

Building a Killer Social Media Presence: Using the Brand Identification Theory to Analyze

Rachel Hollis's Instagram posts and Company Website

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I certify that I have read this thesis and that, in my opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Professional Communication

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Acknowledgements

I never thought I could receive a Master's degree. I hoped to graduate with my Bachelor's and be done with school forever. But my plans changed over the course of a few years. While at snow college my favorite class I took was an "Interpersonal Communication" class. After taking this class, and arriving at SUU I decided to minor in Communication Studies. Who knew that a simple decision, an emphasis in college, would have such a strong impact on me.

After graduating I knew my education was not complete. I had to finish the door I had opened with that minor. This door was one that led me to a love of my classes, friends, new opportunities, and something that pushed me to be my best self. I have faced many challenges in receiving my Master's, especially financially. Some days I thought I could never afford to continue. Somehow, someway, semester by semester, I pushed along. I am so grateful for that perseverance to move forward even when things were hard. This accomplishment is one that I am extremely proud of. Now I stand a little taller, a little wiser with the knowledge that I can do anything I set my mind to, and am overcome with gratitude for all those who helped me along the way.

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Introduction

For many years women including; wives, mothers, sisters and friends have struggled to feel like their voice is heard, their opinion is valued and they are overall good enough to set and reach for goals. Women have “settled” for being unhappy with themselves and their lives. (Hutcheson, 2018) Through her success reaching women in various methods Rachel Hollis has begun to change women's thinking. Hollis connects to her ‘followers’ daily on Instagram with various messages that are contributing to this change. She uses her words to tell other women how to achieve happiness and success through self love. Rachel Hollis is particularly important to study because of her large following on Instagram, and her growing popularity among women in the United States.

The current study demonstrates the power a social media connoisseur has on the people of America. Although Rachel Hollis has no college education and no formal training in PR, Marketing, or personal speaking, she has used her strengths to reach people across the nation through her media content and services. Interestingly, people who do not know her personally are following her advice and taking on taking on new challenges they never thought they would do. The importance of this research can help others see the power of social media, branding, and connecting people through a common message via a single influencer.

To date, there is hardly any research completed based on her social media presence, only on her success in other avenues. Hollis has also produced a movie, multiple conferences, podcasts, branded three companies, created a fashion outlet, and released three books etc. For this purpose this study will focus my research strictly on her Instagram posts and website updates and comparing the media content between the two.

This study will aim to examine Hollis's Instagram posts and captions, along with content on her website The Hollis Co. She posts regularly on both outlets producing new content for her fan base. After reading through her content it can range from a famous quote, to a long post about the struggles of being a mom. With much more information between these lines. The focus on this study will remain on these two outlets because they have constantly updated content produced by the Hollis Company. Other platforms (books, movies...etc) are produced one time with less new content available for continued research.

Additionally, this focus of this research will focus on the year 2019. As this year was a big year for the Hollis Company. Rachel Hollis Produced her second book *Girl, stop Apologizing* on March 5, 2019. They later held multiple 3-day RISE women's conferences throughout the country with huge success, and released a movie titled "Made for More." Further, during 2019 the Hollis Co also produced two or more podcasts weekly (@RISEpodcast and @RISETogetherPodcasts) along with regular blog updates online. With their alarming success during 2019, we could assume that 2020 would follow with even more success than the previous year.

Literature Review

Introduction of Rachel Hollis' History and Branding

With her high school education Rachel Hollis moved to Los Angeles, California and started working full time as an event planner. During this time she created her own blog for recipes. Eleven years after creating this blog, her small online account has blossomed into a multi-million dollar social media company with an enormous following worldwide. As a social media influencer she has 1.8 Million followers. She has various social media accounts, a website, six books, two of which are on the New York's Best Sellers list, multiple podcasts, (one of which

was the most successful podcast in the world) (Hollis, 2020) Massive self-help conferences across the country multiple times a year, and as the years go on - her reputation continues to grow.

Her journey as an influencer started as a food blogger, and a young mom trying to decide what to feed her kids daily. She grew with this outlet for many years and alongside it developed an event planning company, called ChicSite. (Hutcheson, 2018) This site was later rebranded to what it is today, The Hollis Company. About her company: the brand she built from the ground up, Rachel Hollis says this, “What started as a teeny, tiny media company poised to help me create posts for this blog became the medium-sized media company (58 employees at last count) that is The Hollis Company today. HoCo produces content in every kind of media format: books, podcasts, movies, social and live events as well as physical products. Everything we create exists with the same goal in mind: we want to give you the tools to make permanent and lasting, positive changes in your life” (Hollis, 2020)

As part of her social media career Rachel Hollis posts on Instagram and her Website daily motivating people to be their best selves. She uses these outlets to reach her “community” daily with various uplifting and inspiring messages.

Rachel Hollis has developed over the past 10 years. In this time her social media presence which she has become a very strong example of a successful personal brand that exists across the board (Hartling, 2019) She has successfully developed a brand with a huge engagement with its followers. Each year her personal brand gets taken to the next level by various exciting things she creates for her fans. (Podcasts, movies, live coaching, work out programs, clothing recommendations, books...the list goes on) With each form of media she puts out, she has fans hanging on the edge of their seat anxious to see what she creates next. (Hartling, 2019)

One of the things that has made her so successful is continually listening to her audience. The goals of her company have remained the same, with ever changing technique to meet the demands of those seeking out her help. (Hartling, 2019) In 2015 she gained a huge population and following from moms across the country when she posted a bikini picture with her stretch marks from her pregnancies. This picture got “10 million views and 325,000 likes on the Facebook site for her business, The Chic Site. It also prompted thousands of comments, mainly from women empowered by Hollis' message. A few even posted their own belly-baring photos in response.” (Kim, 2015) For something so taboo, this picture sourced a really interesting response among other women. Some may say that this picture started the Hollis fandom phenomenon, as her business has only grown since this post. Further, as Hollis has continued to listen to her fans she has shown more vulnerability on her social media sites then almost anyone else in the influencer business. Overall, her vulnerability throughout her brand, success achieved as an influencer over the last 5-10 years, model for personal brand image, and high rate of engagement with her following are just a few of the reasons that she is worthy of study.

Interestingly, little research has been done on Rachel Hollis and her success over the past 5-10 years. This study was able to use a few articles that mentioned her. The first, by Berlinda Luscombe (2019), mentions Rachel's Hollis Success. Luscombe states, “She found the perfect product to sell you. The product is you. Hollis is persuaded that you are the answer to all your problems. You just need to invest in you, to believe in you, to prioritize you.” (Luscombe 2019). Hollis has written two books on her product, the first in 2018, *Girl wash your face*. The second March 5th 2019, *Girl Stop Apologizing*. These books were not the start of her success, but have aided in the launch of her career. Both become New York time best sellers shortly after their release. However, Hollis had a large social media following before she released either of these

books. “She acquired hundreds of thousands of social-media followers even before the self-help books. But beyond that, almost her entire post-high school education has come via the web, conferences, YouTube videos and podcasts.” (Luscombe 2019). Although this is not an academic researched article it does mention Rachel Hollis’s step to the top through her books and thousands of fans, which is helpful to my research.

