

An Analysis of the Ice Bucket Challenge, and its Effect on Charitability

Nicholas Allen

Allegheny College



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Pledge:

Approved by the Senior Thesis Committee:

Dr. Brian Saltsman, Ph.D.

Dr. Emily Yochim, Ph.D.

Abstract:

The Ice Bucket Challenge, which took place during the summer of 2014 sought to raise awareness about Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, as well as monetary donations to the ALS Association to support research and treatment of the disease. This project sought to determine if the Ice Bucket Challenge facilitated the creation of a brand community based upon qualitative analysis. Quantitative data was then used to examine the relationship between participation in the Ice Bucket Challenge, and a person's willingness to donate money again in the future, as well as the influence of information and emotional advertisements upon donation. It was argued that the Ice Bucket Challenge did not facilitate a brand community. It was hypothesized that participation in the Ice Bucket Challenge would positively influence a person's willingness to donate again in the future, and that emotional advertisements would have a larger impact upon donation. Based upon data collected, results show that participation in the Ice Bucket Challenge did positively influence a person's willingness to donate again in the future, as well as that both informational and emotional videos positively influenced a donation. However, there was no significant difference between the emotional or informational condition.

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To The Participants of the Ice Bucket Challenge of 2014

Do not read this analysis with a heavy heart, as it is not a condemnation of your actions during the summer of 2014. This project has taught me many things about the behind the scenes workings of the Ice Bucket Challenge and its related entities. Regardless of whether you donated money, your time, or just a couple of clicks, you have perpetuated a system which did effectively change the lives of those stricken with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis; and for that, you can be proud.

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Introduction:**Literature Review:**

In today's world where capitalism reigns as the supreme style of business, many charities feel as though they must adapt to survive. Through countless hours of research in the many different fields of psychology, a number of factors influencing donation have been discovered. These include: the organization's reputation, a donor's values matching that of the organization, the level of empathy the donor has, the distance that the donor is from the cause, and the type of advertising used to garner donations. Researchers in different professions related to communications have also compiled substantial information and critiques of the actions performed by donors and charitable organizations. These analyses often discuss charity brand communities, the role of user generated content in charity advertising, social media advertising effectiveness, as well as critiques of the way charities have fallen into the role of perpetuating capitalist systems within their structures. By compiling this research and applying it to my own personal thoughts, many important questions can be answered regarding the effectiveness of methods used by charities, and insight into their future actions can be gained. The current study qualitatively analyzed the systems at work within and surrounding the Ice Bucket Challenge in order to determine whether or not the challenge influenced the creation of a brand community amongst its participants. The study also generated qualitative data, which was used to determine whether or not participation in the challenge increased the rate of a person's willingness to donate in the future, as well as if an emotional video or informational video influenced increases in donations.

Influencing Repeated Donation:

There are many forms of donation which charitable organizations benefit from; however, none is more important in a business sense than monetary donation. Garnering an initial donation from somebody is the first step. One of the risks which make this difficult is the perceived risk of the money not being used in a way that the donor deems appropriate. By mediating this interaction, and communicating with the donor it can be ensured that this risk is mitigated, and the chance of future donations from this donor are increased (Beldad et al, 2014). One group of researchers who looked into this factor, as well as some others which influence the intention of individuals to engage in repeated donations are Beldad, Snip, and Hoof (2014). The researchers had 304 participants complete a survey which included demographic questions, questions asking them to indicate their past donation behavior, and a place to indicate their intention to donate to a charitable organization within the next few weeks, followed by several boxes which could be checked to indicate their motivation behind their intention donating. Upon statistical analysis of the compiled data, it was found that the affinity with the mission of the organization, the trust a donor had in the organization, the organization's reputation, donors previous experience with the organization, and the perceived risk of donation all had major influence over a respondent's intention to donate to a given organization in the future. It was also found that the donor's sense of moral obligation did not influence their intention to donate in the future (Beldad et al, 2014).

Roger Bennet (2002) looked into a number of personal factors that he proposed led to a willingness to donate to certain types of organizations. Specifically, he looked into demographic factors such as: age, income, occupation, social class, and education. Then, the author looked into the personal values; defined as: "Organized sets of preferential standards used in making selections of objects and actions, resolving conflicts, and defending choices made or proposed"

(Bennet, 2002). Personal values were researched because they serve as the tenants that people ascribe their everyday lives to be, thus they serve to guide their charitable practices. Bennet also cited organizational values; which he defined as: “Facilitating the integration of activities and are expressed in convictions about what is best or good for the organization and how it should behave” (Bennet, 2002). Organizational values were chosen as a focus by the researcher because they can be used as standards for judgment of behaviors by the public and thus influence donations (Bennet, 2002). Bennet gathered 250 randomly selected participants and posited them with the following: “if given a certain amount of money that must be donated to one of the following causes, which cause would you donate to” (Bennet, 2002). Charities included were in the fields of “cancer care, animal welfare and human rights” (Bennet, 2002). The author then presented participants with a number of questionnaires which asked about their demographics, personal values, and other characteristics. The results showed that people with certain personal values were more likely to donate to certain organizations. For example, those with a high tendency toward materialism were likely to donate their “money” to organizations which extended high levels of recognition toward their donors (Bennet, 2002). Participants with a high rating of individualism tended to prefer donating to organizations that promote personal freedoms. Individuals who participated in the study who were shown to have a high rating of empathy were most likely to donate to organizations which conveyed the importance of the plights of victims as well as providing help and support to that plight. The results of this study support the hypothesis that people are generally more eager to donate money to organizations which promote values concurrent to the values of the donor (Bennet, 2002).

Bennet (2009) also performed a study which looked at the factors which influence a person’s behaviors when donating to a charity (Hospice). The independent variable for this

experiment was whether or not the donation was made based upon impulse (without knowing about the cause beforehand), or premeditated (planning to donate before they had been asked (Bennet, 2009). There were 239 participants in the impulsive donation group and 223 in the pre-meditated donation group. Participants were questioned for the amount that they donated, as well as SES, impulsivity (which was self-reported), and attitude towards being impulsive. They also answered a questionnaire about their donation history, prior knowledge of the issues surrounding the charity (Hospice), and their personal involvement in the charity (Hospice) (Bennet, 2009). Participants saw two different advertisements at different times, one that focuses upon emotion, and another that focused upon information. Average donations made on the emotional page were slightly higher than those made on the informational page. It was shown that knowledge; frequency of previous donations, and personal involvement with the charity greatly influenced the amount that a person was willing to donate (Bennet, 2009). It was also concluded that people who spent more time browsing the internet were more likely to donate to the informative page than the emotive page, however, the emotional page increased donations in the impulsive group by 31% (Bennet, 2009). These results show that different advertisements work at different stages of a potential donor's cycle. For example, emotional advertisements are more successful at soliciting donations from people who know less about a cause and are less committed. However, people who are more committed to donating to cause are more easily convinced to donate to an organization through the use of informational advertisements (Bennet, 2009).

Role of Perceived Distance from the Cause:

Ein-Gar and Levontin (2013) performed a number of studies which they compiled together in order to help inform the research community about some of the factors influencing charitable donation. This specific collection of studies combats the idea that people prefer

donating to one-person vs an abstract group of people (nicknamed the “identifiable victim effect”) (Ein-Gar & Levontin, 2013). By manipulating the distance (via time and geography) that donors are from victims the authors were able to manipulate the intentions of participants to donate to a charity, as well as the actual money that they donated (Ein-Gar & Levontin, 2013). This showed that when people are distanced from the victim and their situation, they prefer to donate to organizations. However, when the donors are close to the population in need, they prefer to donate to specific targets. The research also showed that empathy increases donations to specific victims, but does not have an effect on donations to organizations. It also showed that donations given to organizations are different than donations given to a group of victims, insofar as empathy mediates donations to a group of victims similarly to the way it mediates donations to a single victim; however, it does not mediate donations to an organization (Ein-Gar & Levontin, 2013). Executives at charitable organizations can increase the efficacy of their advertisements and use their budgets in more effective ways after being informed by this research.

Perceived Knowledge about a Cause:

Morgan and Miller (2011) looked into the effects of a person’s own perceived knowledge of a charitable cause, as well as their altruist behaviors and how that affected their intention to donate. This study looked at a large group of adults (798) and the factors that led to them either signing an organ donation card, or seeking to sign an organ donation card. Organ donation was used as the case study for this researcher because even though 85% of Americans are aware of the need for donor organs, only 19% of the population have signed an organ donation card. The authors mailed surveys to the homes of the participants asking if they were or planned to become organ donors, as well as surveys designed to show the researchers about each participant's

knowledge of donation, level of altruism, and perceived social norms (Morgan & Miller, 2011). The authors discovered that those who had already signed organ donor cards had an increased level of knowledge about the process, and were less likely to believe some of the myths regarding donation. It was also discovered that those who had signed organ donation cards also reported high social norms surrounding organ donation. This article supports the hypothesis that increased knowledge about a charitable act, will increase a person's intention to perform that action. However, the study also supports the idea that societal norms play an influential role in the decision to perform a charitable act.

Smith and Schwarz (2012) also performed research into the effect that perceived knowledge has on charitable donation. Their study looked at a person's perception of details about a topic, and the amount that they were willing to donate to a cause related to the topic. It was hypothesized that the more a person perceived to know about a topic (based upon a test they had taken on that topic) the more they would donate (Smith & Schwarz, 2012). Tests were of course created to be either easy or difficult in order to control the amount that a person would perceive to know about the topic. The frequency of donation was not analyzed within the bounds of this research, however results showed that participants donated more money when the easy quiz conveyed that they remembered details well, than when the difficult quiz conveyed that they knew little. This article adds to the background knowledge from Morgan and Miller (2011), by showing that the correlation works both ways, those who have donated in the past, most likely have a high level of knowledge, and those with high knowledge are more likely to donate.

Charity Brand Communities:

One of the challenges of generating funding through monetary donations as a not for-profit organization is the distance that a donor is from the benefits of their donation, often

leading donations to be considered to have either intangible benefits, or none at all. Not for-profit organizations have begun to combat this by bridging the gap between the donor and those who benefit from their support through the development of charity brand communities. This is done namely at events such as the “thon”, where supporters, and organization representatives join with people who are benefitting from the donations (King, 2006). This allows for the construction of a brand community, where the charity itself gains values similarly to the way a company brand gains values. Samantha King looks into the development of charity brand communities within her book Pink Ribbon Inc. King begins the second chapter of her book: “Doing Good by Running Well” by discussing the history of “thons”, the brand community of the not-for-profit sector. She states that the first breast cancer “thon” sprang up in 1980, and since that year a mind boggling number of “thons” have sprung up around the country (King, 2006). From here, King narrows her focus to just analyzing “the Race for the Cure” because it's national race is the biggest 5k run in the world, as well as the most visible and profitable “thon”. The visibility that is gained by participants in the “thon” allows this participation to hold more worth than just donating money. All of this visibility gives this particular “thon” the ability to attract corporate sponsors, politicians, and celebrities at different event locations throughout the United States. The race, King states is an authentic community based social movement with mass participation which has succeeded in placing a focus on breast cancer to the forefront of biomedical research (King, 2006). After explaining the positives of these events, she then moves further into her analysis by examining how these events are largely similar, even though they happen at many locations throughout the United States. King states that although races are allowed to inject some local flavor, most of the agenda for each event is predetermined by the foundation's headquarters. Through this process, the race becomes familiar, and reliable, like a brand. King then moves on

to explain how these “thons” act in ways which produce consumer citizens. On a base level, participants pay in order to enter into the run. Once you are entered into the race, certain corporate promotional items are given out as “freebies” and act as “badges” of participation, displaying how citizenship is advanced through certain kinds of consumption. These “thons” serve as sites where particular subjectivity is enacted, in order to promote a certain version of “America” (King, 2006). King notes at these sites:

The preferred ideal is to know and work upon one’s self and one’s community through personal acts of philanthropy and unpaid service to one’s fellow citizens in a space that is imagined to be outside of the realm of social inequality and political struggle (King, 2006).

