

EDITED BY:

ANA TKALAC VERČIČ

RALPH TENCH

SABINE EINWILLER

JOY

USING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
TO IMPROVE WELL-BEING
AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

ADVANCES IN PUBLIC
RELATIONS AND
COMMUNICATION
MANAGEMENT



JOY

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ADVANCES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND
COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT
VOLUME 5

JOY: USING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION TO IMPROVE WELL-BEING AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

EDITED BY

ANA TKALAC VERČIĆ

University of Zagreb, Croatia

RALPH TENCH

Leeds Beckett University, UK

SABINE EINWILLER

University of Vienna, Austria



United Kingdom – North America – Japan
India – Malaysia – China

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Mark Badham (PhD) is Postdoctoral Researcher in Corporate Communication at Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics in Finland. His research focuses on distinct roles news media outlets adopt in mass communication processes, particularly to better understand phenomenon involving power struggles between organizations, activists and their respective publics. This research extends to crisis communication, agenda-building and other mass communication-related research focused on how organizations engage with news media in online and offline environments to reach stakeholders. Prior to entering into a full-time academic career, he worked in public relations roles for politicians, political parties and NGOs in Australia.

Dajana Barbić is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business in Zagreb, University of Zagreb. She teaches 'Personal Finance', 'Public Finance' and 'Monetary Policy' at the Department of Finance. She defended her doctoral dissertation in the field of personal finance 'Linking financial literacy with the successfulness in managing personal finances'. She is one of the founders and director of the Institute for Financial literacy and responsible financial consumption where she actively participates in the programmes of financial education. She is an active researcher in many projects including international project 'Financial literacy and socialization of children as consumers'.

Célia Belim is an Assistant Professor at the School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Lisbon (ISCSP-ULisboa), lecturing on Communication Sciences (CC)'s scientific area since 2000. Currently, she is executive coordinator of the graduate degree of the referred scientific area. She has a PhD on CC. She coordinates projects, such as 'Communicate health' and 'Agendas and communication'. Since 2000, she has participated in several conferences, and publishes in her fields of interest, such as health communication, having published, by invitation from Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. She has received four academic awards.

Jana Brockhaus, MA, is Research Associate and PhD Candidate at the Chair of Strategic Communication at Leipzig University, Germany, and has been a visiting research student at Lund University, Sweden. Her research interests include professionalization of strategic communication, management concepts, and employee engagement. In her master thesis, she examines the internal perception and positioning of communication departments in corporations and analyses the expectations of internal stakeholders.

Laura Dicke, MA, is a Public Relations Assistant at Fraunhofer IFAM in Dresden, Germany. In 2020, she finished her master's degree in Communication Management at the Department of Strategic Communication at Leipzig University, Germany. Her academic interests lie in challenges and opportunities of strategic communication for organizations, employee engagement and financial communication. Her master's thesis explores the challenges of strategic employer branding in start-ups.

Sabine Einwiller is a Professor of Public Relations Research at the Department of Communication, University of Vienna, Austria, where she heads the Corporate Communication Research Group. Since 2018 she is the Head of the Austrian Public Relations Ethics Council and serves as the Austrian representative of the European Communication Monitor. In 2019/2020 she headed the Scientific Committee of EUPRERA. Sabine Einwiller has published about 40 articles in international peer-reviewed journals and is co-editor of the Handbook of Employee Communication (Springer Gabler, in German). In her research, she is mainly interested in the effects of corporate communication on stakeholders and in strategic communication management.

Finn Frandsen is Professor in the Department of Management at Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University, Denmark. In 2019, he was appointed Professor II at BI Norwegian Business School, Norway. His primary research interests include organizational crises, crisis management and crisis communication. His most recent books are *Organizational Crisis Communication: A Multivocal Approach* (2017; co-authored with Winni Johansen) and *Crisis Communication (Handbooks of Communication Science HOCS 23, co-edited with Winni Johansen)*. In 2019, Finn Frandsen and Winni Johansen served as co-editors of *Big Ideas in Public Relations Research and Practice (Advances in Public Relations and Communication Management, Emerald Publishing)*.

Patricia Hauck is a Consultant for strategic communication and change management at FTI Consulting. She finished her master's degree in Communication Management at the Department of Strategic Communication at Leipzig University, Germany, in 2020. In 2019, she has been a visiting research student at Tallinn University, Estonia. Her research interests focus on innovative methods for strategic communication and employee engagement. Her master's thesis is concerned with the use of microtargeting within corporate communications.

Olaf Hoffjann is a Professor at the Department of Communication Studies at University of Bamberg, Germany. He studied, inter alia, communication studies in Münster, Germany. From 2006 to 2019 he was Professor of Communication Management at the Mediadesign University for Applied Sciences in Berlin and Professor of Media Management at the Ostfalia University for Applied Sciences in Salzgitter, Germany. He was awarded a PhD for his system-theoretical study of the relationship between PR and journalism. His research interests cover trust in public relations (PR), the reality of PR and public affairs.

