

SOCIAL MEDIA FATIGUE AND ITS PERCEIVED EFFECTS ON ADVERTISING ON
SOCIAL MEDIA

by

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Introduction

In the past 15 years, a new phenomenon started to appear on the Internet: social media. These social network sites (SNS), such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, have allowed unprecedented connections between people in different parts of the world. The advertising industry has taken to SNS as a new tool in their work to communicate with audiences. Advertisers have taken advantage of user data from SNS and SNS' dependence on advertising cannot be overstated; two of the largest SNS operators in the United States have told shareholders that their companies' fortunes rest on their ability to effectively target advertising to users (Facebook Inc., 2012; Twitter, Inc., 2014). However, developments in recent years have cooled the world's love affair with SNS. With advertising revenue and user engagement down in recent years (Neate, 2017; Perez, 2018) and increasing regulatory oversight (McGill, 2019; Schulze, 2019), SNS companies face yet another threat from social media fatigue (SMF). SMF, also called SNS fatigue, is defined as "a subjective and self-evaluated feeling of tiredness from SNS usage" (Lee, Son, & Kim, 2016, p. 51) and a tendency by SNS users "to pullback from social media when they become overwhelmed" by social media's features and pressures (Techopedia, 2011). This study will examine the perceptions of SMF and its effect on advertising on SNS platforms, according to SNS users, and from the professionals utilizing SNS as part of their work.

A study that investigates a possible relationship between SMF and advertising effectiveness on SNS is vital for several reasons. Academic literature on SNS and advertising has addressed how effective advertising can be on the different SNS platforms. Research on SMF has sought to understand the SMF phenomena and why it is occurring. This study combines SNS users' perceptions of SMF and how it affects advertising effectiveness and brings in advertising

professionals for their view of SMF. Advertisers and SNS companies also stand to benefit from this study. With recent reports of declining advertising revenue (Neate, 2017) and first-time installation of apps on mobile phones declining (Perez, 2018), SNS such as Facebook and Twitter face a threat to their most dominant revenue stream. Recent scandals regarding privacy, one factor in SMF (Bright, Kleiser, & Grau, 2015), could also affect SNS use, degrading its value to advertisers. The academic community, SNS companies, and advertisers would stand to benefit from an examination of a possible relationship between SMF and advertising effectiveness.

The inclusion of advertising professionals and social media users in this study is essential for two reasons. First, it is worth exploring whether the two sides of advertising on SNS share or have conflicting perceptions of SMF and its possible effects on messages on SNS. Seeing whether there is a difference of opinion between the two groups could yield valuable insights for strategic communication professionals. Second, the current state of SNS and its influence on American society are enormous. The academic community has researched the perceptions of advertising professionals because of the industry's influence on our society (Nyilasy, Canniford & Kreshel, 2013; Nyilasy & Reid, 2009). If SMF does influence the effectiveness of advertising on SNS platforms, it would be wise to seek out both professional and user perceptions.

This study will proceed as follows. After the Introduction, the Literature Review will cover topics around advertising effectiveness, social media usage and engagement, advertising on SNS, and finally, SMF itself. A series of research questions will be proposed. Next, there will be a Methods section that will describe how the research questions were investigated. There will be a Results section that will outline the findings of a series of professional interviews and a survey of social media users. After that, there will be a Discussion of the results of the study. The

study will conclude with a description of the Limitations of this project, as well as future areas of study and Implications for the professional and academic communities.

Literature Review

To propose a study on the intersection between SMF and SNS message effectiveness, a literature review is necessary. There are several areas of review that are required. The literature on advertising effectiveness, social media usage and engagement, advertising on SNS, and SMF will be examined for how they can contribute to this study.

Advertising Effectiveness

Much of SNS's revenue comes from advertising, which needs to be effective in reaching and engaging consumers. Effective advertising, or "advertising value," is defined as a "subjective evaluation of the relative worth or utility of advertising to consumers" (Ducoffe, 1995, p. 1). Four factors influence a consumer's perception of the value of advertising: "informativeness, deceptiveness, irritation, and entertainment" (Ducoffe, 1995, p. 3). In addition to information gained from an advertisement, an advertisement's entertainment value was also an important factor in consumers' perception of an advertisement's value (Ducoffe, 1995).

With the advent of the Internet, additional research was needed to see if traditional notions of effective advertising still held. A study from the early days of the Internet found that respondents did not think highly of the new platform's ability to connect advertisers with consumers, but did confirm the importance of information value, entertainment, and irritation as factors in advertising effectiveness (Ducoffe, 1996). Even in the mid-1990s, several prescient predictions about the Internet and its role in advertising were made, such as consumers determining content relevance, an overall increase in the content available to users, and the relative ease advertisers would have in targeting small but highly motivated groups for

advertising messages (Ducoffe, 1996). These early findings regarding effective advertising on the Internet would also apply to effective advertising on SNS (Saxena & Khanna, 2013).

Since it is estimated that 80% of the time spent on social media is via a mobile device of some description (Sterling, 2016), it is necessary to examine effective advertising on devices such as smartphones and tablets. Advertising on mobile platforms has generally favored younger audiences, has been used in concert with traditional media, and has been found to attract users with small monetary rewards in order to perform the advertisers' preferred action (Park, Shenoy & Salvendy, 2008). Traditional concepts of advertising effectiveness have been confirmed when tested on mobile devices, especially when advertising was informative and entertaining (Ducoffe, 1995; Ha, Park & Lee, 2014). Advertising was also found to be effective when it gave users a greater sense of control and social interaction (Ha et al., 2014). However, it did not directly lead to increased purchase intentionality, possibly due to the physical constraints of mobile devices had on the presentation of advertising (Ha et al., 2014).

Successfully defining what "effective" means for advertising has proven to be a difficult task. For the SNS user survey and this project, "effectiveness" of advertising on social media will be defined as those messages that users find entertaining, informative, non-irritating, and move them to engage with the advertisement, such as purchase intention (Ducoffe, 1996; Hausman & Siekpe, 2009).

Social Media Usage and Engagement

Social media usage. Despite recent challenges, social media has become a daily fact of life for people around the world, of almost every race, social class, and income. Facebook claims 2.5 billion monthly users worldwide of its suite of apps and services, despite recent declining user numbers (Salinas, 2018). Likewise, Twitter, which recently reported flat user growth, still

has 335 million monthly users worldwide (Salinas, 2018). An estimated “20 percent of all digital media time” (Sterling, 2017 para. 7) is spent on social media. Users are not only spending time looking at social media on their devices but engaging with others on social media, most often on their smartphones (Sterling, 2017). SNS and how users interact with platforms are changing as well. One digital marketing CEO writing in *Adweek* cited the increase in video-based content on social media platforms as an area where marketers and advertisers needed to orient future campaigns and strategies (Sheetrit, 2018). Even with declining user numbers and falling revenues, SNS operators can still take comfort in the enormous amount of usage that their services still command.

Social media engagement. The success of SNS as a communication medium for advertisers has been through its ability for direct engagement with consumers, bypassing traditional middlemen such as the media or the limitations on closeness that radio or television incurs. The interactive nature of SNS has meant that the platforms are “more than an advertising channel; they constitute a powerful relationship building and consumer engagement tool” (Tsai & Men, 2017, p. 3).

SNS’s ability to engage users has been key to its popularity and success in the area of advertising. A study of Chinese and American SNS users found that Chinese users view SNS as a way to form deep social bonds with brands, while Americans were more likely to engage with SNS brand pages as a way to receive discounts and learn about upcoming sales (Tsai and Men, 2017). However, across the two different cultures, “information seeking and entertainment emerged as the two most important reasons” for engagement with brand SNS pages (Tsai and Men, 2017, p. 15). Successful advertising on SNS platforms has found a way to connect with

users in a way that does not involve an intermediary, whether that be for establishing a social bond or for a cheaper deal on a product or service.

Advertising on SNS

SNS dependence on advertising. Before discussing SMF, it is worth discussing how deeply dependent SNS companies are on advertising for the bulk of their revenue. As stated earlier, regulatory scrutiny of SNS companies has increased while advertising revenue and user numbers have decreased in recent years (Neate, 2017; Perez, 2018; McGill, 2019; Schulze, 2019). SMF and its effects may be yet another headache for SNS companies that are already under pressure.

The two largest SNS companies in the U.S., Facebook and Twitter, are examples of social media companies' relationship to advertising revenue. From 2014 to 2016, Facebook consistently showed that no less than 89% of revenue came from advertising (Facebook Inc., 2014; Facebook Inc., 2015; Facebook Inc., 2016). Reports to shareholders of Twitter from those same years stated the same level of dependency on advertising revenue, 89%, from 2014 to 2016 (Twitter, Inc., 2014; Twitter, Inc., 2015; Twitter, Inc., 2016). The issue of SNS companies' reliance on advertising for revenue goes back to the companies' earliest days. In the years 2010, 2011, and 2012, advertising accounted for 95%, 85%, and 84%, respectively, of Facebook's revenue (Facebook Inc., 2012).

Both Facebook and Twitter have gone beyond statistics to underline to stakeholders how relevant advertising is to revenue. Facebook cited the need for additional investment to improve the experience for marketers and advertisers on the platform so that it could continue its strategy of creating "ad products that are social, relevant, and well-integrated with other content on Facebook (in order to) enhance the user experience while providing an attractive return for

marketers” (Facebook Inc., 2012, pp. 9-10). Twitter repeatedly used the “Risk Factors” section of its 2014 shareholder report to warn of the consequences of declining user engagement and lower advertising revenue (Twitter, Inc., 2014, p. 11). The report used language such as:

If we fail to grow our user base, or if user engagement or ad engagement on our platform decline, our revenue, business and operating results may be harmed. (Twitter, Inc., 2014, p. 11)

If our users do not continue to contribute content or their contributions are not valuable to other users, we may experience a decline in the number of users accessing our products and services and user engagement, which could result in the loss of advertisers, platform partners and revenue. (Twitter, Inc., 2014, p. 12)

We generate the substantial majority of our revenue from advertising. The loss of advertising revenue could harm our business. (Twitter, Inc., 2014, p. 12)

Both Facebook and Twitter have gone out of their way to emphasize to interested parties how intertwined their ability to deliver users to advertisers and marketers are to the companies’ bottom lines.