What King means here is that executives of companies in charge of the sites have determined that their sites are most effective when certain hot-button topics such as inequality and politics are ignored. This is partially because these struggles would lead to an acknowledgement of difference among sufferers, as well as social mechanisms which may allow certain sufferers to have an easier time than others. If we do not ignore politics, we risk the chance that the government will be looked to for donations, which would decrease the rate and amount of private donations as people feel it is no longer their obligation. King also explains the negative critiques of “thons” such as the finding that because “thons” are so large and expensive, not very much money was donated to the cause once all was said and done (King, 2006). Another critique, was that because of the large visibility of participants who look healthy, as well as the absence of those too sick to participate; the severity of the disease gets under-represented. King also discusses the history of “thons”, criticizing the way in which “thons” began as protests demanding government action, which morphed over a short period of time into what we know

them as today. King claims that these “thons” perpetuate a capitalist culture within the healthcare industry, where people essentially trade money for an improvement in their self-image as well as the “free” items often handed out at these “thons”. King discusses a large number of pro’s and con’s to “thon” style events, and by studying these events, and learning from them we may be able to create more successful thons.

Sarah Banet-Weiser and Charlotte Lapsansky also looked into brand culture within their article “RED is the New Black”. The article begins by defining “branding” and stating that participation in a consumerist society is not shown by the purchases that someone makes, but through the defense of certain brands (Banet-Weiser & Lapsansky, 2008). Companies rely on this defense, and often place more value on their brand than on individual products (Banet-Weiser & Lapsansky, 2008). This is often because people identify more regularly with brands than with products marketed by that brand. Within this article, the authors looked at a number of campaigns within different areas of the market, namely, the 2006 Chevy Tahoe advertising campaign, and the RED campaign which also started in 2006. These two campaigns give a contrast between an open, and closed brand. The Red Campaign, created by pop star Bono, in collaboration with Bobby Shriver was a closed brand where the consumer had very little control over the meaning of the brand. The campaign was designed as a business model where companies would donate portions of their proceeds to the “Global Fund”, similarly to cause marketing models (Banet-Weiser & Lapsansky, 2008). The campaign did not portray itself as morally upright or philanthropic, instead it openly stated that it was about making money. Within the Tahoe campaign, General Motors gave us an example of an open brand, where consumers have some control over the meaning of the brand. Within the campaign potential customers produced their own online commercial advertisements by choosing from several sets of

predetermined images, only the text was completely user generated. Through this process, General Motors was attempting to start a viral marketing campaign. However, one of the big risks with user generated content (UGC) is that the marketing method may be hijacked and used against the company, which is exactly what happened in this case (Banet-Weiser & Lapsansky, 2008).

The idea of creating a brand image for charities has been around for decades. Many advertising executives understand however, that due to constant uncertainty in the not-for-profit sector, new perspectives must be looked into constantly in order to meet their company's demands. Morris et al. performed research on using an entrepreneurial approach toward marketing in the not-for-profit sector (Morris et al, 2001). The researchers explain entrepreneurship by breaking it into three groups of behaviors; "innovativeness, risk-taking and proactiveness" (Morris et al, 2001). They define innovativeness as: "novel solutions to problems; risk-taking as: "the willingness to commit resources to opportunities having a reasonable chance of failure"; and proactiveness as: "doing what is necessary to bring an entrepreneurial concept to fruition" (Morris et al, 2001). As part of this specific structure (applying the entrepreneurial approach towards marketing to charity marketing), several changes have to take place within the organizational structure of not-for-profit organizations. The researchers stated that in order to increase their chances of success charity organizations should create less of a hierarchical structure, where decision making is spread amongst a number of empowered employees; shorten the time spent developing programs to raise funds; and utilize reward structures which emphasize the cohesion of a group of workers. The researchers also noted several obstacles to applying an entrepreneurial approach toward charity marketing, which the authors group into "systems, structure, strategic direction, policies and procedures, people,

and culture” (Morris et al, 2001). Within the category of systems, one obstacle is a constrained reward system, which do not encourage innovative or risky actions be taken. The hierarchical structure which localizes decision making power towards a few members at the top is an example of a structural obstacle (Morris et al, 2001). An obstacle to strategic direction, as well as policies and procedures is an absence of innovation goals, coupled with long, complex approval cycles (Morris et al, 2001). Finally, a fear of change, as well as ill-defined values are both obstacles which are directly correlated to people and culture (Morris et al, 2001). Adapting to a model which values all members of the organization as equals, and promotes innovation and adaptation to new situations, will allow a not-for-profit organization to excel in the fast-paced community we see today.

Cause Related Marketing:

Another strategy seeking to facilitate increased donations for a not for-profit organization is Cause Related Marketing. In CRM, a for-profit company promotes a certain not for-profit organization by donating a portion of their sales to a defined charity (Peloza & Hassay, 2007). John Peloza and Derek Hassay are two researchers who have studied cause-related marketing, and have reached a number of conclusions which support the employ of this strategy. Within their research, they list CRM as a charity support behavior, which is a collection of modern approaches to generating money for not for-profit organizations (Peloza & Hassay, 2007). The researchers have found that when CRM programs have been used, consumers were more likely to recall the charity, than the sponsor. The researchers also discovered that CRM programs were highly effective at attracting consumers with a low level of involvement in a charity (Peloza & Hassay, 2007). These findings support the use of CRM programs, especially for smaller not for-

profit organizations which would benefit from improved recall, and have a large group of low level supporters.

Sridhar Samu and Walter Wymer looked into the factors which influence consumer attitudes toward branding in their research. Specifically, the two researchers looked at consumer responses to cause advertising (advertisements for cause related marketing) and the outcomes this had on the brand and its associated cause (Samu & Wymer, 2014). Similarly, to other research, the perceived motivations, type of advertisement, cause/brand fit, and cause/brand salience were analyzed in the process of this research. On the topic of message type, Samu and Wymer focused upon informational content, which provide information about the cause; and buy messages, which focus on “linking monetary donations with sales” (Samu & Wymer, 2014). The researchers hypothesized that messages which focused on informational content would lead to an increase in positive attitude toward the brand, as well as an increase in intent to contribute their time and money to the cause (Samu & Wymer, 2014). They also hypothesized that buy messages would also increase positive attitude toward the brand, as well as higher purchase intention (Samu & Wymer, 2014). After their research was completed, they discovered that both of these hypotheses were supported by their findings, suggesting that while both styles (buy and informational) are effective, they generate different intentions amongst customers (Samu & Wymer, 2014). Within the bounds of this research, “salience” referred to “the importance of a part of an advertisement relative to other parts” (Samu & Wymer, 2014). This is important because it gives the advertisement the ability to grant more salience/message power to either the brand, or the cause. In terms of salience, the authors hypothesized that when salience was given to the brand it would moderate the effects of the message on attitude, and intention such that buy messages would be more effective than informational messages (Samu & Wymer, 2014). The

authors also hypothesized that when the cause was given salience, no effect would be present (Samu & Wymer, 2014). Based upon the data that was collected by the researchers it was determined that both of these hypotheses were supported. Samu & Wymer (2014) next looked at perceived fit, which they specified as the cohesion between the brand, and the cause which they had partnered with, from the perspective of the consumer. In this context, the researchers hypothesized that when the perceived fit is low, informational messages will elicit more success than buy messages (Samu & Wymer, 2014). Conversely, when the perceived fit is high, the success of buy messages increase (Samu & Wymer, 2014). After experimentation was complete, it was discovered that these hypotheses were found to be supported (Samu & Wymer, 2014). The final topic which the researchers looked at, was the attribution of brand and cause motivations towards the collaboration. The researchers hypothesized that the perceived brand/cause motive would mediate the effect that salience, brand-cause fit have upon the consumer attitudes towards the brand/cause (Samu & Wymer, 2014). After the research was completed and data was compiled, this was found to be supported as well (Samu & Wymer, 2014). The authors compiled and contributed a significant amount of information to the field of cause related marketing, by giving future researchers, as well as marketers a basic framework of the methods which have the highest rate of success in that field.

One highly salient example of CRM can be seen every October in stores across the United States, demarcated by a soft pink color, or by ribbons. Documentarian Lea Pool performed extensive research on these campaigns, and discusses some of the important effects of CRM programs in this context. These programs, such as the campaigns created by Yoplait and Avon, donate money from their profits every year to the Susan G. Komen foundation (Pool, "Pink Ribbons, Inc."). However, it was found that only small percentages of the profits from

each purchase were donated, sometimes in the single digits (Pool, "Pink Ribbons, Inc."). For this reason, Pool brings up one of the major critiques of CRM programs, the fear that for-profit companies make more profit for themselves; this gets conflated as profiting off of a disease and can be damaging to a brand's reputation (Pool, "Pink Ribbons, Inc."). Another concern that gets raised with CRM within Pool's research is the idea that our society has come to believe that a cure exists, and by spending enough money, we can find it; even though no evidence of a cure may exist (Pool, "Pink Ribbons, Inc."). Pool's research does not focus upon only the negatives of CRM, however, her work cautions us to think and perform research about where our money is going before we donate to a cause.

Another researcher looking into CRM is Denise Steckstor, who has focused upon the effects of CRM on the attitudes and behaviors of customers. Steckstor begins her research by attributing the first CRM campaign to American Express in 1983, and stating that due to their success CRM programs continue to increase since that day (Steckstor, 2012). One of the problems that she notes however, is the lack of a consistent definition of CRM throughout research articles on the concept. She then proposes to use Varadarajan and Menon's definition from their 1988 research whereby:

Cause-Related Marketing is the process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when the customers engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives (Steckstor, 2012).

Stockton also cites a number of research based conclusions such as that 59% of people say they would be more likely to buy a product if it were tied to a cause, or that customers are willing to pay higher prices for products related to different causes (Steckstor, 2012). Steckstor also

mentions several caveats to CRM programs however, such as the fact that these programs could damage the brand image if they are perceived as disproportionate, such as the thought that the business was profiting too well (Steckstor, 2012). Another negative impact that CRM might have is a reduction in monetary donations due to donors feeling they have already given enough through purchasing CRM related products. Also mentioned are the risks taken by not-for-profit organizations which might gain negative publicity due to behaviors of the partnering organization that are deemed undesirable by the public (Steckstor, 2012). When it's all boiled down, Steckstor article focuses upon the perceived motivation of a partnering organization, as well as their fit with their intended not-for-profit; and how these affect the buying behavior of their customers.

