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# REMEMBERING JCS FOUNDING EDITOR LAWRENCE J. HUGENBERG

## ADAM C. EARNHEARDT

Larry Hugenberg was my colleague at Youngstown State University for one year before he moved on to his new position at Kent State University. You might ask, "How do you become close enough to someone in one year to be able to write a tribute to that person?"

If you knew Larry, it would be an easy question to answer.

Dr. Larry Hugenberg

From the day we met, Larry was finding ways for us to connect. He created opportunities for me and nurtured my career as a scholar and teacher. He was the consummate mentor. That was Larry. He found ways to encourage people. Whether it was his approach to work or life, Larry was fun, and fun to be around.

Larry was a publishing machine. He had numerous journal articles, books, and book chapters. With almost every publication he produced, he tried to find ways to include people interested in those areas of research.

As the inaugural editor of the *Journal of Communication Studies*, he was focused on creating a showcase of some of the top empirical research in organizational, interpersonal, and intercultural communication. It was in the hall at Kent State that he asked me to sign on as book review editor of this new journal. I was intimated, but in typical Larry fashion, he quickly calmed my fears by suggesting it would be an easy and fun experience.

His research interests included sports, fandom, and NASCAR. In fact, an upcoming issue of the JCS will focus on sports communication-related research. Larry was our co-editor on Sports Mania: *Essays on Fandom and the Media in the 21st Century* (w/ Paul Haridakis). Again, he did the lion's share of the work — securing a publisher, corresponding with contributors, and making suggestions on content and organization. He was the founding

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editor of *The Basic Communication Course Annual*, co-edited the popular *Teaching Ideas for the Basic Course* (w/ his wife, Barb Hugenberg), and *Communication Teacher*. Larry wrote several communication textbooks including *Creating Competent Communication,* which he co-authored with friends and colleagues across the state of Ohio.

Larry earned his B.S.S.W, M.A., and Ph.D. from The Ohio State University. He was the undergraduate coordinator for the School of Communication and Information at Kent State, a fitting position for someone who loved students as much as Larry. He was with Youngstown State University from 1980 to 2006.

During that stellar career, he received numerous teaching and research awards from state, regional, and national organizations. At his farewell party at YSU in May 2006, many of his students showed up to wish him well. I like to think it was the reception he received from those YSU students that gave him the greatest sense of success and fulfillment.

In an earlier press release about Larry's passing, Stan Wearden, director of the School of Communication Studies at Kent State, noted that Larry "cared deeply for his students and colleagues and worked harder than anybody I've ever known." Stan said that Larry "gave a lot of time and attention to his students and was always there to give advice, not only on courses but on life and career choices as well."

Larry was a loyal friend, a clever teacher, and a conscientious mentor. That combination in a college professor is a once-in-a-lifetime find. We are all fortunate to have lived in his lifetime.

He is survived by his wife, colleague, and best friend, Barb Hugenberg, and by four adult children and one adult step-son. The School of Communication Studies has set up the Lawrence W. Hugenberg Scholarship Fund for Communication Studies. Donations can be made in care of the department at Taylor Hall. Plans are underway to establish a memorial for Larry at Youngstown State University.

# PROFIT STATUS OF THE ORGANIZATION AS A CONTEXT CUE IN ATTITUDE FORMATION

SUSAN GRANTHAM AND EDWARD T. VIEIRA, JR.

*This online study (n = 148) examined the roles of profit status as a context cue along with emotional and rational reason message frames for cognitive involvement, comprehension, message credibility, and subsequent attitude formation. Using structural equation modeling, the results indicate that the model was driven by comprehension and involvement in processing the message. The nonprofit context cue was significantly linked to increased level of involvement with the message and subsequent greater perceived source credibility and positive attitude toward the nonprofit organization source.*

**Keywords:** source credibility, message involvement, nonprofit/profit designation, attitude, message salience, and emotional content

Context cues are important in order to establish meaning. Establishing a common framework helps stakeholders to process new information and alleviate uneasiness (Williams & Olaniran, 1998). This context may be established on behalf of an organization through its reputation, through the association it has with certain issues or the industry in which the organization exists. An organization's reputation is established through the stakeholders' evaluation of the organization and how this evaluation influences such issues as perceived level of social responsibility achieved by the organization (Hyojin, 2002). This in turn impacts how stakeholders interpret the credibility of information generated by an organization. In addition to an organization's own reputation as a credible source of information, and the reputation of the issue/industry in which the organization exists, there

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is potentially an implied value associated with an organization's financial status in terms of the for-profit or not-for-profit context.

Not-for- profit organizations may have an advantage in the source credibility arena while also having a greater responsibility. These organizations are often created to fill an information void and to support activities that do not attract business financing, at least at the outset. Information generated from for-profit organizations may be viewed with a filter of skepticism in terms of its credibility based on the perception of the organization's motivation for financial gain and thus as a source is more easily dismissed. Alternatively, nonprofits, due to their tenuous nature, need to be more trustworthy in order to achieve a higher degree of trust (Ortmann & Schlesinger, 1997).

Thus, a primary purpose of this study was to evaluate if profit status provided a context cue that affected cognitive involvement, comprehension of the message, and ultimately attitude formation toward the organization and subsequently their credibility as a source of information. When stakeholder are more cognitively involved in message processing, the organization benefits from increased name recall and hopefully a more positive attitude toward the organization. In short, organizations viewed as credible sources of information enhance their overall reputation.

## CREDIBILITY AS A FUNCTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL REPUTATION

Research has shown that source credibility, or perceived trustworthiness, is comprised of a dichotomous framework (Massey, 2003). Credibility can be operationalized through trust or perceived benevolence (Ganesan & Hess, 1997; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Ohanian, 1991; and Anderson & Narus, 1990). Source credibility is evaluated on whether the organization has the expertise to back up statements and declarations made on its behalf (Tormala & Petty, 2004). This expertise, merged with the organization's perceived trustworthiness, is then evaluated on established past performance that provides the framework for the organization's identity and reputation (Heath, Seshadri & Lee, 1996).

Previous studies have shown that source credibility has an impact on attitudes toward the message (Lafferty, Goldsmith & Newell, 2002; Smith & Petty, 1996; and Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy, 1990.). Source credibility was originally examined from the perspective of the spokesperson/celebrity delivering the message and was operationalized via expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. However, more recently, source credibility has been tied to the pre-existing and established corporate reputation

Organizations with socially responsive reputations increase their value. Social responsibility is a function of the organization's management and public relations orientation (Black & Hartel, 2004). Specific decisions must be made and implemented about how business is conducted and how this information is communicated to the various publics and how the organization is positioned apart from its competition. A socially responsible

reputation helps consumers to positively evaluate the credibility of the organization and contributes to the cognitive process when evaluating message content produced by the organization.

Within this more specific framework of association, an organization's credibility is established on the basis of trustworthiness. In fact, relationships based on trust are highly valued and through this leap of faith in another, one is made vulnerable (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Yet, this leap of faith is sometimes required because, based on the lack of first-hand experience and knowledge, we are required to trust in others such as experts, thereby prompting a heuristic processing route.

Content experts are frequently perceived as being unbiased and function as individuals who do not stand to directly benefit from their stated position. Expert sources include the media as an unbiased, or balanced, intermediary source who serves as a conduit of information and often enjoys a higher level of trust (Heath & Nathan, 1991; and Freedman, Sears & Carlsmith, 1981). This perceived expertise and trustworthiness are significant measures of source credibility (Dholakia & Sternthal, 1977).

An organization's reputations can increase or decrease its perceived credibility. It may also make the organization more familiar which may lead to information seeking behaviors that include a heightened level of information involvement and cognition (Grunig, 1997). Thus, credibility as a source may essentially function as a moderator influencing the impact of a persuasive message (Buda & Zhang, 2000).

The authors agree with Massey (2003) that organizational identity contributes to the organization's credibility and that identity is a function of internal and external stakeholders' perceptions of the institution. Nonprofit organizations with established name recognition such as The American Lung Association and Habitat for Humanity, Inc., benefit from functioning responsibly and as expected over time and thus their reputation remains intact. Alternatively, an organization such as FEMA may not produce the same level of confidence or trustworthiness. In FEMA's case, the media coverage of the organization's response to Hurricane Katrina victims is easily recalled by the public and this coverage may shape stakeholders' opinions of the organization's reputation for a long period of time. Furthermore, organizations that lack a "brand" identity and positive name recall may not gain the attention of key stakeholders who then use a heuristic or mental shortcut to determine source trust and organizational competence (Chaiken, 1980). Based on the lack of "brand" value, organizations may be evaluated on the perception of what the organization has to gain versus its role in serving the public interest. Thus, positioning the organization within an established issue may be advantageous.

# CREDIBILITY AS A FUNCTION OF INDUSTRY/ISSUES

Organizations may also be closely identified to a particular industry and consequently the organization's perceived credibility may be linked to perceptions of the industry in general. In some cases these perceptions are stronger than the inverse-- the reputation of an industry linked to a specific organization. For example, pharmaceutical products such as the diet pill Phen Fen serve as an industry poster child rather than a branding of the manufacturer, American Home Products Corporation (Newman, 2000).

In the past, not-for-profit organizations have primarily focused on the issues/industry (environment, health, etc.), while the emphasis on the organization itself has come in a distant second. Keeping the focus on the issue instead of the organization has served two purposes. First, there is typically a limited amount of resources available so the majority of effort and financial resources are dedicated to creating awareness about the issue. Second, and by default, the organization may be perceived as being more credible by operating in an altruistic framework predicated on the organization's mission and secondarily on organizational name recognition.

Interestingly, the trend toward integrating public relations, marketing, and advertising, in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors, has shifted to using a comprehensive approach to an industry or an issue as it relates to a specific organization and industry in which the organization exists. Often the perceived outcome is implied such as Apple's "The power to be your best" or the USDA Forest Service's "Give a Hoot, Don't Pollute." These campaigns help to brand the organization as well as influence how these products or services will be placed in the target audience's collective mind.

Typically, a structured a priori audience-centered and issue specific central thesis is developed to be consistently and thoroughly communicated through various channels of communication to target audience members. Through a holistic framework, this approach does not focus on a specific product or service but does attempt to create awareness about the organization. In turn, this awareness can activate analytical and emotional cues for stakeholders resulting in the target audience holding a more positive attitude toward the organization.

A primary goal of this communication strategy is to focus attention on the organization as well as the affiliated issues that impact society in general. Properly executed, this reputation-building emphasis increases the perceived credibility and trustworthiness of the organization by aligning the organization with accepted societal values (Sinclair & Irani, 2005). Message content that focuses on issues may be perceived as more legitimate than content focusing on specific products or services. These nano-second evaluations of the organization as a credible source of information influence the level of cognitive involvement achieved by the message receiver.

One method of communicating about an organization is to generalize its position within the broader framework of an industry or an issue through primary demand advertising. This approach has led to the development of a niche market for advocacy advertising, a form of social advertising (Bass, Krishnamoorthy, Prasad & Sethi, 2005). Advocacy advertising (Handy, 2001) is a cross between brand and generic advertising, where the advocacy focuses on a single issue such as health.

Primary demand advertising (or generic) campaigns within the for-profit sector such as *"Got Milk?"* have used this strategy to advance the dairy commodity industry and highlight the related health benefit issue without specifically focusing on any one producer thus facilitating a nonprofit status perception. Studies have shown that this generic promotional approach has been successful (Schmit, Gould, Dong, Kaiser, & Chung, 2001). The goal is to attract new consumers' and/or stakeholders' support by raising awareness of an established product or service and influencing attitudes in a favorable way for the industry as a whole. These "for the good of society" sponsorship messages provide the opportunity for stakeholders to develop positive attitudes toward the industry (Rifon, Choi, Trimble & Li, 2004) and achieve "an environment more favorable to their position" (Haley, 1996). The *"Got Milk"* tagline implies that because dairy products are good for you, dairy producers are members of a desirable industry.

Not-for-profit organizations often employ this same strategy slightly tweaked to emphasize the legitimacy of the information derived from a science-based foundation. Organizations such as the American Cancer Society that advocate yearly mammograms to reduce breast cancer are not endorsing specific labs or physicians. They advocate a service sector based on scientific findings that are often the result of studies conducted by the advocating organization. The scientific community on many levels is considered sacrosanct due to the rigorous peer review process applied to its research (Florida, 2000). Even though recent information has highlighted issues surrounding fraudulent reporting of stem cell research this information was exposed and the fact that the "system" works was supported.

## Message Framework

Often an organization's credibility and growing reputation takes place as a function of media involvement. Media reports highlighting the negative practices of an organization provide the contextual frame for evaluating the organization (Massey, 2003; and Mahon & Wartick, 2003). For example, the media focus on various investigations into United Way's CEO misuse of funds in the last decade. Alternatively, positive stories that expose stakeholders to the organization's name and practices can help increase the "brand" recall of the organization such as the Gates Foundation which supports international efforts to improve health and education. If stakeholders lack personal experience or a frame of

reference, they rely on "others," including the media, to establish reputation authenticity (Mahon & Wartick, 2003).

In fact, the role of the media has exponentially increased as they serve as organizational watchdogs (Massey, 2003). As the gatekeepers of the information, the media provides the evaluative function of determining if the source is credible, or holds the appropriate level of expertise, and whether the source is considering the best interest of the public. Once published or broadcast, the public can then further evaluate the information once they receive it.

## MESSAGE COGNITION

In order for a reputation to exist, there must be knowledge about the individual or institution. First hand experience, peer-to-peer communication, and media content are common methods used to establish this linkage. However, cognitively formed decisions must be compatible to with one's existing belief system in order for the messages to be effective (Tversky & Kahnemen, 1974). Cognition is a deliberative function of comprehension leading to knowledge that influences the formation of attitudes. Given the hundreds, if not thousands, of messages available to us each day, it is a self-serving strategy to engage in selective attention. In other words, we tune out some portion of messages in order to be able to focus on the others through varying levels of involvement. Therefore, after salience, perceived source credibility as the source of information may be pivotal in prompting cognitive involvement.

From the message production side, messages are created to invoke cognition through rational and/or emotional appeal. According to the ARI (Affect – Reason – Involvement) Model (Buck, Chaudhuri, Georgson, & Kowta, 1995), individuals process emotional and rational information. This dual processing influences level of awareness and message persuasiveness. Therefore, all awareness involves feeling and thinking. Much like the Heuristic Systematic Model (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993; and Chaiken, 1980) and the Elaboration Likelihood Model utilizing central and peripheral processing routes (Petty, 1999), the ARI Model attempts to amplify the combination of affect and reason in persuasion (Buck, Chaudhuri, Georgson, & Kowta, 1995). Thus, it follows that an optimal amount of both emotional and analytical information processing, would maximize involvement in message processing and ultimately lead to the formation of an attitude.

Relevant to the level of involvement based on personal interest and/or salience are message frames. Research has shown that personal relevance moderates attention and level of involvement in processing a message (McGuire, 1985). Interested individuals often become information seeking indicating an increased level of cognitive involvement in an issue (Grunig, 1997). Furthermore, research indicates that females and males process

information differently (Martin, 2003; Meyers-Levy & Sternthal, 1991; and Zang & Buda, 1999).

In situations where personal relevance is a factor, framed messages highlighting potential personal loss may produce a higher level of involvement (O'Keefe & Jensen, 2005; Eagley & Chaiken, 1993; and Smith & Petty, 1996). However, when personal relevance is low, messages highlighting potential personal gains tend to be more persuasive. Both approaches incorporate a level of emotionality in order to invoke involvement and provide information about the situation and potential impact as well.

Alternatively, rational messages typically focus on a more generalized context and tend to be more emotionally flat. The function of the message is to build interest in the content while creating a sense of credibility for the organization within the given context. The perceived source credibility of the organization disseminating the information provides an introductory view or continuation of the stakeholders' attitudes toward the organization.

## STUDY OVERVIEW AND PREDICTIONS

In addition to examining the role of message content in terms of nonprofit versus for-profit organizational brand context cues, additional investigation was conducted on how the levels of affect and reason determine involvement in message cognition, comprehension, message credibility, and subsequent attitude formation as a function of processing a message. The authors selected a familiar issue, ecotourism (the cultural use of the environment) as the industry in which the organizations exist. The industry/issue association of ecotourism, and the general support found for the natural environment, predicts a certain level of acceptance with few negative repercussions. Studies have shown that just about everyone considers themselves  environmentalist, even if individual practices vary widely (Guber, 2003). Therefore, positioning the organizations within this issue advocacy framework, the message content was not confounded by negative attitudes toward the industry/issue.

Because of the possible relevance of the personal association to any specific location as an influencing factor (Cantrill & Masluk, 1996), a setting with high name recognition (the Everglades) was selected that was geographically and culturally remote from the sample subjects (college students in the northeast).

The researchers posed the following hypotheses and research questions to explore the predicted relationships between message frames, context cues, and level of involvement:

H1:   The not-for-profit contextual cue will positively predict involvement in processing the on-line news story.

H2:   The not-for-profit contextual cue will positively predict comprehension of the message.

H3:    The emotionally framed news story will positively predict involvement in processing the online news story.

H4:    The emotionally framed news story will positively predict comprehension of the message.

H5:    Comprehension will positively predict perceived message credibility.

H6:    Involvement with the news story will positively perceived message credibility.

H7:    Perceived message credibility will positively predict a positive attitude toward the topic.

RQ1:  Will the participant's gender influence her/his level of message involvement?

RQ2:  Will the participant's gender influence her/his level of message comprehension?

RQ3:  Will the participant's existing salience toward the topic as operationalized by participating in outdoor activities influence level of involvement with the message?

RQ4:  Will the participant's existing salience toward the topic as operationalized by participating in outdoor activities influence level of message comprehension?

The following proposed structural equation model (SEM) was developed to capture the hypotheses and research questions (see Figure 1). As noted above, some relationships were posed as research questions and were more exploratory, such as the role of gender and outdoor interests, which were conceptualized as potential intervening variables (O'Keefe, 2003). Otherwise, relationships are predicted based on the hypotheses, specifically the role of profit/nonprofit and emotional/rational message content. The model predicts that the participants will become more cognitively involved in reading the story if they perceive the source of information as a nonprofit organization. The model also predicts that the participants who read the emotional news story, versus the rational news story, will become more cognitively involved. These factors, in turn, will relate to an increase in the possibility of the reader developing a positive attitude toward the topic (ecotourism in Florida).

Moreover, familiarity with environmental issues, represented by involvement in the outdoor interests variable, may increase comprehension of the news story, increase credibility in the message, and ultimately increase positive attitude toward eco-tourism directly and indirectly. In addition to a direct influence, increased comprehension will increase message credibility, and this credibility will positively influence attitude toward eco-tourism.

