Annotated Bibliography of Recent and Significant Psychological Research Of Import to Public Relations Practitioners

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Annotated Bibliography of Recent and Significant Psychological Research Of Import to Public Relations Practitioners

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Editors' Note: The following bibliography consists of recent psychological research, reviews, and theoretical works that bear upon the work of the public relations practitioner. Most items in this list have been published within the last seven years and have been culled from scholarly journals in psychology or are public relations articles that draw heavily upon psychological research (no claim to representativeness, however, is made). It is hoped that this list will promote integrated research between psychologists and public relations practitioners.

Keywords are listed in bold.

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Attitude Formation

These articles explore how attitudes are formed and maintained.


**Attitude formation, Attitudes toward business.**


**Attitude formation, Political attitudes, Public opinion, Measurement.**


**Attitude Formation, Publicity, Advertising.**


**Attitude formation.**

Williams, S. L. & Moffitt, M.A. (1997). Corporate image as an impression formation process: Prioritizing personal, organizational, and environmental audience factors. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 9*(4), 237-258. In contrast to established long-held conclusions that corporate image is determined mostly by the organization, recent findings suggest that image is also determined by both environmental and personal factors of the audience member. Studies suggest, further, that these factors combine in novel ways as part of an impression-formation process and produce an overall perceptually-based audience image. This study suggests different public relations campaign strategies based on findings of multiple images of audiences. These images come from social influence, personal impact, business-related and organization factors.

**Attitude formation, personal involvement.**
**Attitude Change**

These articles explore how attitudes change.

Bright, A. D., Manfredo, M. J., Fishbein, M., & Bath, A. (1993). Application of the Theory of Reasoned Action to the National Park Service's controlled burn policy. *Journal of Leisure Research, 25*(3), 263-280. This is a nice application of the Theory of Reasoned Action to a communication policy about environmental issues. The most interesting aspect of this investigation is the use of an elicitation study to identify salient beliefs and attitudes about the environmental policy.

**Attitude change, Environmental issues, Theory of Reasoned Action.**

Lavallee, L., & Suedfeld, P. (1997). Conflict in the Clayoquot Sound: Using thematic content analysis to understand psychological aspects of environmental controversy. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 29*(3), 194-209. The information campaigns of seven groups involved in a major environmental land dispute were content analyzed for integrative complexity, motive imagery (need for power, achievement, and affiliation) and value pluralism. Low levels of complexity and high levels of power imagery were found. Environmental and forest industry values did not overlap. The research suggests that more integratively complex campaigns may yield more innovative solutions to environmental conflicts.

**Attitude change, Persuasion, Environmental issues.**

Smith, R. D. (1993). Psychological type and public relations: Theory, Research and Application. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 5*(3), 177-200. This research applies psychological type theory (articulated by Jung and developed by Myers) to public relations, especially to matters of persuasion and message effectiveness. It includes an instrument developed to measure characteristics inherent in messages that relate to how persons gather information and make decisions. It reports a preliminary study that supports the hypothesis that a person will prefer a message that exhibits the characteristics of his or her own psychological type, and it offers guidelines for using psychological type theory in the production of public relations messages.

**Attitude change, Personality correlates.**


**Attitude change, Ethnic prejudice.**


**Attitude change, Ethnic prejudice.**
Cognitive Processing

These articles use cognitive processing to consider how audiences and public relations practitioners make judgments

Culbertson, H. M., Denbow, C. J. & Stempel, G. III. (1998). Needs and beliefs in construct accessibility: Keys to new understanding. *Public Relations Review, 24*(2), 125-143. This study of respondents' closeness to osteopathic medicine suggested the storage-bin concept in construct accessibility theory, those who had experience with the concepts of osteopathy were most apt to use them in assessing osteopathic medicine.

