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Our celebrities our selves: Reconstructing ourselves as online personalities

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OUR CELEBRITIES OUR SELVES: RECONSTRUCTING OURSELVES AS ONLINE

PERSONALITIES

A Dissertation

by

ARNE BARUCA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Texas – Pan American
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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Michael S. Minor
Chair of Committee

Dr. Mohammadali Zolfagharian
Committee Member

Dr. Xiaojing Sheng
Committee Member

Dr. Sibin Wu
Committee Member

August 2012

ABSTRACT

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Celebrity influence on consumer behavior at the online macro level is the motivation for this study that addresses the nature of celebrity consumption and how consumers apply that consumption to develop their online self-presentation.

The sample for this study is limited to consumers with active accounts at online social networks such as Facebook or Twitter. Methodology is a three-part design. A multi-factor qualitative exploratory study (n=73) reveals four celebrity-consumer relationships whose proposed measurement scales are tested in a quantitative pilot study (n=85). Finally, a large sample study (n=593) is used to test the measurement model and to test the proposed relationships among the four constructs.

Model fit was tested using a confirmatory factor analysis that returned significant fit indices. Convergent, discriminant and nomological validity tests supported the four-construct model. Finally, structural equation model analysis was performed to test the overall model fit and test the proposed relationships among constructs.

The online celebrity relationship scale overall fit was positive and particularly convincing is that online *Self Celebritization* (consumers mimicking celebrities in their social media pages) is dependent on *Celebrity Connectedness*. The study contributes by confirming the link between extensive consumption of celebrities and people's behavior online. The propensity of consumers

to celebritize themselves online is predicated with the need to first consume the celebrities.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my grandmother Marija Mikolic. Despite experiencing WWII, where she lost her father at age 13 (when he was shot at his home by the Nazis in front all of the family), despite all the other bad things that happened to her in her early years, she always kept a positive attitude and motivated us to do better, to help and care for each other, and to always be happy no matter what. She is a great inspiration and continues to motivate me to this day. I hope that with this work (and with the Ph.D.) I make her proud. Hvala Nona!

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I am also very grateful to Dr. Mohammadali Zolfgharian. He is a very special committee member and professor to me, as we clicked from the beginning. I have cherished our friendship all these five years. During my dissertation he provided me with very useful comments and challenged me to make this work better. He pushed me and was very demanding with me also in his class. The result was my very first paper in my academic life that we co-authored together. I hope he continues to enlighten and "de-casualizes" me when needed in the future as well.

I also thank all my committee members, Dr. Xiaojing Sheng and Dr. Sibin Wu for helping me in finishing this work despite the enormous time pressure at the very end of the project. They were both very kind and helpful and, most importantly, very patient with me. Their comments, constructive criticism, and spot-on-remarks helped me raise the level of my work and finish it on time.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"In the future everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes." Andy Warhol (1968)

Fascination with and influence by celebrities is omnipresent in today's society, a phenomenon well represented in the literature that posits an age of celebrity within a celebrity culture (Currid-Halkett 2010; Marshall 1997; Schickel 1985; Turner 2010b; Turner 2004). The noun *Celebrity* is derived from the Latin *celebritas*, which means celebration or fame (Ferri 2010). A more insightful description was framed by Boorstin (1961) who defined celebrity as "a person who is well-known for their well-knownness" (p.58). The Dictionary of American History characterizes the celebrity culture from two perspectives. The first is from the celebrity's point of view (Dictionary of American History 2003):

> *"Celebrity culture is a symbiotic business relationship from which performers obtain wealth, honors, and social power in exchange for selling a sense of intimacy to audiences. Enormous salaries are commonplace.....Although it is certainly difficult to measure the social power accruing to celebrities, Beatle John Lennon's controversial assertion that "The Beatles are more popular than Jesus," suggests something of the sort of grandiosity that celebrity culture fosters."*

The second addresses the consequences of celebrity culture from the celebrity consumer point of view (Dictionary of American History 2003):

"For the fan, celebrity culture can produce intense identification at rock concerts, athletic arenas, and other displays of the fantasy object, whether live or recorded and mechanically reproduced. Such identifications can lead to role reversals where the fan covets the wealth, honors, and supposed power of the celebrity.

For the purpose of this study, I define celebrity as a triumvirate. First, a famous person who regardless of whether he or she possesses a specific talent is well recognized and is often mentioned in media outlets; second, has followers (or, fans); and third, has the possibility of benefiting financially from his or her appearances at venues, in commercials or any other commercial relationship where his or her name is present.

In spite of the popular belief that obsession with celebrities developed in the beginning of the 20th century and rose to prominence with the help of Hollywood (Schickel 1985), the past tells us otherwise. Braudy (1997) cautions that even though today's mass media has fuelled awareness of celebrities; fascination with fame is an ancient phenomenon where notable persons engraved their faces onto coins or named cities after themselves.

What is exclusive to today's society is the sensation of closeness that consumers have with celebrated people due in no small part to technological developments in the recent past (Ferri 2010). As Ferri (2010) points out, "celebrities populate all media because technology not only allows but also encourages distribution and capture of image and sound through the ease of every improving media devices" (p. 403). It would therefore seem that the relationship with celebrities has evolved from escapism from the daily hum drum of life to identification with celebrities (Turner 2004). This development is well described by Lawler (2010) who suggests that people can be persuaded to emulate celebrities' lifestyles, by freely living irresponsible lives as many celebrities do, which may lead to a destroyed and unfulfilled life.

This level of involvement, or better connectedness, with celebrities can result in different behaviors of the follower. Celebrities affect their fan's lifestyle that goes beyond consumption

decisions (Marshall 1997). Because of the celebrity influence, a fan may try to lead a life similar to his or her celebrity of choice (Hollander 2010). As history sadly demonstrates, this behavior results in tragedy, as was in the case in the murder of John Lennon, killed by his fan who yearned for fame; or in the cases of Jodie Foster and Ronald Reagan where their fans attacked them (Schickel 1985). In other cases, Hyman and Sierra (2010) argue that fascination with celebrities may lead to adult psychopathology, such that young adolescents who idolize their celebrity of choice may continue to obsessively worship that celebrity into adulthood resulting in a dysfunctional life. To overcome this obsession, Hyman and Sierra (2010) suggest reducing the idolization of celebrities for promotions of sports and non-sports products. Furthermore, there is a stream of literature in psychology that discusses the notion of *Celebrity worship syndrome*, a state when fans develop an obsessive-addictive disorder where they display an over-interest with celebrities' personal lives (McCutcheon et al. 2002). Trenger (2011) posits a recent manifestation of this disorder such that fans prefer to compare themselves to successful celebrities rather than to their peers. A result of such comparison could lead to the *Fear of insignificance* that causes depression.

The preceding narrative reveals a variety of ways celebrities affect people's everyday lives. This influence gains momentum in terms of access to celebrities beyond the entertainment industry. It is not simply movies, TV or sports venues, but the power of the Internet. As Ewalt (2007) points out, Internet celebrities could be bloggers, podcasters or YouTube stars, and are defined " as a person famous primarily for creating or appearing in Internet-based content, and for being highly recognizable to a Web-based audience". One of the most famous internet celebrities is Jessica Lee Rose aka *lonelygirl15*, a New Zealand born actress who pretended to be a home-schooled 15 year old American girl and became famous through her YouTube videos.

Another example is the gossip blogger Perez Hilton, who contributes to many gossip magazines and TV shows, having achieved fame via the Web.

Milner (2010) suggests that the topic of celebrities is no longer the domain of tabloids, but is frequently discussed in general news publications such as Time, the Wall Street Journal, and in academic journals, all demonstrating the importance of this topic. Moreover, a newly launched academic journal is entirely devoted to the topic of celebrity studies (Holmes and Redmond 2010).

Such commodification, and media exposure of stories about celebrities have affected cultural discourse, where images are becoming more important than text or speech (Milner 2010). Visibility is an important part of today's status system and as a result, today's culture is favorably disposed toward the "Hollywood maxim – there is no such thing as bad publicity" (Ibid, p. 382).

The celebrity extravaganza is a daily event – portrayed in tabloids, films, TV shows, Internet and lately major news channels, intensified as celebrities use social media to expose themselves to gain a following and an audience (Marshall 2010b). In many cases, celebrity scandals are followed more intently than the "real" news. For example, if a famous athlete, politician or actor cheats on his wife, then that becomes the headline news. The actor Mel Gibson, athlete Tiger Woods, entrepreneur Jesse James, and politician Anthony Weiner are some of the recent examples of scandal trumping traditional news stories.

Widespread distribution of such behaviors across various media outlets seems to transfer onto the audiences themselves. This notion is in line with cultivation theory (Gerbner and Gross 1976; Miller 2002), suggesting that exposure to television over time modifies viewer perceptions of reality. For example Gabler (1998) labeled the U.S. as the *Republic of Entertainment*, where

citizens live their daily lives as a performance. Gabler (1998) also claims that American society allows entertainment to become a driving force behind its thoughts and actions. In the same vein, Turner (2004) suggests that the influence of celebrities is not limited to escapism, but identification. A result of this continuous exposure is the desire to become famous that has "infected" Americans. Currid-Halkett (2010) reports a study from the Pew Research Center group where "51 percent of eighteen to twenty-five year olds said that their first or second goal in life was to become famous" (p. 21). Thus, it may be argued that the need to be famous is a constant whether as celebrities followed by the mass media or average persons followed by their friends.

A vexing question is why people behave this way and why has this need to behave become so widespread? The answer may reside in the online world. Complementing increased accessibility to the Internet is the time spent online by an average consumer. Apart from using the internet for business purposes, consumers are spending more and more time online for (1) entertainment; playing online games, watching movies, news, downloading music and (2) social interaction; friendships, relationships, and meetings. A survey by the Nielsen company (2011) estimated that in May 2011 the average daily time a person in the U.S. spent on Facebook was 6 hours and 20 minutes. A longitudinal comparison is not possible given none of the online social sites made it to the top 10 most used sites in 2007 or 2008 (Nielsen 2007, 2008). The increased presence of online consumers has led to a need to self-present, and to develop oneself as a personal brand because online social media require members to create a personal profile. Online users developed their image(s), created and shared stories, and gradually built a presence in the online world. Now consumers "meet" on various online sites as the connectedness age opens up

new meeting points. Consumers can meet and discuss news postings at news sites or in various blogs, and can chat on several social media sites, and make new acquaintances.

In the early part of this century, consumers refrained from posting personal information, preferring to hide behind invented names and posting fake photos. In sharp contrast, the tendency toward secrecy has waned and has developed into a desire for personal branding as sites interconnected with one another. Unlike organizations with marketing departments to develop corporate image and create a story behind the brand, consumers do not have that luxury. However, the celebrity culture age (Currid-Halkett 2010; Gabler 1998; Gamson 1994; Marshall 1997; Turner et al. 2000) offers celebrities as proxies for marketing departments by acting as examples to help consumers develop their online profiles. As Marshal explains (2010b), celebrities are a marker of presentational media with a pedagogical effect on audiences in the specular (i.e. mirrored) economy. As the percentage of young adults who strive to be famous grows, celebrity behavior influences consumer value systems in important ways. Assuming young adults extensively use the internet, what are the implications for society if younger generations grow up with a celebrity-want-to-be character? What affects their self-presentation online? In spite of Charles Barkley's proclamation in a Nike commercial that it is the parents, not himself, that should be the role model, the overconsumption of celebrities suggests that celebrities may not be able to escape from the status of role-models. Can young adults really escape the celebrity culture?

Purpose of the Study

This study examines the effect of celebrities on consumers' online self-presentation. In line with Marshall's (2010a; 2010b) theorization, the high level of celebrity exposure in the media and subsequent celebrity consumption results in consumers behaving as celebrities in the

online context. According to seminal work by Goffman (1959), people have possessed the tendency to represent themselves theatrically for years, but today's online world gives even more options and tools to do so.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the interrelationships between celebrities and their audience, the nature of involvement and consumption of celebrities, and how this involvement and consumption affects consumer self-presentation online. The literature (Hollander 2010; Lawler 2010; Marshall 2010b; Schickel 2010; Turner 2004) suggests that celebrities are not only role models, but directly and indirectly affect how consumers construct their value systems. This study builds on these findings by examining the influence of celebrity culture and behavior on how online users construct (brand) themselves. The online user has access to what celebrities are doing, how they are dressed, and what they stand for. By using and consuming different media, online users learn celebrity behavior and embed this behavior into their online behavior.

For example, users of social media spend a substantial amount of time online, carefully choosing the right picture to post on their profiles, managing their comments and consequently, building their own "online" brand (Marwick 2010). In some cases, their real life behavior is guided by their "online" self-presentation strategy. A tragic example befell an individual who fell from a balcony while trying to pose for a picture for a Facebook group called *The Lying down game* (BBC 2011).

Finally, celebrities are not limited to those promoted by large organizations, but via the 'Do it Yourself' (DIY) concept (Turner 2004), where individuals use their own web page to become a mainstream celebrity. For example, the show-girl Tila Tequila first collected a large

number of online friends, then appeared in a couple of MTV reality shows, and is now a constant feature in tabloid magazines (Weiner 2006):

In summary, the objective of this study is to answer to the following questions:

1. What are the constructs related to celebrity culture that affect online self-presentation?

2. How are the identified constructs related to one another?

3. Does celebrity culture affect the consumers' online self-presentation?

Contribution of the Study

Internet usage has steadily increased over the past decade, and, particularly on social media sites where daily usage averages 6 hours and 20 minutes (Nielsen 2011). The study of celebrities and their role in this context contributes to the marketing literature. The marketing literature discusses the effect of celebrity endorsements extensively (Erdogan 1999; Erdogan et al. 2001; McCracken 1989; Ohanian 1990; Seno and Lukas 2007; Till 1998; Till and Shimp 1998) but rarely discusses the effect of the entertainment industry (Shrum et al. 2005; Shrum and O'Guinn 1997), and of celebrities specifically (Thomson 2006) on consumer behavior at the macro level. As McLuhan (1964) argued, it is not the message that is important, but the medium, and celebrities are arguably the message behind an endorsement. The evolution from celebrity endorsements to celebrity influence on consumer behavior is the motivation for this study.

The marketing literature benefits from this study in five ways. First, to extend the influence of media effects on marketing theory. This study will provide a deeper understanding of how media consumption shapes our society, and how it affects its consumer.

Second, to advance our knowledge of celebrities. As of now, many studies about celebrities in marketing are devoted to the endorsement topic. This study suggests that the influence of celebrities goes well beyond this function that area. As has been claimed (Gamson 1994; Marshall 1997; Turner 2004; Turner et al. 2000), celebrities are commodities, and need to be researched as such.

Third, is a celebrity consumption scale. To date, studies measuring how consumers consume celebrities are non-existent. The practical implication is that celebrity management teams can benefit from such knowledge in many ways. Knowing how celebrities can affect others, and in which ways and how that can be seen, may offer new market opportunities for the celebrity. For example, they could further understand how certain celebrity reactions affect consumers. This study will provide explanations of the relationships between celebrities and their consumers.

Fourth, to develop the self-presentation literature in the online context. As time spent online increases, consumer behavior in the online context gains importance. This study will investigate the possible antecedents of such behavior and thus provide further understanding on how and why consumers present themselves. Understanding how people build and create their online presence helps companies when they are in the process of hiring new employees, or when seeking new partners. An employee's creative behavior may benefit the employer, though it is prudent to understand the reasons behind such behavior to avoid pathologically dangerous outcomes as some authors have suggested.

Fifth, companies contact users with many paid followers, just as they pay celebrities (Vascellaro 2011), they may want to know who has the potential to become a celebrity before

that happens. By understanding the mechanisms behind such behavior, they may adopt appropriate strategies to develop or hire their own stars.

This dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 2 presents the relevant theoretical foundations, a review of the literature on celebrities from the communication and marketing perspectives, and media effect theories and self-presentation theories.

Chapter 3 presents the preliminary qualitative research data, describes the proposed theoretical model, and presents the developed hypotheses for testing in this study.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology, research approaches and methods used in this study. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the quantitative part of the study that include sampling characteristics, the measurement instrument and construct validity tests. Moreover, it presents the results of the overall model and hypotheses testing.

In conclusion, Chapter 6 reviews the objectives of this study, the results and follows with conclusions. The chapter includes sections on academic and managerial implications and future research possibilities. The last part of the chapter describes the study's limitations.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

"Human beings become a commodity in a celebrity culture. They are objects, like consumer products. They have no intrinsic value. They must look fabulous and live on fabulous sets. Those who fail to meet the ideal are belittled and mocked. Friends and allies are to be used and betrayed during the climb to fame, power and wealth. And when they are no longer useful, they are to be discarded." (Hedges 2009)

This chapter presents the relevant theoretical foundations for this study based on four "pillars" of literature. First is a discussion of the celebrity phenomenon from the academic field of communication, specifically film and media studies. It is important to understand how the celebrity phenomenon has changed, and how those changes affect the celebrities of today. Several definitions and typologies of celebrities are presented and discussed.

Second, a discussion of celebrity in the marketing field is presented. In the marketing literature, the majority of studies pertaining to celebrities revolve around the concept of endorsement. This part shows the importance of the celebrity figure in the commercial environment, and it explains for what purposes companies have used celebrities.

The third part of this Chapter discusses media effect theories as they play a central role in this study. The media effect theories attempt to explain how and why media consumption affects consumers. This study theorizes that constant exposure to celebrities affects our behavior. This section of the literature review explains the evolution of media theories and the phenomena of media exposure. Lastly, we provide a discussion about self-presentation. This study explains the

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construction of the online self to celebritize online selves. To explain and advance knowledge about this phenomenon it is essential to present its theoretical foundations.