Figure 1
Proposed Structural Equation Model Predicting Positive Attitude
Toward Ecotourism News Story
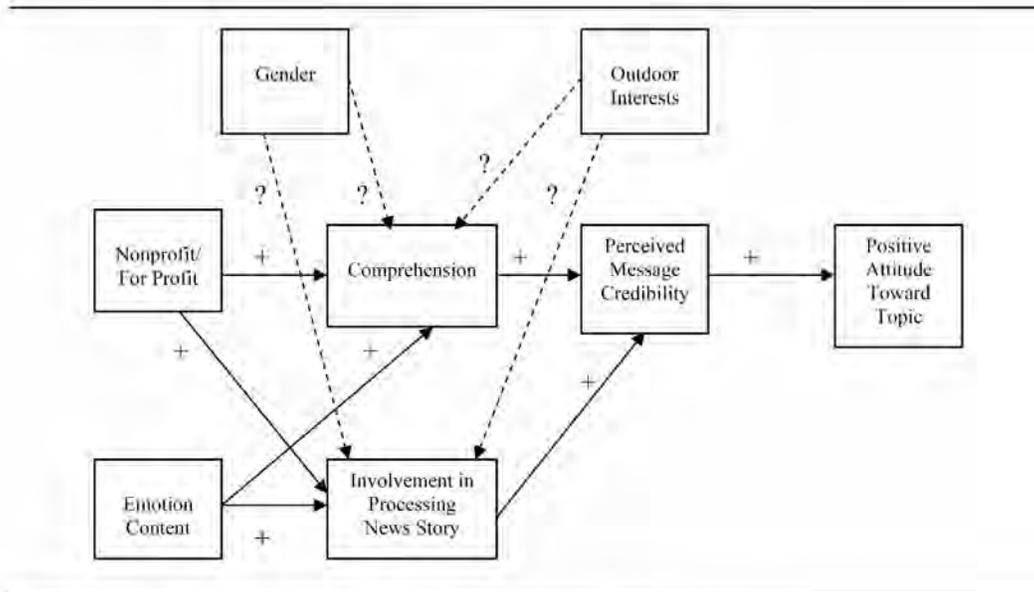


Note: Coding- Nonprofit = 1 and for-profit = 2 and Female = 0 and Male = 1.

## METHODS

Sample participants were college/university undergraduate students. They were recruited from a number of colleges and universities in New England. Students were offered extra credit for their participation.

Participants were assigned to one of four conditions: 1) emotional and nonprofit, 2) rational and nonprofit, 3) emotional and for-profit; and 4) rational and for-profit. A pilot study (N= 76) was conducted to examine manipulation effectiveness and measure validity on message frames as operationalized through emotional versus rational content. No significant differences were found. Therefore, more emotional terms were inserted in the emotional condition while affective terms were reduced in the rational version for further testing. No data from the original sample (N=76) was used in subsequent analysis.

Following adjustments to the verbiage, additional data were collected from 92 participants and manipulations were re-examined to measure validity. While the differences produced in the emotional versus rational message frames were not significant, they approached significance and indicated that this manipulation might be effective. Thus, additional data (N=56) were collected to increase the sample size. Before the data could be

### Table 1
### ANOVA Results Between N=92 and N=56 samples

| Variable | Means ($N = 92$) | Means ($N = 56$) |
|---|---|---|
| News Story Comprehension ($F = 2.95, p = .088, df = 1, 146$) | 5.58 | 5.95 |
| Involvement in Processing the News Story ($F = .090, p = .765, df = 1, 146$) | 4.88 | 4.93 |
| Perceived Message Credibility ($F = .924, p = .338, df = 1, 146$) | 5.16 | 5.35 |
| Participation in Outdoor Activities ($F = .134, p = .715, df = 1, 146$) | 4.40 | 4.30 |
| Positive Attitude Toward Message Topic ($F = .000, p = .988, df = 1, 146$) | 5.68 | 5.68 |

Note: Responses were anchored in a 7-point Likert scale (1=low to 7=high).

collapsed, one-way ANOVAs were conducted to ascertain whether there were nested data effects. There were no significant differences between model variables in the two samples (see Table 1). The data were then collapsed and analyzed in the aggregate bring the sample size to N = 148.

### Experimental Procedure

This was an online experiment utilizing a 2 X 2 design. Four messages were developed with one using descriptive language to prompt a positive emotional response while the other message was more rational. This message strategy is often employed when focusing on environmental issues (Davis, 1994) in order to invoke involvement from individuals. Additionally, one message was sourced as being a product of a nonprofit organization (The Nature Conservancy) while the other message was sourced as being a product of a for-profit organization (Businesses promoting Florida Ecotourism). This was done in order to evaluate the role of credibility in terms of cognition and attitude development as it pertained to the organizational brand or contextual cue. Participants were randomly assigned to receive either the rational and nonprofit, rational and for-profit, emotional and nonprofit, or emotional and for-profit condition. The news stories were dated as having appeared within the previous six months from the time of the study.

### Stimulus Material

The online news stories represent real subjects. The topic advocates ecotourism in Florida with a focus on the linkage to the indigenous people, the Miccosukee Tribe of

Native Americans. The online news stories were equal to 1½ - 2 printed pages in length. On the left side of the web page was a box indicating sponsorship (for-profit: "Businesses Promoting "Florida Ecotourism" or nonprofit: "The Nature Conservancy") that thanked the readers for participating in the study. Sponsorship was also noted in the main copy area. The story was entitled "Florida Ecotourism." There were the following descriptive sections: ecotourism, activities, biking, boating, hiking/camping, fishing, and cultural experience.

## Measures

The measures initially consisted of 26 items including gender, manipulation check measures, and five model variables each consisting of a number of items. Multiple item measures for variables were selected to assure acceptable levels of construct reliability.

## Control Variables

Gender - Participants would click onto the radio button (circle) either female or male. For coding purposes: female = 0 and male = 1.

Outdoor Interests - These 5 items consisted of the following: "In general, I enjoy outdoor activities;" "I enjoy hiking trips;" "I enjoy camping trips;" I enjoy biking trips;" and "I enjoy fishing trips." These items were anchored in a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree."

## Independent Variables

The independent variables consisted of the following configurations as shown below.

Emotional/nonprofit: "Ecotourism promotes memorable experiences that are not only available for you today but for future generations by providing economic opportunities while preserving heritage-based rich cultures. In its ideal form, ecotourism is a philosophy, an activity, a development policy, and an environmental policy, all at the same time.

An overriding goal is that monies raised through ecotourism can then be used to acquire more land to preserve worthwhile environments so that we have an on-going opportunity to visit these places. Ecotourism also provides a great learning experience that allows you to take home meaningful knowledge and wonderful memories."

Emotional/for-profit: "Florida is home to many pristine and unique ecosystems. In a movement to preserve, yet share, these environments, the ecotourism industry has developed an alternative way to allow visitors to enjoy an exceptional vacation experience where the focus remains on protecting the environment and cultural heritage of an area. This innovative approach produces economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural

resources beneficial to local people. We hope you'll take advantage of the opportunity to enjoy these wonderfully unique environmental and enriching cultural treasures."

Non-emotional/nonprofit: "Ecotourism is defined as the purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem while producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people.

Ecotourism, by design, helps to conserve and protect ecosystems and the cultural integrity of an area while providing economic opportunities for the people who live there."

Non-emotional/for-profit: "Florida's tourism industry supports ecotourism by partnering with businesses in local areas to provide opportunities that allow you to experience the best environmental and cultural activities in the region. We hope you'll take advantage of the opportunity to enjoy these unique environmental and cultural assets."

At the end of the news story was a button labeled "Proceed to survey."

### Mediating Variables

Three mediating variables were conceptualized: comprehension, involvement in processing the news story, and perceived message credibility. These variables were based on theory and operationally predicated on face validity.

Comprehension - Understanding the news story consisted of the following two items: "Did you understand the information you read?" and "Did you understand the point of the article that you read?"

Involvement - The level of involvement in processing the news story consisted of the following five items: "Was the article informative?" "Was the article interesting?" "Was the article important?" "Did the article make you more aware of ecological and ecotourism issues?" and "If you were a member of the Miccosukee Tribe, would you be concerned with ecotourism?"

Credibility - Perceived message credibility was comprised of the following six items: "Was the article factual?" "Was the article honest?" "Was the article truthful?" "Was the article believable?" "Was the article biased?" and "Was the article propaganda?"

All items were anchored in a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree." In some cases, items were reverse coded to represent consistent responses. For example, the "biased" and "propaganda" responses were reflected so that higher scores represented greater perceived message credibility.

### Dependent Variable

The dependent variable measured positive attitude toward ecotourism. This variable consisted of three items: "Do you admire the Miccosukee's efforts to promote their

culture?" "Do you think the Miccosukee find joy in promoting their culture?" and "Do you think that the Miccosukee are proud of their heritage?" These items were anchored in a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree."

## Measurement Model

This is an *a priori* study. Confirmatory factor analyses were run for each sample ($N$=92 and $N$= 56) based on the conceptualized measures above. Based on these results, four items were dropped with loadings of .50 or less. They were the following: "If you were Miccosukee, would you be concerned with ecotourism?" "The message I read was propaganda." "The message I read was biased." and "I enjoy fishing trips."

The loadings demonstrate excellent convergent validity. In other words, they measured the same construct well. Furthermore, the average inter-item correlation within factor range is .47-.80 (N=92) and .58-.70 (N=56). Inter-item correlations within factor of .30 and larger are desirable for internal validity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Cronbach's Alpha was used for evaluating reliability. Reliability assessments ranged from .74-.89 (N=92) and .82-.89 (N=56) indicating that these items would yield consistent results.

In order to examine for multidimensionality among the variables, bivariate Pearson correlations were run and ranged from .039 ($p$ = .71) to .62 ($p$ = .00) for N= 92 and .002 ($p$ = .99) to .65 ($p$ = .00) for N = 56 which demonstrates excellent discriminant validity.

Based on the conceptualized variables, each latent variable was constructed from a unit-weighted average of the items as found in the factor structure. In other words, each variable is a result of a simple average of the item scores for each case.

## Full Study Results

This was a 2 X 2 experimental design: high and low levels of emotionality, and nonprofit as opposed to the for-profit contextual cue where $N$ =43 for the nonprofit/emotional condition, $N$ = 35 for the non-profit/non-emotional version, $N$ = 38 for the for-profit/emotional version, and $N$ = 32 for the for-profit/non-emotional condition.

The experimental influences of comprehension, involvement, credibility, and the influence of outdoor activities were viewed as contributing to the process of forming a positive attitude toward the topic. The specific approach was two-stage, where a measurement model was first developed through confirmatory factor analysis (Table 2), and then a structural equation model was developed using the AMOS application (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999) utilizing maximum likelihood estimation and standardized beta weight path coefficients serving as a total fit model (Figure 2).

Maximum Likelihood Estimation was used. Path coefficients are standardized beta weights. Females were coded 0 and males were coded 1. The nonprofit conditions were

Table 2

Confirmatory Factor Analysis For Predicting Positive Attitude Toward Ecotourism (N=148)

| | Items | Factor 1 (Compre.) | Factor 2 (Involvement) | Factor 3 (Credibility) | Factor 4 (Outdoor) | Factor 5 (Attitude) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Did you understand the information you read? | .88 | | | | |
| 2 | Did you understand the point of the article you read? | .88 | | | | |
| 3 | Was the article informative? | | .77 | | | |
| 4 | Was the article interesting? | | 76 | | | |
| 5 | Was the article important? | | 68 | | | |
| 6 | Did the article make you more aware of ecological and ecotourism issues? | | 64 | | | |
| 7 | Was the article factual? | | | .81 | | |
| 8 | Was the article honest? | | | .84 | | |
| 9 | Was the article truthful? | | | .83 | | |
| 10 | Was the article believable? | | | .73 | | |
| 11 | In general, I enjoy outdoor activities. | | | | .87 | |
| 12 | I enjoy hiking trips. | | | | .82 | |
| 13 | I enjoy camping trips. | | | | .69 | |
| 14 | I enjoy biking trips. | | | | .68 | |
| 15 | Do you admire the Miccosukee Tribe's efforts to promote their culture? | | | | | .77 |
| 16 | Do you think the Miccosukee people find joy in promoting their culture? | | | | | .75 |
| 17 | Do you think that the Miccosukee Tribe are proud of their heritage? | | | | | .66 |
| | Average Inter-Item Correlation Within Factor | .76 | .51 | .64 | .58 | .52 |
| | Alpha | .87 | .80 | .88 | .85 | .77 |

Note: All items are anchored in a 7 point scale ranging from 0 = low/strongly disagree to 7 = high/strongly agree and n = 148.

coded 0 and for-profit were coded 1. $X^2 = 142.860$, $df = 17$, $p = .000$; goodness of fit = .839; adjusted goodness of fit = .658; root mean square error approximation = .224; * $p < .05$; and n = 148.

## Nonprofit Versus For-Profit Condition

In the full study, nonprofit/for-profit conditions demonstrated significant effects in three manipulation check items and in one latent variable (see Table 3). Item/variable mean

Figure 2
Results of the Proposed Structural Equation Model for
Predicting Positive Attitude Toward Ecotourism
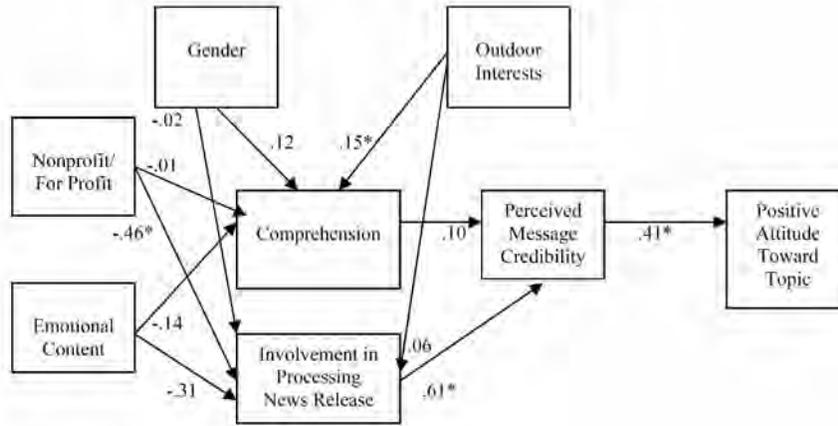


Maximum Likelihood Estimation was used. Path coefficients are standardized beta weights. Females were coded 0 and males were coded 1. The nonprofit conditions were coded 0 and for-profit were coded 1. $X^2 = 142.860$, $df = 17$, $p = .000$; goodness of fit = .839; adjusted goodness of fit = .658; root mean square error approximation = .224; * $p <$ .05; and n = 148.

scores were as expected. Nonprofit scores for content awareness, reading enjoyment, interest in the news story topic, and involvement in reading the story were significantly higher than the for-profit scores.

## Measurement Model

Five factors (comprehension, involvement, credibility, outdoor activities, and positive attitude toward the topic) were conceptualized at the outset in this a priori study. Based on the conceptualization, confirmatory factor analysis was utilized to determine validity. The factors displayed excellent convergent validity with factor loadings ranging from .64 - .88 the average inter-item correlation within factors ranged from .51 to .76 (see Table 3).

Latent variables were constructed based on factor analysis. Comprehension consisted of two items, involvement consisted of the four items, credibility was comprised of four items, outdoor activities consisted of four items, and positive attitude toward the topic consisted of three items.

Table 3
Study Variable ANOVA Results Between Nonprofit And For-Profit Conditions

| Variable | Nonprofit (M) | For- profit (M) |
|---|---|---|
| Did the news story make you more aware of ecotourism? (F = 6.93, p = .01, df = 1, 146) | 5.13 | 4.46 |
| Did you enjoy reading the news story? (F = 4.27, p = .04 df = 1, 146) | 4.40 | 3.92 |
| Was the news story interesting? (F = 3.95, p = .05, df = 1, 146) | 4.71 | 4.27 |
| Involvement in Processing the News Story (latent variable)   (F = 5.02, p = .03, df = 1, 146) | 5.09 | 4.67 |

Note: Responses were anchored in a 7-point Likert scale (1=low to 7=high).

The dimensionality of the variables was then tested. As can be seen in Table 4, there is excellent discriminant validity among the variables. Zero-order correlations range from .06 to .55. This demonstrates excellent variable unidimensionality. In other words, these variables are discrete constructs.

### Structural Model

We used maximum likelihood estimation and the path coefficients are standardized beta weights (â). Overall, the specified proposed model (see Figure 2) did not fit the data well: root mean square error approximation (RMSEA) = .224, $X^2$ = 142.860, $df$ = 17, $p$ = .000, goodness of fit (GFI) = .839, and adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI) = .658. A RMSEA of $\leq$ .05 and fit indexes of $\geq$ .90 are acceptable fit indicators (Kline, 1998). Significant paths are noted. Maximum likelihood procedure evaluates the total model fit and does not focus on any specific path coefficient.

The hypotheses were tested through the proposed structural equation model. Predicated on the results, the model was revised based on modification indices that were theoretically consistent with this study. The respecified model (see Figure 3) more accurately represents the studied process. The respecified model fit the data very well: RMSEA = .000, $X^2$ = 10.300, $df$ = 14, $p$ = .740, GFI = .981, and AGFI = .963. Significant paths are noted.

Table 4
Zero-Order Correlations Between Variables For Multivariate Analyses ($N = 148$)

|   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ecotourism news story comprehension | - | | | | |
| 2 | Level of involvement in processing news story | .55* | - | | | |
| 3 | Perceived credibility of ecotourism content | .42* | .55* | - | | |
| 4 | Interest in outdoor activities | .15 | .06 | .11 | - | |
| 5 | Positive attitude toward news story content | .32* | .51* | .39* | .15 | - |

Note: *$p \leq .01$

# RESULTS

The respecified model clearly fits the data well and presents a clearer and more accurate representation of the process (see Figure 3). It contains three exogenous variables: gender, outdoor interests, nonprofit/for-profit designation. Based on the results displayed in Figure 2, the emotional and rational content variable was dropped as it did not contribute significantly to any direct or indirect paths for involvement, comprehension, attitude or message credibility. Along with these variables, the results indicate a process by which readers develop a positive attitude toward the news story topic of ecotourism represented through the cultural and environmental implications for the Miccosukee Tribe. While not significantly different from males, females did tend to comprehend the news story more easily than males. The nonprofit designation enhanced involvement in reading the news story. Additionally, the nonprofit condition indirectly and positively influenced perceived message credibility through increased involvement in processing the news story content. Comprehension increased involvement in reading the story. Greater involvement directly increased positive attitude toward ecotourism. Moreover, outdoor interests increased comprehension of the news story and positive attitude toward ecotourism and the Miccosukee. It appears that perceived message credibility did not influence attitude toward the topic. The following addresses each hypothesis and research question.

H1:     The not-for-profit contextual cue will positively predict involvement in processing the on-line news story. This was confirmed (â = -.20, $p < .05$). The nonprofit designation was coded with 0 and the profit condition with 1. The nonprofit designation predicted an increase in processing the news release content.

H2:     The not-for-profit contextual cue will positively predict comprehension of the message. The model did not accommodate this relationship; thus, this hypothesis was not supported. The nonprofit designation did not predict a greater understanding of the news story content.

Figure 3
Results of the Revised Structural Equation Model For Predicting
Positive Attitude Toward News Story ($N = 148$)
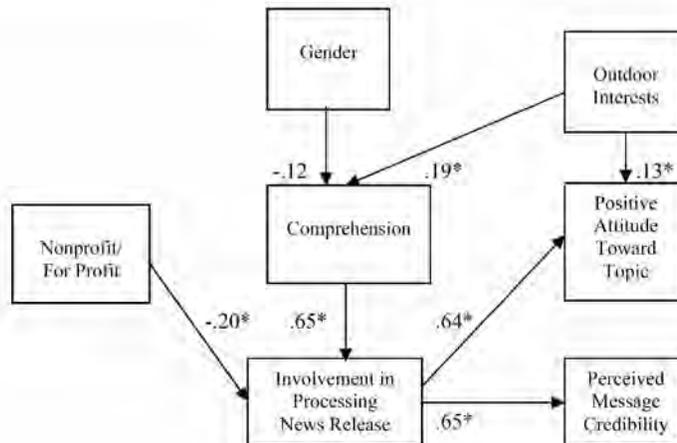


Note: Maximum Likelihood Estimation was used. Path coefficients are standardized beta weights and corrected for attenuation. Females were coded 0 and males were coded 1. The non-profit conditions were coded 0 and for-profit were coded 1. $X^2 = 10.300$, $df = 14$, $p = .740$; goodness of fit = .981; adjusted goodness of fit = .963; root mean square error approximation = .000 and n = 148.