Recently, SNS companies have seen a variety of events that have hurt their ability to connect advertisers to users, albeit at a small scale compared to the massive size of companies such as Facebook or Twitter. SNS companies have seen declines in advertising revenue and first-time app installations in the past two years (Neate, 2017; Perez, 2018). In 2018, Facebook lost 2 million monthly users in Europe, which it blamed on recently passed European Union data privacy legislation (Edwards, 2018). To Facebook, this loss was significant because it has more users in Europe than it does in the United States (Edwards, 2018). A 2018 report by a financial analysis firm found that a little less than half of the advertisers surveyed planned to increase

spending on Facebook, compared to 66% in 2017 (Wittenstein & Frier, 2018). Declines in user growth and even user loss have affected advertiser spending on SNS platforms, putting SNS companies' most significant source of revenue under pressure.

Effective advertising on SNS. The subject of effective advertising on SNS platforms has been thoroughly studied and come to several broad-based conclusions. Advertising on social media platforms is compelling in part because of the “word-of-mouth marketing” (Martin, 2013, p. 1) ability, in other words, brands or organizations creating an experience or identity on SNS platforms that are easily shareable by users. Essential to the success of advertising on SNS platforms are the “4C’s” of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) credibility: community, competence, content, and consensus (Moran & Muzellec, 2017, p. 149). Rather than try and manipulate users to gain positive eWOM, advertisers should instead use their SNS presence to build feelings of community with users, competently send messages, spread explicit content and messages, and give users a sense that their interaction with the brand on the platform is affecting (Moran & Muzellec, 2017). Effective advertising on SNS platforms engages with users rather than showering them with content and expecting a favorable response.

User concerns regarding privacy and social media have been found to have affected advertising on SNS. On the one hand, users are seemingly willing to trade personal information to an SNS advertisement; in return, advertisers saw increased purchase intention, word-of-mouth (WOM) mentions, and an overall spread of the brand throughout the network (van Noort, Antheunis, & Verlegh, 2014). However, users are also leery of their data being used by advertisers, which can affect users' behavior toward advertising they see on SNS (van Noort et al., 2014). There is the possibility that if advertisers ask for detailed personal information, rather than “basic, ‘shallow’ information” (Van Noort et al., 2014, p. 247), users would be turned off

by such a request. A change to Facebook's privacy policy in 2014 gave users more control over how advertisers used personal data; this change welcomed by users (Tucker, 2014). Giving users the perception that they had more control over how advertisers and marketers used their data was found to increase the effectiveness of advertisements (Tucker, 2014). The perceptions of users and how their data is used contributes to user perceptions of advertising on SNS platforms.

Traditional notions of what makes advertising effective has translated from the past into the current age of social media. Advertisements on SNS platforms were found to be effective when they informed, entertained, and were found to be credible by audiences, which increased purchase intentionality online (Dao, Le, Cheng & Chen, 2014). Interestingly, this phenomenon was found to be more influential on content sharing sites such as Flickr and YouTube than it was on SNS like Facebook (Dao et al., 2014). Conversely, if SNS users find advertising on platforms to be irritating, the SNS advertisements would see a decrease in value (Saxena & Khanna, 2013). In order to be effective, ads on SNS should "focus on providing information content in their advertisements to make their advertisements worth for consumers" (Saxena & Khanna, 2013, p. 23). As was the case with traditional notions of advertising effectiveness and value, advertising on SNS platforms is successful when it informs, entertains, and avoids irritating users.

As time has gone on and SNS have become an increasingly common part of life, users have seemingly become aware of advertising on the platforms and have taken steps to avoid advertising on social media where possible. In turn, advertisers have turned to more controversial or shocking content to gain users' attention. In one study, users avoided SNS advertising they deemed controversial and were more receptive to advertising that they considered to be more ethical (Ferreira, Michaelidou, Moraes & McGrath, 2017). The findings regarding user ad avoidance "question[ed] the efficacy of social media advertising generally, particularly where

consumers might perceive such as offensive, annoying or irritating due to the media being used,” (Ferreira et al., 2017, p. 196).

Social Media Fatigue

Fatigue and overload. The words “fatigue” and “overload” do not specifically mean exhaustion in a physical sense alone but can refer to mental and emotional exhaustion. One such form of fatigue relevant to the discussion of SMF is compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue is a kind of burnout experienced by healthcare providers, first responders and news media personal wherein the emotional burden of caring for those in need and bearing witness to great suffering numbs responders and leads to burnout (Figley, 2002; Roberts, Flannelly, Weaver, & Figley, 2003; Dworzniak, 2009). News media audiences can become fatigued to unpleasant stories, leading to a lack of compassion for the affected and burnout; trying to shock audiences into action rarely succeed in getting audiences to care (McIntyre & Sobel, 2016). Finally, news overload describes news consumers feeling as though they are receiving too much information from too many outlets, leading to fatigue and a cutting back of news intake (Song, Jung, & Kim, 2017). Both of these phenomena track with descriptions of how users of SNS experience SMF.

SMF history. 2011 saw the beginnings of the study and the identification of SMF. Media reports from 2011 speak of early SNS users reporting feeling strain from the pressure to engage across several social networks (Rosenbloom, 2011). An entire industry had developed around taking SNS users’ tiredness and fatigue and denying them access to their profiles for their own good and move them toward a “social media detox” (Rosenbloom, 2011, para. 24). “Social media fatigue” as a term came to be when researchers from the consumer research firm Gartner used the phrase to describe the results of a survey, which found 25% of respondents were using social media less than when they joined SNS (Goatsduff & Pettey, 2011). Years before the

privacy scandals that currently engulf the SNS industry, the Gartner study found that a third of respondents had concerns around SNS and privacy (Goadsduff & Pettey, 2011). However, it should be noted that there was a significant difference in age when it came to SNS and privacy concerns, with young adults having the most concern and teenagers reporting the least (Goadsduff & Pettey, 2011). The “Kony2012” social media campaign, which was meant to raise awareness of the crimes of Ugandan terrorist Joseph Kony, was the subject of anecdotal reports of SNS users viewing the campaign with skepticism because it was centered on SNS (Dailey, 2012). One marketing professor described the “Kony2012” skepticism as proof of “social media fatigue” developing (Dailey, 2012). Though the history of SMF as an observed phenomenon has been a relatively short one, it nevertheless has made its presence felt in popular culture.

SMF symptoms and causes. There has been considerable work done regarding the potential symptoms and causes for SMF. Concerns about privacy have featured prominently SMF-related research, with researchers finding that more significant concern regarding privacy on SNS leads to an increase in SMF (Logan, Bright & Grau, 2018; Bright, Kleiser & Grau, 2015; Xiao & Mou, 2019). When signing up for SNS services, users agreed to terms of service requiring the sharing of personal information, leading to users feeling as though their privacy has been invaded (Xiao & Mou, 2019). SNS users that experience SMF also report that “stressors,” such as information overload, feature overload, and the pressure to interact on SNS, all contributed to SMF, with social overload (a feeling of being pressured to keep up social contact through interaction with others via SNS) being the most significant factor in SMF and, therefore, disengagement and dissatisfaction with SNS (Zhang, Zhao, Lu & Yang, 2016). This feeling of being overwhelmed by SNS was most acute in men and older people (Zhang et al., 2016). SNS users that had greater self-confidence in using SNS, had pre-existing positive perceptions of

SNS, and more extroverted individuals have been found less likely to experience SMF (Bright et al., 2015; Xiao & Mou, 2019). Conversely, individuals that had higher SNS self-efficacy and were more neurotic personalities did experience SMF more profoundly (Bright et al., 2015; Xiao & Mou, 2019).

Recommendations regarding SMF. Scholars have alerted the industry to the potential problems that SMF poses for SNS operators but have not brought in the perspectives of advertising professionals themselves for what they believe may be going on, if anything, at all. SMF research has recommended on dialing back on content and increased transparency as a way to comfort users and their SMF-related concerns (Bright et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2016). There have been warnings that fewer eyes on brand profile pages could lead to a decreased ability to convert page viewers into customers (Bright et al., 2015). While academic work surrounding SMF has produced several suggestions aimed at combatting SMF in SNS users, there has not been work connecting SMF in users and their perceptions of effective strategic communication.

Conclusion. Although SMF as a recognized term has only existed since 2011, its impact has generated a considerable amount of attention and research by journalists and researchers. As is the case with other forms of fatigue, SMF would seem to affect certain SNS users with feelings of burnout and overwhelming regarding the pressures to maintain a presence on the platform(s) and manage the enormous flow of information SNS provides. SMF seems to pose a distinct threat to the model upon which social media companies rely, i.e., gaining and keeping users' attention. Without eyeballs seeing ads, the advertisers who use SNS have less of an incentive to pay SNS operators for the tools that allow them to target users. While research has gone into depth regarding the symptoms and causes of SMF, there has not been an effort to evaluate how SNS users perceive SMF and its effects on advertising on social media. The

perceptions of the advertising profession have not been taken into account in the course of SMF research. It will be the aim of this project to consider the perceptions of both users and professionals regarding SMF and effective advertising on SNS.

Research Questions

There has been a great deal of academic and journalistic work done on advertising on SNS and SMF. Much of this work has centered on SNS usage and possible causes of SMF. However, there has not been an examination of how two groups at opposite ends of social media, users, and advertising professionals, perceive SMF and possible effects the phenomena may have on advertising on SNS. Therefore,

***RQ1:** How do advertising professionals perceive the effects of SMF on advertising on SNS platforms?*

***RQ2:** How do users' SMF affect the perceived effectiveness of advertising on SNS platforms?*

***RQ3:** Do advertising professionals have accurate perceptions of users' SMF and its effect on advertising on SNS?*

Method

In order to assess the perceptions of SNS users and advertisers regarding SMF, data was collected using a series of in-depth interviews with advertising professionals and a survey of social media users. Interviews were chosen as the preferred method for data collection from professionals due to interviews' ability to bring out the participants' view of the world as they see it (Morrison, Haley, Sheehan & Taylor, 2012). A survey provides the best method to understand how SNS users' perceptions en masse (Jugenheimer, Kelley, Hudson & Bradley, 2014). After the interviews and survey were concluded, the student researcher analyzed survey

results and interview transcripts to find themes and patterns related to perceptions of SMF and its effects and possible conflicts between professionals and SNS users.

