



## Facebook Politics: Toward a Process Model for Achieving Political Source Credibility Through Social Media

Elizabeth E. Housholder & Heather L. LaMarre

To cite this article: Elizabeth E. Housholder & Heather L. LaMarre (2014) Facebook Politics: Toward a Process Model for Achieving Political Source Credibility Through Social Media, Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 11:4, 368-382, DOI: [10.1080/19331681.2014.951753](https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2014.951753)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2014.951753>



Accepted author version posted online: 07 Aug 2014.  
Published online: 07 Aug 2014.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



Article views: 909



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)



Citing articles: 2 [View citing articles](#)

## Facebook Politics: Toward a Process Model for Achieving Political Source Credibility Through Social Media

Elizabeth E. Housholder  
Heather L. LaMarre

**ABSTRACT.** The last two election cycles have seen an exponential rise in the number of political campaigns integrating some form of social media into their communication plans. As candidates and campaigns increase their social media communications, political communication scholars have become increasingly interested in the process through which voters assess political candidates' credibility through social networking sites. Using experimental data, this study examines the mediating role of attitude homophily in establishing political candidates' source credibility among Facebook users. A multiple mediation model outlines a process wherein attitude homophily mediates the relationship between political cues and evaluations of source credibility. Theoretical and practical implications of the results for political social media campaigns are discussed.

**KEYWORDS.** Multiple mediation, political campaigns, social media, source credibility

The advent of social media has been touted as a revolutionary way for politicians to connect directly with voters (Grant, Moon, & Grant, 2010), for citizens to engage in online political discussions (Ifukor, 2010), and for non-elites (such as bloggers) to influence political discourse (Sweetser, Porter, Chung, & Kim, 2008). Social media encourage active participation among media consumers (Burns; 2010; Jenkins, 2006; Solis, 2010), creating a rich environment for online political participation. Recent research examining the interplay between political social media and democracy suggests that social media function as alternative channels of communication, allowing voters to connect

with elites and facilitating intergroup communication (Hamdy & Gomaa, 2012; Lim, 2012; Murthy, 2010; Rane & Salem, 2012). Moreover, there appears to be a link between social media use and election outcomes (LaMarre & Suzuki-Lambrech, 2013).

As political social media use continues to rise among the electorate, so do questions regarding which sources are reliable, trustworthy, and credible (Brenner, 2013). The mere volume of political information shared and discussed online makes it increasingly difficult for voters to discern which sources hold relatively more value. Perceptions of source credibility offer online political consumers a way to make such

---

Elizabeth E. Housholder is a PhD candidate in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Minnesota. Her research interests center around the intersection of political communication, new media, and strategic communication.

Heather L. LaMarre is an assistant professor in the School of Media and Communication at Temple University. Her research interests include political communication, public opinion, and the psychology of strategic policy narratives.

Address correspondence to: Elizabeth E. Housholder, 111 Murphy Hall, 206 Church St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455 (E-mail: [gesk0034@umn.edu](mailto:gesk0034@umn.edu)).

distinctions. Specifically, high source credibility is known to increase message persuasiveness (Homer & Kahle, 1990; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), develop favorable attitudes (Till & Busler, 1998) and influence vote intention (Mondak, 1995). Yet, little is known about how individuals evaluate and assign credibility to socially mediated political sources and/or their messages. Although source credibility is one of the most widely tested variables in traditional persuasion research (Petty, Brinol, & Priester, 2009; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), political social media research offers few empirical examinations of the social-psychological process underlying individuals' evaluations and judgments of candidates' source credibility in online environments (e.g., Facebook). To this end, the current study uses experimental data to investigate this process, focusing on attitude homophily as a potential mediator between exposure to political candidates' Facebook pages and evaluations of their source credibility. Additionally, this work employs motivated reasoning theory to discern the relationship between perceptions of social media source credibility (e.g., the political candidate on Facebook) and information credibility (e.g., the online political information provided by said candidate). In doing so, this work builds on extant political social media and credibility research by focusing on the source (rather than the medium) and examining the role of attitude homophily as a source credibility antecedent.

### ***ESTABLISHING CREDIBILITY IN POLITICAL SOCIAL MEDIA***

Using social media to follow campaigns and candidates has been linked to a range of positive attitudinal and behavioral voter outcomes, including increased offline participation (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; see also Baumgartner & Morris, 2010 for a counterpoint), increased feelings of political efficacy (Towner & Dulio, 2011), and increased candidate support (Gilmore, 2011). Political social media studies have largely focused on key behavioral outcomes including political participation and political engagement, paying little

attention to the underlying processes that lead to such outcomes. However, there is a growing interest in credibility evaluations of political social media (Powell, Richmond, & Williams, 2011).

### ***Social Media Credibility***

Among the few studies that have explored the role of credibility in social media contexts, focus has remained on the credibility of the medium, platforms, and channels (e.g., Internet blogs, online news), or the institutions that occupy them (e.g., MSNBC, The Huffington Post). Johnson and Kaye (1998, 2000) found that perceived credibility of a traditional media source (i.e., MSNBC) positively predicted credibility ratings of that same source in an online context, suggesting that the well-established traditional media sources carry their credibility into new media environments. Recent research on blog credibility has found that among the politically interested, blogs are generally considered to be more credible than mainstream media sources (Johnson & Kaye, 2004; Johnson, Kaye, Bichard, & Wong, 2007). Sweetser et al. (2008) also found that high users of blogs were more likely to perceive blogs as credible sources of information. Lee and Ahn (2013) demonstrated that people are more likely to engage with Facebook causes and pages when they perceive Facebook to have higher medium credibility.

In one of the only studies examining political source (as opposed to medium or platform) credibility, Powell et al. (2011) found that those who connected with a candidate on social media also reported higher credibility ratings for that candidate (but only for Barack Obama). However, this study stopped short of examining the process through which perceptions of source credibility were fostered within the social media environments. With the notable exception of Powell et al., little is known about how individuals evaluate and form judgments about political candidates' credibility in online environments or the conditions under which their socially mediated campaign messages are accepted as credible information. Yet, traditional persuasion literature has repeatedly demonstrated the role that the message source plays in fostering message

agreement and influencing behavior (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Pornpitakpan, 2004).

