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# Media Marketing Strategies University Leaders Use to Increase Alumni Financial Support

Wesley Carter  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Wesley Carter

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University  
2018

Abstract

Media Marketing Strategies University Leaders Use to Increase Alumni Financial

Support

by

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MBA, Campbellsville University, 2013

BS, Campbellsville University, 2011

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

May 2018

## Abstract

Colleges and universities in the United States could end operations in record numbers largely from financial shortfalls. The Urban Institute reported that nonprofit organizations lost \$3.4 billion in renege pledges from 2013 to 2014 from donor dissatisfaction, creating a problem because financial losses can occur from a lack of understanding on how media marketing efforts affect fundraising. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify traditional and social media marketing strategies that some nonprofit college and university leaders use to increase alumni financial support. Interviews took place with 7 college or university leaders at 3 private, nonprofit colleges or universities in the southeastern United States. The 7 leaders consisted of 3 vice presidents, 2 provosts, and 2 presidents. The conceptual framework differentiated media into categories, 2 of which were owned media and earned media. As the primary data collection instrument, collection of marketing literature for each school and 7 semistructured interviews occurred. In the data analysis process, transcription of interview data and coding using the modified van Kaam method took place discovering themes. The 4 themes discovered included social media effectiveness, evolution of traditional marketing blending with social media marketing, social media marketing efficiency, and the multiplier effect of social media. Implications for social change included increasing the scholarship ability of schools, creating an affordable environment for students to receive postsecondary education. Additional benefits included enhanced economies for communities where a college or university resides and an improved level of education per capita in the areas surrounding a college or university.

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## Dedication

I dedicate my work first to my father in heaven and Lord, Jesus Christ. Additionally, I dedicate this doctoral study to the many people who have never given up on me. Such people include my doctoral chair, Dr. Debbie Nattress. Without your persistent leadership and continual support, I would not be where I am today. You have been a bedrock throughout this process. Thank you. I also wish to thank my second committee member, Dr. Kate Andrews and the University Research Reviewer, Dr. Cheryl Lentz. Thank you for each never giving up on me and always being willing to help me each step of the way. I wish to thank all of the Walden faculty, administrators, and staff for always going the extra mile to see me through to the end. To my wife, Ariel Carter, thank you for always being willing to help. Thank you for staying up late and getting up early to support me through this process. To my entire family, thank you. To my mom, dad, and brother, I would not be here without you. Thank you for supporting me and encouraging me throughout the entire process. To my brother specifically, thank you for meeting with me nearly every week throughout these steps. Finally, I wish to thank my employer for understanding my situation and providing me the appropriate time to continually work on my doctoral study.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

College and university leaders work to increase alumni financial support to expand opportunities, add scholarships, contribute to the surrounding communities, and decrease the rising tuition costs (Neill, 2015). Furthermore, college and university leaders use traditional media marketing and social media marketing tools to increase alumni financial support. Stephen and Galak (2012) designated media into categories, two of which are *owned* and *earned media*. Earned media is unsanctioned media not generated by the owner or leadership within an organization; owned media is sanctioned media generated by the owner or the leadership within an organization (Stephen & Galak, 2012). College and university leaders increasingly strategize ways to effectively use media marketing efforts to increase financial support (Neill, 2015).

### **Background of the Problem**

To increase alumni financial support, using effective media marketing efforts is vital for business leaders (Smith, 2013). In some cases, organizations lost revenue from an inability to control media (Jasperse, 2015; Plencer, 2014). The Urban Institute (2015) reported that, in higher education alone, university leaders lost more than \$3 billion from 2013 to 2014 in donor and alumni financial commitments.

Traditional marketing venues are time tested, but with social media marketing, new forms of communications exist (Smith, 2013). With the emergence of social media, organizational leaders lost the ability to control their marketing narrative (Vernuccio, 2014). College and university leaders struggle to strategize and understand the effects of traditional and social media marketing on success (Griffiths & McLean, 2015). With

social media platforms, such as Facebook, reaching more than 1 billion members worldwide, communication and marketing strategies changed (Tuten & Angermeier, 2013). Marketing leaders struggle with the best ways to disperse marketing efforts between traditional and social media outlets. Stephen and Galak (2012) differentiated social media into two categories: owned and earned. Owned is media controlled and sanctioned by the overseeing organization (Stephen & Galak, 2012). Earned is media unsanctioned and distributed outside of the control of the organization (Stephen & Galak, 2012). Much like losing control of brand, college and university leaders rely heavily on alumni financial support, especially in ensuring sustainable revenues (Stinson & Howard, 2008). College and university leaders struggling to maintain control of media creates a substantiation for researching media marketing efforts to increase alumni financial support.

### **Problem Statement**

Organizations have lost financial support because of an inability to control media (Jasperse, 2015; Plencner, 2014). The Urban Institute (2015) reported nonprofit organizations lost \$3.438 billion in reduced commitments or reneged pledges from 2013 to 2014 because of donor dissatisfaction. The general business problem is that financial losses occur at colleges and universities from a lack of understanding of how media marketing efforts affect fundraising. The specific business problem is that some nonprofit college and university leaders lack traditional and social media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify traditional and social media marketing strategies that some nonprofit college and university leaders use to increase alumni financial support. The target population for this study was nonprofit college and university leaders located at three colleges and universities in the southeastern United States. With regard to social change, the results of this study could enable college and university leaders to use effectively traditional (TV, radio, newspaper, etc.) and social media marketing to increase fundraising efforts, resulting in increased scholarships, expanded community outreach programs, and higher education levels in the surrounding communities.

### **Nature of the Study**

A qualitative methodology fit this specific study because of the importance of acquiring interview data from university leaders on the effect of traditional marketing and social media marketing (owned and earned) on alumni financial support. Researchers using qualitative research methodologies search for trends in hopes of discovering concepts in a research study (Yin, 2014). In a quantitative method, a researcher collects numerical data and analyzes the data using standard statistical measures (Creswell, 2013). A quantitative approach was not the most suitable for this study because I did not collect numerical data. A qualitative study was an appropriate choice because I sought to collect data from university leaders using semistructured interviews, official documents, and media postings (artifacts). In addition, a qualitative study fit most appropriately because of the lack of academic work on the effect of owned and earned marketing strategies on

alumni financial support (Gouveia, 2014; Stephen & Galak, 2012). As stated by Malagon-Maldonado (2014), in a qualitative design, a researcher works to understand, interpret, and analyze diverse phenomena observed by individuals, communities, and cultures. A mixed methods design combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. A mixed methods and a quantitative method lacked suitability because of the lack of existing quantitative data available on owned and earned marketing in relation to alumni financial support.

The chosen design was a multiple case study design. Researchers commonly use a multiple case study in qualitative research (Hott, Limberg, Ohrt, & Schmit, 2015; Wolery, Dunlap, & Ledford, 2011). A scholar chooses ethnography as a study design when a researcher uses participant observation to gain a real-time understanding of specific routines, cultures, and rituals (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). Ethnographers enter the ongoing lives of other people to engage in their activities and concerns first hand (Yin, 2014). Researchers use phenomenology to explore a specific experience within a culture or society (Petty et al., 2012). Scholars use focus groups when using a phenomenology design and to conduct qualitative research to determine whether varying characteristics and responses emerge in a group setting that may not emerge in a single interview (Morgan, 1996). Focus groups encourage rich dialogue between participants (Morgan, 1996). Other qualitative designs, such as phenomenology, did not fit my study because no need existed for an examination between empirical relationships and multiple variables. A researcher uses a case study design to investigate unique circumstances that occur in the real world that enable future researchers to expound on study findings (Yin,

2014). Scholars use a case study design to investigate a setting, a single topic, a set of documents, a particular event, an organization, a particular profession or area of work, or a single community (Lune & Berg, 2016). In this study, I used a case study design instead of other qualitative designs because the focus was on college and university leaders at three nonprofit schools to improve media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support.

### **Research Question**

What traditional and social media (nontraditional) marketing strategies do some nonprofit college and university leaders use to increase alumni financial support?

### **Interview Questions**

Traditional marketing is marketing via hardcopy, radio, and TV (Wergin & Muller, 2012). Social media marketing is the use of social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat, and Instagram) as marketing outlets, through paid and unpaid social media postings (Kumar, Bezawada, Rishika, Janakiraman, & Kannan, 2016). Media can be viewed as earned and/or owned. Earned media is media not generated by the owner (Stephen & Galak, 2012). Owned media is sanctioned media generated by the owner or the leadership within an organization (Stephen & Galak, 2012). In this study, I used the following interview questions:

1. What media marketing (traditional and social media) strategies have you found effective in increasing alumni financial support?
2. What are some challenges or barriers you faced with media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support?



3. Are there any media marketing strategies you tried that failed to increase alumni financial support?
4. What earned media marketing strategies have you used to increase alumni financial support?
5. What owned media marketing strategies have you used to increase alumni financial support?
6. In your experience, were owned or earned media marketing strategies more effective in increasing alumni financial support? Why or why not?
7. Is there anything else you would like to share about traditional and social media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support?

### **Conceptual Framework**

Stephen and Galak (2012) distinguished media into categories within traditional and social forms. Two of the categories are earned and owned media. Earned media is media not generated by the owner; owned media is sanctioned media generated by the owner or the leadership within an organization (Stephen & Galak, 2012). These distinctions could be investigated by examining the effects in traditional media and social media landscapes. The conceptual distinction of earned media was substantiated further by Belden (2013) when distinguishing media into paid, earned, and owned media. Stephen and Galak (2012) investigated further into the earned versus owned framework and provided the application of differentiation between media, allowing researchers to study the influence of traditional media and social media on alumni financial support for colleges and universities. As a result, the opportunity opened to study the effect of

owned and earned media, traditional and social, at a university level (Stephen & Galak, 2012). Through the existing literature and research, Stephen and Galak's efforts were a good fit for this study by providing a framework for a media marketing study that adds strategies to increase alumni financial support.

### **Operational Definitions**

Listed in this section are the operational definitions. The operational definitions refer to specific terminology indicative to contents contained within the doctoral study. In the doctoral study, I researched traditional and social media strategies that college and university leaders use to increase alumni financial support at three private nonprofit universities located in the southeastern United States.

*Earned media.* Earned media is media not generated by the owner or the leadership within an organization (Stephen & Galak, 2012).

*Financial support.* Financial support is direct or indirect financial support through cash, stock, real estate, and in-kind donations (Shearer & Carpentier, 2015). Financial support, for the purposes of the study, relates to college and university alumni donations.

*Owned media.* Owned media is media generated by the owner or the leadership within an organization (Stephen & Galak, 2012).

*Social media marketing.* Social media marketing is the use of social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat, and Instagram) as marketing outlets, through paid and unpaid social media postings (Kumar et al., 2016).

*Traditional marketing.* Traditional marketing is marketing via hardcopy, radio, and TV (Wergin & Muller, 2012).

## **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

In this section, included are the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations that might affect the outcome of this doctoral study. Assumptions consist of items a researcher assumes before engaging in academic study (Yin, 2014). Limitations are restricting items within a study (Hausman, 2012). Delimitations are boundaries set forth within a study (Yin, 2014).

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are necessary predispositions held by a researcher(s) before conducting a study (Bendle & Cotte, 2016). As an independent researcher, four primary assumptions applied to this study. The first assumption was that further understanding is obtainable and discoverable, and that a qualitative study could be used to learn additional insight into how strategies related to traditional marketing and social media marketing influence alumni financial support. The second assumption was that participants would answer honestly. The third assumption was that earned social media can positively or negatively affect a person's likelihood to provide financial support to a university. The fourth assumption was that traditional media and social media can positively or negatively affect a person's perception of an organization including, but not limited to, their likelihood to provide financial support to a college or university.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are the restricting weaknesses within a study outside of the control of a researcher (Hausman, 2012). As an independent researcher, there were limitations to this study. One limitation was the study was specific to college and university leaders.

Another limitation was that participants vary in their experiences leading up to working at a college or university, and participants might remember their experiences at the college or university level differently based on their program of study (if a graduate), time of tenure, and employment history following college.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations enable a researcher to define boundaries of the study (Yin, 2014). There were delimitations to this research. The scope of this doctoral study was limited to three colleges and universities located in the southeastern United States. This study encompassed nonprofit college and university fundraising leaders at the three colleges and universities each with an enrollment of fewer than 10,000 students.

### **Significance of the Study**

Through the findings from this study, the potentially benefits could be to the business operations of nonprofit colleges universities that rely on donations. By identifying effective media marketing strategies related to traditional and social media with regard to alumni financial support, new opportunities could exist for colleges, universities, and nonprofits to increase revenues. If the leadership within colleges and universities could improve their marketing practices using traditional and social media platforms, colleges and universities may improve revenue through increases in donations/gifts, increases in enrollment, and decreases in the influence of negative earned media. The results may add to the value of business in general by contributing to understanding the nature of philanthropic attitudes of individuals and levels of loyalty to businesses and institutions. The results from this study may contribute to positive social

change by increasing the solvency and scholarship ability of colleges and universities, creating a more affordable environment for students to receive postsecondary educational opportunities. Additional possible benefits include increased economic revenues for the communities where a college or university resides, enhancing the ability for a college or university to serve the community, and an improved level of education per capita in the areas surrounding a college or university.

### **A Review of Professional and Academic Literature**

Within the focus of this study, the goal was to explore traditional and social media marketing strategies that college and university leaders use to increase alumni financial support. Traditional marketing is an important function for organizational growth, and individuals who work in the field of traditional marketing set the public relations trajectory each year, positive and negative, for organizations, including colleges and universities (Connolly-Ahern & Ahern, 2015). Social media is a relatively new form of communication, and social media evolved marketing by adding new venues for marketers to market goods and services (Vernuccio, 2014). Colleges and universities are organizations that rely heavily on marketing to raise awareness, recruit students, and garner financial support (Arnett, 2015). Alumni, defined as former students of a college or university, are often the most likely to support financially a college or university (Arnett, 2015). By engaging in strategies to increase alumni financial support, college and university leaders could be in a better positioned to earn increased levels of financial support to sustain the well-being and growth of colleges and universities, as well as increase scholarships, while also potentially reducing tuition costs.

The organization of the literature review consists of nine subsections: (a) theory of owned versus earned media; (b) competing theories; (c) similar theories; (d) traditional marketing; (e) social media marketing; (f) blending traditional and social media marketing; (g) media preferences by age and gender; (h) college, university, and nonprofit fundraising; and (i) existing literature on alumni financial support at colleges and universities. Each subsection was labeled. Each label helped explain how to search the literature review.

Operating from the Stephen and Galak (2012) distinction of media as owned and earned, media includes the distinction into these two categories. Owned media is media issued and sanctioned by an organization; earned media is media written or spoken about concerning an organization without the prior sanctioning or approval from an organization (Stephen & Galak, 2012). The theory of owned and earned media used in the conceptual framework fit this study because Stephen and Galak shed light onto how well media can (or cannot) control the narrative of an organizational brand. Furthermore, one can understand how financial support is affected by traditional media (TV, radio, print-based) and social media (sanctioned and unsanctioned).

Prior, but limited, research exists in the area of financial support at colleges and universities (Gouveia, 2014). An overview of studies is located in Subsection 8, existing literature on alumni financial support at colleges and universities. Examples of supporting and contrasting theories can be found in Subsections 2 and 3, which are competing theories and similar theories.

In building the literature review, I used the Walden University databases, Google Scholar, and local libraries in Lexington, KY; Louisville, KY; and Danville, KY for the collection of research. In addition, monitoring the local, national, and global media took place. A primary tool used in conducting research was the virtual Walden University library, specifically the business and marketing databases.

