Harry Potter and the Public Relations Phenomenon

A thesis submitted to the Miami University Honors Program in partial fulfillment of the requirements for University Honors with Distinction

by

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ABSTRACT

The Harry Potter Public Relations Phenomenon

By Ashley Muddiman

Since the Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone was published in the U.S. in 1998, the coming-of-age series about a young wizard has become a worldwide publishing phenomenon. This project studies the public relations strategies of the series in an attempt to understand one aspect that led to the success of the novels. More specifically, the study first examines the appropriateness of the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) tactics and strategy changes that appear in the public relations publications between two of the Harry Potter novels, and, second, evaluates the usefulness of utilizing the ELM as a content analysis research technique. The print articles published in the months surrounding the publications of the second and third books in the series (Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban and Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire) were analyzed within the framework of the ELM. The ELM techniques apparent in these articles were compared to other articles published for the same book, as well as articles published for the release of the other book. After analyzing the articles in this manner, it was apparent that a shift in public relations strategy occurred in the time between the publications of the two books: the first encouraged the peripheral processing route while the second encouraged the central processing route. This public relations strategy change, as well as the use of the ELM, apparent in the articles was appropriate for the Harry Potter series and seemed to be one factor in the large amount of sales the books have seen. In addition, the ELM was a useful tool in the content analysis of these articles, although the lack of individual mental processes should be taken into account when using the ELM in this context in the future.
The *Harry Potter* Public Relations Phenomenon

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INTRODUCTION

Muggles, magic and a wizard named Harry Potter have become a worldwide phenomenon. In the eight years since the first *Harry Potter* book appeared in the United States, J.K. Rowling’s series has exploded in popularity. Both children and adults have embraced the coming-of-age story about Harry Potter, a wizard orphaned when he was one-year-old. When the sixth book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, went on sale July 16, 2006, it sold 6.9 million copies in 24 hours (Ramirez & Hutchinson, 2005). *The New York Times* created a children’s book bestseller list after the release of the fourth book, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, so that the series would not compete against popular adult fiction for the top. Warner Brothers has produced four highly successful movies based on the books, and is currently filming a fifth movie to be released in 2007. Few, if any, other book series have been able to propel its author from living in poverty to being a multi-millionaire, encourage bookstores to throw midnight release parties or actually make children want to read.

As impossible as it seems, the *Harry Potter* series has accomplished all of these feats. What began as a simple coming-of-age story has become an international sensation. Although not the only cause for the books’ enormous success, public relations has played a major role in the sensation surrounding the series. This study examines the persuasion techniques published in print articles about the series in an effort to find an underlying cause of its surprising success, and to discover ways to imitate this success in the future.
The public relations surrounding the release of *Harry Potter* novels has sought to create relationships with potential consumers to increase book sales. To encourage its publics to purchase the books, Scholastic, Inc., the *Harry Potter* series’ American publisher, has used a variety of persuasive tactics in the public relations materials it releases. According to Frymier and Nadler (2007), persuasion is “communication between two or more people with an intent to change, reinforce or shape the attitudes, beliefs and/or behaviors of the receiver” (pg. 7). While promoting the *Harry Potter* series, Scholastic has intended to create and reinforce positive attitudes in its publics about the *Harry Potter* series, which could then change the behavior of those publics and encourage them to buy *Harry Potter* books. Through the public relations tactics, which manifest themselves in print articles, television appearances, Web sites, events and other media, a number of persuasive techniques show the publisher’s intent to influence children, and their parents, to form positive attitudes about the books.

Although a variety of persuasion theories exists, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is a particularly appropriate framework within which to study *Harry Potter* public relations tactics. This theory, first developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1981, 1986), examines the processes used when receivers think about messages to which they are exposed. In addition, the ELM observes that certain types of processing lead to stronger attitude change and a greater likelihood that people will act on their attitudes. Through the ELM, this study can determine the strategies reflected in the print media coverage that persuaded children and adults to purchase *Harry Potter* books, and evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in changing attitudes and behaviors related to the series.
CHAPTER 1
ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL

The ELM is based on the amount of elaboration in which a person engages after coming in contact with a persuasive argument (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981, 1986). Frymier and Nadler (2007) define elaboration as “the amount of thinking the receiver engages in about the content of a message” (p. 160). In simple terms, the more a person thinks about a message, the higher the likelihood of elaboration.

CENTRAL VS. PERIPHERAL

The amount of elaboration a person engages in influences the way that person processes a persuasive argument. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) proposed that people take one of two routes when managing persuasive information: the central or peripheral. The central route occurs when a person supports or rejects a persuasive argument as a result of careful thinking about whether the information presented in the argument is true or false (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). People process through the central route when they engage in high amounts of elaboration. On the other hand, the peripheral route occurs when a person supports or rejects a persuasive argument as a result of a “simple cue” in the argument without actually considering the truth of the arguments presented (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986, p. 3). In this case, a person who engages in low elaboration is more likely to process the information through the peripheral route.
Motivation and ability combine to determine which route a person uses to process a message. If a person has a high level of motivation to learn about an issue, as well as the ability to do so, the elaboration likelihood of the situation is also high. A person is more likely to pay more attention to issue-relevant arguments in this situation. Therefore, when both motivation and ability are sufficiently high, the central route is used (Petty, Rucker, Bizer & Cacioppo, 2004, pg. 73). On the other hand, when either motivation or ability to gain information is missing from a persuasive situation, the elaboration likelihood is low. In this situation, attitudes are more likely to be changed not by issue-relevant information, but by peripheral cues that do not encourage further elaboration. Therefore, when either motivation or ability is not present, the peripheral route is used (Frymier & Nadler, 2007).

When the motivation and ability to elaborate are present and a person processes a persuasive message through the central route, the quality of the arguments used has a large effect on the likelihood the persuasive message will be accepted. Since the central route depends on high elaboration, people are more motivated and able to rationally analyze the information presented so they can try to find “truth” in a message (Petty et al., 2004, pg. 73).

However, the majority of message processing takes place with the peripheral route because of the sheer volume of messages to which people are exposed. Petty et al. (2004) explain that the “the peripheral route can be an adaptive, necessary tool in people’s everyday lives” because it does not require the high levels of thought that the central route does (p. 71). Instead, through the peripheral route, persuasion takes the
form of simple cues. Petty and Capcioppo (1986) define peripheral cues as “stimuli in the persuasion context that can affect attitudes without necessitating processing of the message arguments” (p. 18). These peripheral cues can include the expertise and likeability of the source, number of persuasive messages given (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), rewards or punishments and the reactions of other people (Frymier & Nadler, 2007), among others.

Peripheral cues involving the source of the message, including the source’s likeability and expertise about a subject, are especially important in advertising and marketing when message recipients process the messages through peripheral routes. When a person does not engage in high elaboration about a subject, that person will be more likely to believe a source that is likeable and that seems more credible, despite the strength of the actual arguments. This person is more likely to experience a change in attitudes about a message, in the short term at least, when the source of the message is someone popular, attractive or otherwise likable. Advertising uses this peripheral cue often. For example, the McDonald’s “Nothin’ but Net” commercial in the early 1990s used popular basketball stars Michael Jordan and Larry Bird as likeable sources for the restaurant, even though the men did not have a large amount of expertise about fast food. Expertise can also serve as a peripheral cue when a source knows a great deal about the topic of the message. Again, advertising uses this cue often. For example, pain reliever medicines often claim that they are the medicines that doctors recommend most, implying that, despite any other argument for or against the medicine, the expert advice of the doctors should be taken seriously.
Also, the number of persuasive messages to which a message receiver is exposed can serve as a peripheral cue. Marketing messages are repeated over and over again in an effort to reach as many people as many times as possible. In this way, even people who do not experience high elaboration likelihood are constantly exposed to the message. Presumably, the quality of the message does not matter as much to those who process the message through the peripheral route, but the quantity will allow the same people to remember the messages they repeatedly hear.

Frymier and Nadler (2007) also mention that rewards and punishments can act as a peripheral cues in a message. A person processing through the peripheral route could use the reward as a “mental shortcut” to decide whether to change an attitude (Frymier & Nadler, p. 167, 2007). An example of a successful use of rewards in the retail industry is the proliferation of ‘bonus gifts’ from cosmetic companies, including Clinique. A person may not pay attention to the quality of the messages in this situation, but may rather purchase makeup solely to receive the reward of a free gift. Punishments can be used in a very similar way, except a threat takes the place of a reward in the message.

Finally, the reactions of other people can act as peripheral cues in persuasive situations. Many times, message recipients do not highly elaborate upon a message, but rather listen to opinions of others. In an advertising context, commercials often show many people enjoying a product or service to encourage viewers to use the product or service as well. In relation to the *Harry Potter* series, media messages could contain many examples of fans who truly love the books so that message recipients engaging in
peripheral processing would believe they could like the books just as much as the people quoted in the media.

Petty and Cacioppo (1986) postulate that the variables in any communication situation can act in many different ways depending on the situation and the person. However, the basic rule is as the elaboration likelihood decreases, the influence of peripheral cues increases. The next section discusses the factors that determine the processing route an individual chooses: motivation and ability.

MOTIVATION AND ABILITY

The amount of elaboration present in a situation depends on both a person’s motivation and ability to think about a message. Both motivation and ability must be present for a person to process a message through the central route. Motivation relates to how much the receiver of the information wants to learn more about the message (Frymier & Nadler, 2007). Petty and Cacioppo (1986) explain that “people are motivated to hold correct attitudes” but have to decide how much energy to expend when trying to find the correct information (p. 6). This situation leads to a tug of war between the motivation to know the correct information and the effort it takes to gain this information.

Motivation

Many issues can increase a person’s motivation to elaborate upon a message, including high personal relevance, unexpected information or format, multiple sources, relaying the information to another person and a high individual need for cognition (Petty
et al., 2004; Frymier & Nadler, 2007). Personal relevance, which can be described as a person’s interest or involvement in a topic, is one important factor that can motivate a person to think more deeply about an argument (Frymier & Nadler, 2007). When a message uses personal relevance, that message connects to a person’s interests and encourages that person to pay more attention to the message than if the message did not relate to that person. For example, if a new product were released in the United Kingdom, people in the United States would feel little personal relevance to that product and, therefore, would have less motivation to elaborate about that product. Personal relevance and involvement also correspond to the *Harry Potter* series in that people who feel a closer personal connection with the messages in the public relations campaign will have more motivation to elaborate upon those persuasive messages.

In addition to personal relevance, people are more motivated to have a high elaboration likelihood when either the information or the format in which the information was relayed is unexpected. When a message somehow violates the expectancies of a person receiving that message, it surprises the person and causes him or her to think more about the information (Petty, Haugtvedt & Smith, 1995). Some aspects of the message must violate what the receivers expect to draw attention to aspects of that message and encourage deeper thought. For example, a series of newspaper headlines may fit into the expectations people have about what belongs in a newspaper, including some headlines about the president’s latest foreign policy speech and others about the latest business scandal. In this context, a headline related to the *Harry Potter* series like “That’s Why They’re Called Muggles,” which headlined an article in *The Denver Post* in 1999, would
be unexpected and could have caused more curiosity and motivation to elaborate on the headline and the article (Dionne, 1999).

Also, the existence of multiple sources within the same persuasive message can motivate people to think about the information. Petty et al. (1995) explain that, when a different source presents each argument, those “arguments receive greater scrutiny than when all arguments are presented by the same source” (p. 98). This “multiple source effect” is even more prevalent when each source is, or seems to be, giving independent information about the message (Petty et al., 1995). One political campaign that illustrates this technique was the Swiftboat Veterans for Truth television advertisements aired during the 2004 presidential election, which included a series of Vietnam veterans stating their opposition to candidate John Kerry’s leadership. In this situation, the multiple sources helped make the message more credible while also encouraging viewers to think deeply about each message in the commercial.

Another factor that can contribute to the motivation of a person to elaborate upon a message is when that person expects, before hearing the message, that he or she will have to relay the information to another person. People feel as though they have to pay more attention to, and think more deeply about, a message when they have to remember the general information and the details to tell to someone else. A Boninger, Brock, Cook, Gruder & Romer (1990) study showed that, when participants had to transmit the messages they heard in the study to another person, they would elaborate more than the people who were not told to transmit the messages. If a public relations campaign could
encourage the immediate receivers of its messages to relay the information to others, it would be able to motivate the audience to think more deeply about its messages.

Other issues can affect the motivation of people to elaborate on a message, but these do not connect as well to public relations campaigns. For example, people with a high need for cognition, meaning that they have the need to think more deeply when processing any information, are more motivated to elaborate on messages. However, public relations, advertising and marketing cannot alter the levels of need for cognition in the target audience in individual campaigns. Also, people who know they will be accountable for the information received in a message before actually receiving the message will be more likely to elaborate. In a public relations context, it would be difficult to ask questions and otherwise make the receivers of public relations messages accountable after messages have been disseminated. As a result, this research will focus on the motivating aspects of high personal relevance, unexpected information or format, multiple sources and relaying the information to another person, which closely relate to public relations message distribution.

**Ability**

Ability, the second factor necessary for elaboration, refers to how much a person can learn about a message (Frymier & Nadler, 2007). In some situations, there are mitigating factors that prevent learning additional information about a message and this, in turn, lowers the amount of thought concerning an issue. For instance, people are bombarded with thousands of messages every day, many of which are unimportant;
therefore, they do not have the ability to think deeply about each of these messages (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). There are approximately 10 minutes of commercials in every half hour television broadcast. In addition, there are signs, including billboards, yard signs and even street signs along the roads that many people see every day. The internet inundates people with even more messages, including pop-up and banner ads. People simply do not have the time or energy, and, therefore, the ability, to process each message very deeply.

Many other factors, such as how well an individual understands the message, the number of times a message is repeated, format of a message (written or oral), distraction and prior knowledge about a topic can also effect a person’s ability to process a message (Petty et al., 2004; Frymier & Nadler, 2007).

If a person cannot understand the message presented, that person will not be able to elaborate deeply about the message. The organization and language, among other factors, can affect an individual’s comprehension level (Frymier & Nadler, 2007). In an extreme example, if a person sees an advertisement in Spanish, but only speaks English, that person does not have the ability to understand and elaborate upon the message.

Also, people are better able to process messages when the arguments or the messages themselves are repeated, especially in situations with complex messages (Petty et al., 1995). This issue closely relates to public relations. Using the example of *Harry Potter*, messages were, and still are, consistently being disseminated through a variety of different media in an effort to reach target publics many different times. This gives the publics a chance to catch arguments and information they did not hear upon first
encountering the message. The sheer number of the messages and arguments reaching the audience should make the people more able to process these messages.

The format in which a person receives a message can also affect that person’s ability to process the information. Frymier and Nadler (2007) explain that, in a written format, people are able to read at the pace that maximizes their understanding and can review passages that they do not comprehend. On television and other oral formats, messages can move too quickly for a person to fully process them, making the publics less able to elaborate upon the information, whereas print media such as newspapers, magazines and Web sites allow people to read the messages at the speed best for them.

Distracting a person can also change that person’s ability to elaborate on a message. The more distraction a person encounters, the less that person is able to process information (Frymier & Nadler, 2007). However, some amount of distraction can help a message at times, specifically when the arguments presented are weak. Petty et al. (1995) explain that distraction causes people to be less aware of the flaws in an argument, since they are less likely to elaborate and think deeply about the argument, and, therefore, are more likely to change their attitudes about a message despite the argument strength. This is actually a way to increase persuasion through distraction, but the new attitude would not be based on solid arguments and good information. The better approach would be to try to reduce the amount of distraction as much as possible to encourage people to elaborate on the message. This is a challenge in the public relations and marketing arena because of the proliferation of messages targeted at the public. Somehow, people who structure these messages, be it for books like *Harry Potter* or any other consumer good,
should try to decrease distraction in order to increase the audience’s ability to elaborate on the messages.