Brand Identity Theory

The Brand Identity theory is based on the way that customers relate to and understand the brand they are viewing. This is how they develop relationships and are personally connected with its communication methods (Halliday, 1970). Evan Tarver states that brand identity is “visible elements of a brand, such as color, design, and logo, that identify and distinguish the brand in consumers' minds.” (Tarver, 2020) Further, Tarver explains that some brands have a specific atmosphere, and image about them. For example, Apple is known for being sleek and useful. It uses its brand color choices to align with this plan. (Tarver, 2020) The goal is using the brand identity theory to create an image and name for the brand that separates it from others in a positive way. This is called, positive brand image.

In this capstone study Rachel Hollis, is the brand I will be focusing on. We will focus less on her personal story, rather the focus will be on the brand image and marketing strategies. As this is what the customers know Hollis for: The products that help change lives.

According to Meyerson (2020) an excellent review of the Brand Identity theory in his summary of David Aaker’s research. In summary, the brand identity theory is based on four components. Brand as product, Brand as an organization, Brand as a person and Brand as a symbol. Each component has its own subcategories that help explain this perspective and importance. (Meyerson, 2020). The first, brand as a product expresses the outcomes/product

offered by the brand. This can be a broad topic i.e cell phones, or smaller topic, i.e Apple XR telephone devices. Brand as a product also focuses on the attributes of the brand. Perhaps explaining, “something that the product does better than the competition, or that other products don’t do at all.” (Meyerson, 2020) other main focus in this category are uses, users, and origination of the brand.

Second, a brand as an organization varies from the first in the fact that its focus is on the community, people, values, and goals of an organization instead of the product. These are things that are much harder for competitors to create and reproduce (Meyerson, 2020). Here there is also a focus on the physical location of the brand. Local brands vary compared to global brands in branding styles and goals. (Meyerson, 2020) Next is, brand as a person. This varies from the first two as it focuses on the humanistic traits of the brand. In this situation consumers often value purchasing from a brand as it is an expression of their own personal values and beliefs of the company's overall focuses. Here a researcher also looks at the relationships the brand is demonstrating and emulating through the advertisements. (Meyerson, 2020)

Lastly, brand as a symbol. Once again, this category is completely different from the other two as it draws its attention to the visual aspects of the brand (Meyerson, 2020). This is more than the logo of the brand but rather, characters, images, packaging, and traits that are representative of the brand. (i.e Nike’s bright orange shoe box). Another focus here is on the heritage of the brand. According to Meyerson, “A brand with a storied past, such as a prestigious university or an Americana-oriented brand like Coca-Cola, McDonald’s, or Disney, can put its legacy to work as one element of its identity.” Using the brand's heritage can target the audience in a whole different way. (Meyerson, 2020). Each of these four categories will be used to

evaluate Rachel Hollis and the Hollis company as a whole, as they use each of these in their marketing technique. This will be discussed in more detail below.

A few of my main research questions using the Brand Identity theory and Rachel Hollis's Content are as follows:

RQ1: What are the dominant strategies in Rachel Hollis Instagram posts?

RQ2: What are the most often used keywords in her Instagram posts?

RQ3: What are the branding patterns she uses as a theme for her Instagram posts?

RQ4: What are the differences between Hollis's Website and Instagram account in the way they approach the brand as a person, and brand as an organization?

RQ5: What are the differences from the Hollis Co official website vs her Instagram in the way Hollis addresses her followers?

RQ6: What are the main differences between the Hollis's Companies branding strategies and branding approach, vs the approach taken on Instagram?

Method

The current study will use a quantitative content analysis to analyze common themes and words within Rachel Hollis's Instagram captions and website. For the purpose of this paper the method section will be broken down into a sample section, and coding categories for better understanding.

Sampling

This study will aim to examine Hollis's Instagram posts and captions, along with blog posts/content on her website. (<https://thehollisco.com/>) She posts daily on both outlets producing new content for her fan base. After reading through her content it can range from a famous quote, to a long post about the struggles of being a mom. With much more information in

between these lines. These two sources have the most updated content shared by the Hollis Company. Other platforms (books, movies, podcasts, conferences...etc) are produced one time with less new content available for research.

As the Hollis Company puts out huge masses of information annually, this research will focus on most of the Instagram captions from January 1st 2019- December 31st 2019 on @mrsrachelhollis's instagram page. Based on the data, she averages 45-50 posts per month on Instagram which would be around 540 posts annually. For this purpose of this study we will focus on 10 Instagram captions for each month of the year, leading to approximately 120 captions to gather data on.

Next we will gather at least 120 captions of various types from the Hollis.co website. This will include product, books, blog posts descriptions and each podcast summary until enough data is gathered to compare Instagram to the website.

The year 2019 was a big year for the Hollis Company. Rachel Hollis Produced her second book *Girl, stop Apologizing* on March 5, 2019. They later held multiple 3-day RISE women's conferences throughout the country. The company also produced two or more podcasts weekly (@RISEpodcast and @RISETogetherPodcasts) along with daily/weekly blog updates online.

On the contrary, 2020 has been a challenging year for many companies to stay afloat with the COVID-19 pandemic affecting business. Along with this global challenge the couple recently took a huge hit from their fan base, losing much of their credibility. On June 24, 2020 Hollis recently announced that her husband, partner in the business, and best friend, Davis Hollis are getting divorced. So many people have turned to the Hollis company for marriage advice during hard times. As much as fans love Rachel Hollis, some fans believe that Dave attributes to as

much of the success of the business. (Hodgkins, 2020). Along this same line, many fans have felt deceived by the Hollis Company after listening to all the marriage advice over the years.

(Hodgkins, 2020). With this game-changer in play, this study will focus on 2019 as this is the most recent full-year of success and new content.

Further the effect of the divorce impacted the content produced online. Based on my understanding, Rachel Hollis cut down her posting from around 45 posts a month, to about 2-3 posts a month. In addition, podcasts/blogs were re-broadcasted with much less media available to subscribers. Although this break was only 6-8 weeks long, the content produced on a scheduled regimen took a large hit.

Coding categories

Using a content analysis, each post/description will be coded in one of the below categories. The following categories are from Aaker's (1996) brand identity theory and apparent common themes the Hollis company uses the most in their media.

Personal Growth: This theme includes anything referring to change toward a more positive lifestyle change both internally and externally.

Attitude toward life: Any reference toward an attitude over view about life will be placed in this category. (Gratitude, positivity, joy...etc).

Unity/fandom/fan-community: Content referencing a group of people will be placed here. Often Hollis use religion, families, communities, and friendships, and women as a whole to portray unity.

Brand as person: Each brand, and person, has their own personality and direction. Brand as a person focuses on Rachel Hollis and what she has to offer to the world through her company, image, and branding.

Brand as organization: Aaker's brand as an organization's category focuses on the people, goals, and deliverables as a brand instead of the product. The Hollis Co. Does this with their goals and values of growth and development.