Winni Johansen is Professor in the Department of Management at Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University, Denmark, and adjunct professor at BI Norwegian Business School, Norway. Her primary research interests include organizational crises, crisis management and crisis communication. Her most recent books are *Organizational Crisis Communication: A Multivocal Approach* (2017; co-authored with Finn Frandsen), *International Encyclopedia of Strategic Communication* (2018; co-edited with Robert L. Heath) and *Crisis Communication (Handbooks of Communication Science HOCS 23, 2020; co-edited with Finn Frandsen)*. In 2019, Winni Johansen and Finn Frandsen served as co-editors of *Big Ideas in Public Relations Research and Practice (Advances in Public Relations and Communication Management, Emerald Publishing)*.

Erik Kosteljik is Associate Professor of Marketing at the Amsterdam School of International Business of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands. He has teaching, research and professional experience in several countries including China, the USA, Lithuania, France, Spain and Italy. Currently, he also works as marketing consultant in the Netherlands. Erik is the designer and author of the Value Compass, the method to assess the influence of values on branding. His book on brand positioning (with K. J. Alsem) won the Dutch award for the marketing study book 2016. The book was published in 2020 in English at Routledge.

Alla Kushniryk (PhD) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada. Her department has been nationally recognized for excellence in public relations education in Canada. She earned a PhD in Communication and Information at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Alla's research and publications centre on organizational communication, digital and social media, and quantitative research methods. She has been engaged in several research projects funded by Communications + Public Relations Foundation, Canadian Public Relations Society and other organizations.

Danijela Lalić, PhD, is an Associate Professor at the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, Faculty of Technical Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Serbia. Her research interests include public relations, corporate communications, especially social media, digital and internal communications. She published over 70 scientific and professional publications. Her PR handbook is considered as excellent guide for professionals and students. She was the editor and lead translator of the textbook *Business Communication Today*, published by Pearson Education. Dr Lalić is a member of Serbian PR Association, a member of EUPRERA and a national collaborator for Serbia for the European Communication Monitor.

Andrea Lučić is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Marketing at the Faculty of Economics in Zagreb. She teaches 'Foundations of Marketing' and 'Sustainable marketing and ethics'. She is leading a Croatian Science Foundation research project 'Empowering financial capability of young consumers through

education and behavioural intervention'. She is also a research fellow on 'Strenght2Food: Horizon 2020 – Strengthening European Food Chain Sustainability by Quality and Procurement Policy Activity' project. She is one of the founders of the Institute for Financial Literacy and responsible financial consumption where she actively participates in the programmes of financial education.

Vibeke Thøis Madsen is an Assistant Professor in digital and organizational communication, Department of Culture and Learning, Aalborg University, Denmark. Her research interests are interactions among organizational members on internal social media and employees as strategic communicators in public relations. She has, for example, studied how employees construct organizational identity on internal social media and the self-censorship strategies they apply when they communicate. Presently, she studies the strategic role and the participatory potential of social intranets in public organizations and develops a framework to understand employees as communicators in organizational contexts.

Dijana Bojčeta Markoja is Managing Director of Association of Pension Funds and Pension Insurance Companies with more than 20 years of working experience in financial industry with the main focus on corporate communication and marketing. Her professional and scientific focus is on Financial Literacy, specifically Pension Literacy. She participated in numerous conferences and panel discussions with contributed lectures. DBM has degree in political science and Master Degree in economics – field marketing. She attended IEDC Bled – Business School. At the moment, she is attending the master course in public relations.

Bojana Milić is a PhD Candidate and a Scientific Researcher at the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, Faculty of Technical Sciences at University of Novi Sad, Serbia. She currently writes her PhD thesis on employee creativity and their innovative behaviour. Her research interests include employee engagement, knowledge management, creativity and social media marketing.

Natalie Doyle Oldfield (BA Honours, BPR, MPR) is the author of the book *The Power of Trust: How Top Companies Build, Manage and Protect It*. Four times, Natalie has been named one of the world's Top Thought Leaders in Trust by Trust Across America. A former Chief Marketing Officer and keynote speaker, she publishes business and academic articles.

Natalie advises business owners and leaders on how to increase revenue, trust and loyalty through a scientifically based framework. She is the creator of the Client Trust Index™, an award-winning proprietary diagnostic and a digital program called Becoming a Trusted Advisor.

Stanislav Orlov (MEd, MIST) is a Systems Librarian at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Part of his duties includes facilitating seamless access to various e-resources by students, faculty and the larger community. That involves everyday work with journal article databases, e-book platforms, institutional repository, university archive, online citation managers,

etc. He teaches the Intro to Research in Information Age course that focuses on proper ways of finding, evaluating and using information in academia, as well as in everyday life. Stanislav's research interests include Open Education Resources, and Social Media.

Lars Rademacher, MA, PhD, is Professor for Public Relations at Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences and adjunct lecturer & researcher at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), Ireland. He serves as Director at the Institute of Communication & Media. Before joining academia, Lars spent more than 15 years as communication consultant and media relations manager working for a number of national and multinational companies including BASF and Volkswagen. His research interests cover public legitimacy, PR ethics, leadership & executive communication, CSR and compliance communication. Since 2017 he is a member and since 2018 the Chairman of the German Public Relations Council.

