Faculty Research Contributions 2018–19
College of Business
California State University, Chico
Academic research plays a critical role in furthering our understanding of how business impacts society. Business researchers discover new ways to organize human and capital resources and create new understandings of the lifecycle of business organizations. In this way, business research plays its own critical role in ensuring that businesses continue to be a force of societal good, allowing citizens the means to better themselves and their communities.

Our accrediting body, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), recently released its vision for business education. This vision centers around five pillars: business school as catalysts for innovation, hubs of lifelong learning, leaders on leadership, enablers of global prosperity, and co-creators of knowledge. That last pillar calls for business schools to answer society's complex problems by generating new insights and understanding about how to effectively organize and motivate people, how to build sustainable organizations, and how to create value. To do that, AACSB says schools should create research that explores critical social issues and management problems, partner with academics in other disciplines and practitioners in the field, and become conveners and partners with industry in knowledge creation.

I'm pleased to tell you that in the 2018–19 academic year, the faculty at Chico State's College of Business have delivered admirably on this vision. As you'll see in this selection, the faculty are engaging in thoughtful and impactful research that pushes our understanding of business organizations and their impacts on society. Across all the business disciplines, our faculty are influencing the practice and regulation of business, as well as creating new paths of research for other academics to follow.

I know you'll find the research write-ups in this publication as fascinating and interesting as I did. Thank you for your support of and engagement with the Chico State College of Business.

Terence J. Lau, JD
Dean, College of Business
California State University, Chico
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EPISTEMOLOGY IN THE ERA OF FAKE NEWS: AN EXPLORATION OF INFORMATION VERIFICATION BEHAVIORS AMONG SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE USERS

Research Question: How do perceptions of news authors and news sharers influence fake news verification behavior? How do user intentions change fake news verification behavior?

Background/Relevance: Fake news is garnering increased attention across the world. Digital collaboration technologies now enable individuals to share information at unprecedented rates to advance their ideologies. Much of this sharing occurs via social networking sites (SNS), whose members may choose to share information without consideration for its authenticity. This research advances our understanding of information verification behaviors among SNS users in the context of fake news. Grounded in the literature on the epistemology of testimony and theoretical perspectives on trust, we develop a news verification behavior research model based on the results of a survey of active SNS users.

Results/Analysis: Our findings support the premise that perceptions of news sharers and news authors, along with the intentions of the focal user, influence news verification behavior. We also find that SNS users attribute more importance to the perceptions of those with whom they are closely tied.

Conclusion/Implications: This research integrates literature from both the epistemology of testimony and trust research areas and demonstrates their combined applicability to the fake news phenomenon within the context of social media. Fake news is endemic in modern SNS. As a result, users of SNS cannot decipher where the information originates and whether it can be trusted. This study theorizes on the development of trust to construct a research model that explores perceptions of both the network and the media, in conjunction with user intentions, to better understand information verification behaviors.

Jaebong Son is an assistant professor of management information systems in the College of Business at CSU, Chico. He holds an MS in management information systems from the University of Arizona, and a PhD in information management from the University of Colorado Boulder. His research interests include the organizational and societal impact of Information Communication Technology (ICT), the study of social media and User-Generated Content (UGC), and knowledge extraction and representation using computational techniques, such as Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Social Network Analysis (SNA). His research has appeared in the International Journal of Information Management, the Journal of Nanoparticle Research, the International Conference on Information Systems, the American Marketing Association Proceedings, and other conferences.

 CONTENT FEATURES OF TWEETS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION DURING DISASTERS: A MEDIA Synchronicity THEORY PERSPECTIVE

Research Question: How do the different features of Twitter support different information needs for different phases of a disaster?

Background/Relevance: Research on the use of Twitter in disaster situations has focused primarily on the content of the communicated information, identifying prominent Twitter users and how its features are used. Although these studies improve our understanding of some aspects of Twitter, we lack theoretical standpoints for examining Twitter as an effective communication medium; we are therefore unable to generalize on, predict, and explain how its functions facilitate communications in various disaster events. This study’s objective is to investigate how Twitter’s features support different information needs during different disaster phases. To reflect the various disaster phases, we draw on Media Synchronicity Theory (MST), which includes these situational differences and thus offers an appropriate theoretical framework. In fact, according to MST, a communication medium is more effective when its capabilities properly support different information needs in different communication conditions, including situational differences.

Results/Analysis: Drawing on MST, this study examined how Twitter’s representation features supported the different information needs of two communication processes—crisis and risk—during a disaster. Overall, we found that Twitter data from the Colorado floods partially supported our hypotheses. The individual elements of the Twitter’s symbol set—words, hashtags, and URLs—show different effects on average retweet time, depending on the communication type. Our findings indicate that users make efforts to align Twitter’s capabilities with the purpose of their communication process to achieve effective communications with others; the findings thus support MST’s main thesis on the importance of fit between media capabilities and communication processes in communication performance.

