cognition, Smith and Bolton (2002) found feelings predict satisfaction levels. Additionally, Oliver (1993) found that both cognition and affect are critical in influencing satisfaction judgments. Extrapolating from this, online consumer engagement, especially given the satisfaction measures related to the construct, may be functioning similarly in that cognition and affect may be so closely tied together that researchers have to consider the construct jointly.

Similarly, considering the Facebook environment in which the study was focused, it may be hard to tease out cognition and affect components separately. A company's Facebook page

includes a variety of features including text, pictures, videos, games, contests, and interaction. Due to the nature of how all of these features are presented, especially with the new timeline design (Lessin, 2011), respondents are mentally involved, making product decisions and learning about the company while simultaneously assessing if they are pleased and satisfied with their experience. According to Belosic, CEO of ShortStack.com, a custom Facebook App creator, “the timeline design allows businesses to engage with customers with cool apps, contests, promotions” while concurrently describing corporate histories (Evans, 2012, p. 1). Furthermore, Jennifer Noir, owner of Chat Noir Bookstore, states that the timeline features help companies make a good impression by having more things visible at any one time (Evans). Thus, having all of the information and visual elements alongside each other can make the experience very engaging both cognitively and affectively, which may contribute to the difficulty of separating consumers’ thoughts as well as their feelings about a company. O’Brien (2010) states that functionality and hedonic elements are infused throughout systems to concurrently evoke cognitive and affective engaging experiences.

Additionally, methodologically the items could have loaded together because of the wording of the questions. Respondents could have answered the cognitive items and the two affective (pleasurable and satisfying) items that loaded on the CogAff factor as a specific experience on a company’s Facebook page, which they were asked to do, but may have answered the additional affective items based more on their general experience on a company’s Facebook page due to the wording of the survey question. In other words, the items that loaded with CogAff may be more specific to one particular visit to a company’s Facebook page whereas the other items that did not load with the factor may be based more on multiple visits to a company’s Facebook page.

This study's finding that cognition and affect should be measured together broadens the knowledge of online consumer engagement in the academic literature, specifically regarding the dimensionality of the construct and the construct's measurement scale. Several scholars have defined engagement as purely unidimensional, either cognition (Douglas & Hargadon, 2000; McConnell, 2006; Peppers & Rogers, 2005; Peterson, 2007) or affect (Campanelli, 2007; Heath, 2007; Shevlin, 2007; Smith & Wallace, 2010), while others have defined engagement as multidimensional with tenets of cognitive and affect (Harris, 2006; Mollen & Wilson, 2010; Passilkoff, 2006). This finding suggests that online consumer engagement in fact is multidimensional and does encompass both cognition and affect, which helps solidify the hypothesis that online consumer engagement is a multifaceted construct. Additionally, there is a lack of online consumer engagement scales present in the marketing literature. This finding suggests that online consumer engagement scales should include both cognitive and affective items together to measure the construct.

Lastly, this study's finding that cognition and affect should be measured together has implications for marketing managers. Marketing managers have historically regarded engagement as a unidimensional term of simply participation (Evans & McKee, 2010; Harden & Heyman, 2009; Solis, 2010). However, given that the measurement scale that included the CogAff factor was found to be reliable, marketing managers should begin to realize that engagement is much more than just participating online – it also includes thought and emotion. Additionally, marketers can construct metrics that encompass the traditional participation measures but also cognitive/affective measures to determine how well their marketing efforts are succeeding.

Antecedents and Outcome Variables of Online Consumer Engagement

The third aim of this study was to test the proposed conceptual framework of online consumer engagement that situated engagement between the antecedents and behavioral outcomes associated with “liking” companies on Facebook. As predicted, this study found that information quality is related to cognitive/affective online consumer engagement (H1AB). When consumers are reading and working with the information presented on a company’s Facebook page, they begin to understand the company and become wrapped up into the company’s story through its history, mission, goals, and product offerings while at the same time forming emotions that create a positive attitude about the company. The findings align with previous research conducted by O’Brien and Toms (2008) in that consumers are engaged when systems, in this case company Facebook pages, post not only the information that they need but present it in a way that is considered pleasurable, enthralling, and satisfying.