Branding Causes in the Social Media Era:

The concept of branding began in the 1870s as a way to communicate differences between products in a more consistent way than by relying upon shopkeepers (Paterson, 2006). Branding is defined as the use of advertising to convey the core meaning of a company to a consumer as quickly as possible (Paterson, 2006). This began with commodities when most companies were small, and sold one or two different products at most. In these times branding focused upon these commodities, however, as time went on, and companies began to manufacture many different kinds of products, the branding of the commodity began to decrease in importance, and the branding of an image began to increase (Paterson, 2006). This image, or logo of a brand is a symbol which originally stands for nothing, but by associating this symbol with other culturally relevant symbols it gains meaning over time and stands to represent the whole story or experience of what the brand means to the customer (Paterson, 2006). However, it is important to note that this "whole story" is carefully written for the consumer to hide any

mention of the exploitation of workers behind the ever-so-thinly veiled truth that most of these brands do not own any production facilities, taking responsibility only for their image (Paterson, 2006). With the invention of the internet, a new avenue of reaching customers was created, however, without a method of tracking who was viewing these advertisements media companies were slow to buy campaigns (Turow, 2011). Of course, consumers could click on advertisements which took them to the site for the company that owned the ad, and companies could track the number of clicks (Turow, 2011). This changed with the invention of the “cookie”; a small text file that would be placed on the user’s computer by the website and allow it to recognize that computer and differentiate it from other computers. This also allowed media companies that created these cookies for the websites of their clients to track computers across the internet (Turow, 2011). By tracking users, they were now able to create profiles for each user and provide advertisements that best appealed to those people (Turow, 2011). Often influenced by a consumer’s use of social media, targeted ads produced as a result of these profiles have caused some individuals to see these ads as markers of social status, leaving some feeling elite, and others sub-par (Marwick, 2013; Turow, 2011). These feelings of inadequacy lead some to distrust certain companies and refuse to buy, which in turn begins a downward spiral as the marketing agencies then classify these people as “waste” in opposition to the “targets” whom marketers see as willing consumers (Turow, 2011).

Websites such as Facebook, and YouTube are now available to virtually anyone in any corner of the globe, and because the sites do not require a paid subscription, consumers are not strictly limited in their use of the sites. Agnes Phing and Rashad Yazdanifard (2014) looked into how the use of several phenomena present in today’s social media community helped the ALS Association Ice Bucket Challenge to achieve its goal in the summer of 2014. The phenomena

they cite as key to the result of the Ice Bucket Challenge are “social media marketing, celebrities’ influence, online word-of-mouth phenomenon, viral marketing, and right-timing marketing” (Phing & Yazdanifard, 2014). While each of these are looked at in depth in the article, it can be seen that each of the phenomena fit easily within the sphere of social media marketing. In social media marketing we see the various traditional methods of advertisements placed on various areas around popular social websites. In addition, we also see utilization of Celebrities in order to help with “brand identification” and “global marketing””, as well as the encouragement of peers to spread messages throughout their limitless online social networks (Phing & Yazdanifard, 2014). By taking advantage of the possible marketing applications of various social media sites the Ice Bucket Challenge was able to achieve a result which had never been seen before.

Hashem and Behrad Koohy (2014) looked into the massive amount of publicity that was generated for different scientific articles related to Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis during the summer of 2014. Through their analysis Koohy and Koohy (2014) argued that due to the low income most scientists have, using social networks for publicity would be a necessary step in order to get the public interested in scientific discoveries. The authors also discussed the practical differences between social media sites like LinkedIn and those like Facebook. They cite that because LinkedIn is targeted more towards job hunting it is a less optimal area for the marketing of science, however, the lack of a universal theme for various Facebook pages leads to a more optimal venue for the marketing of science (Koohy & Koohy, 2014). By researching the power of social media, and its potential as a marketing vehicle it is possible to facilitate a better spread of knowledge throughout our world.

Another area of social media marketing which has been explored is the way in which users of social media have begun to market themselves to others, called “self-branding”. Self-branding focuses upon the ways that people create the identities for themselves that we find on social media (Marwick, 2013). This topic is centered around social media because this is where most of the self-branding takes place due to the fact that these sites act similarly to advertising as well as that the user feels they have control of the media that they display on these sites (Marwick, 2013). As part of self-branding, users must engage in strict self-surveillance; prosumers must identify events and topics which they should not display on their sites, as well as those that they should display, in order to maintain the appearance of an appealing self (Marwick, 2013). This is important because having an appealing self allows a social media user to gain a higher status, allowing themselves to gain more fans, thus giving them the opportunity to spread media to more followers than their peers of lower status (Marwick, 2013).

Ethnographer Alice Marwick (2013) has studied this extensively, in order to better understand how social status and equality is measured and conveyed online over various networks. Marwick discovered early on in her research that while pockets of “non-hierarchical” social media users exist, they are far outnumbered by users who have chosen to market themselves in order to gain massive online status (Marwick, 2013). Overall, Marwick uses her research to show that social media gives high status to users who adopt neoliberal subjectivities (Marwick, 2013). Within social media networks a number of neoliberal tropes are present such as the trope of the American Dream, where everyone can start with no followers, and skyrocket to fame through only hard work and dedication. This is done through the popularization of entrepreneurial labor models where citizens find something they are passionate about, and market that as a useful service to other people (Marwick, 2013). This model of gaining status is made possible because

social media sites have no cost to use, or maintain. However, Marwick argues that through her research she has found that large groups of people are not only inhibited, but ignored by social media marketing (Marwick, 2013). Marwick has also discovered that there is an inherent struggle present within practicing self-surveillance in order to create an ideal self-brand because it risks a person losing their own authenticity which also reduces a person's online status (Marwick, 2013). Growing older, displaying distrust/disinterest of marketing tactics, or associating with friends that marketers deem "undesirable" are also ways to decrease online social status (Turow, 2011). This leads to a divide between "targets" or those of high social status and "waste" which are those of low social status, thus encouraging each group to live in their own comfortable personally constructed worlds away from issues that they do not care enough about to search for on their own (Turow, 2011).

One of the major attributes of sites such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter is that internet users are now able to create their own media and share it amongst their friends, in addition to content that has been shared to them, thus evolving from consumers of the internet to its "prosumers" (Nightingale, 2011). With these new opportunities for interacting with internet media, a new era has been ushered in. "Participatory culture" is the name for the era that Henry Jenkins argues has begun as a result of new opportunities for participation brought on by Web 2.0 technologies such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube (Fuchs, 2014). Participatory culture is defined as "culture in which fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content" (Fuchs, 2014). Central to participatory culture is the argument that the most important characteristic of social media is that content is spreadable media, which is defined as the concept that media requires little to no effort to be shared with others (Fuchs, 2014). The concept of spreadable media was explained in Jenkins' and Green's

article “Spreadable Media”, where the authors began by covering the role that the audience plays in determining the value of a piece of media on the internet (Nightingale, 2011). In internet media, the audience crosses the border from “consumer” to “prosumer”, which is a term for users of the internet who passively view media, actively create their own media, and attribute value to media by sharing it with their friends (Nightingale, 2011). A prosumer is responsible for attributing value to videos by choosing to “share” videos with their friends thus spreading the video’s with higher value further around the internet (Nightingale, 2011). In a study by Bortha and Reyneke (2013) participants were shown one of two videos and asked which one they would be more likely to share, and why they made that decision. The researchers concluded that participants chose which videos to share based upon the relevancy of content to the individual making the decision, as well as the individual's emotional connection to the video (Bortha & Reyneke, 2013). Inadvertently, these videos often take on different meanings as they spread throughout the internet, based upon who is spreading them and the conversations that arise from these interactions (Nightingale, 2011). This spread of media amongst friends based upon which videos they have an emotional connection to and find relevant creates a community of people united by similar interests.

Within brand culture, consumers place a higher value on an image which they wish to become than on any one individual product (Banet-Weiser & Lapsansky, 2008). Intertwined with brand culture is consumer citizenship, a topic which was explained by Sarah Banet-Weiser and Charlotte Lapsansky in their article Red is the New Black: Brand Culture, Consumer Citizenship and Political Possibility. Consumer Citizenship is explained as the conflation of the two terms that happens when consumption is seen as the way to gain the ideals that are portrayed by a country’s ideology for citizenship (Banet-Weiser & Lapsansky, 2008). In America, this has

happened as consumerism became the keys towards gaining freedom, and equality (Banet-Weiser & Lapsansky, 2008). The principle of consumer citizenship has helped to form American Citizens as constant consumers, so by attaching a popular brand to a product which allows people to display the brand, a company can generate money more effectively (Banet-Weiser & Lapsansky, 2008).

The “Politics of Philanthropy” was discussed in the book Pink Ribbons, Inc. Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy, in chapter 2 titled “Doing Good by Running Well” which was written by Samantha King. The politics of philanthropy is the name given to the body of knowledge surrounding the rise of the “thon”, a fundraising’ event based on physical activity (King, 2006). Over time, each “thon” has begun to create its own schedule, and has been replicating that schedule at each of its events across the country, thus generating its own brand (King, 2006). By generating a brand these organizations are able to attract their own corporate sponsors, as well as loyal followers who attend a number of events per year, becoming members of brand communities (King, 2006).

Context:

ALS:

The first known case of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) was diagnosed in 1869 by Jean Martin Charcot, leading to its first affectionate name Charcot’s Disease (“ALS Ice Bucket Challenge – A Global Movement to Find a Cure”). It was characterized by a loss of control over one’s voluntary muscles (“ALS Ice Bucket Challenge – A Global Movement to Find a Cure”). Not much was known about the disease until Major League Baseball Player Lou Gehrig was diagnosed with the disease in 1939 (“ALS Milestones Timeline Milestones in ALS Research”). After his death, his widow, Eleanor Gehrig became the Campaign Chairman of the

newly founded Muscular Dystrophy Association ("ALS Milestones Timeline Milestones in ALS Research"). Through this position she increased awareness about what became fondly known as Lou Gehrig's disease ("ALS Milestones Timeline Milestones in ALS Research"). It is now known that within the mechanisms of this disease motor neurons become malnourished and begin to die off, resulting in an inability to move voluntarily ("Learn"). In America, the ALS Care Database catalogues those diagnosed with the disease and receiving treatment ("Who Gets ALS"). Of those registered in the database, 60% are male, and 93% are Caucasian ("Who Gets ALS"). The cause of this disease is unknown, and currently there is only one method of treatment for the disease that is approved by the FDA ("Learn") ("What is ALS"). The drug is called riluzole, and it serves to extend the life of the victim by only a small amount ("What is ALS"). Every hour and a half a new person is diagnosed with the disease ("Learn"). The disease progression is not always the same; some sufferers die after several months, while others take a number of years, however the disease is always fatal ("ALS Ice Bucket Challenge – A Global Movement to Find a Cure").

The ALS Association:

The ALS Association was founded in 1985, and stands to be the largest national non-profit organization whose specific goal is fighting Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis ("ALS Association"). The ALS Association seeks to create a world without ALS by leading our nation as the preeminent organization advocating for global research, and treatment of those people with Lou Gehrig's disease and their families ("ALS Association"). The association focuses on research, public policy, patient care services, chapter relations, public education and awareness ("ALS Association"). The organization gains all of its monetary funding through either government grants, or donations ("ALS Association"). In the fiscal year ending January 31, 2014

they received about \$29 million dollars in donations, coming mostly from private contributions (29%), and their individual chapters (26%) ("Financial Information"). Of the \$29 million received they spent just over \$26 million, mostly on public and professional education about ALS (32%), and on research (27%) ("Financial Information"). The following fiscal year, the association spent \$39.2 million as a result of the high influx of donations from the IBC (the excess donations are being spread out over the next several years to reduce the chances of poor choices in expenditures) ("Financial Information"), ("ALS Ice Bucket Challenge – A Global Movement to Find a Cure"). The highest areas of expense for this fiscal year are: patient and community services (36%), and research (35%) ("Financial Information").