Finally, a person’s prior knowledge about a topic can affect that person’s ability to process information about the topic (Frymier & Nadler, 2007). When an individual, or an entire audience, already knows about a product, including *Harry Potter* books or many other consumer goods, it is much easier to understand and process arguments encountered. Since the public already has background information about the product, it is better able to understand the information in the messages without as much explanation. In the case of *Harry Potter*, this could have influenced the attitude change in the audience as a result of the series format. When books are published in a series, the publics already have background knowledge about the later books, which suggests that publics will be better able to understand the messages disseminated for the later books in the series.

Motivation and ability work together to form high or low elaboration likelihood situations. If, and only if, a person is both motivated and able to deeply process a message can that person engage in high elaboration and central route processing. This also means that if either the motivation or ability to process arguments is absent, an individual will not have high elaboration likelihood, and will process information through the peripheral route.

**THE CHOSEN ROUTE AND ATTITUDE CHANGE**

The purpose of persuasion is to change the attitudes of the message recipients, so the ELM must be examined to understand how the model can be used to alter attitudes.
Petty and Cacioppo (1986) postulated that attitude changes occurring from processing messages through the central route would “show greater temporal persistence, greater prediction of behavior, and greater resistance to counterpersuasion” than attitudes formed through the peripheral route (pg. 21). This reasoning springs from the definition of the central route: since there is more elaboration of information in the central route, the attitudes should be longer lived than in the surface level persuasion attained through the peripheral route.

**Persistence**

Persistence refers to the ability of a person to hold onto a new attitude over a long period of time, whether or not that attitude is countered (Petty et al., 1995). For example, in an experiment by Petty, Haugtvedt, Heesacker and Cacioppo (1995, Experiment 1), groups of undergraduate students were given either positive information from a credible source or negative information from a noncredible source about comprehensive exams. The students were told that these exams were either going to be used in their university (making the issue have high relevance to them) or for a more distant school (making the issue have low relevance to them). The researchers then measured the initial attitude change in both groups of students and measured the same students again two weeks later to see if the change persisted. Although all groups showed the same initial attitude change, the high relevance groups showed more persistent attitude change than the low relevance group. This study gives just one example of how central processing, created by high amounts of elaboration in high relevance groups, creates change that is more likely
to persist than attitude change based on peripheral processing, which focuses more on the
credibility of the sources and other cues rather than the strength of the arguments
presented.

In relation to the *Harry Potter* novels, Scholastic, Inc., the books’ publisher, seeks
to create persistent attitudes in customers who purchase the books. Although the first
three books were released within one year of each other (between September 1998 and
September 1999), the final four books have had between one and three years between
their publications. By creating persistent positive attitudes in the consumers of *Harry
Potter* novels, this group of people should maintain positive attitudes during the time
between the book releases. These persistent attitudes, in turn, make *Harry Potter* fans
more likely to have positive attitudes about the books when a new book in the series is
published.

**Resistance**

Resistance is another sign of strong attitudes and refers to the ability of an attitude
to withstand attacks (Petty et al., 1995). Central processing of a message should also
result in resistant attitudes, according to Petty and Cacioppo (1986). Research again
provides evidence to support this statement.

Haugtvedt and Wegener (1994) conducted an experiment with two opposite
messages of equal strength and different personal relevancies depending on the proximity
of issue. The first group of undergraduate students received ‘pro’ or ‘con’ messages
concerning senior comprehensive exams either in their school (high relevance) or in a
school far away (low relevance). The second group had either ‘pro’ or ‘con’ arguments concerning a new nuclear power plant either in their home state (high relevance) or in surrounding states (low relevance). In both studies, the high relevance participants, who had high elaboration likelihoods, agreed with the first argument, no matter whether the pro or con argument was mentioned first. However, the low relevance participants agreed more with the second argument. This agrees with the ELM because the participants who thought more about the first argument (those with high relevance to the topic) were less likely to change their minds after hearing the opposing side (Petty et al., 1995). Again, this study and others show that people who engage in central processing, since they are more willing to elaborate on a message, are more likely to develop resistant attitudes that are less likely to change in the face of opposition.

Resistant attitudes are also beneficial to Scholastic, Inc. as it publicizes the *Harry Potter* series. As explained previously, the large time spans between the books’ publications needs to be countered with strong, positive attitudes. Resistant attitudes, in this case, would allow the consumers of *Harry Potter* books to keep their strong, positive attitudes about the series, despite any negative counterpersuasion experienced, which is persuasion a person encounters that is contradictory to newly formed attitudes. In the case of *Harry Potter*, one of the major forms of counterpersuasion a supporter of the series can encounter is the belief of some, specifically select conservative Christian groups, who claim the books promote witchcraft and are, therefore, unsuitable for children. If Scholastic, Inc. succeeds in creating a resistant attitude in its publics, however, these attitudes will make it more likely that consumers will oppose the counterpersuasion, such
as these ‘anti-witchcraft’ groups, and continue to maintain positive attitudes until the next book is published.

**Prediction of Behavior**

Petty and Cacioppo (1986) also postulate that messages processed through the central route lead to a greater ability to predict behavior. This stems from the idea that a person who has a high elaboration likelihood concerning a new idea before changing attitudes will be more likely to keep these new attitudes and, therefore, more likely to act upon them.

One example that supports Petty and Cacioppo’s postulate is an experiment conducted by Sivacek and Crano (1982, experiment 2) involving, once again, comprehensive exams for college students. In this experiment, college undergraduates were split into low, medium, and high relevance groups in an effort to control the elaboration likelihood in each group and, therefore, the route in which the groups process information. After a presentation about the exams to each group, they were given the option to sign a petition or join a group that opposed the exams. As predicted, the group with the highest relevance, and, therefore, having higher elaboration likelihood and using the central route to process the information, was more likely to take action by signing the petition or joining the group (Petty et al., 1995).

The prediction of behavior is one of the most important aspects of the ELM in relation to the *Harry Potter* series. Scholastic, Inc., not only wants its target audience to
have persistent and resistant attitudes toward the books, it wants these publics to put these attitudes into action by purchasing the novels.

**CRITIQUES**

Despite the large amount of research relating to the theory, some scholars dispute the validity of the ELM. However, many of the claims stem from misunderstanding of the model and can be answered through the theory.

One of the most prevalent critiques of the ELM is that it claims people use only single channel processing, which is where a person uses either the central route or peripheral route to process messages, but not both. Frymier and Nadler (2007) explain that, in some situations, people seem to use parallel processing instead, which includes both central and peripheral processing in one message.

However, Petty et al. (2004) explains that one person can use both routes to process a message. The ELM, they claim, “addresses the impact” of the routes on attitude change, meaning that only one of the routes will actually affect the persuasive ability of a message for one person (Petty et al., 2004, pg. 78). Another possible explanation for the appearance of dual processing is that the variables within a persuasive message work differently for different people in different situations (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Instead of a single person using both channels of processing, the central and peripheral channels appear in the same message, but are not used by the same person. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) give the example of emotional or affective states in a message to show this point. An emotion such as love can be processed by one person with low elaboration likelihood
as a peripheral cue. However, another person can perceive the same emotion of love in the same message as being directly related to the merits of the issue, causing that person to then process the emotion through the central route (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

The multiple uses of variables leads to another weakness in the theory. Since aspects of a message can affect different people in different ways, the ELM does not give persuaders a clear way to create successful persuasive messages (Frymier & Nadler, 2007). This presents a difficult situation for people trying to form messages through the ELM. However, when persuaders have a thorough knowledge of groups important to their message, these persuaders can use the variables in ways that reach that specific audience. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) explained that a persuader has to know the central elements for a specific situation and group of people in order to use the ELM variables effectively. In relation to the *Harry Potter* series, the public relations personnel at Scholastic, Inc. would need extensive research to understand the target publics. With this knowledge, the ELM messages and variables can be adapted to specific publics, even though the ELM does not provide an exact outline of how to use the variables in every situation.

Another criticism concerning the ELM is that argument quality is never clearly defined, even though it is used as a variable in most ELM experiments. Petty et al. (2004) points out, however, that the strength of an argument is used to compare how the variable is actually working, not as an antecedent to persuasion from a message. Instead, argument quality refers “to any features of the arguments that get people to think favorable thoughts (strong arguments) or unfavorable thoughts (weak arguments)” (Petty et al.,
In this case, a strict definition of a strong and weak argument is not necessary because it can change depending on the experiment or situation. Again, the use of ‘quality arguments’ depends on the knowledge of an audience. For instance, Scholastic, Inc. must understand its audience to know what messages and arguments will lead that audience to think favorable thoughts about the *Harry Potter* series. There is not a strict definition of a strong or weak argument in this case, only strong and weak arguments in relation to the audience a message is trying to reach.

Despite criticisms of the ELM, the theory can be useful for studying persuasive messages, especially in relation to advertising and public relations. These situations specify certain audiences so that the ELM variables used in a persuasive message can be targeted to that group of people. By narrowing the audience of a message, a persuader can understand that specific group of people can use the ELM variables that will most effectively alter the attitudes of that audience.

**INFLUENCING CONSUMERS THROUGH THE ELM**

The ELM has major implications for the effectiveness of advertising and public relations (PR) on consumers of various products. Like other aspects of the ELM, persuasion through advertising and PR can take place through either the central or peripheral routes, depending on the purpose of the message. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) explain that the advertiser has to understand the arguments that are central to the group of people it is trying to reach. Depending on the situation and target audience for the
organization, the combination of ELM variables can make a message more persuasive for a target audience.

Although central processing and high amounts of elaboration have been shown to create more persistent and resistant attitudes and to better predict the behavior of a person, attitudes can also be changed through the peripheral route when influencing consumers. Using peripheral cues such as an expert source and high numbers of message arguments, a company can target an audience that does not have the motivation or ability to elaborate upon a message. However, encouraging an audience to form attitudes through the peripheral route results in short term attitude change. In this case, constant exposure to advertising or PR messages would be necessary to keep the short term, peripheral attitude change alive in the minds of the audience. One example of a PR tactic using a peripheral cue is when talk show host Rosie O’Donnell endorsed the *Harry Potter* series on *The Rosie O’Donnell Show*. In this situation, O’Donnell was a likable source to millions of her show’s viewers. She did not have any specific expertise regarding children’s novels, but her show was very popular with women who were home during the day, many of whom had children. Even if members of the target audience did not have the motivation and ability to centrally process the persuasive messages, they were constantly exposed to a likeable source in a way that could have changed their attitudes toward the series, especially in the short term.

Despite the proliferation of peripheral cues in advertising and PR, attitudes changed through central processes are often stronger and longer lasting than attitudes changed through the peripheral route. The majority of research concerning the ELM and
advertising has centered on the audience’s personal relevance to the product. A Haugtvedt and Strathman (1990) study measured the attitudes of undergraduate students placed in low and high relevance conditions concerning the advertisement for the launch of a new bicycle. The researchers measured the attitudes of the students after seeing the advertisements the first time, and measured their attitudes again 2 days later. As expected, those students who were told the bicycle would be launched in their geographical area, and, therefore, experienced high relevance conditions, held more persistent attitudes than those students in low relevance conditions.

A Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann (1983) study also looked at personal relevance in relation to advertising, but focused on the ability of the ELM to predict behavior from newly changed attitudes. The researchers exposed undergraduates to mock advertisements for a new razor under either high or low relevance conditions with a likeable or neutral source and strong or weak arguments, depending on the group. They found that, under the low relevance conditions, the peripheral cues such as the perceived credibility of the source, led to greater attitude change within the audience, while central processes, such as message strength, influenced subjects under high relevance situations. The attitudes of subjects under high relevance conditions also better predicted their intent to buy the razors in the ad.

Research has also focused on the message framing in advertisements when the audience has low personal relevance in a situation. In a Smith and Petty (1996, experiment 2) study, which focused on the effects of positive or negative cues on elaboration, the researchers looked at groups with high and low needs for cognition.
When low need for cognition groups expected positively framed information about an advertisement, but actually saw negatively framed information, that group engaged in more elaboration and scrutiny of that advertisement. On the other hand, when these low need for cognition participants expected negative message arguments, they engaged in more elaboration when the message arguments were positive. Smith and Petty (1996, experiment 2) concluded that, if the target audience is not highly motivated to engage in thought about an advertisement or product, the audience will be more likely to process a message when it is surprised by the content of the message.

An audience could also be surprised by the content of messages relating to the Harry Potter series, which could, in turn, encourage that audience to elaborate more deeply upon a message. In addition to the unexpected headlines concerning Harry Potter mentioned previously, people could also have been shocked by the appearance of children’s books on The New York Times adult bestseller book lists or the fact that children were reading books instead of watching television or playing video games. When unexpected content appears in media messages surrounding Harry Potter, people will be more motivated to centrally process messages relating to the series.

Even though some aspects resulting in attitude change from the ELM have not been extensively researched, the ELM does predict other ways in which attitudes can be changed. For example, the central route and higher levels of elaboration can be affected by a person’s need to talk about the messages to another person. As previously stated, if media messages concerning the Harry Potter series can encourage publics to speak to
each other about their own attitude changes, they will be more likely to centrally process those messages, which can lead to greater persistence and resistance in those attitudes.

**Distinction between advertising and public relations**

In the case of the *Harry Potter* series, the majority of the persuasive messages concerning the books are not disseminated through advertising. Instead, Scholastic, Inc. used public relations techniques in an attempt to change the attitudes and affect the behaviors of its audience. Although traditional advertisements are not used in this process, PR artifacts can be examined in the same manner as advertisements using the ELM.

Many explanations of PR exist, including Guth and Marsh’s (2003) basic definition that defines it as the “management of relationships between an organization and the publics that can affect its success” (pg. 576). Advertising, on the other hand, is usually defined as paid and controlled media access for an organization or product. In advertising, the organization has complete control over the structure of the message, number of times the message is repeated and where the message is placed (Guth & Marsh, 2003). PR usually does not have this type of control over the placement and frequency of the message in the media. However, since PR messages must move through gatekeepers in the media, such as editors and news directors, they are often seen as more credible. Also, PR has many uses within a company, ranging from relations with the media to stockholders to employees, whereas advertising focuses on marketing a product, service or company to a consumer audience outside of the company.
In the context of the *Harry Potter* series, the PR campaign to raise awareness about the books in the U.S. focused on the media to reach its audience. The publics that could most affect Scholastic’s success are the books’ consumers and potential consumers. Scholastic, therefore, had to manage the relations between itself and its customers using persuasion techniques in the PR messages sent to these publics. In this way, the ELM strategies will apply to the PR of the *Harry Potter* series.

ELM research has not focused on PR, choosing instead to look at advertising messages. However, many experiments relate closely to PR goals of influencing the attitudes of a target audience concerning a certain idea or product. For example, Smith and Petty (1996, experiment 1) researched the effects of message framing in recycling articles on undergraduate students and concluded that the positive or negative framing of a message in such articles changes the amount of elaboration in which the audience engages. Also, a large amount of ELM experiments involve undergraduate student attitudes toward comprehensive exams (Sivacke & Crano, 1982; Petty, Haugtvedt, Heesacker, and Cacioppo, experiment 1, 1995). These experiments involve the influence of ideas on a target group of people without the use of advertising, which directly relates to public relations.

In a related experiment, Igartua, Chang, and Lopes (2003) studied the effects of two different AIDS films on audiences. Again, this relates to PR in that the creators of the films were attempting to promote a message through avenues other than direct advertising in ways that encourage audiences to think about the message. One film was a more traditional health film whereas the other used entertainment in a dialog short to
attract the attention of people who normally would not elaborate on AIDS issues. Although the researchers noted that more study on the subject was needed, they concluded that the dialog short film “activated a central pathway of processing” in audience members (Igartua et al., pg. 525).

As seen in the research, the ELM can apply to public relations activities, as well as advertising. The current study will examine artifacts from the *Harry Potter* public relations phenomenon in relation to the various aspects of the ELM. More specifically, this project will address two issues. First, it will examine changes in the ELM tactics and public relations strategies used in print publications surrounding the releases of two of the *Harry Potter* novels. In addition, it will evaluate the usefulness of utilizing the ELM as a content analysis research technique.
CHAPTER 2
METHODOLOGY

In order to evaluate the public relations tactics that most affected success of *Harry Potter* series, this study will look at the similarities and differences between the American book releases of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (September 8, 1999) and *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (July 8, 2000), the third and fourth books in the series.

