Co-constructing Loyalty in an Era of Digital Music Fandom: An Experiential- Discursive Perspective

James Obiegbu, Durham University
Gretchen Larsen, Durham University
Nick Ellis, Durham University
Daragh O'Reilly, University of Sheffield

Purpose: This article seeks to answer the question: How can a discursive approach to how music fans construct loyalty in a digital context contribute to a theoretical understanding of brand loyalty?

Design/methodology/approach: Drawing on insights from theories of brand loyalty and fandom, this interpretive inquiry makes use of data from an online forum dedicated to the band, U2, and interviews with forum members. A combination of online ethnography and discourse analysis are employed.

Findings: The analysis shows that music fans mobilise particular discursive resources in constructing loyalty in the digital context, specifically: length of time spent as a fan; obsession; and the opposition of obligation and choice. These discursive resources reflect a grounded account of an experientially-rooted brand loyalty that extends beyond attitudinal and behavioural loyalty, and which is particularly salient in music consumption.

Research limitations/implications: This is a single case study, but as a rich and vibrant online community, it provides fruitful insights into the discursive construction of loyalty. The processes of negotiation, accommodation and conflict, engaged in through online discourse are important in laying bare the preferences, value systems and meanings that frame the experiences of loyal consumers.

Originality/value: Examining loyalty through the lens of online music fandom enables a discursive understanding of consumers' experience of brand loyalty. It shows how online engagement with other consumers of a brand facilitates a deep engagement with the notion of loyalty.

Introduction
This study explores the discursive resources music consumers use to make claims about loyalty to an artist or 'b(r)and' (O'Reilly and Doherty, 2006) in a digital context. The allegiance of consumers to brands, mainly conceptualised as 'brand loyalty' has long held a central place in marketing theory and practice (Uncles et al., 2003). Most research has tended towards a supplier-oriented view that draws on logical positivist paradigms (Paavola, 2006) of behavioural and attitudinal loyalty, thus prioritising the interests of management. A consumer-oriented view that highlights the meaning and lived experience of brand loyalty has been pointed to in the work of, for example, Solomon (1986), McCracken (1993), Schouten and MacAlexander (1995), Fournier and Yao (1997), and Fournier (1998). While such a view promises to both widen and deepen our understanding of brand loyalty, the continued prevalence of behavioural and attitudinal approaches suggest that Fournier and Yao's (1997: 454) observation endures: "we have perhaps prematurely circumscribed the brand loyalty construct and our understanding of it, thereby precluding the accumulation of knowledge into a theory of brand loyalty that is valid at the level of lived experience".

The paucity of symbolic and affective dimensions in brand loyalty theory is problematic. Following the experiential turn, (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982), it is now widely accepted that consumers are active and affective subjects who negotiate and transform market-mediated meanings in pursuit of identity. Furthermore, brand community research by Muňiz and O'Guinn (2001) and Muňiz and Schau (2005) has underscored the importance of the consumer-to-consumer axis in brand relationships. Facilitated by digital technologies and social media, communities form around brands that offer symbolic resources through which consumers can communicate with each other and share experiences. Hence, and in response to Fournier and Yao's (1997) implicit call, our study contributes to an expanded theory of brand loyalty by calling attention to the symbolic meanings that underpin loyal behaviour and in doing so, highlights the utility of an experiential perspective of brand loyalty.

Our research focuses on music, as it is a social and cultural product (Hargreaves and North, 1999) where consumer loyalties are critically important but often radically challenged. The music industry has recently experienced significant changes and challenges due to digital technology (e.g. Meisel and Sullivan 2002). Amongst these, is the growth of social media which have allowed large groups of consumers to form around music brands much more easily, on a different scale, at a faster speed and intensity, and with a broader geographic scope than in the days of fan clubs and zines. In response, there is a considerable literature on various topics related to digital music consumption, in which a key focus is the phenomenon of file-sharing and music 'piracy' (e.g. Choi, Bae and Jun 2010), in other words, behaviours that do not exhibit loyalty. While studies focusing on loyalty in the positive sense are not found, the connected, digital landscape of music offers a unique opportunity to advance our understanding of brand loyalty. Consumer-to-consumer interactions in these spaces shape, and are shaped by, the meanings, perceptions, attitudes, behaviours and experiences of loyalty in a consumption context (e.g. Algesheimer et al., 2005).

To this end, the present research presents a grounded account of the lived experiences and social realities of music fans as they co-construct notions of loyalty through consumer-to-consumer engagement within interpretive online communities. In adopting an experiential perspective, we also elaborate upon the contribution of a discursive approach to an expanded understanding of brand loyalty. Experiential brand loyalty recognizes not only the symbolic meanings that underpin loyal behaviour, but also frames the consumer as an active party, rather than passive recipient in the constitution and negotiation of meaning. Loyalty is viewed as lived

and experienced by particular consumer groups. This study therefore challenges existing assumptions on the nature of brand loyalty, and points to conceptualisations that are valid and meaningful to contemporary consumers.

We begin with a critical review of the literatures on brand loyalty and music fandom, as a 'fan' is a subjective position often adopted by loyal consumers in the cultural sector. The study employs discourse analysis within a broadly netnographic approach to systematically observe the discursive resources utilized within the selected fan community along with direct contact with its social actors (Androtsoupouos, 2008). Three discursive resources that resonate with fans around loyalty were identified: time spent as a fan; obsession; and the opposition of obligation and choice. Findings confirm that an experiential view of loyalty that recognizes different ways of being loyal and of expressing loyalty, even to the same brand, is appropriate for the mediated, active and multifaceted consumers of today (Elliot and Wattanasuwan, 1998). It also constitutes a step forward in terms of an approach to brand loyalty that is awake to the lived experience of consumers as suggested by Fournier and Yao (1997).

Brand Loyalty
Existing literature defines brand loyalty in either behavioural or attitudinal terms, or as a two-dimensional model consisting of both (Rundle-Thiele and Bennet, 2001). Behavioural brand loyalty is mainly defined with reference to "the pattern of past purchases with only secondary regard to underlying consumer motivations or commitment to the brand" (Uncles et al., 2003:7). Repeated acts of purchase of a branded product are considered sufficient evidence of loyalty. According to Tucker (1964:32) "no consideration should be given to what the subject thinks or what goes on in his central nervous system; his behaviour is the full statement of what brand loyalty is". The benefit of this approach is that it is based on actual purchases, which are directly related to business performance (Mellens et al., 1995). However, it lacks explanatory power for the behaviour and assumes that purchase is necessarily a manifestation of loyalty. Behavioral models are therefore insufficient in providing a full understanding of the underlying factors that drive repeat purchase behaviour (Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978).

Attitudinal brand loyalty is focused on attitudinal commitment, alone or in combination with behavioural elements (Day 1976; Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978). It is defined in relation to whether or not the purchase of a brand is a manifestation of loyalty or an act devoid of choice. An oft referenced proponent of this view, Oliver (1999), defines loyalty as "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour" (p. 34). To track attitudes, proponents of the two-dimensional model focus on positive feelings, beliefs and commitment toward the brand, relative to available alternatives. Despite drilling deeper into the dynamics of loyalty than those accounted for under behavioural conceptualizations, attitudinal loyalty has not evaded criticism for its reliance on consumer declarations, rather than on observed behaviour (Odin et al., 2001).