From an academic perspective, these findings broaden the knowledge base regarding online consumer engagement given that few researchers have considered the construct’s antecedents. This contribution is significant in that several researchers are examining what engagement is, rather than focusing on what leads to engagement. This study suggests that information quality is one antecedent of online consumer engagement, which identifies a starting point for future investigation into the construct.

From an industry perspective, understanding that information quality influences cognitive and affective online consumer engagement suggests that marketers should concentrate on the type of information presented as well as the format in which the information is presented. Marketers need to provide not only timely and accurate information but also relevant information

that evokes pleasure and satisfaction in order to create emotional ties between a company and its consumers.

This study hypothesized that information quality would be positively related to the participation dimension of online consumer engagement (H1C). However, when examining the relationship, it was found that information quality does not predict the participation component of online consumer engagement. This relationship is understudied in the literature so it is still unclear even if a relationship exists. This study did not find a significant relationship, but O'Brien and Toms' (2008) in-depth interviews suggested that a relationship does exist but they have yet to analyze the numerical data. Based on this, additional research needs to be conducted to clarify the conflicting findings.

The hypothesis may not have been supported because consumers could be motivated to go to a company's Facebook page to seek out specific information that may not warrant a reason to participate on the page. For example, a consumer may only want information regarding company hours, location, and sale dates. This finding does align with the focus group results of this study, in that several participants said that they go to a company's Facebook page for basic information and may not read posts, leave a comment, or play a game. Because some consumers, at times, are more motivated in a utilitarian sense (Hyllegard et al., 2012) their willingness to participate could be negatively influenced.

Even though the findings did not support H1C, in which information quality is thought to lead to the participation component of online consumer engagement, they do provide new insight regarding a relationship that is not well-supported in the literature. As previously stated, the path between information quality and participation has yet to be heavily studied in the literature, so this research has suggested new ideas and has opened new opportunities for future research.

This relationship should become even more important to study, with the ever-increasing development of new technologies that provide online participation opportunities for consumers.

Additionally, this research provides insight to marketers in that, at times, consumers may only be accessing the company's Facebook page for specific information and may not take the time to participate on the Facebook page. However, it is still imperative for marketers to provide information that consumers want, in a pleasing manner, as this can contribute to overall online consumer engagement.

As hypothesized, enjoyment influences both cognitive/affective (H2AB) online consumer engagement. When consumers are enjoying themselves on a company's Facebook page via the text posts, photos, videos, games, and/or contests, they become emotionally involved with the company as well as cognitively involved, which leads to cognitive and affective online consumer engagement. In other words, consumers who are having fun and are excited and entertained on a company's Facebook page are not only garnering knowledge about the company but are also developing a fondness for the company, which can lead to preference for that company (Severin & Tankard, 2001). This finding concurs with past research that has found websites, in this study's case Facebook pages, with aesthetic and novel features move consumers forward into engagement (Aboulaflia & Bannon, 2004; Jennings, 2000; O'Brien & Toms, 2008).

Similar to information quality, the finding that enjoyment can be considered an antecedent to online consumer engagement helps researchers to understand online consumer engagement better and provides insight into the stimulus to engagement, particularly in the Facebook environment. Given that online consumer engagement is a new construct in the marketing literature, little is known at this point about what leads to engagement, so this study helps shed light on the construct's antecedents. Additionally, knowing that enjoyment leads to

cognitive/affective online consumer engagement provides insight to marketers; they need to continually update the company's Facebook page with fun and exciting features to keep their consumers engaged. Marketers need to challenge themselves to continually innovate and create new opportunities (e.g., apps, contests, promotions, or creative page design) on the company's Facebook page that are unique and novel. By doing this, consumers are vested both cognitively (concentration and process-oriented) and affectively (emotionally bonding, pleasure) through the element of surprise, which contributes to online consumer engagement.

Based on the literature that suggests enjoyable experiences on a web site can increase a consumer's willingness to participate (Watson et al., 1998; Zhang & von Dran, 2000), this study hypothesized that enjoyment can lead to participative online consumer engagement (H2C). After examining the data based on the revised research model, it was found that the hypothesized relationship was supported. This suggests that consumers who perceived a company's Facebook page as enjoyable are more likely to read posts from the company and other fans, respond to the company's or other fans' posts, watch videos, and/or even play games. This exploration of enjoyable features directly results in longer periods of time spent on a company's Facebook page, which has been found to influence the level of consumer input (Watson et al; Zhang & von Dran).