Sample

Professional Interviews. Convenience sampling was used for interviews with advertising professionals and the survey of SNS users. Advertising professionals were recruited through a combination of convenience and snowball samples. The goal was to recruit local advertising professionals with experience in and responsibility for SNS advertising and accounts. Interviews continued until data saturation was reached.

The interviews took place between January 28 and March 2, 2020, either in-person ($n = 5$), via phone ($n = 4$), or via teleconference software ($n = 2$). Data saturation was achieved after 11 interviews. All the participants had experience working in either local advertising agencies, corporate advertising departments or both. Two participants had advertising experience outside of the United States. Of the 11 participants, seven were male and four were female. There were seven Caucasian participants, three Hispanic American participants, and one Asian American participant. The professionals' mean and median ages were 38 years old. The professionals' time in the advertising industry came to a median and mean of nine and 12 years, respectively. Finally, the professionals reported having been in their current positions for a median and mean of one and two years, respectively. The professionals' job titles varied from "Digital Content Manager" to "Owner." The discussion guide for professional interviews can be found in Appendix C. Table 1 has an individual break down of the participants and their demographic details.

Table 1*Professional Interview Participant Demographics**

Participant	Job title	Sex	Ethnicity	Age	Years worked in advertising	Time in current position	Interview format
1	Digital Marketing Consultant	Male	Caucasian	35	15	4 Years	In-Person
2	Director of Strategy & Distribution	Female	Caucasian	26	4	5 Months	In-Person
3	Brand Strategist/ Communications Planner	Male	Caucasian	38	5	3 Years	In-Person
4	Owner	Male	Caucasian	46	8	2 Years	In-Person
5	Digital Content Manager	Female	Caucasian	35	9	1 Year	In-Person
6	Principal Executive Creative Director	Male	Hispanic American	52	35	7 Years	Telephone
7	SVP of Client Partnership	Male	Caucasian	38	16	8 Months	Telephone
8	Brand Strategist	Male	Hispanic American	41	11	2 Weeks	Telephone
9	Digital Marketing Consultant	Female	Asian American	27	5	2 Months	Telephone
10	Senior Interactive Producer	Female	Caucasian	24	5	1 Week	Video Conferencing
11	Senior Marketing Product Director	Male	Hispanic American	53	20	2 Years	Video Conferencing

Note.

*Conducted between January 28, 2020 and March 2, 2020

SNS User Survey. The survey of user perceptions of SMF and its effects on the effectiveness of advertising on SNS was achieved using a convenience sample. Although not as good as a random sample, an adequately large sample should be enough to project generalizability to the broader population (Jugenheimer et al., 2014). The sample was recruited through Amazon MTurk. Buhrmester, Kwang, and Gosling (2011) found that MTurk was a good source of survey participants, requiring only “nickels and dimes for 5-10 minute tasks (p. 5). Participants for the consumer survey were compensated for their participation with \$0.30.

The survey was conducted on March 30, 2020, using Qualtrics. There was a target of 200 participants for the survey. There were 205 participants who took the survey according to Qualtrics; after data cleaning, there were 199 useable results. Results that were not useable included four results from the researcher previewing the survey and those from participants who had disagreed with the consent form, were subsequently sent by Qualtrics to the end of the survey and used the provided validation code to request compensation through MTurk. A check of Qualtrics found that the participants in question ($n = 2$) had not completed the survey, and their data was eliminated from the dataset used for analysis.

Survey participants were social media users that were at least 18 years of age or older and were recruited using MTurk. The full breakdown of participant demographic information can be found in Tables 2 through 6.

Table 2

Survey Participant Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	121	60.8
Female	78	39.2
Total	199	100.0

Table 3*Survey Participant Age Range (Usable Answers Only)*

Age	Frequency	Percent
19-25	38	19.8
26-32	77	40.1
33-40	37	19.3
41-48	14	7.3
49-58	16	8.3
59-73	10	5.2
Total	192	100

Table 4*Survey Participant Ethnicity*

	Frequency	Percent
Caucasian	120	60.3
African American	17	8.5
Asian American	24	12.1
Hispanic American	12	6.0
American Indian	10	5.0
Multiracial	4	2.0
Other	10	5.0
Prefer not to say	2	1.0
Total	199	100.0

Table 5*Survey Participant Education*

	Frequency	Percent
Less than high school	1	0.5
General Education Development (GED) diploma	5	2.5
High school graduate	15	7.5
Some college education	37	18.6
College graduate	114	57.3
Postgraduate degree/PhD	25	12.6
Other	1	0.5
Prefer not to say	1	0.5
Total	199	100.0

Table 6*Survey Participant Household Income*

	Frequency	Percent
\$20,000 And Below	31	15.6
\$20,001 To \$40,000	50	25.1
\$40,001 To \$60,000	44	22.1
\$60,001 To \$80,000	32	16.1
\$80,001 To \$100,000	20	10.1
\$100,001 to \$120,000	13	6.5
\$120,001 and above	7	3.5
Prefer not to say	2	1.0
Total	199	100.0

Procedure

Professional Interviews. There were separate procedures for professional interviews and the survey. As stated above, professionals were recruited through a combination of convenience and snowball sampling using the recruitment message found in Appendix A. After setting a time and place or medium in which to meet, the student researcher and the professional participant

met for the interview. After an initial introduction, the participant and student researcher would sign the consent document in Appendix B. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted using the interview guide found in Appendix C. Interview questions began with the participants' work experience and moved next to their observations about SNS and how advertising on the platforms have changed throughout their careers. The interviews concluded with questions regarding perceptions of SMF, if any. All interviews were audio-recorded and were between 30 and 45 minutes in length. Interviews were transcribed using Rev, an online transcription service. Before uploading to Rev, audio files of the interviews were edited to remove identifiable information. The choice of Rev to transcribe the interview serves to protect participant privacy and confidentiality by the service's use of encryption for all files uploaded to its servers, compliance with European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) data privacy regulations, vetted transcriptionists who sign confidentiality agreements about their work, and a policy of not selling information collected to third parties ("Security and Privacy at Rev," n.d.) After interviews were complete, the student researcher thanked participants and offered to answer any questions they had; many participants said they desired to see a copy of the completed study.

SNS User Survey. The survey was administered through Qualtrics. Survey participants were recruited on MTurk, using the recruitment message in Appendix A, and after having accepted the assignment, they were directed to the survey on Qualtrics. After consenting to participate (see Appendix B for the consent document), participants began the survey by answering questions about their level of SNS usage generally on an interval scale ranging from zero-to-six (for example, "On a 0 to 6 scale, 0 meaning 'Never,' and 6 meaning 'all the time,' please indicate your level of social media usage."). The full survey can be found in Appendix E.

After describing their level of SNS usage, participants were asked to indicate which SNS platforms they used from a list including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and “other,” which allowed participants to enter alternative SNS that they used. Next, participants were asked to describe their level of usage of their preferred platforms using a zero-to-six interval scale (for example, “Of the social media platform(s) you said you used in the previous question, please indicate how often you use the platform(s). Classify your usage on a 0 to 6 scale, 0 meaning ‘Never,’ and 6 meaning ‘all the time.’”). After answering questions about their SNS preferences and level of usage, participants were divided into a control group and a SMF group as randomly and evenly as possible by Qualtrics; 103 participants (51.76%) were in the control group, and 96 (48.24%) were in the SMF group. The control group was shown a short fictional social media feed (resembling Twitter), while the SMF group was shown a longer version of the fictional social media feed; both stimuli can be found in Appendix D. Since the scale measuring SMF (which will be discussed in the next paragraph) used in the study measures SMF primarily through information overload, the stimuli were designed to elicit information overload in participants so that the operationalization of SMF in both the manipulation and measurement were the same. Both stimuli social media feeds contained the same advertisement and shared one tweet in common so that the following comprehension questions would be the same for both control and SMF stimuli groups. Both groups were asked the same comprehension questions in order to determine if participants’ SMF had been invoked by exposure to the longer, SMF stimulus. Lower rates of accuracy to the correct answers to the comprehension questions indicated stronger SMF.

Next, participants were asked questions regarding SMF with a Likert-type scale, adapted from Bright et al.’s (2015) five item SMF scale. Questions from this scale are designed to test

participants' level of SMF, specifically their level of information overload; for example, "I find that social media sites do not have enough detail to quickly find the information I am looking for" (Bright et al., 2015). After answering questions related to SMF, participants were asked to answer a series of questions regarding the effectiveness of the advertisement they viewed. The effectiveness questions included scales of advertising informativeness, entertainment, and irritation (each with five items) from Ducoffe (1996) and a scale of purchase intention developed by Hausman and Siekpe (2009), which contained four items. Example questions in the advertising effectiveness scale included:

Informativeness: "I find this advertising for Maxwell House...Is a good source or product information" (Ducoffe, 1996)

Entertainment: "I find this advertising...Is entertaining" (Ducoffe, 1996)

Irritation: "I find this advertising...Insults people's intelligence" (Ducoffe, 1996)

Purchase Intention: "I will definitely buy products from Maxwell House in the near future." (Houseman & Siekpe, 2009)

Finally, participants were asked to rate the advertisement relevance adapted from Jung's three item scale (2017); for example, "When I saw advertising for Maxwell House, I felt that it might be...Of value to me." All scales associated with questions of advertising effectiveness were Likert-type scales running from one to seven, with one meaning participants "strongly disagree" with the statement at hand and seven meaning participants "strongly agree" with the statement. Questions regarding participant demographic data were saved until the end of the survey. After completing the survey, participants were shown a debriefing message (see Appendix F) informing them of the nature of the survey, that the stimulus they saw was from a false account

but composed of real tweets, and providing a code that could be entered into MTurk to ensure compensation for completing the survey.