Both behavioural and attitudinal definitions of brand loyalty privilege the supplier perspective, by prioritizing the interests of management (i.e. the purchase/sale) and adopting managerial discourses. Interpretive consumer research, through its experiential focus (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982) has shed a different light on the nature of consumer-brand relationships whereby the meanings and symbolic aspects of brand loyalty are brought into focus. For instance, Fournier (1998), argues that it is the relationship between the consumer and brand that provides meaning, and that a key to making sense of this meaning is to understand the

psychological and sociocultural context of the consumer. Fournier's (1998) work, like much marketing and consumer research, is focused on the one-on-one, dyadic relationship between brand and consumer (O'Guinn & Muñiz, 2005). While this is important in understanding individual attitudes, motivations and decision making processes, the range of cultural behaviors, and complex culturally defined patterns that shape behavior are somewhat masked by focusing on a singular consumer-brand relationship. This holds greater significance when we consider the connected landscape within which consumers engage with brands.

There have been attempts to understand the influence of groups on the individual consumer's behavior from a social-psychological perspective, however loyalty as an inherently social behavior that is constructed, enacted, and embedded within the collective is a vastly different undertaking. Researchers such as McCracken (1993) and Schouten and MacAlexander (1995) view brand loyalty as co-constructed by a community of consumers, but this perspective remains under-developed in the brand loyalty literature. Thus for a more complete picture of brand loyalty, the meanings that emerge through interaction need to be considered concurrently. A discursive/ experiential understanding of brand loyalty takes a step in this direction, by highlighting the ways brand loyalty is experienced by a group of consumers. From the consumer's perspective, the notion of the 'fan' is often evoked by those claiming a position of loyalty especially in relation to cultural products like films, sports and music (e.g. Kozinets, 2001), but also as relates to consumption more broadly. "Fandom" is therefore an effective lens for comprehending highly engaged and committed consumers and thus developing an understanding of the experiential nature of brand loyalty, especially when interacting through online music communities.

Fandom
There is no single definition that encompasses all that a fan is. However, there is general academic consensus that 'fan' describes a person who has a special relationship with the object of their affection, characterized by a high level of engagement. O'Reilly et al. (2013) suggest that a music fan displays broad knowledge about the object of their fandom, exhibits strong emotional attachment to it, and celebrates their obsession even in social situations. Fans weave their passion for the brand or consumption activity into their sense of identity in stronger and more visible way than is the case with other brands, products, or activities (O'Reilly et al., 2013; Lobert, 2012). They express their passion and attachment to a brand even in banal, everyday situations, not as a fleeting consumption activity, but as a consistent, religious-like allegiance (Lobert, 2012). Although the focus of the work on fandom has typically been on cultural brands within the arts and sport, because all brands can be understood as a mediated artefact of popular culture (Holt, 2004), any brand could become an object of fandom. It is not far-fetched to suggest that consumers can make similar associations with brands as fans do with musicians or sports teams. Fans, however, are set apart from other loyal consumers by the degree and intensity with which they engage with the objects of their admiration (Fiske, 1992; O'Reilly et al., 2013). As such, fandom epitomises an elevated functioning of brand loyalty characterised by intense brand engagement, socialization and identity.

Although fans can and do enjoy the consumption activity of their choice individually, fandom takes on a more powerful form when it is engaged with collectively (Harris and Alexander, 1998). Loyal fans typically seek out other similarly highly engaged and passionate fans and congregate within communities online and offline where they share their consumption experiences (O'Reilly et al., 2013). Fan communities provide structures for collectiveness, centred around the object of their shared admiration.

Fandom is also characterized by the semiotic and material productivity of fans (O'Reilly et al., 2013). They are 'excessive readers' (Fiske 1992) who are not content to simply receive and consume cultural texts as handed down in a producer-consumer exchange relationship. Rather, "fans are consumers who also produce, readers who also write, and spectators who also participate" (Jenkins, 1992:214). The intensity of engagement plays out in the form of co-creative endeavours (Alvermann and Hagood, 2000). As fans engage proactively in practices such as connecting with other fans and reworking and repurposing cultural texts in their productive endeavours, the meanings of those texts are negotiated and constructed within the interpretive community. This provides the grounds for approaching fandom as a discursive practice (See Figure 1). Fandom is constructed as a heightened expression of loyalty irrespective of the type of brand being considered, in the sense that it encompasses repeated purchases (behavioural loyalty), positive feelings towards the brand (attitudinal loyalty) and meaningful engagement with the brand within the context of its community (experiential loyalty).

The use of the frame 'fan' is not unproblematic, with fandom often being described pathological terms (Jenson, 1992) as a deviant and potentially dangerous form of interaction. However, many recent studies treat fandom as a normal and harmless form of cultural behavior that comprises a diversity of rich experiences (O'Reilly, et al., 2013). According to Gray et al. (2017) where "critics had previously assumed fans to be uncritical, fawning and reverential, fan studies scholarship argued and demonstrated clearly that fans were active, and regularly responded, retorted, poached" (p. 3). The term 'fan' has also been used inconsistently in relation to its offshoots: 'fanatics' and 'fanaticism', and this, argues Chung et al., (2018) complicates the study of fans. Nonetheless, the term 'fan' does not typically attract negative associations; rather, it is often used to highlight enthusiasm and passion for a target object (Chung et al., 2018). Music fans in particular are highly active in engaging their shared passion for artist brands both online and off.

In sum, 'fan' elucidates the richness of consumers experience of, and practices related to particular brands. For example, Cavicchi's (1998) ethnographic study of Bruce Springsteen fans focuses on the meanings attached to their fandom as told from their perspective. The ethnographic accounts captured in that study, though deeply insightful, are limited in comparison to the typical quantity of consumer-to-consumer communications that are afforded by a digital context. The access to naturally occurring data in an online context brings into full view the co-constructive potential of consumer-to-consumer interactions. O'Reilly and Doherty's (2006) more recent study of New Model Army looks at how fans and the band co-construct meaning and identities for themselves and for others within the context of an online community. This current study by contrast is entirely focused on fans as active players in the co-constitution and reconstitution of what it means to be a loyal consumer of the b(r)and.

Methodology
To examine the discursive resources music fans use to make claims about loyalty in a digital context, the study employs methods and techniques drawn from discourse analysis (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) within a broadly netnographic approach (Kozinets, 2002). Netnography is a method that "adapts ethnographic research techniques to the study of cultures and communities emerging through computer-mediated channels" (Kozinets, 1998:2). This combination enabled both systematic observation of discourses within the selected fan community and direct contact with its social actors to further deepen understanding (Androtsoupouos, 2008). The key

questions guiding the exploration were 'how do music fans construct meaning in relation to loyalty in an era of digital music consumption?', and 'what discursive resources do they draw upon in making sense of loyalty to U2?'.

The music b(r)and, U2, were selected firsty, because they are a prototypical mainstream commercial artist brand with a vibrant online fan community. Second, their success and longevity mean that the fan community is diverse in terms of age, status, income, online engagement and duration of relationship with the band. This presents the potential for interactions drawn from a breadth of experiences, with different areas of alignment and divergence structuring fan's relationships with the band. Finally, U2 have been through highs and lows; periods of extended commercial success and underperformance, and positive and negative media coverage that has both attracted, and tested, the loyalty of fans through the length of their career.