Ice Bucket Challenge:

The start of the phenomenon more commonly known as the Ice Bucket Challenge (IBC) before it was used to support awareness for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is unknown. Prior to its conception, the IBC was not tied to any specific charity, but one chosen by the person who was pouring water over their heads (Sifferlin, 2014). It was not until Chris Kennedy, a resident of Sarasota, Florida emptied a bucket of cold water over his head on July 15th, 2014 that the first challenge on behalf of ALS was recorded (Sifferlin, 2014). Kennedy challenged his cousin's wife Jeanette Senerchia to do the same within 24 hours of receiving the message, or donate \$100 to a charity supporting the research and treatment of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis; Kennedy chose this charity, because his cousin was diagnosed with the disease (Sifferlin, 2014). Senerchia, a resident of Pelham, New York posted her video the next day challenging more residents of the small town to do their part (Sifferlin, 2014). Soon after, videos began popping up all over their online communities, eventually reaching a man named Pat Quinn, who was diagnosed with ALS in 2013 as well as Peter Frates, who had been diagnosed in 2012 (Sifferlin,

2014). These men are both credited directly by the ALS Association as beginning what we now know as the Ice Bucket Challenge for ALS through the use of their especially large social network followings.

The challenge uses social media such as Twitter and Facebook as a vehicle for raising awareness of what is commonly referred to as Lou Gehrig's disease. All anyone who has been challenged needs is a bucket, ice, water, and a video camera ("ALS Ice Bucket Challenge – A Global Movement to Find a Cure"). The person challenged films themselves accepting the challenge, nominating several other friends to take the challenge, then pouring a bucket filled with water and ice over their heads ("ALS Ice Bucket Challenge – A Global Movement to Find a Cure"). They must then upload the video to their social media accounts, often with one of a number of "hashtags" such as #ALSIceBucketChallenge ("ALS Ice Bucket Challenge – A Global Movement to Find a Cure"). Those who have been challenged have 24 hours to respond, if they fail to complete this challenge they have to donate \$100 to a charity supporting ALS research and treatment ("ALS Ice Bucket Challenge – A Global Movement to Find a Cure"). Often, even those who had completed the challenge chose to donate, raising both money as well as awareness for the disease (Steel, 2014).

Organizations began seeing massive increases in their donations both from regular donors as well as new donors as early as July 29th, 2014 (Steel, 2014). In the period from July 29th, 2014 to August 29th, 2014 a record \$110 million was raised by the Ice Bucket Challenge compared to the \$2.8 million that was raised in the same period of time the previous year (Steel, 2014). After videos of the challenge reached a global scale, additional money and support was garnered. All in all, an international total of \$220 million was raised from July 29th, 2014 through the end of the year ("ALS Therapy Development Institute"). In addition to the money raised by the IBC,

awareness for the disease was also raised to levels that were not even fathomable before based on the increase in searches for ALS and its related terms on search engines such as Google (Steel, 2014). The end of the year did not end the Ice Bucket Challenge and with the start of #EveryAugustUntilACure it is clear that there is no end in sight for this fundraiser (“ALS Association”).

Slacktivism:

Only days after the first videos of the IBC went viral critics took to their keyboards in protest of the movement claiming it as a textbook example of “slacktivism”. Slacktivism is a derogatory term used to describe inexpensive methods of making oneself look or feel better without actually doing anything (Kristof, 2015). Critics see that while the IBC videos raised short term awareness for ALS, the awareness is not useful in the long term because the awareness fades over time (Kristof, 2015). The critics argue this on the stance that unless money is donated to the cause, an action isn’t useful in completing the objective of garnering donations (Kosinski, 2014). Critics also attacked certain participants of the Ice Bucket Challenge if they felt that the factor motivating the donation was one that was not focused upon those suffering from the disease (Kosinski, 2014).

What We Missed:

While videos from the Ice Bucket Challenge flooded social media sites, another important event was taking place where buckets of ice were replaced by canisters of tear gas. Midway through the IBC, on August 9th, 2014 shots rang out in the small suburb of Ferguson, Missouri. Earlier that morning Michael Brown entered a local convenience store and left after allegedly stealing a pack of cigarillos; Brown was about six feet tall, large, and black (Buchanan

et al, 2014). After the robbery was reported to the police, Brown was confronted by a white local police officer Darren Wilson (Buchanan et al, 2014). During the confrontation, which took place with both men on either side of a door to a police cruiser, Wilson fired two shots from inside the cruiser, one bullet grazed Brown's hand (Buchanan et al, 2014). Brown turned and ran, with Wilson chasing him; eventually Brown turned to face Wilson, and was fatally shot several times (Buchanan et al, 2014). Brown was unarmed, and allegedly attempting to surrender (Buchanan et al, 2014).

In response to this event protests broke out in the city which were extremely violent at times. Rallying behind the cry of “Hands Up! Don’t Shoot!” which stood to combat increasing accounts of police brutality amongst racial minorities (Urbanski, 2014). The protest was often displayed as violent and full of criminal acts such as looting, arson, and acts of physical violence perpetrated against police officers (Urbanski, 2014). These actions resulted in Police officers armed with Military equipment and vehicles being sent to the area, which was seen as an increased threat by protestors (Urbanski, 2014). The use of tear gas and rubber bullets against protestors was a common occurrence, seeming to again display a lack of compassion for human life (Urbanski, 2014). Social media played a large part in these protests, as videos posted by private accounts are often seen as more trustworthy than television news broadcasts. These posts displayed the actions of police officers and protestors, thus allowing for massive amounts of information to be shared among protestors at different locations without much hassle (Tucker, 2014). Information about the location and time of protests as well as the number of protestors present, police presence, level of danger, as well as recruitment information looking for support (Tucker, 2014). Unfortunately, these videos did have to compete for views on social media with the already viral Ice Bucket challenge videos.

Facebook vs Twitter:

Founded in January of 2004, by Mark Zuckerberg, a Sophomore at Harvard University, The Facebook's intention was to create a centralized website for the internet, as well as to connect people all over the world (Zeevi, 2013). It was reported that as of August 15th, 2014 15 million users had posted about, commented, or liked a post that was related to the Ice Bucket Challenge, the site also reported that 1.2million videos had been posted about the challenge (Lafferty, 2014). As of September 7th, 2014 those numbers increased to 2.4 million videos posted, with 28 million people posting, commenting, or liking a post about the challenge ("The Ice Bucket Challenge On Facebook"). It is worth noting that in 2014 the user demographics for Facebook display a high prevalence of white, non-Hispanic users (71% of all internet users), between the ages of 18-29 (87% of all internet users) (Duggan, 2015). Critics argue that one of the reasons that the Ice Bucket Challenge videos reached their popularity was because of the algorithm that Facebook uses to rank posts and leaves viewers likely to see posts similar to those that they have interacted with in the past (M, 2014). This algorithm, in conjunction with targeted ads, creates a comfortable personalized reality for each person, hiding from their view any news, or entertainment which is outside of that comfort zone (Turow, 2011). For this reason, even though other events were being talked about at the time of the Ice Bucket Challenge, they were rarely seen by users outside of their specific communities (M, 2014). There is a sense of community on Facebook, but it is a very segmented community in that users see what they have liked before, and often only see posts from their "friends" whom they are in contact with often. These segments are often discriminatory based upon class, where people who "like" or "share" posts regarding regional vacations, or fast food will receive coupons, while those that do the same for international vacations or high class restaurants will receive different offers (Turow,

2011). Inherent in this normalization of discrimination is race based differentiation, where interacting with posts regarding issues of race difference, or human social justice issues will result in advertisements for products that are racially based such as skin or health care, while blogging about food, or mainstream television will result in advertisements that are not racially coded (Turow, 2011). While each of these different profile types exist on the site, it is rare that a person would see an interaction of these different styles, thus each person would be able to live comfortably in their own sphere, without sympathy or understanding for how the other half lives, plays, or struggles to survive (Turow, 2011).

On March 21st, 2006 the internet's first "tweet" was sent across the internet (Picard, 2011). Today, more than 140 million tweets are sent per day between nearly 200 million users (Picard, 2011). During the summer of 2014 only 4.4 million tweets were sent about the Ice Bucket Challenge, far fewer than Facebook ("8 Social Media"). There were however, many more tweets regarding the events in Ferguson than the Ice Bucket Challenge (McDermott, 2014). Critic's posit that this was a result of the fact that user's feed on Twitter shows the user what their followers are posting, as well as the topics that are trending without their past activity influencing what they see (M, 2014). At the time of the Ice Bucket Challenge videos, the demographics for Twitter (which hosts 23% of all adult internet users) users were predominantly black and non-Hispanic (27% of all Twitter users), between the ages of 18-29 (37% of all Twitter users) (Duggan, 2015). The sense of community on Twitter is objectively less segmented, due to its lack of algorithm, where the only factor of separation between users is their geographic location (Picard, 2011). This leads to a larger diversity between user experiences, as well as interactions between these different profiles (Turow, 2011). However, as we saw in the

Ice Bucket Challenge, this does not mean that issues do not gain or lose publicity based upon the community's decision about what is important and what is not at any time.

Analysis:

The Ice Bucket Challenge, which took place over the summer of 2014 influenced people to amass over 100 million dollars in donations to the ALS Association in order to research Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, and provide various services for those that have been diagnosed with the disease. This challenge used Web 2.0 sites such as Facebook to inspire people to donate money, and make videos urging others to do so. Due to the methods used by the challenge, the argument that an online community was formed around the Ice Bucket Challenge brand is valid, but requires further analysis. In order to formulate this analysis, I will use Henry Jenkins theory of "participatory culture". I chose the theory of participatory culture because it has been formulated around ideals of creating a community through civic engagement and artistic expression (Banet-Weiser & Lapsansky, 2008). This theory wraps within itself the concepts of spreadable media, self-branding, consumer citizenship, and the politics of philanthropy. I will first, explain why the Ice Bucket Challenge videos became as popular as they did. Then, I will discuss how participation in the Ice Bucket Challenge was criticized as slacktivism. Next, I will discuss the effect of consumer citizenship on those that participated in the Ice Bucket Challenge Brand. Finally, I will situate this brand community as being primarily online, and critique the power relations that are specific to this community.

I then will use this analysis to argue that the Ice Bucket Challenge did not create an online brand community amongst its participants. My argument is based upon a lack of fulfilling several fundamental requirements which I feel are necessary in the creation of an online brand community. In order to understand my argument, it is necessary to note the key concepts which I

argue signify a brand community. From what I have learned, I have determined that the most central tenant of a brand community is that it has a unifying factor which connects all members of the group, serves as a concrete marker of initiation into the group, and separates them from others. Secondly, there must exist a place where members of the group can interact, and enact change either as a group, or within the group if it so desires. Finally, group members must have a moral responsibility to help each other. For some, it may be easy to jump to conclusions about how these tenants were fulfilled by the Ice Bucket Challenge, however, my analysis will show the flaws present in that line of thinking.

I Challenge You:

Part of the popularity of the Ice Bucket Challenge videos can directly be attributed to the development of web 2.0 technologies such as Facebook and Twitter. These sites allow users to create a separate, online “self” whose reputation is constantly surveilled in an effort to create the best “self” possible (Marwick, 2013). The rhetoric of philanthropy and sacrifice for others arose around the Ice Bucket challenge, leading it to be deemed a successful way to gain status.