Conclusion/Implications: To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to empirically examine the fit between Twitter’s features as symbol sets and the different communication types used in disasters, while also leveraging MST as a strong theoretical foundation. Further, using SNA and PageRank, we consider hashtag quality—specifically, hashtag importance—which other studies have also neglected. Our study’s key finding shows that users use different communication strategies when they engage in different communication processes. During crisis communication, they include fewer URLs and a greater number of important hashtags to help achieve higher synchronicity, thereby decreasing the average retweet time. Based on our empirical analyses and MST, we extend the current literature by demonstrating that the different relationships between URL and hashtag importance and average retweet time were due partially to the moderating effects of communication type.

PLACES IN NAMES: AN INVESTIGATION OF REGIONAL GEOGRAPHIC BRAND CONGRUENCY

Research Question: Brand names are associated with numerous characteristics and deeper meanings in the memories and imaginations of consumers. Beyond cues of quality, safety, nutrition, etcetera, consumers in the marketplace are also keenly aware of (if not actively searching for) geographic brand associations. The use of geographic regions in brand names communicates much about brand characteristics by drawing on a region's geographic equity. For example, Hornell Brewing associates Arizona with iced tea. It seems the Arizona region connotes images of a hot, arid desert and that people there must be knowledgeable about thirst-quenching iced tea (similar to Texas BBQ, Seattle coffee, or Maine lobster). Consumers look to brand associations that are fitting, credible, and congruent. Two main research questions arise: Do consumers perceive levels of geographic brand congruence (GBC) in their brand evaluations? And, does GBC effect levels of brand trust, brand parity, perceived value, brand honesty, and purchase intentions?

Background/Relevance: Whether congruent or not, attaching geographic references to products and brand names is a popular marketing strategy, and empirical studies support its effectiveness. Quite often, misleading geographic associations of a product go unnoticed by the public (e.g. Arizona Iced Tea is actually produced in New Jersey). Marketers may even choose a brand that uses a fictional or vaguely defined place (e.g., Hidden Valley Ranch Salad Dressing—made in Oakland, California). Consumers are becoming more adept at searching for, recognizing, and understanding regional differences within a country's borders. This research conceptualizes GBC as the relationship between products and services and geographic regions that are authentic, credible, and fitting. This research uses a 3 x 3 experimental method across two studies to test hypotheses revolving around five dependent variables (i.e., brand trust, brand parity, perceived value, brand honesty, and purchase intentions). There were geographically congruent conditions, incongruent conditions, and control conditions that spanned three grocery products (i.e., orange juice, maple syrup, and potato chips).

Results/Analysis: Generally speaking, results from the two studies support the hypotheses that brands with high regional GBC have higher levels of consumer evaluations compared to brands with geographic incongruence or with no geographic reference at all.

Conclusion/Implications: This research offers insight into the decision to name a brand. If a marketer is going to associate a city or region with a product, consumers will not only judge the association, but they will also evaluate the fit or congruence. Furthermore, these judgements will affect myriad variables ranging from trust to purchase intentions.

FROM PASSION TO OBSESSION: DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF A SCALE TO MEASURE COMPULSIVE SPORT CONSUMPTION

**Research Question:** Recent research has discovered that marketing cues may be partly to blame in facilitating consumption addiction (Martin et al., 2013). Sport consumption involves complex psychological processes—facilitating emotional highs and lows that reinforce and perpetuate habitual behaviors. Is it possible that a segment of consumers (i.e., extremely avid fans) can become compulsively over-engaged in sport consumption?

**Background/Relevance:** The current work contextually broadens the scope of compulsive consumption research by developing and validating a scale to measure compulsive sport consumption (CSC). Three studies seek to: (1) qualitatively explore CSC and probe foundational issues; (2) begin the process of scale development through item generation, purification, and validation; (3) classify compulsive sport consumers and examine the consequences of CSC. The resulting unidimensional CSC scale assesses the habitual and obsessive consumption of sport wherein the pattern of behavior is associated with a sense of limited control.

**Results/Analysis:** Results shed light on the unexpected prominence of CSC and expose several interesting psychological and behavioral relationships. In Study 1, themes of extreme involvement, social motivations, identification, pride, mixed emotions, harmful consequences, sport as a coping mechanism, and compulsion were prominently woven throughout interviewees' stories and experiences. Reported CSC behaviors resulted in internalized deleterious feelings (e.g., guilt, regret, conflict, etc.) as well as harmful external consequences (e.g., negative effects on relationships with friends, family, professions, etc.). Studies 2 and 3 utilized college-student and nationwide-adult samples to develop a scale to measure and validate CSC. While there were no significant age, income, or educational differences, these studies uncovered that men have significantly higher CSC levels compared to women. However, men and women were equally likely to know (or have known) someone high in CSC. Psychologically, CSC scores correlated positively with identification, sensation seeking, and obsessive and harmonious passion. Interestingly, in the presence of many harmful consequences, CSC frequently involves a justifiable, well-reasoned, even prideful, consumptive stance.