The study focused on one of two popular online U2 forums, which can be seen as a storehouse for the community's interactive text. Forum threads (sometimes called a topic) consist of a collection of posts focused on a topic of discussion (Xun and Reynolds, 2010) (See Figure 1). Data was collected using a combination of "observation ethnography" (Bainbridge, 2000) which focuses on the static examination of online data without interaction with forum members, and "participant observation" (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994) which involves communication and interaction with community members. Data collection began with an initial read through the large number of posts made between August 2008 when the forum was started and February 2016, with subsequent rounds undertaken monthly to capture new posts and emerging discussions. Notes were made of what was observed and where (Brown et al., 2003). A second read-through focused on threads and exchanges that made reference to loyalty, fans, fandom or allegiance, particularly those exchanges that seemed to imply a degree of conflict or debate regarding their meanings. The aim was to achieve depth in terms of analyzing the way loyalty was talked about within the confines of the community. The downloaded threads comprised 106,000 words from a combination of 28 threads and individual posts. Each thread typically had from 10 to over 50 participants depending on the duration and the interest of participants in the topic under discussion.

Data was also collected via participant observation, where the first author initiated threads and engaged in discussions based on emergent themes (for instance, on the importance of length of time as a fan, relationship between heritage and loyalty etc.). Finally, Skype interviews were conducted with forum members who appeared likely to add depth and richness to the data, or to offer interesting perspectives.

Online research raises certain ethical issues that require consideration (Eynon, Fry, and Schroeder, 2008). At the start of the participant observation, permission was gained from the forum administrator to proceed, who also posted a message on the forum informing members about the study. A more detailed description of the research plan was also sent to all fans within the forum. Members were informed that usernames of all participants would be changed to protect their online identities. Participants who wanted to know more about the research project or who did not want to be involved were invited to make contact. Six forum members responded that they did not want their posts to be used, and their wishes have been respected.

Discourse analysis was employed, as it provided a means of identifying the prevailing discursive resources and accompanying discourses within the fan community and of analysing the ways these discourses were negotiated through fans' interactions. For similar approaches

in a marketing context, see Dean et al. (2017) and Moufahim et al. (2007). Analytical work therefore placed emphasis on action, construction and variability of accounts within the interactive text of the community (Potter and Wetherell 1987). This process was guided by a theoretical interpretation of what was represented, as well as from explicit accounts. The analysis of discursive resources was underpinned by the notion of interpretative repertoires put forward by Potter and Wetherell (1987), where talk is viewed as a means by which speakers position themselves and are positioned by others, as they produce a situated construction within a particular interaction (cf. Ellis & Ybema, 2010).

Results & Discussion
Three discursive resources that were utilized by fans around loyalty were identified from the online U2 forum and interviews: loyalty represented by the time spent as a fan of the band; the notion of obsession; and the opposing views of 'loyalty as an obligation' tied to emotions toward the band and 'loyalty as an economic choice' that can be exercised at will. Of these, the use of time and obsession as discursive resources were most prevalent, featuring in multiple threads and individual posts. Constructions of loyalty as an obligation and as a choice were less prominent, featuring in discussion on two threads within the forum. Figure 1 illustrates the process of sense-making of loyalty and related practices and resources within the digital music community.

FIGURE 1

EXPERIENTIAL BRAND LOYALTY IN A
DIGITAL MUSIC CONSUMPTION COMMUNITY
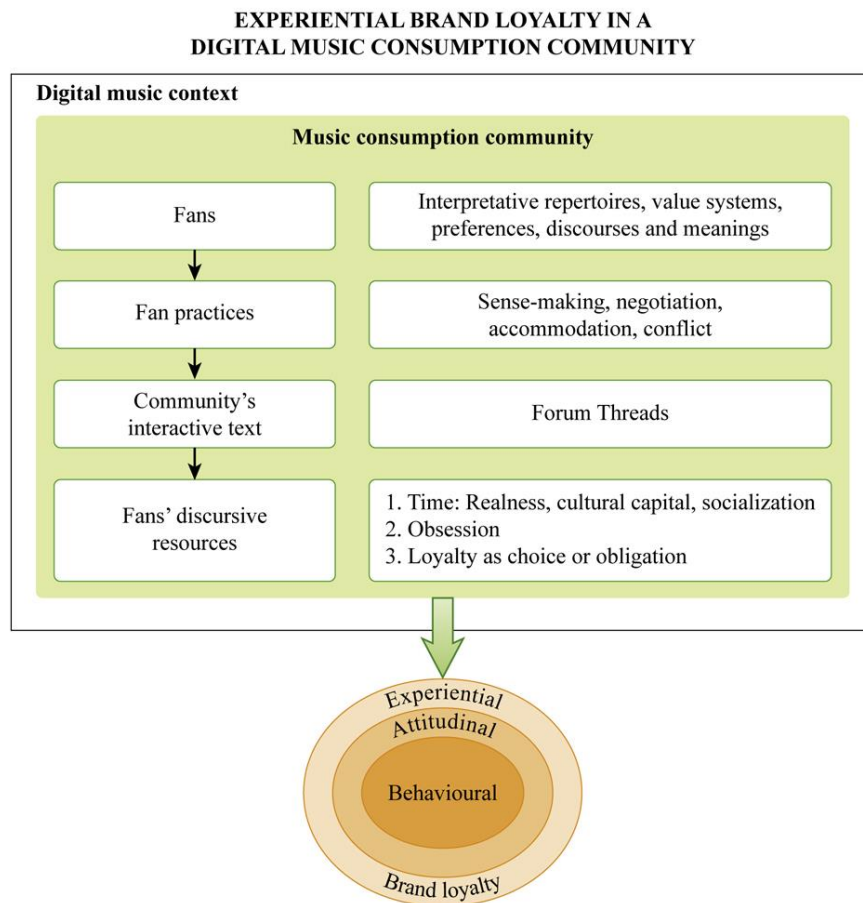
(1)Time and Loyalty
Fans use the length of time a person has been a fan of U2, and been engaged with the online community, as a discursive resource for constructing loyalty. This takes different forms: time

is used as a means of asserting 'real' fan status, making claims to possess cultural capital, and as part of the routine process of socialization. These are discussed further below.

(a) Time as a fan and realness

Extract 1

Briscoteque –   How do you know if you are a REAL fan??? There's so much confusion these days over what constitutes a REAL FAN™.

Marsgirl-   I love the music. Isn't that enough?

Ayajedi -   Of course I'm a real fan of U2. And so is anyone else who loves their music. […] If listening to some or all of U2's music gives you great pleasure, you are fan! End of.

Drowning Man – Is 30 years of loving the band enough to get me in? I think I am a real fan. (and no one is going to tell me I'm not 🤐).

Tumbling Dice- I think length of devotion is an important qualification to being a REAL FAN […]. Not that being a JohnnyorJillyComeLately can't *necessarily* be a REAL FAN, it's just that they'll likely be treated with some suspicion by us more longstanding and experienced REAL FANS. You see, we feel a kinship for having made the journey together through all the good times and the not-so-good times.
(forum: April 03, 2011)

These fans are engaged in a online debate on what it means to be a fan of the band. Briscoteque's use of the word 'real' suggests a belief in the existence of fans who might not be genuine. This participant thus introduces the notion of social categories of fans. 'REAL FAN' in capital letters, hyphenated with the trademark symbol, seems to be a way of denoting and contrasting fans who are accepted as meeting some sort of criteria acknowledged by those in a position to know. The symbol could represent a type of fan sanctioned by the market versus a kind of fandom that emerges from organic or authentic emotions towards the band. Briscoteque's question raises the notion that interaction with other fans is necessary to come to a shared sense of what it means to be a fan.