Brand as symbol: Brand as a symbol focuses on the image (not the logo) of the brand, and how that is portrayed through the content. Here the symbol is growth and happiness engaging many to partake.

Brand as product: This category focuses on the features and outcomes offered by the brand. This is what this brand can do that no other company can do. In this example it is changing a person's life through the advice offered by the Hollis Co.

Functional Benefits: This category includes any mention of the functional benefits of engaging in the Hollis content. Anything that mentions sleep, lifestyle, healthier living, goal setting, is placed here.

Emotional benefits: All content speaking on emotional benefits of this brand including mentions of positive living, self-worth, body image, personal value are placed here.

Health benefits: This subcategory will include all posts including healthy body lifestyle changes to lead to a healthier life. Healthy eating, working out, healthy daily habits. Other things that reference mental or physical health will be placed here.

Results

My research showed significant results in each of the areas compared against one another. See tables below. Where N represents the number of times the theme was present.

Table 1: Life Attitude

Value	Instagram	Website
N	72	90
%	44.4	55.6

As table 1 Indicates, there is more content on the theme “life attitude” on the website than was posted to instagram. ($\chi^2= 10.358$, $df = 1$, $p<.05$)

Using Instagram 44.4% of posts relate to “Life Attitude” (n=72), in comparison 55.6%of articles on the website mention/relate to “Life Attitude” (n=90).

Table 2: Health Benefits

Value	Instagram	Website
N	19	37
%	33.9%	66.1%

As table two Indicates, there is significantly more content on the theme “health benefits” on the website than was posted to instagram. ($\chi^2= 9.250$, $df = 1$, $p<.05$)

Using Instagram 33.9% of posts relate to “health benefits” (n=19), in comparison 66.1% of articles on the website mention/relate to “Life Attitude” (n=37)

Table 3: Brand As Product

Value	Instagram	Website
N	61	105
%	36.7%	63.3

As table three Indicates, there is significantly more content on the “brand as product” theme on the website than was posted to instagram. ($\chi^2 = 45.240$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$)

Using Instagram only 36.7% of posts relate to “brand as a product” (n=61), in comparison 63.3% of articles on the website mention/relate to “brand as a product” (n=105)

Table 4: Brand As Person

Value	Instagram	Website
N	104	65
%	61.5%	38.5%

As table four Indicates, there is significantly less content on the “brand as person” theme on the website than was posted to instagram. ($\chi^2= 19.951$, $df = 1$, $p<.05$)

Using Instagram 61.5% of posts related to the “brand as a person” (n=104), in comparison 38.5% of articles on the website were categorized as “brand as a person” (n=65)

Table 5: Functional Benefits

Value	Instagram	Website
N	16	86
%	15.7%	84.3%

As table five Indicates, there is significantly more content on the “functional benefits” theme on the website than was posted to instagram. ($\chi^2= 90.288$, $df = 1$, $p<.05$)

Using Instagram only 15.7% of posts related to the “functional benefits” (n=16), in comparison 84.3% of articles on the website were categorized as “functional benefits” (n=86)

Table 6: Brand As Organization

Value	Instagram	Website
N	54	113
%	32.3%	67.7%

As table six Indicates, there is significantly more content on the “brand as an organization” theme on the website than was posted to instagram. ($\chi^2= 77.010$, $df = 1$, $p<.05$)

Using Instagram only 32.3% of posts related to the “brand as an organization” (n=54), in comparison 67.7% of articles on the website were categorized as “brand as an organization” (n=113)

Table 7: Brand As Symbol

Value	Instagram	Website
N	61	77
%	44.2	55.8

As table seven Indicates, there was more content on the “brand as symbol” theme on the website than was posted to instagram. This comparison did not have a huge gap between the two, but is still significant. ($\chi^2= 7.170$, $df = 1$, $p<.05$)

Using Instagram only 44.2% of posts related to the “brand as symbol (n=61), in comparison 55.8% of articles on the website were categorized as “brand as an organization” (n=77)

Table 8: Unity and Fandom

Value	Instagram	Website
N	74	102
%	42.0	58.0

As table eight Indicates, there was more content on the “Unity/Fandom” theme on the website than was posted to instagram. ($\chi^2= 10.067$, $df = 1$, $p<.05$)

Using Instagram 42.0% of posts related to the “Unity/Fandom” (n=74), in comparison 58.0% of articles on the website were categorized as “Unity/Fandom” (n=102)

Table 9: Personal Growth

Value	Instagram	Website

N	68	87
%	43.9	56.1

As table nine Indicates, there was more content on the “personal growth” theme on the website than was posted to instagram. ($\chi^2= 10.358$ df = 1, $P<.05$)

Using Instagram 43.9% of posts related to the “personal growth” (n=68), in comparison 56.1% of articles on the website were categorized as “personal growth (n=87)

Cross Tabulation Analysis

Table 10: Comparing themes within Instagram

Value	Instagram
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The me	Personal Growth	Attitude Toward Life	Unity/ Fandom	Brand as person	Brand as Organization	Brandon as Symbol	Functional Benefits	Health Benefits
N	68	72	72	103	61	61	16	19

%	14.4	15.3	15.3	21.8	12.9	12.9	3.4	4.0
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As table ten Indicates, the most theme used on Instagram was “brand as a person” (n=103) and the least used theme on Instagram was “functional Benefits” (n=16). ($\chi^2= 182.504$, $df = 8$, $P<.05$)

Using Instagram 21.8% of posts related to the “brand as a person” in comparison 3.4% of posts related to the theme “functional benefits.”

Table 11: Comparing themes within Website

Value	Website
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Theme	Personal Growth	Attitude Toward Life	Unity/ Fandom	Brand as person	Brand as Organization	Brand as Symbol	Brand as Product	Functional Benefits	Health Benefits
N	87	90	102	65	113	77	105	85	28
%	11.6	12.0	13.5	18.6	15.0	10.2	13.9	11.4	3.7

As table eleven Indicates, the most theme used on the website was “brand as organization” (n=113) and the least used theme on Instagram was “health benefits” (n=28). ($\chi^2= 112,806$, $df = 8$, $P<.05$)

Using Instagram 15.0% of posts related to the “brand as organization” in comparison 3.7% of posts related to the theme “health benefits”

Discussion

Personal Growth Industry

Across the world people are seeking to use personal growth and develop further personally. In doing this people may look to podcasts, books, friends, neighbors, councilors and other sources. For this reason, and perhaps many others, the personal growth industry is constantly developing with new ways to reach those wanting to reach for “self-help” or personal development. As of 2018, “The U.S. self-improvement market was worth \$9.9 billion in 2016. It is forecast to post 5.6% average yearly gains from 2016 to 2022, when the market should be worth \$13.2 billion.” (LaRosa, 2018) With such a booming industry to succeed an Influencer may want to specialize in a “type” of personal growth to attract the specific demographic they are looking for. A few examples include: Dave Ramsey who is known for his help in financial matters. Malcolm Gladwell, famous for understanding common traits of successful individuals, and Gary Chapman a marriage counselor. (Ramen, 2015) Each of these people have decided to focus on one specific area, and become some of the most knowledgeable resources in that area.