H3:   The emotionally framed news story will positively predict involvement in processing the online news story. The model did not accommodate this relationship; thus, this was not supported. Having more emotional terms in the release did not influence the level of involvement in processing the content.

H4:   The emotionally framed news story will positively predict comprehension of the message. This relationship was not confirmed. More emotional content did not relate to a greater understanding of the news story content.

H5:   Comprehension will positively predict perceived message credibility. This hypothesis was not confirmed. Having a greater understanding of the news story was not associated with greater perceived message credibility.

H6:   Involvement with the news story will positively perceived message credibility. This hypothesis was strongly supported (â = .65, $p < .05$). Individuals who became more involved in reading the news release, resulted in an increase as perceiving the release as credible.

H7:   Perceived message credibility will positively predict a positive attitude toward the topic. This was not supported in the model. Positive attitude toward ecotourism in Florida was not found to be associated with news story credibility.

RQ1: Will the participant's gender influence her/his level of message involvement? There was no relationship discovered between gender and involvement in reading the message.

RQ2: Will the participant's gender influence her/his level of message comprehension? This was partially confirmed (â = -.12, $p$ = .13). Females were coded 0 and males were coded 1. Although nonsignificant, if a participant were female, there was an increase in news release comprehension. A larger sample size, might reveal a significant path coefficient.

RQ3: Will the participant's existing salience toward the topic as operationalized by participating in outdoor activities influence level of involvement with the message? No relationship was evinced. There were no personal relevance effects between involvement in reading the story and interest in outside activities.

RQ4: Will the participant's existing salience toward the topic as operationalized by participating in outdoor activities influence level of message comprehension? This was supported (â = .19, p < .05). Participants with an interest in the outdoors positively predicted the level of news release comprehension.

Additionally, the respecified model includes three new relationships: Comprehension predicted Involvement in Processing the News Release (â = .65, $p$ < .05); Involvement in Processing the News Release was associated with Positive Attitude Toward the Topic (â = .64, p < .05); and Outdoor Interests predicted Positive Attitude Toward the Topic of Ecotourism (â = .13, $p$ = .13). This reveals that participants who understood the news release consequently became more involved in reading the story, and greater involvement predicted a favorable attitude toward ecotourism in Florida. Also, although this relationship was not significant, those individuals who found the news release personally relevant developed a positive attitude toward the topic of ecotourism.

## DISCUSSION

This study examined the role of nonprofit versus for-profit organizational context cues and emotional content of messages on levels of affect and reason in cognitive involvement, comprehension, message credibility, and subsequent attitude formation. While the findings are informative and indicate that future work in this area is needed, there are certain limitations to the study that need to be addressed. Some relationships among the variables that indicated that there might be some merit were not found to be significant perhaps due to a smaller sample size (N = 148). Additionally, all the respondents were college students from the same geographic region, which limits the breadth of demographic

features that may influence the outcome of further studies. Furthermore, in order to not be perceived as overly contrived (Tormala & Petty,1994), the message frames of emotional/rational were not convincingly operationalized and subsequently these variables were dropped. Finally, most people consider themselves to be supportive of the environment (Florida, 2000), and by extension ecotourism. Thus there is little need, or use, in persuading them to be something they think they already are.

The results did indicate that the model was indirectly driven by comprehension and directly driven by involvement in processing the news story. Combined, these two variables strongly predicted attitude toward the topic and perceived message credibility, which were unrelated. This suggests that credibility is a factor, but not necessary for attitude formation, at least in this case. The nonprofit status context cue suggests a relationship where the nonprofit designation increased involvement in processing the news release. Females had a slight influence on release comprehension. Interest salience had a moderating influence on comprehension and positive attitude toward ecotourism. In the respecified model, profit status does not have a path to comprehension and message credibility does not have a path to attitude toward ecotourism.

The findings support the premise that organizational branding (nonprofit versus for-profit) indirectly increases perceived source credibility through involvement in processing the message, at least in the parameters of a topic such as the environment or health that generally has support (Pan, 2005). It is probable that the nonprofit "brand" for a well-established issue increased salience and that respondents could easily reconcile this association.

These results are consistent with existing literature highlighting the perception of source credibility that have found that when messages are evaluated through levels of involvement and comprehension, the result is positive attitude toward the topic. Previous studies have confirmed that nonprofit sources are typically perceived to be more credible than for-profit sources (Haley, 1996). Although the model did not establish a relationship between topic attitude and message credibility, other studies have reported that source credibility plays an important role in influencing attitudes (Lafferty, Goldsmith & Newell, 2002; and Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1999) through establishing its reputation or image (Keller, 1998). Moreover, the more the news story was comprehended, the greater the involvement in reading the story. This increased involvement positively influenced attitude toward the topic, as well as message credibility.

These findings suggest for a nonprofit organization, especially one that naturally exists within an advocacy framework, the contextual cue of a nonprofit status should be clearly conveyed. This strategy can lead to increased involvement in the message and perceived credibility of the source as well as the formation of a positive attitude toward the topic and the organization. Organizations lacking high name recognition should benefit from the nonprofit designation. The nonprofit label helps promote information processing and

reinforces the organization's role in being a credible source of information, especially if combined within an advocacy framework focusing on an issue. Logically, key target audiences who already share an area of interest with the organization, such as "the outdoors", may benefit from focusing attention on that connection and thus successfully amplify the issue enough for a positive attitude to be formed.

Communication about joint ventures between nonprofit and for-profit entities should potentially emphasize the nonprofit partner to enhance cognitive involvement and information processing. This increased involvement can improve the likelihood that the reader will perceive the information source as credible, as well as develop a favorable attitude toward the message. However, dependent upon the communication goal, research has shown that for-profit organizations have benefited from this paired approach at the expense of the nonprofit organization because monies have flowed to the for-profit organizations through the purchase of products and services instead of donations to the nonprofit (Lichtenstein, Drumwight, & Braig, 2004).

In conclusion, the nonprofit context may provide a communication advantage that can be used to increase a target audience's level of understanding and cognitive involvement in the topic. The nonprofit designation can contribute to successfully achieving communication goals to inform and/or to persuade target audience members in a neutral topic such as the environment or health issues. It also reinforces perceived source credibility through message involvement. Source credibility can provide long-term benefits to an organization and through select channels, organizations can enhance their reputation.

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# Is Women's Multivitamin Consumption Reasoned, Planned, or Socially Cognitive? A Test of Three Social Influence Models

Lisa L. Massi Lindsey, Jenifer E. Kopfman and Christine E. Prue

*Neural tube defects (NTDs) are serious birth defects that affect approximately 3,000 pregnancies in the United States each year. Consuming the B vitamin folic acid can reduce the incidence of NTDs 50%–70%, and recent efforts to reduce NTD rates have focused on increasing the number of childbearing-aged women who take a vitamin containing folic acid every day. Future declines in NTDs must come from creative and compelling education and communication campaigns that will increase the number of childbearing-aged women who consume these vitamins. Therefore, conducting theory-guided research on multivitamin use is essential given the lack of knowledge surrounding this behavior. To this end, the current study tested three social influence models—the theory of reasoned action, the theory of planned behavior, and social cognitive theory—to determine which theory, or theoretical constructs, best predict(s) multivitamin use and might be used to guide message design to increase folic acid use. A nationally representative sample of 1,048 women of childbearing age was utilized, and results indicated that multivitamin use was best predicted by constructs from the theory of planned behavior*

*and social cognitive theory. The practical and theoretical implications of the results are discussed.*

**Keywords**: theory of reasoned action, theory of planned behavior, social cognitive theory, message design

Birth defects are the leading cause of infant mortality in the United States (Sutton & Munson, 2005). Neural tube defects (NTDs) are serious birth defects of the spine (spina bifida) and brain (anencephaly) that currently affect over 3,000 pregnancies each year in the United States (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2004a). Daily periconceptional consumption of the B vitamin folic acid reduces the occurrence of NTDs 50%–70% (CDC, 2004a). Because NTDs occur in the first 21 days of pregnancy—before many women know they are pregnant—and because folic acid is water soluble, women must consume folic acid every day *before* they become pregnant (CDC, 1992). To this end, the U.S. Public Health Service and Institute of Medicine issued separate recommendations that all women capable of becoming pregnant consume 400 micrograms ($\mu$g) of folic acid daily (CDC, 1992; IOM, 1998). Also, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration mandated the fortification of cereal grain products such as bread, breakfast cereals, and pasta with folic acid in an effort to increase women's daily intake (FDA, 1996). Since fortification of the U.S. food supply began in 1998, it has resulted in a 26% reduction in NTDs (CDC, 2004a).

With fortification alone, most women do not reach the daily recommended level of 400 $\mu$g of folic acid from their diets (CDC, 2004a, 2004b); therefore, increasing the use of vitamins containing folic acid remains an important component of NTD prevention (CDC, 1992, 2004a, 2004b). The most recent March of Dimes Gallup poll indicated that only 33% of U.S. women aged 18–45 years reported daily consumption of a vitamin containing folic acid (CDC, 2005; The Gallup Organization, 2005). Success in increasing sustained multivitamin use among women of childbearing age has been elusive (Lawrence et al., 2003). Because it is unlikely that fortification levels will be increased at this time, future declines in NTDs must come from creative and compelling programs that will increase the number of women who consume vitamins containing folic acid.

The current investigation contributes to efforts to develop such programs by testing three social influence models that might be used to guide interventions designed to increase multivitamin use among childbearing-aged women. Because using theory to guide message design can save resources (Murray-Johnson & Witte, 2003), conducting this research on multivitamin use is essential given the lack of knowledge surrounding this behavior. Also, many different theoretical foundations have been used in planning health campaigns in recent years. In an effort to determine which theories, or theoretical constructs, could best be used to guide a campaign encouraging women of childbearing age to consume multivitamins containing folic acid, this study examined three of those commonly used

theories—the theory of reasoned action, the theory of planned behavior, and social cognitive theory—in order to determine which theory or combination of theoretical constructs best predicts multivitamin use among reproductive-aged women in the United States. In what follows, each of the three theories is explicated and models are proposed to test each.

## THEORY OF REASONED ACTION

The theory of reasoned action (TRA; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970, 1974, 1980a, 1980b; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) proposes three determinants of behavior. Individuals' attitudes regarding a behavior as well as their subjective norm—that is, their perceptions of what important others think about this behavior—predict their intent to perform the given behavior. This intent subsequently determines behavior. This theory has been used to understand myriad behaviors, and as a subset, many different health behaviors.

The TRA's principles have been used previously in interventions designed to increase the use of multivitamins among women of childbearing age (Lawrence et al., 2003). Although Lawrence et al. used the TRA to guide their intervention, their research did not specifically test the TRA model. Therefore, research is needed to establish whether the TRA is an effective theoretical foundation for encouraging multivitamin consumption.

In the current investigation, the TRA can lend insight into women's behavior regarding the daily consumption of multivitamins. Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory was developed specifically for behaviors seen as volitional or voluntary; that is, behaviors that people perform because they choose to do so (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Taking a multivitamin fits within these parameters. Women who take multivitamins daily (the behavior) already intend to perform this behavior, and their attitudes and subjective norm are likely to reflect positively on multivitamin consumption. Women who do not consume multivitamins daily, however, are likely to be the target audience for a health campaign encouraging this behavior. Given that the TRA suggests that favorable attitudes toward multivitamin consumption could lead to increased intent to purchase and consume multivitamins, an intervention focused on increasing favorable attitudes might lead to the desired behavior. For example, because folic acid is not important to most women who are not planning a pregnancy (if they are not intending to become pregnant then they do not perceive a need for folic acid), messages focusing on the fact that folic acid prevents NTDs in pregnancy would not be effective in influencing most women's beliefs and subsequent attitudes despite the fact that a high percentage of pregnancies are unplanned (Lindsey et al., in press). Conversely, if other beliefs important to these women could be addressed in health campaigns (e.g., helping them stay energetic), then these beliefs are likely to promote a positive attitude toward multivitamin consumption, thus leading to increased intent to purchase and consume multivitamins. This increased intent should, according to the TRA, lead to the desired behavioral response.

Given this rationale and previous evidence that the TRA has been shown to explain adequately behaviors in myriad health contexts, the current study proposes that one could assume reasonably that the TRA could explain women's decisions to take a multivitamin. Thus, the following hypothesis is offered:

> H1: The TRA will explain reported multivitamin consumption behavior among women of childbearing age.

## THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR

Building on the TRA, Ajzen (1985, 1987, 1988, 1991) proposed the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to include an additional variable he labeled *perceived behavioral control*, which is defined as the belief that one can perform the desired behavior. According to Stiff and Mongeau (2003), "Ajzen argued that people's intentions to perform a behavior are often thwarted by a lack of confidence in their ability to perform that behavior" (p. 66). At its core, Ajzen's argument indicated that one's perception of his or her ability to perform the behavior would predict both behavioral intention and the extent to which one actually engaged in the behavior. The TPB, therefore, suggests that attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control predict behavioral intention, and both intent and perceived behavioral control have a direct impact on behavior.

This theory has been found to explain successfully many different health-related behaviors. According to a recent study, the TPB explains multivitamin use among African-American female students quite well, explaining 65% of variance in behavioral intentions (Pawlak, Connell, Brown, Meyer, & Yadrick, 2005). Ajzen and his coauthors also examined the issue of taking daily vitamins as one outcome behavior in a test of the TPB (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992). Although their study claimed that the TPB significantly enhanced the prediction of behavioral intentions over the TRA, it is interesting to note that there was virtually no difference between the TPB and the TRA when specifically examining taking a multivitamin. This behavior demonstrated the lowest increase in explained variance of all 10 behaviors for both intentions and behavior outcomes. Thus, although studies have attempted to show the theoretical superiority of the TPB over the TRA, it is clear that both theories could predict the behavior of taking a multivitamin (e.g., Madden et al., 1992).

For the current study, the implications of the TPB are apparent. Although attitude and subjective norm might be useful components in understanding whether or not women take multivitamins daily, perceived behavioral control could play a role in determining whether or not this behavior actually occurs. Even though women indicate a positive attitude toward taking a multivitamin and perceive that others would respond positively to this behavior, factors such as forgetfulness, cost, time, and negative pill attributes such as size and taste (CDC, 2005; Lindsey et al., in press) might prevent women from actual

performance of the behavior. If this is the case, then effective health campaigns targeting perceived behavioral control might be the most effective method of increasing women's multivitamin consumption.

Given this rationale and previous evidence that the TPB has been shown to explain multivitamin-taking behavior, the current study proposes the following hypothesis:

> H2: The TPB will explain reported multivitamin consumption behavior among women of childbearing age.

# SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY

Scholars have argued that social cognitive theory (SCT) provides an explanatory mechanism for how people acquire new behaviors (e.g., DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). Originally called social learning theory, SCT (Bandura, 1977, 1986) borrows from the early learning theories that suggest that people learn behavior by pairing performance with the rewards or punishments generated by this behavior, but it differs from the earlier theories in that it emphasizes humans' ability to learn through observation rather than direct experience of the reinforcement. The fundamental assumption of SCT is that by observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, as well as how they are rewarded or punished, and this information serves as a guide for personal behavior.

Although the TRA and TPB incorporate the idea of other people being important in a decision-making process through subjective norm, SCT brings the role of others to the forefront. By observing the behavior of others and the outcomes received as a result of the action, people consider whether or not a particular behavior is one they would want to perform. Several factors come into play during these considerations. According to SCT, the goals that people set for themselves, and the behaviors they choose to enact to make progress toward those goals, are determined by three factors: self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental supports and resources relevant to their goal pursuit (Bandura, 1986, 1997).

Self-efficacy refers to people's beliefs in their capability to organize and confidently execute the course of action required to perform a given behavior successfully (Bandura, 1986). Similar in nature to the TPB's construct of perceived behavioral control, a person with high self-efficacy is confident that he or she can perform the chosen behavior, and a person with low self-efficacy doubts his or her ability to perform this behavior. SCT makes a clear distinction between beliefs about the ability to enact a behavior (i.e., self-efficacy) and beliefs about the outcomes that will result from the behavior. This latter concept has been called outcome expectations, which are the effects or consequences (physical, social, self-evaluative, or other) that are believed to result from performing a particular behavior. As Maibach and Cotton (1995) stated, "People are motivated to perform behaviors that they

believe will produce outcomes they desire" (p. 49). A single behavior could have more than one expected outcome; thus, those outcomes viewed as more important tend to have a stronger influence on whether or not the behavior will be performed. Finally, environmental supports and resources comprise the third factor determining behavior according to SCT. This construct suggests that certain environmental factors could help or hinder one's decision to perform a particular behavior. Issues such as financial considerations and physical limitations could affect this decision, as well as opinions of other people who might be important to an individual. SCT suggests that these three factors—self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental supports—all work together to determine how people make progress toward their goals.

Although it could be assumed that self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental supports all contribute to behavior directly, a recent review by SCT's original author (Bandura, 2004) indicated that an additional step in the cognition-to-action path might be included. Intentionality and forethought are identified as core features of behavior. Bandura suggested that "people are not only agents of action" (p. 618), but that people form intentions that include action plans and strategies for realizing them prior to performing the action or behavior. Thus, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental supports could be assumed to affect intentions, which then predict whether or not the behavior will occur. Consistent with Bandura's recent thinking, the current study presumes that self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental supports will impact intention, and intention will act as the sole predictor of behavior. Indeed, previous research on myriad health behaviors showed that SCT can be used successfully (see e.g., Coleman, Horodynski, Contreras, & Hoerr, 2005; Netz, Wu, Becker, & Tenenbaum, 2005; Winett, Tate, Anderson, Wojcik, & Winett, 2005).

SCT implications for the current project indicate that before women will consider taking multivitamins daily, they will need to perceive that certain health outcomes will result from this behavior (outcome expectations—women might need to believe that vitamin consumption prevents birth defects, prevents illness, or simply improves general health), as well as view these outcomes as important to them. In addition to perceiving these outcomes as desirable, women must perceive that they are capable of performing this behavior (self-efficacy). If factors such as limited budget or inability to swallow pills are present, self-efficacy might decline, but women who perceive that they can afford to purchase vitamins and are capable of swallowing them (or taking an alternative form like a chewable tablet) will have high self-efficacy. In addition to outcome expectations and self-efficacy, environmental supports will come into play. If women perceive that others will disapprove of multivitamin use, this environmental pressure could affect their decision regarding the behavior negatively; likewise, perceptions of positive environmental support could encourage this behavior. Thus, outcome expectations, self-efficacy, and environmental

supports all affect women's intentions to take multivitamins, and these intentions will determine whether or not the behavior is performed.

Given this rationale, the current study proposes that one could assume reasonably that SCT could explain women's decision to take a multivitamin. Thus, the following hypothesis is offered:

> H3: SCT will explain reported multivitamin consumption behavior among women of childbearing age.