The sources contained within this literature review are primarily from academic, peer-reviewed journals. There are 110 total sources within the literature review. Within the literature review, I used one book, 107 peer-reviewed articles, and two academic reports. Of the 110 total sources, 106 originated in or after 2013. In arranging the organization of the literature review, nine subsections distinguished the topics of research and literature contained within the literature review. This process aided in searching for specific aspects of prior research within the nine distinct sections. Key search terms were *social media, traditional marketing, fundraising, alumni, colleges, universities, owned media, and earned media.*

### **Application to the Applied Business Problem**

The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore media marketing strategies college and university leaders utilize to increase alumni financial support. According to Dr. E. Bruce Heilman, chancellor of the University of Richmond, fundraising is the single most important aspect of growing a college or university. Without significant alumni financial support, colleges and universities struggle to survive (E.B. Heilman, personal communication, July 25, 2017). If colleges and universities can increase their

levels of financial support, not only may higher education be afforded to more people, but this education may also be afforded to people at a lower cost

### **Theory of Owned Versus Earned Media**

In marketing, a theory exists distinguishing two ways to view exposure. Stephen and Galak (2012) differentiated two ways: owned and earned. Owned media is media controlled and sanctioned by the overseeing organization; earned is media unsanctioned and distributed outside of the control of the organization (Stephen & Galak, 2012). Traditional media includes public marketing documents, press releases, newspapers, billboard ads, and radio ads; social media includes social networking site activities and blogging (Stephen & Galak, 2012). Xie and Lee (2015), operating from Stephen and Galak's research, studied the effects of exposure on owned and earned social media during a 12-month period using a single source data set of products purchased from Facebook fan pages related to brands and found that social media had a significant influence on brand consumer perception and activity. Colleges and universities also rely heavily on brand name and consumer perception (Waters, 2015).

Stephen and Galak (2012) found that earned media, traditional and social, affect sales, discovering that social earned media was a driving force in the way traditional media affects sales. Stephen and Galak's research, although specific to the dairy industry, is still generalizable across other organizations because organizational leaders, such as college and university leaders, need to market their products, goods, or services using traditional and social media strategies. Similarly, Xie and Lee (2015) revealed that



earned and owned social media affects the likelihood for a consumer to purchase certain brands.

DiStaso and Brown (2015), evolving from Stephen and Galak's (2012) research, examined the changes of owned and earned media across companies in relation to the *Fortune* lists. Companies perceived that, at more desirable workplaces, higher uses of owned media occurred, and companies received increased levels of earned media in both traditional and social media, indicating a relationship between the amounts of owned media distributed and earned media received (Distaso & Brown, 2015). In addition, Bao and Chang (2014) conducted a study on two types of earned media, social and traditional, and found that social and traditional media influenced sales and that social and traditional media affect one another. The studies of Stephen and Galak (2012), Xie and Lee (2015), Distasso and Brown (2015), and Bao and Lang (2015) show a benefit between blending social and traditional media with regard to marketing across all organizations, including colleges and universities.

In blending all media more effectively, marketing and advertising become important aspects. Precourt (2014) analyzed the question of what makes advertising work, as posed by Charles Ramond in the 1960s. With the influx of social media, the equation has changed, making the answer to the question about what makes advertising work more important than ever to understand for colleges and university leaders (Fulgoni, 2015; Precourt, 2014). The 2015 Prize for Social Strategy cited social media as the central marketing piece for many companies and organizations (Fulgoni, 2015). Precourt suggested that traditional marketing and social media marketing can work in

reciprocal ways, with each helping the other. In addition, the inability to control the earned media in advertising, especially through newer social media platforms, does not have to control all aspects of a brand (Precourt, 2014). In the case of college and university leaders, one might be able to use earned media to the advantage of a brand and use honesty to strengthen the brand. When negative information arises, such information might serve as an elevating source of media if the organization and brand can use it to promote improvements and human factors.

Embedded online media content in marketing and public relations is a new phenomenon; paid content is content that appears digitally on social media sites, online apps, and websites across the Internet (Lahav & Zimand-Sheiner, 2016). In a study investigating the benefits of paid online content and the control of public relation practitioners over online media content, Lahav and Zimand-Sheiner (2016) suggested paid media crosses an ambiguous line between organizational public relations and marketing (Lahav & Zimand-Sheiner, 2016). Crossing the abstract line between public relations and marketing brought some ethical concerns creating a situation where readers may not be able to distinguish the difference between editorial style postings and paid online advertisements in a college or university environment (Fullerton, McKinnon, & Kendrick, 2014). To an organization that depends on revenue from marketing much like a college or university, an ethical situation occurring from inaccurate media could negatively affect financial support.

Precourt (2014) noted that social media changed the landscape of marketing. Gilfoil, Aukers, and Jobs (2015) agreed and concluded that return on investment (ROI) is

important for organizational leaders including college and university leaders. Those responsible with handling the return should focus on maximizing the financial ROI and the potential reallocation of ROI funds (Gilfoil et al., 2015). Gilfoil et al. introduced needed research questions about the ROI that companies see from social media marketing in relation to traditional marketing. As a result of the recent trend, the focus shifted to how much traditional marketing should take place as opposed to social media marketing.

With the advances of media (owned and earned), including social media, consumer behavior changed resulting in the need for marketing leaders, including college and university leaders, to evolve the way they market their products (Mudrick, Miller, & Atkin, 2016). Both online branding and human interactions are critical as consumers make decisions on which items to purchase. In a quantitative study focused on predicting brand engagement and earned consumer attention, Godhino Moutinho and Silva (2015) developed the Memetic algorithm to predict consumer purchasing behavior using social media. Social media affects customer purchasing and donor behavior (Tysiac, 2016). Consumer purchasing behavior may be an important area for college and university leaders in their efforts of increasing alumni financial support. If college and university leaders know more about their alumni and how they perceive branding and value, those alumni may be more inclined to contribute financially.

Big data and the mass collection of data present a challenge to organizations, including colleges and universities (Conway & O'Connor, 2016). Holtzhausen (2016) cited that with such a mass of information available and algorithms in place according to personal data and individual patterns, such data gathering practices pose a threat to public

discourse, both for companies and for individuals. In the same sense, big data can be helpful for organizations and individuals; Holtzhausen (2016) discovered that companies can use big data to enhance their media channels and reach their targeted audience. Similarly, Srinivasan, Rutz, and Pauwels (2016) conducted a study on consumer behavior using online media and concluded that earned media drove sales increases more than any other form of media, and high levels of earned media, if negative, can result in high levels of consumer disengagement. In essence, consumer opinions (earned media) affect sales, both in increasing revenue and decreasing revenue. As a result, organizations, including colleges and universities, must intentionally assess all incoming media to maximize revenue and minimize media challenges (Spotts, Purvis, & Patnaik, 2014).

### **Similar Theories**

Icek Ajzen developed the theory of planned behavior (TPB) in 1985, suggesting that attitudes and perceived control of behavior direct behavioral intentions (as cited in Hasking & Schofield, 2014). Kinsky, Drumheller, and Gerlich (2014) used the TPB to explore the behavioral patterns of donors after a crisis. Kinsky et al. and Campbell, Lambright, and Wells (2014) identified ideal practices for nonprofits handling crises. Campbell et al. found that crises can be viewed as opportunities of renewal if portrayed correctly; nonprofit organizations (such as colleges and universities) need to know their target market and audiences well, know how to handle their target audience, and know when to apologize and accept blame for making mistakes.

Kim, Lee, Sung, and Choi (2016) examined the TPB relating to social media and selfie pictures discovering that attitudes toward selfie posting and narcissism were

significantly associated with an individual's intention to post selfies. Collectively, Kinsky et al. (2014), Campbell et al. (2014), and Kim et al. indicated that social media is significant in marketing theory when considering the TPB, including owned and earned media. Similarly, while conducting research in the area of relationship building, Archer and Harrigan (2016) shaped an emerging theory of social media relationships after observing the fact that social media bloggers and theorists must be creative in monetizing social media and other forms of digital technology. Archer and Harrigan discovered the key tenant to social media in terms of being a formalized relationship building theory was monetizing social media phenomena and information, substantiating further the role and place of social media information in the world of colleges and universities.

### **Competing Theories**

Although many consistencies exist within the literature associated with the TPB and relationship theory, competitive theories within the published research remain. The Ansoff matrix is a marketing theory where market penetration, product development, market development, and diversification factor into new and existing markets (Richardson & Evans, 2007). The Ansoff matrix is a competing theory when thinking about the relationship between traditional and social media marketing because of the importance of market penetration and marketing in higher education at colleges and universities (Richardson & Evans, 2007).

Robert Kaplan and David Norton developed the balanced scorecard theory in 1992 (Coe & Letza, 2014). Business leaders use the balanced scorecard theory as an effective method where business leaders take each facet of business (internal and

external) into account in the vision and strategy of an organization (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). The balanced scorecard is a theory where leaders, including college and university leaders, focus on measuring a more complete series of factors for organizational success aside from the financial variables (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). The owned and earned differentiation of media involves each element of the balanced scorecard and can serve as a supplemental theory to implement in an organizational strategy. The balanced scorecard is a competing marketing theory where the vision and strategy build upon financial processes, customer experiences, learning processes, and internal business processes (Humphreys, Gary, & Trotman, 2016).

Albert Humphrey developed the theory of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, and SWOT is a competing theory to the theory of earned and owned media (Paraskevas, 2013). SWOT is an analysis where organizational leadership weighs SWOT to situations (micro and macro) (Verbonchu & Condurache, 2016). SWOT is a competing theory in that SWOT analysis takes place in the marketing decision-making process and much like owned versus earned media can sway the decision making in organizational marketing efforts, including colleges and universities.

Marketing continues to evolve (O'Malley, 2014). Social media marketing, both owned and earned, remains a relatively new form of marketing (Vernuccio, 2014). In terms of the Ansoff matrix, the balanced scorecard, and SWOT, college and university leaders using social media marketing would be a newer form of marketing. College and university leaders using traditional marketing venues are examples of more traditional forms of marketing. Considering Stephen and Galak's (2012) work on the differentiation

of media into owned and earned adds to the challenges that college and university leaders may face in the future.

### **Traditional Marketing**

Traditional marketing consists of TV, billboards, radio, magazines, brochures/handouts, and newspapers (Spotts, Weinberger, & Weinberger, 2015). College and university leaders depend on traditional forms of marketing to spread their word (Waters, 2015). Traditional marketing is an important aspect of media focus.

Dr. E. Bruce Heilman, the chancellor of University of Richmond, shared that traditional media sources are important at colleges and universities because college and university leaders rely on college fairs, high school presentations, and other events that require physical marketing literature, which are all traditional (E.B. Heilman, personal communication, July 25, 2017). Connolly-Ahern and Ahern (2015) investigated the relationship between news coverage, fundraising, and the First Amendment, concluding that media influences financial support at nonprofit organizations, including colleges and universities.

For Christian colleges and universities, Torbert (2014) found that faith components of marketing are more visible on traditional forms of media and hard copy admission packets when compared with public universities. This inclusion of faith language could be seen as relational marketing. O'Malley (2014) cited that relational marketing is a form of marketing built around the establishing of relationships. A danger of relational marketing is the autonomy of the managers within an organization and the amount of control the market has on such managers (O'Malley, 2014). In the context of

colleges and universities, relational marketing could increase financial support from specific relationships with specific staffers, which could provide an unhealthy amount of power that individuals with large volume donor relationships have in relation to the college or university.

Spotts et al. (2015) found that publicity, including newspaper and magazine articles, has unique and differing effects on the marketing-productivity chain. In addition, Spotts et al. suggested that reasons for publicity helped drive the effectiveness of marketing. The findings by Spotts et al. complemented Wei Shi and Ming's (2015) research by strengthening the argument for the importance of marketing via traditional formats to specific populations who are most likely to purchase specific products. Such specificity includes college and university marketing literature.

### **Social Media Marketing**

Social media marketing is a new form of technology (Vernuccio, 2014). College and university leaders use social media in marketing as a result of the rise of social media use from the populous (Rowe, 2014). Social media use rose significantly in recent years; student social media use has grown exponentially (Rowe, 2014; Vernuccio, 2014).

Social media sites, such as Twitter, affect college and university leaders when college and university leaders learn about student behavior via their social media activity (Palmer, 2013). Palmer (2013) investigated the visible interactions from university stakeholders using Twitter and concluded that social media increases the opportunity for people in organizations to communicate with wider audiences. Smith and Lambert (2014) added that Twitter use among higher education institutions is consistent across



Europe, making social media marketing efforts at colleges and universities a global issue. In addition, in a study of a business institute and the effect of social media use on a school's growth, Aslam (2014) discovered that the organization was not using social media well; most of the posts offered by the institute did not excite anyone reading them, and as a result, the social media postings had an adverse effect. These three sources justified further the need for study by demonstrating that media across colleges and universities can have adverse effects when not used effectively and efficiently.

Social media use continues to surge, but the effects remain unknown (Belangee, Bluvshstein, & Haugen, 2015). Rowe (2014) examined the effect of inappropriate social media postings for college students, raising the question of how colleges and universities handle student postings, student reputation, and university perceptions. Rowe discovered college and university leaders have little to no control of what students post through social media. Such a lack of control of media justifies the need for this study in discovering way to control the media narrative and increase alumni financial support.

Social media continues increasing in popularity and, subsequently, researchers are increasing efforts in investigation and social media (Vernuccio, 2014). In a study surveying faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the Adler Graduate School in Minnesota, Belangee et al. (2015) revealed that only 31% of the more than 100 respondents believed professional people using social media were more concerned than an average person regarding the content they posted on social media. In a similar study, Ott and Longnecker (2015), showed that social media held an overall positive viewpoint in the eyes of the respondents. One could infer, based on this data, college and university

leaders do not adequately consider the ramifications of social media behavior on their professional career.

Social media growth enabled increased correspondences between educators and alumni (Lu, Hao, & Jing, 2016). In a study about Facebook and Twitter over a 5-year span of selected users in Australia, Bahfen and Wake (2015) concluded that social media was a beneficial tool in connecting and sustaining more beneficial relationships between students, staff, and alumni at college and universities. Bahfen and Wake saw concern in the content of some postings, specifically postings related to partying, nudity, and drinking. Some posts related to partying, nudity, and drinking displayed a negative side to individuals posting such material leading to a need for further research to determine the specific benefits and potential downsides to social media use between college and university leaders and alumni (Bahfen & Wake, 2015). Lu et al. and Bahfen and Wake's research helped justify the need for effective media strategies that college and university leaders can use to increase alumni financial support.

Using interviews and Internet data, Campbell et al. (2014) examined social media use between public and nonprofit organizations across six counties in New York State. Campbell et al. found that social media use occurred more with the nonprofits and did not have a long-term effect (positive or negative) on organizational health. In addition, Campbell et al. observed through their Internet data and interviews a general apprehension concerning the questionable use of social media. Resulting from the perceived possibility of inappropriate use, social media use was discouraged for employees working in nonprofit hospitals as administrators determined individual social

media use from employees often did more harm than good (Campbell et al., 2014). In the arena of colleges and universities, Williams (2014) cautioned the use of social media postings because of potential individual student and staff postings, personal and professional, related to the college or university. Campbell et al. and Williams both saw danger in allowing people within any nonprofit structure the freedom to post anything they desired on social media. Campbell et al. and Williams' research in the area of social media use substantiated the need for additional research in media marketing and how media influences alumni financial giving.

Scholarly study in the areas of public relations and social media remain relatively new topics of research (Vardeman-Winter & Place, 2015). Saxton and Waters (2014) studied engagement through social media across the Nonprofit Times 100 list. The intent of Saxton and Waters was to investigate what information stockholders of these nonprofit organizations, like colleges and universities, enjoyed most. Examples of nonprofit stockholders include college and university alumni serving on college and university boards. Saxton and Waters found that individuals preferred messages regarding their region and their network of influence and discovered that people were most likely to share messages about their area and networks. Saxton and Waters' work was important in validating the need for this doctoral study in that college and university leaders may be able to garner insight from focusing on their region and networks in their efforts of increasing alumni financial support.

Ashley and Tuten (2015) studied social media using a sample of top brands and produced a content analysis of the creative strategies present in the social media content.

Ashley and Tuten discovered that incentives and recurrent updates are critical for participation, experience, and exclusivity, while image messages were creative strategies found to have connection with customer engagement. Chen (2013) also studied brand and social media finding that personal brand can be promoted and demoted through social media. Brand recognition and social media are particularly important for colleges and universities who rely on positive branding and public relations through their alumni networks.

