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Character Influence and Brand Relationships: How Morally Ambiguous Characters Shape Brand
Identity?

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Media & Communications
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Brand and Media Strategy

by
Jason Alexander Daugherty
May 2021

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Robert A. Dunn, Ph. D.
Susan Waters, Ph. D.

Keywords: morally ambiguous, branding, affective disposition theory, brand influence

ABSTRACT

Character Influence and Brand Relationships: How Morally Ambiguous Characters Shape Brand Identity?

by

Jason Alexander Daugherty

This study examines morally ambiguous characters in television dramas and they represent their respect brand. The goal of the study is to examine how these MACs define their respective brands, specifically the brands, AMC and Showtime. Recent studies observed people chose brands based on their affective disposition and social cognition towards specific influencers. These theories could inform how people relate to characters from TV shows and brands. An observation and narrative analysis of four characters promotional videos from AMC were Don Draper (Mad Men), Saul Goodman (Better Call Saul) and from Showtime Jackie Peyton (Nurse Jackie) and Dexter Morgan (Dexter). Interviews were conducted with 13 people about their views of the character's moral ambiguity and brand interest. Promo videos were observed along with videos of characters in their environment. Results found MACs defined their brand and their overall character arc appealed to the audience's interests in their brands.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my wife Briana. She has been the biggest supporter throughout this whole process. She understood my love for television and especially for morally ambiguous characters. She had a never-ending faith in me that I could accomplish this goal in my academic career. She was very attentive to my mind set about the whole study and even took interest in my ideas. She was constantly reassuring me that I would write a great thesis, a feat I never thought I would accomplish. Without her, I wouldn't have been able to have the motivation for this thesis. Thank you, Briana for being my best friend and the best support system in the world. This whole study is dedicated to you.



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Chapter 1. Introduction

Imagine a time when people cheered for the bad guy to win in a form of entertainment. Would people pull for the one who breaks the rule to obtain their goal or one who lives on the edge and does wrong by everyone? In stories and movies, viewers can identify with heroes and villains based on their actions. While some actions may affect the viewers views and ethics, they still want to pull for the hero. However, what if the main character of the story doesn't have quality traits of a hero? What about Tony Soprano of *HBO's The Sopranos*? The mob boss runs his "business" the way he sees fit, while also being a family man: "Everything I do, and everything I've done and everything I will do, it's all for you and your brother" (*The Sopranos*, S2, Ep. 10).

Viewers know that some of his actions throughout the series are immoral. Tony kills and has people killed. He also has numerous affairs. Why did viewers tune every week for someone who does such actions? Viewers see a flawed character who is a mobster but also at the same time, a husband and father. Tony Soprano is human, and viewers can sympathize with him. Viewers may not agree with what he does, but from his perspective, he is providing for his family.

These characters may have motivations and desires in which they need to be fulfilled. Tony Soprano did what he did for his family. Walter White from AMC's *Breaking Bad* (Gilligan, 2008). did the same. Walter White was dying from cancer and he had to leave his family with something once he passed on. With an underpaid job as a chemistry teacher, Walter White turned to the drug world by creating and distributing methamphetamine. (IMDb, 2020). With his background in chemistry, he creates his own personal style of methamphetamine. His motive was to provide for his family before his death. As time goes on, his actions change his

character. Walter White becomes Heisenberg, the drug lord kingpin. His motives go from providing for his family to creating a drug empire. Viewers follow White through the series and wonder what his next move will be. As he gets further in the empire, viewers wonder is it still all for his family? While Walter claims it is all for his family, in the end, he admits he done it for himself. Viewers pulled for Walter for his motives in the beginning, but do they still side with him after his true motives?

The overall idea of this study is to look at the morally ambiguous character in television dramas. Even throughout the history of literature, movies, and television, morally ambiguous characters have always existed. Numerous brands have adopted an original series that revolve around a protagonist with a character who is considered morally ambiguous. Even *Disney+* adopted an original series, *The Mandalorian* (Favreau, 2019) in which the main protagonist has traits of moral ambiguity. These types of characters bring different aspects to the media world. They focus on complex characters with a strong sense of character development along with an engaging story arc. Depending on the original stories, brands can adopt the series to their specific network and be a representation of shows that are about morally ambiguous characters.

Chapter 2: Study Thesis

This study will seek to understand and evaluate how brand narratives involving morally ambiguous characters determine individuals' relationships with a specific streaming content brand. Morally Ambiguous Characters or antiheroes often behave in immoral ways however have redeeming qualities that set them apart from villains (Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2015). This case study will first analyze the characters associated with AMC and Showtime network brands, by identifying specific scenes depicting moral ambiguity. Second, the researcher will conduct in-depth interviews to assess how fans and viewers understand this influence and have them discuss how their thoughts on these characters interact with the brand. Participants will view clips from Showtime and AMC shows and answer questions about the characters. Third, the interview answers will be coded both thematically and statistically to identify ways fans relate to the branded content and the characters. Using the lens parasocial relationships, (Perse & Rubin, 1989) and the related theories of affective disposition theory (Raney et al., 2005) and Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2002), researchers will focus on how fans and viewers perceive and relate to four specific characters. AMC Network's Donald Draper from *Mad Men* (Weiner, 2007), and Saul Goodman from *Better Call Saul* (Gilligan & Gould, 2015), and Showtime's Dexter Morgan from *Dexter* (Manos, 2006), and Jackie Peyton from *Nurse Jackie*, (Brixius et al., 2009). The study will seek to understand these relationships by using research concerning television brand marketing, brand identity, narrative and fan culture as a foundation for analysis.

This research is guided by literature concerning the branded practices of cable and streaming entertainment networks, character identity, and moral ambiguity of characters, as well case study methodology (using observations and interview data), and narrative thematic analysis.

In this study, the goal is to understand if audiences might engage more with morally ambiguous characters based on how they identify with those characters and if advertisers and brand managers might harness these narratives to create brand relationships.

Literature Review

How audiences' members enjoy various media entertainment offer several explanations. Enjoyment increases when liked characters experience good outcomes and/or when disliked characters experience bad ones. On the other side enjoyment decreases when liked characters experience bad outcomes and/or disliked characters experience good ones (Raney, 2017). This relates to affective disposition theory.

Affective Disposition Theory

Affective disposition theory (ADT) is the idea in which viewers make moral judgements about characters in a media narrative that affects their enjoyment (Raney, 2004). Viewers often create an ideal of image of a character based on what the character does in the story. When characters have mixed ethical standards or do not stay true to what the audience considered appropriate ethical actions this leads to a disconnection or disassociation to specific moral standards that the hold true in the real world. ADT concerns this relationship. ADT found the combination of hero narratives and antihero narratives establish moral complexity and help viewers to identify more with the main protagonist (Raney & Shafer, 2012). As a viewer interreacts with the story, the viewer's reaction to characters help relate the viewer to relate to or like certain characters more than others. This also turns a viewer into a fan (Coppa, 2014).

Viewers use cues from previous characters and storylines they have enjoyed informing how much they enjoy subsequent stories and characters. Also, ADT gives context for how

viewers relate to how character triumphs, experiences downfalls, and anticipates the character future actions. ADT provides a process by which the viewer can relate more closely to the character's hopes and fears. Finally, ADT establishes a relationship to the characters' narratives and create a sense of pleasure or enjoyment for the viewer (Raney, 2006, 2011, Zillman, 2000).

Up until recently (Grizzard et al., 2020), most disposition research has focused on characters who did not provoke consistently strong disposition towards audiences. Research shows positive relationships to characters with strong morality are more likely (Krakowiak & Oliver, 2012). The positive morality of the character often influenced how much a viewer liked the character. However, disposition can change overtime (Raney, 2004). As it becomes more difficult for viewers to define the morality of a character, they may begin to relate to the character more.

It appears that ambiguous characters are more distinctive from clearly defined moral and immoral characters in the areas of morality, liking and outcomes (Eden et al., 2011). Viewers relate to characters differently based on their moral understandings of good or bad behaviors, and this is differed in studies depending on the variable studied (Krakowiak & Oliver, 2012). The variables observed in this study were transportation or a distinct mental process, an integrative melding of attention, imagery, and feelings (Green & Brock, 2000). The next variable looked at suspense at what characters would do in certain situations.

One study was an observation of an online serial drama *Sorority Forever* (Eden et al., 2011). The participants of the study were Midwestern University male students. None of the participants were familiar with the show, but the obscurity of it defined it as a suspenseful drama. For eight weeks the male students viewed the show. The study then concluded with surveys

dealing with the characters' dispositions along with the morality of the characters' actions. This study offered insights into character development and critical factors for promotion of audience engagement and enjoyment. As stories featuring MACs become more common, understanding the roles of these characters will clearer (Eden et al., 2011).

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory (SCT) “adopts an agentic perspective to human development adaptation, and change” (Bandura, p. 269, 2002) SCT has inspected experiences of viewer relationships experienced with television characters. For example, Eyal and Rubin (2003) examined traits of aggression; this process allowed them to identify how viewers would identify with aggressive characters. In the study, viewers were given questionnaires measuring the aggressive traits of eight characters. A content analysis looked at the portrayals of each character and the researchers used this to determine different levels of aggression for the characters. Viewer aggression was an indicator of relationship identification with characters (Eyal & Rubin, 2003). However, homophily or when viewers have an attraction to a character who shares similar traits was not identified in the study, and interactions beyond the modification of gender were clarified.

Another SCT study observed self-expansion through fictional characters. Shedlosky-Shoemaker, Costable and Arkin (2014) studied whether viewers who establish a cognitive connection with fictional characters create self-expansion or when humans have a motivation to expand relationships which allow the inclusion of the other in the self (Aron & Aron, 1996). The goal of the study was to determine if fictional characters can offer self-expansion and if so whether if it is related to the narrative. An adapted questionnaire was given to measure their

feelings about characters in relation to themselves. Another measurement involved how mentally drawn participants were to the narrative. A stronger cognitive connection indicated that viewers experienced transportation into the narrative, and this created perceived self-expansion. In other words, people can expand their individual potential, knowledge, and capacities through close relationships even if those relationships are with fictional characters. So, people can interact with characters in a one-way relationship and still experience the same thing they might with a person they interact with in their real lives. “Cognitive overlap with the character increases to the extent the character represents one’s actual self-guide” (Shedlosky et al., 2014, p.556). This goes into the idea of parasocial relationships “Readers who felt more transported into the narrative world were able to experience more self-expansion about a fictional character than real world people (Shedlosky et al., 2014). These findings illustrate the nature of parasocial relationships and its effect of entertainment media on the self.

As the audience watches, people within the audience develop feelings towards the show’s characters and the show itself. These relationships often influence the way that people relate to the brand and even networks that carry the show. This relationship—often described as parasocial relationships—provide viewers with a connection to fictional characters in ways they would relate to friends and family in real life. Brand influencers and marketers have used these relationships to appeal to viewers by developing their loyalty to the characters, shows, and brand.

For example, brands like Disney have used transmedia storytelling to introduce fans of one of their brands to another brand. Specifically, has done this since 2009 with their marketing of *Star Wars* and the *Marvel Universe* (McCarthy, 2015). This marketing tactic of transmedia

storytelling involves using character from one piece of media to appeal to viewers of other media platforms. Disney has taken the *Marvel Universe* and connected with viewers with the characters and their stories across movies and television shows. With standalone movie franchises built around *Marvel* character such as *Thor*, *Captain America*, and *Ironman*, viewers get an introduction to the heroes and their respective origin stories. Disney then brings all the heroes together with *The Avengers*. Disney has also incorporated this into the *Star Wars* Universe-- with films like *Rogue One* (2016) and *Solo* (2018), building on stories and characters from the original trilogy, *A New Hope* (Lucas, 1977), *The Empire Strikes Back* (Lucas, 1980), and *Return of the Jedi* (Lucas, 1983) to market the new *Star Wars* films. *The Force Awakens* (Abrams, 2015) opened in 2015, giving marketers a new way to appeal to fans of the franchise, while expanding the audience to a generation of new fans. Disney partnered with several different brands to market the products for the movie.

Brands like Toys R Us, Monopoly and Lego created marketing campaigns to promote the movie, it was as if “the force” was flowing “through the products in almost every imaginable sector” (McCarthy, 2015, para 11). Hasbro extended their contract with Disney in 2020 in hopes of continuing to market the products of *Star Wars* and *Marvel*. Hasbro has attributed financial revenue success up to 24% to 1.22 billion (CNBC, 2020). The strongest brand for sales were *Frozen 2*, (Buck & Lee, 2019) *Avengers*, (Lee, 1963) *Spider-Man* (Lee, 1962) and *Stars Wars* (CNBC, 2020). The recent brand contracts look to further increased brand influence by promoting *Marvel* and *Disney* on the new streaming service *Disney+*. By incorporating different brands to promote the movie with merchandise, *Disney* has connected with more viewers.