Participatory culture explains that “those deemed successful at social media usually fit into a narrow mold, and, as we will see, those who don’t are criticized.” (Marwick, 2013). Meaning that those that participated were celebrated for their 45 seconds of fame, and those who did not were verbally attacked for having lost touch. Participating in the challenge by filming oneself dumping a bucket of ice water on their heads also increased both the popularity of the actor, but also the popularity of the challenge. In the context of participatory culture, it is stated that within self-branding “Web 2.0 technologies function similarly, teaching their users to be good corporate citizens in the postindustrial, post-union world by harnessing marketing techniques to boost attention and visibility.” (Marwick, 2013). This was because participating in the challenge

boosted the visibility of all parties involved, and because increasing awareness for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis was one of the goals of the challenge, it was seen as helping. By increasing the visibility of the self, and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis people increased the size of their social networks by adding connections to their Web 2.0 sites, thus increasing visibility even more.

Participatory culture explains this feature of self-branding by saying “the technical features of Web 2.0 reward attention, making the potential audience clearly visible to the user by turning ephemeral status or reputation information into quantifiable metrics” (Marwick, 2013). Meaning that by gaining friends and followers (the quantifiable metrics of Web 2.0) users saw themselves and each other as gaining reputation/status. One of the main characteristics of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis which can be found upon a simple Google search is that it is always fatal, this created an emotional attachment to the videos, as well as the people in the videos. Participatory culture explains this by saying “the longer term benefits would include...the intensification of consumer loyalty by increasing emotional attachment to the brand” (Fuchs, 2014). This means that due to the increased emotional connection generated by the grave nature of the videos, viewers were more inclined to display their brand identity/loyalty by sharing videos, or creating their own. The development of Web 2.0 platforms which allowed users to take control over their reputation thus supplied a solid foundation for an event such as the Ice Bucket Challenge to perpetually gain popularity.

Another reason that the Ice Bucket Challenge videos became as popular as they did was due to the tools that were available to prosumers present on the sites. One of these tools, was a video player embedded in the site allowing videos to be played right on the site, as well as allowing them to be shared instantly to the viewer’s page. The theory of participatory culture states that “the main characteristic of social media/web 2.0 is that they are spreadable media.”

(Fuchs, 2014). This means that all content that is placed on Web 2.0 sites is spreadable, or can be easily shared to anyone within a prosumers network. The major determining factors for whether someone shares a video within their social network are, the relevancy of content to the viewer and the emotional connection that the viewer has to the video (Nightingale, 2011). This means that if a viewer finds the content of the video to be relevant, and feels an emotional attachment to the video they are more likely to forward the video on. However, the viewer is less likely to forward the video again in the future each time that they see the video again. Thus, the ability to upload unique videos to Web 2.0 was also a major contributor to the popularity of these videos. Participatory culture explains that this is because “if it doesn’t spread, it’s dead” (Fuchs, 2014). Meaning that unless people are continually spreading the video, it will eventually no longer be seen. By allowing everyday people to create and upload their own unique videos, they became increasingly attached to the videos and to the cause, which further increased the visibility and popularity of the videos. Participatory culture explains this by saying “spreadable media empower consumers and make them an integral part of a commodity’s success” (Fuchs, 2014). As well as “spreadability seeks to motivate and facilitate the efforts of fans and enthusiasts to spread the word” (Nightingale, 2011). These statements mean that by placing the power of the videos in the hands of everyday people, they are motivated to spread the word and directly influence how far that word spreads. By presenting prosumers with the tools to make spreading the influence of their point of view easy, as well as by motivating prosumers to do so, the Ice Bucket Challenge was able to take advantage of a situation and use it to gain popularity and visibility.

Why You Aren't Really Helping:

One of tools used in marketing is misdirection, in the case of the Ice Bucket Challenge the discourse of Web 2.0 technologies leads people to feel as though their participation is free, however, that is not the case. Participatory culture states that one of the tenants of charity marketing within the politics of philanthropy is “misleading participants about the fund-raising capacity of thons and for sinking money into the overhead expenditures” (King, 2006). This can be explained easily in the context of the Ice Bucket Challenge because in order to complete the challenge every single person had to spend money, while single participants might have only had to pay for ice and water for themselves, some other groups spent much more. For example, many sports teams and corporate teams performed their challenges as a group requiring ice and water for as many as 100-500 people, and in extreme cases, a fire truck was used to spray water over large groups of those wishing to take the challenge. Critics argue that in these cases, the money should have been spared from performing the challenge, and donated to the organization. The politics of philanthropy responds to this by saying “thons have become popular not so much because of their money making potential.... but because of the publicity they generate for the foundations that sponsor them.” (King, 2006). In the Ice Bucket Challenge this was specifically useful because one of the goals of the challenge (along with raising money to fight ALS) was to raise awareness for the disease. In addition to raising awareness for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, participants of the Ice Bucket Challenge also received increased visibility for themselves, which raised their status, which raised concerns over the motivation behind performing the challenge. Participatory culture speaks to this by saying “doing the “right” thing is framed in a context of hip coolness, where “helping [Africa]” functions as another product choice.” (Banet-Weiser & Lapsansky, 2008). Meaning that because the Ice Bucket Challenge

was a cool thing to do, people were criticized for placing the benefits of increased awareness for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis as well as increased funding for the ALS Association as secondary causes for performing the challenge.

Further arguments for the Ice Bucket Challenge as slacktivism criticized the power that prosumers were given over the identity of those with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. Due to the small number of those that have the disease and the physical nature of the challenge, very few people with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis participated in the Ice Bucket Challenge. Thus, the identity for the Ice Bucket Challenge brand was created almost entirely by people who had little to no connection to Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. Participatory culture describes this by saying “groups that are commodified find themselves targeted more aggressively by marketers and often feel they have lost control over their own culture” (Jenkins, 2014). This means that once a group of people is commodified, their identity becomes created for them by marketers in order to sell the commodity more efficiently. In the case of the user generated content that modified the identity of those with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis through the Ice Bucket Challenge this was done by the average person. To explain this, participatory culture “describes literacy as “social skills and cultural competencies”, not as individual capacities” (Jenkins, 2014). This explains that the meaning of the brands that are established by campaigns created user generated content must be looked at in their entirety, not in individual case studies giving more power to the popular opinion. This marginalization of those with the disease was not intentional, but the lack of representation of those with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis in the Ice Bucket Challenge videos hurts the cause overall. Participatory culture explains this by saying that “specific configurations of disease and survivorship had the capacity both to undermine demands that the syndrome be taken seriously and to dissipate the rage of activists” (King, 2006). Meaning that a lack of

victims for people to see leads to a belief that the disease does not affect many people, and that help isn't needed, leaving activists feeling defeated. Furthermore, the structure of many of the videos, which focus upon individuals donating money, or spreading awareness unintentionally suppresses hopes of collective action seeking to place government funding into Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. Participatory culture explains this by saying "the individual strength, courage, and perseverance...offer an important source of hope and (albeit temporary) community, but they leave little room for the politically targeted anger" (King, 2006). These areas of contention left critics feeling as though the challenge may have done as much harm as it did good for the awareness of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis.

Wasting Water for Democracy:

One of the major marketing practices at work within the Ice Bucket Challenge was that of conflating certain virtues and qualities with the people who performed the challenge. Due to the fact that the challenge videos were placed into online profiles for the persons acting in the video, an identity was created for the person by aligning themselves with the Ice Bucket Challenge. Participatory culture explains this as "consumers, that is, can and do build civic identity and virtue through their consumption practices" (King, 2006). Meaning that by becoming part of a brand, the ideals of the brand become part of a person's identity. Of course, this required people to do more than pour water over their heads, in order to perform effectively as members of the brand, they had to challenge others, and let the world know why they were pouring the water over their heads. Participatory culture describes that the major goal of marketing in this sense is "to transform purchasers into certain kinds of people living certain kinds of lives." (King, 2006). By this they mean that they wish to create a brand advocate with an investment in the brand, from a consumer who is looking for a product. The Ice Bucket Challenge was also filtered as

specifically supporting American people with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, because of the call to donate specifically to the ALS Association, which is the largest charity looking to perform research and support services for those suffering with the disease. Participatory culture describes the power of this conflation by stating “consumerism is seen as the key way to access particular liberal ideals such as freedom, liberty, and equality.” (Banet-Weiser & Lapsansky, 2008). Thus meaning that through their support of the Ice Bucket Challenge, prosumers were able to support the equality of treatment for all those with the disease, as well as the freedom to choose where their money is spent, which cannot be done as easily with federal funding. This is because a number of practices were at work within the Ice Bucket Challenge to focus people away from turning to government help. For example, the fact that a major focus of each video was the participation of one person at a time performing an action to support the ALS Association. Participatory culture explains this by saying “citizens are, of course, always consumers, and are in the current commercial environment “trained” to be selfish, individualistic, and loyal to goods and services.” (Banet-Weiser & Lapsansky, 2008). This means that those who supported the Ice Bucket Challenge were perpetuating, through their individual “achievement” of helping those with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis a sense of loyalty to the current way federal funding is allotted for the disease, as well as to the belief that the need to support foundations like the ALS Association are less serious. While the Ice Bucket Challenge was flooding Facebook, people also saw the way that protests against the government were shown as dangerous and unnecessary when media broadcasts of the protests in Ferguson, Mo were played on televisions following the shooting of a black man by a white police officer. Participatory culture says that here “the media have cast public activism (on both the left and the right) as naïve, ridiculous, shallow, and juvenile.” (King, 2006). This means that any action which drastically calls government power

into question is portrayed by the media as “going about it the wrong way” or being immature. Within these broadcasts, protestors were labeled “thugs” and “looters”, destroying property and endangering the local neighborhoods. Participatory culture here states “the media subtract personhood from activists, making their practices seem proof that their very claims are illegitimate.” (King, 2006). Meaning that by removing personhood from these people, not only makes it easier to see them as incorrect, but also as people who do not fit the public view of “citizens”. In contrast, through the positive reinforcement of gaining increased status by participating in the Ice Bucket Challenge, people were discouraged from seeking other solutions to raise money for the ALS Association after the challenge began. Participatory culture explains this by saying “the only way Americans can claim both rights and mass sympathy is to demonstrate not panic or anger, but ethical serenity, patriotism, and proper deference.” (King, 2006). This meant that while we are legally allowed to peacefully protest, media systems will criticize that protest as unpatriotic, and destabilizing, whereas methods such as the Ice Bucket Challenge, which are more of a call to action instead of a protest receive support from media systems. Through the lens of consumer citizenship, the modality of the Ice Bucket Challenge can be more easily understood.

But is it Really a Democracy?