Padgett and Rolston (2014) conducted a study around the ethics of social media use for business purposes, fundraising, and business start-ups through the social media fundraising site Kickstarter ([www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com)). In a similar study, Giannakos, Chorianopoulos, Giotopoulos, and Vlamos (2013) investigated the use of Facebook and gratification across an exploratory participant pool. Padgett and Rolston identified and substantiated the use of social media for fundraising purposes revealing that social media provides direct access to potential investors/donors never previously accessible. In Giannakos et al.'s similar research, 70 participants generated expressions commonly used on Facebook revealing that Facebook substantiated part of individual users' daily routines and became a daily habit. Collectively, Padgett and Rolston and Giannakos et al. discovered the importance of the vast reach of social media. Such media reach may be useful for college and university leaders seeking to increase alumni financial support as social media is an outlet that can be used to reach out to alumni and remain connected.

Twitter is a relatively new form of social media (Araujo, Neijens, & Vliegenthart, 2015). Much like other social media platforms, Twitter allows for marketing and

advertising to take place, and serves as a grassroots marketing form for individuals, businesses, and organizations. Marketing through Twitter is something that continues to grow. Araujo et al. (2015) conducted a study examining more than 19,000 Twitter messages during a 3-year period. Researchers continue to conduct similar studies using Facebook in related manners, including Carlson and Lee's (2015) and Icha and Edwin's (2016) works highlighting the sheer popularity of Facebook. Using a quantitative method, Araujo et al. found informational cues triggered re-Tweets, and emotional cues reinforced cues that also generated re-Tweets. In addition, Araujo et al. found that higher levels of richness in informational messages within Twitter propelled re-Tweets (Araujo et al., 2015). This information is valuable for college and university leaders working to increase alumni financial support, highlighting the popularity and potential of social media marketing.

Chen (2013) investigated social media and personal branding to garner a better understanding of the influence social media has on personal brand. From the findings of the study, Chen discovered that personal branding through social media could empower individuals, which is complementary to Rinaldo, Laverie, Tapp, and Humphrey's (2013) work where marketing students studied the power of social media information across the population by using social media. The research of Chen and Rinaldo et al. is helpful because demonstrating the personal and empowering benefits of individual posting through social media, and such personal branding on social media (earned media) could help or hurt college and universities. Chen and Rinaldo et al.'s work justified further the need for continued research in that they provided the framework for how social media

and branding can help promote an individual or an organization (including a college or university) to be more successful.

Rinaldo et al. (2013) conducted similar research using the social media platform, Twitter, examining Twitter use among college students integrating the use of Twitter into upper-level marketing courses. Rinaldo et al.'s purpose was to integrate students into the real-world marketing arena provided through social media. A discovery occurred that students who listened to the professor and used Twitter daily found Twitter to be more beneficial than students who did not report using Twitter every day (Rinaldo et al., 2013). By allowing students to observe and participate in marketing activities within a social media platform where no filters were present and accountability not required, Rinaldo et al. provided an enhanced understanding of how social media platforms influence people. The work of Rinaldo et al. complemented the assertion of Chen (2013), citing the importance of personal marketing and branding through social media outlets. It became evident the value of how important social media information, including postings, is in media and culture (Rinaldo et al., 2013). College and university leaders may benefit in efforts of increasing alumni financial support by understanding how social media influences people, including college students and alumni.

Mehmet and Clark (2016) investigated business-to-business (B2B) marketing and social media. With the emergence of social media sites such as Facebook growing in users to more than 1 billion (Vernuccio, 2014), Mehmet and Clark used expansion theory as a method of measurement to identify, analyze, and categorize social media and online marketing. Marketing leaders can map-out conversations through social media, and these

conversations have a comprehensive impact on all stakeholders (Mehmet & Clark, 2016). The use of social media in marketing has enriched the means to market, allowing for positive results and for confusion and concern when messages are outside of the marketing leaders' control of an organization (Mehmet & Clark, 2016). Mehmet and Clark indicated the need for enhanced understanding regarding how people use social media in the B2B marketplace to produce maximized effect and positive results, including sustained cash flow and organizational growth. Mehmet and Clark's research is important for college and university leaders because existing students and alumni are often recruiters of other potential students of their school or alma mater. By understanding the value of social media in the marketplace, college and university leaders may be able to optimize efforts to increase alumni financial support and enrollment efforts.

Similar to Chen's (2013) research on personal branding and social media, promoting a corporate brand also involves comprehensive social media marketing (Vernuccio, 2014). Vernuccio (2014) investigated the emerging strategies in promoting an organizational brand through the social media site Facebook, which boasts more than a billion users. Using a quantitative design, Vernuccio discovered that despite increases in popularity across social media platforms, more than one-third of companies still described their marketing as cautious in social media platforms, which may prove useful for college and university leaders working to increase alumni financial support.

Social media platforms grew beyond any expectation (Xie & Lee, 2015). Within the growth, brand presence continues to increase across social media platforms (Smith,

2013). Smith (2013) conducted a study using more than 6,000 respondents on Facebook measuring the value of experience and the value of a *fan* (a follower of an organization). The value of experience centered on the perception of people's experiences and the value of the fan metric centered around the likelihood of a Facebook user to post about an experience with a brand (Smith, 2013). Smith discovered that value exists in understanding more about how people perceive brands through social media. Social media sites provide people an opportunity to share about the brands they like and dislike, including the brand of a college or university.

Social media gained popularity and prominence in the early 2000s (Icha & Edwin, 2016; Zafarani & Liu, 2016). Icha and Edwin (2016) conducted a study to learn more about the possibilities and limitations of social media marketing discovering social media marketing to be as effective, if not more effective, than traditional marketing. The unlimited nature of social media affects marketing plans since any person can say anything at any time about anyone; such an overload of information can be valuable and dangerous (Icha & Edwin, 2016). Icha and Edwin concluded that potentialities for social media marketing effectiveness and challenges exist and made recommendations to marketing leaders at colleges and universities, as well as for-profit organizations, on how to manage and disperse marketing information over social media, which included caution, communication, and consistency of messages with an organization's mission statement. College and university leaders may benefit from Icha and Edwin's research from practicing caution and consistency in social media postings that alumni have access to read.



Social media marketing is growing, largely affecting the viewpoint of millennials (Duffet & Wakeham, 2016). Similar to Icha and Edwin's (2016) work on the unlimited nature of social media marketing, Duffett and Wakeham (2016) investigated millennial social media use. Social media interaction has a significant influence on the attitude stages of millennials (Duffet & Wakeham, 2016). Duffet and Wakeham discovered that suggested interaction levels associate positively with attitudes. Higher levels of interaction may factor into marketing success via social media (Duffett & Wakeham, 2016). Colleges and universities rely on millennials to select their school over other institutions (Duffett & Wakeham, 2016). The attitudes of target markets, such as millennials, for colleges and universities are important to understand because millennial students will one day be alumni and may have the capacity to provide financial support to their alma mater.

Social media continues to grow in users and popularity (Vernuccio, 2014). Carlson and Lee (2015) conducted a study investigating the effectiveness of social customer relationship management on social media marketing and followership. The demographic studied were traditional college-aged students (18-22 years of age). Within social media, marketing becomes more present each year (Icha & Edwin, 2016). However, social media marketing effectiveness remains difficult to measure (Carlson & Lee, 2015). Carlson and Lee (2015) intended to prove the power of marketing through followership in social media. Using multiple regression models and Pearson's correlation coefficient, Carlson and Lee suggested statistical differences between demographics, immersion, and communication had a significant effect on

followership adding to the body of literature on the role social media now plays in marketing (Carlson & Lee, 2015). Such research increased the body of literature into how college aged consumers react and feel about social media (Carlson & Lee, 2015). College and university leaders may benefit from Carlson and Lee's work by using social media more effectively by concentrating on obtaining alumni followership to the college or university social media pages.

Through research in the area of social media marketing, one generality can be established. Social media influences all facets of life. Social media affects personal life and brand. Social media may also influence business and organizational life and brand, including college and universities (Chen, 2013; Rinaldo et al., 2013).

### **Blending Traditional and Social Media Marketing**

Researchers increasingly link traditional and social media marketing (Martin, 2013). Both are critical in marketing strategies at colleges and universities (Martin, 2013). When examining the relationship between social media marketing and the magazine industry, Martin (2013) found that leaders within magazine companies can effectively market their magazine through social media and turn a competing force into an aiding force, illustrating that social media marketing can be useful even for competing, traditional marketing venues. Alexander and Sullenger (2014) conducted a similar study relating the vast penetration of social media on society. They focused on technology, social media, and mobile devices, and how these advances affect society as a whole (Alexander & Sullenger, 2014). Alexander and Sullenger (2014) and Martin (2013) each highlighted the reach of social media within the United States. Alexander and Sullenger

strengthened the case for additional research of the impact of social media's reach within organization marketing. Through this doctoral study, I have examined how organizations, specifically colleges and universities, are affected by traditional and social media advances relating to increasing alumni financial support.

Villar (2014) researched marketing strategies of financial leaders, combining social media and traditional marketing elements and discovering the importance of Internet search result listings and social media sites, including Twitter and LinkedIn. Todor (2016) acknowledged that social media and internet marketing have significant effects on consumer behavior, which can be compared to alumni behavior at colleges and universities. Todor concluded pressures regarding shifting marketing dollars to internet and social media platforms exist and investigated the evolution of how consumers receive information. Todor discovered that a blended approach to marketing is the best approach and that marketers should not dismiss traditional marketing in lieu of social media or digital marketing. While the new marketing approaches are valuable, there will always be a place for traditional marketing (Todor, 2016). College and university leaders may benefit from Todor's research by providing a framework of how to disperse marketing dollars between traditional and social media marketing in their efforts to increase the levels of alumni financial support.

Similarly, face-to-face marketing and social media marketing are different in many ways (Harris & Williams, 2014). Harris and Williams (2014) examined these differences using students at a U.S. university. The students were forced out of their virtual environments and faced with marketing face-to-face. Harris and Williams

suggested that face-to-face experiences are vitally important and cannot be completely replaced by online communication and marketing. Relating to college and university leaders, Todor as well as Harris and Williams, shared the value in face-to-face, social media, and traditional marketing; these collective research efforts substantiate the need for college and university leaders to utilize all three modes of communication (traditional marketing, face-to-face marketing, and social media marketing) when seeking out alumni financial support, which helps substantiate the need for this doctoral study.

Leaders at colleges and universities grow increasingly aware of social media and the impact of social media on marketing practices (Duffett & Wakeham, 2016). In one study, Linville, Rowlett, and Kolind (2015) investigated how one social media platform, Pinterest, is used to enhance traditional marketing efforts at colleges and universities. The use of content analysis took place in relation to the number of Pinterest pins and re-pins arose in association to a college or university. The findings indicated that some colleges and universities needed to re-assess their social media strategies in relation to their cumulative marketing strategy (Linville et al., 2015). Linville et al. found a lack of engagement and connectedness, despite the new social media methods for connecting people, across audiences at colleges and universities. Such a lack of engagement and connectedness of colleges and universities to aspects of their marketing practices justify the need for additional study in improving media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support.

Within one study, scholars examined traditional marketing, social media marketing, and relational marketing (Angulo-Ruiz, Pergelova, Cheben, & Angulo-

Altamirano, 2016). Angulo-Ruiz et al. (2016) studied these elements of marketing across multiple countries, examining similarities and differences. Angulo-Ruiz et al. concluded people within different countries responded differently. In the same theme, Vel, Brobbey, Salih, and Jaheer (2015) mentioned marketing approaches that fall under the traditional sense of marketing historically link with major success; in result to advances in technology, traditional approaches by themselves have become less significant. Vel et al. (2015) posited that society needs a more thorough description of how contemporary research relates to online, social media, and digital marketing advancements. College and university leaders may garner strategies to increase alumni financial support through understanding the research of Angulo-Ruiz et al. and Vel et al.

With new innovations in technology, people can integrate television (TV) advertisements with social media through an interactive relationship (Rossi & Giglietto, 2016). In a study on the 2011 and 2012 NFL championship games, which are often the most widely watched TV presentations, Spotts et al. (2014) discovered that TV advertisements resulted in increased social media activity about the products featured on TV (Spotts et al., 2014). The use of TV and social media platforms enhanced the brand engagement by increasing the total participation between the two forms of media (one being traditional marketing and the other being social media marketing) (Spotts et al, 2014).

In conclusion, researchers can draw one generality from the research surrounding the blend of traditional and social media marketing. Social media marketing can be a component (even supplementary aid) of traditional marketing. In many ways, traditional

marketing is no longer the seminal form of marketing (Martin, 2013). Even traditional marketing can be supplemented with social media features across organizational marketing practices, including colleges and universities (Villar, 2014). Such collective research demonstrates a need for improved media marketing strategies college and university leaders use to increase alumni financial support.

### **Media Preferences by Age and Gender**

With the advent of technology, new forms of media influence people (Icha & Edwin, 2016). Dunaetz, Lisk, and Shin (2015) conducted research on personality, gender, and age as a predictor for media preferences. Dunaetz et al. found that males with higher levels of extraversion held characteristics indicative of preferring newer forms of media with increased richness levels, and age was not a statistically significant variable for preferred media preference. Essentially, people of all ages found new media (online, social media, and digital media) as resourceful, and they preferred comparable levels of richness across all media forms. College and university leaders may benefit from Dunaetz et al.'s study by implementing more new media (i.e. online and social media) into their media marketing strategies.

Palsdottir (2014) conducted a study on the use of social media as a preference over other media forms relating to health and lifestyle information. Palsdottir found that women grew more inclined to use social media for seeking and communicating health and lifestyle information, and in addition, the younger the participant, the more inclined they were to use social media for their health and lifestyle information sources. In complement to Palsdottir's findings, Nimrod (2017) studied older audiences with regard

to media preferences. Nimrod found that users 60 years of age and older still felt more inclined to use and trust traditional media outlets more than social media outlets and, there is a divide between younger media preferences and older media preferences.

College and university leaders might profit from Palsdottir and Nimrod's research by being conscious of meeting the needs of younger and older alumni via traditional forms of marketing for aging alumni and social media forms of marketing for younger alumni.

Tkalac and Vercic (2013) conducted a study on students born in the Internet era regarding their media preferences. People born after digital communication technologies were available overwhelmingly preferred digital media outlets, such as social media, for their preferred media sources (Tkalac & Vercic, 2013). They found that people in college and university settings preferred social media outlets for their media sources as opposed to more traditional media outlets (Tkalac & Vercic, 2013). Collectively, Palsdottir (2014), Nimrod (2017), and Tkalac & Vercic found that there is a difference between media preference based on age and gender. The younger the participant, the more inclined to social media and digital media outlets; the older the participant, the more inclined to traditional media outlets (Nimrod, 2017; Palsdottir, 2014). In addition, it is interesting to note that people in college and university settings tend to be more early adapters in preferring digital and social media outlets (Tkalac & Vercic, 2013).

### **College, University, and Nonprofit Fundraising**

Colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations rely heavily on fundraising (Waters, 2015). Merchant, Ford, and Sargeant (2010) evaluated the stark reality of donor attrition and the value of nurturing donor relationships. Follow-up marketing and work

for the next *gift* (donation) begins with a thank you (Merchant et al., 2010). In two studies, Merchant et al. looked into the effect of acknowledgments and thank you notes on donor relationships. Merchant et al. found a positive correlation between donors receiving a thank-you note and feeling positive emotions. Adversely, the opposite feelings occurred when a donor did not receive a thank-you note (Merchant et al., 2010). For colleges and universities, donor retention and follow-up marketing are essential. Human emotion plays a role in college and university marketing and fundraising (Ruth & Shanka, 2008). Ruth and Shanka (2008) studied motivations, satisfactions, and intention of participants in sporting events (golf scrambles, basketball tournaments, and tennis tournaments) held by non-profit organizations, including colleges and universities, to produce greater awareness and generate revenue. Ruth and Shanka showed the significant relationship between the four components and non-profit sport participation. Merchant et al. and Ruth and Shanka, discovered that positively playing into human emotion is an important aspect in college and university fundraising. College and university leaders may profit from utilizing human emotion in their media marketing efforts to alumni.