### *Source Credibility*

Conceptually, source credibility includes two main dimensions: character and competence (McCroskey & Young, 1981) or variations thereof (such as trustworthiness and expertise). Sources are considered to be trustworthy (or have high character) to the extent that the audience perceives their assertions to be valid (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). Sources are considered to be competent to the extent that they possess knowledge or relevant expertise of a particular subject (Page, 1978; Teven, 2008). More recently, Teven and McCroskey (1997) identified goodwill as a third important dimension of source credibility. Goodwill has been conceptualized as the degree to which an audience perceives that a source cares about their well-being and has their best interests at heart (Teven & McCroskey, 1997). In general, source credibility is conceptualized (and operationalized) as a set of positive characteristics attributed to the message source, which potentially increase message acceptance by receivers (Ohanian, 1990).

Higher source credibility can lead to many desirable attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. Attitudinally, individuals are more resistant to persuasion when source credibility is low (Greenburg & Miller, 1966) and low credibility sources typically produce no change in attitude (Milburn, 1991). From a strategic communication standpoint, higher source credibility results in more positive brand attitudes (Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1999; Till & Busler, 1998), more agreement with proposed recommendations (Ohanian, 1990), more positive attitudes toward the endorser (Braunsberger, 1996), and more positive perceptions of information credibility (Greer, 2003; Moore, Hausknecht, & Thamodaran, 1986). Higher evaluations of source expertise have also been associated with increased purchase intention (Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1999; Till & Busler, 1998).

Politically, higher source credibility predicts more positive global candidate evaluations (Funk, 1999; Markus, 1982; Miller,

Wattenburg, & Malanchuk, 1986), as well as higher assessments of leadership ability (Page, 1978). Additionally, high source credibility has been shown to reduce voters' reactivity to negative political advertising (Yoon, Pinkleton, & Ko, 2005), and increase the likelihood of reelection for incumbent politicians (McCusker & Mondak, 1995; Mondak, 1995). Taken together, these studies suggest a positive relationship between one's source credibility evaluations and their propensity to hold favorable attitudes toward the source or source's message. In a political setting, favorable attitudes should manifest as candidate support. Thus, we expect that participants will be more likely to participate in political activities (as a show of support) for sources that they find more credible.

- H1: There will be a direct, positive relationship between one's evaluations of a candidate's source credibility and their intention to politically participate in support of the candidate.

### *Motivated Reasoning and Political Source Credibility*

Most studies that examine source credibility manipulate the credibility of the source (see Wilson & Sherrell, 1993) by providing participants with objective information about a source's education, experience, and credentials. Yet in a political context, this type of manipulation makes less sense, as political campaigns hardly represent an objective context. Far from perceiving sources in a neutral, objective context, political campaigns are heavily affect-laden and voter attitudes toward candidates (even unknown candidates) are often constructed as a function of prior attitudes and salient political cues (Kunda, 1990; Lau & Redlawsk, 2006; Lodge & Taber, 2013). This motivated reasoning in the political realm undercuts the traditional strategic communication argument that source credibility can be objectively manipulated. In a political context, motivated reasoning occurs more often than not (Lodge & Taber, 2013), which results in faulty judgments including overscrutinization of information from out-party

sources (Taber & Lodge, 2006), underscrutinization of information from in-party sources (Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979), and source derogation (Smalley & Stake, 1996). Contrary to traditional source credibility research (which suggests that source credibility is a function of information credibility), motivated reasoning predicts that in a political context, source credibility influences voter perceptions of information credibility. Iyengar and Han (2008) offered empirical support for this prediction, demonstrating that source cues influenced information search and evaluation. Because political contexts elicit relatively more motivated reasoning (Lodge & Taber, 2013) and source credibility can bias message processing (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), individual-level perceptions of source credibility are likely to influence perceptions of information credibility. More formally:

H2: There will be a direct, positive relationship between one's evaluations of a candidate's source credibility and their evaluations of information credibility.

### ***Party ID and Source Credibility***

In addition to predicting outcomes (e.g., participation, candidate support), identifying the determinants of political source credibility in social media environments provides political strategists and candidates insights for building online source credibility. For instance, one mechanism known to influence political source credibility evaluations is the presence of a politically similar or dissimilar cue for voters (Lodge & Taber, 2013). Although voters are able to process and use many types of cues, Party ID is a highly salient cue that signals whether a candidate is similar or dissimilar to the individual (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006). Thus, it would be expected that source credibility evaluations for politicians are higher when individuals are cued that the candidate shares similar political identity (e.g., they belong to the same party). Stated more formally:

H3: Similar political cues positively predict evaluations of source credibility.

As previously mentioned, motivated reasoning research has shown that individuals are more likely to participate in support of candidates from their own political party (Lodge & Taber, 2013), and are more likely to judge information from in-party candidates as credible (Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979). Thus, there should be a direct effect for the political similarity cue (i.e., Party ID) on perceptions of information credibility and participation intention. The credibility literature (detailed earlier) also suggests source credibility should mediate this relationship, such that similar political cues influence source credibility evaluations, which in turn influence behavioral and attitudinal outcomes.

H4: Similar political cues positively predict participation intention.

H4a: This relationship will be mediated by source credibility.

H5: Similar political cues positively predict credibility evaluations of the information presented.

H5a: This relationship will be mediated by source credibility.

### ***The Mediating Role of Attitude Homophily***

The relational nature of Facebook (specifically) and social media (generally), suggests an additional step in the mediation model. To the extent that social media communication can foster a sense of interpersonal connection with a candidate, social media can potentially spur feelings of closeness, or homophily (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Conceptually, homophily is the extent to which similarities are perceived between two individuals or groups of individuals. Increased perceptions of similarities lead to increased attraction to each other's beliefs and increased influence in decision-making (Powell, Richmond, & Williams, 2011). Homophily has been defined as having three main dimensions: demographic, attitude, and background homophily (McCroskey, Richmond, & Daly, 1975). Attitude homophily is conceptualized as the extent to which two individuals think and behave in similar ways, whereas background homophily describes the extent to which

two individuals come from similar cultural or social backgrounds. The third dimension, demographic homophily, is the extent to which two individuals share key demographic characteristics. However, perceptions of demographic homophily have not been stable (McCroskey et al., 1975) and therefore remain outside the scope of this investigation. Additionally, it is not expected that background homophily would significantly impact source credibility perceptions, because participants are unlikely to be able to make judgments about the perceived background similarity of candidates. As such, this study will focus exclusively on attitudinal homophily.