These two books were chosen by comparing the initial U.S. print runs for each of the seven books in the *Harry Potter* series. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (*POA*) had an initial print run in the U.S. of 500,000 copies, whereas, less than one year later, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (*GOF*) had an initial U.S. print run of 3.8 million copies (Memmott, 2005). Although the initial print runs had increased with the release of each new book, the initial print run for *GOF* was almost eight times as large as the previous book. This drastic increase marked a turning point in the *Harry Potter* series from a successful children’s book to a publishing phenomenon.

In addition to the size of the initial print runs, these two books were chosen based on the number of hits each book received on LexisNexis in a three month span of time surrounding the individual book releases. The database LexisNexis provided a solid foundation for the amount of media coverage the books received in publications surrounding each release. When searching for “Harry Potter” in major newspapers between August 1999 and October 1999, the months before and after the release of the
third book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (*POA*), LexisNexis showed 313 hits. In comparison, when searching for “Harry Potter” in major newspapers between June 2000 and August 2000, the months before and after the release of the fourth book, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (*GOF*), LexisNexis showed more than 1000 hits. The drastic increase in media coverage between the third and fourth books in the series signaled that the public’s awareness of the series increased exponentially between these two books.

By studying the media coverage the *Harry Potter* books received, the ELM persuasion techniques can be found that most affected the consumer public. Any PR campaign involves a wide variety of publics. However, in product release situations, such as the ones revolving around the release of the *Harry Potter* books, the consumer public is paramount. In order to reach such a broad public, Scholastic had to encourage the mass media to disseminate its messages to the public who would eventually buy the books. As a result, the final coverage in the mass media can be studied as an illustration of the PR campaign and its tactics. Even when PR uses television and other tactics as a part of the campaign, including books signings, product release parties, and other non-media events, the print media will often run stories about the tactics. Since the print media reflects a wide variety of PR tactics, it is a good source in which to find the important messages that reach a campaign’s publics.

The artifacts analyzed were gathered using LexisNexis searches to find articles from major newspapers and magazines regarding the *Harry Potter* series. Artifacts were recovered by searching LexisNexis for “Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban”
between August 1999 and October 1999, the months before and after the book’s release, and by searching for “Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire” between June 2000 and August 2000, again, the months before and after the book’s release. Using the titles of the books during each LexisNexis search narrowed down the search results into more manageable numbers that could be more easily analyzed. The search for “Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban” articles yielded 83 newspaper articles (49 from within U.S. publications) and three magazine articles (all from U.S. publications), whereas the search for “Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire” yielded 479 newspaper articles (254 from U.S. publications) and 23 magazine articles (22 from U.S. publications). Since this study focuses on the book releases and public relations present in the U.S., only the articles published in U.S. newspapers and magazines were analyzed.

When gathering articles for the analysis of each *Harry Potter* book, groupings emerged that covered similar themes or topics. These groupings, were not chosen before analysis, but rather surfaced after reading the articles related to each book release. Each article was skimmed by the researcher and was grouped according to the common themes and topics present in the artifact. For example, some of the groups included ‘Events,’ in which articles announced events in specific locations where *Harry Potter* related events were taking place celebrating the books’ releases, and ‘Anti-Harry,’ which contained messages discouraging the validity of the *Harry Potter* series. The artifacts relating to *POA* were clustered into seven groups: “Anti-Harry,” “Pro-Harry,” “Release,” “Reviews,” “Events,” Opinion” and Success.” The artifacts relating to *GOF* were clustered according to the same seven groups used to study *POA*, but also included the
following three groups for a total of ten groups: “Participation,” “Hype” and “Glitches.”

The complete descriptions of the groups are as follows:

**Groupings for both Books**

**Anti-Harry:** These articles focus on a variety of objections to the books (although the journalist may or may not agree with the sources s/he uses in the article). The chosen articles represent the most typical objections present concerning the books. *POA* articles focus on the witchcraft and occult, whereas *GOF* articles focus on the literary quality (or lack thereof) of the series.

**Pro-Harry:** These articles focus on challenging the objections of the sources in the Anti-Harry articles. Although the Pro-Harry articles often overlap with the Opinion articles, they use facts and other sources to challenge negative views of the series.

**Events:** These articles detail events taking place parallel to the release of the books. Specifically, around the time of the *POA* release, J.K. Rowling participated in a book tour of the U.S., and, during the *GOF* release, the bookstores in various locations across the U.S. held release parties detailed by the articles.

**Success:** These articles detail the success of the individual books, as well as the series as a whole. They talk about numbers and sales figures, not necessarily the hype surrounding the book.

**Opinion:** These articles were found in the ‘opinion’ sections of newspapers and include both editorials and letters to the editor. They allow newspapers to print the actual opinions about the books held by a variety of people.

**Release:** These articles focus on the actual release of the book in question. They are published before the release as announcements detailing how people can get the book (usually including the date of release, price of the book and other factual information).

**Reviews:** These articles are book reviews published either before or after the book’s release.

**Additional Groupings for *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire***

**Participation:** In articles published around the *GOF* release, many newspapers encouraged readers to write to the editors with their theories and ideas about the books before the release. These ‘articles’ are very short and ask participatory questions about the books.
**Hype:** In these articles surrounding the release of the *GOF*, the hype of the public relations, marketing and ‘Pottermania’ becomes the actual news story, rather than the books themselves.

**Glitches:** Around the release of *GOF*, a series of articles focused on the number of occurrences disrupted the planned book release details, including early sales of the books, the title release and books that were not delivered on time.

The sheer volume of *Harry Potter* related articles made it impossible to study each one, so a representative article was chosen for further analysis from each of these groups. The researcher read each of the 329 articles found through the Lexis Nexis search, and chose one article from each grouping that used messages and topics that were demonstrative of the other articles in that grouping. For instance, the majority of the articles in the *GOF* “Anti-Harry” group included the topic of *Harry Potter*’s literary quality; therefore, the representative article from this group also focused on this topic rather than the presence of witchcraft in the novels. Additionally, the source of the artifacts also influenced the selection of representative articles. The researcher selected articles from a variety of national and regional print publications in an effort to analyze artifacts written in different styles from different areas of the U.S. Two articles were chosen from *The Houston Chronicle*, two from *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, three from *The New York Times*, and one each from *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Newsweek*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Washington Post*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, MN), *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, *The San Francisco Chronicle* and *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, for a total of 17 representative articles selected for analysis.
These representative artifacts were then analyzed in the context of the ELM. First, a content analysis form (Appendix 1) was constructed with factors contributing to the audience’s motivation (including personal relevance, unexpected information or format, multiple sources providing information and the encouragement to relay information to another person) and the audience’s ability (including an individual’s understanding of the message, the number of times a message is repeated and prior knowledge about a topic) to process a message. This form also included the tactics most appropriate to the central route (including message strength and rational thought processes) and the peripheral route (including source likeability/expertise, number of persuasive messages, rewards and punishments and reactions of others). The last section created a space to mark preliminary information estimating the prevalence of the central or peripheral route in each article. This qualitative research form was used in the first step of analyzing the articles. The researcher noted the presence or absence of each factor in every article, as well as examples of these factors.

After examining the articles through this form, two comprehensive charts were created in order to quantify and compare the results. The researcher created a separate chart for the articles relating to POA (Figure 1) and those relating to GOF (Figure 2). These charts included the factors relating to motivation, ability, central processes and peripheral processes from the qualitative research form, as well as the groupings associated with each book. A scale ranging from 0 to 3 was then applied to each ELM factor in each grouping for each book. A score of 0 represented no presence of a specific ELM factor in the article representing an article grouping; a 1 represented a minimal
presence of a specific ELM factor in an article; a 2 represented an average presence of an ELM factor article; and a 3 represented an extensive presence of an ELM factor in an article. The full description of the scores assigned to each factor, as well as examples from articles, can be found in the coding explanation charts in Appendix 2.

Figure 1 shows the scores assigned with each representative article from the *POA* book release. The headings for each row represent the seven article groupings that emerged from the *POA* articles: “Anti-Harry,” “Pro-Harry,” “Events,” “Success,” “Opinion,” “Release” and “Review.” The first section of the chart (Figure 1a) includes the scores assigned to the articles based on the motivational factors of “Personal Relevance,” “Unexpected Format or Information,” “Multiple Sources,” and “Relaying Information to Another Person.” The second section (Figure 1b) includes the scores based on each ability factor, including “Understanding the Message,” “Number of Times Messages Repeated,” and assumed “Prior Knowledge.” The third section (Figure 1c) includes the scores based on the central processing factors of “Argument Strength” and “Rational Thought Processes.” Finally, the last section of the chart (Figure 1d) includes scores assigned to articles based on the peripheral processing cues, including “Source Expertise or Likeability,” “Number of Persuasive Messages,” “Rewards and Punishments,” and “Reactions of Others.” Each section of the chart also gives the mean score for every individual article grouping in that category of factors for *POA*. For example, the Figure 1a gives the mean score of each motivational factor in every article grouping in the row labeled “Mean Motivation.” Finally, the last row of each section of the chart gives the total mean score of the motivational factors for *POA*. For example, in
Figure 1a, the row labeled “Total POA Mean” shows the average of all motivational factor scores assigned to POA articles.

Figure 2 shows the scores assigned to each representative article from the GOF book release. The headings for each column represent the 10 article groupings that emerged from the GOF articles: “Anti-Harry,” “Pro-Harry,” “Events,” “Success,” “Opinion,” “Release,” “Review,” “Participation,” “Hype” and “Glitches.” As with Figure 1, the first section of Figure 2 (Figure 2a) includes all scores assigned to the representative articles based on the motivational factors, Figure 2b includes all scores assigned to the articles based on the ability factors, Figure 2c includes all scores assigned to articles based on the central processing factors, and, finally, Figure 2d includes scores assigned to articles based on the peripheral processing factors. Additionally, each section of the chart gives the mean score for each article grouping in that category of factors for GOF. For example, the Figure 2a gives the mean score of each motivational factor in each article grouping in the row labeled “Mean Motivation.” Finally, the last row of each section of the chart gives the total mean score of the motivational factors for GOF. For example, in Figure 2a, the row labeled “Total GOF Mean” shows the average of all motivational factor scores assigned to GOF articles.

Finally, the mean scores for each category (including motivation, ability, central processing and peripheral processing) are labeled in each of the figures as receiving high, medium or low scores in that category. A low result is any score between 0 and 1.66, a medium score is any score between 1.67 and 2.00, and a high score is any score between 2.01 and 3.00 (Figure 1 and Figure 2). These levels were chosen by creating a normal
distribution of scores, with the results showing 20 ‘low’ scores, 20 ‘high’ scores and 28 ‘medium scores.’ Labeling each score as low, medium or high creates a broad a range of scores, rather than labeling only the highest and lowest score. The average scores of the motivation factors, ability factors, central route factors and peripheral route factors were then used compare the ELM differences between the articles and the books. The results found through the analysis of these charts, as well as the PR strategies found in the text of the articles, are discussed in the next section.
CHAPTER 3
RESULTS

The ELM scores found by using Figure 1 and Figure 2, as described in the last section, formed the foundation for the analysis of the articles in this study and yielded the following results. However, other results could not be quantified that emerged from the text of the articles. These results examine the message repetition and strategy change shown in the representative articles, and are discussed later in this section.

ELM SCORES

First, by using the ELM charts, the representative articles were assigned scores for each ELM factor and analyzed. The highest scores found in the charts were compared in a variety of different manners. First, the mean scores for each article grouping were compared within each book in the areas of motivation, ability, central processing and peripheral processing. Next, the mean scores for each article grouping were compared between the two books in the areas of motivation, ability, central processing and peripheral processing. Finally, the total mean scores for each book were compared in the areas of motivation, ability, central processing and peripheral processing.

Groupings compared within each book

The scores assigned according to the ELM charts were first analyzed by comparing the scores each article received in the motivation and ability factors. If an
article received high scores in motivation and ability, the ELM expects readers to engage in central processing of the information in the articles, which means that the articles would be most persuasive if they scored highly in central processing factors as well. On the other hand, articles that received low motivation or ability scores encourage peripheral processing, according to the ELM, meaning that these articles should receive high peripheral processing factor scores to be most persuasive. By comparing the scores of each article grouping within each book, the persuasive effectiveness of these individual articles could be determined.

Motivation Factors

The first determining factor of a person’s processing route is the motivation to elaborate on the information presented in the article. The “Pro-Harry” articles from POA and GOF received the highest mean motivation score for their respective books. The “Pro-Harry” article from POA received a mean motivation score of 2.25, which was .50 more than the next highest mean motivation score (Figure 1a). The “Pro-Harry” article from GOF received a mean motivation score of 2.50, which was .25 more than the next highest mean motivation score (Figure 2a). The “Pro-Harry Potter” articles from both books emphasized unexpected format or information, multiple sources and relaying information to another person, with each of these factors receiving a score of 2.00 or 3.00. The high scores the articles received in these areas increased the mean motivational scores.
Three articles from each book received the lowest motivation scores from that book. The “Opinion,” “Release” and “Review” articles from POA received a mean motivation score of 1.25 (Figure 1a). Also, the “Opinion,” “Success” and “Glitches” articles from GOF received a mean motivation score of 1.50, which was the lowest mean motivation score for that book (Figure 2a). The “Opinion” articles from both books scored among the lowest mean motivation scores. Both articles received scores of zero in the motivation factor of “Multiple Sources,” which dramatically lowered the mean motivation scores. Even though each of these articles, except for the GOF “Glitches” article, received a score of 3.00 in at least one motivational factor, they still received the lowest mean motivation scores for their respective books. This suggests that each article must use a variety of motivational factors, rather than use only one motivational factor extensively, in order for that article to give readers a high level of motivation to centrally process messages.

The articles that received low mean motivation scores will encourage peripheral processing, according to the ELM. The articles that received high mean motivation scores, however, are more likely to encourage central processing. The results related to the ELM ability factor scores for these individual articles must be examined before any conclusions regarding the chosen processing route can be drawn.

**Ability Factors**

Before drawing any conclusions concerning the route each specific article encouraged in its readers, the mean ability scores must also be examined. The “Opinion”
articles from both books received the highest mean ability scores for their respective books. The “Opinion” article from POA received a mean ability score of 2.00 (Figure 1b) and the “Opinion” article from GOF received a mean ability score of 2.67 (Figure 2b). These articles focused on the ability factors of “Understanding the Message” and assumed “Prior Knowledge,” which both received scores of 2.00 or higher, to increase these mean ability scores.

After analyzing the motivation and ability scores for each article grouping, the scores suggest the specific processing route that the article encourages in its readers. According to the ELM, a reader’s processing route depends on the motivation and ability of that reader to elaborate on the messages presented. Any article, for example, that received high motivation and ability scores would encourage processing through the central processing route, and would, therefore, be most persuasive if the article scored highly in central processing factors. However, none of the individual articles had the highest, or the lowest, mean scores in both motivation and ability components. This signals that elements of a variety of motivation and ability factors were present in most articles, and no one article contained the strongest mean motivation and ability factor scores as compared to the other articles.

However, when the mean scores are grouped into high scores (2.01-3.00), medium scores (1.68-2.00), and low scores (0-1.67), some of the articles did show similar uses of motivation and ability factors. In the POA articles, the “Anti-Harry,” “Success,” “Release” and “Review” articles received low mean scores for both motivation and ability factors (Figure 1a and Figure 1b). Following the ELM, these articles should
receive high scores in the peripheral factors to be most persuasive to the audience reading the messages since lack of motivation and ability encourages low levels of elaboration and peripheral route processing.