The Evolution of the Celebrity Phenomenon

Famous people and fame are not exclusive to modern times (Braudy 1997; Evans 2005; Inglis 2010). Braudy (1997) argues that fame can be traced to ancient Greece, it was present throughout history, and culminated in the era of mass communication. Today, celebrity culture is a phenomenon on the rise and a constant feature in the 21st century news media (Turner 2010a). According to Turner (2010a), "celebrity news has proved its capacity to attract attention and to drive consumption" (p. 11), pointing out that the increase of media outlets introduced novel ways to represent, consume and produce celebrities. These new technologies have turned celebrities into objects of mass consumption (Furedi 2010). Nonetheless, some critics disagree with the concept of celebrity culture, instead labeling it the culture of publicity, as publicity represents its main value (Epstein 2005a).

According to Halpern (2007), evidence of the mounting influence of celebrities in the news media is a function of circulation. General news publications (Newsweek, The New Yorker, Time and Atlantic Monthly) remained constant, or experienced a slight dip in circulation between 2000 and 2005, while celebrity driven tabloids (People, US weekly, Entertainment Weekly, InStyle) all increased in circulation. Specifically, in the year 2000, compared to celebrity driven tabloids, general news publications had almost a million issues more in circulation. However, by 2005, the general news publications circulation increased by 2% versus celebrity driven tabloids that increased their circulation by 18.7%, with almost 300,000 more issues in circulation. The distribution of celebrity influence is global, with shows like American Idol (i.e. that began as Pop Idol on British TV in 2001) licensed in many parts of the world

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(Goodman 2010). In some nations this influence of American celebrity values draws controversy because of values conflict with values of the region in which the show is aired (Turner 2010a).

Furedi (2010) claims that celebrity is not just a noun, but "an adjective that signifies that someone possesses the quality of attracting attention" (p. 493) that translates into material wealth (Turner 2004), essential to popularize and promote products of popular culture (Hollander 2010). The rise of the modern celebrities started in the middle of the 20th century when Hollywood studios signed specific actors for extended periods of time and in multiple movies to promote those movies. Actors needed to be publicized to attract audiences, and thus a manufacturing process of the "star" took place (Gamson 1994). Hollywood stars were created by movie studios, media companies, and public relations experts (Ibid).

Marshall (1997) argues that celebrities are commodities, and as such can be manufactured, marketed and traded. There is a need to justify the investment, the development, the planning and the product diversification, as they are an industry unto themselves (Turner 2010a). Central to the celebrity industry are the cities of Los Angeles and New York that annually generate $31 billion in revenues and employ approximately 220,000 people (Currid-Halkett 2010). Those two cities represent the headquarters of the celebrity industry, where, for example, there are approximately 2000 firms are devoted to handling celebrities in Los Angeles (Ibid).

Celebrities are no longer limited to royal families or movie actors, emerging in fields that were non-existent a few decades ago. TV has produced an abundance of famous personalities who started as sit-com actors, or lately, reality show contestants (Bennett 2011). Boorstein (1961) defined celebrity, as someone who is well known because of his well-knownness.

Monaco (1978) was one of the first authors who offered a typology of the celebrity where he classified them as either (i) the hero, (ii) the star, or (iii) the quasar. *The hero* earned his status by doing something spectacular, *the star* earned it by developing a public persona through media, and *the quasar* is somebody who earns celebrity status by chance. Rojek (2001) categorized celebrities based on how they earned the status, differentiating three types: (1) through blood relations, (2) achieved in open competition, (3) attributed by the media. Rein et al (2006) do not use the term celebrity, arguing that to be successful, everyone should seek to gain attention in ne of five categories; (i).invisibles, (ii) local visibility, (iii) regional, (iv) national, and (v) international.

Celebrities in the 1960's were considered a powerless elite (Alberoni 1972), lacking in influence. Over time, this perception transformed into a belief that celebrities possess influence in both the commercial and cultural arenas (Marshall 1997). Giles (2000) explains that fame is a process, a way of how individuals are treated by media. Similarly, Rojek (2001) argues that celebrity is the consequence of the "attribution" of qualities to a particular individual through the mass media. However, Rojek (2001) maintains there are differences among celebrities, but admits the limitation of his classification for the new celebrity heavily supported by the popular media.

According to Currid-Halkett (2010), celebrity is "the phenomenon of society collectively caring about certain people for reasons that far outweigh their talent or deserved fame" (p.29), and that celebrity, fame and talent are different from one another. Currid- Halket (2010) claims that talent and/or fame fall short to achieve celebrity status, instead pointing to "celebrity residual" which is the difference between how much people should care about someone, and the amount that people actually do. As a result, people with no talent can become celebrities, and

people with talent and fame (i.e. Bill Gates- although he possesses great business talent and is popular because of that, his private life does not spark particular interest) are not celebrities because they do not produce interest in their personal life. Only if that condition is met do people become celebrities, whether is it on a mainstream level, regional or among friends (Currid-Halkett 2010).

In June 2011, one of the major media events was the trial of Casey Anthony, a 24-year-old woman accused of killing her daughter. According to Stelter (2011), all TV networks experienced a remarkable spike in viewer levels on the day of the verdict. For example, the HLN network's average viewer level jumped from an average of 283,000 viewers to 5.2 million viewers in time for the verdict announcement – the highest ratings in the history of the network, surpassing that of the September 11 attacks in 2001. The accused, Casey Anthony, did not speak to anyone during her incarceration nor demonstrated any specific talents, yet this individual underscores the importance of celebrity residual. Viewer attention was motivated by the personal life of the accused (murder of a child, a young mother in a dysfunctional family) and not her talent or other inherent qualities.

Naturally, those who possess celebrity residual will build upon it and try to cash in (Currid-Halkett 2010). Since they spark so much interest, tabloids will sensationalize them, radio and TV shows will invite them, and they are able to engage in endorsement deals with corporations (Smith 2010). The attraction lies in the residual and not necessarily talent suggesting that celebrities with residual need to market themselves to capitalize on their fame, by being visible and building a fan base.

Hollander (2010) explains that proliferation of celebrity in the USA occurred primarily due to the entertainment orientation of the American society, pointing out that the precondition

of celebrity worship is "the decline of community and the growth of social isolation that helps nurture fantasies of having something in common with the celebrities" (p.391).

In contrast with expected positive outcomes, celebrity worship has the potentially for negative consequences. Schickel (1985) describes cases where fans that idolize celebrities may turn to violence as occurred with stars such as John Lennon and Jodie Foster. Supporting this theme are Hyman and Sierra (2010) who suggest that the young fans of celebrity athletes can face adult psychopathology in later life, that excessive idolization can traumatize a person later in life if they did not achieve the same level of success as their favorite athletes. Work by Strenger (2011) suggests that young people today judge success against famous and successful celebrities in lieu of their peers that may lead to a fear of insignificance, as many of them fall short of their aspirations that may lead to depression.

Celebrity as Endorser

In 1905 marketers capitalized on the positive influence celebrities offered their companies when the tobacco industry employed entertainment personalities in their communication campaigns (Clark and Hortsmann 2003). These endorsers are defined as "any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement" (McCracken 1989, p.310). Furthermore, McCracken explained that "celebrities have particular configurations of meanings that cannot be found elsewhere…even when they deliver meanings that can be found elsewhere, they delivered them more powerfully" (ibid, p.315). Drawing on the source credibility literature, Ohanian (1990) proposed three concepts to assess the effectiveness of the celebrity endorser; their perceived expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness. Various studies have examined the relationship between the celebrity and the products they endorse, and the benefits of using a

celebrity as a spokesperson, and how their likeability can be transferred to the product, or how their genuine approval of the product helps increase the attitude towards the product by the consumer (Agrawal and Kamakura 1995; Alsmadi 2006; Mathur et al. 1997; Silvera and Austad 2004; Till 1998; Till and Shimp 1998)

A study by Tom et al (1992), investigated the difference between a celebrity spokesperson and a non-celebrity in-house spokesperson, discovering that in-house spokespersons were more effective in creating a link to the product than celebrity endorsers (Tom et al. 1992). Consequently, many companies started to create their own celebrities, such as Snapple (Holt 2004) and Subway (Leung 2007).

Erdogan's (1999) review of the celebrity endorsement literature concluded that the effectiveness of the celebrity endorser is moderated by several factors. Those factors are "celebrity attractiveness and credibility, product-celebrity match, message and product type, level of involvement, number of endorsements by celebrities, target receivers characteristics, and overall meanings" (p. 308), as well as the economic visibility of endorsers, regulative issues, compatibility with overall marketing strategy, and potential risks. Erdogan (1999) presented several models for celebrity endorsement strategy. The first model is the *Source Credibility model*, in which the effectiveness of the message depends on the perceived level of expertise and trustworthiness in an endorser. According to the literature, information from a credible source can influence beliefs, opinions, attitudes and/or behavior through a process called internalization, which occurs when receivers accept a source influence.

The second model Erdogan (1999) presented is the *Source Attractiveness* model. In this model, advertisers choose celebrity endorsers based on their attractiveness to gain from the dual

effects of celebrity status and physical appeal. The endorser is supposed to create purchase intentions, but Erdogan's literature analysis showed ambiguous results.

The third type of model is the *Meaning Transfer Model*. In this model, celebrity endorsers bring their own symbolic meanings to the endorsement process. The cultural meanings that represent a celebrity go beyond the person and into the product.

Endorsement latest trends

Thomson (2006) posited that 'celebrities can also be considered brands because they can be professionally managed and because they have additional associations and features of a brand' (p.115). This logic incentivized investigations of the relationship between celebrities and products, in both directions. Seno and Lukas (2007) found that both the endorsed products and the celebrities themselves serve as mediators to each other's equity. Similarly, Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010) suggested that a celebrity endorsement should be viewed as a brand alliance, as meanings and values transfer from either partner to the other. Doss (2011) investigated the interactions between a likeable celebrity and the non-likeable brand he/she endorses, and between a non-likeable celebrity and a likeable brand. Results show that the attitude toward the product indeed affects the attitude towards the celebrity.

The longevity of celebrity influence may continue long after they pass away. Perry and D'Rozario (2009) discussed issues related to how and when fans and celebrity heirs take advantage after a celebrity's death. Additionally, Evans et al (2010) investigated attitudes toward dead celebrities, discovering that to capitalize, marketers need to emphasize gender-relevant information and highlight nostalgia relevant aspects for the intended market segments. Clearly, celebrities spark interest in their afterlife, which speaks loudly about their social power and possibility of influence.

Media Effects Theories

The influence of audience media consumption is a cornerstone of various disciplines including media studies, psychology and communication studies. According to Neuman and Guggenheim (2011), the contribution of media effects theory can be divided into three main stages. The first stage referred to as the "magic bullet" theory of the 1930's argued if the message reached its target, the effects are immediate. This was attributed to Lasswell (1930; 1948). The second stage's "minimal-effects school" overturned the magic bullet hypothesis (Klapper 1960) by claiming that media do not have the influence as previously belived (Neuman and Guggenheim 2011). The third and current stage of research argues that media have a strong influence on their audience (Gerbner et al. 1977; Gerbner and Gross 1976; Iyengar et al. 1982) in terms of the content being presented, but with the medium itself becoming more important (McLuhan 1964). However, there is discussion whether there is a macro effect or not, and that the reason may be due to the incorrect methodology undertaken by academia (Dickinson 1998).

Several studies have addressed the effects of TV viewing, most suggesting that heavy TV viewers construct their own social reality (Gerbner et al. 1977; Gerbner and Gross 1976; Shrum et al. 2005; Shrum and O'Guinn 1997). Evans et al (1981) studied the effects of social-learning films on smoking and noted that those films helped deter smoking in junior-high students. DeJong and Winsten (1990) explained how the Harvard research project along with the TV industry successfully implemented and designed dialogues in TV shows that stigmatized drunken driving. In investigating two popular TV shows, Hirschman (1988) found that TV programs do enhance consumption, and are a powerful driver of consumer ideology. Englis et al (1993) compared music videos in America with the music videos in Sweden, and found that American

videos were more oriented towards consumption compared to the Swedish ones. Shrum and

O'Guinn (1997) researched the effect television has on the construction of consumer reality, and

found that the more people are exposed to TV programs the more distorted their view on

affluence is. Englis and Solomon (1997) also asserted that the affluence seen on media represent

a very desirable objective for many who are exposed to mass media. Eisend and Moller (2007)

showed that TV viewing affects the social perceptions of body images for women, as opposed to

men. Moreover, they found that TV viewing affects dissatisfaction with the body for both

groups.

In summary, media consumption affects human behavior in a myriad of ways.

Viewers/consumers construct their social realities based upon media content. Russell et al (2004)

discussed relationships viewers develop with TV characters and proposed the connectedness

scale which measures the intensity viewers develop with TV shows and their characters.

Consumers develop a relationship with the characters in the show, and aspire to live in the same

fashion characters do. Marketers are cognizant of this and helps explain why TV shows are

populated with consumption information (Fiske 1987).

Self-Presentation

Self-presentation is an essential part of social life that influences friendship, romance, and

career (Vohs et al. 2005). The concept of self-presentation has its roots in the social psychology

literature. Goffman (1959) theorized that self-presentation is the intentional and tangible

component of identity, defining self-presentation as impression management. According to

Schlenker (1985), self-presentation is shaped by a combination of personality, situational and

audience factors, incorporating features of the actors; self-concept, personality style, salient

social roles, and beliefs about the audience's preferences. Schlenker (2003) further explains that

self-presentation happens "when people try to control impressions of themselves, as opposed to other people or entities" (p. 492). Moreover, based on knowledge acquired from experience or mass media, there may be distortion, exaggeration or even fabrication during the self-presentation process (Schlenker 2003).

Following the popularization of self-presentation in the social-psychology literature by Goffman (1959), it gained traction in across the social sciences. As Schlenker (2003) noted, self-presentation is also discussed in counseling and clinical psychology, developmental psychology, sports psychology, organizational behavior and management, political science and marketing.

 Various objectives motivate self-presentation beyond that used to create a perception for others. As Martin, Leary and Rejeski (2000) posit, self-presentation is also important for people's self-wellbeing. When a person is satisfied with the perception of their persona, this affects the well-being of that particular person. To achieve this, people think and create their selves by organizing their consumption patterns to fulfill self-satisfaction. Belk (1988) noted that people are what they have, as their self is extended into the possessions they have. People feel that possessions extend their selves. Cars, houses, clothes, and other material objects help create the individual self. It may be argued that self-presentation and consumerism affect each other.

Various studies have addressed the relationship of the self and possession of products or brands (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Escalas and Bettman 2005; Escalas and Bettman 2003; Ferraro et al. 2011; Richins 1994). Interestingly, consumers at times tend to lie about their purchases in order to be consistent with their self-presented identity (Sengupta et al. 2002). Self-presentation is also linked to the concept of self-branding (Peters 1997) which are marketing strategies used by the individual to promote and create oneself as a brand.

In the digital era, self-presentation attracts an entirely new dimension. With the advent of internet and the popularity of social media sites, where profile-building is necessary to join social media communities, self-presentation has emerged as an essential concept (Schau and Gilly 2003). Schau and Gilly (2003) were amongst the first to investigate the motivation, intentions and strategies used for self-presentation in the online environment. They found that the motivations online are similar to motivations in the off-line world, except for the variety of people that need to be impressed. Another difference concerned the usage of brand associations for consumers' self-expression. While in real life some of the brands are inaccessible to consumers, the online users' digital connection with brands enables them to associate with the brand more easily by artificially recreating themselves, to be seen associated with the inaccessible brands (Schau and Gilly 2003).

Self-presentation online is a contemporary issue driven by the boom in social media. According to Lenhart et al (2010), 73% of teens and 72% of young adults use social network sites. Once stigmatized online social interactions such as online dating have become mainstream in the recent past (Baker 2005; Baker 2002). Gibbs et al (2006) investigated self-presentation in online dating and found out that positive and intentional self-presentation, "where people tend to be less honest, and control their self-disclosure to carefully craft online personalities to be attractive, desirable and idealized" (p. 170), leads to greater perceptions of self-presentation success. The latter explains Milner's (2010) claim that image and appearance are now more important to gain status versus character or intellectual sophistication. As a result, "dating websites, often with flattering air brushed photos, are becoming increasingly central to initiating romantic relationships" (p. 382). DeAndrea et al (2010) investigated how culture affects self-construction in the online social media environment and found that culture plays a significant

role in the construction of the self, and also plays a significant role in how self-construction is communicated.

Marwick (2010) examined how status seeking guides self-presentation in the Web 2.0 environment, and identified three main self-presentation techniques; (i) microcelebrity, (ii) self-branding and (iii) life-streaming. According to Marwick (2010) micro-celebrity is "a practice that involves creating a person, sharing personal information about oneself with others, performing intimate connections to create the illusion of friendship or closeness" (p. 13). How many people actually follow the micro-celebrity is not important, as he or she defines himself/herself as somebody to be watched. The second self-presentation technique proposed by Marwick ((2010) is self-branding; the strategic creation of identity to be promoted and sold to others. Finally, the third self-presentational technique is Lifestreaming, defined as "the ongoing sharing of personal information to a networked audience, creating a digital portrait of one's actions and thoughts" (p. 16).

Behavior in the online environment has sparked interest in many academic fields. Since its introduction in 1958 by Goffman, the self-presentation concept evolved through time, and is now a much more dynamic construct due to the dynamic and multifaceted online world. Users of online social networks present themselves to a much wider audience in a much quicker time. The online self-presentation is not built solely on face-to-face interactions, but may be built strategically, through a myriad of media, and developed based on cues found online.

This chapter lays the theoretical foundation for the present study by presenting the concept and influence of celebrities, media effects theories though which were theorized celebrity effects, followed with the self-presentation concept. In the next chapter, a preliminary study is presented and discussed. The results of the preliminary study and this chapter's

literature review are used to construct the theoretical framework of the quantitative study as well

as presentation of hypothetical relationships amongst the presented constructs.