Attitude homophily (in the context of politics) is the extent to which voters feel attitudinally and behaviorally similar to politicians. Although one's Party ID could cue attitude homophily (e.g., "We are from the same political party so we must share political attitudes"), it is possible for persons from the same political party to differ in their attitudes or for persons from different parties to share attitudes. As such, attitude homophily is considered a distinct construct from Party ID. Homophily has been shown to be moderately related to and predictive of source credibility (Wright, 2000). Generally speaking, perceived attitude similarity (or homophily) facilitates interpersonal liking (Aronson, 1980; Byrne, 1961) and attraction (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954) among individuals. Specific to online contexts, Wang, Walther, Pingree, and Hawkins (2008) found that within online health support groups, one's increased level of perceived homophily with the group was positively related to participants' perceived credibility of group members, which was also related to increased trustworthiness of group members. Dahlberg (2001) similarly found in-group homogeneity of values and viewpoints among online political communities. Davis (1999) also pointed to the importance of attitude homophily among political social media groups, noting that political social media users have a tendency to attract and reinforce preexisting majority opinions. A qualitative case study of political Facebook group discussions revealed similar results, wherein distinct majority and minority groups

were formed around homogeneity of political views (Gaines & Mondak, 2009; Kushin & Kitchener, 2009). These studies demonstrate that attitude homophily can influence one's perception of trustworthiness and, by extension source credibility. Additionally, online political groups exhibit relatively high levels of attitude homophily, suggesting that these platforms are uniquely suited for this purpose. As such, it is reasonable to assume that increasing perceptions of attitude homophily between political candidates and online users would result in higher perceptions of the candidates' credibility (within the online community).

Additionally, because the political similarity cue (e.g., Party ID) can signal attitude homophily, it is plausible that the observed effect of the similarity cue on relevant outcomes (e.g., credibility evaluations, participation intention) works through attitude homophily. Put differently, when individuals see that a political candidate shares their political party identification, feelings of homophily should increase. This, coupled with additional information that reinforces shared attitude homophily (e.g., similar interests, shared favorite hobbies, books, movies, etc.), should increase one's credibility evaluations of the candidate, along with their credibility evaluations of information presented by the candidate and their intention to support the candidate. More formally:

- H6: There will be a direct, positive relationship between perceptions of attitude homophily and one's evaluations of source credibility.
- H6a. Attitude homophily mediates the positive relationship between similar political cues and source credibility evaluations.

### ***Attitude Homophily and Source Credibility: A Multiple Mediation Perspective***

Here, the multiple mediation process begins to unfold. Thus far, the hypotheses predict a series of direct and indirect effects with attitude homophily and source credibility serving as mediators between political similarity cues

and relevant political outcomes. Given the vast literature on the role of Party ID, it should be no surprise that shared Party ID cues more positive evaluations of a political candidate's credibility, along with more favorable evaluations of information presented by said candidate or intentions to support the candidate. However, by integrating attitude homophily, we begin to see a more nuanced process unfold. Here, the political cue is thought to work in combination with other relational information presented in social media (e.g., candidates' likes, favorites, hobbies, etc.), signaling attitude homophily. Subsequently, increased attitude homophily is expected to increase source credibility evaluations of the candidate, which (under motivated reasoning conditions often found in political contexts) are known to increase information credibility ratings and candidate support. Thus, a multiple mediation process is proposed for the two relevant outcomes (i.e., information credibility and political participation intention). More formally stated:

- H6b. The relationship between similar political cues and participation intention will be mediated by attitude homophily and source credibility, acting in serial.
- H6c. The relationship between similar political cues and perceptions of information credibility will be mediated by attitude homophily and source credibility, acting in serial.

## **METHOD**

To test the previously stated hypotheses, a two-condition experiment was performed. One hundred and twenty-six college students at a large, Midwestern university participated in this study in exchange for course credit. Some students were recruited through an online research participation system that grants course extra credit in exchange for research participation while others were recruited directly from university courses. The majority of students were recruited from large, introductory mass communication courses that generally contain

a wide variety of majors. The resulting sample was 75.4% female, 80.2% white, and had an average age of 21.5 with some college education (74.6%<sup>1</sup>). The sample leaned slightly democratic ( $\mu = 4.55$ ) and liberal ( $M = 4.60$ ).

## **Procedure**

The experiment was conducted in a lab. Upon entering, students read and signed a consent form and were then randomly assigned a condition (i.e., Democrat or Republican candidate Facebook page). Upon sitting down at the computer, the Facebook page of the assigned candidate was already loaded and all participants started on the "About" section of the page. Participants were told verbally to spend as much time as they needed getting to know the candidate. Following this, participants were directed to the questionnaire (description below). After completion, participants were debriefed and thanked for their time.

## **Stimuli**

Participants were shown a fictitious Facebook page for either a Republican or Democratic purported Senate candidate (stimuli available upon request). The pages were designed to look like real candidates' pages, mirroring the setup, organization, design, and content of real pages. All personal information about the candidate was held constant across both profiles (e.g., musical tastes, favorite books, profile picture, etc.), aside from party identification. The candidates were stated as running in the state in which most participants reside and the only difference in personal information for each candidate was stated political party. On the news feed, fictitious past posts were constructed for each candidate. The posts were on the subject of jobs/job creation and were also taken from real status updates by real Congressional candidates. Each Facebook page for the politicians contained the same number of posts on the same topics. The only variation was the partisan nature of the comments to align with the positions taken on this issue by each of the major political parties.