Branding has many purposes, but the main purpose is to build a relationship and establish a trend for customer loyalty. Branding incorporates promotion of a product in and influences the consumer to purchase or endorse it. Branding is more than just buy and sell; it is a relationship with consumers. Brand is a stimulus in the mind of the consumer that should create trust, (Berry, 2000). This means that the influence of the product creates a wish for the consumer to purchase the product. By creating trust with the brand, the consumer hopes it will benefit from the use of the service or product.

Building trust in a brand with consumers will increase revenue and build better relationships. With packaged goods like candy and cereal and candy, the product is the primary brand, while with services the company provide is the secondary brand (Berry, 2000) The impact of influence between the two differs as with services, you cannot package entertainment or transportation services over tangible items. The locus of a product determines the impact. If a consumer will buy the product. For example, Berry (2000) notes that consumers buy Folgers for the product brand. Most consumers don't know that Folgers is a division of Procter & Gamble. In which consumers don't take into consideration that it belongs to Procter & Gamble; they just see Folgers. Folgers is the brand name, and it influences consumers to purchase the product based on the logo.

Along with the names and locus, brands also incorporate characters in which define their respective company. Brand characters convey meanings to consumer like product or services (Kay, 2006). Characters portray the brand through use of storytelling that relates to the brand and its origins. One example for Disney is Mickey Mouse. Mickey symbolized hope and fantasy for American during the First and Second World Wars. (de Roos, 1994; Watts, 1997). Along with

Mickey other characters have achieved success with publications as Peter Rabbit and Harry Potter (Booth & Hayes, 2005). While these portray brands through animation and publication, other characters are portrayed through identity.

Characters like Tony the Tiger and Ronald McDonald are the identity of the brand in which they represent. If a consumer sees Tony the Tiger on a billboard by himself, they relate to Frosted Flakes. They serve as the spokesperson character in advertising (Costa, 2010). With a spokes-character for the brand, it helps incorporate brand trust with consumers along with a positive display for the brand.

Next there are characters in brands that are pure design. Examples of these rely on merchandise sales and licensing. The design of the brand itself tells the story of the product or service that is being provided. Hello Kitty is one brand that personifies pure design. The brand itself has launched several different styles over time that helped generate revenue and excitement. Some examples are Lolita Kitty that represents the street fashion in Japan, while French Kitty compliments the French style with long legs and Tan Kitty representing a beach style in Hawaii (Costa, 2010).

Brand identity can influence how people interact with certain brands like McDonalds, Nike, and Disney (Costa, 2010) and can also lead to brand loyalty.

Fan Culture

Brand relationships also incorporate a fan culture. Fans are people who enjoy types of content such as sports teams to media platforms such as television shows along with movies. "Fans, when insistenty characterized as "them" can be distinguished from "people like

us" (students, professors and social critics as well as from (the more reputable) patrons of aficionados or collectors" (Jenson, 1992, p. 9). Fans can be categorized in several classifications. First fans could be socially symptomatic. This deals with aspects of fan and celebrity interaction. With this comes individual obsessions and public hysteria. (Jenson, 1992). Each fan relates to individuals. "The obsessed loner invokes the image of the alienated atomized "mass man" the frenzied crowd member invokes the image of the vulnerable, irrational victim of persuasion" (Jenson, 1992, p.14).

Next fans deal with psychological compensation (Jenson, 1992). This deals with social and psychological conditions looking at the modern self or Celebrity relationships as a psychological version of the mass society. Horton and Wohl (1956) characterized the media-audience relationship as a form of "para-social interaction." They noted fandom as a surrogate relationship, one that partially emulates normal relationship. The relationship replicates like a face-to-face interaction. Studies suggest that prolonged intimacy of parasocial relationships audiences become displeased with celebrity persona. One would assume that contact or recognition with a celebrity, the persona transfers some of the influence on to the fan. This indicates that the fan looks for this recognition from celebrity in hopes for psychological needs such as prestige. Fans deals with psychological inadequacy and are vulnerable to the influence of media on the masses. (Jenson, 1992).

Aficionados are like fans, in which they carry knowledge about activities and are very enthusiastic about the subject. Aficionados obtain objects of desire in which it is considered high culture. If the object of desire is popular with the middle to lower classes, it is inexpensive and available to the masses, it is a fandom. On the other side, if it popular to the wealthy, it is

expensive and rare priority. Fans are believed to be obsessed with objects or be infatuated with celebrity figures to the point they are willing to die for them (Jenson, 1992).

Branding

Transmedia Storytelling

A phrase coined by Henry Jenkins (2006) transmedia storytelling, which means telling a single narrative across multiple platforms using digital technology, The *Star Wars* franchise is prime example of transmedia storytelling. *Star Wars* has adapted to movies along with video games, cartoons, and novels. Each story has its own respective tale that adds to the universe. Jenkins (2006) notes the story world has a larger narrative arc that connects the other stories. In other words, while there are many stories in the *Star Wars* universe, it all revolves around a central them in the “galaxy far, far away.”

A similar study looked at transmedia storytelling as a potential resource for corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication. CSR is a communication model in which helps companies be socially accountable to itself and its stakeholders along with the public community (Chen, 2020). In the study, Coombs (2018) observed the *Thank You Mom* campaign and measured participants reactions towards the commercial. By using analyzing the content, Coombs (2018) was able to identify plot lines in the story. Results found that transmedia storytelling can be applied to CSR communication and it is beneficial for future studies. Transmedia storytelling can be manifested into CSR communication. Using transmedia storytelling shows promise as a means to inform people about CSR efforts and involve them in the communication efforts without creating the potential backlash that can result with CSR

communication (Coombs, 2018, p. 363). Transmedia storytelling can also be presented across social media platforms, creating more social media engagement from users.

Social Media Engagement

With the rise in social media use, viewers are more engaged with social media platforms, and are using a variety of social media to engage with brands. Dolan et al. (2015) note in their study about social media engagement using uses and gratifications theory (UGT). This explores customer's motivations to engage with specific types of media content, and therefore examines developing literature within social media marketing that completely or notably maintains this perspective. In this study, seven different aspects of social media engagement behavior (SMEB) were observed: co-creation, positively contribution, consumption, dormancy, detachment, negative contribution, and co-destruction (Dolan, 2015, p.6).

Co-creation is the highest level in of positively social media engagement. Co-creators are like developers for the social media pages. Their job is to create content in various forms in order to disseminate their resources, knowledge, and experience to the focal form and other consumers (Brodie et al., 2013; Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014). The engagement aspect of co-creation deals with interactive behaviors including learning, sharing, socializing and co-development (Brodie et al., 2013). Positive contribution deals with customers who represent a moderate level of positively in the SMEB.

Users engage in this from of behavior through making positive active contributions to the existing content on the brand's social media page. The significant contribution to social media is through "liking" functions on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Another form is the

favorite function on Twitter. When users like, share, or retweet or favorite content, they become endorsers of the focal brand, increasing the likelihood of friends to also engage with the content (Chu, 2011). Consumption is the lowest level in the positive valence of SMEB. This behavior is passive, with a small level of participation with actively contribution or creation to content. Although individual value will be withdrawn from the consumption of social media content this behavior is individualistic and does not impact others. Research supports the notion that users access social media to consume content as a source of information, without contribution through likes, shares, and comments (Gummerus et al., 2012). This goes into the negative valenced level of the SMEB.

Dormancy reflects a state of inactivity of passive engagement. Dormant users are described as lurkers, with little to no contribution in social media engagement (Muller et al., 2010). On the first level of negatively valenced SMEB, they do engage in social media consumption, contribution to or creation to content. Detachment comes next in which users remove themselves from social media pages by unliking or unsubscribing to content. Other terms that define detachment are termination, withdrawal, or dissolution. The next level is negatively contribution in which users make negative contributions to social media. These contributions are like word-of-mouth reviews. In this instance it is negative word of mouth. Social media platforms offer an ideal tool for negative WOM, as customers freely create and disseminate brand-related information in their established social networks (Vollmer & Precourt, 2008). Social media platforms offer an ideal tool for negative word of mouth, as customers freely create and disseminate brand-related information in their established social networks (Vollmer & Precourt, 2008). The last level of high-level, negatively valenced SMEB is co-destruction. This is when users create negative content on social media pages, while interacting with other users

and the public. Co-destruction is the opposite of co-creation in which it is the destruction of value by providers and customers (Ple & Caceres, 2010).

Figure 1: Journal of Strategic Marketing



Figure from Dolan et al. (2015)

YouTube

Along with the rise in social media, YouTube has been a big part of the rising platforms. YouTube “can be regarded as a convergence of the traditional entertainment choices of television, music, and film” (Shao, 2009). It has over 2 billion users who watch hundreds of hundreds of millions of hours of content every single day (Leskin, 2020). Started in 2005, YouTube took off quick within 18 months being purchased by Google. Under the new ownership, YouTube went from being small outlet of amateur videos to a powerhouse platform of original content. YouTube is the go-to resource for viewing videos and is the third most visited site in the world after Google and Facebook (Alexa, 2016). YouTube allows users to

interact with the platform in several ways, serving as a social media website as well as a search engine. With the use of like/dislike feature, along with the uploading of videos, users have a greater deal of control. With the controlled factor, it gives users the chance to post respective content while also building a sense of community with other users.

With the studies of uses and gratifications study on social media engagement, one study looked at YouTube and engagement with their users. Khan (2016) observed 1,143 users on YouTube with a survey that helped gauge user behavior. The strongest predictor of engagement of YouTube was liking and disliking videos due to the relaxing entertainment motive; commenting and uploading being strongly predicted by social interaction motive; sharing being strongly predicted by information giving motive. (p.236) It was classified as a relaxing entertainment motive; commenting and uploading being strongly predicted by social interaction motive; sharing being strongly predicted by information giving motive (Khan, 2016). The more negative experience a user yielded predicted liking, however anonymous users played a role in sharing and uploading videos.

Facebook Groups

In the past few years, social media have become perhaps the most popular communication channels for college-aged Internet users (Pelling & White, 2009). One of the many social media platforms that attribute the success is Facebook. Launched in 2004, Facebook is an ever-growing social media platform with over 2.7 billion as of 2020. The site itself is where users can create their own profile and connect with people from around the world. Facebook is packed with several features in which users can interact. Facebook adapted groups which gives users the convenience of sharing topics and interests among members. Once a user has created a

profile they can create or join a group of an interest to them. They can join the group and connect their friends and family. Within the group, people can be added from different networks such as schools to global locations. Once users are in the groups, they can add pictures, videos, or even posts to start conversations with other users.

Several studies have looked at the use of Facebook groups. One study looked at marketing library services through the Facebook groups. The purpose of the study was to discover if these groups are conducive for library marketing. Results found that the success of the groups can be controlled by the active users. “Groups should target not only students but also faculty and staff in support of their research and teaching” (Xia, 2009, p.469). Groups struggled with narrow topics and inactive management. What worked best was energetic conversation in the groups dealing with the library’s resources. The solution to make the groups more interactive was to create more general topics for the users and maintain an active management style. “Facebook groups can be used as a useful platform to support the teaching and research of faculty who showed their enthusiasm for connecting to library services” (Xia, 2009, p.477).

Similarly, a study of UGT on YouTube, Facebook groups examined users’ gratifications and the relationship between users’ gratifications and their political and civic participation offline (Kee et al., 2009). Four different variables were observed: socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking, and information. The socializing aspect deals with people who participate in Facebook groups for the chance to meet up with people and discuss similar interests. Along with the groups, it builds peer support and a strong sense of community. The entertainment variable dealt with the engagement of the participants for leisure and amusement needs with the groups. Self-status seeking pertained to participants for maintaining their respective status. The

information variable pertained with users of the groups with the intention of learning information about on and off campus events and services. Respondents noted they joined Facebook groups because of peer pressure, and they thought it would make them cool and bring benefit for their future careers.

Television and Branding

Television shows seek to garner fan support in order to earn brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is an indicator of financial success for a business. Marketing is firmly embedded as a core business function and involves anticipation and satisfaction of customer needs where this is mutual benefit (Moolla, 2010). Brand loyalty has been part of marketing strategies in the services industry since the 1990s. (Moolla & Bisschoff, 2013). With a steady increase, marketers have incorporated useful strategies for their brands to create longer lasting relationships with their customers. With numerous strategies and approaches involved it yielded advantages, and the “repetitive buying behavior of an organization’s products or services positively contributes to market share and a sustained competitive advantage (Moolla & Bisschoff, 2013, p. 1).