## COMPARING THE THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS

Because all three of these social influence models have been used effectively in a variety of health contexts, it remains unclear which would provide the strongest guidance in an effort to increase multivitamin consumption among women of childbearing age. Although all three theories could provide acceptable foundations for public health messages surrounding this issue, one goal of this investigation is to examine all of the constructs that comprise the three models to determine which combination of theoretical constructs best explains this target behavior. Therefore, the following research question is offered to address this issue:

> RQ1:   Which constructs from the theories examined—the TRA, the TPB, or SCT—best predict intent to consume multivitamins and subsequent multivitamin consumption (behavior) reported among reproductive-aged women?

## METHOD

### Procedure

The current study was part of a larger investigation included in a nationwide consumer mail panel survey. The sampling and data collection were conducted by Synovate, Inc. Respondents were recruited to join the mail panel through a 4-page recruitment survey in early 2004. In return for their participation, respondents were given small gifts (e.g., a 20-minute telephone calling card) and were entered into a sweepstakes with a first-place prize of $1,000 and five second-place prizes of $50 each. In October 2004, a total of 5,947 surveys were mailed by Synovate to potential participants. Responses to the survey were received from 4,214 participants using the provided postage-paid envelopes, yielding a response rate of 71%. The data were poststratified and weighted so that the sample distribution of age, race, sex, household size, and household income matched that of the

general population according to the 2000 U.S. census. This weighting adjusted for over- or underrepresentation of categories within these demographic variables.

### Participants

Because the authors were interested only in women of childbearing age, the data from women 18–45 years old ($M = 33.50$, median = 34.00, mode = 24.00, $SD = 7.45$) were examined, resulting in a final sample of 1,048 women on which all subsequent analyses were based. A majority of the women were married (55.5%), with 30.7% never married and 12.2% either widowed, divorced, or separated. Participants' education level included women who attended elementary or high school (3.5%), graduated from high school or trade school (25.1%), attended college (41.3%), graduated from college (20.6%), and attended graduate school (9.2%). Most participants held full-time jobs (62.7%), 10.8% worked part time, and 16.7% identified themselves as "homemakers." Annual household incomes ranged from less than $5,000 to over $300,000 ($M = \$34,000$, median = $40,000–$44,999). Most respondents were White (64.2%), 14.0% were African-American, 15.5% were Hispanic, 2.4% were Asian, and 3.9% indicated a race/ethnicity of "other."

### Instrumentation

With few exceptions, measures were composed of five-point, Likert-type items on a scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and were scored such that higher scores indicated greater perceptions of the construct being measured (alternate measurement will be discussed in detail where necessary). Given that specific items were specified a priori to measure one and only one factor, confirmatory factor analysis was employed to test the measurement model (Anderson, Gerbing, & Hunter, 1987; Hunter & Gerbing, 1982; Levine, 2005). The data were found to be consistent with the proposed factors. Internal consistency tests showed that the inter-item correlations were substantial, and errors calculated between items measuring the same construct were within sampling error of zero. Likewise, the parallelism test indicated that the errors calculated between items measuring different constructs were within sampling error of zero.

*Attitude toward multivitamin use.* Three items modified from previous health behavior research (e.g., Kopfman, Smith, Morrison, Lindsey, & Yoo, 2002; Smith, Kopfman, Lindsey, Yoo, & Morrison, 2004; Smith, Lindsey, Kopfman, Morrison, & Yoo, in press) measured attitudes for each of the models (e.g., "I think it is a good idea for me to take a multivitamin every day."). Attitudes toward multivitamin use had a mean of 3.74 ($SD = 1.13$) and standardized item alpha (SIá) was found to be .89.

*Subjective norm (environmental support).* Three items measured subjective norm (for tests of the TRA and TPB) and environmental support (for the test of SCT) (e.g.,

"People who are important to me believe that I should take a multivitamin every day."). Subjective norm (environmental support) had a mean of 3.13 ($SD$ = 1.16, SIá = .93).

*Self-efficacy (perceived behavioral control).* Self-efficacy (for the test of SCT) and perceived behavioral control (for test of TPB) were measured using three items (e.g., "Taking a multivitamin every day is easy for me."). The items were consistent with previously published scales and conceptualizations of the construct (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Pastorelli, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Rola, Rosza, & Bandura, 2001; Witte, 1992). Self-efficacy (perceived behavioral control) had a mean of 3.75 ($SD$ = 1.05, SIá = .77).

*Intent.* Three items modified from previous research (e.g., Kopfman et al., 2002; Lindsey, 2005; Lindsey, Ah Yun, & Hill, 2007; Smith et al., 2004; Smith et al., in press) measured behavioral intention for each of the models (e.g., "I plan to take a multivitamin every day."). Intent had a mean of 3.47 ($SD$ = 1.34, SIá = .95).

*Outcome expectations.* Outcome expectations were measured by creating a composite variable that had two sets of items: (a) the likelihood of various outcomes and (b) the personal importance of each outcome. First, participants were asked to indicate how likely they perceived each of seven outcomes to be on a scale from 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely). This index is consistent with previously published scales and conceptualizations of this variable (e.g., Bandura, 1986; Solomon & Annis, 1989) and multivitamin-related outcomes measured previously (e.g., CDC, 2004b, 2005).

Outcomes included items such as "I will be healthier if I take a multivitamin," "Taking a multivitamin every day will lower my risk of having a baby with certain birth defects," and "Taking a multivitamin every day will keep me from getting sick." The second set of items asked respondents to rate how personally important each outcome was on a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important) and included items such as "Becoming healthier," "Lowering your risk of having a baby with certain birth defects," and "Getting the vitamins you do not get from the food you eat." For each participant, the likelihood of each outcome was multiplied with its corresponding importance item (e.g., likelihood of "I will be healthier if I take a multivitamin" x importance of "becoming healthier"), and the resulting products were averaged to create the final variable. Values possible for the resulting outcome expectations variable ranged from 1.00 to 25.00, and had a mean of 14.43 ($SD$ = 4.59, SIá = .80).

*Behavior.* Multivitamin use was measured with a single open-ended item asking respondents to write the number of times they took multivitamins in a week. Responses ranged from 0 to 7 with a mean of 3.34 ($SD$ = 3.06, median = 4.0).

## RESULTS

To test each of the hypothesized models, the ordinary least squares criterion (Hunter & Gerbing, 1982) was used to estimate the parameters, parameter size was examined, and

Figure 1
Hypothesized TRA Model With Path Coefficients
Corrected For Attenuation Due To Measurement Error
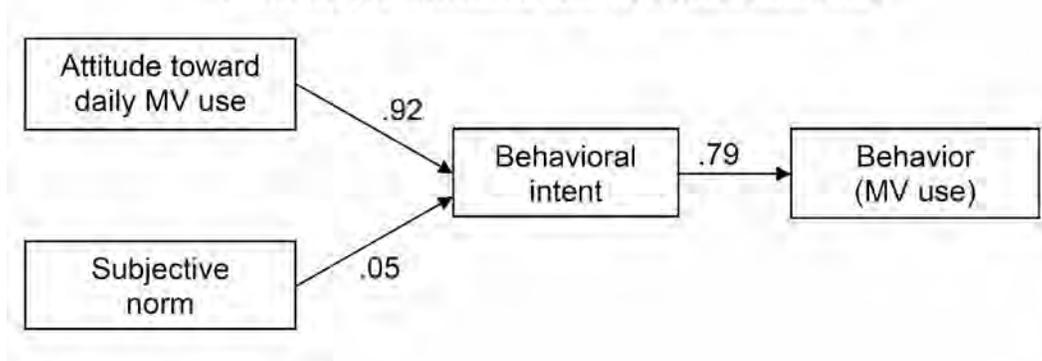


the fit of each model was assessed. Parameter size was determined in each path diagram by performing a simple regression of each endogenous variable onto its causal antecedent, and model fit was tested by comparing the estimated parameter size to the reproduced correlations (see Hunter & Gerbing, 1982 for information on reproducing correlations in path analysis). Models are said to be consistent with the data when path coefficients are substantial and the differences between parameter estimates and reproduced correlations (errors) are attributable to sampling error. If the path coefficients are within sampling error of zero or the errors are larger than what is expected from sampling error alone, the model is said to be inconsistent with the data.

### Theory of Reasoned Action

The TRA posits that both attitude and subjective norm impact behavioral intent, which in turn predicts behavior. The path coefficients for this model, presented in Figure 1, showed that each of the path coefficients was in the direction predicted by the TRA, but not all relationships were substantial. The coefficient linking attitude and intent was 0.92, $P(0.88 \leq \hat{a} \leq 0.96) = .95$, indicating that attitude had a substantial effect on intentions to take daily multivitamins. Intent, in turn, affected behavior (path coefficient = 0.79) indicating a tendency for respondents who intended to take a multivitamin daily to engage in that behavior, $P(0.77 \leq \tilde{n} \leq 0.81) = .95$. Subjective norm, however, had little impact on behavioral intent. The coefficient linking subjective norm and intent was .05, $P(-0.02 \leq \hat{a} \leq 0.13) = .95$, and was within sampling error of zero.

The differences between predicted and obtained correlations for all unconstrained bivariate relationships in the model were examined, and none differed substantially from what was expected from sampling error (errors ranged from -.02 to -.07). Although the

## Figure 2
### Hypothesized TPB Model with Path Coefficients
### Corrected For Attenuation Due To Measurement Error
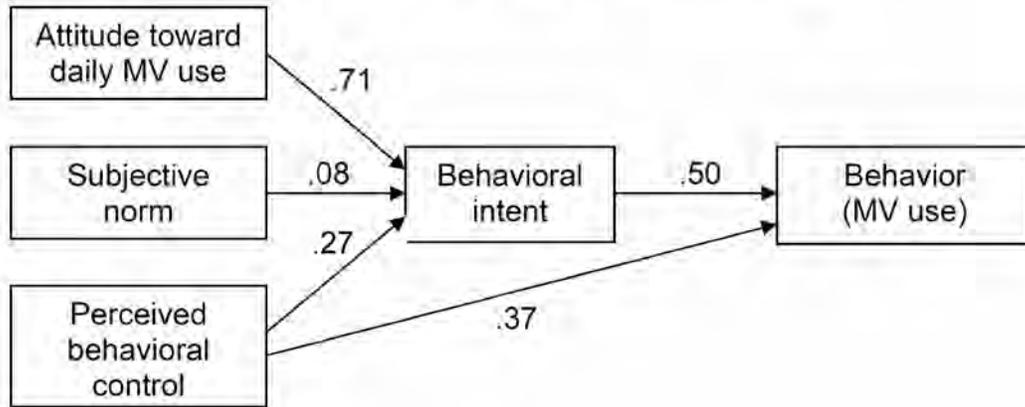


errors were small, a confidence interval around a path coefficient that includes zero indicates that there is no real link between the two constructs. Therefore, it is clear that subjective norm cannot be declared a predictor of intent. For these reasons, the data were judged to be inconsistent with the TRA model, hence inconsistent with the first hypothesis, and suggested that the TRA did not explain women's behavior regarding multivitamins because "important others" appeared not to be very important when it comes to multivitamin use.

### Theory of Planned Behavior

The TPB proposes the same conceptual structure as the TRA with the inclusion of an additional variable: perceived behavioral control. The TPB predicts that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control all impact intent, and perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention both directly influence behavior. Path coefficients for the TPB, presented in Figure 2, indicate that each was in the direction predicted, but not all relationships were substantial. Attitude demonstrated a substantial effect on intentions to take multivitamins, as the coefficient linking these variables was .71, $P(0.63 \leq â \leq 0.79) = .95$. Subjective norm showed little effect on intent with a coefficient of .08, $P(0.01 \leq â \leq 0.15) = .95$. Although not very large in magnitude, the coefficient linking subjective norm and intent was not within sampling error of zero, and can be viewed as acceptable. Perceived behavioral control demonstrated a substantial effect on both intent [path coefficient = .27, $P(0.19 \leq â \leq 0.35) = .95$] and behavior [path coefficient = .37, $P(0.27 \leq â \leq 0.47) = .95$]. Finally, the coefficient linking intent and behavior was .50,

## Figure 3
### Hypothesized SCT Model With Path Coefficients
### Corrected For Attenuation Due To Measurement Error
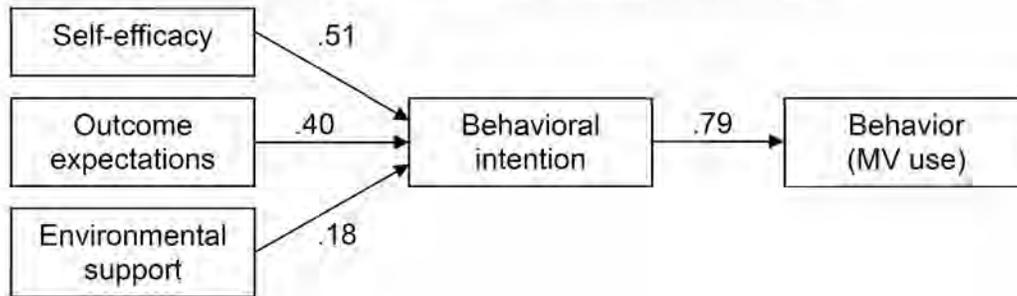


$P(0.42 \leq â \leq 0.58) = .95$, indicating that intent remained a substantial predictor of behavior.

The differences between predicted and obtained correlations for all unconstrained bivariate relationships in the model were examined, and none differed substantially from what was expected from sampling error (errors ranged from -.02 to -.03). Thus, given that errors were small and the path coefficients were ample in size, it could be concluded that the TPB provided an acceptable explanation for multivitamin-taking behavior. Therefore, the data were consistent with the second hypothesis. One should be cautious when interpreting these results, however, given that subjective norm demonstrated a minimal effect on intent and the resulting path coefficient might be a statistical artifact of the large sample size.

## Social Cognitive Theory

For the current investigation, SCT was conceptualized to include five key variables identified by Bandura (1977, 1986, 2004). Self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental support were predicted to impact behavioral intention, which, in turn, affects behavior. Path coefficients for SCT, presented in Figure 3, indicate that all were ample and in the predicted direction for each of the proposed relationships. The coefficient linking self-efficacy and intent was .51, $P(0.45 \leq â \leq 0.57) = .95$, indicating that self-efficacy demonstrated a substantial effect on intentions to take multivitamins. Similarly, outcome expectations had a significant effect on intent, with a path coefficient of .40, $P(0.32 \leq â \leq 0.48) = .95$. Somewhat smaller in effect but still ample in size, the coefficient linking environmental support with intent was .18, $P(0.10 \leq â \leq 0.26) = .95$. Finally, intent demonstrated a strong relationship with behavior, yielding a path coefficient of .79, $P(0.77 \leq ñ \leq 0.81) = .95$. These results indicated that expected outcomes, personal beliefs about one's capability to take multivitamins daily, and perceived support from others all

influenced participants' intentions to take multivitamins, and this intent determined whether or not they actually engaged in the behavior.

An examination of the errors for all unconstrained bivariate relationships in the model indicated that most did not differ substantially from what was expected from sampling error, as they ranged primarily from -.02 to -.07, but that one error of .14 was slightly larger than preferred although it was not large enough to be considered unacceptable. Despite this slightly larger than preferred error, the path coefficients were quite substantial and the errors were within an acceptable range, both of which suggest that SCT does provide a satisfactory explanation for multivitamin consumption behaviors. Therefore, the data were consistent with the third hypothesis.

## Research Question

Although all three theories examined in this investigation—the TRA, the TPB, and SCT—could have provided an acceptable foundation for public health messages surrounding multivitamin use, the goal of this study was to determine which constructs from these theoretical frameworks would best explain this target behavior. To assess which of the theoretical constructs best explain multivitamin consumption among reproductive-aged women, the results of all three path analyses were examined to determine which antecedent variables would be included in the post hoc analysis. The strongest predictors of behavioral intent were attitude (from the TRA and TPB), self-efficacy (from the TPB and SCT), and outcome expectations (from SCT). These three theoretical constructs were then used to create a post hoc model that was tested to determine which constructs were the best predictors of reproductive-aged women's intent to take multivitamins daily and the women's ensuing behavior.

The post hoc model posits that attitude, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations impact intent to take a daily multivitamin, which in turn predicts behavior. Path coefficients for this post hoc model, presented in Figure 4, show that each was in the direction predicted, but not all relationships were substantial. The coefficient linking attitude and intent was 0.68, $P(0.62 \leq â \leq 0.74) = .95$, indicating that one's attitude had a substantial effect on intentions to take daily multivitamins. Similarly, self-efficacy had a significant effect on intent, as the path coefficient was 0.27, $P(0.21 \leq â \leq 0.33) = .95$. Intent, in turn, affected behavior (path coefficient = 0.70), indicating a tendency for those respondents who intended to take a multivitamin daily to engage in that behavior, $P(0.66 \leq ñ \leq 0.74) = .95$. Outcome expectations, however, had little impact on behavioral intent. The coefficient linking outcome expectations and intent was .05, $P(-0.03 \leq â \leq 0.13) = .95$, and was within sampling error of zero.

The differences between predicted and obtained correlations for all unconstrained bivariate relationships in the model were examined, and one differed from what was

Figure 4
Post Hoc Model With Path Coefficients
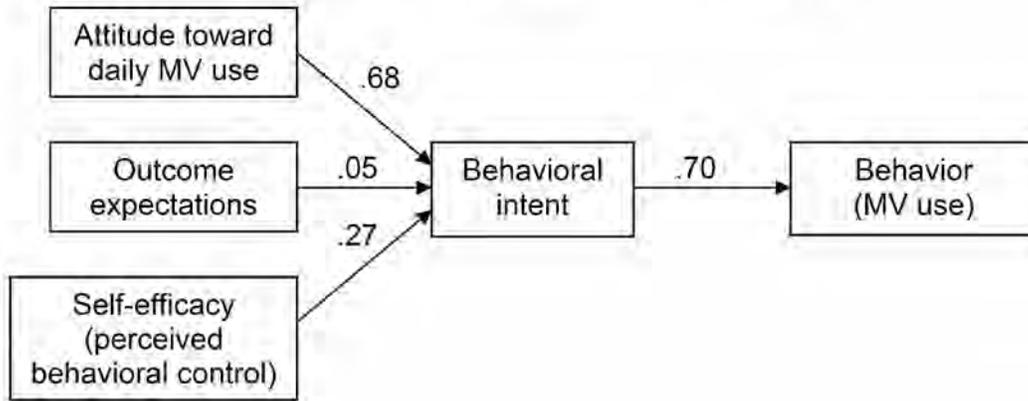


expected from sampling error (.14). Although the errors were acceptable, a confidence interval around a path coefficient that includes zero indicates that there was no real link between the two constructs. Therefore, the post hoc model indicates that outcome expectations did not predict intentions and behavior as well as attitude and self-efficacy, and that outcome expectations should not be viewed as a strong predictor of intent. In answer to the research question, results from this analysis clearly suggest that the strongest predictors of intentions and subsequent behaviors related to taking a multivitamin daily were attitude and self-efficacy.

## DISCUSSION

In an effort to determine which social influence theories, or theoretical constructs, might best be used to guide a campaign encouraging women of childbearing age to consume multivitamins containing folic acid, the current study tested three theoretical models—the TRA, the TPB, and SCT—in order to determine which constructs best predicted multivitamin use among reproductive-aged women in the United States.