## Measures

### Credibility

Credibility was measured using Teven and McCroskey's (1997) scales for competence, character, and goodwill, which consist of six each 7-point semantic differential scales. They include statements such as "the politician whose Facebook profile I just viewed is reliable/unreliable, expert/inexpert, and honest/dishonest."<sup>2</sup> The alpha reliabilities for each dimension of source credibility were sufficiently high (competence = .89,  $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ; character = .89,  $M = 4.50$ ,  $SD = .96$ ; goodwill = .82,  $M = 4.31$ ,  $SD = .96$ ). However, these three dimensions were all highly correlated with each other (all correlations above .70) and, therefore, were treated as one overall credibility measure ( $M = 4.40$ ,  $SD = .91$ ). An exploratory, principal components factor analysis confirmed that all source credibility indicators loaded on to one factor (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Factor Loadings of Source Credibility Indicators

	Factor 1
<b>Competence</b>	
Intelligent	.802
Trained	.569
Expert	.700
Informed	.748
Competent	.804
Bright	.813
<b>Character</b>	
Honest	.686
Trustworthy	.810
Honorable	.778
Moral	.684
Ethical	.684
Genuine	.766
<b>Goodwill</b>	
Cares about me	.664
Has my interests at heart	.732
Not self-centered	.589
Concerned with me	.651
Sensitive	.614
Understanding	.741

### Homophily

Attitudinal homophily was measured using the scales developed by McCroskey et al. (1975). The attitudinal homophily scale consists of four 7-point semantic differentials designed to indicate perceived similarity in thought and action between the participant and the politician and includes statements such as "the politician whose profile I just viewed . . . is like/unlike me, is different/not different from me, thinks/does not think like me, and behaves/does not behave like me" ( $\alpha = .88$ ,  $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ).

### Information credibility

Information credibility was measured using five, 7-point semantic-differential scales, which asked participants to rate the believability and trustworthiness of the information presented by the politicians. Participants were asked to indicate whether "the information you just read was . . . believable/unbelievable, inaccurate/accurate, trustworthy/untrustworthy, biased/unbiased, and complete/incomplete" ( $\alpha = .80$ ,  $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ).

### Political participation

Political participation was measured using three items, which asked participants to indicate on a 7-point scale "how likely would you be to . . . vote for Alex Johnson, donate money to Alex Johnson, and volunteer/publicly support Alex Johnson." These three items were highly correlated and were combined into one general participation index ( $\alpha = .87$ ,  $M = 2.65$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ).

### Party identification

Participants were asked to indicate their party identification on a 7-point scale ranging from strong Republican (1) to strong Democrat (7) ( $M = 4.55$ ,  $SD = 1.74$ ). Party identification was used to assess political agreement between participants and the fictitious candidates they were exposed to (i.e., Democrats matched with a Democratic politician were in a "matched



political cue” condition). Independents ( $n = 17$ ) were removed from subsequent analyses.

### *Political knowledge/interest*

Political knowledge scores were calculated by counting the number of correct answers to five political questions as outlined by Delli Carpini and Keeter (1997). These questions included participants’ knowledge of Joe Biden’s political office, who is responsible for determining constitutionality of a law, the majority required to overturn a presidential veto, the party that currently controls the house, and whether one party is more conservative than the other at the national level. Overall, participants had relatively high levels of political knowledge ( $M = 3.83$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ). Political interest was a single-item measure asking participants to indicate how interested they were in politics on a 5-point scale, with 1 indicating *not at all interested* and 5 indicating *very interested* ( $M = 2.92$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ).

### *Analysis*

In order to test the previously stated hypotheses, OLS regressions as well as mediation and multiple mediation models were tested. The first, second, and third hypotheses predict non-mediated relationships and as such, were tested using OLS regression. The fourth, fifth, and sixth hypotheses (and respective subhypotheses) predict mediated relationships and were tested using the PROCESS macro developed by Andrew Hayes (2013). Specifically, the bootstrapping procedure, as outlined by Preacher and Hayes (2004, 2008) was used. Traditional mediation analyses as outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986) have been criticized for a lack of power and high Type II error rates (MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004). Preacher and Hayes (2004) and MacKinnon et al. (2004) recommend bootstrapping as a method for obtaining confidence intervals for indirect effects in mediation models. Bootstrapping tests for the indirect effects in a mediation model by repeatedly drawing subsamples from within the original sample (Hayes, 2009). Bootstrapping allows for two key advantages over prior mediation tests. First, bootstrapping increases power and

reduces Type II error rates (a frequent critique of Baron and Kenny, 1986). Bootstrapping does not require stringent assumptions of normality about the sampling data (unlike the Sobel test; Sobel, 1987). Additionally, bootstrapping does not require a standard error estimate for the indirect effects.

This study uses Hayes’ (2013) PROCESS macro, which allows for bootstrapping within complex mediation and moderation models. Specifically, the PROCESS macro allows for the testing of multiple mediation models, where multiple mediators are specified between the independent and dependent variables. Because this study is testing a multiple mediation model, PROCESS was the best available tool to examine this model. PROCESS has been empirically tested and validated across numerous contexts and studies (Hayes, 2012). In the present study, on the basis of 10,000 bootstrap samples, the PROCESS macro produces 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals to assess the significance of the indirect effects in the proposed credibility model.

## **RESULTS**

### *Direct Effects*

The first and second hypotheses predicted a direct, positive relationship between source credibility and participation/information credibility. The results of the regression analysis show that source credibility positively predicts both intended participation ( $b = 1.05$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .69$ )<sup>3</sup> and perceptions of information credibility ( $b = .92$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .72$ ) Thus, hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported. The third hypothesis tests the positive direct effect of political cues on evaluations of source credibility, such that similar politicians would be seen as more credible. The regression results provide support for hypothesis 3 ( $b = .67$ ,  $SE = .17$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .37$ ). The sixth hypothesis predicted that positive evaluations of attitude homophily would lead to more positive evaluations of source credibility and support ( $b = .35$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .51$ ). Thus, the direct effects of key variables in this study are confirmed.

FIGURE 1. Model 1: Effects on participation intention.

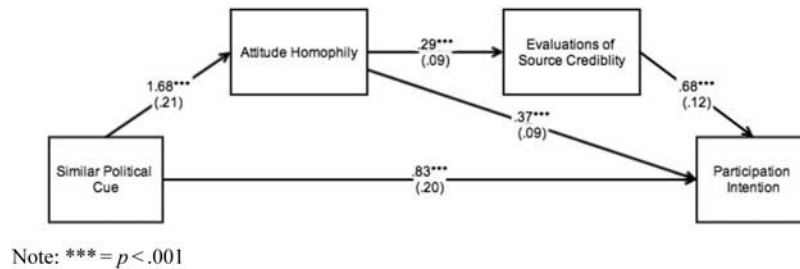
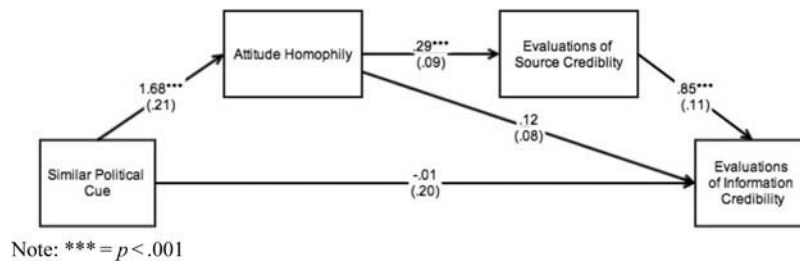


FIGURE 2. Model 2: Effects on information credibility.