Watching television is different now. People are not watching shows on television or real time but rather using streaming services competing for subscriptions and viewers. Shows that were once on cable television when they first premiered are now on streaming services. Showtime shows *Dexter* and *Nurse Jackie* are available on Netflix for streaming (Stream on Demand, 2016). *Dexter* remains on Showtime for subscribers to watch on any platform from online streaming to subscription to the channel. AMC launched their own streaming service AMC+ where fans can sign up to watch originals *Mad Men* and *Better Call Saul* (Farrell, 2020).

While three of these shows are no longer airing new content, fans can revisit and watch the series on streaming services, *Better Call Saul* continues with new material. The other shows can still be found on their networks but in reruns. These shows with their respective protagonists influenced viewers when they were on the air in real time and left viewers wondering what they will do next. Several scenes in the shows explain the respective character in their environment and how situations and actions defined their role in the series. Will different scenes throughout the series change viewer's perceptions of the protagonist? The goal is to understand if these characters influence the brands narrative storytelling.

A study looked at the underlying social identity of national brands (Lee et al., 2009) The study involved an underdeveloped African country comparing a mobile phone company with the country's name over a European brand. Consumer ethnocentrism or the evaluation of one's culture was predicted between two age groups. Young and older users were moderated for the relationships between social identities and brand preference. Results concluded across age groups ethnocentrism was stronger with the older generation. (Lee et al., 2009, p. 450). With the older generation, values related significantly to the influence of the brand. With the younger generation, social influence didn't relate to values.

Characters and Brand Identity

Certain television brands have focused on portraying antiheroes or MACs as they have seen these plots rise in popularity. (Polatis, 2014). Places like HBO, Showtime, AMC, and FX along with other cable networks can be anywhere as long as the story is compelling and the character's actions are justifiable (Moloney, 2014, para 5). Many streaming services have created shows with narratives centered around morally ambiguous characters. morally ambiguous

character is a subject who has a mixture of good and bad qualities that define their character by their ethics along with their choices in life. “AMC’s identity as a brand involves storytelling by creating visual, engaging and targeting stories to a highly engaged digital audience all year round.” (AMC, 2020). Showtime brands itself as a premium entertainment channel featuring critically-acclaimed original series and limited series, along with hit Hollywood movies, action sports and comedy specials (Showtime, 2020).

Research has found people identify with characters they can relate to. Morality and brand identity play a role in the enjoyment of a program (Raney, 2011). Morality influences and governs an emotional response to media. “The stories we consume, the characters we love and hate, the rationale behind those feelings, the emotions that we experience on their behalf, and the pleasure and meaning comes to a result” (Raney, 2011, p.18). Each emotional reaction is regulated by morality. Character liking relates to moral judgements made by viewers based on the character’s actions and behaviors.

Morality concerns what is right and wrong vs. what is good and bad behavior—this is often referred to as an ethical framework. Most ethical frameworks are based on a sense of what is right and wrong, empirical beliefs and experiences of the individual (Brown University, 2008). Ethics is explained as to mean any rational procedure by which we determine what individual human being’s ‘ought’—or what it is ‘right’ for them” (Sidgwick, 2010, p.1).

Brand identity often encompasses a company’s ethics and value (Syed Alwi et al., 2017). Brands should engage in ethical practices. Some brands use different strategies dealing with ethics. An example would be a company using a target audience with a different brand voice. An ethical stand would be beneficial for this strategy.

If your company has a strong ethical focus at its center, it's going to make recruiting much easier; people will be more interested in applying to work for your company, and they'll be more likely to stick around for the long haul. (Gibbons, 2019)

A study looked at corporate identity dealing with ethics and corporate social responsibility. Fukukawa et al. (2007) mapped out different levels of ethical identity: (1) foundations, triggers, and motivations; (2) Management; (3) action and communication and (4) image and stakeholder perception. With foundations and motivations, ethical identity pertained to strategic alternatives for competition among brands. Secondly, it dealt with the management of the ethical identity.

Brand identity encompasses how a specific product or company portrays its image, values, and mission:

“It is tangible and appeals the senses. It fuels recognition, amplifies differentiation, and makes big ideas and meaning accessible” (Wheeler, 2017, p.4).

The interactions between the morality of characters and network brand identity have not been studied from an audience or individual perspective in the field of marketing. This study seeks to examine how a character's identity might impact or influence the way a viewer or fan interacts with the brand of the network that produced the show. Therefore, understanding how a character identity might influence brand trust and engagement is a key factor for this study.

Character Identities

Characters

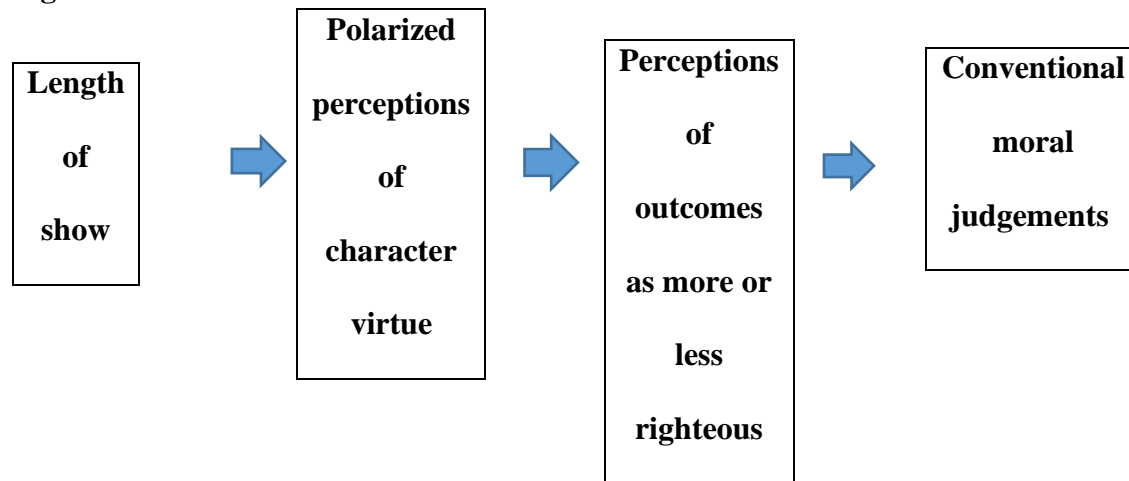
In terms of character identity, it was important to understand the plots surrounding the characters portrayed in the respective shows. When people watch a show, relationships form. This is identified as par asocial relationships

Moral Ambiguity

Moral ambiguity is the idea that there is no defined right and wrong, or that right and wrong are flexible given the individuals circumstances (Krakowiak & Oliver, 2012). How moral ambiguity relates to characters and character identity is rooted in studies of literature, mass communication and popular culture. Studies have examined the ways which characters and celebrities are portrayed in both entertainment and news media (Ludicke et al., 2010). But overall narratives of morally ambiguous characters have not been studied by interviewing viewers and fans and connecting that to brand identity have not been explored.

The role of morally ambiguous characters in television dramas has only been studied since 2008. Earlier studies examined the perceptions of characters in short stories. Krakowiak (2008) saw often characters who varied their behavior, shifting from moral to immoral actions with their story, were more relatable and notable by readers. Tamborini et al. (2010) observed in a soap opera study that the viewer's ideal image of the characters' morality shifted overtime. However, the degree to which soap opera characters influenced the viewer's program enjoyment was not examined. This study also only began to examine the role characters with hence the impact of the ambiguous morality played in the viewer's observation of the respective character.

Figure 2: Predicted Model



Note: Figure shows the predicted influence of exposure on polarization of character dispositions leading to perceptions of outcomes as righteous and subsequent conventional moral judgment.

Figure 2 from Tamborini et al. (2010)

The above figure shows the predicted influence of exposure on polarization of character dispositions leading to perceptions of outcomes as righteous and subsequent conventional moral judgement.

However, moral judgment may be less important to antihero enjoyment that Affective Disposition Theory (ADT) has found, instead previous experience with antihero narratives may alter the response to similar narratives (Raney & Shafer, 2012). Moral disengagement is defined as an extension of social cognitive theory in which moral agency is governed by a self-regulatory system that includes self-monitoring of one's conduct as well as self-reaction, which prompts the viewer's process of enjoyment (Bandura, 1986). By studying the interactions between that enjoying the antihero narrative, Raney and Shafer (2012) found that story development over time influenced how people related to heroes and antiheroes. The study concluded, as viewers

interacted with more stories through movies/trailers/literature, they developed relationships with characters who had similar characteristics but across different stories.

By examining subsequent narratives of more complex characters with changing morality, viewers might relate less to stories featuring honorable heroes. Perhaps the way an individual relates to an audience is influenced by how they can apply those antihero narratives concluded. Another study found that morality plays a key role in ADT, which requires more explanation to the application of antihero narratives (Raney, 2011).

In a survey done of viewers the Fox network television show *24* (Cochran & Surnow, 2001), people who had watched the show before liked the antihero protagonist Jack Bauer and enjoyed the episodes more than those who had not (Janicke & Raney, 2011). It also found that as feelings of sympathy and compassion toward Bauer increased so did the viewers' enjoyment. However, they also found enjoyment increased with the immoral actions of Bauer. The study concluded that fans and nonfans related to Jack Bauer and the program differently. Fans tended to relate towards dramatic narratives like *24* while nonfans relied more on the basic traditional ADT narrative arc. Nonfans found Bauer to be unappealing and immoral, but they still enjoyed the show despite his character.

Morally ambiguity is defined as having characteristics of both good and bad but often the actions of characters are unpredictable "Sometimes labeled as antiheroes, separate themselves from the traditionally good and bad characters because they don't consistently act in a good or evil way" (Daalmans et al., 2017, p. 16). Some other examples of morally ambiguous characters range from Tony Soprano from *The Sopranos* (Chase, 1999) to Dr. Gregory House from *House M.D* (Shore, 2004). These characters intermix bad behaviors and good motives and intentions.

The characters often act in ways that appear unethical, but often the motives and behaviors being portrayed are justified by circumstances and are developed throughout the show or series.

Audiences may view these morally ambiguous characters as interesting; their ethics may differ from the characters portrayed on the screen.

Ethics are the set of moral ideologies that controller a person's behavior moral values that direct a person's conduct or the conducting of an action (Lumen Learning, 2020). Ethics reflect beliefs, about right/wrong and good/bad. With these morally ambiguous characters in question, it looks at their respective ethics. While the audience sees the character portrayed on the screen doing unethical actions, it often questions the individual of their own respective ethics. If that individual would do the same action in the respective situation vs the character that is on the screen. This goes into characters be classified as heroes or villains.

Heroes and Villains

In a study observing German citizens viewing a clip dealing with a traditional hero plot or a morally problematic antihero situation (Raney et al., 2009). The purpose of the study was to examine the enjoyment process during the antihero movies in comparison with traditional hero films. They took and edited a clip form an unknown antihero movie *Peridita Durango*, marking it down to a three-minute clip running it as an extended trailer. Despite the major cut, the trailer itself displayed more detail about the narrative than the actual trailer. The moral judgment of the protagonist's behavior along with the judgement of the character was based on the proper situation in the film (Raney et al., 2009). Other measurements that were observed were the liking of the characters and the enjoyment of the clip. Viewers occasionally accepted the morally improper acts because of the attitude-defensive strategies they engage out of loyalty to people

they love (Raney et al., 2009). In other words, people show favoritism to characters they like. Viewers like whom they like, and they want to keep on liking them. When characters do something, the viewer dislikes they tend to cut the character slack. They blame something or someone by defending: the character for their actions:

“When they say and do things we dislike, we pardon them; or “we cut them slack,” we blame something or someone else, we defend them” (Raney et al. 2009, p.15).

In addition, the stronger a person’s affective disposition towards a character the more likely we will use those strategies of practice moral disengagement for the sake of enjoying the narrative. “Identifying with the protagonist seems to be the route that is taken,” meaning viewers appear to align more with the antihero in other way than morally (Raney et al. 2009, p.19). How much viewers identified with a character, or character or saw themselves like that character predicted how viewers accepted the rebellious behaviors of the characters (Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2011). In the experiment participants read a narrative w in which the main character did immoral actions. Participants then answered questions pertaining to character similarity, identification, moral disengagement, and enjoyment. Character similarity was evaluated as the participant perceived themselves like the main character in the story Identification dealt with putting the participants in the role of the main character. Moral disengagement was observed by the extent of the behaviors and actions evaluated if they were morally acceptable. Enjoyment looked at if participants were entertained by the content. Similarity between the viewer and character was found to mediate the connection between identification and moral disengagement, and lead to greater affective enjoyment in the media narrative. In other words, participants experienced a better experience with the characters involved (Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2011).

