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Engagement Across the Pond: The NFL's Attempts to Increase Social Media Engagement Through the Cultural Targeting of Messages

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ENGAGEMENT ACROSS THE POND: THE NFL'S ATTEMPTS TO INCREASE SOCIAL
MEDIA ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE CULTURAL TARGETING OF MESSAGES

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ABSTRACT

With more and more sports organizations reaching saturation points in their current home markets, the search for new, untapped, international audiences is on. Reaching out to these new markets has been made much more simple by the digitization of communication, and particularly the global spread of social media. The NFL, as the United States' most popular sports league has been targeting the United Kingdom as it's next market since the mid-2000s, and has gone as far as setting up a separate UK branch of their communications division (NFL UK). The NFL faces several challenges in engaging new fans in this fresh and culturally dissimilar market, and therefore their communication efforts need to be highly engaging to help bridge the gaps between the two cultures.

This two-part study examines whether Grunig and Hunt's (1984) public relations models, can be traced from offline communications to online Twitter communications, specifically those of the NFL UK. The study also explores whether another facet of excellence theory, the inclusion of culturally specific concepts, is present in messages targeting a new marketplace, and whether this inclusion impacts the engagement levels with those messages.

The findings demonstrate that Grunig's (1992) assertions that two-way symmetrical messages are the most engaging type, while press agentry/publicity and public information messages are least engaging, are not supported in the case of the NFL UK's use of Twitter. Instead the results of this study show that it is one-way communication models that receive the highest levels of engagement from new audiences. The findings do, however, support the case put forward by Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2006), Wakefield (2007), Rhee (2009), and others, that organizations should attempt to incorporate in their messages terms and concepts specific to the culture that is being targeted.

This study concludes by discussing the theoretical and practical implications of these findings. Elements of Grunig's (1992) set of public relations best practices, as laid out in excellence theory, do not easily translate to the world of digital communication, and often do not reflect at all in the messages of certain digital platforms, such as Twitter. An advancement of excellence theory is needed, particularly in relation to public relations best practices for the constantly changing world of social media, as well engaging international audiences. The results of this study also indicate some practical implications; organizations hoping to engage audiences embedded in a culture differing to their own should attempt to incorporate elements of this culture into their messages. In the case of Twitter, instead of focusing on the type of tweet, communications departments should emphasize the importance of diverse but relevant content in their messages when attempting to engage these new publics.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

With sellout crowds packing Wembley Stadium in London, attempts to increase engagement in international markets for American football seem to be working (Panchev, 2014). The sport is the most prominent example of several recent attempts to bridge international gaps in major sports markets, stretching from bobsledding to rugby and cricket (Baker & Esherick, 2013, p.220). The National Football League (hereafter referred to as the NFL) has been hosting regular season games in London for the last seven years, and has recently expanded the international series from one game a season to three (NFL.com, 2013). In order to fill these games and help create a steady and growing fan base, the organization has created a United Kingdom-specific communications branch, NFL UK. This division of the NFL organization faces several unique hurdles as they try to engage fans in their relatively new marketplace.

In this arena traditional public relations issues combine with the problems of reaching an audience with differing cultural touchstones, a lack of knowledge of the sport, and multiple alternative avenues to invest their time and money in sport. This thesis will explore whether NFL UK is successfully engaging their new British audience online with the use of public relations excellence theory. It will examine whether the organization is implementing traditional public relations models in its Twitter messages (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), whether it is including culturally-specific concepts in these messages (Vercic, Grunig, & Grunig, 1996), and how effective the use of both of these tactics are in engaging publics online.

NFL in the UK

Several previous efforts have been made to launch American football in both Europe and specifically the United Kingdom within the last three decades, but significant British interest in

American football is a relatively recent phenomenon (Allison, 2000, Ford & Foglio, 2005). Efforts to expand the sport in Europe advanced in the early 1990s when a European league was formed with hopes of transforming it into a feeder league for the NFL (Ford & Foglio, 2005). This plan fell through as popularity for the sport waned in the early 2000s (Colangelo, 2014). Attempts to again introduce the sport into the western European marketplace were reinvigorated by the NFL in the mid-2000s when the UK was pinpointed as the ideal target market (Ford & Foglio, 2011). Through these new efforts, the *International Series* was launched in 2007, which means that each season at least one game is played at Wembley Stadium in West London in order to grow interest in the sport and test the waters for a possible London-based franchise team (Colangelo, 2014).

The current NFL UK campaign, run for the last seven seasons, has continued through the growth of digital communication as the fundamental method of advertising to and engaging audiences; it now finds itself situated in a highly globalised and digitized world, where communication must be fast, transparent, universal, and responsive (Li & Bernoff, 2011). Digitization has changed the world of sport and entertainment drastically, and communications departments have altered the way in which they find, form, and connect with fans (Billings & Butterworth, 2014). Sports fans can now connect with their favorite athlete, team, or sport online, as well as find out information instantaneously and give immediate feedback (Gibbs & Haynes, 2013). Given the nature of sports as event-based products, they are especially well positioned to engage fans online by providing live event information (Sanderson, 2011).

The objective of this study is to determine whether organizations attempting to engage audiences online, which are based in a different culture, should alter the type and content of their messages in order to do so. By exploring the NFL UK's use of Twitter over a nine-week period,

this study determines whether use of James Grunig and Todd Hunt's (1984) different public relations models impact the levels of engagement a tweet receives. Further examining Grunig's work on excellence theory and it's use in international public relations, the study also determines whether including terms and concepts specific to the culture of the targeted audience improves engagement with messages (Vercic, Grunig & Grunig, 1996; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2006). By examining one organization's use of Twitter as a method to engage a new public with different cultural touchstones, this study attempts to determine the standards that organizations following in the NFL UK's footsteps should adhere to.

Public Relations Within Sports Communication

The swift proliferation of social media in the last decade has cemented the position of sports online as one of the world's largest and most easily accessible sources of entertainment (Billings & Butterworth, 2014). Not only has social media advanced the accessibility of sports, but it has also drastically advanced fan engagement and investment in sports brands and organizations (Sanderson, 2011). With the vast majority of sports fans active online it is one of the easiest and most effective ways to connect with and influence a public (Li & Bernoff, 2011). Growing a fan base through social media has swiftly become the most common method in sport communication to engage an audience, and therefore create lasting relationships with them (Sanderson, 2011).

For sport organizations attempting to break into a new market there are several hurdles, including already existent fan-team relationships, a lack of knowledge about the sport, and negative feedback from the sport's original fans (Gibbs & Haynes, 2013). Strategic communicators face significant barriers in not only finding and connecting with new, amiable

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publics, but also engaging them in meaningful relationships (Rein, Kotler, & Shields, 2006). These issues do not dissipate when the relationship moves online; often the limitations of digital communication, specifically miscommunications, a lack of quantifiable measurement, and barriers of digital literacy, exacerbate them (Rein, Kotler, & Shields, 2006). In order to successfully navigate these barriers, organizations must implement a variety of communication tactics, often in conjunction with each other.

Organizations regularly use exhibition games between national teams, or regular season games to introduce foreign markets to their sports (Colangelo, 2014). These games help familiarize the new market with the sport, while also gauging levels of interest in the sport and possibilities for further expansion into the market. The NFL began hosting regular season games in London in 2007 in order to test the waters of the UK as a potential market; the game was immensely popular and led to a game each season in London between 2008 and 2012, for 2013 two games were scheduled at Wembley Stadium, and in 2014 three regular season matchups took place in London (Kaplan, 2014).

Due to the live action nature of their events, sports communication excels in the live stream format of the social network Twitter; scores of games and matches can be communicated quickly and succinctly to audiences around the globe, individuals can interact with the parent organization, team, or specific player, and group discussions can take place in real-time involving fans from around the world (Williams & Chinn, 2010). The data collected for this study will encompass a period of nine weeks including the three 2014 season games held at Wembley Stadium in London. Messages sent by the organization during this period are likely to be the most appealing and engaging of the year.

The communications efforts, both online and offline, made before, during, and after events such as these exhibition games are vital; encouraging fans to engage with the organization's communications will mean that they are then more likely to engage with the event. Success in the field of communications has shifted away from the number of impressions made by a message, toward the development of relationships between customers and organizations (Paine, 2011). Online the method to measure these relationships is to look at the levels of engagement occurring with the messages produced by the organization (Paine, 2011). Engagement, with regard to communication efforts, can be described as what people do with the information provided in a message; it is no longer enough for a message to just reach a large audience, the goal is now for these people to read the message, comment on it, signify their pleasure or displeasure with it, and ideally share it with others (Paine, 2011).

Social media has been shown to be the most effective method through which organizations can reach and engage potential and already existent publics (Williams & Chinn, 2010), and measuring this engagement allows for organizations to test the value of interest in their event, and sport as a whole. In new marketplaces, initial and continued efforts to engage audiences before, during, and after events will maintain and strengthen customer-organization relationships (Rein, Kotler, & Shields, 2006). The communication model traditionally most suited to engaging audiences, is the two-way symmetrical communication model, one of the four models classified by Grunig and Hunt (1984). With audiences able to choose or reject messages very simply online, the message must be designed to reach the right audience and engage them, rather than the largest audience (Paine, 2011). The communication strategies surrounding the offline events of NFL UK are designed to help overcome the hurdles faced by established sports

entering new markets: the messages used must help educate new fans, engage audiences, and recognize the cultural differences between the established sport and its new marketplace.

Public Relations Across Cultures

Although there is a small base of research in public relations for sports entering new marketplaces, the field is fairly sparse, with the focus primarily on the strategies and tactics of sports organizations in their already established markets. The NFL may be the most recent and prolific attempt at crossing international boundaries in search of a new marketplace, but other sports organizations have already found saturation in their local market and were forced to look further afield for expansion (Baker & Esherick, 2013). The topic deserves more attention, as it is likely to be a pressing issue in the world of sports in years to come. The Information Revolution has brought us all a lot closer together, political changes worldwide are slowly opening up international markets, and the recent global economic crisis has meant that more and more organizations are looking outward to international markets to sustain themselves or grow. Launching in international markets is likely to become a future necessity in many sports, and the communication efforts used to advance and bolster these efforts should be examined.

Although there have been cross-cultural efforts by the National Basketball League, and the World Rugby organization, among others, never before has such a large and already well established sports organization attempted to move into a new international marketplace (Baker & Esherick, 2013). The NFL is spearheading the first global shift in a digital sports world. This study will explore the methods used by the NFL UK in order to engage fans on Twitter, whether these methods are effective in engaging publics, and whether the methods used recognize and

reflect cultural differences in their new target market, and if doing so is positively received by audiences.