**Conclusion/Implications:** First, this work contributes to our theoretical understanding of compulsive consumption through the context-specific exploration of CSC, the introduction of a clear definition of CSC, and the determination that it is indeed possible that a segment of consumers may be compulsively over-engaged in sport consumption. Second, this work makes a methodological contribution through the development of a valid and reliable research tool. Third, this work contributes pragmatically by formally recognizing CSC as a harmful compulsion. Perhaps most importantly, this research demonstrates not only popular acceptance but also scientific support for the existence of CSC. Across studies, our research projects a 5–6% range of the adult sport-fan-specific population may have issues with CSC. This is a considerable number of people given the worldwide size of the multi–trillion dollar sport industry. Consequently, for a large and ever-increasing segment of fans it may be more accurate to assert that they are not consuming sport, but rather that sport is consuming them.

MERGER SPECULATION IN FINANCIAL MEDIA: THE VALUATION OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

Research Question: This study investigates abnormal returns and volume in the days surrounding takeover speculation by financial media.

Background/Relevance: This study provides an empirical analysis of price and volume responses to firms that are rumored to be takeover targets. It proxies for merger speculation by collecting a particular sample of financial media coverage from the “Real M&A” series of articles published by Bloomberg.

Results/Analysis: Significantly positive price and volume responses two days after publication are observed. While most of this effect dissipates shortly thereafter, some excess returns remain impounded into the stock price. A study of the ex-post takeover probabilities suggests that a positive response is justified, as takeover probabilities for such firms subsequently increase after publication of coverage by financial media.

Conclusion/Implications: The main findings of this study are consistent with the idea that financial media speculation can facilitate the release of useful private information to shareholders. However, significantly positive excess returns and volume in the few days before publication also suggests that certain shareholders may benefit disproportionately.

Emily J. Huang, PhD, is an associate professor of finance in the College of Business at CSU, Chico. She is also the director of the University's Center for Excellence in Finance. Her research and publications span topics in institutional investors, behavioral finance, insurance companies, financial education, and financial well-being.

Kenny K. Chan, PhD, is a marketing professor and former department chair in the College of Business at CSU, Chico. His research focuses primarily on consumer information processing and integrated marketing communication. He collaborates regularly with professionals across disciplines to apply consumer behavior theories to address current issues in advertising, finance, and economics, as well as public health. He is a regular contributor to peer-reviewed journals. His publications have appeared in the Journal of Advertising, Journal of Global Marketing, Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy, Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, and Journal of Financial Education, among others.

USER-SOURCE FIT AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION SOURCE SELECTION OF MILLENNIALS

Research Question: This study addresses four research questions aimed at helping institutions facilitate millennials' financial information source selection: (a) Are millennials’ perceptions of information source attributes related to source use? (b) What sources of financial information are most popular among millennials? (c) Which source attributes do millennials weigh highest for the financial information sources they choose to use? and (d) How are personal characteristics associated with perceptions of source attributes and financial information source choices?

Background/Relevance: The purpose of this study is to better understand millennials' financial information source selection process and to offer suggestions to universities and financial service providers on how to better reach this cohort. Employers, universities, and financial services firms must understand the source attributes that millennials consider important when searching for financial information to position their institutions as the main sources constituents would turn to for counsel. Otherwise, even the best intentions and assistance programs will go unnoticed.

Results/Analysis: Results from an online survey of 488 business students at a Western U.S. university showed that millennials used multiple sources when looking for financial information, but only sources whose perceived attributes fit the seekers' preferences were considered; respondents favored family, employer/university, and government sources. When considering disparate financial information sources, participants weighed the seven source attributes differently. Men and women demonstrated different preferences for financial information sources and exhibited different personal characteristics.

Conclusion/Implications: Findings suggest financial practitioners, universities, and employers can improve their “fit” as financial information sources for Millennials by co-creating financial information with them, tailoring the communication channels, and enhancing the accessibility of information.

Extra Information: This second paper is part of our programmatic research to help improve college students' financial health. The first article in the series, titled “Understanding Financially Stressed Millennials' Hesitancy to Seek Help: Implications for Universities and Employers,” was published in the Journal of Financial Education in 2017. Following a second survey, we are preparing a third manuscript that investigates effective message delivery strategies for universities and financial service to disseminate financial health information to college students. We plan to submit this manuscript for publication in 2019.

EXPLORING MBA STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PREPARATION AND READINESS FOR THE PROFESSION AFTER COMPLETING REAL-WORLD INDUSTRY PRODUCTS

Research Question: This paper describes the development and evaluation of a capstone project implemented in an MBA-level “Operations Management” course being offered at a College of Business in the Pacific Northwest accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)—the accrediting body for postsecondary business schools and colleges. The capstone project was designed with two constructs that influence professional preparation: authentic learning and student choice. We surveyed 20 graduate business students to evaluate how the proposed artifact, The Process Improvement Capstone Project, supports student learning. The paper discusses implications for this correspondence in designing authentic projects that integrate industry partners in MBA classes.

Background/Relevance: University students in professional-preparation degree programs (e.g., management) may be exposed to concepts—especially complex concepts—without knowing how to apply the new learning to professional problems of practice. To ensure business schools have students' professional preparation and readiness at the top of a priorities list, AACSB addresses this educational goal with Standard 13: Curricula facilitate student academic and professional engagement appropriate to the degree program type and learning goals (AACSB, 2018); in this context, “student academic and professional engagement occurs when students are actively involved in their educational experiences, in both academic and professional settings, and when they are able to connect these experiences in meaningful ways.”