Marsgirl starts the process of co-constructing loyalty and fandom within the exchange by enquiring if 'love' of the band's music is not sufficient to be considered a real fan, a view supported by Ayajedi. Drowning Man then evokes time as a discursive resource for constructing loyalty. Tumbling Dice picks up on this, although her opinion seems to be presented with an air of authority that is missing from the preceding comments. She expands on this position by confirming that a new or recent fan is likely to attract suspicion from older fans like herself. By so doing, she positions herself and others like her as 'REAL' fans, because they have bonded through thick and thin over the course of their 'longstanding' fandom. Tumbling Dice's comment is an example of a classic othering technique, a way of establishing difference and hierarchy (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). It provides a means of dismissing others as less, in this case less worthy of trust, respect, or fan status. Time therefore operates as its own currency within this digital community, to the extent that it helps to establish the realness or authenticity of the fan. As we shall see, the currency of time cannot be accumulated simply by purchasing the band's music and merchandise. It has to be earned through time invested in the relationship with the band.

The length of time as a fan of U2 is used to position some fans as more invested than other 'casual' fans, and this also affects the interactions within the online community as a whole. For example, in another extract drawn from the interviews, Diane expresses her frustrations.

 I think I was the youngest member on the forum, and I kind of had the feeling, the vibe from some people that, you know, "You've just been a fan for like a year. We are bigger fans because we know them from like Redrocks, and we saw the tours", and I'm like, "Sorry I wasn't born earlier." **(Skype interview, February 27, 2016)**

Diane feels that fans who have followed the band for much longer than her perceive themselves to be 'bigger' fans. Time is thus seen to not only be a constructive resource for the depth of loyalty, but is also used to structure relations within the community. Similar patterns are found by Widdicombe and Woofit (1990) in their study of punk subculture and in Larsson's (2013) exploration of heavy metal culture, where the time the individual member had been involved had a direct effect on their level of status and accumulated cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Also, to the extent that engagement (as against purchase and the expression of preference) can be seen as a heightened expression of devotion, participants are effectively making claims about loyalty to U2.

(b) Time and cultural capital

Cultural capital also seems to relate to another way of emphasizing time as a constructive device for loyalty, where some fans claim the role of connoisseur with regards to the quality of the band's music and other issues. Daniel alludes to this in the interview quote below.

I can say that, because I was able to witness the band in their prime, it probably adds a little more weight in how good they are now vs their prime years. The last few U2 tours, while good, are not even close to the earlier tours in terms of the band's performance. […] Night and day difference. **(Email interview, March 4, 2016)**

Daniel constructs himself as having accumulated experience and cultural capital in the U2 brand, and as knowledgeable enough to make such a comparison. Fans have been found to act from the position of gatekeepers as they try to argue for a preferred view of the fan object and set arbitrary standards for what constitutes their best work (Robinson and Price, 2015). The length of time fans claim to have invested in the band is a tool they use in exercising the discretionary right to curate U2's cultural output. Consumption communities can remember their pasts through "the output of a collective memory produced from the collected memories of community members" (O'Reilly et al., 2017, p186). The use of time within the U2 forum is a device to control and dictate what cultural artefacts should resonate with other fans in the construction of this collective digital memory.

Relatedly, the length of time as a fan is used to add heft to opinions expressed within the online community, especially when those opinions take a critical position against the band and their music. This appears to be done to forestall claims from other fans that the criticism is only being made because the speaker is not a 'real' fan.

Extract 2

VegasPatrick: Here's what I hope, as a fan of the band for 25 years:
                  If you don't really like this song at this point (which I don't), I hope you don't get castigated for expressing that opinion on this forum.

                  You shouldn't have to like everything the band puts out in order to be considered a fan of the band […] I love probably 95 percent of their catalogue, maybe more. And I've invested way

more money and time into U2 than into any other entertainment outlet in my 40 years on this planet. **(forum: January 20, 2009)**

Vegas Patrick is responding to the backlash from some fans over a critical opinion about a song that he shared on the forum. His opening gambit draws on the authenticity of his relationship with the band, showing that his criticism is not made lightly, but rather is based on the reflection and knowledge afforded him by the length of his fandom. He also indicates that his views come from a place of genuine care ('love'); and seems to be disappointed that it has been interpreted negatively by other fans. Time is therefore used to take a defensive position against further complaints. Later he explicitly notes his investment of 'money and time'. Whereas the traditional behavioral view of brand loyalty would consider monies spent on concerts and merchandise to be a sufficient indicator of loyalty, the time invested in the brand is here given equal value.

(c) Time and socialization

Fans also make use of time as part of the routine process of socialization within the online community. In the following two excerpts it is clear that time plays a role in the introductory pleasantries that fans use to interact on the forum.

Extract 3

Bowman -   Hi everyone, I registered here more than a year ago but never really took the time to actually post. […]
So, anyways, I am only 17 years old but I've been a U2 fan for as long as I can remember. My earliest memories of listening to music were hearing Achtung Baby and ATYCLB in the car as a young child. My dad became a fan as long ago as Boy […]
So, I suppose maybe I was bred to be a fan. **(forum: November 28, 2015)**

Extract 4

Jenny -   I'm Jenny from Minnesota. I should have probably been on this forum a long time ago. I've been a U2 fan since 1983, when I saw them perform Sunday Bloody Sunday at the US festival on TV. After that I became pretty obsessed with them. I had a collage that covered one wall of my bedroom. **(forum: January 15, 2017)**

Bowman's claims that U2 have been a part of his life from his earliest childhood memories is constructed to indicate the taken-for-granted nature of his relationship with the band: he 'was bred to be a fan', thereby making claims to a sort of hereditary fandom. It can be argued that Bowman, by evoking his father, is attempting to negate an objective experience of time, in so far as his fandom has been handed down paternally (Woermann and Rokka, 2015). Similarly, Jenny applies a time logic, using the length of her fandom to tell her life story. This has two functional effects: first, she asserts her loyalty and consequently offers up justification to belong within the forum; second, time is a tool for establishing the depth of her allegiance, thereby attempting to ensure she is welcomed by this online community.

(2) Obsession and Loyalty

Also related to fandom is the use of obsession as a discursive resource within the U2 forum. Some fans take pride in their 'obsession' with the band and see it as a reflection of the extent of their fandom and loyalty. For other fans, however, obsession is a label to be avoided because of perceived parasocial (Horton and Wohl, 1956) underpinnings.

Fans provide evidence for their claims of obsession by drawing parallels with money spent in engaging their fandom, and stressing their collecting behaviour, and frequency of activity on the forum. One thread in particular highlights this range of perspectives.

Extract 5

Luieu2   -   are you all obssesed like me i cant go a day without listening to u2

Sydney_   After telling her all about my CD's, DVDs, LPs, bootlegs, books, Singles, remastered editions, T-shirts, Forum posts, concert attendances and photos, my psychotherapist reckons I'm totally obsessed. I say, I just like 'em a lot

StrongGirl -   Ummm, check the number of posts I have here. That should tell you my answer

Mariamontreal -   completely, totally, shamefully, shamelessly, unambiguously obsessed. For 20 years

Starfish -   Obsessed within reason, if such thing is possible.

Aburrow -   That's a strong word. I would say I have a very close connection with them and the music that I truly enjoy […] Are they my favourite band? ABSOLUTELY. The word obsessed is creepy, although I know you mean it in a good way. I interpret it in my way.