Transcript Analysis and Survey

Professional Interviews. Interview transcripts were analyzed for themes and differing perspectives on the perceived impact (or lack thereof) of SMF on advertising on SNS platforms. The student researcher read the transcripts twice, once while proofreading them for accuracy against the audio recording and again when coding. During the analysis stage, the student researcher recorded notes and quotes summarizing participants' answers in a spreadsheet. The student researcher then analyzed the summaries using open coding and axial techniques described by Corbin and Straus (2008).

Survey. After the conclusion of the survey, participants' responses were analyzed using SPSS. Scales used for the survey include a five-item series designed to test social media fatigue (Bright et al., 2015). As stated in the Literature Review, "effectiveness" for this study is a composite of Ducoffe's (1996) advertising effectiveness scale (consisting of informativeness, entertainment, and irritation questions, with five items each) and a scale developed by Hausman and Siekpe (2009) to measure purchase intention (containing four items). Finally, a scale for advertising relevance was adapted from Jung's (2017) three-item scale. Advertising relevance has been linked to how effective consumers perceive advertising to be (Baker & Lutz, 2000), and it was included in the regression models as a control variable. Tests for data reliability were run on the scales; all were found to be reliable, with no scale having a Cronbach's alpha lower than 0.80 (see Table 7). A multiple regression analysis was then conducted to establish the relationship between SMF and the advertising effectiveness scales, with the scale for advertising relevance acting as an independent variable.

Table 7*Scale Reliability*

Scale	Cronbach's alpha	Scale based on
SMF	0.80	Bright et al., 2015
Advertising relevance	0.94	Jung, 2017
Informativeness	0.95	Ducoffe, 1996
Entertainment	0.96	Ducoffe, 1996
Irritation	0.94	Ducoffe, 1996
Purchase intention	0.98	Hausman & Siekpe, 2009

Results**Professional Interviews**

The professional participants were asked a series of questions about their experience, present outlook, and future expectations for advertising on social media.

Social media over time. Views on the past, present, and future of advertising on social media concentrated mostly on how advertising had become more difficult due to rule changes from the platforms and how users and platforms were encouraging more private and smaller groups of interactions amongst users. Most participants said that in the early days of advertising on social media (and Facebook specifically, since most participants claimed that it was the platform on which advertising was most successful), platforms allowed targeting to be extremely specific, down to almost individual users. However, over time, platforms restricted advertisers by making targeting more complicated and started to give preference to organic content over paid content. Social media in 2020 was an information-gathering source for consumers, but not necessarily a place for searching what to purchase; as Participant 7 put it, "...and the whole thing I think used to be about, brands used to say, it used to be what to buy, now social media has turned it into why to buy it" (Participant 7, personal communication, February 13, 2020).

The Facebook-based Cambridge Analytica scandal, and the resulting privacy backlash from users and regulators, also played a prominent role in professionals' outlook for the current state and future of advertising on social media. Repeatedly, participants across experience levels cited the recent scandal as a reason for Facebook and other SNS to alter their advertising algorithms, making the job of advertisers more difficult. Several participants said they believed that the scandal, other revelations surrounding privacy on SNS, had changed user behavior on SNS, especially regarding their willingness to engage with advertisements and brand pages. When asked about the future use of advertising on social media, professionals said they thought that platforms would continue restrictions on paid advertising and encourage smaller, more private group or chat interactions over the "feed" style of format that figure prominently in modern social media interfaces.

On the subject of the role of "influencers" (such as those found on Instagram), professionals disagreed. Some professionals claimed that the brands would move to use "influencers" more for advertising since users trusted individuals more than ads (which they were more aware of than in the past). Other professionals claimed that the use of "influencers" for advertising on social media had peaked and would decline. The debate over the role of influencers hinged on what professionals thought paid SNS advertising would look in the future (targeting more restricted or the same as the present), the role regulators would have regarding "influencer" marketing, and whether the number of "influencers" already on SNS had saturated the market and rendered "influencer" marketing ineffective.

What makes effective advertising on social media. Professionals were also asked to talk about what made effective advertising on social media; their answers mostly fell into one of two camps. One group ($n = 7$) of professionals claimed that content, story, and authenticity were

of paramount importance in advertising on social media. Another group ($n = 4$) of professionals described social media's ability to identify and target users who would be open to taking action that advertisers wished them to take as being the most essential part of effective advertising on social media. Participant 7 (personal communication, February 13, 2020) described effective advertising on social media as being about the ability to target users when they "are in a mindset to receive that type of communication."

Professionals on social media fatigue. When asked whether users were responding differently to advertising on social media over the years, professionals expressed the idea that given social media's current age as a communication platform, users were more aware of advertising than in the past and consequently were not as likely to engage with platforms. Participant 3 (personal communication, February 5, 2020) said he believed that the increase in use of social media "influencers" by brands was a way to counteract the increasing awareness of social media users of advertisements on SNS, which they linked to a decrease in traffic to brand pages and engagement with brand advertising. This answer highlighted some of the responses to the next question, which asked professionals to describe what the term "social media fatigue" meant to them; almost every participant described the term as a feeling of burnout, overload and exhaustion associated with the content of social media and the need to participate. Participant 1 went so far as to say that to their mind, social media fatigue meant that "content isn't exciting anymore" (personal communication, January 28, 2020). Interestingly, when asked about the term "social media fatigue," most professionals described the phenomena in personal terms relating to their own social media use and then translated that experience onto what they believed users felt.

Professionals on RQ1. On the crucial question of whether fatigue affected how social media users perceived advertisements on the platform, professionals largely agreed (with some

exceptions) that SMF did affect advertising effectiveness on SNS but were divided on the specifics of how SMF's influence played out in practice. One group of professionals said that they believed users continued to use social media out of habit, but SMF caused users to unconsciously scroll past advertisements in a communication space that was overcrowded; in effect, users physically saw the advertisements but did not consciously process their content. The view that users continue to use SNS but do not consciously process ads was best represented by Participant 8, who said that SNS users with SMF would not be:

...engaged with the communication or ad that they throw at them. So they're tired of the engaging with the platform role. They're definitely not going to be a good target for anyone who wants to use the platform to communicate to them. (personal communication, February 17, 2020)

Another group of professionals, represented by Participant 11, said that SMF was such that if users had SMF, "I will assume you will not enter any social media because you have fatigue. If you didn't have enter, you're not exposed to a message recommendations or new things that you're launching," (personal communication, March 2, 2020). Under this view of SMF's affects, SMF causes users to stop using social media, rendering advertisements placed on platforms by advertisers useless and ineffective.

There were other views among the professional participants in relation to how they believed SMF would affect advertising on SNS. Participant 2 (personal communication, February 2, 2020), while agreeing with the consciousness view of SMF's effect on advertising on SMF, believed that social media users would only be affected for a short period of time by SMF, disengage from social media entirely, and return. Participant 4 (personal communication, February 8, 2020) believed that the effect of social media "siloeing" was such that users were

used to seeing specific ads in their social media feed and so long as those ads “landed” with the targeted user, SMF was not a factor in their perception of the advertisement. Finally, Participant 7 (personal communication, February 13, 2020) expressed the view that the number of SNS users affected by SMF was small enough not to be a consideration for advertisers when designing ads for social media. The outlier views of these professionals, while not shared by the other professional participants, do represent unique points of view regarding SMF and its effects that should be kept in mind in future discussions of SMF and its influence on advertising.

SNS User Survey

Social media usage by SNS and device category. After professional interviews were completed, the study turned to a survey of SNS users. Survey participants reported high levels of social media use, responding with a mean of 4.35 ($SD = 1.26$) and a median of 5.00 on a zero-to-six scale of social media usage, with zero indicating “never” having used social media and six translating to using social media “all the time.” When asked to indicate what SNS they used, participants indicated Facebook ($n = 172$, 86.4%) most often, followed by Instagram ($n = 143$, 71.9%), Twitter ($n = 112$, 56.3%), LinkedIn ($n = 67$, 33.7%), and Snapchat ($n = 58$, 29.1%). Several participants ($n = 25$, 12.6%) reported using other social media sites, including Reddit, YouTube, TikTok, Pinterest, Goodreads, Discord, and WhatsApp. Facebook emerged as the SNS with the most frequent use among survey respondents; using an interval zero-to-six scale to describe overall social media use (with zero indicating “never” have used social media and six translating to using social media “all the time”), Facebook scored a mean of 3.79 ($SD = 1.77$) and a median of 4.00. Facebook was followed by Instagram ($mean = 3.30$, $median = 4.00$, $SD = 2.13$), Twitter ($mean = 2.58$, $median = 3.00$, $SD = 2.11$), Other social media sites ($mean = 1.69$, $median = 1.00$, $SD = 2.08$), LinkedIn ($mean = 1.68$, $median = 1.00$, $SD = 1.77$), and Snapchat

(*mean* = 1.67, *median* = 1.00, *SD* = 1.99). It should be noted here that some users indicated the use of some SNS, and then when asked to describe their frequency of use, articulated using multiple SNS that they did not say they used in the previous question. This drawback will be mentioned in the Limitations section of this study.

Survey participants were asked what devices they used most to engage with social media; mobile phones were the most used device category ($n = 158$, 79.4%), closely followed by laptops and desktop computers ($n = 143$, 71.9%), and far ahead of tablets ($n = 39$, 19.6%). Asked to describe the level of engagement with social media on each device category, participants reported using mobile phones most often to interact with social media; on an interval zero-to-six scale, mobile phones scored a mean of 4.69 ($SD = 1.25$) and a median of 5.0. Desktops and laptops (*mean* = 3.99, *median* = 4.00, *SD* = 1.55) followed mobile phones as having the most frequency of use for interacting with social media, with tablets (*mean* = 3.44, *median* = 4.00, *SD* = 1.59) having the least frequency of use by participants when interacting with social media.