Jelena Stanković, PhD, is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, Faculty of Technical Sciences at University of Novi Sad, Serbia. Her research interest focuses on marketing management, corporate communication, branding and entrepreneurship. She is the author of more than 50 papers published in scientific journals and conferences. She is also one of the translators of the textbook *Business Communication Today*, published by Pearson Education. Dr Stanković is a member of Mensa since 2013.

Kathrin Stürmer, MA, is a PhD Candidate at Cork Institute of Technology in cooperation with Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences. She has been teaching at Darmstadt UAS since 2018. Before, Kathrin worked in a lobby agency where her research topic 'digital lobbying' arose. She worked at the German Bundestag and currently in the political department of a social media agency. Her research interests cover online, political, strategic communication; lobbying and social media. Kathrin holds a Bachelor's degree in political and media science (University of Regensburg, Germany) and a Master's degree in European and international studies (European Institute Nice, France).

Professor Ralph Tench is Director of Research for Leeds Business School and Past President (2017–2020) European Public Relations Research and Education Association. Tench's research involves national and international projects. He has written and edited 26 books; published over 40 academic journal papers; presented worldwide 60+ peer-reviewed papers. Books include the market-leading strategic communication textbook, *Exploring Public Relations*, and recently *Communication Excellence – How to Develop, Manage and Lead Exceptional Communications*, based on the longitudinal, annual European Communication Monitor project (14 years, www.communicationmonitor.eu). Tench's research focuses on strategic communication and its impact on societal issues including health, business, social and public policy.

Cristina Vaz de Almeida is a Specialist in Health Literacy (HL) and director of a postgraduate course on HL at the Higher Institute of Applied Psychology (ISPA) since 2012. She has a permanent intervention as a lecturer in HL for training

health professionals, at national and international level. Since 2007, she has participated in Portuguese social projects. She has been working for more than 17 years at Lisbon Holy House of Mercy-Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa (SCML). She is co-author of the book *Literacia em saúde na prática (Health literacy in practice)* and of various articles and chapters.

Ana Tkalac Verčić is a Full Professor of Marketing communications and Public Relations at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb, Croatia. She is a former Fulbright scholar and a recipient of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations diploma. Ana Tkalac Verčić has authored, co-authored and edited numerous books including *Public Relations Metrics: Research and Evaluation* (with B. van Ruler and D. Verčić) and is the author of the first Croatian public relations textbook. She has published more than a 100 papers in various academic journals and serves in various editorial boards such as *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, *Journal of Public Relations Research* and *Public Relations Review*. Throughout her career professor Tkalac Verčić has received numerous awards, most recently, GrandPRx, the award for the development of public relations as a profession. She is currently the president of the Croatian Public Relations Association.

Sophia Charlotte Volk, MA, is Research Associate and PhD candidate at the Department of Strategic Communication at Leipzig University, Germany. As project leader in the research program 'Value Creating Communication', she co-authored the book *Toolbox Communication Management* (Springer Gabler 2019). Her research interests include corporate communications, communication management, evaluation and measurement, and comparative research. Her research has been published in renowned international journals and awarded several prizes at academic conferences. Her doctoral dissertation examines the state of the art of comparative communication research and generates empirical insights into the collaborative challenges of international research projects.

Gerrit van der Waldt is Research Professor: Public Governance attached to North-West University, South Africa. He is author and co-author of 34 text books and more than a 100 scholarly articles to date. He has published extensively in the field of governance and policy-related domains and serves on various advisory boards and research committees. He also lectured and conducted research at the Vrije University, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and was appointed as global expert by the International Swedish Institute for Public Administration (SIPU) to partake in the design and development of Masters' Programmes for various African countries.

Magrita N. Wiggill is Associate Professor at the Department of Strategic Communication at the Helsingborg Campus of Lund University, Sweden. She has published several scholarly articles on strategic communication management in the non-profit sector as well as in a disaster risk context. Her research interests include strategic communication and relationship management, disaster risk communication management, communication and sustainability, and social media.

INTRODUCTION

As I write the introduction to this latest book in the European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA) Congress series for Emerald, I cannot help but hold some sense of irony. Our excellent Congress in Zagreb – held during early October 2019 – was another annual celebration of international exchanges of research and new ideas in the scholarship of public relations and strategic communication. The theme of the congress was ‘Joy’. And yet, as I compose these introductory thoughts and reflections for the book, my fellow editors and I are each sitting in our home offices as many of you will have done. All of us experiencing for the first time in our lives an extraordinary, enforced lockdown during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) crisis in the spring of 2020. As such ‘joy’ may not be the first emotion academics and research students think of when reflecting on this challenging period of our lives, but it is perhaps poignant to recall the discussions and debates we held in Zagreb and the fascinating papers we shared during the Congress. Whilst many of the papers touched literally on the issue of joy, others explored related emotions and in some papers the flip or opposing sensations to positivity. In essence the theme of the 2019 Congress is perhaps never more appropriate than in times of stress, international emergency and genuine societal challenge. We need to be able to understand how and where we can sense happiness, well-being, social cohesion, togetherness, appreciation of others and, arguably, attributes of joy.