Due to the fact that the Ice Bucket Challenge took place primarily on the internet, feelings of freedom and control were present amongst the prosumers who made videos, and shared them across their social networks. However, upon further analysis we can see that these feelings were convoluted and misinformed. Participatory culture explains this by stating “Though the consumer momentarily drives the development of the brand, it is not likely that the consumer is actually “free” to produce shared meanings and social relations” (Banet-Weiser &

Lapsansky, 2008). Furthermore, take into account that “internet culture is not separate from political economy, but is to a large extent organized, controlled and owned by companies” (Fuchs, 2014). Thus, while it may seem as though prosumers control what is posted to their sites, there is a hierarchy which influences the messages that are spread throughout Web 2.0 media. This is why messages which contained information that disparaged the Ice Bucket Challenge did not spread as widely on the internet as the videos of people participating in the Ice Bucket Challenge. Participatory culture supports this argument by saying “not all voices have the same power and that produced content and voices are frequently marginalized because visibility is a central resource in contemporary culture that powerful actors, such as media corporations, can buy.” (Fuchs, 2014). Meaning that corporations which own either the sites themselves, or the resources to buy advertising space possess the power to marginalize those without that power who may have a different message to share. Another way that the messages of celebrities and corporations effectively marginalized the voices of the masses in the Ice Bucket Challenge had to do with the fact that the algorithms which decide which content you see first on the internet are designed to target each user differently. In support of this argument, participatory culture states “YouTube pushes up content which receives support from other users” (Fuchs, 2014). YouTube is not the only site that does this, Facebook uses a similar algorithm in order to generate each user’s Newsfeed. This point, in conjunction with the last explain that content created by corporations/celebrities occupy a space far above the average person in terms of the power that they have over what is seen online. This marginalization of control over internet content between celebrities/corporations and everyday prosumers creates a hierarchy which shows that prosumers did not have a large amount of control over the content of the Ice Bucket Challenge. Participatory culture supports this fundamentally with the statement “corporations imagine

participation as something they can start and stop, channel and reroute, commodify and market.” (Jenkins, 2014). Meaning that within the context of the Ice Bucket Challenge, influences beyond that of the prosumers were effecting change on the messages that were being presented.

Marginalization is not a concept which divides only the prosumers from the corporate media, it also effects different groups within the prosumers. Participatory culture explains that online “huge populations of people who are marginalized in the world at large—non-westerners, women, people of color, and queer populations, for instance—are de-emphasized or ignored” (Marwick, 2013). Meaning that many voices which are ignored on most mainstream forms of media are also hushed on Web 2.0 Technologies, leaving them without a place to have their messages heard by people outside of their structured social groups. This line of thinking explains why on Facebook (a Web 2.0 site with an audience that is predominately white), the Ice Bucket Challenge was the topic of 2.4 million uploaded videos, with 28 million people creating or interacting with these posts (The Ice Bucket Challenge on Facebook). As well as why the Ice Bucket Challenge was the topic of far fewer uploaded videos and interactions (4.4 million overall) existed on Twitter (a Web 2.0 site with an audience that is predominately black) (Duggan, 2015). Another explanation for this is that the Ice Bucket Challenge was perceived largely as a white issue, and non-white people had other issues which drew their participation to another cause. This is explained by the health belief model of health promotion which states “for people to adopt recommended physical activity behaviors, their perceived threat of disease (and its severity) and benefits of action must outweigh their perceived barriers to action.” (US Department of Health and Human Services). Meaning that the perceived the threat of receiving a diagnosis of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis was high for white audiences (93% of patients are Caucasian), non-white audiences felt that it was not something which they would likely be

diagnosed with. Due to this, the brand image for the Ice Bucket Challenge often included racial markers of whiteness.

Digging Deeper:

Based upon what I have learned in my research, I argue that the Ice Bucket Challenge, which took place over the summer of 2014 did not create a brand community. This thesis is based upon the belief that the challenge did not fulfill several fundamental requirements that I feel are necessary in order to establish a brand community amongst a group of people. Among these requirements are: a unifying factor which connects all members of the group, serves as a concrete marker of initiation into the group, and separates them from others (Muniz, 2001). As well as: the existence of a place where members of the group can interact, and enact change either as a group, or within the group (Muniz, 2001). And finally: a sense of moral duty to the community as a whole and its individual members (Muniz, 2001). By fulfilling these tasks, an event would create, in at least a basic form, a brand community.

In order to determine whether or not these central tenants were fulfilled by the Ice Bucket Challenge, I chose six Facebook posts from various people regarding the Ice Bucket Challenge. These posts were made by users of the site that are connected to my own site, I have chosen to use these for several reasons. First, using posts that are created by corporate media, or celebrities offer a different context than I am interested in. Second, these posts offer a variety of different viewpoints from among those that completed the challenge, and also are all reflective of the relationship between prosumer media and the Ice Bucket Challenge. Third, due to the amount of time that has elapsed since the Ice Bucket Challenge of 2014, and the mechanics of Facebook, it is not feasible to track a set of connected posts that had the topic of the Ice Bucket Challenge

from origin to end. Through a careful analysis of these videos, I will be able to determine whether or not each central tenant of a brand community was fulfilled.

Within the set of posts that I used for my text, I discovered that two of the six were text posts concerning donations that a person made. In the first post, a link to the donation page of the ALS Association website was shared to all of the prosumer's friends, with the text "I donated #icebucketchallenge" above it; the post received three "likes", and was not commented on by the prosumers network connections (Caros, 2014). Within this post, the only noticeable ritual that was present was the fact that it was posted to Facebook, as well as the text "I donated" these actions suggest an initiation ritual which separates them from others (Caros, 2014). In the other video, a link to the same donation page was posted, beneath a couple paragraphs of text, designating who challenged this prosumer, a small descriptive blurb about Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, and who was being challenged to continue on the advocacy (Martinchek, 2014). There was no mention that the prosumer donated in this post, but it was implied by the statement "While I am honored to be nominated to pour buckets of ice over my head, I think that donations really help us further the cause that is the focus of this recent advocacy campaign." (Martinchek, 2014). This video received 17 "likes", and was commented on once by a friend of the prosumer (Martinchek, 2014). Within this post, the fact that it was again posted to Facebook, as well as that it named who challenged this prosumer and who they challenged in turn serve as markers of ritual which have to be followed. However, the implication that money was donated to the ALS Association does not in my opinion serve to count as a marker which separates this prosumer from the group as it is not a concrete marker. The part of the text that reads "For a disease that affects 5,600 new individuals every year and 30,000 in the United States currently, it is certainly meaningful and important to #StrikeOutALS" definitively displays the marker of moral duty to

individual members of the community (Martinchek, 2014). Also, the text that reads “I encourage all those who have been challenged to complete the real challenge and put some cash money to help address this issue” suggests a sense of moral duty the community as a whole by encouraging others to improve society (Martinchek, 2014). While this sample is considerably insignificant in reference to the entirety of all text posts in the Ice Bucket Challenge; I feel that it is sufficient in displaying the lack of consistency within the rituals present amongst prosumers that participated in the Ice Bucket Challenge, as well as how this lack of consistency also led to the possibility of criticizing the motivations of each prosumer due to posts which lacked statements which suggested a moral will to do good.

Among the six posts that I looked at for my case study, the remaining four were video posts. In each of these videos, the subject of the video is the person who created the Facebook profile which their video was posted on. In the first post, text which notified the viewer of who challenged the prosumer, as well as who the prosumer was challenging, as well as the caveat that those challenged had to post their video within 24 hours of the challenge being issued, the prosumer also noted that they had donated money to the ALS Association; the video received 20 “likes” (Georgiades, 2014). Within the video, the prosumer (who was the only actor present) reiterated these points in the order they appear above (with the exception that they had donated money) and then proceeded to dump a bucket of water over their head (Georgiades, 2014). The fact that the post was present on Facebook, the fact that a bucket of water was poured over an actor’s head, that the actor had donated money to the ALS Association, the acts of stating who had nominated the individual, as well as who the individual challenged, along with the caveat that they only had 24 hours to complete the challenge, all serve as concrete markers of ritual and initiation that were present in the video. However, there are no markers which suggest a moral

connection to the challenge. In the second post, text which stated who had nominated the prosumer, the reasoning why the prosumer was doing this “to raise awareness for Lou Gehrig’s Disease”, who was being challenged, and that they had 24 hours to post their own videos or donate money (Lee, 2014). Below the text was a video in which the prosumer reiterated the above statements, then was assisted by another actor in dumping a bucket of ice water over their head; the post received 9 “likes” (Lee, 2014). The fact that the prosumer posted this upon social media, poured a bucket of ice water over their head, notified the viewer of who challenged them as well as who they had challenged, and gave the time constraint of 24 hours, while also suggesting donating to the ALS Foundation serve as concrete markers of ritual and initiation. By stating that this challenge was “to raise awareness for Lou Gehrig’s Disease”, as well as the suggestion that those challenged could donate money to the foundation also serve as markers of moral reasoning for helping individuals within the community as well as the community at large. In the third post, text which denoted who nominated the prosumer, the fact that the prosumer was donating money to “help strike out ALS” as well as who the prosumer was nominating, followed by the caveat of “you have 24 hours” (Jozwiak, 2014). Following the text was a video in which the prosumer had a second actor pour a bucket of ice water over them after reiterating what was said in the text post (Jozwiak, 2014). Overall, the post received 16 “likes” as well as 10 comments (Jozwiak, 2014). The fact that the post was placed on Facebook, stating who had challenged the prosumer, as well as who the prosumer challenged, the fact that a bucket of water was poured over the actor’s head, that they were also donating money to the ALS Association, and warning those challenged that they had 24 hours to complete their own challenge all serve as concrete markers of initiation and ritual. Stating that “I will also donate money to help strike out ALS” stands as a marker of a moral obligation to help the community as well as individuals

within it (Jozwiak, 2014). In the fourth post, text which stated who had challenged the prosumer, who the prosumer was challenging in return, the caveat that those challenged had 24 hours to perform the challenge, as well as the alternative of donating \$100 and the motive of performing this challenge to cure ALS followed declaring that the prosumer was also donating money (Adamson, 2014). Following the text was a video in which the actor reiterated the text, then dumped a bucket of ice into a bucket of water, and proceeded to dump the water over his own head (Adamson, 2014). The video received 29 “likes”, which was the most of any of the videos in the sample, and 5 comments (Adamson, 2014). The facts that this post was placed upon Facebook, that it included who had challenged the prosumer, and who the prosumer had challenged, as well as the 24-hour time constraint, consequence of having to donate to the ALS Association, and the video of the actor pouring a bucket of water over their head all serve as concrete ritual markers for initiation into a group. The statement “donate \$100 to help cure ALS” provides the viewer with an understand of the moral reasoning which motivates the prosumer to complete this task and also displays the prosumers wish to help others in the community (Adamson, 2014). Though this sample is miniscule in relation to the number of videos about the Ice Bucket Challenge, they succeed in displaying which rituals were present, as well as the variations in these rituals. This sample also succeeds in showing the viewer the ways in which statements which suggest a moral motivation cause a video to be read differently than those that do not possess such a statement.

The most central tenant of a brand community is that there is a unifying factor which connects all members of the group, serves as a ritual for initiation into the group, and creates a divide between the group and those in the outgroup. According to the ALS Association website, in order to complete the Ice Bucket Challenge one must first accept the challenge and gather a

bucket of ice water. Next, the participant must record themselves, and call out three or more friends to take the challenge, pour the water over your head, and upload the video to social media (ALS Ice Bucket Challenge). In addition to this, the challenge originally required participants to perform the challenge within 24 hours of being notified (Sifferlin, 2014). Within this small sample, it is clear to me that the rituals and markers of initiation into the group that were present in the Ice Bucket Challenge were not consistent across all prosumers who participated thus the line between those that are “real” members of the Ice Bucket Challenge community and those that are not becomes blurry. Due to these inconsistencies between prosumers that participated in the Ice Bucket Challenge, I do not feel this central tenant of a brand community was fulfilled.