### Simple Mediation Model

Turning now to the mediation analyses, the first set of analyses show the mediating role of source credibility on the relationship between political cues and participation intention/information credibility (hypotheses 4, 4a, 5, and 5b). The relationship between political cues and participation intention is partially mediated by source credibility. Perceiving that a politician's party identification matches your own predicts more positive evaluations of source credibility ( $b = .67$ ,  $SE = .17$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which in turn predicts greater participation intentions ( $b = .85$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .68$ ). That said, receiving a politically similar cue remains significant, even when source credibility is in the model ( $b = 1.34$ ,  $SE = .17$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The indirect relationship between the similar political cue and participation through source credibility is significant (95% bias-corrected confidence interval: .28; .91<sup>4</sup>; indirect effect size = .56, Bootstrapped  $SE = .16$ ). However, the direct effect of receiving a similar political cue and participation intention also remains significant (95% bias-corrected confidence interval: 1.00; 1.69; direct effect size = 1.34,  $SE = .17$ ).

The meditational relationship was fully supported for information credibility (see Figure 2). Similar to the first model, perceiving a politically relevant cue leads to more positive perceptions of source credibility and source credibility positively predicts perceptions of credibility of the information presented ( $b = .90$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .52$ ). This is a fully mediated relationship because being presented with a relevant source cue does not significantly predict perceptions of information credibility when source credibility is in the model ( $b = .14$ ,  $SE = .17$ ,  $p = .39$ ). The indirect path between similar political cues and information credibility through source credibility is significant (95% bias-corrected confidence interval: .30, .96, indirect effect size = .60,  $SE = .17$ ).

### Multiple Mediation Model

Given the results for the mediating influence of source credibility, the full multiple mediation models were tested, such that attitude homophily and source credibility, acting in serial, fully mediate the relationship between political source cues and

participation/information credibility (hypotheses 6a, 6b and 6c).

Partial support was found for the mediating influence of attitude homophily and source credibility on participation. As Figure 1 highlights, receiving a similar political cue positively predicts attitude homophily ( $b = 1.68, SE = .21, p < .001$ ), which in turn predicts source credibility ( $b = .29, SE = .09, p < .01$ ). Moreover, source credibility positively predicts political participation ( $b = .68, SE = .12, p < .001$ , <sup>2</sup> for the total model = .74). However, being presented with a similar political cue ( $b = .83, SE = .20, p < .001$ ) and attitude homophily ( $b = .37, SE = .09, p < .001$ ), both remain significant, positive predictors of political participation. In this case, the direct effect of political similar cue reception on political participation is significant (95% bias-corrected confidence interval: .44, 1.23, *direct effect size* = .83,  $SE = .20$ ), as are the indirect paths through attitude homophily only (95% bias-corrected confidence interval: .33, 1.03, *indirect effect size* = .62,  $SE = .18$ ) and through both attitude homophily and source credibility (95% bias-corrected confidence interval: .13, .64, *indirect effect size* = .33,  $SE = .13$ ).

Turning to information credibility, the multiple mediation model is fully supported. Perceiving a politically relevant cue leads to greater attitude homophily ( $b = 1.68, SE = .21, p < .001$ ), which in turn leads to increased perceptions of source credibility ( $b = .29, SE = .09, p < .01$ ). Finally, source credibility positively predicts perceptions of credibility of the information presented ( $b = .85, SE = .11, p < .001$ , <sup>2</sup> of the overall model = .53). Neither being presented with a relevant political cue ( $b = -.01, SE = .20, p = .94$ ), nor attitude homophily ( $b = .12, SE = .08, p = .16$ ) predict perceptions of information credibility when source credibility is included in the model. The indirect path between similar political cues and information credibility through attitude homophily and source credibility is significant (95% bias-corrected confidence interval: .18, .76, *indirect effect size* = .35,  $SE = .11$ ). Neither of the effect sizes of the other two indirect paths was significant.

## DISCUSSION

This study examined the role of political source credibility on social media to better understand the determinants of source credibility for politicians in a socially mediated communication situation. The results provide an exploratory first look at the relationship between source credibility, attitude homophily, motivated reasoning, and key attitudinal and behavioral outcomes in a political context. The tested models support the idea that source credibility is an important determinant of behavioral and information outcomes in a political context as well as the idea that attitude homophily may be a key determinant of source credibility. Past studies looking at source credibility have found that factors such as knowledge, credentials, and strength of argument all increase source credibility. However, these factors make less of an impact in a political campaign situation, where evaluations of credibility are shaped by motivational forces as well as cognitive forces (Lodge & Taber, 2013). By extending what is already known about key credibility factors to include attitude homophily, this study provides evidence that feelings of attitudinal similarity are important to credibility evaluations in politics in a way that is different from traditional strategic communication situations.

Past research has demonstrated the homogeneity of groups on Facebook. We tend to befriend and follow those who are attitudinally similar to ourselves. On politician pages, the majority of fans/followers are likely to be individuals who are already somewhat sympathetic to the party the politician represents. Thus, social networking sites offer a unique opportunity to politicians to enhance their perceived credibility through increasing their perceived attitudinal homophily. Facebook, for example, offers many opportunities for politicians to personalize their fan pages, from their cover photo to the information in the "About Me" section. Barack Obama's Facebook page is an excellent example of this, where one can view photos of the president eating ice cream on national Ice Cream Day or candid photos of the president

with his team. Additionally, one can discover his favorite music, books, and activities. These types of information may serve to humanize politicians, all of which contribute to building attitude homophily. Future work should extend this line of research and investigate strategies that are more or less successful at increasing attitudinal homophily.