Control and SMF stimuli exposure comprehension questions. As stated in the Methods section, participants were divided into a group that would view the control stimulus social media feed and a group that would view the longer social media feed designed to induce SMF. Both groups were asked an identical set of comprehension questions after viewing the stimulus to see whether the SMF group stimulus has induced more SMF so that there is enough variability of SMF among participants. The results of the comprehension questions for both the control group and the SMF stimulus group can be found in Tables 8 (regarding Question One) and 9 (regarding question Two), with an asterisk indicating the correct answer to the given comprehension question.

Table 8*Stimulus Comprehension: Question One Responses*

Question 1 - Who was the first tweet in the list from?	Ariana Grande	Taylor Swift	Lilly Singh*
Control Stimulus ($n = 103$)	15 (14.6%)	22 (21.4%)	66 (64.1%)
SMF Stimulus ($n = 96$)	16 (16.7%)	25 (26.0%)	55 (57.3%)

Note.

*Indicates the correct answer

Table 9*Stimulus Comprehension: Question Two Responses*

Question 2 - What product or service was the advertisement from?	Enterprise Car Rental	Maxwell House*	Amazon Prime
Control Stimulus ($n = 103$)	17 (16.5%)	71 (68.9%)	15 (14.6%)
SMF Stimulus ($n = 96$)	24 (25.0%)	61 (63.5%)	11 (11.5%)

Note.

*Indicates the correct answer

In both cases, the group who viewed the control stimulus answer correctly more often than the group who answered after viewing the stimulus meant to induce SMF. The effect was most pronounced in the first question, with 64.1% ($n = 66$) of control respondents answering correctly compared to 57.3% ($n = 55$) of SMF respondents. However, the effect was less evident in the second question, with 68.9% ($n = 71$) of control respondents answering correctly and 63.5% ($n = 61$) of SMF respondents responding correctly. An independent sample t-test found that the difference in the level of SMF between those who were exposed to the control stimuli ($mean = 4.08$, $SD = 1.30$) and SMF stimuli ($mean = 4.21$, $SD = 1.13$) was not statistically significant: $t(197) = -0.80$, $p = 0.42$. Although the results of the comprehension questions and means of SMF of the two groups indicated a trend that the SMF group experienced more SMF

compared to the control group, the quantitative portion of this study was treated as a survey instead of an experiment because of the insignificant t-test.

Table 10

Explained variance, unstandardized regression coefficients, standardized regression coefficients, significance, and confidence intervals with SMF as independent variable, controlling for the effects of ad relevance - Informativeness

Scale	R Square	Unstandardized b	Standardized coefficients beta	Significance (p value)	95% confidence interval for b
Informativeness	0.60	0.16	0.12	0.01	0.03 – 0.28
Ad Relevance	n/a	0.65	0.72	<0.00	0.56 – 0.73

Note. The R Squared value is for the whole regression model.

Table 11

Explained variance, unstandardized regression coefficients, standardized regression coefficients, significance, and confidence intervals with SMF as independent variable, controlling for the effects of ad relevance - Entertainment

Scale	R Square	Unstandardized b	Standardized coefficients beta	Significance (p value)	95% confidence interval for b
Entertainment	0.73	0.07	0.05	0.21	-0.04 – 0.19
Ad Relevance	n/a	0.80	0.83	<0.00	0.73 – 0.89

Note. The R Squared value is for the whole regression model.

Table 12

Explained variance, unstandardized regression coefficients, standardized regression coefficients, significance, and confidence intervals with SMF as independent variable, controlling for the effects of ad relevance - Irritation

Scale	R Square	Unstandardized b	Standardized coefficients beta	Significance (p value)	95% confidence interval for b
Irritation	0.30	0.49	0.36	<0.00	0.31 – 0.66
Ad Relevance	n/a	0.28	0.30	<0.00	0.16 – 0.40

Note. The R Squared value is for the whole regression model.

Table 13

Explained variance, unstandardized regression coefficients, standardized regression coefficients, significance, and confidence intervals with SMF as independent variable, controlling for the effects of ad relevance – Purchase Intention

Scale	R Square	Unstandardized b	Standardized coefficients beta	Significance (p value)	95% confidence interval for b
Purchase Intention	0.78	0.03	0.02	0.55	-0.08 – 0.14
Ad Relevance	n/a	0.90	0.87	<0.00	0.83 – 0.98

Note. The R Squared value is for the whole regression model.

RQ2 and regression analysis. A multiple regression analysis was used to determine the effect (if any) that SMF would have on the effectiveness of advertising on social media; the results of the regression analysis can be found in Tables 10 to 13. None of the scales used needed to be reverse coded. Interpretation of the regression coefficients used the standard suggested by Keith (2014). According to Keith (2014), standardized coefficients with a value of 0.25 and

above have a large effect on the variable in question, with values between 0.10 and 0.25 having a moderate effect, values from 0.05 to 0.10 a small effect, and values below 0.05 having such a small effect as having no meaning.

The multiple regression analysis found that informativeness ($R^2 = 0.60$, $B = 0.16$, $b = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$) and irritation ($R^2 = 0.30$, $B = 0.49$, $b = 0.36$, $p < 0.001$) were affected by SMF, controlling for the effects of advertisement relevance. In contrast to informativeness and irritation, entertainment ($R^2 = 0.73$, $B = 0.07$, $b = 0.05$, $p > 0.05$) and purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.78$, $B = .03$, $b = 0.02$, $p > 0.05$) were not affected by SMF. Advertising relevance affected informativeness ($B = 0.65$, $b = 0.72$, $p < 0.001$) and irritation ($B = 0.28$, $b = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$). Likewise, advertising relevance also affected entertainment ($B = 0.81$, $b = 0.83$, $p < 0.001$) and purchase intention ($B = 0.90$, $b = 0.87$, $p < 0.001$).

The survey results yielded three interesting insights into how user SMF affects users' perceptions of advertising effectiveness. First, there was a moderate relationship between SMF and informativeness. Second, SMF and irritation also had a relationship, but a stronger one than the relationship with informativeness. SMF did not affect users' perceptions of the advertisement's entertainment value or their purchase intention.

Discussion

The combined results of the professional interviews and the SNS user survey lead to answers to the three proposed research questions. Advertising professionals appeared divided on the specifics of how SMF influences advertising on SNS. The survey of SNS users suggests that SMF does influence at least part of what makes advertising on SNS effective. The results of the study overall contribute to the current understanding of SMF and expand SMF research through the contributions of advertising professionals and their thoughts on SMF.

RQ1

How do advertising professionals perceive the effects of SMF on advertising on SNS platforms?

Past studies of SMF have focused on how SMF affects SNS users (Xiao & Mou, 2019; Zhang et al., 2016); this study has expanded the body of SMF research by bringing in the perspectives of advertising professionals and how they view SMF. From the interviews with advertising professionals, it is possible to infer several points related to RQ1. Nearly all the professionals described SMF as being associated with strain (Rosenbloom, 2011) and “overload” (Zhang et al., 2016), terms used to describe SMF and its effects since the phenomenon was first described in 2011. Several professionals, when responding to how social media had changed over the years and how users responded to ads, said that they believed that privacy concerns seemed to be influencing users. The anecdotal observation by professionals that privacy concerns seem to be changing user behavior on SNS aligns with the findings from past academic studies of SMF and privacy (Logan et al., 2018; Bright et al., 2015; Xiao & Mou, 2019). This study has shown that, at least to the professionals interviewed, privacy continues to be a factor in SNS user behavior regarding advertising on social media platforms. Finally, several professionals described the modern social media advertising landscape as one in which users had a greater awareness of advertising, which was linked by the professionals to a decrease in traffic to brand social media pages. The decline in engagement with brand social media pages described by the interviewed professionals adds industry credibility to Bright et al.’s (2015) concern that SMF would decrease traffic to brand social media pages as a consequence of SMF.

Opinions on whether fatigue affects how users perceive advertisements on social media were primarily united in principal that SMF did affect user perceptions. However, professionals disagreed on how SMF influenced users’ perceptions of ads. The central point of disagreement

regarding the effect SMF may have on advertising on SNS among the professionals interviewed is whether SMF causes users to leave social media completely (thus rendering ads useless) or users continue to use social media but are otherwise unconscious to advertisements on the platform. If users are still on social media but unconscious to advertisements due to SMF, it is still theoretically possible for advertisers to design effective advertisements that break through users' fatigue. However, if SMF drives users off platforms, advertising professionals working on SNS have a bigger problem on their hands. The academic literature reviewed for this study did not indicate user reactions to SMF over time, i.e., whether SMF-affected users left SNS completely or whether users continued on platforms.

Even for the advertising professionals interviewed who believed that SMF was a temporary phenomenon or that the number of users affected by SMF was so small as to not be a danger to advertising on SNS, the implications of SMF and what it could do to advertising on SNS should be taken into consideration. While user engagement on some platforms may be on the decline, other platforms are growing in size (Perez, 2018). Since SMF can exist across social media platforms and borders (Bright et al., 2015; Xiao & Mou, 2019; Zhang et al., 2016), it is not unreasonable to believe that even if the number of users affected by SMF is small or SMF's effects are short-term, an increasing number of users and the rising popularity of new platforms could represent an escalating amount of risk to effective advertising on SNS. If a small percentage of SNS users are affected by SMF, this still represents a large number of individuals in absolute terms who are affected in their perception of SNS advertising by SMF.

In terms of an answer to RQ1, advertising professionals are largely united in their perception that SMF does affect advertising on SNS platforms. Based on the professionals interviewed, SMF is widely accepted as having effects on how users perceive and engage with

advertisements on SNS platforms. Among those interviewed, there is nuance to how exactly SMF influences users, with some believing users continue to use SNS but become “blind” to advertisements and others believing SMF drives users off platforms, rendering ads useless.

RQ 2

How do users' SMF affect the perceived effectiveness of advertising on SNS platforms?

The results of the SNS user survey contain interesting implications for RQ2. Using a SMF scale (Bright et al., 2015) focusing on information overload, one of SMF's contributing factors (Zhang et al., 2016), it would appear that SMF most affects users' perceptions of an advertisement's informativeness and how irritated users become when viewing an advertisement. According to the survey results, users' SMF can cause them to see ads on SNS as less informative and more irritating. Fortunately for advertisers, SMF does not appear to influence how users perceive an advertisement's entertainment value nor an advertisement's ability to influence purchase intention. However, it is also possible that participants paid particular attention to the advertisement in the stimuli because of the directions of the survey. SNS users' SMF affects user perceptions of an advertisement's information value and level of irritation, perhaps indicating that users with SMF are less like to process the message an ad is trying to communicate and become annoyed with the ad overall.