In the GOF articles, even more articles received similar mean motivation and ability scores, including “Anti-Harry,” “Release” and “Hype,” which all received medium scores for both motivation and ability, and “Pro-Harry” and “Participation,” which received high scores for both motivation and ability (Figure 2a and Figure 2b). In this situation, the ELM would suggest that the article groupings receiving medium scores for the motivation and ability scores should receive medium scores in the central and peripheral processing factors as well. Since motivation and ability factors are present, but not too strong, the audience receiving the articles’ messages could potentially use either processing route. These articles should then include factors from both the central and peripheral routes to persuade people who engage in each of the processing routes. Finally, the two articles that received high motivation and ability mean scores, “Pro-Harry” and “Participation,” would encourage central processing, according to the ELM. This implies that the articles should receive high scores in the central processing factors and lower peripheral processing scores to be most persuasive to their readers. Analyzing the central and peripheral processing scores can show whether these separate article groupings used the ELM persuasion techniques effectively in the manners described above to increase the likelihood of attitude change in the audience.
Central Processing Factors

By analyzing the mean central processing scores, it became clear that the GOF articles better used the central processing factors to persuade their readers than the POA articles used these factors. For example, the highest mean central processing score for the POA articles was assigned to the “Anti-Harry” article, which received a mean central processing score of 2.50 (Figure 1c). However, the “Anti-Harry” POF article received low mean motivation and ability scores. According to the ELM, this situation signals that readers will be more likely to engage in the peripheral processing route, since there is a lack of motivation and ability present in the articles to encourage elaboration on the message. In this case, the high mean central processing score will not provide the greatest amount of persuasion in the article’s readers because they will most likely use peripheral processing, and would be more persuaded by peripheral cues in the article.

The POA “Success of Books” article also received low mean motivation and ability scores, but high a central processing factor mean score of 2.50 (Figure 1c). Like the “Anti-Harry” article, the “Success” article encourages readers to engage in peripheral processing, so the high amount of central professing factors do no persuade readers in the best manner. Finally, the “Release” and “Review” POA articles also received low motivation and ability mean scores, and, therefore, encouraged peripheral processing. These articles received medium mean central processing scores of 2.00 that paralleled the expectations of the ELM (Figure 1c). Although there is still a medium amount of central processing factors present in the articles, they do not rely as heavily on these factors as do the “Success” and “Anti-Harry” articles. Since the ELM suggests that low amounts of
motivation and ability will encourage peripheral processing and persuasion through peripheral cues, the lower levels of central processing factors in the *POA* “Release” and “Review” articles should match the lower levels of central processing that these articles encourage.

At least one *GOF* article shows the same disconnect between the motivation and ability scores and the central processing route as the *POA* articles. The *GOF* “Release” article received medium mean scores in both the motivation and ability factors, which suggests that at least a medium amount of central processing factors should appear in the article to reach those people who do process the messages centrally. However, this article received a low mean central processing score of 1.50 (Figure 2c). Since the presence of some motivation and ability factors in this article could encourage at least some people to engage in the central processing route, the low amount of central processing factors could lack the necessary persuasiveness for readers engaging in the central processing route.

However, the majority of the other *GOF* articles receive the central processing mean scores expected as a result of the mean motivation and ability scores. The *GOF* “Anti-Harry” article, for example, received medium mean motivation and ability scores and a high mean central processing score of 3.00 (Figure 2c). The *GOF* “Hype” article follows the exact same pattern with medium motivation and ability scores and a high central processing mean score of 2.50 (Figure 2c). Since the medium mean motivation and ability scores could encourage central processing in the articles’ readers, the high level of central processing factors in the articles could be persuasive to people who do process the articles through the central route.
The \textit{GOF} “Pro-Harry” article also received high motivation and ability scores. In this situation, the ELM suggests that readers will engage in central processing and will be most persuaded when central processing factors are used to present messages. This article also scored very highly in the central processing factors, receiving a mean score of 2.50 (Figure 2c). Since the article encouraged central processing in its readers and used a large amount of central processing factors to communicate its messages, the article should be persuasive to readers who are more likely to elaborate upon these messages.

Overall, the \textit{GOF} articles used the central processing factors in a way more consistent with the individual articles’ mean motivation and ability scores than the \textit{POA} articles. Since the scores are more consistent, these \textit{GOF} articles are more likely to persuade those readers engaging in central processing. However, to further analyze the effectiveness of each article, the peripheral scores must be compared to the motivation and ability scores each article received.

\textit{Peripheral Processing Factors}

While analyzing the mean peripheral processing scores for articles within each of the books, a clear pattern emerged for the \textit{POA} articles while the \textit{GOF} articles did not show as strong a pattern. The \textit{POA} articles with consistently low motivation and ability scores, which encouraged the peripheral processing route and would be most persuasive using peripheral cues, received only medium peripheral processing scores, while the \textit{GOF} articles varied widely in their effective or ineffective use of the peripheral processing route.
As previously explained, those POA articles that received low mean scores in both motivation and ability, including the “Anti-Harry,” “Success,” “Release” and “Review” articles, would have encouraged the audience to engage in peripheral processing and would have been most persuasive had they effectively used peripheral cues to persuade readers. However, each of these articles received only medium mean peripheral processing scores of either 1.75 or 2.00 (Figure 1d). Although the articles do use some peripheral cues, they would be more persuasive had they used higher levels of peripheral cues.

Analysis of the GOF articles and their mean peripheral factor scores did not uncover as clear a pattern as the POA articles. In the GOF articles, some used peripheral cues to effectively persuade the audience, but other GOF articles did not. For example, the “Anti-Harry” article received medium motivation and ability scores, which could encourage either central or peripheral processing because it is not lacking either motivation or ability, but it is not emphasizing them either. As a result, the medium mean peripheral processing score of 1.75 that this article received could effectively persuade the readers of this article that were engaging in peripheral processing (Figure 2d). In addition, the GOF “Participation” article received high motivation and ability scores, which encourage central route processing over peripheral route processing. Consequently, the low mean peripheral processing score of 1.25 shows that the article did not waste space utilizing peripheral cues that those readers engaging in central processing would not find persuasive (Figure 2d).
However, the *GOF* “Pro-Harry” article did not use peripheral cues as effectively as possible to reach the audience. This article received high motivation and ability scores, which encouraged central processing in its readers. However, this article also received an unnecessarily high mean peripheral processing score of 2.50 (Figure 2d). Since high amounts of motivation and ability promote central processing, the large amounts of peripheral cues do not help persuade the people who are engaging in central processing. As a result, the high peripheral processing score does not actually add to the persuasiveness of the article. Additionally, the “Hype” article, which received medium motivation and ability scores, received only a low peripheral processing score of 1.67 (Figure 2d). This low score shows that only a limited number of peripheral cues were used in this article. However, since the article received the medium motivation and ability scores, it could have encouraged people to engage in either processing route. As a result, the article could have used more peripheral cues to make sure that those people engaging in peripheral processing would be persuaded of the messages presented in the article.

Since analysis of the *POA* and *GOF* articles did not provide a clear pattern throughout each portion of the ELM showing the effectiveness of persuasion used in the articles within each book, a comparison of the articles between the books further examined the persuasion used in the articles.

**Groupings compared between books**

After looking at the ELM scores from individual article groupings within the individual books, these scores for each article were compared between the books. By
looking at the comparisons between the articles in the two books, patterns can emerge concerning the use of ELM strategies surrounding each books’ release, as well as the success of each of these strategies.

*Motivation Factors*

The motivation factor provides one necessary element readers must have to centrally process a message. If there is little or no motivation to elaborate on a message, the reader of any of the *Harry Potter* articles will not engage in central processing. When looking at the mean motivation scores for each article grouping it can be seen that every GOF article grouping either received an equal or higher mean motivation score (Figure 2b) than the mean motivation scores assigned to each corresponding POA article grouping (Figure 1b). Except for the GOF “Success” article, every representative article from GOF received higher mean motivation scores than the representative article in the same grouping from POA.

The GOF “Success” article received an equal mean motivation score of 1.50 to the POA article in same grouping (Figure 1a and Figure 2a). The “Success” articles from both books extensively used unexpected information to convey the exponential success of the book series. Despite the same type of use in these two articles, the unexpected information was even larger in the GOF article. For example, the POA article cites that the first and second *Harry Potter* books sold more than one million copies each in the U.S. by the time of the article’s publication in 1999 (Jones, 1999). However, the GOF article cites that Scholastic would publish a first printing of 3.8 million copies for the
release of *GOF* alone (Hoover, 2000). The numbers surrounding the *GOF* release were significantly more startling than those surrounding the previous books, but the use of this unexpected information in articles was similar between the two books, and related to the motivation factor scores assigned.

Not only did every *GOF* article grouping receive higher mean motivation scores than those *POA* articles in the same groupings, the *GOF* articles also received many more medium (1.67 to 2.00) and high (2.01 to 3.00) mean motivation scores than did *POA*. Of the seven *POA* article groupings, five scored low mean motivation scores of 1.66 or less, while one article scored a medium mean motivation score and one received a high mean motivation score (Figure 1a). On the other hand, only three *GOF* articles received these low mean motivation scores, while five scored medium mean motivation scores and two scored high mean motivation scores (Figure 2a). The overall number of high mean motivation scores could have been increased by utilizing more of the motivational factors in each article to better encourage central processing in readers, since central processing increases the length an attitude is held (persistence), as well as a reader’s refusal to accept new arguments counter to that attitude (resistance). However, the amount of motivation factors used in *GOF* articles was significantly more than the amount used in *POA* articles. In combination with the ability factors, high levels of motivation can increase the likelihood a person will engage in central processing. Before a conclusion is drawn about the probable processing route chosen, however, the ability factors must be analyzed as well.
**Ability Factors**

The ability of a person to process a message also must be present for that person to engage in central processing of a message. The presence or absence of this factor, together with motivation, will dictate the use of either the central or the peripheral processing route.

The *GOF* articles, which already received the highest motivation scores, also received higher mean ability scores than the *POA* articles in the corresponding article groupings. Also, the three additional article groupings (“Participation,” “Hype” and “Glitches”) present in *GOF* that did not emerge from *POA* articles received higher mean ability scores than other *POA* article groupings. The lowest mean ability score in these three *GOF* article groupings was 1.67 (Figure 2b), whereas the lowest mean ability score of any article grouping from *POA* was 1.33 (Figure 1b). One reason for the high mean ability scores in *GOF* articles was that these articles received higher scores than *POA* articles in the ability factor of assumed “Prior Knowledge” in every article grouping. These articles assumed that the audience already had a foundation of knowledge concerning the *Harry Potter* series and, therefore, did not give much, if any, explanation about the series in the article. Since the ELM explains that prior knowledge makes the audience more able to process a message, this ability factor gave the *GOF* articles higher ability scores than articles from the other book’s release.

In addition, the *GOF* articles received many more medium (1.67 to 2.00) and high (2.01 to 3.00) mean ability scores than did *POA*. Whereas *POA* articles received no high mean ability scores and five low mean ability scores (Figure 1b), *GOF* articles received
no low mean ability scores and seven high mean ability scores (Figure 2b). The much greater number of high mean ability scores in GOF articles showed a change in the focus of many of the Harry Potter articles between the two books. The large levels of ability factors used in GOF articles as compared to POA articles in every article grouping greatly increased a person’s ability to elaborate on the messages received through the GOF articles. Each article grouping increased the amount of ability factors present in the articles between the two books. This signals a change in strategy between the two books from a plan that overlooked a person’s ability and motivation to process a message, to one that focused on the reader’s ability to understand the message and motivation to do so.

GOF articles received high scores in both motivation and ability factors. Since a reader’s choice of processing route depends on the presence of both motivation and ability to elaborate on the message, the ELM expects these same GOF articles to receive higher central processing mean scores than the POA articles to be most persuasive. To further analyze whether these persuasion techniques were used effectively in the ELM, the central processing factors, as well as the peripheral processing factors, must be analyzed.

Central Processing Factors

Central processing, according to the ELM, occurs when a person has both the motivation and ability to elaborate on a message. Since the GOF articles received consistently higher mean motivation and ability scores than POA articles within all article
groupings, the ELM expects these *GOF* articles to be most persuasive when utilizing the central processing factors to persuade its audience.

Within the central processing factors, the “Success of Books” and “Book Release” articles from *POA* (Figure 1c), and the “Anti-Harry Potter,” “Pro-Harry Potter” and “Opinion” articles from *GOF* (Figure 2c) received the highest mean central processing scores in their respective article groupings. The central processing scores for the other two article groupings, “Book Release Events” and “Book Review,” received equal mean central processing scores for the two books.

According to the ELM, since the *GOF* articles received higher scores for every combined average of the motivation and ability factors in each article grouping, these articles are more likely than those of *POA* to encourage central processing in the readers. The ELM explains that strong arguments, as well as encouragement of rational thought processes within an artifact, will make that artifact more persuasive to people engaging in central processing of messages. However, the *GOF* articles only had a slight advantage over the previous book in mean central processing scores: only three *GOF* articles received higher mean central processing scores than articles from the corresponding article grouping in *POA*. The equal mean central processing scores in two of the other groupings weakened this advantage even further. In addition, although the *GOF* articles did have more articles that received high mean central processing factor scores (2.01 to 3.00), two articles also received low mean central processing scores (Figure 2c), whereas not one *POA* article grouping received a low central processing score (Figure 1c). Since *GOF* articles scored higher combined means for motivation and ability in every article
grouping, the ELM suggests that the articles would have been more effective if they had utilized more strong arguments and rational processing methods.

Finally, dissecting the peripheral processing factors utilized in each article grouping between the books can show whether the GOF articles still use more central processing factors in comparison to the POA articles as a result of the lower amounts of motivation and ability the POA articles have seen.

**Peripheral Processing Factors**

Peripheral processing occurs when people have little motivation or ability to elaborate on information presented to them. The ELM would expect the POA articles to emphasize peripheral processing factors more than GOF articles because POA articles consistently received lower motivation and ability scores than GOF articles. The same type of result emerged from the scores of the peripheral processing factors. The “Book Events,” “Success of Books” and “Book Review” articles from POA (Figure 1d) and the “Opinion” and “Event Release” articles from GOF (Figure 2d) received the highest peripheral factor scores. The other two article groupings, “Anti-Harry Potter” and “Pro-Harry Potter,” received equal scores.

Since the articles relating to the POA received lower combined mean motivation and mean ability scores than those articles in the corresponding groupings from GOF, the ELM suggests that readers would be more likely to use peripheral processing when reading the POA articles. When using this processing route, readers are more likely to be persuaded by peripheral cues such as source expertise or likeability, number of
persuasive messages, rewards and punishments and the reactions of others. However, the articles from POA had only a slight advantage over the GOF articles in mean peripheral processing scores: only three articles scored higher than articles from the same grouping related to the other book. Again, the tie in mean peripheral processing scores between the other two books weakened this advantage. According to the ELM, the POA articles would have been more persuasive had they have scored higher than the GOF articles in each grouping for the peripheral processing factors.

However, when looking at the number of high (2.01 to 3.00), medium (1.67 to 2.00) and low (0 to 1.66) mean peripheral processing scores between the individual article groupings for each book, POA received many more medium and high scores than GOF articles. The POA articles received five medium scores and two high scores, whereas the GOF articles received five low scores, three medium scores and two high scores (Figure 1d and Figure 2d). Even though the POA mean peripheral processing route scores are not always more than the same article grouping in GOF articles, the POA scores for the groupings overall are higher. This result relates closely to the ELM. Since the POA articles received lower motivation and ability mean scores than did the GOF articles, the readers of the POA articles would be more likely to engage in peripheral processing. The use of peripheral cues (as shown by the medium and high peripheral processing factors scores) in POA articles is, therefore, more likely to persuade the readers of the articles.

After comparing the individual articles between the books, a wider approach attempted to sort out any remaining inconsistencies found while analyzing the articles surrounding each of the books.
Total averages compared between books

After averaging the total motivation, ability, central processing and peripheral processing scores for each book, a slightly clearer result set emerged. By averaging the scores assigned for each factor and article grouping for each book, broad results could be used to draw conclusions about the persuasion tactics of the total campaign for each book, rather than just for each article or grouping.

Motivation and Ability Factors

The mean motivation scores for both books supported the previous results regarding the motivation and ability amounts used for articles related to each book: the articles associated with \textit{GOF} scored a higher mean motivation score of 1.9 (Figure 2a) than the articles associated with \textit{POA}, which scored 1.54 (Figure 1a). The \textit{GOF} mean motivation score falls into the medium (1.67 to 2.00) score range, while the \textit{POA} mean motivation score falls into the low (0 to 1.66) range. As the other comparisons showed, the \textit{GOF} articles clearly used more motivational techniques than the \textit{POA} articles. However, both sets of articles could have increase the number of motivational factors used to increase the motivation scores. This would have increased the likelihood of central processing in the reader, which can increase the strength of persuasion in the article and attitude change in the reader.

