Coorientation of Department of Journalism Students and Professors

Regarding Opinion Leadership

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examines opinion leadership in the journalism department (including advertising and public relations) using coorientation theories to explain relationships between students and professors. Agreement and perceived agreement were explored for four components of opinion leadership. Results indicate that agreement exists between groups in relation to practical knowledge, innovation, and accessibility, but not network participation. Additionally, perceived agreement exists between groups in relation to practical knowledge and innovation, but not network participation and accessibility.

Acknowledgements

I would like to first thank my advisor, Prof. Michelle O’Malley, for all of her guidance and support throughout this project. She has not only guided me on my project, but also given me career advice and supported me as I have struggled with personal issues. Throughout this process, I have come to view Prof. O’Malley as not only a professor, but as a mentor and friend. Once again, thank you.

I would also like to thank my friend Chris Huang, who has been gracious enough to help me edit throughout this process. I would also like to thank all of my friends and family for their support with this project and many others.

Thank you.
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Author’s Statement

Consumer behavior theorists have often been enthusiastic to determine the role of opinion leaders in the diffusion of innovation and product life cycle (Rogers, 2008). Identifying opinion leaders, as a result, has become a key skill in the toolbox of marketers, public relations specialists and advertisers. Likewise, the two-way symmetric model of public relations (Grunig, 1984) is also becoming increasingly important for these strategic communicators. Analyzing the two-way symmetric model (Grunig, 1984) has led to discussion of the coorientation model (McLeod & Chaffee, 1973), which measures the communication that is distributed against the perceptions that the audience hold to determine the contrast in perception between the two. The purpose of this study is to extrapolate on opinion leadership using the concept of coorientation to determine the similarities and differences in characteristics that make opinion leaders as perceived by students and professors.

Diffusion of Innovation

Diffusion of Innovation was first fully conceptualized by the rural sociologist Everett M. Rogers (2008) after exhaustive study of previous research. The theory was codified in the book Diffusion of Innovations to explain the way that new ideas are adopted by a culture or group over time. The theory focuses particular attention on the five stages of innovation adoption and the characteristics of innovation. The stages of innovation also relate to different categories of adopters, with additional discussion on the definitions of each. Further research explores how
innovation is spread within and amongst groups and networks. Within this context, Rogers identifies the concept of opinion leaders.

Rogers (2008) identifies opinion leaders as a unique form of social influence that mediates the relationship between innovation, the media and the groups they belong to. He suggested that these leaders assumed the role, sometimes formally and often informally, based on personal characteristics they possess. The list of characteristics includes external communication, accessibility, socioeconomic status, innovativeness, and organizational affiliation. Lyons and Henderson (2005) modified these characteristics to explore the role of opinion leadership on the internet, suggesting new ways to define these categories. Opinion leadership, as defined by these categories, is often measured using self-identification or sociometric nomination according to Grimshaw et al (2006).

Rogers (2008) indicated that opinion leaders often have higher levels of external communication. The generalizations he suggests are that opinion leaders are more exposed to mass media, they are more cosmopolite than their peers and they have greater contact with agents of change, or the factor that represents the tipping point of an innovation. Lyons and Henderson (2005) suggest that computer competence, internet engagement and the frequency and length of internet access relate to higher levels of opinion leadership. Flynn, Goldsmith and Eastmen (2001) suggest that this extended involvement with a subject often relates to increases in perceived knowledge.

Rogers (2008) also suggested that opinion leaders are more accessible than their peers, which is generalized by the statement that opinion leaders are more socially engaged than their followers. Lyons and Henderson (2005) supports this by suggesting that engagement in online
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Communities defines internet opinion leadership. Likewise, socioeconomic status often plays a role in opinion leadership (Rogers, 2008). This is demonstrated by increased status shopping, spending, and consumption (Flynn, Goldsmith & Eastmen, 2001).

Innovativeness was also a qualification the Rogers (2008) indicated opinion leaders possess. Opinion leaders must be more innovative than their followers, meaning that the innovativeness of opinion leaders relates directly to the innovativeness of the group they are involved with. Lyons and Henderson (2005) also believed that innovation was an important mark of opinion leadership while also suggesting exploratory behavior as a measurement.