Results from the test of the first hypothesis examining the TRA indicated that the opinions of others regarding multivitamin use (subjective norm) did not exhibit a significant influence on women's intent to take multivitamins, and because of this, the TRA did not provide a satisfactory explanation of the target behavior (daily consumption of multivitamins). Although the findings of this study suggest that the TRA did not provide an adequate explanation of the behavior examined here, these results do not discredit the TRA, which has been a popular social influence theory for a wide variety of contexts. Rather, it has become apparent that normative considerations did not play an important role in

women's decisions about multivitamins. Although the opinions of others might matter more when weighing other behavioral options, they are not given much consideration by women in this particular context, and these results are consistent with previous research on multivitamins (Lindsey et al., in press). Recent research has begun looking at the distinction between descriptive and injunctive norms, as well as variables that moderate the relationship between norms and behaviors (e.g., Lapinski & Rimal, 2005). Future use of the TRA to examine multivitamin behaviors might find stronger predictive values of norms when considering different explications of this construct.

Having rejected the TRA as an effective theoretical model in the current study, the statistical findings for the remaining two hypotheses presented a challenge for interpretation. The TPB yielded low errors but a rather weak path coefficient for subjective norm. SCT, on the other hand, produced substantial path coefficients, and one error somewhat larger than preferred. Although results for both models indicated acceptable predictive ability, neither model produced statistical evidence that it explained the dependent variables better than the other. In fact, both models offer viable explanations of the target behavior. Therefore, post hoc analyses examined a combination of the strongest constructs from each of these models to determine which of the theoretical constructs best predicts women's multivitamin consumption intent and behavior.

Examining a model in which attitude, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations all predicted intent, which then predicted behavior, provided a clear answer to the research question.  Although it appeared to be a strong predictor of multivitamin use when examined with the SCT model, outcome expectations was not found to have a strong impact on intent when compared with attitude and self-efficacy. The strongest predictors of multivitamin use among women of childbearing age were attitude and self-efficacy. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings will be considered.

### Theoretical Implications

All of the theories examined in this investigation—the TRA, the TPB and SCT—have been used as theoretical underpinnings for innumerable persuasive endeavors, including myriad health-related topics. In this study, attitude, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations demonstrated the strongest influence on intent when testing the individual hypotheses, and intent consistently produced a significant impact on behavior across theories. For campaigns targeted to women of childbearing age, post-hoc analyses examining constructs elicited from these theories clearly suggest that attitude is the most influential factor contributing to intent, but that self-efficacy, or a woman's own belief about whether or not she can perform a particular behavior, plays a significant role in determining both intent and behavior. Subjective norm (perception of important others' attitudes) and outcome expectations were found to affect women's intent to take multivitamins, but these

effects were either insignificant or weak. Finally, consistent with much of the previous work testing the attitude-behavior relationship, intent to consume multivitamins had a strong relationship with the corresponding behavior.

When examining the strongest constructs that emerged from the theories guiding this study, an interesting picture emerges for consideration. If constructs from these theories are used to guide message design, multivitamin messages aimed at women of childbearing age should focus on increasing positive attitudes toward multivitamins and increasing women's perceived self-efficacy. The theoretical implications of this study provide clear practical considerations for any attempt to persuade women to take multivitamins.

More broadly, the findings of this investigation suggest that perhaps social influence researchers and practitioners ought not limit themselves to the use of one theoretical perspective to guide their work. Testing several different theories and selecting the constructs that are most relevant for the particular context or application will provide a stronger foundation on which to base persuasive efforts.

## Practical Implications

No single influence theory dominates health communication research or practice because each theory offers a different perspective of audiences, behaviors, and the contexts in which those behaviors occur. Communication campaigns might have the greatest impact if they use a combination of theories to understand a problem and articulate solutions. By reviewing these theories, clues emerge for practitioners related to overall program objectives and strategies, message and materials development, and selection of messengers and message channels.

Each of the three theories offers insights that health communication professionals can use in developing clear and compelling messages to influence the target behavior of multivitamin use. In the current study, attitude was found to be the strongest predictor of intent to consume multivitamins. This finding suggests that practitioners seeking to increase women's use of multivitamins should target persuasive messages at creating favorable attitudes. Despite the fact that multivitamins containing folic acid are one of the best ways to prevent birth defects, previous research has shown that this information does not necessarily create positive attitudes toward consumption (Lindsey et al., in press). Instead, practitioners might employ other creative methods to encourage both multivitamin use and the knowledge that taking multivitamins is an important daily behavior. Clearly, the theories examined here indicate that creating a positive attitude toward the desired behavior is an important step in the persuasive process.

Also, self-efficacy (perceived behavioral control) was found to be a strong predictor of intent to consume multivitamins. Women of childbearing age need to feel that taking a multivitamin is something they can do easily. New evidence suggests that certain factors can

affect self-efficacy, and thus the successful performance of this behavior. For example, women have noted that they are not capable of taking a multivitamin every day because of time (hard to fit it into a busy schedule), high costs of multivitamins (e.g., too expensive, not in women's tight budgets), negative attributes of multivitamin pills (e.g., problems swallowing pills, unappealing smell/taste), forgetfulness, and misperceptions about getting necessary nutrients from food sources even when women acknowledge having poor diets (Lindsey et al., in press). Persuasive messaging is vital to increasing women's perceived self-efficacy around daily multivitamin use. Although persuasive messages cannot overcome unappealing product attributes or cost barriers, they can point out the many types of multivitamins from which women can choose (pill, chewable, liquid, gummy bears, etc.), correct misperceptions about costs, or identify locations where multivitamins can be purchased inexpensively, to overcome these barriers. Practitioners seeking to increase multivitamin use would be wise to address these issues of self-efficacy.

## Limitations

*Measurement of norms.* Regardless of the theoretical model, subjective norm (environmental support) consistently showed a weak effect on behavioral intention. The items used to measure subjective norm included general referents (e.g., "people who are important to me"). Although this generalized approach is used frequently, increased specificity of the referent (e.g., my mother, my friends, my doctor) could have resulted in different conclusions. There is evidence to suggest that a doctor's recommendation might be an influential antecedent of this behavior. For example, 20% of women not taking vitamin or mineral supplements indicated that a doctor's recommendation might motivate them to do so; however, among women who reported not consuming a vitamin or mineral supplement daily, 31% indicated they had received a doctor's recommendation (CDC, 2005). Exploration of normative influences should be focused on pursuing specific influencers (e.g., mothers and doctors), pursuing different types of norms (e.g., descriptive and injunctive norms, Lapinksi & Rimal, 2005), validating or invalidating their influence on this behavior, and using that information to develop effective intervention strategies.

In the test of SCT, environmental support was measured in terms of perceived support from important people. This is a narrow definition given that environmental supports for multivitamin use could include a wide array of factors including visibility of and access to multivitamins. These are important areas for consideration, and future examinations of multivitamin use should include an expanded assessment of environmental support.

*Outcome expectations.* Although outcome expectations were found to demonstrate a strong influence on intent to take multivitamins in the test of SCT, it had little predictive ability in the current investigation when compared to attitude and self-efficacy. If it is true

that to perform this behavior, women must perceive that certain outcomes will result from taking a daily multivitamin, it is possible that the current study did not include those outcomes that are most influential with women. Understanding women's expectations about what multivitamins can do for them (e.g., stave off sickness) and marrying those expectations with legitimate, credible, science-based information about multivitamin benefits is important. One should note, however, that the current study examined outcomes such as general health, prevention of birth defects, and getting nutrients not obtained from food. Although these are outcomes one might expect from multivitamins, future research should explore what other expectations women might have and seek to better understand their perceptions of the costs and benefits of taking a multivitamin. Practitioners attempting to increase women's multivitamin use must determine which outcomes are perceived as most valuable to the target audience and which are legitimate (e.g., have scientific evidence consistent with the outcomes), and then use these findings to test the predictive ability of outcome expectations.

### Conclusion

The comparison of three influence models regarding their ability to predict multivitamin use among women of childbearing age demonstrates the utility of using several theories both to understand a public health problem and also to design effective interventions to address the problem. None of the theories in this examination provided an exceptional explanation of multivitamin behaviors, but two constructs from these theories should be considered when designing persuasive messages aimed at increasing multivitamin consumption: attitude and self-efficacy. Campaigns designed around the constructs of these theories might improve the odds of getting women to take multivitamins daily, thereby decreasing the number of babies born with birth defects in the United States.

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# A Burning Issue in Teaching: The Impact of Teacher Burnout and Nonverbal Immediacy on Student Motivation and Affective Learning

Qin Zhang and David Alan Sapp

*The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of teacher burnout on student state motivation and affective learning and to test the moderating effect of teacher nonverbal immediacy. Utilizing a 2 x 2 factorial experimental design, 172 college students were exposed randomly to one of four written scenarios manipulating levels of teacher burnout (high or low) and nonverbal immediacy (high or low). Results of MANOVA indicated that teacher burnout adversely impacted student state motivation and affective learning, and teacher nonverbal immediacy mitigated the negative effect of teacher burnout on students. Students reported the highest motivation and affective learning with low burnout and high immediacy teachers, and the lowest motivation and affective learning with high burnout and low immediacy teachers.*

**Keywords:** teacher burnout; teacher nonverbal immediacy; student motivation; affective learning

Teacher burnout is a frustrating and devastating experience. About 30 percent of new primary and secondary teachers leave the profession within five years (Archer, 1999; Boreen, Niday, & Johnson, 2003). The number of teachers reporting considerable job-related stress increased from 43% in 1951 to 78% percent in 1976, and the numbers seem to be still on the rise with approximately 93% of teachers reporting some of the feelings

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associated with burnout (Farber, 1984, 1991; Gregorian, 2001). Despite widely-held perceptions that burnout is a challenge facing only primary and secondary teachers, it is experienced by college professors as well (Hamann, Daugherty, & Sherbon, 1988; Hamilton, 2005; Jamal, 1999; Kanervo & Ferrier, 1998). As a front-line profession being "overworked and underappreciated" (Tifft, 1988, p. 58), teachers, regardless of level, are vulnerable to burnout (Farber, 1991) and susceptible to experiencing dark emotions such as anger, anxiety, failure, and estrangement (Newkirk, 1992; Ray & Miller, 1991; Winograd, 2005).

Despite the devastating effects of teacher burnout, empirical research conducted on the topic of teacher burnout has been inadequate in the field of instructional communication. Most of the existing research focuses on the causes and symptoms of teacher burnout, its deleterious effects on the stressed teacher and the institution, and coping strategies (Dillon & Tanner, 1995; Ray, 1991; Ray & Miller, 1991; Starnaman & Miller, 1992), such as teacher empowerment, social support, and individual relaxation training (Farber, 1991; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). The moderating effect of teacher communication variables (e.g., teacher immediacy) on students has never been investigated. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the effects of teacher burnout on student motivation and affective learning in university settings and to test the mitigating effect of teacher nonverbal immediacy.

## BURNOUT IN THE WORKPLACE

The term *burnout* was coined by Graham Greene (1961) in his novel, *A Burn-Out Case*, which describes a spiritually tormented, despondent, and disillusioned architect who withdraws into the African jungle. The best seller did not make burnout a household word; it was popularized instead through the work of psychologists such as Freudenberger (1974), Maslach (1982), Pines (1982), and Cherniss (1980). Freudenberger used the term to identify the feeling of exhaustion often experienced by human services workers. In these settings, burnout was defined as a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion that resulted from chronic job stress, attrition, and frustration (Maslach, 1993, 2003; Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout manifests in three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion is characterized by feelings of frustration, anger, depression, and dissatisfaction. Depersonalization involves a dehumanized and impersonal view of others and treating them like things or animals rather than people. Reduced personal accomplishment suggests a loss of self-efficacy on the job and the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively (Maslach, 1982, 2003).

Utilizing a grassroots approach from people's workplace experiences, burnout research has gone through two consecutive phases—the pioneering phase and the empirical phase—each involving different research methodologies (Maslach et al., 2001). In the pioneering phase, the work was largely exploratory, descriptive, and qualitative. Researchers

used interviews, case studies, and field observations to identify symptoms of burnout and to examine the individual and situational causes of burnout. In the empirical phase, the work was largely quantitative. Researchers utilized questionnaires and surveys to assess burnout and to investigate the link of burnout to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover (Maslach et al., 2001).

People working in the caring professions (e.g., teachers, nurses, social workers, and legal-aid workers) tend to be most prone to burnout (Senior, 2006). Sources of burnout are recognized at individual, organizational, and societal levels (Farber, 1991; Maslach et al., 2001; Starnaman & Miller, 1992). Freudenberger's (1974) clinical approach views burnout as an inability to cope with job stressors. It focuses on individual factors that give rise to burnout and ascribes its occurrence to its victims (Dworkin, Saha, & Hill, 2003). From this perspective, burnout occurs most frequently in highly motivated, dedicated, and committed workers who react to stress by working too intensely, which leads to their collapse.

Maslach's (1982) social-psychological approach views burnout as mental exhaustion leading to an organizationally-induced loss of enthusiasm and idealism. This approach attempts to identify specific elements in organizational work environments that trigger burnout (Cherniss, 1980; Maslach, 1982, 2003). Like Freudenberger's (1974) approach, Maslach (1982) contended that burnout typically afflicts those who start out being the most idealistic, caring, enthusiastic, and zealous (Farber, 1991) but become mentally exhausted by the conjoined effects of organizationally-induced alienation, powerlessness, and meaninglessness (Dworkin et al., 2003).

Sarason's (1983) social-historical approach examines the conditions at large that are conducive to burnout. From this perspective, burnout is triggered by "features of the larger society" (p. vii) rather than by individual or organizational factors. Integrating these approaches, Farber (1991) argued that burnout is the gap between expectation and reward, which "is essentially triggered by feelings of inconsequentiality—a sense on the part of professionals that their efforts to help others have been ineffective, that the task is endless, and that the personal payoffs for their work (in terms of accomplishment, recognition, advancement, or appreciation) have not been forthcoming" (p. 25). In sum, burnout is primarily caused by a mismatch between what people feel they are giving and what they feel they are receiving in return (Cherniss, 1980).

Burnout is not an overnight occurrence. As a prolonged response to chronic stress, burnout is a process with physical and psychological symptoms (Farber, 1991): exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Maslach et al., 2001). Related symptoms include anxiety, fatigue, frustration, depression, powerlessness, hopelessness, failure, detachment, and inability (Pines, 1982). Professionals experiencing burnout might feel like "a dry teapot over a high flame [or a drained battery that can no longer hold its charge" (Senior, 2006, p. 27). As a result, burnout can be a career killer with deleterious consequences to stressed individuals and their organizations, and can lead to poor job performance, turnover, drug and alcohol

abuse, and emotional and psychosomatic illnesses (Farber, 1991; Ray, 1991). As early as 1983, burnout and other stress related costs were already being estimated at $50 to $70 billion each year (Wallis, 1983).

## Teacher Burnout

The notion of teacher burnout has received considerable attention in the fields of psychology and education. Teaching is inherently frustrating and stressful because there always seems to be a gap between teaching goals and students' actual learning outcomes (Smylie, 1999; Winograd, 2005). Therefore, teaching is considered a profession that is highly vulnerable to burnout. Teacher burnout is a function of societal, organizational, and individual factors, combined to produce a perception of inconsequentiality in teachers (Farber, 1991). At the societal level, the erosion of public respect for and support of teachers—provoked by media criticism since the late 1960s—laid the foundation for the emergence of teacher burnout (Farber, 1991). At the organizational level, teachers face increasing challenges from more diverse and needy student populations (Smylie, 1999). In this profession, particularly, burnout tends to be triggered by work overload and stress inflicted by role conflict and ambiguity (Dillon & Tanner, 1995). Farber (1991) summarized an array of work-related stressors to teacher burnout, including classroom discipline, apathy, administrative insensitivity, bureaucratic incompetence, overcrowded classrooms, and inadequate salaries. In addition, individual variables, particularly personality factors, also contribute substantially to teacher burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

Teacher burnout is depicted as a new academic disease (Melandez & de Guzman, 1983). Typical teacher burnout syndromes include emotional and physical exhaustion, anxiety, and depression (Farber, 1991), which are often manifested in behavioral reactions such as tardiness, absenteeism, poor job performance, and lack of interest and commitment. Teachers who are burned out often distance themselves from students physically or emotionally, feel less sympathetic toward students, teach class less enthusiastically and creatively, and their teaching effectiveness often declines as a result (Farber, 1991; Weiskopf, 1980).

## Teacher Nonverbal Immediacy

Immediacy is the extent to which communication behaviors enhance closeness and reduce physical or psychological distance between communicators (Mehrabian, 1969). Nonverbal immediacy behaviors generally involve kinesics, proxemics, vocalics, haptics, and oculesics, but the most salient teacher nonverbal immediacy behaviors typically include smiling, vocal variety and expressiveness, eye contact, gestures, and relaxed body position (Andersen, 1979). Numerous studies have demonstrated that teacher nonverbal immediacy

is related positively to teaching effectiveness, student state motivation, and affective or cognitive learning outcomes (Allen, Witt, & Wheeless, 2006; Christophel, 1990; Rodríguez, Plax, & Kearney, 1996; Zhang & Oetzel, 2006).

Research also has indicated that teacher nonverbal immediacy can interact with other communication variables to alleviate negative effects and moderate verbal messages (Kearney, Plax, Smith, & Sorensen, 1988; Mottet, Parker-Raley, Cunningham, & Beebe, 2005; Mottet, Parker-Raley, Cunningham, Beebe, & Raffeld, 2006). The neutralizing effect of nonverbal immediacy was first suggested by Kearney et al. (1988), who found that students perceive nonverbally immediate teachers who use antisocial behavioral alteration techniques (BATs) as using prosocial BATs. Teacher immediacy was also found to soften the negative impact of teacher misbehaviors on perceived teacher credibility (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). Likewise, Mottet et al. (2005) found that teacher immediacy increases students' tolerance for teacher unavailability. Further, immediacy can help teachers overcome the negative effects of heavy workload demands by preserving students' affect for the course and teacher (Mottet et al., 2006).

In addition, research also has suggested that teacher nonverbal immediacy can interact with other positive communication variables to strengthen positive effects (Chesebro & McCroskey, 1998, 2001; Pogue & AhYun, 2006). Chesebro and McCroskey (1998) found that the combination of teacher nonverbal immediacy and clarity generated more desirable learning outcomes to an even greater extent than the presence of either individually. These outcomes exist because clear teaching helps students process messages, and immediate teaching gains students' attention. Similarly, Pogue and AhYun (2006) found that teacher nonverbal immediacy and credibility interacted to impact student motivation and affective learning. When combined, teacher nonverbal immediacy and credibility generated more motivation and affective learning than either one by itself.

## Student State Motivation

Motivation is conceptualized as a force with directive and stimulating properties (Brophy, 1983). Student motivation to learn can be characterized as state or trait (Brophy, 1983). Trait motivation is an enduring predisposition toward general learning, whereas state motivation involves the transient and contextualized properties toward a specific class (Christophel, 1990). This study focuses on student state motivation to learn, featuring the stimulation that directs students to have a positive attitude toward a course and the instructor and to learn cognitively.

Student state motivation has been found to be affected by a variety of teacher communication variables, such as verbal and/or nonverbal immediacy (Christophel, 1990; Frymier, 1994), clarity (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001; Chesebro & Wanzer, 2006; Zhang & Zhang, 2005), socio-communicative style (Martin, Chesebro, & Mottet, 1997), credibility

(Pogue & AhYun, 2006), self-disclosure (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007), and affinity-seeking (Richmond, 1990).