CHAPTER III

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Looking for aspiring celebrities in America is a little like looking for dehydrated nomads at a desert encampment – they are everywhere, and their thirst is so intense it's almost palpable (Halpern 2007).

This chapter describes and presents the qualitative study used to develop the conceptual framework of this study together with the proposed hypotheses.

Qualitative Investigation

To help identify and understand the constructs explaining the relationship between celebrity consumption and online consumer behavior, a set of qualitative studies was designed and implemented. An ethnographic research approach was used to meet his objective. Ethnographic techniques have been successfully used to study the consumption phenomenon in marketing (Arnould and Price 1993; Hill 1991; Schouten and McAlexander 1995). As Goudling (2005) explains "ethnography can be any full or partial description of a group, as a means of identifying common threads" (p.299). A researcher applying the ethnographical approach is part of the context under study and is affected by it (Boyle 1994). The context of this study was the online social media and the celebrity culture. To help advance an understanding of social media and celebrities, the author had an active profile in one of the popular social sites used to monitor the behavior of the user base over time and regularly watched celebrity related news shows and held a yearly subscription for two celebrity related magazines.

The qualitative part was divided into three stages: depth interviews, a focus group, and an

open ended questionnaire. A three-part method was designed in order to yield valid data (Riege 2003; Wallendorf and Belk 1989), that was kept in ethnographic context as a result of the author's engagement at an online social media site. Data collection for part one started with in-depth interviews conducted with ten participants who were asked about their relationship with celebrities and their online social media usage. The sample consisted of ten purposively selected respondents who were recruited using snowball sampling that began with the recruitment of two students. The students and principal investigator (this study's author) recruited an additional eight respondents. The sample consisted of seven females and three males, with ages ranging from 21 to 34. The interviews were performed in the author's office at the university and were audio-recorded. Interviews lasted from 40 to 60 minutes, and were later transcribed and coded. Respondents were asked to describe their familiarity with a celebrity, their relationship with the celebrity and to describe their typical online behavior.

For part two, a focus group was designed to better understand the relationships between the respondents and the celebrity culture. Eight respondents answered questions about celebrities, the consumption of celebrities and discussed the effect celebrities have on their lives. There were 3 males and 5 females in the group, with ages ranging from 22 to 31. The focus group session lasted for 90 minutes, and was video-recorded.

In part three, students in a senior level online college class in consumer behavior were invited to complete essays describing their online behavior and construction of their online selves. The essay task had several open ended questions to aid respondents focus while describing and explaining their online behavior. Fifty five essays were collected resulting in 120 single-spaced written pages.

Analysis

The objective of the data analysis was twofold. First, insights into the consumption of the celebrity and consumer self-presentation online were sought to identify emerging themes to explain the interplay between celebrity and online self-celebritization (Hirschman 1989; Miles and Huberman 1994; Spiggle 1994), and second, to evaluate potential items for the measurement scales. The author reviewed the dataset from all three parts of the qualitative study several times. To analyze the dataset the author used two levels of coding (Corbin and Strauss 2008; Glaser and Strauss 1967). The first was open coding used to categorize data and identify common themes, followed with axial coding to identify relationships amongst the identified themes. As Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest identified themes were compared to existing theory, which guided the analysis and interpretation of the data. The findings, combined with an extensive literature review across different disciplines contributed to the development of the proposed framework. The results were categorized into four main themes; familiarity with the celebrity culture, celebrity consumption, connection with celebrities, and online self-celebritization.

The first theme "*Celebrity Culture Familiarity*" depicts the respondents' awareness of the existent celebrity phenomenon. Some of the respondents claimed that they did not spend too much time searching for stories, yet, they exhibited a fair degree of knowledge about the phenomenon. Some of the statements describing awareness are:

> Actually I don't really follow it that much. I know who people are, I know what goes on, but actually I don't invest my time in following them. Every single time I hear them, they always seem to do something stupid, something to get money, it's just a waste of an influence. (Trisha, 22)

> Every channel is going to be talking about some celebrity. Paparazzi, cameras 24/7,.somebody is always around them to get a story out of them. …… I always watch the news, and there is constantly something new about, whether I'm watching world news, local news or celebrity news always something about celebrities, even if it's Channel 5 local News. It's surround us pretty much. (Davon, 23)

Respondents were aware that the celebrity culture is part of our society and is unlikely to fade away in the coming years. When one of the respondents was asked if she thought that we could escape from such trends, she replied:

> Actually I do. If people have enough will power…we don't want to, that's why we don't, we don't want to. We enjoy it so much, I mean we love seeing people make mistakes, we love watching them fail, so we're just watching them for their own failure. Even if they are so great, they can fail too. I feel bad when they fail. I'm waiting for them to fail, so I can't feel bad I don't like to see failure personally…I know some people enjoy it, that's why we all watch competition to see the person cry when they lose [laugh] If there is only one winner why do you want to sit and watch a show of 12 crying people and one happy person? (Jeanette, 23)

Interestingly, many shared negative evaluations of the influence of celebrities:

> I think they have a big effect, especially with younger generations, they want to look like them they want to be like them, but realistically they seem to have all the money in the world and if you do so, you can do pretty much whatever you want. But a lot of people wanna be like them but know they can't in reality. They kind-a have a negative impact, especially with little kids, ….Miley Cyrus and kids…they still look up to her (Davon, 23)

> I think today's society they make it all about celebrity. Some people make it their mission, to know exactly what's going on with people in Hollywood, they want to know everything that's going on with everybody that's ever been famous. Which is, sort of a waste of life. Like paparazzi, the people that follow them on a TV show, I think that's just a complete waste of time because that's what they dedicated their lives to, but they could be doing something real, like go to school, have an actual jobs…(Trisha, 22)

Celebrity culture familiarity may be a cultural value typical for American society, but may not hold such centrality in other countries. The democratization of celebrities has perhaps yet to happen elsewhere. In some cases, it can make the non-familiar individual a stranger in his own group:

> I also, don't need to follow any celebrity. Maybe it's because I'm not from this country. I really don't feel I connect with any celebrity, it's not part of my culture. But I do see most of my friends here that always have something to say about the artist and what they post or tweet. Sometimes I feel left out of the conversation, but to me it's not a very important topic. (Inga, 21)

Overall, the respondents were not surprised about the presence of celebrities in today's society. They were accepting of the concept that celebrities do have an important role, be it

positive or negative, and that celebrity influence is well established in today's society. The responses were consistent with the literature on celebrities (Currid-Halkett 2010; Furedi 2010; Gamson 1994; Hollander 2010; Laswell 1948; Marshall 2010a; Marshall 1997; Marshall 2010b).

One of the goals of these exploratory investigations was to elaborate on the phenomenon of celebrity consumption such as how a celebrity is consumed and what people do when they consume them; coding this theme as *celebrity consumption*. When asked how much time and how respondents spend their time consuming their favorite celebrity they replied:

> Anything related to her? A lot! [laugh]. Her music is the only thing I'd play in my car or my IPod, on my phone. We talk about her, when we are chatting, and texting A lot of my friends know, that the way to get to me is to mention her name. Like, so I'm not paying attention, they just mention her name, and I'm automatically, like, there. So, she doesn't revolve around everything I do, but her music.. to get me pumped up for the day, when I want to concentrate and stuff I just listen to her, I read, I watch music videos whenever I'm home and it just helps me mellow down I guess. (Trisha, 21)

> When Real Madrid is playing, I'll watch, but I'll watch because of him. I don't like the team, but I watch because of him. I follow him not the team…Just because of him, I'll watch the team. But I wouldn't go on and stalk him, where he goes in summer. I don't collect pictures. Short distance I would travel, but the whole day no..(Elena, 34)

Although studies have suggested that celebrities are commodities (Gamson 1994; Marshall 1997; Turner et al 2000; Turner 2004) there is scant evidence in the marketing literature that describes this particular phenomenon. Nonetheless, the respondents implied that celebrity consumption is multi-dimensional. It is not simply the direct product of a celebrity as for example a music album, or a ticket to a live show, but indirect products such as TV shows:

> I love the Kardashians, and I watch the show. I never buy anything, but I read articles about them. Their show is, hm…I envy them, you want be them, you want read everything about them... You can try and be like them, I think that's the thing. That's why people like them, they want be them…they have this fabulous life, great clothes, they are looking fabulous (Jeannette, 23)

As suggested by Russell et al (2004), the more people consume celebrities the more they develop a special bond with them. This theme emerged with regularity amongst the respondents as

their *connection* with select celebrities. The level of connection varies as well as why they feel

connected:

> Like, I only follow one person, and it's Lady Gaga. Like, she's the only one I follow, that, she's just she talks about what she feels and how she wants her fans to feel, and other people just don't invest that much time, and much effort into doing that. They use their fame for good sometimes, like when it seems to benefit them, but they don't use it for good all the time. (Trisha, 21)

As may be inferred from the preceding response, there is a level of connection between

fans and their celebrity of choice that goes *beyond* the consumption of celebrities as products.

Fans don't stop at enjoying the celebrity at what he or she does best, but attempt to emulate the

celebrity's lifestyle such as supporting the same charitable causes the celebrity does. Some of the

respondents suggested that there is a difference in how the sexes follow celebrities:

> I guess in the guys' point of view that the way we analyze male celebrities is as if we want them to be our friend, I guess we want to have a beer with them or something like that. Like Paulie D from Jersey Shore, he seems like a cool guy, because I watch the show and he is like super funny. The other guys are just boring and stupid…" (Sergio, 22)

Celebrities' behavior influences a broad age range from adults to younger viewers that lie

outside the target audience of a show that depicts the social life of young adults. One such

example is the show Jersey Shore that airs on MTV:

> Totally. I think it's different. There is a lot more tolerated on TV, there's not a line between good and bad, I mean, it's chaos there, is a lot of chaos. You see it with kids. When I'm teaching, some of the things they say and so, it's stuff that you know they've seen on TV. Bad words, just different quotes, like for example, Jersey Shore. They watch it, and they repeat it. Like I said, they repeat some of the scenes; they act like some of the actresses or actors. I've seen some of this stuff in my first grade. Like, "you are such a Guido" and me what? And the kid, yeah, I look like the Situation, don't I look like the Situation? And then he is pretending like he is all wearing muscles or something…, or that girl is hot. You know, language like that. Girls hot?!! You are 6 years old, what are you talking about? It's pretty crazy. I don't know, clearly the parents don't care about what they watch. (Yaz, 26)

It is possible that children might be influenced by celebrities as a result of overexposure

to popular reality shows. The *specular economy* described by Marshall (2010) might manifest

itself at an earlier age than previously considered, particularly when factoring in channels such as

MTV that are accessible to every cable subscriber in the U.S., and reality shows such as Jersey

Shore that are aired in and out of prime time. Consequently, there exists the likelihood that a

show's viewers will include consumers beyond the intended target audience's demographic

profile. Respondents share the concern of such influence:

> I think they have a big effect, especially with younger generations, they want to look like them they want to be like them, but realistically they seem to have all the money in the world and if you do so, you can do pretty much whatever you want. But a lot of people wanna be like them but know they can't in reality. They kinda have a negative impact, especially with little kids, for example Miley Cyrus and kids, they still look up to her. (Doris, 24)

The celebrity connection may be drawn from the "para-social interaction" – a term

developed by Horton and Wohl (1956) that defines the imagined relationship that develops over

time between a TV performer and the audience. It is a relationship where one person knows

everything about the other, while the other is unaware of the relationship.

Finally, the issue of how respondents build their image online and why was addressed.

How do they construct their self-celebrity and what affects this process? The final theme was

coded as online self-celebritization.

> I do see online profiling as branding yourself, as promoting yourself because it tells so much about you and there are people that have the same trends as you, and maybe they see me as someone they would like to be, just like I see others, especially celebrities (Corey, 23).

> I decided to create my own page to be part of what was the trend of the new millennium. I quickly realized that if you want to be well known and well liked you had to keep up with your page by beautifying it – people were prone to visit your profile more often…. My page was the place where I shone as bright as a star. The more requests were popping into my page the more I felt I needed to let people know about my life. I felt as if I was a celebrity. I had a voice and it was being projected through cyberspace (Ignacio, 24)

> Ladies, girls, women are the reason I have a Facebook and have an alter ego online. They inspire me to create a beautiful mirage of myself, in hopes that they will then want to get to know the real me. It makes me wonder if other guys do the same thing and use Facebook as a dating profile. Who knows, maybe girls do the same thing. I can only imagine now how awkward it is when the majestic illusion is gone and people are getting to know each other "offline". Maybe "offline" is the new "online" and vice versa, Facebook is so addicting, who is to say what is real anymore. (Roger, 23).

There is a wide range of reasons why consumers construct online profiles. On one extreme are obsessed and addicted consumers who consider this a must, whilst at the opposite extreme are consumers who believe this is a good communication tool for networking and business:

> With Facebook I realize that most of my online time is dedicated to that page. The first thing I do when I wake up is turn my laptop on and check all of my notifications from Facebook, and this is the same thing I do before going to bed. I would say I spend around 10 hours daily on Facebook. I woke up with Facebook, eat with Facebook, watch TV with Facebook open, go out with Facebook on my phone, and go to bed visiting Facebook. (Corey, 23).

It is noteworthy that respondents do understand the power of social media as a self-presentation tool. They seek for influencers, for somebody they can relate to, and amongst the influencers are the celebrities. An extension of these relationships is for the consumer to consider being a celebrity within their circle of friends:

> Hm, I could see a parallel…realistically I could see a parallel between the more friends you are the more popular you are , the more I don't wanna say celebrity, but realistically like a sphere of influence. I mean, you do have a sphere of influence. I think in a sphere of influence, you could, not consider yourself a celebrity, but like a "celebrity". So in my sphere of influence I know I'm considered like ..certain people come to me, for certain information that they need. I don't know if that makes me some kind of celebrity but it makes me feel important. So, I guess I could look at it as a parallel between celebrities and normal people on Facebook. I think it's quite a parallel. Because realistically Facebook is like the normal person's way to be a celebrity (Elena, 34).

> I see my online behavior similar to a celebrity. I am so involved in the community, that I am always out and about, I choose to live a life of happiness and gratitude, sending out positive quotes daily. I do have to say I follow other people in the industry, and celebrities to see what I can learn and how I can spread my message more effectively. I follow a few famous people, I really like Kim Kardashian and Oprah. (Mari, 27).

Additionally, respondents enjoy to influencing their own social network. The general consensus is that the number of friends is proportional to one's influence, such that the more online friends they have, the more they can potentially influence others. They also equate the number of friends as a potential asset.

> When I first created my online profile, I was looking to add as many friends as I possibly could and I would even add people that I did not know just so it would look like I was very popular person. I had a lot of "offline" friends through school and sports, but I wanted my online

reputation to be just as good if not better. I spent a lot of time online and I was very fixated on establishing myself and building my online profile empire so to speak. (Miguel, 25)

Some respondents differentiate between different social networks, suggesting they re-brand themselves:

> My Twitter personality is I guess it's the real workings of my mind. Like, I have the Facebook side, which is, I have my mom on Facebook, so of course, I can't post anything there, because she reads all my stuff. So, my personality on Twitter is what I really think, what I really feel about a certain situation, like, just random stuff about me, like me watching TV. I actually update my Twitter more than I update my Facebook. It's so easy, like people post 10 posts in an hour. So, like, I actually watch a show and I post something in a minute. Two minutes later I post something different…… it's really what I think, the most random times, the most random thoughts that come to my head. That's my Twitter. …………Everybody agrees that Twitter is who you really are. They sort of have this saying that Facebook is for the way you want the world to see you, and Twitter is for the way you really are. (Trisha, 21)

Respondents exhibited substantial awareness of the breadth of communication possibilities offered by online social media sites. They seem to understand the power of self-presentation and how online social sites can help build their identities and communicate to their networks their preferred image. The image may be similar or dissimilar to their offline persona, or they may develop more than one online persona. The results are similar to what Schau and Gilly (2003) suggested with regard to the motivations of online self-presentation. Additionally, this study's results suggest new motivational dimensions of self-popularity, self-branding and self-celebrity.

This section examined the description and process affecting consumers when they use their online social profile. Four themes were identified and explained. The following section proposes the relationships among the identified themes.

Proposed Framework and Hypotheses

Based on the themes from the qualitative exploratory research and on the existent literature, four constructs were proposed for the purpose of the next step in this study. These

constructs are *Celebrity Culture Familiarity, Celebrity Consumption, Celebrity Connectedness,* and *Online Self- Celebritization*.

 Celebrity Culture Familiarity is defined as *the level of awareness and knowledge consumers have about the celebrity culture.* In other words, the construct will measure how familiar people are with regard to the phenomenon of celebrity. It will measure the "literacy" of the celebrity world and evaluate how well the average consumer is aware of the celebrity culture phenomenon.

 Celebrity Consumption is defined as the level (*or degree) to which a celebrity is consumed across different dimensions. A celebrity can be consumed in only one dimension, or in multiple dimensions*. As Rinallo and Savi (2010) suggest, celebrities may be consumed in different fashion and hence it is important to understand the level of celebrity consumption given the suggestion that the more consumers consume the more they develop a tendency to become celebrities themselves.

 Celebrity connectedness is based on the para-social interaction construct suggested by Horton and Wohl (1956) and defined by Russell et al (2004) who posit that TV audiences develop an imaginary relationship with the TV characters they follow. Building upon this definition *Celebrity Connectedness* is defined *as the degree to which someone develops a para-social relationship with one or more celebrities*. Celebrity consumers will over time experience various consumptions related to celebrities and so develop a bond between themselves and a celebrity, that represents an escape from real life and as importantly, guides the lives of those consumers as they emulate the same fashion preferences of celebrities, and literally behave like them (Russel et al 2004). Consumers will increase their level of connection with celebrities, which will be expressed as the consumption of various celebrities' products, but also in their

lifestyle. They will emulate celebrities' lives in different ways as portrayed by the media (Hollander, 2010). For example, a Rod Stewart fan devoted an entire room in her house to Rod Stewart (Halpern 2007) where she stores albums, posters and any other Rod Stewart merchandise. Moreover, she wanted Rod Stewart to have a star on the walk of fame in Hollywood, so she went through all the necessary steps for that to happen. She collected the required number of signatures, officially requested a star to the appropriate authorities, and even organized the event when Rod Stewart officially received the star on the walk of fame in Hollywood (Halpern 2007).