Increasing attitudinal homophily is important because of its ability to significantly increase source credibility evaluations and subsequent participation among online stakeholders. Motivating and rallying the base can be the difference between winning and losing an election. Not only does attitude homophily increase participation through source credibility, it also uniquely increases the likelihood of participation, both in terms of voting as well as donating time/money. Although these effects are predicted by party cues, the inclusion of these variables improves the model fit overall, suggesting that campaigns may be able to use these strategies to encourage participation beyond what they would get otherwise. All of these activities represent value to a campaign.

Additionally, this study provides evidence for the idea that attitude homophily works through source credibility to increase information credibility. Past studies have shown that when voters believe more strongly in their information (i.e., view their information as more credible) they are better able to launch cognitive defenses against contradicting or conflicting information. This resistance to persuasion could help ensure that a campaign's supporters are not discouraged from voting.

Finally, this study begins to bring together literatures that, for all their similarities, rarely speak to each other. This is especially true of the attitude homophily and source credibility literatures; this study provides early evidence for the idea that these concepts are importantly related to each other.

Practically, this study offers some insights for political campaigns. To the extent that attitude homophily can influence key credibility and participation variables, especially among young voters, strategies that enhance this feeling of personal closeness should be employed by the campaign. This could include activities such

as posting about family activities, favored interests, or local community events in which the politician takes a part. For example, the Obama campaign recently posted a picture of the president playing catch with a Secret Service member on the lawn of the White House, while the Chris Christie campaign posted a video of Christie's dance segment with Jimmy Fallon and prior to that, a video of the governor dropping in on T-ball practice. These types of interactions serve to humanize politicians.

Additionally, social media are an important place to highlight these types of activities. Recent Pew data (Brenner, 2013) suggests that 34% of young adults aged 18–24 get their news from social media. Therefore, community events in which politicians participate that are usually covered by local news may not be reaching much of the young adult demographic. As such, continuing to highlight these community outreach efforts on social networking sites is crucial for campaigns.

Finally, these findings offer insight into a very unique role that social media may play in the campaign communication mix. Prior to the proliferation of owned assets, politicians were largely forced to either rely on media coverage of community events or spend their own money to include this information in direct-mail pieces. Social media offer politicians a low-cost way to promote and tailor messages, yet little work has looked at what types of messages may be more or less suited to a social media environment. Although social media have largely been adopted by campaigns at all levels, campaigns are only beginning to take advantage of the opportunity to employ different types of campaign messages for relatively low cost. The results of this study suggest that campaigns could and possibly should expand the types of campaign messages they disseminate via social networking sites to include more messages aimed at personalization of the politician.

There are a few limitations to this study that need to be discussed. First, the sample size of this study is small. Although the results presented are significant, we suggest replication before generalizing to the public as a whole. Second, although youth aged 18–24 still make up the largest proportion of Facebook

users, college students may be different, politically, than the general population (Sears, 1986). However, there are still valuable generalizations to be made, as the popular press has highlighted that social networking sites are a key way that politicians are able to interact with youth and potentially gain the youth vote (Qualman, 2011).

Additionally, regarding the results of the mediation models, it is important to highlight possible limitations on the causal inferences associated with these types of models. Some scholars have suggested caution when inferring causality from mediation models and have suggested strategies (such as manipulation of key mediators) for reducing bias in the point estimates of the coefficients (Bullock, Green, & Ha, 2010). Though other scholars have offered a counterpoint to Bullock et al.'s conclusions (see for example, Kenny, 2008), we do not wish to overstate the implications of our findings. This study should be considered largely as an exploratory look into the mechanisms fostering source credibility in a political, social media context and future work should continue to manipulate and validate the variables outlined here.

Overall, this study suggests many directions for future research. Central to the question of source credibility is attitude homophily. However, it is not known what features of social networking sites lead to the greatest attitude homophily. There are many ways that politicians can interact on a personal level with their fans (e.g., postings, information about themselves, shout-outs to friends/individual fans). Future research should investigate these different modalities for increasing personalization and homophily. Additionally, future research should expand to look at other social networking sites. Recent research (Lee & Ahn, 2013) suggests that different social networking sites result in different attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. As such, effective mechanisms for enhancing attitude homophily may differ from one social networking site to the next. Functionally, the range of options available on Facebook differs significantly from options available on Twitter,

which in turn differ significantly from YouTube. This type of research would help campaigns develop an easy set of best practices for using social media more effectively to communicate with voters.

In conclusion, there is more work needed to understand how features of specific social networking sites can be optimized for strategic uses. This study is an important first step, as it affirms the importance of source credibility to the political process while also identifying a key factor, attitude homophily, that may be used to promote feelings of closeness to a politician as well as enhance cognitive evaluations of both politicians and the information they present. Moreover, attitude homophily is under the control of campaigns, which makes it an essential part of strategically engaging in online political messaging. Understanding the underlying social-psychological processes that influence perceptions of credibility can help politicians and other political communicators to more effectively tailor and target their messaging. Future work in this area should begin to investigate how attitude homophily and source credibility can be manipulated by campaigns to produce stronger attitudinal and behavioral effects.

## NOTES

1. Although the sample included all students, there were some graduate students in the sample (16%) as well as freshman who had not completed their first semester of college and therefore answered this question with "high school graduate" (8%). Dropping these students did not substantively change any results reported hereafter. As such, they were left in the final models.

2. Competence: *intelligent/unintelligent, untrained/trained, inexpert/expert, informed/uninformed, competent/incompetent, stupid/bright*

Goodwill: *cares/does not care about me, has/does not have my interests at heart, self-centered/not self-centered, concerned/unconcerned with me, insensitive/sensitive, understanding/not understanding*

Character: *honest/dishonest, untrustworthy/trustworthy, honorable/dishonorable, moral/immoral, unethical/ethical, phony/genuine*

3. All OLS models were run with and without demographic and political controls. Strictly speaking, random assignment to condition should eliminate the need for these controls. The results reported here do not change with the inclusion of demographic and political controls in the model. As such, the more parsimonious results were reported here.