Again, this finding contributes to the existing research findings by suggesting an antecedent to online consumer engagement. It also contributes to the literature by lending further support to the concept that enjoyable web site features positively predict participation (Watson et al., 1998; Zhang & von Dran, 2000).

This finding that consumers' perceived enjoyment of a company's Facebook page leads to participative online consumer engagement provides valuable insight for the industry. As

discussed previously, much of the industry literature defines consumer engagement solely by participation, but few studies have considered what elements influence participation. This study suggests that marketers, who want to see high levels of participation, should create company Facebook pages that are considered enjoyable with fun and entertaining features. Companies that make the effort to create distinctive Facebook pages may find themselves with a fan base more willing to interact and be more engaged.

This study found that interactivity influences cognitive/affective (H3AB) online consumer engagement. When consumers are aware of an opportunity to interact with a company and the company is responsive, consumers are more likely to be engaged. This finding aligns with the focus group data that found respondents were substantially more likely to be engaged with a company on Facebook if the company took the time to respond to their inquiries or other fans' inquiries.

Thus, understanding that interactivity influences cognitive/affective online consumer engagement contributes to the current body of literature by providing insight into the contradiction among researchers regarding the relationship between interactivity and engagement. As previously stated, O'Brien and Toms (2008) believe that interactivity is part of engagement, whereas Mollen and Wilson (2010) place interactivity as occurring before engagement. This study's structural equation modeling results suggest that interactivity should be considered an antecedent of engagement, which supports Mollen and Wilson's belief.

Additionally, understanding that interactivity influences cognitive/affective online consumer engagement contributes valuable information to the industry by suggesting marketers focus on creating Facebook company pages that encompass interactive elements. Given that the Facebook environment is conducive to providing highly interactive elements, marketers creating

pages that encourage interactivity should be easy. However, perhaps an even more important insight is the fact that consumers respond to companies that provide feedback. Based on this, marketers need to monitor the activity on the company's Facebook page and respond to consumers' inquiries in a timely manner. It appears based on the focus group data that consumers do not expect that a company's response be very long or even that personal; consumers just want to be recognized and heard. This suggests that marketers can quickly and without a lot of forethought respond to consumers, especially if they are answering similar consumer questions or inquiries. This will benefit the company two-fold: a quick response recognizes the consumers' efforts and goes a long way in influencing consumer engagement, and a quick response that does not require a lot of planning can save the company time and money.

Additionally, as hypothesized, interactive features on a company's Facebook page influence the participation online consumer engagement (H3C). This suggests that the more consumers perceive the company's Facebook page to be interactive, the more they will participate. This makes sense given that the more interactive features available on a company's Facebook page mean more opportunities for a user to participate; whereas, less or very few interactive features make it hard for a consumer to participate. Additionally, if the interactivity is two-way and a company provides feedback, consumers are more likely to become engaged with the brand. This suggests a reciprocal relationship between interactivity and online consumer engagement, which will be discussed in a later section.

The finding that interactive features on a company's Facebook page influence participative online consumer engagement does support past research that suggests interactivity contributes to a user's overall willingness to respond on a web site (Cyr et al., 2009), which contributes to the literature by confirming previously published results. It also expands on the

understanding of online consumer engagement by identifying interactivity as another antecedent to the construct. Similarly, the results help marketers understand what contributes to engagement on a company's Facebook page. Marketers need to understand that providing interactive features can influence a consumer to participate, so companies need to create pages that allow consumers to easily read the company's posts while also being able to respond. Additionally, marketers need to create pages that showcase other users' comments and responses, since this study found that consumers become engaged by viewing other fans' comments and the company's responses to these comments.