The final construct is *Online Self-Celebritization* defined as *the degree to which consumers act and behave as celebrities while engaging in social media.* This construct attempts to explain the effort online consumers take to develop their own celebrity behavior. It is suggested that continued exposure and consumption of celebrities, and their development of a connection with specific celebrities, online consumers start to develop their own celebrity persona to engage in a celebrity-like behavior towards their online community. As the media studies literature suggests, the more consumers engage in media consumption, the more prone they are to construct their own social reality based on what they are exposed to (Gerbner et al 1977; Gerbner and Gros 1976; Shrum and O'Guinn 1997; Eisend and Moller 2007). And since the prevalent personalities exposed in the media are celebrities, it is suggested that online consumers try to emulate this situation and become a celebrity themselves (Marshall 2010).
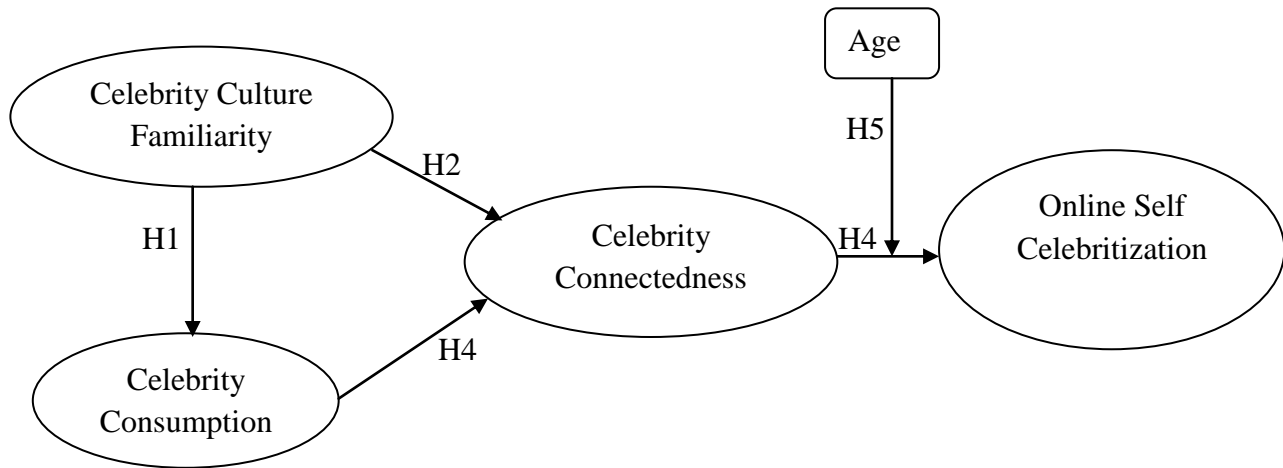
Figure 1: The proposed theoretical model

Celebrity Culture Familiarity and Celebrity Consumption

As it was noted earlier, celebrities are produced by the media (Turner et al. 2000). The main premise supporting the effect of celebrities on consumer behavior is that people consume media, and they cultivate their values through media exposure (Neuman and Guggenheim 2011; Shrum et al. 2005; Shrum and O'Guinn 1997). If there are certain individuals who do not consume media, then theoretically they do not have encounters with celebrities and the celebrity effect is absent. Media consumption is defined as the level of time people spend consuming different media outlets. This audience is constantly exposed to what is going on in the entertainment industry, and more specifically, what is happening with certain celebrities. This constant exposure comes from various magazines, special celebrity news programs, "real" news programs and the Internet. The cultivation theory and other media effects theories suggest that the more consumers watch and follow an event on TV, the more we believe it is true (Gerbner et

al. 1977; Gerbner and Gross 1976). By consuming media, consumers learn celebrity behavior

and embed the behavior in themselves, and subsequently express it online where it seems they

start to develop themselves as a celebrity. Therefore, media consumption is an important premise

of celebrity culture.

> Yes, I think so…I really do, you know. Personally because my passion is clothes and fashion, instead of something like music, when I'm trying to show somebody who I am, that's where I go to first…and how I'm supposed to know what everybody is looking to, unless I go to somebody famous. The eyes are always on them,. This is what's good, and this is what's not…so they say, I try not to always follow that….but I do, if I'm gonna see something I like see and try to resemble it and …yeah I do think….Their overall appearance, that would affect me…. the way they are presented…(Jeanette, 23)

Awareness of the celebrity culture is an important antecedent affecting the consumption

of celebrities. The salience of brands discussed in marketing literature play an important pre-

condition of attitude development (Chattopadhyay and Alba 1988; Romaniuk and Sharp 2004).

To be familiar with brands and develop feelings and/or be affected by brands, an awareness of

the brand itself is necessary (Keller 1993). In today's culture where brands play an important role

in the socio-cultural context, consumers need to be literate about brands, and learn how to use

them (Bengtsson and Fırat 2006). By extension, it is suggested that this relationships holds for

the celebrity culture. Knowledge of the celebrity culture and knowledge of the main characters in

that culture can be referred to as celebrity culture familiarity.

Rinallo and Savi (2010) were among the first to define how a celebrity is consumed.

Generally, the marketing literature discusses celebrities in terms of endorsement, and the

celebrity in those cases plays the role of persuader. According to Rinallo and Savi (2010),

celebrities may be consumed in three different ways: (i) as a performer – the celebrity's

recognized performances (actors, athletes, etc.), (ii) as a character – celebrity's public image

beyond the performances, and (iii) as the private self – hardly seen through the fabricated

image.

> Concerts tickets, when they are locally, CD's, some apparel at the concerts…and the sports the same, their apparel, tickets to see their games... From the Spurs I have a lot of memorabilia, collection items…mainly sports, but I don't have any celebrity stuff, like movie stars and so on, except for their movies… (Davon, 23)

Celebrities diversify their assortment of products (movies, TV shows, music, etc) with a strategic use of their brand names. Their popularity increases their option to "cash-in", and it is not unusual that even *celtoids* (Rojek 2001), or people who become famous overnight, hire agents and publicists as soon as they reach fame (Currid-Halkett 2010). Consequently, it is assumed that the more popular and famous a celebrity is due to media exposure, the more possibility he or she has to cash-in. It is therefore proposed that:

H1: Celebrity Culture Familiarity is positively related to Celebrity Consumption

Celebrity Culture Familiarity and Celebrity Connectedness

Various studies suggest that a celebrity is a commodity (Gabler 1998; Gamson 1994; Milner 2010; Rein et al. 2006; Turner 2004). It is proposed that the more popular a celebrity is, the more likely the celebrity will build a market of consumers. Celebrities have hired specialists whose task is to increase and to protect the celebrity's market value (Gamson 1994). Rein et al (2006) argue that the celebrity industry has strategies to transform celebrities into brand-name products. Industries supporting celebrities such as the entertainment and communication-media industries distribute celebrity images to consumers, and sell the celebrity to consumers in market segments or mass markets as celebrity information or as a celebrity performance vehicle (Gamson 1994 p. 61). The intense marketing activities create familiarity amongst the consumers. Familiarity, or awareness, is an important influence of brand choice for consumers (MacDonald and Sharp 2000), therefore, efforts to market a celebrity is marketed are matched with increased consumer familiarity with the celebrity.

Some consumers will engage passively whilst others engage more actively with celebrities. The more consumers follow a celebrity, the more likely it is that consumers feel a sense of connectedness with the celebrity. Russell and Puto (1999) examined connectedness in the context of television programming, suggesting that connectedness is a different term than just attitudes and involvement, and that it is a richer indicator of the nature and intensity of the relationship between a viewer and a TV show. According to Russel et al (2004), connectedness is the "level of intensity of the relationship(s) that a viewer develops with the characters and contextual settings of a program in the para-social television environment" (p.152).

> She (Lady Ga Ga), for instance, she has over 7 million fans all over the world, and they all love her and care about her so much. And recently she was like digitally dead to raise dollars for AIDS awareness, and she actually raised a million USD in like 6 days. Because everybody wanted he to come back, because they love her, and they need her. I donated $20 for that plan (Trisha, 22)

Therefore, connectedness is linked to celebrities. The previously proposed hypothesis suggested that familiarity is related to consumption. Additionally, it is proposed that celebrity culture familiarity is also related to connectedness, although not as strongly as with consumption. Consumption of celebrity is important for the development of connectedness, however, some consumers who do not actively engage in any form of celebrity consumption can develop a relationship with a celebrity before becoming active consumers of the celebrity. It is therefore hypothesized that:

H2: Celebrity Culture Familiarity is positively related to Celebrity Connectedness

Celebrity Consumption and Celebrity Connectedness

The more consumers consume a celebrity, the greater the propensity to develop a para-social relationship with the celebrity. Consumers will actively search for products related to the celebrity. Consumers may buy a news magazine containing news about their celebrity; they may

watch TV for the same reasons, or purchase concert or movie theaters tickets. Moreover, they may follow the celebrity online via social media sites, like Twitter or Facebook. Not only they follow, but they also try to emulate their behavior, their fashion:

> If I saw Miley Cyrus wearing something, and it was in the article about the worse dresses I would still wear it…because I like her. (Jeanette, 23)

Respondents indicated pride and contentment when consuming and emulating celebrities. On occasion participants changed their attitude to be consistent with those held by as noted below in the decision to cease buying tabloid magazines:

> I used to but tabloids, but I don't anymore, because the celebrities hate them, they said they ruined their lives. I kind of feel bad for them, even though I know some of them call them, there are some who are like me, and they just wanna live their lives. I don't want to interfere and feeding into the frenzie (Jodie, 24)

This behavior suggests a link between consumption and change of behavior for some of the celebrity consumers. Consumers are willing to change their pattern of consumption in line with opinions expressed by a celebrity. It seems therefore that consumers are remarkably interconnected with the celebrity of choice and willingly impose the celebrity's wishes upon themselves, pointing to the immense power celebrities possess (Marshall 1997).

As previous studies in the media and marketing literature imply, extensive TV viewing influences how consumers construct their own social reality (Gerbner et al 1977; Gerbner and Gross 1976; Evan et al 1981; Schrum and O'Guinn 1997; Schrum et al 2005). Aware of this influence, social marketers constructed story lines in TV shows addressing and stigmatizing drunk driving DeJin and Winsten (1990). The relationship of these studies to the study at hand is essential. That is, media influence is directly related to celebrities since they are a media manifestation. Therefore, the notion of connectedness is extended to celebrities, and is not limited to TV characters. Consumers have now the possibility to follow a particular celebrity via

different channels, and extensive following causes the development of a relationship between the consumer and some celebrities.

> One family show in particular I am obsessed with is the Kardashians. Their family is so close, obnoxious, and fun at the same time. I sometimes find myself comparing my family with theirs and wonder what it would be like if I were part of their family. They are so iconic for their fashion and I always keep that in mind whenever I am shopping for myself. If I am shopping for a specific event, I find myself asking "what would they be wearing". Also this family is very wealthy and successful. I dream of one day being an entrepreneur just as they have become to be." (Cecilia, 21).

In the same fashion, it is theorized that the more consumers consume a celebrity, the more they feel connected with that particular celebrity. It is therefore predicted that:

H3: Celebrity Consumption is positively related to Celebrity Connectedness

Celebrity Connectedness and Online Self-Celebritization

By consuming the celebrity and becoming familiar with the celebrity's behavior, particularly their online behavior, the online consumer is prone to use that behavior and strategy for their online persona. Exposure to media affords a consumer to become connected with the celebrity and as a result, the consumer emulates the celebrity in many ways as suggested in the literature (Russel et al 2004; Marshall 2010; Lawler 2010).

> There's no way, that people can actually have 2000 friends. So, realistically I think that some people, I'm not, but I know some friends of mine they have probably like close to 2000 friends. And, if I have to probably tell to like, guess how many people you know, and list the name of people, they would probably name like 30. So, there are not really their friends, but they feel good because they reached that level of stardom, you know, on Facebook to where they go to over a 1000 friends. And they are like, oh, wait, I want get to 1100. So I think that's the same thing like with celebrities. .. or like, promoting products, or movies. Oh man I made 3 million people watch my last movie, so I'm going to get another 2 million to go see it. And I think that's the same thing with Facebook. A lot of people go online and say, Ok well, I have 500 friends right now, so and so has that many friends, so I could do that. So I think that's one way (Elena, 34)

Online users are aware that celebrities have many followers and use that concept engage in popularity contests against their peers as a way to garner additional followers (Sutter 2009). Developing similar news, pictures, stories, and comments; online consumers feel important in their own circle of friends/followers. As Marwick (2010) suggests, online consumers behave this way because they want to behave as micro-celebrities, both for personal branding reasons or for no reason – motivated to share whatever happens in their lives.

> I see my online behavior similar to a celebrity. I am so involved in the community, that I am always out and about, I choose to live a life of happiness and gratitude, sending out positive quotes daily. I do have to say I follow other people in the industry, and celebrities to see what I can learn and how I can spread my message more effectively. I follow a few famous people, I really like Kim Kardashian and Oprah. (Mari, 27).

By being connected with certain celebrities in one way or another, online consumers learn how celebrities behave, and how they expose themselves. And once they learn those techniques, they try to emulate them with their online profiles.

> No, I would think that the celebrity culture has changed us in the way that I think if we didn't have celebrities, which I don't even know if we even can imagine a world without celebrities, but say for instance we took out celebrities in total. I think that we would not Facebook. We might have a Facebook, but not to the level it is. We'd have emails, we might have some type of basics, but we wouldn't have counters. It wouldn't matter how many friends you have. Attaching a number to it, quantifies it. And I think when it's quantifiable it's a race. It becomes more like, "*Im gonna get one more, Im gonna get one more*".I think that's because of, I don't wanna say like directly related but I think looking at celebrities I think that's what it is. You see celebrities and you're like "Oh man I might not meet anybody ever in my life , but hey, I have 2000 friends on Facebook, so I am somebody". I think that's what it is. (Eleonora, 26)

According to Marshall (2010) such behavior is a consequence of the specular economy in which consumers mimic celebrity behavior. Celebrities have a pedagogical effect on their consumers, and signify success and have a quality of attracting attention (Furedi 2010). The pedagogical effect and the influence can be seen is the following excerpt, where a Lady GaGa fan talks about the pedagogical influence Lady GaGa has on her personally, and on all the other fans:

Well, the thing she teaches are, she teaches us not to care. She calls herself an outcast, or she was an outcast when she was in high school, and she's only 24, so she is closer to my age and all bunch of other's people. So she sort of teaches us, not to care what other people think about us, about the way we dress, the way we act, our mentality, like if we wanted things that are bigger than people say we are, we have every right to, so it sort of made me wanna work harder so that I can actually show them than I'm bigger than what I am appear to be…So she just teaches us to be comfortable with ourselves. And a lot of people had actually taken that to heart. Like there are so many stories about how people wanted to kill themselves before Lady gaga came around…like she saved their lives. (Teresa, 21)

Such belief expressed by celebrity fans may indicate that what Marshall (2010) and Furedi (2010) suggested is theoretically sound. Not only there are pedagogical implications for a specific transaction, as for instance in process of endorsement, but there are pedagogical implications about the conduct of consumer's lives. The celebrity educates his or her audiences that in some extreme cases consumers re-evaluate life and death decisions. As Shrum and O'Guinn (1997) pointed out, the more people engage in TV shows, the more they have a distorted view of social reality. Therefore it can be inferred that a similar phenomenon occurs when people develop high levels of connectedness with celebrities. Therefore, it is proposed that:

H4: Celebrity Connectedness is positively related to Online Self-Celebritization

A Comparison between Generation Y and Older Generations

Sociological studies have demonstrated that Generation Y (people born after 1981) express significantly higher levels of narcissism compared to the rest of the population ((Konrath et al. 2007; Twenge and Campbell 2009; Twenge et al. 2008), and have been termed as the *Generation Me* because of such tendencies (Twenge 2006). It may then be argued that the younger generation tend to self-celebritize themselves much more than the older generation. A reason for this is that generation Y is the first generation that grew up with the rise of the Internet and media explosion consumption. We therefore hypothesize that:

H5: Age has a moderating effect on the relationship between Celebrity Connectedness and Online Self-Celebritization

Table 1: Summary of the Proposed Hypotheses

Hypotheses
H1: Celebrity Culture Familiarity is positively related to Celebrity Consumption
H2: Celebrity Culture Familiarity is positively related to Celebrity Connectedness
H3: Celebrity Consumption is positively related to Celebrity Connectedness
H4: Celebrity Consumption is positively related to Online Self-Celebritization
H5: Age has a moderating effect on the relationship between Celebrity Connectedness and Online Self-Celebritization

This chapter presented the theoretical framework for this study that identified and developed four interrelated concepts designed to help answer the research questions. The next chapter details the methodology needed to develop and test the proposed model.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

The flamboyant lives of celebrities and the outrageous characters on television, movies, professional wrestling, and sensational talk shows are peddled to us, promising to fill up the emptiness in our own lives. Celebrity culture encourages everyone to think of themselves as potential celebrities, as possessing unique if unacknowledged gifts. It is a culture of narcissism. (Hedges, 2009)

Research Approach

The goal of this research is to evaluate the effect of celebrities on consumer behavior in the online social media environment. The purpose of this chapter is to present and describe the procedures and methodologies employed in the research. Multiple methods research (Davis et al. 2011) were used in the study. The methodology is divided into three parts; (i) an exploratory qualitative study that was previously performed (see Chapter 3), (ii) a quantitative pilot study to test the proposed measurement scales, and (iii) a main study to test the measurement model and to test the proposed relationships among the identified constructs.