Much like Ruth and Shanka (2008) studied sport related fundraising events, De los Salmones, Dominguez, and Herrero (2013) reviewed the influence of celebrity promotion of nonprofit fundraising events. The phenomena of using celebrities to promote non-profit organizations (NPOs), including colleges and universities, is not a new concept (De los Salmones et al., 2013). Using celebrities is an example of a way to promote nonprofit colleges and universities. Celebrities historically hold high persuasive



powers (Rossiter & Smidts, 2012). NPOs operate off emotion, spurring feelings and emotional responses that stimulate a person's desire to support a nonprofit organization. Celebrities can act as a positive appeal or a negative appeal, spurring emotion to support or work against a NPO.

In De los Salmones et al.'s (2013) study, the scholars presented nine hypotheses. De los Salmones et al. addressed image and attitudes of celebrity credibility, credibility of the NPO, social cause, and behavioral intentions. Celebrity credibility, NPO credibility, fit between celebrity and NPO, attitude toward celebrity and toward NPO's are all hypothesized positively in relation to attitudes toward advertisements (De los Salmones et al., 2013). The results provided support that celebrities are powerful transmitters of feelings and have a strong influence over consumers (De los Salmones et al., 2013). Saunders (2013) complemented the importance of utilizing celebrities by researching the importance of differentiated and creative fundraising approaches across nonprofits, including colleges and universities. If a celebrity is credible and the attitude toward the celebrity in relation to the NPO is positive, then the celebrity has a stronger impact on the results of marketing. In summation, De los Salmones et al. cited that celebrity persuasiveness has a direct relation to the celebrity public image; if the image is positive, the level of persuasiveness is positive. Such research may benefit college and university leaders by enlightening these leaders into the value of using celebrities and notable alumni in their media marketing strategies.

According to Saunders (2013), to draw benefactors and elevate resources, nonprofits, including colleges and universities, progressively rely on increasingly

differentiated and multifaceted fundraising structures. Social media networking, charitable fundraising, and consumerism play an increasing role within a for-profit oriented objective within the realm of business. Rossiter and Smidts (2012) added the value of complementing notable names and celebrities to the fundraising mix for nonprofits, including colleges and universities. Using such notable names in college and university media marketing strategies might aid in increasing alumni financial support.

Similar to social media driven fundraising and nonprofit success, Lin (2015) described the ability to gain or lose social capital through social networking sites. Social capital is the amount of advantage and power a person holds in carrying out their will in a given group of people (Lambert, 2016). Social capital is a topic of much research, yet very little research exists on the role social media plays in gaining or losing social capital (Chul-joo & Dongyoung, 2016). Lin (2015) employed attachment theory to explore the level of individual attachment to Facebook usage. A sample of university students found that individual attachment style in Facebook was an important factor in guiding social orientation and gaining or losing social capital (Lin, 2015).

Lin (2015) expanded on the importance of university students, alumni, and friends in relation to social media sites. Social media sites continue to increase in size and scope, and they have an effect on the people associated with a college or university (Carlson & Lee, 2015). If social capital can be both gained and lost through social media, this leads one to question whether alumni financial support at colleges and universities might be gained or lost through social media.

Ward and Edmondson (2015) conducted a study on a popular phenomenon known as the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge. The ALS Association is the only nonprofit organization solely created to fight Lou Gehrig's disease. According to Ward and Edmondson, between 2014 and 2015, the ALS challenge swept the United States of America via social media. Waters (2015) cited the value of specific dates in fundraising for colleges and universities. The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge allowed for specific action on certain dates to spur fundraising. This challenge was one of the most successful fundraising campaigns in history, and social media played a catalytic role in propelling the success. College and university leaders may profit from the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge by seeing the value in utilizing social media trends and phenomena in their media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support.

Specific days and specific dates can spur financial giving (Waters, 2015). The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge complemented giving days and allowed for organizations to choose days based on participation in the ice bucket challenge (Ward & Edmondson, 2015). Waters (2015) conducted a study on giving days for nonprofits, including colleges and universities. There are significant seasons and days in nonprofit work that spur additional fundraising momentum and Waters studied to see how social media enhanced designated giving days on the calendar for nonprofits. Waters found, when used correctly, that social media was an enhancing force in increasing financial support at nonprofit organizations, including colleges and universities.

Complementing Waters' (2015) work in utilizing specific dates for fundraising initiatives, Arnett (2015) described how social media impacted fundraising at Columbia

University in 2013. Through their online giving day, Columbia University promoted their brand through social media and raised more than \$7 million in 24 hours. Columbia University's success that day caught the attention of other college and university leaders across the country.

Online giving is a new technique, and one that universities cannot ignore (Arnett, 2015). Online giving is a method preferred by many college and university alumni (Stephenson & Bell, 2014). Through qualitative interviews, Arnett (2015) found evidence suggesting that college and university leaders cannot ignore social media and need to be moving in the direction of online giving campaigns. In their study, Stephenson and Bell identified a statistically significant relationship between university awareness and branding to alumni donations. Stephenson and Bell (2014) conducted a study based on governmental funding decreases in the sector of higher education institutions, concluding that branding and fundraising efforts are on the rise throughout colleges and universities. Stephenson and Bell enhanced the need to study the effect of social media on alumni financial support and giving behavior.

Facebook has a reach of more than 1.2 billion users, and Facebook has more than 8 million users daily (Icha & Edwin, 2016). Such reach yields interest for nonprofits and fundraising efforts. However, increased fundraising effectiveness at nonprofits, including colleges and universities, has not happened. According to Held (2014), less than 2% of nonprofits in the United States reported raising between \$10,000 and \$25,000 within the course of 12 months. Blackbaud, a popular development software, reported that roughly 1% of fundraising is linked directly to social media (Held, 2014). To understand more

completely this phenomenon, Facebook representatives ran a test study where they added a donate icon to 19 nonprofit pages (Held, 2014). The results were consistent in that people did not, in large scale, donate to these nonprofits through Facebook. Held found that social media is more important in increasing understanding and awareness of the mission of a nonprofit, but very few nonprofits have as of yet shown proof that it is a viable source for large-scale fundraising. Held discovered there is a divide between social media and actual fundraising. Held's research is valuable for college and university leaders seeking alumni financial support in that social media reach is exponential, but that successful fundraising through the reach of social media is still at an infant state.

Social media increased the communication channels in a significant way (Icha & Edwin, 2016). Social media provides new modalities of communication, including providing additional means for communication and methods of engagement with local communities (Conway & O'Connor, 2016). Using a mixed methods study, Icha and Edwin studied social media platforms using statistical data during a 6-week study of monitored interaction. Five social media platforms were studied. Icha and Edwin found that larger hospitals used social media more than smaller hospitals. Hospital promotion was the most widely use of social media, second to education, and third to fundraising. Icha and Edwin illustrated the relationship between fundraising and community organizations (i.e. hospitals, colleges, universities). Icha and Edwin shared that larger organizations are using social media more than smaller organizations, and there is a possibility for negative outcomes if the narrative is not controlled by the organization.

College and university leaders may benefit from Icha and Edwin's study by keeping a close eye on the community feelings and the importance of controlling (as best as is possible) the institutional marketing narrative.

Paulin, Ferguson, Schattke, and Jost (2014) conducted a study on the differences in millennials and their willingness to donate based on gender. Paulin et al.'s (2014) focused on nonprofit organizations dealing with breast cancer and homelessness, and the literature indicated women to be more empathetic and feel more morally responsible than men. O'Neil (2014) reported that millennials showed little loyalty to their Alma mater colleges when it came to financial support. Paradoxically, the literature O'Neal cited was contrasting to the findings of this study, at least within a social media context. Paulin et al. found that men were more altruistic, empathetic, and inclined to donate to cancer and homelessness causes than women. The findings shed light into future research by tying emotion to the minds of donors, especially men. These findings showed that men, when nudged by emotion, are more inclined to give. These results also compliment O'Neil's report, adding to understanding about millennials and financial support to alma mater colleges, especially considering that millennial males may be a group to focus more intently on in college and university fundraising. In essence, fundraising is all about touching the hearts of men and women (especially men per Paulin et al.) to open their minds toward considering financial support.

Stephenson and Yerger (2015) investigated the relationship between alumni satisfaction and brand identity, correlating these relationships with donor levels. Similar to Stephenson and Yerger, Peake, Par, and Roberts (2013) surveyed alumni satisfaction

in the public postsecondary education system in the southern state of Georgia. Peake et al. isolated one branch campus in Georgia and investigated alumni satisfaction. Stephenson and Yerger used a quantitative survey design across a mid-sized public university where university leaders surveyed alumni through email. More than 2,500 participants returned usable responses. Stephenson and Yerger revealed there were two primary sub-constructs that determined greater levels of satisfaction. The two sub-constructs were (a) satisfaction with student affairs and (b) satisfaction with campus resources. Stephenson and Yerger discovered that the most important sub-construct to alumni satisfaction was student affairs, which is the social life of college students living on campus, including dorm quality, amenities, and clubs. Stephenson and Yerger's findings are important in revealing information as it can lead a person to infer that the way universities treat their students is the most important factor in receiving greater levels of satisfaction and donor participation across alumni. The findings of Peake et al. signified alumni were satisfied with their education and the brand their degree represented. Such research justifies further the need for this study by citing examples of alumni satisfaction. College and university leaders can use satisfying traits of alumni in their efforts to increase alumni financial support.

Philanthropy at colleges and universities is an important aspect of higher educational growth (Powers & Yaros, 2013). McAlexander, Koenig, and DuFault (2014) studied the relationship between alumni and their financial giving at a large university. In a quantitative study conducted at a large U.S. university, McAlexander et al. found that affinity to a university correlated to philanthropic giving levels. Affinity had a greater

impact on the likelihood of giving than any other variable, including prior giving and giving capacity (wealth). The McAlexander et al. findings indicate that emotions and affinity are important factors in giving. With social media having a global scope, it is important for university leaders to know how to treat social media in relation to marketing and alumni financial support.

Orienting alumni is an important function of most all colleges or universities (Osborn, Alkezweeny, & Kecskes, 2015). Alumni hold some of the highest potential to give back to the school where they attended. Alnawas and Phillips (2015) examined the alumni orientation process using the discovery-oriented approach. Using mixed methods, Alnawas and Phillips collected educational data with 22 personal, in-depth interviews across six universities. Alnawas and Phillip's findings indicated nine components were involved in building a case for support including alumni database management, social media management; financing event management, financing publication management, promoting best practices of event management, promoting best practices of publication management, intrafunctional coordination, and interfunctional coordination (Alnawas & Phillips, 2015). These nine components might aid existing college and university leaders in their efforts to increase alumni financial support.

The use of social media and social networking introduced a new age of interconnectedness (Tzuo-Ming & Chi-Tsai, 2014). Tzuo-Ming and Chi-Tsai (2014) tapped into the interconnectedness of social media and the usefulness such connectedness has in encouraging alumni to remain connected with the college or university they attended. Such interconnectedness increases information and allows for people's social



media pages to influence universities, both through owned and earned media channels. Tysiac (2016) discussed creative nonprofit fundraising plans, and topics mentioned within the study included the value and significance of events for donors, social media in fundraising, and the importance of partnerships (Tysiac, 2016).

Financial support and fundraising are not easy for nonprofit organizations, especially when salaries supporting staffers at nonprofits are involved (Marudas, Petherbridge, & Ciokiewicz, 2016). The nonprofit fundraising landscape is more competitive than ever (Tysiac, 2016). Furthermore, Tysiac (2016) cited the importance of the story (i.e. marketing) of a nonprofit in relation to financial support.

Tzuo-Ming & Chi-Tsai (2014) also substantiated the breadth of connectedness across alumni groups through social media. This connectedness can be good or bad for the university, depending on the information released concerning the university and how the information is released. With the emergence of higher levels of media, including social media, Weertz, Cabrera, and Sanford (2010) distinguished the importance of university awareness in fundraising.

Marketing and fundraising are important functions within nonprofit organizations, including colleges and universities (Waters, 2015). There is a difference in nonprofit organizations concerning marketing and fundraising effectiveness (Cacija, 2013). Cacija conducted a study investigating nonprofit strategic marketing and fundraising effectiveness and found that traditional media and marketing efforts were important to maintain existing donors.

Nonprofit fundraising is an important function (Marudas et al., 2016). Powers and Yaros (2013) conducted a study on the importance of relationship building in fundraising. The nonprofits within the study were nonprofit news organizations, which brings the importance of marketing into the study. Conclusions drawn by Powers and Yaros were that high volumes of low-level financial supporting donors were vital.

Cacija (2013) proposed that traditional marketing activities are vital to long-term donors at colleges and universities. The level of fundraising effectiveness served as a sound litmus test of the quality of college or university marketing. Within another study by the same author regarding nonprofit marketing, fundraising success correlated with organizational success (Cacija, 2014). Fundraising success at colleges and universities is affected by marketing tactics, and proper implementation of marketing affects fundraising. Cacija cited that creativity in college and university fundraising campaigns precluded the importance of financial giving.

Powers and Yaros (2013) suggested that nonprofit organizations rely heavily on large portions of donors who give in small chunks; donors only give when they trust a nonprofit, and donors place a premium on relationships with nonprofit leaders (Powers & Yaros, 2013). Colleges and universities, which are largely nonprofit, rely significantly on fundraising (Kinsky et al., 2014). Cacija (2014), as previously mentioned, conducted a study clarifying the relationship between traditional marketing and fundraising. In addition, donor characteristics and behaviors were highlighted as important by Shaker et al. (2014). Shaker, Kienker, and Borden (2014) examined the culture of philanthropic behavior within the campuses of Indiana University. Within the study, the authors

documented fundraising strategies assessing the effectiveness of the philanthropic behavior of donors. Findings of Shaker et al. included the importance of utilizing a strategy when assessing donor behavior. Continued and consistent communication was vital in sustaining donor support.

Nonprofit organizations rely on fundraising efforts to remain viable (Hoefler, 2012). The National Center for Charitable Statistics reported more than one million nonprofits with \$1.4 trillion in contributions and revenues in 2009 (Hoefler, 2012). With many nonprofits facing declines in annual funding, yet having an increased demand for services offered, nonprofit leaders are forced to be more creative to fundraise (Hoefler, 2012). Within the research, Hoefler discussed affiliate marketing and online donations to help nonprofits be better prepared to meet fundraising goals. Affiliate marketing is a practice used where one organization steers viewers to another organization via their web page.

Hoefler (2012) showed that colleges and universities must be aware of donor-specific situations and how other organizations are handling donor relationships. Colleges and universities widely support alumni visits. In fact, college and university leaders often set meetings and events built to encourage alumni back to campus to visit. Within one study, Schofield and Fallon (2012) examined the propensity for alumni to return to the home city where they attended college. Schofield and Fallon found campus visits greatly decreased by alumni 6 months after graduation.

Losing customers is consistently an issue with firms and organizations (Feng, 2014). In some cases, blame goes to marketing efforts. The answer, Feng (2014) argued,

is concerned with knowing the probability of regaining lapsed customers. Also, the identification process of knowing which donors can be revived is equally important. The researcher focused on two areas of research, the first was with literature on nonprofit marketing, and the second was on customer relationship management, Feng (2014) utilized a quantitative method of study on a large nonprofit agency in Southeast Asia and found that sending marketing communications at an appropriate frequency has positive influences on reviving lapsed donor relationships. Furthermore, nonprofits might consider hiring outside help in fundraising and marketing creation. Hofer (2012) concluded that nonprofits (including colleges and universities) face tumultuous times, largely because funding is decreasing, and services needed to operate are increasing.

Moon and Azizi (2013) conducted research into the revenue-business-based relationships and the donor base of non-profit organizations. In fundraising, college and university leaders seek to learn how to predict who will donate and how much they will donate (Moon & Azizi, 2013; Waters, 2015; Arnett, 2015). Once fundraising leaders make determinations, they can make decisions on how marketing resources have affected donor decisions. The researchers utilized and developed models to predict donor behavior using a veterinary school as the non-profit organization under study.