The other central tenant of a brand community is that there is a place where members of the group can interact, and enact change either as a group, or within the group if it so desires. The internet sites where the challenge was posted also serve as the space in which members of the group can communicate and enact change. I do understand that each post within my sample was from the same social media site, however, my claim that all social media sites possess content that is influenced by large corporations is not new (Turow, 2011). Due to the power that corporations have over these sites there is a status hierarchy in place which does not grant equal visibility to all members of the group and allows those corporations which do not perform the same rituals as average prosumers to be members of the community and possess more visibility than average prosumers. As I have shown above, one of the factors in place, which discourages change amongst the members of the Ice Bucket Challenge is the positive reinforcement of participation through the “likes” that prosumers gain from participating (in which more likes are received by those that post videos than by those that have created an environment in which change is not likely to be enacted by the group. Due to the fact that changes initiated by those

involved in the Ice Bucket Challenge were unlikely, as well as the fact that any changes that did occur were undoubtedly influenced by corporate media producers, I do not feel that the second central tenant of the brand community was satisfied.

Inconsistency was also present across statements of moral connection to members of the proposed community, which lends critical viewers the ability to question the motivations of certain prosumers in posting their videos to social media. Due to these inconsistencies, I surmise that the connection to other members of the community as well as the moral obligation to help those in the community was not of primary concern to a portion of those that participated in the Ice Bucket Challenge. For this reason, I do not feel the third central tenant of brand communities was satisfied by the Ice Bucket Challenge.

Based upon several differences amongst the details present in the Ice Bucket Challenge posts, as well as the media systems surrounding them those that participated in the Ice Bucket Challenge did not follow a strict ritual, which did not create a sharp enough line between members of the group and those that were not in the group. The differences amongst these posts also lacked a display of primary importance of moral concern for other members of the community. Furthermore, change was not likely to originate from within the group due to the influence that corporations have over the only area which could be considered a meeting place. Based upon the lack of fulfillment of what I have deemed to be the most central tenants of a basic brand community I have determined that the Ice Bucket Challenge did not facilitate the creation of a brand community amongst its participants.

The Present Study:

The purpose of this study is to further examine the relationship between participation in an online brand community event, and how that influences a future relationship with that specific community as well as the effect of different advertising stimulus (either emotional or informational) on donation amount. The primary goal of this study is to determine if the participation in the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Association Ice Bucket Challenge in the summer of 2014 increased the chances that a person would report that they intend to donate again in the future. The secondary goal of this study is to discover if there an effect of different advertisement themes on the donation that a person makes to a charitable organization. It is the belief of the researcher that those that participated in the Ice Bucket Challenge will display an increased intention to donate again in the future. It is also the belief of the researcher that the emotional video will have a stronger impact upon donations than the informational video.

Methods:**Participants:**

The participants in this study were N= 32 students, from a small liberal arts college located in the northeastern United States. Students were recruited for this study via the posters placed around the campus (Appendix F). The participants in this study were a random sample of legal age students at the college. The participants were aged 18-21, and were self-reported users of social media, it was required that an individual have a social media account in order to be eligible for participation in this experiment.

Procedure:

Participants arrived, one at a time, and were given the informed consent form to sign, and had the experiment explained to them by the researcher (Appendix A). This was the only time that identifying information was to be collected, from this point on all identifiers were anonymous (by assigning a number to each participant). The participants then were led to a room and received a demographic questionnaire and a form asking them about their history with ALS and the ALS Association (Appendix B). From here, participants were asked to complete a token economy activity having to do with the ALS Association (Appendix C). Next, the participants were separated into two groups, one which received an informational stimulus (titled: Your Health: ALS (Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis)), and one which received an emotional stimulus (titled: ALS-Head and Shoulders). After, the participants were asked to complete the token economy activity again, followed by a sheet which asked them to indicate the level of effect they felt the stimulus had upon them (Appendix D). Upon completion of these tasks, participants were debriefed, and allowed to leave (Appendix E). Forms were collected and stored in a secure location, to be removed only for data analysis.

Measures:

Several variables were measured throughout the course of this study; they were sex, participation in the Ice Bucket Challenge which took place in the summer of 2014, donation history with ALS Association, emotional proximity to ALS, and willingness to donate to the ALS Association in the future. Sex was male (0) or female (1); *Participation in the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge* was defined as: having either created a video in which cold water was dumped over their head after denoting who nominated them, and who they nominated; by donating a check in the amount of \$100 dollars to the ALS Association; or by doing both and was measured

as either Video (0), Donation (1), or Both (2). *Donation history* was defined as either having no history (0), formally donating money to the ALS Association (1), volunteering at a philanthropic event where proceeds were donated to the ALS Association (2), or both volunteering at an event as well as donating money to the ALS Association (3). *Emotional proximity* to ALS was defined on a scale, where participants were asked to indicate how many hours per year they spent either raising money for ALS, or interacting with someone who had been diagnosed with ALS. In this scale, hours were measured as: zero (0), 1-5 (1), 6-10 (2), 11-15 (3), 16 or greater (4).

Willingness to donate again in the future was defined as a self-reported interest in donating money in the future, either as a returning donor (if they had donated before), or as a first time donor, and was measured as either Yes (0) or No (1), as well as an amount to be generated by the participant. Within the token economy activity, each participant is given two envelopes, ten lottery tickets, and a form describing the activity. The form would explain that one envelop was labeled “donation”, and one labeled “compensation”. Participants would be tasked with placing the tickets into the envelopes however they saw fit, with the only stipulation being that all tickets would have to end up in the envelopes. The form would then move on to explain that each ticket was worth two United States Dollars if placed into the envelop marked “donation” which would be placed into a pot for donation to the ALS Association, any tickets not placed in the “donation” envelop were to be placed into the envelope marked “compensation” and were each worth one chance towards winning a gift card for The Movies at Meadville, worth \$20. The only difference between the first and second token economy activity, was a question at the end of the activity to be filled out on a slip of paper asking participants to indicate (on a five point Likert scale; where 1=not at all and 5=highly influential) how influential they felt the stimulus (either the informational or emotional) was in making their decision the second time around.

Results:

Both of my hypotheses were supported by the research that I performed. To reiterate, my hypotheses were: that those that participated in the Ice Bucket Challenge will display an increased intention to donate again in the future, that the emotional video will have a stronger impact upon donations than the informational video.

In this study, an independent samples T-test was conducted to compare participant intentions of future donation across those that did and did not participate in the Ice Bucket Challenge. This T-test suggests that the participant's intention to donate was significantly higher when they had participated in the Ice Bucket Challenge $t(30) = -2.529$, $p = .017$ (2-tailed) (table 1). A paired samples T-test was conducted to compare the number of tickets placed into the donation envelope for the emotional group before and after the stimulus (watching the video). This T-test suggests that the number of tickets increased significantly between the pre-test and post-test conditions $t(15) = -2.423$, $p = .029$ (2-tailed) (table 2). A second paired samples T-test was conducted to compare the number of tickets placed into the donation envelope for the informational group before and after the stimulus (watching the video). This T-test suggests that the number of tickets increased significantly between the pre-test and post-test conditions $t(15) = -2.764$, $p = .014$ (2-tailed) (table 3). An independent samples T-test was conducted to compare the effect of the informational video and the emotional video on the increase in the number of tickets placed in the donation envelope. This T-test suggests that while the mean differences before the video $t(30) = -.490$, $p = .628$ (2-tailed) are larger than after the video $t(30) = -.295$, $p = .770$ (2-tailed) the differences are not significant (table 4). A simple effects test was also conducted to determine main effects of several other factors. Based on this test, no significant

main effects were shown for social media use, Ice Bucket Challenge participation, donation history, volunteer history, knowing anyone with ALS, or emotional proximity to ALS (table 5).

Discussion:

While some results did not display statistical significance, others did, and thus support my hypotheses. Additionally, those results that did not support my hypotheses, may be easily explained in retrospect. For example, the hypothesis that the emotional advertisement would show a greater increase in donations than the informational video. However, in retrospect, it makes sense that due to priming, and response bias, a lack of significant difference would be present.

Willingness to Donate in the Future:

Data suggested that across groups, there was a significant difference between those that did participate in the Ice Bucket Challenge, and those that did not. It was hypothesized that those who did participate in the challenge would display a higher willingness to donate again in the future than those who did not participate. The data showed this, thus supporting my hypothesis. Logically, this can be understood because those that had chosen to accept the challenge took on the identity that they would help the cause. Thus, when that cause asked again, almost two years later, those who had it in their identity to help, were more inclined to donate again.

The Influence of Stimuli:

Data suggested that across both groups, there was a significant increase in the number of tickets in the donation envelopes between the trial before the advertisement, and after the advertisement. It was hypothesized that there would be a larger increase in those participants in the emotional advertisement condition. Data suggested however, that there was no significant

difference in the increase of tickets placed in the donation envelopes between the two groups. This, as I explained above could be logically explained by taking into account the priming that was naturally unavoidable due to the activity, as well as response bias (though pre-cautions were taken to eliminate this possibility).

On The Ice Bucket Challenge and Facilitating a Brand Community:

Prior research suggested that in order to facilitate the formation of a brand community, three things were necessary. These are: a unifying ritual which served to initiate members into the group and separate them from others, the existence of a meeting place where members of the group could enact change, and a sense of moral connection and responsibility to the group (Muniz, 2001). I argued that the Ice Bucket Challenge did not possess these central tenants, and thus did not facilitate the formation of a brand community. Upon qualitative analysis, it was discovered that there were discrepancies in the rituals that allowed members into the group, as well as the ability for corporate media to easily influence decisions made by the group, and finally a lack of importance of the moral responsibility of participants to the group. Based upon these findings, the argument was supported that a brand community was not created by the Ice Bucket Challenge.

Limitations:

Though there was an equal number of participants in each group, and statistical significance was found for all but one of the relationships I was interested in, a number of factors limit the generalizability of my study. Based upon the population I was able to draw from, only 32 people participated in the empirical side of my study, this is a considerably small sample which only allowed for 16 people in each condition. There was however, an uneven

representation between those that participated in the Ice Bucket Challenge (N=14) and those that did not (N=18). Thus these results are largely only generalizable to the campus from which I drew participants. Further, due to the importance of reputation in a college setting, participants may have been inclined to donate more due to a fear of being found out for not donating. Also, the method of this study which used a token economy (to eliminate the effects of socio-economic status) may have led participants to take the activity less seriously. Similarly, the compensation (being the \$20 gift card to The Movies at Meadville) may not have adequately drawn students to place tickets in the compensation envelope. If this study were replicated, it would be beneficial to take these into account.

A number of factors on the side of the qualitative analysis also limit my findings. First, a lack of other philanthropy events similar to the Ice Bucket Challenge provide a small amount of generalizability. Second, due to the differences in posts between social media sites, I used Facebook for my case study, and due to the algorithm which selects which posts I see in my archive when I attempt to track the Ice Bucket Challenge videos, I was forced to choose several random posts from people that I knew for my case study, instead of following one post and tracking its influence by seeing who responded to the challenge and who had challenged the account in order to provide more generalizability.

Conclusion:

The implications of these findings have the potential to be helpful in addressing the methods by which not-for-profit organizations can seek to more effectively garner repeat donations, as well as gain valuable first time donors. While previous research has demonstrated that there are many factors which influence donation to charitable companies, the current study demonstrates that certain types of advertisements, as well as internet based philanthropy events

also have an influence. By utilizing these methods in tandem to create evolved marketing strategies, a not-for-profit brand can use their advertising budget more effectively, with the outcome of higher donations as a possibility.

Further research on this topic would lead to more concrete conclusions. Due to the small sample size, as well as the lack of events similar to the Ice Bucket Challenge, it is hard to generalize my findings to a larger group of people. If more people were studied, and more events were able to be analyzed, further support for the hypotheses could be gained.