Finally, opinion leadership within a network is inconsistent, according to a two year study by Doumit et al. (2011). They found that opinion leaders did not remain the same, and that opinion leadership was limited to narrow areas of expertise. This is consistent with the framework set forth by Rogers (2008) which suggests that opinion leaders seek networks of their interest. Rose and Kim (2011) reflect this by indicating that opinion leaders are motivated by a desire to belong and by the desire to establish social status.

Coorientation

Coorientation has its roots in psychology and has historically been used to examine group dynamics, making it an interesting theory for exploring diffusion of innovation and opinion leadership. O’Keefe (1973) demonstrates how this can be used to determine power structures, while Clarke (1973) shows how this can be used to influence interpersonal choices. Both support the argument that coorientation is an excellent tool for analyzing opinion leadership.

McLeod and Chaffee (1973) first suggested that the coorientation model could be applied to practical situations, while Grunig and Stamm (1973) extend this principle to large groups and
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social institutions. Likewise, Kelly, Thompson and Waters (2006) and Verčič, Verčič and Laco (2006) suggest the coorientation model can be used to analyze and correct differences between groups.

According to McLeod and Chaffee (1973) coorientation is based on several premises: Information is exchanged between people, so it can be measured interpersonally; exchanges of information relate to cognitive changes over time; changes can be measured through messages and acts; exchange requires a degree of simultaneous orientation; and, coorientation can be analyzed comparatively. They suggest that coorientation be measured by collecting and comparing information from two or more sources. This information is then analyzed as agreement, perceived agreement and accuracy.

Cognitive overlap, or agreement, occurs when there are similarities between two or more individuals’ thoughts regarding a subject (McLeod & Chaffee, 1973). Wang, Seo and Cortese (2004) suggests that agreement increases as individuals communicate more and increase exposure to each other.

Congruency, or perceived agreement, occurs when there are similarities between an individual’s thoughts regarding a subject and their perception of the thoughts of others (McLeod & Chaffee, 1973). Like agreement, Wang, Seo and Cortese (2004) suggests that perceived agreement also increases with increased communication.

Accuracy relates to the similarity of an individual’s perception of others’ cognition to the reality of that cognition (McLeod & Chaffee, 1973). Additionally, this relates to reification which explains how group members orient themselves to the groups they belong to (McLeod & Chaffee, 1973).
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Research Question and Hypotheses

The research question for this project was: How do students and professors in the journalism department view opinion leadership in relation to each other? To answer this question, eight hypotheses were developed. Each dimension of opinion leadership had two hypotheses, with at least two measures for each hypothesis. Theses hypotheses were:

Ho1: Agreement and perceived agreement exist between groups (undergraduate students, graduate students, professors) regarding the practical knowledge component of opinion leadership, so there are no significant differences between groups.

Ho2: Agreement and perceived agreement exist between groups (undergraduate students, graduate students, professors) regarding the innovation component of opinion leadership, so there are no significant differences between groups.

Ho3: Agreement and perceived agreement exist between groups (undergraduate students, graduate students, professors) regarding the network participation component of opinion leadership, so there are no significant differences between groups.

Ho4: Agreement and perceived agreement exist between groups (undergraduate students, graduate students, professors) regarding the accessibility component of opinion leadership, so there are no significant differences between groups.

Methodology

The methodology of this project comes primarily from the survey methodologies of Dilman, Smyth and Christian (2008) in addition to an extrapolation of the questions suggested by Grimshaw et al (2006) regarding opinion leadership. The survey was an anonymous census of declared journalism department majors (which includes public relations and advertising students)
above the age of eighteen and journalism department faculty (which includes public relations and advertising professors). The survey was sent out six times using a departmental list, and data was collecting using Google Drive’s form application. The survey was distributed on a schedule recommended by Dilman, Smyth and Christian (2008), consisting of an alert, the study, a reminder, the study again, a final reminder, and the final release of the study over a three week period of time.

The survey examined opinion leadership along dimensions synthesized from both Rogers (2008) and Grimshaw et al (2006). These dimensions included practical knowledge, accessibility, innovation, and network connection. Practical knowledge represents the ability of the opinion leader to communicate knowledge of their leadership area. Accessibility refers to how friendly and approachable others feel the opinion leader seems. Innovation involves how creative and original an opinion leader seems. Network connection represents how active an opinion leader is in groups within their leadership area. Data was collected on the self-identified characteristics of respondents, the characteristics they perceive in identified opinion leaders (both student and professor), and the perceived characteristics emphasized by other students and professors regarding opinion leadership.

