The Effects of Journalists’ Social Media Activities on Audience Perceptions of Journalists and their News Products

Dissertation

By

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Abstract

Social media have recently emerged as one of the primary information sources in the U.S. Journalists and news organizations have been keen on establishing a presence within digital social networks in order to utilize this new channel to build and maintain an audience. However, little is known about the practical implications of social media engagement by journalists for audience perceptions of news.

The present dissertation attempts to investigate 1) the influences of journalists’ social media activities, self-disclosure and interaction with other users, on audience perceptions of the journalists; 2) if the perceptions serve as an important mediator between the social media activities and audience perceptions of the journalists’ news products; and, 3) if and how the direct and indirect effects of journalists’ social media activities are moderated by audiences’ individual differences in journalism orientation (IJO), which refers to which journalism norm audience members lean toward: engagement (public journalism norm) or detachment (objective journalism norm). Given that journalism is in a state of flux between traditional detached approaches and newer attached perspectives, these are important questions to be addressed relative to journalism in new media environments.

An experiment with multiple message stimuli was conducted in the context of a journalist’s Facebook profile, and college students’ perceptions of the journalist and his news product were measured via an online questionnaire. All perceptions were examined
on both personal (e.g., attractiveness) and professional (e.g., objectivity and competence) dimensions.

The results provided empirical evidence that, 1) when it comes to journalists, engaging in such common social media activities as self-disclosure and interaction can significantly harm journalists in terms of their perceived competence although the same behaviors can improve perceptions of their personality. Results on the perceived objectivity dimension were mixed such that objectivity was positively influenced by interactive behaviors whereas it was negatively influenced by self-disclosure via social media; 2) Audience perceptions of journalists, formed based on their social media activities, tended to transfer to their impressions of the journalists’ news products, demonstrating that the indirect effects of journalists’ self-disclosures and interactions via social media on audience perceptions of their news products were mediated through audience perceptions of the journalists in terms of personality and competence although this mediation relationship was not evident in the case of journalists’ self-disclosing activities and the professional-dimension perceptions; 3) These influences of journalists’ social media activities were moderated by audiences’ individual journalism orientation such that the impacts of journalists’ self-disclosure on the journalists’ personal and professional images (in both objectivity and competence) were in general stronger for the audiences oriented to an objective journalism norm, indicating that those with an objective orientation tend to react more sensitively to journalists’ unconventional behaviors.
This set of results revealed that journalists’ conforming to social media norms and acting like ordinary social media users could make not only the journalists but also their news products look personally attractive and friendly, but professionally less competent. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.
Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation work to my loving parents, Joo Hyuk Lee and Jae Shin Ahn, who have taught me the joy of learning and the power of love throughout my life.
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**Fields of Study**

Major Field: Communication
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Chapter 1: Literature Review

Social Media as News Outlets

The U.S. is now fully in the digital age. Eight out of 10 (80%) U.S. adults use the Internet, almost half of all adults (45%) own a smartphone (Mitchell, Rosenstiel, Santhanam, & Christian, 2012), and 31% own a tablet PC (Brenner, 2013). It is clear that news is being consumed through this multitude of digital devices. According to a recent PEW Research Center survey, half (50%) of the U.S. population had obtained news digitally via a computer or mobile device the previous day (“yesterday”) (Kohut, Doherty, Dimock, & Keeter, 2012). Nearly two thirds of smartphone owners (62%) and tablet owners (64%) said they used their devices to get news at least weekly (Mitchell et al., 2012).

As with the increase of mobile news consumption, one of the most dramatic changes in the current digital news environment is the emergence of social media as a news platform (e.g., Greer & Yan, 2010) and as a news source (e.g., Kwak, Lee, Park, & Moon, 2010; Warner, McGown, & Hawthorne, 2012). Social media such as Facebook and Twitter are interactive websites that provide a set of services for managing personal profiles and connecting and sharing information with others. As of February 2013, more than two thirds (67%) of adult U.S. Internet users were using social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook and Twitter with the percentage among individuals aged 18 to
29 as high as 83% (Brenner, 2013). Even among the 30-49 and 50-64 age groups, the percentages were reported as 77%, and 52%, respectively. For those aged 65 and older, the figure was 32% (Brenner, 2013). Although keeping in touch with family and friends is the primary reason Americans use SNS (Baltaretu & Balaban, 2010; Smith, 2011), the sites are also utilized as a venue for accessing a wide variety of other kinds of information as well. In 2011, for instance, approximately 83% of Fortune 500 companies were using some form of social media to connect with consumers (Naylor, Lamberton, & West, 2012).

In the past decade, U.S. news organizations have uniformly embraced social media as an extended news outlet. Viewing services like Facebook and Twitter as opportunities to market and distribute content, news organizations rushed into the social media environment, and enabled users to easily share materials with others (Hermida, Fletcher, Korell, & Logan, 2012). For instance, when Vivian Schiller, senior vice president and chief digital officer of NBC News, was a senior vice president at NYTimes.com, she focused on social media marketing as one of several essential strategies for surviving (Emmett, 2009). She said SNS are “not just a traffic driver but a brand enhancer” (p.3). According to the Pew Research Center, 9% of the traffic to news websites originates from Facebook or Twitter (Olmstead, Sasseen, Mitchell, & Rosenstiel, 2011). Further, the consumption of news via social media is a rising; the percentage of SNS users who reported that they had obtained news on SNS the previous day jumped from 19% to 36% between 2010 and 2012 (Kohut et al., 2012). As users increasingly
share hyperlinks with one another (Hughes & Palen, 2009), it is now commonplace for people to refer to news headlines with word such as “I saw on Facebook that…” (Stassen, 2010). It is well-known that Whitney Houston’s death was announced on Twitter 55 minutes earlier than on the AP wire. It was also been reported that nearly one third (31%) of U.S. adults have deserted a particular – traditional – news outlet because it no longer provided the news and information they had become accustomed to (Enda & Mitchell, 2013).

For news consumers, social media outlets (e.g., Twitter) have characteristics that distinguish them from other media outlets (e.g., newspapers, TV, official news websites) in that the former enable users to subscribe not only to official news organizations (e.g., CNN @CNN or @CNNBRK) and specific news programs (e.g., Anderson Cooper 360° @AC360), but also individual journalists (e.g., Anderson Cooper @andersoncooper). As social media function as a useful tool for promoting individual journalists (Ahmad, 2010), more journalists and news personalities have become keen to establish a presence in social networks and likewise to use social media in promotion (Arceneaux & Weiss, 2010; Butcher, 2009). As of April 2013, The New York Times had more than 2,891,800 subscribers (likes) on Facebook and almost 8,125,700 followers on Twitter. And, individual journalists are increasingly creating and managing their own social media accounts for public consumption (Hermida, 2009). As of April 2013, for instance, Jenna Wortham, a New York Times technology reporter, had more than 489,700 followers on Twitter. Some news organizations encourage their journalists to use social media
(Gleason, 2010) to expand readership and cultivate social media star journalists like Wortham. Famous journalists or TV personalities often function as a path that connects Internet users to their news organizations’ social media accounts. Relatively unknown journalists also try to tap into larger audiences and earn loyal fans by actively utilizing social media. This phenomenon has even been described as journalists’ “romancing new communities by blogging and posting updates and stories on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook” (Emmett, 2009).

As a result, nearly one quarter (23%) of SNS users who are also online news consumers follow news organizations or individual journalists on SNS (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2010). For the consumers, having journalists as “friends” in their social networks is a unique experience to communicate or interact with journalists online. It is a new opportunity offered through the new media environment. If people “friend (on Facebook)” or “follow (on Twitter)” a journalist, whenever the journalist posts something on his or her wall, it appears on their news feed page, which possibly makes people feel as if the well-known public figure personally delivers a message to them. This interpersonal feeling of social media posts may be the reason many users who are not even particularly interested in following news often follow journalists on social media sites. For instance, Anderson Cooper’s personal Tweeter account has gained more than 3,993,200 followers so far, which is almost 20 times larger than 245,700 followers of the official Twitter account of his news program (i.e., Anderson Cooper 360°; as of May 8, 2013). While the traditional news industry is suffering from the steady and
consistent decline in audience, social media are certainly a promising alternative channel of news.

**Previous research.** The rise of social media as a news platform provides an interesting context for scholars to explore. Indeed, social media have recently become a research focus for scholars from various fields such as communication (e.g., Ellison, 2007; Lasorsa, 2012, Stassen, 2010; Warner, McGown, & Hawthorne, 2012), psychology (e.g., Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008; Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009; Wilson, Fornasier, & White, 2010), information science (e.g., Jansen, Zhang, Sobel, & Chowdury, 2009; Lerman & Ghosh, 2010), business/marketing (e.g., Carmichael, 2012; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Labrecque, Markos, & Milne, 2011; Mansumitrchai, Park, & Chiu, 2012; Rettberg, 2009), education (Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, & Witty, 2010), and computer science (e.g., Kwak et al., 2010; Sankaranarayanan, Samet, Teitler, Lieberman, & Sperling, 2009). From a mass communication perspective, the uses and gratifications paradigm is one of the most common theoretical frameworks used in approaching social media during its very early stage of development. Relative to new communication technologies in the 21st century, the uses and gratifications framework still focuses on the same basic questions of why people become involved in one particular type of mediated communication or another and what gratifications they receive from doing so (Ruggiero, 2000). While remaining largely within this purview, although often without mentioning the theory, numerous scholars have addressed the purposes of social media use (e.g., Donath & Boyd, 2004; Jansen et al., 2009; Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield,
2008; Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004; Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009; Ross, Orr, Sisic, Arseneault, Simmering, & Orr, 2009; Sheldon, 2008; Trammell, 2005; Waters & Ackerman, 2011), sometimes focusing on specific social media outlets such as Facebook (e.g., Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Joinson, 2008; Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2011) and Twitter (e.g., Ariyachandra, Crable, & Brodzinski, 2009; Chen, 2011; Java, Song, Finin, & Tseng, 2009), sometimes focusing on specific age groups (e.g., Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010; Livingstone, 2008; Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008), and sometimes from an intercultural or comparative perspective (Baltaretu & Balaban, 2010; Grant, Moon, & Gran, 2010; Knight, 2012; Trammell, Tarkowski, Hofmokl, & Sapp, 2006; Waters & Lo, 2012).

In the field of journalism, scholars have examined how mainstream media are responding to the emergence of social media (Harrison & Barthel, 2009; Hermida & Thurman, 2008) and what journalists do with the alternative media outlets (e.g., Java et al., 2009; Lasorsa, Lewis, & Holton, 2012). Scholars interested in issues related to the diffusion of innovations, in particular, have examined how social media as an innovation has become diffused in society (e.g., Chang, 2010; Vishwanath, 2009). Others have combined the diffusion approach with network analysis, conceptualizing the processes through which social media are adopted as the diffusion of an innovation through networks of social media users (e.g., Ausserhofer & Maireder, 2012; Deroian, 2002; Holton, 2012; Kwak et al., 2010; Verweij, 2012). Some media scholars have treated social media as a mass communication channel and tested the credibility of the channel or
messages it transmits in comparison to other news channels (e.g., Banning & Trammell, 2006; Johnson & Kaye, 2004, 2009; Schmierbach & Oeldorf-Hirsch, 2012; Sweetser, Porter, Chung, & Kim, 2008), whereas other scholars have envisioned social media interaction as mediated-interpersonal communication (e.g., Lewis & George, 2008; Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, Westerman, & Tong, 2008).

Political communication scholars have focused on the potential of social media as a new public sphere in promoting civic engagement, and they have revealed that informational social media uses (e.g., social media uses for news) can facilitate democratically desirable outcomes such as political participation (e.g., Gil de Zuniga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012; Hampton, Goulet, Ranie, & Purcell, 2011; Nermeen, 2011). Meanwhile, the fields of international communication and media history have engaged in heated discussions about the power of social media to bring down autocratic regimes in such historic cases as Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. Some scholars have argued that social media have made possible the fast dissemination of news and thus provided the basis for the formation of an extensive network of protesters and massive political actions on an unprecedented scale in those countries (e.g., Dunn, 2011; Howard & Hussain, 2011; Shirky, 2011). However, others have argued that the role of social media in the “Arab spring” has been exaggerated (e.g., Aday, Farrell, Lynch, Sides, & Freelon, 2012).

**Gaps in the literature.** Though the theoretical approaches and the studies born of them briefly outlined above have succeeded in shedding light on various dimensions of social media use relative to news, there are still a number of gaps to address in the
literature. Most previous studies have explored the needs and uses of content providers (e.g., link posters) who create or disseminate information on social media sites. Yet, few studies have focused on content consumers who process the posted information (e.g., audiences). Although some studies have looked at the effects of news or information consumption via social media, such studies have focused on visible behavioral outcomes such as political discussion and participation, rather than on addressing a variety of perceptual effects. Moreover, most social media studies revolved around making meaningful connections between social media uses and the outcome variables available in survey data while less effort has been expended to investigating causal effects on user perceptions based on experimental methods.

However, individuals must perceive a person or an object in their environment and form an impression before acting in relation to the person or object. Usually, perceptions become a foundation for impressions, and based on the impressions, attitudes are formed, and actions/behaviors taken. Thus, before proceeding to a consideration of the behavior stages, it is important to understand what influences individuals’ perceptions and impressions.

Perceptions and impressions are connected concepts. Perceptions refer to the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information in order to understand the environment (Schacter, Gilbert, & Wegner, 2011). Impressions refer to how an individual perceives another person or object and are formed by integrating various bits and pieces of information about the target person or object (Reber, Allen, &
Within the specific context of social media news consumption, however, little is known about the step between exposure to the information via social media and the subsequent perceptions of audiences in regard to the information provider. For instance, questions remain concerning how audiences (i.e., news consumers such as readers and viewers) form impressions of journalists they encounter on social media sites and their news products. *What do audiences see when they are exposed to a journalist’s news posts? What cognitive or affective mechanisms are at work in the formation of audience perceptions of the journalist and his or her news products? What other factors may influence audience perceptions or impressions of journalists or news? How do the evolving journalism norms interact here?* These are important questions to be addressed relative to journalism.

However, relatively few attempts have been made to explain this process within a theoretical framework. Moreover, most of those previous studies adopted theories grounded in the traditional mass communication model (e.g., uses and gratifications, diffusion of innovation), and have not considered theories from interpersonal communication (e.g., uncertainty reduction theory), social psychology (e.g., expectation violation), or computer-mediated communication theories grounded in interpersonal communication (e.g., social information processing theory). Those theories from neighbor areas will bring different lenses to this issue, and with these different lenses will come different questions, and the different questions will produce new knowledge. Given that a number of journalists manage their own social media accounts and given that news
consumers are increasingly exposed to these accounts, it is important for journalism scholars to understand how the information is interpreted and utilized as cues influencing the consumers’ impression formations and decisions. Likewise, it is crucial that journalists and news organizations know how their social media engagements can influence audience perceptions and how audiences’ journalism orientations moderate the effects. It is the charge of this dissertation to address this gap in the literature.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

**Social information processing (SIP) theory.** This dissertation focuses on the notion of normative journalism values in the context of journalists’ social media practices. More specifically, it considers the implications of individual journalists’ self-disclosures and interactions via social media for audience perceptions of the journalists and their news products. The basic assumption of this inquiry is that human beings are social information processors who seek, exchange, and interpret social cues in any given environment in order to make sense of others, whether they are online or offline. In traditional mass communication, particularly in the news channels, social cues about individual information providers (e.g., journalists) are few. In social media, however, social information is more commonly being supplied and exchanged, and the interaction occurs even between audiences (i.e., news consumers) and professional journalists (i.e., news providers) who have been traditionally detached from audiences. This availability of social cues makes journalists’ social media communication a unique and important
context for journalism scholars to examine. By taking the SIP perspective and viewing audiences as social information processors, we can look at variables that the previous research has not taken under consideration.

The approach governing this dissertation moves beyond the boundaries of the mass communication discipline where the uses and gratifications perspective has dominated the study of social media. The dissertation uses a computer-mediated communication (CMC) theory (i.e., social information processing (SIP) theory of CMC; Walther, 1992) as a basis for the story. SIP theory offers a counter-argument to the pessimistic views on CMC that predate it: Early theorists argued that CMC can never be as efficient as face-to-face (FtF) communication because CMC does not allow for the nonverbal, social context cues that are available in most face-to-face settings (e.g., gestures and facial expressions) (e.g., Calhoun, 1991; Dubrovsky, Kiesler, & Sethna, 1991; Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976). This approach and similar positions are collectively called the cues-filtered-out approach (Culnan & Markus, 1987).

However, according to SIP theory, online communicators are also motivated to affiliate with others, and it is possible for individuals who communicate via computer to form impressions of distant others and develop interpersonal or business relationships with a similar level of accuracy to those of face-to-face (FtF) communicators although it may require more time to exchange social information (Walther, 1992). SIP theory assumes that as messages continue to accumulate over time, relationships formed through CMC should approximate similar levels of development as those formed FtF.
communication. Contrary to the previous cues-filtered-out perspectives that CMC has fundamental limitations as an efficient form of communication, SIP argues that CMC is not necessarily inferior to FtF communication in terms of either impression formation or relationship building because CMC users draw on whatever limited number of cues are available in the environment to make up for the absence of nonverbal communication. In other words, SIP highlights the ability of humans as social information processors to identify, deploy, and interpret the social cues in CMC in order to convey relational information that would normally have been expressed through nonverbal cues. This SIP approach provides a foundation for the present dissertation, which assumes that people have the capacity to form impressions of unknown others whom they encounter online.

Cue research from SIP perspective. A number of studies have supported the fundamental claim of SIP which is, when motivated to form impressions and develop relationships, CMC users employ verbal relational cues at their disposal to achieve a comparable level of relational communication as that which is achieved by FtF communicators who use multiple verbal and nonverbal cues. Whereas FtF interactants deployed various nonverbal cues, computer-mediated interactants employed more verbal cues to reduce uncertainty over the course of the communications (Walther & Tidwell, 1995). The cues utilized in CMC include emoticons and affective scripts (Utz, 2000; Walther & D’Addario, 2001) and chromenics, or time-related cues such as the time of day a message was sent and the time lag until a reply was received (Walther & Tidwell, 1995). In an extended research on the cues in CMC, some studies have examined the
manner in which social information is sought and acquired, and found that computer-mediated communicators actively made use of interactive uncertainty-reducing strategies such as self-disclosure and personal question to obtain more social information and achieve relational goals (Pratt, Wiseman, Cody, & Wendt, 1999; Ramirez, 2001; Ramirez, Walther, Burgoon, & Sunnafrank, 2002; Tidwell & Walther, 2002). In the development of interpersonal impressions, CMC users devoted more conversations to disclosures and questions than FtF communicators and the questions were more intimate than those of FtF communicators (Tidwell & Walther, 2002). CMC users adopted not only the strategies available through other communication forms, but also several advantages otherwise unavailable in FtF interaction such as searches of electronic postings and archives (Ramirez et al., 2002). As a result, it was found that differences in communication channels (i.e., whether it is CMC or FtF communication) did not exert as much influences as communicators’ motivations in conveying affinity (Walther et al., 2005). These results demonstrate that social cues matter greatly in CMC (Tidwell & Walther, 2002).

Although the SIP perspective is now regarded as the mainstream view of CMC by communication scholars, still lacking is empirical validation of the theory in light of audiences’ impressions of the social information providers. While most SIP studies focused on comparing communicators’ information seeking behaviors in both mediated and FtF communication situations and recognized online mediated communicators’ active uses of social cues and consequential relational confidence in a general way, less
scrutiny has been placed on the concrete implications of providing social cues for the way the information provider is perceived by others. In other words, although it is known that social cues matter in CMC, it is still not clear how the cues matter in consideration of different dimensions of impressions and evaluations. As most social media users are somehow providing social information on social media sites without knowing its concrete consequences, it is important to examine the practical implications of it not just for information seekers (impression formers), but for information providers (impression managers), which is an understudied area.

In addition, little attention has been paid to SIP relative to newer media environments. It may be because the theory was developed with simple, text-based CMC situations such as emailing or instant messaging in mind. However, as the simple CMC circumstances in which only text-based asynchronous communication is available are becoming rare, it is time to consider the theory within some current, newer CMC contexts where more diverse cues are available. One of the contexts is the social media interaction. Information provided by Internet users tends to be stored for years and available online for public consumption beyond the people for whom it was originally intended, thereby offering valuable insights to information seekers, and the phenomenon is more apparent in social media environments. Social media users can easily locate others’ profiles on which they can see a history of the profile owners’ postings and interactions with other users. Collecting and interpreting this kind of available online information can be done even without the target’s knowledge (Ramirez et al., 2002). Although social media
profiles provide visual cues such as photos, displaying and seeing photos on others’
online profiles are not equivalent to exchanging all kinds of contextual, nonverbal
communication cues with them as in FtF conversations. As those cues are still lacking in
the social media context, it is appropriate to apply the SIP theory to audiences’
impression formations of others via social media.

Consideration of the social media settings in SIP studies opens the door to
inquiries about public figures as social information providers. Numerous public figures
from politicians to journalists manage presences in social media, and it is worth
investigating how social information provided by them is selected and interpreted by
audiences in their impression formation or evaluation processes. As there is a variety of
dimensions in which public figures are evaluated, the consequences of social media
activities can be explored in a larger picture by turning our attention to the case of public
figures.