RQ 3

Do advertising professionals have accurate perceptions of users' SMF and its effect on advertising on SNS?

This study marks a new point in SMF research, wherein the perspectives of SMF of both advertising professionals and SNS users were incorporated into the same study. With the results of both the professional interviews and SNS user survey in mind, the answer to RQ 3 appears to

be that at least some advertising professionals have at least partially accurate perceptions of SNS users' SMF and how it affects advertising on SNS. The survey would suggest users' perceptions of advertisements' information value and irritation level are affected by SMF; therefore, it would appear that the advertising professionals who believed that users on SNS with SMF are not consciously processing advertisements on platforms due to their fatigue are onto something. The participants of the survey described their social media usage as a mean of 4.35 on a zero-to-six scale with zero meaning "never" and six meaning "all the time"; clearly, users are still on social media. However, those with SMF are most affected in how they understand an advertisement's information value and ability to irritate them; it would follow that advertising professionals need to keep in mind the amount of brainpower users expend when they see ads. The lack of a relationship with entertainment value and purchase intention could indicate that those two activities do not require as much user engagement as irritation and informativeness, and therefore, are not affected by SMF as the former two dimensions of ad effectiveness are. It is also possible that entertaining advertisements are more appealing to users than those trying to give users information. It could also be the case that the product advertised in the stimuli, Maxwell House coffee, was already known to users, who already had preconceived ideas about whether they intended to purchase Maxwell House or not. These findings represent a new point for academic researchers, advertising professionals, and SNS platform operators in their quest to understand SMF and how it affects users.

Implications

This study offers several implications for the academic study of SMF and the advertising profession. This research links SMF to at least having some influence over how effective

advertising is seen by SNS users, with SMF having influence on how users perceive an advertisement's informativeness and irritation.

In terms of the implications of this study for the advertising profession, there are several. Advertisers who place ads on SNS should be aware of the impacts that SMF has on their ads. The data shows that SMF can be detrimental to an advertisement's ability to inform (arguably one of the advertisement's most important functions) and can irritate users, however relevant the advertisement may be to the user. With the findings of this research in mind (and subsequent research on this subject if the results are confirmed), future advertisements on SNS should perhaps tend toward being entertaining and highly targeted toward users, to avoid the pitfalls of SMF's effects on advertising. However, this recommendation is a contradiction in that privacy is regularly cited by users (Logan et al., 2018; Bright et al., 2015; Xiao & Mou, 2019) as being one of the biggest influences of SMF. It is up to advertisers to discover the correct balance between making content that engages the relevant users without making users feel as though their privacy has been violated. Finally, the lack of a relationship between SMF and purchase intention should give advertisers some comfort that users' purchase intentions are not affected by SMF.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Limitations

As with any study, there are limitations to be found. The in-depth interviews with 11 advertising professionals in one metropolitan area and the associated demographics of the professionals were not as diverse as one would have liked. The demographics of the SNS user survey were not as representative of the general population as could be hoped for; similarly, the findings of the survey could be made stronger by having a larger sample size.

Additionally, there were issues between two questions asking about social media usage on the survey. Survey participants were asked to indicate what social media platforms they used (multiple selections were allowed), and in the following question, were asked to show how frequently they used the platforms they said they had used in the previous question. Despite language telling participants to indicate use only for those platforms they said they had used in the last question, some users indicated using platforms they did not say they used in the previous question, and vice versa. These responses constituted 104 (52.26%) of the 199 useable responses.

There is also the issue of the stimuli used for the control and SMF groups of the consumer survey. The stimuli were created from screenshots of a Twitter feed and manipulated to include the advertisement and other tweets from frequently followed accounts. Interviews with the advertising professionals revealed that Facebook was most often advertisers' SNS of choice. It is conceivable that had the survey stimuli been done with screenshots of a Facebook feed, results might have been different. However, using a Facebook feed to create the stimuli needed for the survey would have required the creation of a Facebook account, which requires a real person or business behind it. Twitter was used as the SNS to create the stimuli because the researcher had access to a Twitter account and could easily change the account's settings to follow to popular, widely followed Twitter accounts. This had the effect of giving the Twitter account in question a feed filled with tweets from commonly followed accounts, and therefore, advertisements that the average user would see. Despite the use of Twitter over the more conventional advertising platform of Facebook, SMF has been found to occur across multiple SNS and is not localized to one platform in particular (Bright et al., 2015; Xiao & Mou, 2019; Zhang et al., 2016).

Finally, the perceived SMF difference was not statistically significant between the two groups of the SNS user participants and therefore the quantitative portion of the study was

treated as a survey instead of an experiment. Had there was a statistically significant difference of SMF between two groups, the results of the quantitative portion may be different.

Future Research Directions

Future academic studies should explore the relationship between SMF and informativeness, and SMF and irritation, in greater depth. Such a future study should try to use Facebook, the SNS described as that which was most often used by advertising professionals. In addition, how users with SMF perceive video advertisements should also be explored, as several platforms such as TikTok are primarily video-based and now-legacy SNS such as Facebook are making video a more common feature for users.

Future studies could also test the two explanations given by advertising professionals for how SMF affects user perceptions: that users are still on SNS but unconscious to ads versus driven off SNS platforms completely. A study seeking to test the “consciousness” view of SMF’s effect on SNS advertising could utilize eye-tracking to measure how users with SMF react to SNS advertising; this study should control for device type to make sure that devices’ physical restrictions (such as screen size) do not influence the outcome. Studies seeking to find out whether SMF forces users off platforms completely could study how SMF affects user intentions to withdraw from social media. Finally, this study of SMF used a scale that addressed the information overload aspect of SMF (Bright et al., 2015); a future study of SMF’s influence on advertising on SNS should look at the other aspects of SMF that users have reported feeling, namely pressure to interact (commonly referred to as “fear of missing out”) and privacy concerns.

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Appendix A - Recruitment Messages

Professional In-Depth Interview Recruitment Message

Hello INSERT NAME HERE,

I wanted to reach out to ask whether you or someone you know in the industry would be interested in participating in a study I am doing for my master's thesis regarding advertising on social media. It would involve an in-depth interview that I anticipate taking about an hour to complete. As I said, the subject matter would be about social media, advertising on social media and your experience of it. I am happy to meet you wherever is most convenient for you. If you cannot participate in an interview, I would greatly appreciate it if you could refer me to a colleague who could, ideally someone who works in advertising on social media. If you do have a colleague in mind who could participate, please pass along this email.

If you or someone you refer me to agrees to participate, the interview would be recorded and transcribed. Any identifying information would be kept private and confidential and would not be shared with other individuals or organizations outside me, my faculty advisor (Dr. Liang Ma), and the appropriate authorities. The recording of the interview and transcript would be stored on a cloud server controlled by TCU. Any hard copy consent documents and other written materials will be held under lock and key by the lead investigator.

If you have any additional questions, I can be reached at p.c.yoxall@tcu.edu or 334-703-1690.

Thank you for your time,

Collin Yoxall

Questionnaire Participant Recruitment Message

Hello,

I am a graduate student at Texas Christian University (TCU) and I am inviting you to participate in a social media survey. You must be 18 years old or older to participate. The survey would take approximately 10-15 minutes and you will be compensated \$0.30. To receive compensation, you must complete the survey, then copy and paste the code at the end of the survey into the provided window in M-Turk. Be sure to leave your internet browser with M-Turk open while you take the survey, so you are able to enter the compensation code.

Your personal data and answers would be kept private and confidential. Your answers would be aggregated with others to produce a complete dataset. Data collected from the survey would be kept in a secure cloud drive controlled by TCU. Any hard copy consent documents and other written materials will be held by the lead investigator. The only people who would have access to this information would be myself, my advisor and the appropriate authorities.

Thank you for your time, Collin

Appendix B - Consent Documents

In-Depth Interview Consent Document

Title of Research: Perceptions of fatigue and social media advertising

Principal Investigator: Dr. Liang Ma

Co-investigators: Collin Yoxall

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must have worked in the advertising industry and have responsibilities regarding the development and implementation of advertising on social media. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

A summary of things you should know: This is a research study involving participants that has been approved by the TCU Institutional Review Board (IRB). Risks or discomforts from this research include disclosure of views regarding social media use and your views regarding your job. Please take the time to read this entire document and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of this research is to learn more about the perceptions of advertising professionals as it relates to social media and how social media affects your work.

What is my involvement in participating in this study?

If you agree to be in the study, we will ask you to do the following things:

Answer questions about your observations and views about social media, and advertising on social media.

The study will involve no direct benefit to you, the participant. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. You do not have to participate, and you can stop at any time.

This interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. Transcription will be handled by Rev, a service specializing in professional audio transcription. The audio of your interview will be edited before upload to remove identifying information. Rev maintains high standards of confidentiality, privacy and security. More information about Rev's procedures can be found at www.rev.com/security. Identifying information such as your name and employer will be censored from the transcript and the study's final report. In the course of our questioning, we may learn information about your job and views you may have. Only your views as they pertain to the study's subject matter will be included in the study. We will not share the interview recording or transcript with anyone other than the principal researcher, co-investigator, and other authorities as provided by law.

How long am I expected to be in this study for and how much of my time is required?

The interview should take approximately one hour.

What are the risks to me for participating in this study and how will they be minimized?

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Approved January 22, 2020

We do not believe there are any risks from participating in this research that are different from risk that you encounter in everyday life. There is a risk that recordings of the interview will become public; to minimize this, recordings and transcriptions will be kept in a secure cloud storage drive accessible only to the principle investigator, the student researcher and a transcription service used to transcribe this interview. Any hard copy consent documents and other written martial will be kept in a locked filing cabinet by the lead investigator. The transcription service used to transcribe the interview, Rev, maintains the highest standards of confidentiality and security, including encryption of files for upload, complying with European GDPR regulations for handling of personally identifiable information, confidentiality agreements for all employees, and a policy of not selling data to third parties. More information can be found at www.rev.com/security.