As explained in the previous chapter, the exploratory qualitative study was composed of four elements: The author conducted in-depth individual interviews, personal observation in the online world, and a focus group session. Additionally, 55 essays on the topic of celebrities and personal online behavior were completed in an online class at a southwestern US University. The findings proposed by the preliminary study, along with an extensive literature review are the foundations for the present study.

Following the qualitative study, the pilot study was designed to test the adequacy of the proposed measurement scales. As previously mentioned, four constructs were suggested based on a mix of a literature review and the qualitative study results. After defining the measurement indices, a questionnaire was proposed. Based on the results of the qualitative part of the study a survey using *Likert* scales was constructed and the pilot study performed. After the pilot study, a confirmatory factor analysis using structural equations modeling tested the multidimensionality of the proposed model. Confirmatory factor analysis is a relevant technique for the validation of scales for the measurement of constructs (Hair et al, 2006). After adjusting the measurement items using the results of confirmatory factor analysis, the structural equation model was re-run to test the proposed relationships among the proposed constructs. Surveys were collected in the US.

Target Population - Sample

This study examines online self-celebritization and therefore requires the target population be composed of consumers with accounts with the current online social networks such as Facebook or Twitter. Consumers without such an account were excluded from the study. There were no restrictions based on age, gender or any other demographic variable.

Hair et al (2006) posit that the researcher must ensure the model's measures capture the appropriate unit of analysis for testing the Structural Equation model (SEM). They explain that the researcher either measures the perception at an individual level, by measuring the relationships among individuals, or by measuring the perception at the organization level (or any other group). For the purpose of this research, responses (measures) were taken at the individual level for a general product that for this study is the celebrity, which is a general commodified product (Turner 2004, Marshall 2010) or a brand (Thomson 2006).

For the main study, the sample was divided into two groups. As discussed earlier, prior literature suggests that there is an increased level of narcissism present in the Y-generation versus older generations (Konrath et al. 2007; Twenge et al. 2008). Y-generation is a demographic group that consists of people born after 1981 (Strauss and Howe 1991). In order to compare the Y-generation with older generations, the sample was split in two groups; participants born in 1981 and later, and participants born before 1981.

Data Collection and Sample Size

The data collection reflects a three part procedure. In the first part, rich data was collected through in-depth interviews, and a focus group. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Additional data was obtained from short essays discussing celebrities and online social media from 55 students in an online class.

The second (pilot study) and third (main study) parts of data collection was distributed online using a survey developed by the author. The pilot study's data collection were captured using a survey instrument designed by the author designed to test the measurement scales of the proposed constructs. Using two scales demands scale testing and refinement (Churchill 1979; Spector 1992). The survey was distributed by posting the survey link at the author's personal social media accounts together with those social media accounts of his colleagues at a southwestern US University where the sample are located and were equally distributed in terms of gender.

The objective of the third part (main study) was to test the model and its reliability, and to test the relationships amongst the constructs. In order to yield satisfactory results using confirmatory factor analysis, a sample of at least 250 people is suggested (Hair 2006) and therefore, that is the target size for the main study designed to test the relationships between the

proposed constructs. However, the minimal sample size will be defined following the finalization

of the measurement scales as suggested by Hair et al (2006) that is dependent on the final

number of items in the measurement instrument. It is suggested that at least 7 cases (n) per item

(k) are needed to yield satisfactory results (i.e., the n:k ratio).

A data collection company distributed the main study survey following completion of the

pilot study. A data collection company is preferred as they have the capability to collect data

from a larger sample in a shorter time as compared to the author's resources. The survey was

constructed using SurveyGizmo, a vendor-hosted web-based software company that offers

survey creation platforms for individual and businesses. The data collection was performed by

CINT, a partner of SurveyGizmo. CINT is a Swedish data collection company with offices in

major cities across Europe, North America and Asia able to reach 7 million people in 50

countries for the purposes of data collection. An additional benefit of using a data collection

company are guarantees against missing data, limited to fully answered surveys

Table 2: Data Collection Overview

Data Collection phase	*Method of Data Collection*	*Number of respondents*
Part One (Qualitative Exploratory Study)	In-depth Interviews	10
	Focus Group	8
	Class assignment essay	55
Part Two (Pilot Study)	Author's personal Social Networks	85
Part Three (Main Study)	CINT	578
	Author's personal Social Networks	15

Scale Construction and Operationalization

For scale development the study follows guidance suggested by Spector (1992) who proposed five steps in the scale construction process:

1. The construct needs to be defined clearly

2. The scale is designed

3. The initial version is pilot tested (small sample)

4. Administration and item analysis (bigger sample - if results do not yield satisfactory reliability, otherwise step 2 needs to be re-done

5. Validation

The results of the preliminary study and a review of the existent literature, four constructs were proposed to assess the effects of celebrities on consumers. The four constructs are: Celebrity Culture Familiarity, Celebrity Connectedness, Celebrity Consumption and Online Self Celebritization. These four constructs are all formative constructs, such that the measured construct is reflected in the measurement indicators (Hair 2006). To date, no quantitative measurement scales for these constructs were available in the literature. However, for the first two constructs, Celebrity Familiarity and Celebrity connectedness, similar scales were found and adapted. For the last two constructs, Celebrity Consumption and Online Self Celebritization, completely new scales were developed.

Celebrity (Culture) Familiarity

For the purpose of this study Celebrity Culture Familiarity is defined as *the level of awareness and knowledge consumers have about the celebrity culture.* Familiarity is not a new concept in the marketing literature and has been previously discussed by various authors (Hirschman 1986; Hirschman and Solomon 1984; Oliver and Bearden 1985). Both, Hirschman (1986) and Oliver and Bearden (1985) have developed 2 and 3 item, seven-point semantic scales

respectively to measure familiarity. Hirschman (1986) evaluated familiarity of print advertisements, whereas Oliver and Bearden (1985) evaluated a person's knowledge about a specific object. Both studies reported reliable scales with Cronbach Alpha values above .85 (Bruner and Hensel 1992).

In addition to reported measurement items, the author added two questions/statements collected during the qualitative study and were representative of the context of the study, which is celebrity culture. The final measurement scale for the purpose of the pilot study follows:

- In general, would you consider yourself familiar or unfamiliar with the presence of celebrity in today's society?

- Would you consider yourself informed or not informed at all with the presence of celebrity in today's society?

- Would you consider yourself knowledgeable about celebrities?

- I am aware of what is happening in celebrities' worlds.

- Although I do not follow any celebrities in particular I do somehow know a lot about the current popular figures/celebrities in my culture.

Celebrity Consumption

Celebrity Consumption is defined as the level (*or degree) to which a celebrity is consumed across different dimensions. A celebrity can be consumed in only one dimension, or in multiple dimensions*. With an exception of one study that discussed different methods of celebrity consumption (Rinallo and Savi 2010), the literature did not include other studies in which celebrity consumption was discussed. Therefore, a measurement scale was developed for the purpose of this study by the author. The author, ten fellow marketing PhD candidates, and Phd holders with a focus in consumer behavior evaluated statements collected from the qualitative

study. Sixteen statements were assigned for this construct with six redundant and ambiguous statements removed. The remaining statements were retained for further analysis. The following final ten items were used in the exploratory analysis:

- I purchase items which are endorsed by my favorite celebrities.

- When I can, I attend/watch my favorite celebrities' live performances.

- I "Liked" my favorite celebrity Facebook/twitter page.

- I buy memorabilia linked to my favorite celebrities.

- I read articles about my favorite celebrities.

- I am highly interested in my favorite celebrities' opinions about social issue.

- I like to keep up with public appearances of celebrities.

- It's fun to follow celebrities' off-stage life.

- I like to keep up with the private lives of celebrities.

- I follow celebrities on their online social profiles.

Celebrity Connectedness

Celebrity connectedness is defined *as the degree to which consumers develops a para-social relationship with one or more celebrities*. The Celebrity Connectedness scale was adapted from the Connectedness scale developed by Russell et al (2004) which measured the relationships viewers developed with television programs and their characters. Cronbach's Alpha for this scale was .84, divided into 6 different underlying dimensions; escape, fashion, imitation, modeling, aspiration and paraphemelia. Each of those dimensions represents a different manifestation of how viewers connect with their TV program and develop para-social relationships with the characters (Rusell et al 2004). The scale adaption consisted of replacing the space meant to

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mean *My Favorite Tv Program* with the words *My Favorite Celebrity*. The resulting scale for

Celebrity Connectedness follows:

- Following my favorite celebrities is a sort of escape for me.

- My favorite celebrities help me forget about the day's problems.

- If I am in a bad mood, thinking about my favorite celebrities puts me in a better mood.

- I like the clothes/style my favorite celebrities wear.

- I like the hairstyle of my favorite celebrities.

- If I could I would often buy the clothing style that I've seen on my favorite celebrities.

- I imitate the gesture and facial expression from my favorite celebrities.

- I find myself using phrases from my favorite celebrities when I interact with other

  people.

- I try to speak like my favorite celebrities.

- I learn how to handle real life situations by thinking what my favorite celebrities would

  do.

- I get ideas from my favorite celebrities about how to interact in my own life.

- I relate what happens in my favorite celebrities lives to my own life.

- I would love to be in the same place where my favorite celebrities are.

- I would love to meet my favorite celebrities.

- I have objects that relate to my favorite celebrities (badge, books, pictures,…).

- I read books if they are related to my favorite celebrities.

Online Self Celebritization

Online Self Celebritization is defined as *the degree to which consumers act and behave as celebrities while engaging on social media.* This newly proposed construct for this study, as was that case for the Celebrity Consumption construct, required a measurement scale development by the author. The literature to date addresses related phenomena; hence a new measurement instrument was developed for the purpose of this study. Similarly, as with the construct of Celebrity Consumption, statements were collected from the qualitative study, and evaluated by the author, ten marketing PhD candidates and/or PhD's. The result was a 12 item scale that was used in the pilot study:

- I regularly post updates on social media sites such as Twitter or Facebook.

- I pay attention to what I post online.

- I post information about myself online so others can know what is going on in my life.

- I feel bad when nobody Likes or Retwitts my Facebook/Twitter status updates.

- The more people Like or Comment on my updates the better I feel.

- I Like to influence my online friends.

- I see my online social profile as my personal brand.

- I use the social media to shape the way others see me.

- The more friends/followers I have in the social media, the more I feel like a celebrity.

- I believe that certain friends are celebrities in my circle.

- I believe that I am a celebrity in my own circle, because many people follow me and my life.

- My public figure online is different than my offline persona.

- I feel important when a celebrity replies to my comments.

Adaption and development of measurement scales for each of the four constructs prompts the use of a pilot study (Churchill 1979; Spector 1992). The pilot study used a small sample of respondents as Spector (1992) suggests. The author developed an online survey using the SurveyGizmo platform and distributed it online.

The target population for the pilot study was the same as that for the main study – consumers with an active profile on one of the popular online social media sites. A total of 120 respondents started the online survey during the ten day period when the survey was made available. Eighty-five of the 120 participants qualified for study while the remaining 35 were excluded from the analysis given they did not have an active account with one of the popular online social media sites. Out of the 85 respondents 60% (51) were female and 40 % (34) were males. Respondents were categorized in four aged groups; 52% (44) were in the 18-24 age group, 25% (21) in the 25 – 31 age group, 18% (16) in the 32 – 45 group, and .4% (4) in the 55 and above group.

Table 3: Pilot study reliability results

Construct Measurement Scale	*Number of items*	*Cronbach Alpha*
Celebrity Culture Familiarity	5	.718
Celebrity Consumption	10	.943
Celebrity Connectedness	16	.923
Online Self- Celebritization	12	.941

Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach Alpha. The results in Table 3 confirm the reliability of all four constructs according to guidance provided by (Nunnally and Bernstein

1994). The Cronbach Alphas ranged from .718 to .941 (see Table 3). In spite of the relatively small sample size, an exploratory factor analysis was run to evaluate the measurement scales. Principal component analysis helped evaluate the number of factors using a Varimax rotation. Each factor was evaluated on the basis of a scree plot and retained with an eigenvalue greater than 1. Each factor's loadings were examined such that items with factor loading lower than .3 and items with loadings on more than one factor were eliminated. In total 10 items were removed, reducing the total number of items to 33.

The Celebrity Connectedness scale did not include the 16 items and six underlying dimensions as in the original Russell et al (2004) Connectedness scales from which it was adapted. The newly adapted scale has 12 items, and loads onto three different factors, meaning it has three underlying dimensions. Russell et al (2004) framed these six dimensions as Escape, Fashion, Imitation, Modeling, Aspiration and Paraphemalia. In this study, the dimensions of Escape and Fashion remained the same. The dimensions of Imitation and Modeling were transformed into one dimension and labeled Copycat. The final two original dimensions of Aspiration and Paraphemalia were dropped from scale. Specifically the dimension of Paraphemalia could cause potential correlation problems with the Celebrity Consumption constructs as these items address ownership and reading celebrities' related stories. A construct with multiple underlying dimensions suggests that a second order model would be needed in structural equation modeling (Hair et al, 2006). However, a single order model would first be tested.

Data Analysis

The proposed model was evaluated using two steps in the main study. First, exploratory factor analysis was performed using SPSS 17.0. After evaluating the unidimensionality of the

constructs a confirmatory factor analysis was performed using AMOS 20.0 software. The objective of confirmatory factor analysis is to determine the fit of the proposed model, and it tells us how well our specifications of the factors match reality (Hair 2006).

After the model testing, a casual model was tested using AMOS 20.0. First, the model indices were evaluated and then the relationships amongst these constructs were measured and evaluated using a structural equation model. A model comparison between two groups (Y-generation and the older generation) was tested for differences.

The purpose of this chapter is to present and describe the procedures and methodologies employed in the pilot and main studies. The measurement scales of the four constructs presented in Chapter III are reviewed. A description of the pilot study and its results are discussed followed with the data analysis method used in the main study. The following chapter will present and discuss the main study's findings.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

Celebrity culture has a pervasive presence in our everyday lives- perhaps more so than ever before. It shapes not simply the production and consumption of media content but also the social values through which we experience the world.(Holmes and Redmond 2006)

This chapter addresses findings of the main (quantitative) study. First the sample is presented and analyzed. Second, results of the exploratory factor analysis along with the reliability and validity tests are discussed. Finally, the results of the model testing is presented and evaluated, followed by the analysis and testing of the proposed hypotheses. Concluding this chapter is an analysis and discussion contrasting the two age cohorts.

Sample Demographics

A total of 593 participants completed the survey. The CNIT company sent an invitation to participate to 4,000 members of its panel. A total of 760 panel members responded to the invitation and started the survey resulting in a response rate of 19%. For the purpose of this study, respondents were qualified to participate if they had an open account in at least one of the active online social media sites. The survey automatically disqualified 167 participants who did not have an open account on any of the online social media sites. CINT charged the author a fee for surveys that were completed by qualified participants. Of the 593 respondents, 72% (428) were female and 28% (165) were male resulting in approximately two thirds of the respondents representing the female population. Respondent age ranged from 18 to 55 years old with a mean of 34.4 years. Thirty percent (180) of the respondents were in the 18-24 age group, 20% (117) in

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the 25-31 age group, 28% (164) in the 32 – 47 age group, and 22% (132) in the 47 and above age group. In terms of formal education, 5% (30) of the respondents finished 12th grade or less, 23% (137) graduated from high school, 12% (68) had associated degrees, 33% (196) had some college credits, but no degree, 19% (112) had Bachelor degrees, and 9% (51) had post-graduate degrees. Another demographic aspect that was analyzed was ethnicity. Of the 593 respondents, .4% (25) identified themselves as Asian/Pacifica Islanders, 13% (80) identified themselves as Black/African-American, 63% (375) declared themselves as Caucasians, 11% (68) as Hispanics, .01% (8) as Native Americans, .04% (27) did not identified with any of the ethnicities, and .01% (10) declined to answer this question.

Respondents were also asked which of the popular online social media sites profiles they own. As expected many have more than only one profile active; there were 200 respondents with Twitter accounts, 562 respondents with Facebook profiles, 182 respondents had Google+, 44 respondents had Foursquare and 290 respondents had YouTube profiles. A complete breakdown of the demographic data is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Sample Demographics:

Demographic Variable	Frequency	%
Sex		
Male	165	28
Female	428	72
Age		
18 – 24	180	30
25 – 31	117	20
32 – 47	166	28

48 and above	130	22
Education		
12th Grade or Less	30	5
High School or Equivalent	137	23
Associate Degree	68	11
Some College No Degree	196	33
Bachelor Degree	112	18
Post Graduate Degree	50	8
Ethnicity		
Asian/Pacific Islander	25	4
Black/African American	80	13
Caucasian	375	63
Hispanic	68	11
Native American	8	1
Other/Multi Racial	27	4
Decline to Respond.	10	1
Yearly Income		
Less than $25,000	228	38
$25,000 to 34,999	104	18
$35,000 to $49,999	81	14
$50,000 to $74,999	83	15
$75,000 to $99,999	48	8
$100,000 to $124,999	31	5
$125,000 to $149,999	9	1
$150,000 and above	9	1

N=593

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Reliability and Validity Tests

For this study four constructs were proposed and tested. Those constructs are *Celebrity Culture Culture Familiarity, Celebrity Consumption, Celebrity Connectedness* and *Online Self-Celebritization*. As noted in the previous chapter, the measurement scales of two of the proposed constructs, *Celebrity Culture Familiarity* and *Celebrity Connectedness*, where adapted from previously developed scales. The measurement scales of the remaining two constructs, *Celebrity Consumption* and *Online Self-Celebritization*, were developed by the author.

Despite the fact that some of the measurement scales were adapted from prior studies, all constructs and their scales needed to be tested for reliability and validity.