The present dissertation focuses on the utility of social cues and its perceptual
implications in the context of journalists’ social media communication. It attempts to
identify causal relationships between journalist’s social information supplies via social
media and audience perceptions of the journalists and their news products by employing
experimental methods. Approaching news audiences as social information processors
provides a useful lens through which to examine how news and news providers are
perceived and evaluated on social media sites. Traditionally, journalists’ delivery of news
has been regarded as a fact-supplying process which has nothing to do with social or
relational cues. Taking the SIP approach to journalists’ social media communication—asking about the social information processing, presuming that social cues matter in journalists’ news delivery as well—can create problems for journalists who have traditionally been considered as distant, public entities. However, the tenets of SIP open the door to many new questions, and it is important for journalism scholars to adopt the SIP perspective, as it forces researchers to look at what is occurring within social media in a unique way relative to the questions traditionally asked at journalism schools. For instance, the types of variables focused on via SIP are not those focused on by journalists, and the ways in which audiences mix and match online cues in an effort to form an impression of journalists or news products has not received sufficient attention from journalism scholars. The new foci come as a result of a new theoretical lens, and so does new knowledge.

**Conflicting Journalistic Norms and Social Media Norms**

**The objective journalism norm (Journalism of detachment).** For journalists, there are additional normative considerations to review. The traditional role of journalists as outlined within normative theories is to provide objective, detached, and accurate reporting without inserting their own views into the news and thereby distorting or intervening in it (McQuail, 2010). Since Lippman (1922) argued for the need to apply the scientific method to news reporting, objectivity has been probably the most central concept in media theory relating to information quality (McQuail, 2010). Objectivity has
been referred to as “the emblem” (Schudson, 1981, p. 9), the “cornerstone principle,” and “one of the identifying features” of U.S. journalism (Munoz-Torres, 2012). It is also a popularly requested quality for professional journalists. It has been reported that four of the five most widely used modern textbooks specifically tell students to be objective (Mindich, 2000).

Although objectivity is a common word in journalism studies and practices, it is an ever-evolving, elusive concept (Streckfuss, 1990; Holbert & Zubric, 2000). Generally, objectivity in journalism has been understood as a synonym for neutrality or for the separation of facts from values or opinions (Schudson, 1981). Schudson defines the belief in objectivity as “a faith in facts,” “a distrust of values,” and “a commitment to their segregation” based on the positivistic assumption that “one can and should separate facts from values” (pp. 5–6). News should not only distinguish facts from opinions, but it should also be factual. According to this perspective, a journalist functions as a neutral mediator between real-world events and the public (Ruigrok, 2008). News is supposed to be a reflection of facts or reality, as “an account of something real” (Campbell & Wolseley, 1961, p. 6) or as something that “has actually happened” (Harris, Leiter, & Johnson, 1981, p. 27). Therefore, the content of the news depends on the characteristics of the events, not on the journalist who is covering those events (Ruigrok, 2008). Values, on the other hand, are “an individual’s conscious or unconscious preferences for what the world should be” (Schudson, 1981, p. 6), which are ultimately subjective and should be separated from facts. Objective journalists are not supposed to censor information, select
only the facts that suit them, or “be in anybody’s or any organization’s pocket” (Hadwin, 1980, p. 29).

Another characteristic of objective journalists is their detachment from political parties, violence, and certain classes of audiences such as the elites (Mindich, 2000). The underlying idea of this detachment is that journalists do not serve certain people. Traditionally, journalists worked within a private or non-public sphere, then delivered the results in public (Karlsson, 2011). By using certain procedures that were not easily discernible to the news consumers and keeping a distance from them, journalists could avoid the risk of being caught red-handed and losing authority (Tuchman, 1972). In the traditional media era, only the final news products went public and few concrete details about the processes of information gathering and producing were ever disclosed. According to Meyrowitz (1985), “in general, whatever dimensions of the rehearsal become visible to the audience must be integrated into the show itself; whatever backstage time and space remain hidden can still be used to perfect the performance” (p. 47). Thus, it was strategically important to journalists to control what to reveal and what to hide. Journalists were to be detached from audiences and not informed of these decision-making processes. This detachment norm gave journalists a certain authority although it also meant that they could appear to be somewhat distant and unfriendly.

Journalistic independence was acknowledged as a related principle, as independence is a necessary condition of detachment (McQuail, 2010).
Finally, objectivity in journalism also places importance on the accurate reporting of factual information. Particularly in recent decades, the norm of objectivity in journalism has evolved from strict neutrality or detachment toward accuracy, balance, and fairness (Ryan, 2001); objectivity became something that could be obtained in the process of news reporting by checking facts for validity, attribution, and accuracy (Holbert & Zubric, 2000).

Neutrality, detachment, and accuracy, however, all remain important qualities of objective journalism. For instance, McQuail (2010) classifies the main features of objectivity in news as first, “the adoption of a position of detachment and neutrality towards the object of reporting,” second, “lack of partisanship (i.e., not taking sides in matters of dispute or showing bias),” and third, strict adherence to “accuracy and other truth criteria (i.e., relevance and completeness)” (p. 200). Mindich (2000) also offers the following as the three central standards of objectivity: detachment (ensuring that “the facts are doing the talking, not the reporter’s own preconceived notions”), nonpartisanship (offering “both sides of each story”), and balance (providing “undistorted reporting”).

This objectivity standard is the dominant ideal for a professional journalist (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). It is the standard according to which practitioners, critics, and scholars scrutinize journalistic practice (Ruigrok, 2008). Lippmann (1963), the main commentator arguing for objective reporting, focused on expunging biases, sensationalism, and ideologies from reporting. By providing unembellished and unbiased
factual information from which people could draw their own conclusions, objective journalism was believed to raise the credibility of the profession of news reporting (Holbert & Zubric, 2000). Thus, the word objectivity came to invoke “notions of science” and “ideas of professionalism” (Tuchman, 1972, p. 660). In particular, detachment and accuracy were associated with such professional qualities as journalistic competence. When a news story is judged as lacking objectivity in terms of any of the three standards, the news writer, or his or her quality as a professional journalist, can become an object of criticism.

The idea of objective journalism was introduced with the rise of the Associated Press, the first American wire service, which was incorporated in the 1840s (Schudson, 1981). Before that, and even for several decades after the AP was established, subjective reporting from avowedly partisan viewpoints was common in U.S. newspapers. Meanwhile, the AP by offering nonpartisan reporting attempted to publish its stories in newspapers with different political allegiances as a survival strategy in the marketplace. However, according to Schudson (1981), it was only after World War I that the idea of objective reporting based on facts prevailed as a dominant discourse among U.S. journalists. The impact of the propaganda machines of World War I led journalists to recognize that the world could be constructed/manipulated by interested parties and that their reporting could be implicated. Thus, journalists started to view news as itself a social construct, such that they began to submit “facts” to procedures designed to ensure their veracity. Over time, news reports have become, or at least are expected to be, “a
person’s statements about the world” that can be “trusted [to hold up] if they were submitted to established rules deemed legitimate by a professional community” (Schudson, 1981, p. 7). Reflecting this perspective, news was redefined as “new information about a subject of some public interest that is shared with some portion of the public, or, in short, what is on a society’s mind” (Stephens, 1988, p. 9). This constructivist view led to the development of professional standards in journalism.

Critics of the objective journalism norm argue that perfect objectivity is not a realistic goal, that it is impossible for humans to describe a single correct version of reality without any value judgment involved. Even Lippmann, (1922) in whose view journalists were featured as experts who connected the public (“bewildered herd”) to policymakers, acknowledged that a journalist’s version of the truth would still be subjective. He realized that no one could refrain from constructing his/her own reality; i.e., a “pseudo-environment” or “the pictures in our heads” (1922). However, it should be noted that Lippmann originally argued for an objective method of journalism, rather than objective outcome (Holbert & Zubric, 2000). McQuail (2010) also asserts that objective journalism is more of an approach to the process of information gathering and storytelling rather than an achievement, whereas much criticism of objective journalism focuses on the final product (e.g., Fallows, 1996; Jackson, 1997). Recognizing the shifting focus, scholars now conceptualize objective reporting as balanced coverage that conforms to prevailing social standards of fairness rather than coverage that offers an unadulterated view of naked reality (Olson, 1994). According to this conceptualization,
journalistic objectivity is not impossible to achieve, however, the definition is somewhat modified (Hadwin, 1980). In another effort to define the objectivity norm in a way that renders it realizable, Westerstahl (1983) claimed that information provided by journalists should be (a) objective in the sense that it is accurate, honest, sufficiently complete, and true to reality, (b) reliable in the sense that it separates fact from opinion and is essentially factual, and (c) balanced and fair (impartial) in the sense that it reports alternative perspectives and interpretations in a non-sensational, unbiased way, as far as possible.

In sum, the objectivity norm encourages reporters to gather and present facts to the public in a detached, fair, and balanced way. This objective journalism norm has prevailed as a significant principle of journalistic professionalism. A recent study in which 242 codes of ethics in 94 countries were analyzed found that the traditional objective journalism paradigm still dominated: there was a rather consensual perception on the journalistic norm of neutrality and detachment from society (Himelboim & Limor, 2011). These findings imply that many people still invoke this concept of objectivity—neutrality, detachment, and accuracy—when they think about professional journalism and journalistic ideals. Objectivity is also frequently cited by reviews on periodicals.¹

¹ For example, a review titled “A Matter of Trust,” published in The Columbia Journalism Review, J. J. Goldberg (2009), editor-at-large of the newspaper The Forward, examined international press coverage in terms of objectivity and political bias of stories of atrocities committed by the Israel military during its incursion into the Gaza Strip in late 2008 and early 2009. Another review published in the same publication criticized U.S. journalist Philip Gourevitch’s positive portrayals of Kagame, the Major General of Rwanda who would later become president, after the 1994 genocide (McConnell, 2011).
The public journalism norm (Journalism of attachment). The late 1980s saw the emergence of self-critiques among journalists who were concerned that they were failing to address the public as active participants. These discussions gave birth to a newer journalistic norm called public journalism. Public journalism is called “a theory and practice that recognizes the overriding importance of improving public life” (Rosen, 1993, p. 53). Rosen opposes the notion of objectivity according to which journalists are required to disengage from all dimensions of community life. Instead, he encourages a journalism defined by active attachment to and participation in community life on the part of the journalist. By placing the journalist in the sphere of public life and by creating a dialogue between politics, journalism, and citizens, public journalism aimed to act as a catalyst for citizens’ involvement in finding solutions to public problems (Haas, 1999). In other words, public journalism attempts to focus on journalism’s mission of public service (Ruigrok, 2008). In this paradigm, the role of journalism is not only to uncover societal problems, but also to initiate and sustain public debate about the problems among citizens by providing the information they need to engage in discussions and to make decisions (Voakes, 1999). Instead of passively listening to public commentary, public journalism should “present independent research on alternative public views so that citizens can be informed in their public judgment” (Voakes, 1999, p. 759). Because of this involvement, public journalism journalists are also referred to as participant journalists (Johnstone, Slawski, & Bowman, 1976).
This notion of a specific public role for journalism, or a journalism of attachment, arose from heated debates during international conflicts such as the Bosnian War in 1990s. After the Bosnian War, scholars and practitioners criticized the coverage of the warfare, and suggested more comprehensive approaches to conflicts. Notably, former BBC war correspondent Martin Bell (1997) criticized what he called “bystanders’ journalism,” which attempts to offer war coverage in a neutral way such that it concerns itself more with the circumstance of war, such as military formations, weapons, strategies, maneuvers, and tactics than with the human costs of it. Bell (1997) distinguished what he called the “journalism of attachment” from bystanders’ journalism, and argued that journalists should record the human and emotional costs of war in an attached manner (journalism of attachment) rather than simply acting as “transmission vehicles” for governmental or military sources (bystanders’ journalism). Journalism in this approach, or the journalism of attachment, concerns itself more with people—those who provoke wars, those who fight them, and those who suffer from them. In that sense, unlike cold, objective journalists, public journalists tend to be seen as being more humane and warm-hearted by the audience.

The journalism of attachment takes on the responsibility of distinguishing between right and wrong and between the good guys and bad guys. Journalists, as participants in the conflicts, are encouraged to engage in and foster public deliberation. It is commonplace now that journalists wish to play a role in ending a conflict, such that they take the side of the main victims of the war as opposed to the main perpetrators of it.
Based on their own opinions, they argue for their preferred solution to the conflict. In a similar vein, it has been argued that “journalists cannot remain detached or neutral in the face of modern evils like genocide in Bosnia or Rwanda, but should side with the victims and demand that something-must-be-done” (Hume, 1997, p. 4). Overall, advocates of the journalism of attachment see their actions as arising from good will and as being performed in the general interest of humanity.

Objectivity is still pursued in the journalism of attachment but more in the sense of factual accuracy rather than in the sense of strict neutrality. Although separating journalism from politics still matters in public journalism (Rosen & Merritt, 1994), attached war journalists tend to have a framework in mind in regard to how they will cover a conflict (Kepplinger, Brosius, & Staab, 1991). Their practices include selectively quoting so-called “opportunе witnesses” and other sources that support the journalists’ political stance or editorial line (Hagen, 1993, p. 320). In this way, they highlight or downplay certain events or statements in order to support their own opinions (Ruigrok, 2008). The prevalent framework as well as journalists’ understanding of people involved in the conflicts (e.g., who is the victim) and opinions (e.g., who they think is to blame) can influence news coverage. Attached journalists are less afraid of taking sides or revealing their opinions (Ruigrok, 2008) than are journalists striving for objectivity. In fact, the approach of the journalism of attachment allows journalists to send audiences “relational communication cues” (Burgoon & Hale, 1987) that could affect or strengthen perceptions of immediacy, trust (receptivity), and similarity.
This attached approach has been taken up by numerous journalists, including some very well known people, among whom are Christiane Amanpour and Roy Gutman in the US and Ed Vulliamy, Maggie O’Kane, Johnathon Steele in the UK, as well as Bell from the BBC. The Dutch media’s coverage during the Bosnian war is also considered an example of the journalism of attachment. By providing a stereotypical picture of the war, the Dutch media created a framework within which the Bosnian war was interpreted in the Netherlands (Wieten, 2002). A clear goal of attached journalists in Bosnia was that of leading a public debate in the hope of triggering a military intervention in order to set free the victims of the war (Ruigrok, 2008). According to Bell (1997), journalism is “not a neutral and mechanical undertaking,” but “a moral enterprise” (pp. 7–16). CNN war correspondents in Bosnia who also adopted this approach argued that journalists’ objectivity could be achieved not by treating all sides equally, but by giving all sides a fair hearing (Gilboa, 2006). The rejection of strict journalistic neutrality was justified as a consequence of a moral imperative to stand up to wickedness (Tumber & Prentoulis, 2003).

Although the concept of public/attached journalism was developed through debates on war coverage, its principles apply both in war and peace. Regardless of the presence of war, public journalism seeks to engage in public discourse, foster civic responsibility, and encourage citizens to take ownership of community problems and make informed judgments (Holbert & Zubric, 2000). The fundamental goal of public journalism is to provide the public with the information they need to address and solve
mutual problems (Bowman, 1997). Such values as accuracy and independence are retained in public journalism, but due to efficiency concerns, it is not plausible that journalists simultaneously provoke the public promptly and provide the most accurate factual information possible at the same time (Holbert & Zubric, 2000). This public journalism approach is close to Dewey’s perspective. As opposed to Lippmann who doubted that the public had the capacity to participate rationally in democracy, Dewey (1927) believed that, though the modern world was too complex for every citizen to grasp completely, the public could through improved communication still form a “Great Community” (p. 149). And, this great community could become educated about issues, could come to judgments, and could arrive at solutions to societal problems.

Critics of public journalism argue that attached journalism is dangerous because it sets journalists up as both judge and jury (Hume, 1997). The argument is that this brand of journalism might “devolve into unsubstantiated journalism where bias parade[s] as moral principles” (Ward, 1998, p. 124), that audiences would identify with one party to the conflict simply because they received one-sided information, or be driven by its own interests rather than by a desire to protect the public interest (Kohut, 2001). On the other hand, public journalism criticizes traditional objective journalism arguing that by trying to remain neutral and detached while it is impossible to do so, objective journalism actually rewards the bad. Calling the “false god of objectivity,” media critic John Katz criticizes objective journalism for some of the very reasons that others favor it: detachment (“New media let people speak far more freely”), the inverted pyramid (“the
knee-jerk dogma of the spokesperson culture”), and the objectivity ("Crossfire mentality that afflict journalism shrink this discussion into one side or the other, both of them rigid and strident") (Mindch, 2000).

Although the philosophies and practices of traditional objective and public journalism are still diverse, we can distinguish several core characteristics of each of the practices. The major difference between the two paradigms lies in their goals and foci. Whereas objective journalism aims to present reliable factual information (Tankard, 1976), public journalism places prime importance on the presentation of information that citizens can use in making decisions important to their communities (Clark, 1997). Whereas objective journalism focuses on quickly gathering and confirming facts and delivering them to the public in a detached way, attached public journalism is involved in communities and provides a forum in which public issues can be discussed and resolved (Holbert & Zubric, 2000). This distinction between the respective goals of the two approaches also speaks to the respective differences in the roles of the journalists. For traditional detached journalists, their main role is to be a reliable collector and disseminator of factual information. What audiences do with the information is not their main concern. Public journalists move beyond recording and disseminating facts about problems; they focus on solutions as opposed to problems. For public journalists, the audience does not consist of news readers or consumers but constitutes instead a body of citizens among whose number the journalists themselves are counted (Rosen & Merritt, 1994). By encouraging open public discussions and revitalizing the “public sphere”
(Habermas, 1989/1962), public journalists attempt both to serve their communities and to promote democracy. The respective conceptions of the journalistic role of the two paradigms are also framed as “gatekeepers” vs. “advocates” (Janowitz, 1975) or “watchdog (toward the power)” vs. “educators (toward the society)” (Fjaestad & Holmlöv, 1976).

**Journalism in a state of flux and social media.** Journalism is in a state of flux at present. The debate over the journalistic ideals and norms of detachment and attachment, is ongoing. Although objective journalism is still alive and well in textbooks, journalistic practices are moving toward the attachment paradigm with the emergence of new media, particularly social media, as news outlets and the citizens as active political actors.

Social media is not responsible for this state of flux. However, social media has undoubtedly had an impact on journalism giving rise to heated discussions over how journalists should use the media. Social media are by nature “social” and are now commonly used as a way to engage with and remain connected with others. As social media become increasingly popular news platforms, current Internet environments offer a good opportunity to explore differing journalism paradigms being put to the test. The present day is unique as a time when the news industry is searching for an identity, considering its practices, and embracing social media as an important element

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2 Rather, this state of flux has been driven mainly by economic factors: the decline of the news business. As the journalism business, particularly the print side, has become less profitable, advocates of public journalism have argued that people do not read newspapers because newspapers do not provide the information they actually need. The public journalism perspective has gained ground with this perception of economic crisis in the business that has bolstered the need for greater attachment between news providers and audiences.
determining how news and the delivery of news will look in the future. Examining the norm differences in the context of social media and the role of social media is significant for the study of journalism.

On the other side of the coin, looking through the lens of varying journalism approaches (i.e., objective/detachment and public/attachment) may shed light on implications of journalists’ uses of social media. Whereas some journalists use the social nature of social media in order to gain a better understanding of the problems in a community and initiate and foster civic discussions on solutions via the public journalism approach, other journalists try to be as objective as possible and post only factual information thereby continuing to strive for detachment. For instance, when Brian Williams, the anchor of NBC Nightly News, maintained a presence on Facebook, he managed his account mainly to repurpose existing news stories. He rarely expressed his personal feelings or opinions about the news in his posts. Borrowing Herring and colleagues’ term (2004), his account can be classified as a “filter” rather than as a “personal journal.” He neither tried to encourage people to do anything about the news nor tried to narrow the distance between himself and the audience. With his job title showing as “journalist” at the top of his Facebook wall, his postings merely functioned as a simplified version of NBC’s online news. In terms of the two journalism paradigms, his approach to social media was close to traditional journalism, i.e., the journalism of detachment.
On the other hand, Frank Somerville, a news anchor at KTVU in California and a Facebook user (http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Frank-Somerville-KTVU/162404453822890?fref=ts), takes a more proactive role in the community. Although he refrains from making conclusive remarks regarding controversial political issues, he often voices his opinions on societal problems such as hunger, discrimination, modern-day slaves, and sexual abuse, and he urges audiences to pay attention and get involved through Facebook. On these matters, he doesn’t hesitate to introduce his own personal experiences, thoughts, and feelings. He also encourages social media users to participate in the discussion by asking such questions as “What do you think?” “Did you have similar experiences?” Considering the main content of his posts is still news, his social media use can be classified as journalism. This attached approach is more common among journalists in the social media world.

Journalist Katie Couric, who previously worked for ABC and CBS and currently has more than 252,000 followers (subscribers) on Facebook (http://www.facebook.com/#!/KatieCouric), also takes the attached approach and attempts to induce audience participation. On January 17, 2013, for instance, she posted a discussion-leading question about Lance Armstrong, a former professional road racing cyclist who had admitted using banned drugs and blood transfusions during most of his famed cycling career including all seven of his victories in the Tour de France: “Question for you all ... Should Lance Armstrong be forgiven? Let me know your thoughts!”). In
the following 20 hours, more than 500 people left their opinions. After Armstrong’s interview with Oprah Winfrey aired the next day, Couric posted the following questions:

After watching the interview – what do you think? Do you forgive Lance Armstrong? How has your impression of him changed?

Tomorrow on Katie Couric, we try to answer the question: why do we cheat? Share your thoughts with me!”

These questions raised hundreds more comments and polarizing discussions among Facebook users even more quickly. This instance supports the argument that social networking sites (SNS) can function as a public sphere in which news consumption drives democratically desirable discourse (Lee & Song, 2013; Weeks & Holbert, in press).