What are the benefits for participating in this study?

Although you will not directly benefit from being in this study, others in the advertising industry may benefit through increased knowledge of social media fatigue and how it is understood by other professionals.

Will I be compensated for participating in this study?

No.

What are the costs to me to be a part of the study?

Time taken during the interview.

Who can profit from study results?

TCU might/could be paid (e.g. licensing fees) in the future for the discoveries resulting from the study.

Other advertising agencies.

Companies or organizations with social media presence. Social media companies.

What is an alternative procedure(s) that I can choose instead of participating in this study?

The student researcher is open to discussing alternative interview options as a phone interview or via Skype, but any potential issue must be raised with the co-investigator. The same procedure as an in-person interview would be applied.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study records, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Personal identifying information will be removed from the final research report. Your records may be reviewed by Texas Christian University (TCU) officials, the

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Approved January 22, 2020

principal researcher, the co-investigator, or other individuals who will be bound by the same provisions of confidentiality.

What will happen to the information collected about me after the study is over?

Your name and other information that can directly identify you will be stored in a secure cloud storage service maintained by TCU. Any hard copy consent documents and other written materials will be held under lock and key by the lead investigator. As stated earlier, identifying information will not appear in the final research product. We may share your research data with other investigators without asking for your consent again, but it will not contain information that could directly identify you.

Is my participation voluntary?

Yes. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. If you decide to withdraw before this study is completed, your data will be made non-identifiable just as the participants who choose to continue with the study will have with their data.

Who should I contact if I have questions regarding the study?

If you would like a copy of this consent page, please tell the student researcher. You can contact me, Collin Yoxall, at p.c.yoxall@tcu.edu with any questions that you have about the study. My thesis advisor is Dr. Liang Ma; she can be contacted at liang.ma@tcu.edu. For questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, please contact Dr. Dru Riddle, TCU Institutional Review Board (IRB) chair, at d.riddle@tcu.edu. The TCU Office of Research can be reached at research@tcu.edu or 817-257-7104.

This research has been reviewed according to the TCU IRB procedures for research involving human subjects. By checking “Yes,” you agree that you are 18 years old or older; have read or been read the information provided above; you have received answers to all your questions; you have been told who to contact if you have any more questions; you have freely decided to participate in this research; and that you understand that you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

Do you consent to participate in this study? YES NO

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature Date

1920-120-AM1

Approved January 22, 2020

Printed Name of person obtaining consent

Signature Date

Consent to be audio/video recorder

I agree to be audio/video recorded. Yes _____ No _____

Signature Date

Survey Consent Document

Title of Research: A Social Media Survey

Principal Investigator: Dr. Liang Ma

Co-investigators: Collin Yoxall

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years of age, reside in the United States and use social media regularly. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

A summary of things you should know: This is a research study involving participants that has been approved by the TCU Institutional Review Board (IRB). Risks or discomforts from this research include disclosure of social media habits and views regarding social media use. Please take the time to read this entire document and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of this research is to learn more about the perceptions of social media users about social media and advertising on social media.

What is my involvement for participating in this study?

If you agree to be in the study, we will ask you to do the following things:

Answer questions about your observations and views about social media and advertising on social media.

You will be compensated for your participation. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. You do not have to participate, and you can stop at any time.

How long am I expected to be in this study for and how much of my time is required?

The survey should take approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

What are the risks to me for participating in this study and how will they be minimized?

We do not believe there are any risks from participating in this research that are different from risk that you encounter in everyday life.

What are the benefits for participating in this study?

Although you will not directly benefit from being in this study, the advertising industry may benefit through increased knowledge of social media fatigue and how it is perceived.

Will I be compensated for participating in this study?

Yes. You will be compensated \$0.30 for your participation. Only participants who complete the survey and enter the accompanying code from the end of the survey into M-Turk will receive compensation.

What are the costs to me to be a part of the study?

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Time taken during the course of taking the survey.

Who can profit from study results?

TCU might/could be paid (e.g. licensing fees) in the future for the discoveries resulting from the study.

Advertising agencies.

Companies or organizations with social media presence. Social media companies.

What is an alternative procedure(s) that I can choose instead of participating in this study?

There is no alternative procedure for taking the survey. If you are unable to participate, you may stop at any time without penalty. However, only participants who complete the survey will receive compensation.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study records, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Personal identifying information will be removed from the final research report. Your records may be reviewed by Texas Christian University (TCU) officials, the principal researcher, the co-investigator, or other individuals who will be bound by the same provisions of confidentiality.

What will happen to the information collected about me after the study is over?

Information that can directly identify you will be stored in a secure cloud storage service maintained by TCU. Any hard copy consent documents and other written materials will be held under lock and key in a secure filing cabinet by the lead investigator. As stated earlier, identifying information will not appear in the final research product. We may share your research data with other investigators without asking for your consent again, but it will not contain information that could directly identify you.

Is my participation voluntary?

Yes. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. If you decide to withdraw before this study is completed, your data will be made non-identifiable just as the participants who choose to continue with the study will have with their data.

Who should I contact if I have questions regarding the study?

If you would like a copy of this consent page, please print this page now. You can contact me, Collin Yoxall, at p.c.yoxall@tcu.edu with any questions that you have about the study. My thesis

advisor is Dr. Liang Ma; she can be contacted at liang.ma@tcu.edu. For questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, please contact Dr. Dru Riddle, TCU Institutional

Approved 03/24/2020

Review Board (IRB) chair, at d.riddle@tcu.edu. The TCU Office of Research can be reached at research@tcu.edu or 817-257-7104.

This research has been reviewed according to the TCU IRB procedures for research involving human subjects. By clicking “Yes,” you agree that you are 18 years old or older; have read or been read the information provided above; you have received answers to all your questions; you have been told who to contact if you have any more questions; you have freely decided to participate in this research; and that you understand that you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

Do you consent to participate in this study? Click “YES” or “NO” to answer. YES NO

Appendix C - In-Depth Interview Guide

●Introduction

○Statement of purpose: “Thank you for your participation and time. The purpose of our interview today is to talk about your views as an advertising professional of the current state of the advertising industry, social media and the consequences social media has had for the advertising industry. Please sign the consent document if you are willing to participate. Do I have your permission to record?”

○Consent document signed

○Recording started

○State of advertising industry

○“Tell me about your work.”

○Views on advertising on social media

○“Please talk about the current state of social media as it relates to advertising in your opinion.”

○“Please talk about your past experience working on advertising on social media.”

○“What do you see as the future use of social media for advertising?”

○“What makes effective advertising on social media?”

○Social media fatigue (SMF)

○“Have you found over the past couple of years that users respond differently to advertising on social media?”

■“If yes, how so?”

○“What does the term ‘social media fatigue ’mean to you?”

○“How do you believe fatigue effects how social media users perceive advertisements, if at all?”

○Concluding thoughts

○“Anything additional for the record?”