### Affective Learning

Learning is a process involving the acquisition of cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes (Bloom, 1976; Christophel, 1990). Affective learning concerns the student's attitude and feelings toward the subject matter or the teacher, while cognitive learning focuses on the comprehension, retention, and recall of knowledge and information (Bloom, 1956). Traditionally, affective and cognitive learning have been perceived as parallel learning goals, but more recently, scholars (Rodriguez et al., 1996; Zhang & Oetzel, 2006) argued that cognitive learning is the ultimate end, and affective learning is only a means to the end. In this study, we focus on the effect of teacher burnout and nonverbal immediacy on affective learning because teacher communication variables (e.g., immediacy) are found to be a stronger predictor of affective learning than cognitive learning (Allen et al., 2006; Mottet & Beebe, 2006; Zhang & Oetzel, 2006; Zhang, Oetzel, Gao, Wilcox, & Takai, 2007).

Teaching typically has been regarded as a rhetorical and relational communication process in which teachers use messages and relational cues to influence students and their behaviors (Mottet & Beebe, 2006). It is well-documented that teacher communication behaviors (e.g., immediacy, clarity, and misbehaviors) can affect student state motivation and affective learning (Allen et al., 2006; Andersen, 1979; Christophel, 1990; Rodríguez et al., 1996; Zhang & Oetzel, 2006; Zhang et al., 2007; Zhang & Zhang, 2005). Meanwhile, teaching can also be described as an emotional process in which teachers manage, monitor, and regulate their emotions to achieve effectiveness and to create a positive learning environment (Boyer, 1987; Gates, 2000). However, instructional communication scholarship has largely ignored the emotional aspect of teaching, and little research has investigated the effects of teachers' emotions on their instruction and their students' learning.

McPherson, Kearney, and Plax (2003) found that inappropriate anger displayed by teachers is associated with negative teaching evaluations, and their aggressive expressions are related negatively with students' affect. No direct link among teacher burnout, student motivation, and affective learning has been established, but given the inverse relationship of negative communication behaviors (e.g., teacher misbehaviors) and dark emotions (e.g., teacher anger) with student motivation and affective learning (Banfield, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006; Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Gorham & Christophel, 1992; Gorham & Millette, 1997; McPerson, Kearney, & Plax, 2006; Zhang, 2007), it seems reasonable to assume that teacher burnout will have a negative effect on student motivation and affective learning. In addition, based on previous research indicating the mitigating effect of teacher

nonverbal immediacy (Kearney et al., 1988; Mottet et al., 2005, 2006), the following hypotheses are offered:

> H1: Teacher burnout and nonverbal immediacy will interact to influence student state motivation.

> H2: Teacher burnout and nonverbal immediacy will interact to influence student affective learning.

# METHOD

## Research Design

This study utilized a 2 x 2 factorial experimental design. The two independent variables were teacher burnout and nonverbal immediacy, both of which were operationalized using high and low conditions. The dependent variables were student state motivation and affective learning. Two manipulation checks were conducted before the experiment.

## Manipulation Check

Two separate manipulation checks were conducted to assess the effectiveness of the manipulation of the two independent variables: teacher burnout and nonverbal immediacy. Taken together, 110 students from a small university in the Northeast (who were not used in the major experiment) were randomly exposed to one of the four scenarios depicting a level of teacher burnout (high vs. low) or nonverbal immediacy (high vs. low). Participants were recruited from history and sociology classes.

*Teacher burnout.* Two teacher burnout scenarios were constructed to describe high and low burnout conditions (See Appendix). Each scenario consisted of three sentences, with each representing one of three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1982). The sentences were either directly from the Burnout Inventory (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996) items or slightly modified to fit the instructional context. Students were asked to read one of two scenarios and then complete the 22-item, 5-point Likert-type (*5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree*) burnout scale (Maslach et al., 1996). All items were prefaced by the phrase, "The teacher seems…." Wording of the items was adapted to fit the instructional communication context (e.g., "to feel emotionally drained from teaching" and "to feel frustrated by teaching").

Fifty-two students were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: high and low teacher burnout. An independent samples t-test was performed to test the validity of the conditions described in the scenarios. The scale yielded a Cronbach of .96. Students reported a significantly higher level of teacher burnout in the high burnout condition ($M$ = 4.11, $SD$ = .54) than in the low burnout condition ($M$ = 1.58, $SD$ = .57), $t$ (50) = 16.01, $p$ < .001. The results indicated that the high and low burnout conditions were manipulated correctly.

*Teacher nonverbal immediacy.* Two previously validated high and low teacher nonverbal immediacy scenarios (Kearney et al., 1988) were used. Fifty-eight students were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: high and low teacher nonverbal immediacy. Students were asked to read one of two scenarios and then complete the revised 10-item, 5-point Likert-type (5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree) Nonverbal Immediacy Measure (McCroskey, Richmond, Sallinen, Fayer, & Barraclough, 1995), which was based on the original Nonverbal Immediacy Measure (Richmond, Gorham, & McCroskey, 1987). An independent samples t-test was performed to test the validity of the conditions described in the scenarios. The scale yielded a Cronbach of .96. Students reported a significantly higher level of teacher nonverbal immediacy in the high immediacy condition ($M$ = 4.35, $SD$ = .40) than in the low immediacy condition ($M$ = 2.40, $SD$ = .88), $t$ (56) = 11.15, $p$ < .001. These results indicated that the high and low teacher nonverbal immediacy conditions were manipulated correctly.

## Participants

Participants for the major experiment included 172 college students at a small comprehensive university in the Northeast, which has a predominantly Euro-American student population. The sample included 58 male and 114 female students. The average age of the participants was 19.62 ($SD$ = .78). Most of the participants were communication, English, and business majors.

## Instruments

*State motivation.* Student state motivation was measured with Christophel's (1990) State Motivation Scale, which consisted of 12-item, seven-point, bipolar adjectives (e.g., *motivated/unmotivated, 1 = motivated, 7 = unmotivated*) designed to measure students' motivational attitude about taking a specific course. Cronbach's alpha for the scale has generally been over .90 in prior studies (Christophel, 1990; Rodríguez et al., 1996). For this study, the reliability of the scale was .94.

*Affective learning.* The Affective Learning Scale (Christophel, 1990) was employed to measure the affect toward the course content, instructor, and course behaviors. This study

measured only students' attitude toward course content and the instructor. The scale consisted of eight-item, seven-point, bipolar adjectives (e.g., *good/bad*, *1 = good, 7 = bad*). For this study, the reliability of the scale was .98.

### Procedures

Most participants were recruited during a registration event for communication majors and minors. Other participants included students enrolled in introductory English and business courses. In both situations, after the researchers briefly introduced the study, participants were exposed randomly to one of four written scenarios manipulating the levels of teacher burnout (high or low) and nonverbal immediacy (high or low). After reading the scenario, participants were asked to imagine taking a class from the particular teacher described in the scenario and respond to the questionnaire, assessing their motivation to learn and their affect for the course and instructor. Participation was confidential and anonymous. Appreciation was expressed to the students, but no extra credit was given. The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes for the students to complete.

# RESULTS

H1 predicted an interaction between teacher burnout and nonverbal immediacy on student state motivation. The results of MANOVA revealed a significant interaction effect on student motivation, $F(1, 158) = 10.32$, $p < .01$, partial $\varsigma^2 = .06$, as well as significant main effects for teacher burnout, $F(1, 158) = 196.47$, $p < .001$, partial $\varsigma^2 = .55$, and nonverbal immediacy, $F(1, 158) = 157.06$, $p < .001$, partial $\varsigma^2 = .50$. Students with a low burnout teacher were more motivated ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.49$) to learn than students with a high burnout teacher ($M = 5.30$, $SD = 1.27$). Students with a high nonverbal immediacy teacher reported higher motivation ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.63$) than students with a low immediacy teacher ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 1.27$). Thus, H1 was supported. Means and standard deviations for the variables are reported in Table 1.

Tukey post hoc mean comparisons were conducted to see if the four conditions differed significantly in motivating students to learn at the .05 level. The low burnout and high immediacy condition was found to generate the highest motivation ($M = 2.01$, $SD = .97$) among students, and high burnout and low immediacy condition produced the lowest motivation ($M = 6.01$, $SD = 1.10$). No significant difference was found between the conditions: low burnout and low immediacy condition ($M = 4.37$, $SD = .82$) and high burnout and high immediacy condition ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 1.02$). This finding suggests that teachers who are experiencing high burnout can compensate for it with high immediacy behaviors to maintain student state motivation.

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations for Student Motivation and
Affective Learning by Teacher Burnout and Nonverbal Immediacy

| | Teacher Burnout | | | | | |
| | High | | Low | | Total | |
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motivation | | | | | | |
| High Immediacy | 4.59 | 1.02 | 2.01 | .97 | 3.14 | 1.63 |
| Low Immediacy | 6.01 | 1.10 | 4.37 | .82 | 5.18 | 1.27 |
| Total | 5.30 | 1.27 | 3.05 | 1.49 | 4.11 | 1.79 |
| Affective Learning | | | | | | |
| High Immediacy | 4.69 | 1.24 | 1.32 | .84 | 2.83 | 1.98 |
| Low Immediacy | 6.12 | .90 | 4.30 | 1.30 | 5.19 | 1.44 |
| Total | 5.40 | 1.29 | 2.67 | 1.83 | 3.95 | 2.10 |

H2 predicted an interaction between teacher burnout and nonverbal immediacy on student affective learning. The results of MANOVA revealed a significant interaction effect on affective learning, $F$ (1, 158) = 21.46, $p < .001$, partial $ç^2$ = .12, as well as significant main effects for teacher burnout, $F$ (1, 158) = 269.70, $p < .001$, partial $ç^2$ = .60, and nonverbal immediacy, $F$ (1, 158) = 167.49, $p < .001$, partial $ç^2$ = .52. Students with a low burnout teacher reported higher affective learning ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 1.83$) than students with a high burnout teacher ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 1.29$). Students with a high nonverbal immediacy teacher reported higher affective learning ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.98$) than students with a low immediacy teacher ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 1.44$). Thus, H2 was supported. Means and standard deviations for the variables are reported in Table 1.

Tukey post hoc mean comparisons were conducted to see if the four conditions differed significantly in student affective learning at the .05 level. The low burnout and high immediacy condition was found to generate the highest affective learning ($M = 1.32$, $SD = .84$) among students, and the high burnout and low immediacy condition produced the lowest affective learning ($M = 6.12$, $SD = .90$). No significant difference was found between the conditions: low burnout and low immediacy condition ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 1.30$) and high burnout and high immediacy condition ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 1.24$). This finding indicates that teachers who are experiencing high burnout can compensate for it with high immediacy behaviors in order to maintain student affective learning.

# DISCUSSION

This study attempts to extend research on teacher burnout limited to investigating the causes, symptoms, and negative effects on the stressed teacher and offering coping strategies (Dillon & Tanner, 1995; Farber, 1991; Maslach et al., 2001; Ray, 1991; Starnaman & Miller, 1992) to examining its effects on students and the buffering effect of communication variables on burnout. Specifically, the study investigated the effect of teacher burnout on student state motivation and affective learning and tested the mitigating effect of teacher nonverbal immediacy.

As hypothesized, the findings revealed a significant interaction between teacher burnout and nonverbal immediacy on student motivation and affective learning. Perceived teacher burnout was found to have a negative effect on student motivation and affective learning. Students experienced significantly less motivation and affective learning with high burnout teachers than with low burnout teachers. This finding provides confirmation of the deleterious effect of teacher burnout (Farber, 1991; Ray & Miller, 1991). The findings also indicate that perceived teacher nonverbal immediacy can alleviate the negative effect of teacher burnout on student motivation and affective learning, which provides support for the neutralizing effect of teacher nonverbal immediacy (Kearney et al., 1988; Mottet et al., 2005, 2006; Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998).

Previous research suggests that teacher nonverbal immediacy can alleviate the negative effect of teacher antisocial BATs (Kearney et al., 1988), misbehaviors (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998), and unavailability (Mottet et al., 2005) on students. However, the neutralizing effect of teacher nonverbal immediacy has been somewhat inconsistent. Mottet et al. (2006) found that teacher nonverbal immediacy failed to neutralize the negative impact of teacher course workload demands on students' willingness to comply. But this finding echoes Mottet et al.'s (2006) argument that immediacy neutralizes affectively-based constructs (e.g., affection and motivation).

These findings offer some interesting theoretical and practical implications and research directions. First, the study indicated that teacher burnout significantly lowers student motivation and affective learning. Given the adverse impact of teacher burnout and teacher anger (McPherson et al., 2003) and the prevalence of emotional expression in teaching (Winograd, 2005), emotion management in the classroom should become an important topic in instructional communication deserving more scholarly attention. Current instructional communication research mostly focuses on teacher communication behaviors such as immediacy, clarity, misbehaviors, affinity-seeking, and their effects on students. However, teaching is not only a rhetorical and relational communication process (Mottet & Beebe, 2006) but also an emotional process (Boyer, 1987; Gates, 2000). Winograd (2005) observed: "Teaching was a profoundly, all encompassing emotional endeavor. Just as in emotional life outside school, I emoted it all as a teacher: guilt, joy, embarrassment, sadness,

anxiety, depression, satisfaction, and anger" (p. 199). Thus, instructional communication research needs to explore more about the emotional aspects of teaching and their effects.

Second, since teachers' expressions of dark emotions (e.g., burnout and anger) affect students negatively and students seem to be unforgiving of teachers when they express such emotions (McPherson et al., 2003), teachers should try to reduce their expressions of negative emotions in the classroom. Instead, they should try to adopt positive emotions to promote positive learning environments. Popular images of ideal teachers tend to show them as enthusiastic, happy, confident, self-assured, passionate, and satisfied (Winograd, 2005). Emotion is an indispensable part of teaching, playing an important role in teaching and learning processes. Thus, the effective management of emotion in the classroom can be beneficial to teachers, students, and institutions.

Third, the finding that teacher nonverbal immediacy can temper the negative effect of teacher burnout on students seems to offer a promising direction to cope with burnout and reduce its impact. Traditionally, coping strategies for burnout have involved broad-based school reform and social support (Farber, 1991; Maslach et al., 2001). However, teachers' communication behaviors have not been examined as a possible coping strategy to burnout. This study suggests that teachers experiencing burnout can utilize nonverbal immediacy behaviors to alleviate the negative impact of burnout on students. The use of immediacy behaviors (e.g., smiling, eye contact, vocal variety) can increase student motivation and affect for the instructor and the course, which may make teachers feel more valued, hence mitigating the feelings associated with burnout and engaging in a virtuous circle of mutual affect with students. Thus, the use of appropriate teacher communication behaviors could be a viable and effective strategy to deal with burnout and moderate its negative effects.

Despite research that suggests otherwise (Hamann et al., 1988; Hamilton, 2005; Jamal, 1999; Kanervo & Ferrier, 1998), some might argue that teacher burnout is less likely to occur at the college level than at the pre-college level, due to the soothing effect of some built-in factors, such as sabbatical leaves for college professors. While it may be true that sabbaticals can, to some extent, relieve burnout in college teachers, they are not a panacea. Further, sabbaticals are generally only available to tenured professors. It should be noted that, of the 1.1 million college teachers in the U.S., more than half are contingently-employed (Dubson, 2001; Schell, 2002). In other words, over half of college courses are taught by part-time instructors and untenured faculty, many of whom are overworked, undercompensated, and have no sabbatical benefits (Sapp, 2006; Schell & Stock, 2001). Thus, while it is important to continue to study burnout experienced by primary and secondary school teachers, burnout remains an important issue to study at the college level.

Two limitations in the study warrant brief discussion. The first limitation involves the approach of experimental design utilized in the study. The use of hypothetical scenarios and fictitious teachers can minimize the influences of other extraneous variables, but hypothetical conditions might not reflect the actual teacher burnout and nonverbal

immediacy behaviors per se in a naturalistic environment (Pogue & AhYun, 2006). Examining the behaviors of teachers in a real instructional setting might provide us with more valid and accurate results regarding the impact of teacher burnout and nonverbal immediacy on student motivation and affective learning. In addition, the two scenarios were constructed to operationalize high and low teacher burnout, but the presentation of two extreme poles might not fully capture the processual and ongoing nature of teacher burnout. Given the experimental nature of this study, the results should be interpreted with caution.

The second limitation concerns the use of the convenience sample from a private comprehensive university in the Northeast, where the students are predominantly from middle- or upper-class Euro-American families. The nature of small class sizes and the emphasis on teacher-student interaction associated with the small university setting might make the students' expectations and their interpretation of teacher burnout and immediacy behaviors different from the students at a large public university. Thus, we need to consider that the results may not be generalizable to other student populations.

In conclusion, this study found that teacher burnout produces a negative effect on student motivation and affective learning, and that teacher nonverbal immediacy can moderate the adverse effect on students. Given that teaching is an emotional process and teacher burnout is prevalent and has a negative impact on students, this study calls for more scholarly attention to investigating teacher emotion management. Future research could consider examining more about teacher emotions (e.g., anger, anxiety, and enthusiasm) and their impact on students and teachers (e.g., affect and credibility), and investigating specific teacher communication behaviors that could be used as possible coping strategies.

Burnout is a devastating experience afflicting many stressed-out teachers, impacting not only their professional lives but also their students and institutions (Ray & Miller, 1991). However, considering the fact that burnt-out teachers are often those who are the most enthusiastic, dedicated, caring, and hardworking (Farber, 1991; Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach, 1982, 2003), it is unfair to blame teachers for the burnout they experience. Rather, we need to advance research to identify coping strategies to help some of our most passionate colleagues as they struggle to deal with burnout more effectively.

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# Appendix

*Scenarios*

*High Burnout.* You are taking a class from a teacher who seems fatigued, frustrated, and emotionally drained during class lectures and discussions. This teacher treats students as if they were impersonal objects rather than as human beings, and does not care what happens to students. This teacher does not know how to create a relaxed atmosphere with students and has difficulty in dealing with the problems of students.

*Low Burnout.* You are taking a class from a teacher who seems energetic, passionate, and emotionally engaged during class lectures and discussions. This teacher cares what happens to students and treats students as human beings rather than as impersonal objects. This teacher creates a relaxed atmosphere with students and deals very effectively with the problems of students.

# MESSAGE DESIGN LOGIC, GOALS, AND MESSAGE CHARACTERISTICS IN SECOND-REQUEST MESSAGES

Gwen A. Hullman, Saralinda Seibert-Kiser, Amy Arias and Janet Miller

*This study investigated how structure, speaker goals, and message characteristics changed after a first request message failed. Participants (N = 232) responded to a hypothetical scenario and wrote messages analyzed for structure and message characteristics. Cognitive complexity and stated message goals were then compared to the structure. Results indicated no difference in cognitive complexity based upon message structure, but less complexity in the second request (p < .01). Empathy decreased in the second request (p < .01), whereas threats increased (p < .01). Relational and task goals decreased for the second message as well (p < .01).*

Key Concepts: second-request messages, message goals, cognitive complexity, message design logic

$M$uch of the previous request research is based on analysis of one message to make a request. Although some research has focused on second request messages, much of that revolves around compliance-resistance or expected resistance patterns. These include foot-in-the-door (FITD) strategies, which ask a target to comply with a small request, which is then followed by a larger request at a later time, and door-in-the-face (DITF) strategies, which begin with a more imposing request expecting a rejection followed by a less imposing request (O'Keefe, 2002). The primary goal of

the present study is to examine the message structure and goals of the second request after the speaker's first message unexpectedly fails to achieve the desired outcome.

People continually make requests of one another in interpersonal relationships. It is important to examine these requests not only at the initial time they are presented, but also the second time if they are resisted or fail to achieve the desired outcome. Social constructivists argue that one's perceived social reality is unique and is a result of interpreting the surrounding social world. Berger and Luckmann (1966) contend that people know their worlds by interacting with others. It follows that when interpreting resistance from another person after making an initial request, the resistance influences one's perception of reality and most likely impacts the construction of the second request.