**Cognitive processing, Construct accessibility, Personal constructs.**

Fischer, R. (1998). Public relations problem solving: Heuristics and expertise. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 10*(2), 137-153. This study examined one of the threats to successful problem solving identified by cognitive psychologists: error induced by the problem solvers’ use of heuristics. The three factors comprising expertise (experience, education, and training) are considered in a controlled experiment involving conjunction-rule problem frames in a public relations context. A novel approach to measuring expertise is used and discussed in this study. Training was found to significantly affect error rate, whereas experience and education, as operationalized in the study, had no effect.

**Heuristics, problem-solving.**

Hallahan, K. (1999). No, Virginia, it's not true what they say about publicity's "implied third-party endorsement" effect. *Public Relations Review, 25*(3), 331-350. In this essay, the author argues that any implied third-party effect involves inferences by audience members who used biased processing that favors news and disfavors advertising. The author reviews relevant research, including 11 experiments that provide only qualified support.

**Cognitive effects, attitudinal effects, involvement, attitude and knowledge interactions.**


**Cognitive effects, attitudinal effects, involvement, attitude and knowledge interactions.**

Consumer Attitudes and Behavior

These articles link to marketing communication planning and evaluation.

Baron, J. (1999). Consumer attitudes about personal and political action. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 8*(3), 261-275. This manuscript explores the effect of various moral views on purchase behaviors. Deontological (some acts are inherently wrong) versus consequentialist (some acts are wrong by virtue of their negative consequences) principles are compared and buying intention is measured in two questionnaire studies.

**Attitudes, Consumer Behavior.**
**Consumer Attitudes and Behavior**

These articles link to marketing communication planning and evaluation.

Moore, D. J., & Harris, W. D. (1996). Affect intensity and the consumer's attitude toward high impact emotional advertising appeals. *Journal of Advertising, 25*(2), 37-55. The intensity with which a person feels emotions is related to their enjoyment of and attitude toward positive emotional advertising appeals. Participants high in Affect-Intensity (AI) enjoyed a Hallmark television commercial more and had a more positive attitude toward the commercial than low AI participants.

**Attitude change, Personality correlates.**

**Framing Effects**

These articles help guide public relations communication strategies.

Kaufman, S., & Smith, J. (1999). Framing and reframing in land use change conflicts. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research, 16*(2), 164-180. Presents a discussion and typology of frames used in land use change conflicts. It also analyzes a specific landfill expansion conflict with regard to these frames.

**Framing effects, Land use issues.**


**Framing effects, Attitudes, Political attitudes.**

**Inter-group relations**

This article gives perspective to public relations strategy for solving group conflicts.


**Inter-group relations, Uncertainty, Anxiety.**
Internet

These articles contribute to how we can use the Internet as a research method and how Internet information is processed.


**Rumors, Internet.**


**Rumors, Internet, Reputation management.**


**Rumors, Internet, Reputation Management, Social Movement Organizations.**

Kaye, B. K., Johnson, T. J. (1999). Research methodology: Taming the cyber frontier: Techniques for improving online surveys. Issues and guidelines for generating and administering Internet surveys are proposed.

**Internet, Measurement.**

Issues Management

These articles deal topically with challenges often faced by the PR practitioner.


**Attitude change, Animal research issues.**


**Measurement, Environmental issues, Attitudes.**
Issues Management

These articles deal topically with challenges often faced by the PR practitioner.

*Risk perception, Environmental issues.*

Political Attitudes

These articles contribute to developing political communication strategies.

Fischle, M. (2000). Mass response to the Lewinsky scandal: Motivated reasoning or Bayesian updating? *Political Psychology, 21*(1), 135-159. Two waves of interview data supported a motivated reasoning approach to social judgment of President Clinton in light of the Lewinsky affair. Appraisal of the veracity and the importance of the scandal allegations were strongly influenced by prior Clinton approval ratings.  
*Motivated reasoning, Attitude formation, Political attitudes.*

*Political attitudes, Social identity.*

Mehrabian, A. (1998). Effects of poll reports on voter preferences. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 28*(23), 2119-2130. Evidence for the bandwagon or "rally-around-the-winner" effect was found. Participants preferred the candidate they thought was winning. Participants also preferred the winning position in an issue with moderate, but not strong consensus.  
*Attitude change, Political attitudes.*

*Political attitudes, Attitude formation.*

Reputation Management

These articles help develop public relations strategies involving reputation management.