The survey began with informed consent before asking for basic information including sex, age, academic level, and socioeconomic status. Students then indicated which major or majors they belong to and two additional Likert scales measuring in-group identification with their sequence. Professors were asked to identify what sequence they primarily taught, which sequences they taught, and Likert scales measuring in-group identification with these sequences. The next step for both groups was then a matrix of twenty Likert scale questions in which they
were asked to self-report their view of themselves in relation to opinion leadership. This primed them to answer other questions relating to opinion leadership.

**Student Opinion Leader Identification**

The next section asked respondents to identify a student opinion leader and rate their characteristics in a matrix of twenty Likert scale questions. Each dimension of opinion leadership (practical knowledge, innovation, network participation, and accessibility) related to five questions in the matrix. Respondents were able to rate the degree to which they agreed with each statement on a scale of one to five. The characteristics of opinion leaders that respondents identified were then used to indicate which characteristics the respondent valued.

Practical knowledge was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their agreement with the following items: This student expresses themselves clearly, this student is up-to-date on professional issues, this student expresses themselves concisely, this student is knowledgeable about their profession, and this student gives others practical information. These scales were extrapolations of characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run, establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis identified a Cronbach’s alpha of .748 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally consistent.

Innovation was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their agreement with the following items: This student has original ideas, this student thinks of things in new ways, this student is at the forefront of new trends, this student is “edgy,” and this student often introduces others to new things. These scales were extrapolations of characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run,
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establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis identified a Cronbach’s alpha of .763 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally consistent.

Network participation was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their agreement with the following items: This student is involved with extracurricular activities, this student participates in class, this student is recognizable in the groups I’m involved in, this student likes being involved with student groups, and this student is involved with more than one student group. These scales were extrapolations of characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run, establishing the questions as valid as two components. A reliability analysis identified a Cronbach’s alpha of .649 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally consistent.

Accessibility was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their agreement with the following items: This student takes the time to answer others completely, this student demonstrates a high level of concern for others, this student is caring, this student treats others as equals, and this student is “approachable.” These scales were extrapolations of characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run, establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis identified a Cronbach’s alpha of .896 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally consistent.

Professor Opinion Leader Identification

The next section asked respondents to identify a professor opinion leader, then rate their characteristics in a matrix of twenty Likert scale questions. Each dimension of opinion leadership
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(practical knowledge, innovation, network participation, and accessibility) related to five questions in the matrix. Respondents were able to rate the degree to which they agreed with each statement on a scale of one to five. The characteristics of the opinion leaders respondents identified were then used as a second indicator of which characteristics the respondent valued.

Practical knowledge was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their agreement with the following items: This professor expresses themselves clearly, this professor is up-to-date on professional issues, this professor expresses themselves concisely, this professor is knowledgeable about their profession, and this professor gives others practical information. These scales were extrapolations of characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run, establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis identified a Cronbach’s alpha of .863 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally consistent.

Innovation was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their agreement with the following items: This professor has original ideas, this professor thinks of things in new ways, this professor is at the forefront of new trends, this professor is “edgy,” and this professor often introduces others to new things. These scales were extrapolations of characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run, establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis identified a Cronbach’s alpha of .777 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally consistent.

Network participation was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their agreement with the following items: This professor is involved with
extracurricular activities, this professor participates in class, this professor is recognizable in the
groups I’m involved in, this professor likes being involved with student groups, and this
professor is involved with more than one student group. These scales were extrapolations of
characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run,
establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis identified a
Cronbach’s alpha of .850 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally
consistent.

Accessibility was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale their
agreement with the following items: This professor takes the time to answer others completely,
this professor demonstrates a high level of concern for others, this professor is caring, this
professor treats others as equals, and this professor is “approachable.” These scales were
extrapolations of characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis
was run, establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis identified a
Cronbach’s alpha of .912 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally
consistent.

**Perception of Student Perception**

The next section asked respondents to rate how important various characteristics in a
matrix of twenty Likert scales are to students. Respondents were able to indicate the importance
of each item on a scale of one to five. Each dimension of opinion leadership (practical
knowledge, innovation, network participation, and accessibility) related to five characteristics in
the matrix. The characteristics the respondents identified were then used to indicate which
characteristics the respondent felt students valued.
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Practical knowledge was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their perception of what students valued on following items: The ability expresses oneself clearly, being up-to-date on professional issues, expressing oneself concisely, being knowledgeable about their profession, and being able to give practical information. These scales were extrapolations of characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run, establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis identified a Cronbach’s alpha of .810 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally consistent.