This study will contribute to the growing literature exploring excellence theory in practice around the world; it is uniquely placed as the first research to examine the role of global excellence theory principles in communications designed by one culturally specific organization for another culturally different audience; as well as exploring the continuing value of excellence theory in digitized communications. Its findings can be examined and used by both scholars exploring the expansion of excellence theory into the digital communication domain, and practitioners hoping to utilize Twitter as a tool for engaging a new, culturally distinct audience.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Excellence theory has long been held as the standard best practices for public relations practice (Grunig & Grunig, 2008), however, in recent years the theory has come under fire for failing to advance and adapt quickly enough in two key areas: online communication and international communication (Waters & Williams, 2007; Rhee, 2009). These two areas have become vital for modern public relations practitioners to master. The digitization of communication has opened the world up for the possibility of fast, cross-continental engagement and the option of organizations reaching out to new marketplaces with little to no risk to their standing in their current market. Grunig's ongoing work in the field of excellence theory has attempted to adapt his set of public relations best practices to this new communication landscape. This study will attempt to gauge how successful these attempts have been and the continuing validity of the theory in digital communications, by examining the Twitter communications of NFL UK.

Grunig and Hunt's (1984) Four Models of Public Relations

In 1984 James Grunig and Todd Hunt together formulated the four models of public relations that would later form the backbone of Grunig's excellence theory (1992). The four models define the different ways in which organizations communicate with their publics. The first model, press agentry/publicity, is a one-way type of communication that "uses persuasion and manipulation to influence audiences to behave as the organization desires" (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995, p.41). The second model, public information, is also a one-way type of communication that "uses press releases and other one-way communication techniques to distribute organizational information" (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995, p.41). The third model,

two-way asymmetrical, is an imbalanced two-way type of communication that "uses persuasion and manipulation to influence audiences to behave as the organization desires" (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995, p.41). Finally the fourth model, two-way symmetrical, is a two-way type of communication that "uses communication messages to negotiate with the public, resolve conflict and promote mutual understanding and respect between the organization and its stakeholders" (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995, p.41).

Two-way Symmetrical Communication and Excellence Theory

Grunig expanded on his and Hunt's work over the next decade to form his excellence theory, a set of best practices for public relations (1992). In his subsequent work on excellence theory, Grunig suggests that to best engage publics practitioners should use the two-way communication model (Grunig, 1992). The basis of the two-way communication model as a fundamental principle of public relations relationship building was set out in Grunig and Hunt's work (1984), but excellence theory goes on to state that public relations practitioners should use two-way symmetrical communication to create campaigns that balance the organization's objectives with the public's expectations and values (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2006). It is the joint satisfaction of these expectations that in turn encourage a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship between an organization and its publics (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2006).

Regardless of the organization's overall objective, or the context in which they are producing their messages, Grunig argues that two-way symmetrical communications, messages that make up a mutually beneficial conversation between the organization and its stakeholders, should be used. This kind of message should balance the interests of the organization and its publics, and should be used to resolve conflict or promote mutual understanding between the

two. For example, messages that engage with individual stakeholders on a personal level, while attempting to improve the individual's experience and encourage feedback, are classified as two-way symmetrical communication (Grunig, 1992). The prevalence of excellence theory in public relations research and practice suggests that even though the NFL faces several non-traditional barriers in their communication strategies, they will form their communications based on the ideal two-way symmetrical model.

An organization's relationship with its publics is of critical importance in the age of Web 2.0 (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social media has made it possible for consumers to communicate their opinions directly to the organization and other consumers; organizations should engage their publics in meaningful dialogue through social media in order to gain the most insight into their current and potential audiences. Excellence theory asserts that an organization's behavior has more effect on the organization-public relationship than its messages, as members of a public are much more receptive to an organization's messages when they feel that the organization values their opinions (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2006). The theory purports that the manner in which the organization engages with its audience, that is its choice of public relations model, will impact the organization-public relationship and engagement between the two. Without publics engaging with the company's communication efforts, the company cannot produce programs or products that align with consumers' interests (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

The Four Models of Public Relations and Excellence Theory in the Digital Age

Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models have been a stalwart of public relations practice since the mid 1980s, but they have not yet been adapted to suit a rapidly altering communications landscape (Grunig & Grunig, 2008). Grunig still advocates for the use of the

original four models in public relations practice today, arguing that if a digital platform is not suited to all four models, then different platforms should be used by an organization for each model (Grunig, 2009). For example, an organization's website could be used disseminate publicity messages, while a community chatroom could more easily facilitate two-way symmetrical communication (Grunig, 2009). Although there are arguments against the validity of excellence theory in modern public relations practice, particularly of the legitimacy of two-way symmetrical messages (Cancel, et al., 1997; Cameron, et al. 2001), Grunig and Hunt's four models are still taught today in public relations departments across the world. Though Grunig has left the four models untouched since 1984, he and his counterparts have continued to expand and adapt other elements of excellence theory over the last three decades, including features designed to facilitate its use internationally (Grunig & Grunig, 2008; Grunig, 2009).

International Use of Excellence Theory

Although Grunig's work was designed to be a global standard for public relations, providing a set of guidelines that could feasibly be enacted in different cultures around the world (Grunig, 1992), he did not specify their international applicability or test their use outside of the United States until 1996 (Vercic, Grunig & Grunig 1996), and it was not until the third iteration of his excellence theory that he recognized the growing importance of international communications (Grunig & Grunig, 2003). Once Grunig acknowledged the impact of culture on an organization's communication efforts, he built the principle into his growing theory (Vercic, Grunig, & Grunig, 1996).

The first researcher to actually test Grunig's excellence theory (1992) outside of the US was Robert Wakefield, who from 1995 to 1998 undertook three studies in order to test excellence

theory in a real-world multicultural context. Published a decade later, his results successfully demonstrated that excellence theory could be put into use in multinational organizations (Wakefield, 2007). Although the principles of the theory remained the same in different cultural contexts, Wakefield showed that the specific applications of them varied, with the culture of where the organization was situated impacting the manner is which it engaged in public relations and the content of its messages (Wakefield, 2007).

Once he had undertaken studies outside of the US, Grunig himself recognized the impact of contextual variables on the application of the excellence theory principles, stating that the variables *political-economic system*, *level of development*, *culture*, *extent of activism*, and *media systems* all affect the methods with which the principles can be enacted (Vercic, Grunig, & Grunig, 1996). Grunig and his peers advocated for a set of abstract generic principles that could be globally applicable, but individual application of these principles would occur; he stated, "global public relations should fall in the middle between standardization and individualization" (Grunig, 2009, p.1). As the US and the UK have very similar political-economic systems, levels of development, media systems, and levels of activism, this study will explore the impact of cultural differences on engagement.

Although Grunig's work on excellence theory put forward a set of arguably universal principles, not a large body of research has explored the implementation and effectiveness of these best practices in international settings (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2006). Wakefield's work during the mid 1990s explored the use of excellence theory principles in international marketplaces, and his findings supported Grunig's belief that the theory could be used globally, however he also demonstrated that the principles must be adapted to cultural variations in order to remain successful (Wakefield, 2007), a view that Grunig came to agree with (Vercic, Grunig

& Grunig, 1996). Wakefield focused on the importance of recognizing and incorporating the existing culture of the new marketplace with public relations when using excellence theory to expand into a new market (2007).

Sriramesh, et al. (1999) expanded on Vercic and the Grunigs (1996) work by again exploring the impact of different Asian cultures on organizations' messages within three different nations, India, Japan, and South Korea. Their results demonstrate that companies within each nation operate in distinctive ways depending on their local culture, and the communications produced are reflective of this unique culture. Flora Hung (2004) expanded this work to examine cultural influence on the communication efforts of multinational companies in China, finding that these organizations utilize elements of their larger national culture in order to create messages that appeal to more local audiences, as well as utilizing other national cultures when targeting a foreign market. Rhee (2009) also explored the use of excellence theory principles in non-Anglo cultures; her research on South Korean public relations practices showed that cultural collectivism and elements of Confucianism may impact local practitioners use of the principles of excellence theory and therefore successful public relations practice.

These results support Grunig et al.'s (1998, 2006) argument that public relations should be based on these fundamental principles, however cultural differences will impact the effectiveness and frequency with which they are put into practice. Further work in the field of cross-national public relations is likely to occur as more and more corporations and organizations look to global markets in order to expand. Grunig, Wakefield and others demonstrate that communications must remain respectful and ideally incorporative of the new cultural identity they are attempting to infiltrate (Deatherage & Heatherton, 1998; Wakefield, 2007; Flora Hung, 2004). As the NFL attempts to form relationships in a differing cultural contexts to their

organization's formation, according to prior work in excellence theory they should be attempting

to follow Grunig, and his peers work and attempt to blend the content of messages with

culturally-specific language, imagery, and concepts (Grunig et al., 1998; Flora Hung, 2004;

Wakefield, 2007; Rhee, 2009).

This body of research successfully demonstrates the ability of culturally-targeted

messages to enhance engagement with an organization, however all of the studies discussed here

explored the use of offline or online one-to-one methods of communication, such as corporate

emails (Rhee, 2009; Grunig, et al., 1998; Sriramesh et al., 1999; Deatherage & Heatherton, 1998;

Flora Hung, 2004). There is no research examining the use of culturally-targeted messages on

social networks. This study is unique in attempting to determine whether cross-cultural messages

targeting a new and foreign culture will result in higher levels of engagement on Twitter.

Measuring Engagement

Measuring and quantifying the level of engagement with an organization online is vital in

determining whether the strategies and tactics being used to communicate are successful (Kwon

& Sung, 2011). It is often regarded as a difficult prospect; engagement within social media

usually focuses on the number of 'likes' or 'follows,' and although these metrics are important

they don't begin to cover the analysis of how and why content will help bolster relationships

with consumers (Paine, 2011). Grunig and others have demonstrated the importance of creating

lasting and mutually beneficial relationships with publics, in order to transform them into loyal

customers and consumers (Vercic, Grunig, & Grunig, 1996), and Paine's (2011) work on

measuring customer relationships advocates that measuring engagement is vital for modern

organizations as it is the first step in forming these relationships. If engagement is measured and

enacted on successfully then it can help promote and protect a brand during crisis as well as improve services (Paine, 2011).

Paine outlines the engagement levels of consumers as lurking, casual, active, committed, and loyalist. These levels are linked to the phases of engagement that lead from impressions to trial, through to purchase and advocacy (Paine, 2011). Message consumers at the lurking level merely bookmark or 'like' the organization on social media, forming the most basic of relationships, whereas those at the casual level of engagement take some form of action indicating further contact. For example subscribing to a YouTube channel or blog, or following a Twitter account (Paine, 2011). This is the level at which the majority of these relationships will stagnate, but some will remain interested in the content provided and move to be actively engaged. Here the relationship becomes more communal and consumers are sharing content with others (Paine, 2011). If the organization can satisfy consumers in their communications at the third level of active, then some may move on to become committed fans, where individuals trust the organization enough to become a member or provide personal details (Paine, 2011).

Grunig states that satisfaction is achieved as the positive expectations of a relationship are reinforced for both parties (Grunig, 1992). The last level of engagement consumers can reach is loyalist, these individuals have formed such strong relationships with an organization they have become loyal advocates for it (Paine, 2011). It is vital for organizations to identify the different levels of their engaged audiences in order to measure whether their communication efforts are advancing, harming, or not impacting their reputation, their publics' engagement with the organization, the relationships formed, and therefore their potential behaviors.