Rachel Hollis has followed these same footsteps in focusing mostly on women's personal development. As her brand has expanded and grown she some of her goals, products, and tactics

have changed to better reach her target. Hollis states, "As a company, our mission has been the same from the very beginning. The way we offer it up to people is different, but our mission has always been giving women the tools to change their lives" (Hutcheson, 2018) Further, Hollis's focus is on women, whereas other influential powerhouses have focused on a more specific demographic. With this in mind, she has already included a large sum of the world population in her "community" by uniting a group together based on gender.

With this same thing in mind, we can see Hollis's success reaching her specific demographic from her first book, "Girl Wash Your Face" as it is rated the number one best selling women's "self-help" book of 2020. (Epstein, 2020) Here, she reaches women by telling them of 20 common lies that are commonly told by women to themselves, and how to overcome those lies within oneself. (Epstein, 2020)

Hollis's three books are all number one sellers, in addition to the content of her books as an author she brings a certain "spark" to her pages that others in the industry just don't have. (Jones, 2019) She speaks of christianity and growing up with her father a pastor, she tells embarrassing stories of herself to her readers that other authors may not be willing to share so publicly. She shares her own personal growth journey and expresses how her own life has changed through the same industry she works in. (Jones, 2019) She calls reach reader names she would call someone she loves creating a bond with her and her readers. Some examples include: "friend, sister, huster, fellow mama, girlfriend etc" She further encourages relationship bonding by saying, "xoxo, Rach" or "your friend, Rachel" She states that this fun-filled direction has a purpose in her business when she says, "My intention is I'm going to get you here with the humor, or I'm going to get you here with the lighthearted, then I just want to add just a little something for you to think about during the day." (Jones, 2019) Demonstrating that the things

she tells her readers to try, are not huge things. They are little thoughts throughout the day that make a big difference in the end.

With her bubbly and “bursting at the seams” personality both on the pages of her books, using her social media platforms, and in person, Hollis is her own brand strategy. (Jones, 2019) The results of this research study demonstrate this as well. We see that using Instagram 61% of her posts (n=104) over the course of a one-year time frame are focused on the “brand as a person.” Meaning, using this more *casual* platform she wants to get to know her audience, and have them get to know her as well. Here she tells stories of her life, shows pictures of her kids, mentions her favorite things, or records live videos to reach her audience in a more face-to-face approach. As her followers use this website to get to know her she may turn to her brand to see her other products and events.

On the contrary, Hollis uses her website to reach her audience in other ways that are mentioned below. We can see this difference using the gathered data. On her website only 38% of the content is focused on “brand as a person” (n=65)

By Women For Women

Rachel Hollis has built her company around the idea that she needs to lift and support other women. Her first book, “Girl, Wash Your Face, which was published in February 2018 is [based on] an amalgam of stories, tough-love advice from a woman who has been there, and vaguely biblical encouragement. This is structured by tackling the various “lies” that Hollis believes have held her back — and maybe you too?” (Turner, 2018) As Laura Turner mentions here, using her books Hollis seeks to reach other women around the world, by telling her own personal stories, and personal “lies” that have held her back from being successful. She hopes that other females can relate to her same thoughts and feelings by reading her book, and

overcome them as did she. We can assume through the success of the book, and this is exactly what happened, as the book was a New York Times best seller. (Epstein, 2020) Throughout her book she is open and honest about GIRL things. Her being a girl and telling these stories to others makes her more liked and reached by other women.

However, many female authors have written books directed toward women overcoming their doubts and fears. The top 5 books in this category (other than Hollis's book) include: "*Maybe You Should Talk To Someone*" by Lori Gottlieb, "*Why Not Me?*" By Mindy Kaling, "*How to Skimm Your Life*" by TheSkimm, "*The Big Life*" by Ann Shoket, and "*Joy At Work*" by Marie Kondo. (Epstein, 2020) Each of these books are written by women for women. Some may be more directed toward work, some may be directed more toward family, some may be based on living big and bold. Regardless, we can see that having books directed toward the female gender is not something that set Rachel Hollis apart. Something that perhaps is unique about her in this category is the amount of books that she has released compared to other authors. Hollis has released 3 books in three years, all based on the same topic. Helping women. She is producing an entire book each year, which adds to her content creation that she pushes annually in various other categories which will be mentioned below.

Coaching Platforms for Women by Influencers

Another area that Hollis produces her content is through Podcasts. Hollis had two podcasts that she released episodes weekly. The first, "*RISE podcast*" is described by Apple Podcast Preview as the "ultimate podcast for anyone looking for more joy and purpose in their lives. Featuring candid interviews with top performers in business, media, and lifestyle, as well as deep dives into topics like health and motivation," (*Rachel Hollis Podcast*, n.d.) Second, "*Rise Together podcast*" featured both Rachel Hollis and her husband Dave Hollis discussing their

relationship, stating tips on how to have a successful marriage. However, earlier in 2020 the couple announced they were getting divorced. Since this announcement, Rachel has not been involved in the “Rise Together” podcast and it has been re-branded on solely feature Dave Hollis.

Once again, podcasts created by influential women directed toward other women is not something specific to Rachel Hollis herself. Other examples of podcasts are as follows: Ann Friedman hosts “Call your Girlfriend” Next there is “On Going” by Krista Tippett, and author Alex Elle hosts “hey, girl.” Interestingly, neither the *Rise Podcast*, or the *Rise Together* podcasts are on the top 9 standout podcasts for women. (*Women's Podcasts We Love*, n.d.) With this information, a person could suspect that although Hollis is producing lots of content in various outlets, podcasts are not one of the things that set her apart from other strong women producing media content.

Another avenue that Rachel Hollis has explored is her life coaching. She does this through two venues: Online through conferences which her and the Hollis Company produces called, The Rise Conference. As for her live coaching, Hollis hosts two separate online coaching products: life coaching, and business coaching. Each type of coaching offers different titles, focuses, methods, and lessons. An interested individual may purchase one specific course, or a lump of 22 videos to download and watch. (*Your Journey To A Better You*, n.d.) Using her website to consider live coaching, it appears as if she is creating new content online for her live coaching series (in both business and personal coaching) every 3-4 months for her fans to consume at home. (*Your Journey To A Better You*, n.d.)

An additional method of coaching is her Rise conferences. Looking at the “Top 30 conferences for women to attend in 2020”, Hollis's conferences do not meet the mark compared

to others in the industry. (Galvez, 2020) However, according to Hollis' Instagram feed, Rise conferences will sell out in a matter of a few short hours or days. Tickets typically sell for \$300 - \$1,800 excluding taxes (*RISE San Diego*, n.d.) Although ticket prices may seem affordable, the cost of attending any conference is not cheap when a person considers travel, hotel, food and entertainment accommodations; and these conferences are no different. As for the Rise Conference in Dallas in 2019, 7,800 tickets were sold to women seeking out personal and individualized growth at a large scale event. A person may question, is attending a conference worth the money, if this conference did not meet "The Top 30 Conferences Women Should Attend in 2020?" According to a few blogger's and style queens, these events are "absolutely something [and] I totally recommend doing for anyone who wants to grow as a person!" The same blogger states, "I realized some bigger dreams of mine, some I didn't realize were hiding right beneath the surface – like, writing a book" (Durham, n.d.) Another blogger states similar feelings when she makes a comment similar too "after the first day of the conference she did not feel the ticket price was worth the amount, but she changed her mind after the conference ended." She then states "I firmly believe that if you have the ability to attend a Rise conference, you should go. It's well worth the price of admission!" (Rinaldi, 2020). With these reviews in mind, the value of a Rise conference may be considered a more personal determination. If a person is a Hollis fan, seeking out personal growth, wondering what to do next in life, the value of the conference could be different for them then others who want a good book to reach and occasional modification.