Mariamontreal -   I'm someone who spent big money (well, bigger than your average CD price) importing the LP of Atomic Bomb from England. [a list of U2-related purchases follows…] I'm someone who knows the location and price of every U2 CD and U2-related item within a 100-mile area of where he lives. Obsessed? Not much.

NothernStar -   I think I was more obsessed in my early days of U2 fandom (I've been a fan for 26 years) when I HAD to have everything that had anything to do with them. Now I have a much more "comfortable" relationship with them[…]. But I am no less a fan nowadays and my excitement at the thought of the new album is as strong as ever.

StrongGirl -   I feel the same way Northern Star. It's like a marriage. After 26 years, it changes. That doesn't mean it's not just as good!

Starfish -   I like that comparison. Well put Girl!

U2yooper -   Hmm, that marriage comparison is a good one. You're over the infatuation, you accept their flaws and still love them. And if every time isn't fireworks, that's okay there's always another... album.

Bloom -   Yeah, I like the marriage comparison too, even though I'm not married! I think I might not quite be through the honeymoon stage yet though... 😊 […]

You get more comfortable and familiar and relaxed about your fandom, but you don't ever get sick of them. I guess that's a lot like what you hope for in a partner! This all reminds me of something Matt McGee said, […] when he truly became a U2 fan by saying that was "when I stopped dating other bands". […] I love lots of other bands and listen to lots of other music, but nothing GETS me on quite that same level that U2 get me. **(forum: January 7, 2009)**

In the opening post Luieu2 declares himself to be 'obsessed' with U2, on account of the frequency with which he listens to their music. His use of the term seems to carry no negative connotations, and leaves room for other fans to articulate the meanings that the word conjures for them. Sydney begins to construct and come to terms with obsession as related to his investments in the band. He presents what he describes as the view of his 'psychotherapist' that the money he spends indicates his state of obsession. The identification of this commentator as a psychotherapist can be seen as an acknowledgement of the perceived 'abnormality' of fan obsessions (Duffet, 2014).

StrongGirl, by making reference to the number of posts she has made online, seems to be using obsession as a metaphor for her level of engagement and participation within the forum itself. Mariamontreal claims the obsessed label 'unambiguously'. By suggesting that she is 'obsessed within reason' however, Starfish starts to put up limits. Aburrow demonstrates her awareness of the often negative, potentially stigmatizing use of the term (Jenson, 1992).

Mariamontreal then returns by sarcastically making her U2 obsession visible by detailing the 'big money' she has spent on music and merchandise as well as her knowledge of 'every' U2 item in her area. Northern Star maintains this view by using a historical framing of her purchasing behaviour to construct her past fandom as obsessive. She uses this past experience to legitimate her current 'comfortable' relationship with the band where she constructs fandom and loyalty as steeped in her continuing 'excitement'about the band's music.

Subsequently in the online exchange, Stronggirl and U2yooper use the notion of marriage as a metaphor for their on-going relationship with U2. Participants thereby co-construct loyalty as a fluid, constantly changing relationship that goes from periods of 'infatuation' to periods of minimal to no financial investment. Bloom points to the critical moment she 'truly' became a fan of U2, characterizing it as a relationship where U2 are the band that 'gets' her (emphasized in capitals) the most, thus confirming Fournier's (1997) view of brands as relationship partners.

Although obsession features prominently as a positive discursive resource within the forum, during the interviews participants tended to avoid being described in those terms; with some going as far as ending email interviews and holding back responses at the use of the word, even where the same participants had expressed comfort with the term on the forum. This suggests that what might be seen as acceptable within the shared safe space of an online forum might be interpreted differently if used by someone seen as an 'outsider (cf. Kozinets' (2001) study of Star Trek fans). Katie, who was pressed on why this might be the case, noted:

It just has a negative tinge because it implies that you're blinded or interested at the expense of other things because that's all you want (**Skype interview, November 5, 2016**).

Another way in which participants repeatedly navigated the negative associations with obsession was by framing their obsession with U2 as a previous variation of their fandom which they have currently outgrown.

I would say I used to be (obsessed) but I'm not right now. I was more into them when I was younger during the teenage years but I'm not right now. I would call myself a big fan, but I won't call myself obsessed (Anna, **Skype interview, February 27, 2016).**

Although the link between obsession as a discursive resource and financial expenditure on the band arguably confirms some of the dominant behavioural views on loyalty, these views do not allow for the sort of nuance and context-bound understanding seen in participants' interactions. While some have framed their loyalty in terms of their financial expenditure on the band, others clearly use other non-economic metrics to construct their fandom and self-confessed obsessional loyalty to U2.

(3) Loyalty: Obligation or Choice
Another discursive resource employed by participants relates to the notion of choice in their purchases. As an entity, U2 is located at the nexus of art and commerce – on one hand seeking

to create aesthetic musical experiences, and on the other employing traditional marketing principles and engaging in exchange with a mass audience. This intersection is important to the extent that it allows us to zero in on perceptions of how an artist-fan loyal relationship emerges when layered with the exigencies of the market. Commercial and artistic discourses have traditionally been viewed as positions which evoke meanings and demands that are mutually antagonistic (Bradshaw et al., 2006). This perceived separation of art and business serves as a backdrop for the construction of loyalty as an obligation borne out of emotional ties with U2, as opposed to a choice exercised by the consumer. This can be seen in the extended online exchange below.

Extract 6a

Olimar –   U2 have never felt more corporate. I know they have always been a business, but it just feels so calculated at this point. Announcing that the tour is going to be made up of pairs of shows, each distinctly different from the other, makes it almost essential for a fan to attend two consecutive nights, for fear of effectively missing half of the show. […]
Then there are the prices which will help to dissuade people from wanting to go to both shows on consecutive nights, as I will. […] There is also the rapid manner of the tickets going on sale.

SlyDanner -   My take is that the approach here was to do everything possible to block scalper access and make as many fans as possible have the opportunity to attend a show.

Olimar -   Who knows, maybe I'm being totally unfair, […] But at the moment, there is the feeling that it might be a little exploitative of fans who attend every tour, but now feel compelled to see both nights, because they don't want to miss a part of the tour production.

I'm a big football fan; the notion of a business overselling their product because they know they have a captive audience who have an emotional tie to their product is sadly familiar.

M2 -   The quote from Bono was: "We are going to try to have a completely different feeling from night one to night two. "You've somehow turned that into "if I only see one show, I'm missing half the event." I think that's quite a jump. **(forum: December 5, 2014)**

Olimar starts by sharing his thoughts within the forum regarding an upcoming tour, framing the band as making 'calculated', strategic choices with the aim of making a profit. The 'corporate' label invokes an exploitative narrative with regards to U2 at the expense of the fan. By suggesting that it would be 'almost essential' to attend the two consecutive shows, Olimar constructs loyalty as an obligation and positions himself as a victim suffering the consequences of wanting to be part of the live experience. Also, purporting to speak on behalf of 'people' in general, or presumably other fans, he suggests the price of tickets is prohibitive.

Olimar's proposition does not go unopposed, however. SlyDanner challenges this corporate view of U2 by proposing that the actions of the band in making tickets 'rapidly' available are actually in the interest of fans. Olimar then doubles down on his earlier position, arguing that the tour is 'exploitative of fans'. He also reintroduces and fortifies the discourse of loyalty as an obligation, suggesting that fans might feel 'compelled' to see both nights. He relates his experience as a music fan to his experience as a football fan, employing business vocabulary to make his point and continuing with the depiction of the loyal fan as a victim, who is 'captive' to U2 due to having an 'emotional tie'. M2 attempts to dampen the assertions of Olimar by putting them in the context of the particular comments by Bono that might have ignited them.