Although a number of studies consider journalists’ social media use (e.g., Java, Song, Finin, & Tseng, 2009; Lasorsa et al., 2012; Păun, 2009; Verweij, 2012), very few of these explore this topic through the lens of journalism paradigms. As long as journalists use social media for journalistic purposes, the existing debate on the approaches of news reporting—the journalism of detachment vs. the journalism of attachment—applies to journalists’ social media activities. Journalists’ differing approaches to news reporting can influence audience perceptions of the journalists and their news products including those produced for the social media environment. Thus, the respective journalistic approaches in regard to social media are likely to have implications in terms of the relationship between the audience and the journalism presented.
General social media norms. In social media environments, self-disclosure and interactions are increasingly becoming social norms. Self-disclosure is defined as a verbal revelation of personal information including thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Jourard, 1971; Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Marguilis, 1993) that the received is unlikely to hear them from someone else (Waring, 1990). Self-disclosure has been identified as one of the core indicators of the development of a relationship (Derlega et al., 1993; Knapp & Vangelisti, 2000) that significantly correlates with (i.e., predicts and is predicted by) liking (Collins & Miller, 1994). Self-disclosure has become a major component of the content of many communication channels and genres including blogs, reality TV, and talk shows and consultation programs on radio and TV (Talor, 2013).

Online interaction is defined as active, participatory online communication which provides feedback (Muirhead, 2000). In particular, providing feedback is referred to as an essential component of interactivity (Sims, 2003; Vrasidas & McIssack, 2009). The importance of interaction in communication has been researched and described in a variety of areas including education in particular (Garrison & Anderson, 1998; Moor, 1989; Wilson, 2004).

Studies have found that both informational needs and social utility such as self-expression and social interaction drive the use of interactive media (James, Wotring, & Forrest, 1995; Trammell, 2005). Social utility is also considered to constitute the principal gratification that users derive from blogging (Papacharissi, 2007). In a similar vein, Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012) argued that SNS use, particularly the use of
Facebook, is motivated by two primary needs that facilitate interpersonal relationship building: (1) the need for self-presentation and (2) the need to belong. The former represents self-disclosure and the latter speaks to interaction with other users.

First, disclosure of the self is a practice that is prevalent on social media sites (Barak & Gluck-Ofri, 2007). Social media users have a higher propensity for self-disclosure than other media users (Acquisti, Gritzalis, Lambrinoudakis, & di Vimercati, 2007; Acquisti & Gross, 2006; Lewis, Kaufman, & Christakis, 2008). Nor do they appear to be highly concerned about the possible negative repercussions of sharing their personal information with other users (Barnes, 2006; Dwyer et al., 2007). The default settings of most SNS such as the Facebook settings whereby users display their educational background, work history, and relationship status. The core features such as status update, posting and sharing, and publicly displaying social interactions with others also encourage users to reveal their personalities on their profiles—although they do have the option of making their information private. As norms are learned from observing behaviors of others (Martey & Stromer-Galley, 2007), users tend to contribute more content if they see that other users are contributing content (Burke, Marlow, & Lento, 2009). A study found that exposure to a few personalized social cues on the web significantly increased people’s information disclosure intentions (Lee & LaRose, 2011). As SNS users can easily access others’ highly personalized content in the social media environment, they are likely to follow suit eventually, thereby making self-disclosure one of the social media norms.
Next, the other primary need for SNS use, the “need to belong,” is likely to be fulfilled through interactive communications among users. Social media constitute a highly interactive platform via which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify content (Kietzmann & Hermkens, 2011). Because of the social nature of social media, users tend to interact with each other by exchanging information and opinions. The core features of SNS such as sharing, commenting, and “liking” enable users to interact quickly and easily. According to a recent survey, 22% of Facebook users comment on another user’s post or status, 20% comment on another user’s photos, and 26% “like” another user’s content on an average day (Hampton et al., 2011). Particularly among young Facebook users (i.e., 18–22 years old), 44% “like” their friends’ content on a daily basis. Given the ease and frequency of interaction, SNS users have more discussion confidants (i.e., an average of 2.45) than either average Internet users (i.e., 2.27) or non-users (1.75) do (Hampton et al., 2011).

The relationship between self-disclosure and interaction is circular: self-disclosure elicits responses from others and thus gives rise to further interactions such that social interaction constitutes an underlying drive for self-disclosure. Alexander van Elsas, CEO and lead Internet operation system developer of Zwapp, a social app discovery service, argues that interaction is the core element that completes social media uses and gratifications. In a blog post about why people post their thoughts and experiences to a large audience, he explains that
Web technology has brought us the ability to interact at zero cost. […] Let’s assume that […] we express ourselves but no one is listening. I bet that the phenomenon would die out very quickly. It isn’t the expressing your thoughts that makes social media tick. That is only half of the equation. It is the “social” dimension of it that matters most. The ability to react, to agree or disagree, to build further, the sharing of experiences in order to learn from each other, to have fun, to argue or fight, in other words, it is interaction that matters.

As self-disclosure and interaction motivate each another, these two social media behaviors are intertwined as general social media norms.

**Journalists’ social media activities and social media norms.** As social media users, journalists are subject to the social media norms of personality disclosure and interaction. Although some journalists use their social media accounts to simply deliver news or to provide some insights into news reporting, most on SNS use their accounts for personal purposes as well. They tend to update their personal status with information about what they have done recently, post materials they find interesting or worth sharing, and offer personal takes on news or others’ posts by commenting on or “liking” them. A study analyzing the tweets (i.e., Twitter posts) of the 500 “[most] followed” professional journalists found that popular journalists on Twitter sent an average of 5.6 tweets per day. Journalists’ tweets commonly included links (42%), personal life stories (20.2%), opinions (15.7%), information with at least an element of opinion (27%), retweets
and discussions (14.9%) (Lasorsa et al., 2012). It is notable that describing their lives in a way that goes beyond their professional existence is a significant portion of the journalists’ Twitter activity. It shows that journalists’ social media uses may not differ greatly from those of other Internet users. As long as journalists’ accounts are active (i.e., they occasionally post something or comment on others’ posts), they are likely to disclose at least some cues about their personalities, preferences, and opinions. Users who friend journalists (i.e., subscribe to their posts) can immediately see their posts on the journalists’ social media walls. And, observers can interpret those posts as quasi-personal messages from individual journalists even if the posts are not directed at a specific person. In addition, journalists can personally interact with individual audience members via social media by “liking” their comments or leaving their own personal responses to the comments. Casting questions is also a common option for journalists using Facebook and Twitter. Disclosure of trivial life events and individual interactions via wall posting and the comment section can make the nature of journalists’ social media sphere close to that of mediated, but still interpersonal, communication.

In this current environment, journalists are increasingly playing a mixed role as professional news providers and individual social media users. Therefore, it is not clear which norms they should conform to, particularly given that the social media norms of self-disclosure and interaction appear to clash with the traditional detachment norms of the profession. According to objective journalism ideals, journalists are supposed to be detached, neutral third parties who always keep some distance from both their sources
and their audiences. This objectivity has been referred to as one of the most salient features of journalism as a profession (Schudson & Anderson, 2008). As Singer (2005) points out relative to blogging journalists, however, any journalist who uses social media may confront “challenges to professional norms as a nonpartisan gatekeeper of information” (p. 174). Like blogs, social networking sites can lead journalists to reveal a personal side such that they deviate from the role of neutral information provider (Lasorsa et al., 2012). Whereas professional journalistic norms request journalists to keep their personal opinions and preferences to themselves (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007), there is an expectation of self-disclosure and social interaction in social media. Social gratifications are a key motivator for social media use (Chen, 2011); therefore, efforts to pass on news in a uni-directional way may not serve such motivations (Schmierbach & Oeldorf-Hirsch, 2012).

How then do the norms of social media interact with the norms associated with objective journalism? By revealing personal information and interacting with other SNS users, journalists might build mediated interpersonal relationships with readers. However, do disclosing and interactive behaviors influence audience perceptions of the journalists and their news products positively? More specifically, does the personal touch increase source and message credibility by meeting social media’s reciprocity norms? Or, do their activities that support attachment negatively influence the image of journalists because such activities violate traditional journalistic ideals? Overall, do journalists’ self-disclosures and active interactions benefit or hurt them in terms of audience perceptions?
of the journalists and, in turn, of their news products? These are important questions for the present time given that social media have rapidly emerged as a news consumption context and given that we have every reason to think that their importance in this regard will only increase over time.

**Perceptions of Journalists and their News Products**

Dimensions of perception. It goes without saying that the public image of journalists is important in the production and delivery of news. As Kohring and Matthes (2007) state, “journalism would not be able to fulfill its societal function if its audiences would not provide a certain amount of trust on a daily basis” (p. 2). This explains why it is important to examine how audiences see journalists and their news products in the new context of social media. Thus, it should be addressed how audience perceptions are conceptualized and operationalized in this dissertation.

As the concept of credibility is considered to be of central importance in forming an impression of or evaluating a person, then journalists and news perceptions, which are the outcome variables in this dissertation, are defined by relying primarily on this concept. Credibility, which often indicates “source credibility,” is a principal consideration of perception in regard to the personal dimension. Credibility refers to the perceived believability of information and/or its source (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Hovland, Janis, & Kelly, 1953). As such, credibility is a central concept in understanding communication (Jakobs, 2008). It implies that the positive and negative characteristics of communicators
affect the extent to which a receiver accepts or does not accept a message (Ohanian, 1990). Since Hovland et al.’s (1951; 1953) landmark study of the factors leading to perceived credibility, a number of researchers have extensively investigated and developed the concept of credibility and found that the person perceived as providing information has a significant influence on how people view issues (Cohen, 1963).

Credibility has been operationalized in numerous ways. Hovland et al. (1953) concluded that this multifaceted concept inheres principally in trustworthiness and expertise. They defined trustworthiness as “the degree of confidence in the communicator’s intent to communicate the assertions he considers most valid,” and expertise as “the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions” (p.21). On the other hand, McCroskey (1966) identified character and authoritativeness as additional dimensions of source credibility, but later with Tavern, he created a scale composed of trustworthiness, goodwill, and competence (1999). In the “source valence” model, McGuire (1985) focused on the source’s familiarity, likability, similarity, and attractiveness to the respondent as the dimensions important to any determination of a message’s effectiveness. Synthesizing these approaches, Ohanian (1990) suggested expertise, trustworthiness, and physical attractiveness as the three dimensions of source credibility, although his emphasis was on understanding the elements factoring into the credibility of celebrity endorsers. O’Keefe (2002) also included attractiveness as a factor that affects perceptions of credibility.
These various dimensions of credibility can be classified into the two general categories of personal and professional dimensions. For instance, trustworthiness, good will, and attractiveness are more pertinent to the personal dimension (i.e., favorability or sociability), whereas competence and expertise are more pertinent to the professional dimension (i.e., task-performing ability). Competence and expertise are typically measured by determining the extent and nature of a person’s experience, knowledge, skills, and expertise (Ohanian, 1990). Trustworthiness could easily be understood as applying to both the personal and the professional dimensions. However, given that trustworthiness is measured by such subcategories as honest, sincere, reliable (Ohanian, 1990), genuine, ethical, and honorable (McCroskey & Tavern, 1999), it is more relevant to the personal than to the professional dimension. In examining journalists’ perceptions as a result of their social media activities, this dissertation focuses on the two dimensions of credibility—personal and professional—utilizing both Ohanian’s (1990) and McCroskey and Tavern’s (1999) scales.

In journalism, as we would expect, it is not only the credibility of the journalists, but also the credibility of the news that matters. News credibility has not been studied as extensively as that of source credibility, but several scales have been developed that treat the news as separate from the source. A well-known measure is Gaziano and McGrath’s (1986) media credibility scale, which comprises two factors: credibility and social concerns. The credibility factor includes such items as fair/unfair, unbiased/biased, separates/does not separate fact from opinion, factual/opinionated, concerned about
public interest/making a profit, has well-trained/poorly trained as a journalist. The social concern factor is composed of such items as cares/does not care what audiences thinks, sensationalizes/does not sensationalize, and moral/immoral. Sundar (1999) developed a scale for news story ratings, which focuses more on print news than TV, and examines such dimensions of news credibility as liking, credibility, and quality in comparison to source credibility, i.e., the journalist’s credibility.

News credibility is becoming more important in current online environments where anybody can throw around any information (Metzger, 2007). Many informational websites do not go through a rigorous editorial process for factual verification (Johnson & Kaye, 2002). As a result, they often publish incomplete, spurious, or even fraudulent information (Berland et al., 2001; Crocco, Vilasis-Keever, & Jadad, 2002). With the prevalent audiences’ uncertainty about information sources, the credibility of the news providers is important in determining the credibility of news. Because trust in the source can transfer to the message, news products provided by credible organizations or journalists tend to be seen as credible. This suggests that perceived news credibility on the Web may be determined based on audience perceptions of the journalist’s credibility. However, if audiences are not familiar with a news source, the impact of any credibility usually afforded to the source will decrease, and the extent to which the news is credible is likely to be determined by the message itself (Slater & Rouner, 1996).

Journalists’ social media activities and the implications for audience perceptions. Journalists’ self-disclosures and interactive behaviors on social media sites may have
complex implications for the various dimensions of perceptions. For the personal
dimensions, the implications may be generally positive. Uncertainty reduction theory
(URT; Berger & Calabrese, 1975) posits that individuals strive for making sense of and
reducing uncertainty about others. The more information one gets about another, the less
uncertainty he or she has, and the more comfortable he or she tends to be. To collect
more information about others, individuals tend to employ a variety of passive, active,
and interactive strategies (Berger, 1979; Berger, Gardner, Parks, Schulman, & Miller,
1976). Indeed, Tidwell and Walther’s (2002) study demonstrated that CMC interactants
used significantly higher proportions of questions and produced significantly higher
proportions of disclosure than their FtF counterparts.

Studies have found that self-disclosure through writing blogs improves bloggers’
social connections and results in more positive feedback comments from other bloggers
(Ko & Pu, 2011). Authors of so-called A-list (i.e., most linked-to) blogs tend to reveal
more personal information and pay more attention to impression management than other
bloggers do (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005). Transparency, or at least the appearance
of it, together with a willingness to communicate often lead audiences to trust blogs more
readily than other traditional media (Johnson & Kaye, 2004). Like blogs, microblogs
such as Twitter characteristically feature the revelation of personal information and the
expression of opinions (Phillips, 2010; Shudson & Anderson, 2008). College instructors
who used Twitter for social purposes were rated significantly higher by undergraduate
students than those who used Twitter for scholarly purposes (Johnson, 2011).
SNS users also utilize such strategies as verbal interrogation (question asking) and self-disclosure to reduce uncertainty about other social media users they interact with. One’s social media profile displaying personal information and a track of status updates, and responses to others’ questions and comments is likely to function as social information or cues to be processed by observers in the course of impression formation and relationship building. Journalists’ personality disclosure and intimate interaction with unknown commenters within social networks can also result in observers’ positive perceptions of the journalists. By revealing self and openly engaging with audiences, journalists can reduce uncertainty audiences had, create transparency, and provide an interpersonal ground on which to form impressions and build relationships (Jacoby et al., 1994; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005). Journalists’ self-expressive and interactive behaviors imply that they trust and depend on the audience (Papacharissi, 2002; Trammell & Keshelashvile, 2005), and, therefore, can induce the audience to feel that they are up close and personal. Thus, journalists’ self-revealing social media activities are likely to have a positive influence on the personal dimensions of their credibility, i.e., on the extent to which they are perceived as trustworthy and attractive and on the extent of the good will toward them.

In terms of objectivity and competence (professional dimension), however, self-disclosures and interactions might negatively influence audience perceptions of journalists as objectivity and adherence to the detachment norm are regarded as essential to journalists’ professionalism (Carlson, 2007; Lowrey & Mackay, 2008). Not only for
journalists, but any professionals, self-expression is an action that requires caution. The fact that internet users who view their personal homepages as professional tools are less likely to post personal information online than those who view their pages as self-expression tools (Papacharissi, 2002) supports the idea. Even in the present changing media environment, this distinction between personal and professional behaviors remains important to the practice of professional journalism: Journalists are expected to keep their personal opinions and politics to themselves (Kovach & Rosentiel, 2007; Schudson & Anderson, 2008). Given that instructors with social tweets are rated as more credible than those with scholarly tweets in the current environment (Johnson, 2011), negative impressions arising from journalists’ self-disclosures and interactions via social media may not be as strong as previously. However, journalists who use social media in this way may still be doing so at the risk of damage to their professional standing. By disclosing unnecessary information, journalists may unwittingly reveal important information or reporting tactics to their competitors, give the impression that they are biased, and/or expose their sources to danger. The fact that compared with their counterparts in local media, journalists working for national news media are less inclined to write about their personal lives or provide information about their jobs in their tweets (Lasorsa et al., 2012) supports this perspective. Nonetheless, formal tests are needed to address questions relating to the norms of journalism in the social media era.

**Effects of audience perceptions of journalism norms.** In order to explore the big picture in regard to the mechanism through which audiences form an impression of a
journalist and evaluate his or her news products, it is important to understand the individual factors that may determine the main effect of the journalists’ behaviors on audience perceptions. The effect is likely to depend on how audiences think journalists should behave; if journalists behave in a way that audiences consider inappropriate, for instance, they are likely to have negative perceptions of the journalists, and these perceptions may influence audience perceptions of the journalists’ news products. What, then, do audiences think is appropriate behavior for journalists? The answer depends on audience expectations, i.e., what they accept as the norms of journalistic practice. Some audience members may ascribe to the traditional detachment norm so that in their opinion journalists should be neutral and objective, should refrain from taking sides, and likewise should not express any personal preferences. Others may argue that it is good for journalists to be attached to and involved in their communities and have a voice in their social networks. Depending on the norm individuals favor, or where they are located on a scale between the norm of detachment (objective) and the norm of attachment (public) journalism, journalists’ use of social media is likely to influence them differently. Thus, it is crucial to address the implications of individual journalism orientation for the ways in which journalists social media activities are perceived.

**Social Media Journalism as a “Masspersonal” Context**

Traditionally, journalism has been studied as a representative mass communication research area. Journalists typically deliver news using mass
communication channels such as television, radio, and newspapers. Their news products have been consumed by mass audiences in a rather unilateral and uniform way. Based on this assumed “mass” nature, historically journalism research has focused on the effects of the mass media.

On the other hand, CMC has its roots in the discipline of interpersonal communication, focusing on determining whether online communicators can build effective interpersonal relationships (e.g., Walther, 1996; Walther & Burgoon, 1992). Studied separately from interpersonal communication, mass communication has also been distinguished from CMC. Many fields in communication have developed as distinct categories including political communication and health communication, and it is said that no greater schism exists in the communication literature than that between mass media scholars and interpersonal communication scholars (Landreville, 2010; see Feeley, 2008) for a bibliographic analysis of communication journals and citation patterns. Although mass communication is closely associated with interpersonal communication (Delli Carpini & Williams, 1994a. 1994b, 1996), mass communication scholars tend to focus on media effects while overlooking any influence from interpersonal component, and vice versa (Benoit & Holbert, 2010).

However, this practice of separating fields of research needs to be reconsidered as today’s communication environments are becoming neither mass, nor interpersonal, but “masspersonal” (O’Sullivan, 2005). The recent development of interactive online communication technologies has enabled “masspersonal” journalism. Though the “false
dichotomy” (Reardon & Rogers, 2006) between the two areas of communication research continues to exist, more and more scholars are acknowledging that mass communication and interpersonal communication are intertwined and complementary rather than competitive (Holbert, 2005; Holbert & Benoit, 2009). The emerging masspersonal approach focuses on the communicators themselves and the communication process rather than on the specific hardware used for communication (O’Sullivan, 2005).

With the emergence and evolution of new communication technologies, the line between these seemingly disparate areas is becoming increasingly blurred as more individuals (a) use channels that have traditionally been used for mass communication, (b) use traditionally interpersonal channels for mass communication, and (c) use older and newer channels to generate mass communication and interpersonal communication simultaneously (O’Sullivan, 2005). Although interpersonal communication researchers tend to regard face-to-face interaction as “a kind of gold standard” (Berger, 2005), with such a narrow standard, only a very small proportion of everyday social interaction would qualify as interpersonal in nature (Miller, Steinberg, & Moscoso, 1975). New contexts for interactive communication are prompting scholars to reassess some basic assumptions about interpersonal communication (e.g., Lea & Spears, 1995), mass communication (e.g., Chaffee & Metzger, 2001), and the distinction between the two (e.g., O’Sullivan, 1999, 2005). Some interpersonal communication scholars formally include CMC as part of the discipline (e.g., Berger, 2005). Whereas the traditional mass audience has fragmented into multiple smaller audiences, interpersonal communication has become increasingly
amplified through personal blogs, email lists, and SNS to afford individuals ever-larger audiences. And, it is in this way that the historical distinction between mass and interpersonal communication has been obscured (Wu, Hofman, Mason, & Watts, 2011).

Journalists’ communication with audiences on social media sites is a good example of this blurring distinction. Journalists can communicate with individual audience members via social media by “liking” their comments or by leaving personal responses to the comments. Such self-disclosure and interactions can make the nature of journalists’ social media sphere close to that of mediated but still interpersonal communication. These changes in journalism in the social media environment require new paradigms that encompass conventional mass and interpersonal communication as well as computer-mediated communication tools and practices that do not fit traditional distinctions and definitions (O’Sullivan, 2005). It is important and meaningful to approach social media journalism as the merging area of mass and interpersonal communication context.

Whereas social media activities are regarded as mediated-interpersonal communication, CMC or any interpersonal communication theories have not been rigorously applied to the context of journalists’ social media communication. The application of a theory from another discipline to journalism is uncharted theoretical territory and can be of unique importance given the popularity of social media and the vital role of journalists in society. Moreover, as social media become one of the most popular news platforms, journalism scholars must relate to other communication areas to
explain the underlying mechanisms whereby audiences form impressions of journalists and news.