As hypothesized, the results of this study confirmed that there is a relationship between cognitive/affective (H4AB) online consumer engagement and loyalty. When consumers are simultaneously cognitively present and affectively present, they are not only learning and processing information about the brand, forming emotional bonds and a positive attitude about the brand, but they may also be forgetting that they are in a mediated environment (based on focus group findings), which can lead to higher levels of brand loyalty. Presumably, getting wrapped up in the experience, fully immersing themselves in higher levels of thinking, and experiencing strong feelings of connectedness form the positive attitude toward the brand, moving consumers into "real" loyalty (Mowen & Minor, 2006). The finding that cognitive/affective online consumer engagement leads to loyalty supports claims from past research that has found cognitively engaged (Shang et al., 2006) and affectively engaged (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Dick & Basu, 1994) consumers promote brand loyalty.

Identifying and confirming there is a relationship between cognitive/affective online consumer engagement and loyalty significantly contributes to the literature on engagement from a marketing perspective. To date, very few studies have analyzed the relationship, so the

findings of this study help to situate online consumer engagement as an important marketing concept to research.

Additionally, confirming that there is a relationship between cognitive/affective online consumer engagement and loyalty significantly contributes to the industry. First, the findings support the notion of including the cognitive and affective components into the definition of online consumer engagement that has previously been lacking in the industry literature. By helping marketers realize that engagement is much more than just participating on a site, they can begin to measure their Facebook presence in different ways and assess whether managing a Facebook page is worthwhile for a company. Additionally, this finding confirms that engagement can create loyalty, which has been suggested by industry experts (Evans & McKee, 2010; Roberts, 2005; Solis, 2010) but until this study has been merely speculation.

Moreover, this study has confirmed that a relationship between the participative online consumer engagement and loyalty exists (H4C). This finding aligns with past research that suggests participation in a mediated space elevates the connection between a consumer and the company, which can lead to loyalty (Casalo et al., 2010; Koh & Kim, 2004). Given that the Facebook environment provides a vast array of opportunities to engage with a company by either reading or responding to the companies' or other fans' posts, watching videos, looking at pictures, and/or playing games, consumers can easily connect with the company and therefore form strong feelings of loyalty.

Similarly to the previous discussion, understanding that a relationship between participation online consumer engagement and loyalty exists expands upon the current knowledge of online consumer engagement and loyalty. Given that online consumer engagement is an emerging construct within the marketing literature, little is known about the

construct's outcomes. Identifying loyalty as an outcome of online consumer engagement positions the construct as an important area to study, as loyalty is considered a crucial marketing issue (Casalo et al., 2007, Flavian et al., 2006; Keating et al., 2003) Furthermore, due to the fact that past research has considered loyalty to be a key factor in achieving organizational success and long-term sustainability (Casalo et al.; Flavian et al.; Keating et al.), confirming that participative online consumer engagement influences loyalty provides further insight for marketers in that they should strive to promote participation on their Facebook pages in order to increase loyalty among consumers.

Lastly, as hypothesized, this study found consumers who are loyal to a company they "like" on Facebook are likely to have (re)purchase intentions (H5). This finding supports past research that has found a positive link between attitudinal loyalty and purchase decisions (Griffin, 2002; Shukla, 2009). This suggests that consumers who feel loyalty toward a company are more likely to select that company over its competition. Given that Facebook provides companies and consumers an unprecedented opportunity to interact, it might be easier for consumers to become brand loyal and therefore be willing to purchase products from the company they "like" on Facebook. This is because they can learn about the company's history, goals, missions, and philanthropic efforts, can see the company's products through photos and videos, and can read how other consumers feel about the company all in one place.

From an academic perspective, this finding further confirms that there is a relationship between loyalty and (re)purchase intent. It also lends support for separating loyalty and purchase intentions into separate constructs and situating loyalty before (re)purchase intent, which several scholars have done (Bolton et al., 2000; Dick & Basu, 1994; Griffin, 2002; Shukla, 2009). By confirming that loyalty should be situated before (re)purchase, this study's findings suggest that

loyalty is more of an attitudinal measure than merely a behavioral measure, and that loyalty should be regarded as instrumental in a consumer's purchase decision.