In this continuation of the digital exchange, however, Jeany13 introduces a competing

discursive construct by suggesting that Olimar is under no compulsion to attend.

Extract6b

Jeany13 -   Seems to me that you're blaming your feelings on the band. Um...you don't HAVE to go to a U2 concert. Really, it's okay if you don't. (By the way, I thought the prices were steep, as well, for those of us who want to go for a pair of nights. But the price of the tickets is not my decision. Whether to purchase those tickets at the price offered IS my decision.)

Olimar -   There are other sports teams to go and watch, but you won't go and watch another one, because your emotional tie is with your team. As long as they can find the money somehow, U2 fans will pay whatever they can afford to see U2 play […] you aren't going to go and watch Foo Fighters playing next door because they are half the price.

Jeany13 -   I do believe that market value is based on what the market will bear -- yes? And, I would think that, if a U2 fan doesn't have the money to attend a concert, a U2 fan simply DOESN'T attend a concert. As my daughter used to say when she was little, "That's just the way life is." No one's to blame for it. […]

Olimar -   Take that argument to any organisation/newspaper discussing ticket prices in the English Premier League and see what reaction you get. The entire focal point is that the regular, long-standing fans, who have an emotional connection, are left with the choice of stretching themselves beyond their means […] They are then replaced by the corporate market, or the middle/upper classes who can afford it. (**forum: December 5, 2014**)

By asserting her agency in purchasing expensive concert tickets, if not in choosing the price, Jeany13 emphasizes her freedom of choice as a fan and consumer. Olimar continues with his sports analogy, asserting a kind of monopoly of emotion wielded by the band over loyal fans. He is therefore obligated to buy tickets to see U2 irrespective of the price of tickets compared with other bands. Jeany13 continues in dissent, remaining almost oblivious to any claims of emotional ties, by drawing evocatively on her daughter's reported speech. Applying the football comparison again, Olimar draws on two different constructive resources for loyalty – time ('long-standing fans'), and 'emotional connection', both positioned in opposition to the alleged 'corporate' motives of U2. He also introduces what seems to be a puritanist, 'indie' view of the relationship with the band that rejects all traces of the hand of the 'market' and displays an ostensible distaste for middle-class society (Fonarow, 2006).

At this point in the exchange, the discussion shifts to an analysis of exactly what role the corporate label plays, or should play in relation to U2.

Extract 6c

Jick -   U2 is corporate with no apologies!

Jeany13 -   But what is this about "never felt more corporate"? They are artists. This is their livelihood. Is "corporate" somehow a bad thing? Seems they have SO much fun in their line of work (and play) and they've invited us to come along for the ride. But it's not a mandatory journey. It just so happens that a whole lot of people like what they do.

Jick -   U2 make music for a living, and not for charity. You can call it corporate or commercial strategy. I can also call it common sense. Why turn down more money on the table if it's there?

Daniel -   I'm as big a U2 fan as anybody else who makes an effort to post on these forums. I've been a fan for 20 years. Even though I make pretty good money and could afford it, there is no way in hell I'm paying $600 for a pair of tickets for a U2 concert. […] I understand why they're charging that much… because they can. Those $300 tickets will sell… just not to me.

Mofomat –   Your clearly not as big a fan of U2 as anybody else. You reached your price point. There are others who will pay $300 per ticket.

Furq -   If you think the loyalty and devotion of U2 fans should be measured on their willingness or ability to pay for gig tickets then, well, you're in the right thread!

JohnnyFeathers - Posts are exactly right--being willing (or, just as likely, ABLE) to buy super-expensive U2 tickets does not necessarily make you a bigger U2 fan than someone who won't (or CAN'T) do it. (**forum: December 5, 2014**)

Following Jick's assertion, Jeany13 rejects Olimar's negative stance on the notion of U2 as a corporation, while also demonstrating her awareness and comfort with seeing them as artists that operate within the marketplace. She also returns to her framing of following U2 as a choice. Jick then seems to further enforce her position, claiming that the band wanting to get as much as it can for its services is 'common sense'.

Daniel draws on the length of time he has been a fan and his activity within the online forum to construct himself as a 'big fan' of U2. Even though there is a sense of acceptance of the demands of the market, these constructs are in competition with financial expenditure as indicators of loyalty. Mofomat takes this as evidence of the limits of his fandom. Furq speaks to the heart of the matter, noting that if 'loyalty and devotion' should be 'measured' by expenditure then Mofomat's view is correct. He seems to imply that this should not be the case, with JohnnyFeathers also supporting this position.

Overall, multiple discursive resources for loyalty can be seen to be at play through this digitally-mediated exchange, and competing for supremacy: emotional ties with the band, length of time as a fan, expenditure on the band and frequency of activity within the forum. These online discursive struggles have an important function to play in the day-to-day construction of loyalty from a music fan perspective.

Discussion and Conclusions

This paper has explored discursive resources utilized by music fans in making claims to loyalty in a digital context. We have framed our discussion by arguing for an experientially driven brand loyalty, characterised by intense brand engagement, socialization and identity. The engagement of loyal 'fans' within interpretive (online) communities, where the meanings of texts are negotiated and constructed, facilitates a discursive, grounded approach to loyalty as understood by music fans. Although loyalty as a word is rarely mentioned in these online exchanges, to the extent that fandom can be seen as a heightened expression of loyalty, the same meanings are being communicated.

The findings point to an expanded conceptualisation of brand loyalty which encompasses not only behaviours and attitudes, but also experiences. As noted earlier, brand loyalty research began with a focus on behaviours, particularly purchases. The behavioural view follows a largely rational decision making process (Tucker, 1964), based on the information processing model of consumption (Bettman, 1979), where the brand that satisfies the identified need best, reaps rewards in the form of repeat purchases. The behavoural dimensions of loyalty are alluded to in the data on obsession, where behaviours such as active participation on the online forum, and expenditure on the band, are summoned as evidence of loyalty. While some fans view expenditure as a prerequisite for loyalty, others argue in favor of a broader definition that is grounded in feelings about the band.

With its psychological richness, and focus on preference, commitment, attitude, emotion, and mental attachment, attitudinal loyalty offers a vital improvement to the behavioural approach, as it begins to accommodate some of the complexities inherent in consumer-brand relations (Bennett and Rundle-Thiele, 2002). The notion of preference is alluded to in the data when loyalty is negotiated as an obligation or a choice. Reference to loyalty as an obligation is grounded in positive feelings of preference, commitment and emotional attachment on the part of some fans towards U2, compared to other alteranative music brands. Nevertheless, as with behavioural loyalty, attitudinal loyalty is limited in ability to elucidate the subjective meaning-based dimensions of loyalty which shape and alter behaviour in diverse ways.