Similar to her podcasts and books; in neither coaching setting is Hollis the only personal growth centered entrepreneur chasing these avenues. Many competitors are doing similar events. Perhaps what makes Hollis stand out in the "Created by Women For Women" Industry is not

“one” category that she excels in, (books, podcasts, coaching) it’s instead a compilation of each and her success in each area. For example, authors like: Elizabeth Gilbert, Gretchen Rubin, Trish Blackwell, and Oprah are each authors with successful books, who are also using the podcasts industry to grow their business. (*Empowering Podcasts Every Woman Should Listen To*, 2018) In this case, none of these successful authors are also running live coaching sessions *along* with million dollar conferences, instead they seek out their own audience and meet their needs instead. (*Empowering Podcasts Every Woman Should Listen To*, 2018)

Instagram Themes

Using a content analysis to study @MrsRachelHollis instagram, it was discovered that she used multiple themes repeatedly throughout her instagram captions of 2019. It was also interesting to see what themes were not used as often on solely on Instagram on either her instagram or website. All words used throughout 2019 Instagram were placed into a word cloud for a visual representation of repetition. A word cloud categorizes the information based on repetition and usage. The largest words in the image are the words Hollis used the most, and smallest words are the ones used least. (See Image 1)

Image 1: All of @MrsRachelHollis Instagram Captions of 2019

It's almost as if she is using Instagram to bond with her followers in a way that a new-neighbor would bond with other moms in the neighborhood. Captions are on things women typically talk about: kids, shopping, school, husbands, getting fit, and dinner. The focus on Instagram is less on the products she is selling, and more on a surface-deep, "let me be your friend" vibe. It appears as if she mentions her as a brand, in a way that is focused on her as a person. This way her followers have a chance to understand her personally, prior to purchasing products.

Using this tactic her followers can reach out to her through personal messages, comments, likes, and support their new "friend" in a way that they would support other women in their community. Perhaps her audience thinks to themselves *"I love the Rachel Hollis shops at Target, drinks her morning coffee, and promotes working out. I need to work out more like she does, and get my body back in shape. I want to purchase her product so that I can do the same for myself."* This is just one example of how connecting over media could drive product purchasing. Contrary the exact opposite could happen. Followers could use her Instagram to get to know Hollis as a person, and decide they do not want to support her business and unfollow her, or tell friends the things they don't agree with that she stands for. By putting herself out on Instagram as much as she does, she is bound to have both sides of the spectrum constantly stating their opinions on her, and her brand.

For those who are seeking to develop a similar brand, or model Hollis branding strategies in the future there are a few suggestions we can see from her success. First, do not be afraid to do what no one else has done. Hollis is very vulnerable online. She was one of the first influencers to expose her personal life in this direction. She exposes herself for good or for bad to connect to women and their emotions with similar situations. Perhaps vulnerability is not something a

smaller brand wants to model after, in this case find something that is unique from other influencers/business owners and focus on developing that in one's branding strategies.

Second, Hollis started as a food blogger with hardly a soul seeking out her website. (Hutcheson, 2018) Those that did follow along gave her feedback as she altered her website for new goals. Hollis constantly listened to her audience. If she noticed that one particular post was popular she would produce more content like it. Understanding her audience is one of the key things she attributes to her success. (Hutcheson, 2018) Modeling after this behavior can help a business grow as they can discover what interests the audience has in their products and tailor production to meet those needs.

Lastly, Hollis seeks to develop a connection to her audience. She engages with their comments, tells personal stories, and produces content about her life. This allows for customers to create a connection with her as a person before deciding to buy a product. With this created connection, her followers may feel like with their purchase they are supporting a "small business" or a "friend." Occasionally people are driven by supporting others whom they know rather than a large cooperation. Following this behavior may assist in finding new online companies, friends, and more buyers of the particular developing business.

Attitude on Life/Unity

The next most used theme(s) on Instagram were tied for repetitiveness within the posts. Attitude on life, and unity/Fandom. Both themes were mentioned 72 times out of 472 posts. It is especially interesting that these two themes were mentioned the exact same amount of times on her Instagram. Perhaps for every post that she mentioned attitude on life, she also mentioned unity and how grateful she was for her fans. However, understanding the coding categories this

was not the case. It appears that the focus was on these two categories as equal importance instead of a direct correlation from one to another.

Hollis used this category on Instagram to focus on how to change or improve a person's overall attitude on their life. Through the use of Instagram captions Hollis demonstrates her opinion of the importance of unity. In this theme we see her use religion, families, communities, and friendships, and women as a whole to portray unity. To begin, over and over again Rachel addresses her followers as “guys,” “friends,” “hustlers” or “Fellow business owners.” She does an excellent job of creating a community of her own, by addressing people she has never met as friends and as her confidants. Other common used words in this category were “mindset,” “growth,” “belief in oneself” and “gratitude.” Although there were many more words used in this category, these were the most common. Using this theme, Hollis was seeking to encourage her followers to change, or enhance their overall thinking, and the choices they can make to better their life. As a personal growth entrepreneur this theme falls right in line with the overall goals of her business. Demonstrating to each person how to make the changes that they are seeking to improve their life.

Within this category the largest focus was on gratitude. Hollis states in one of her posts, “When you spend your day looking for blessings, you find them! A daily gratitude practice will fundamentally change your life forever.” (Hollis, 2020) She encourages each person to look for daily moments to be grateful for, and watch their life improve as they continue this practice. (Hollis, 2020) In fact, she has trademarked a whole business on this idea: *The Start Today* brand. The purpose of this brand is to encourage users to “help you build foundational daily routines that push you to succeed in life.” (*About Start Today*, n.d) Within Instagram she often mentions this brand and its focus on daily gratitude. Using Instagram to represent her *Start Today brand*,

She encourages her audience to write down 5 things they are grateful for each morning, and then set 10 goals as if they have already happened. (*About Start Today*, n.d).

She additionally mentions being grateful for the small moments, and seeking every opportunity to notice little daily moments that improve life. On one of her Instagram posts, she encourages her followers to make a gratitude on wherever they are: using a phone, paper, on a receipt, etc. She states “Don’t list big things, like that you’re grateful for your partner or that you’re grateful for the ability to breathe. Write down things that happened today. Things like how good your cup of coffee was. Or how someone let you in on the freeway when there was heavy traffic. Or that you got to see a friend, or that your five- year-old told you a terrible joke and you laughed even though it wasn’t funny.” (Hollis, 2019) Showing that a person does not have to use her start today journal to be grateful, yet still encouraging a daily gratitude practice.