In order for organizations to build strong relationships with consumers in the modern world they must engage them where they are, online. Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2006)

advocate that to best engage and form these relationships the two-way symmetrical

communication model should be used. The use of Twitter by organizations combines these

concepts and provides reasonably accessible data in order to measure engagement (Paine, 2011).

Engagement on Twitter can be quantified as the number of followers an organization can claim,

however this number does not reflect the intensity with which these fans engage with the

organization either online or offline (Paine, 2011). In order to measure the engagement of fans

on social media other metrics must be used; these include the quantifiable number of favorites,

retweets, and responses a message receives, as well as the sentiment of these responses – are they

positive or negative?

In the case of Twitter, engagement is often measured by the variables of number of

favorites, number of retweets, and number of responses a message receives (Kwon & Sung,

2011). These quantifiable measures demonstrate the number of people that have engaged with a

message on Twitter. Favoriting a tweet usually signifies that the user likes or agrees with the

statement made in the message, although it can also be used as a method to store messages for

later review (Bruns, 2012). Retweeting content again implies agreement with or approval of the

message, however it is not certain (Bruns, 2012). While the number of responses a tweet receives

will demonstrate the number of people engaging with it, it will not give any indication of the

value of this engagement, whether it be positive or negative, only examining the sentiment of

these responses can (Bruns, 2012).

Engaging Publics Through Twitter

Developed in 2006, Twitter has become the most used social media tool in public

relations campaigns, particularly sports communication (Kwon & Sung, 2011). By limiting

updates to easily digestible messages of 140 characters or less, Twitter has increased the speed of information sharing; while its interactive features allow organizations the opportunity to begin a dialogue with its publics, reply to consumer inquiries and concerns, and cultivate a brand personality (Lovejoy et al., 2012). Brands can nurture and maintain relationships with publics through Twitter by engaging their publics directly in conversations; even just a company's presence on social media generates consumer attention and brand awareness (Kwon & Sung, 2011).

On Twitter, individuals can send public messages directly to an organization, and the organization's representative can respond back either directly to the individual or to the individual, and also the larger public audience of their followers. By engaging the individual in a public dialogue, the organization can show responsiveness and commitment to the organization-public relationship. A company can also publicize its involvement with other organizations and individuals by retweeting, which involves re-posting another organization's or individual's message on the company's Twitter page, while hyperlinks in a tweet can direct traffic to the organization's website (Lovejoy et al., 2012). Twitter provides individuals the ability to locate information on specific topics through the use of hashtags and verified official accounts, while also engaging with other individuals (Kwon & Sung, 2011). Twitter's characteristics combine to make it one of the most engaging social media platforms available, and a valuable tool for public relations practitioners.

In order to capitalize on what was seen as an emerging market back when the International Series began, the NFL set up a separate NFL UK Twitter account in September 2009. In order to familiarize fans with this unfamiliar sport, the organization focuses much of its tweeting on fan engagement and education. The majority of tweets, outside of game scores and

updates, involve trivia questions, contests, and fan retweets (NFL UK Twitter, 2014). To further

engage their foreign audiences, during the period of September 28 through November 9, 2014,

when three games were held in London, the communications teams expended great efforts to

include local content and cultural nods in their tweets. For example, for Remembrance Day on

November 9, 2014, the NFL's UK Twitter account included messages supporting the Royal

British Legion Charity, an association for British ex-servicemen. In addition, the Twitter account

mentioned local UK soccer teams and celebrities, and included local imagery like pictures of Big

Ben, Parliament, and red telephone boxes in tweets (NFL UK Twitter, 2014).

The efforts of the NFL to incorporate British culture into their Twitter messages extends

further than the inclusion of imagery and national events. A distinctly British voice is used in the

messages, with the use of colloquialisms and British spellings, such as 'mate' and 'lads' to

describe fans (NFL UK Twitter, 2014). These tactics give a local voice to the Twitter messages

and make them more relatable to UK audiences than their American counterparts (Kwon &

Sung, 2011). Although there is no clear human presence, defined by Kwon and Sung as an

identifiable person responsible for the messages who provides their name and likeness to those

they interact with, the NFL UK Twitter does maintain a human voice with use of national

colloquialisms, the collective first person pronoun of 'we', and by engaging consumers in

conversations (Kwon & Sung, 2011).

According to Grunig and supporters of excellence theory, in order to engage audiences in

conversations, the NFL UK should utilize mostly two-way communication tactics online to

invite input from publics (Grunig, 2009). These tactics include asking questions, trivia,

competitions, retweets, and quick responses to fan queries, as well as solving problems through

two-way communication. These strategies combine to engage audiences online around a topic

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that physically occurs offline; sparking dialogue between fans and the organization allows for the NFL to gauge which of their tactics are successful in increasing support for the sport, and also build lasting relationships with consumers who are likely to engage with the organization for the long term (Lovejoy et al., 2012).

Never before has research combined exploring the validity of two parts of excellence theory, the four models of public relations and advocacy for the cultural-targeting of messages, in the sphere of social media communications. The first component of excellence theory explored in this study has not been adapted to fit the digitized, international, changing landscape of communications, whereas the second has been loosely altered. This study will attempt to determine whether Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models of public relations are still valid and relevant for modern, digital communication on the social network Twitter, and also establish whether Grunig, and his peers' (2006) belief, that inclusion of cultural content is vital in creating engaging messages, is true in the case of cross-cultural Twitter campaigns, such as the NFL UK.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Grunig's (1992, 2006) extensive work on excellence theory, as well as others' attempts to situate it internationally, demonstrates that a global set of principles can be ascribed to excellent public relations. However these principles must be enacted with care and regard to local cultural and systematic differences. In order to engage audiences and create lasting, mutually beneficial relationships, the key principle of the theory is the use of the two-way symmetrical communication model, which entails an organization creating messages that require reciprocation from their audience and draw the two into a mutually beneficial conversation.

Although Grunig and Hunt's (1984) public relations models have been tested in many different communication platforms, research on the models' effects on Twitter is scarce. The social network allows for organizations to find, connect with, and engage in relationships potential fans of their services or products. Measuring whether these communication efforts are utilizing the four models in an impactful manner, and discovering whether they are successful in creating engagement is a vital step in determining whether excellence theory and the four models of public relations remain relevant in the world of Twitter. Alongside the exploration of the role of the four models use on Twitter, measurement of the use of culturally-specific concepts by the NFL UK will help determine whether Grunig and his peers (Vercic, Grunig & Grunig, 1996; Wakefield, 2007; Flora Hung, 2004) are correct in asserting that the use of this tactic will increase positive engagement in a new marketplace.

By all appearances the NFL UK, which is gaining popularity in the UK year on year (Jessop, 2013), appears to have successfully implemented their communication strategies in a differing culture to the organization's origin. Whether this relative success is attributable to the use of excellence theory is explored in this study. Determining whether the NFL UK has

attempted to recognize these cultural differences in their communications, and if these attempts have created a positive or negative effect on audiences, will help determine whether Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2006) and others are correct in suggesting that alongside using the two-way symmetrical communication model, practitioners must adjust the application of these principles for cultural differences, or go further and include these differences in communications. The research questions that this study will attempt to answer are:

RQ1: What types of tweet and content are being used by the NFL UK?

Observing the tweets of @NFL_UK for the type of tweets being used the majority of time, including the style of tweet (original, response, or retweet), whether they include imagery, hashtags, or weblinks, and the public relations model of the tweet, will provide an insight into how the NFL are using Twitter as a communication tool. Examining which public relations model the NFL UK is most frequently using when formulating their tweets will determine the method in which the organization is attempting to communicate with their publics. Collecting this data will also enable an oversight of the variation with which the NFL UK tweets; should the organization prove to use the same model, style, and combination of content for the majority of its tweets then it is unlikely to be purposefully following the recommendations of excellence theory (Grunig , Grunig, & Dozier 2006).

RQ2: Which of Grunig's Public Relations Models is most engaging?

Analysis of data demonstrating which public relations model is most used by the NFL UK, combined with data indicating the engagement levels (the number of favorites, retweets, responses, and the overall sentiment of these responses) for each model, will demonstrate

whether there is a significant relationship between any of the models and higher levels of engagement. This research question aims to discover whether or not differing use of the four models of public relations (Grunig and Hunt, 1984) impacts the level of engagement messages receive, as well as confirm whether Grunig's assertion that two-way communication is the most engaging of his four models is true in the case of the NFL UK's Twitter communications.

RQ3: Are the NFL UK's messages targeting their new cultural marketplace?

Assessing NFL UK's tweets for content that explicitly targets the marketplace of the UK will determine whether or not the organization is making exerted efforts to engage this audience on a cultural level. Combining and comparing data collected on the public relations model used, with cases of cultural-targeting in messages, will determine whether one particular model is being used to culturally-target the audience, and also if the two-way symmetrical model is being combines with British-specific concepts in order to maximize the level of engagement the message will receive, as is claimed by Grunig (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier 2006).

RQ4: Are culturally-targeted messages more successful in engaging audiences?

Should culturally-targeted messages be discovered, testing whether there is a significant relationship between the content of these messages and increased engagement (a higher number of favorites, retweets, and responses) with these tweets will determine whether this targeting is a successful method for engaging publics. Testing for this relationship will establish whether Twitter users are engaging with these messages, however it will not confirm a causal relationship or determine whether this engagement is wholly positive. The favoriting and retweeting of a tweet does not necessarily indicate agreement with a message, and therefore high levels of

engagement does not guarantee a universal approval of the tweet studied (Bruns, 2012; Paine, 2011).

RQ5: Do tweets that contain culturally-specific concepts receive more positive responses?

Finally, examining whether tweets containing culturally-specific terms and concepts receive responses that have an overall more positive sentiment will support the theory that organizations targeting new marketplaces should attempt to incorporate aspects of this new culture into their messages. The value of a favorite, or retweet, has been debated (Paine, 2011, Thelwall, et al. 2010; Bruns, 2012). The sentiment behind these actions can be hard to determine, often Twitter users will favorite an item in order to store it and possibly return to it later rather than indicate approval of the message. Similarly, retweeting a message does not necessarily mean endorsement from that user (Thelwall et al. 2010), whereas a clearly positive response to a message is more difficult to misread. Positive responses indicate a clear affirmative reaction to the original message. There are of course issues in determining the sentiment of a tweet (Thelwall et al. 2010), these will be discussed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4: METHOD

The purpose of this study is to test whether use of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models of public relations remains useful and relevant in modern digital communication. It also attempts to determine whether Grunig's (2009) assertion, that two-way symmetrical communication is still the most successful manner in which to try and engage audiences, is accurate in the case of NFL UK Twitter communications. It also aims to ascertain whether the inclusion of culturally-specific concepts in communication messages encourages more positive engagement from publics. In order to assess the five research questions formed from examination of the existent literature, tweets containing original content sent from the account @NFL_UK, between September 7, 2014 and November 9, 2014, will be coded and analyzed. This time frame was chosen as it encompasses the first nine weeks of the 2014 NFL season, as well as the three exhibition games held at Wembley Stadium by the NFL UK. Twitter was chosen as the social network tool to analyze content from due to its prevalence in sports and its ability to engage audiences (Gibbs, O'Reilly, & Brunette, 2014). Another factor in the decision to use Twitter data was that the NFL UK does not have a separate Facebook page dedicated to UK fans, only their official US-focused page, meaning that it would be much more difficult to discern which (if any) posts were targeting their British audience on Facebook.