The mean ability scores for both books also supported the previous results: the articles associated with \textit{GOF} scored a higher mean ability score of 2.33 (Figure 2b) than the articles associated with \textit{POA}, which scored 1.62 (Figure 1b). The \textit{GOF} mean ability
score falls within the high (2.01 to 3.00) range while the POA mean ability score falls within the low (0 to 1.66) range. As previously stated, the high mean ability score for the GOF articles can be attributed to the increased “Prior Knowledge” scores as compared to the same scores in the POA articles (Figure 2b and Figure 1b). This increased mean ability score for the GOF articles show an improvement between the books, since this high ability score increases the likelihood of central processing in the readers. Given that the Harry Potter articles are trying to influence the readers to like, and eventually purchase, the books, the central route is an appropriate method because it can help form stronger attitudes that last for longer periods of time.

The GOF articles received higher mean scores for both motivation and ability than the articles associated with POA. As a result, the ELM suggests that the GOF articles would encourage higher elaboration and more occurrences of central processing in the readers. The audience reading GOF articles would be most persuaded by central processing factors, rather than peripheral factors. On the other hand, the ELM suggests that the POA articles would encourage lower amounts of elaboration and peripheral processing in the reader. The following results examine whether the articles surrounding GOF and POA followed these ELM expectations in respect to each book.

Central Processing Factors

The mean central processing scores were almost equal between the POA articles and the GOF articles, even though the GOF articles received higher motivation and ability scores and, therefore, would have been more persuasive using the central factors
than *POA* articles would have been. The *POA* articles averaged a slightly higher mean central processing score of 2.14 (Figure 1c) than the mean central processing score of 2.10 for the *GOF* articles (Figure 2c). This result is problematic since the *GOF* articles received higher mean motivation and ability scores, and, according to the ELM, encouraged more central processing in readers than the *POA* articles. Following the ELM, articles relating to the *GOF* would be most persuasive to readers when using the central processing factors of strong arguments and rational thought processes. Both books, however, received high (2.01 to 3.00) total mean central processing scores for their respective articles. The slight .04 difference in mean central processing scores between *GOF* articles and *POA* articles was very small, which illustrated that the articles surrounding the two books used central processing factors at approximately the same rate. Again, before drawing conclusions about the effectiveness of either books articles in using ELM techniques, the peripheral processing scores must be examined.

*Peripheral Processing Factors*

When analyzing the mean peripheral processing scores for each book, the *POA* articles received much a much higher mean peripheral processing score than the *GOF* articles, which will make these *POA* articles more persuasive to the readers processing the information peripherally. The articles from *POA* also scored a higher mean peripheral processing score of 2.00 (Figure 1d) than the articles associated with *GOF*, which received a mean peripheral processing score of 1.68 (Figure 2d). This result does parallel ELM expectations. Since the *POA* articles scored lower mean motivation and ability
scores, the ELM suggests that readers will engage in low amounts of elaboration and process information through the peripheral processing route. In order for these *POA* articles to be most persuasive, they would use many peripheral cues to relate the messages to readers. When comparing the mean peripheral processing scores between the *GOF* articles and *POA* articles, the higher mean peripheral processing score for the *POA* articles illustrates that these articles did use relatively more peripheral cues than *GOF* articles, which suggests that these *POA* articles presented their messages in ways that could effectively persuade the audience.

**Difference between Central and Peripheral Factors**

The differences between the mean central and peripheral processing scores within each book showed an interesting trend. The *POA* articles had a very small difference between the mean central processing score and the mean peripheral processing score of only .14 (Figures 1c and 1d). However, the *GOF* articles had a difference between the mean central processing score and peripheral processing score of .42 (Figures 2c and 2d), which is three times more than the difference between the averages in the *POA* articles. Although the *POA* had a slightly higher average in central processing factors than *GOF*, the differences between the averages within each book signal that the *POA* articles used a higher ratio of peripheral to central factors.

These *POA* articles used a relatively greater number of peripheral cues than *GOF* articles, which parallels the ELM suggestions. As previously explained, since the *POA* articles received lower mean ability and motivation scores than *GOF* articles, they would
encourage audience members to peripherally process the material. As a result, peripheral cues would be most persuasive to the audience. The *POA* articles used the peripheral cues effectively, as shown by the greater ratio of peripheral cues to central factors than *GOF* articles.

Also, as previously mentioned, the *GOF* articles received higher mean motivation and ability scores than *POA* articles. According to the ELM, these high levels of motivation and ability encourage central processing in audience members who would then be more strongly persuaded through central factors. These *GOF* articles used significantly more central factors than peripheral cues (Figure 2c and Figure 2d). As a result, these differences reflected the ELM and show that the audience should be persuaded using these central factors.

These results help clear the confusion related to the inconclusive results found when comparing the scores of individual article groupings. When the articles were analyzed as a whole for each book, it became clear that *POA* articles placed more emphasis on using peripheral cues than *GOF* articles, which lacked a large number of peripheral cues and relied more heavily on central cues in making their arguments. Since *POA* articles lacked large amounts of motivation and ability factors, and, therefore, encouraged peripheral processing, the greater amount of peripheral cues made the messages more persuasive to the readers, according to the ELM. In addition, the high levels of motivation and ability present in the *GOF* articles should encourage central processing, which means the higher level of central factors present in these articles than in *POA* articles should increase attitude change in the readers.
Although analyzing the ELM scores assigned to each article resulted in interesting findings, to understand the overall strategy involved in the POA and GOF book releases it is necessary to look at the overall message repetition patterns, as well as other changes in public relations strategies associated with the books.

MESSAGE REPETITION

When looking at the overarching messages published in print media surrounding the release of the *Harry Potter* books, the content of the articles was overwhelmingly positive toward the *Harry Potter* series. Even the articles containing negative information about the series often also included positive messages. For example, the representative article from the POA “Anti-Harry” grouping did include messages with negative connotations, including two messages questioning the appropriateness of the books for children, as well as three comparisons between the books and the “occult.” However, this article also included four messages stating the bestselling-nature of the books, as well as five claims of “enthusiasm” toward the series (Parents, 1999). A count of the messages reveals that more positive messages occurred in this article than negative ones.

Additionally, the representative article from the GOF “Anti-Harry” grouping also includes some negative messages about the books. However, these messages revolve around the “flat prose” of the series and “one-dimensional” characters (Conwell, 2000). Although they are negative messages, these revolve around the literary quality of the books. The articles question the appropriateness of a comparison between the *Harry Potter* books and those of lasting children’s literature, not the appropriateness of the
Harry Potter series as a popular work of fiction. Even this article with negative messages includes positive messages as well, including the statement that the books were “extremely imaginative” (Conwell, 2000).

After analyzing the articles, it became clear that, even with some articles including negative messages, such as those above, the vast majority of the messages in the print media spoke very positively about the Harry Potter series. As a result, the audience was constantly exposed to a large quantity of positive messages about the series and its individual books.

Certain messages were repeated numerous times not only within each article, but within the media surrounding each book release and throughout the entire series as well. These key messages allowed publics to better understand the messages by allowing them to grow familiar with the campaign and the series, as well as by giving them knowledge they could build upon when they read future articles.

The large number of repeated messages also acted as an ability factor within the ELM framework. According to the ELM, an audience is more able to understand a message after being exposed to it multiple times. For example, the message that the Harry Potter books were bestsellers occurred 30 times within the representative articles chosen for this study alone (Figure 3). This often-repeated information made understanding the key messages easier for the audience members. The repetition of messages occurred within every article grouping, and within each book, although sometimes the content of the messages differed between the groupings and the books.
POA Repetition

Three messages were repeated most often within articles associated with the *POA* release: the books were bestsellers, the entire family would enjoy the books and the books helped children enjoy reading (Figure 3).

One of the messages repeated most often was that the entire family could read, and enjoy, the *Harry Potter* books. This message was repeated 15 times within the representative articles chosen for *POA* (Figure 3). The message makes the information presented in the articles more relevant, especially toward people with children, and, therefore, increases the motivation of the audience to elaborate on the arguments present.

In addition, the articles surrounding the *POA* release emphasized that the previous *Harry Potter* books were bestsellers. Derivatives of this message were repeated 22 times within the representative *POA* articles alone (Figure 3). By mentioning the bestselling nature of the books, these articles alluded to the positive reactions other people have toward the series as a whole. Although not directly described in the articles as the “reactions of other people,” these bestseller messages show the audience one specific reaction: a large number of other people are buying these books. The ELM classifies the reactions of other people as a peripheral cue, meaning that the proliferation of this cue should increase the persuasiveness of the articles targeted toward people processing the information through the peripheral route.

Finally, the *POA* articles often mentioned that the *Harry Potter* books helped children enjoy reading, instead of viewing it as a chore. This message was repeated 11 times in the *POA* representative articles (Figure 3). Within the ELM framework, this
message exemplifies the peripheral cue of a reward. By processing this message, the audience can feel as though purchasing the book will give them (or their children) the reward of reading and pleasure. As a peripheral cue, this message emphasizing rewards should increase the persuasiveness of the articles targeted toward people processing the information through the peripheral route.

As the ELM scores and comparisons showed in the previous section, the POA articles received low mean motivation and ability scores, meaning that the audience is likely to engage in peripheral processing and peripheral cues will be persuasive. Since two of the three most often repeated messages are most likely used as peripheral cues, these message repetitions can be persuasive to an audience receptive to these types of persuasive cues.

**GOF Repetitions**

The articles associated with the release of GOF emphasized slightly different messages in the media. The top three messages repeated in these articles included announcements for the midnight release parties surrounding the book’s release, supportive statements for the book and the bestselling nature of the book and series.

The most repeated messages, by far, were announcements concerning the midnight book release parties at bookstores across the country. Within the GOF representative articles, announcements for these parties occurred 21 times (Figure 4). This repeated mentioning of the release parties draws attention because it is unexpected information and encourages the participation of the audience in the release of the book,
both ELM factors which act to increase a person’s motivation to elaborate, through central processing, on information communicated through the articles.

In addition, these articles also repeatedly supported the book and discouraged banning it from schools and other libraries. However, this message was only repeated eight times within the representative articles from GOF, which means many fewer people in the audience were exposed to the message (Figure 4). The book supporting messages repeated in these articles exemplifies the ELM factor of rational processes, since the variety of supportive messages encourage readers to think about multiple viewpoints concerning the issue. In addition, these repeated messages acted as strong quality arguments because the creators of the message (journalists, sources, etc.) had to clearly back up their messages with research, including sources such as teachers who believed in the books after reading them, and personal experiences, including children who read the books and used their imaginations. According to the ELM, these rational processes and strong arguments best persuade those people engaging in central processing while reading the information presented in the article.

Finally, the messages surrounding the bestselling nature of the series also surfaced in the representative articles from GOF, although to a lesser extent. In the GOF articles, messages about the book and series sales only occurred eight times (Figure 4). However, the messages operate in the same way as those repeated in POA articles, by illustrating the reactions of others and, therefore, acting as a peripheral cue.

Analysis of this information reveals that the proliferation of the messages in the GOF articles reflects the information gathered through scoring the ELM factors. First, the
most repeated messages (book release party announcements) help strengthen the motivation of readers, thereby encouraging them to engage in central route processing. In addition, the messages supporting the books use rational processes and strong arguments, which are most persuasive to people engaging in central processing. Since the *GOF* articles encourage central processing, these repeated messages focusing on rational processing should help persuade the audience through central factors. Finally, however, the repeated messages focusing on the bestselling nature of the series persuades through peripheral cues instead of focusing on central route persuasion techniques. By looking at these message repetitions, *GOF* articles seem to encourage central processing, but could have used more central processing techniques to meet the persuasive needs of the audience.

**Repetition in both books**

When examining the combined strategy surrounding the release of both books, the media most often repeated messages of the bestselling nature of the books, midnight release parties and support for the quality of the books (Figure 5). These messages perform the same functions in the media throughout the whole series as they did for the separate books: focus on the peripheral factor of the reactions of other people (bestselling nature of books), the motivational factor of unexpected information (midnight release parties) and the central processing factors of strong argument quality and rational through processes (supporting the books).
These repeated messages give consistency to the campaign and make the audience better able to understand and process the messages disseminated. They also emphasize the ELM factors that occur within the media surrounding each book and show a shifting strategy between the two books. After examining the message repetition patterns within the books, a final analysis of the PR strategies used in the book releases can examine the similarities and differences that appeared between the release of POA and the release of GOF.

CHANGE IN STRATEGY

Finally, when looking at the overarching strategies used in the book releases of POA and GOF, a number of other noteworthy differences appeared in the media surrounding each book’s release. The addition of new categories to the GOF media, as well as the content changes in the articles that appeared when comparing the different books, reflect a change in the Harry Potter PR strategy between the releases of the two books.

Article Content Changes

The article groupings for each book were not predetermined; instead, they arose from a study of the media for each book. As a result, three additional article groupings were generated from the media associated with GOF that did not appear in the media associated with POA. These three additional groupings, which including articles concerning “Participation,” “Hype” and “Glitches,” show a change in the PR strategy
surrounding this book, as well as a new view of what material was newsworthy about the 
*Harry Potter* series.

Whereas the article groupings surrounding *POA* almost all consisted of factual and informational articles relating to the actual product, the three additional groupings associated with *GOF* either required in-depth previous knowledge about the series ("Participation"), or focused on stories more removed from the actual product. The grouping entitled “Hype,” for example, includes articles that are not only about the product, but also about the marketing tools and popularity of the product. In addition, the final extra grouping involved “Glitches” that occurred in the publication process, ranging from fans purchasing the book early to Amazon.com not delivering books on time. Before *GOF*, these articles would not have been sufficiently newsworthy for major papers and magazines to print. Only after the public has a greater amount of prior knowledge concerning the product itself, in this case the *Harry Potter* series, does it have the ability to process information regarding side issues springing from the product, such as the intense marketing effort and the glitches associated with the release.

The content also changed within in some articles in the same groupings published surrounding the release of different books. The most prevalent example of this change occurs within the “Anti-Harry Potter” article grouping. In media associated with *POA*, articles focused on the aspects of witchcraft and the occult in books, which could have a negative influence on children. However, this content switched in *GOF* media, which focused on the books as popular children’s novels rather than literature of great value. This content change signals the popularity explosion that occurred between the books. As
the series became more popular, the debate began to focus on people who believed this popular children’s series would not have longevity in the children’s literature world.

**Event Changes**

Another content change within article groupings is one of degree: the number of events published in articles increased significantly between the publications of the two books. The “Book Event” articles from *POA* focused almost exclusively on J.K. Rowling’s American book signing tour. Although these events were significant and relevant, Rowling only visited certain large U.S. cities, including Chicago. There were very few instances of widespread events in bookstores coinciding with the release of this book.

However, the *GOF* articles listed a much larger number of events coinciding with the book’s release, which were mentioned in both the article groupings of “Book Events” and “Book Release.” Although J.K. Rowling did not have a book tour in 2000, the book events that took place in bookstores around the country gained just as much, if not more, media attention as the tour, and reached a more widely spread area. These events took place in bookstores across the country, including smaller cities like Minneapolis, rather than only in large metropolitan areas like Chicago. Articles listed the parties and events taking place at local bookstores, which made the material much more relevant to the local audience. They also encouraged participation in the book’s release in a similar manner as the “Participation” articles, only in physical rather than written form.
By creating these events, Scholastic, Inc. and the individual bookstores were able to better motivate people, as well as give them the ability, to elaborate more fully on the information they received about the *Harry Potter* series. These book release events employed many of the ELM’s motivation and ability factors to encourage elaboration more deeply than a newspaper article could accomplish. For example, events at local bookstores not only made the information relevant to consumers, the events were also presented in a very different format than any other book release at the time. Until this time, only movie theaters opened late to release blockbuster hits like *Star Wars*. For a bookstore to engage in the same action was unexpected. Finally, the unexpected information about these events encouraged people to relay information to others, which is another motivational factor in the ELM. These factors increased the motivation consumers had to elaborate on information provided through traditional media by immersing themselves in the series, rather than only reading messages in a newspaper.