In the present study, we examined how the structure of request messages and stated relational and task goals changed from the first request to the second request of a roommate to clean a mess in a joint living space. To examine the message structure, we used message design logic, which states that a person's lay theory of language is reflected in the way the individual structures messages. We extended our examination to other message characteristics as well. These characteristics included stated task and relational goals as well as empathetic, threatening, and helping elements.

First, we review the previous research using message design logic in regulative situations. Second, we review the literature related to second request messages. Third, we explain the reasons for examining additional message variables in the present study. Within the reviews, we present our hypotheses and research questions.

## MESSAGE DESIGN LOGIC

Message design logic evolved from a constructivist view of communication. Kelly (1955) argued that people view the world through filters in their cognitive structures. The filters are personal constructs and resemble templates that consist of bipolar dimensions. Cognitively complex people have more developed construct systems. That means (a) they have more constructs, and (b) that the constructs are articulated and integrated. Burleson and Caplan (1998) stated that "persons with highly developed systems of interpersonal constructs are better able than those with less developed systems to acquire, store, retrieve, organize, and generate information about other persons and social situations" (p. 241).

Past constructivist research identified situational demands of the context and how well constructed messages met these demands (O'Keefe & Delia, 1982). To the extent that the message met multiple goals of the speaker, the message was classified as more complex in a hierarchical classification of message coding schemes. An example of multiple goals is to make a request of someone, and at the same time, preserve the relationship. O'Keefe and Shepherd (1987) found through analysis of regulative messages that situational goals were addressed in three different ways. Some people addressed only one goal. Others

addressed one goal initially, and then attempted to achieve a secondary goal later by using apologies, hedges, and other similar strategies. Still others addressed both goals simultaneously in the message, recreating a situation no longer characterized by conflicting goals.

O'Keefe (1988) argued that a theory connecting the verbal message to the practical goals of a situation would explain why people address goals differently in messages. When placed in similar situations, some people produce messages that express their thoughts and feelings without addressing the goals of the interaction while others express socially constructed rules and obligations, using those rules to support how they address goals in the message. Still others seem to align their own goals with the goals of the other person so the goals no longer conflict (O'Keefe, 1997). These three message strategies suggest three distinctively different design logics.

The expressive design logic reflects a speaker's inability to address the present interaction goals. In persuasive situations, expressive messages fail to explicitly address what the target needs to do in order to satisfy the speaker's wants. In addition, expressive messages contain litanies of complaints, abusive content, and venting (O'Keefe, 1988).

The conventional design logic is characterized by explicit address of interaction goals. The structure has been likened to the speaker playing a game with the target, basing the rules of the message structure on socially developed norms. These norms might include rights and obligations of the dyad's relationships to each other (O'Keefe, 1988).

The rhetorical design logic is considered to be the most complex of the three design logics. The complexity is warranted because the structure reflects a speaker's ability not only to be aware of context and social norms, but also to change the context of the situation to achieve both task and relational goals (O'Keefe, 1988).

The design logics are developmentally ordered from simplest to most complex (O'Keefe, 1997). For example, a child who has mastered the art of mere expression of thought and emotion could then move on to constructing messages according to socially constructed rules and norms as he or she learns them. From there, the speaker could eventually construct messages that recreate the context of the situation. Not all adults, however, develop the skill to produce rhetorical messages. The progression from expression of thought and emotion to recreating the context of the situation represents the ability to move from the simplest design logic to the most complex design logic when necessary. For example, in regulative situations where one person might be trying to control the conduct of another, the logic employed could be instrumental in achieving the speaker's and receiver's goals, especially in the presence of potentially face-threatening contexts (O'Keefe, 1988). The developmental order refers to the ability to use the more complex logic only when it's necessary, not in every message.

Message design logic has been used as a framework for analyzing regulative messages. In many instances, more complex design logic was associated with perceptions

of greater communication competence (O'Keefe & McCornack, 1987), effectiveness (Lambert & Gillespie, 1994; O'Keefe & McCornack, 1987; Vidal, 1998), and appropriateness (Vidal, 1998). Hullman (2004), however, found that a more complex message design was not always associated with more positive attributions of the speaker. Still, some attribute the frequent successful outcomes of the rhetorical design logic to its association with cognitive complexity.

Cognitively complex people not only have a larger inventional capacity (Hample & Wang, 2001), but also produce messages that are more effective in accomplishing the goals of the speaker (Adams & Shepherd, 1996; Burleson & Samter, 1985; O'Keefe & McCornack, 1987; Samter, Burleson, & Murphy, 1987; Vidal, 1998). The effectiveness could stem from the increased person-centeredness of the messages they produce (Delia, Kline, & Burleson, 1979). Person-centered messages reflect the speaker's ability to adapt to different contexts and to create messages that include both the task and relational aspects of the situation. For example, Bonito and Wolski (2002) found that those who produced conventional and rhetorical complaint messages were able to better adapt their messages compared to those who produced expressive messages. One explanation for the positive outcomes associated with complex message designs lies in the cognitive complexity of the producer. Those who produce more complex messages are more cognitively complex (O'Keefe, 1988; Vidal, 1998).

The link between cognitive complexity and message design logic makes sense given that more person-centered messages are produced using more complex design logic. Person-centered messages meet the relational demands and instrumental tasks in a regulative or control-motivated context. It might be easier for cognitively complex message producers to address multiple goals because they are able to see multiple dimensions of interactions (Shepherd & Trank, 1992). For example, when motivated to change the behavior of an employee, a superior might wish to stop the employee's inappropriate behavior and also to be considerate of saving the employee's face to preserve a satisfactory interpersonal relationship. According to message design logic, addressing both of these goals so they are not conflicting will yield positive results for the speaker. To replicate previous research (O'Keefe, 1988; Vidal, 1998), we hypothesized that:

> H1: Those who produce more complex messages are more cognitively complex
> than those who produce less complex messages.

Within request messages there are several goal types including gaining assistance, sharing an activity, and enforcing an obligation. The likelihood that a speaker will use a particular compliance-gaining strategy may depend on the goal type specific to that message (Cody, Canary, & Smith, 1994). However, few studies have examined the second request messages of speakers to determine if or how the structure will change in terms of goals. The

research addressing foot-in-the-door and door-in-the-face strategies is among the most well-known (for reviews, see Dillard, 1991; Dillard, Hunter, & Burgoon, 1984).

These techniques are based, however, on the speaker planning on requesting compliance twice using the same goal but manipulating the perception of the goal for the target from the first to the second message. They are also associated more so with persuasive messages between strangers than between friends or acquaintances. Typically, they are tested with solicitation or fundraising situations. The present study addresses how unanticipated compliance-resistance affects the goals and message structure of the speaker within a closer relationship.

Research addressing second requests excluding FITD or DITF techniques is sparse. Goldman and Creason (1981) found moderate support for the prediction that in subsequent requests, increased compliance can be obtained if the target can decide the level of assistance the speaker is willing to provide.  Although no published studies have demonstrated that the message design logic changes from a first request to a second request, other research suggests that second request messages might be less complex than first request messages. Kim, Shin, and Cai (1998) found that speakers relied on more direct, aggressive message tactics after a failed first request. Bisanz and Rule (1990) also found that persuasive schemas dictate more socially approved strategies be used before employing more aggressive ones. For example, deTurck (1985) found that people sanction the use of punishments following noncompliance of their target. In addition, Hample and Dallinger (1998) stated that politeness is less of a concern for a speaker after noncompliance from the target. More specifically, Johnson, Roloff, and Riffee (2004) found that after a refusal, a speaker is more likely to engage in negative face threats rather than positive face threats. Based on these findings, one then would expect that a second message would focus more heavily on effective compliance without much concern for the relationship.

The changes from one request to the next would emphasize the social construction process. The construction of the second request would depend on the response given to the first request. In this way, the conversation changes depending upon the interaction between the participants, and both parties have a role in constructing the meaning.

Because more complex messages (in terms of message design logic) require an advanced design whereby effectiveness and appropriateness are achieved simultaneously, messages containing aggressive tactics, punishments, or the threat of punishment would be characterized as less complex messages. In addition, messages reflecting less concern for the relationship would also be considered less complex. Therefore, we hypothesized that:

> H2: Message design logic is less complex from the first to the second request.

The framework of message design logic assumes message production based on speakers' use of practical and ends-to-means reasoning (O'Keefe, 1988); therefore, it should follow that speakers would articulate message goals that are consistent with the design logic

employed. Since design logics are presented as a model for the selection process utilized in encoding thoughts into a message (O'Keefe, 1997), it would be logical for the selection criteria to be based on a desired outcome or goal.

Each of the three logics suggests specific goal orientations. In a conventional message, for example, one would expect the stated goals to reflect the speaker's awareness of socially constructed norms guiding the interaction.

Stated goals accompanying rhetorical messages might look different from those accompanying conventional messages. Speakers employing rhetorical design logics are sensitive to contextual effects on recipients and construct messages that are conducive to mutual goal attainment (Bonito & Wolski, 2002); therefore, one would expect stated goals to demonstrate awareness of not only socially constructed norms but also mutual needs and relational concerns. Rhetorical message producers are able to redefine the context of the situation to align their goals with those of the other person involved. Because rhetorical messages reflect person-centered communication, they most likely emerge from goals that include caring about the relationship. In addition, their creativity reflects different strategies for dealing with the task at hand.

Finally, expressive design logics, for example, present direct and unfiltered thought, so it would follow that stated goals would reflect most clearly the speaker's state of mind, regardless of situational norms or relational concerns. Expressive messages reflect the speaker's reaction to a situation instead of his/her attempts to communicate according to social rules or redefine the situation. Expressive messages might emerge from goals that are unrelated to relational and task demands. Therefore, we posed the following question:

> RQ1: Do participants' stated goals reflect the assumed goals of the message structure employed?

In addition to message design logic and stated goals, we also chose to record the frequency of specific message elements. The elements of empathy, helping (offering to help the target), and threat were also examined as they occurred in the request messages. These elements, which are more specific in nature than message design logic, illustrate how detailed message strategies can complement larger categories of messages.

Few studies have considered how empathy impacts requests or second request messages. Redmond (1985) found that "communication competence and empathy are composed of the same set of skills or behaviors" (p. 380). Because cognitively complex individuals have higher levels of communication competence, these individuals should be accustomed to incorporating elements of empathy in their messages. However, as Miller and Steinberg (1975) argue, a person's ability to understand another's feelings doesn't indicate that person's ability to communicate empathy. In such cases, the individual may frequently use a developmentally less complex design logic. Nevertheless, empathy elements in messages would indicate a higher degree of cognitive complexity.

Studies on help and helping behavior have focused more on the act of helping or offering help, rather than on the verbal component of help found in a spoken message. Helping behavior is typically governed by social norms, and on the level of dependence between individuals (Carnevale, Pruitt, & Carrington, 1982). "Help-giving is governed by equity norms. It is appropriate to give help in response to the receipt of help or in an effort to elicit reciprocity" (Carnevale et al., 1982, p. 14). Help is also a pro-social behavior. Edwards and Shepherd (2007) found that those who produced rhetorical or conventional messages also reported enacting more pro-social or altruistic behaviors than those who used an expressive design logic. More detailed messages that include offers to help could also be an indicator of increased cognitive complexity, which, in turn indicates increased complexity in message design logic. Therefore, the following hypothesis is posed:

> H3: Message elements of empathy and helping increases when design logic becomes more complex.

Empathy and helping are person-centered strategies. In contrast, threats are not person-centered strategies. Threats may or may not be related to the issue of the message, and are frequently considered to be aggressive tactics. "Threatening is perceived as a more negative communication strategy than is a persuasion attempt" (Fink et al., p. 299). Much research has been done on threats and the effect of threats on communication, and the difference between threats and persuasion. For example, "persuasion presumes that an agent offers a target a choice to comply or not to comply. These choices in turn help preserve social relationships. On the other hand, threats are perceived to harm relationships" (Fink, et al., 2003, p. 312). Persuasive strategies that include threats are the subject of much study, but threats as elements of request messages are not often examined. Fink et al. (2003) argued that agents threaten a target when they indicate that they will make the target's situation worse if the target does not comply with their request. Threats can be considered components of expressive design logic. They would not, however, be considered elements of rhetorical messages because of their destructive effects on the relationship. Based on this premise, we predicted that:

> H4: The frequency of threats decreases when message design logic increases.

## METHOD

### Procedures

*Participants.* Two hundred thirty two students (33% male, 60% female, and 7% no response), (62% had a current roommate unrelated to him/her, 32% had a current roommate

related to him/her or no current roommate, 6% no response). The sample was 83% Caucasian, 9% African American, and 2% Asian (6% did not report their ethnicity). The average age was 22.89 ($SD$ = 2.34).

Participants were recruited from a large introductory course in communication at a large Midwestern university. Course credit was awarded to those who participated. Participants signed up for the study at a location and time different from class. Researchers were not instructors for the course. After a researcher gave informed consent information and instructions in a classroom setting, participants completed the packet containing the Role Category Questionnaire, a hypothetical scenario, and questions eliciting open-ended responses. The packet contained no identifiable information about the participants. When the participants finished the packets, they left the classroom.

## Measures

To assess cognitive complexity, participants completed the Role Category Questionnaire (Crockett, 1965). Participants were asked to describe two well-known peers: one they liked and one they disliked. The answer sheets contained directions that read, "Please list as many characteristics as you can of a person whom you know well and like (dislike)." Participants took five minutes to describe each person.

Typically, the Ron test is used to assess message design logic. It is a useful scenario to employ when assessing a work or task relationship since participants create messages designed to persuade Ron to follow through on a group project commitment. This project, however, focuses on interpersonal relationships that are typically more longstanding than a semester-long course. In addition, Jackson (1992) warned against using the same scenario or case to always represent a class of situations. To increase the external validity of the findings, an alternate scenario was used. The packet included a hypothetical scenario of a roommate asking another roommate to clean up a mess. A 13-person volunteer subsample of the population sample agreed that the situation was realistic and encountered by themselves or other students they knew. The participants were asked to answer the questions in order without looking ahead to upcoming questions. The first page of the survey described a hypothetical scenario in which the participant had decided to confront a roommate with an issue that had been bothersome. The issue was messiness on the part of the roommate such as leaving clothes, books, dishes, and personal belongings everywhere. The instructions read, "After reflecting on the situation, write down exactly what you would say to your roommate about the problem." About one half page was left blank for a response.

The next question asked participants to list what goal(s) they were trying to accomplish when they constructed the message. Again, about one half page was left open for the response. Next, the participants were informed that after they delivered the first

messages, the behavior of the roommate continued so they decided to confront the person again.

The first two open-ended statements were repeated for the second scenario: "Write down exactly what you would say to your roommate" and "What goal(s) were you trying to accomplish when you constructed your message?" Finally, participants recorded their sex and whether or not they lived with someone who was unrelated to them.

### RCQ Scores

Two independent coders coded each Role Category Questionnaire ($N = 232$, $M = 29.71$, $SD = 11.59$). Reliability, based on Cronbach alpha, was .99.

### Message Design Logics

Each of the 232 participants was asked to produce two messages. Four independent coders coded fifty randomly drawn messages from among 464 messages for message design logic. Coders used the descriptions of message characteristics explained by O'Keefe (1988) as guidelines for coding. Among the four coders, reliability ranged from .86-.89 (Cohen's kappa). One of the four coders then coded the remaining 414 messages. There were 190 complete pairs of legible messages. Table 1 shows the frequency and design logics for messages one and two.

### Stated Goals

Fifty randomly drawn messages were coded by four independent coders for both task and relational goals. Using Dillard's (1990) notion of task and relational messages, a goal was labeled a task goal if it was related to cleaning up the mess. For example, "getting him to clean up his stuff" and "letting her know I want the dishes done today" were considered task goals. Influence attempts unrelated to the mess were considered irrelevant and not coded as task goals. Similarly, we coded relational goals as attempts at maintaining a favorable relationship with the target, despite having to ask the person to clean up. For example, "trying not to make her mad at me," "trying to maintain amicable relations," "letting him know I'm not mad at him," were considered relational goals. Cohen's kappa was .84 for the task goals and .87-.92 for the relational goals. Four independent coders divided and coded the remainder of the stated goals for message one and message two.

## Table 1
### Message Design Logic Frequency from Message One to Message Two and Frequency of Message Elements

| Design Logic | Message Elements | Message One | Message Two |
|---|---|---|---|
| Expressive | | ($n = 14$) | ($n = 50$) |
| | Task | 12 | 23 |
| | Relational | 2 | 5 |
| | Empathy | 1 | 0 |
| | Threat | 4 | 31 |
| | Helping | 0 | 0 |
| Conventional | | ($n = 169$) | ($n = 137$) |
| | Task | 140 | 91 |
| | Relational | 98 | 32 |
| | Empathy | 24 | 4 |
| | Threat | 27 | 59 |
| | Helping | 22 | 14 |
| Rhetorical | | ($n = 7$) | ($n = 3$) |
| | Task | 23 | 3 |
| | Relational | 5 | 1 |
| | Empathy | 0 | 0 |
| | Threat | 31 | 0 |
| | Helping | 0 | 0 |

### Additional Message Characteristics

Four independent coders coded 50 randomly drawn responses for additional message characteristics: empathy, helping, and threat. Coders were trained to recognize empathy, helping, and threat messages using the following criteria. Empathic responses reflected an other-centered perspective which considered and acknowledged the current situation of the hearer. They included such confirmations as, "I know you are really busy right now," or "I realize things are stressful for you." Helping messages contained a "we" message with a commitment of future action or help implied such as "I'll take you to Wal Mart so you can buy bins," or "We can do this together." Threat messages contained explicit mention of an action that would be taken against the hearer regardless of solution-orientation. Examples of threat messages included, "I'll throw your stuff away if you don't clean it up," or "I'll start looking for a new roommate." Reliability for empathy ranged from

.81-1.00 (Cohen's Kappa). Reliability for helping ranged from .82-.91 (Cohen's Kappa). Reliability for threat ranged from .78-1.00 (Cohen's Kappa). Independent coders divided and coded the remaining messages.

# RESULTS

Hypothesis one predicted that those who produced messages reflecting more complex design logics would also be more cognitively complex. This hypothesis, however, was not supported. Results of the ANOVA show no difference in cognitive complexity for those who produced expressive, conventional, or rhetorical messages for either the first ($F(1, 232) = .381, p = .684$) or second ($F(1, 232) = .217, p = .884$) messages. Because 32% of participants indicated they were either without a roommate or living with one who was related to themselves, an eta statistic was computed for the roommate variable by message design logic for both message one ($p = .198$) and message two ($p = .092$). The eta statistic is used to compute analysis of variance for nominal and ordinal data sets (Bryman & Cramer, 2005).

Hypothesis two predicted that message design logic would be less complex from the first to the second message. This hypothesis was supported. One hundred ninety pairs of messages were analyzed. Twenty-five participants either failed to complete one message of the pair, or wrote illegibly. The results from the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test showed that from message one to message two, the design logics were less complex ($z = -5.17, p < .01$). In terms of frequency, expressive messages increased from 14 to 50, conventional messages decreased from 162 to 137, and rhetorical messages decreased from 7 to 3. The frequencies of all patterns of change are listed in Table 2.