Even before this exceptional year of 2020, it would have been possible to argue that we are living in an era of societal pessimism. That challenging viewpoint appears only to have been reinforced and heightened by the international experiences of the COVID-19 crisis. As we observe our everyday academic worlds, it is possible to see that everyone potentially has a voice, and in the contemporary climate it is very often used to criticize. Publics see problems and discuss them in multifarious ways and on a plethora of platforms and media outlets. And, in turn, academic research reflects this and often views the world through a negative lens and focuses on difficulties, issues and bad practices. With this meeting of the international public relations and strategic communication research community, it was the ambition of the Congress organizers from the University of Zagreb and the EUPRERA Board to encourage and promote some optimism in both the public discourse and academic research about the discipline.

The conference call proposed that public relations and strategic communication could be used for cultivating a positive environment. This means communicators could accept that one of the biggest competitive advantages in today’s business world is a positive and engaged public. Satisfied participants are at the core of any successful relationship. To succeed in the future, public relations will

have the aim of keeping various stakeholders not only informed, nor even satisfied, but happy. Whether they are employees, customers or business partners, only happy stakeholders will ensure long-term organizational success.

The success of relationships with publics is mostly based on how people are valued and treated, which in turn affects their self-perceptions and level of performance. Both of these elements are correlated with life happiness. So it seems logical that public relations should put additional effort in fostering happiness and joy among their publics and by improving both organizational success and the well-being of people. These were the thoughts and aspirations to encourage academic papers to join in the debate about ‘joy’ and its implications for strategic communication and public relations.

The Zagreb Congress was the 21st to be organized by The European Public Relations Education and Research Association. EUPRERA is an autonomous organization with nearly 500 members from 40 countries interested in advancing academic research and knowledge in strategic communication. Several cross-national and comparative research and education projects are organized by affiliated universities. In order to spread new methodologies and research results, EUPRERA organizes its Annual Congress each autumn in collaboration with a selected university or college in Europe. The organizer of the 2019 Congress was one of my co-editors, Professor Ana Tkalac Verčič, from the University of Zagreb. The Congress attracted 60 full papers, and this book is a selection of the best papers that were not included in the special issue of the *Journal of Communication Management*.

The book is divided into three parts. The following pages provide a summary for each part of the book and a flavour of the chapters within each section.

Part I: Strategic Communication and Organizational Goals

Not all contingencies named ‘societal development’ add to joy – some have positive some negative effects. Questioning the role of public relations in society and a strategic approach to communication can induce the spreading of positive human and corporate behaviour that contributes to joy. How can public relations contribute to the communication of social change through ethical persuasion and promotion of public interest? Additionally, measuring the effectiveness of communication is vital for understanding its value and for shaping future plans in a way that contributes to greater effectiveness. If joy is a part of successful communication, how can we measure it? Can joy be measured through results and performance indicators and consequently integrated into strategic communication plans? In order to be precise, we need to first define the role of joy and its related constructs in the process of communication.

In his paper ‘Love Wins: A Love Lens Approach to Cultivation of Organization Stakeholder Relationships’, Mark Badham’s chapter draws on the theory of brand love developed in relationship marketing research and the theory of love from psychological research to build a theoretical framework of organization–stakeholder love (OSL) that can be applied to organizational relationships with

publics and stakeholders. Badham argues that OSL is important as it has the potential to contribute to addressing public relations' image problems (e.g. relating to terms such as *spin*, *fake news* and *corporate greenwashing*). It also offers a new love orientation that guides organizations towards a focus on the primacy of stakeholder needs and values, which in turn may shape the way organizations initiate and manage their relationships with stakeholders. The chapter concludes with practical ways OSL can be implemented and offers a research agenda.

Erik Kosteljik takes the view that people decide what is good or bad, or what they should or should not do, based on the values they cherish. Someone's values create the feeling that something is important for him or her, and then motivate him or her to take action. Titled 'Values-Based Communications: A New Impulse to Communication Effectiveness', Kosteljik's chapter explores the use of values in communication and introduces mechanisms through which values can be used to stimulate communication effectiveness.

In 'Outside-In- versus Inside-Out-Content. Introducing a New Approach on the Origins of Contents in Strategic Communication', Olaf Hoffjann introduces the concept of outside-in-content, which facilitates a new perspective in the decoupling of discourse. Outside-in-content encourages decoupling for three reasons: (1) like a lighthouse, it draws attention away from negative issues. (2) As neither-true-nor-false-content, it encourages non-committal and arbitrary strategic communication. (3) If organizations no longer talk about themselves, or do so less frequently, talk and action can also no longer be examined using the standards of tight or loose coupling.