The experiential perspective adopted in this study accommodates behaviors and attitudes but expands on a theoretical understanding of brand loyalty in a number of ways. *First*, it highlights the symbolic meanings consumers draw from the brands with which they engage. For some U2 fans at least, the long-term relationship with the band is characterised as a marriage that goes through periods of highs and lows, but remains just as good. The marriage metaphor brings into view the symbolic underpinnings of loyal behaviour towards U2 . *Second*, the experiential perspective taken shows the consumer to be an active party in the constitution and negotiation of meaning, rather than simply a passive recipient. The digital context makes visible and accessible the consumer-to-consumer interactions through which fans narrate and negotiate their unique and individual relationships with the band. *Third*, this perspective focuses on loyalty as lived and experienced by particular consumer groups. This enables a more nuanced view of the relationships between the meanings consumers attach to brands to which they are loyal and the cultural milieu within which they develop, and situates these relationships within a dynamic marketplace context. For this particular group of consumers, time is used to claim status as an authentic fan. It also confers authority in terms of which opinions are elevated within the group. Time as an indicator of loyalty is not necessarily new: Jacoby and Kyner (1978:2) define brand loyalty as "a biased behavioral response expressed over time". Accommodating the consumer's perspective, however, shifts the focus from the act of purchase to the use of time as a resource for ordering and structuring the nature of engagement within the community of fans, and as an anchoring device for the self, both at an individual level and as public demonstration of what the band and their music means to a consumer. *Finally*, the experiential perspective taken in this study allows brands to function as conceptual spaces where consumers can construct their identities and make sense of the things that matter to them (Grossberg, 1992). This recognition paves the way for an analysis of the reasons why certain brands may be elevated from mundane, everyday activities, objects and experiences to the realm of the obsesssive.

Along these lines therefore, where a logical positivist paradigm enables the identification of attitudes and behaviours, an interpretivist paradigm has opened up space to get at the deep meanings and experiences that frame and underlie brand loyalty. The fine-grained and granular approach to understanding loyalty in our study has called attention to the process of negotiation, accommodation and conflict, engaged in through discourse amongst consumers, and lays bare the preferences, value systems and meanings that frame loyal behavior. In this way, experiential loyalty bridges the gap between the positivist stance largely employed in brand loyalty research and the experiential consumption literatures. As a complementary position to behavioral and attitudinal loyalty, experiential loyalty puts the meaning dimension, which characterises interpretive consumer research, front and centre. This socially constructed view facilitates a more sensitive and nuanced application of brand loyalty, with implications for segmentation and targeting activities. It provides a possible basis through which precise insights can be gained into the meanings and practices of loyal fans and consumers.

Although our focus has been on music consumption, all brands can be understood as mediated elements of popular culture (Holt, 2004), and thus can potentially form the same sort of connections with fans. In this way, our findings should have further analytical generalisability, since our extension of the concept of loyalty in a particular musical context is likely to apply in other contexts in which there is a digital consumption community, involving interactive texts, and meaning-making around an offering with which consumers have an affective relationship. As a minimum, this might entail anything in the creative and cultural industries, sports, fashion, motor vehicles, and so on. Morover, the ubiquity of the internet likely entails that communities of passion similar to the U2 community looked at in this study will continue to proliferate online; and it will be important for the marketing literature to be able to develop theory to handle them. Future research could specifically consider the culturally relevant ways that consumers of particular brands construct and frame their engagements with those brands, thresholds and basis for affective relationships with the brand, fan profiling and, where appropriate, financial income (Guimaraes et al., 2016).

It should be borne in mind that this study has a number of limitations. In the consideration of the way in which loyalty is enacted within the context of community, we have focused almost exclusively on the fan/consumer side of the loyalty phenomenon. A focus on the perspective of the artist, or a concurrent focus on artists and fans, could provide some insights into their identity constructions and relationships as concerns meanings around loyalty, as well as their marketing and branding practices as they affect the experiences of their fans. Keeping in mind the inherent issues of access such an undertaking might entail, this nonetheless suggests a direction for further research. Also, in our consideration of the discursive resources music fans use to make claims about loyalty, a netnographic approach was taken. The access to asynchronous consumer-to-consumer communications in a digital context was vital in our attempts to build a narrative of the music consumers' lived experience of loyalty. The netnographic study entailed drawing data and participants from a single dedicated online community, but it did not consider fans who had not been active on the online forum. It is unclear if and how the findings might differ if the study took into consideration the experiences of both online and offline fans of U2. Also, due to the constraints of time and the degree of focus necessary, the study focused on a single (b)rand. As we note above, future studies might consider other different types of brands besides cultural brands, or comparative studies, in order to assess the extent to which the current findings can be generalized.

References
Algesheimer, R., Dholakia, U.M. & Herrmann, A. (2005), "The Social Influence of Brand Community: Evidence from European Car Clubs", *Journal of Marketing,* Vol. 69, No. 3, pp. 19-34.

Alvermann, D.E. & Hagood, M.C. (2000), "Fandom and critical media literacy", *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy,* Vol. 43, No. 5, pp. 436-446.

Androutsopoulos, J. (2008), "Potentials and Limitations of Discourse-Centred Online Ethnography", *Language@Internet,* Vol. 5, No. 8.

Atkinson, P. & Hammersley, M. (1994), "Ethnography and participant observation.", In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Ed. N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. pp. 248-260.

Bainbridge, W.S. (2000), "Religious ethnography on the world wide web", *Religion and the social order,* Vol. 8, pp. 55-80.

Bennett, R. & Rundle-Thiele, S. (2002), "A comparison of attitudinal loyalty measurement approaches", *The Journal of Brand Management,* Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 193-209.

Bettman, JR (1979) *Information processing theory of consumer choice,* Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.

Bourdieu, P. (1986), "The forms of capital.", *Cultural theory: An anthology,* Vol. 1, pp. 81-93.

Bradshaw, A., McDonagh, P. & Marshall, D. (2006), "No space–New blood and the production of brand culture colonies", *Journal of Marketing Management,* Vol. 22, No. 5-6, pp. 579-599.

Brown, S., Kozinets, R.V. & Sherry Jr, J.F. (2003), "Teaching old brands new tricks: Retro branding and the revival of brand meaning", *Journal of Marketing,* Vol. 67, No. 3, pp. 19-3

Cavicchi, D., 1998. *Tramps like us: Music and meaning among Springsteen fans.* Oxford University Press.

Choi, P., Bae, S.H., and Jun, J. (2010). Digital piracy and firms' strategic interactions: The effects of public copy protection and DRM similarity, *Information Economics and Policy,* Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 354-364.

Chung, E., Farrelly, F., Beverland, M.B. and Karpen, I.O., 2018. Loyalty or liability: Resolving the consumer fanaticism paradox. *Marketing Theory*, p.1470593117705696.

Day, G.S. (1976), "A two-dimensional concept of brand loyalty" in *Mathematical Models in Marketing:* Lecture Notes in Economics and Mathematical Systems (Operations Research), Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg Vol.132, pp. 89-89.

Dean, A., Ellis, N. & Wells, V. (2017). Science 'fact' and science 'fiction'? Homophilous communication in high-technology B2B selling. *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 30 No. 9-10, pp. 764-788.

Duffett, M. (2014), *Understanding fandom: An introduction to the study of media fan culture,* Bloomsbury Publishing USA.

Ellis, N. & Ybema, S. (2010). Marketing identities: Shifting circles of identification in inter-organizational relationships. *Organization Studies*, 31, 279-305

Elliott, R. & Wattanasuwan, K. (1998), "Consumption and the Symbolic Project of the Self", *European Advances in Consumer Research,* Vol. 3, pp. 17-20.

Eynon, R., Fry, J. & Schroeder, R. (2008), *The ethics of internet research,* Sage: London.

Fonarow, W. 2006, *Empire of dirt: The aesthetics and rituals of British indie music,* Wesleyan University Press.

Fiske, J. (1992), The Cultural Economy of Fandom (ed). *In: Lewis, L. A The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, Routledge, NewYork.