Innovation was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their perception of what students valued on following items: The ability to come up with original ideas, thinking of things in new ways, being at the forefront of new trends, being “edgy,” and being able to introduce others to new things. These scales were extrapolations of characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run, establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis identified a Cronbach’s alpha of .698 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally consistent.

Network participation was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their perception of what students valued on following items: Involvement with extracurricular activities, this participating in class, being recognizable from group involvement, being involved with a group, and being involved with more than one group. These scales were extrapolations of characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run, establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis identified a
Cronbach’s alpha of .768 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally consistent.

Accessibility was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their perception of what students valued on following items: Taking time to answer others completely, demonstrating a high level of concern for others, being caring, treating others as equals, and being “approachable.” These scales were extrapolations of characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run, establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis identified a Cronbach’s alpha of .872 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally consistent.

**Perception of Professor Perception**

The final section asked respondents to rate how important various characteristics are to professors in a matrix of twenty Likert scales. Respondents were able to indicate the importance of each item on a scale of one to five. Each dimension of opinion leadership (practical knowledge, innovation, network participation, and accessibility) related to five characteristics in the matrix. The characteristics the respondents identified were then used to indicate which characteristics the respondent felt professors valued.

Practical knowledge was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their perception of what students valued on following items: The ability expresses oneself clearly, being up-to-date on professional issues, expressing oneself concisely, being knowledgeable about their profession, and being able to give practical information. These scales were extrapolations of characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run, establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis
identified a Cronbach’s alpha of .784 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally consistent.

Innovation was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their perception of what students valued on following items: The ability to come up with original ideas, thinking of things in new ways, being at the forefront of new trends, being “edgy,” and being able to introduce others to new things. These scales were extrapolations of characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run, establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis identified a Cronbach’s alpha of .682 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally consistent.

Network participation was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their perception of what students valued on following items: Involvement with extracurricular activities, this participating in class, being recognizable from group involvement, being involved with a group, and being involved with more than one group. These scales were extrapolations of characteristics described by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run, establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis identified a Cronbach’s alpha of .903 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally consistent.

Accessibility was measured by asking respondents to identify on a Likert scale of one to five their perception of what students valued on following items: Taking time to answer others completely, demonstrating a high level of concern for others, being caring, treating others as equals, and being “approachable.” These scales were extrapolations of characteristics described
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by Rogers (2008). A varimax rotation factor analysis was run, establishing the questions as valid as one component. A reliability analysis identified a Cronbach’s alpha of .862 between these items, suggesting that the questions are internally consistent.

These indexed factors were then analyzed in the context of three groups; undergraduate students, graduate students, and professors. An ANOVA with Bonferroni post hoc was determined to best answer the hypotheses.

Results

Respondent Overview

The respondents represented around thirteen percent of the journalism department students and around forty-four percent of the journalism department professors. Fifteen respondents had incomplete surveys, and were thrown out. Of the surveys kept, there were a total of one-hundred and six undergraduate students, twenty-four graduate students, and eleven professors represented. One-hundred and ten were female, while thirty-one were male. Three
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described themselves as lower class, twenty-eight described themselves as lower-middle class, ninety-three described themselves as middle class, and thirty-two described themselves as upper-middle class. Of the students, eight were graphics majors, thirty-two were news majors, six were magazine majors, eleven were photojournalism majors, twenty were advertising majors, sixty were public relations majors and one was a secondary education in journalism major. Of the professors, six identified themselves as primarily teaching news, one as primarily teaching magazine, one as primarily teaching advertising, two as primarily teaching public relations and one as primarily teaching secondary education in journalism. Similarly, five professors indicated that they teach news, one indicated teaching magazine, one indicated teaching photojournalism, one indicated teaching advertising, and two indicated teaching public relations.

Practical Knowledge

Ho1: Agreement and perceived agreement exist between groups (undergraduate students, graduate students, professors) regarding the practical knowledge component of opinion leadership, so there are no significant differences between groups.