As a social media branding researcher, understanding Hollis’s focus on gratitude can demonstrate to others the importance of being intentional about posting online. Hollis focuses on gratitude as a personal growth strategy- meeting the demands of her consumer base. She pushes gratitude as an act that will change a person's daily life. As an influencer for personal growth she is advocating a strategy that is aimed at helping each consumer grow personally. Further, Hollis expresses her gratitude for her audience, buyers, friends, and community throughout her posts. She regularly tells her audience “thank you” for their support in various ways. As someone seeking to model after her branding strategies, being grateful for each purchase, and expressing gratitude to one’s audience could increase sales. By doing this, one’s following may begin to see the company not as a universal production, but as a small business who appreciates their purchase.

Unity/Fandom

As previously mentioned the theme “attitude toward life” was tied for repetition on Instagram with the theme “unity/fandom” for the second most used theme, both at 72 posts. It's important to note the different connections Hollis seeks after in each theme. As both “brand as a person” and “Unity/fandom” are relationships centered. However, the difference between her connections with her following using the “Unity/fandom theme”, and the “brand as a person” theme is where the focus of her posts are. In the “unity/fandom” Hollis uses Instagram to create a strong sense of community within her followers while focusing on their relationship with each other, and their relationship with her. Compared to the “brand as a person” theme, where she mainly is seeking to have her audience understand her, and the brand she represents.

The Dictionary defines fandom as: “a subculture composed of fans characterized by a feeling of empathy and camaraderie with others who share a common interest” (*Fandom*, 2020). Demonstrating that “Fandom” this is a type of connection fans/followers feel toward Hollis, and others who are supporters of her as well. They create a Hollis fan community. Understanding fandom, and exploring the connection fans make toward her, we can better understand how

Hollis encourages this theme on her posts. Words like “mom life,” “sister,” “hustler,” “Chic tribe,” “you guys,” “friends” and “my community” were often used in the Instagram posts placed in this category. A few times Hollis would sign off of her Instagram posts with “xoxo, your pal, Rach.” Being more personal in her posts and mentioning that she is on *their* team as well.

In each of the examples above Hollis treats her fans as if they were her best friends. She addresses millions of followers as “friends” in many of her posts. She also uses “mom life,” “sister,” “hustler,” to categorize the community. Those that are moms, have a place to turn to and a sense of connection by being a Rachel Hollis fan. Those that are not mothers, can be called

“sisters” feeling that same unity. Additionally, Hollis repeatedly mentions “hustlers” motivating women to fall into this category and be a “hustler” like Hollis strives to be. On one coded instagram post she says, “That’s what hustle means to me: it means that you’re willing to work for it, whatever it is, whatever you want, and you don’t assume anyone is going to give it to you, but you know it can be yours. Where are all my hustlers at?” (Hollis, 2019) Using this definition it's clear that many women will classify themselves using this term. For all those who are seeking to be more than what they currently are, a “hustler” is a term suiting them. Additionally, Hollis is very inclusive about how she addresses her audience. Each term may include some, but not others (ex. mom life) however, Hollis creates many inclusive names for her band of followers ensuring that each person feels a connection to her as their motivational leader, and friend.

The large focus on community on Instagram is no accident. Hollis seeks to ensure that each individual seeking her modification feels as if her posts are directed toward them. Using the language above she is seeking to create connections within her audience as more than a brand. The Hollis website states, “We are more than a brand. We are a COMMUNITY! We are people who motivate each other to do better. We love one another. We believe that we are stronger together. We strive for inclusion because no matter what you believe in, who you choose to love, and what you look like, everyone deserves the opportunity to live out their dreams.” (*About Start Today*, n.d.) With this quote in mind, Hollis does not want her followers to connect to only her, but one another as well. Lifting each other up, and supporting one another in each other's dreams. To accomplish this task of uniting women across the world, she creates Instagram hashtags, facebook pages, challenges, and other motivating ways to connect her groups together and create worldwide connections.

Hollis Co. Website

This research showed a significant difference between the brand strategies of the two media sources. Evaluating the Hollis Co. website for common themes the ones that were used most often were completely different than those that were ranked the highest on Instagram. The most used theme on Rachel Hollis's website was "brand as an organization." Placed in this category was any content that mentioned the Hollis Co, Start Today brand, Rachel Hollis, Dave Hollis, or any other representation of the brand that promoted these. Hollis also mentioned "hashtags" that she has submitted to her followers and the associated factors. #Last90Days #RachelHollisQVC, #HollisBuisnessCoaching, #Hollisday2019 Additionally there was information about other influencers that the brand supports, and the company stated some of their values on some political arguments here.

This theme is unlike any of the others used in this study, as it does not directly pertain to Rachel Hollis, instead the focus is on the brand as a whole. This includes many products, branches, and even some smaller brands the Hollis company oversees (i.e Start Today Brand). Understanding the different strategies that each media source is utilizing, one may begin to understand why this theme would be the most represented online.

In the world of marketing there are two types of brands. A *product brand*, and an *organizational brand*. (O'Keefe, 2015) A product brand, takes place when the consumer purchases a product without understanding who the company is behind the product. (I.e. Windex, Cool Whip) An organizational brand is the opposite, "Organizational brands focus on identity and purpose – who is behind it and why it matters. Strong organizational brands include Whole Foods, Patagonia, Starbucks, Google, Microsoft, Nike, Ikea, and Apple. These companies aren't building portfolios of brands, they are the brand. And they have built a following through consistent behavior and committed action." (O'Keefe, 2015) Using this example, we can

understand the strategies that the Hollis Co is using. They are focusing each of their efforts to explain the value behind their products and their company overall, as an organizational brand.

Hollis uses Instagram to hook her audience with her bubbly, outgoing personality, and has built a relationship with her audience, the audience could then turn to her other media outlets to see what other content she is producing elsewhere. At this point they would see the other products, and ways to engage with the Hollis Co online. As an audience member they could see company values, team members, and begin to understand the sense of unity and the Hollis brand seeks after within their community. In addition, understanding a brand as a whole increases sales tremendously compared to product based brands. (O'Keefe, 2015) The company is loyal to their values, they support their friends, they find ways to engage and support their audience and in turn that same loyalty is given back to them by their audience. Further, audience members are more likely to support a brand, if they bought one product from them previously and truly enjoyed it. (O'Keefe, 2015) It's clear that the focus of the Hollis Co using their website is to engage their audience with their brand as a whole first. Then, they can branch out to other ways to connect to their audience.

Brand Identity

The second most highest theme used on the website was "Brand and a Product" at 113 posts that fell into this category out of 250. Again, the branding strategy of the Hollis Co is completely different on Instagram then it is using the Website. Using Instagram, Hollis occasionally markets her products as they come out. As discussed prior relating to Instagram, on this platform she is more focused on having her audience focused on getting to know her as a person. Contrary, using the website the marketing strategy shifts to much more focus on the products that she sells.