This study concluded, the greater similarity between the character and viewer, the more likely one is to confirm the immoral actions of the character. Viewers were driven by defensive mechanisms to maintain self-concepts; they may be more persuaded to give characters the benefit of the doubt when they commit the immoral actions. Findings suggest when audiences feel psychologically similar to characters, not only are weaker moral standards used for judgment of character, but immoral actions are likely to be recognized as less severe. (Krakowiak & Tsay, 2011, p. 108). The more the viewer understood and empathized with the character, the more likely they were willing to forget their faults. Findings from the present research elucidate our understanding of moral disengagement by investigating the extent to which perceptions of character similarity and identification facilitate individuals to more readily accept harmful actions of characters as morally justified. (Krakowiak, & Tsay-Vogel, 2011, p. 109)

Another study that examined the insight of conventional character tropes in terms of character morality, enjoyment, and appreciation responses (Daalmans et al., 2017). When examining viewer's response to the visual media, researchers observed self-expansion, or the viewer's perception of truthfulness of statements. Wishful identification, or a desire to be like their character, asked participants if they wanted to be the character. and moral violation dealt with the participants morals and beliefs. All were all strongly related to the enjoyment process. However, appreciation was not related to moral violation. The study implemented a broad survey looking at various factors pertaining to perceptions of the common character. The character tropes examined the links between character type, morality, and responses to the characters. The study's significance was that viewers perceived and responded to characters. Another study focused on how "the self" relates to characters using the TEBOTS Model (Daalmans et al., 2017). The TEBOTS Model states that narrative engagement causes the

experience of self-expansion. Without narrative context, the affective dispositions accessed by participants in the study were presumed to be based around schema structures as proposed by Raney (2004).

Discovering how individuals related to characters and expanded their individual self, understanding or the concept of “self-expansion” was integral to studies of character identity, entertainment media and narrative (Shedloksy-Shoemaker et al., 2014; Slater et al., 2014). Self-expansion is explained as viewers managing threats, strains, and limitations related to the self-concept. In other words, viewers identify with and relate to experiences to others’ lives and situations they view through media. Contact to narratives can surge self-expansion toward an ideal self (Shedloksy-Shoemaker, 2014). Another process related to self-expansion is wish identification, or when viewers have the desire to be like or to experience the life of the character (Eden et al., 2015). Gender congruence or the feeling of harmony of one’s gender (Gender Spectrum, 2019) between the viewer and character were found to also be connected to how the viewer perceived the character.

Character identification itself looks at the extent to which readers or viewers take on the perspective of the character in the media. This process is imaginative, it is a process in which audience members assume the identity of the character and takes on the role goals of their life (Cohen, 2001). Viewers appreciate and enjoy characters for a variety of reasons. Also, this study found that morality was strongly linked to enjoyment. People who identified with the character’s moral framework grew in self-expansion and experienced wishful identification: “Our findings support the notion that morality as a whole is central to enjoyment processes, but less central to appreciation processes” (Daalmans et al., 2017, p. 368)

Morality salience, refers to the ideas of awareness of death that relates to the narrative responses to characters (Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2015). Comparisons for those whose own principles are threatened through the process of downward social comparison and the “moral disengagement mechanism of advantageous comparison” (Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2015, p. 9). In this same study, two experiments were done to examine the effects of a person’s self-perception on responses to characters who demonstrate changing stages of morality (Krakowiak, & Tsay-Vogel, 2015). The first study found individuals whose vices were made noticeably salient had a more positive affect and satisfaction after reading a narrative containing morally ambiguous over one featuring a bad character. The second study found individuals whose virtues were made salient had a better positive affect and enjoyment reading a narrative including a good character rather than one with a morally ambiguous character. These findings concluded that morality salience is an imperative factor determining responses to different types of characters (Krakowiak, & Tsay-Vogel, 2015).

When an individual’s vices are more pronounced, a story about a morally and a questionable character yields meaningfully more ego-enhancing benefits than a story with a bad character, hence producing more positive emotions. In addition, individuals in both vice and virtue conditions enjoyed stories featuring morally ambiguous characters (MACs) more than bad characters, and MACs were perceived to have more positive attributes than bad characters (Krakowiak & Tsay, 2015). When it comes to MACs, findings indicated people who felt insecure about their own moralities felt better when exposed to those types of characters over bad characters. Executing a blend of good and bad deeds may have allowed a MACs to be a stronger assessment goal than a bad character for those whose vices were made salient. MACs are deemed more like humans as we are not always observant when it comes to our own ethical

standards. Ethical standards may differ depending on the situation and environment, we are in. Secondly, the narratives dealing with bad characters possibly inhibit individuals to feel somewhat morally ambiguous themselves more likely to associate themselves to MACs than bad characters, possibly explaining their immoralities to be salient: “Findings invaluable provide paths for further inquiry in the study of positive psychology as we consider the impact of moral self-perceptions and the theoretical implications of the dual role of MACs” (Krakowiak & Tsay, 2015, p. 19).

Television Brands and Characters on Streaming Services

Many television brands specialize in delivering content based on MACs.. Showtime is one of the top brands in premium television, delivering dramas along with motion pictures and made-for-TV movies. Showtime has proven itself competition against other brands like HBO. Showtime is owned by ViacomCBS, formerly Viacom. At the end of 2019, Viacom CBS reported that Showtime, combined with CBS All Access and its other streaming services, had amassed over 11 million subscribers (Cord Cutter News, 2020). Showtime gained high claim by releasing their own respective content starting in 2005 with *Weeds* (Kohan, 2005), rating 7.9 out of 10 (IMDB, 2005) and 2006 with *Dexter*, rating 8.6 out of 10 (IMDB, 2006). *Weeds* introduced Showtime to protagonist Nancy Botwin, recently widowed mother of two who begins selling marijuana to make ends meet. *Dexter* shows the life of a blood stain analyst who lives a secret life as a serial killer. In 2009, Showtime introduced the world to Nurse Jackie Peyton in *Nurse Jackie*, a character dealing with pill addictions while also supplying care for the people of New York City.

While Showtime was narrating shows with morally ambiguous characters on the premium channels, there was also brands on standard cable portraying their own shows. The channel American Movie Classics (AMC) had been known for its playback of classical movies and shows until 2002. In 2007, AMC started delivering their own content and had major success with *Mad Men* followed by *Breaking Bad* in 2008. *Mad Men* focused on the main protagonist Don Draper and his life and career in the advertising industry in the brink of the 1960s. The show, simply altered television. It didn't just prove that cable could be as good as the older broadcast networks (Poniewozik, 2015). *Breaking Bad* focused on protagonist chemistry teacher Walter White who is ill with cancer. White turns into criminal mastermind by making meth in order to provide financially for his family because of the costs of medical treatments. Both shows were a major success and established AMC as a dominant brand for television dramas on the cable network. In 2015, AMC delivered *Better Call Saul*, a spinoff/prequel to *Breaking Bad*, in which tells the story of Walter White's criminal lawyer Saul Goodman.

Subscriptions, Social Media, and Brand Influences

AMC is a channel on a basic cable television package. Showtime differs as it is a paid subscription service. However, Showtime can be purchased by individuals with streaming services like Amazon Prime. But often brand is a motivator for subscribing to the content. A great brand increases the willingness to pay and maintain among customers (Campbell, 2020). In recent years, Showtime has used this brand influence to gain popularity for dramas like *Shameless*, *Homeland*, and *Billions*. Aside from television shows, the brand also promotes sporting events. Showtime often incorporates ads onto YouTube with shorter clips of the shows and other respective content (YouTube, 2020).

AMC also incorporates ads about their current shows with clips of their content on YouTube. In Spring 2020, *Better Call Saul* released several promos to promote the new season. Starting in December 2019, AMC started running ads of the new season of *Better Call Saul* that premiered in February of 2020 (Darwish, 2019). Soon into the new year, the show introduced more sneak peeks along with several mentions and retweet on Twitter.

Case Studies: Observation, Interviewing, and Narrative Analysis

Case studies are studies that use at least three different types of data to discuss a specific phenomenon. Robert K. Yin defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p.18). For this case study, the researcher used observations, narrative analysis of the shows, and interview methodologies to unpack the research questions around morally ambiguous characters and brand identity.

Case studies allow the researcher to examine several different types of data, and draw connections and conclusions based on their relationships. The conversations between data illuminate how people relate to narratives, brands and parasocial relationships. Case studies allow for analysis of media, technology, and individual experiences (Stake, 2015; Yin, 2013). Throughout a case study, the researcher can deconstruct and reconstruct concepts and phenomena, as well as evaluate practices, and develop practical applications for future practice.

Interviews seeks to describe the meanings of “central themes in the life world of the subject” (Valenzuela & Shrivastava, 2002, p. 2). The main task of interviewing is to understand

what the interviewees say. Interviewing can be considered a more personal form of research; it allows for individual communication between the researcher and participant. It allows the participant to determine what data is collected from them in the research process, and therefore is more empowering (Valenzuela & Shrivastava, 2002). This study uses a standard open interview approach. Standard open interviews ask the same questions to all participants. In closed interviews, interviews are simpler and may be easier to code and analyze. (Valenzuela & Shrivastava, 2002). This is because it builds on a standard questionnaire from one participant to the next. In this format, questions are simple, closed, and have a fixed response. These participants are also asked the same questions but are asked by the researcher from a set of possible responses. There are also a few open-ended questions at the end. For the purpose of our study, we will use a combination of closed and open questions about characters and moral ambiguity along with the study stimuli of scenes cut from YouTube depicting the four characters—Donald Draper, Nurse Jackie, Saul Goodman, and Dexter Morgan.

Telephone interviews have been used as another form of conducting interviews. Like face-to-face interviews, telephone conversations can produce adequate results. Telephone interviewing can yield higher quality data under appropriate conditions, making a productive method of data collection comparable to a face-to-face interaction (Kee & Schrock, 2019). While a beneficial tool, it also carries disadvantages. Some participants in the study may not have phones or may not feel comfortable talking on the phone. Instead, video calls can accommodate the researcher and interviewee with resources such as a printed questionnaire and the ability to show video clips seamlessly.

Video interviewing is another affective tool to gain data. One study looked at patients being interviewed by doctors to deal with their respective health care needs (Llanwarne et al., 2017). The study notes doctors felt like patients weren't coming to appointments and their time was being wasted. The goal of the study was to understand how patients are dedicated to their overall healthcare needs. if they are not able to come to an in-person appointment. Results found that patients spoke often about the lack of time during visits along with the doctor's time with them. Most participants noted that they felt rushed during their visit. "Whilst a proportion of patients with chronic conditions will receive invitations to make contact with their doctor, patients in general practice still largely hold the responsibility for initiating the encounter and disclosing their symptoms to the doctor" (Llanwarne et al., 2017, p.121).

Participants

The sample size of interviews consisted of 13 participants. The interviews took place from December 2020 to January 2021. Two took place in December with the remaining 11 taking place in January. Out of the 13 participants, eight were female and five were male. Age of participant wasn't asked but the overall range consisted of ages 25 to 50. Education wasn't asked of participants but the majority of participants college experience. Locations of participants were mostly in the Tennessee area with a few participants from the Northwest area of the United States.

Participants were recruited primarily through email and social platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Redditt, and Snapchat) from faculty and students in courses at East Tennessee State University.

Interviews lasted an average of 30-45 minutes. Participants were in 20 to 50 age group. Nine participants lived in Tennessee, one from Colorado and North Dakota, and two from Missouri. Only one participant was a student and the rest were working professionals. All were over the age of 18 at the time interviews.

Interview Preparation

In this study, the researcher conducted interviews with participants and obtained data. The interviews involved standard open questions as well as closed scaled questions which was coded. The researcher sought out participants who were aware of the characters and the content portrayed in the study. The researcher asked professors to offer extra credit for participation in the study experiment. When participants agreed, they were read the informed consent document provided by the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board. (IRB) After they consented to participate, interviews began. Participants were asked questions about their personal identity, the characters in the clips, and their understanding about moral ambiguity. They were also asked to identify their feelings toward the brand.

Participants were asked questions pertaining to MACs and their actions portrayed in their respective television dramas. Participants observed several clips pertaining to their respective shows along with promos. The shows observed were AMC's *Mad Men* and *Better Call Saul* and Showtime's *Nurse Jackie* and *Dexter*. Interviews were conducted over Zoom video to assure the safety of participants. Because of the risks of COVID-19 video interviews were the best way to assure the safety of participants. There was no face-to-face interaction between the researcher and participants. Zoom also allowed for a richer environment as participants could see

the researcher and the video clips, it allowed the researcher to record and transcribe the interviews quicker and more efficiently.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do morally ambiguous characters define their respective brand?

RQ2: Do morally ambiguous characters engage more audiences than other types of characters?