Reliability of the Measurement Scales

Reliability of the four proposed measurement scales was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha. All four scales scored greater than .7 and are considered reliable according to the literature (Hair 2006; Nunnally and Bernstein 1994) . The four scale reliabilities ranged from .749 to .924 (the constructs reliability measures and descriptive statistics are in Table 5)

Table 5: Descriptive statistics Alpha, Mean, S.D.

Variables	1`	2	3	4	Mean	S.D.	α
1. Celebrity Culture Familiarity	1				5.017	1.26	0.749
2. Celebrity Connectedness	0.442* (0.000)	1			3.396	1.37	0.924
3. Celebrity Consumption	0.472* (0.000)	0.694* (0.000)	1		3,919	1.52	0.871
4. Online Self-Celebritization	0.293* (0.000)	0.598* (0.000)	0.548* (0.000)	1	3.334	1.50	0,899

N = 593, *P < 0.01

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was used to analyze and refine the measurements of the four

constructs and to evaluate the number of dimensions of the proposed items (see Table 6).

This design is necessary given two of the four construct measurements were adapted from

previous studies (Celebrity Culture Familiarity and Celebrity Connectedness) and that two of the

construct measurements are novel (Celebrity Consumption and Online Self- Celebritization).

Table 6: Exploratory factor analysis:

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Celebrity Culture Familiarity						
In general, would you consider yourself familiar or unfamiliar with the presence of celebrity in today's society?	.110	.057	.203	.147	.028	**.839**
Would you consider yourself knowledgeable about celebrities?	.134	.109	.210	.140	.167	**.793**
Although I do not follow any celebrities in particular I do somehow know a lot about the current popular figures/celebrities in my culture	.049	.112	.046	.364	.167	**.563**
Celebrity Connectedness						
Following my favorite celebrities Is a sort of escape for me	.190	.119	.245	.246	**.744**	.208
My favorite celebrities help me forget about the day's problems.	.300	.147	.165	.176	**.827**	.110
If I am in a bad mood, thinking about my favorite celebrities puts me in a better mood.	.376	.210	.246	.223	**.705**	.089
I like the clothes/style my favorite celebrities wear.	.211	.113	.225	**.797**	.200	.181
I like the hairstyle of my favorite celebrities.	.145	.150	.182	**.805**	.212	.221
If I could I would often buy the clothing style that I've seen on my favorite celebrities.	.358	.213	.255	**.661**	.159	.210
I imitate the gesture and facial expression from my favorite celebrities.	**.773**	.266	.176	.171	.086	.026
I find myself using phrases from my favorite celebrities when I interact with other people.	**.715**	.187	.208	.237	.078	.150
I try to speak like my favorite celebrities.	**.826**	.237	.144	.091	.084	.011
I learn how to handle real life situations by thinking what my favorite celebrities would do.	**.814**	.211	.135	.030	.231	.045
I get ideas from my favorite celebrities about how to interact in my own life.	**.747**	.206	.225	.158	.190	.035
I relate what happens in my favorite celebrities lives to my own life.	**.678**	.245	.163	.131	.268	.095
Celebrity Consumption						
I purchase items which are endorsed by my favorite celebrities.	.369	.185	.554	.224	.134	.099
When I can, I attend/watch my favorite celebrities' live performances.	.129	.119	.710	.125	.146	.242

I "Liked" my favorite celebrity Facebook/twitter page.	.171	.243	.783	.092	.101	,070
I buy memorabilia linked to my favorite celebrities.	.357	.179	.703	.093	.115	.001
I read articles about my favorite celebrities.			.554	.282	.240	.315
I Like to keep up with public appearances of celebrities.	.273	.316	.661	.137	.147	.160

Online Self-Celebrtitization

I feel bad when nobody Likes or Retweets my Facebook/Twitter status updates.	.166	.680	.150	.146	.043	.121
The more people Like or Comment on my updates the better I feel.	.133	.799	.112	.175	.097	.035
I Like to influence my online friends.	.126	.771	.196	.167	.030	.151
I see my online social profile as my personal brand.	.142	.679	.224	.235	.071	.120
I use the social media to shape the way others see me.	.166	.799	.104	.112	.122	.074
The more friends/followers I have in the social media, the more I feel like a celebrity.	.309	.705	.122	.034	.146	.110
I believe that certain friends are celebrities in my circle.	.333	.577	.157	.124	.191	.162
I believe that I am a celebrity in my own circle, because many people follow me and my life.	.341	.600	.156	.176	.136	.212

Extraction Method: Principal component Analysis
Rotation Method: Varimas with Kaiser Normalization

Though the scales were partially refined in the pilot study, additional refinement was necessary given the constructs were insufficiently parsimonious due to the large number of items. An exploratory factor analysis was run using SPSS 17. According to Hair et al (2006), the data matrix requires sufficient correlations to justify the use of the Exploratory Factor Analysis. To address the correlation requirements, the Bartlett test of sphericity and Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) were performed. The Bartlett test of sphericity was significant (p=.000), and none of the variables fell below the .5 threshold as suggested by Hair et al (2006). Those results indicated that the data matrix met the requirements for factor analysis.

Before using factor analysis, the data matrix was cleaned to help reach a higher level of parsimony. Exploratory factor analysis using 33 items was run. Although some of the constructs were predicted to correlate, an orthogonal rotation was employed using the Varimax rotation method. Following the literature for statistical criteria of item retention (Spector 1992; Hair et al 2006) items with loadings above.4 and items with an average inter –item correlations were

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retained. Items that cross loaded on multiple factors were removed. In total 4 items were removed from the scale as they did not met the statistical criteria for retention.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

On the basis of previous findings and to further evaluate the items and their structure a confirmatory factor analysis was performed. The objective of confirmatory factor analysis is to determine the fit of the proposed model, and it tells us how well our specifications of the factors match reality (Hair 2006). We employed the same sample size (N = 593) used in the exploratory factor analysis. It is important to notice that with the proposed 29 item indicators and a sample size of 593 respondents, the requirement for the sample size suggesting at least 20 respondents per item was met (Hair et al 2006).

After testing and confirming the multivariate normality a maximum likelihood method was used to test the parameters of the proposed model. The factor loadings λ ranged from .529 to .905, while the error variance estimates δ ranged from .058 to .225. These results suggest that between 53% and 90% of the variance among the measured variables is explained by the factor structure, and that between 6% and 23% is due to measurement error. This indicates that the maximum likelihood method provides strong evidence for the factor structure presented of the proposed model (Appendix E).

To evaluate the measurement model, the literature suggests using multiple and different indices (Hair et al 2006, (Bagozzi and Yi 2012; Meyers et al. 2006). These indices are divided into three major groups (Hair et al 2006; Meyers et al. 2006); i) *absolute fit indices* (χ2 Chi Square, Goodness of fit (GFI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), ii) *incremental fit indices*; Normed Fit Indices (NFI) and Comparative Fit Indices (CFI), and iii) *parsimon fit indice*; Parsimony goodness of fit (PGFI) and Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI).

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To yield satisfactory results, various studies (Bagozzi and Yi 2012; Byrne 2001; Hair et al 2006) suggest using as many of the above mentioned indices because the results depend on multiple artifacts such as sample size, number of variables and theory. Though the commonly used cut-off value is .9 for absolute fit indices (Hu and Benter 1999), there is disagrement on the use of this specific cutoff value due to the complexity of structural equation modelling by advocating restraint in their use (Marsh et al. 2004), limited to certain occasions because standards are lax (Markland 2007; Miles and Shevlin 2007), while some wish to completely abolish them as they are not testing statistics as they are commony being used for (Barrett 2007). According to Sobel and Bohrnstedt (1985), fit indices provide no definite proof that the model is usefeul. Wheaton (1987) claims that it is possible the model to fit and yet be be incorrectly sepecified. This is supported by Byrne (2001) who suggests that fit indices cannot reflect the extend to which a model is plausible, and that this judgement lies with the researcher. Byrne (2001) adds that the assessment of model adequacy must be based on multiple criteria that take into account theoretical, statistical and practical considertations (p.88).

Theory as postulated by Russell et al (2004) and exploratory factor analysis point to the necessity of a second order model for this study given Connectedness possesses three underlying dimensions. However, a single order model was performed and results evaluated. The results of the CFA and exploratory factor analysis confirmed what was previously suggested from the literature about the Connectedness scales. The Chi square met the suggested cutoff value for good model fit while none of the other fit indices did so. Therefore another confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to re-evaluate the model fit. This time a second order model was evaluated. The Chi Square was significant at 4.729, the RMSEA was 0.07 and the PNFI index was 0.721. (See Table 7 for detailed results) All of those results fell into the suggested cutoff

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values (Bagozzi and Yi 2012). The absolute fit index CFI on the other hand was just below the

suggested value at .88. Following the suggestions from the literature (Byrne, 2001) and

according to a general assessment of practicality and theory, the model was a good fit and

therefore the analysis continued with the evaluation of construct validity. Figure 2 depicts the

proposed model with indicators for each construct.

Table 7: Model Fit Indices CFA

Goodness of Fit Indices	*Single Order Model*	*Second Order Model*
Chi Square*	3370.990/428 = 7.729	1740.287/368 = 4.729
RMSEA**	0.10	0.07
CFI***	0.75	0.88
PNFI****	0.63	0.72

*Recommended value for Chi Square <5 (Arbuckle 1997; Wheaton et al. 1977)
**Recommended value for RMSEA is <0.07 (Byrne 2001; Hair et al 2006)
***Recommended value for CFI > 0.90 (Byrne 2001; Hair et al 2006)
****Recommended value for PNFI >0.50 (Byrne 2001)
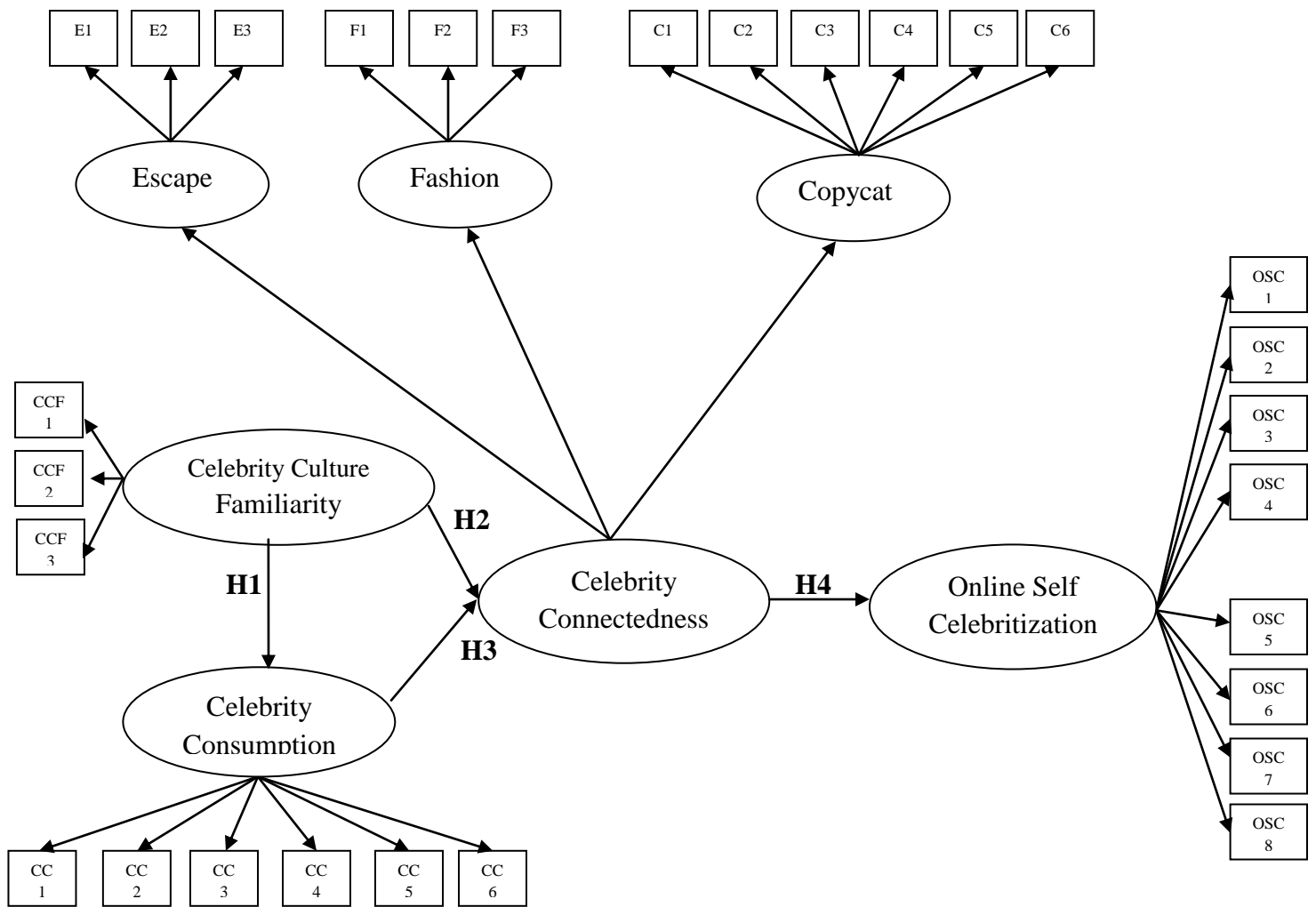
Figure 2: Proposed Model with Constructs and Indicator Variables

Convergent Validity

A range of information can be used in defining convergent validity. According to the
literature (Bagozzi et al. 1991; Hair 2006), standardized factor loadings (at least .5), variance –
extracted (at least 50%) and reliability (above .7) are common values to assess the convergent
validity of the constructs in question. All the standardized factor loadings used in the analysis
exceed the threshold of .5. The extracted variances of all of the constructs used in the model
exceed 50%. Moreover, all four constructs' reliabilities (Cronbach Alpha's) were higher than .7.

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Therefore, convergent validity for the constructs was supported. Table 8 shows the outcome of the convergent validity assessment.

Table 8: Convergent Validity

Construct Measurement Scale	*Stand. Factor Loadings*	*Variance extracted (%)*
Celebrity Culture Familiarity		59.077
1. In general, would you consider yourself familiar or unfamiliar with the presence of celebrity in today's society?	.796*	
2. Would you consider yourself knowledgeable about celebrities?	.844*	
3. Although I do not follow any celebrities in particular I do somehow know a lot about the current popular figures/celebrities in my culture	.529*	
Celebrity Connectedness		54.619
1. Following my favorite celebrities Is a sort of escape for me	.777*	
2. My favorite celebrities help me forget about the day's problems.	.871*	
3. If I am in a bad mood, thinking about my favorite celebrities puts me in a better mood.	.881*	
4. I like the clothes/style my favorite celebrities wear.	.905*	
5. I like the hairstyle of my favorite celebrities.	.883*	
6. If I could I would often buy the clothing style that I've seen on my favorite celebrities.	.808*	
7. I imitate the gesture and facial expression from my favorite celebrities.	.811*	
8. I find myself using phrases from my favorite celebrities when I interact with other people.	.766*	
9. I try to speak like my favorite celebrities.	.837*	
10. I learn how to handle real life situations by thinking what my favorite celebrities would do.	.841*	
11. I get ideas from my favorite celebrities about how to interact in my own life.	.825*	
12. I relate what happens in my favorite celebrities lives to my own life.	.778*	

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Celebrity Consumption	72.907

1. I purchase items which are endorsed by my favorite celebrities.	.738*
2. When I can, I attend/watch my favorite celebrities' live performances.	.680*
3. I "Liked" my favorite celebrity Facebook/twitter page.*	.765*
4. I buy memorabilia linked to my favorite celebrities.	.753*
5. I read articles about my favorite celebrities.	.625*
6. I Like to keep up with public appearances of celebrities.	.803*

Online Self-Celebrtitization	58.85

1. I feel bad when nobody Likes or Retwitts my Facebook/Twitter status updates.	.648*
2. The more people Like or Comment on my updates the better I feel.	.760*
3. I Like to influence my online friends.	.769*
4. I see my online social profile as my personal brand.	.721*
5. I use the social media to shape the way others see me.	.800*
6. The more friends/followers I have in the social media, the more I feel like a celebrity.	.792*
7. I believe that certain friends are celebrities in my circle.	.656*
8. I believe that I am a celebrity in my own circle, because many people follow me and my life.	.671*

*p=0.000

Discriminant Validity

Hair et al (2006) define discriminant validity as "the extent to which a construct is truly

distinct from other constructs" (p.778), and explains the uniqueness of a particular construct.

Discriminant validity is established by comparing the variance-extracted estimates for each

factor with the squared inter-construct correlation associated with that factor (Hair et al 2006).

All variance extracted estimates of the proposed four constructs in this study are higher than the

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corresponding inter-construct squared correlations. These results suggest that there evidence of

discriminant validity.

Table 9: Discriminant Validity

	Squared Inter- construct Correlation	Variance Extracted (%)
Celebrity Culture Familiarity		59.077
1. Celebrity Culture Familiarity – Celebrity Connectedness	.196	
2. Celebrity Culture Familiarity – Celebrity Consumption	.223	
3. Celebrity Culture Familiarity – Online Self-Celebritization	.085	
Celebrity Connectedness		54.619
1. Celebrity Connectedness – Celebrity Culture Familiarity	.196	
2. Celebrity Connectedness - Celebrity Consumption	.481	
3. Celebrity Connectedness - Online Self-Celebritization	.358	
Celebrity Consumption		72/907
1. Celebrity Consumption - Celebrity Culture Familiarity	.223	
2. Celebrity Consumption - Celebrity Connectedness	..481	
3. Celebrity Consumption - Online Self-Celebritization	.300	
Online Self-Celebritization		62.932
1. Online Self-Celebritization - Celebrity Culture Familiarity	.085	
2. Online Self-Celebritization - Celebrity Connectedness	.358	
3. Online Self-Celebritization - Celebrity Consumption	.300	

Nomological Validity

Mentzer and Flint (1997) define nomological validity as "the degree to which the

constructs fits within the logical network of the theory" (p. 207). Hair et al (2006) explain that

nomological validity examines whether the correlations among the construct in a theory make

sense. Venkatraman and Grant (1986) and Brahma (2009) describes three possible ways to test

for nomological validity: correlational, regressional, or causal modeling techniques. However, as

Mentzer and Flint (1997) point out, there is no statistical test of nomological validity, arguing for

a qualitative assessment of the tightness of the theory and definition of the constructs. The

bivariate correlations of the four constructs among themselves are indeed significant, and high

between the construct where it is predicted to be high (Celebrity Connectedness and Online Self-

celebritization) and low where it is predicted to be low (Celebrity Culture Familiarity and Online

Self- Celebritization). Finally, prior to the start of data collection, 10 consumer behavior

researchers evaluated the proposed scales and offered a determination that the measurement

made sense. Therefore, we suggest that nomological validity was reached.