In sum, as an inquiry into perceptions of journalism in the context of social media, this dissertation focuses on the notion of normative journalism values in comparison to journalists’ current social media practices. Social information exchanges and processing between journalists and audiences are ubiquitous in the social media world, but the norms of and the needs expressed through social media may clash with the basic normative values of journalism as profession. Obviously, journalists’ engagement in social media can impact perceptions of them and their news products in both positive and negative ways.

By applying SIP to journalism in the context of the social media environment, this dissertation contributes to the research areas of both CMC and journalism thereby connecting these fields and generating meaningful new knowledge. In addition to examining the normative implications for journalism, this dissertation allows a better understanding of the practical implications of journalists’ social media use and how they can make better strategic use of current social media environments to support their professional standing.
Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that journalists’ social media activities (i.e., exposure of the self and reciprocal interaction with audiences) influence the way that audiences perceive the journalists and their news products, and that audience journalism orientation will influence the effects. These questions are addressed in the form of simple mediation and moderation first, and finally, the moderated mediation models were assessed.

Simple Mediation Model

**Personal dimension.** First, as self-disclosure is the norm in the social media world, it is reasonable to expect that self-disclosure is a natural and friendly action by social media users. By conforming to social media norms and revealing the self, journalists can reduce relational uncertainty existing in audiences’ perceptions, and give the sense that they are also part of the social media community. Thus, social media activities through which journalists reveal themselves are expected to have a positive influence on how they are perceived in the personal dimension (journalist personal perception). Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H1: Audiences exposed to a journalist’s **self-disclosures** via social media perceive the **journalist** more positively in the **personal** dimension than those who are not exposed to the self-disclosures.
Second, exchanging interactive feedback is also a standard practice among social media users. Therefore, a journalist’s interactions with audiences via social media are expected to positively affect audience perceptions of the journalist in terms of the personal dimension. By initiating conversations with audiences and providing individual feedback, journalists can give the impression that they are nice, friendly individuals who care about the audiences who visited their social media profiles. Thus, journalists’ interactive social media activities are likely to have a positive effect on how they are perceived by audiences in personal the dimension, which raises the following hypothesis.

H2: Audiences who are exposed to a journalist’s interactions with other audiences via social media perceive the journalist more positively in the personal dimension than those who are not exposed to the interactions.

Journalists cannot be thought of separately from the news they produce. Thus, it is important to address the relationship between audience perceptions of a journalist and audience perceptions of news the journalist produces in current new media environments. Information given by a reliable source is in general seen as to be more credible and as having more influence than information from a less reliable source is (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Hovland et al., 1953), and audiences cued by source credibility tend to accept or reject a message more readily (Slater & Rouner, 1996). Therefore, it is expected that audiences view a news product positively when it is produced by a person they view
positively. In other words, positive audience perceptions on a journalist are likely to transfer to audience perceptions on the journalist’s news product (news personal perception), which posits the following hypothesis:

H3: Audience perceptions of a journalist in the personal dimension positively predict audience perception of the journalist’s news product in the personal dimension.

One of the main hypotheses of this dissertation is that audience perception of journalists is a mediator of the relationship between journalists’ non-traditional activities via social media and audience perceptions of news products. It means that there is an indirect effect of journalists’ social media activities on audiences’ news perceptions through audiences’ journalist perceptions in both personal and professional dimensions. As journalists’ self-disclosures and interactions are predicted to produce positive perceptions, the positive effects are likely to transfer to audience perceptions of the journalists’ news products through audience perceptions of the journalists. Thus, the following two hypotheses are posited:

H4: The effect of a journalist’s self-disclosures via social media on audience perceptions of the journalist’s news product in the personal dimension is mediated by audience perceptions of the journalist.
H5: The effect of a journalist’s interactions via social media on audience perceptions of the journalist’s news product in the personal dimension is mediated by audience perceptions of the journalist.

Professional dimension. The effects of journalists’ self-disclosures on audience perceptions of journalists and news products must be addressed in terms of the professional dimension (i.e., objectivity and competence) as well. Although self-expression and interaction are common social media activities, they are closely related to interpersonal goals rather than to professional goals, and in particular journalists’ self-disclosures and interaction with audiences can be seen as a violation of professionalism and can have negative consequences for how journalists are perceived professionally (journalist professional perception). Thus, the following hypotheses are posited:

H6: Audiences exposed to a journalist’s self-disclosures via social media perceive the journalist more negatively in the professional dimension than those who are not exposed to those self-disclosures.

H7: Audiences exposed to a journalist’s interactions via social media perceive the journalist more negatively in the professional dimension than those who are not exposed to those interactions.

Audience perceptions of the journalist are likely to apply to audience perceptions of the journalist’s news products in the professional dimension (news professional
perception) in the same way as long as audiences are aware that the news products were produced by the journalist. Audiences are anticipated to perceive a news product negatively when it is produced by a journalist they evaluate negatively. Therefore, the following hypothesis is raised:

H8: Audience perceptions of a journalist in the professional dimension positively predict audience perception of the journalist’s news product in the professional dimension.

Like in the personal dimension, audience perceptions of a journalist in the professional dimension are expected to mediate the relationship between the journalist’s social media activities and audience perceptions of the journalist’s news product such that the negative effect of a journalist’s self-disclosure and interaction is likely to influence audience perceptions of the journalist’s news product through audience perceptions of the journalist.

H9: The effect of a journalist’s self-disclosures via social media on audience perceptions of the journalist’s news product in the professional dimension is mediated by audience perceptions of the journalist.

H10: The effect of a journalist’s interactions via social media on audience perceptions of the journalist’s news product in the professional dimension is mediated by audience perceptions of the journalist.
Moderation and Moderated-Mediation Models

Simple moderation with self-disclosure as moderator. Self-disclosures and interactions are expected to interact with each other in predicting audience perceptions of the journalist in both the personal and professional dimensions. As both self-disclosure and interaction have positive effects on journalist personal perception, a contributory relationship between them is expected whereby a positive effect on the personal dimension becomes more positive whereas a negative effect on the professional dimension becomes more negative.

H11: Self-disclosures and interactions interact such that audiences exposed to both a journalist’s self-disclosures and interactions with other audiences via social media perceive the journalist even more positively in the personal dimension than those who are exposed to only one of these.

H12: Self-disclosures and interactions interact such that audiences exposed to both a journalist’s self-disclosures and interactions with other audiences via social media perceive the journalist even more negatively in the professional dimension than those who are exposed to only one of these.

Moderated mediation with self-disclosure as moderator. H11 and H12 focused on assessing if the effect of interaction on the journalist perceptions is conditioned by self-disclosure. H13 and H14 looked at the mechanism in the larger picture of the mediation model suggested by H5 and H10, and examined if the indirect effect of interaction on the
news perceptions through journalist perceptions was qualified by self-disclosure in the personal and professional dimensions.

H13: The indirect effect of a journalist’s interactions on audience perceptions of the journalist’s news product in the personal dimension through audience perceptions of the journalist is moderated by the journalist’s self-disclosures, with the positive influence of interaction being greater when it is coupled with high self-disclosure than when it is not.

H14: The indirect effect of a journalist’s interactions on audience perceptions of the journalist’s news product in the professional dimension through audience perception of the journalist is moderated by the journalist’s self-disclosures, with the negative influence of interaction being greater when it is coupled with high self-disclosure than when it is not.

**Simple moderation and moderated-mediation with IJO as moderator.**

Another important goal of this dissertation is to address the moderating role of individual journalism orientation (IJO). Given the conflicting journalism paradigms and social media norms, it is plausible that audience perceptions of primary norms influence which norm is dominant and, therefore, which constitutes a basis for audience criticism. In specific, which journalism norm individual audience members are leaning toward between the objective and public journalism norms is likely to influence how their perceptions are affected by journalists’ communication activities via social media. As
objective journalism norms emphasize journalists’ detached, neutral manners whereas public journalism norms welcome journalists’ engagements with audiences, journalists’ self-disclosures may be seen personally more positively to audiences with a public journalism orientation than to audiences with an objective journalism orientation. Thus, the following hypotheses are raised:

H15: **Individual journalism orientation** (IJO: objective norm vs. public norm) serves as a moderator of the relationship between a journalist’s **self-disclosures** and audience perceptions of the **journalist** in the **personal** dimension, with the positive influence of self-disclosures being greater for audiences with a public journalism orientation than for audiences with an objective journalism orientation.

H16: The indirect effect of a journalist’s **self-disclosures** on audience perceptions of the journalist’s **news product** in the **personal** dimension through audience perceptions of the journalist is moderated by **individual journalism orientation** (IJO), with the positive influence of self-disclosures being greater for audiences with a public journalism orientation than for audiences with an objective journalism orientation.

In the same manners, the influence of journalists’ interactions with audiences via social media in the personal dimension may be even more positive for those with a public journalism orientation than for those with an objective journalism orientation.
Considering both the simple moderation model and the moderated mediation model, the following two hypotheses are raised:

**H17: Individual journalism orientation (IJO) serves as a moderator of the relationship between a journalist’s interactions and audience perceptions of the journalist in the personal dimension, with the positive influence being greater for audiences with an objective journalism orientation than for audiences with a public journalism orientation.**

**H18: The indirect effect of a journalist’s interactions on audience perceptions of the journalist’s news product in the personal dimension through audience perceptions of the journalist is moderated by individual journalism orientation (IJO), with the positive influence of interactions being greater for audiences with a public journalism orientation than for audiences with an objective journalism orientation.**

Individual journalism orientation is also expected to play a moderating role between journalists’ communication activities via social media and audience perceptions in the professional dimension. As audiences with an objective journalism orientation believe that journalists should not act like ordinary social media users norms to be professional whereas audiences with a public journalism orientation do not oppose to journalists’ self-revealing and interactive social media activities, the effect of journalists’ self-disclosures and interactions are likely to be even more negative for those with an
objective journalism orientation than for those with a public journalism orientation. Thus, the following four hypotheses are raised:

**H19:** Individual journalism orientation (IJO) serves as a moderator of the relationship between a journalist’s self-disclosures and audience perceptions of the journalist in the professional dimension, with the negative influence being greater for audiences with a public journalism orientation than for audiences with an objective journalism orientation.

**H20:** The indirect effect of a journalist’s self-disclosures on audience perceptions of news products in the professional dimension through audience perceptions of the journalist is conditioned by Individual journalism orientation (IJO), with the negative influence being greater for audiences with an objective journalism orientation than for audiences with a public journalism orientation.

**H21:** Individual journalism orientation serves as a moderator of the relationship between a journalist’s interactions and audience perceptions of the journalist in the professional dimension, with the negative influence being greater for audiences with an objective journalism orientation (IJO) than for audiences with a public journalism orientation.

**H22:** The indirect effect of a journalist’s interactions on audience perceptions of news products in the professional dimension through audience perceptions of journalists is conditioned by Individual journalism orientation (IJO), with the
positive influence being greater for audiences with an objective journalism orientation than for audiences with a public journalism orientation.

**Summary of hypotheses.** Overall, this dissertation proposes 22 hypotheses regarding the influences of journalists’ social media activities and audience perceptions. The 22 hypotheses can be broken down into five main points: 1) journalists’ self-disclosure and interaction as the positive predictors of audience perceptions of the journalists in the personal dimension, 2) journalists’ self-disclosure and interaction as the negative predictors of audience perceptions of the journalists in the professional dimension, 3) the cumulative interaction effect between self-disclosure and interaction in predicting audience perceptions (**Figure 4** and **Figure 6**), 4) audience perceptions of the journalists as a mediator between journalists’ social media activities and audience perceptions of the journalists’ news products in the personal and the professional dimensions (**Figure 3**), and 5) individual journalism orientation as a moderator between journalists’ social media activities and audience perceptions of the journalists in the both simple moderation and the moderated mediation models (**Figure 5** and **Figure 7**). The process of connecting these main points unfolds the main story this dissertation: how journalists’ social media activities influence audience perceptions of the journalists and their news products in consideration of audiences’ journalism orientation. By testing those hypotheses, this dissertation addresses the implications of journalists’ active social
media uses, which is becoming increasingly common, for their and their news products’ personal and professional images.
Chapter 2: Method

Study Design

An experiment was conducted to address the 22 hypotheses that serve as the foundation for this dissertation. The dual purposes of this dissertation are to examine the role of self-disclosure by a journalist and a journalist’s interaction with the audience via social media as the predictors of the perceptions of the journalist (personal/professional) and news produced by that journalist. The main effects of the two independent variables were tested in a 2 (self-disclosure: low vs. high) x 2 (interaction: low vs. high) between-subject factorial design before testing either mediation- or moderation-based effects. Self-disclosure and interaction via social media were experimentally manipulated, and participants were randomly assigned into one of the four self-disclosure-by-interaction high-low combination conditions. More specifically, low and high self-disclosure and interaction were operationalized through a mock Facebook profile of a fictitious journalist shown to participants as a stimulus (see Appendix A for examples). The outcome variables in the basic models were, first, the perceptions of the journalist and, second, the perceptions of his news product. The journalist and news perceptions were measured by a questionnaire immediately following the stimuli exposure.

Another purpose of this dissertation is to explore the role of individual journalism orientation (IJO) as a moderator between the independent variables (i.e., experimental
manipulations of self-disclosure and interaction) and the outcome variables (i.e., audiences’ perceptions). Individual journalism orientation is conceptualized as what individuals perceive as a standard journalism norm and operationalized as where individuals are placed on a bipolar scale from the objective journalism norm to the public journalism norm.

To test the moderation models, a journalist’s self-disclosure and interaction were separately tested for its interaction with the IJO in predicting audiences’ perceptions of the journalist and his news products. That is, IJO’s role as a moderator was tested in combination with high and low self-disclosure and interaction conditions.

Next, this dissertation attempted to examine the role of the perception of the journalist (personal/professional) as a mediator between this study’s independent variables (i.e., self-disclosure and interaction) and the perception of the journalist’s news product (personal/professional). In other words, the simple mediation model assessed the path from the independent variables to the news perception through the mediator.

The final goal of this dissertation is to assess a series of moderated-mediation processes of influence. With the moderated-mediation model, it was tested if the effects of independent variables (i.e., self-disclosure and interaction) on the news perceptions in the personal or the professional dimensions which were mediated by the journalism perceptions were moderated by IJO.
Participants

The data were collected for 10 days from February 28 to March 9, 2013 using an online survey program Qualtrics (www.qualtrics.com). Initially 392 undergraduate students of The Ohio State University participated in the study. They were recruited from undergraduate-level communication courses and awarded extra course credit in exchange for their voluntary participation. Through data cleaning processes described in the data cleaning and missing data section below, the final number of participants who were included in the final analyses was 267.

The mean age of participants was 21.3 years old with a standard deviation of 4.3 years. There were more females ($N = 174, 65.2\%$) than males ($N = 93, 34.8\%$), and more whites ($N = 221, 82.8\%$) than non-whites ($N = 46, 17.2\%$). Among the non-whites, Asians, Asian-Americans, or pacific islanders ($N = 35, 9.4\%$) were the largest group followed by African Americans ($N = 20, 5.3\%$), others ($N = 9, 2.4\%$), and Hispanics ($N = 8, 2.1\%$). In terms of party identification, there was a nearly even distribution across the three groups of Democrats ($N = 95, 35.5\%$), Republicans ($N = 83, 31.1\%$), and independent ($N = 89, 33.3\%$). Most partisans defined themselves as moderate (Democrats: $N = 85, 31.8\%$; Republicans: $N = 68, 25.5\%$) than strong (Democrats: $N = 10, 3.7\%$; Republicans: $N = 15, 5.6\%$). More than two thirds of the participants ($N = 188, 70.4\%$) reported that they had never visited a journalist’s Facebook profile before. Less than a third of the participants (30%) reported that they had friended a journalist before whereas the two thirds (70%) answered that they had not.
Procedure

An electronic recruitment letter with a web link was sent to the instructors of participating courses and posted on the course website for students’ voluntary participations. By clicking on the link, participants could access the online experiment site on Qualtrics.com. Once they read a description of the study on the first page and signed the informed consent form by clicking on “Agree to participate,” they proceeded to the first stimulus page. By Qualtrics’ automated algorithm, one of the 16 stimuli (i.e., a screenshot of a journalist’s Facebook profile) was randomly shown to each participant (see Appendix A for example stimuli). While the basic settings of the Facebook profile were kept the same, only the kind of the news posted on the profile, the journalist’s inputs, and audiences’ feedback were manipulated depending on the condition. Even for the same condition, four different stimuli were used. After spending as much time as they wanted on examining the stimulus, participants filled out an online questionnaire that included a series of semantic differential scales about their perceptions of the journalist in both personal and professional dimensions.

Once participants finished and clicked on the “Next” button, they were exposed to the full text of the news article that had been posted on the journalist’s profile (see Appendix B for the full-length articles). Among the four article stimuli, the same article as the one shown on the previous page was provided in full length. For instance, if a participant in the high self-disclosure and no interaction condition saw the title and the
lead of the job market article on the first stimulus page, he or she was given an opportunity to read the whole job market article in text on the second stimulus page. David Miller’s name appeared in the byline as the single author under the title of each of the four articles. After reading the article, participants were asked to fill out the same questionnaire. This time, however, it was about how they perceived the article, not the journalist. The questionnaire also used a set of semantic differential scales with 24 pairs of bipolar adjectives about personal and professional dimensions of the article.

As they clicked on the “Next” button and proceeded to the next page, participants in all conditions were given the final set of questions to measure their demographics and individual differences such as age, sex, race, party identification, ideology, knowledge of current affairs, interest in the given news topic, perceptions of the bias in the U.S. news media, and IJO. Finally, after answering questions for manipulation checks, they entered their personal information (i.e., name, email address, course number, instructor’s name) to ensure that they receive extra credit for the specific course. As they clicked on the “Finish” button, they exited the website.

**Stimuli**

**Default settings.** The independent variables, self-disclosure and interaction, were operationalized through a mock Facebook profile of a fictitious journalist, David Miller. Among various social media sites, Facebook was selected and utilized as the experimental context because it is the most popular social-networking site (SNS) and the
second most-visited Internet site following Google; Not only in the U.S., but around the globe (Alexa, 2013). Nine out of ten (92%) social-networking site users had reported that they were on Facebook (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2011).

To create the stimuli, first, David Miller’s mock Facebook profile was created on Facebook by the author. The header that was common to all conditions was made by uploading a background image (i.e., a pencil on a newspaper) and a profile image. Instead of a real person’s face photo, a cartoon character depicting a classical male journalist was used for his profile photo. The cartoon character signaled that he was a journalist by wearing a hat with a “PRESS” note was attached to it and taking down memos on a small notebook. In the header, David Miller’s profession was shown as “journalist” with no specific affiliation information. To avoid confounding factors, other individuating cues such as the number and photos of his friends, his photos, or what he likes were not displayed or removed from the header using Photoshop (see Appendix A for the example stimuli). An active Facebook profile shows a lengthy history of a profile owner’s Facebook activities and his or her interactions with others. In this experiment, a screenshot of only the top part of the Facebook profile was presented as a stimulus to achieve experimental control. In a nutshell, participants could see only two news links David Miller posted on his wall under a simple header signaling his profession as a journalist.

3 On the first stimulus page where participants were exposed to the screenshot image, it was explained in text that the journalist’s profile photo was covered with the cartoon image for privacy purposes.
The common article. Using Photoshop, the two recent posts linked to news articles were displayed side by side in the screenshot image. On the left side, a shared article titled “Critics rated “Bullitt” the best car chase scene movie” was displayed as a default setting. The title was highlighted in blue signaling that it was a link. Only a part of the lead sentence was visible on the profile: “In a recent survey of movie critics conducted by Variety magazine, “Bullitt” (1968) was voted the best car chase scene movie of all time, followed by “Robin” (1988)…. This article was used an example of casual entertainment news that could attract anybody’s attention, and it was displayed to keep a balance with the other article displayed on the right side that would deal with a heavier issue. Although it was shown as if the article (i.e., the lead showing on the profile) had been “share”d from AP news website, it was actually written by the author, inspired by a real-world journalist Frank Somerville’s (at KTVU in California) an actual Facebook post updated on September 21, 2012.

Under the post, two audiences’ comments were created and displayed: “I think Bullitt is the best too. Did Steve McQueen actually drive the car in the movie (Nick Bickett)?”; “I haven’t seen this movie, but Disney’s ‘Cars’ is the best to me (Allison Dickinson).” A blue link saying “View 12 more comments” was shown right above the comments indicating that there were more hidden conversations about the article. This default setting was used for the no self-disclosure and no interaction condition. While the layouts and the design elements of the profile were kept the same across conditions, the
journalist’s status update relative to the news post and his responses to the comments were manipulated for other conditions.

*High self-disclosure condition.* For the high self-disclosure condition, David Miller not only provided the news link, but also added his personal thoughts and feelings about the news using the status update feature. For the car chase scene article, he posted: “I cannot agree more with this result. “Bullitt” is my dad’s all-time favorite and we both loved the 390 Mustang racing down the streets of San Francisco. I hadn’t seen this movie for a while, but when I watched the scene today, it’s just as good as I remember.”

*High interaction condition.* For the high interaction condition, questions toward the readers were added to the self-revealing status update: (…it’s just as good as I remember.) Do you agree? Or, what’s your favorite car chase scene?” Each of the two readers’ comments was responded by David Miller: “(to Nick Bickett) Yes, Steve McQueen was an avid car racer. He and a couple others drove the Mustang.”; “(to Allison Dickinson) Fair enough!” In addition, both readers’ comments were “like”d presumably by David Miller. The number of hidden messages was marked as 24 (i.e., “View 24 more comments.”) in the high-interaction condition, which was a double of 12 in the no-interaction condition, suggesting all the comments were given feedback by him.

