

Hearing the Organizational Human Voice

[Testing a Theoretical Model of Conversational Human Voice and Perceived Trustworthiness]

A good theory ought to provide solutions such as to the **current trust crisis** in public relations. With the proliferation of using social media tools like Facebook to build trust, one relationship management strategy includes PR representatives employing a natural style or tone often represented by the construct of **Conversational Human Voice (CHV)** (Kelleher, 2009). Sounding like a "human" as a technique is intuitive because social media is built for personalized social networking. However, CHV has been underdeveloped both in terms of its measurement and identifying attributes. What about CHV truly makes the difference in trust? This experiment tests a proposed model of CHV **different dimensions** and determines what actually effect a stakeholder's perception of a businesses **trustworthiness**.



Method

A panel of 12 experts (professional and academic) were consulted to confirm the face value of the stimuli used and the development of CHV as a construct.

- An experiment manipulated four consumer-facing organizations' (Target, Starbucks, Southwest Airlines, and Microsoft) Facebook conversations representing high and low CHV conditions.
- Previous previous attitude, reputation, and loyalty were controlled for.
- A path analysis was then conducted to observe the moderated & mediating direct and indirect effects of CHV on Trust.
 - Pretest $N = 180$
 - Main Test $N = 226$

Dimensions

- Human Voice
- Trust
- Social Presence
- Bots
- Interactivity
- Expectations
- Informal Tone
- Emoji

The natural style "of organizational communication as perceived by an organization's publics based on interactions between individuals in the organization and individuals in publics," (Kelleher, 2009, p. 177).

Definition and measurement 1) estimates a public's perception rather than behavioral intentions, 2) accounts for the underlying future orientation (like making a bet), and 3) accommodates the "initial trust" model of online organizations. (Rawlins, 1999)

How warm, intimate, and personal media are perceived to be connecting via a computer mediated interface. (Lim, Hwang, Kim, & Biocca, 2015)

The perception that the communicating agent is an AI rather than a real human. Will this moderate the effect of Social Presence?

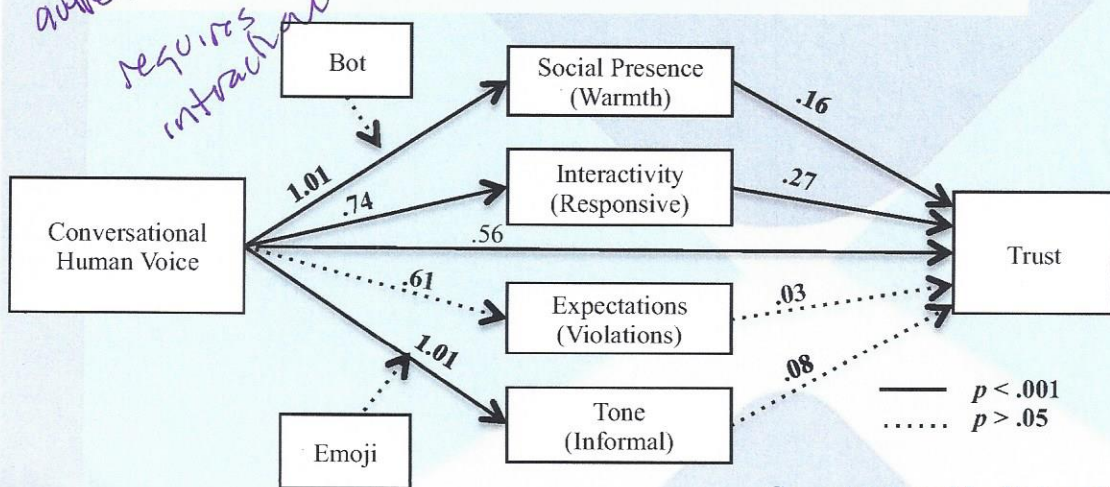
Contingency interactivity with stakeholders online is both a media and a psychological factor (Kiousis, 2002) and capitalizes on "loops" and "...takes the first step to stimulate... engagement". (Bortree & Seltzer 2009, p. 318)

How individuals respond positively or negatively to behaviors that violate cultural or experientially constructed norms (Burgoon, 1993).

Specified as "personal and intimate"- the antithesis of a "professional" "corporate", "organizational", or "traditional" tone, "respectful, formal, and task-oriented, but limited in affective content". (Oh & Ki, 2019; Park & Cameron, 2014; Sparks, So, & Bradley, 2016; Sung & Kim, 2018; Sweetser, 2010)

In informal settings, emojis are associated with collegiality, but in formal exchanges is seen as unprofessional. (Gilkson, Cheshin, & Van Kleef, 2017)

Model Results



authenticity requires interaction

No human

More Findings

- Perception of CHV did not change for company.
- Trust was **not significant** without controlling for these dimensions.
- Social Presence and Interactivity were the only significant factors in relation to trustworthiness.
- A re-evaluation with an updated CHV scale for social media may yield more significant results.