Content analysis

Content analysis was chosen as the method to explore NFL UK's communication efforts as it allows for analysis of real-world data created by events that have recently occurred. Rather than conducting in-depth interviews with members of the organization's publics, analyzing their unadulterated reactions to messages eliminates any risk of interviewer bias. By examining

content that was produced and received organically and instantaneously at the time of the events covered, it is easier to explore the audience's visceral and instant reactions to certain messages (Krippendorf, 2004). Quantification of this data gives an accurate representation of the content created and received, and allows for simple comparison between the efforts of NFL UK and reactions of their publics, and also between the communication methods used and levels of engagement (Krippendorf, 2004).

Collection

Twitter has historically limited access to their "firehose" collection of past tweets, however recently this full back catalogue has been made available to educational institutions, and limited versions of access reaching back at least a year are accessible online via Twitter itself or one of their affiliates such as Tweet Tunnel or Topsy (Finley, 6 February, 2014). Utilizing Tweet Tunnel 981 tweets were collected for the nine-week time period of September 7, 2014 to November 9, 2014. These tweets could be expanded to show how many favorites, retweets, and responses they had received, as well as the content of each response. Each tweet was then coded using a survey data collection model in the program Qualtrics; each coding category was posed as a question within the survey and the coder answered the twenty-eight questions for each tweet and their corresponding responses. Once collated, the data was downloaded into SPSS for statistical analysis.

Universe

The population of interest for this study is the communication efforts of the NFL UK, more specifically their communication efforts online through the social media platform Twitter.

The tweets from the Twitter handle @nfl_uk were chosen to be analyzed, along with any direct responses to these tweets. The tweets had to contain original content from the organization, therefore 'quote retweets' where NFL UK retweeted another users message but added their own content would be coded, however simple retweets with no additional content from NFL UK were not counted. The NFL is highly popular in its original market, particularly on social media; the US-based original NFL Twitter account boasts 9.86 million followers (NFL Twitter, 2015). The UK-based NFL UK Twitter account is much smaller with an audience of 55,000 (NFL UK Twitter, 2015).

Sample

A time frame of nine weeks from the September 7, 2014 to the November 9, 2014 was chosen. The time period was selected as it encompasses the first nine weeks of the 2014 NFL season as well as all three NFL games held at Wembley Stadium for the year; September 28 marked the first of three games in the NFL's 2014 international series, the second was played on October 26, and the third on November 9. These events will likely have produced a boost in the level of interaction with the organizations on Twitter, as well as an increase in attempts to create culturally relevant content for the host nations of the events.

Identification

The tweets were each coded for time, date, and type. To define type, tweets were coded as either 'original', 'quote retweet', or '@reply'. All categories included some form of original content created by NFL UK. 'Original' tweets were classified as those that originated from @NFL_UK, did not contain any content from other Twitter users, and were not in response to a

tweet from another user. 'Quote retweet' tweets were classified as messages that included a retweet of another user's content as well as additional content from NFL UK. '@reply' tweets were classified as messages that were a direct response to content from another user, the majority of the time these tweets begin with the handle of the user the message is directed to. Tweets from @NFL_UK that were direct retweets with no additional content were not included in the data collection for this analysis.

In order to mitigate some of the limitations that occur when analyzing content, intercoder reliability was tested to ensure the validity of the coding used in this study. The original researcher coded all 981 tweets, and an additional test coder coded the first 200 tweets of the time period – just over 20% of the full sample. Once this data was collected, Scott's (1955) *pi* index was used to calculate the intercoder reliability for each variable. In the case of the identification measures the agreement of reliability measure for each was calculated as 1.0, indicating complete agreement between coders for the variables of time, date and tweet type.

Content

Each tweet was then coded for the inclusion of an image or video, hyperlink, or hashtag. Messages were assigned to each of the categories depending on whether that content type was included. The agreement of reliability measure was calculated as 1.0 for each category, indicating complete agreement between coders for the three variables of image/video, hyperlink and hashtag.

Public Relations Models

   Tweets were then coded into categories for each of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models of public relations: press agentry/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical. Tweets that encompassed elements of more than one model were coded as all categories that applied to them.

   Press agentry/publicity modeled tweets were those defined as one-way communicative messages that did not request a response from their audience. They are usually persuasive in nature and aim to publicize the organization or one of its affiliates. Often tweets of this nature include competitions that do not require Twitter feedback from publics, offers, or promotions. Public information modeled tweets were also defined as one-way communicative messages that do not request a response from their audience. However, unlike press agentry/publicity tweets, these messages provide information in a non-biased form, making no appeal to the audience. Instead of creating publicity for the organization, messages of this model type share information in a factual manner.

   Two-way asymmetrical modeled tweets were defined as two-way communicative messages that attempt to elicit responses from their viewers. These messages will focus more on the needs of the organization than the publics, and will often feature suggestions to utilize the products or services of the NFL UK. Two-way symmetrical modeled tweets were defined as two-way communicative messages that also attempt to elicit responses from their viewers. However these messages are focused on connecting with individuals, often to solve a problem they may be experiencing, or to engage in personal conversation. There will be at least equal emphasis placed on the needs of the public as on the needs of the organization.

The agreement of reliability between the two coders varied between the four models. For the press agentry/publicity model it was calculated as 0.77, for the public information model it was 0.85, for the two-way asymmetrical it was 0.82, and for the two-way symmetrical model is was 0.8. Although these results do not show complete agreement between the coders for these variables, the levels of agreement calculated are all above the minimum acceptable agreement of reliability level of 0.75, as set out by Scott (1955).

Engagement

After they were identified, each tweet was coded for the levels of engagement it received. The categories for engagement were defined as the 'number of favorites', 'number of retweets', and 'number of responses' each message received. Each of these categories was coded using a numerical scale.

The agreement of reliability between the two coders for the variable of number of favorites was 0.94, for the number of retweets it was 0.948, and for number of responses it was 0.88. Although they do not suggest uniform agreement across coders, the results do suggest a high enough level of agreement to give statistical weight to the results.

Sentiment

The sentiment of consumer response tweets was then measured by assessing the overall tone of responses. Each response was coded as including either 'positive,' 'neutral,' or 'negative' language and tone. If a message included aspects of more than one category the coder was asked to use their discretion and assign it to the category that the tweet held the most prevalent characteristics of. Once collated, the collection of responses per original tweet was measured for

the overall sentiment of the group. The number of responses in each category was taken and the majority category was assigned as the overall sentiment of responses.

As Thelwall et al. (2010) have demonstrated, measuring sentiment in small allotments of online text is very difficult, and extremely subjective. Therefore the likelihood of achieving a perfect agreement of reliability between coders is low. The level of agreement for the variable of sentiment of responses was 0.793; although this is significantly lower than the level of agreement for the engagement measures, it is still above the 0.75 threshold defined as the minimum acceptable agreement of reliability level (Scott, 1955).

British-specific concepts

Lastly tweets were coded for the appearance of any terms or concepts taken from British culture, which would be recognizable specifically to British publics. These concepts included mentions of British holidays and memorials, UK charities, mention of British celebrities, and the use of UK-specific imagery, such as the Union Jack or red telephone boxes.

Again this is a subjective category that could produce incongruity between two coders, particularly if the coders are of different nationalities. In order to test for any bias created by the original coders nationality, Scott's *pi* index was again used to determine the agreement of reliability between the coders on this variable. The result for this was 0.76, the lowest level of agreement of any of the measures, but again just above the minimum acceptable agreement of reliability for two coders.

Reliability

Although three variables, press agentry/publicity, sentiment of responses, and presence of British-specific concepts, received a level of agreement of reliability much lower than the other variables, use of Scott's *pi* index indicates that there is an acceptable level of agreement between the coders to validate the data collected.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

Once collected and coded, Twitter data was compared using both Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS. In order to compare the categorical data of each public relations model with the numerical data of number of favorites, retweets, and replies, Chi-Square calculations were used. The SPSS cut point tool was used to form the numerical data into categorical data; dividing the data sets into three equal groups, labeled 'low', 'medium' and 'high.' In the case of favorites the values included in the 'low' group are 0 to 4, the values of 'medium' are 5 to 12, and any value including and above 13 is classified as 'high'. For number of retweets these groups stand as, 0 to 3 equaling 'low', 4 through 12 classified as 'medium', and any value including and above 13 categorized as 'high'. Due to the much lower rate of responses to tweets, the category of 'number of responses' contained much smaller groupings; 'low' was categorized as tweets including 0 or 1 response, 'medium' tweets had 2 or 3 responses, while 'high' tweets received 4 or more responses.

Once this data was transformed it was possible to cross tabulate the two sets of categories and use the Pearson Chi-Square to test the likelihood that any observable relationships between the factors were received by chance. Chi-Square tests were used to test the difference between expected and observed frequencies of favorites, retweets, and responses to each public relations model type, and between expected and observed frequencies of favorites, retweets, and responses to culturally specific messages. As well as to test the difference between expected and observed frequencies of positive responses to each public relations model type, and expected and observed frequencies of positive responses to culturally specific messages.

RQ1: What types of tweet and content are being used by the NFL UK?

In order to verify how the NFL UK are choosing to utilize Twitter as a communication tool, frequencies of each different tweet type, content, and public relations model for all 981 tweets were collected. The overwhelming majority (93.2%) of NFL UK's tweets are original tweets produced by the organization not in response to a message from any other user (n=915). Over the nine-week period there was no use of the 'quote retweet' function of Twitter, and a limited use of the '@reply' function, the low rate of 6.8% indicates the lack of frequency with which this Twitter tool is used by the NFL UK. Retweets with no additional content were not collected or coded, as they did not include any original content created by NFL UK.

The organization uses images, hashtags, and hyperlinks in their messages around half of the time. Images appear in 51% of tweets (n=498), hashtags in 66.4% (n=649), and hyperlinks in 41% of tweets (n=399). The high frequencies of each component indicate that many tweets include a combination of two or all of these engaging elements. British-specific concepts feature in fewer tweets, but a still respectable 31.5% of tweets did contain a reference to British culture (n=309) including images, or hashtags particularly relevant to the British population.