The main goals of this study were to determine whether or not the Ice Bucket Challenge facilitated the creation of a brand community amongst its members, if participation in the Ice Bucket Challenge would correlate positively to a person's willingness to donate, and if different types of advertisements displayed different levels of effectiveness in receiving increased donations from participants. Based upon qualitative research, it was argued that the Ice Bucket Challenge did not possess the three central tenants of a brand community, and therefore did not facilitate the creation of one. It was also found that a positive relationship between participation, and future donation did exist, as well as that advertisements do influence higher levels of donation, however no significant difference between emotional and informational advertisements. Ultimately, this study achieved its goals, and has contributed to the body of knowledge surrounding not-for-profit monetary donation.

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Appendix:**Appendix A:****Informed Consent form for Senior Thesis****Date:****Study Title:** An Analysis of Young Adult Willingness to be Charitable**Researcher:** Nicholas L Allen, BS Candidate, Psychology, Allegheny College

Purpose of the Research: The purpose of this study is to further examine the relationship between participation in an online brand community event, and how that influences a future relationship with that specific community as well as the effect of different advertising stimulus (either emotional or informational) on donation amount. The primary goal of this study is to determine if the participation in the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Association Ice Bucket Challenge in the summer of 2014 increased one's knowledge of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), and increased the chances that a person would report that they intend to donate again in the future. The secondary goal of this study is to discover if there is a relationship between previous involvement with a cause, and the effect of different advertisement themes. It is the belief of the researcher that those who participated in the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge will facilitate a higher rate of responses indicating a willingness to donate again in the future. It is also the belief of the researcher that those who have increased interactions with ALS, will be more affected by the informational stimulus than the emotional stimulus.

What You Will Be Asked to do in the Research: Participation in this research is not expected to take longer than fifteen (15) minutes. You will be led to a room where you will receive a demographic questionnaire and a form asking about your history with ALS and the ALS Association. From here, you will be asked to complete a token economy activity having to do with the ALS Association. From here, you will receive either an informational stimulus, or an emotional stimulus. After, you will be asked to complete the token economy activity again. Upon completion of these tasks, you will be debriefed, and allowed to leave. Forms will be collected and stored in a secure location, to be removed only for data analysis.

Risks and Discomforts: I, the researcher, do not foresee any risks or discomfort resulting from your participation in this research.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You: The results and information gathered from this study will be used to further our understanding of contact with mental illness, perception of mental illness, and defining mental illness. This will help to assist in reforming the social stigma placed on different mental illnesses.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this research is voluntary, you may choose to omit an answer from any question presented to you, or refuse to participate in any activity. Your decision to volunteer will not affect the treatment you receive, or your relationship with the researcher, or Allegheny College now, or in the future.

Withdrawal from the Study: You may cease your participation in the study at any time, for any reason, without consequences. If you decide to remove yourself, please inform the researcher. Your decisions to remove yourself will not render you ineligible for the compensatory drawing for the \$20 Gift Certificate to The Movies at Meadville; nor will it affect your relationship with the researcher, or Allegheny College. Upon removal from this study, all data generated as a consequence of your participation will be destroyed.

Confidentiality: All information you supply during the research will be held in the strictest confidence and, unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility and only the researcher will have the ability to access this information. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent of the law.

Questions about the Research: If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study please feel free to contact Nicholas Allen, at allenn@allegheny.edu, or Dr. Brian Saltsman at bsaltsma@allegheny.edu. This research has been reviewed and approved for compliance with research ethics protocols by the Institutional Review Board committee of the Psychology Department at Allegheny College and conforms to the standards and guidelines of ethical research. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact Joshua Searle-White, the head of the Institutional Review Board at jsearle@allegheny.edu.

Legal Rights:

I, the undersigned consent to participate in An Analysis of Young Adult Willingness to be Charitable conducted by Nicholas Allen. I have read and understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Please Initial here to indicate that you are at least 18 years of age at the time of your participation. _____

Signature _____ Date _____

I would like to receive information regarding the conclusions of this research upon its completion. Yes: _____ No: _____

Appendix B:**Demographic Questionnaire:**

Please **do not** place your name anywhere on this sheet.

1. What is your age?
 - a. 18-20
 - b. 21-23
 - c. Over 23
2. What is your biological sex?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Prefer not to answer
3. What is your current annual household income in U.S. Dollars?
 - a. Under \$25,000
 - b. \$25,000 - \$50,000
 - c. \$50,001 - \$75,000
 - d. \$75,001 - \$100,000
 - e. Over \$100,001
4. Which of the following best describes the area in which you live?
 - a. Urban
 - b. Suburban
 - c. Rural
5. How long have you been using the internet?
 - a. Less than five years
 - b. 5-10 years
 - c. 11-20 years
 - d. Over 20 years.
6. Do you have a Facebook account?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. Do you have a Twitter account?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. Do you have a YouTube account?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

9. How many hours per week do you spend using these accounts?
 - a. Under 5
 - b. 5-10
 - c. 11-15
 - d. 16-20
 - e. Over 20
10. Did you participate in the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge which took place over the summer of 2014? (Either by making a video in which you or someone else poured a bucket of ice water over your head, then posted it on your own social media account; by donating \$100 to the ALS Association, or both)?
 - a. Yes, by making an Ice Bucket Challenge Video
 - b. Yes, by donating \$100 to the ALS Association
 - c. Yes, by doing both of the above.
 - d. No
11. Have you ever donated money to the ALS Association before?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
12. Would you be willing to donate again in the future?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
13. Have you ever volunteered for the ALS Association before?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
14. Do you personally know anyone who has been diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
15. How many hours per year do you spend interacting with someone who has been diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis(ALS), or raising money/volunteering for an ALS related charity? (Including volunteering your services through running philanthropic events which the ALS Association benefits from)?
 - a. Zero
 - b. 1-5
 - c. 6-10
 - d. 11-15
 - e. 16 or greater

Upon completion of this form please return to the researcher for your next task.

Appendix C:**Explanation of the Token Economy Activity:**

Before you are two envelopes, one labeled “Donation” and the other labeled “Compensation”. There are also ten lottery tickets, these are worth either: Two United States Dollars to be donated to the ALS Association, or one entry into the drawing towards winning a gift card worth \$20 at The Movies at Meadville.

You’re Task:

Place the tickets into the envelopes before you with any number of tickets in either envelope. Then inform the researcher that you have completed the task.

Appendix D:**Questionnaire to Follow Second Token Economy Activity:**

1. Which method of advertisement did you feel the video better fit?
 1. Emotional
 2. Informational
2. How much do you feel the video influenced your decision during the second token economy task?
 1. Not at All Influential
 2. Not very Influential
 3. Somewhat Influential
 4. Very Influential
 5. Highly influential

Appendix E:**Debriefing Form:**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. Your time and responses will help to complete the purpose and goals of this study. If you feel as though any psychological harm has come to you during this experiment, please contact the Counseling Center or the chair of the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Jailu Streeter, using the information provided below. There is a possibility that even if you do not have concerns now, you may at a later time. Additionally, if at any time after the study you have any question pertaining to the results or the experience, please feel free to email Nicholas Allen, and he will respond as soon as possible. There will also be aggregated results when the study is completed to those who provided their box number or email address on the Informed Consent form.

Contact Information:**Principle Investigator:** Nicholas AllenEmail: allenn@allegheny.edu**Faculty Advisor:** Brian SaltsmanEmail: bsaltsma@allegheny.edu
Phone: 814-332-3332**Chair of the Allegheny College IRB**Email: jstreeter@allegheny.edu**Allegheny Counseling Center**Reis Hall Room 304
Phone: 814-332-4368
Open: Mon-Fri 8am-5pm

Appendix F:**Recruitment Poster:**

Participants Needed!

- Did you participate in the Ice Bucket Challenge in 2014?
- Did you avoid participating because it was “just a fad”?

If so, I need you!

- **What?**
 - o I am looking for students to give me a brief 15 minutes of their time to fill out a survey related to their involvement in the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge.
- **Where?**
 - o Carnegie Hall, Room 107
- **When?**

Wednesday	2/17/16	12:30 PM	7:00 PM
Friday	2/19/16	10:00 AM	3:00 PM
Monday	2/22/16	12:30 PM	5:00 PM
Tuesday	2/23/16	3:00 PM	7:00 PM
Wednesday	2/24/16	12:30 PM	7:00 PM
Friday	2/26/16	10:00 AM	3:00 PM
Monday	2/29/16	12:30 PM	7:00 PM

- **What’s in it for me?**
 - o Good comp karma.....and a chance to win a \$20 gift card to The Movies at Meadville. Just for showing up!

If you have any questions, or would like to sign up please email me!

Nicholas Allen

allenn@allegheny.edu

Table 1: The Influence of the Ice Bucket Challenge on Future Donation

Group Statistics					
	Participation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
FutureDonation	.00	14	.93	.917	.245
	1.00	18	1.61	.608	.143

Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
									Lower Upper
FutureDonation	Equal variances assumed	5.197	.030	-2.529	30	.017	-.683	.270	-1.234 -.131
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.405	21.483	.025	-.683	.284	-1.272 -.093

Table 2: Emotional Data Pre-test Post-test

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	FirstDonationEnvelope	7.81	16	3.103	.776
	SecondDonationEnvelope	8.56	16	2.756	.689

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
			Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	FirstDonationEnvelope - SecondDonationEnvelope	-.750	1.238	.310	-1.410	-.090	-2.423	15	.029

Table 3: Informational Data Pre-test Post-test

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	FirstDonationEnvelope	8.25	16	1.770	.443
	SecondDonationEnvelope	8.81	16	1.974	.493

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
			Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	FirstDonationEnvelope - SecondDonationEnvelope	-.563	.814	.203	-.996	-.129	-2.764	15	.014

Table 4: Comparing Emotional and Informational Statistics

Group Statistics					
	StimulusID	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
FirstDonationEnvelope	0	16	7.81	3.103	.776
	1	16	8.25	1.770	.443
SecondDonationEnvelope	0	16	8.56	2.756	.689
	1	16	8.81	1.974	.493

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
FirstDonationEnvelope	Equal variances assumed	1.688	.204	-.490	30	.628	-.438	.893	-2.261	1.386
	Equal variances not assumed			-.490	23.827	.629	-.438	.893	-2.282	1.407
SecondDonationEnvelope	Equal variances assumed	.726	.401	-.295	30	.770	-.250	.847	-1.981	1.481
	Equal variances not assumed			-.295	27.182	.770	-.250	.847	-1.988	1.488

Table 5: A Simple Effects Test

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
SocialMediaUse	Between Groups	2.498	2	1.249	.718	.496
	Within Groups	50.471	29	1.740		
	Total	52.969	31			
IBCParticipation	Between Groups	1.928	2	.964	1.571	.225
	Within Groups	17.791	29	.613		
	Total	19.719	31			
DonationHistory	Between Groups	.766	2	.383	1.791	.185
	Within Groups	6.203	29	.214		
	Total	6.969	31			
VolunteerHistory	Between Groups	.003	2	.002	.013	.987
	Within Groups	3.497	29	.121		
	Total	3.500	31			
KnowAnyone	Between Groups	.441	2	.221	2.091	.142
	Within Groups	3.059	29	.105		
	Total	3.500	31			
EmotionalProximity	Between Groups	7.815	2	3.908	2.258	.123
	Within Groups	50.185	29	1.731		
	Total	58.000	31			