Schofield and Fallon (2012) studied a sample of graduates from one university in northwestern England. This research is comparative to the United States because of the similarities between the U.S. and the UK's higher education infrastructure. The researchers found that a large majority of alumni visited the town where they attended college within 6 months of graduation. Visits after the 6 month mark were sparse. What

remained unknown with the study was whether the trips were to visit the city, friends in the city, the university, or a combination. Schofield and Fallon presented the tie between alumni and their alma mater university. They added that the city, friendships, and other factors play a role in an alumni choosing to come back for a visit (Schofield & Fallon, 2012). Moon and Azizi (2013) found that client relationships built through medical treatments positively affected donation decisions and shared how donations are associated to marketing efforts, and in the nonprofit sector of higher education showed that building relationships, marketing, and donations were interrelated.

### **Existing Literature on Alumni Financial Support at Colleges and Universities**

Colleges and universities face decreases in funding, increases in expenses, and diminishing alumni support (Stephenson & Yerger, 2014). These findings, coupled with other factors, have triggered nonprofit colleges and universities to operate more like a business and increase fundraising efforts (Burnes, Wend, & By, 2014). Stephenson and Yerger (2014) investigated the influence of brand identification on alumni support behaviors. Using a quantitative survey design at one mid-sized state university in the United States, Stephenson and Yerger examined if branding affected donation behaviors of alumni concluding that there was a relationship between brand identification and the choice of donation, increases in donation amounts, and the number of those who donated as an alumnus of a college or university (Stephenson & Yerger, 2014). In addition, Stephenson and Yerger concluded that interpretation of brand, prestige, and satisfaction levels while being a student impacted the level of association to alumni supportive behavior.

Weertz et al. (2010) conducted focus groups at one university to learn more about alumni giving patterns and behavior. The focus groups consisted of university alumni (Weertz et al., 2010). The researchers found patterns among the focus group participants showing that higher levels of participation, volunteerism, and university awareness resulted in higher levels of financial giving (Weertz et al., 2010). With media, earned and owned alike, raising awareness (positive or negative), Weertz et al. showed that media image/brand awareness matters and are correlated to fundraising.

Universities have distinct rituals and traditions that distinguish schools from one another (Martin, Moriuchi, Smith, Moeder, & Nichols, 2015; Waters, 2015). Martin et al. studied university rituals and traditions revealing that stronger brand ties to university rituals and traditions spurred greater levels of financial support from alumni. In addition, Martin et al. discovered that active alumni help increase alumni support better than non-alumni working to increase support.

Complementing the research of Weertz et al. (2010) and Martin et al. (2015) relating to alumni financial support, Skari (2014) studied alumni giving at community colleges compared to four-year institutions. Skari discovered that graduates are more likely to provide financial support than people who attended, but did not graduate distinguishing a different financial giving pattern for college attendees as opposed to college graduates. Garnering a better understanding of how traditional and social media marketing influence alumni financial support will add to the body of literature on college and university fundraising.

### **Relevancy of the Literature Review**

Within the literature review, there was relevance in the areas of marketing, higher education, social media, and non-profit fundraising research. Marketing, educational, and nonprofit leaders may find value in the literature by taking this existing literature and applying the findings in their specific fields. Within nonprofits, fundraising includes college and university fundraising. Alumni are likely people to provide financial support at colleges and universities, affecting fundraising efforts. The literature review was important in understanding the foundation behind conducting a qualitative multiple case study on the media marketing strategies university leaders can use to increase alumni financial support. Themes from the literature review include: loss of money can occur due to new forms of media; social media is existent across all organizations (including colleges and universities); media marketing strategies are about maintaining relationships and keeping alumni informed about their alma mater, and that social media parameters for college or university staff may become more prevalent.

### **Literature Review Organization and Transition**

The Review of Academic and Professional Literature section is where the landscape of literature surrounding the research question and the specific business problem developed. From the existing literature, a study conceptualization occurred. From the existing literature, I conceptualized and designed the study, posing the following research question:

What traditional and social media marketing strategies (both owned and earned) do some university leaders utilize to increase alumni financial support?

## **Transition**

Colleges and universities rely heavily on alumni fundraising efforts to remain operational and increase in size and scope (Waters, 2015). In the review of academic and professional literature, Stephen and Galak (2012) discovered the value and importance of differentiating traditional and social media into categories of owned and earned media. In addition, Mudrick et al., (2016) substantiated the value of blending traditional media and social media while Skari (2014) and Weertz et al. (2010) showcased the importance of fundraising through the alumni bases at colleges and universities.

Key points within Section 1 included the problem that some university leaders do not know the effect traditional marketing and social media marketing efforts have on alumni financial support. Using Stephen and Galak's (2012) theory of owned and earned media as the guide, I addressed the research question in the subsequent qualitative study. Within the review of academic and professional literature, using nine subsections, I outlined the landscape of literature surrounding the research question. Each subsection outlined knowledge acquired through previous studies in each respective area: (a) the theory of owned versus earned media; (b) competing theories; (c) similar theories; (d) traditional marketing; (e) social media marketing; (f) blending traditional and social media marketing; (g) media preferences by age and gender; (h) college, university, and nonprofit fundraising; and (i) existing literature on alumni financial support at colleges and universities. In Section 2, I include the purpose statement, role of the researcher, participants, research method, research design, population and sampling, importance of ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization



technique, and data analysis, as well as reliability and validity. In Section 3, I report the findings and share analyses, limitations, and directions for future research.

## Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, the goal was to address the purpose statement, role of the independent researcher, participants, research method, research design, population and sampling, ethical research practices, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization technique, data analysis, reliability and validity, and a transition into section 3, with the findings of the study. The work in section 2 is the foundation leading into the study's findings, stemming from the semi structured interview data, official documents, and media postings.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the traditional and social media marketing strategies some college and university leaders use to increase alumni financial support. The target population for this study was college and university leaders located at three nonprofit colleges and universities in the southeastern United States. With regard to social change, I anticipated the results of this study to enable college and university leaders to effectively use traditional and social media marketing to increase fundraising efforts, resulting in increased scholarships, expanded community outreach programs, and higher education levels in the surrounding communities.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The role of a qualitative researcher is to collect quality, inductive, and ethical data that meet the needs of a study (Brush et al., 2014). My first role as the researcher was to find successful college and university leaders who have used effective media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support. As the independent researcher in this

study, I was the data collection instrument. I am a resident living in the southeastern part of the United States working in higher education, and an employee of a university located in the southeastern United States.

In accordance with the Belmont Report (1979), my role as an independent researcher was to investigate, with permission, strategies that university leaders use in their media marketing strategies (traditional and social media) to increase alumni financial support. The national commission who authored the Belmont Report outlined the boundaries between practice and research, ethical principles, and applications of research (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2016). I upheld the ethical requirements as outlined in the Belmont Report, which are respect for people, beneficence, and justice. According to Cross, Pickering, and Hickey (2014), the ethical research guidelines to protect human subjects are outlined within the Belmont Report. Informed consent, assessment of costs and benefits, and selection of subjects are the three core pillars of application within the Belmont Report (Cross et al., 2014; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2016). Aside from the core application principles, three key notions include respect for people, beneficence, and justice (Cross et al., 2014). As an independent researcher investigating effective traditional and social media marketing strategies that university leaders at three different colleges of universities use to increase alumni financial support, I mitigated bias and avoided viewing data through a personal lens by member checking, summarizing all interview data, bracketing, keeping a journal, and sharing summaries with participants. All

participants had total access to all of their interview summaries to ensure accuracy, participant comfortability, and to reduce the possibility of bias.

### **Participants**

For this doctoral study, I used a qualitative approach using semistructured interviews with recommended college and university leaders at three schools, as well as reviewing official documents and media postings (artifacts). Yin (2014) identified that semistructured interviews and the use of artifacts are an appropriate approach to triangulation in qualitative research. The eligibility criteria for the study participants include (a) a master's degree, (b) a minimum of 3 years of field experience in university leadership, and (c) having worked with alumni and increased financial support by using strategic marketing strategies during the past 3 years.

These kind of academic credentials and on the job experience criteria are standard in the field of college and university leadership (Eddy, 2013). By ensuring each participant meets the three criteria, I was more likely to have selected proven and successful college and university leaders who have used effective media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support. Research participants should be determined by the focus of the study, which enables scholars to answer their research question (Saunders, 2012). In addition, when using qualitative methods to ensure alignment, the researcher determines the eligibility of the participants and if the participants can answer the research question.

After obtaining IRB approval, I adhered to the following steps:

- 1) Identified one college and university leader identified as my potential key informant to gain access to other successful university leaders who are potential candidates to participate.
- 2) Used the key informant to identify additional leads on other college and university leaders that will agree to participate or recommend others to participate in the study.
- 3) Initiated strategies through the key informant by emailing and calling potential participants that are college and university leaders to arrange informal breakfast/coffee/lunch meetings.
- 4) Established a working relationship with participants through my key informant. This person will serve as a point of entry in obtaining access to other successful university leaders. The use of well-informed persons is a principle way to gain entrance into a select group of college and university leaders in the field of university leadership (Dexter, 1970). Concentration on an informant can help a researcher acquire a better picture of the strategies that successful college and university leaders use in increasing alumni financial support (Kun, Kassim, Howze, & Macdonald, 2013).
- 5) Obtained permission from each participant. The consent form is located in Appendix B.
- 6) Initiated the semistructured interviews and the collection process of recommended artifacts (official documents and media postings).

## **Research Method**

Scholars use three primary designs in conducting research. The three designs are quantitative, qualitative, and a combination of qualitative and quantitative, which is better known as mixed methods (Rovai, Baker, & Ponton, 2013). The specific research method I used was a qualitative method, including semistructured interviews and the analysis of artifacts.

In qualitative research, scholars allow for the discovery of points of commonality and differences within the interviews and artifact data (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). In addition, qualitative research allows a researcher to better understand the qualities or nonquantifiable characteristics of human behavior (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Using qualitative research is an accepted and recognized way to research and identify successful strategies (Doran et al., 2015; Toye, Williamson, Williams, Fairbank, & Lamb, 2016). In essence, I am looking to discover the thematic commonalities of successful media marketing strategies used by college and university leaders.

Researchers using a quantitative research method focus on measurable characteristics identified from collected numerical data or archival data (Leedy & Ormord, 2013). Quantitative or mixed-methods designs were not appropriate for this study because of the limited research in the areas of traditional marketing and social media marketing in relation to alumni financial support. Using qualitative research was more appropriate because a qualitative method is inductive where researchers look into perceptions; the goal is to look for the trends that may emerge from an in-depth investigation of the qualities of media marketing strategies.

## Research Design

Qualitative research has four common designs, including case study, ethnography, focus groups, and phenomenology (Lewis, 2015; Yin, 2014). I used a multiple case study design. Scholars use case studies to investigate unique circumstances that occur in the real world that enable future researchers to expound upon study findings (Yin, 2014). Researchers use a case study design to investigate a setting, a single subject, a set of documents, a particular event, an organization, a particular profession or area of work, or a single community (Lune & Berg, 2016). A multiple case study was an appropriate fit for my study because I researched multiple cases (colleges and universities) in search of commonalities and trends relating to strategies used to increase alumni financial support. Researchers use ethnography as a study design when a scholar uses participant observation so that a researcher can garner a real-time understanding of specific routines, cultures, and rituals (Petty et al., 2012). Ethnography is research conducted in natural social settings in which people pursue the actual context where people live their daily lives (Ladner, 2014). Ethnographers enter the ongoing worlds of other people to encounter their activities and concerns first hand (Yin, 2014). Ethnography was not a good fit for this study because first-hand experiential data are not necessary to learn effective media marketing strategies college and university leaders use to increase alumni financial support. Scholars use phenomenology to explore a specific phenomenon within a culture or society (Petty et al., 2012). Phenomenology was not a sound fit for this study because the focus of research was on strategies that college and university leaders use, and not on a phenomenon. Researchers use focus groups in qualitative research to

encourage rich dialogue between participants and to determine whether different characteristics and responses emerge in a group setting that may not emerge in a single interview (Morgan, 1996). The use of focus groups was not an appropriate fit for this study because of the use of college and university leaders as participants across multiple universities. A multiple case study design was the most appropriate choice for this study because I investigated the media marketing strategies university leaders use to increase alumni financial support through the lens of individual college and university leaders at multiple colleges and universities. Within this case study design, I used semistructured interviews, as well as review official documents and media postings (artifacts) to identify strategies university leaders use to increase alumni financial support.

I ensured data saturation by methodologically triangulating several types of data, including semistructured interviews, official documents, and media postings (artifacts). Triangulation is a technique scholars use to cross verify that data is valid; to reach saturation, researchers should collect two or more forms of data in a study to check the results (Denzin, 2006). I used member checking to assure the accuracy of participant perspectives. Member checking occurs when a researcher checks findings and interpretations of findings with participants by writing summaries and sharing the summaries with the participants to ensure each interpretation has been accurately portrayed (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Yin (2014) identified that with case study designs, the findings are not generalizable.



### **Population and Sampling**

For this study using a snowball sampling method, I identified a key college or university leader who then will recommend other qualified participants. The number of participants for this study was determined by data saturation using methodological triangulation, and participants will be successful college university leaders. A small sample is justified to gain the level of coherence and depth necessary to locate commonalities and trends in the data (Weiss, 1994).

As mentioned in the above section, I ensured data saturation by utilizing methodological triangulation between semistructured interviews, official documents, and media postings (artifacts); and conducted member checking, which involved sharing summaries with participants to increase study reliability and ensure accuracy and consistency within trends and commonalities in the data. I relied on an identified college and university leader in the field (informant) to recommend additional qualified participants (i.e. snowballing). Interviews took place at natural locations such as commonly used work spaces. To address privacy, I worked with each participant to ensure that interview locations were held in normal settings where participants feel comfortable and private and ensure there is an appropriate level of privacy, as dictated by the participants. I recorded each interview in a natural interview setting where participants feel comfortable and at-home where they were recorded by an electronic audio recording device after receiving permission to do so from the participants in the informed consent. This kind of normal interview setting allowed for rich descriptions to emerge in the data. Rich descriptions are detailed and thick descriptions of the context in

which these university leaders conduct their professional practices. Rich descriptions are important because the goal in qualitative research is depth rather than breadth (Becker, 1996).

### **Ethical Research**

Ethical research is a cornerstone in conducting qualitative studies as well as with quantitative and mixed methods (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2013). All three research methods are collectively the benchmark in professional research practice (Zikmund et al., 2013). In this multiple case study, I worked to ensure data saturation by interviewing participants until no new themes appear. All participation was voluntary, and all participants were college or university leaders that meet the eligibility criteria. The eligibility criteria for the study participants includes a) a master's degree (academic credentials are an indicator of success in the field), b) a minimum of 3 years of field experience in university leadership, and c) have worked with alumni and increased financial support by utilizing strategic marketing strategies in the past 3 years. All potential participants were free to choose not to participate. If a participant chose to withdraw from the study, they could do so at any time. The procedure for withdrawing from the study was a verbal or written notification that they wish to cease participation. If a participant chose to withdraw from the study, I would have documented his or her withdrawal and omit data collected in my study notes.

There were not any incentives offered for participation in the study. There are many variables to conducting sound qualitative, ethical research, including awareness of participant needs, sensitive protocols in place, and complete transparency (Vanclay,

Baines, & Taylor, 2013). Consent forms to participate in the study are located in the appendices in Appendix B. Each participant received a consent form with my name as the independent researcher outlining the purpose and the topic of the study, ensuring confidentiality and sharing a summary of the study (see Appendix B). All information from the study and personal information from the participants was private and stored in a locked safe located in the southeastern United States for 5 years. The public will not have access to any of the data or information gained from the interviews.