During the nine-week period studied, NFL UK utilized all four different models of public relations as laid out by Grunig and Hunt (1984). Often tweets contained elements of more than one model, in these cases the tweet was coded as all models it seemed to encompass. Press agentry/publicity was the most frequently assigned category, covering 74.2% of tweets (n=728), while Grunig's preferred model of two-way symmetrical messaging was used least, in a mere 5.5% of tweets (n=54). Public information was the second most popular model, with 58.8% of tweets being classified as at least partly informational (n=404). Two-way asymmetrical messages (often questions or requests for feedback) were included in 16.7% of tweets (n=164). Of the 981

tweets, 369 encompassed two or more of the models, the most common combination, accounting

for 71.3% of these tweets, were tweets that included elements of both the press agentry/publicity

model and the public information model (n=263).

RQ2: Which of Grunig's Pubic Relations Models is the most engaging?

Within the tweets and responses of NFL UK all four of Grunig's public relations models

are represented, allowing for a comparison between model types and the levels of engagement

achieved by tweets of each model type. Chi Squares were calculated to gauge the significance

between each model type and the corresponding level of favorites, retweets, and responses. Each

model type was also compared with the sentiment of responses received, although due to the low

level of responses these findings will be treated with caution.

The press agentry/publicity model shows a significant relationship with the number of

favorites, number of retweets a tweet receives, and an overall positive sentiment of responses to

the tweet. The Pearson Chi Square results for each of these are, number of favorites: χ^2 (2,

N=1348) = 25.155 P< .001, number of retweets: χ^2 (2, N=1348) = 46.858 P< .001, and sentiment

of responses: χ^2 (2, N=966) = 25.806 P< .001. However the relationship between the press

agentry/publicity model and number of responses is less clear, showing a Pearson Chi-Square

result of χ^2 (2, N=981) = 5.557 P< .062, this outcome suggests that the results could feasibly

have been received by random error and therefore will not be examined.

The contingency tables for the press agentry/publicity model and each engagement

measure demonstrate that there is a fairly even distribution between the low, medium, and high

groupings of favorites, and retweets and the press agentry/publicity. There is a 31.5% chance of a

press agentry/publicity tweet receiving a low number of favorites, a 33.1% chance it would

receive a medium number of favorites, and a 35.4% chance that it would receive a high number

of favorites. Similarly there is a 28.1% chance of a press agentry/publicity tweet receiving

between 0 and 3 retweets, a 37.6% chance it would receive between 4 and 12 retweets, and a

34.3% chance that it would receive 13 or more retweets. Crosstabulation demonstrates that the

relationship between the model and overall sentiment of responses is the most diverse of the

variables. Should a tweet be classified as being of the press agentry/publicity model then there is

a 45.1% chance that it will receive mostly positive responses, a 42.4% chance it will receive

mostly neutral responses, and only a 12.5% likelihood that the message will result in majority

negative replies.

The public information model also shows a strong relationship with two of the

engagement variables, with a Pearson Chi-Square result of χ^2 (2, N=1348) = 57.198 P< .001,

between the model and number of favorites, and a result of χ^2 (2, N=1348) = 56.56 P< .001,

between the model and number of retweets a message receives. The likelihood of a public

information tweet producing a 'low' level of favorites is 22.5%, there is a 35.6% chance that it

would receive a medium number, and a 41.8% chance that it would receive a high number. The

relationship between the public information and number of retweets received is very similar to

that of favorites. The likelihood of the model producing 0 to 3 retweets is 21.3%, this increases

to 38.4% likelihood of producing 4 to 12 retweets, and the model has a 40.3% chance of

soliciting 13 or more retweets. Comparison of the model and number of replies resulted in a χ^2

(2, N=1348) = 1.912 P< .384 Pearson Chi-Square value, while the relationship between the

model and overall sentiment of responses was valued at χ^2 (2, N=966) = 3.704 P< .157. These

high values demonstrate that any observed relationship between the two may be a product of

random error, and these results have therefore been disregarded.

The relationships between tweets classified as the two-way asymmetrical model and the four measurements of engagement are all significant. The Pearson Chi-Square calculated between the model and number of favorites is χ^2 (2, N=1348) = 25.579 P< .001, between the model and number of retweets it is χ^2 (2, N=1348) = 30.747 P< .001, between the model and number of responses it is χ^2 (2, N=1348) = 98.529 P< .001, and between the model and sentiment of responses it is χ^2 (2, N=966) = 80.644 P< .001. Two-way asymmetrical messages are more than 50% likely to receive a low number of favorites, and retweets, but more than 60% likely to receive a high number of responses. The sentiment of these responses is 82.7% likely to be positive, 10% likely to be neutral, and 7.3% likely to be negative.

The two-way symmetrical model also holds significant relationships with each engagement measure. The Pearson Chi-Square for the model and number of favorites is χ^2 (2, N=1348) = 75.162 P< .001, for number of retweets it is χ^2 (2, N=1348) = 98.253 P< .001, and for number of responses it is χ^2 (2, N=1348) = 35.45 P< .001. While the relationship between the model and the sentiment of responses is calculated as χ^2 (2, N=966) = 12.646 P< .002. The model holds an 81.3% likelihood that responses received will be generally positive, and only a 3.1% probability that they will hold an overall negative sentiment. However the likelihood of a two-way symmetrical tweet receiving a low number of favorites is 90.7% and there is 0% chance of a two-way symmetrical tweet garnering more than 12 favorites. The likelihood of the model eliciting between 0 and 3 retweets is 96.3%, and there is 0% likelihood of a tweet of this model receiving more than 12 retweets. A two-way symmetrical tweet is 88.9% likely to receive 0 or 1 response, and only 3.7% likely to receive 4 or more.

RQ3: Are the NFL UK's messages targeting their new cultural marketplace?

In the 981 NFL UK tweets, the organization utilizes British-specific concepts in 31.5% of all tweets (n=309). The breakdown across public relations model type is similar for three of the four types; 34.9% of press agentry/publicity coded tweets contain British-specific concepts (n=254), 35.9% of public information coded tweets contain British-specific concepts (n=145), and 33.3% of two-way symmetrical coded tweets contain British-specific concepts (n=18). Only two-way asymmetrical tweets contain British-specific concepts less than a third of the time, this model was found to include the concepts 16.5% of the time (n=164).

RQ4: Are culturally-targeted messages more successful in engaging audiences?

Within the tweets and responses of the NFL UK, British specific concepts appear 31.5% of the time and appear in at least 18 tweets of each public relations model type. This level of data allowed for a comparison between public relations model types and the inclusion of British specific concepts, as well as an examination of the level of engagement achieved by tweets including these concepts. Data for the frequency of British specific concepts inclusion in each public relations model type can be found in Table 7. To explore the impact of British specific concepts on engagement levels, Chi Squares were calculated to gauge the significance between the inclusion of the concepts and the corresponding level of favorites, retweets, and responses. The inclusion of British concepts was also compared with the sentiment of responses received, although due to the low level of responses these findings will be treated with caution.

The Pearson Chi Square result for the comparison between the inclusion and exclusion of British specific concepts and number of favorites is χ^2 (2, N=981) = 202.822 P< .001,

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demonstrating a significant relationship. The contingency table for this comparison shows that there is a 59.3% likelihood of tweets containing these concepts receiving 13 or more favorites. The comparison of tweets including and not including British concepts, and number of retweets, shows a similar relationship with a Pearson Chi Square result of χ^2 (2, N=981) = 213.725 P< .001, again showing a strong relationship between the two variables. There is a 62.7% likelihood tweets including these concepts will receive 13 or more retweets.

The comparison of tweets including and not including British concepts, and the number of responses received, again shows a relationship between the two variables, with a Pearson Chi Square result of χ^2 (2, N=981) = 28.351 P< .001. However the spread of probability is fairly even across the three levels of the variable. For tweets that contain no reference to British concepts the likelihood that the tweet would receive 1 or no responses is more than 50%.

RQ5: Do tweets that contain culturally-specific concepts receive more positive responses?

In the case of the sentiment of these responses, the relationship between the inclusion of British-specific concepts and the positive, neutral, or negative sentiment received, is less strong but still significant, with a Pearson Chi Square result of χ^2 (2, N=689) = 8.99 P< .011. The likelihood that a tweet containing British concepts would receive mostly positive responses is 55.2%, while the likelihood of a tweet containing no mention of British content receiving mostly positive responses is 48.1%.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

The dual purposes of this study were to discover whether Grunig's (1992) excellence theory practices, specifically his use of public relations models for messages (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), could be put into successful practice in Twitter communications, and also to ascertain whether including culturally-specific content in tweets yields a higher and more positive rate of engagement. Overall, the findings of this study indicate that Grunig's (1992) assertion that two-way symmetrical communication is the most desirable model to use when attempting to engage audiences is not true when exploring communication on Twitter. In fact there were very few perceptible relationships between any of the public relations models and higher or lower levels of engagement. However, the inclusion of British-specific concepts, in tweets targeting a British audience, will result in a higher number of favorites, retweets, and positive responses. No discernible link between any variable and the production of positive sentiment was discovered, it seems that regardless of the use of any specific public relations model, or the inclusion of culturally-specific concepts, responses to the NFL UK's tweets are generally positive.

The data collected from the NFL UK's Twitter account, for the nine weeks studied here, demonstrates that the organization's use of the platform is fairly limited. Although the corporation tweets regularly and varies its' use of engagement tactics, including images, hashtags, and hyperlinks, as well as its' use of different public relations models, overall engagement with the company's tweets is fairly low. The average number of favorites per tweet is 22.82, average number of retweets is 22, and average number of responses is 3.68. When compared with the NFL UK's number of followers at 55,000, these rates of engagement seem very low.

The frequencies demonstrated in tables 1 and 2 show that the NFL UK is using Twitter to communicate with its publics in mostly original tweets, containing a combination of images, hashtags, and hyperlinks. The majority of these tweets fall under the press agentry/publicity model, the public information model, or a combination of the two. NFL UK is mostly using Twitter as an information-providing tool, using it to advertise their products and services to potential customers, as well as providing factual information on games, players, and general news.

Low engagement attempts are demonstrated through the model-types used, the organization rarely asks questions of its followers, engages them in two-way messages to enter competitions, or directs them to retweet, or favorite a message. The erratic use of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) public relations models indicates that it is unlikely the organization is purposefully following excellence theory. It is possible that with excellence theory guidance the organization would be able to utilize the best practices and model their messages in a more methodical manner, with differing results. Although the organization may be following another specific communications plan, the low level of interaction from their followers, when compared to the relatively high following they have, demonstrates that the company should conduct further research into how to consistently engage their audience.

Analysis of press agentry/publicity tweets revealed that the model is equally likely to receive a low, medium, or high number of favorites, it is slightly more likely to receive a medium, or high level of retweets, and equally likely to receive positive or neutral responses, but unlikely to receive overall negative replies. These findings support Grunig's (1992) theory that the press agentry/publicity model is unlikely to receive strong levels of engagement from publics, however the results do not show a distinctly negative relationship between use of the

model and number of favorites, or number of retweets. Although the use of the press agentry/publicity model does not equate with very high chances of receiving high rates of favorites, retweets, and positive responses, it also does not directly equate with the tweet receiving a low rate of favorites, retweets, and overall negative responses.

