Senior Honors Student Presentations

June 8, 2012
The effects of thin-body media use on body image self-discrepancies

Jordan Owashi

Findings from media research have demonstrated that the media influences consumers in terms of body dissatisfaction and attitudes about eating disorders. For my Senior Honors Project, I will examine this topic from a Uses and Gratifications perspective to determine how consumers utilize thin ideal body-type media to decrease discrepancies felt when comparing themselves to these ideal bodies. I will also examine the emotional effects of exposure to either an “ought” or an “ideal” discrepancy, and if the form of media use is different depending on whether the consumer feels an “ought” or an “ideal” discrepancy.

Communication in the global workplace: A two-part study of the managerial perspective

Hilary Kay

In an increasingly globalized world, it is essential for multinational managers to recognize the effects of globalization processes on management. Globalization processes are continuous and the interdependencies they create are ever stronger. To implement the best business practices and strategies, multinational managers must develop communication techniques that are responsive and cohesive with globalization processes. Concepts that have been identified as significant for communication in the global workplace include 1) cultural awareness, 2) approach to understanding other cultures, 3) perspective on cultural diversity, 4) management of diversity, 4) perspective on diversity, 5) complexity of identity, 6) attitudes and use of technology, and 7) language barriers. These concepts affect how managers work within multicultural situations, whether it is an interpersonal interaction or joint venture. A grounded theory approach is applied to two sets of in-depth interviews with managers working within a multinational organization, the first set acquired in 1996 and the second set in 2012. As the processes of globalization have continuously changed our world, they have inherently changed the global workplace. This study will perform a comparative analysis to discover shifts in management’s perspective on communication in the global workplace. The seven concepts above will serve as the basis for this study’s research questions and will guide the discovery of how salient themes have changed from 1996 to 2012.

Music: A tool for improving intergroup relations

Elizabeth Tapia

Few studies have explored the positive effects music can have on its audience. This study will examine the “unifying effect” of music on intergroup relations. Using the Common Identity model, this study will first evaluate whether music has a unifying capability. It will then proceed to evaluate the intensity of this effect by comparing it to the intensity other unifying effects from a different “common identity” manipulation. Subjects will be exposed to a song, either of their favorite genre or not, and performed in either Spanish or English. Subjects will then take the Implicit Association Test to measure their level of prejudice. The results of this measurement will
be compared to the IAT results of subjects who were unified by a common style of thinking rather than a common music genre.

Privacy in families: Whole family secrets and consequences of revelation

Alyssa Bressi

The revelation of secrets in any context has a wide range of implications. “Whole family secrets,” or secrets held within the family and kept from outsiders, are interesting because of the unique dynamic of the family context. This study recruited students from the University of California, Santa Barbara to participate in survey research. Participants answered questions about their family life, about secrets that were either kept within their family, and about the after-effects of revelation. I then analyzed the data to determine the implications of revealing whole family secrets on the dynamics of the family unit. There was a specific focus on family communication environment, target closeness, and motivations to reveal the secret and their effect on the family relationship in a secret revelation scenario.

Why contribute when you can get the information for free?
Users’ motivations to contribute to Wikipedia

Audrey Abeyta

In recent decades, the Internet has become a ubiquitous communication medium that allows for instantaneous, global information sharing. Additionally, this medium enables individuals of diverse backgrounds and geographic locations to reject hierarchical models of production and collaborate across time zones and cultural barriers. This cooperative phenomenon has resulted in multifarious open-source, peer-produced projects, like Wikipedia, an online, collaborative encyclopedia. Although much attention has been granted to these projects, very little research regarding users’ motivations to contribute has been conducted; existing studies provide interesting, but inconclusive, results. Thus, a more detailed look at users’ motivations to contribute is required. This research views contribution to social production projects as an extension of traditional volunteerism and relies on theories of intrinsic motivation and volunteerism to gain a more complete understanding of motivations to contribute to open-source, peer-produced projects.

Attachment theory, family size and romantic relationship satisfaction

Emily Blyth

Understanding and enhancing communication within romantic relationships is a rapidly increasing area of research. This project examines the relationship between family size, Attachment Theory and the “attachment styles” purposed by the theory on later romantic relationships. Participants took part in an online survey measuring attachment style and romantic relationship satisfaction in order to find any correlations between early attachments and later attachments in romantic relationships. The present study draws on previous research
and investigates the effect of family size and early attachment formations on romantic relationship satisfaction.

The effects of physical attractiveness and talk-turn length on sexual and social attraction

Daniel Hartz

Flirting is a common phenomenon that both sexes engage in regularly and on a daily basis. However, many people make new acquaintances that are not flirtatious in nature. What, then, is the difference when meeting someone new, in a flirting situation and just making a new friend? That is, how do people communicate with one another to create sexual attraction versus simply forming a platonic friendship? My senior honors thesis deals with examining the specific differences in communication when men approach a woman with the goal of sparking sexual attraction or a platonic friendship.

The Effects of High Attention to Romantic Media Source and Behavior on the Development of Romantic Beliefs and Behaviors

Molly Maher

Previous empirical research on the relationship between romance-orientated media and viewer beliefs about romantic relationships has determined that romantic media is more strongly correlated with idealistic beliefs and expectations in relationships than media in general, and that a liking for this type of romantic media is further associated with these beliefs. This study investigated this topic by examining the influence of individual characteristics and their relation to these other variables. By applying a social cognitive approach to this investigation, a study designed to test the effects of viewer “attention” level to romantic media, in association with romantic media consumption and preference, was developed. The potential consequences of adopting these beliefs and behaviors depicted in the romance media was also explored by measuring relationship satisfaction.

Cause related marketing: Effects of familiarity and positioning

Christy Needles

The significant growth of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in business reflects an emerging standard where by the public expect greater responsibility from corporate business entities. As a way to engage in CSR, many corporations form partnerships with non-profit organizations (NGOs) in order to create campaigns to market their partnership, known as Cause Related Marketing (CRM). Past research has found a positive relationship between these partnerships and consumers evaluations, making CRM beneficial for both the company and non-profit. This research examines how the positioning of a brand or cause and level of familiarity influence consumers evaluation and ability to recall the organization.

Knowledge transfer in virtual interactive simulation
This study will empirically investigate the transfer of tacit knowledge over four distinct mediums—face-to-face interactive demonstration, face-to-face task non-interactive demonstration, text-based task explanation, and virtual interactive simulation. While the utility of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in explicit knowledge management has been established, contemporary literature on knowledge management questions the transfer of tacit knowledge beyond face-to-face socialization. Rapid advances in ICTs, however, create new platforms for the examination of tacit knowledge transfer. Virtual interactive simulation technology provides a richer medium for situated learning that may enable the transfer of tacit knowledge beyond co-presence.