Confidentiality and participant coding are important in participant protection (Saunders, Kitzinger, & Kitzinger, 2014). After holding this information for a period of 5 years after the completion of this doctoral study, all data will be destroyed. The names of each participant is coded for confidentiality as Participant 1 (P1), Participant 2 (P2), and so forth. The IRB information for this study is as follows: 11-20-17-0594717.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

As an independent researcher, I served as the data collection instrument for this qualitative multiple case study. In qualitative case study designs, the researcher serves as the primary data collection instrument (Yin, 2014). For triangulation, I collected data by conducting semistructured interviews and by analyzing official documents and media postings (artifacts). As the data collection instrument, I interviewed college or university leaders and review all official documents and artifacts. In conducting the semistructured interviews, I asked the interview questions (see Appendix A) in a natural and comfortable setting for the participants in an effort to receive rich descriptions of traditional and social

media marketing strategies used to increase alumni financial support. To ensure reliability and validity of the data collected, I used member checking.

### **Data Collection Technique**

The data collection techniques were semistructured interviews as well as reviewed official university documents, and media posting (artifacts). A semistructured interview is a recognized qualitative data collection technique where a researcher uses preset interview questions to prompt responses and provide a participant with the opportunity to elaborate on interview questions and subject matter (Kallio, Pietila, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016). Using artifacts in qualitative research is an accepted form of data collection in qualitative research (Yin, 2014). Artifacts are physical items made by people that provide insight into cultures, phenomena, organizations, and people (Yin, 2014). To begin, each participant will read and sign a consent form (see Appendix B). The interview protocol included an introduction of the purpose of the study and an explanation of the interview process to the participants.

Advantages of collecting data through semistructured interviews and artifacts include the ability to unearth rich descriptions, the ability to learn in-depth strategies, and the ability to engage in detail with each participant (Barribal & While, 1994), which in this case the participants will be college and university leaders who have experienced success with media marketing strategies. Disadvantages of collecting data through semistructured interviews and artifacts include that the findings were not generalizable and were restricted to the participants within the study. Each interview was conducted in a natural and comfortable setting (i.e. a university leader's existing workplace). Once the

interview questions begin, I paid close attention to nonverbal cues noting cues in my detailed notes, paraphrase if necessary, and most importantly asked follow-up questions to obtain the rich descriptions ensuring appropriate depth in the participant's responses. In closing, I thanked the participant for their time in allowing me the opportunity to interview them.

In the process of closing the interview, appropriate follow up dates for member checking took place to ensure the accuracy, credibility, and validity of the interview data. If necessary, I arranged additional communications as deemed appropriate by the participants. I shared a copy of the summary composed of their responses, ask if the summary is accurate, ask questions to make sure that all participants are aware of IRB approval, ensure that interpretations of their responses are accurate, and valid and that no key information was omitted. Participants had the opportunity to add additional information to their semistructured interview. To ensure confidentiality, each participant represents an unidentifiable label such as: 1 (P1), participant 2 (P2), and so forth.

Bracketing is a process where a researcher undergoes measures to ensure that bias does not take place and that a researcher can act non-judgmentally and reflexively to add rigor and validity to a qualitative study (Sorsy, Kiikiala, & Astedt-Kurki, 2015). Researchers using bracketing set aside any preconceived notions about a particular group or area under study to ensure that there is objectivity in the research process (Goldblatt & Band-Winterstein, 2016; Sorsy et al., 2015). Knowing that it is difficult to not possess any bias when conducting research in an area of interest, I utilized bracketing (Sorsy et al., 2015). Similar to bracketing, I was *reflexive*, which is understanding that one's

position will affect how a scholar researches and analyzes data. Knowing that bias is always possible in qualitative research, being reflexive and utilizing bracketing through journaling can help a researcher understand why certain processes were conducted and why particular interpretations were made during the research process (Sorsy et al., 2015)

To ensure the data is kept properly and logged correctly, appropriate measures included a recording of each interview using an electronic audio recording device, extensive notes of each participant interview, a summary of those notes, and converting the notes into a cataloguing/labeling system. The cataloguing/labeling system was used to keep track of the interview and artifact data. All raw data was stored in a safe and secure location for a minimum of 5 years.

### **Data Organization Technique**

It is important for a researcher to have sound data organization techniques. (Cooper, 2014). As an independent researcher, my plan to keep track of data included taking extensive notes and implementing the notes into a cataloguing/labeling system. Clarity in data organization techniques aids in ensuring the confidentiality of participants (Yin, 2014). After conducting each semistructured interview, recorded with permission of the participants, I reviewed each recording to ensure my notes accurately reflect the conversation and will collect as well as review all official documents and artifacts. Yin (2014) shared the importance of taking notes during and after each interview.

I transcribed each interview recording, and I double and triple checked each interview recording to ensure the transcriptions are correct. Securely storing all data is a keystone in the confidentiality of qualitative research (Cooper, 2014). All recordings and

notes were saved on my personal computer with a designated folder for each participant. With the organization of the data, all information is stored privately in a locked safe in the southeastern United States for a period of 5 years upon completion of my doctoral study. After 5 years, all data will be removed by wiping all portable, stored data and destroying the devices. In addition, I will shred all paper documents.

### **Data Analysis**

Yin (2011) developed a five step cycle for data analysis. The process included compiling a database, disassembling data, reassembling data, interpreting data, and drawing conclusions (Yin, 2011). Within this doctoral study, I used Yin's five step process by compiling all semistructured interview notes and recordings, as well as all artifacts, disassembling the data by breaking the data down into trends and identifying common threads, disassembling the data by breaking it down into codes and themes (the reassembling process), and then interpreting the data. Conclusions followed after the data interpretation process.

To properly follow Yin's (2011) five step cycle and ensure validity and reliability, I used methodological triangulation. Utilizing a triangulation technique allows a researcher to obtain a large level of comprehension within data (Heale & Forbes, 2013). Triangulation is a mechanism researchers use to cross verify data validity, ensuring saturation is achieved; triangulation involves two or more data sources to check the results of each study (Denzin, 2006). In using triangulation in qualitative research, scholars can use multiple data sources to confirm findings (Carter, Bryant, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014). Using triangulation helps assure that scholars are using

credible and reliable research processes (Carter et al., 2014). Within this qualitative multiple case study, I utilized triangulation with semistructured interviews as well as reviewing official documents and media postings (artifacts).

In compiling a database, disassembling/reassembling data, and interpreting trends within the data, it is important to categorize, test, determine concluding findings, and appropriately analyze all collected data (Yin, 2014). In this study, I transcribed all semistructured interviews searching for themes (disassembling) within the data, repeatedly listening to the recordings ensuring the software transcriptions are correct. I then converted the data into codes (reassembling) by identifying repeated themes from my conceptual framework with Stephen and Galak's (2012) owned and earned model. Using the data retrieved from the semistructured interviews (reassembling), I transcribed and coded the data based on trends and commonalities that emerge. By inputting the data into codes, scholars can organize the data and input it into categories (Leedy & Ormand; Pierre & Jackson, 2014).

Following the disassembling and reassembling of the data, interpretation of the data began. In addition, I consistently searched for new publications relating to this study using Walden University's online databases to ensure that new studies published relating to traditional and social media marketing in relation to alumni financial support are included in the doctoral study findings. Upon completion of the data analysis, I began drawing conclusions.



## **Reliability and Validity**

Validity and reliability are keystones of qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Rigor and careful diligence in academic research methods are vital components in the process (Murphy & Yelder, 2010). Without reliability and validity, a research study does not hold much, if any, value (Rubin & Babbie, 2016).

### **Reliability**

Reliability is the degree to which a researcher's assessments consistently measures what they intend to measure (Yin, 2014). Reliability is where credibility, dependability, and consistency of data exist within scholarly research practices (Noble & Smith, 2015). Dependability, which is a part of the reliability process, is the evaluation of the changing conditions that frequently occur in a study setting (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The assurance of reliability in academic research allows for independent researchers to build trust and carry out interview protocols (Kim & Li, 2013). To ensure dependability, I conducted member checking procedures.

### **Validity**

Validity is where a scholar ensures there is credibility, transferability, and confirmability in the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Credibility, transferability, and confirmability are vitally important for scholars in maintaining validity in qualitative research practices (Kim & Li, 2013). Credibility is an element of validity where a scholar ensures that the research approach is synchronized with accepted research standards (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Transferability is the extent to which research

findings apply to other settings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Confirmability is the degree in which other scholars agree with the validity of the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

As the primary data collection instrument, I used specific interview and data collection protocols to ensure proper validity levels. Credibility is when the research approach is generally accepted across the scholarly community (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Credibility measures involve member checking and triangulation (Yin, 2014). I used triangulation and member checking in this doctoral study. Transferability is the assurance that other researchers who conduct similar research are able to use the concepts developed through this study (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Confirmability is a qualitative measure where scholars establish outcomes and can be achieved by checking and rechecking the data throughout the entirety of the research and data collection process (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). I wrote my personal observations throughout the data collection process in order to acknowledge and address personal biases, using these personal observations as a way to maintain a reflexive approach to ensure that my own personal biases do not hinder the findings. Regarding confirmability, I went line by line through the data collected and document the process to ensure the findings are accurate. Data saturation occurs when a scholar reaches a point in qualitative research where no new themes or information emerge (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In this study, I confirmed data saturation using triangulation with semistructured interviews, official documents, and media postings (artifacts).

### **Transition and Summary**

Within Section 2, I re-acquainted the reader with the purpose of the study, including the qualitative multiple case study design, sharing the details of the data collection process and analysis including addressing the study reliability and validity. In Section 3 using semistructured interviews and artifact data to unearth and identify common trends and themes, coupled with the qualitative analysis, I created qualitative illustrations, outlining findings that make it easy for the reader to see, recognizing the trends and themes within the data, and sharing the findings of the research question, applying application of the findings to professional practice. In addition, I revisited implications for social change, make recommendations for actions and future research, as well as share reflections and conclusions moving forward from this study. There is potential to generate in-depth, rich descriptions that could yield interesting and meaningful findings surrounding the effectiveness of media marketing strategies in relation to increasing alumni financial support.

### Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify traditional and social media marketing strategies that some nonprofit college and university leaders use to increase alumni financial support. In answering the research question, I interviewed seven college or university leaders, which consisted of two college or university presidents, two provosts, and three vice presidents across three different southeastern nonprofit colleges and universities. During each interview, each participant answered the same seven interview questions.

Throughout the analysis of the findings, four themes emerged in the data. The first theme was social media marketing effectiveness. This theme was identified early and was consistent across all interviews. The second theme was traditional marketing evolving with social media marketing. Each interviewee spoke to how they were “blending” these types of marketing approaches. A third theme was social media marketing as efficient. Participants perceived social media marketing to be less expensive, to produce results faster, and to render more extensive results than traditional marketing. A fourth theme was the multiplier effect of marketing through social media. Combined and/or blended approaches (traditional and social media marketing) are bringing more results for college and university leaders.

#### **Presentation of the Findings**

The research question for this doctoral study was as follows: What traditional and social media (nontraditional) marketing strategies do some nonprofit college and

university leaders use to increase alumni financial support? In answering the central research question, I interviewed seven college and university leaders across three private, nonprofit colleges and universities in the southeastern United States. Of the seven participants, there were at least two participants from each of the three schools (Table 1). For each participant, I conducted semistructured interviews that consisted of face-to-face interviews at each college or university. In addition, I analyzed college and university documents to review actual marketing materials. By conducting both face-to-face interviews and reviewing college written materials, I was able to check for consistent theme development across marketing strategies. This approach is a form of triangulation of qualitative data. In addition, I conducted member checking for accuracy and reliability of the data.

The conceptual framework for this study was based on the research of Stephen and Galak (2012) where they distinguished media into categories within traditional and social forms. Two of the categories were earned and owned media. Stephen and Galak (2012) provided the application of differentiation between media, allowing researchers to study the influence of traditional media and social media on alumni financial support for colleges and universities. From this research grounded in Stephen and Galak's work distinguishing media into categories, I found four main themes in the data.

The four main themes that emerged from the data included (a) social media effectiveness; (b) traditional marketing evolving with social media marketing; (c) social media marketing as efficient; and (d) the multiplier effect of marketing through social media. Using the van Kaam method of data analysis, I was able to distinguish quotes

from the data that met the criteria to be used in the tables that follow. The van Kaam method of data analysis is where a researcher uses horizontalization and reduction and elimination in qualitative data to determine quotes that group into themes based on a research question (Moustakis, 1994). Each of the four themes emerged in the data based upon the following research question.

### **Research Question**

What traditional and social media (nontraditional) marketing strategies do some nonprofit college and university leaders use to increase alumni financial support?

### **Demographics and Themes**

To carry out this doctoral study, I received permission from three colleges or universities to interview leaders at each school. Each of the three schools were located in the southeastern United States. Each school was accredited, private, and had an enrollment fewer than 10,000 students. At each of the three schools, I interviewed at least two college or university leaders. Each participant was a college or university president (two participants), provost (two participants), or vice president (three participants). In essence, each participant held a cabinet level role or higher within the administration of each college or university. Of the participants, six were male, and one was female. There were five white participants and two black participants. The ages ranged from the 40s to 60s, with four of the seven participants identifying their age between 40 and 50, two participants identifying their age between 50 and 60, and one participant identifying their age to be between 60 and 70 (Table 1).

Table 1

*Demographics*

Participant	Column A (age range, 10 years)	Column B (gender)	Column C (race)	Column D (occupation)
P1	50-60	Male	Black	President
P2	40-50	Male	Black	Provost
P3	40-50	Male	White	Vice president
P4	40-50	Female	White	Provost
P5	40-50	Male	White	Vice president
P6	60-70	Male	White	Vice president
P7	50-60	Male	White	President

Table 2

*Major Themes That Emerged Across the Sample of Participants*

	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4
Participants	Social media marketing effectiveness	Evolution of traditional marketing blending with social media marketing	Social media marketing efficiency (inexpensive) and ease of use	Multiplier effect of social media

Four distinct themes emerged in the data. The four themes were social media marketing effectiveness, evolution of traditional marketing blending with social media marketing, social media marketing efficiency and ease of use, and the multiplier effect of social media. Theme 1, social media marketing effectiveness, emerged as five of seven participants spoke directly to their experience positively with social media marketing because of social media marketing effectiveness. Theme 2, evolution of traditional

marketing blending with social media marketing, became apparent in the data after five of seven participants spoke directly to their experience in blending traditional media with social media by taking traditional marketing efforts and posting them onto social media. Theme 3, social media marketing efficiency and ease of use, emerged in the data after five of seven participants associated social media with efficiency, inexpensiveness, and ease of use. Theme four surfaced as a theme in the data after five of seven participants shared their experiences of effectively increasing alumni financial support and financial support in general by marketing on social media and experiencing the multiplying effect of social media marketing. Participant quotes and more detailed findings via the data collected in the semistructured interviews are highlighted in each of the following four subsections labeled by each of the four themes that emerged in the data.

### **Social Media Effectiveness**

Table 3

#### *Theme 1: Social Media Effectiveness*

- 
1. "It will be crucial for us to move to more social media strategies" (P5).
  2. "Our most effective alumni campaigns to gain financial support have actually been through social media" (P6).
  3. "I'll tell you our 'Give Day' that we had back earlier this year, I learned the power of tweets and shares. That has been very effective for us" (P3).
  4. "The power of social media . . . is very, very effective. Peer to peer, it is almost like the old word of mouth" (P3).
  5. "We are heavily involved in social media." Would you say you are more involved in social media than traditional media? "Yes. Now we are . . . yes" (P1).
  6. "We try to go across different platforms in social media. And it causes a bit of a buzz" (P6).
  7. "Through Facebook, through Twitter . . . It is challenging people to give—In this case I think we were able to have 2700 donations in a 48-hour window" (P7).
  8. "Social media marketing strategies definitely helped. It (social media) is more intentional, and intrusive, and it gets the word out. And, it just seems to be a better approach" (P4).
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9. “I would say the social media is more effective” (P4).