Fournier, S. (1998), "Consumers and their brands: Developing relationship theory in consumer research", *Journal of consumer research,* Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 343-353.

Fournier, S. & Yao, J.L. (1997), "Reviving brand loyalty: A reconceptualization within the framework of consumer-brand relationships", *International Journal of Research in Marketing,* Vol. 14, No. 5, pp. 451-472.

Gray, J., Sandvoss, C. & Harrington, C.L. (2017), *Fandom: Identities and communities in a mediated world,* NYU Press.

Grossberg, L. (ed) 1992, *'Is There a Fan In The House? The Affective Sensibility of Fandom'. In The Adoring Audience, edited by Lisa Lewis*, Routledge, London.

Guimaraes, G., Stride, C., & O'Reilly, D. (2016). Brand community, loyalty and promise in myfootballclub. co. uk. *Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 137-157.

Harris, C. & Alexander, A. (1998), *Theorizing fandom: Fans, subculture, and identity,* Hampton Pr.

Herring, S.C. (2004), "Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis: An Approach to Researching Online Behavior" in *Designing for virtual communities in the service of learning,* Cambridge Univ Pr, pp. 338.

Holbrook, M. & Hirschman, E.C. (1982). The Experiential Aspects of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings and Fun. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 9 (September), pp. 132-140.

Holt, D.B. 2004, *How brands become icons: The principles of cultural branding,* Harvard Business Press.

Horton, D. and Richard Wohl, R., 1956. Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. *Psychiatry*, *19*(3), pp.215-229.

Jacoby, J. & Chestnut, R.W. (1978), "Brand loyalty: Measurement and management", New York: John Wiley & Sons

Jacoby, J. & Kyner, D.B. (1973), "Brand loyalty vs. repeat purchasing behavior", *Journal of Marketing Research,* , Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 1-9

Jenkins, H. (1992), *Textual Poachers; Television Fans and Participatory Culture,* Routledge, New York.

Jenson, J. (1992), "Fandom as pathology: The consequences of characterization", *In L. Lewis (Ed.), The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media,* London: Routledge. (pp. 9-26).

Kozinets, R.V. (2001), "Utopian enterprise: Articulating the meanings of Star Trek's culture of consumption", *Journal of consumer research,* Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 67-88.

Kozinets, R.V., (2002), "The field behind the screen: Using netnography for marketing research in online communities", *Journal of marketing research*, *39*(1), pp.61-72.

Kozinets, Robert V. (1998), "On Netnography: Initial Reflections on Consumer Research Investigations of Cyberculture," in Advances in Consumer Research, Volume 25, ed., Joseph Alba and Wesley Hutchinson, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 366- 371.

Larsson, S. (2013), "'I Bang my Head, Therefore I Am': Constructing Individual and Social Authenticity in the Heavy Metal Subculture", *Young,* Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 95-110.

Löbert, A. (2012), "Fandom as a religious form: on the reception of pop music by Cliff Richard fans in Liverpool", *Popular Music,* Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 125-141.

McAlexander, J.H. & John W. Schouten (1995), "Subcultures of Consumption: An Ethnography of the New Bikers.", *Journal of Consumer Research,* Vol. 22, No. June, pp. 23-61.

McCracken, G. (1993), "The value of the brand: an anthropological perspective" In: D. Aaker and A. Biel (eds), *Brand equity and advertising, Hillsade: Lawrence Erlbaum*, pp. 125-142.

Meisel, J.B. and Sullivan, T.S. (2002). The impact of the Internet on the law and economics of the music industry, *info*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 16-22

Mellens, M., Dekimpe, M. & Steenkamp, J. (1996), "A review of brand-loyalty measures in marketing", *. ijdschrift voor Economie en Management* Vol. 41 p. 507 - 533.

Moufahim, M., Humphreys, M., Mitussis, D. and Fitchett, J. (2007). Interpreting discourse: a critical discourse analysis of the marketing of an extreme right party. *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 23 No. 5/6, pp. 537-558.

Muňiz, A. M. and O'Guinn, T. (2001). Brand community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 412-432.

Muňiz, A.M. & Schau, H.J. (2005), "Religiosity in the abandoned Apple Newton brand community", *Journal of Consumer Research.,* Vol. 31, No. 4, pp. 737-747.

O'Guinn, T.C. & Muňiz Jr, A.M. (2005), "13 Communal consumption and the brand, In: Inside Consumption: Frontiers of Research on Consumer Motives, Goals and Desires, David Glen Mick and S. Ratneshwar. (eds.) New York: Routledge, 2005, 252-272.

Odin, Y., Odin, N. & Valette-Florence, P. (2001), "Conceptual and operational aspects of brand loyalty: an empirical investigation", *Journal of Business Research,* Vol. 53, No. 2, pp. 75-84.

Oliver, R.L. (1999), "Whence consumer loyalty?", *Journal of Marketing,* , Vol. 63, pp. 33-44

Oliver, R.L. (1997), "Satisfaction: A behavioral perspective on the customer", *New York,* .

O'Reilly, D. and Doherty, K., 2006. Music b(r)ands online and constructing community: The case of New Model Army. *Cybersounds: Essays on virtual music culture. New York: Peter Lang*, pp.137-160.

O'Reilly, D., Doherty, K., Carnegie, E. & Larsen, G. (2017), "Cultural Memory and the Heritagisation of a Music Consumption Community", *Arts and the Market*, Vol. 7 No: 2, pp.174-190.

O'Reilly, D., Larsen, G., Kubacki, K. & Larsen, G. (2013), *Music, markets and consumption,* Goodfellow.

Paavola, H. (2005), "Categories of loyalty. Toward a meaning-based theory of customer loyalty", *European Advances in Consumer Research,* Vol. 7, . *eds. Karin M. Ekstrom and Helene Brembeck, Goteborg, Sweden : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 420-428.*

Price, L. & Robinson, L. (2016), "'Being in a knowledge space': Information behaviour of cult media fan communities", *Journal of Information Science,* , pp. 0165551516658821.

Šesek, L. & Pušnik, M. (2014), "Reading popular literature and digital media: Reading experience, fandoms, and social networks.", *Anthropological notebooks,* Vol. 20, No. 2.

Shuker, R. (2016), *Understanding popular music culture,* Routledge.

Solomon, M.R. (1986), "Deep seated materialism: The case of levi's 501 jeans", . in NA - Advances in Consumer Research Volume 13, eds. Richard J. Lutz, Provo, UT : Association for Consumer Research, Pp: 619-622.

Tajfel, H. & Turner, J. (1986), "The social identity theory of inter group behavior in S Worchel & WG Austin (Eds) Psychology of intergroup relations", *Chicago: Nelson,* .

Tucker, W.T. (1964), "The development of brand loyalty", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 32-35

Uncles, M.D., Dowling, G.R. & Hammond, K. (2003), "Customer loyalty and customer loyalty programs", *Journal of consumer marketing,* Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 294-316.

Widdicombe, S. & Wooffitt, R. (1990), "'Being'Versus' Doing'Punk: On Achieving Authenticity as a Member", *Journal of language and social psychology,* Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 257-277.

Woermann, N. & Rokka, J. (2015), "Timeflow: How consumption practices shape consumers' temporal experiences", *Journal of Consumer Research,* Vol. 41, No. 6, pp. 1486-1508.

Xun, J. and Reynolds, J., (2010), "Applying netnography to market research: The case of the online forum". *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing*, *18*(1), pp.17-31.