This study used the AMC's network's Donald Draper from *Mad Men* and Saul Goodman from *Better Call Saul*. Both these characters who are protagonists experiencing identity crises. It also looked at Jackie Peyton in Showtime's *Nurse Jackie* and Dexter Morgan in *Dexter* who are professionals trying to live a normal life but harboring dark secrets.

Methodology

The case study methodology used in this study included observations (personal viewing of the shows and clips) interviews over Zoom along with showing participants clips on YouTube from the respective shows. Qualitative approaches to research seek to unpack questions concerning the process of individuals and groups, and focus on the how and the why questions (Agee,2009). Being the that study was qualitative, the researcher focused on consistency of interview design to produce rich description rather than generalizable statistical information. The goal was to understand why participants liked or did not like certain characters and their respective branded cable networks. The participants were asked 25 scaled based in questions pertaining to each of the MACs along with their respective television brand to which they belong. An additional question was asked for research purposes, if the participant could name any other MACs. Two clips were shown for each MACs. One involved a promo or preview for the show giving audiences a glimpse on what they show is about. The second videos show each

character interacting with others in their environment. Participants each answered five questions about each character including a general question asking if they were familiar with the respective character. The videos observed were all uploaded to YouTube via several accounts of fans of the shows.

The promo videos were shown to give participants a general idea about what the character and shows are about. The idea was to see if the promo described their character well with the description given in the question. A description of the character was read to the participant then the promo was shown. The participant then would rate the description of the promo as being scaled 1 to 5 with the lowest being very inaccurate to the highest being very accurate. The second video shows the character in their respective working environment or their living situation. The question asked after this clip pertained to their career and lifestyle. Participants then would answer based on the scaled choices in which they would answer based on the environment presented in the clip.

Several studies were observed when developing the questionnaire. One study guided by Janicke and Raney (2013) in which a survey was conducted about the show *24*. Several questions were asked pertaining to the main protagonist and antihero Jack Bauer. Questions ranged from whether they found him likable and would they continue watching the show. Results concluded that viewers found him likable and would continue to tune in each season to root for him.

The questionnaire developed for this study used similar questions for each character. One question was asked before each introduction of the character. The question asked was if the participant was familiar with the character of each show. Participants then responded on how familiar they were with the characters. Other questions dealt with the clips that were shown. The

promo videos were met with a description read before the video and participants would watch the clip and determine how accurate the description of the character matched up with the promo of the show. Another question was asked if participants would be comfortable in a room with participants. The next question related to each show respectively, dealing with how invested the participant would be by giving a description of what the show is about. A question then was asked about each character's career and lifestyle. Another question asked was how likable they considered the character overall based on the videos and the description. The last four questions dealt with the television brands AMC and Showtime. Participants were asked which two characters between Don Draper and Saul Goodman were portrayed better for brand narration in terms of a character transforming from one character into another. The other question asked participants what AMC should do for their brand in terms of strategy for the future. Whether they should show movies or create original series like *Mad Men* and *Better Call Saul* or adopt another strategy. *Showtime* questions were asked next between characters Jackie Peyton and Dexter Morgan and which one of them portrayed living a double life better for brand narration. A similar question was asked for participants in what Showtime should do for their brand in the future, more movies, more original content or adopt another strategy. An additional question was asked for participants if they knew any other morally ambiguous characters from other forms of media ranging from literature to movies and television shows.

Recruiting participants for the thesis started in December 2020 once the topic was approved by the IRB. The recruitment process dealt with using emails and social media interaction. The advertisement for the study was posted on social media platforms, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Reddit. Participants were then emailed with consent forms and times were set up to meet over zoom for the interview process. Other participants were joined by

words of mouth by friends and family of the researcher. Facebook proved to be the most useful tool for recruitment.

Interviews

The interviews were the key source of data gathering for the study. Twenty-six questions were asked for participants pertaining to videos that were shown along with information about the individual character. Participants had the option to watch the video or skip it or watch a few minutes of it. Participants also had the option to not answer or skip questions. All participants answered the questions along with some additional information for the researcher to gain more data for the study. Along with the interviews, the researcher also observed the reactions of the participants on the videos that were observed. Interviews ranged from 30 to 45 minutes depending on if all of the videos were watched and the discussion of the questions based on the participants response. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for data gathering by the researcher.

Stimuli

The stimuli for the study consisted of eight videos on YouTube. Each show had two each, one promo video, showing an introduction to the character and show; and a clip of the character in the show where they are in their element or working environment. The researcher picked the promo videos to see how the brands portrayed these characters for the first time to the public. The idea was to pick a promo that showed the character off for the first time to the audience giving a general idea on what the character and show is all about. The second set of clips was to

give the viewer a scene of the character in their respective working or world environment to observe them as themselves.

Narrative Thematic Analysis

The narratives in each of the respective shows were analyzed by the researcher. There were several clips for each show and brand that portrays the morally ambiguous character in their individual setting. Each character had two clips pertaining to the four characters. First the promos or trailers of the show will be shown to participants giving a first look at the character. The next series of clips will show the character in their environment and they adapt to certain situations. The clips that portray them in their environment will hope to bring out their morally ambiguous nature to the participants of the study.

Using narrative thematic analysis, the questionnaire was developed how participants felt about the characters. Each participant was read a description about each MACs. Participants would then decide if the description of each character was accurate with the promo videos. The narrative theme identifies the introduction of each character along with a video showing them at their job or around people. Also, the narrative analysis looked at the plot of each show and how it affected the participants views about the characters. Each participant's interactions with the videos were observed by their reactions and comments.

Coding

After the interviews were conducted and recorded, the researcher then coded the transcripts for narrative themes observed by the participants reactions, analyzed the participants views of the characters similarity, gender identity, and parasocial relationships with the

characters. A second coder was also asked to look over the data and code for its themes. Statistical analysis was used to determine consistency of themes as well as compare identity, brand trust, and character similarity.

A spreadsheet was used to arrange the data and gather the information. Each question had an individual spreadsheet along with each character. The two brands observed had spreadsheets along with the additional questions about other MACs. The use of the spreadsheet proved to be beneficial for the research as it identified similarities and differences with the brand and characters. The responses to questions were recorded with the participants dialogue along with their answers. The scale-based questions were arranged in the spreadsheet to show participants answers for each question.

Results

RQ1: How do morally ambiguous characters define their respective brand?

Focus on Original Writing

Two questions were asked during the interview. One dealt with the AMC and Showtime brands. The participants were asked what these two brands should do for their respective brands in the future. Both brands are known for showing movies ranging from classics to dramas, to original series like the ones observed in this study, or another option was available for the brands to adopt another strategy.

AMC

AMC was the focus brand for two of the four shows observed in the study, *Mad Men* and *Better Call Saul*. Between these two shows, *Better Call Saul* was the most familiar to participants. The reason for this related back to another show on AMC, *Breaking Bad*. *Better Call Saul* after all is a spinoff and prequel of *Breaking Bad*, so most of the participants were familiar with the character of Saul Goodman. *Mad Men* however was before both shows premiering in 2007 with *Breaking Bad* following the next year but *Better Call Saul* didn't premiere until 2015, two years after *Breaking Bad* ended and one year after *Mad Men* ended.

In *Mad Men*, audiences learn that Don Draper used to be known as Dick Whitman in a past life. As the show progresses, we learn how he became Don Draper and what it cost. *Better Call Saul* tells the story of how Jimmy McGill becomes Saul Goodman. For viewers of *Breaking Bad*, he is known as Saul Goodman, but the prequel provides viewers on how he transformed into Saul Goodman.

The two characters are known as one person and they transform into another identity. Participants were half and half for both characters in terms of brand narration in terms of transformation in character. Some participants felt that Dick Whitman's transformation into Don Draper was more compelling and a driving force for his character change. Other participants found the story was drawn out better for Don Draper's past as it builds better with each season. For Saul Goodman, one participant felt that Jimmy McGill's transformation into Saul was a clear transformation from con artist to criminal lawyer. Another response noted that Jimmy's transformation was more compelling due to the character Jimmy McGill being presented first. In

Mad Men, Don Draper was already introduced and viewers have to look back to find out more, but with *Better Call Saul*, it starts with Jimmy and as it goes on we seem slowly turn into Saul.

Participants found Don Draper to be slightly and very likeable character. However, three out of the 13 participants noted they wouldn't be comfortable with him due to their gender. Since Don Draper's character trait was being a womanizer, three females participants said they wouldn't be comfortable in a room for that reason. One male participant stated he found Don Draper likable, but he wouldn't trust him. Nine of thirteen participants said they would be very invested in watching the show based on the idea of learning about Don Draper's past as Dick Whitman. Some even commented that is what intrigued them into continue watching the show. Many of the participants felt that his job as an advertising man defined his role in the show. One scene presented to the participants observed Don Draper breaking down during a selling pitch where he is honest with the client instead of pushing them into taking the deal.

Participants of the study found Saul Goodman to be the most likable between the two. Many of the participants found him to be slightly to very likable. However, three participants found they wouldn't be comfortable being in a room with him. One participant noted they would feel uncomfortable due to Saul Goodman's loud vocal presence. Nine out of thirteen participants were very against for hiring Saul as their lawyer. Saul Goodman is a criminal lawyer, however some participants answered by saying if they were criminals, they would consider hiring him. Over 76 percent of participants said they would be very invested in watching the show to see how Jimmy McGill becomes Saul Goodman.

Twelve out of thirteen participants felt that AMC should continue with original content for their format. Some participants stated specifically that AMC should continue to deliver shows

similar to *Mad Men* and *Better Call Saul*. Others mentioned that there is value in original programming, and they would like to see characters like Don Draper and Saul Goodman. A few participants still believed that AMC should keep the format with showing classic movies along with the original series. One participant suggested that AMC should adopt a new strategy, by offering more of a limited series to viewers along with a criterion collection of movies.

Showtime

Showtime was the second brand with characters that was observed in this study. *Showtime* is the home network for shows *Nurse Jackie* and *Dexter*. Both shows were similar in style and story arc with the main protagonist living a double life and trying to cope with both lives at the same time. Eleven out of thirteen participants thought that *Dexter* portrayed living a double life in terms of brand narration. Participants felt that *Dexter* being a serial killer while also trying to live a life as a father and husband was more interesting and had more of a dramatic effect on viewers. While *Jackie* had her addiction to drugs, *Dexter* had justification for his crimes. One participant felt that *Dexter* was the more heinous narrative however, *Jackie* was not necessarily hurting anyone while abusing drugs besides herself, until people started to find out about it. Another participant noted that *Dexter*'s story arch was more extreme due to him being a serial killer, while *Jackie*'s drug use was not considered too drastic and very believable in terms of character.

Both characters were considered slightly to very likable by participants. Some believed them to be very unlikable. Many of the participants stated they would be very invested in watching *Nurse Jackie* due to the clip that was shown in the interview. *Jackie* prays in the video asking God to make her "good" but not yet. Based on the video, the question asked how invested

in the show would they be to see if Jackie ever becomes “good,” many participants stated they would be invested in watching the show and were very curious to see if Jackie ever becomes good and what it meant by not yet. Four participants felt that they wouldn’t be comfortable being in a room with Jackie, however with the same participants two felt she was very trustworthy as a nurse and a caregiver. Despite her being a drug addict, many of the participants found her to be very trustworthy as nurse. One participant noted Jackie was considered trustworthy based on the video shown of her in the hospital taking care of patients but very untrustworthy based on the promo.

Participants were very invested in seeing Dexter balance his double life as a serial killer and family man. One participant who never watched the show even opted to start binge watching it after this study. Overall, participants were very invested in watching *Dexter*. Dexter is a serial killer, but he only kills criminals or people who went with crimes left unpunished. Seven out of twelve participants felt they wouldn’t be comfortable being in a room with him. One participant noted that they would be comfortable being in a room with Dexter because of their respective good character. Dexter also is a father raising his son Harrison. Half of the participants found Dexter to be very untrustworthy as a babysitter if they allowed their children to be in his care. One participant was neutral about trusting Dexter as a babysitter based on his background and watching a video taking care of his son. Other participants gave Dexter the benefit of the doubt, however. One participant stated that although Dexter was methodical, they felt that he would be fine as a babysitter. Overall, participants found Dexter to be slightly to very likable. One participant felt that Dexter’s actions in earlier episodes demonstrate his need to be a good person and that his goodness seems to outweigh the bad.

All these characters are morally ambiguous. They have traits of good and evil. The overall impression of these characters was favorable. Some participants felt that these characters are what make these shows good. Most of the participants felt that these characters were slightly likable to very likable. Saul Goodman proved to be the most likable out of the four. *Better Call Saul* was noted as being the most popular show in terms of recognition. Participants were already familiar with his character from *Breaking Bad*. One participant stated they would be very invested in watching *Better Call Saul* because of *Breaking Bad*. Another participant familiar with *Breaking Bad* noted they were very invested in watching *Breaking Bad* due to the development of Jimmy McGill's character into Saul Goodman.