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Participant 3 stated, “The power of social media . . . is very, very effective”

Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 spoke directly to the reported effectiveness of social media in their marketing efforts to increase financial support (Table 3). Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) provided research and evidence of social media effectiveness at a relatively low cost, lower than that of traditional marketing efforts on average. Each of the seven participants within this study cited similar professional feelings based upon their leadership experience across colleges and universities. Because of this cited effectiveness of social media, the participants all were more confident marketing through social media for alumni support than any other medium. Furthermore, each participant cited at least one example of using traditional marketing efforts on social media, amplifying the effect of his or her marketing message. These data enable a researcher to form the idea that regardless of the marketing media form (traditional or social media), the majority of marketing efforts will make it into social media forums thus adding to the perceived effectiveness of social media.

### **Traditional Marketing Evolving with Social Media Marketing**

Table 4

*Theme 2: Traditional Marketing Evolving with Social Media Marketing*

- 
1. “First thing that came to my mind involves personal success stories of students and alumni . . . We have been posting these stories in social media with a picture and ‘look how so and so is doing—She’s an alumnus’” (P4).
  2. “I do know today the traditional methods are just really struggling . . . So the added social media marketing strategies have really helped” (P4).
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3. “When talking about media marketing strategies, over the internet is a more recent phenomenon. I think in years past we used to do everything that most colleges did... direct mailing, newspapers, that sort of thing. We don’t do that... we still advertise using traditional marketing, but nothing like we do now.” P6).
  4. “It (social media) is almost like the old word of mouth... We want to use various forms of advertising [both traditional and social]” (P3).
  5. “I think it gets back to diversification. Kind of like bookstores... Although they’re selling a lot of e-books, there are still people who demand the [traditional] hardcopy” (P3).
  6. “Umm, brochures [are used to increase alumni financial support]. We also send them out weekly [over the internet on social media] to alumni and donors. Results in monthly meetings, luncheons with philanthropic and potential donors” (P1).
  7. “Earned media amounts for larger dollars [typically social media]. Owned for smaller dollars [typically traditional]. We’ve always capitalized on marketable news [using traditional and social media marketing together].” (P1).
  8. “We get a lot of comments on social media to these types of stories [traditional media based stories that appear on social media]. I feel like it is a real positive strategy” (P4).
  9. “A chairs challenge that we do would be one way that we gathered alumni support... It is aimed at getting alumni or donors in the habit of giving. It started in person and is now mainly social media” (P7).
- 

Participant 4 stated, “We get a lot of comments on social media to these types of stories [traditional media based stories that appear on social media]. I feel like it is a real positive strategy.” Participants 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7 spoke to the evolution of traditional marketing in that traditional marketing is consistently being supplemented and optimized via social media marketing. Essentially, college and university leaders within this study shared that they take any positive traditional marketing efforts and also place them onto social media platforms, creating an evolution of how traditional marketing is used. Social media marketing has changed the landscape of marketing (Xie & Lee, 2015). Traditional marketing still holds value, but it was almost always blended with social media in the cases of the seven participants within this study. This evolution of

traditional marketing now being supplemented with a social media blend is significant.

Each participant cited how he or she place positive traditional marketing efforts on social media for added value. This demonstrates the power of social media marketing and the reality that traditional media marketing is evolving with social media marketing.

### **Social Media Marketing as Efficient**

Table 5

#### *Theme 3: Social Media Marketing as Efficient and Easy (Inexpensive)*

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1. “Yeah, I think budget limitations is probably the greatest” [challenge] (in relation to media marketing strategies.) Our most effective alumni campaigns to gain financial support have actually been through social media” (P6).
  2. “Social media advertising is quick... The results are fast... You kind of get that instant gratification from the success” (P3).
  3. “And now so much is coming over the internet. We communicate more through the internet—either through social media, texts you know. They’re used to an instant response; this provides that” (P6).
  4. “It (social media marketing) is inexpensive, so that’s what you hope. You’re casting a wider net. You’re looking for the \$100 and under donor to come in through that avenue for the college” (P7).
  5. “It (traditional media marketing) is expensive. Occasionally we will get a front page article... we’re not buying advertisement there... they’re doing it. Social media is much less expensive.” (P7).
  6. “We have moved more from traditional to social media (marketing). And, we are heavily involved in social media” (P1).
  7. “So, our communications department, they’re very active with Facebook, Twitter” (P2).
- 

“Social media advertising is quick... The results are fast... You kind of get that instant gratification from the success” (Participant 3). Theme three materialized from 5 of 7 participants speaking directly to the efficiency, ease of use, and inexpensiveness of social media. In addition, 7 of 7 participants in their interviews outlined their inclination toward using social media more in marketing efforts to increase alumni financial support.

The fact that all participants highlighted social media marketing as a means of marketing they use makes a case that each perceived social media marketing to be efficient and easy to use.

“We have moved more from traditional to social media. And, we are heavily involved in social media” (Participant 1). In an overwhelming fashion, participants within this study identified their intent to use more social media and less traditional media in their marketing efforts. In addition, the participants shared an intent to use social media more in their marketing efforts to specifically increase alumni financial support. The reported efficiency, ease of use, and inexpensiveness of social media was a consistent thread throughout the participant interviews. Social media marketing efficiency may prove vitally important because it typically costs little to zero dollars to multiply traditional media marketing advertisements effectively through social media.

### **The Multiplier Effect of Marketing through Social Media**

Table 6

#### *Theme 4: The Multiplier Effect of Marketing Through Social Media*

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1. “We had a pep rally a few weeks ago.... The president said he’ll give a \$100 bill to the first person who could make a half-court shot... She hit it and then it went viral on Twitter” (P2).
  2. “In terms of social media, I’ve seen the power of you working with several people who have a social media platform, and sharing their posts commenting with their friends—kind of their peer groups—and it creates a multiplier effect” (P3).
  3. “We get a lot of comments on social media to these types of stories [traditional media based stories that appear on social media]. I feel like it is a real positive strategy” (P4).
  4. “A social media approach provides more of a shotgun. You’re casting a wider net (than ever before)” (P7).
  5. “We did an in-the-moment homecoming video and immediately posted it on Facebook. We got lots of responses, and raised a lot of money that day” (P4).
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6. “We are heavily involved in social media... It’s important to keep your good works public. And, let your lights shine down so men may see your good works” (P1).

7. “People (our allies and alumni), they’ll post... They’ll share our stuff on Facebook and Twitter” (P2).

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“In terms of social media, I’ve seen the power of you working with several people who have a social media platform, and sharing their posts commenting with their friends—kind of their peer groups—and it creates a multiplier effect” (Participant 3).

Theme four emerged in the data from 5 participants speaking directly to their experiences of social media allowing marketing efforts to multiply at rates that were not previously possible without the use of social media. All 7 participants acknowledged that social media marketing was a focused area in their cumulative marketing efforts to increase alumni financial support.

“A social media approach provides more of a shotgun. You’re casting a wider net (than ever before) (Participant 7). By providing this shotgun approach, participants deemed social media marketing as a way to quickly and effectively get messages across alumni bases in a multiplied fashion.

“People (our allies and alumni), they’ll post. They’ll share our stuff on Facebook and Twitter” (Participant 2). The consensus of the participants within this study cited consistently the idea of a multiplier effect that social media has on all marketing efforts, including, alumni giving. This perceived multiplier effect appeared consistently across the data creating enough of a trend to deem the multiplier effect as a common theme across the participants within this study.

Utilizing themes one and four, marketing leaders may be able to improve social media effectiveness by using earned social media to their advantage. For example, when people compliment or promote a product on a public social media forum, marketing leaders can use those forms of earned media inexpensively by sharing those postings across their own social media forums, giving a multiplier effect in the marketing efforts of the product(s) or services at hand.

### **Summary of Findings**

The participant interviews and the analyzing of college and university marketing literature led to the identification of four themes in the data from the central research question for this study. The overarching research question within this doctoral study read as follows. What traditional and social media (non-traditional) marketing strategies do some nonprofit college and university leaders utilize to increase alumni financial support? Each of the four themes addressed the central research question in a distinct way.

Theme one was social media marketing effectiveness. Within this theme, I concluded that social media marketing strategies are legitimately deemed important in college and university leader's marketing efforts. The second theme was traditional marketing evolving with social media marketing. Participants formed a central narrative that a key marketing strategy was supplementing traditional media with social media marketing. In other words, college and university leaders experienced success in increasing alumni support by the strategy of posting and advertising traditional media marketing efforts on social media.

Theme three was that social media marketing was efficient and easy. As a result, I concluded from the participants within this study that social media marketing (as a focus) is a strategy. The fourth theme was the multiplier effect of social media. “We did an in-the-moment homecoming video and immediately posted it on Facebook. We got lots of responses, and raised a lot of money that day” (Participant 4). The participant’s in the semistructured interviews identified a collective belief based on experiences that posting efforts on social media amplified and multiplied exposure. In addition, having others (alumni and friends) post, re-post, re-tweet, etc., also resulted in a multiplying effect toward the desired marketing outcome. As a result, using social media as a multiplier is a strategy college and university leaders within this study used.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

Waters (2015) cited the overall importance of alumni financial support in relation to the vitality of colleges and universities. Martin (2013) reported the increasing importance of marketing via traditional and social media marketing platforms to be successful. The blend of traditional marketing with social media marketing is becoming increasingly important for survival and for success (Martin, 2013). The results of this study supplement Martin’s (2013) research, especially via theme 2 with the evolution of traditional marketing with social media marketing. The importance of strong marketing leadership transcends organizations, including mission and goals. While the research conducted for this doctoral study is limited to nonprofit liberal arts colleges and universities, business leaders might garner insights into improved professional practices.

Each of the 4 themes discovered through the interview and artifact data can be applied to potentially improve professional practice.

The first theme was social media effectiveness and the fourth theme was the multiplying effect of social media. Based upon on the findings, social media is here to stay in the marketplace, therefore the utilization of social media marketing holds increasing value. As mentioned in the findings, people now have the ability to use positive marketing that surfaces as earned social media to their advantage by re-posting, sharing, and re-Tweeting.

The second theme was traditional marketing evolving with social media marketing. The fourth theme highlighted the multiplier effect of social media marketing. Leaders can garner insight by engaging in traditional marketing efforts that are aided by social media marketing. For example, when a highly positive advertisement appears in a newspaper, leaders within an organization now have the ability to use that same traditional marketing newspaper article and share it or post it on social media, thus giving the advertisement more mileage and enabling a multiplier effect (theme 4). The third theme was social media marketing as efficient. Social media marketing efficiency, as discussed in the findings, commonly costs little to zero dollars to multiply traditional media marketing advertisements effectively and re-post other positive messages and posts through social media.

Collectively, through each of the four themes identified in the data, I believe scholars, business leaders, and college and university leaders can enhance their marketing goals and potentially increase marketing effectiveness. The consistent thread, identified



by the participants, of positive experiences with social media marketing efforts suggested that marketing leaders across the board may be able to improve professional practice by paying more attention to social media marketing and by working to expand social media marketing efforts.

### **Implications for Social Change**

In section 1, I identified anticipated social change implications from the results of this study including increasing the solvency and scholarship ability of colleges and universities, creating a more affordable environment for students to receive post-secondary educational opportunities. Additional possible benefits mentioned included increased economic revenue for the communities where a college or university resides, enhancing the ability for a college or university to serve the community and to improve the level of education per capita in the areas surrounding a college or university.

Upon completion of the study, implications for social change, based on the data found within results, included a stronger awareness and communication between college and university leaders and their alumni base. By increasing awareness and communications between college and university leaders and their alumni bases, the potential exists to increase the solvency and scholarship ability of colleges and universities. In addition, social change implications included increasing the scholarship ability of colleges and universities, creating a more affordable environment for students to receive post-secondary education. Additional benefits included enhanced economies for communities where a college or university resides and an improved level of education per capita in the areas surrounding a college or university.

Utilization of social media marketing and earned marketing to increase alumni financial support could be a way to save colleges and universities money by savings attributed to the more inexpensive, yet expansive way social media marketing efforts work as opposed to traditional marketing efforts. Better utilization of social media marketing and earned marketing could help the overall communities economically where colleges and universities are located by increasing the education level per capita. Such a utilization of social media marketing and earned marketing may help increase exposure to positive, life changing opportunities via higher education in ways that constituents may have had a lesser chance of learning about in prior years. College and university leaders may also be able to add to social change by increasing scholarship support by offering monies used historically in expensive traditional marketing campaigns and re-assigning some of those dollars to student scholarship accounts.

In addition, social change cannot occur without change agents shedding adequate exposure on positive social change possibilities. The results from my study may enable marketing leaders with more insight on how to spread social change messages quicker, more inexpensively, and more effectively utilizing more time efficient methods (i.e. themes two, three, and four highlighted within the results of this study). By social change messages being able to be transmitted inexpensively and across masses of people via social media, the results from this study could add to positive social change solely by the change agents (college and university leaders) getting their message into the marketplace quicker.

### **Recommendations for Action**

There are three specific recommendations for action based on the findings. One recommendation for action is to implement a higher volume of social media specific marketing campaigns within colleges and universities. Social media campaigns, based on the findings, are inexpensive and, many times, more effective than traditional media marketing campaigns. By increasing presence in social media, colleges and universities may be able to increase financial support, as well as increased college or university awareness and growth.

The second recommendation is that colleges and universities might consider designating more specific internships and even paid positions that watch earned media and social media content pertaining to the college or university where they work. These additional interns and staff can subsequently serve as liaisons for target market groups of colleges and universities. For example, several participants highlighted the value of church connectedness and church as a medium for marketing and communications. Having someone who works specifically related to these kinds of connections could be highly effective. In other words, if a piece of earned media can be maximized, there are people in place prepared to maximize these benefits and follow any specific leads personally that follow positive pieces of earned media.

The third recommendation is that colleges and universities can more effectively intertwine social media and traditional media marketing efforts. Within the interview data, are trends where respondents believed the intertwining of these two forms of media marketing might be the most valuable way to increase alumni financial support, as well

as financial support in general and school enrollment. By implementing these three recommendations for action, I think colleges and universities stand a stronger chance of increasing financial support.

The results of this study could be disseminated via literature, conferences, and trainings in numerous ways. Scholars could present the findings with a focus on college and university effectiveness, solvency, and alumni connectedness in mind. In addition, researchers could share the findings in a broader sense to nonprofit and for-profit leaders identifying the 4 themes and the implementation of the 4 themes into practice. Such ways include reducing the bottom line, increasing organizational exposure and brand, and enhancing communication between internal employees and external constituents.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Within this doctoral study, I centered around college and university leaders and my research was strictly qualitative. There were limitations to my research. Hausman (2012) identified limitations as restricting weaknesses within a study outside of the control of a researcher. The research was limited to 3 colleges and universities and is not generalizable across all colleges and universities. Another limitation is the study is specific to college and university leaders only. In addition, participants vary in their experiences leading up to working at a college or university, and participants might remember their experiences at the college or university level differently based on their program of study (if a graduate), time of tenure, and employment history following college.

The results could be useful to other colleges and universities, but only in broad terms and only through a contextual lens of understanding the limitations of the research conducted in this study. Further research could include quantitative methods. In addition, future research could add student and alumni data, in addition to the thoughts of college and university leaders.

Outside of the realm of postsecondary education, further research could include marketing leaders in the for-profit business world in an effort to compare college and university leader's experiences to business leaders in the for-profit sector. The overwhelming stance of the 7 participants within this study attributing social media marketing to effectiveness, efficiency, ease of use, and as having a multiplier effect could be a sound foundation to dig deeper and ask more penetrating questions as to if other leaders deem social media as effective, efficient, easy to use, and as having a multiplying effect, as well as why they think that way.

### **Reflections**

Making the decision to leap into doctoral study was not easy. The timing was not ideal, and my finances were not ready to take on doctoral tuition payments. In fact, I was working on another graduate degree at the time of my admission. Looking back at my journey now, I am beyond thankful. While I am unaware of any personal biases, preconceived notions did exist. I held a preconceived notion that I would be able to move through the program and the doctoral study much smoother and in 3 years. This was a naïve mindset, as I truly did not comprehend the level of detail necessary for quality doctoral work and the unforeseen difficulties that arise when conducting research.