Additionally, these events made the consumer even more able to understand *Harry Potter* related messages, especially through the repetition of these messages. The events were publicized repeatedly in both local and national newspapers, which made the idea of a midnight party more familiar to the public. Even when people were already at the parties, they continued to hear and see messages repeated. These ranged from bookstores teaching wizarding classes, such as Potions and Divination, to other bookstores holding trivia contests (Edwards, 2000). Through these events, participants heard, saw and experienced massive support for the books, as well as the popularity and bestselling nature of the series. This message repetition, along with the motivation,
encouraged by these events further encouraged central processing of the information presented to consumers.

The events not only encouraged people to process the messages centrally, they also used strong central processing factors to persuade these consumers. The strength of the arguments presented at these events, as well as in the publicity for them, made them very persuasive to people engaging in central processing. The articles published before these events especially emphasized strong arguments in order to encourage people to attend (Figure 2c). For instance, many articles emphasized the fun and anticipation present at these events, which are strong arguments for attending any type of late-night or entertainment activity. In addition, simply making the decision to attend such an event involves rational thought processes, a second ELM central processing factor, as consumers weight the benefits of attending the party (e.g. purchasing GOF, having a good time, etc.) against the costs of attending (e.g. staying up late, crowding into a store, etc.). Simply thinking about attending such a party after reading announcements about them involves high amounts of elaboration through the central route.

Finally, the events take into account people engaging in peripheral processing as well. For example, some of the parties expected 1,000 people, which allows consumers to see the reactions of other people (Collins, 2000). These reactions, according to the ELM, can be very persuasive, especially to someone engaging in peripheral processing. In addition, many of these parties involved prizes and giveaways, including one bookstore’s Harry Potter pins (Edwards, 2000). These peripheral cues could have been especially persuasive to those people engaging in peripheral processing, including people who did
not know as much about the *Harry Potter* series before reading about or attending an event.

These midnight release events gave Scholastic, Inc. a way to reach many thousands of fans across the country and create an experience that used many types of both central and peripheral factors to persuade these consumers that *Harry Potter* was a book, and series, worth purchasing.

Scholastic, Inc., as well as the bookstores that held these events, saw a change in the consumer base between the publications of the two books, and took successful advantage of this change. First, the target public had a stronger knowledge base about the series when *GOF* was published than they had when *POA* was released in the U.S. As a result, during the publication of *GOF*, these consumers needed more than the straightforward information they already knew about the books: they needed a way to interact with the books instead of just reading about them. In addition, a much larger number of people knew about the *Harry Potter* series at the time of *GOF*’s publication.

In the months between the publications of the two books, print media articles continued to be published about the books. Over 900 articles were found containing the words “Harry Potter” in a LexisNexis search during the months of November 1999 to May 2000 alone, when there was no book release imminent. This dissemination of information, through traditional media and word-of-mouth, gave Scholastic, Inc. a broader consumer base for *GOF* than it had for *POA*. Since there was a larger number of people, a select city book tour by the author would no longer be an option for the publication of *GOF*. 
Instead, the more widespread book releases encouraged the participation of more readers and further spread word-of-mouth messages about the series.

The additional article topics, as well as the altered content within the same groupings, signal a change in the Scholastic, Inc. PR strategy. Knowing that the public could more easily process information about the books, Scholastic, Inc. and print media could publish articles that do not relate as closely to the actual product. Instead, they added article types that focused on tangential occurrences, including marketing extremes and book release problems, and types that encouraged participation, both through writing to the editors and attending publication events. Each of these outlets incorporated elements of the ELM in an attempt to better persuade the public.

The significance of the results based on this change in strategy, as well as the ELM scores and the message repetition present in the *Harry Potter* articles throughout the public relations campaign, can now be further examined to understand how the results affected attitude change in the target publics.
CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION

This study answered two research questions by examining changes in the ELM tactics and public relations strategies used in print publications, as well as evaluating the usefulness the ELM as a content analysis technique. By analyzing the print media surrounding the second and third novels in the series, the study has drawn two conclusions. First, the ELM tactics and public relations strategy changes that appeared between the two books contributed to the success of the series. Overall, the media surrounding *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, as well as the actual books in the series, provided the target publics with a foundation of prior knowledge that *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* utilized in later public relations campaigns. Second, although using the ELM as a framework for content analysis has some limitations, the model is beneficial when used in this manner. The following discussion examines these conclusions more closely by explaining the impact of the changing strategy on potential consumers of the *Harry Potter* series, as well as the benefits and limitations of using the ELM in as a content analysis tool.

PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY

According to the previously discussed research concerning the ELM, when a person is processing persuasive messages through the central route, that person is more likely to form persistent attitudes, which last for a long period of time, as well as resistant
attitudes, which remain despite counterpersuasion against the formed attitude. In addition, attitude change through central processing can better predict the behavior of a person based on the attitude he or she holds, which, in this study, means that a person would be more likely to purchase a *Harry Potter* book. Since the fundamental purpose of the *Harry Potter* PR campaign is to sell *Harry Potter* novels, the strategies used in the campaign must encourage the audience to buy more books, implying that attitude change through the central route would be most effective. By further discussing the results that emerged from the ELM scores and message repetition found in various articles, as well as the change in strategy made clear through content found in these articles, the effectiveness of the *Harry Potter* PR campaign can be gauged and suggestions for future success of this kind in PR can be made.

**ELM Scores**

The ELM scores assigned to each of the articles showed trends in the articles relating to each *Harry Potter* book, and illustrated a change in strategy from encouraging peripheral processing in *POA* articles to encouraging central processing in *GOF* articles. Further discussion of each novel’s ELM scores follows, including the significance of the processing route encouraged within articles surrounding each book’s release.

*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

By examining the ELM scores assigned to the *POA* articles and the total mean scores of the *POA* articles in motivation, ability, central processing and peripheral
processing factors, it became clear that these articles encouraged peripheral processing and used many peripheral cues to persuade the audience. The articles consistently received low motivation and/or ability scores, with five of the seven articles receiving low mean motivation scores and low mean ability scores. In addition, the article groupings combined received a low mean motivation score of 1.54 and a low mean ability score of 1.54 (Figure 1a and Figure 1b). These low motivation and ability scores signal that the articles published around the release of POA do not give readers the motivation or ability to elaborate upon the messages written in the articles, and, therefore, encourage readers to engage in peripheral processing of these messages.

Since POA articles encouraged readers to engage in peripheral processing, the messages presented in the articles would be most persuasive if they used peripheral cues, such as source expertise and likeability, rewards and punishments, reactions of other people, etc., which would be signaled by high peripheral processing scores. However, these articles scored only a medium combined mean peripheral score of 2.00 (Figure 1d). Although the articles did use many peripheral cues, the medium score illustrates that the articles could have been more persuasive had they utilized even more of these peripheral processing factors.

The POA articles also a received high mean central processing factor score of 2.14 (Figure 1c), which was higher than the mean peripheral processing score of 2.00 (Figure 1d). Since these scores were almost equal, it seems that the POA articles used only slightly more peripheral cues than central processing factors to persuade their readers. One explanation of these similar scores is the channel through which the
messages were communicated. Petty and Cacioppo (1983) explain that arguments presented in print or written format, like those analyzed in this study, are more likely to encourage central processing because a person’s ability to understand the messages is increased. In addition, it is easier to understand more complex reasoning processes, such as those used to increase argument strength and rational thought processes (central factors), when exposed to them in a written format rather than in oral or broadcast formats. The POA articles, therefore, used a significant number of central factors that may have been unneeded to persuade the readers simply because of the written format of these articles. However, the articles did use a number of peripheral cues to persuade the readers, even though the channel of communication inherently lended itself to central processing factors. Either way, the POA articles could have been more persuasive by focusing even more on peripheral cues and using fewer central processing factors.

The ELM also explains that attitudes changed through the peripheral route using peripheral cues are often less persistent and less resistant than attitudes changed through the peripheral route. These persistent and resistant attitudes are more able to predict whether a person will engage in behavior that acts upon the attitudes. Since the POA articles encourage peripheral processing, those people who do become persuaded by the medium level of peripheral cues in the articles will not form persistent and resistant attitudes regarding the Harry Potter series. Instead, the attitudes they form about the novels will be more short-lived and prone to change. The purpose of the PR surrounding the publication of POA, including the print articles released during this time, was to encourage positive attitudes about the series that could lead to the eventual purchase of
the book. Since the *POA* articles encouraged persuasion through peripheral processing and did not use peripheral cues as effectively as they could have, these articles would not have created persistent and resistant attitudes that could predict whether the readers’ would eventually purchase the books in the long-term. However, the short-term persuasion that the articles could have produced may have been sufficient to persuade a consumer to purchase at least one book in the series soon after processing the PR messages. If this was the case, the purchased book itself could have become a persuasive tactic that encouraged consumers to form more persistent and resistant attitudes and purchase future books in the series. Although this situation likely occurred, the PR messages found in print articles did not stress long-term attitude change in themselves.

The persuasion through peripheral processing that occurred in *POA* articles did not negatively effect attitude change, however, since the PR surrounding *POA*, as well as the two previous books, sought to increase the common knowledge readers held about the *Harry Potter* series as a whole. As people read the books and were exposed repeatedly to the messages promoting each book they became more familiar with the series and gradually became more able to centrally process the messages associated with the books. Between the publications of *POA* and *GOF*, a tipping point occurred where the publics were more inclined to centrally process the messages associated with the series than they had been for previous book releases. An examination of the PR articles surrounding *GOF* can illustrate this trend and study the effects of the shift from peripheral to central processing.
Unlike the examination of ELM scores for the *POA* articles, the scores assigned to the individual article groupings and the combined mean scores for the *GOF* articles showed that these articles encouraged central processing in their readers. The majority of the articles received medium to high mean motivation scores, with only three of the ten articles receiving low motivation scores (Figure 2a). In addition, the mean ability scores were even higher than the mean motivation scores for each article, with seven of the ten *GOF* articles receiving high ability scores (Figure 2b), and the combined mean motivation and ability score was a high 2.12 (Figure 2a).

The results of the ELM ability scores show that the large amount of perceived prior knowledge lead to the high mean ability score of 2.33 (Figure 2a). These articles often gave little or no explanation of the *Harry Potter* series, which illustrated that they expected the readers to have at least a basic knowledge of the *Harry Potter* books to best understand the messages presented. Since this was the fourth book published in the series, enough time had passed for information about *Harry Potter* to spread to a wide variety of people through a variety of channels, including traditional media and word-of-mouth. Less than a year before the publication of *GOF*, articles containing information about *POA*, and the series as a whole, were published to coincide with the release of the third *Harry Potter* book, and articles continued to be published in the 10 months between the releases of the two books. These gave more information about the series, which then added to the readers’ background knowledge about the books through the traditional print media.
In addition to print articles, the months in between the releases gave *Harry Potter* fans time to read the *Harry Potter* books and tell friends and family members about the series. Although not taken into account in this study, the *Harry Potter* books themselves acted as persuasive devices. The two years between the release of the first book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, in September 1998 and the publication of *GOF*, the fourth book, in July 2000 gave Scholastic’s audience a significant amount of time to read at least one book. After the PR, marketing and even simple recommendations from friends encouraged people to read one book, the engaging story present in the series motivated readers to find out what was going to happen in the next book. When the audience read the books, they also gained more prior knowledge about the series as they became familiar with the plotline, writing style and characters. Although this study did not measure the word-of-mouth information spread between fans, or the specific effect reading at least one *Harry Potter* novel had on processing routes, it is safe to assume that the level of knowledge significantly increased between the releases of *POA* and *GOF*. By the publication of *GOF*, readers had gained significant amounts prior knowledge about the series through PR, word-of-mouth spread of information and the books themselves. This led to a tipping point where people who were only motivated and able to process information about the series peripherally before the publication of *POA*, became more highly motivated and able to centrally process messages during the release of *GOF*.

The increased amount of prior knowledge significantly affected the ability scores for the *GOF* articles, which also influenced *GOF*’s high combined mean ability and motivation score of 2.12 (Figure 1). The presence of both motivation and ability in the
GOF articles encouraged readers to engage in central processing, since the ELM explains that a person is likely to engage in central processing to elaborate on the messages when both motivation and ability are present. As previously explained, the ELM also explains that engaging in central processing leads to increased levels of persistent and resistant attitudes. The GOF articles that received high motivation and ability scores had the potential to create stronger attitudinal change, but only if they used a large amount of central factors to encourage persuasion in the readers of the messages.

Unfortunately, some of the individual GOF articles, including the “Participation” article, received medium to high scores in both motivation and ability factors, but then did not receive high central processing scores. When looking at these articles individually, they did not always use central factors, including argument strength and rational thought processes, to persuade the readers that were likely to engage in the central processing. These individual articles could have used additional strong arguments and rational thought processes to persuade readers of the benefits inherent in the Harry Potter series.

Even though the individual articles could have more effectively used central factors to persuade readers, most publics for the campaign were exposed to messages from various sources. As a result, the persuasion efforts used in the entire campaign are more important than those used in each individual article. When the mean central processing scores were combined to one total mean central score for the GOF books, the resulting score was a high 2.10 mean central processing factor score (Figure 2c). This suggests that, although some of the individual articles did not effectively use central
processing factors to persuade readers, when viewed as part of the entire PR strategy the articles did effectively use strong arguments and rational thought processes to persuade readers. In addition, the GOF articles saw only a medium mean peripheral score of 1.68, which shows that the articles relied more heavily on the central processing factors than peripheral cues (Figure 2d). This strong use of central processing factors effectively matched the necessary persuasion techniques that the readers engaging in central processing needed to change their attitudes concerning the Harry Potter series.

In addition, the encouragement of central processing within the GOF articles, as well as the high levels of central processing factors, should help the readers form more persistent and resistant attitudes concerning the book and series as a whole. These persistent and resistant attitudes are better able to predict behavior that acts upon the attitudes. In this case, the behavior encouraged by the articles and other PR activities is the purchase of the new Harry Potter book, as well as the purchase of the future books in the series. The PR efforts using ELM persuasion techniques in the GOF articles seemed to literally pay off, since the book had an initial print run of 3.8 million books and many bookstores still sold out of their initial stock within the first weekend of publication.

However, the ELM techniques present in the print articles form only one part of the PR strategy related to the releases of the Harry Potter books. A closer discussion of the message repetition, as well as the strategy changes shown between the books, will further clarify the similarities and differences between the campaigns for the release of POA and the release of GOF.
Repetition

The extensive repetition of positive messages about the *Harry Potter* books throughout the campaigns surrounding both of the books not only inundated readers with arguments supporting the books, it signified a shift in the PR strategy related to the ELM between the releases of the two books. Since the messages most repeated in *POA* articles were peripheral cues, whereas the messages repeated throughout *GOF* articles included more central processing factors, the repetition of the messages mirrored the ELM scores illustrating a shift in strategy from peripheral processing in *POA* to central processing in *GOF*.

The messages that were most repeated throughout the representative *POA* articles were the 22 messages explaining that the *Harry Potter* books were “Bestsellers” (Figure 3). These messages showed the reader that the reaction to messages about the series from a large number of people was to purchase the books, which acted as a peripheral cue to persuade the audience to purchase the books as well. Since the ELM scores discussed in the previous section showed that *POA* articles encouraged peripheral processing, the overarching “Bestseller” message should have been effective in persuading the readers through a peripheral cue. However, even if a person’s attitude was changed by the repeated message, that attitude is less likely to be persistent and resistant to arguments against the *Harry Potter* series in the future, according to the ELM. In addition, the prevalence of peripheral cues are less likely to accurately predict whether a person will act on a newly formed attitude. In this case, the reader may form positive attitudes about
the *Harry Potter* books because they are bestsellers, but that person may not actually purchase the book as a result of this attitude change.