Mad Men's Donald Draper was a somewhat likable character for participants. One participant noted that the story arc dealing with Don Draper's past was very interesting and she felt that helped her with liking the character. Some participants that were familiar with the show noted that opinions about Don Draper changed due to his actions throughout the run of the series. One participant felt like he was a very engaging but there wasn't much redeeming quality in his character.

In terms of *Better Call Saul* and *Mad Men*, these morally ambiguous characters are focused mostly on their character development. These two characters attempt to escape their past and leave failure with success. Dick Whitman takes on the name of Don Draper and Jimmy McGill transforms into Saul Goodman. What made these shows so compelling was seeing their character develop into someone else. With *Mad Men*, viewers already know Don Draper and as the series progresses, more information about his past is presented. With *Better Call Saul*, viewers are presented with Jimmy McGill who isn't Saul Goodman yet. In *Breaking Bad*, he is

Saul Goodman. *Better Call Saul* serves as a prequel to *Breaking Bad*, in which it tells the full story of how Jimmy McGill becomes Saul Goodman.

Dexter and Jackie were similar in their respective character traits with living a double life. Both were trying to live a normal life with harboring a dark secret. Jackie was battling a drug addiction while also trying to balance her life as a wife and mother and having a secret affair. Aside from that, Jackie takes her job as a nurse seriously. Based on her job as a nurse she is very sympathetic and understanding. Outside of work, her attitude is negative, and she is defensive to others who get in her way. Once people start to find out about her addiction, their views about her start to change. They resent her but at the same time, want to offer her help. Participants were very invested in the show, on the pretense to see if Jackie ever becomes “good.” What made this show so interesting is that viewers are hoping that Jackie overcomes her addiction. As the series show goes on, there seems to be hope for Jackie yet, but she falls back into her old ways.

Dexter tries to live his life as a blood spatter analyst while harboring a dark secret as a serial killer. In the series, viewers learn about Dexter’s past. They see why Dexter has this urge to kill people. Viewers learned that Dexter started killing animals at a young age. Dexter’s adopted father Harry didn’t want him to get worse and possibly cause a human harm, so he adopted a code for Dexter to live by. Harry being a police officer, taught Dexter about the code. The code meant Dexter could channel his urges to kill people who got away with crimes that were unresolved. Dexter would continue to adopt this code as part of his lifestyle. Since he works with police, he knows who is guilty and innocent. With this code in check, Dexter can live a life as a normal person, but he must be secretive. He gets married and has a family as the series

goes on. Viewers want to see him be happy and at the same time, don't want him to get caught being a serial killer. Viewers know that it is morally wrong to kill people, but they want Dexter to get away with it and live a productive life.

RQ2: Do morally ambiguous characters engage more audiences than other types of characters?

Overall, MACs could be described as unpredictable. With these characters, they all have their respective issues they deal with. Studies have shown that viewers relate to these types of characters. Viewers don't want these characters to fail, so we they tend to look over their morally ambiguous choices. With Don Draper, viewers want to understand why he wanted to escape his past and create a new future. With Saul Goodman, viewers want to know why and how he became the crooked criminal. Viewers want to see Jackie overcome her addiction and they want to see Dexter get away with murder. Participant 2 noted "These characters are dynamic, and it keeps the story fresh and compelling." Viewers accepted that these characters are relatable and human and try to justify their actions. If viewers like the character enough, they will be invested in seeing the respective characters grow and prosper in their own ways.

Focus on Brands, Building on Previous storylines and character arc

AMC

AMC started out as a network brand that showcased movies ranging from classic to action movies. Original programs become a staple of the brand with *Mad Men* in 2007 and *Breaking Bad* in 2008. Other shows like *The Walking Dead* and *Better Call Saul* are still airing today with new content. Many of the participants cited Walter White to the definitive character

when it comes to being morally ambiguous. With *Breaking Bad* following up to *Mad Men*, it would create a new definition of MACs. *Mad Men* introduced Don Draper in 2007 and Walter White in 2008. The main characters of the show are by definition morally ambiguous. Few participants even noted that several characters from *The Walking Dead* like Rick and Carol were described as morally ambiguous. *Better Call Saul* is no exception in this discussion. As viewers are familiar with him from *Breaking Bad*, he is morally ambiguous. In *Better Call Saul* it shows Jimmy McGill who is not yet Saul Goodman as a very likable notable character.

Unique Storylines

Mad Men

The storylines that are presented in *Mad Men* and *Better Call Saul* are unique. *Mad Men* is a period piece set in the 1960s, showcasing the world of advertising. Main protagonist Donald Draper is a successful creative director for the company of Sterling Cooper. The show focuses on the life of Don Draper while also presenting the world during the sixties. Don Draper is a drinker and smoker. He has a family of his own, but he also has numerous affairs throughout the run of the series. As the series progresses viewers learn more about his past and find out he isn't Don Draper. His name is Dick Whitman, and he took on the identity of fallen soldier Don Draper. Viewers watch throughout the seven seasons of the show on how Don Draper balance his life as someone else. Few participants noted that the new identity gave the show a mystery quality. Aside from Don Draper's life viewers get a glimpse of what life was like in the 1960s on Madison Avenue in New York City. The term Mad Men is said to come from Madison Avenue where the big ad agencies were at. With AMC being known for its classic movies, *Mad Men* fit

the part right for the brand showing a morally ambiguous character in a period piece about advertising.

Transmedia Storytelling

Better Call Saul

AMC also provided the home for *Breaking Bad*'s prequel *Better Call Saul* in 2015. *Better Call Saul* still remains on AMC until the final season which is set to premiere in 2022. The story arc revolves around how Saul Goodman became the crooked lawyer that viewers see in *Breaking Bad*. The *Breaking Bad* timeline takes place from 2008 to 2013, while *Better Call Saul* takes place 2002 to 2008 almost coming before the events of *Breaking Bad*. *Better Call Saul* is on its sixth season and there is still story for viewers to see. Through the past five seasons, several characters from the *Breaking Bad* universe have made an appearance on *Better Call Saul*. With these appearances, it fills in the holes that were presented in *Breaking Bad*. Aside from Saul Goodman himself, viewers get to see other characters from *Breaking Bad* in their lives before the events of the later show. Characters like Mike Ehrmantraut to Gus Fring who play major roles in *Breaking Bad*, are shown as minor yet intricate to the plot of *Better Call Saul*. It brings all the pieces together in the prequel and viewers see the complete puzzle of the between the two shows. Viewers of *Breaking Bad* had prior knowledge of Saul Goodman's character from the show and now get to see how his character evolved over time. Another interesting story arc in *Better Call Saul* is the black and white scenes that are shown in each season premiere. Each scene shows Saul Goodman under a new identity as Gene Tackovic, a manager of a Cinnabon in Omaha, Nebraska. After the events of *Breaking Bad*, Saul leaves town and goes under a new identity, in hopes to stay away from the police.

Original Content

Showtime

Dexter

Showtime is a brand of television that requires viewers to subscribe to watch their content. Showtime has a variety of movies ranging from documentaries to action movies to dramas. Also, Showtime has an array of original content in television shows. *Dexter* premiered in 2006 and ended in 2013, with a future limited series in production, airing in 2021 or 2022. *Dexter* tells the story of serial killer who hides it well among his peers. Viewers are introduced to Dexter and find out why he kills people and how he copes with this need for it. The show chronicles eight seasons of *Dexter* killing people and getting his dark secret revealed by people and even other serial killers. Aside from the killings, viewers see Dexter grow in his personal life as he gets married and becomes a father to his wife's kids and his own son. Viewers also get to see the numerous relationships that Dexter gets into before settling down and after the death of his wife. The show even draws attention to the minor characters that Dexter works with in the police station. One relationship that draws out the run of the show is with Dexter's sister Debra. They both were adopted by the same family, so their relationship is significant to the plot of the show.

There are many incidents where Dexter gets his identity as serial killer exposed to someone in the show. Two of which are cops in the show, one being sergeant Doakes and the other being Captain LaGuerta. Both characters found out that Dexter was a serial killer and tried to expose him and have him arrested. However, they both failed and died in the process. Debra also found out about Dexter's dark secret, but she couldn't turn him in due to the love she has for

him as a sibling and as a person. Debra tends to believe in the morally hand of justice while Dexter pursues a darker path. Debra's loyalty to Dexter is tested in the last two seasons of the series after finding out the truth about Dexter. Debra even kills Captain LaGuerta just so Dexter wouldn't have to go to jail. Despite all the incidents of being caught, Dexter still felt the urge to kill. There is a point in the final season where he tries to escape his need for killing and form a new life with his son and his new girlfriend. However, Dexter fakes his own death and starts a new life elsewhere.

Nurse Jackie

Nurse Jackie premiered in 2009 and ran for seven seasons ending in 2015. The run of the show saw protagonist Jackie Peyton battling drug addiction while also balancing two lives, her work life and home life. In the pilot episode, viewers are introduced to Jackie and her life as a nurse. Viewers find out quickly that she is addicted to painkillers. However, she has a great reputation for being a good nurse. Her work life revolves around her patients and her employees. Zoey is a nurse in training and is always willing to learn from Jackie. Eddie is the pharmacist in the hospital and Jackie's love interest. Her best friend is Dr. O'Hara whom she confides in during stressful times at work and at home. As the pilot episode ends, viewers find out that Jackie also has a husband and two daughters. Jackie prays in the pilot episode for God to make her good but not yet. Jackie wants to be good, but she also enjoys the painkillers, and it helps her with the pain of working. There is an internal struggle within her need to be good and her need to be high on the drugs.

The story arc of the series revolves around Jackie's drug use and those around her. As her drug addiction gets worse, people start to find out about it. First, Eddie finds out that Jackie is

married and has a family. Eddie then plays as if she doesn't know Jackie and becomes friends with her husband Kevin. He in turn welcomes Eddie and tries to get a job at the hospital where he is already employed. Eddie hangs this over Jackie's head and Jackie must keep their affair a secret for the time being. Jackie's marriage strains over the course of the first few seasons. Kevin admits to having an affair, while in turn Jackie throws him out of the house. They soon file for divorce. Jackie also has a strained relationship with her older daughter Grace. The two get into much heated arguments about her work schedule and her addiction to drugs. Once Kevin and Dr. O'Hara find out about Jackie's drug addiction, they convince her to go to rehab. Jackie goes but she doesn't enjoy the process. She gets off time with work, with the excuse of working and volunteering out of state. She spends the time overcoming her addiction and remains sober for over a year. She then soon starts taking pills again.

By the end of the series, several people know that she is an addict, and, on several occasions, she has overcome the addiction, but she goes back to it again. Her addiction gets into trouble with her job to the point she can no longer practice nursing. She holds off until she can pass a drug test, until she gets her job back then she goes back to her old ways. The end of the show ends on a cliffhanger, where she passes out from a drug overdose. Zoey tells her that "you're good Jackie" giving the answer to the prayer that was said at the beginning of the show. Jackie spent the whole series battling her addiction and trying to balance her life at home and work. The two collided and she started to lose everything little by little. Jackie's career revolved around saving lives, but she couldn't save her own from addiction.

Ambition over Morality

AMC and Showtime featured these four morally ambiguous characters in their respective shows. They all have their similarities and differences, but they all have the same moral character. One trait that each character had was the drive to achieve their goals by any means necessary. Each did their own thing their own way. Don Draper does things his way regardless of what people say. His job as an ad man is to get people to buy his product and he is willing to do whatever possible to achieve his goals. Don Draper has his own personal vices as well with smoking and drinking. He always has numerous affairs over the course of the seven seasons of the show. He had two marriages that ended in divorce and still had the desire to seek other women. Having affairs in the work also didn't stop Don either. Like Jackie, Don wasn't afraid to have an affair even if it involved someone they worked with. Saul Goodman made it clear in *Breaking Bad* he did whatever he could to get what he wanted. Before Saul Goodman, Jimmy McGill was in this mindset as well. Jimmy wanted to be a top lawyer like his brother, but if he could find an easier way to get there, he would do it. Jimmy wasn't afraid of cutting corners. He didn't care what he did legal or not, he did what he wanted. He forged legal documents from his brother Chuck just so his girlfriend would get the client instead of his brother. He had publicity stunts played out just so he could get potential clients. Whatever it takes, Jimmy did it his own way.

Jackie also did things her own way and she went through great lengths to hide her addictions and her affair. Jackie smashed her finger with a hammer on purpose to hide her ring finger from Eddie. She also made people believe she was sober, but she was still taking pills. She even hid pills throughout her own house that way her family would not know she was using.