*Multiple articles.* The other link shown on the right hand of the profile was connected to a news article seemingly written by David Miller himself according to the byline. For better generalizability, four different articles were used for each of the four conditions. The four article topics were created to represent different types of issues
including economic or social. In particular, two articles were more economic or financial but less partisan issues (i.e., student financial aid policy, job market) whereas the other two covered more polarized, controversial partisan issues (i.e., immigration, gun control). By randomly assigning one of the four different articles, it was intended to see if the manipulation effects (i.e., effects of journalists’ self-disclosure and interaction) apply across various news topics. All articles were written by the author who was a former newspaper journalist with both sides’ opinions (if any) evenly reflected based on multiple existing news articles. Sometimes fictitious sources or quotes were inserted to keep the balance. The length of the four articles was kept similar with the word counts between 441 and 446. A journalism professor who was also a former journalist reviewed and edited the four articles and evaluated that they were similarly professional in terms of news writing techniques.

Article 1. The first article was titled “Report suggesting replacement of Pell Grants with a federal-state matching grant causes controversy.” Only a part of the lead was visible below the news link: “A new report from the Committee for Economic Development suggested that Pell Grants and other non-loan federal student aid be replaced with a single federal-state matching grant...” While 9 more comments were marked as to being hidden, two latest readers’ comments were visibly displayed on the profile. The first comment was from Mike Palmer: “It’s hard for me to believe that the replacement will actually happen soon, but I hope so – keep us updated.” The second one was from Elizabeth Kline: “Shedding light on an issue like this is so important – wish
more journalists would pay attention.” This second comment was commonly displayed in all conditions regardless of the article. This default setting with only two comments was used for the no self-disclosure and no interaction condition of the first article (Pell Grant) group.

*High self-disclosure condition.* In the high self-disclosure condition, David Miller’s self-revealing personal statement was posted relative to the news link: “As I am from a low/middle-income family and have benefitted from Pell Grants to earn my undergraduate degree, any news regarding student financial aid policies always gets my attention.” The other settings (e.g., two readers’ comments with no feedback) were kept the same.

*High-interaction condition.* For the high interaction condition, a question toward the readers was added to the statement: (…always gets my attention.) “What do you think about the replacement proposal?” Also, David Miller added some feedback to the individual comments: “(to Mike Palmer) Sure, I will. I am confident that there will be a lot of public debate about this issue. Let me know how this plays out in your community”; “(to Elizabeth Kline) I agree that it’s important, it affects so many people’s lives.” Both readers’ comments were “like”d presumably by David Miller. 18 messages were marked as being hidden, which was a double of 9 messages in the no-interaction condition.

Article 2. The second article was about the economy and was titled: “U.S. job market looks strong but unemployment remains high.” The lead was as follows: The U.S. job market is proving surprisingly strong and raising hopes that the economy will be
resilient enough this year to withstand a budget standoff in Washington and potentially deep cuts in federal spending. Still, doubts remain as…. Two readers’ comments were visible: “I know several people who have been out of job for over 6 months. It’s hard for me to believe that the job market is as strong as the numbers say, but I hope that’s true – keep us updated (Mike Palmer).” The common comment from Elizabeth Kline (i.e., “Shedding light on an issue like this is so important – wish more journalists would pay attention.”) was placed again as the latest comment below Mike Palmer’s comment. This basic setting of the second article (job market) group was used for the no self-disclosure and no interaction condition.

High self-disclosure condition. In the high self-disclosure condition, David Miller’s personal statement was added as a status update: “I experienced a couple months of unemployment after the company I worked for suddenly went out of business, so I understand the pain and uncertainty that many who are unemployed might feel….”

High-interaction condition. For the high interaction condition, a question toward the readers was added to the statement: “What do you think about the current job market?” David Miller’s feedback to the readers’ comments was provided: “(to Mike Palmer) Sure, I will. I am confident that there will be a lot of public debate about this issue. Let me know how this plays out in your community.”; “(to Elizabeth Kline) I agree that it’s important, it affects so many people’s lives.” Both readers’ comments were also “like”d. 18 other messages were marked as posted but hidden.
Article 3. The third article was about the immigration policy. As shown in the title: “Immigration reform offering citizenship path to illegal immigrants raises debates,” the article dealt with a more controversial issue than the previous two articles. The title was followed by the lead: “The nation is abuzz with talk of immigration reform since a bipartisan group of senators released a bill framework. The most controversial part of the plan is a pathway to residency….” Mike Palmer’s comment was written in parallel to the ones in the previous stimuli: “I know my community has a large population of illegal immigrants. It’s hard for me to believe that any reformation will work as effectively as they say, but keep us updated.” Elizabeth Kline’s comment was the same as the ones in the previous stimuli. This basic setting of the third article (immigration) group was used for the no self-disclosure and no interaction condition.

High self-disclosure condition. In the high self-disclosure condition, David Miller’s personal statement was added as a status update: “I volunteered teaching ESL at a local high school for a few years. Many my students were from families whose parents came here illegally. Writing this article made me think of their stories.”

High-interaction condition. For the high interaction condition, a question toward the readers was added to the statement: “What do you think about the proposed reform?” Again, the same individual feedback and and “like”s were added.

Article 4. The last article was about another hot issue, gun control. The title (“Colo. House passes gun-control measures raising debates”) was followed by the lead: “Limits on the size of ammunition magazines and universal background checks passed
the Colorado House on Monday, during a second day of emotional debates that has
drawn attention from….” Mike Palmer’s comment was similar to his previous ones: “A
kid in my community recently brought a gun to school – there’s been an uproar about
what should be done. It’s hard for me to believe that anything will keep our kids 100%
safe, but keep us updated on this issue.” Elizabeth Kline’s same comment was posted.
This basic setting of the fourth article (gun control) group was used for the no self-
disclosure and no interaction condition.

*High self-disclosure condition.* In the high self-disclosure condition, David
Miller’s personal statement was added as a status update: “I am not a fan of having my
rights restricted, but as a father of two elementary schoolers, I would consider anything to
keep children safer.”

*High-interaction condition.* For the high interaction condition, another similar
question toward the readers was added: “What do you think about the measures? Will our
kids be safer?” Again, the same individual responses to Mike Palmer and Elizabeth
Kline’s comments and “like”’s were added.

**Data Cleaning and Missing Value**

As the study was conducted online, it was hard to control each participant’s
participation environments. To reduce the noise in the data and handle the missing data
issue, several steps have been taken. First, the responses of the participants who finished
the study in less than 5 minutes were removed. As the study was anticipated to take about
30 minutes to finish, it was evaluated that it was impossible to sincerely answer the questionnaire in less than 5 minutes. Next, those who skipped most of the core questions (i.e., those about how they perceive the journalist and the article) and answered only required ones such as their class information for extra credit were eliminated. A dozen of participants started the study and saw the stimulus but did not complete it by proceeding to the final page. Noticeable straight liners who gave the same answers (e.g., 1 on the 9-point semantic differential scale) repeatedly without considering the occasionally changing direction of the questions (e.g., positive words on the right end to the left end) were also removed. Among the initial 392 cases, 370 cases remained through this initial filtering process.4

Among the remaining participants, those who failed the self-disclosure manipulation check were removed from the data. For instance, if a participant was assigned to a no personal disclosure condition but answered “yes” to the question asking if the journalist on the social media profile they saw was disclosing his self, the participant’s responses were not included in the analyses because he or she did not seem to pay enough attention to the stimulus while participating and, thus, it was presumed that they could not reflect the effects of the experimental conditions properly. 267 out of the 370 participants passed this manipulation check; One did not respond to the manipulation check and among the failed 102 participants, 31 said there was no self-disclosure in the

4 When some major hypotheses (i.e., main effects of manipulations and their interaction with individual journalism orientation) were tested with both the raw (N = 370) and the trimmed data (N = 267), the general patterns were matched, but the effect tended to be weaker with the raw data, which led some significant results to be not significant.
stimulus while there was, and 71 said there was self-disclosure in the stimulus while there was little. As for the interaction manipulation check, 293 among 369 participants passed whereas 76 failed; 11 said there was no interaction in the stimulus while there was, and 65 said there was interaction in the stimulus while there was little. However, those 76 were kept in the data to avoid losing too much power by decreasing the sample size. The numbers of participants in each condition as a result of the data trimming were outlined in Table 1. Although the low self-disclosure x high interaction condition retained a much lower number of participants than other conditions as the result of data trimming, the success rate of interaction manipulation check did not differ by self-disclosure condition, $\chi^2 (2, 1) = .99, p = .32$.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-disclosure</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>71 (62.3%)</td>
<td>43 (37.7%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>86 (56.2%)</td>
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Table 1. Crosstab of self-disclosure and interaction condition assignments ($N = 267$)
Among the remaining 267 participants, as is typical in research, some participants did not respond to one or more questions used in the analysis. As my mediators and dependent variables were the indices made up of 10 or 15 items, cases with a couple of nonresponses could significantly decrease the ultimate sample size for my final analyses. For instance, among 267 participants, 21 people were missing a value for the core mediator variable journalist personal perception and could not be included in the final analyses which include the variable. Although listwise deletion is one of the most common techniques to deal with missing data, it reduces the effective sample size and introduces bias into estimates (King, Honaker, Joseph, & Scheve, 1998). Particularly when the sample size is small, listwise deletion is not recommended because it can significantly reduce statistical power.

To avoid further decreasing the N while reducing the amount of missing data on items (excluding the dependent variables), a hotdeck imputation procedure (Myers, 2011) was utilized. To impute nonresponses, the rows (i.e., respondents) of the survey data file were randomly permuted within sex, race, and knowledge. Any respondent missing on a given variable was assigned the value of the respondent with the same sex, race and knowledge nearest to him or her in this randomly permuted data file. In other words, nonresponses were assigned a response by randomly sampling without replacement from the distribution of the responses to the item with missing data from those individuals with the same age and knowledge level.
Finally, even after the Hotdeck imputation process, three cases were still missing values for some variables (i.e., those who do not have anybody who has the same sex, race, and knowledge level in the sample). For them, the mean of the variables was imputed. For instance, for a participant who missed the question about attractiveness of the journalist, the mean value of attractiveness in the place of the missing value was placed. This method of mean substitution has the potential to change the value of estimates and artificially deflates the variation of a variable while it has the advantage of allowing the researcher to include as many participants as possible in all final analyses. However, because only a small number of cases had a missing value (i.e., less than 5% of the total number of the participants), they were mean-replaced by a single imputation to keep enough statistical power. After the data cleaning processes, the final sample size ($n$) included in the analyses was 267.

Measures

**Criterion variables.** Perceptions of the journalist and his news product were conceptualized as how the journalist and the news product were seen by audiences in terms of personal and professional dimensions, separately.

*Perceptions in the personal dimension.* The personal-aspect perception was operationalized as a 14-item index. For each item, participants selected a point on a 9-point semantic differential scale with bipolar adjectives that best represented their feelings, and the responses were placed on a 0 to 10 scale. The 14 items covered the
attractiveness dimension (e.g., attractive – unattractive, friendly – unfriendly), the
trustworthiness dimension (e.g., reliable – unreliable, sincere – insincere), and the
goodwill dimension (e.g., caring – uncaring, concerned with people – not concerned with
people) recognized in the credibility literature. The personal-aspect perception index was
created by averaging individuals’ scores on the 14 items (see Appendix C for the
complete list and descriptive statistics of the items). The responses to some items were
reverse coded. This index was used for measuring perceptions of both the journalist and
the news product in personal aspects. The reliability analysis ($N = 267$) showed that the
index was very reliable (journalist perception Cronbach’s $\alpha = .92$; news product
perception Cronbach’s $\alpha = .93$).

The means for the 14 items for the personal perception of the journalist ranged
from 5.6 to 7.4 (on a 0 to 10 scale) with standard deviations that range from 1.5 to 1.9.
None of the 14 skewness estimates and 13 kurtosis estimates came in at the $\pm$ 1 level.
Only the kurtosis estimate of attractive was above 1(1.8). As for the perception of the
news product in personal aspects, the means for the 14 items ranged from 5.7 to 7.1 with
standard deviations that ranged from 1.5 to 2.0. None of the 14 skewness estimates and
13 kurtosis estimates come in at the $\pm$ 1 level. Only the kurtosis estimate of friendly is
above 1(1.3). Overall, there was a solid normal distribution for the 14 personal perception
items.

Perceptions in the professional dimension. The professional-aspect index was
operationalized as an index of 10 items. For each item, again, participants selected a point
that best represented their feelings on a 9-point semantic differential scale with bipolar adjectives on a 0 to 1 scale. The items included the objectivity side (e.g., objective – not objective, fact-based – opinion-based) and the competence side (e.g., competent – incompetent, professional – not professional; see Appendix C for the complete list of the items). This index was used for measuring perceptions of both the journalist and the news product in professional aspects. The reliability of the professional-aspect index was also solid (journalist perceptions Cronbach’s α = .80, news product perceptions Cronbach’s α = .90).

The means for the 5 journalist objectivity perception items ranged from 4.9 to 5.8 on a 0 – 10 scale, with standard deviations that ranged from 1.9 to 2.3. The means for the 5 items for the 5 journalist competence perceptions ranged from 6.7 to 7.2 with standard deviations that range from 1.6 to 1.9. None of the 10 professional perception skewness estimates come in at the ±1 level. Overall, there is a solid normal distribution for the 10 journalist–professional items. As for the objectivity perceptions of the journalist’s news product, the means for the 5 items ranged from 4.3 to 5.2, with tight standard deviations that ranged from 1.9 to 2.1. The means for the 5 items for the competence perceptions of the news product ranged from 5.1 to 5.5 with tight standard deviations that ranged from 1.6 to 1.8. Although there were two kurtosis estimates that reached -1 (i.e., separating facts and opinions: -1.0, factual: -1.0), both did not come over -1 and none of the other 8 kurtosis estimates and 10 professional perception skewness estimates come in at the ±1 level. Overall, the distribution for the 14 news product–personal items, the 5 news
product–objectivity items, and the 5 news product–competence items was normal both for the journalist and the news product.

*Exploratory factor analysis.* Although reliability of the perception measures were assessed with Chronbach’s alphas, exploratory factor analyses (EFAs) were additionally conducted to assess the internal structure of the measures. Particularly because the perception measure items were developed in consideration of several lower-order dimensions (i.e., 3 dimensions for the personal-dimension perceptions, 2 dimensions for the professional-dimension perceptions), final decisions needed to be made about whether the dimensions should be merged or kept separate. The answer could be obtained by examining the internal factor structures of the constructs.

The personal and professional-dimension perception items were factor analyzed using maximum likelihood (ML) method with direct oblimin rotation. The analysis of the journalist’s personal-dimension perception items yielded three factors explaining a total of 65.01% of the variance (see Table 2 for factor loadings and the scree plot). However, initial Eigen values indicated that the first factor (i.e., trustworthiness dimension) explained 48.62% whereas the second (i.e., attractiveness) and third factors (i.e., goodwill) explained much smaller portion of the variance (i.e., 9.07% and 7.32%, respectively). Whereas the first factor’s Eigen value was 6.81, the latter two factors had Eigen values just slightly over one (i.e., 1.27 and 1.03). The analysis of the personal-dimension perception items for the news product also showed the similar result; three factors loaded explaining a total of 70.42% of the variance, but initial Eigen values indicated that the
Table 2. Factor loadings and the scree plot, based on a maximum likelihood analysis with direct oblimin rotation, of the 14 items for the personal-dimension perception of a journalist ($N = 267$). A factor loadings, B scree plot
<table>
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<th>Factor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Considerate</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td>.761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincere</td>
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<td>Appealing</td>
<td>.596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive</td>
<td>.367</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Factor loadings extracting only one factor, based on a maximum likelihood analysis with direct oblimin rotation, of the 14 items for the personal-dimension perception of a journalist (N = 267)
dominant portion (i.e., 52.46%) of the variance was explained by the first factor (i.e., trustworthiness) whereas the second (i.e., attractiveness) and third (i.e., goodwill) factors explained 10.75% and 7.21% of the variance, respectively. The latter two factors had Eigen values slightly over one (i.e., 1.51 and 1.01) whereas the first factor’s Eigen value was 7.34 (see Table 4). What these results indicate is that there is only one distinct factor. The latter two factors were secondary to the first factor (trustworthiness) rather than comparable, independent factors.

Thus, another pair of factor analysis was conducted to confirm this one-factor structure. This time, a fixed number of the factor to extract was set to 1 while other settings were the same. The factor matrix with a fixed factor were provided in Table 3 and Table 5.

Professional-dimension perceptions were also factor analyzed using maximum likelihood (ML) method with direct oblimin rotation. The analysis of the journalist’s professional-dimension perception items yielded two factors explaining a total of 60.59% of the variance (see Table 6 for factor loadings and the scree plot). According to initial Eigen values, although the first factor (competence dimension) explained 40.62% of the variance, the second factor (objectivity) explained 20.18% of the variance, which was not small. The first and the second factors had Eigen values of 4.04 and 2.02, which was distinct from the following factors that had Eigen values below 1. For the news product perception, the same two factors (i.e., competence and objectivity) loaded although the variance the second factor (i.e., objectivity) explained decreased to 12.89% (see Table 7
for factor loadings and the scree plot). Initial Eigen values indicated that competence (5.42), than objectivity (1.29), was the more crucial factor explaining more than a half (54.18%) of the variance. However, the analysis of the journalist’s professional-dimension perception clearly demonstrated that the construct was composed of both factors. Thus, the author decided to treat competence and objectivity as separate constructs that functioned as lower-order variables of professional-dimension perception.

Confirmatory factor analysis. As the exploratory factor analysis showed two factor loadings for the professional perception variables, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were conducted to warrant further confidence in the two-factor structure. The structural equation modeling program, AMOS 19 (Kline 2011), was used to assess the factor structure of the 10-item measure which was composed of the five objectivity items (i.e., objective, neutral, unbiased, separating facts from opinions, factual) and the five competence items (i.e., competent, trained, informed, qualified, professional). As recommended by Holbert and Stephenson (2002, 2008), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was used as an absolute fit statistic and the confirmatory fit index (CFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used as incremental fit statistics. The recommended levels for each statistic as indications for solid model fit are as follows: SRMR, .06 or lower, CFI, .95 or greater (Hu and Bentler1999), and RMSEA, .06 or lower (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). In addition, the chi-square statistic with degrees of freedom noted is reported for purposes of model comparison. Based on the results of exploratory factor analyses, the professional-
dimension perception was conceptualized as a model with 2 latent variables (i.e.,
objectivity, competence) and 10 observable variables (5 under objectivity, 5 under
competence). First, the model was tested for the perception of the journalist (see Figure
1). This model fits and the RMSEA point to a solid fit with the data. The standardized
path estimates calculated for the two-factor model are also indicative of a well-fitting
model. In all 10 cases, the loadings leading from the two latent factors to their respective
observable variables reside much above .60 with the lowest loading of .94 (i.e., informed)
and the highest loading of 1.88 (i.e., factual). The combination of these results points to
the two-factor model fitting the data well.

This two-factor model also fits the data for the perception of the news product
well (see Figure 2): $\chi^2 (df = 34, N = 267) = 95.11, p < .001$; CFI = .96, SRMR = .05, and
RMSEA = .08. Although the RMSEA is above .06, the CFI and the SRMR show that the
model fit the data well. The standardized path estimates also indicate a well-fitting model.
The loadings leading from the two latent factors to their respective observable variables
are solidly in the .93 to 1.45 range, which is much above .60. These results are indicative
of a good-fit model.
### Factors

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<td>Caring</td>
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<td>.613</td>
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A

![Scree Plot](image)

B

Table 4. Factor loadings and the scree plot based on a maximum likelihood analysis with direct oblimin rotation for the 14 items for the personal-dimension perception of a news product ($N = 267$). A factor loadings, B scree plot
<table>
<thead>
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<td>.416</td>
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Table 5. Factor loadings extracting only one factor, based on a maximum likelihood analysis with direct oblimin rotation, of the 14 items for the personal-dimension perception of a news product ($N = 267$)
Table 6. Factor loadings and the scree plot, based on a maximum likelihood analysis with direct oblimin rotation, of the 10 items for the professional-dimension perception of a journalist (N = 267). A factor loadings, B scree plot
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
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<td>Trained</td>
<td>.872</td>
<td>.558</td>
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<td>.563</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informed</td>
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<td>.605</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
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<td><strong>.760</strong></td>
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<td>Fact based</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unbiased</td>
<td>.558</td>
<td><strong>.687</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Separate fact and opinion</td>
<td>.549</td>
<td><strong>.672</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>.345</td>
<td><strong>.541</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Scree Plot](image)

Table 7. Factor loadings and a scree plot, based on a maximum likelihood analysis with direct oblimin rotation, of the 10 items for the professional-dimension perception of a news product ($N = 267$). A factor loadings B scree plot
Residualization. Although personal dimension (i.e., trustworthiness) and professional dimension (i.e., competence and objectivity) were considered separately in this dissertation, they were correlated with one another as the dimensions of the journalist or news product perception (see Table 8 for correlation matrix). Thus, when testing the effect of a predictor on one dimension, the potential effects on the other dimensions needed to be controlled. To achieve the control, unstandardized residuals of the journalist trustworthiness, competence, and objectivity as well as the residuals of the news product trustworthiness, competence, and objectivity were obtained from SPSS and utilized instead of the original perception variables. Upon requesting, SPSS computed and provided the residuals in additional columns by taking the difference between the observed values and the predicted values. The mean of each residual was equal to .00 as the sum of deviations around the regression line always sums to zero. The standard deviation of residuals of the 6 variables, which is supposed to be equal to the standard error of the estimate in the original model, was .27, .13, .11, .25, .12, and .09, respectively.
Figure 1. CFA model predicting audience perceptions of a journalist in the professional dimension in AMOS
Figure 2. CFA model predicting audience perceptions of an article in the professional dimension in AMOS
Individual journalism orientation (IJO). IJO was conceptualized as how strongly individuals agreed with either objective or public journalism norm. IJO was operationalized with a 10-item index which was created by averaging the scores for 10 dichotomous items (i.e., 0: objective journalism, or 1: public journalism). First, participants were asked to select a statement that represents their beliefs between the two conflicting statements (e.g., “Journalists should be neutral in any case.” --- “It is not always desirable for journalists to be neutral.”; “Journalistic objectivity means having no value judgments involved.” --- “Journalistic objectivity means having fair judgments involved.”; “War coverage should not distinguish between right and wrong in their portraits.” --- “War coverage should distinguish between right and wrong in their portraits.”; see Appendix C for the complete list of the items). The former statements (0) represented the objective, detached journalism norm and the latter ones (1) represented the public, attached journalism norm. Then, the IJO index was obtained by averaging individuals' scores on the 10 items. The reliability of the measure was not very strong: Kuder-Richardson20 = .57. However, it was expected to some extent as the measure was made of only two-point (0 or 1) scales, and participants were normally distributed on the scale. The majority of the participants (52.8%) gathered in the center zone with the scores of .40, .50, or .60, but, overall, agreed slightly more with the objective journalism norm than with the public journalism norm (M = .49, SD = .21).