Despite the lack of persistent, resistant and behavior-predicting attitudes formed by the most repeated messages in *POA* articles, these positive messages served a critical purpose in the overall campaign for the *Harry Potter* books. The prevalence of positive messages about the books, including the “Bestseller” message, built a foundation of knowledge in readers about the favorable aspects of the *Harry Potter* series. By constantly reading positive messages in *POA* articles, the audience gained information about the books that became “Prior Knowledge” by the time *GOF* was released about 10 months after *POA*. The ELM scores previously discussed illustrated that *GOF* articles did not explain basic information about the *Harry Potter* series, indicating that they assumed the readers had a large amount of prior knowledge about the series. This “Prior Knowledge” makes readers more able to centrally process messages from the articles. The prior knowledge would not have been possible without the repetition of positive messages in *POA* articles, even if those messages were peripheral cues that could not form persistent and resistant attitudes by themselves. The background knowledge would also not have been possible if the majority of people exposed to the articles had not read at least one book in the series. Again, as people had more time to read the novels, and were encouraged to read the novels by the positive messages about the series, the books became persuasive devices in themselves. In this way, the positive, repetitive messages published about the *Harry Potter* series in the entire two years between the publication of
the first book and GOF encouraged publics to purchase novels in the series, which then increased the strength and number of positive attitudes in formed in readers.

In addition to the greater ability readers had to centrally process messages published in GOF articles, as a result of the repeated positive messages in POA articles, GOF articles also included repeated messages that increased the audience’s motivation to centrally process the messages. The messages concerning “Book Release Parties” were repeated 21 times in the GOF representative articles alone (Figure 4). These articles presented the unexpected information that bookstores would be open late with the sole purpose of selling this book. Unexpected information, such as this, draws attention to messages and motivates readers to elaborate on the information.

The second-most repeated message throughout the representative GOF articles, which emphasized support for the Harry Potter books through rational thought processes and strong arguments (Figure 4), helped increase the effectiveness of persuasion through the central route processing that the motivation and ability of readers had encouraged in GOF articles. By structuring the messages to include multiple viewpoints surrounding support for the books, as well as including a large amount of research to support the claims of the article, the information presented in the articles formed persuasive arguments to readers centrally processing the messages.

Since the ELM scores indicated a high level of ability and motivation present in the articles, and the repeated messages in GOF articles indicated a high level of motivation and ability, the repetition of messages using central processing factors was appropriate in GOF articles to effectively persuade an audience centrally processing the
information. However, the articles could have used more such central processing messages to create more effective persuasion in readers, possibly by increasing the repetition of information such as the “Support of Books” message, which was only repeated eight times in the GOF articles. Even though the use of these factors in GOF articles could be improved through more repetition of messages that included strong arguments and that encouraged rational thought processes, the increased repetition of such messages as compared to POA articles also indicated a shift in strategy between the releases of the two books. It seems that the repeated messages present in GOF articles reflect the desire of Scholastic, Inc. to sell more books by better encouraging people to act on their positive attitudes toward the Harry Potter books. Although the GOF articles did not use ELM strategies perfectly, they did alter the tactics used in POA articles in ways that were likely to increase sales of Harry Potter novels.

Changes in Strategy

As discussed in the previous sections, there was a definite change in PR strategy between the publications of POA and those of GOF. The articles shifted from encouraging peripheral processing around the POA release to encouraging central processing around the GOF release. The increase in motivation and ability, and subsequent encouragement of the central processing route in the GOF articles, showed an effort to make GOF articles form more persistent and resistant attitudes in the readers. Outside the content of the specific articles, a number of interesting elements further supported this strategy change surrounding the books, including the addition of three
article groupings in the *GOF* book release and the extensive use of book release parties for *GOF*.

Although all of the article groupings found in *POA* articles appeared in the *GOF* articles as well, it is significant that three new article groupings also emerged from the *GOF* articles: “Participation,” “Hype” and “Glitches.” Each of these article topics has in common at least one characteristic: the groupings would not have been possible if the audience did not have a large amount of prior knowledge about the books. As discussed in the message repetition section of this study, the *POA* articles repeated messages that increased the knowledge base of the readers, but these articles also repeated topics used in these articles (which then became the article groupings used in the study). Most of the *POA* articles included basic facts about the book, the series and the author, which gave readers a foundation of knowledge they could later use when reading articles about the *GOF* release. When articles were published around the *GOF* release, the readers had more knowledge about the books and could better understand articles that focused on tangential issues, rather than straightforward facts, relating to the books.

The “Participation” articles were especially indicative of the strategy change between the *POA* articles and the *GOF* articles. When these articles asked readers to send in their theories about what would happen in future *Harry Potter* books, or otherwise participate in discussion of the series through the newspapers and magazines, they assumed that the readers had enough *Harry Potter* knowledge, through reading the books and being exposed to media efforts, to answer the questions provided in the articles. After analyzing the *POA* articles, it seems that these articles helped form the *Harry Potter*
knowledge base in readers, and, without this knowledge base, the “Participation” articles would not have been possible, or at least not as prevalent, as they were during the GOF release. This article grouping effectively increased the motivation of readers by increasing the personal relevance of each article through asking for opinions and thoughts. The questions posed in the articles encouraged the readers to think about their personal responses, whether they actually responded to the articles or just thought about their own answers without physically responding. The combination of the motivation to elaborate on the messages (influenced by the personal relevance of the articles) and the ability to elaborate on the messages (influence by the prior knowledge of the Harry Potter series), increased the likelihood readers would centrally process the messages presented in this article grouping.

The three article groupings present in GOF articles grew out of the prior knowledge the audience gained through previous interactions with the Harry Potter series, including the print articles published in relation to the POA book release. This prior knowledge, along with other factors including the personal relevance encouraged by the “Participation” articles, helped readers become more able and motivated to centrally process messages present in GOF articles. These articles also indicate the shift in strategy between the POA articles, which encourage peripheral processing in the readers, and those published for the GOF release, which encourage more central processing in the readers and create more persistent, resistant and behavior-predicting attitudes with effective persuasion techniques.
The widespread book release events discussed in *GOF* articles especially highlights the change in PR strategy, as well as the changes in the audience, between the two books. In *POA* articles, the only event mentioned was the book signing tour engaged in by *Harry Potter* author, J.K. Rowling, who visited a few major U.S. cities including Chicago. Although these events drew large crowds in each city, they could not possibly reach every person who enjoyed the books, especially if those fans lived in small towns. This book tour did gain media attention, but mostly in those few cities, Rowling visited. Even when these book signings were published in widespread, national media, they were not relevant to readers in cities Rowling would not visit, which decreases the motivation readers felt to centrally process the messages in those articles. Although the book tour did help personalize the books, and their author, to those who could attend the signings, the limited reach of the events could not increase the motivation for people to create positive attitudes about the *Harry Potter* series all over the U.S.

However, during the *GOF* book release, more relevant, extensive events took place. Instead of limited book signings, the articles from the “Release” and “Events” groupings explained that bookstores across the nation held release parties, many of them at midnight the night of the *GOF* release. These nationwide book release events provided an opportunity for readers with a foundation of knowledge about the *Harry Potter* series to experience the books outside of reading a basic print article or seeing the series mentioned on television. Since the readers these book events were reaching already knew the basic facts about the series, they were more likely to attend the release parties than those people who had never heard about the books before. As a result, Scholastic, Inc.’s
use of book release parties in relation to the *GOF* book release, but not in the *POA* release, was strongly justified. The basic book tour and media relations used in the release of *POA* familiarized Americans with the *Harry Potter* series. This knowledge then allowed readers to become more able to centrally process messages surrounding the series, including the book release events used in *GOF* and later books. In addition, the general knowledge and interest surrounding the *Harry Potter* books spread between the publication of *POA* and *GOF*, as shown by the drastic increase of media articles found through the LexisNexis search relating to the *GOF* release (over 1000 hits) as compared to the *POA* release (313 hits). As a result, the widespread nature of the *GOF* book release events allowed the series to reach this exponentially expanding audience outside of the traditional media.

These *GOF* book release parties also involved many elements of the ELM that served to increased attitude change in the target audiences. In fact, by simply attending the release parties, readers indicated that they wanted to become more involved with *Harry Potter*. Attendees had to have the motivation and ability to attend the parties, meaning that they were engaging in central processing. The events supported, and even expanded, the persuasive arguments presented in the print articles surrounding the *GOF* release. The motivational factors of personal relevance and unexpected format, for instance, greatly increased the motivation of readers to centrally process information surrounding the books. Since local bookstores held the release parties, people were able to clearly see how the parties could relate to themselves, and the idea that bookstores would stay open late to sell a children’s book was an attention-getting and unexpected
fact. In addition, the repeated messages once people arrived at the book release parties increased the ability of readers to elaborate on information presented to them. The parties emphasized that the *Harry Potter* series was worthy of positive attention by repeating their messages in print articles and through activities taking place in the stores during the parties. Party attendees would become very familiar with these messages as they came to the parties and waited until *GOF* could be sold officially at midnight. The combination of motivation and ability factors present in the *GOF* release parties strongly encouraged central processing of messages in people who attended the parties.

The parties also took advantage of the attendees who were already centrally processing the information they received while at the *GOF* book release. Simply attending such a book release event involves rational thought processing, since a person has to balance the costs and benefits of attending the event, which increases the persuasiveness of messages presented at the event. In addition, the arguments presented for *GOF* at these events were presumably strong, including reasons why the book is worth purchasing. Unfortunately, the arguments actually presented during the book release parties were not publicized in the print media articles studied, so further research would be necessary to discover the specific messages presented at the different events.

The encouragement of central processing, as well as the effective use of central processing factors, found within these *GOF* release parties combine to form strongly persistent and resistant attitudes in those people who attended the parties. These attitudes are especially important in the context of parties, which would end in the sale of the book. Since the ELM postulates that persistent and resistant attitudes are indicative of
behavior that acts upon these attitudes, attendees of the *GOF* book release parties would leave the event with strong attitudes that would last until the publication of the next book in the series, in addition to the purchase of a new novel. Although many of the attendees came to the events already planning to purchase a copy of the book, the events had to continue encouraging positive attitudes to make sure that attendees remained at the events until the book was sold at midnight. By encouraging processing through the central route, the events continued to persuade to ensure that people attending the parties would act upon their positive attitudes toward the *Harry Potter* series by purchasing the current and future books in the series.

The release parties also included one very strong peripheral cue that could speak to those people attending the event who were not motivated or able to process the messages presented, for example, if people attended the event with friends, but were not interested in the *Harry Potter* series themselves. These book release parties clearly showed attendees the reactions of other people in respect to the *Harry Potter* books, which served as a peripheral cue that influenced attitude change in people engaging in peripheral processing. These events could attract up to 1,000 people wanting to purchase *GOF* and participate in the activities provided by the bookstore. By watching the positive reactions toward the series by the people around them, even those attendees engaging in peripheral processing could experience attitude change involving *Harry Potter*. Although this attitude change would probably not last as long, or be as resistant to arguments against *Harry Potter*, as attitude change through the central processing route, even weak persuasion in this instance may be enough to encourage people to purchase the book.
Since the events culminate in the book purchase, people do not have to hold positive attitudes toward *Harry Potter* for very long before facing the decision to purchase a book. As a result, they could be more likely to buy a book than a person who is persuaded to like *Harry Potter* through peripheral processing, but may not have the opportunity to purchase a book for three weeks.

After analyzing the ELM scores attributed to representative articles from *POA* and *GOF*, as well as messages repeated within these articles and the broad strategy changes shown through the content of these articles, it has become clear that the PR strategy shifted between the releases of the two books. Whereas the release of *POA* encouraged peripheral processing and emphasized basic knowledge about the *Harry Potter* series, the release of *GOF* encouraged central processing and utilized both factual information, as well as tangential information, participation and events to encourage attitude change in the audience. This PR strategy change was successful in that the *GOF* book release gained extraordinary media attention and sold almost 1.5 million books in the first weekend through the retailers Barnes & Noble, Borders and Amazon.com alone (Kirkpatrick, 2000). In comparison, during the release of *POA*, a total of only 270,000 copies of the book were sold through all retailers in the first 10 days (Hanson, 1999). Although the PR related to the print articles studied in this research were not the only factors in the success of these books, which could also be attributed to word-of-mouth information dissemination, broadcast public relations and other factors, the print articles played a significant role in giving the audience information about the *Harry Potter* series. These articles could have further increased their persuasiveness by using more peripheral
cues, in the case of POA, or central factors, in the case of GOF. However, they did show a shift in strategy that illustrated a move from encouraging peripheral processing (POA) to central processing (GOF), which can create more persistent and resistant attitude change and better predict the behavior of the audience.

LIMITATIONS

Although the research provided many insights into the PR of Harry Potter, there were a number of limitations present in the methodology. Just one person, for instance, created the article groupings used to analyze the persuasion techniques, as well as the scores each individual article received. Had two or three people coded the data in this research, the final article groupings and scores would have been more reliable. However, the coding chart in Appendix 2 defines the requirements necessary for an article to receive a specific score within a given factor so that the research can be replicated and its reliability confirmed. In addition, to make the task of analyzing the more than 1,000 articles related to the Harry Potter books more manageable, only one article from each grouping was selected for scoring. The choice of only seven articles from POA and only ten articles from GOF limits the results found in the research. These 17 articles represent the over 1,000 articles actually published about the two books during dates studied (August 1999 to October 1999 and June 2000 to August 2000). Therefore, some persuasion techniques could have been missed without studying more of the articles. Using a number of articles from each grouping would have created a more solid foundation for analysis.
In addition, this research did not take into account the number of people actually exposed to the print articles or the total number of media impressions of the articles. As in any evaluation of the reach of PR media messages, measuring this exposure is difficult. Even by gathering the circulation data for each print media source that published the representative articles, it is impossible to know exactly how many people received the newspaper or magazine actual read the article. In addition, these circulation accounts do not take into account people who do not purchase the publication, but read the article anyway or hear about the messages in an article through word-of-mouth. As a result, this study did not use circulation numbers for the publications, but they could have provided a rough estimate as to how many people were exposed to which articles, messages and ELM tactics.

This study also only discussed the ELM techniques used in print media surrounding the book releases. As a result, different techniques could have been used on television or on the Internet than those described in this research. Future studies can examine the different uses of the ELM through alternative media channels. Another interesting communication channel to explore in future research is the role of word-of-mouth spread of product information, in this case information about the Harry Potter books. The structure of this study did not take word-of-mouth marketing into account, except when the presence of this communication appeared in the print media examined. Word-of-mouth is an important way to disseminate information, and its relationship to the ELM and the spread of information could result in interesting future study.
Finally, although the researcher contacted Scholastic, Inc. to gather information about the release of *POA* and *GOF*, including news releases that were sent to various media, Scholastic, Inc. did not respond to requests for this information. Future research studying different uses of the ELM in these news releases as compared to the actual published articles could discover whether using ELM techniques in news releases would lead to the same use of ELM techniques in the final published articles. Also, information about the messages distributed by Scholastic, Inc. could have shown the tactics in which the company engaged and differentiated those tactics from messages and other tactics used by individual bookstores and chains, like Barnes and Noble, that were also promoting the new books. In this study, no distinction was made between Scholastic, Inc.’s strategy and individual bookstore strategies, but this could be an interesting topic for future study.

**ELM AS FRAMEWORK**

The research method relied upon the ELM as a framework for analyzing and judging the effectiveness of the *Harry Potter* articles used in the study. This framework, which has been used to analyze audience members’ reactions to advertisements, has not previously been used as a tool for the content analysis of print media articles. Using the ELM in this novel manner did yield significant results in relation to the *Harry Potter* articles and overall PR campaign.

The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion was a useful framework for analyzing the public relations surrounding *Harry Potter* book releases. Elements of the
ELM clearly surfaced within all of the articles, as well as in the overall strategy for the release of each of the books, which allowed the researcher to find patterns between the persuasive techniques used in the release of *POA* as compared to those strategies used in the release of *GOF*.