Dexter also went through great lengths to hide his identity as a serial killer. After all, his father taught him how to cover his tracks. Dexter was very neat with his victims and disposed of the remains so no one would find them. He would cut up his victims and put them in garbage bags and dump them in the ocean. There are a few incidents where something is left behind and his cover has been broken but, in the end, Dexter never got caught by the police.

Character Careers

Another similarity between these characters is how they all have respective careers in that bring value to society. Don is an ad man trying to get people to buy his product. Saul is a criminal lawyer; Jackie is a nurse and Dexter is a police officer. They all contribute to society with their careers. While they don't follow all the ethical standards for each job, they still find a way to do it. Saul and Jackie each had an issue with their job due to their morally ambiguous actions. Saul forged legal documents and was put on probation for a year. Jackie used drugs while on the job and was also on probation. In the end, both got reinstated from their respective jobs and still returned to their old ways. Even Don Draper, took a leave of absence from his heavy drinking at work. Dexter's job as a blood spatter analyst helps the police catch the suspect in a crime that involved blood. Dexter's job is vital to catching the murderer. Even if they catch the person, the jury could vote to let the suspect go, but Dexter would then take the law into his own hands.

Character Differences

While these characters are similar, they also have differences. While Jackie and Saul still cling to their old lifestyles, Don and Dexter make somewhat different choices. Don Draper gets

fired from his job and tries to reconnect by going to group therapy. He makes amends with his ex-wife Betty and tries to leave his past behind him. The end of *Mad Men* sees Don meditating and it then cuts to a classic commercial showing Coca-Cola. In the end, Don Draper was trying to escape his past and embrace his future. However, Don may change his ways but his job as an ad man has been a part of his identity. Dexter even considers leaving Miami with his son and his new girlfriend in the hopes of starting a new life. His girlfriend Hannah and his son Harrison leave for Argentina, while Dexter stays in Miami to tie up loose ends. His sister Debra dies from a gunshot wound and that changes the course in Dexter's mind. He takes her body and dumps it in the ocean like he did with his own victims. Dexter feels that he was the cause of her death. Dexter then fakes his own death with a storm out at sea. Dexter then lives another life without his son and his girlfriend. Whether or not Dexter kills again after the events of the series is still yet to be determined. However, these two characters were willing to change, it just took something to happen to them to shake them to their core.

Another difference deals with Jackie and Saul. While they both get reinstated from their jobs, they have similar reasons for their character arc. Jackie dealt with her drug addiction and was never able to come to terms with it. Whether or not she died from her drug overdose in the final episode is still a topic of discussion. Jackie couldn't save her own life. Saul Goodman has a different character arc than Jackie, however. *Better Call Saul* starts with Jimmy McGill who is a lawyer just trying to get by and is willing to cut corners a little to get ahead. When he becomes Saul Goodman, the corner cutting becomes part of his role as a criminal lawyer. He is representing criminals while also being a criminal himself. However, after the events of *Breaking Bad*, Saul goes into hiding under a new name Gene Tackovic. He isn't considered a threat due to him hiding from the police for his involvement with Walter White's meth empire.

The opening scenes of each season premiere show Saul in his new life as Gene. While he is Gene, he still has traits from Saul Goodman. He almost blows his cover when a crime is witnessed in front of him, and he screams to the person “don’t say anything and to get a lawyer.” Even there is a hint of Jimmy McGill in there as well as he cared for the person that got arrested. Saul Goodman never left Jimmy McGill and vice versa. In the end, no matter what happens to Gene in the future events of the show, he will always be Jimmy McGill despite his Saul Goodman identity.

Character Development

What is presented in these shows dealing with morally ambiguous characters revolves around character arc and development. The character arcs play a huge role in the success of the show. Without the interesting stories of each of these morally ambiguous characters, the show wouldn’t be as interesting. The idea of Don Draper’s secret past gives viewers reason to tune in on why he left Dick Whitman behind and traded it in for Don Draper. The mystery of finding out about his past give the arc of the story a compelling twist. Behind the backdrop of an everchanging decade of the sixties, and the job of advertising gives the show a compelling story. Don Draper’s job as an ad man represents his own life, as he is selling people the idea of Don Draper through his own actions and motivations.

In *Better Call Saul*, Jimmy McGill transforms into Saul Goodman the criminal lawyer, and the whole premise of the show is what actions and events shaped him into the character. Such events like his relationship with his brother and his motivation to succeed by any means necessary were the driving force of the show. Jimmy’s actions in *Better Call Saul* show that he isn’t in favor of doing the right thing. He feels that doing the right thing got him nowhere and

cutting corners is the right way to do things. Being a MAC gives traits of doing things in their own character's respective way. It shows that no matter how many times you do the right thing, it won't always work in your favor, but doing things another way may cause a better or disastrous result.

Jackie Peyton also did things her own way and did not even consider the moral way, as she took her own interest at heart before others. After all, she was a nurse, and in her job, she took an oath to uphold ethical rules and standards of it. Her character doesn't even take this into consideration. Jackie cares about her patients, she cares about her employees, however Jackie cares about herself more. She is an addict, and she is always thinking of her next high. She doesn't necessarily care who she hurts in the process until she loses that person in her life for good. MACs do think what is best for them and they don't consider the outcome of the situation. While they may have close friends and family they care about, they take their own feelings into consideration first before others.

Dexter is like Jackie when it comes to dealing with feelings. While Dexter doesn't understand what it means to love someone, he isn't totally heartless. He marries a woman who has kids and takes them in as his own. Dexter doesn't express love like everyone else. He finds it difficult. Dexter has a son who he loves but he expresses in his own way. Dexter does keep his own personal demons away from the people he cares about. While he has an endless hunger to kill people, he divides it from his personal life. He does care for people, but he still considers his own personal needs. Morally ambiguous characters may have a hard time showing emotion or may show their emotion in a different way. They still take their own feelings to heart over others.

Discussion

This section takes a look at how the theories related to the study of the MACs. Each theory had its own relatable connection with each show and character. Each character related to each theory in its own way.

Affective Disposition Theory

ADT played a role in this study. Raney (2004) noted in his study that viewers make judgments of the characters in the shows they are watching that affects their enjoyment of the narrative. In terms of this study, ADT made a clear statement. Many of the participants found all the characters observed in this study to be likable. Several of the participants had seen the shows that were observed and stated they continued watching the shows despite the actions of the characters. Many of the participants noted they would be very invested in watching these shows just based on the arc of character development in the show along with the arc of the story telling.

Participants found Don Draper's character to be somewhat to very likable. While most participants noted they wouldn't be comfortable being in a room with him, they still considered watching the show. Many of the participants found it a very compelling story arc about Don Draper's past and noted this to be a motivating trend to be invested in the show. Few people however, stated the reason for watching show was the time period presented in the show with the sixties and the golden age of advertising. Viewers found that Don Draper's role in the show was based on his role in the advertising business. He was defined as an ad man and not a family man.

Since his character had numerous affairs and wasn't an active father, viewers felt that he wasn't the ideal family man. They felt that his job was his identity, and it defined his role in the show.

Saul Goodman was the most recognized character of all the shows that were observed. Many of the participants were familiar with his character from *Breaking Bad*. Participants that had watched *Better Call Saul* noted they were interested in the arc of how Jimmy McGill became Saul Goodman. Even many participants that hadn't watched the show, considered watching it with the idea of the character development of Saul Goodman. After watching a clip of one of Jimmy's scams, it gave viewers a glimpse of what kind of person he is. Most participants found the video to be funny as Jimmy hires someone to pose as a war hero to get on an Air Force base and take a photo with a fighter jet. While the act itself was considered immoral, participants found the clip to be comical.

Jackie Peyton was a somewhat likable character to the participants found her story arc to be very interesting. Most of the participants noted they were very invested to see if Jackie ever becomes good. Some participants that had watched the show noted that it was a compelling story to watch with her battle with drug addiction. Some participants were neutral about the show. One participant felt that the story arc of hospital shows was overdone in television. Many participants felt that Jackie was a good and dependable nurse, and they would trust her despite knowing her dark secret. Other participants noted despite not watching the show, they were curious about just based on the promos alone and were very interested in watching it.

Dexter Morgan was also considered a somewhat likable character to participants. Many felt that his story arc of being a serial killer and maintaining a normal life was a compelling story arc. Few participants that weren't familiar with the show decided to watch it after this study was

completed. Participants felt that Dexter was likable, but they also considered him to be a risk. Many of the participants felt that Dexter was trustworthy as a babysitter considering he has a child of his own. They noted that despite his need to kill people, Dexter would never harm a child. One participant noted that they would be comfortable in a room with Dexter because he wasn't considered to be a bad person in Dexter's eyes. Dexter only kills people who are criminal and do bad things that get away with it. Dexter was also pretty recognizable by participants with most of them being familiar with the show and a good portion of them had watched the show.

Affective disposition theory looks at how viewers judge characters in television shows based on their narrative. These shows were observed as all these characters are categorized as being morally ambiguous. Each character has his or her flaws and viewers tend to look over it by giving them the benefit of the doubt. While viewers may not agree with the decisions of the characters, they tend to disassociate their decisions and support them. They come to these shows for enjoyment. The shows observed gives viewers characters that are morally ambiguous and have compelling arcs.

With *Mad Men*, viewers get to the character development of Don Draper from a fallen soldier who takes the name of Draper and leaves his past behind as Dick Whitman. Viewers still follow Don Draper despite his affairs with other women and drinking and smoking. Viewers want to see him succeed as a person and as an ad man. Viewers want to know how Saul Goodman became the criminal lawyer he was on *Breaking Bad*. *Better Call Saul* gives viewers the chance to the steps and events it took for Saul Goodman to come into existence.

Participants wanted to see if Jackie ever beats her addiction, and they constantly root for her to get better. They cheer for her because she is human, and she has a vice. People can relate

with this for personal reasons or just because they care for another human being. They want to see her get better and continue her job as a dependable nurse. Even with Dexter, viewers understand that it is morally wrong for killing people, but they still don't want Dexter to get caught and taken away. They like Dexter despite his dark side. They want him to succeed as a father to his son Harrison. With all these characters observed ADT means that viewers are willing to give the show a chance if they like the character. The character may cross the line when it comes to the viewer's moral and ethical standards, but audiences are willing to let it slide for the sake of enjoyment.

Social Cognitive Theory

The second theory that was incorporated in this study was social cognitive theory. The theory states that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person along with their behavior and environment. In other words, it is a theory in which viewers can identify with the characters in the shows they are watching. Viewers may find similarities in the character giving more reason for the enjoyment of the show based on their overall assessment of the characters. This theory was used in this study. Each character had traits that could easily be like those who watched them. One aspect of what made these characters identifiable with viewers were their careers. Each of the characters observed in the study all had jobs that brought value to society.

Don Draper was the advertising executive who was trying to sell his products to the masses. People can identify with him because he is trying to sell a product that will benefit others. Even if someone isn't in advertising, they understand the goal is to sell the product to someone that needs it. Viewers of the audience take stock in the idea of Don Draper as the ad

man. They understand that his job is part of his identity and with that they can sympathize that their own job could be part of their identity.

Saul Goodman is the criminal lawyer but before that he was a lawyer trying to find his common ground. Before Saul became the lawyer he is in *Breaking Bad*, Jimmy McGill was trying to find clients of his own to represent. It wasn't easy for Jimmy, having a brother that already had a firm with the McGill name, so he had to make his own way. With that, Jimmy does whatever he can to get his name out there to the public and get clients for his practice. Jimmy finds his focus in the elderly, helping them with their wills and even finding an interesting case involving in a nursing home. Viewers can identify with trying to find the right area for their job interest. Jimmy has a degree in law in which he can choose an area to focus his talents on. People go to school for different degrees and can often use their degrees in different areas of concentration. Now, with the options available, Jimmy's goal was to get his name out there. He wanted to be his own man in his own career field. Viewers can relate with this as they want to be recognized as someone special in their career field. While viewers probably won't do illegal actions to get to the top, they will however strive to get there regardless.

Jackie's job as a nurse was very vital to her role in the show. She was a reliable and dedicated nurse to her patients. Viewers from the healthcare field can sympathize with her and relate to the pressures and rewards of being a nurse. Even with those who aren't in the healthcare field can find sympathy for Jackie along with other healthcare professionals. After all their job is to provide care for people who are sick or injured.

Aside from her job, people can relate to her addiction. The whole premise of Nurse Jackie could identify with viewers who are struggling with addictions themselves or of someone

close in their lives. *Nurse Jackie* could also provide a positive aspect for viewers with hopes of trying to overcome their own personal demons while also cheering for Jackie to overcome hers.