Results/Analysis: Using a survey with six open-ended questions, students were asked to reflect on the project, their experience working with a real-world client, and their preparedness for the workforce. The authors mined the text of the survey responses and developed a co-occurrence network to identify potential relationships between terms that students used and the major constructs of the instructional design. The key contributions made in this study are the following: (a) to examine contextualized knowledge, authentic activity, and student choice when adult learners apply BPM by using lean philosophy in a real-world project; (b) to measure students' perceptions of their learning of the learning experience itself.

Conclusion/Implications: The results support earlier evidence of a relationship between contextualized knowledge, authentic activity, and student choice. Students identified instructor feedback as an effective scaffold. Students positively viewed the scaffolding they received through three different project submissions and attributed their ability to focus on the projects as well as keep the project on schedule to this scaffolding. The results indicate incorporating these approaches in a real-world project has a positive effect on student learning. By requiring students to improve business processes with lean philosophy instead of with process models, we fill a research gap by exploring methodologies for students to learn business process management in higher education.

Weighing the Case for University Sales Competitions: Significant Commitment and Rewards

Research Question: What is a university sales competition and what are the pros/cons associated with hosting a competition?

Background/Relevance: More than 100 U.S. universities compete in university sales competitions each year, but researchers have not yet defined or circumspectly described these competitions. Based on USCA surveys, depth interviews, a literature review, and an analysis of all U.S. competitions, the study provides a definition, description, and assessment of university sales competitions.

Results/Analysis: The study defines a university sales competition as an “academic contest, usually hosted by a university with a recognized sales program, designed to model a salesperson’s preparation for and experience of specific elements of the personal sales process.” Survey and interview results indicated that competitions offer positive utility to students, sales programs, and corporate partners. That said, sales competitions require tremendous resources, offer participation to a relatively limited number of students, and do not broadly model the entire sales cycle.

Conclusion/Implications: Sales competitions are an effective active learning tool. Competitions provide substantive utility to multiple parties. However, to assure circumspect sales education outcomes, competitions should be couched within a broad and robust sales curriculum.

Research Question: Does the sales ethics sensitivity of university students vary across cultures?

Background/Relevance: Professional sales positions are the third most difficult position to fill globally. The problem may partially stem from the fact that business students and the general populace view sales negatively, associating the occupation with ethical abuse. This negative perception decreases students’ intention to pursue sales careers. Therefore, the improvement of sales ethics education is a worthwhile goal that will potentially improve the overall ethical climate of sales and ameliorate the negative sales stereotypes which adversely affect student intentions.

Results/Analysis: Based on a five-country sample, the study found that sales ethics sensitivity varies based on culture, gender, and moral ideology. The cultural perspectives of traditionalism/secularism and individualism/collectivism affect sales ethics evaluations. Additionally, women are more sensitive to ethical misconduct than men. Regarding moral ideology, absolutists are the most sensitive to ethical misconduct.

Conclusion/Implications: University sales ethics training is critically important. This training should be based on idealistic ethical ideologies but should also include relativistic applications for students who do not subscribe to moral idealism. Second, expanding the definition of relevant stakeholders could enhance sales ethics sensitivity across cultures. Finally, educators must identify and prime ethical schemas that are applicable for both male and female students.

Wei Athena Zhang joined CSU, Chico in fall 2015. She wrote extensively in the area of mergers and acquisitions, the listing effect in mergers and acquisitions, anchoring biases, regency biases, corporate profitability, initial public offerings, futures market, hospitality financial management, market anomalies, valuation, stock price efficiency, among others. She teaches introductory finance and financial planning.

Qingzhong Ma joined CSU, Chico in fall 2015. His main research areas include corporate finance, especially mergers and acquisitions, insider trading, short selling, investment banking, investments, corporate bonds market, and behavioral finance in general. He teaches investments and financial management applications.

ACQUIRER REFERENCE PRICES AND ACQUISITION PERFORMANCE

Research Question: In the paper “Acquirer reference prices and acquisition performance,” Ma, Zhang, and David Whidbee of Washington State University examine whether the reference prices of acquirer stocks affect acquisition performance and various deal characteristics.

Background/Relevance: The paper adds to the growing behavioral finance literature, more specifically how human cognitive biases affect perceptions and real financial decisions. The mergers and acquisitions (M&A) setting naturally also speaks to broader issues related to corporate decision making and corporate governance. The paper was featured in Harvard Law School online forum on corporate governance and financial regulation.

Results/Analysis: Based on a comprehensive sample of mergers and acquisitions, the findings show during the announcement period, stock prices of the acquirer firms increase more if their pre-announcement stock prices are far below their 52-week high, a reference point, consistent with investors perceive those stocks as undervalued. Among many other results, there is significant stock price reversal over the longer horizon, indicating that the announcement-period stock price reaction is inefficient, as it is likely driven by a human cognitive bias, the anchoring bias.