The effectiveness of the ELM in respect to the *Harry Potter* book releases also illustrates a possible way to increase PR effectiveness for other publications and products. By introducing *POA* with print articles that included basic information about the series and that encouraged peripheral route processing, a basic foundation of knowledge was created that could form positive attitudes about the product, even if they were not strong and long-lasting attitudes. However, as more of the audience gained a foundation of knowledge about the books by the time of the *GOF* release, readers were able to elaborate more deeply on messages received. As a result, the articles could then encourage central processing, which, if effective central factors are used to persuade the readers, can lead to stronger attitude change concerning a product and a greater likelihood that readers will act on this attitude by purchasing the product. Although the public relations surrounding *Harry Potter* suggest the effectiveness of using this pattern, more research needs to be conducted on other products or publications to see if the same pattern leads to higher sales in other situations as well.

Despite the benefits of using the ELM in studying the *Harry Potter* book releases, a number of limitations emerged that hindered the use of the model. First, although the ELM is not fundamentally a descriptive theory, this study used the ELM in a descriptive manner. For example, the ELM demonstrated that an article contained statements that
could increase the motivation of a reader to centrally process the information, but the model could not predict with absolute certainty whether or not that reader centrally processed the message. When analyzing previously published articles, and using only content analysis to do so, researchers can never be entirely certain that the route encouraged in the articles was the route readers actually chose. In this way, the results found by using the ELM framework in content analysis cannot be assumed to be valid at all times. Instead, the results found through this framework must be validated through additional research to make sure that the use of the same ELM factors generates the same outcomes in varied situations. Only through this additional study can the researcher be assured that similar messages printed in articles lead to similar results regardless of the situation or the individual use of the ELM.

In addition, the ELM is primarily a psychological model involving mental processes in the minds of individuals. Since print articles do not reflect these mental processes, using the ELM as a content analysis tool does not allow the researcher to take individual characteristics of the audience into account. Individual factors, such as a person’s mood or need for cognition, can influence his or her motivation and ability to elaborate on a message. For instance, a person who has just been in an argument with family is often in a negative mood and less motivated to elaborate on information provided in an article than a person in a good mood. A person with a high need for cognition is also more motivated to elaborate on the message than a person with a low need for cognition simply because the person with a high need for cognition always wants to think more deeply about information. Neither of these factors can be easily
influenced by the information in the articles themselves, and articles cannot know the mood of readers or their level of need for cognition. In addition, these individual characteristics cannot be taken into account when analyzing the articles, since researchers also cannot measure the characteristics of the readers.

Personal relevance is another factor that cannot be completely controlled through media messages. The study did measure the ways in which articles increased personal relevance, but some aspects of this factor rely on the individual. For instance, an audience member may have a strong interest in reading children’s books. This person would be likely to read any article that focused on books, even if the article does nothing in itself to increase relevance.

Other individual factors, including personal responsibility for the message, and situational factors, including the levels of distraction surrounding anyone who reads articles, could not be measured in this study. Again, these factors cannot be controlled by PR messages, but do influence the way in which a reader processes messages. In the case of *Harry Potter*, articles cannot make a person feel responsible for remembering information before reading a message. Also, readers are exposed to messages in many different situations that could involve different people, sounds and internal thoughts that draw their attention away from messages. There is little that PR tactics can do to avoid some of these distractions that plague people attending to the information.

By taking individual factors such as these into account, researchers can understand that, when using the ELM as a tool in content analysis, the model can only generate generalizations about how the articles would encourage *most* people to process
the information assuming all individual factors are held equal. These individual factors must be noted when drawing any conclusions from the information gathered through the ELM framework in content analysis, especially in studies such as this that only analyze the messages presented and not the audience members’ characteristics.

Despite these limitations, the ELM did provide a good framework within which to study the persuasion techniques in *Harry Potter* articles. The limitations must, however, be kept in mind when structuring PR campaigns in the future. ELM strategies, however helpful, are not a guarantee of PR success. In the case of the *Harry Potter* series, the ELM factors within this study provides an explanation of the persuasion techniques used in print articles, which are just one aspect of the incredible success of the series. The reasons for the success of the information spread about the series through word-of-mouth, as well as the broadcast messages, Internet sites and other events related to the series, remain a mystery, but further research in this area could shed some light onto these other aspects of the series. Until more information is gathered, however, these areas remain hidden in by the magic of the *Harry Potter* series.
REFERENCES


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FIGURES
FIGURE 1: *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* Analysis

**Figure 1a: Motivation**

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<tr>
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POA Motivation Mean 1.54 (L)

**Figure 1b: Ability**

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POA Ability Mean 1.62 (L)

Total POA Mean 1.58 (L)

Scoring Ranges L=Low  M=Medium  H=High
### Figure 1c: Central

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POA Central Mean 2.14 (H)

### Figure 1d: Peripheral

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POA Peripheral Mean 2.00 (M)

Scoring Ranges L=Low M=Medium H=High
FIGURE 2: *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* Analysis

**Figure 2a: Motivation**

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GOF Motivation Mean 1.90 (M)

**Figure 2b: Ability**

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GOF Ability Mean 2.33 (H)

Total GOF Mean 2.12 (H)

Scoring Ranges  
L=Low  M=Medium  H=High
### Figure 2c: Central

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<td>2.50 (H)</td>
<td>2.00 (M)</td>
<td>2.00 (M)</td>
<td>2.50 (H)</td>
<td>1.50 (L)</td>
<td>2.00 (M)</td>
<td>2.00 (M)</td>
<td>2.50 (H)</td>
<td>1.00 (L)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GOF Central Mean: 2.10 (H)

### Figure 2d: Peripheral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Anti-Harry</th>
<th>Pro-Harry</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Success</th>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Release</th>
<th>Review</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Hype</th>
<th>Glitches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source Expertise or Likeability</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Persuasive Messages</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards and Punishments</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactions of Others</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Peripheral</td>
<td>1.75 (M)</td>
<td>2.50 (H)</td>
<td>1.50 (L)</td>
<td>1.00 (L)</td>
<td>2.00 (M)</td>
<td>2.75 (H)</td>
<td>1.75 (M)</td>
<td>1.25 (L)</td>
<td>1.00 (L)</td>
<td>1.25 (L)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GOF Peripheral Mean: 1.68 (M)

Scoring Ranges: L=Low, M=Medium, H=High
FIGURE 3: *POA* Message Repetition in Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Number of Times Repeated in <em>POA</em> articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Series is a bestseller</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books are good for whole family</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books encourage reading</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for books, which shouldn’t be banned</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Potter is a hero/celebrity</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events draw large crowds</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books are imaginative</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books are high quality</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents should control reading</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare to fairy tales</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books contain evil/occult</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books’ appropriateness in class</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of protests against books</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 4: *GOF* Message Repetition in Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Number of Times Repeated in <em>GOF</em> articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Announcing midnight release parties and sales</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for books, which shouldn’t be banned</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series is a bestseller</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books contain a flat writing style</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hype and marketing effort around books</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-dimensional characters</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books are only short-lived hype</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents should control reading</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcement of release date</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books show a range of ability and emotion</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books are imaginative</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books encourage reading</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times new children’s bestseller list</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 5: Message Repetition in articles from both *POA* and *GOF*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Number of Times Repeated in all articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Series is a bestseller</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcing midnight release parties and sales</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for books, which shouldn’t be banned</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books encourage reading</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books are good for whole family</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1
CONTENT ANALYSIS FORM

Analysis of Harry Potter articles

Motivation:

1) Personal Relevance

2) Unexpected Format/Information

3) Multiple Sources

4) Relaying to another person

Ability:

1) Understanding of the message

2) Number of times a message is repeated (in an article)

3) Prior Knowledge (estimate)
If Central Route:

1) Argument Strength

2) Rational Thought Processes

If Peripheral Route:

1) Source Expertise/Likeability

2) Number of Persuasive Messages

3) Rewards/Punishments

4) Reactions of others

Conclusions:

1) Persistent?

2) Resistant?

3) Can it help predict behavior?
APPENDIX 2
CODING EXPLANATION CHARTS

Motivation Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3     | Articles that list very specific local locations of book events, or articles that directly encouraged participation from readers | *POA* “Release” Article (O’Briant, 1999)  
“Scottish author Rowling will be at the Roswell store at 6 p.m. Oct. 20, and only those books purchased at Hobbit Hall will be autographed” |
| 2     | Article contains information relevant to a general local area, as well as information relevant to people interested in the *Harry Potter* series and people with children | *GOF* “Success” Article (Hoover, 2000)  
“One interesting fact that has emerged from the Potter business is the Pittsburgh connection” |
| 1     | Article relevant to people interested in *Harry Potter* and reading, or to people with children, and published in a national print source | *POA* “Success” Article (Jones, 1999)  
“Harry’s adventures have children reading them six and seven times apiece.”—POA Success, “Magician for millions” |
| 0     | Article does not stress relevant information, and any relevance seen in the article is related to the personality of reader | None |
### Unexpected Format/Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3     | Article is written in a very unexpected format or contains more than 5 mentions of very unexpected information. | *GOF “Success”* Article (Hoover, 2000)  
“Scholastic Press ran off 3.8 million copies of ‘Goblet of Fire’ for its July 8 release, then, after some stores ran out, ordered another 3 million from the printer” |
| 2     | Article uses slightly unexpected format or contains fewer than 5 unexpected information. | *POA “Anti-Harry”* Article (“Parents,” 1999)  
“The books have a serious tone of death, hate, lack of respect and sheer evil” |
| 1     | Article uses very little unexpected information or very few instances of unexpected format, such as using an interesting headline | *POA “Release”* Article (O’Briant, 1999)  
“Sheer Wizardry: Latest Harry Potter Hits Bookshelves” |
| 0     | Article presented in a traditional format and presents no unexpected information. | None |

### Multiple Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Article contains more than 7 sources outside the author and/or publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Article contains between 4 and 6 sources outside the author and/or publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Article contains between 1 and 3 sources outside the author and/or publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Article contains no sources outside the author and/or publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Article explicitly encourages people to talk about the books or take some type of action after reading the article.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Article contains people who are relaying information themselves, implicitly encouraging others to relay their opinion to more people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The article contains information that could entice people to talk about the books, but gives no encouragement to actually talk about them, especially in the instance of book events that could lead to word-of-mouth marketing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Article contained no explicit or implied encouragement to talk about the books.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Ability Factors

#### Understanding the Message

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3     | Articles written with clear, concise language, as well as simple words, so that people of most reading levels can understand | *POA “Anti-Harry” Article (“Parents,” 1999)*
> “Some adults wish Harry Potter would just—poof!—disappear” |
| 2     | Articles written with clear language and shorter sentences, but use some more advanced vocabulary | *POA “Release” Article (O’Briant, 1999)*
> “Perhaps most remarkable of all, parents report that children who once were reluctant to open a book are reading the novels enthusiastically” |
| 1     | Article uses mostly advanced vocabulary, but still clearly written for people who do understand the vocabulary | *GOF “Anti-Harry” Article (Cowell, 2000)*
> “Yet the remarks of scores of reviewers and commentators on both sides of the Atlantic—indeed, as far afield as The Straits Times of Singapore—make it clear that proponents of a minority controversy are prepared to take up the cudgels against the prevailing view of the Potter store, even to brave the accusation that nothing breeds resentment quite like success” |
| 0     | Article uses long, complex, and confusing sentences, as well as very difficult vocabulary | None |

#### Number of times a message is repeated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Articles contain some messages that are repeated more than five times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Articles contain some messages that are repeated between four and five times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Articles contain some messages that are repeated between two and three times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Articles contain no messages that are repeated more than once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Article explains nothing about the background to the books or series and assumes that readers have a strong foundation of knowledge concerning the books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Article explains a limited amount about the series and book, including information about the number of books and overall plotline, but only what is necessary for understanding the article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Article explains many details about the books, including themes and more descriptive plotlines, but does not give a full description of the series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Article explains the books and series in great detail, assuming that the readers have no knowledge about <em>Harry Potter</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Central Processing Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3     | Article uses statistics, clear support and knowledgeable, respected sources to support the written claims | *GOF* “Success” Article (Hoover, 2000)  
“Barnes & Noble, Borders and Amazon.com sold a total of 1.2 million Potters over that weekend. Meanwhile, sales of the earlier books were bumped up enough to put them 2,3, and 4 on the New York Times best-seller list for July 16” |
| 2     | Article uses some evidence or support for claims in more than two instances, but few statistics, examples, sources etc. to completely backup the arguments | *GOF* “Opinion” Article (Hughes, 2000)  
“It’s all pretty standard daydreaming for children. When my other, now-grown-up son was that age, he was planning to be the police chief on Nantucket, living in a trailer with two Labrador retrievers” |
| 1     | Article uses very little support or evidence for the claims presented and uses this limited support in only one or two instances in the article. | *POA* “Pro-Harry” Article (“‘Harry Potter’ series,” 1999)  
“To me, the reason some parents have such an aversion to the books is because of all the violent, terrible things that are happening in the world” |
<p>| 0     | Article uses no evidence or support to backup the claims present. | None |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Articles include evidence, comparisons, multiple sources and extensive encouragement for the reader to evaluate information on their own about the Harry Potter series.</td>
<td><em>GOF</em> “Participation” Article (“What’s next,” 2000) “Datebook wants to know what you think will be revealed. No conjecture is too wild, no plot line too absurd. Please send your theories to Harry Potter, Datebook”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Articles use some evidence, comparisons and sources in more than two instances to encourage the reader to evaluate information about the Harry Potter series.</td>
<td><em>POA</em> “Success” Article (Jones, 1999) “Rowling’s American publishers at Scholastic know all about numbers. They published R. L. Stine’s Goosebumps series and Ann M. Martin’s Baby-Sitters Club. But they cheerfully throw up their hands when asked why Rowling’s books are selling as fast as they can print them”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Articles use only one or two arguments that include evidence, comparison, sources, etc. that encourage readers to evaluate information about the Harry Potter series.</td>
<td><em>GOF</em> “Success” Article (Hoover, 2000) “The New York Times Book Review is now planning its own children’s book list, thanks to Harry, so it can keep its fiction list for adults only”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Articles use no strategies requiring readers to draw their own conclusions about the Harry Potter series based on evidence, comparisons or multiple sources.</td>
<td><em>GOF</em> “Release” Article (Collins, 2000) “Oh yeah, I’m psyched!’ said Rowan, 10, of Hopkins at the mere thought of the book. ‘I’ll be the first one up waiting for the doorbell to ring.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Peripheral Processing Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Expertise/Likeability</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Article cites experts in the field, including children who have read the books, teachers, children’s book experts, etc., and people who seem likable. Additionally, the paper is a very credible source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Article cites either expert sources, such as those listed above, or likable sources, but not both, and the paper is still a credible source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Article cites no more than two likable or credible sources other than the paper and the journalist for the article.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Article cites no source and lists no journalist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Persuasive Messages</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Article contains more than five messages and three to five of those messages are repeated five or more times in that article.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Article contains one to three messages repeated five or more time and an additional three to five messages repeated less than five times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Article contains one to three messages repeated less than five times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Article contains only one message that is not repeated in that article.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Rewards and Punishments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Article explicitly states a reward or punishment the reader can receive.</td>
<td><em>GOF</em> “Release” Article (Collins, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“We’re going to raffle off a trip for two to England on Saturday”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Article implies some type of reward or punishment for the reader that goes beyond the reward of receiving joy from reading the books.</td>
<td><em>GOF</em> “Events” Article (Edwards, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“That’s when ‘Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire’ will be released and you can start reading those 752 pages”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Articles mention only the reward of receiving joy from reading the series or the punishment of receiving harm from reading the series.</td>
<td><em>POA</em> “Success” Article (Jones, 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Harry’s adventures have children reading them six or seven times apiece”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Article mentions or implies no type of reward or punishment in the article.</td>
<td><em>GOF</em> “Success” Article (Hoover, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Harry IV was going to be a huge seller without much effort, but the promoters pushed the book to new heights of hype”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reactions of Others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Article mentions more than four reactions of others who have connections with the books in some way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Article mentions two or three reactions of others in relation to the series.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Article mentions only one person’s reaction to the series or book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Article mentions no other person’s reaction to the series or book.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>