In 'Quantifying Organizational Trust on Twitter: A Communication Perspective', Alla Kushniryk, Stanislav Orlov and Natalie Doyle Oldfield draw on both theoretical and empirical literature on trust and discuss the role of trust in strategic communication. They examine the importance of trust for organizational success, the dimensions of trust and distrust, and discuss quantifiable proxies to measure trust and distrust on social media. They use theoretically driven dimensions of trust and distrust as a framework to examine how Boeing and Airbus use Twitter to communicate with their stakeholders and publics. Two separate lists of words and phrases were created, one for proxies of trust and one for proxies of distrust. In addition, trust building actions that organization can engage in on Twitter were identified: listening and engaging in dialogue by following users, mentioning users in messages, replying to inquiries, providing and encouraging feedback.

Part II: Internal and Employee Communication

Strategic internal communication is a part of the organizational context in which employees are engaged or disengaged, while strategic external communication is an antecedent of a company's image on the market which designates consumer engagement. Both are vital in the digital era in which employees prioritize on fun working environments awakening positive emotions including happiness, joy and

enthusiasm. How can we use communication to attract and preserve engaged employees – employees that believe that working is fun? Are lucrative communication activities such as employer brand communication, innovative organizational communication initiatives and open channels of communication helpful? How can we use communication to secure customer loyalty? Are extensive communications with diverse external stakeholders, especially on social media platforms, the right solution?

In the chapter, ‘Internal Communication and Employee Engagement as the Key Prerequisites of Happiness’, Danijela Lalić, Jelena Stanković and Bojana Milić investigate internal communication satisfaction and employee engagement as prerequisites of employee happiness. The outcomes of their study reveal how organizations can employ an internal communications strategy in order to enhance engagement of their employees and their happiness as the ultimate goal.

Vibeke Thøis Madsen explores interactions on internal social media (ISM) in a Danish bank in order to understand how communicative leadership is enacted in social media dialogues within an organizational context. The chapter titled ‘Communicative Leadership on Internal Social Media – A way to Employee Engagement?’ identifies three types of communicative leadership: Formal communicative leadership, coconstructed communicative leadership and peer communicative leadership. Madsen argues the findings help us understand leadership as a complex set of interactions in organizational contexts and know that empowering communication on ISM can therefore enhance employee engagement.

The research team of Jana Brockhaus, Laura Dicke, Patricia Hauck and Sophia Charlotte Volk explores corporate ambassadors in their chapter, ‘Employees as Corporate Ambassadors: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Perceived Benefits and Challenges from Three Perspectives’. The goal of this qualitative study is to analyze the communicative engagement of employees within an organization and explore the expectations towards ambassador communication from three perspectives: the communication department, other departments such as marketing or human resources, and corporate ambassadors themselves. The chapter lays the groundwork for further discussions about corporate ambassadors in the field of corporate communications and outlines directions for future research and implications for practice.

Part III: Joyfully Practising Communication

The world is definitely going through a transition, and strategic communication has to participate in the debate on major issues and help shape values and beliefs of the society as a whole. Through shaping communication, public relations experts help shape core values. Is satisfaction a prerequisite of good communication? What is the role of communication professionals in discussions about a society in transition? What is our professional responsibility? Are we (at least partially) in charge of satisfaction in society? When and why does communication foster health, happiness and well-being?

In 'The Pursuit of Happiness in PR: Joy, Satisfaction & Motivation during working as Communication Manager on Purposeful Cases', Lars Rademacher and Kathrin Stürmer explore the job satisfaction of communication managers. This chapter discusses the connection between a good cause and job satisfaction and the difference it makes when it comes to working in communication management over time. Unlike other studies, the focus in the chapter is on purpose-driven projects as a change in business routine to stay motivated.

If you reach this part of the book and you are not already elated, then after the next chapter you will be. Aarhus colleagues Finn Frandsen and Winni Johansen take us on a whirlwind journey across the corporate dance floor in the riveting chapter 'The Dancing CEO: Perspectives on the Leader: Performer, Chief Happiness Officer or Seducer?'. The chapter is a riveting case study about the Danish CEO who suddenly began to dance in front of journalists while singing *Everything is awesome* from the LEGO Movie. Why did he do it? Was it out of spontaneous joy? Or was there a strategy behind his actions? And what were the reactions of the media and LEGO employees? These are questions handsomely answered in this chapter that contributes to a broader understanding of strategic communication and leadership and adds a dramaturgical and multimodal perspective.

In 'Incorporating Cultural Diversity, Nation Building and Social Cohesion When Teaching Communication and Relationship Management', Magrita Nicolene Wiggill and Gerrit Van der Walldt reflect on the necessity of incorporating practical and experiential learning modalities in higher education to prepare communication and relationship management students for engaging others in potentially conflicting socio-cultural heterogeneous settings. The case study illustrates students' general anxiety to engage people from different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds. The authors recommend innovative teaching strategies are developed to foster harmony, tolerance, understanding and cultural sensitivity in communication and relationship management education.