The data collected from public information modeled tweets disputes Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier's (2006) assertion that the model will produce very little engagement. In the case of the NFL UK, tweets of the public information model are slightly more likely to receive a high number of favorites than a medium number, and slightly more likely to receive a medium number of favorites than a low number; it is also nearly twice as likely to receive a high or medium number of retweets than a low number. Unfortunately, the data for number of responses and the sentiment of these responses showed relationships too similar to chance or random error for analysis.

Tweets categorized as using the two-way asymmetrical model should, according to Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2006), receive a higher level of engagement than either press agentry/publicity or public information formed tweets. Tweets categorized as this model are three times more likely to receive a high number of responses, and there is an 82% chance that these replies will be mostly positive in their sentiment. However, the model is twice as likely to receive a low number of favorites than a medium or high, and there is a 51% likelihood it will receive a low number of retweets. The majority of two-way asymmetrical tweets, while receiving a higher rate of response engagement, particularly positive responses, are likely to receive low levels of favorites and retweets. These seemingly contradictory results may be explained by further analysis of the content of the tweets; often NFL UK tweets categorized as two-way asymmetrical included a question or request for response from their publics, in these cases it is

understandable that followers would engage with the message through positive responses, rather than a high number of favorites or retweets.

Similar to the results of the two-way asymmetrical model, tweets of the two-way symmetrical model are shown to be highly likely to receive a low number of favorites and retweets, 90% and 96% respectively. Tweets of this model are also highly likely to receive only a low number of responses, however the replies that are received have an 81% chance of having an overall positive sentiment, and only a 3% likelihood that they will in general be negative. Again this seems to refute Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier's (2006) claim that two-way symmetrical model messages are the ideal form of interaction with publics and will produce the greatest level of engagement; though this incongruity could well have been created by the platform that is studied here.

Direct response tweets on Twitter, all categorized as a two-way method of communication, are often (and in the case of NFL UK, always) sent directly to the user that the account wishes to correspond with. Unless the user includes a period in front of the handle of the tweet recipient, the tweet will only be visible to the receiver and any followers of both users (in the case of interactions between large organizations such as NFL UK and individuals, the followers of both users is often limited). If these tweets cannot be viewed by the full, or even majority audience of the NFL UK Twitter feed, then it is unlikely that they would achieve a high number of favorites, retweets, or responses; however the high likelihood of responses to these tweets being positive supports Grunig's theory that two-way symmetrical messages yield a positive response from receivers.

In the findings of this study, none of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) public relations models have been proven to work in the way in which the researcher purports them to. The translation of

Grunig's (1992) public relations best practices from offline communication to online communication was bound to be bumpy; the digitization of communication is the largest disruption in history to the way in which mankind communicates, and will undoubtedly require an update to the set of public relations best practices. With no overarching relationship between the models and engagement levels demonstrated in these findings, Grunig's statement that organizations may have to utilize different digital platforms to engage in each different public relations model can be supported (Grunig, 2009). Further research into the other digital platforms of the NFL UK, including their official website, blogs, and other social media accounts, could help determine if they are being utilized for more specific communication efforts than the Twitter account appears to be.

Online communication, particularly Twitter, has the ability to be open and accessible to all, or reasonably private and closed between two users (Kwon & Sung, 2011). Although the model of two-way symmetrical communication may be the most successful way to engage audiences offline (and on some online platforms, eg. Email (Grunig, 2009)), Twitter messages that follow this model tend to be accessible only by the organization and the one user they are addressing their message to. This limits the ability of these messages to garner a high level of engagement from multiple users. The engagement from the one targeted user is likely to be positive and therefore the message is deemed successful, but unless these effects reach more than one user, the organization is not successfully engaging its audience on an effective scale.

Contrary to Grunig's (1992) belief that the two-way communication is the most positive and engaging of models, these results show that it is in fact one-way modeled messages that are most likely to receive a high number of favorites and retweets, while two-way asymmetrical messages are most likely to receive a high number of responses, and two-way symmetrical

messages are most likely to receive responses that have an overall positive sentiment. No model is significantly more likely to receive higher levels of all four engagement measures and therefore there is not one model that can be classified as 'most engaging. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models of public relations do not seem to fit into the sphere of short, informal, online communication. These results demonstrate that in the 'town square' of social networks the model in which a message is conveyed is less important than the content of the message itself. When limited to 140 characters, it is the concepts and information contained in a message, rather than its design that engage followers (Thelwall et al., 2010).

Of the 981 tweets collected and coded, almost a third contain some reference to a British-specific concept. Although this is not the majority of tweets, given that the organization, and the sport it is a part of, are fundamentally American, the inclusion of British content in 31.5% of tweets can be seen as reasonably high. Each Public Relations model contained around a third of tweets including these concepts, except for data belonging to the two-way asymmetrical model, where concepts were found in only 16.5% of tweets. The lower rate of inclusion of British-specific concepts in two-way asymmetrical tweets may be explained by further analysis of their content style; the majority of the NFL UK's two-way asymmetrical tweets include a question, competition, or request for feedback, these messages are usually generic. Further in-depth study of the exact content of the tweets and their purpose may clarify why British-specific concepts are utilized within this model at a much lower rate. The fact that British content features fairly evenly across the other three models of public relations again indicates that the NFL UK are not consciously implementing these different models, or combining them with content in a tactical manner.

The comparison of the use of British-specific concepts and the four measures of engagement used throughout this study demonstrate that there is a strong likelihood that tweets utilizing these concepts will receive a high number of favorites, retweets, and positive sentiment of responses compared to those that do not feature these concepts. Although the results here seem to indicate a positive relationship between the inclusion of terms and concepts targeted toward British culture, and high levels of engagement, there is much less of a corresponding negative association between a lack of inclusion of this content type and level of engagement.

The positive relationship between the use of cultural targeting and a high number of he variables appears in all engagement variables, apart from the number of responses; here there is an equal chance of a tweet with British-specific content receiving a low (37%) or high (38%) number of responses. The relationship between the exclusion of British-specific content and a high likelihood of receiving a low number of favorites, retweets, and responses is less clear. Although less significant than the results of tweets containing culturally-specific content, these results do demonstrate a slight negative relationship between the omission of these concepts and engagement rates. Similarly the relationship between inclusion of these concepts and an overall positive sentiment seems positive, with a 55% likelihood, compared to a 7% chance of an overall negative sentiment.

The results discussed here imply that, although not including British-specific concepts does not seem to be particularly detrimental to the overall level of engagement a tweet receives, including these concepts does increase the chance of higher engagement levels with tweets across all measures, except for number of responses. The results show a reasonably significant relationship between the inclusion of British-specific content and a high number of favorites and retweets. There is a less significant, but still positive, relationship between the exclusion of these

concepts and a low number of favorites and retweets. There is no link demonstrated between the inclusion of British concepts and a high number of responses, although there is a weak, but positive, relationship between exclusion of British concepts and a low number of responses. Although these results cannot determine a causal relationship between the use of culturally-specific concepts, and higher rates of engagement, they do indicate that the two variables have a strong relationship. These findings support Vercic, Grunig, and Grunig's (1996) statement, as well as the work of Wakefield (2007), Rhee (2009), Flora Hung (2004) and Sriramesh et al. (1999), that excellent public relations must incorporate elements of the targeted culture in its formulation, and most importantly in the content of its messages.

The data collected on the sentiment of responses to tweets including and excluding this content type, indicates that tweets (regardless of the inclusion or exclusion of British content) that receive responses are likely to receive positive responses. Due to the very low number of responses received it is hard to draw any conclusions from these findings. From this data set it seems that publics are overwhelmingly responding positively to tweets, but on the few occasions that responses have been identified as negative, the tweets that produced these negative responses are half as likely to have included British concepts than not. These findings suggest that inclusion of culturally specific content is related to a higher level of engagement across most measures, except sentiment of responses, where the only clear relationship found was between the exclusion of these concepts and a higher chance of receiving negative responses. Unfortunately, these unclear results for the variable of sentiment mean that the conclusions drawn are based upon the findings of engagement variables, which have been proven to be less valuable in determining the success of a message than sentiment of responses (Thelwall et al., 2010).

Implications

    Theoretical

The findings of this study indicate that Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models of public relations do not translate from offline rigid organizational communications, to the fluid online platforms of social media, specifically Twitter. The traditional public relations model that Grunig and Hunt were working with during the 1980s and 1990s has been transformed over recent years with the advent of Web 1.0, and now the expansion of Web 2.0 and the relatively new world of mobile (Waters & Williams, 2011). The idealistic set of four public relations models as laid out by Grunig and Hunt (1984) are insufficient and unsuitable for this new world (Gregory & Halff, 2013). The results discussed here demonstrate that there is no discerning link between the use of these different models and a change in engagement levels; online communications, particularly short text messages such as Twitter's, no longer fit into the bindings of traditional public relations theory and will require a new set of specifically designed best practices in order to move excellence theory forward.

Although Grunig and Hunt's (1984) models seem to be defunct in the new world of globalized social media, Grunig , Grunig, and Dozier's (2006) work on expanding the excellence theory internationally does seem to stand up online. The results of this study signal that work conducted by Grunig and his team in 2006, on offline communications, still holds relevance nine years later when exploring online messages (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2006). The suggestion by Grunig et al. (2006), Wakefield (2007), and Rhee (2009) that public relations practitioners should attempt to incorporate aspects of whichever culture they are targeting, seems imperative in the world of global digital communication. The findings of this study suggest that the

adaptation to the excellence theory put forward by these researchers is relevant for Twitter communications between two culturally diverse nations. Although a new set of best practices should be formed for practitioners facing the complex challenge of communicating across mediums, platforms, and international borders, the inclusion of Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier (2006) assertion, that the culture of the targeted audience must be recognized in messages, is vital.

Practical

Until the modernization of the excellence theory can occur within academia, practitioners will need to assert their own best practices for communication online, particularly on social media. These social networks alter so often that a rigid set of communication rules would become redundant almost immediately (Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton, 2012). The results of this study do not suggest a link between the use of any of the traditional public relations models and higher engagement, and therefore cannot support the purposeful use of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) models by any organization attempting to engage publics on Twitter.

Although the practical implications of this study involve discontinuing decided use of the four models of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), the results do demonstrate that other aspects of excellence theory are still valid for modern, online communications, specifically the use of cultural concepts to engage publics. Public relations practitioners aiming to engage an audience based in a different culture to that of the organization should include terms and concepts that are specific to that audience, whether they be images, colloquialisms, or locally recognizable people and places. This study demonstrates that inclusion of these concepts in Twitter messages is likely to result in a higher level of engagement than without, as well as a much lower likelihood of receiving negative feedback from publics.