Conclusion/Implications: The paper concludes that reference prices of acquirer firm stocks affect how investors perceive stock price valuation, stock price movements, and managerial financial decisions. The results add new evidence to the behavioral finance literature that behavioral biases impact stock market and corporate policies.

Hyunjung Kim, PhD is an associate professor in the Department of Management at CSU, Chico. She received her PhD in public administration from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, University at Albany, focusing on the development of system dynamics simulation models as a decision support tool. Kim uses the Group Model Building approach to include key stakeholders in the modeling process, and she developed a text analysis technique widely used in the system dynamics field. Her research and consulting projects cover application areas such as the data-driven service industry, health care industry, higher education, and public administration.

Michael Rehg is a professor of management in the Department of Management at CSU, Chico. He arrived at CSU, Chico in August 2008, after a 20-year career in the United States Air Force and a three-year stint as an assistant professor at the Air Force Institute of Technology in Dayton, Ohio. He served as chair of the Department of Management from 2012-19, and will be interim director of the Center for Entrepreneurship in 2019-20. He obtained his PhD in strategic management from Indiana University in 1998 and has published several articles in the areas of whistleblowing, training, and system dynamics.

FACULTY PERFORMANCE AND MORALE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A SYSTEMS APPROACH

Research Question: This study explores how a system approach can support strategic planning process at a higher education institution.

Background/Relevance: Universities face problems that are complex and dynamic, which makes strategic planning particularly difficult. Traditional planning approaches in universities could be improved using systems approaches. This paper presents systems maps and insights from a series of participatory systems mapping sessions in a higher education institution. More specifically, key issues of faculty performance and morale are discussed around unintended consequences of innovation attempts, hiring decisions, and compensation structures.

Results/Analysis: From a series of systems mapping sessions conducted with the key stakeholders in the higher education institution, the study generated multiple systems maps representing critical areas for strategic planning. This paper presented maps in three areas with insights generated: (i) By representing curriculum and pedagogical innovations in an aging chain, that map differentiated the short-term and the long-term effects of commitment to innovations on the faculty workload. There is a worse-before-better dynamics that requires continuous administrative commitment and faculty incentives for innovations. (ii) By disaggregating the faculty workforce into different faculty stocks (i.e. tenured, tenure track, and temporary) and by identifying hiring goals, hiring and promotion delays and service roles, that map explained how managing the faculty workforce requires balancing of various needs and constraints. For example, an attempt to alleviate faculty workload can lead to a higher faculty workload in the short term. (iii) By illustrating the dynamics of faculty salary inequity, that map showed how salary inequity can potentially lead to costly outcomes. All these maps are tied to faculty morale, which plays a key role in faculty performance.

Conclusion/Implications: A systems approach can support a strategic planning effort in higher education by providing a tool to understand connections beyond the department and sector boundaries. It also generates insights by drawing attention to vicious/virtuous cycles, areas of policy resistance, leverage points, intervention delays, and unintended consequences.

Hyunjung Kim, PhD is an associate professor in the Department of Management at CSU, Chico. She received her PhD in public administration from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, University at Albany, focusing on the development of system dynamics simulation models as a decision support tool. Kim uses the Group Model Building approach to include key stakeholders in the modeling process, and she developed a text analysis technique widely used in the system dynamics field. Her research and consulting projects cover application areas such as the data-driven service industry, health care industry, higher education, and public administration.

USING A STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS TO IMPROVE SYSTEMS MODELLING OF HEALTH ISSUES: THE IMPACT OF PROGESTERONE THERAPY ON INFANT MORTALITY IN OHIO

Research Question: This study focuses on stakeholder behaviors to explain why the impact of health policy interventions do not often match the effects predicted in controlled clinical trials.

Background/Relevance: Considering a wide range of stakeholder behavior is a requisite for developing a useful model. Our paper shows how to systematically identify stakeholder behavior, formulate them in a model and test their impact on policy outcomes. Stakeholder behaviors are explained in the context of a simulation-based analysis of infant mortality in Ohio. Using group model building techniques, we identify three levels of stakeholder behavior—individual, organizational and policy behaviors—and discuss how these behaviors are reflected in the model formulation and drive the key health outcomes. Specifically, we show how individual and policy behaviors are formulated to examine their influence on the impact of progesterone therapy—one of the interventions identified in the group model building session—on infant mortality.

Results/Analysis: In the formal simulation model, the stakeholder behaviors were captured parametrically, structurally or both. We demonstrate that the outcome of health intervention varies quite dramatically depending on the behavior of these stakeholders. We believe that these various stakeholder behaviors go a long way toward explaining why observed effects of policy interventions such as progesterone therapy do not always closely match the size of effects that might be predicted from controlled clinical trials.

Conclusion/Implications: Our simulation results indicate that health care policy interventions must be undertaken in the context of understanding how multiple stakeholders will behave in that intervention. We conclude by making multiple recommendations for integrating behavioral effects from a wide range of stakeholders in the health care system into systems modelling.