Test of the Overall Model

This section contains results of the model testing. After some of the items that failed to

meet the statistical criteria for retention were removed from the data, a structural equation model

analysis was performed to test the overall model fit and test the proposed relationships among

constructs.

First, goodness-of-fit indices were calculated and examined. According to the literature

(Bagozzi and Yi 2012; Hu and Benter 1999), there are many criteria that must be evaluated and

measured in order to assess the fit of the proposed model. Except for the CFI value which is

slightly below the .90 cut off value, all the other indices suggested a satisfactory model fit (See

Table 10).

The next step in the structural equation modeling is to evaluate the hypothesized

relationship between the proposed constructs (Table 11). Figure 3 shows the estimated path

coefficients and their significance. Structural equation modeling is not only used to evaluate the

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measurement model as confirmatory factor analysis does, but is also used to evaluate and

analyze the relationships among the variables in a model. (Schreiber et al. 2006)

Table 10: Model Fit Indices SEM

Goodness of Fit Indices	Main Model	Group Comparison Model
Chi Square *	1740.287/368 = 4.729	3832.157/1104 = 3.471
RMSEA**	0.07	0.04
CFI***	0.89	0.89
PNFI****	0.72	0.72

*Recommended value for Chi Square <5 (Arbuckle 1997, Wheaton et al 1977)
**Recommended value for RMSEA is <0.07 (Byrne 2001, Hair et al 2006)
***Recommended value for CFI > 0.90 (Byrne 2001; Hair et al 2006)
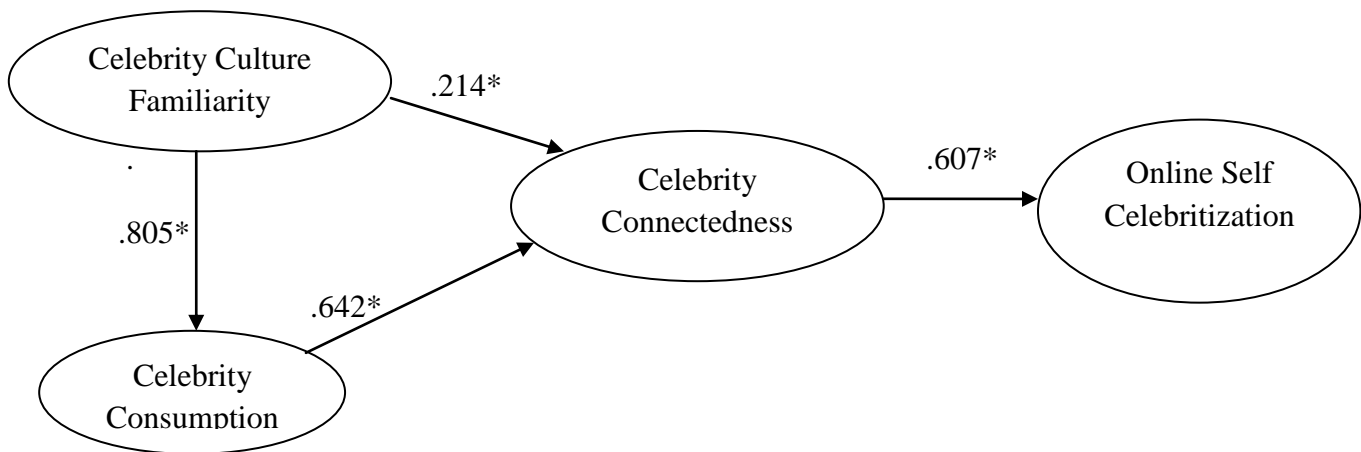****Recommended value for PNFI >0.50 (Byrne 2001)

Figure 3: Structural Modeling
*p <0.01

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The findings suggest that the although the model was not a perfect fit, as one of the fit indices was lacking, all the relationships proposed seemed to suggest that Online Self Celebritization exists and is dependent on Celebrity Connectedness.

Table 11: Summary of Hypotheses testing

Hypotheses	Results
H1: Celebrity Culture Familiarity is positively related to Celebrity Consumption	Supported
H2: Celebrity Culture Familiarity is positively related to Celebrity Connectedness	Supported
H3: Celebrity Consumption is positively related to Celebrity Connectedness	Supported
H4: Celebrity Consumption is positively related to Online Self-Celebritization	Supported
H5: Age has a moderating effect on the relationship between Celebrity Connectedness and Online Self-Celebritization	Supported

Finally, a group comparison was performed to evaluate the differences between the younger and the older age cohorts. Again, goodness-of-fit indices were calculated and examined. The Chi Square was significant at 3.471, the RMSEA was 0.04 and the PNFI index was 0.721. (See Table 10 for detailed results) All of those results fell into the suggested cutoff values (Bagozzi and Yi 2012). The absolute fit index CFI on the other hand was just below the suggested value at .89.

It was hypothesized that younger generation is prone to online Self-Celebritization. The group comparison results confirmed this behavioral propensity. The relationship between Celebrity Connectedness and Online Self-celebritization was significant with a loading value of .757 amongst the younger generation. However, in the older group, this relationship was not significant and the loading value was .241 suggesting that online Self Celebritization is not favored by older consumers.

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In this chapter the finding of the quantitative (main) study were presented and discussed. First the sample was presented and analyzed. Next, results of the exploratory factor analysis along with the reliability and validity tests were discussed. Finally model testing results were presented and evaluated, followed by the analysis and testing of the proposed hypotheses. Rounding out the chapter was an analysis comparing two ago cohorts was performed and discussed. In the next chapter a summary and conclusion of the findings will be presented.

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CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Through gossip about celebrities, the public is able to visualize the life of a hero and even enjoy it vicariously. Celebrities are depicted while swimming in their pools and sunning themselves on their yachts, or dining in expensive restaurants and dating other celebrities. Knowing the intimate details of celebrity lifestyles helps the public feel close to its heroes – to reduce the anonymity and impersonality which have become associated with life in a mass society. (Levin and Arluke 1987)

This chapter first reviews the objectives of this study, the results and conclusions. This is followed with a discussion of the academic and managerial implications, and the study's limitations. The chapter concludes by addressing themes for future study.

Review

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect that celebrities have on online consumer behavior. According to the media and communication literature (Currid-Halkett 2010; Gabler 1998; Gamson 1994;Holmes and Redmond; Marshall 1997), society has reached a point at which consumers are obsessed with celebrity's lives as never before. Various studies suggest that today's celebrities have evolved as commodities and are marketed as such (Gamson 1994; Hedges 2009; Marshal 1997; Turner 2004; Turner et al 2000). Online social media has fuelled the exposure of consumers to celebrities at a level previously unheard of (Vogel 2011). The marketing tools used by celebrities in the past, such as magazines, TV and radio media, are no longer the sole platforms for promotion. Present-day celebrities and their teams enjoy a variety of new promotional tools, mainly the Internet and online social media platforms such as

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Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and the like. Intense celebrity exposure, along with the increased

usage of such sites by the general population (Nielsen 2011) results in an entirely new

phenomenon that for the purpose of this study is labeled *Online Self Celebritization*.

This study theorized that online over consumption of celebrities leads to consumers

behaving as celebrities themselves in the online context. With the advent of online social media,

consumers are empowered to build their online profiles and therefore their online-self, often

times reconstructing themselves. Marshall (2010) talked about the so called mirror – specular

economy in which celebrities' consumers emulate celebrities' lifestyles.

To examine this celebrity-consumer phenomenon, a multiple methods approach was

used, in line with the guidance offered by Davis et al (2011). The methodology was divided in

three parts. Part one was a qualitative study for which data were collected using in-depth

interview, a focus group and essays. This data, along with the available literature review were

used to identify the following four constructs: Celebrity Culture Familiarity, Celebrity

Consumption, Celebrity Connectedness and Online Self Celebritization. Two of the

measurement instruments were adopted from prior work (Celebrity Culture Familiarity and

Celebrity Connectedness) and two are hitherto novel to the literature (Celebrity Consumption

and Online Self Celebritization). Part two of the study was a pilot study aimed at testing the

measurement scales. Part three was a large sample quantitative study designed to test the

measurement model and relationships among constructs.

The results of these studies confirmed there is a link between the extensive consumption

of celebrities and people's behavior online. It was theorized that being merely familiar with the

Celebrity Culture does not necessarily lead to a consumer celebritizing him or herself online.

Predicating consumer celebritization is the requirement to consume the celebrities. Consumption

of celebrities may occur in various ways. Direct consumption happens when consumers buy a tangible celebrity product in from of a music CD, a concert or movie ticket and the like. However, consumption can also occur when consumers consume the celebrity via an intangible product (direct purchase is not necessarily required) such as a TV show, or online sites. In both cases, excessive consumption leads to a new phenomenon called Celebrity Connectedness. Russell et al (2004) discuss the phenomenon of connectedness between the fictional TV character and a viewer. This study extended the construct of connectedness to celebrities. When celebrity connectedness occurs, celebrity consumers develop a para-social relationship with the celebrity influencing the consumer's daily life. It does not only affect their consumption patterns, as the endorsement literature suggests, but creates a value system for the consumer, a lifestyle shaping the consumer's identity that as is posited in this study, leads to Online Self celebritization.

The literature suggested that the Millenial generation (also referred as Generation Y) expresses a higher level of narcissism than their predecessors do. In this study it is proposed that Millenials are more prone to celebrity influence than any other generation. The result of the group comparison suggested that this is indeed the case, possibly because Millennials are the first generation to grown alongside the Internet, and the pre-Internet era is unknown to them. They are more engaged in online social media and are therefore more likely to be influenced by celebrity behavior.

Excessive consumption of celebrities prompted by online social media and the entertainment industry heavily influences today's society in ways that are not entirely healthy. Examples include psychological dysfunctionalities such as the *Celebrity Worship Syndrome*, a state when people develop an obsessive-addictive disorder where they show an over- interest

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with a celebrities' personal life (McCutcheon et al. 2002). For example Trenger (2011) suggested

that because of the constant exposure to successful celebrities, consumers now compare

themselves to those celebrities, as opposed to their own peers as was usual just a few decades

ago. Such unrealistic comparisons lead to personal disappointments, and later depression.

Trenger (2011) terms this phenomenon the *Fear of Insignificance*, when consumers feel

depressed because they did not achieve their objectives; objectives based on a comparison with a

celebrity's success.

Entertainment consumption is on the rise (Vogel 2011) and the effects of such

consumption may need better understanding. This study extends the knowledge of media effect

theories in marketing by evaluating the effect of such consumption, suggesting that celebrity

consumption leads to *online self celebritization*. Moreover, the findings contribute to knowledge

of celebrities in the marketing literature given the consumption of celebrities has not been

previously examined. Finally, this study offers two additional measurement scales to the

marketing literature; the *Celebrity Consumption* scale and the *Online Self Celebritization* scale.

Research Implications

Celebrities are well studied in the marketing literature, albeit limited to the endorsement

literature (Erdogan 1999; Erdogan et al 2001; McCracken 1989; Ohanian 1990; Till 1998; Till

and Shimp 1998 to name a few). The literature on celebrity consumption (focus of this study) in

the marketing literature is scant at best. There are works describing how celebrities affect

consumer behavior (Thomson 2006) or how the consumption of products in the entertainment

industry affects consumers' values and reality construction (Shrum et al. 2005; Shrum and

O'guinn 1997). Nonetheless, it is of utmost importance to study the phenomenon of celebrities

more extensively in the production aspect of celebrity and its distribution (Turner, 2010).

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Celebrities are an important part of society, considered both a commodity (Turner 2004) and

brands (Thomson 2006). Being as influential as they are, celebrities affect consumer lifestyles,

value systems and political decisions (Marshall 1997). This study advances the need for celebrity

consumption research in marketing and related fields by encouraging an understanding of

celebrity consumption and its effect on consumer behavior.

Vogel (2011) suggests that the consumption of entertainment products significantly

increased over the recent past; in the 1970's an average adult spent 50.7 hours a week consuming

TV, radio, newspapers, magazines and other leisure/entertainment activities. In 2009 that value

increased by 60% to 81.1 hours per week in spite of the increase in hours worked per week over

the same period. Pinsky and Young (2009) suggest that celebrities have a tendency to be more

narcissistic than the general population, and due to excessive exposure, consumers tend to view

celebrities' eccentric lives as normal. The results of this study demonstrate that the trend

proposed by Pinsky and Young (2009) is underway. This study helps the theoritization of

researchers in fields such as sociology and communication studies, as it provides quantified data

to support such theorizations.

Managerial Implications

Celebrities are brands (Thomson 2006) and as such employ advisors to manage their

present and future projects, their image and their money (Turner 2004). As commodities,

celebrities need to study their target markets to understand their consumption patterns when it

comes to consuming celebrities. Celebrity management teams benefit from this study by

employing the *Celebrity Consumption* scale in their audience research to assess the attitude

audiences have towards the celebrity in question. This measurement instrument possesses

different dimensions of celebrity consumption. By identifying the highly and poorly scored

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items, celebrity managers are in a position to develop marketing strategies to target the increase of consumption of scale items with low values.

Online social media is omnipresent and attracts a host of professions such as social medial manager, online social media consultant and social media producer. Businesses are developing software programs with algorithms to identify online's biggest influencers (Vascellaro 2011), but not all of those influencers are willing to persuade others on behalf of a particular corporation. This is a powerful motive for businesses to seek talent themselves.

Businesses could benefit from this study's findings by using the *Online Self Celebritization* scale as an additional tool for recruitment. If companies want to be successful in online social media, they would significantly increase the success by employing a candidate expressing the characteristics of a celebrity. Candidates who score highly on the *Online Self Celebritization* scale would more likely have such characteristics.

Another group potentially benefiting from this study's results are social marketers. Social awareness companies that supported anti-smoking, AIDS prevention, and anti-soda consumption would factor the overconsumption of celebrities as a problem for society at large. The results of this study suggest there is a positive relationship between celebrity culture and self-celebritization. If such celebrity exposure causes numerous potential psychological problems as has been suggested (Hyman and Sierra 2011, McCutcheon et al. 2002; Pinsky and Young 2009; Trenger 2011), then social marketers would benefit from this study's findings in the development of their awareness campaigns.

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Limitations of the Study

Though this study offers several contributions to the scholarly literature and to the marketing profession, there are five limitations to consider related to methodology and the author.

The first limitation is the lack of prior research for parts of the study. As mentioned in the dissertation's introductory sections, there is a lack of literature discussing celebrity consumption. This study is thus partially informed by the literature and that weakness is balanced by the use of qualitative exploratory data collection techniques.

The second limitation of this study concerns the qualitative data convenience sampling method. The sample was limited geographically and to a small number of participants due to time and availability constraints. The qualitative part of the study represents the foundation for the main study and any discrepancies caused in this part most likely affected the main study. As one of the respondents suggested, celebrities have different effects in different locations. Consequently, participants in study's single and limited geographical area influenced the main study. Additionally, different celebrities are popular in different times. The popular celebrities during the study's period of data collection may have distorted the result. Finally, data collection for the pilot study was also geographically limited as it was collected via the author's social network and at one university in the southern U.S.

The third limitation regards data collection for the main quantitative study. An online panel was used which poses several limitations (Dillman et al. 2009) such as self-selection and sampling problems as participant recruitment was limited to a recruitment advertisement. For example, in this study both Caucasian (68%) and Hispanics (11%) are underrepresented. An additional concern relates to online surveying measurement error. Namely, panels typically

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respond to multiple surveys on a monthly basis that may lead to fatigue and hence respondents unlikely to provide well thought out and honest answers.

The fourth limitation is an artifact of the cross sectional nature of research. Results that are more reliable would have been obtained using a longitudinal study, but because of time and financial constraints this option was not possible.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the limitation of correlational studies such that though two variables may be correlated, any temptation to infer causality must be dismissed and hence the need for casual research going forward.

Directions for Future Research

Despite various limitations, this study offers important contributions to the marketing literature by examining the effects of celebrity consumption on consumers' lives, specifically to explore how the overexposure of celebrities, affects online consumer behavior. This study suggests that overexposure influences how consumers behave online in terms of presenting and building their online profiles. Additionally, the study contributes to the field of marketing by adding two new constructs to the literature along with two measurement scales for those two constructs. This study is seminal in addressing the phenomenon of celebrity consumption in the marketing field, and will help motivate additional research in this important and topical area.

Marketing researchers should evaluate and explore further the consequences of overconsumption of celebrities, analogous to the stream of investigations into overconsumption and its effect on natural resources of generic products (Kjellberg 2008). Researchers are encouraged to investigate whether the overconsumption of celebrities affects society in a manner similar to other resources and whether this would motivate an anti-consumption movement (Penaloza and Price 2003; Zavestoki 2002).