Almost every piece of content posted using the online platform pushes at least one of her products to her listeners whether it is a blog post, podcast, or caption of a product for sale on her online shop. For example, Hollis will use her weekly podcast to discuss her broadcasted information and twice during each podcast is a brief intermission where she will tell her listeners about her newest product (book, app, journal...etc). Additionally, she will promote her products briefly on Instagram, but will instruct viewers to turn to her website for more information about each product and to purchase the items she is selling. Here, each viewer is seeing more promotional offers, reviews, comments, and different types (colors, and additional features) of products where they will be more convinced to buy these items based on finding the perfect fit for them.

Another thing that Hollis does in her marketing strategy is create a community within her products. This was briefly mentioned above under Unity/fandom. However, instead of using Instagram to do this, she markets each product online as a separate community.

With her Start Today Journals that she sells, each asks you to join to team using hashtag #StartTodayJournal. (*About Start Today*, n.d.) Further, using her website at the very top there is a pop-up that says “join our community and get 10% off your first order” along with constant pop-up advertisements asking for the viewer to “put in an email address and be part of our group” as a person looks through the various links on her website. (*About Start Today*, n.d.)

Furthermore, Hollis has a separate link that talks about her “community” within her products, “There's nothing that means more to our brand than the people who support us every day. We welcome you to this community of HUSTLERS and GOAL GETTERS and hope you find motivation from us every single day. Be sure to follow our community on social using the hashtags #starttodayjournal or #STJdreamcatcher to see how much they have changed their lives

by simply taking the time to invest in their dreams.” (*About Start Today*, n.d.) demonstrating that each person that uses her products can join an online team of others walking in their same shoes.

Along with focusing on the community within her products, she also focuses on each buyer creating a group of Hollis products with those who surround them. Meaning, not only can a person order a Start Today Journal for yourself, but one for their kids, and their neighbors and friends. The kids' start today journal is tailored for kids with the same idea, growth, gratitude, and writing down ideas to help them grow to be their best selves and achieve their dreams.

(*About Start Today*, n.d.) To increase her business each journal contains 90 pages for each person to write on. The Hollis Co is constantly creating new products, designs, and additions to each journal, to encourage buyers to continue to buy (or re-buy) products after the journal is filled.

Personal Growth

Personal growth category was particularly interesting from a research standpoint. As this was neither the highest or lowest on either Instagram or using the website. (Instagram 68 total usages, Website 87 posts) Although the company is based on personal growth and helping people develop as individuals, it's fascinating that the company has a higher focus on other factors that they may hold as a higher value than personal growth itself. Interestingly this theme was the 4th most used theme on the website, and the 3rd highest on Instagram out of all 8 themes. It's apparent that the Hollis Co has an emphasis on personal growth throughout their company. As they post online regularly on the subject. However, we can see that this is not the company's top priority when compared to other themes mentioned more often and findings in this study. As mentioned previously, content that outranks personal growth is: Brand as a product, person, & organization.

This demonstrates that the Hollis co wants each individual to first learn about their company values and products before they focus on personal growth. Once a person has developed a relationship with the company they may then desire to turn to learn more about each product offered and how to grow as an individual. A person may also feel that it is easier to develop as a person when they have a support group or community behind them (Carucci, 2017). Meaning, the Hollis Co may be seeking to first develop these strong relationships with their audience. Once this is established, each person feels a connection to them as people/company want to follow their example, products, and personal growth journey together with the build in support group the Hollis Co creates.

This section teaches business owners, social media branding specialists, and others that having two different strategies is perhaps recommended for consumers. They want to know “who” they are supporting; personally and as a brand, and then they want a place to go to show their support and see all the products offered. Often we think that consistency is key, and by not being consistent across all media can decrease sales. However, based on the Hollis’s Co ever growing success, this may not be the case.

Other Large Themes on Website

Aside from the two mentioned above, the other themes that presented most often on the website were “attitude on life” and “unity.” This demonstrates that these core values are unanimous throughout both areas of media production. They are equally as valuable to the Hollis Co in their representation both on the website and Instagram. As a company it's understandable how they have a large focus on a person's attitude/outlook on their life. Seeking to grow each person to have a more positive outlook on life and how to grow as a person.

Unity is something the Hollis Co discusses repeatedly throughout all of their content. Using this research we can see their emphasis on uniting each individual that supports their work in any of the various ways. Perhaps unknown prior to this study it's much easier to get an idea of the company values and goals.

Least Addressed Themes

Another interesting result that came out of this research is the themes that were used the least throughout each online platform. With the original hypothesis that each theme would be used in fairly equal amounts.

Hollis continues to push women to become their best selves. Just in these few examples it's clear that she has a passion for growth and a passion for health. Clearly through her words she has a passion for chasing dreams and living boldly, but she also has a huge passion for health and fitness. In one of her Instagram captions Rachel Hollis attributes all of her success to her commitment to changing her health. She mentions that when she changed her health and committed to working out/taking control of her eating habits, her whole life changed. Stating examples like marriage, business, how she parented, and energy levels all improved in her life. Further in three different Instagram captions throughout September and November she states "your health is your secret weapon" again, attributing her success to her change in health overall motivating others to do the same. Hollis repeatedly mentions her passion for health and wellness. However, her focus is clearly not on the benefits of health. As both themes in this area were among the least used themes. Interpreting the coding, health benefits had a total $n=19$, versus functional benefits with $n=16$. Compared to some of the other previously discussed categories this is a significantly lower number. Understanding why this could occur, contrary to the starting hypothesis is another significant interpretation of this study.

Reading through each Instagram caption it was found that Hollis discusses “health” much of the time. She discusses her health, her goals, how she decides to work out, her work out music, and her attitude toward being healthy. In these specific posts, she puts much of the emphasis on the attitude toward health and fitness and her mindset about the topic, rather than the benefits of being healthy per se. A reason for this could correlate with the above findings indicating that much of her Instagram is used to focus on her as a person. By leaving the focus on brand as a person, she can gain traction in other parts of her business (i.e. the health portion) as people look to her as an image they may begin to adopt her practices as well and start/continue to use her products.

As for functional benefits, Hollis mentions these just briefly on her online platforms. On occasion she will state the benefits that she has experienced. In one of her Instagram posts she says, “Physical movement is how I learned to manage debilitating anxiety. Working out made me a better leader, long distance running made me a better mama, strength training made me feel STRONG mentally way more than physically. I am NOT a fitness leader or a health coach. What I AM is your sister Rachel and I’m telling you that the practice of physical movement will drastically change your life! I care about you enough to keep fighting you on this and I’m right here with you leading by example.” (Hollis, 2019) This is one of very few posts that she directly mentions the functional benefits of working out in daily life. Typically there is more of a focus on encouraging her audience to get started in their physically fit journey, and to develop lasting habits.