Understanding that loyalty influences (re)purchase intent has implications for marketers in that if they can influence loyalty among their consumers on a company's Facebook page, they can influence consumers' (re)purchase intentions toward the products. This finding is significant because marketers have struggled to connect their Facebook efforts to a positive return on investment (Holzner, 2009; Levy, 2010; Solis, 2010), but this finding suggests that building brand loyalty on Facebook can positively contribute to the bottom line, which is the ultimate goal of all marketing efforts.

Conclusions

Given that many consumers utilize social media, especially the social networking site Facebook, many companies have followed suit in an attempt to engage with their customers in a new mediated space. Since marketers and academics alike have suggested very different ideas of what engaging consumers online in the Facebook environment really entails, this study was designed to explore the online consumer engagement concept. Drawing upon the literature from a variety of disciplines such as website design, consumer behavior, communication, and marketing, the online consumer engagement model developed and empirically tested in this study represented an effort to examine the online consumer engagement construct as well as its antecedents and outcomes. Information quality, enjoyment, and interactivity were hypothesized to be the antecedents of online consumer engagement, and loyalty and (re)purchase intent were hypothesized to be outcomes of online consumer engagement.

Several major theoretical implications emerge from this study. First, through the confirmation of the revised research model, a proposed benchmark definition of online consumer

engagement is put forth that is enhanced from previous attempts to include cognitive/affective presence, and participative dimensions:

Online consumer engagement is the state of being present in a mediated branded space where the consumer is immersed in the brand's offerings meant to deliver purpose and value. Cognitive engagement requires intense levels of focus and concentration in seeking, interpreting, analyzing, and summarizing information to a point where consumers may lose themselves in the process and may lose a sense of time and space. Additionally, brand learning (e.g., mission, goals, product offerings, philanthropic efforts, and promotions) occurs while negative responses toward the brand are minimized. Furthermore, online consumer engagement requires affective feelings, which involves emotional bonding and connection with the brand, products, and other users that leads to overall satisfaction. Lastly, consumers must invest themselves within the online vehicle by participating through sharing, conversing, and co-creating with the brand and/or other users.

This new definition attempts to synthesize the previous definitions of online consumer engagement in the marketing literature as well as other disciplines (e.g., education, psychology, and sociology). The definition draws upon the narrative engagement literature by including the notion of presence. Presence, which is defined as the state of "being there," enhances the definition of online consumer engagement because it considers how deeply consumers can be connected to a company's Facebook page. This transportation can reduce negative thoughts and feelings, which suggests that consumers who are engaged on a company's Facebook page are less likely to challenge the company's message. Until this study, presence had yet to be considered a part of online consumer engagement in the marketing literature. Even though the

results of this study were mixed regarding presence, this study has presented new ideas and has stimulated new opportunities for interdisciplinary research.

Additionally, this new definition of online consumer engagement builds a bridge between the academic literature and the industry literature by including the participative dimension. The hope is that the gap between the two different definitions is eliminated so the two groups can work together to explore and understand this complex concept.

Secondly, the findings of this study advance the understanding of online consumer engagement within the “liking” environment on Facebook by confirming the direct paths of the antecedents – information quality, enjoyment, and interactivity – on online consumer engagement. Furthermore, this study expands the knowledge of online consumer engagement by confirming that loyalty and (re)purchase intent are outcomes of the construct. Additionally, the findings from this study provide insight into the measures of online consumer engagement. Particularly noteworthy is recognizing that the cognitive and affective dimensions of online consumer engagement should be measured simultaneously. The results of this research revealed that the factors for cognition and affect loaded together as one item, which is an expansion of an existing engagement scale developed by O’Brien and Toms (2008).

This research explored the role online consumer engagement has in the context of “liking” companies on Facebook. Consumers’ engagement with a company’s Facebook page may be enhanced by marketers who have influence over the company’s Facebook page design. Several managerial contributions emerged from this study. Similar to the theoretical implications, the definition of engagement put forth has implications for management. By including the components of cognition/affect and participation in the definition makes the construct a richer marketing metric, which in turn influences the robustness of its measures.

Secondly, the findings encourage practitioners to develop Facebook company pages that include quality information as well as fun and exciting features that are interactive in order to influence the level of consumer engagement on the site. Based on this, marketers can be assured that an investment in a site that encompasses these elements can pay off in loyalty and eventually an increase in sales. Finally, this study provides a better understanding of a company's return on investment from its company's Facebook page.