THE UTILITY OF A SYSTEM DYNAMICS APPROACH FOR UNDERSTANDING CUMULATIVE HEALTH RISK FROM EXPOSURE TO ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Research Question: This study explores the potential of system dynamics modeling to advance our understanding of cumulative risk in the service of optimal health.

Background/Relevance: Traditional methods of assessing environmental risk have generally relied on single chemical, single route of exposure models to understand impacts on human health. More contemporary approaches to understanding cumulative risk to optimal health examine risk posed by multiple stressors, including chemical, physical, biological, and psychosocial factors. However, these approaches are still in the early stages of development in terms of their ability to examine 1) the complex interactions of multiple sources of risk simultaneously and 2) the accumulation of these impacts over the life course. In this study, we illustrate how system dynamics, coupled with existing cumulative risk methods, can offer a conceptual and analytical framework in understanding cumulative health effects from exposure to multiple environmental and social stressors.

Results/Analysis: Key conceptual and procedural components of system dynamics modeling are applied to various known problems in cumulative health risk research to fill the gaps identified in the literature. The paper reviews stocks and flows, multiple causality, and feedback loops in the context of cumulative health risk. The system dynamics modeling conventions, such as its stakeholder involvement, schematic representation, data collection, model calibration, and validation processes are applied to the cumulative health risk research, and the benefits of such approach are illustrated.

Conclusion/Implications: System dynamics modeling provides a promising methodology to complement traditional research methods in understanding cumulative health effects from exposure to multiple environmental and social stressors.

I AND WE: DOES IDENTITY EXPLAIN UNDERGRADUATES’ ETHICAL INTENTIONS?

Research Question: The paper compares business to non-business undergraduate students to study the effect of a business education on students’ ethical intentions and the mediating roles of individual and collective identity in the relation between major and ethical intentions.

Background/Relevance: The involvement of business and MBA graduates in fraudulent activities has led business schools and accreditation institutions to re-examine business ethics education. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) has progressively increased its pressure on business schools to include business ethics in the curriculum and to measure their impact on students’ ethical outcomes. Schools of business typically redesign the business ethics curriculum either by introducing required standalone business ethics courses or by embedding ethical contents into standard courses across the curriculum (Brinkmann, Sims, & Nelson 2011, Hartman & Werhane 2009). Yet, the effectiveness of these strategies is uncertain. A variety of pedagogical strategies has been used to influence how much students care about making ethical choices, such as socializing students in medical and nursing schools into professional standards, using service learning in regular courses to enhance students’ engagement with their community, or engaging students in social service activities to strengthen their ethics and citizenship competencies. In their different ways, these pedagogical strategies pursue giving centrality to collective identities (e.g.: professional identity, civic identity, etc.) that convey values of otherness, prioritizing the common good over one’s individual interests.

Results/Analysis: Business students have higher individual identities and higher collective identities than other students. Interestingly, the negative effect of the former on ethical intentions and the positive effect of the latter on ethical intentions offset each other.

Conclusion/Implications: More effective business ethics educational strategies should study changes to the curriculum and educational strategies used in business schools in order to foster student development of collective identities.

Professor Morgan has taught business law, employment law, and a variety of other courses within the College of Business since 1981. He is an attorney licensed to practice in California and within all levels of the federal court system. His is the author of a university-level business law textbook now in its sixth edition. Morgan’s scholarship has appeared in legal, management, human resource management, and international business journals, with a focus in the areas of employment law and government regulation of business.

CLARIFYING THE EMPLOYEE-INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR DISTINCTION: DOES THE CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT’S DECISION DO THE JOB?

Research Question: The issue of whether a worker under federal and state employment laws is properly classified as an employee or independent contractor continues to vex workers, employers, and the courts. The California Supreme Court issued a ruling in 2018 that potentially makes it difficult, if not impossible, for California employers to argue any worker is an independent contractor unless the worker fits within the historic notion of independent contractors (e.g., a sole proprietor electrician brought to the employer’s call center facility to provide additional electrical capacity). The article examines the legal and business issues embedded in the determination of worker status, presents the California Supreme Court’s decision in Dynamex Operations West, Inc. v. Superior Court (“Dynamex”) that severely curtails the ability of employers to classify workers as independent contractors, and analyzes the probable impact of the decision in California and beyond its borders.

Background/Relevance: Because the legal tests frequently applied by courts in determining whether a worker is an employee involve a variety of factors, employers often are successful in arguing workers are independent contractors in many traditional and non-traditional employment settings. Established businesses commonly hire independent contractors where a firm is offering a new service on a trial basis and making a determination whether the service should become part of the normal operation of the firm. These businesses wish to avoid legal and regulatory “permanence issues” associated with classifying a worker as an employee. Newer businesses, particularly those associated with the “gig” economy, hire workers as independent contractors in order to avoid certain payroll costs and wanting to incorporate the desire of workers for flexibility. Uber and Lyft are among common examples relying on this model. From a worker perspective, being an independent contractor provides flexibility and greater wages; from an employer perspective, having workers properly classified as independent contractors saves money and allows the employer to avoid compliance with an ever-increasing array of regulations.