This research hypothesis was tested using an ANOVA. The practical knowledge component of opinion leadership was measured through indexes of Likert scales relating to the
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dimension. If the ANOVA showed no significant difference between groups in relation to the opinion leaders they indicated and the perceptions they identified, then agreement and perceived agreement were demonstrated among groups and Ho1 was supported.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Opinion Leader Practical Knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.576</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.788</td>
<td>.785</td>
<td>.458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>119.424</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>1.004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>121.000</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professor Opinion Leader Practical Knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>126.807</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1.014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>127.000</td>
<td>127</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perception of Student Value on Practical Knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.256</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>137.744</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>1.013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138.000</td>
<td>138</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perception of Professor Value on Practical Knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.436</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.218</td>
<td>.215</td>
<td>.807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>128.564</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>1.012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>129.000</td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in the ANOVA above, at a significance of .458, there were no differences between groups in their identification of the practical knowledge dimension of opinion leadership in students. Additionally, at a significance of .909 in the ANOVA above, there were no differences between groups in their identification of the practical knowledge dimension of opinion leadership in professors. These results suggest agreement between groups and support Ho1.
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At significances of .881 and .807, the ANOVA above indicates that there were no differences between groups regarding their perceived perceptions of students or their perceived perceptions of professors in relation to the practical knowledge of opinion leadership. These results suggest perceived agreement between groups and support Ho1.
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Ho2: Agreement and perceived agreement exist between groups (undergraduate students, graduate students, professors) regarding the innovation component of opinion leadership, so there are no significant differences between groups.

This research hypothesis was tested using an ANOVA. The innovation component of opinion leadership was measured through indexes of Likert scales relating to the dimension. If the ANOVA showed no significant difference between groups in relation to the opinion leaders they indicated and the perceptions they identified, then agreement and perceived agreement were demonstrated among groups and Ho2 was supported.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Opinion Leader Innovation</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>117.789</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>1.015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>118.000</td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Opinion Leader Innovation</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>123.936</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>1.016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>124.000</td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Student Value on Innovation</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.483</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.742</td>
<td>.739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>138.517</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>1.004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>140.000</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Professor Value on Innovation</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.618</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>.306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>128.382</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>1.011</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>129.000</td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At a significances of .901 and .969, the ANOVA above indicates that there were no differences between groups regarding the innovation of the identified opinion leaders. This
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indicates no significant differences exist between groups, suggesting agreement and supporting Ho2.

As indicated in the ANOVA above, at a significance of .480, there were no differences between groups in their perception of student perception of innovation. Additionally, at a significance of .737 in the ANOVA above, there were no differences between groups in their perception of professor perception of innovation. These results demonstrate no significant difference between groups, suggesting perceived agreement and supporting Ho2.
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Network Participation

Ho3: Agreement and perceived agreement exist between groups (undergraduate students, graduate students, professors) regarding the network participation component of opinion leadership, so there are no significant differences between groups.

This research hypothesis tested using an ANOVA. The network participation component of opinion leadership was measured through indexes of Likert scales relating to the dimension. Student opinion leader network participation was further divided into two unknown components in the varimax rotation factor analysis. If the ANOVA showed no significant difference between groups in relation to the opinion leaders they indicated and the perceptions they identified, then agreement and perceived agreement were demonstrated among groups and Ho3 was supported.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Opinion Leader Network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>7.983</td>
<td>9.087</td>
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<td>115</td>
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<td>Network Participation B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>11.761</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.881</td>
<td>6.426</td>
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<td>Within Groups</td>
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<td>115</td>
<td>.915</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>117.000</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Opinion Leader Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.369</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>.681</td>
<td>.508</td>
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<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>123.631</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>1.005</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Perception of Student Value on</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Network Participation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>6.334</td>
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<td>3.167</td>
<td>3.269</td>
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<td>Within Groups</td>
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<td>139</td>
<td>.969</td>
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Coorientation of Department of Journalism Students and Professors

Regarding Opinion Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Professor Value on Network Participation</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Between Groups</th>
<th>Within Groups</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td></td>
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</table>

At significances of .000 and .002, the ANOVA above seems to indicate that there were differences between groups regarding student opinion leader network participation (component A and component B). Despite this, at a significance of .508, there are no differences among groups regarding professor opinion leader network participation. These results suggest that H03 is not completely supported because the significant differences involved indicate a lack of agreement between groups.