4. These numbers represent the upper and lower confidence intervals.

## REFERENCES

- Aronson, E. (1980). *The social animal*. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman.
- Bakker, T. B., & de Vreese, C. H. (2011). Good news for the future? Young people, Internet use and political participation. *Communication Research*, 38(4), 451–470.
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1173–1182. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.51.6.1173.
- Baumgartner, J. C. & Morris, J. S. (2010). MyFaceTube politics. Social networking web sites and political engagement of young adults. *Social Science Computer Review*, 28(1), 24–44.
- Braunsberger, K. (1996). The effects of source and product characteristics on persuasion. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 57 (6-A), 2575.
- Brenner, J. (2013, February 14). Pew Internet: Social Networking. *PEW*.
- Bullock, J. G., Green, D. P., & Ha, S. E. (2010). Yes, but what's the mechanism? (don't expect an easy answer). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98(4), 550–558. doi:10.1037/a0018933
- Burns, A. (2010). Distributed creativity: Filesharing and produsage. In S. Sonvilla-Weiss (Ed.), *Mashup cultures* (pp. 24–37). Germany: Springer-Verlag/Wien.
- Byrne, D. (1961). Interpersonal attraction and attitude similarity. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 62, 73–77. doi:10.1037/h0044721
- Dahlberg, L. (2001). Computer-mediated communication and the public sphere: A critical analysis. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 7(1), doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2001.tb00137.x
- Davis, R. (1999). *The Web of politics: The Internet's impact on the American political system*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Delli Carpini, M. X., & Keeter, S. (1997). *What Americans know about politics and why it matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Funk, C. L. (1999). Bringing the candidate into models of candidate evaluation. *The Journal of Politics*, 61(3), 700–720. Retrieve from <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2647824>
- Gaines, B. J., & Mondak, J. J. (2009). Typing together? Clustering of ideological types in online social networks. *Journal of Information, Technology & Politics*, 6(3-4), 216–231. doi:10.1080/19331680903031531
- Gilmore, J. (2011). Ditching the pack: Digital media in the 2010 Brazilian congressional campaigns. *New Media and Society*, 14(4), 617–633.
- Grant, W. J., Moon, B., & Grant, J. B. (2010). Digital dialogue? Australian politicians' use of the social network tool twitter. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 45(4), 579–604. doi:10.1080/10361146.2010.517176
- Greenberg, B. S., & Miller, M. (1966). The effects of low-credible sources on message acceptance. *Speech Monographs*, 33, 127–136. doi:10.1080/03637756609375488
- Greer, J. D. (2003). Evaluating the credibility of online information: A test of source and advertising influence. *Mass Communication and Society*, 6(1), 11–28. doi:10.1207/S15327825MCS0601\_3
- Hamdy, N., & Gomaa, E. H. (2012). Framing the Egyptian uprising in Arabic language newspapers and social media. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 195–211. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01637.x
- Hayes, A. F. (2009). Beyond Baron and Kenny: Statistical mediation analysis in the new millennium. *Communication Monographs*, 76(4), 408–420.
- Hayes, A. F. (2012). *PROCESS: A versatile computational tool for observed variable mediation, moderation and conditional process modeling* (White paper). Retrieved from <http://www.afhayes.com/public/process2012.pdf>
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Homer, P. M., & Kahle, L. R. (1990). Source expertise, time of source identification, and involvement in persuasion: An elaborative processing perspective. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(1), 30–39. doi:10.1080/00913367.1990.10673178
- Hovland, C. I., Janis, I. L., & Kelley, H. H. (1953). *Communication and persuasion: Psychological studies of opinion change*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Ifukor, P. (2010). “Elections” or “selections”? Blogging and Twittering the Nigerian 2007 general elections. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 30(6), 398–414. doi:10.1177/0270467610380008
- Iyengar, S., & Han, K. S. (2008). Red media, blue media: Evidence of ideological selectivity in media use. *Journal of Communication*, 59, 19–39.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Johnson, T. J., & Kaye, B. K. (1998). Cruising is believing?: Comparing Internet and traditional sources on media credibility measures. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 75(2), 325–340.