Limitations and Future Research

This study revealed several insights for academic researchers and practitioners, but caution should be taken when interpreting the results due to the limitations of the study. First, the snowball sampling technique used may bias the data in several ways. One is the composition of the sample. The sample may not be representative of the consumer population that "likes" companies on Facebook, given that this researcher posted the survey link on her personal Facebook page and the pages of groups she is affiliated with. Future research should consider a different sampling technique that may better reflect the demographic composition of consumers who "like" companies on Facebook. A few examples include enlisting companies with Facebook pages to help disseminate the survey link on their Facebook page, or buying Facebook ads that target consumers who "like" companies on Facebook. Additionally, participants of the study were expected to recall a company on Facebook that they "liked" and to answer the survey questions accordingly. Given that the participants had to recall a company, their responses may have been biased. Specifically, recalling the amount of time spent on a Facebook page that the participant "likes" could have contributed to the 46% of survey participants who said that they rarely spend time on the company's Facebook page. Future research may consider surveying the participants while they are using Facebook or any other social media of research interest.

Secondly, the study only considered the role online consumer engagement has on consumer goods companies' Facebook pages. Although the relationships in the model are expected to be generalizable to organizations other than consumer goods companies, future research needs to be conducted to verify this. For instance, the study showed that online consumer engagement influenced loyalty and (re)purchase intent. However, the influence of online consumer engagement on loyalty and (re)purchase intent may be different for organizations than consumer goods companies. For example, many focus group participants said they "like" their banking institution on Facebook. Several participants said that they feel more loyal to their bank because of "liking" them on Facebook but did not feel that their loyalty led to more banking transactions or acceptance of more bank offers; rather their loyalty contributed to feelings of trust and security regarding their money.

It is unclear if the outcomes of online consumer engagement are different for non-profit organizations instead of consumer goods companies. Non-profit organizations are reliant on fundraising and donations in order to successfully operate (Seitel, 2011). Given this, non-profit organizations may be more concerned with consumers' willingness to donate rather than their (re)purchase intentions. Therefore, the loyalty/(re)purchase intent path may not be applicable for all organizations. Future research should consider the role online consumer engagement has on other constructs such as trust, sense of security, willingness to donate, and willingness to volunteer.

Third, this study did not test the potential recursive relationships that might be occurring in the model suggested by the findings in the focus groups. For example, people who have developed loyalty with a company previously might be more engaging on the company's Facebook page. Given that this was an exploratory study of online consumer engagement, the

researcher attempted to test the proposed model first before suggesting potential recursive relationships. However, future research could explore these recursive relationships to determine their effects on online consumer engagement. Potential relationships to explore include interactivity and participation, online consumer cognition/affect and online consumer engagement participation, online consumer engagement and loyalty, and loyalty and (re)purchase intent.

Fourth, this study only considered the online consumer engagement construct in the context of “liking” companies on Facebook. However, organizations are utilizing several different social media applications to connect with their consumers. Future research could test the online consumer engagement model in different social media environments such as branded online communities, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, or Flickr to see if the antecedents and outcomes are the same or if they are specific to the Facebook environment.

Fifth, given that the study was situated within an S-O-R framework, the antecedents explored were based on the company’s perceived Facebook features. However, several other variables could be influencing online consumer engagement; future research could examine these variables. Other variables potentially influencing consumer behavior could be social structural (e.g., age, gender, and education level), motivation, values, self-efficacy toward “liking” companies on Facebook, physiologic (e.g., expectations and arousal), and having a prior relationship with the company.

Sixth, results from the study were conflicting in regards to the inclusion of cognitive/affective presence within the definition and measures of online consumer engagement. The results of the focus groups conducted in this study revealed that some participants had felt a sense of “presence” when on a company’s Facebook page that they “liked,” especially when they

were looking at pictures posted on the company's Facebook page. Given this, presence items were included in the survey as additional items to measure cognitive and affective dimensions of online consumer engagement. However, after the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were completed, only one item of presence remained in the CogAff factor – “When I am on the company's Facebook page that I “like,” I get mentally involved in the company (e.g., its story, history, mission, goals).”