As indicated in the ANOVA above, at a significance of .041, there was a difference between groups in their perception of student perception of network participation. Despite this, at a significance of .120 in the ANOVA above, there were no differences between groups in their perception of professor perception of network participation. These results suggest that H03 is not completely supported because the significant differences involved indicate a lack of perceived agreement between groups.
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Regarding Opinion Leadership

Accessibility

Ho4: Agreement and perceived agreement exist between groups (undergraduate students, graduate students, professors) regarding the accessibility component of opinion leadership, so there are no significant differences between groups.

This research hypothesis was tested using an ANOVA. The accessibility component of opinion leadership was measured through indexes of Likert scales relating to the dimension. If the ANOVA showed no significant difference between groups in relation to the opinion leaders they indicated and the perceptions they identified, then agreement and perceived agreement were demonstrated among groups and Ho4 was supported.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>1.026</td>
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<td>.513</td>
<td>.509</td>
<td>.603</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>115.974</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1.008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117.000</td>
<td>117</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>124.999</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>1.016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.944</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.472</td>
<td>.468</td>
<td>.627</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perception of Student Value on Accessibility</td>
<td>140.056</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>1.008</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>141.000</td>
<td>141</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As indicated in the ANOVA above, at a significance of .603, there were no differences between groups in their identification of the accessibility dimension of opinion leadership in students. Additionally, at a significance of 1.000 in the ANOVA above, there were no differences between groups in their identification of the accessibility dimension of opinion leadership in professors. These results indicate no significant difference and suggest agreement between groups, supporting Ho4.

As indicated in the ANOVA above, at a significance of .627, there was no difference between groups in their perception of student perception of accessibility. In contrast, at a significance of .033 in the ANOVA above, there seems to be differences between groups in their perception of professor perception of accessibility. These results suggest that Ho4 is not completely supported because the significant differences involved indicate a lack of perceived agreement between groups.

Discussion

Agreement

In relation to practical knowledge, there were no differences among the groups in relation to identified practical knowledge in opinion leaders. This suggests agreement among all groups and supports Ho1. This indicates that communication between groups regarding practical knowledge in relation to opinion leadership is frequent, co-orienting the groups in terms of agreement.
In relation to innovation, there were no significant differences between groups. This suggests agreement between groups and supports Ho2. This indicates that communication between groups regarding innovation in relation to opinion leadership is frequent, co-orienting the groups in terms of agreement.

Network connection is slightly more complicated. Questions relating to student opinion leader network connection identified two unknown components. Additionally, the ANOVA initially determined that each component held significant differences between groups. To further examine the differences between groups, a Bonferroni post hoc was ran. For the first component graduate students were different from undergraduate students and professors. At a standard deviation of .260, graduate students had a significant difference of .000 from undergraduate students. Likewise, at a standard deviation of .395, graduate students had a significant difference of .002 from professors. Alternatively, at a standard deviation of .327, undergraduate students and professors had no differences at a significance of .974. This indicates that agreement exists between undergraduate students and professors, but not between graduate students and any other group. These results do not support Ho3, and indicate that there is frequent communication with undergraduate students and professors regarding network participation A, but not with graduate students.

Student network participation B also held a significant difference of .002. A Bonferroni post hoc was run to determine differences between groups. This suggested that the difference only exists between undergraduate students and graduate students. At a standard deviation of .265, differences between undergraduate students and graduate students had a significance of .002. These results do not support Ho3, and indicate that there is limited communication
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Regarding Opinion Leadership

regarding network participation B between undergraduate students and graduate students, but frequent communication between professors and the other two groups.

Regarding accessibility, there were no significant differences between groups in relation to identified accessibility in student and professor opinion leaders. This indicates agreement and supports Ho4. This indicates that communication between groups regarding accessibility in relation to opinion leadership is frequent, co-orienting the groups in terms of agreement.

Over all, it seems that there are levels of agreement between student groups and professors regarding all components of opinion leadership except network participation. This means that all groups have similar definitions of opinion leaders. The data also indicates that undergraduate students have more agreement with their professors than graduate students.

Perceived Agreement

In relation to the perceived perceptions of students and professors regarding practical knowledge and opinion leadership, the results indicate that there are no significant differences between groups. This implies that perceived agreement exists between groups, supporting Ho1. This suggests that communication between groups regarding their perceptions of innovation in relation to opinion leadership is frequent, co-orienting the groups in terms of perceived agreement.