Andrea Lučić, Dajana Barbić and Dijana Bojčeta Markoja develop an interesting case study chapter in 'Using Education As a Strategic Communication Tool – A Case Study of Raising Financial Literacy And Voluntary Pension Fund Promotion'. The chapter has the purpose of showing how purposeful content-based valuable information can be created with the aim of influencing attitudes and behaviours in the field of personal and pension savings. A quantitative study was conducted in order to investigate the effectiveness of education on the attitudes and knowledge related to pension fund savings. The results of the quasi-experiment indicate that the education has increased respondents' knowledge and positive attitudes towards retirement savings.

To conclude the book, Cristina Vaz de Almeida and Célia Belim Rodrigues explore health professional's communication competences. The chapter, 'When the Health Professional's Communication Competences Decide Patient's Health: Proposal of a Communication Model' focuses on the impact of health professional's communication competences on patients. The study is a response to the lack of consensus in the literature on what specific and operative communication competences the health professional should perform in clinical encounters

with patients, and how these competences can improve, in the final instance, health and well-being.

I hope you enjoy reading these valuable contributions to our research community and share them with your peers. I look forward to seeing you soon at one of the forthcoming EUPRERA Congresses held every autumn.

Professor Ralph Tench, April 2020

PART I

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

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LOVE WINS: A LOVE LENS APPROACH TO CULTIVATION OF ORGANIZATION–STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

Mark Badham

ABSTRACT

This chapter adds to emerging research exploring the construct of joy by drawing attention to the value of more loving stakeholder relationships. Relationship management research has focussed attention on the antecedents, outcomes and quality of an organization's relationships with various publics and stakeholders and has examined strategies that can nurture these relationships. However, not much of this research has addressed intimacy and passion in these relationships.

Accordingly, this chapter draws on the theory of brand love developed in relationship marketing research and the theory of love from psychological research to build a theoretical framework of organization–stakeholder love (OSL) that can be applied to organizational relationships with publics and stakeholders. An OSL framework switches emphasis from how organizations can attract stakeholder affection (e.g., love) towards organizations to how organizations can and should love their stakeholders. The proposition put forward in this chapter is that OSL can and should become a driving force behind organizations' interactions with stakeholders, thus contributing to ethical public relations practices.

OSL is important because it has the potential to contribute to addressing public relations' image problems (e.g., relating to terms such as spin and corporate greenwashing); it offers a new love orientation that guides organizations towards a focus on the primacy of stakeholder needs and values, which in turn may shape the way organizations initiate and manage relationships with

Joy

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stakeholders. This chapter concludes with practical ways to implement OSL and a research agenda suggesting ways OSL may open up new research opportunities in public relations.

Keywords: Ethical public relations; intimacy; love; organizational orientation; organization–public relationships (OPRs); organization–stakeholder relationships (OSRs)

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. –1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV)

INTRODUCTION

Addressing the recent and welcome theme of *joy* in public relations research (e.g., the Euprera 2019 congress theme), this chapter draws attention not only to the foundational construct of *relationships* in public relations theory and practice but more specifically to the value of closer loving relationships between organizations and their stakeholders. The logic is that positive emotions of *joy* and *love* are complementary attributes and desired outcomes of an organization's relationship with stakeholders.

Three decades of research on organization–public relationships (OPRs; [Ki & Hon, 2009](#); [Ledingham & Bruning, 1998](#)) and more recent research on organization–stakeholder relationships (OSRs; [Slabbert & Barker, 2014](#)) have examined how organizations can build and nurture positive relationships with publics and stakeholders. Extensive research in OPR studies has examined three main aspects of OPRs. First, research has focussed on the antecedents of OPR ([Bowen, Hung-Baesecke, & Chen, 2016](#); [Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 2000](#); [Hon & Grunig, 1999](#); [Huang, 2001](#)), addressing the question of why there is a need, and preconditions required, to establish relationships. Second, research addressed maintenance ([Hon & Grunig, 1999](#)) or cultivation strategies ([Grunig, 2006](#)) focussing on how to continue quality relationships (i.e., sustainability of relationships). Third, research has examined the outcomes of OPR relationship quality ([Grunig & Huang, 2000](#)), including relationship dimensions such as commitment, trust, openness, intimacy and passion ([Ledingham & Bruning, 1998](#)).

However, despite this breadth of research, what is still missing in public relations research is a deeper understanding of relationship intimacy. [Ki and Shin's \(2006\)](#) content analysis of OPR studies published between 1985 and 2001 found that only two studies focussed on intimacy as a measurement variable and only one focussed on emotions as a measurement variable. More widely, however, recent public relations studies have begun to examine stakeholder emotions and emotional engagement ([Coombs & Holladay, 2015](#); [Lievonen, Luoma-aho, & Bowden, 2018](#)).