Dexter can also be identifiable to audiences. Dexter's job as blood spatter analyst is very intricate to the plot of the show. His job is to help the police with murder cases. If there is blood at a crime scene, Dexter will come to the crime scene and decipher the situation and figure out what happened to the victim. Viewers related to Dexter in his job environment. Dexter does a fascination with blood, but his job is to figure out the cause of the murder and the reason behind it. Aside from his job, Dexter craves the idea of justice for crimes committed. He wants to see people put away or dealt with for their heinous crimes. Being raised by a police officer, Dexter's dad Harry taught him that police officers can't catch all the bad guys. Dexter then takes this to heart with his need to kill people. Using the code of Harry as a justification, Dexter takes the law into his hands and tracks down criminals who got away with their crimes. Viewers can relate to Dexter's action to some degree. While people's morals of killing others are not like Dexter's, they still want to see justice served.

Brand Marketing on Social Media

All of these shows apart from *Better Call Saul* ran during a time when streaming services were starting out. *Mad Men* and *Better Call Saul* were home to cable network *AMC* and viewers would have to tune in every week for the latest episode. *Better Call Saul* is still in circulation, viewers can watch in real time and watch it on available streaming services. *Dexter* and *Nurse Jackie* were on the paid subscription *Showtime* when they were on the air. Even today, viewers can watch and stream these two shows not only on the *Showtime* but other streaming services. *Better Call Saul* remains the only show that is still circulating new episodes into 2022.

In 2020, there were several advertaintments around the shows upcoming fifth season. Ever since the start of the show, *AMC* has incorporated trailers for each season using social media platforms to market the show. Platforms ranged from Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Reddit and even YouTube. Even with the launch of AMC+ the platform markets other key shows as *Mad Men* and *Breaking Bad*. *Dexter* is another show where social media is incorporated to their marketing strategy. With *Dexter*, having numerous places on streaming services from *Netflix* to *Amazon Prime*, viewers have more option to watch the show. Even with the planned limited series of *Dexter* being produced, the show could easily be marketed using social media, drawing bigger audiences than when it first premiered. Even with *Nurse Jackie*, still a Showtime original, viewers can now watch it on Apple TV (Decider, 2021)

While half of these shows have finished production, *Dexter* and *Better Call Saul* are still shows that have future footage to be seen. *Better Call Saul* wraps up the series in 2022 while *Dexter*'s limited time miniseries returns in late 2021 to early 2022. With social media being an intricate part of society, it can play in the succession of the shows. For future television, shows social media is a strong strategy to market the shows. It will draw in more viewers with the social media connection and more subscriptions depending on where the show is presented. Cable television shows can still incorporate commercials as a strategy but using social media may hit more target audiences. Even with streaming services dedicated to having exclusive content for their specific network, it can help build an audience for their brands.

Limitations

There were some limitations in this study. There were 13 participants who took part in the study. The methodology used in this study was able to gather data. More data might have

been collected if there was a larger sample size. Also, Zoom was used in this to communicate with participants in the study. Face to face interactions or focus groups might have yielded more data. Face to face interviews might had more discussion. Focus groups might have had more discussion along with agreements and disagreements. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher had limited options with the study. The researcher uses the resources available to conduct the study. Another aspect to take into consideration is to take more time to analyze the content to produce more data driven questions.

Conclusion

This study was to see if MACs influence brand relationships with their respective characters. Each character represented their respective brand with their own development throughout the narrative and the arc. The study found that MACs represent their respective brands *AMC* and *Showtime*. These brands can market these shows with a strategy using MACs. The idea behind these MACs, is their compelling narratives and their development in throughout their stories. Using ADT, people root for characters when they succeed and want bad characters to fail. With MACs, people are spilt with the decision to cheer or not based on the MAC's decisions. If people like the character, they are going to give the MACs the benefit of the doubt when it comes to their action. People want to overlook the actions of MACs in order to enjoy the narrative presented.

This study could be beneficial to the study of MACs. Not only as characters as a whole, but for brands who are willing to adopt shows about these types of characters. Brands can incorporate narrative storytelling with MACs into their strategy to give recognition from audiences. *AMC* has adopted characters like Walter White and Saul Goodman to be a

representation of what their brand it all about. *Showtime* has adopted memorable characters like Dexter Morgan to be a poster boy for MACs. These types of characters have traits that are good and bad. Audiences can choose who they will root for based on the MACs actions and motives. Even if the MAC's ethics and values differ from the people watching, the viewer can often disassociate themselves from those ethics and values and watch the show for pure enjoyment.

Future studies could be observed. A deeper content analysis of each episode of the respective shows in question may help bring more data. Also, other shows could be observed from the past, present, and future shows revolving around MACs. Characters could be compared and contrasted from all forms of media. This could range from literature to movies to video games. MACs bring a great deal of information to observe. Future studies can help researchers understand why people relate to these characters, and why despite their actions like them.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Don Draper

	1	2	3	4	5
How familiar are with Don Draper from Mad Men?	Very unfamiliar	Slightly unfamiliar	neutral	Slightly familiar	Very familiar
Don Draper also known as in a previous life as Dick Whitman. He escapes his past and tries to redefine himself as a successful Ad man in New York. He takes on the identity of a fallen soldier from the war. He is a family man and is dedicated to his career. Aside from being a family man, he has numerous affairs throughout the run of the series.	Very inaccurate	Slightly inaccurate	neutral	Slightly familiar	Very familiar

How precise is this narration of the promo of the character of Don Draper					
How comfortable would you be in a room with Don Draper?	Very uncomfortable	Slightly uncomfortable	neutral	Slightly comfortable	Very comfortable
Considering Don Draper used to be Dick Whitman, how invested in the show would you be in order to learn more about his past?	Very uninvested	Slightly uninvested	neutral	Slightly invested	Very invested
Does his job as an ad man define his role in the show?	Very indefinite	Slightly indefinite	neutral	Slightly invested	Very invested
How likable do you consider the character of Don Draper?	Very unlikable	Slightly unlikable	neutral	Slightly likable	Very likable

Saul Goodman

	1	2	3	4	5
How familiar are with Saul Goodman from Better Call Saul?	Very unfamiliar	Slightly unfamiliar	neutral	Slightly familiar	Very familiar
<p>Saul Goodman also known as Jimmy McGill. He is a young scam artist trying to win the approval of his older brother Chuck. He pushes himself to become a lawyer, with the hopes of approval from his brother Chuck being a striking force. After the McGill name gets him nowhere, he changes his name to Saul Goodman from the phrase "it's all good man." Although he is a lawyer, he still has traits of his past scam artistry that resonates in his work as a criminal lawyer.</p> <p>How precise is this narration of the promo of the character of Saul Goodman?</p>	Very inaccurate	Slightly inaccurate	neutral	Slightly accurate	Very accurate
How comfortable would you be in a room with Saul Goodman?	Very uncomfortable	Slightly uncomfortable	neutral	Slightly comfortable	Very comfortable
Better Call Saul tells the story of how Jimmy McGill becomes Saul Goodman. How invested in the show would you be to learn his transformation into another identity?	Very uninvested	Slightly uninvested	neutral	Slightly invested	Very invested
How considerate are you for hiring Saul Goodman as your lawyer?	Very inconsiderate	Slightly inconsiderate	neutral	Slightly considerate	Very considerate

How likable do you consider the character of Saul Goodman	Very unlikable	Slightly unlikable	neutral	Slightly likable	Very likable
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Jackie Peyton

	1	2	3	4	5
How familiar are with Jackie Peyton from Nurse Jackie?	Very unfamiliar	Slightly unfamiliar	neutral	Slightly familiar	Very familiar
Jackie Peyton is a nurse who takes her job seriously and is very sympathetic towards her patients. Aside from her job she lives a double life as a mom and wife while also battling drug addiction and having an affair.	Very inaccurate	Slightly inaccurate	neutral	Slightly accurate	Very accurate
How precise is this narration of the promo of the character of Jackie Peyton?					

How comfortable would you be in a room with Jackie Peyton?	Very uncomfortable	Slightly uncomfortable	neutral	Slightly comfortable	Very comfortable
. In the pilot episode, Jackie prays to God "make me good." How invested in the show would be in order to see Jackie become "good?"	Very uninvested	Slightly uninvested	neutral	Slightly invested	Very invested
As a nurse, how trustworthy would you feel if Jackie was your caregiver?	Very untrustworthy	Slightly untrustworthy	neutral	Slightly trustworthy	Very trustworthy
How likable do you consider the character of Jackie Peyton?	Very unlikable	Slightly unlikable	neutral	Slightly likable	Very likable

Dexter Morgan

	1	2	3	4	5
How familiar are with Dexter Morgan from Dexter?	Very unfamiliar	Slightly unfamiliar	neutral	Slightly familiar	Very familiar

<p>Dexter Morgan is a blood splatter analyst for the Miami police department in Miami. He lives a double life as family man and as a serial killer. He lives by the "code of Harry" his stepfather's code of killing "bad" people who got away with crimes left unpunished.</p> <p>How precise is this narration of the promo of the character of Dexter Morgan?</p>	Very inaccurate	Slightly inaccurate	neutral	Slightly familiar	Very familiar
<p>How comfortable would you be in a room with Dexter Morgan?</p>	Very uncomfortable	Slightly uncomfortable	neutral	Slightly comfortable	Very comfortable
<p>Dexter lives a double life as serial killer and a family man, how invested in the show would you be in seeing him live his double life?</p>	Very uninvested	Slightly uninvested	neutral	Slightly invested	Very invested
<p>How trustworthy would you consider</p>	Very untrustworthy	Slightly untrustworthy	neutral	Slightly trustworthy	Very trustworthy

Dexter as a babysitter?					
How likable do you consider the character of Dexter Morgan	Very unlikable	Slightly unlikable	neutral	Slightly likable	Very likable

AMC and Showtime

	1	2	
Which of the following transformations between the two characters do you find the strongest for the brand narration?	Don Draper	Saul Goodman	
AMC is known for its original drama series, along with showing action/drama movies. What format should AMC adopt for their brand in the future?	Show more movies	More original content	Other (adopt another strategy)

Which of the following characters portray living a double life stronger for the brand narration?	Jackie Peyton	Dexter Morgan	
Showtime is a paid subscription for television. How could Showtime improve their brand in the future?	Show more movies.	More original content	Other (adopt another strategy)

Appendix B: Stimuli/Videos

Character	Promo	Description	Environment	Description
Don Draper	Mad Men Season 1 Promo	An introduction to the series. A period piece set in the sixties and the golden age of advertisement. Introduction to Don Draper	Don Draper-Hershey Bar Honesty	The scene shows Don Draper deliver a pitch for Hersheys. He delivers the pitch with a fictional story of his childhood After the successful pitch, he then confesses his true association with the candy bar.
Saul Goodman	Better Call Saul Season 1 Promo	An introduction to the series. A show about a lawyer trying to find himself. A prequel to about Breaking Bad's Saul Goodman Bad's Saul Goodman	Better Call Saul Season 2 Ep. 8 Fifi	Jimmy McGill hires a man to pose as a wounded war hero in a wheelchair to gain access to a military base. Once they are in, they trick the officer in charge to bring them a drink for the war

				<p>hero. Once he is gone, Jimmy instructs the war hero to get out of the wheelchair and pose in front of a fighter pilot. His camera crew records the fictional war hero posing in front of the fighter pilot.</p>
Jackie Peyton	Nurse Jackie Promo	An introduction to the series. A show about a nurse who struggles with drug addiction. Introduction to Jackie Peyton.	Nurse Jackie Working in Hospital	<p>A young athlete comes in from a line drive to the head. Once they are getting her settled in, she tells Jackie that she is taking steroids. The patient goes into shock and Jackie and her staff try to rescue her. The patient dies.</p>
Dexter Morgan	Dexter Promo	An introduction to the series. A show about a blood spatter analyst living a secret life as a serial killer.	Dexter with his son Harrison	<p>The scene shows Dexter taking care of his son Harrison by dressing, bathing, and reading to him. Dexter makes it clear the importance of routine. He often wonders how he can protect Dexter from the big bad wolves of the world.</p>

Appendix C: Demographics

Participants	Gender	Age/Education Status	Location	Occupation
1	Female	30 to 40	Tennessee	Nonstudent
2	Male	30 to 40	Tennessee	Nonstudent
3	Male	30 to 40	Tennessee	Nonstudent
4	Female	30 to 40	Tennessee	Nonstudent
5	Female	30 to 40	Tennessee	Nonstudent
6	Female	30 to 40	Tennessee	Nonstudent
7	Female	30 to 40	Missouri	Nonstudent
8	Male	20 to 30	North Dakota	Student
9	Female	40 to 50	Tennessee	Nonstudent
10	Female	20 to 30	Colorado	Nonstudent
11	Male	30 to 40	Tennessee	Nonstudent
12	Female	30 to 40	Tennessee	Nonstudent
13	Male	30 to 40	Missouri	Nonstudent



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