Limitations

Although every effort has been made to minimize them, there are several potential limitations to this study. Only communications from one social network were analyzed, and only the tweets of one official organization's account were collected. The narrow scope of the data collected was chosen due to the influence of Twitter in sports culture and out of a desire to limit the focus of the study, however a further analysis of all communication efforts by the NFL UK, both online and offline, may offer a clearer examination of these particular attempts to engage international audiences. Similarly, although the individual teams that competed in the offline events that took place during the period of study maintain their own individual Twitter accounts, it was decided that communications from these accounts would not be examined as it was unclear which audiences these would be targeting. This may limit the effectiveness of the study, as fans are usually more likely to engage with specific teams, rather than the organizing body in charge of their league (Rein, Kotler, & Shields, 2006).

The Jacksonville Jaguars, the NFL team that recently signed a deal to hold one of their regular season games in London for the next three years, have recognized that UK fans would like to engage with the designated "home team" directly. The communications team created a separate Twitter handle, @JaguarsUK, in order to connect directly with UK fans in the hope of creating a stronger fan base in the UK. Further research into the specific communications efforts of individual teams competing in these international marketplaces may prove fruitful.

Aside from a restricted scope of data, the limitations of only analyzing one organization's communications include issues arising from the organization's background and goals. NFL UK, as a branch of the NFL, an already established and highly popular brand online and offline, may

well have modeled its communication strategies on those that have proven successful for their American parent organization. These tactics are likely to produce differing responses and levels of engagement from an audience that is unfamiliar with the organization (Wakefield, 2007). Similarly, the study of only English speaking countries limits this analysis. Although the cultural differences, particularly with regard to sport, are clear between the UK and US, the considerable communication hurdle of a language barrier does not exist.

Examining only one organization's communication efforts across cultural divides limits the conclusions that can be drawn from this study. The relationships demonstrated between the data of NFL UK tweets may prove to be an anomaly in the field of cross-cultural communication. In order to test whether the conclusions formed here can be applied to corporate Twitter use in general, further testing will need to occur with a variety of organizations.

Other limitations include the design of the coding categories. Measurement and analysis of content is notoriously difficult and coding content is often subjective and unreliable. Original tweets are coded for communication model and number of favorites, retweets, and responses, while respondent tweets are only coded for sentiment. Limited categories were chosen in order to try and limit the impact of coder reliability on any findings; unfortunately the complete elimination of coder bias is impossible and subjectivity will always play a part in the coding of content. Of particular worry is the subjectivity involved in defining and classifying 'British-specific concepts,' a category that is difficult to identify and outline the borders of.

Examining the sentiment of responses to sport-related content is particularly difficult as it is a topic where passions run particularly high. Often negative responses are not necessarily reactions to the content or style of the tweet, but sometimes just a reaction to the team or player being discussed, or the sport as a whole. Once the sentiment of each response has been

determined another potential issue arose, by determining the overall sentiment of responses based on the majority category of responses means that one tweet can sway the designation of the group. This is particularly problematic in the case of the NFL UK, where the average number of responses was very low.

Further potential limitations include the loss of any tweets that were not sent as direct responses to official original tweets, as well as the failure to collect any data with spelling mistakes in the handle. As only official tweets and responses were collected, any tweets that were not directly responding to an NFL UK tweet, or were incorrectly linked to the original tweet, will be not be collected. For future studies collecting data from event hashtags may give further insight into fan levels of engagement with the event and teams, but for the purpose of this study the focus was placed on how effective the NFL UK's direct communications are in engaging fans.

Unfortunately, by only analyzing the interactions between the NFL UK's Twitter account and its' respondents, it is likely that the study is mostly exploring interactions with already established fans, not unknown publics (Gibbs, O'Reilly & Brunette, 2013). Individuals are most likely to come across NFL UK tweets through a search and are therefore likely to hold some prior knowledge or interest in the communications of the organization. The engagement of already invested audiences is a valuable metric to measure, but one that is reasonably simple; the ability to measure the impact of communications on prior non-publics is highly valuable, but much more difficult and particularly unattainable on Twitter. The openness of the social network creates difficulties in discovering whether or not respondents were prior fans, observers, or brand new publics.

As well as limiting the ability to discover publics' prior knowledge of the organization, the openness of Twitter could possibly have created some false results in this study. Instead of a strong relationship between the content of the tweet and high levels of engagement indicating success for that content, some tweets are likely to have these higher rates due to having been retweeted by more prolific organizations or Twitter handles. The close link with the NFL, and the NFL season games that took place at Wembley, will likely have meant that the official NFL Twitter account would retweet some NFL UK messages, sharing them with a vastly larger audience and therefore likely increasing their engagement levels, regardless of their style or content. Any future research exploring organizations' use of Twitter, particularly those aligned with much larger corporations, should attempt to identify and nullify any impact on results by these retweet-produced surges in engagement.

Future Research

As one of the first studies to explore engaging of international sport audiences on Twitter, it is hoped that the findings here will provide a basis for future study of other attempts to engage international audiences whether in the context of sports, entertainment, charity, or business. Potential further studies looking at engagement with sports events hashtags, individual sports teams rather than parent organizations, and the communication efforts of organizations attempting to maneuver into foreign language markets would help alter and advance excellence theory, particularly its relevance in the online global public relations sphere.

Further research that could be conducted with this study's data set includes exploring the relationship between the use of images/videos, hashtags, and hyperlinks and the different rates of

engagement; as well as the relationship between the use of these variables and the inclusion of culturally-specific concepts, and the resulting levels of engagement.

Any future research building on this study should aim to analyze a longer time period or larger number of tweets, ideally a full year's worth of tweets. It is possible that messages created outside of the football season would have different content and style from those posted during the height of interest in the sport. Similarly tweets from a time period that does not encompass the UK-based events of the NFL season, may include less British-centric concept. A full year of Twitter data would provide a more well-rounded data set and also demonstrate whether the organization can maintain engagement with its audience when the sport is in its off-season.

In order to apply the findings here to other organizations on Twitter, further analysis of a variety of companies is needed. Although further research in the area of sports communication across cultural boundaries would provide data sets with which to compare that of NFL UK, examining an organization that receives or distributes a material product, rather than an entertainment product, would allow for comparison between different types of corporation and their use of Twitter. Exploring whether product-based organizations aiming to breach a new marketplace utilize Twitter in different ways to event-based organizations could help create the groundwork for a set of best communication practices.

Conclusion

The digitization of communications has forever altered the way in which we communicate with each other, previously inaccessible markets are now freely available, and can be targeted at a minimal cost. The place of sports in this new landscape has been cemented by the NFL UK's bold foray into a new cultural marketplace; willing to connect with publics

internationally online and offline, the organization has demonstrated its enthusiasm for engaging stakeholders with their own cultural touchstones.

This study has established that the NFL UK has been haphazardly utilizing elements of Grunig's (1992) excellence theory of public relations (likely not purposefully) in its efforts to engage this relatively new audience. The lack of connection between the uses of different public relations models and engagement levels in the data collected from the NFL UK, implies that Grunig and Hunt's (1984) models are no longer relevant in public relations efforts on social media, particularly the use of the Twitter platform. However the results of this study do support the aspect of the excellence theory that calls for an abstract universal guide to public relations, but individually enacted sets of rules, including the inclusion of the native culture (of the publics that are being targeted) in both public organizations' structure and message content (Vercic, Grunig, & Grunig, 1996).

An adaptation of the four models of public relations (1984) is needed for use in online communications, especially those of short, informal, messages such as social media communications. Although Grunig's work on international public relations and the importance of mirroring the culture of a target audience is still relevant today, as demonstrated by the results of this study, an expansion of the theory is needed in order to take into account the importance of international markets in a digitized communications landscape. This study is the first of its kind, and it is hoped that both practitioners and researchers aiming to develop excellence theory in the sphere of digital cross-cultural public relations will utilize the results produced here.

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APPENDIX A
CODEBOOK FOR CODESHEET ONE: NFL UK TWITTER MESSAGES

This codebook will be used as a guide for researchers identifying and categorizing tweets sent out by the official NFL UK handle @NFL_UK between midnight on 7th of September 2014 and midnight on 9th of November 2014. Researchers will code each tweet for each category below and also assign each tweet an identifying three-digit code. The purpose of this codesheet is to identify the different how the NFL UK use Twitter as a communication tool, which of Grunig's models of public relations is most frequently used by NFL UK, and whether the organization is including UK-specific concepts and cultural nods in their messages.

- Identifier: Three-digit identifying code unique to each NFL UK tweet. Each researcher will be allotted a section of numbers to assign to their tweets.

- Time: Both the date and time of the tweet must be recorded in the style below
  Date – MM/DD/YY
  Time – 24 hour clock. Eg. 11:03 or 16:52

- Type of tweet:
  - Original tweet (1) – An original post directly from the @NFL_UK handle, not including any retweeted content or response to another individual Twitter user.
  - Quote Retweet (2) – Tweets that include a RT message but also include original content from @NFL_UK.
  Example, '@NFL_UK Kickoff in T-minus 2 hours!! RT: @NFL Lions v. Falcons live from Wembley Stadium.'
  - @ Reply (3) – Tweets where @NFL_UK is responding to a message by

- Hyperlink: If the tweet includes a hyperlink indicate with present/not present.
  Example: 'New Era Apparel Collection available now at @NFLShopEurope http://bit.ly/1DAlTKI '

- Image or Video: If the tweet includes an image or video that is visible within the tweet without clicking on an embedded link indicate with present.

- Hashtag: If the tweet includes a hashtag indicate with present/not present.
  Example: 'Join @ioncamerauk and #NFLUK in reliving Super Bash...right now! http://bit.ly/1Ff4YMz '

- Number of favorites: Note the number of favorites the tweet has received, this is often indicated by the number next to a small star below the tweet.

- Number of retweets: Note the number of retweets the tweet has received, this is often indicated by the number next to the small interlocking arrows symbol.

- Number of replies: Note the number of reply tweets that are directed at the tweet, these will have to be manually counted once the tweet is expanded.

- Grunig's Four Models of Public Relations: Indicate whether the tweet falls into any of the four public relations models listed below. Tweets may fit into more than one category, you may assign them to multiple categories when coding.
  - Press Agentry/Publicity (1)

    One-way communicative messages that do not expect or request a response, they are usually persuasive in nature. They will often include a promotion, offer, or direct publicity for the organization.
    Example: 'Save on the @NFLShopEurope Super Bowl XLIX Collection before it's gone - http://bit.ly/1C9ClwR'
  - Public Information (2)

    One-way communicative messages that do not expect or request a response, but they are not persuasive in nature. Information is provided in a non-biased form and makes no appeal to the audience; game scores, directions, and travel updates are all examples of public information messages.
    Example: '1 Hour until #SuperBowlXLIX.'
  - Two-way Asymmetrical (3)

    Two-way communicative messages that encourage feedback or participation by recipients, or those that are responses to requests or questions from the publics. These messages will focus on the needs of the NFL UK rather than the publics. Will include @replies, and often feature suggestions to utilize the organization's services or products. Asking for feedback from an audience will likely fit into the two-way asymmetrical model.
    Example: 'Let us know what you thought of the coverage at http://bit.ly/6Gh7lp'
  - Two-way Symmetrical (4)

    Two-way communicative messages that focus on mutual benefits to both the organization and its publics. They often involve the organization attempting to connect with an individual, solve an issue they may have, or engage in casual conversation.
    Example: '@rileyg, thanks, we can't wait for you to join us!'