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Currid-Halkett (2010) discovered that a sizeable proportion of young consumers express the wish to become famous. Future research should tackle celebrity consumption's effect on consumers' life-goals. What are the implications and consequences for society if fame is a desired goal? Luscombe (2012) posited that fame used to be a mystical oil that anointed an extremely talented few, but is now more like a fire hose that can be sprayed to anybody who looks marketable (p.54). Future research should investigate what are the implications for society if the commodification and exposure of celebrities will continue to grow as it did in the past decade.

Future research should also investigate online self-identity construction. For example, Marwick's (2010) research on self-presentation in the online context was limited to the community of web-designers in Silicon Valley. Additional research should extend the investigation of the online self-presentation construct to the general population and seek to understand the motives of self-celebritization.

Finally, findings from the qualitative component of this study suggest that investigation is needed in the motivational aspects of celebrity consumption. For instance, many of the respondents describe the reality show star Kim Kardashian as their favorite celebrity, as someone consumers wish to emulate in their daily lives in terms of fashion, behavior, success and so on. The question at hand is why a celebrity with no record of notable accomplishment (e.g., an Oscar, a music award) or talent is very popular and attractive to companies in search of endorsers? According to a recent earnings report by Forbes (2012) Kim Kardashian is the second most highly paid female TV personality, earning $18 million between May 2011 and May 2012. Why is there insatiable demand for such a celebrity? Future investigation should explore the answers to this phenomenon.

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APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX A

Interview/focus group starting questions

Study title: Our Celebrities, Our Selves

Researcher contact information:

Name: Arne Baruca
Title: PhD Student
Dept: Marketing
The University of Texas-Pan American
Phone: 956 665 7135
Email:abaruca@utpa.edu

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Protection (IRB). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, or if you feel that your rights as a participant were not adequately met by the researcher, please contact the IRB at 956.665.2889 or irb@utpa.edu. You are also invited to provide anonymous feedback to the IRB by visiting www.utpa.edu/IRBfeedback.

List of questions:

1. How much do you know about the entertainment industry in general?
2. Are you interested in celebrities? Why? Which are your favorites?
3. Where and how do you find information about celebrities?
4. Do you buy something related to your favorite celebrity?
5. How do you think celebrities affect your life? Why?
6. How do you think celebrities affect today's society?
7. Can you describe some examples?
8. Do you want to be famous?
9. Do you have an online social media account?
10. Describe me how you use it?
11. How do you organize it?
12. What guidelines you follow when you are updating your profile?
13. What do you expect when you post something?
14. How many followers/friends do you have online?
15. Do you think that you are influencing somebody in your online circle?
16. Do you consider yourself popular online?
17. How do you feel when somebody likes or comments your status updates?
18. Do you think that celebrity behavior affect your online behavior?
19. Why? Why not?
20. Do you consider yourself a brand?
21. Have you ever done something in your "real life" so that you can then describe it or publish it on Facebook, or any other social media account?

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APPENDIX B

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APPENDIX B

The University of Texas – Pan American

Informed Consent Form – Focus Group
[Study Title: Our Celebrities, Our Selves: Reconstructing Ourselves as Online Personalities]

This research survey is being conducted by Arne Baruca from the University of Texas – Pan American/UTPA, under the supervision of Dr. Michael Minor. We are conducting a research study about the consumption of celebrities, and consumer behavior on online social media. As part of this study, we are interested in the views of people who are users of social media from 18 to 55 years old, both males and females.

We have invited you here today so that we can conduct a focus group about issues related to this topic. The focus group is expected to last approximately 60 mins. Your individual responses will be treated confidentially. Statements made by other group members should also be treated confidentially and should not be shared outside of this group. Your participation is completely voluntary; although you have all shown interest in participating in this group, you are free to withdraw from the focus group at any time and can choose not to answer specific questions.

In order to ensure the accuracy of statements made by participants in this group, we will be recording the session on audio and video tape and later transcribing the tapes. The tapes will not be marked with your names and will be securely stored at UTPA. The recordings themselves will only be used for research purposes and will not be given to anyone not directly involved in the research. After 2 years, the tapes will be destroyed or erased.

Your responses may be quoted in whole or in part in publications or presentations based on this research. If quotes are used, your real name will be replaced by a made up name (pseudonym) and any additional information that might directly identify you will be excluded.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this research. If you are under 18, please let the researcher know before the session begins.

Researcher contact information: Name: Arne Baruca
                                     Title: PhD Student
                                     Dept: Marketing
                                     The University of Texas-Pan American
                                     Phone: 956 665 7135   Email:abaruca@utpa.edu

Faculty Advisor   Name: Dr. Michael Minor
contact information: Dept: Marketing Department,
                                     The University of Texas-Pan American
                                     Phone: 956 665 3379   Email: msminor@utpa.edu

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Protection (IRB). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, or if you feel that your rights as a participant were not adequately met by the researcher, please contact the IRB at 956-665-2889 or irb@utpa.edu. You are also invited to provide anonymous feedback to the IRB by visiting www.utpa.edu/IRBfeedback

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APPENDIX C

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APPENDIX C

The University of Texas – Pan American

<u>Informed Consent Text – Online Survey</u>

[Study Title: Our Celebrities, Our Selves: Reconstructing Ourselves as Online Personalities]

This survey is being conducted by Arne Baruca (abaruca@utpa.edu) a graduate student from The University of Texas-Pan American, under the supervision of his faculty advisor Dr. Michael Minor (msminor@utpa.edu)

The purpose of this study is to examine the use of celebrities and the behavior of people using online social media.

This survey should take about 8 - 10 minutes to complete.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Choosing not to participate will not adversely affect your grade or standing in the class. If there are any individual questions that you would prefer to skip, simply leave the answer blank.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate. If you are not 18 or older, please do not complete the survey.

All survey responses that we receive will be treated confidentially and stored on a secure server. However, given that the surveys can be completed from any computer (e.g., personal, work, school), we are unable to guarantee the security of the computer on which you choose to enter your responses. As a participant in our study, we want you to be aware that certain technologies exist that can be used to monitor or record data that you enter and/or websites that you visit.

Any individually identifiable responses will be securely stored and will only be available to those directly involved in this study. Deidentified data may be shared with other researchers in the future, but will not contain information about your individual identity.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Protection (IRB). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, or if you feel that your rights as a participant were not adequately met by the researcher, please contact the IRB at 956-665-2889 or irb@utpa.edu. You are also invited to provide anonymous feedback to the IRB by visitingwww.utpa.edu/IRBfeedback.

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First, I would kindly ask you which of the following social media accounts do you have?*

[ ] Facebook

[ ] Twitter

[ ] Google+

[ ] Foursquare

[ ] YouTube

[ ] Other

[ ] I do not have a social media account

Now, please fill out some demographic information that are needed for the survey.

1) Age?*

( ) 18-24

( ) 25 -31

( ) 32-47

( ) 48+

( ) 55+

2) Gender?*

( ) Male

( ) Female

3) Education*

( ) 12th grade or less

( ) Graduated high school or equivalent

( ) Some college, no degree

( ) Associate degree

( ) Bachelor's degree

( ) Post-graduate degree

`

4) Race?

( ) Asian/Pacific Islander

( ) Black/African-American

( ) Caucasian

( ) Hispanic

( ) Native American/Alaska Native

( ) Other/Multi-Racial

( ) Decline to Respond

5) Yearly income?

( ) Less than $25,000

( ) $25,000 to $34,999

( ) $35,000 to $49,999

( ) $50,000 to $74,999

( ) $75,000 to $99,999

( ) $100,000 to $124,999

( ) $125,000 to $149,999

( ) $150,000 or more

Consider the current media environment of today's society, and think about the current role of celebrities in our everyday lives.

6) In general, would you consider yourself familiar or unfamiliar with the presence of celebrity culture in today's society?*

( ) Very Familar

( ) Moderately Familiar

( ) Slightly Familiar

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly Unfamiliar

`

( ) Moderately Unfamiliar

( ) Very Unfamiliar

7) Would you consider yourself informed or not informed at all with the presence of celebrity in today's society?*

( ) Not all informed

( ) Moderately uninformed

( ) Slightly uninformed

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly informed

( ) Moderately informed

( ) Highly informed

8) Would you consider yourself knowledgeable about celebrities?*

( ) Know a great deal

( ) Moderately knowledgeable

( ) Somewhat knowledgeable

( ) Neutral

( ) Somewhat Uninformed

( ) Moderately Uninformed

( ) Know nothing at all

9) I am aware of what is happening in celebrities' worlds.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

`

10) Although I do not follow any celebrities in particular I do somehow know a lot about the current popular figures/celebrities in my culture.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

Now think about some celebrities you like/follow or that you are a fan of, and express your agreement/disagreement with the following statements. Any celebrity counts (athlete, actor, TV host, Reality Star, etc.)

11) Please list your favorite Celebrity/Celebrities:*

Name:: _____

Name:: _____

Name:: _____

Name:: _____

Name:: _____

Name:: _____

12) Following my favorite celebrities Is a sort of escape for me.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

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13) My favorite celebrities help me forget about the day's problems.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

14) If I am in a bad mood, thinking about my favorite celebrities puts me in a better mood.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

15) I like the clothes/style my favorite celebrities wear.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

16) I like the hairstyle of my favorite celebrities.*

( ) Strongly disagree

`

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

17) If I could I would often buy the clothing style that I've seen on my favorite celebrities.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

18) I imitate the gesture and facial expression from my favorite celebrities.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

19) I find myself using phrases from my favorite celebrities when I interact with other people.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

`

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

20) I try to speak like my favorite celebrities.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

21) I learn how to handle real life situations by thinking what my favorite celebrities would do.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

22) I get ideas from my favorite celebrities about how to interact in my own life.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

`

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

23) I relate what happens in my favorite celebrities lives to my own life.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

24) I would love to be in the same place where my favorite celebrities are.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

25) I would love to meet my favorite celebrities.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

`

26) I have objects that relate to my favorite celebrities (badge, books, pictures,…).*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

27) I read books if they are related to my favorite celebrities.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

Again, think about the celebrities you've chosen before, and please answer the following questions by indicating the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

28) I purchase items which are endorsed by my favorite celebrities.

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

`

29) When I can, I attend/watch my favorite celebrities' live performances.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

30) I "Liked" my favorite celebrity Facebook/twitter page.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

31) I buy memorabilia linked to my favorite celebrities.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

32) I read articles about my favorite celebrities.*

( ) Strongly disagree

`

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

33) I am highly interested in my favorite celebrities' opinions about social issue.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

34) I Like to keep up with public appearances of celebrities.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

35) It's fun to follow celebrities' off-stage life.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

`

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

36) I like to keep up with the private lives of celebrities.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

37) I follow celebrities on their online social profiles.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

Social networks and you

Now think about the times when you are using your Facebook/Twitter or any other online social media account. Try to recollect some behavioral aspects of yours when you were/are using these accounts, or when you set them up. Now answer the following questions by indicating the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

38) I regularly post updates on social media sites such as Twitter or Facebook.*

( ) Strongly disagree

`

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

39) I pay attention to what I post online.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

40) I post information about myself online so others can know what is going on in my life.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

41) I feel bad when nobody Likes or Retweets my Facebook/Twitter status updates.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

`

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

42) The more people Like or Comment on my updates the better I feel.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

43) I Like to influence my online friends.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

44) I see my online social profile as my personal brand.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

`

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

45) I use the social media to shape the way others see me.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

46) The more friends/followers I have in the social media, the more I feel like a celebrity.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

47) I believe that certain friends are celebrities in my circle.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

`

48) I believe that I am a celebrity in my own circle, because many people follow me and my life.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

49) My public figure online is different than my offline persona.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

50) I feel important when a celebrity replies to my comments.*

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Moderately disagree

( ) Slightly disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Slightly agree

( ) Moderately agree

( ) Strongly agree

Thank you for taking our survey. Your response is very important to us!

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APPENDIX D

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Table 1: Participant Profile In-depth Interviews and Focus Group

No.	Age	Sex	Education	Currently lives in	Occupation
1	24	F	Associate	McAllen, TX	Sales rep
2	22	F	Some College	Pharr, TX	Event Manager
3	34	F	College Degree	Edinburg, TX	Sales Rep
4	23	F	College Degree	San Antonio, TX	Sport organization employee
5	27	F	Some College	Reynosa, Mexico	Student
6	27	M	High School	Mission, TX	Insurance Sales rep
7	21	F	Some College	McAllen, TX	Student
8	26	F	College Degree	McAllen, TX	Teacher
9	30	M	College Degree	Edinburg, TX	Retail manager
10	22	M	Some College	Mission, TX	Student
11	22	M	Some College	Reynosa, Mexico	Student
12	24	M	Some College	Reynosa, Mexico	Student
13	25	F	College	McAllen, TX	Librarian
14	28	F	Master	Laredo, TX	Healthcare retail
15	31	F	Associate	Pharr, TX	Sales Rep
16	23	M	Associate	Harlingen, TX	Sales rep
17	24	F	College degree	Edinburg, TX	Bank Teller
18	28	F	College degree	Mission, TX	Bank Teller

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APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

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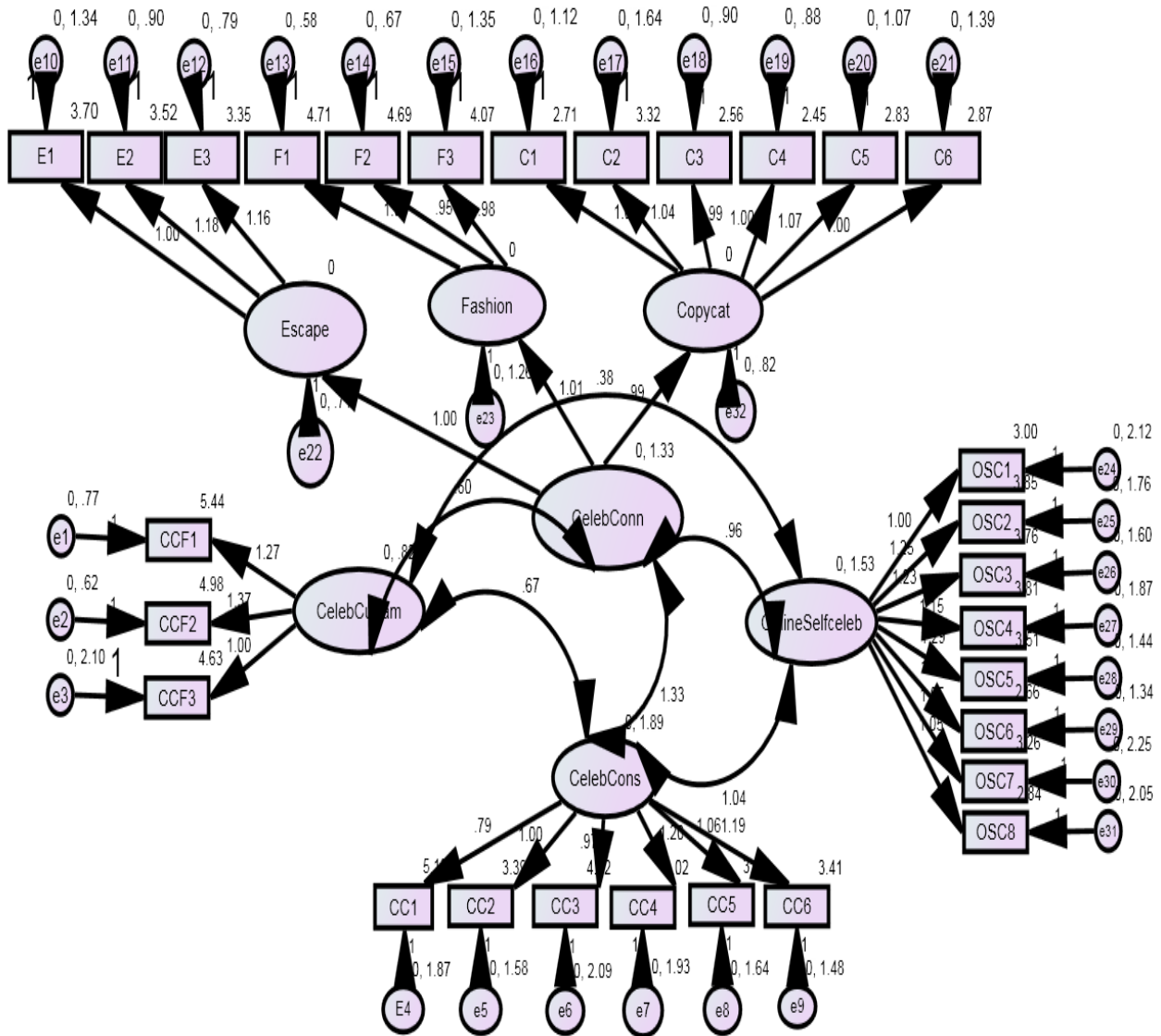
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Arne Baruca was born in Koper, Slovenia on Jul 21st, 1976. He grew up in Slovenia where he obtained his Bachelor of Science degree in Traffic Engineering at the University of Ljubljana in 2001. He later started a Master of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing Management at the University of Maribor, where he is currently awaiting for his thesis defense.

Before moving to the U.S. to pursue his doctorate degree, he worked in several industries for several years. He has experience in the telemarketing industry, in the banking industry and in the automotive industry. He was also actively playing soccer for more than twenty years.

In 2007 he moved to the United States where he started and earned his Doctorate in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing at the University of Texas Pan American in 2012. During his studies in the U.S. he attended several national conferences in the marketing field where he presented his research work. He is currently a member of several professional organizations such as the Academy of Marketing Science, the American Marketing Association, the Association of Consumer Research and the Sports Marketing Association. He co-authored a paper with Dr. M. Zolfagharian titled *Cross-Border Shopping: Mexican Shoppers in the US and American Shoppers in Mexico* and was published in the *International Journal of Consumer Studies* in 2012. In August 2012 he started his tenure-track position as Assistant Professor of Marketing at Sacred Heart University in Connecticut. He is married, and has a child named Alex.