This chapter draws on brand love research adopting [Sternberg's \(1986, 1988\)](#) theory of love ([Bügel, Verhoef, & Buunk, 2011](#); [Yim, Tse, & Chan, 2008](#)) to develop a theoretical framework of love that can be applied to public relations

studies examining organizational relationships with publics and stakeholders. Like stakeholder emotions research in public relations literature, brand love research sheds light on how organizations can attract love-like feelings from stakeholders. An organization–stakeholder love (OSL) framework switches emphasis from how organizations can nurture stakeholder affection (e.g., love) towards organizations to how organizations should first love their stakeholders. The proposition put forward in this chapter is that OSL, which can be adopted and implemented through organizational culture, systems, policies and practices, should become a guiding motive for how organizations interact with stakeholders.

Development of an OSL framework contributes to relationship management research (Ledingham, 2003; Ledingham, Bruning, Thomlison, & Lesko, 1997), particularly to offer a better understanding of intimacy in stakeholder relationships. An OSL framework also has the potential to contribute to more ethical public relations (Botan, 1997; Bowen et al., 2016; Fawkes, 2012). The public relations profession is in dire need of increased attention to ethical practices and principles. Historically, public relations have been perceived as a manipulative and deceptive practice, which has given rise to terms such as *spin*, *fake news* and *corporate greenwashing*. Critics have pointed to its prioritization of organizational benefits over the public good or public interest (Brunner & Smallwood, 2019) and to its focus on image over action. Theory about OSL contributes in some way towards addressing these challenges by offering a new love orientation that may shape the way organizations initiate and manage their relationships with stakeholders. It builds on and extends the stakeholder-centricity paradigm by introducing organizational love into the stakeholder relationship–building process, thus testing organizations’ real motives for relationship cultivation strategies.

An organization’s orientation or stance towards stakeholders is important because it shapes its relationship with them (Shin, Cheng, Jin, & Cameron, 2005) and guides how it treats them, including how it communicates with them. Public relations studies have explored organizations’ orientations towards stakeholders and the effect this has on organizations’ behaviours towards stakeholders. As an example, it has been widely argued that an organization’s ‘strategic communication’ orientation leads that organization to treat stakeholders as a means to an end, which is understood as a more one-way asymmetrical communication model. A paradigmatic shift towards a more stakeholder-centric orientation complements a two-way symmetrical communication model that influences how organizations behave towards stakeholders. For example, an organization’s ‘engagement’ orientation influences its interaction with stakeholders; such an approach ‘guides the process of interactions among groups’ (Taylor & Kent, 2014, p. 384). Kent and Taylor (2002, 2014) argue that ‘dialogic engagement’ is an organizational orientation that contributes to a more ethical approach towards stakeholders; dialogue is considered

...‘more ethical’ because it is based on the principles of honesty, trust, and positive regard for the other rather than simply a conception of the public as a means to an end. (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 33)

This chapter is structured as follows. Following the introduction, it conducts a review of brand love studies that draw on Sternberg's theory of love (1986, 1988) and moves on to a review of public relations studies with a focus on intimacy, passion and commitment in organizations' relationships with stakeholders. The third section makes use of the integration of brand love theory and Sternberg's theory of love to develop an OSL framework to be applied in relationship management research specifically and public relations research more broadly. The fourth section leads a theoretical discussion about how a love orientation contributes to ethical organizational relationships with stakeholders. Finally, this chapter concludes with practical implications of how OSL can be implemented within organizations and offers a research agenda suggesting ways an OSL framework may open up a range of research opportunities in public relations.

CONSUMERS' LOVE FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Relationship Marketing Research on Brand Love

To improve our understanding in public relations research of OSR intimacy and passion, this chapter draws on constructs of *brand love* and *interpersonal love* explored in relationship marketing research and in psychological research. Early relationship marketing researchers observed how the tactics individuals employ to build and maintain healthy personal relationships could also improve the way organizations strategically instigate and build relationships with their customers, suppliers and even competitors. In her seminal work, Fournier (1998) offered a link between interpersonal relationships and organization–consumer relationships, outlining a framework for characterizing and better understanding the types of relationships consumers form with brands. This gave marketing scholars and practitioners a new perspective with which to view customers and which changed their strategic approach to customers. Today, relationship marketing has become the dominant view in business marketing studies (Möller, 2013).

Due to its links to a relationship metaphor, relationship marketing researchers began to apply the construct of *love* to explore consumer–organization relationships. Research on brand love has been substantial, particularly since 2005. These studies (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) used the term 'love' to label consumers' 'love-like' affection for particular brands. The intensity of these love-like affections ranges from liking brand-related objects to an intense emotional attachment with these objects. Although brand love has become a major topic in marketing, no universally accepted definition exists (Albert, Merunka, & Valette-Florence, 2008; Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012).

Both brand love and interpersonal love are an important focus in relationship marketing research because intense feelings are widely seen as a prerequisite for a long-lasting relationship (Shimp & Madden, 1988). However, simply transferring the characteristics of interpersonal love into a marketing context has raised conceptual challenges, because the feelings a person holds for a brand are not perfectly comparable to the feelings a person has for another person (Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). One of the main differences is that whereas

interpersonal love is an outcome of a bidirectional interaction, love for an object such as an organization, product or brand is unidirectional (Whang, Allen, Sahoury, & Zhang, 2014).