Abalakina-Paap, M., & Stephan, W. G. (1999). Beliefs in conspiracies. *Journal of Political Psychology, 20*(3), 637-647. Personality correlates (e.g., authoritarianism, anomie, powerlessness) were predictive of belief in specific conspiracies (e.g., AIDS is a plot to wipe out minority groups, the government is storing information in computer files to against its citizens, fluoridating drinking water will hurt people). Low sense of trust was predictive of the existence of conspiracies in general.  
*Reputation management, Attitudes toward Business, Rumors, Personality Correlates.*
Reputation Management

These articles help develop public relations strategies involving reputation management

**Measurement, Reputation management.***

Risk Communication

These articles add information on how to select public relations communication strategies when perceptions of risk are involved.

Heath, R. L. & Abel, D. D. (1996). Proactive response to citizen risk concerns: Increasing citizen's knowledge of emergency response practices. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 8*(3), 151-172. A research project was conducted to further test the approach to risk communication, which assumes that the information provided by the chemical industry to the members of surrounding communities needs to be that which members of those communities believe will give them control over the risks they encounter due to the manufacturing and transportation. 
**Risk communication, Involvement, Attitude change.***

**Risk communication, Involvement, Attitude change.***

Heath, R. L., Seshadri, S. & Lee, J. (1998). Risk communication: A two-community analysis of proximity, dread, trust, involvement, uncertainty, openness/accessibility, and knowledge on support/opposition toward chemical companies. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 10*(1), 35-56. This research examined how people's levels of trust, involvement, uncertainty, perceptions of openness, support, dread, and knowledge were affected by proximity to chemical manufacturing facilities. The research suggests that proximity is a negative factor in risk assessment. Analysis confirms the model that features openness and trust-building efforts as a means for achieving support by addressing residents' cognitive involvement, dread, and uncertainty. 
**Risk communication, Involvement, Attitude change.***
Rumors

These articles contribute to an understanding of rumor as a channel of communication.


**Rumors, Reputation management.**


**Rumors, Organizational change, Uncertainty.**


**Rumors, Reputation Management.**

Social Identity

This article discusses the importance of group memberships on persuasion.

McGarty, C., Haslam, S. A., Hutchinson, K. J., & Turner, J. C. (1994). The effects of salient group memberships on persuasion. *Small Group Research, 25*(2), 267-293. Two experiments showed that making the persuader's in-group membership salient enhanced persuasion effectiveness to the extent that in-group membership is important to self. Making the speaker's outgroup membership salient led to greater rejection of arguments.

**Persuasion, Social Identity Theory.**
ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS (IPR)

Established in 1956, IPR is the only independent foundation in the field of public relations focusing on research and education.

Through publications, lectures, awards, symposia, professional development forums and other programs, IPR has been at the leading edge of efforts to promote and encourage academic and professional excellence.

Equally important, IPR has supported more than 250 separate research projects covering everything from what PR students should study to how PR should be measured.

Through the years, IPR has made impressive contributions to the sum and substance of modern public relations:

- Our non-proprietary research has led to breakthroughs in improving the teaching and the understanding of public relations.
- Our practice-oriented programs and publications help to strengthen the effectiveness of public relations in profit-making and nonprofit institutions.
- Our Commission on Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation is the leading provider of information about and advocate for public relations and related communication research & evaluation.
- Our distinguished awards and competitions serve as incentives for students and scholars to build the body of knowledge in the field.

Research and education are so critical to the future of public relations that IPR attempts to assist everyone in the field. More practically, we try to serve everyone with better programs and activities to improve the knowledge and practice of public relations.

IPR’s mission is to improve the effectiveness of organizations by advancing the professional knowledge and practice of public relations through research and education.

Everything we do -- our publications, our awards, our competitions, our research -- is open to students, educators and practitioners regardless of their organizational affiliations.

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