Results/Analysis: By rejecting the popular multi-factor test in determining whether a worker is an employee, the California Supreme Court in Dynamex has taken a decidedly pro-employee view. The article explores the rationales offered by the court in adopting a position counter to the widely accepted approach adopted in federal courts and the courts in other states. The need to apply statutory legal protections to workers generously, according to the Dynamex court, mandates that the definition of an employee be broad. Also, the court opined that unscrupulous employers abuse the multi-factors tests by treating workers who easily should have been treated as employees were instead categorized as independent contractors.

Conclusion/Implications: While the Dynamex test provides greater clarity in determining worker status by eliminating the multi-factor test in establishing an employer–employee relationship, the decision all but eliminates the possibility that a California employer can hire workers as independent contractors either in the “margins” or within the “gig economy.” The article discusses implications of the Dynamex decision in both of these areas.

Suzanne Zivnuska, PhD
Professor, Management

Suzanne Zivnuska is a professor in the Department of Management at CSU, Chico. Her PhD training in Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management from Florida State University well prepared her for a dynamic research stream, which has included organizational politics and impression management, and more recently focuses on lifestyle issues such as work–family balance, social media use, and mindfulness. She has published her work in journals such as Journal of Applied Psychology, Leadership Quarterly, Journal of Vocational Behavior, Human Relations, and Journal of Occupational Health Psychology.

SELF-PERCEPTION AND LIFE SATISFACTION

Research Question: What role do three dispositional personality factors (self-esteem, narcissistic entitlement, and narcissistic superiority) play in predicting cognitive assessments of subjective well-being, and in particular, life satisfaction?

Background/Relevance: Evidence suggests that life satisfaction is important in predicting work-related outcomes such as productivity, strength of social relationships, student performance, and job satisfaction. This research explores work-related predictors of life satisfaction (self-esteem, narcissistic entitlement, and narcissistic superiority) to firmly ground this construct within an organizational context. Life satisfaction is important to consider in the organizational sciences, as it can predict critical work outcomes such as physical and psychological health, productivity, strength of social relationships, and job satisfaction. Narcissistic entitlement is the preference or demand for more rewards, attention, and benefits than other people receive, regardless of their own contribution, effort, or performance. When the entitled narcissist is denied the validation or respect that he or she expects at work, the response will generally be a strong defensive attitude and a desire to save face, which may be exhibited by denigrating or attacking others, or even workplace theft to re–balance perceived inequities. We predicted that this trait would be negatively related to life satisfaction, with people high in this trait reporting low satisfaction with their life circumstances, because real life rewards and attention would never meet the inflated expectations of the entitled narcissist. Narcissistic superiority is an inflated sense of self, wherein superior narcissists believe that they are truly extraordinary, worthy of great admiration, and better than others. At non-clinical levels, these traits are thought to be adaptive and ego-protective in the workplace, as these individuals judge every success as well-earned and find great satisfaction in their achievements. Narcissism is not simply an excess of self-esteem. Self-esteem is a global affective evaluation of one’s self that represents the overall value that individuals afford themselves. Having a strong belief that one is worthy regardless of life’s circumstances may provide individuals some healthy resilience in the face of failure at work, and may predict job satisfaction. We predicted that these traits would be positively related to life satisfaction, with people high in these traits reporting high satisfaction with their life circumstances.

Results/Analysis: Regression results from 185 survey respondents collected at two time points three months apart demonstrated that of narcissistic entitlement, narcissistic superiority, and self-esteem, only the last two are significant predictors of life satisfaction.

Conclusion/Implications: As predicted, both narcissistic superiority and self-esteem positively predicted life satisfaction, but narcissistic entitlement did not. These findings suggest that narcissistic superiority and self-esteem, or having an inflated sense of self and believing oneself to be valuable and worthy, play important roles in managing cognitive evaluations of one’s circumstances. Contextualizing these findings to the workplace may suggest that these personality traits could provide employees with a certain degree of resilience and satisfaction even in challenging times at work. Managers might use this knowledge when assigning employees to particularly demanding job tasks or uncertain, intractable problems. Interestingly, narcissistic entitlement did not predict a lack of satisfaction. This finding suggests that even with limited resources, managers might be able to keep their entitled narcissists more satisfied than one might intuitively expect. Therefore, rather than bestowing special rewards and expending resources disproportionally to these employees in the hopes of keeping them satisfied, managers could strive for a more equal distribution of resources without fearing negative repercussions of “slighting” the entitled narcissist’s needs.

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ABUSIVE SUPERVISION, LEADER–MEMBER EXCHANGE, AND MORAL DISENGAGEMENT: A MODERATED–MEDIATION MODEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVIANCE

Research Question: What role do ethical cognitive processing and high quality relationships with supervisors play in the relationship between abusive supervision and organizational deviance?