Nevertheless, brand love is important to organizations because it is the most emotionally intense connection between the brand and its consumers (Schmid & Huber, 2019). For this reason, although strong organization–consumer relationships are acknowledged to be the main objective of brand management (Esch, Langner, Schmitt, & Geus, 2006), brand love is understood as the ultimate goal of these relationships.

From an interpersonal perspective, love is seen as the inclusion of others in the self (Aron & Aron, 1996). Transferring this to the consumer-brand domain of brand love research, which sheds light on the feeling of love towards an object rather than a person, brand love is understood as occurring if characteristic attributes of a brand reflect a consumer's self (Ahuvia, 2005; Albert et al., 2008). Consumers tend to feel passionate love for a brand if it is able to reflect the consumers' inner self, for example, his or her personality.

Further, both hedonic and utilitarian attributes play a part in brand love formation. Huber, Meyer, and David (2015) found that consumers not only identify with a brand and thus feel love for it if it is an emotionally appealing brand, functional benefits such as the ability of a product to perform a desired function are a central driver of long-term relationships as well. Huber et al.'s (2015) study also shows that a passionate love subtly evolves into a more rational love when utilitarian features of a product become more important to a consumer.

Another important finding is that brand love, like interpersonal love, is dynamic in nature (Whang et al., 2014); feelings of love can change over time. Brand love studies show that love is affected by length of relationship. Over time, as brand familiarity increases, the consumer senses a feeling of assimilation towards the brand (Huber et al., 2015).

Relationship marketing studies (e.g., Bügel et al., 2011; Yim et al., 2008) have drawn on Sternberg's triangular theory of love (1986, 1988) originating in psychological research to explore consumers' love for brands. According to Sternberg, love consists of three components that together can be considered the vertices of a triangle: intimacy, passion and commitment (see Fig. 1). Intimacy refers to feelings of closeness, connectedness and bondedness in loving relationships and includes feelings that essentially give rise to the experience of warmth in a loving relationship. Passion refers to the driving force that leads to romance and other related phenomena in loving relationships and therefore is considered the motivational component in loving relationships. Commitment is a cognitive element (Shimp & Madden, 1988) involved in the decision to love someone and to maintain that love.

These three components of love, when combined, may lead to different types of love (Sternberg, 1988). For example, *nonlove* is the result of the absence of all three components of love. *Liking* results from the existence of intimacy in the absence of passion and commitment. Passion without the other components of love results in infatuated love. Romantic love derives from a combination of intimacy and passion with little commitment. *Companionate love* is the result of a

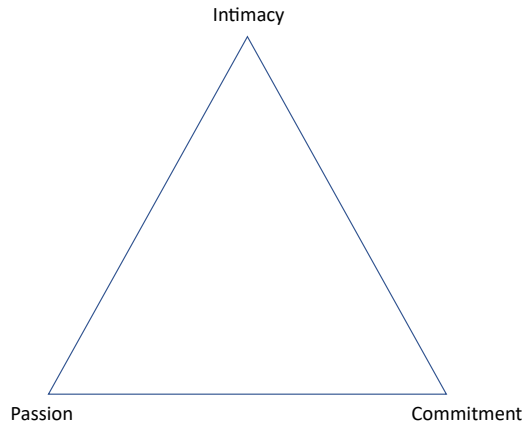


Fig. 1. Sternberg's Triangle of Love. Source: Bügel et al. (2011).

combination of intimacy and commitment with little passion. *Consummate or complete love* results from a full combination of all three components.

Bügel et al. (2011) apply Sternberg's theory of love to their study of brand love in organization–consumer relationships. Like other brand love studies, they measure intimacy by asking test participants to what extent they feel they have a confidential relationship with a particular brand, how much value they attach to the brand and how much 'good understanding' they have of the brand. To measure passion, they ask participants to what extent they are fascinated by the 'things' the brand does and how much they feel 'very enthusiastic' about the brand. To measure commitment, they ask participants to what extent they intend to remain a customer with the brand, they feel 'committed to' the brand, and how often they consider switching to another brand. However, because they were not able to find evidence of the existence of both passion and intimacy as separate constructs, they argued that passion and intimacy can jointly form one construct, which they labelled intimacy. Interestingly, despite the breadth of research on brand love, relationship marketing research has not paid much attention to customer intimacy (the study by Bügel et al., 2011, is an exception).

Relationship Management Research on Intimacy, Passion and Commitment

Next, a review is conducted of public relations studies with a focus on varying types and levels of intimacy, passion and commitment in organizational relationships with stakeholders. The relationship dimension of commitment has attracted significant attention in relationship management research (Bortree, 2010; Huang, 1998, 2001; Ki & Hon, 2009; Ledingham et al., 1997). Commitment is defined as 'the extent to which one party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending time to maintain and promote' (Hon & Grunig, 1999, p. 20). However, relationship management research has not focussed much on intimacy and passion. Ki and Shin (2006) conducted a content analysis of