This may be occurring because the respondents for the survey were asked to select one company they “liked” on Facebook and to answer the questions based on their experience with that one company. Potentially, the respondent might not feel a sense of presence with the particular company's Facebook page that they selected, but perhaps felt a sense of presence with other companies' Facebook pages that they “like.” Additionally, given that the focus group participants stated several times that they felt a sense of presence when looking at pictures posted on the company's Facebook page, perhaps the company that they selected to answer the survey questions about had very few pictures posted, which could affect consumers' feelings of “being there.” Lastly, perhaps the items used to measure presence were limiting and did not capture presence within the context of “liking” companies on Facebook.

Given that there were conflicting results between the focus groups and the survey conducted in this study, further research exploring the role of presence and how it relates to cognitive and affective dimensions within online consumer engagement should occur. Findings from the focus groups suggest future research may consider measuring presence with the following statements: “I get wrapped up in the company's story while on the company's Facebook page that I ‘like;’” “I get swept away in other consumers' stories they have shared about the company on the company's Facebook page that I ‘like;’” “When I am viewing pictures

posted on the company's Facebook page that I 'like,' I lose track of time;" "When I am viewing pictures posted on the company's Facebook page that I 'like,' I forget that I am viewing them in a computer-mediated space;" and "I feel like I am a stakeholder to the company that I 'like' on Facebook."

Furthermore, future research may consider exploring the role of narrative engagement within the construct of online consumer engagement. The narrative engagement literature (e.g., Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009) may help marketers craft marketing messages that immerse and transport consumers into the company's story in a way that minimizes negative thoughts and feelings about the company. The ability to influence consumer "presence" within online consumer engagement may prove to be competitively advantageous for companies.

Seventh, the study initially assumed that consumers stay up-to-date by visiting a company's Facebook page. However, based on the focus group results, it was discovered that consumers read a company's posts on their newsfeeds, and if they find the post "interesting, entertaining, and relatable," they will go to the company's Facebook page. Given that the process of accessing the company's Facebook page relies heavily on a company's message that is posted in the newsfeed, future research could be dedicated to message analysis to help determine the types of messages that drive consumers to a company's Facebook page. This research could help determine if it is the content, tone, visual elements, and/or length of posts that intrigues consumers enough to click through to a company's Facebook page.

Lastly, future research could explore the possibility of linking a company's Facebook page and a company's website together, given that companies have spent tremendous time and money to develop websites that support e-commerce functions. Because very few companies use Facebook as an e-commerce site, researching how Facebook may be used to direct consumers to

a company's website with established e-commerce capabilities might be fruitful for marketers to further justify the resources needed to maintain a company's Facebook page and may provide additional support for a company's Facebook page return on investment.

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APPENDIX A

1. How long have you been a Facebook user?
2. Approximately, how many companies do you “like” on Facebook?
3. What types of companies do you “like” on Facebook?
4. Why do you “like” companies on Facebook?
5. What benefits do you receive from “liking” companies on Facebook?
6. How do you typically interact with companies you “like” on Facebook?
 - a. Do you mainly read their posts on your wall feed or do you visit the company’s Facebook page?
 - b. If you only read their posts, why don’t you visit their Facebook page?
7. Describe a company’s Facebook page that you go to most often.
 - a. Why do you go to that page most often? What do you like about it?
 - b. How much time do you typically spend on the page a week?
8. What do you do when you get on the company’s Facebook page?
 - a. Probe for participation
 - i. Interact with other fans (e.g. read their posts, answer questions, post comments)
 - ii. How do you interact with the company?
 - a. Read posts from company? Read about us section?
 - b. Do you find you get involved in the organization’s story?
History/background/charity
 - c. How do you view the posts from an organization? Do you think that it is an organization sending the posts or consider the posts coming from a person?

9. Describe how you feel in relation to time and space when you are on a company's Facebook page.
 - a. Probe for presence (e.g. lose track of time, absorbed in the page, forget that it is a mediated space)
10. What characteristics on a company's Facebook page are important to you? Why?
 - a. Prime for information quality, enjoyment, and interaction
11. If you "like" more than one company on Facebook, how do the companies' pages differ from each other in terms of site characteristics?
12. Do you consider yourself a loyal customer to the company/brand you "like" on Facebook?
13. If so, describe what you mean by being loyal.
14. Have you done anything different toward the company since "liking" it on Facebook?