Ideology. Individuals’ ideology was measured using an index of 3 items. Participants were asked to indicate where they were located on a 9-point scale from “Very conservative (1)” to “Very liberal (9)” on political, social, and economic issues
separately. The ideology index was created by averaging individuals’ scores on the 3 items and recoded on a 0 to 1 scale (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .85$). Participants were overall closer to the neutral than to the extreme (i.e., very conservative or very liberal), but they were slightly more liberal than conservative ($M = .56, SD = .25$).

Interest in the topic. As motivation and ability are recognized as the two major factors that influence information processing (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), individuals’ interest (motivation) and knowledge (ability) levels are commonly considered as covariates. In this dissertation, interest in the topic of the given stimulus article was used as a proxy for motivation. The extent to which participants were originally interested in the topic of the article might influence their perceptions of the article and the journalist who wrote it, and needed to be controlled. The topic interest was measured by an index of three items asking how important, how much concern, and relevant the topic was to them on a 9-point bipolar scale ranging from unimportant (1) to important (9), no concern (1) to much concern (9), and irrelevant (1) to relevant (9), respectively. Individuals’ scores on the three items were averaged and recoded on a 0 to 1 scale. This created a reliable index of interest in the topic (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .92$). The mean scores varied by articles ranging from .69 (Article 1 and 3) to .73 (Article 2) to .75 (Article 4), but the differences across articles were not statistically significant in predicting the interest level ($F = 1.76, p = .155$). Overall, participants were quite highly interested in the article they were exposed to ($M = .72, SD = .19$).

Knowledge of current affairs. Ability, another important factor that might influence information processing, needed to be controlled as a covariate. An index of four
multiple-choice questions was developed to measure individuals’ knowledge of current affairs, and used as a proxy for ability. Each question asked if participants knew which party was the current majority party in the U.S. House of Representatives (The Republican Party; answered correctly by 45.3% and incorrectly by 25.1% (i.e., The Democratic Party); 29.6% responded that they were not sure), who Eric Holder was (The U.S. Attorney General; answered correctly by 29.2% and incorrectly by 3.7% (i.e., the Secretary of the Treasure, The CEO of BP, or White House Chief of Staff); 67.0% responded that they were not sure), who recently surprised people by suddenly resigning (Pope Benedict XVI; answered correctly by 83.1% and incorrectly by 2.9% (i.e., Nancy Pelosi – the Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representative, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad – President of Iran, or John Roberts Jr. – Chief Justice of the U.S.); 13.9% responded they were not sure), and what movie won the best picture award and who won the best leading actor award in the latest Academy Awards (Argo & Daniel Day-Lewis; answered correctly by 42.7% and incorrectly by 3.7% (i.e., Lincoln & Daniel Day-Lewis, Argo-Ben Affleck, or Life of Pi-Ben Affleck; 27.3% responded that they were not sure) respectively (see Appendix C for complete question wordings). In addition to the first two traditional questions commonly used to measure political knowledge, the latter two questions on the latest social and cultural news were created and included to see if participants kept up with current affairs. A correct answer was given .25 point and the points added for the knowledge index. As each item dealt with a different area, the reliability of the measure was low (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .43$). Overall, participants answered a half of the questions correctly ($M = .50$, $SD = .29$).
Media bias. Individuals’ beliefs in prevalence of bias in the U.S. news media were can influence their perceptions of journalists and news and, thus, needed to be controlled. Media bias perception was measured by asking if individuals thought the news media in the U.S. were biased, and requesting to choose a response among 5 options: “Yes, severely (31.1%)” “Yes, but not so severely (41.9%)” “Maybe (22.5%)” “Maybe not (4.5%)” and “No, I don’t think they are biased (0%).” In general, participants perceived the U.S. news media as being somewhat biased ($M = .72, SD = .19$ when recoded on a scale ranging from 0 (No, not biased) to 1 (Yes, severely).

Online news use. It is possible that individuals who consume most news online perceived journalists on Facebook more favorably. Therefore, the extent to which individuals consume news online (vs. offline) was measured using a 9-point scale ranging from “I receive news only from traditional media (0)” to “I receive news only from the Internet (1),” and considered as a potential covariate. Participants consumed news more from the web than from the traditional media ($M = .67, SD = .21$).

**Manipulation Check**

In an experiment, it is important to ensure that manipulations worked as intended. To check the manipulations of self-disclosure and interaction, participants were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the following two descriptive statements: “On the profile I just saw, the profile owner (journalist) revealed his personal thoughts or feelings when he posted a news link.”; “In the Facebook profile I saw, the journalist
interacted with the audience who provided responses by responding to and liking them.”

It was expected that participants in the high self-disclosure condition would answer “Yes”
to the first question, and those in the high interaction condition would answer “Yes” to
the second question.

Among the remaining 267 participants, 153 were assigned to the high-disclosure
condition and 114 were assigned to the low-disclosure condition. As participants who
failed to pass the self-disclosure manipulation check were removed from the sample
during the course of data trimming, remaining participants were those who passed the
self-disclosure manipulation check. Among the 267 participants, 212 (79%) passed the
manipulation check on interaction whereas 55 (21%) failed to provide correct answers,
which is a smaller number compared to those who failed in the disclosure manipulation
check. The 55 participants were kept to avoid further decreasing the sample size.

**Correlation Matrix**

Before proceeding with the hypothesis testing, the bivariate zero-order
correlations between the variables of interest and the control variables were presented in
Table 8.

**Analysis**

Analysis progressed in several steps. First, potential effects of multiple stimuli
(different articles) on the outcome variables (i.e., journalist personal perception, news
product personal perception, journalist professional perception, and news product
professional perception) were assessed using ANOVA to determine if the different article groups could be collapsed in the main analyses.

Second, the effects of control variables on the four outcome variables were estimated using regressions in order to decide which control variables to include in the analyses.

Next, hypothesis tests started with the simple mediation models from journalists’ social media activities to audiences’ perceptions (see Figure 3). First, the main effects of manipulations (i.e., journalists’ social media activities) on audiences’ journalist perceptions in the personal and professional dimensions (H1 – H2, H6 –H7) were assessed by running a series of ordinary least squares (OLS) hierarchical regression equations.

![Figure 3. The simple mediation model from journalists’ social media activities to audiences’ perceptions](image-url)
Control variables were included as Block 1 items and predictors were entered in Block 2 in each regression equation. Next, the main effects of audience perceptions of journalists on audience perceptions of their news products (H3, H8) were assessed using hierarchical regression equations with journalist perceptions as the mediators and news product perceptions as the outcome variables. Then, it was formally examined if the effects journalists’ social media activities on news product perceptions were mediated through journalist perceptions (H4 – H5, H9 – H10; (see Figure 3). For the test of indirect effects, confidence intervals were generated using Process (Hayes, 2012), a modeling tool for SPSS and SAS which incorporates bootstrapping-based inferences about indirect effects in OLS-based moderator/mediator models (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). In running Process, a total of 5,000 bootstrapping re-samples were generated from 267 original samples following the recommendation suggested by Hayes (2009). In all mediation analyses, heteroscedasticity-consistent SEs and bias corrected maximum likelihood confidence intervals were estimated at .95 confidence level. All of the covariates were controlled for both the focal mediator (i.e., journalist perceptions) and the dependent variable (i.e., news product perceptions).
Figure 4. The simple moderation model (between journalists’ social media activities) predicting audiences’ perceptions of journalists.

Figure 5. The simple moderation model (between journalists’ social media activities and IJO) predicting audiences’ perceptions of journalists.
Once simple mediation models were assessed, simple moderation models (Figure 4 and Figure 5) were assessed using hierarchical regression equations as a stepping stone for the tests of moderated mediation. Each of the interaction terms (i.e., predictor x moderator) was inserted as a single Block 3 variable. Finally, a set of moderated mediation models was assessed estimating the relationships among journalists’ social media activities (i.e., self-disclosure or/and interaction), audiences’ individual journalism orientation (IJO), and the perceptions of the journalists and their news products (see Figure 6 and Figure 7). In particular, the moderating role of a self-disclosure (for H9 – H12) or IJO (for H13 – H20) was examined in the association between journalists’ social media activities and journalist perceptions in consideration of the mediating role of journalist perceptions.
Table 8. Bivariate Correlation Matrix (N = 267)

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<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
<th>5.</th>
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<th>8.</th>
<th>9.</th>
<th>10.</th>
<th>11.</th>
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**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Figure 6. The moderated-mediation model predicting audiences’ perceptions of news products with self-disclosure as moderator.

Figure 7. The moderated mediation model predicting audiences’ perceptions of news products with IJO as moderator.
Chapter 3: Results

Article Effect

It is important to conduct an experiment using multiple messages (stimuli) for more dependable generalization (Jackson & Jacobs, 1983; Jackson, O’Keefe, & Jacobs, 1988; Jackson, S., O’Keefe, D. J., Jacobs, S., & Brashers, D. E., 1989; Slater, 1991). Four different news articles were used as message stimuli in this dissertation. The four articles individually dealt with such topics as student loan (article 1), job market (article 2), immigration (article 3), and gun control (article 4). Significantly differing test results across articles would signal that the results might apply only to some types of news or some topic areas. Thus, it was tested if the different articles had different effects on audience perceptions using analysis of variance (ANOVA) with different article group (1 through 4) entered as a between-subject factor (independent variable). As professional-dimension perceptions were measured in terms of objectivity and competence, six ANOVA were conducted with each of the six different outcome variables (i.e., journalist-personal, journalist-objectivity, journalist-competence, news product-personal, news product-objectivity, news product-competence) in their residual forms.

ANOVA results showed that which particular news article participants were exposed to did not significantly influence how they perceived its writer in terms of personal dimension, $F(3, 263) = .66, p = .58$, objectivity in the professional dimension, $F$
(3, 263) = .80, \( p = .49 \), and competence in the professional dimension, \( F(3, 263) = .15, \ p = .93 \), and how they perceived the news product in terms of personal dimensions, \( F(3, 263) = .75, \ p = .53 \), objectivity, \( F(3, 263) = .46, \ p = .71 \), and competence \( F(3, 263) = 1.33, \ p = .26 \) (see Table 9). As no differences across articles were found, the four article condition cells were ultimately collapsed in the analyses. This result showed that the effects of experimental manipulations in the stimulus on audience perceptions did not differ by the kind of stimulus and could generally apply to various news topics, thereby increasing generalizability of the results of this dissertation.

**Control Variables**

The main effects of various potential covariates on the six outcome variables were tested using regressions in order to decide which control variables to include in the analyses. First, five variables of individuals’ ideology, interest in the topic of the news product, knowledge of current affairs, media bias perception, and online news use (as opposed to offline news use) were individually included in the set of regressions with six residual perception variables (i.e., journalist-personal, journalist-objectivity, journalist-competence, news product-personal, news product-objectivity, news product-competence) as criterion variables.

---

5 No significant article (topic) effect was found when tested with the raw (non-trimmed) data (\( N = 370 \)) as well.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Journalist Perception</th>
<th></th>
<th>Article Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$F$(df)</td>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>$F$(df)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree of freedom</strong></td>
<td>(3, 263)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(3, 263)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bootstrapped N</strong></td>
<td>$N=5,000$</td>
<td></td>
<td>$N=5,000$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$, #$p < .10$***

Table 9. ANOVA for multiple stimuli (article) effects
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Personal</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Objectivity</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Competence</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>b(SE)</strong></td>
<td><strong>p</strong></td>
<td><strong>b(SE)</strong></td>
<td><strong>p</strong></td>
<td><strong>b(SE)</strong></td>
<td><strong>p</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>-.06(.07)</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.01(.03)</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.00(.03)</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic interest</td>
<td>.09(.09)</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>-.07(.04)</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.00(.04)</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>-.08(.06)</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.02(.03)</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.05(.02)</td>
<td>.02*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias perception</td>
<td>-.07(.10)</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>-.21(.05)</td>
<td>.00***</td>
<td>.08(.04)</td>
<td>.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online news use</td>
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<td>.84</td>
<td>.05(.04)</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.05(.04)</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Personal</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Objectivity</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Competence</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>b(SE)</strong></td>
<td><strong>p</strong></td>
<td><strong>b(SE)</strong></td>
<td><strong>p</strong></td>
<td><strong>b(SE)</strong></td>
<td><strong>p</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>.06(.06)</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>-.03(.03)</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.01(.02)</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic interest</td>
<td>.18(.08)</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>.04(.04)</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.02(.03)</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>-.11(.05)</td>
<td>.04*</td>
<td>.05(.03)</td>
<td>.04*</td>
<td>.02(.02)</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias perception</td>
<td>-.01(.09)</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>-.08(.04)</td>
<td>.05+</td>
<td>.04(.03)</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online news use</td>
<td>.02(.07)</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.05(.03)</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>-.02(.03)</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05, #p < .10

Table 10. Regressions for potential control variables.
For ideology, none of the six regression results were significant (see Table 10), indicating that participants’ individual ideology did not have a main effect on audience perceptions. On the other hand, topic interest was a significant predictor of the news product perception in personal dimensions, \( b = .18, SE = .08, p < .05 \), showing that those who were more interested in the topic of the news they read tended to perceive the product more positively in the personal dimension regardless of experimental conditions.

However, topic interest did not significantly influence any of the other 5 outcome variables. Current-affair knowledge had significant effects on journalists’ competence perception, \( b = .05, SE = .02, p < .05 \), the personal-dimension product perception, \( b = -.11, SE = .05, p < .05 \), and the news product’ objectivity perception, \( b = .05, SE = .03, p < .05 \). Interestingly, this result indicated that more knowledgeable people rated a journalist more competent and his or her news product more objective, but less favorable. Individuals’ perception of bias prevalence in the news media significantly predicted journalists’ perceived objectivity, \( b = -.21, SE = .05, p < .001 \), and competence, \( b = .08, SE = .04, p < .05 \), and marginally predicted news product’s perceived objectivity, \( b = -.08, SE = .04, p = .05 \). Those who believed news media were in general biased viewed an unknown journalist less objective, but more competent. Online news use had no significant effect on any of the six outcome variables.

It is not desirable to include non-significant variables unless there is a compelling reason as they reduce statistical power of the analysis by consuming degrees of freedom while explain no extra variance. Because ideology and online news use did not
significantly influence any of the outcome variables, they were dropped. Only the variables that had a significant influence on at least one of the outcome variables – topic interest, current-affair knowledge, and media bias perception – were included and controlled in the analyses.

**Hypothesis Testing**

Simple mediation analyses. The first set of hypotheses of this dissertation (H1 – H10) assesses the simple mediation models predicting audience perceptions of the journalists’ news products through audience perceptions of the journalists in the personal dimension (see Figure 3). Before getting to the mediation, the effects of journalists’ self-disclosure and interaction on audience perceptions of the journalists were tested first. H1 and H2 predicted positive effects of the social media activities, and a hierarchical regression result showed that self-disclosure and interaction indeed significantly and positively influenced journalist personal perception, $b = .06, SE = .03, t = 2.04, p < .05$, and $b = .17, SE = .03, t = 5.20, p < .001$, respectively, above and beyond the influences of topic interest, knowledge, and media bias perception (see Table 11). H1 and H2 were supported$^6$. No control variable significantly predicted journalist personal perception. This regression model explained a significant portion of variance of journalist personal perception, $r = .35, R^2 = .13, F (5, 261) = 7.50, p < .001$.

---

$^6$ The same pattern (significant, positive effects of self-disclosure and interaction) was found with the raw data ($N = 370$).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Journalist (Personal)</th>
<th>News product (Personal)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 1:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-.15+</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic interest</td>
<td>.17+</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media bias</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>(.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 2:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-disclosure</td>
<td>.06*</td>
<td>(.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>.17***</td>
<td>(.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 3:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>journalist</td>
<td>-.28*</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perception</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model $F$</td>
<td>7.50***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model $R^2$</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample $N$</td>
<td>N=266</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bootstrapped $N$</td>
<td>N=5,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$, #$p < .10$

Table 11. Hierarchical regression of self-disclosure and interaction predicting audience perceptions of a news product via audience perceptions of a journalist in the personal dimension
H3 predicted a positive effect of journalist personal perceptions on news product perceptions in the personal dimension. The result supported the prediction. Journalist personal perception was a strong and positive predictor of news product personal perception, $b = .28$, $SE = .06$, $t = 4.90$, $p < .001$, above and beyond self-disclosure, interaction, and the control variables (i.e., topic interest, knowledge, and media bias perception). Thus, H3 was supported. Among control variables, topic interest and knowledge were also significant predictors of news product personal perception, $b = .20$, $SE = .08$, $t = 2.46$, $p < .05$, and $b = -.11$, $SE = .05$, $t = -2.21$, $p < .05$, respectively. The more interested in the topic of the news journalists wrote about, and the less knowledgeable about other current affairs, audiences perceived news products more positively in personal dimensions. This extended model accounted for a significant variance of personal-dimension news product perception, $r = .39$, $R^2 = .15$, $F(6, 260) = 7.87$, $p < .001$.

H4 and H5 examined if the effect of self-disclosure and interaction on personal-dimension news product perception was significantly mediated by journalist personal perception (see Figure 3). Using Process, a standard path-analytic mediation analysis coupled with bootstrapped resampling method was conducted to assess the indirect effect. The results showed that 95% confidential interval of the indirect effect of self-disclosure on news product perception through journalist personal perception ranged from .002 to .042 with a point estimate of the indirect effect of .020, $b_{\text{Indirect Effect}} = .02$, bootstrap $SE = .01$, bootstrap $CI = [.002, .042]$. The 95% confidential interval of the indirect effect of
journalist interaction on news product personal perception through journalist personal perception ranged from .021 to .081, with a point estimate of the indirect effect of .05; \(b = .05, SE = .02, CI = [.021, .081]\). There was no significant direct effect of self-disclosure on news product personal perception, \(b = -.04, SE = .03, t = -1.33, p = .18\), and \(b = .04, SE = .03, t = 1.40, p = .16\), respectively, indicating complete (as opposed to partial) mediations. Thus, both H4 and H5 were supported.

The results of H1 – H5 indicated that journalists’ self-disclosure via social media benefitted them in the personal dimension by positively influencing audience perception of the journalists and, in turn, audience perceptions of their news products. Those intimate and friendly social media activities ultimately positively affected the way the journalists’ news products were rated by audiences by affecting the way they were personally seen by audiences.

The next set of hypotheses of this dissertation (H6 – H10) focused on audience perceptions in the professional dimension which was measured in two aspects: objectivity and competence. H6 and H7 predicted that a negative effect of journalists’ self-disclosure and interaction on audience perceptions of the journalists in the professional dimension. A hierarchical regression focusing objectivity revealed that self-disclosure and interaction significantly influenced perceived journalist objectivity, \(b = -.09, SE = .02, t = -5.89, p < .001\), and \(b = .04, SE = .02, t = 2.41, p < .05\), respectively (see Table 12). However, whereas self-disclosure was a negative predictor as anticipated, interaction was a positive
### Table 12

**Hierarchical regression of self-disclosure and interaction predicting audience perceptions of a news product via audience perceptions of a journalist in the professional dimension (objectivity side)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block 1: Controls</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.21***</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic interest</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>-.55</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.05*</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>-.001***</td>
<td>(.03)</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.06*</td>
<td>(.03)</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media bias</td>
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<td>(.05)</td>
<td>-4.24</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.09*</td>
<td>(-.05)</td>
<td>-2.02</td>
<td>.05</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block 2: Predictors</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-disclosure</td>
<td>-.09***</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>-5.89</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>-1.10</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>.04*</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.29</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block 3: Mediator</th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal journalist</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.11+</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>1.87</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>News Product (Objectivity)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>b</strong></td>
<td><strong>SE</strong></td>
<td><strong>t</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.21***</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic interest</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>-.001***</td>
<td>(.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media bias</td>
<td>-.20***</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Model F**     | 12.53*** | 3.44** |
| **Model R^2**   | .19 | .07 |
| **Sample N**    | N=266 | N=266 |
| **Bootstrapped N** | N=5,000 | N=5,000 |

***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05, #p < .10
### Table 13

Hierarchical regression of self-disclosure and interaction predicting audience perceptions of a news product via audience perceptions of a journalist in the professional dimension (competence side)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block 1: Controls</th>
<th>Journalist (Competence)</th>
<th>News Product (Competence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>$SE$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-.03 (.04)</td>
<td>-.02 (.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic interest</td>
<td>-.04 (0.04)</td>
<td>.02 (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>.04+ (0.03)</td>
<td>.002 (0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media bias</td>
<td>.07 (0.04)</td>
<td>.01 (0.03)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block 2: Predictors</th>
<th>Journalist (Competence)</th>
<th>News Product (Competence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>$SE$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-disclosure</td>
<td>-.01 (0.01)</td>
<td>.01 (0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>-.03* (.01)</td>
<td>-.02+ (.01)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block 3: Mediator</th>
<th>Journalist (Competence)</th>
<th>News Product (Competence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>$SE$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal journalist perception</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Model $F$          | 2.67***      | 7.82***      |
| Model $R^2$        | .05          | .39          |
| Sample N           | N=266        | N=266        |
| Bootstrapped N     | N=5,000      | N=5,000      |

***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$, #$p < .10$
predictor of journalist perceived objectivity\(^7\). This result indicated that, while a
journalist’s exposing personal thoughts and feelings on social media sites made the
journalist look less objective as a professional, his or her active online interactions with
other social media users actually increased the perceived objectivity. Media bias
perception strongly and negatively influenced perceived journalist objectivity, \(b = -.20,\)
\(SE = .04, t = -4.24, p < .001\), showing that audiences who believed that news media were
biased tended to view a news product less objective regardless of experimental conditions.
This regression model accounted for a significant variance of journalist personal
perception, \(r = .44, R^2 = .19, F (5, 261) = 12.53, p < .001\).