Regarding the perceptions of student perception relating to innovation and opinion leadership, there were no differences between groups. Similarly, there were no differences between groups in relation to perceptions of professor perceptions of innovation and opinion leadership. This suggests that perceived agreement exists between groups, supporting Ho2. This
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indicates that communication between groups regarding perceived innovation in relation to opinion leadership is frequent, co-orienting the groups in terms of perceived agreement.

In relation to perception of student perception of network participation and opinion leadership, there were differences between groups. A Bonferroni post hoc was run to determine differences between groups. At a standard deviation of .229 and a significance of .038, differences only existed between undergraduate students and graduate students. These results do not support Ho3, and indicate that there is limited communication regarding perception of student perception of network participation between undergraduate students and graduate students, but frequent communication between professors and the other two groups.

Similarly, the initial ANOVA demonstrated differences between groups with regards to perception of professor perception of accessibility. A Bonferroni post hoc revealed that the differences only exist between undergraduate students and graduate students at a standard deviation of .240 and a significance of .030. These results do not support Ho4, and indicate that there is limited communication regarding perception of professor perception of accessibility between undergraduate students and graduate students, but frequent communication between professors and the other two groups.

Over all, it seems that perceived agreement exists between student groups and professors in relation to all dimensions of opinion leadership. This means that students and professors have accurate perceptions of the perceptions of each other. Despite this, undergraduate and graduate students do not demonstrate perceived agreement regarding network participation and accessibility.

Conclusion
Coorientation of Department of Journalism Students and Professors Regarding Opinion Leadership

This study has shown that there are high levels of communication between students and professors regarding opinion leadership. This suggests that the curriculum of the journalism department provides students with a clear understanding of opinion leadership and its component characteristics. The data suggests that undergraduate students and professors understand each other more completely than graduate students and professors. This is consistent with the amount of time each student group spends with professors (one to four years as opposed to one to two). The data also suggest a slight lack of communication between undergraduate students and graduate students, which is also consistent with the interaction typified in the journalism department. Understanding opinion leadership is important for all members of the journalism department, including those involved in news, advertising, and public relations. By understanding opinion leaders, individuals also gain insight into how innovation spreads and diffuses. Thus, the indicated agreement and perceived agreement suggests that the department is educating its students well regarding opinion leadership.

Moving forward, there are two research areas that this study suggests require further exploration. The first would be to expand the study by collecting data from multiple universities. This would allow for an examination of opinion leadership between not only students and professors, but also between curriculums and institutions. The second would be to devote more time to identifying more distinct characteristics of opinion leadership.
References


Coorientation of Department of Journalism Students and Professors

Regarding Opinion Leadership


References (2)


Institutional Review Board

DATE: February 20, 2013
TO: Trevor Oakerson
FROM: Ball State University IRB
RE: IRB protocol # 423925-1
TITLE: Characteristics of Perceived Opinion Leaders Among Journalism Department Professors and Students
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project
ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: February 20, 2013

The Institutional Review Board reviewed your protocol on February 20, 2013 and has determined the procedures you have proposed are appropriate for exemption under the federal regulations. As such, there will be no further review of your protocol, and you are cleared to proceed with the procedures outlined in your protocol. As an exempt study, there is no requirement for continuing review. Your protocol will remain on file with the IRB as a matter of record.

Editorial notes:

1. Approved- Exempt

While your project does not require continuing review, it is the responsibility of the P.I. (and, if applicable, faculty supervisor) to inform the IRB if the procedures presented in this protocol are to be modified or if problems related to human research participants arise in connection with this project. Any procedural modifications must be evaluated by the IRB before being implemented, as some modifications may change the review status of this project. Please contact John Mulcahy at (765) 285-5106 or jmulcahy@bsu.edu if you are unsure whether your proposed modification requires review or have any questions. Proposed modifications should be addressed in writing and submitted electronically to the IRB (http://www.bsu.edu/irb) for review. Please reference the above IRB protocol number in any communication to the IRB regarding this project.

Reminder: Even though your study is exempt from the relevant federal regulations of the Common Rule (45 CFR 46, subpart A), you and your research team are not exempt from ethical research practices and should therefore employ all protections for your participants and their data which are appropriate to your project.