Background/Relevance: A large body of research confirms a positive relationship between abusive supervision and subordinate workplace deviance. Social exchange theory suggests that when supervisors enact behaviors that are abusive, subordinates may feel that engaging in behaviors such as stealing, damaging company property, arriving late to work, or taking unauthorized breaks are warranted given the apparent breach of the exchange relationship between employer and employee; these employees may resort to workplace deviance as a way to restore the balance in the relationship. What causes employees to enact destructive, sometimes illegal behaviors when confronted with abusive supervision? Ethical cognitive processing (moral disengagement) and relationship quality with the supervisor (leader–member exchange) may help explain deviance in the face of abusive supervision. Moral disengagement may allow individuals to give themselves permission to violate organizational norms and engage in deviant behavior when faced with abusive supervision and how the context of the relationship with the supervisor may impact that tendency.

Results/Analysis: Statistical results are from analysis of 206 survey respondents who were 21 years or older and working an average of 43 hours/week, collected at two time points, six weeks apart. Results demonstrate that employees subjected to abusive supervision rationalize their subsequent deviant workplace behavior by morally disengaging, and that even when the employee had a generally trusting relationship with the supervisor, it was not enough to ameliorate deviant behaviors in the face of abuse.

Conclusion/Implications: Although the relationship between hostile supervisory practices and organizational outcomes may be intuitively grasped, the finding that organizational deviance may be preceded by moral disengagement from personal and professional norms is important. Employers depend on norms of conformity, social pressures, and at least implicit loyalty to organizational values as an enforcement mechanism of company policy and procedure. These norms have been shown to be a reliable and inexpensive tool to ensure members operate within the expected bounds. However, an employee, driven to moral disengagement by abusive supervision, would effectively short–circuit that enforcement mechanism, freeing himself or herself from the feelings of shame and self–criticism that would normally accompany a deviant act. This finding suggests that organizations must expand their reliance on peer pressure to include a full range of interventions to manage employee behavior. In particular, organizational leaders must commit themselves to preventing toxic supervision and also must identify and directly intervene with employees who may be prone to moral disengagement. For example, organizations may prevent toxic supervision by closely examining their processes for supervisor selection, and focusing on the training and preparation given to new supervisors. The influence of relationship quality on disengagement and deviance also suggests the importance of gathering subordinate feedback related to toxic supervision when evaluating supervisors. Finally, if these types of measures do not succeed in reducing or eliminating the incidence of abusive supervision, organizations can build in relief valves by which aggrieved employees can voice their concerns, hopefully before disengaging or acting against the interests of the organization.

Suzanne Zivnuska, PhD
Professor, Management


INVESTIGATING THE IMPACTS OF REGULATORY FOCUS AND POLITICAL SKILL WITHIN A SOCIAL MEDIA CONTEXT

Research Question: What role do ethical cognitive processing and high quality relationships with supervisors play in the relationship between abusive supervision and organizational deviance?

Background/Relevance: Though originally introduced as a social tool largely confined to use in one's private life, social media has started to infiltrate work relationships, with colleagues friending and following each other, job seekers using social media to aid their job searches, and organizations using social media to engage internal and external audiences. As social media use bleeds into the workplace and creates a blurred boundary between the work and personal realms, it is becoming important to understand its use related to the workplace. Regulatory focus theory (RFT) inspired us to investigate how employees use social media to enhance their mood and build their professional networks. RFT suggests that some individuals are motivated by a prevention-focus, hoping to minimize pain by avoiding risk, focusing on following rules, and endeavoring to produce the highest work quality possible. Other individuals have a promotion-focus, whereby they seek to maximize pleasure by focusing on career mobility and activities that further their attainment of visibility and position. Since these motivations are independent strategies, we argue that they likely explain why people use social media for different purposes and with different effects. Specifically, we believe the two regulatory foci will be associated with political skill, which is the ability to understand others at work and use that understanding effectively, and that two different paths emerge out of these associations.

Results/Analysis: Structural equation modeling was used to analyze data from 312 survey respondents who were 18 years or older and working at least 30 hours/week, with an average of 17 years of work experience and who spent on average 10 hours/week on social media. Results demonstrate that prevention-focused employees are unlikely to use political skill, and ultimately tend not to use social media at work either to enhance their mood or grow their professional network. On the other hand, promotion-focused employees are likely to use political skill and use social media at work to boost mood and enhancement of professional network.

Conclusion/Implications: Findings indicate that the promotion-focused employee, with an eye to rapid career advancement, is likely to leverage political skill and extend it to the social media realm to enhance work mood and build professional networks. In addition, an interesting finding that was not hypothesized was that the relationship between our control variable of age and social media use was significant and negative for both work mood enhancement and work network enhancement. We conjecture that this result suggests that the older you are, the less likely you are to engage in these social media behaviors. These findings have interesting practical implications. Managers seeking to build a stronger organizational presence on social media may want to select promotion-focused employees for that kind of work role. Promotion-focused employees may have an intuitive understanding of how to leverage social media for the benefit or organizational visibility that prevention-focused employees may not have. On the other hand, promotion-focused employees may also benefit from the reminder that work task performance should not be neglected in favor of spending time on social media. When prevention-focused employees are selected for a social media role in an organization, they may benefit from some training on effective use of social media within the context of building work relationships. Some encouragement may help these employees achieve some career success that amplifies their excellent task performance.
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