The result of another hierarchical regression focusing journalist competence
showed that whereas perceived journalist competence was significantly and negatively
influenced by interaction, \(b = -.03, SE = .01, t = -2.05, p < .05\), it was not significantly
affected by self-disclosure, \(b = -.01, SE = .01, t = -.74, p = .46\) (see Table 13)\(^8\). None of
the control variables were significant predictors. This regression model accounted for a
significant variance of journalist personal perception, \(r = .22, R^2 = .05, F (5, 261) = 2.67,\)
\(p < .05\). This result demonstrated that journalists’ responding to individual commenters
on their wall made them look less competent as a professional as expected although it
made the journalists look more objective. Journalists’ self-disclosure was not
significantly related to their perceived competence whereas it seriously damaged their

\(^7\) The same pattern (contrast effects of self-disclosure and interaction) was found when the same hypothesis was tested with the raw data (\(N = 370\)).

\(^8\) A similar pattern was found with the raw data (\(N = 370\)), but the negative effect of interaction was marginally significant (\(p = .08\)).
perceived objectivity. Thus, both H6 and H7 were partially supported; H6 was supported only for objectivity and H7 was supported only for competence.

H8 predicted the effect of journalist perception on news product perception in terms of perceived objectivity and competence (i.e., professional dimensions). The result showed that the effect of perceived journalist objectivity on perceived news product objectivity was marginally significant, \( b = .11, SE = .06, t = 1.87, p = .06 \) whereas knowledge and media bias perception significantly influenced perceived news product objectivity, \( b = .06, SE = .03, t = 2.30, p < .05, \) and \( b = -.10, SE = .05, t = -2.02, p < .05, \) respectively (see Table 12). The more knowledgeable audiences were about current affairs, or the less biased they thought news media were, the more objective they perceived a news product was. There was some evidence that audiences who perceived the journalist to be objective found the news product to be objective, but the result could be due to chance as it was only marginally significant (i.e., slightly above .05 level). This regression model accounted for a significant variance of perceived journalist objectivity, \( r = .27, R^2 = .07, F (6, 260) = 3.44, p < .01. \)

Meanwhile, perceived journalist competence was found to be a significant, positive predictor of perceived news product competence, \( b = .31, SE = .05, t = 6.14, p < .001 \) (see Table 13). It was a full mediation with the direct path from interaction to news product competence being not significant. When audiences thought that a journalist was competent, they tended to think that the journalist’s news product was competent as well. None of the control variables were significant in predicting perceived news product
competence. The regression model explained about 15 percent of the variance, \( r = .39, R^2 = .15, F (6, 260) = 7.82, p < .001 \). Thus, H8 was partially supported, only for the competence dimension.

H9 and H10 examined a formal mediation model of self-disclosure influencing news product perceptions in professional dimensions through journalist perceptions (see Figure 3). The indirect effect of self-disclosure on perceived news product objectivity had 95% bootstrap confidence intervals that included zero, \( b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .01, SE = .01, CI = [-.024, .001] \). It demonstrated that perceived journalist objectivity was not a key player in establishing an association between self-disclosure and perceived news product objectivity. The path from self-disclosure to perceived news product competence through perceived journalist competence was not significant either; the 95% bootstrap confidence intervals included zero, \( b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = -.003, SE = .004, CI = [-.012, .005] \). The result demonstrated that, although the main effect of self-disclosure on perceived journalist objectivity was significant (H6), the effect did not transfer to audience perceptions of news product objectivity. For competence, there was no significant main effect on journalist perception to transfer from the beginning. Thus, H9 was not supported. Nonetheless, this simple mediation model accounted for a significant variance of news product objectivity and competence, \( r = .44, R^2 = .19, F (5, 261) = 12.53, p < .001 \), and \( r = .39, R^2 = .15, F (6, 260) = 7.82, p < .001 \), respectively.
### Perceived Journalist Personality

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<td>$N=5,000$</td>
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</table>

### Table 14
Hierarchical regression of self-disclosure x interaction predicting audience perceptions of a journalist in the personal dimension

***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$, #$p < .10$
H10 looked at the mediation path from interaction to news product professional perception through journalist professional perception. The bootstrap analysis for the objectivity dimension demonstrated that the indirect effect of journalist interaction on perceived news product objectivity through journalist objectivity was significant, but in the positive direction, $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .004, SE = .003, CI = [.000, .013]$. As shown in the result of H7 test, interactive journalists tended to be seen more objective than non-interactive journalists, and the positive effect transferred to audience objectivity perceptions of the journalists’ news product. This simple mediation model accounted for significant variance of perceived news product objectivity, $r = .44, R^2 = .19, F (5, 261) = 12.53, p < .001$.

As for the competence dimension, the indirect effect of interaction was significant and negative as expected, $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = -.01, SE = .005, CI = [-.019, -.001]$. Its direct effect on perceived news product competence was marginally significant, $b = -.02, SE = .01, t = -1.68, p = .09$. This result demonstrated that audiences perceived an interactive journalist’s news product less competent mainly because they perceived the journalist less competent. This simple mediation model accounted for significant variance of perceived news product competence, $r = .39, R^2 = .15, F (6, 260) = 7.82, p < .001$.

Following the result of H7, the result of H10 result consistently showed interaction’s positive association with the objectivity-dimension perception and negative relationship with the competence-dimension perception. Thus, H10 that expected mediation of
negative effect was partially supported, only for competence, not for objectivity, although evidence of significant mediation was found for both.

**Moderation and moderated-mediation analyses.** H11 to H12 predicted cumulative interaction effects between journalists’ self-disclosure and interaction in predicting the perception of the journalists in personal (H11) and professional (H12) dimensions (see **Figure 4**). A hierarchical regression result indicated that the self-disclosure x interaction product significantly predicted journalist personal perception, but negatively, $b = -.24, SE = .06, t = -3.82, p < .001$ (see **Table 14**). This negative direction means that the positive effect of interaction on journalist personal perception was strongest when there was low self-disclosure (self-disclosure = 0), $b = .30, SE = .05, t = 6.37, p < .001$. When there was high self-disclosure (self-disclosure = 1), the influence of journalist interaction on journalist personal perception became non-significant, $b = .07, SE = .04, t = 1.63, p = .10$. In contrast to H11, this result revealed that as far as personal-dimension perceptions are concerned, journalists benefitted most from social media activities when they actively provided commenters with individual feedback without revealing too much personal information. Thus, H11 which predicted a contributory positive effect was not supported. None of the control variables were significant at a .05 level in predicting journalist personal perception. This moderation model explained significant variance of journalist personal perception, $r = .41, R^2 = .17, F(6, 260) = 9.01, p < .001$. 
H12 hypothesized the same cumulative interaction effect of the self-disclosure x interaction term on audience perceptions of the journalist in the professional dimension. However, neither journalists’ perceived objectivity nor competence was significantly predicted by the self-disclosure x interaction product, $b = .0001, SE = .03, t = .003, p = 1.0$, and $b = .03, SE = .03, t = 1.0, p = .32$, respectively (see Table 15 & 16). Thus, H12 was not supported. Nonetheless, the moderation models explained significant variance of journalist personal perception, $r = .44, R^2 = .19, F(6, 260) = 10.40, p < .001$, and $r = .23, R^2 = .05, F(6, 260) = 2.39, p < .05$.

H13 and H14 addressed the moderated mediation (Preacher et al., 2007) model depicted in Figure 6. H13 expected the indirect effect of interaction on news product personal perception through journalist personal perception would be conditioned (i.e., moderated) by self-disclosure such that the indirect effect would be stronger when there was high self-disclosure. The result of H5 test already indicated that the simple mediation model from interaction to news product personal perception through journalist personal perception was significant, $b = .05, SE = .02, CI = [.021, .081]$, and the bootstrap-based moderated-mediation test result additionally showed that the indirect effect of interaction was moderated by self-disclosure, with topic interest, knowledge, and media bias perception controlled.
Table 15. Hierarchical regression of self-disclosure x interaction predicting audience perceptions of a journalist in the professional dimension (objectivity side)
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<td>Self-disclosure x Interaction</td>
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| Model $F$           | 2.39*            |
| Model $R^2$         | .05              |
| Sample $N$          | N=266            |
| Bootstrapped $N$    | N=5,000          |

***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05, #p < .10

Table 16. Hierarchical regression of self-disclosure x interaction predicting audience perceptions of a journalist in the personal dimension (competence side)
However, the effect was not contributory as consistent to the result of H11 test; the indirect effect of a journalist’s interaction on news-product personal perception turned out to be significant only when the journalist did not disclose much personal thoughts and feelings (i.e., self-disclosure = 0), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .08$, $SE = .02$, $CI = [.040, .130]$. When the journalist highly exposed himself or herself (self-disclosure = 1), the indirect effect of interaction became not significant, $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .02$, $SE = .01$, $CI = [-.002, .048]$. Thus, although there was evidence that the indirect effect of interaction on news product personal perception was dependent on self-disclosure, H13 was not supported as the pattern was not in the direction predicted by the hypothesis. This moderated mediation model accounted for significant variance of news product personal perception, $r = .41$, $R^2 = .17$, $F (6, 260) = 9.01$, $p < .001$.

H14 examined the same model in the context of audience perceptions in the professional dimension (see Figure 6). H14 predicted a negative indirect effect of interaction on news product professional perception through journalist professional perception would be moderated by self-disclosure such that the negative effects would increase when both self-disclosure and interaction are present. The moderated-mediation test focusing on perceived objectivity showed that the indirect effect was significant only when self-disclosure was high (self-disclosure = 1), thereby supporting the contributory relationship, but the effect was not negative, but positive, $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .05$, $SE = .004$, $CI = [.0002, .02]$. The effect was not significant when self-disclosure was low (self-disclosure = 0), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .05$, $SE = .004$, $CI = [-.001, .015]$. Following the result of
H7 test, interaction had a positive influence on journalist objectivity and the effect was particularly evident when there was high self-disclosure. This result indicated that highly self-disclosing and interacting journalists were seen more objective than lowly self-disclosing and interacting journalists, and those audience perceptions influenced their news products; the moderating was significant and contributory, but was in the opposite direction. This moderated mediation model accounted for significant variance of perceived news product objectivity, $r = .26$, $R^2 = .07$, $F (5, 261) = 3.88$, $p < .01$.

On the other hand, the indirect effect of interaction on perceived news product competence through perceived journalist competence was found to be significant when self-disclosure was low (self-disclosure = 0), $b_{IndirectEffect} = -.01, SE = .007, CI = [-.028, -.002]$ whereas it was not significant when self-disclosure was high (self-disclosure = 1), $b_{IndirectEffect} = -.01, SE = .01, CI = [-.018, .004]$. News products of the journalists who were highly interactive in social media were regarded as to be less competent as the journalists were seen as to be less competent, and the negative effect was particularly prominent when the journalists did not report on themselves using social media. H14 which anticipated stronger negative effects of interaction on perceived journalist objectivity when coupled with high self-disclosure was not supported; the cumulative effect on objectivity was significant but in the positive direction and the effect on competence was significant but not cumulative. This moderated mediation model accounted for significant variance of perceived news product competence, $r = .39$, $R^2 = .15$, $F (5, 261) = 9.32$, $p < .001$. 

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The overall results of H13 and H14 demonstrated that, although the moderation effects on the personal and objectivity dimensions were not in the hypothesized (i.e., cumulative) direction, the indirect effects of interaction largely depended on self-disclosure; whether journalists’ interactive social media communication influenced audience perceptions of their news products through audience perceptions of the journalists was conditioned by whether they disclosed their personal thoughts and feelings through social media.

The final set of hypotheses (H15 to H22) focused on the moderating role of individual journalism orientation (IJO), and investigated if the indirect effects of a journalist’s self-disclosure and interaction on audience perceptions of the journalist’s news product through audience perceptions of the journalist were also moderated by IJO. Based on the simple mediation models that were already assessed with H4 – H5 and H9 – H10, simple moderation models (i.e., the interacting relationships between self-disclosure/interaction and IJO) predicting journalist perceptions were proposed with H15, H17, H19, and H21 (see Figure 6). Combining the models, H16, H18, H20, and H22 predicted the indirect effects of self-disclosure/interaction on news product perceptions through journalist perception were moderated by IJO.
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***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$, #$p < .10$

Table 17. Hierarchical regression of self-disclosure x IJO predicting audience perceptions of a news product in the personal dimension
For H15, a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted and the result indicated that the self-disclosure x IJO product significantly, but negatively predicted journalist personal perception, $b = -.38, SE = .15, t = -2.60, p < .01$ (see Table 17). When the moderation relationship was probed, it turned out that the positive effect of self-disclosure was stronger when audiences had an objective journalism orientation (i.e., when IJO was 1SD below the mean), $b = .15, SE = .04, t = 3.37, p < .001$, than when audiences had no particular norm orientation (i.e., when IJO was at the mean), $b = .07, SE = .03, t = 2.20, p < .05^{9}$. The influence of self-disclosure was not significant for audiences who had a public journalism orientation, $b = -.01, SE = .04, t = -3.30, p = .77$, indicating that the significant, positive effect of journalists’ self-disclosure on journalist personal perception was most prominent for audiences with an objective journalism orientation. Thus, H15 which predicted a stronger effect for public journalism-oriented audiences was not supported. Topic interest was also a significant predictor, $b = .17, SE = .09, t = 2.02, p < .05$, indicating that audiences who were more interested in the topic of a news product saw its writer personally more positively. This simple moderation model accounted for a significant variance of perceived journalist perception, $r = .40, R^2 = .16, F (7, 259) = 7.10, p < .001$.

H16 predicted the indirect effect of self-disclosure on news product personal perception through journalist personal perception would be moderated by IJO (see

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9 When tested with the raw data ($N = 370$), the interaction term (self-disclosure x IJO) was not significant, $p = .41$ although the same pattern (with the effect being significant and stronger for those with an objective norm) was found.
The test of H4 already showed that the effect of self-disclosure on news product personal perception was significantly mediated through journalist personal perception, $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .02$, $SE = .01$, $CI = [.002, .042]$ with interaction, topic interest, knowledge, and media bias perception controlled. When the indirect effect of self-disclosure was probed at various levels of IJO, the effect was found to be significant when audiences had an objective journalism orientation (1SD below), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .04$, $SE = .02$, $CI = [.017, .077]$, or when they were neutral between an objective journalism norm and a public journalism norm (i.e., IJO was at the mean), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .02$, $SE = .01$, $CI = [.004, .041]$, but not when they had a public journalism orientation (1SD above), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = -.004$, $SE = .01$, $CI = [-.031, .017]$. People with an objective journalism orientation or no particular norm orientation evaluated a self-exposing journalist’s news product positively based on their positive evaluation of the journalist whereas audiences with a public journalism norm evaluated the news product and the journalist separately. This result demonstrated that the indirect effect of self-disclosure on news product perception in the personal dimension was significantly conditioned by IJO, but the effect was not in the expected direction as H16 suggested. The indirect effect was expected to increase as audiences leaned more toward a public journalism norm, but it actually increased when audiences leaned more toward an objective journalism norm. Thus, H16 was not supported. This moderated mediation model accounted for significant variance of news product personal perception, $r = .39$, $R^2 = .15$, $F (6, 260) = 67.87$, $p < .001$. 

Figure 7).
H17 examined the moderating role of IJO relative to the indirect effect of interaction instead of self-disclosure (see Figure 5). The positive effect of interaction on journalist personal perception was anticipated to be moderated by IJO such that the effect would be stronger for audiences with a public journalism orientation. A hierarchical multiple regression result showed that the effect of the interaction x IJO product was not significant in influencing audience perceptions of the journalist in the personal dimension, $b = -.07, SE = .15, t = -.50, p = .62$ (see Table 17).\(^{10}\)

The positive effect of a journalist’s active interaction with audiences via social media on how the journalist was seen was also not modified by audiences’ journalism norm orientation; audiences found an interactive journalist personally favorable whether they conformed to an objective journalism norm (IJO is 1SD below the mean), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .04, SE = .02, CI = [.017, .077]$, accepted a public journalism norm (IJO is 1SD above the mean), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .04, SE = .02, CI = [.017, .077]$, or they were located somewhere in between (when IJO is at the mean), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .04, SE = .02, CI = [.017, .077]$. Thus, H17 was not supported. This simple moderation model accounted for a significant portion of a variance of journalist personal perception, $r = .37, R^2 = .14, F (7, 259) = 6.02, p < .001$.

H18 predicted that the indirect effect of interaction on news product perception through perceived journalist perception in the personal dimension would be significantly conditioned by IJO (see Figure 7). As the result of H5 test showed, the effect of

\(^{10}\)The same pattern (no significant interaction effect) was found when tested with the raw data ($N = 370$).
interaction on news product personal perception was significantly mediated through journalist personal perception in a simple mediation model, $b = .05, SE = .01, CI = [.021, .081]$, and the indirect effect of interaction on news product perceptions in the personal dimension differed by audiences’ IJO in a moderated mediation model. Audience perceptions of journalists played a key role in linking journalists’ interactions and audience perceptions of the journalists’ news products whether audiences had an objective journalism norm orientation (IJO = 1SD below), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .05, SE = .02, CI = [.02, .09]$, a public journalism norm orientation (IJO = 1SD above), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .04, SE = .02, CI = [.016, .080]$, or no particular norm orientation (IJO = at the mean), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .05, SE = .02, CI = [.02, .08]$, but the positive effect was slightly stronger in the case of objective IJO or no norm orientation than in the case of public IJO. Thus, H18 was not supported as it expected a stronger effect for public IJO audiences. This moderated mediation model accounted for significant variance of news product personal perception, $r = .39, R^2 = .15, F (6, 260) = 7.86, p < .001$.

As H15 to H18 focused on personal-dimension perceptions, H19 to H22 assessed the moderation and the moderated-mediation models predicting professional perceptions of journalists and news products. H19 predicted a significant interaction between self-disclosure and IJO in predicting journalist professional perception (see Figure 7) with the negative effect of self-disclosure being greater for audiences with an objective journalism orientation. A hierarchical multiple regression result predicting the objectivity dimension showed that the self-disclosure x IJO product indeed positively influenced perceived
journalist objectivity, $b = .17$, $SE = .07$, $t = 2.34$, $p < .05$ (see Table 18). When the conditional effect of self-disclosure was probed at differing IJO levels, it turned out that the negative effect of self-disclosure on perceived journalist objectivity was strongest when audiences had an objective journalism orientation, $b = -.13$, $SE = .02$, $t = -5.84$, $p < .001$, second strongest when audiences had no particular journalism orientation, $b = -.09$, $SE = .02$, $t = -6.00$, $p < .001$, and weakest when audiences had a public journalism orientation, $b = -.05$, $SE = .02$, $t = -2.57$, $p < .05$. This result indicated that, as expected, journalists who actively revealed their personal information were in general perceived less objective than those who did not, and the negative effect was stronger for audiences who believed that journalists should be detached and neutral. This moderation model explained a significant portion of variance of perceived journalist objectivity, $r = .46$, $R^2 = .21$, $F (7, 259) = 9.97$, $p < .001$.