APPENDIX B: Focus Group Personal Data Sheet

**ONLINE CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT:
UNDERSTANDING THE ANTECEDENTS AND OUTCOMES**

Personal Data Sheet

Focus Group # _____ Participant # _____ Date: _____

Your age: _____

Your gender: _____

Your school year: _____

Your major: _____

How long have you been a Facebook user? _____

How many companies do you “like” on Facebook? _____

Please list the companies you “like” on Facebook.

Approximately, how much time do you spend on the companies’ pages that you “like” on Facebook during a week?

1-5 hrs. _____ 6-10 hrs. _____ 11-15 hrs. _____ 16-20 hrs. _____ 20+ hrs. _____

APPENDIX C: Survey Questionnaire



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Spring 2012

Dear Facebook User:

We are conducting a research study titled, "Online Consumer Engagement: Understanding the Antecedents and Outcomes." The purpose of this study is to explore the concept of online consumer engagement within the context of "liking" companies on Facebook. Specifically, this study will explore how consumers interact with companies they "like" on Facebook through company profile pages. More specifically, the study will consider what consumers feel about interactions with companies they "like" on Facebook and how consumers may act based upon the interactions with companies they "like" on Facebook.

We would like to invite you to participate in this research. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to respond to a questionnaire that includes demographic items as well as items designed to examine your Facebook usage. It will take about 15 - 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Please be assured that any information or responses that you provide in connection with this research will remain anonymous, meaning your answers will not be connected to you in anyway. All questionnaires will be destroyed in the year 2015. Also, if you decide to participate, you may decline to answer any questionnaire item(s) you choose and may stop participating at any time.

There are no known risks to participating in this research. Similarly, there are no known direct benefits to participating in this study, but we hope that participants will gain knowledge of the potential benefits to "liking" companies on Facebook. We appreciate you dedicating your time to our survey. We ask that you answer all questions honestly and completely so we can get comprehensive data to help our research project. For your time and effort you have given for our research, please provide your email address for a chance to win one of five \$20.00 American Express gift cards. Your email address will only be used to contact you if you win one of the gift cards. Your survey answers are not connected to your email address. If you have any questions about the study, please phone Amy Reitz at (970) 351-2645 or email her at areitz@lamar.colostate.edu. If you have questions about human research participants' rights, please contact Janell Barker at (970) 491-1655 or at Janell.Barker@colostate.edu.

Thank you for considering our request to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

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Qualifying Question

Please answer the following question.

Do you currently “like” a company on Facebook? Yes _____ No _____

Part I. About You

Please provide the following information about yourself.

1.1. What is your age? _____

1.2. What is your gender? (please select one): Male _____ Female _____

1.3. Are you a US resident? Yes _____ No _____

1.4. What is your ethnicity?

_____ American Indian, Alaskan, or Hawaiian Native

_____ Asian

_____ Black or African American

_____ Caucasian or White

_____ Hispanic

_____ Other

_____ Do not wish to respond

1.5. What is the highest education level you have completed?

_____ Some high school, no diploma

_____ High school diploma

_____ Some college, no degree

_____ Associate’s degree

_____ Bachelor’s degree

_____ Master’s or Doctoral degree

_____ Do not wish to respond

1.6. What is your annual household income level?

_____ Less than \$25,000

_____ \$25,001 to \$50,000

_____ \$50,001 to \$75,000

_____ \$75,001 to \$100,000

_____ \$100,001 to \$125,000

_____ \$125,001 to \$150,000

_____ \$150,001 to \$175,000

_____ \$175,001 to \$200,000

_____ more than \$200,000

Please answer all questions before continuing on to the next section.

If you would like to be eligible for a chance to one of five \$20.00 American Express gift cards, please provide your email address below. As a reminder, your email address will only be used to contact you if you win one of the gift cards. Your survey answers are not connected to your email address. We will notify the winners of the American Express gift cards by July 15, 2010.

Email address: _____

Thank you for completing this survey.