It took some time to get a handle on how to move forward in a manner that meets the expectations necessary for a doctoral study.

From learning practical wisdom and knowledge through each course to meeting strong allies and friends in my peers, I grew as a professional in only positive ways. In addition, the faculty guided my path in a healthy, rigorous, and supportive manner. Such support led me to entering the doctoral study phase of my degree path. It is at the doctoral study juncture where I made the closest of friends and grew closest to faculty. Dr. Debbie Nattress and Dr. Kate Andrews were constant supporters and mentors. You name the struggle, they had a wise and positive answer. I will forever reflect thankfully on my Walden University experience. I only hope to offer the same level of experience to those serving alongside me in the future.

### **Conclusion**

The overarching conclusion is that social media marketing is more efficient and more effective than traditional marketing because it is cheaper, it is quicker, and it is believed to produce more financial support than traditional marketing. Additional conclusions include that social media offers a multiplying effect on marketing efforts. Even the traditional marketing that is being used by the participating schools is being supplemented with social media marketing efforts. Furthermore, the earned media and owned media that social media marketing produces was more desired by the participants within the study. While it is out of the control of the institution with how earned media is often produced and what is said, earned media can be the most effective form because viewers tend to perceive it as “real and genuine.” Social media marketing is often

earned, but can also be owned. Participants tended to hold similar thoughts toward social media needing to be a higher focus in marketing than traditional media. In addition, the participation that takes place from alumni and friends who gain benefit from their earned media that is re-marketed by their alma mater adds even more value.

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## Appendix A: Invitation to Participate

Dear College or University Leader,

Hello, my name is Wesley Carter. I am a Doctor of Business Administration student at Walden University where I am studying *Media Marketing Strategies University Leaders to Increase Alumni Financial Support*. I invite you to participate in my doctoral study. The inclusion criteria to participate in this study are as follows:

- a) a master's degree.
- b) a minimum of 3 years of field experience in university leadership.
- c) have worked with alumni and increased financial support by utilizing strategic marketing strategies in the past 3 years.

The objective of the study is to interview college and university leaders while also reviewing official university media (artifacts) (i.e. official social media pages and official university marketing pieces) to research media marketing strategies university leaders use to increase alumni financial support. If you agree to participate, the interview will take place in person and will last 30 minutes. I will meet you at your respective college or university location. Each participant will have the opportunity to review all of their individual interview notes and summaries to ensure that all information is accurate. Upon completion of the study, I will share a summary of the results. The results may benefit in your workplace as a college or university leader in the southeastern United States.

All participant information, including identity and college or university of employment, will be confidential. Each participant will be labeled as Participant 1, Participant 2, so forth. I invite you to participate in my study. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Wesley Carter  
DBA Student  
Walden University

## Appendix B: Interview Questions

Traditional marketing is marketing via hardcopy, radio, and TV (Wergin & Muller, 2012). Social media marketing is the use of social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat, and Instagram) as marketing outlets, through paid and unpaid social media postings (Kumar et al., 2016). Media can be viewed as earned and/or owned. Earned media is media not generated by the owner (Stephen & Galak, 2012). Owned media is sanctioned media generated by the owner or the leadership within an organization (Stephen & Galak, 2012).

1. What media marketing strategies (traditional and social media) have you found effective in increasing alumni financial support?
2. What are some challenges or barriers you faced with media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support?
3. Are there any media marketing strategies you have tried that have failed to increase alumni financial support?
4. What earned media marketing strategies have you used to increase alumni financial support?
5. What owned media marketing strategies have you used to increase alumni financial support?
6. In your experience, were owned or earned media marketing strategies more effective in increasing alumni financial support? Why?
7. Is there anything else you would like to share about traditional and social media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support.

## Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

**CONSENT FORM**

This is a formal consent form inviting you to participate in a research study about media marketing strategies college and university leaders use to increase alumni financial support. Each participant will agree to take part in a recorded semi-structured interview.

The findings of this study should benefit college and university leaders in their efforts to increase alumni financial support. The findings might also benefit future college students with alumni funded scholarship support. The goal is to explore the media marketing strategies current college and university leaders utilize to increase alumni financial support in an effort to learn highly effective strategies that can be used at colleges and universities.

This study is being conducted by Wesley Vaughn Carter, a doctoral student at Walden University in the doctor of business administration program.

**Background Information:**

The purpose of this study will be to explore the traditional and social media marketing strategies some college and university leaders use to increase alumni financial support.

**Eligibility:**

All participants will be university leaders that meet the eligibility requirements. The eligibility criteria for the study participants include a) a master's degree, b) a minimum of 3 years of field experience in university leadership, and c) have worked with alumni and increased financial support by utilizing strategic marketing strategies over the past 3 years.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

All participation will be voluntary. All potential participants will be free to choose not to participate. If a participant chooses to withdraw from the study, he or she may do so at any time.

**Risks of Being in the Study:**

Each interview will be held face-to-face with the researcher. While it is not possible to guarantee anonymity completely, privacy measures will be taken to ensure participant privacy. To address privacy, I will ask each participant about the interview setting ensuring that interview locations are held in natural settings where participants feel comfortable and private. I will confirm there is an appropriate level of privacy, as dictated by the participants. Each interview will be recorded using an electronic audio recording device after receiving permission to do so from the participants in the informed consent. Each participant will be asked to agree to their comfortability being observed

during the interview. During the interview, I will check comfortability by detailing in the summary notes the following score for comfortability:

- Comfortability
  - Comfortable
  - Somewhat comfortable
  - Neutral comfortability
  - Somewhat uncomfortable
  - Uncomfortable

Each participant will receive an emailed summary of all interview notes for member checking. Please review the summary for accuracy. If any item in the summary is not reflected accurately, that summary item will be deleted.

**Time Commitment for Participants:**

Each participant will be asked to undergo one 30 minute interview. Each participant will be asked to help in sharing official social media posts and hard copy marketing/development literature that they wish to share with the permission of the college/university. Additionally, each participant will receive a detailed summary of the interview for their review, which should take approximately 20-40 minutes to review. The total time commitment for each participant will be between 2-4 hours (120-240 minutes) for the duration of this study.

**Payment:**

I will not provide any payment for your participation in this study. All participation is completely voluntary.

**Privacy:**

The findings from this research study will not include identifying information for any participant. All participant information including participant identity, recorded interviews, and notes from the interviews will be kept in a locked safe located in the southeastern United States for a period of at least 5 years before being destroyed.

**Contacts and Questions:**

If there are questions at any time during this research study, you may contact the researcher by email at [wesley.carter@waldenu.edu](mailto:wesley.carter@waldenu.edu). If any participant wishes to talk privately about participant rights, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at my university at 612-312-1210. The Walden University approval number for this research study is 11-20-17-0594717

and it expires on 11/19/2018.

Please print or save this consent form for your records.

**Obtaining Your Consent:**

If you agree to the terms listed, please sign and date on the lines below.

**Participation Approval**

By replying “yes, I agree to participate” to this emailed consent form, you are formally agreeing to take part in this study. Thank you for consideration.

### Appendix D: Observational Protocol

My name is Wesley Carter. I am a Doctor of Business Administration student at Walden University. In conducting semistructured interviews with college and university leaders, I will observe body language throughout the interview session. These sessions will not be taped, but they will be audio recorded. I will record my observations in the interview summaries, of which will be shared with each participant for their approval of the summary.

#### **How people will be recruited?**

- 1) Identify one college and university leader identified as my potential key informant to share contact information for other successful university leaders who are potential candidates to participate.
- 2) Utilize the key informant to share contact information on additional leads of other college and university leaders that will agree to participate or recommend others to participate in the study.
- 3) Initiate strategies through the key informant by emailing potential participants that are college and university leaders to arrange informal breakfast/coffee/lunch meetings.
- 4) Establish a working relationship with participants. This person will serve as a point of entry in obtaining access to other successful university leaders. The use of well-informed persons is a principle way to gain entrance into a select group of college and university leaders in the field of university leadership (Dexter, 1970). Concentration on an informant can help a researcher acquire a better picture of the



strategies successful college and university leaders utilize in increasing alumni financial support (Kun et al., 2013).

- 5) Obtain permission from each participant. The consent form is located in Appendix B.
- 6) Initiate the semistructured interviews and the collection process of recommended artifacts (official documents and media postings).

### **How people will consent to observation?**

Participants will consent to observation by reading and signing the consent form located in Appendix C.

### **What will be observed and how data will be collected?**

For the observation protocol, I will observe based on the following criteria of observed comfortability:

- Comfortability
  - Comfortable
  - Somewhat comfortable
  - Neutral comfortability
  - Somewhat uncomfortable
  - Uncomfortable

### **How to prevent deception in the observation period?**

To prevent deception, I will share a summary of each interview, including the observation score to each participant for their review. If a participant chooses to not

agree with the observation protocol, this portion of their summary will be omitted from all reported findings.

### **Data collection instrument**

For the observation protocol and for the study, I (the independent researcher) will be the sole data collection instrument.

## Appendix E: College/University Permission Request

Dear (Insert college President/Provost):

Date

Hello, my name is Wesley Carter. I am a Doctor of Business Administration student at Walden University where I am studying *Media Marketing Strategies University Leaders to Increase Alumni Financial Support*. Within this doctoral study, I hope to be able to study effective media marketing strategies that leaders at your institution successfully utilize to increase alumni financial support.

I am formally requesting permission to interview 1-3 college/university leaders (vice presidents and/or president) at your college/university. I am humbly requesting to have the opportunity to hold one face-to-face interview for 30 minutes with 1-3 college/university leaders at your institution. Additionally, I am requesting permission to review official college/university social media posts over the past 2 years and any hard copy marketing and development pieces that have been produced over the past 2 years that you feel comfortable sharing with me.

For each interview, I ask the following seven questions verbatim:

1. What media marketing (traditional and social media) strategies have you found effective in increasing alumni financial support?

2. What are some challenges or barriers you faced with media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support?
3. Are there any media marketing strategies you have tried that have failed to increase alumni financial support?
4. What earned media marketing strategies have you used to increase alumni financial support?
5. What owned media marketing strategies have you used to increase alumni financial support?
6. In your experience, were owned or earned media marketing strategies more effective in increasing alumni financial support? Why?
7. Is there anything else you would like to share about traditional and social media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support?

Thank you for your consideration. **If you grant me formal permission to carry out my study with your college/university as a participating institution, please reply back to the email with the answer of, “yes, this college/university agrees to participate.”** If you have any additional questions, please feel free to email me at [wesley.carter@waldenu.edu](mailto:wesley.carter@waldenu.edu)

Most cordially,

Wesley Carter

DBA Student

Walden University

## Appendix F: College or University Permission Request

11/27/17

Dear [REDACTED] President, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Hello, my name is Wesley Carter. I am a Doctor of Business Administration student at Walden University where I am studying *Media Marketing Strategies University Leaders to Increase Alumni Financial Support*. Within this doctoral study, I hope to be able to study effective media marketing strategies that leaders at your institution successfully utilize to increase alumni financial support.

I am formally requesting permission to interview 1-3 college/university leaders (vice presidents and/or president) at your college/university. I am humbly requesting to have the opportunity to hold one face-to-face interview for 30 minutes with 1-3 college/university leaders at your institution. Additionally, I am requesting permission to review official college/university social media posts over the past 2 years and any hard copy marketing and development pieces that have been produced over the past 2 years that you feel comfortable sharing with me.

For each interview, I ask the following seven questions verbatim:

1. What media marketing strategies have you found effective in increasing alumni financial support?
2. What are some challenges or barriers you faced with media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support?
3. Are there any media marketing strategies you have tried that have failed to increase alumni financial support?
4. What earned media marketing strategies have you used to increase alumni financial support?
5. What owned media marketing strategies have you used to increase alumni financial support?
6. In your experience, were owned or earned media marketing strategies more effective in increasing alumni financial support? Why?
7. Is there anything else you would like to share about traditional and social media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support?

Thank you for your consideration. **If you grant me formal permission to carry out my study with your college/university as a participating institution, please reply back to the email with the answer of, “yes, this college/university agrees to participate.”** If you have any additional questions, please feel free to email me at [wesley.carter@waldenu.edu](mailto:wesley.carter@waldenu.edu)

Most cordially,

Wesley Carter  
DBA Student

Walden University

12/12/17

Wesley,

**Dr. Dean Adams**, Vice President for Student Services, and I would be happy to participate.

When are you looking to complete the interview?

**Bill**

## Appendix G: College/University Permission Request

11/25/2017

Dear [REDACTED], President [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Hello, my name is Wesley Carter. I am a Doctor of Business Administration student at Walden University where I am studying *Media Marketing Strategies University Leaders to Increase Alumni Financial Support*. Within this doctoral study, I hope to be able to study effective media marketing strategies that leaders at your institution successfully utilize to increase alumni financial support.

I am formally requesting permission to interview 1-3 college/university leaders (vice presidents and/or president) at your college/university. I am humbly requesting to have the opportunity to hold one face-to-face interview for 30 minutes with 1-3 college/university leaders at your institution. Additionally, I am requesting permission to review official college/university social media posts over the past 2 years and any hard copy marketing and development pieces that have been produced over the past 2 years that you feel comfortable sharing with me.

For each interview, I ask the following seven questions verbatim:

1. What media marketing strategies have you found effective in increasing alumni financial support?
2. What are some challenges or barriers you faced with media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support?
3. Are there any media marketing strategies you have tried that have failed to increase alumni financial support?
4. What earned media marketing strategies have you used to increase alumni financial support?
5. What owned media marketing strategies have you used to increase alumni financial support?
6. In your experience, were owned or earned media marketing strategies more effective in increasing alumni financial support? Why?
7. Is there anything else you would like to share about traditional and social media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support?

Thank you for your consideration. **If you grant me formal permission to carry out my study with your college/university as a participating institution, please reply back to the email with the answer of, “yes, this college/university agrees to participate.”** If you have any additional questions, please feel free to email me at [wesley.carter@waldenu.edu](mailto:wesley.carter@waldenu.edu)

Most cordially,

Wesley Carter

DBA Student  
Walden University

11/25/17

Hi Rev. Carter,

On behalf of President **Cosby**, : **“yes, this college/university agrees to participate.”**

Thank you!

**Cheri Mills**



## Appendix H: College/University Permission Request

11/25/2017

Dear [REDACTED], Provost [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Hello, my name is Wesley Carter. I am a Doctor of Business Administration student at Walden University where I am studying *Media Marketing Strategies University Leaders to Increase Alumni Financial Support*. Within this doctoral study, I hope to be able to study effective media marketing strategies that leaders at your institution successfully utilize to increase alumni financial support.

I am formally requesting permission to interview 1-3 college/university leaders (vice presidents and/or president) at your college/university. I am humbly requesting to have the opportunity to hold one face-to-face interview for 30 minutes with 1-3 college/university leaders at your institution. Additionally, I am requesting permission to review official college/university social media posts over the past 2 years and any hard copy marketing and development pieces that have been produced over the past 2 years that you feel comfortable sharing with me.

For each interview, I ask the following seven questions verbatim:

1. What media marketing strategies have you found effective in increasing alumni financial support?
2. What are some challenges or barriers you faced with media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support?
3. Are there any media marketing strategies you have tried that have failed to increase alumni financial support?
4. What earned media marketing strategies have you used to increase alumni financial support?
5. What owned media marketing strategies have you used to increase alumni financial support?
6. In your experience, were owned or earned media marketing strategies more effective in increasing alumni financial support? Why?
7. Is there anything else you would like to share about traditional and social media marketing strategies to increase alumni financial support?

Thank you for your consideration. **If you grant me formal permission to carry out my study with your college/university as a participating institution, please reply back to the email with the answer of, “yes, this college/university agrees to participate.”** If you have any additional questions, please feel free to email me at [wesley.carter@waldenu.edu](mailto:wesley.carter@waldenu.edu)

Most cordially,

Wesley Carter

DBA Student  
Walden University

11/25/17

Yes **Campbellsville University** agrees to participate

**Donna Hedgepath**  
Provost  
**Campbellsville University**