- Johnson, T. J., & Kaye, B. K. (2000). Using is believing: The influence of reliance on the credibility of online political information among politically interested Internet users. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 77(4), 865–879.
- Johnson, T. J., & Kaye, B. K. (2004). Wag the blog: How reliance on traditional media and the Internet influence credibility perceptions of weblogs among blog users. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 81(3), 622–642. doi:10.1177/107769900408100310
- Johnson, T. J., Kaye, B. K., Bichard, S. L., & Wong, W. J. (2007). Every blog has its day: Politically interested Internet users' perceptions of blog credibility. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 100–122.
- Kenny, D. A. (2008). Reflections on mediation. *Organizational Research Methods*, 11(2), 353–358. doi:10.1177/1094428107308978
- Kent, M. L., & Taylor, M. (1998). Building dialogic relationships through the World Wide Web. *Public Relations Review*, 24(3), 321–334. Retrieved from [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111\(99\)80143-X](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111(99)80143-X)
- Kunda, Z. (1990). The case for motivated reasoning. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108(3), 480–498.
- Kushin, M. J., & Kitchener, K. (2009). Getting political on social network sites: Exploring online political discourse on Facebook. *First Monday*, 14(11). Retrieved from <http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/viewArticle/2645/2350>
- Lafferty, B. A., & Goldsmith, R. E. (1999). Corporate credibility's role in consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions when a high versus a low credibility endorser is used in the ad. *Journal of Business Research*, 44, 109–116. doi:10.1016/S0148-2963(98)00002-2
- LaMarre, H. L., & Suzuki-Lambrecht, Y. (2013). Tweeting democracy? Examining Twitter as an online public relations strategy for congressional campaigns. *Public Relations Review*, 39(4), 360–368.
- Lau, R. R., & Redlawsk, D. P. (2006). *How voters decide: Information processing in election campaigns*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lazarsfeld P. F., & Merton R. K. (1954). Friendship as a social process: A substantive and methodological analysis. In M. Berger (Ed.), *Freedom and control in modern society* (pp. 18–66). New York, NY: Van Nostrand.
- Lee, Y. J., & Ahn, H. Y. (2013). Interaction effects of perceived sponsor motives and Facebook credibility on willingness to visit social cause Facebook page. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 13(1), 41–52.
- Lim, M. (2012). Clicks, cabs, and coffee houses: Social media and oppositional movements in Egypt, 2004–2011. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 231–241. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01628.x
- Lodge, M., & Taber, C. S. (2013). *The rationalizing voter*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lord, C. G., Ross, L., & Lepper, M. R. (1979). Biased assimilation and attitude polarization: The effects of prior theories on subsequently considered evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37(11), 2098–2109.
- MacKinnon, D. P., Lockwood, C. M., & Williams, J. (2004). Confidence limits for the indirect effect: Distribution of the product and resampling methods. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 39(1), 99–128. doi:10.1207/s15327906mbr3901\_4
- Markus, G. B. (1982). Political attitudes during an election year: A report on the 1980 NES panel. *American Political Science Review*, 76(3), 538–560. doi:<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1963730>
- McCroskey, J. C., Richmond, V. P., & Daly, J. A. (1975). The development of a measure of perceived homophily in interpersonal communication. *Human Communication Research*, 4(1), 323–332. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2958.1975.tb00281.x
- McCroskey, J. C., & Young, T. J. (1981). Ethos and credibility: The construct and its measurement after three decades. *Central States Speech Journal*, 32(1), 24–34. doi:10.1080/10510978109368075
- McCurlley, C., & Mondak, J. J. (1995). Inspected by #1184063113: The influence of incumbents' competence and integrity in U.S. House elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, 39(4), 864–885.
- Milburn, M. A. (1991). *Persuasion and politics: The social psychology of public opinion*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Miller, A. H., Wattenberg, M. P., & Malanchuk, O. (1986). Schematic assessments of presidential candidates. *American Political Science Review*, 80(2), 521–540. doi:<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1958272>
- Mondak, J. J. (1995). Competence, integrity and the electoral success of congressional incumbents. *Journal of Politics*, 57(4), 1043–1069. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2960401>
- Moore, D. L., Hausknecht, D., & Thamodaran, K. (1986). Time compression, response opportunity, and persuasion. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13, 85–99.
- Murthy, C. N. (2010). Imperatives of citizen-centric Web 2.0 political networks for an effective democracy: A case study of websites of southern Indian states. *Journal of International Communication*, 16(2), 25–41. doi:10.1080/13216597.2010.9674766
- Ohanian, R. (1990). Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(3), 39–52. doi:10.1080/00913367.1990.10673191
- Page, B. I. (1978). *Choice and echoes in presidential elections: Rational man and electoral democracy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Petty, R. E., Brinol, P., & Priester, J. R. (2009). Mass media attitude change: Implications of the elaboration

- likelihood model of persuasion. In J. Bryant & M. B. Oliver (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 125–164). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. In R. E. Petty & J. T. Cacioppo (Eds.), *Communication and Persuasion* (pp. 1–24). New York, NY: Springer.
- Pornpitakpan, C. (2004). The persuasiveness of source credibility: A critical review of five decades' evidence. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 34*(2), 243–281.
- Powell, L., Richmond, V. P., & Williams, G. C. (2011). Social networking and political campaigns: Perceptions of candidates as interpersonal constructs. *North American Journal of Psychology, 13*(2), 331–342.
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2004). SPSS and SAS procedures for estimating indirect effects in simple mediation models. *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, & Computers, 36*(4), 717–731. doi:10.3758/BF03206553
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. *Behavior Research Methods, 40*(3), 879–891. doi:10.3758/BRM.40.3.879
- Qualman, E. (2011). *Socialnomics*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Rane, H., & Salem, S. (2012). Social media, social movements and the diffusion of ideas in the Arab uprisings. *Journal of International Communication, 18*(1), 97–111. doi:10.1080/13216597.2012.662168
- Sears, D. (1986). College sophomores in the laboratory: Influences of a narrow data base on social psychology's view of human nature. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51*(3), 515–530. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.51.3.515
- Smalley, R. L., & Stake, J. E. (1996). Evaluating sources of ego-threatening feedback: Self-esteem and narcissism effects. *Journal of Research in Personality, 30*(4), 483–495.
- Sobel, M. E. (1987). Direct and indirect effects in linear structural equation models. *Sociological Methods & Research, 16*(1), 155–176.
- Solis, B. (2010). *Engage! The complete guide for brands and businesses to build, cultivate, and measure success in the new Web, revised and updated*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Sweetser, K. D., Porter, L.V., Chung, D., Kim, E. (2008). Credibility and the uses of blogs among professionals in the information industry. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 85*, 169–185. doi:10.1177/107769900808500111
- Taber, C. S., & Lodge, M. (2006). Motivated skepticism in the evaluation of political beliefs. *American Journal of Political Science, 50*(3), 755–769.
- Teven, J. J. (2008). An examination of perceived credibility of the 2008 presidential candidates: Relationships with believability, likability and deceptiveness. *Human Communication, 11*(4), 383–499.
- Teven, J. J., & McCroskey, J. C. (1997). The relationship of perceived teacher caring with student learning and teacher evaluation. *Communication Education, 46*(1), 1–9. doi:10.1080/03634529709379069
- Till, B. D., & Busler, M. (1998). Matching products with endorsers: Attractiveness versus expertise. *Journal of Consumer Research, 15*(6), 576–586. doi:10.1108/07363769810241445
- Towner, T. L., & Dulio, D. A. (2011). An experiment of campaign effects during the YouTube election. *New Media & Society, 13*(4), 626–644.
- Wang, Z., Walther, J. B., Pingree, S. C., & Hawkins, R. P. (2008). Health information, credibility, homophily, and influence via the Internet: Web sites versus discussion groups. *Health Communication, 23*(4), 358–368. doi:10.1080/10410230802229738
- Wilson, E. J., & Sherrell, D. L. (1993). Source effects in communication and persuasion research: A meta-analysis of effect size. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 21*(2), 101–112.
- Wright, K. (2000). Perceptions of on-line support providers: An examination of perceived homophily, source credibility, communication and social support within on-line support groups. *Communication Quarterly, 48*(1), 44–59. doi:10.1080/01463370009385579
- Yoon, K., Pinkleton, B. E., & Ko, W. (2005). Effects of negative political advertising on voting intention: An exploration of the roles of involvement and source credibility in the development of voter cynicism. *Journal of Marketing Communications, 11*(2), 95–112. doi:10.1080/1352726042000315423