Research question one asked whether or not participants' stated goals reflected the assumed goals of the message structure they employed. The results from the Sign test showed that relational goals ($z = -8.02, p < .01$) and task goals ($z = -4.90, p < .01$) were less frequent in the second message compared to the first message, just as message design logic was less complex from the first to the second message. Frequencies of task and relational goals by design logic are listed in Table 1.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that empathy elements and helping elements would decrease as the message design logic complexity decreased. This hypothesis was partially supported. The results of the Sign test indicate that empathy elements ($z = -4.20, p < .01$) were less frequent in the second message, as message design logic became less complex. The number of helping elements did not significantly differ from message one to message two ($p = .64$). Frequencies of empathy and helping elements by design logic are listed in Table 1.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that threats would increase as message design logic complexity decreased. This hypothesis was supported. The Sign test shows that threats

Table 2
Message Design Logic Change Patterns From Message One To Message Two

| Message One ($n = 190$) | Message Two ($n = 190$) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Expressive | Conventional | Rhetorical |
| Expressive | | | |
| 14 | 8 | 6 | 0 |
| Conventional | | | |
| 169 | 39 | 127 | 3 |
| Rhetorical | | | |
| 7 | 3 | 4 | 0 |

became more common from message one to message two ($z = -6.87$, $p < .01$), whereas message design logic became less complex. Frequencies of threats by design logic appear in Table 1.

## DISCUSSION

In the present investigation, we sought to examine how message structure and message goals change after a first request is denied. Our data suggest that messages become less complex. One explanation is that once speakers realize they cannot achieve both the task and relational goals, they opt to at least attempt to be effective in achieving the task goal. This explanation is supported by previous studies citing the 'rebuff phenomenon' (Hample & Dallinger, 1998). In our scenario, noncompliance may indicate an unwillingness of the target to tend to relational concerns, which then permits the speaker to become more aggressive without feeling socially inappropriate.

In addition, the particular scenario we chose (asking a roommate to clean up a mess in shared living space) might also have impacted the drop in complexity from message one to message two. This could be the case given the roommate situation because equal rights are implied in sharing living space with another person. This implication might cause people to believe they need to use fewer face-saving strategies in their messages because they are being imposed upon by another's actions. In fact, Herrmann (1983) found that when participants felt they were legitimate in making their requests, they also felt less obligated to show politeness to their targets. So, it seems that because of the nature of the request, participants might not have felt obligated to save the target's face or increase complexity to address both task and relational elements in their request messages.

The potential failure to feel obligated due to the nature of the request is supported by our lack of difference in the cognitive complexity of those producing more complex messages. Those higher in complexity might not have chosen to produce a complex message

in this situation. So, as O'Keefe (1988) suggested, people don't always employ the more complex design even if they have the ability to do so.

This explanation is also supported by the congruity between message design logic and the stated task and relational goals. For example, if people don't view this situation as one where they need to use more complex, face-saving strategies, then one would expect the design logic to become less complex, and the stated relational goals to become less frequent from message one to message two. This is, in fact, supported by our data. Stated relational goals did decrease in the second messages as did complexity of design logic.

Task goals also decreased from message one to message two. The cause of the decrease in stated task goals deserves further attention. After further examination of these messages, we concluded that the goal of the communicators reflected saving their own face after a rebuff. So, the goal seemed unrelated to the situation (indicative of expressive design) and resembled demands for respect, bids for dominance, expressions of unrelated complaints, etc. These results point to the transactional, interdependent nature of communication.

Goals change as the interaction evolves, depending upon the response from the other person. This finding supports the earlier argument of Canary, Cunningham, and Cody (1988), who stated that obstacles to goal achievement sometimes result in goal shifts from proactive to reactive goals. Proactive goals include goals pertinent to the current situation, whereas reactive goals reflect expressive message design and are typically unrelated to the current task and relational goals.

The frequency of message characteristics also changes with the stated goals. For example, the increase of threats in the second messages and the decrease of empathy make sense given the decrease in stated relational goals. If a person abandons appropriateness goals, or decides that due to the nature of the situation, they are no longer necessary, then that person would demonstrate less empathy in the message and feel justified in the use of threats to accomplish a task goal.

Message design logic was used as a framework for examining second request messages. Our data support the conclusion that when people attempt to address conflicting goals, they employ more complex message design to address the goals. They also resort to less complex designs after noncompliance. Our data also support the conclusion that when less complex messages become more prevalent, there is less evidence of attention to relational goals and task goals in the messages. Furthermore, people state that they make fewer attempts at addressing task and relational goals. This finding supports awareness of goals in message construction. According to message design logic, the goals in conversation are not individually constructed, but are socially constructed.

The socially constructed goals that seem obvious to address in our scenario (i.e., cleaning up a mess, preserving a good relationship) seemed to change quite easily as a result of noncompliance with the first message. For some, noncompliance reconstructs the

interaction to create goals different from the original task and relational goals. One can imagine how this interaction might continue if the focus now turns to maintaining one's own face, making demands about deserving respect, listing unrelated complaints, etc. Most likely, an argument about an unrelated issue becomes the focus, and the original issue, and any attempts to resolve it, are now lost.

Potential negative communication patterns resulting from changing goals and message structures necessitates further study on second request messages. For example, we used one scenario to test our hypotheses and answer our research questions. The examination of other scenarios would lend further generalizability to the findings we present. In particular, using a situation where the speaker might not feel as justified in making the request warrants further study.

In addition to including other scenarios in future research, the use of direct observation of verbal messages in a naturalistic setting would add validity to our findings. Although we were able to analyze individually constructed messages, we were unable to attend to messages in a real-life setting, such as the dorm room/apartment in question. The naturalistic setting would also give researchers the ability to consider the impact of nonverbal cues. Limitations of the present investigation also include the use of a college student sample, especially one representing mainly the female perspective.

Finally, it should be noted that 32% of our sample were living alone or were living with a roommate who was related to them. Although these participants did not differ in terms of the design logic they used, family relationships can be significantly different from friendships or acquaintance-type relationships. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted with that in mind.

The present study has three implications for request research. First, our findings suggest that message design becomes less complex after noncompliance of a target, and includes more threats and fewer statements of empathy. Second, the stated goals for messages after noncompliance support the notion that due to the noncompliance, the situation has been reconstructed into one where some speakers no longer feel obligated to attend to more socially appropriate ways to gain compliance. Finally, the stated goals for each message match the message structure by reflecting what the speaker intended to explicitly address in the message. This finding challenges the notion that the message structure might result from an unconscious lay theory of communication unique to the individual. Rather, message creators seem to understand what they are trying to accomplish with the changing message structure.

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# BOOK REVIEWS


*The Pursuit of Public Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism.* Tanni
Haas. New York: Routledge, 2007. 208 pp. $24.95 pbk.


Reviewed by Mary Beth Earnheardt, *Youngstown State University*


In *The Pursuit of Public Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism*, Tanni Haas examines the roots and development of public journalism, provides a synthesis of studies about public journalism (including his own in-depth case study examinations), addresses criticism of this controversial approach, and provides practical and progressive suggestions for the implementation of public journalism. His research is comprehensive and his points are clearly defined. Overall, he achieves the goals he sets by presenting an interesting examination of the role of the press in democracy. Haas gives specific strategies for implementing the ideals of public journalism into the organizational structure of the American newsroom.

Haas' early chapters provide an overview of public journalism that is easy to follow and capable of bringing those unfamiliar with the topic into the debate. He follows this with an explanation of his philosophy in regards to public journalism, which provides the grounds for later examination into the implementation of public journalism in the newspaper industry. He provides a strong groundwork and understanding of the practical role of journalism as it relates to the larger organization of the public sphere.

The real strength of Haas' book is the case studies, specifically his research about the *Akron Beacon-Journal's* "Question of Color" campaign. This case study provides a narrative in which the ideas advocated by Haas are explained and analyzed. The extent to which the *Beacon-Journal* is successful is not the focus, but rather Haas gives concrete examples of how the coverage that was published could have been modified to meet the model presented in the book. Another reason this chapter is successful is its use of examples. Haas provides meaningful examples from the *Beacon-Journal's* stories. These make the issue of race (as an exemplar of the community journalism) become more relevant to readers. Other case studies are instructive, but not as applicable or as well-researched as that relating to the *Beacon-Journal* stories.

Another strength of the book is that it brings an understanding of the organizational nature of the press and the community to the arguments. Instead of approaching this simply as a "how-to" for journalists, Haas provides a commentary about the relationships between

the press and the audience of citizens it serves. This organizational approach highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages to community journalism, provides context to the use of elite and citizen sources, and brings balanced analysis to tensions between the newspaper as a business and the newspaper as an agent of community change.

The major weakness of the book is its failure to give the opponents of public journalism a clear voice. Although an entire chapter presents common criticisms of public journalism, each criticism is neatly addressed and easily dismissed by the author. Were it practical to address the problems with this approach so easily, it would not be seen by many as a controversial practice. Because the author has such a comprehensive understanding of public journalism, I felt that he could have done more to look for an approach that would be more satisfying to those who resist the practice of public journalism.

The book is well-researched and interesting. The chapters are clearly organized and easy to follow. Haas has certainly provided a useful text for exploring the functionality of public journalism. It would have been nice to see less focus on the criticism of conventional journalism practices and more specific strategies to bridge the gap between the current situation in the American newsroom and the one for which Haas is an advocate. I applaud Haas for encouraging the debate.

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*Communicating Forgiveness*. Vincent R. Waldron & Douglas L. Kelley. Los Angeles: Sage, 2008. 216 pp. $36.95 pbk.

Reviewed by Charlotte Klesman, *University of North Dakota*

The book, *Communicating Forgiveness*, is a scholastic, personal, and practical discussion of the communication people use to create forgiveness and repair relationships. Waldron and Kelley identify related theories, propose new theories, and create models relevant to communicating forgiveness. They have developed an extensive body of research through structured interviews with a carefully selected target group; couples married for 30 years or more. The result is a good combination of a well-developed analysis and practical application. The authors build on work from scholars in other fields and support their findings with carefully designed studies from individual interviews. Before their collaboration, Waldron conducted research on forgiveness in the workplace and Kelley explored communication among couples. Their interest in the ability of forgiveness to repair relationships developed into the extensive research that they are now sharing through this book. Waldron and Kelley's unwavering dedication to this study is reflected on every page.

The book evolves naturally from the concept of forgiveness, to identifying the steps in the forgiveness process, to developing and testing theories. It ends with such practical

issues as practicing forgiveness and the behind-the-scenes effort required for this extensive study. By combining scholarly theories with personal stories and useful suggestions, Waldron and Kelley have created an informative resource for all. Academics will value the effective use of extensive, personal interviews, the method used to develop interview questions, (these are included in the appendix), and how the stories formed categories used to identify forgiveness communication.  Social scientists and professionals will appreciate the importance of forgiveness in maintaining and repairing personal relationships. Graduate students will observe the mastery of the process of academic research and find suggestions for future research in related areas.  Other readers may find many 'aha!' moments, personal insights, and suggestions for using forgiveness to repair their own relationships.

Forgiveness is a complicated business. Traditionally forgiveness has been viewed as a psychological decision made by individuals. However, because this study is about communicating forgiveness, the authors begin by assuming that forgiveness emerges from our interactions, that it involves the creation of meaning, and that forgiveness can develop over time. This definition emphasizes the communication used to forgive. Forgiveness begins with one person, but the communication response is imbedded in complicated personal, family, and social systems. People involved in negotiating forgiveness must weigh the circumstances against their personal and social values, and then make a decision about the next step in the relationship.

Waldron and Kelley identified at least six communication processes that are central to negotiating forgiveness.  These included (a) revealing and detecting transgressions, (b) managing emotions, (c) sense-making, (d) seeking forgiveness, (e) granting forgiveness, and (f) negotiating the relationship. These steps are part of the higher thinking process that signals willingness to change. True forgiveness needs time to develop, just as people often need time to grow comfortable with the new relationship as it develops. The authors note that familiar routines can help establish these new patterns. Forgiveness communication can be powerful. When couples are honest and open in their discourse they can create positive relational outcomes that build stronger relationships, but communication can also develop for unhealthy reasons. The urge to exploit an opportunity for power and control can cause the offended party to take advantage of a situation, so boundaries are wise.

Chapter 6, entitled "Studying Forgiveness," is particularly exciting to those interested in communication research in general, and the study of relational and forgiveness communication in particular. Here Waldron and Kelley provide a glimpse of their experiences as they formulated theories, tested those theories, compared notes and adjusted their approach to create meaningful results. The authors openly admit that is was enjoyable to interview people in their homes about their marriages. This resulted in large amounts of data that was carefully analyzed, but which resulted in rich, well-articulated theory of the structure of communication used to express forgiveness and allow relationship repair.

Waldron and Kelley noted that this is a work in progress and that they will continue to test the parameters of their findings as new data are collected. Although these interviews were clearly complex communication processes, the authors found that patterns did emerge. The authors stated that each has memories of interviews that moved them deeply and changed them in some way. They were left with "indelible memories of the power of forgiveness in personal relationships" (p.175). The authors concluded that forgiveness discourse speaks for itself; they just had to listen.

We communicate with each other for many reasons. One is to try to control our environment and create positive future circumstances. Communicating forgiveness allows us to do this on several levels. It allows us to absorb the shock of a transgression, reevaluate our values, and repair emotional damage. If we choose, we can repair the relationship by addressing possible causes of the transgression and agreeing to a new kind of relationship. This book offers a comprehensive and interesting look at forgiveness communication. It is appropriate for a broad audience. Methods and results are presented in an entertaining and understandable format that includes scholarly theories and emotional responses. The personal comments, included in boxes, give examples of interviews, charts, graphs, and other visuals to support the text. There are practical suggestions for practicing forgiveness, conducting research, and the authors identify areas of research that others might like to explore. There should be a place for this book in every communicator's bookcase.

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*Emotional Intelligence: Achieving Academic and Career Excellence.*
     Darwin B. Nelson & Gary R. Low. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice
     Hall, 2003. 171 pp. $20.99 pbk.

Reviewed by Michael R. Elkins, *Indiana State University*

According to the authors Darwin B. Nelson and Gary R. Low, *Emotional Intelligence: Achieving Academic and Career Excellence*, provides "a self-directed learning program to help you identify, understand, learn, and practice emotional skills that are essential to your academic and career success" (p. xi). The book, from a communication education perspective, is intended to help people discover and develop ten skills and identify three problem areas in achieving personal and career relationship excellence. Essentially the book serves as a practical, self-directed, opportunity to explore, identify, understand, learn, and apply four specific competency areas by integrating what education researchers conceptualizes as emotional intelligence (EI) (Epstein, 1998) and communication scholars label communication competence (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002).

The book is organized with an introduction and seven chapters. The introduction and the first two chapters summarize emotional learning system research findings. More specifically as an extension of the introduction, Chapters 1 and 2 articulate five beliefs about EI and achievement: (a) EI is the most impacting variable in individual achievement, career success, leadership, and personal fulfillment; (b) EI is learned; (c) educational institutions fail to furnish a practical and systematic model of EI; (d) EI requires reflection via experiential learning; and (e) EI consists of learned abilities and skills designed to enhance an individual's overall short- and long-term life transformations. These chapters, along with the introduction, provide a foundation for EI's theoretical underpinnings and practical applications.

Chapters 3 through 6 are devoted to each EI competency area: interpersonal skills, leadership skills, self-management skills, and intrapersonal skills. In Chapter 3, the authors identify interpersonal skills related to an individual's ability and willingness to establish and maintain quality interpersonal relationships. Included in the chapter are questions from the author's Emotional Skills Assessment Process (ESAP), which provide a discovery and learning model that assesses an individual's EI propensity. As a result of completing the author's questions, one discovers the impact communicator style has in interpersonal relationship satisfaction, anger detection, and constructive anger management. Chapter 3, like other chapters, provides five-step instructional lessons, detailed exercises, potential skill deficiency problem area outcomes, and reflective thinking prompts that act as a catalyst for self-discovery.

The authors begin Chapter 4 with this observation, "[e]ffective leadership is people centered and effective leaders know understand and respect the needs, values, and goals of others" (p. 61).  Leadership, the second EI competency, is reflected in an individual's social awareness, empathy, decision-making, and positive influence.  The authors provide an emotional skills model that identifies factors necessary to know, understand, and embody when assessing positive leadership propensities. This competency, as with the other competencies, includes cognitive foci, emotional foci, and action dimensions. In Chapter 4 the authors provide insight into one's ability to recognize a "genuine respect for the differences in others and the ability to communicate and accurately understand the differing points of view" (p. 61) serving as the essence of emotionally intelligent leaders.

Chapter 5 identifies and highlights the skills central to high-achieving self-motivated individuals. The authors identify drive strength, commitment ethic, time management, and positive change as those skills comprising the third EI competency, Self-Management Skills. Cognitive, emotional, and action-based outcome variables pertaining to encouraging self-motivation are made salient and assessed through the completion of selected areas of ESAP, suggested exercises, and a sample personal goal checklist. Potential problem areas associated with change orientation toward someone's current undesirable behavior is

juxtaposed with a ten-step positive change process intended to enhance this competency area.

The last EI competency area, Intrapersonal Skills, which is composed of self-esteem and stress management, is addressed in Chapter 6. Readers are invited to complete particular areas of the ESAP, engage a variety of engagement exercises, identify personal stressors, review a personal skills model supplied by the authors, restructure negative self-debilitating cognitive statements, and apply a variety of coping skills for stress management. As a result, this chapter challenges readers to understand and apply helpful strategies intended to enhance their self-worth while managing stress in a healthy and productive manner.

The authors advocate an holistic approach to EI. Chapter 7, the concluding chapter, integrates concepts addressed within previous chapters into a systematic self-renewal, perpetuating process. Based upon the philosophy of John Dewey, the authors assert that EI skills are not learned merely by thinking about how to enhance personal and career goals. An experiential approach consisting of exploring, identifying, understanding, and applying each EI skill is necessary to master EI skills. Achieving personal goals and objectives, the authors assert, leads to healthy interpersonal relationships and improved career satisfaction levels. Upon completing several guided emotional skills profile activities provided by the authors and completing the ESAP, an individual action plan designed to enhanced one's EI four competency areas can be developed and maintained throughout one's life and career. Eight tenets extracted from the authors' 30 years of studying diverse EI profiles serve as concluding points for the book.

A discussion of the theoretical foundation of EI is provided throughout the text as a basis for practical application of theory. Practically, this book serves as an instruction manual for personal and career development that appeals to diverse audiences. The materials are as applicable for someone transitioning from high school to college as for someone experiencing culture shock, cognitive dissonance, or a workplace promotion. The book does not lecture the reader. Rather, the engaging text provides numerous skills-based opportunities in four competency areas related to personal discovery, understanding, application, reflection, and assessment. The authors consistently provide rationales for the book's objectives and make clear application for diverse audiences.

Pedagogically, the authors offer students a direct, comprehensive, and useful text for exploring, identifying, understanding, learning, and applying EI skills in diverse contexts, situations, and settings that are directly relevant to the discipline of communication. Although the text predominately focuses on helping the first year student succeed in college, it should also be a helpful resource for classes in interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, listening, small group communication, organizational communication, and communication education. Moreover, the shared exercises, lessons, assessments, and Internet resources should prove valuable to those responsible for directing the Basic Course as well as anyone responsible for designing any

corporate instructional training modules. Heuristically, the book serves as a foundation for researching particular relationships between EI and communication theory, EI and educational training, and EI and lifestyle modification. In the 21$^{st}$ Century, EI integrated with communication competence will concentrate on classroom as well as organizational civility, collegiality, promotion, and transformative learning.

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