○In-Depth Interview Demographic Information from Professional

○Job title

○Gender

○Age

○Years worked in advertising

○Time in current position

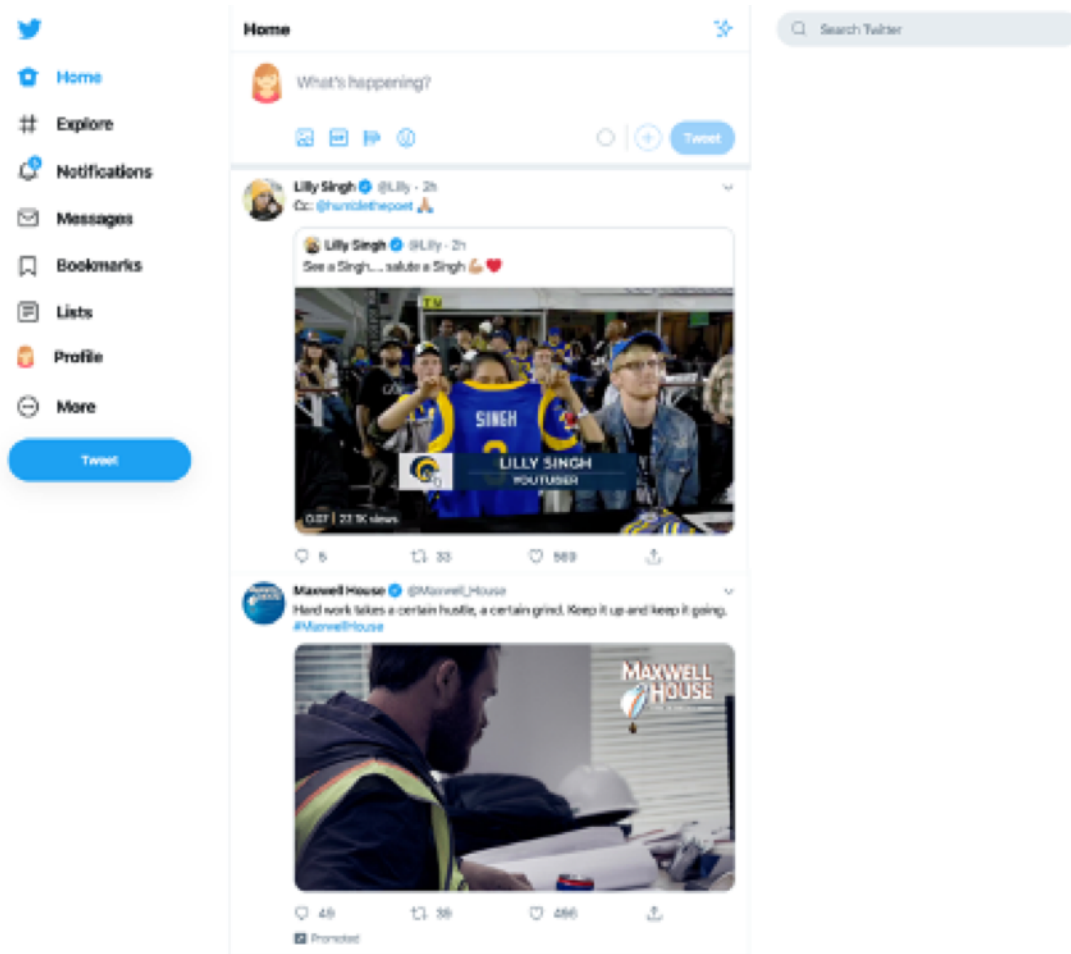
○Conclude interview

○Stop recording

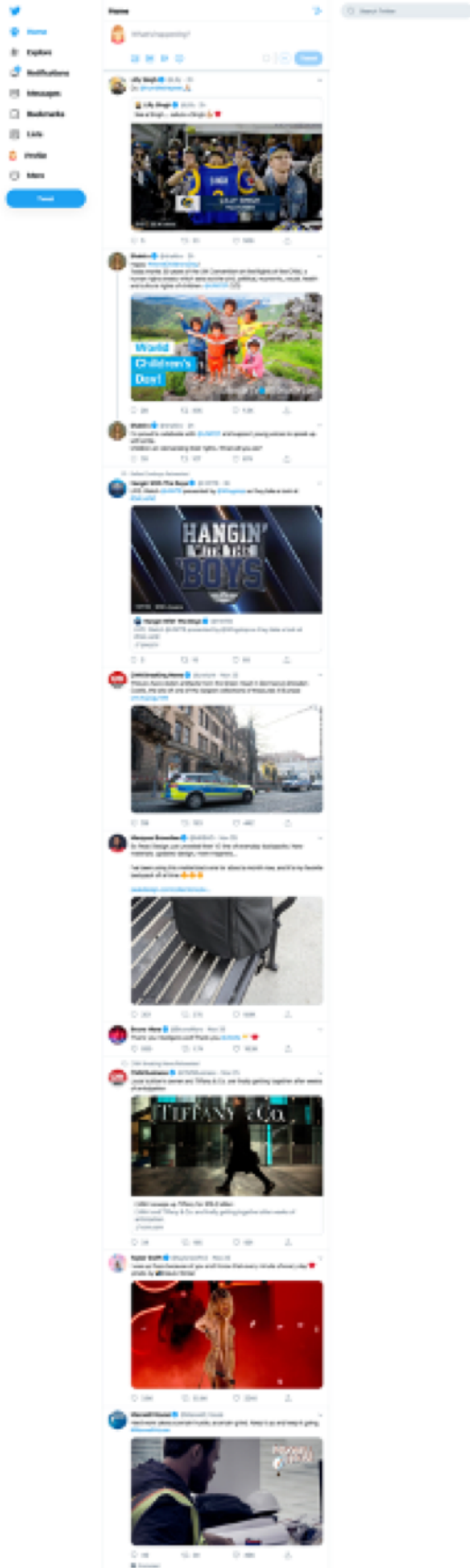
Estimated interview time: one hour

Appendix D - Survey Stimulus

Survey Control Group Stimulus



Survey SMF Group Stimulus (See Next Page)



Appendix E - Survey Questionnaire

- Consent document

- Social Media Usage

- On a 0 to 6 scale, 0 meaning “Never,” and 6 meaning “all the time,” please indicate your level of social media usage.

- Please indicate which social media platforms you use. Multiple selections are allowed.

- Facebook

- Twitter

- Instagram

- LinkedIn

- Snapchat

- Other

- If yes, please indicate what platforms not listed here you use.

- Of the social media platform(s) you said you used in the previous question, please indicate how often you use the platform(s). Classify your usage on a 0 to 6 scale, 0 meaning “Never,” and 6 meaning “all the time.”

- What devices do you use to interact with social media? Multiple selections are allowed.

- Mobile phone

- Indicate the frequency with which you use this platform to interact with social media on a 0 to 6 scale, 0 meaning “Never,” and 6 meaning “all the time.”

- Tablet

- Indicate the frequency with which you use this platform to interact with social media on a 0 to 6 scale, 0 meaning “Never,” and 6 meaning “all the time.”

- Laptop/Desktop Computer

-

- Indicate the frequency with which you use this platform to interact with social media on a 0 to 6 scale, 0 meaning “Never,” and 6 meaning “all the time.”

- Screenshot/Stimulus

- Please slowly and carefully examine the following social media feed and answer the series of questions about what you see and your perceptions of it.

- Advertisement Attention-Checking Questions

- Who was the first tweet in the list from?
 - Ariana Grande
 - Taylor Swift
 - Lilly Singh
 - What product or service was the advertisement from?
 - Enterprise Car Rental
 - Maxwell House
 - Amazon Prime
- SMF (Bright et al., 2015)
 - Please rate whether you agree with the following statements on a 1 to 7 scale, with 1 representing strongly disagree and 7 representing strongly agree.
 - I am likely to receive too much information when I am searching for something on social media sites
 - I am frequently overwhelmed by the amount of information available on social media sites
 - I find that social media sites do not have enough detail to quickly find the information I am looking for
 - The amount of information available on social media sites makes me feel tense and overwhelmed
 - When searching for information on social media sites, I frequently just give up because there is too much to deal with
- Social media advertising effectiveness (Ducoffe, 1996; Hausman, & Siekpe, 2009)
 - Read the following statements and rate whether you agree with the statements on a 1 to 7 scale, with 1 representing strongly disagree and 7 representing strongly agree.
 - Informativeness (Ducoffe, 1996): I find this advertisement for Maxwell House...
 - Is a good source of product information
 - Supplies relevant product information
 - Provides timely information
 - Is a good source of up-to-date product information
 - Supplies complete product information
 - Entertainment (Ducoffe, 1996): I find this advertising ...
 - Is entertaining
 - Is enjoyable
 - Is pleasing
 - Is fun to use
 - Is exciting
 - Irritation (Ducoffe, 1996): I find this advertising...
 - Insults people's intelligence

- Is annoying
- Is irritating
- Is deceptive
- Is confusing
- Purchase Intention (Hausman & Siekpe, 2009):
 - I will definitely buy products from Maxwell House in the near future.
 - I intend to purchase Maxwell House in the near future.
 - It is likely that I will purchase Maxwell House near future.
 - I expect to purchase Maxwell House in the near future.
- Advertisement Relevance (Jung, 2017)
 - Read the following statements and rate whether you agree with the statements on a 1 to 7 scale, with 1 representing strongly disagree and 7 representing strongly agree: When I saw advertising for Maxwell House, I felt that it might be...
 - Of value to me
 - Relevant to my needs
 - Created just for me
- Survey Participant Demographic information
 - Please indicate your gender: _____ male _____ female _____ Other (Please note that this survey is confidential. Data will be aggregated by the researchers for analysis.)
 - Please indicate your ethnicity. (Please note that this survey is confidential. Data will be aggregated by the researchers for analysis.)
 - Caucasian
 - African American
 - Asian American
 - Hispanic American
 - American Indian
 - Multiracial
 - Other
 - Prefer not to say
 - Please indicate your level of education. (Please note that this survey is confidential. Data will be aggregated by the researchers for analysis.)
 - Less than High School
 - General Education Development (GED) diploma
 - High School graduate
 - Some college education
 - College graduate
 - Postgraduate degree/PhD
 - Other
 - Prefer not to say

○Please indicate your household income. (Please note that this survey is confidential. Data will be aggregated by the researchers for analysis.)

- \$20,000 and below
- \$20,001 to \$40,000
- \$40,001 to \$60,000
- \$60,001 to \$80,000
- \$80,001 and \$100,000
- \$100,001 to \$120,000
- \$120,001 and above
- Prefer not to say

○Please indicate your age; please type a whole number. (Please note that this survey is confidential. Data will be aggregated by the researchers for analysis.)

- (participant indicates age)

Appendix F - Survey Debriefing Message

Thank you for your participation in this survey. The social media screenshot you saw was from a fictional account, but the tweets and advertisement were real. The purpose of this survey was to study a phenomenon known as social media fatigue and its effects on advertising on social media. This survey was not intended to misinform in any way.

To receive compensation for your participation, copy and paste the code below into M-Turk window. This will help us confirm that you completed the survey. Thank you for your participation.

SOCIAL MEDIA FATIGUE AND ADVERTISING

VITA

Patrick Collins “Collin” Yoxall was born on October 9, 1990 in Fort Worth, Texas. He is the son of Kevin Yoxall and Nancy (née Scott) Yoxall. He graduated from Auburn High School in Auburn, Alabama in 2009 and earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, International Relations Emphasis (cum laude), from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas, in 2013.

Yoxall worked from 2013 to 2018 in various jobs in politics across several states, including Texas, Colorado, Florida, and Washington, DC. He worked on campaigns on the local, state, and federal levels. Yoxall worked in Washington, DC during the 2016 presidential election. Yoxall stayed in Washington until July 2018, when he resigned to attend graduate school at Texas Christian University.

As a graduate student, Yoxall earned a full scholarship and was a Teaching Assistant for Dr. Liang Ma and Dr. Laura Bright.

He currently resides in Fort Worth, Texas.

SOCIAL MEDIA FATIGUE AND ADVERTISING

ABSTRACT

SOCIAL MEDIA FATIGUE AND ITS PERCEIVED EFFECTS ON ADVERTISING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

by Collin Yoxall

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Over the past several years, social network sites (SNS) have faced challenges from seemingly all directions. A new challenge to the SNS business model may lie in social media fatigue (SMF). SMF describes a feeling of exhaustion and disconnection from SNS use. The SMF phenomenon threatens the business model that SNS companies rely upon, as well as the advertising industry that has come to use SNS as a crucial part of campaigns. This study sought to answer how SNS users perceive SMF and its effect on advertising effectiveness, whether advertising professionals recognize SMF, and if professionals' views align with SMF's actual effects on SNS users. Using a combination of interviews with advertising professionals ($n = 11$) and a survey of SNS users ($n = 199$), the researcher found that professionals have divided opinions regarding the effects of SMF and SMF most affects how SNS users perceive an advertisement's informativeness and irritation.

Keywords: Social network sites (SNS), social media fatigue (SMF), advertising,
effectiveness