The reason for her not addressing this topic as much could be a few things. First, perhaps it relates to the idea that once people get started on their own journey they will find differing functional benefits that they noticed personally. As every person has a different body type and

unique individual physical and mental challenges, the result could be completely different for each member of the audience. Another reason for the lack of focus on this topic using Instagram could be that as Hollis uses her example to have her followers develop a pattern of working out and being healthy. After the individual's pattern has been set, it will slowly turn into a habit and each person will continue to look at Hollis not for the benefits of their habit (as likely they will realize these on their own) but instead, to add variety and meaningful motions to their new found daily routine.

Contrary to what one may believe the least commonly used themes on the website were not exactly the same as the ones using Instagram. Here health benefits were again not addressed very often, $n=37$. However, in addition "brand as a person" was featured a low amount using the website $n=65$ when compared the other other themes.

Health benefits, although mentioned significantly more on the website ($n=37$ compared to $n=19$ on Instagram) were still not a large focus on Hollis messages. Although not used often, this category was used in a different way. Instead of the focus being on her, the Hollis Co stated the benefits of health using other influencers, each stating their own reason for wanting to pursue their individual health journey. Other influencers include Brad Chandler, Brit Barron, Dave Hollis, and each of the RISE app featured instructors. For example, Brad Chander says this about working out daily, "I only need to sweat every day. It doesn't matter how. I leave that part up to how I'm feeling. That gives me the freedom to move my body intuitively and with the intention of feeling good and caring for myself. Committing to the sweat means that I'll at least get the endorphins flowing and making my physical heart and body happy." (The Hollis Company, 2020). Each influencer feature mentioned reasons why they like to work out, and what keeps them motivated each day.

However, we still see that this category is significantly lower when compared to others that the Hollis Co website is targeting. The reasons for this could be the same as the reasons above (why health benefits are low on Instagram as well). As focusing on the product seems to be the most important target of the Hollis Co on the website, and alternative reason for this theme being lower than the others could be that the focus of the website is not to describe the benefits to each person, but to instead motivate each individual to purchase the products the Hollis Co has to offer. Each product they offer will then further mention the benefits, or motivate the buyer to participate as they think of the money they spend in the buying of the item.

“Brand as a person” as a theme was also mentioned much less using the website when compared to Instagram. Again, one can deduct using the earlier parts of this discussion that “brand as a person” is largely a focus on Instagram. In fact, the name of the Instagram page is @mrsrachelhollis. Using Instagram fans are getting to know Hollis as a person, and understanding her name, brand, and then seeking to get to know the company and the products better. Once the fans go to the website, the focus is no longer on Hollis as an individual, but as a whole “Hollis Co” as a brand. At this point viewers are viewing the products, events, and overall feel for the company. The message then shifts away from “brand as a person” to instead “brand as a product” demonstrating a possible reason for the low numbers in this theme online.

Practical/Theoretical Applications

The goal of this research is to understand Hollis's success online reaching her audience. By using quantitative content analysis with brand identity theory as the theoretical framework. This theory was developed by David Aaker in 1994. Since then, this theory has been used for many studies, but few that have included online material. There could be many reasons for this, one of which could include the idea that much of the online community was developed along

after the Brand Identity theory was used. For instance, Facebook was created in 2004, and Instagram was developed in 2010. (Blystone, 2020) During this time, online influencers became a popular sensation around the developing around the Late 2000's. Hollis began her time as an influencer in 2004 as a food blogger, and has grown since then. (Luscombe, 2019) In addition, the Hollis Company website has become increasingly more popular over the last 5 years. Again, developed much later than the Brand Identity theory.

Although this study is based on a theory that is 26 years old, it is still applicable to this the online platform for producing media and developing a brand. For this research study we are using an older theory to analyze new material. Hollis started as an online blogger, and has developed into an Instagram sensation. Understanding that her whole brand has developed from the online community, makes her particularly interesting to study using this theory. The study aims to discover how her personal branding using her online connection has enhanced her marketing strategies over the years.

Limitations and Future Research

The purpose of this research is to understand the marketing strategies that Rachel Hollis uses to reach her audience. The focus of this study is on the difference between branding of her Instagram and her Website and how they differ in content and curation.

After comparing the branding methods of @MrsRachelHollis online there are two different strategies used for Instagram and the Website. Hollis uses her Instagram to connect with her audience on a personal level. She advocates herself, and develops posts that allow her audience to “get to know her” on a superficial level. She uses this outlet to mention her favorite coffee, her kids, her daily plans, and motivations quotes to inspire others. Contrary, she uses the website to promote her products and her brand. Using this media channel users can shop for

personal growth products, see how each product is used by Hollis, and begin to see all that the Hollis Co is doing as a business.

Further research would need to be completed to see if the Hollis Co is aware of the discrepancies between the two outlets. However, based on this study we can assume that the company has developed particular strategies for using each various social media forms. This assumption can be made based on the content variations between the two outlets, and the way the audience is addressed.

With her bubbly and “bursting at the seams” personality both on the pages of her books, using her social media platforms, and in person Hollis is her own best advertisement. (Jones, 2019) As we can see using the research, on Instagram the audience is a “friend, sister, pal, hustler” etc. Hollis uses her own vulnerability, and stories to reach other women who are struggling with mental and physical battles. Her skills to deliver individualized messages to every unique person plays a role in her success. Each audience member feels as if her posts are directed towards them personally. Due to this attribute and her uplifting messages in various channels; women reach to her through social media as a best friend, a community member, a celebrity, and fellow mother. On this media outlet, the followers are a community and a team behind Rachel Hollis and are used for encouragement and support for each other, and for Hollis herself. Sharing stories, laughing at images, commenting back and forth, and developing a relationship with Hollis online.

Using the Website for branding, this connection is much different. Website viewers are seen as purchasers, buyers, and product consumers. This focus on the website is to solely promote products for purchasing. They do this in various ways, one of which is to share experiences, from famous influencers, and “people just like you” who are using the products and

loving them. The focus is no longer on the audience making connections to Hollis. A shift has taken place, and using this media outlet the focus is about the consumers making connections with the products deciding to “add to cart.” Understanding these discrepancies may assist the user in making an informed decision about purchasing the products rather than following suit, and chasing Hollis in each movement made.

The Hollis Co will likely continue to grow and rise in the industry. As Hollis herself has produced three books in three years, her audience may be expecting more in years to come. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic resides, the Hollis co has plans to resume their RISE conferences which, as mentioned, sell out regularly. These conferences will be marketed online, and may take a different approach in targeting the audience which would need to be studied separately. As far as company growth, this Hollis Co recently pushed a personalized fitness app that has individual coaches, workouts, goals, and motivational quotes buried inside its programming. (The Hollis Company, 2020). As the app grows, more research will need to be completed on the ways that the app targets the audience versus other outlets.

Overall, using this study it's clear that each media outlet has a different strategy that the Hollis Co uses to connect with their audience and sell their products. Using these eight themes studied, and other themes that may be discovered by future researchers we can understand the company goals online on various outlets and hopefully begin to understand the social media powerhouse that Hollis has developed. She is constantly gaining popularity among women, and taking on incredible tasks to work to be an example in the industry. (Hutcheson, 2018) Her success using these outlets demonstrates the importance of social media, branding, and connecting people through a common message via a single influencer, especially as media continues to grow.

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