- British-specific concepts: Indicate present any concept that relates specifically to British culture, including recognition of British holidays, UK charities, retweets of content from UK-specific celebrities and sportspeople, mentions of the BBC or Sky TV coverage, and UK-specific imagery (eg. The Union Jack, red telephone boxes).
  Example: 'Support the Poppy Appeal by taking your seats for the 5:30 pre-game program, w/a tribute performance from Joss Stone. pic.twitter.com/BwkJBcFvBb'

CODESHEET ONE

Identifying Code: _____

Time: _____
Date: _____

Type of tweet (tick applicable category): (1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____

Hyperlink (delete as appropriate): Present / Not Present

Image or Video (delete as appropriate): Present / Not Present

Hashtag (delete as appropriate): Present / Not Present

Number of favorites: _____

Number of retweets: _____

Number of replies: _____

Public Relations model used (tick applicable category, more than one may apply):

(1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ (4) ____

British-specific concepts (delete as appropriate): Present / Not present

APPENDIX B
CODEBOOK FOR CODESHEET TWO: RESPONSES TO NFL UK TWITTER MESSAGES

This codebook will be used as a guide for researchers identifying and categorizing tweets sent as responses to the official tweets of the NFL UK handle @NFL_UK between midnight on 7th of September 2014 and midnight on 9th of November 2014. Researchers will code each tweet for each category below and also assign each tweet an identifying three-digit code. The purpose of this codesheet is to identify the sentiment of responses to NFL UK messages.

- Original tweet identifier: The three digit identifying code unique to each original NFL UK tweet that the examined tweet is a response to.

- Time: Both the date and time of the tweet must be recorded in the style below
  Date – MM/DD/YY
  Time – 24-hour clock. Eg. 11:03 or 16:52

- Hashtag: Indicate whether the hashtag used in the original tweet is present or not in the response tweet; if no hashtag appears in the response tweet please leave blank.
  Example: 'happy with arrival of #SuperBowl Champions t-shirt! @nfl_uk @Patriots @UKPatriots'

- Sentiment: Indicate whether the tweet has an overall positive (1), neutral (2), or negative (3) tone to it. Should a tweet contain both positive and negative elements please indicate both categories.
  - Positive (1): The message may contain superlatives such as 'great' or 'amazing,' the overall tone of the tweet will be optimistic or affirmative.
  - Neutral (2): The message does not contain words or phrases that are identifiably positive or negative. Often simple statements and unbiased questions will have neutral sentiment.
  - Negative (3): The message may contain negative words and phrases such as 'terrible' or 'annoying,' the overall tone of the tweet will be pessimistic or disapproving.

CODESHEET TWO

Identifying Code of original tweet: _____

Time: _____
Date: _____

Original Hashtag (delete as appropriate): Present / Not Present.

Sentiment (tick applicable category): (1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

APPENDIX C
TWITTER TERMS

Favorite – Favoriting a Tweet indicates that you liked a specific Tweet. It displays as a small star icon beneath the tweet's text.

Follower - A follower is another Twitter user who has followed you to receive your Tweets in their Home stream.

Handle – An alternative term for username. A users handle appears as an @ symbol followerd by their username: @example

Hashtag – A hashtag is any word or phrase immediately preceded by the # symbol. When you click on a hashtag, you'll see other Tweets containing the same keyword or topic.

Mention - Mentioning other users in your Tweet by including the @ sign followed directly by their username is called a "mention." Also refers to Tweets in which your @username was included.

Reply – A response to another user's Tweet that begins with the @username of the person you're replying to is known as a reply.

Retweet (n) – A Tweet that you forward to your followers is known as a Retweet. Often used to pass along news or other valuable discoveries on Twitter, Retweets always retain original attribution.

Retweet (v) - The act of sharing another user's Tweet to all of your followers by clicking on the Retweet button.

Tweet – A posting made on the social media website Twitter.

Twitter - An information network made up of 140-character messages (including photos, videos and links) from all over the world.

Table 1: Frequencies of tweet type and content

Frequency and percentage counts of the number of times NFL UK used each type of tweet (original or reply) and how often each content measure (hyperlink, hashtag, and image) was utilized by NFL UK.

Tweet Type and Content	Original	@reply	Hyperlink present	Hashtag present	Image present
Frequency	911	66	399	649	498
Percent	92.9	6.7	40.7	66.2	50.8
Valid Percent	93.2	6.8	40.9	66.4	51

Table 2: Frequencies of public relations model use

Frequency and percentage counts for the number of times NFL UK utilized each of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) public relations models.

Public Relations Model	Press agentry/publicity	Public information	Two-way asymmetrical	Two-way symmetrical
Frequency	726	404	164	54
Percent	74	41.2	16.7	5.5
Valid Percent	74	41.2	16.7	5.5

Table 3: Chi-Square result for number of favorites across public relations models

The Pearson Chi-Square results for the comparison between the NFL UK's use of each of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four public relations models and the corresponding number of favorites these tweets receive.

Number of Favorites									
	Low		Medium		High		χ^2	df	p
Public Relations Model	n	%	n	%	n	%			
Press agentry/publicity	229	50.2	240	55.7	257	55.7	25.155	2	.001
Public Information	91	20	144	33.4	169	36.7	57.198	2	.001
Two-way Asymmetrical	87	19.1	42	9.7	35	7.6	25.579	2	.001
Two-way Symmetrical	49	10.7	5	1.2	0	0	75.162	2	.001
Total	456	100	431	100	461	100		N=1348	

Table 4: Chi-Square result for number of retweets across public relations models

The Pearson Chi-Square results for the comparison between the NFL UK's use of each of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four public relations models and the corresponding number of retweets these tweets receive.

Number of Retweets							χ^2	df	p
	Low		Medium		High				
Public Relations Model	n	%	n	%	n	%			
Press agentry/publicity	204	47.8	273	56.8	249	56.6	46.858	2	.001
Public Information	86	20.1	155	32.2	163	37	56.56	2	.001
Two-way Asymmetrical	85	19.9	51	10.6	28	6.4	30.747	2	.001
Two-way Symmetrical	52	12.2	2	0.4	0	0	98.253	2	.001
Total	427	100	481	100	440	100		N=1348	

Table 5: Chi-Square result for number of responses across public relations models

The Pearson Chi-Square results for the comparison between the NFL UK's use of each of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four public relations models and the corresponding number of responses these tweets receive.

Number of Responses							χ^2	df	p
	Low		Medium		High				
Public Relations Model	n	%	n	%	n	%			
Press agentry/publicity	353	55.6	158	57	215	49.3	5.557	2	.062
Public Information	198	31.1	89	32.2	117	26.8	1.912	2	.384
Two-way Asymmetrical	36	5.7	26	9.4	102	23.4	98.529	2	.001
Two-way Symmetrical	48	7.6	4	1.4	2	0.5	35.45	2	.001
Total	635	100	277	100	436	100		N=1348	

Table 6: Chi-Square result for the overall sentiment of responses across public relations models

The Pearson Chi-Square results for the comparison between the NFL UK's use of each of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four public relations models and the corresponding overall sentiment of the responses these tweets receive.

Sentiment of Responses							χ^2	df	p
	Negative		Neutral		Positive				
Public Relations Model	n	%	n	%	n	%			
Press agentry/publicity	64	59.3	216	61.7	230	45.3	25.806	2	.001
Public Information	32	29.6	114	32.6	128	25.2	3.704	2	.157
Two-way Asymmetrical	11	10.2	15	4.3	124	24.4	80.644	2	.001
Two-way Symmetrical	1	0.9	5	1.4	26	5.1	12.646	2	.002
Total	108	100	350	100	508	100		N=966	

Table 7: Frequencies of the inclusion of British-specific concepts across public relations models

Frequency and percentage counts of the number of times British-specific concepts were included or excluded from each of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models of public relations, when used by NFL UK.

British Concepts	Present N	%	Not Present N	%
Press agentry/publicity	254	35.3	465	64.7
Public information	145	36	258	64
Two-way asymmetrical	27	16.7	135	83
Two-way symmetrical	18	33	36	66

Table 8: Chi-Square result for number of favorites and the presence of British-specific concepts

The Pearson Chi-Square results for the comparison between the NFL UK's inclusion or exclusion of British-specific concepts and the corresponding number of favorites these tweets receive.

Number of Favorites									
	Low		Medium		High		χ^2	*df*	*p*
British-specific concepts	n	%	n	%	n	%	202.822	2	.001
Present	29	8.2	92	29.6	188	59.3			
Not Present	324	91.8	219	70.4	129	40.7			
Total	353	100	311	100	317	100		N =	981

Table 9: Chi-Square result for number of retweets and the presence of British-specific concepts

The Pearson Chi-Square results for the comparison between the NFL UK's inclusion or exclusion of British-specific concepts and the corresponding number of retweets these tweets receive.

Number of Retweets									
	Low		Medium		High		χ^2	*df*	*p*
British-specific concepts	n	%	n	%	n	%	213.725	2	.001
Present	33	9.9	88	25.4	188	62.7			
Not Present	302	90.1	258	74.6	112	37.3			
Total	335	100	346	100	300	100		N =	981

<u>Table 10: Chi-Square result for number of responses and the presence of British-specific</u>
<u>concepts</u>

The Pearson Chi-Square results for the comparison between the NFL UK's inclusion or exclusion of British-specific concepts and the corresponding number of responses these tweets receive.

Number of Responses									
	Low		Medium		High		χ^2	*df*	*p*
British-specific concepts	n	%	n	%	n	%	28.351	2	.001
Present	115	23.6	78	39.8	116	39.1			
Not Present	373	76.4	118	60.2	181	60.9			
Total	488	100	196	100	297	100		N =	981

<u>Table 11: Chi-Square result for the overall sentiment of responses and the presence of British-</u>
<u>specific concepts</u>

The Pearson Chi-Square results for the comparison between the NFL UK's inclusion or exclusion of British-specific concepts and the corresponding overall sentiment of the responses these tweets receive.

Sentiment of Responses									
	Negative		Neutral		Positive		χ^2	*df*	*p*
British-specific concepts	n	%	n	%	n	%	8.99	2	.011
Present	18	21.7	93	36.2	137	39.3			
Not Present	65	78.3	164	63.8	212	60.7			
Total	83	100	257	100	349	100		N =	981

VITA

Isabelle Moore was born in London and raised in Cambridge, England. After studying at Louisiana State University for her junior year abroad, she graduated in 2012 from the University of Nottingham with a bachelor's degree in American Studies (International Study). During her time at the Manship School of Mass Communication she worked as a research assistant within the Digital Media Initiative and as a teaching assistant. Upon graduating she hopes to see more of the world and begin a fulfilling career aiding organizations to communicate internationally effectively.