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11 When tested with the raw data ($N = 370$), the positive interaction term (self-disclosure x IJO) was marginally significant ($p = .07$) although the similar pattern of interaction was found (with the effect being strongest for those with an objective norm and non-significant for those with a public norm)
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-disclosure</td>
<td>-.17***</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>-.13***</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJO</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Block 3:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-disclosure x IJO</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction x IJO</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model $F$</strong></td>
<td>9.97***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model $R^2$</strong></td>
<td>.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample $N$</strong></td>
<td>$N=266$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bootstrapped $N$</strong></td>
<td>$N=5,000$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$, #$p < .10$

Table 18. Hierarchical regression of self-disclosure x IJO predicting audience perceptions of a news product in the professional dimension (objectivity side)
### Table 19. Hierarchical regression of self-disclosure x IJO predicting audience perceptions of a news product in the professional dimension (competence side)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-disclosure x IJO</th>
<th>Interaction x IJO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>$SE$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Block 1:</strong> Controls</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic interest</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>.04+</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media bias</td>
<td>.07+</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Block 2:</strong> Predictors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-disclosure</td>
<td>-.10**</td>
<td>(.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>-.03*</td>
<td>(.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJO</td>
<td>-.15**</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Block 3:</strong> Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-disclosure x IJO</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction x IJO</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model $F$</strong></td>
<td>3.50**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model $R^2$</strong></td>
<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample N</strong></td>
<td>N=266</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bootstrapped N</strong></td>
<td>N=5,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$, #$p < .10$
Next, the moderating role of IJO of the effect of self-disclosure on perceived journalist competence was also tested. Although self-disclosure had no main effect on perceived competence of journalists according to H6, the self-disclosure x IJO product was found to significantly influence the perceived journalist competence, $b = .19$, $SE = .06$, $t = 2.98$, $p < .01$ (see Table 19). The analysis of conditional effects of self-disclosure at differing values of IJO demonstrated that self-disclosure had a negative effect on perceived journalist competence and the effect was strongest when audiences had an objective journalism orientation (e.g., when IJO was 1SD below the mean), $b = -.05$, $SE = .02$, $t = -2.70$, $p < .01$. The negative influence became non-significant when audiences had a public journalism orientation, $b = .02$, $SE = .02$, $t = 1.53$, $p = .13$, or no particular orientation, $b = -.01$, $SE = .01$, $t = -.85$, $p = .39$. As hypothesized, those who believed that journalists should be detached and neutral were more critical about journalists’ self-disclosure and viewed highly self-disclosing journalists less competent. This simple moderation model explained a significant portion of variance of perceived journalist competence, $r = .29$, $R^2 = .09$, $F(7, 259) = 3.50$, $p < .01$. Combining the significant interaction between self-disclosure and IJO in predicting both perceived journalist objectivity and competence, H19 was supported.

H20 expected the effect of self-disclosure on journalist perceptions, which transferred to news product perceptions in both objectivity and competence, would be significantly restricted by IJO (see Figure 7). Following the result of H9 test which found

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12 When tested with the raw data ($N = 370$), the interaction was not significant ($p = .23$).
no evidence of mediation, the assessment of a moderated mediation model with IJO entered as a moderator controlling for interaction, topic interest, knowledge, and media bias perception demonstrated that the indirect effect was consistently not significant, whether audiences had no particular journalism orientation, (i.e., IJO was at the mean), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = -.01, SE = .01, CI = [-.023, .002]$, objective journalism (e.g., IJO was 1SD below the mean), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = -.01, SE = .01, CI = [-.032, .002]$, or public journalism orientation (e.g., IJO was 1SD above the mean), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = -.01, SE = .005, CI = [-.018, .004]$. No evidence was found that the indirect effect of self-disclosure on perceived news product objectivity through perceived journalist objectivity was significantly moderated by audiences’ IJO. Audiences did not base their evaluations of the objectivity of a self-disclosing journalist’s news product on the perceived objectivity of the journalist regardless of what journalism norm they conformed to.

Next, the same procedure was taken for the competence side. A moderated mediation model with IJO moderating self-disclosure and competence perceptions revealed that the indirect effect of self-disclosure on perceived news product competence through perceived journalist competence was significantly moderated by audiences’ IJO. The indirect effect was significant only for audiences with an objective journalism norm (i.e., when IJO was 1SD below the mean), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = -.02, SE = .01, CI = [-.030, -.006]$. The indirect effect was not significant for audiences with a public journalism norm (i.e., when IJO was 1SD above the mean), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = .01, SE = .01, CI = [-.001, .021]$, or for audiences who were neutral (i.e., when IJO was at the mean), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = -.003, SE$
This result demonstrated that audiences with an objective journalism orientation evaluated the competence of a self-disclosing journalist’s news product based on their evaluation of the competence of the journalist whereas audiences with a public journalism orientation or no particular journalism orientation separately evaluated the competence of the news and the journalist. This simple moderation model accounted for a significant portion of a variance of journalist personal perception, \( r = .29, R^2 = .09, F (7, 259) = 3.50, p < .001 \). H20 was partially supported as the negative indirect effect of self-disclosure was stronger for audiences with audiences with an objective orientation only on perceived competence, not on perceived objectivity.

Finally, H21 – H22 assessed the moderating role of IJO relative to journalists’ interactive social media activities in the simple moderation model and the moderated mediation models predicting journalist and news product professional perceptions. First, H21 expected a negative effect of the interaction on journalist professional perceptions would be stronger for audiences with an objective journalism orientation (see Figure 4b). As far as journalists’ objectivity was concerned, the interaction x IJO term turned out to be a significant, positive predictor, \( b = .23, SE = .07, t = 3.32, p < .01 \), with self-disclosure and other control variables controlled (see Table 18). When the moderation was probed at differing levels of IJO, however, the result showed a positive effect of interaction on perceived journalist objectivity was strongest for audiences with a public journalism norm orientation, \( b = .09, SE = .02, t = 4.09, p < .001 \). The effect was second strongest and positive for audiences with no specific norm orientation, \( b = .04, SE = .02, \)
t = 2.42, p < .016\(^13\). As revealed in the result of H7, the effect of interaction on perceived journalism objectivity was, again, positive. For audiences with an objective journalism norm, the effect of interaction was in the negative direction but was not significant, \(b = -0.01, SE = .02, t = -.61, p = .54\). This result indicated that highly interactive journalists were perceived more objective to people who believed that it was okay for journalists to engage with audiences or people who were neutral about journalism norms. No evidence of the negative influence of interaction on perceived objectivity, which was suggested by H21, was found. Among control variables, media bias perception was a significant predictor of perceived journalist objectivity, \(b = -.19, SE = .05, t = -4.15, p < .001\). This simple moderation model explained a significant portion of variance of perceived journalist objectivity, \(r = .48, R^2=.23, F (7, 259) = 10.95, p < .001\).

Next, the effect of the interaction x IJO product on perceived journalist competence was assessed. The regression result revealed that the interaction x IJO product was not significant in predicting perceived journalist competence, \(b = .02, SE = .06, t = .35, p = .73\)^14. When the conditional effect of interaction was assessed at differing levels of IJO, interaction was found to significantly and negatively influence perceived journalism competence when audiences had no particular journalism orientation, \(b = -.03, SE = .01, t = -2.03, p < .05\) (see Table 19). The negative effect was marginally significant for audiences with an objective journalism orientation, \(b = -.03, SE = .02, t = -1.67, p = .095\), and not significant for audiences with a public journalism orientation.\(^\text{13}\) The same pattern was found with the raw data (\(N = 370\)).\(^\text{14}\) The same pattern was found with the raw data (\(N = 370\)).
orientation, $b = -.02$, $SE = .02$, $t = -1.21$, $p = .23$. This result indicated that, unlike my expectation, no evidence of mediation was found with the audiences with either an objective public journalism orientation or a public journalism orientation whereas audiences in between the two norms were significantly influenced by the interactive social media activities in evaluating the journalists’ competence. No other control variable was significant at a .05 level. This simple moderation model explained a significant portion of variance of perceived journalist competence, $r = .24$, $R^2 = .05$, $F (7, 259) = 2.17$, $p < .05$. Considering the results, H21 was not supported.

The last hypothesis, H22, predicted the indirect effect of interaction on news product professional perceptions through journalist professional perceptions to be moderated by audiences’ IJO (see Figure 7). To test the hypothesis, the conditional indirect effect of interaction was examined in a moderated mediation model in light of IJO’s moderating role between interaction and IJO. First, in terms of objectivity, evidence of significant conditional indirect effect of interaction was not found. The effect was not significant across different norm orientations, indicating that audiences did not perceive the objectivity of an interactive journalist’s news product based on the journalist’s perceived objectivity whether they were leaning in favor of objective norms, $b_{IndirectEffect} = -.01$, $SE = .01$, $CI = [-.03, .001]$, public norms, $b_{IndirectEffect} = .004$, $SE = .003$, $CI = [.001, .01]$, or they had no particular norm, $b_{IndirectEffect} = .004$, $SE = .003$, $CI = [-.001, .01]$. This moderated mediation model accounted for a significant variance of perceived journalist objectivity, $r = .48$, $R^2 = .23$, $F (7, 260) = 10.95$, $p < .000$. 

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Finally, a moderated mediation model predicting perceived journalist competence was assessed. The result demonstrated that the indirect effect of interaction on perceived news product competence through perceived journalist competence was conditioned by audiences’ IJO; The indirect effect was significant when audiences had an objective journalism norm (i.e., when IJO was 1SD below the mean), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = -.01, SE = .01, CI = [-.023, -.001]$, or no norm orientation (i.e., when IJO was at the mean), $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = -.01, SE = .005, CI = [-.019, -.001]$. When audiences had a public journalism norm (i.e., when IJO was 1SD above the mean), the indirect effect of interaction was not significant, $b_{\text{IndirectEffect}} = -.01, SE = .01, CI = [-.020, .004]$. This result indicated that the indirect negative effect of self-disclosure on perceived news product competence was significantly moderated by IJO; audiences with an objective journalism norm orientation and no particular journalism orientation were more reactive to journalists’ self-disclosure on social media sites than audiences with a public journalism norm orientation in evaluating the competence of the journalists and their news product. This moderated mediation model accounted for a significant portion of variance of journalist personal perception, $r = .39, R^2 = .15, F (6, 260) = 7.82, p < .001$. Given the results of interaction on objectivity and competence perceptions, H22 was partially supported only for perceived competence, not for perceived objectivity.

The results of H15 to H22 showed that most of the moderation or moderated mediation hypotheses were not supported. The only supported hypothesis was about the self-disclosure x IJO interaction predicting journalist professional perceptions. Two
partially-supported hypotheses proposed a moderated mediation model depicting the indirect effects of journalists’ self-disclosures and interactions via social media on professional news product perceptions through professional journalist perceptions with the first path from the predictors and the mediator was moderated by IJO (H20 and H22). Both hypotheses were supported only for the competence side. These results demonstrated that journalists’ acting like ordinary social media users could actually hurt not only their own perceived competence but also the competence reflected in the news being produced by the journalist, and that the negative effect was particularly strong when audiences were lenient to the traditional objective journalism norm. The indirect influences of the social media activities on perceived objectivity did not differ by IJO.

Overall, only 6 out of the 22 hypotheses of this dissertation were fully supported. Some hypotheses were partially supported as one of the two sides of the professional dimension (objectivity and competence) was supported. Many hypotheses were not supported although significant effects were found because the effects were not exactly in the hypothesized direction. For instance, self-disclosure was found to have a positive effect on audience perceptions of journalist objectivity whereas the effect was predicted to be negative (H6). Self-disclosure and interaction negatively interacted in predicting personal perceptions of journalists whereas they were hypothesized to positively interact (H11). These main or interaction (moderation) effects found in the opposite direction put the subsequent mediation or moderated-mediation hypotheses in a wrong setting from the beginning (H13 and H14). IJO also interacted with journalists’ social media activities in
an unexpected direction in predicting audience perceptions of journalists in the personal (H15) and the objectivity dimension (H21). There was a case in which an effect was found to be in the hypothesized direction, but marginally significant (H6; in the objectivity side). In sum, even with some predictions that were inaccurate in detailed directions, there was evidence of hypothesized effects of predictors, mediators, and moderators.
Chapter 4: Discussion

Revisiting the Main Predictions

This dissertation investigated the effects of journalists’ self-disclosure and interaction, audience perceptions of journalists, and audiences’ individual journalism orientation in various models on audience perceptions of the news presented by journalists. Some predictions were supported, others were not supported, and still others were partially supported (i.e., supported only in some conditions and not in others). Overall, complex, but close causal relationships among the main variables were found.

First, the dissertation explored the positive main effect of journalists’ self-disclosure and interaction on audience perceptions of the journalists in the personal dimension. The prediction was supported. Both self-disclosure and interaction on the part of journalists significantly and positively influenced personal-dimension perceptions of the journalists. As many news organizations hope, the journalists who approach audiences by revealing their personalities via social media as compared to those who do not reveal themselves in this way were regarded as more attractive, appealing, approachable, friendly, honest, trustworthy, sincere, caring, thoughtful, and respectful of and concerned with people. This positive impression, in turn, influenced audience perceptions of the news presented by the journalists such that the news were also rated more positively on those items. It is worth noting that the positive interpersonal effects of
social media disclosure and interaction applied to journalists, i.e., to public figures, and their news products. People may not always expect a journalist to act like an ordinary social media user but still found a journalist personally favorable when they reveal their personal sides and interacting with other users.

Second, the dissertation explored the implications of journalists’ self-disclosure and interactive activities for the audience’s perceptions of the journalists in the professional dimension. Given that the public assumes professional journalists to be distant, public figures, negative effects were predicted across differing dimensions of professional perceptions (i.e., objectivity and competence). However, this prediction gained only partial support. Whereas self-disclosure had a negative effect on audience perceptions of the journalists’ objectivity, interaction positively affected audience perceptions in this regard. On the other hand, whereas interaction was found to have a negative influence on perceptions of journalists’ competence, self-disclosure had no significant effect on this aspect. These mixed results suggest three possibilities: (1) Objectivity and competence are two separate dimensions that should be examined independently although both of them were identified via factor analyses as closely related factors of journalists’ professionalism. It appears that audiences consider journalists’ competence to be the more strictly professional dimension, which involves less personal component (thus, negatively affected by self-disclosure), whereas audience perceptions of journalists’ objectivity appear to be influenced by the personal-dimension (thus, positively affected by self-disclosure). (2) It may be that audiences raise the question of
journalistic objectivity only when journalists offer personal thoughts about the news. No matter how interactive journalists were on social media sites, audience perceptions of their objectivity were not hurt. In fact, perceptions of journalists’ objectivity were actually strengthened based on a high level of interactivity. On the other hand, audience perceptions of journalists’ objectivity were significantly damaged when journalists shared personal thoughts and feelings even when those thoughts and feelings via social media were not about their biased views on the news. This result implies that audiences take the extent of self-disclosure as a heuristic cue that signals journalists’ objectivity, regardless of the content of disclosure. (3) Given that journalists’ interactive behaviors negatively impacted audience perceptions of their competence whereas self-disclosure did not, it is assumed that audiences still accept journalists who post news accompanied with expressions of personal thoughts and feelings as an expert as long as they do not exchange individual messages with other social media users in public. This may be because audiences are accustomed to seeing journalists’ publishing texts; i.e., writing about things is what journalists do as a job anyway. But audiences are not used to seeing journalists engaging in casual conversations with Jack and Jill and responding to every random comment. It could be this casual conversation that sounds the alarm that the journalists are not professional. This result implies that audiences take interaction, rather than self-disclosure, as a good criterion of journalists’ competence.

Overall, these results suggest that journalists’ social media activities influence the different dimensions of their professionalism differently. Self-disclosure was more
closely related to the objectivity dimension than to the competence dimension whereas interaction was strongly associated with both dimensions. It appeared that journalists’ interactions with other social media users was quite a noticeable action, such that it significantly influenced audience perceptions of the journalists either positively (objectivity) or negatively (competence). Audiences counted journalists spending time on Facebook interacting with other users as evidence of incompetence, and they regarded public disclosures of personal information on the part of journalists as indicating compromised journalistic objectivity.

The third major prediction of this dissertation pertained to the relationship between self-disclosure and interaction in predicting audience perceptions of journalists. It was expected that each social media activity would play a role of contributory-condition moderator such that positive and negative effects would double when journalists showed both behaviors on social media sites. However, little support was obtained for the prediction. No evidence of interaction was found for the professional-dimension perceptions, whether it was objectivity or competence, and the significant interactive relationship found between self-disclosure and interaction in predicting the personal-dimension perception was competing rather than cumulative or complementary: the positive effect of self-disclosure was very strong when interaction was low, and the positive effect of interaction was very strong when self-disclosure was low. The strongest positive effect was found when the low-disclosure and high-interaction conditions met. This competing relationship indicates that the positive impact of journalists’ social media
activities on audience perceptions of them in the personal dimension is heightened when there is no other action from which audiences can detect the journalist’s personality. What matters to audiences seems to be the fact that journalists provide some personality-disclosing social information, not the amount of the information.

The fourth important prediction pertained to the role of perceptions of journalists as the mediator between journalists’ social media activities and audience perceptions of news products. This mediating relationship was found in the personal dimension for both self-disclosure and interaction. However, in the professional dimension, this prediction received partial support, i.e., only for interaction, not for self-disclosure. Audience impressions of journalists’ objectivity and competence based on their interactive behaviors continued to influence audience impressions of the objectivity and competence of journalists’ news products; whether the effect was positive or negative. However, no evidence of such mediation was found in regard to journalists’ self-disclosing social media activities.

An inquiry into the role of audiences’ individual journalism orientation (IJO) as a moderator was the fifth point of this dissertation. A set of hypotheses predicted that the strength of the implications of journalists’ social media activities would differ by audiences’ individual differences in regard to the journalism norm orientation. Specifically, audiences with an objective journalism orientation were expected to be more critical of journalists acting like ordinary social media users online, whereas audiences with a public journalism orientation were expected to be more open-minded about such
activity. The results were mixed, but overall, when audiences generally had a negative view on a journalist, objective journalism-oriented members were more negative in their views than were public journalism-oriented members, and when audiences generally had a positive view on a journalist, objective journalism-oriented people were more positive in their views than were public journalism-oriented members. These results suggested that objective norm-oriented audience members may be more sensitive to journalists’ public behaviors and, therefore, react to them more strongly, whether negatively or positively. Although this moderating role of IJO was very apparent relative to journalists’ self-disclosures (i.e., significant interactions between self-disclosure and IJO were found across the personal and the professional dimensions such that the effects of self-disclosure were stronger for audiences with an objective norm), it was less evident relative to their interactions. Only in the objectivity dimension did IJO influence how journalists’ interactions impact audience perceptions of journalists’ objectivity (and the effect was stronger for those with a public journalism norm) and no interaction was found in the personal and the competence dimensions. These results suggested that IJO matters more in the evaluation of journalists’ self-disclosures than in rating their interactive actions.

Finally, the role of IJO as a moderator of indirect effects was examined again in the moderated mediation model. The indirect effects of self-disclosure on news perceptions were found to be significantly conditioned by IJO such that the indirect effects were stronger for audiences with an objective journalism orientation than for
audiences with a public journalism orientation in both the personal and the professional
dimensions whereas the positive effect was expected to be stronger for public IJO
audiences in regard to the influences on the personal dimension. This sensitivity
associated with an objective IJO was detected again for journalists’ interactions. Both the
negative indirect effect of interactions on the perceived competence of news and the
positive indirect effect of interactions on the perceived objectivity of news were stronger
for objective IJO audiences than for public IJO audiences. These results showed again
that audiences who had held onto traditional objectivity criteria (i.e., audiences who had
an objective norm orientation) reacted to a greater degree to journalists’ social media
activities regardless of the valence of their influences. Public IJO audiences who believed
that it was okay for journalists to engage with audiences and make their voices heard
seemed to care relatively less about what journalists do on social media sites.

These results not only pertain to the hypothesized relationships among the
variables, but they also shed light on potential in-depth social information processing
dynamics by exposing unpredicted links among the variables. Such information is
important and worth investigating further. For instance, the subtle differences between
objectivity and competence as respective standards of professionalism, and between
journalists’ self-disclosure and interaction as a social media activity influencing audience
perceptions were detected through the tests performed for the present study. The
implications of these unanticipated findings are discussed in the contribution section of
the present chapter.
Limitations and Future Directions

This study, as with all research, has limitations that should be discussed. First, in terms of conceptualization, this dissertation proposed objectivity and competence as parallel aspects of journalists’ professional dimension. However, the dissertation does not differentiate between their natures. The overall results suggested that objectivity and competence might be two independent dimensions linked to other variables in different ways. For instance, the perceived objectivity of journalists was positively influenced by interaction whereas perceived competence was negatively influenced by it. The same contrasting result was obtained for the effects of self-disclosure x interaction term in the moderated mediation model. It appeared that the perceived objectivity of a news product was closely connected to the journalist’s perceived objectivity whereas the competence of a news item was more independent and separately rated from its writer. By combining these two unique dimensions and treating them as one dimension, i.e., the professional perception dimension, this dissertation produced a number of partially supported hypotheses. Future studies would benefit from conceptualizing these activities as distinct dimensions and seeking predictors for the perceptions associated with each dimension.

Second, in this dissertation, the nature of self-disclosure and interaction were proposed as representative of the activities of most social media users, and they were treated as the factors influencing the perceptual outcomes in the same pattern. However, these two activities turned out to be somewhat different in nature and to differ in regard
to how audiences perceived journalists on the basis of them. For instance, self-disclosure negatively affected audience perceptions of journalists’ objectivity whereas interaction had a positive effect. Also, self-disclosure significantly interacted with IJO in predicting audience perceptions of journalists whereas interaction did not. Although the current design was still able to provide meaningful findings, many of the hypotheses failed to receive support because the two social media activities were treated as the same thing. Therefore, in future research it would be worthwhile to investigate why there are such differences in regard to audience perceptions of journalists on the basis of engaging in these activities. For instance, it is possible that audiences think of self-disclosing journalists in one way and interactive journalists in another: an audience may see self-disclosing journalists as innocent and honest, but subject and not cautious, such that they cannot be trusted to be objective on other matters; however, an audience may view interactive journalists who respond to every comment posted to their social media walls as a less efficient (competent), but kind and thoughtful person who are not inclined to take sides (objective) between conflicting parties. Overall, it may be, then, that the two actions cue different sides of the journalist. If that is the case, what attitude would audiences take toward a journalist based on these perceptions? Which dimension would be more important in determining their ultimate attitudes and behaviors? If competence turned out to be more detrimental than objectivity in regard general professional impressions, why would that be? These are remaining questions to be addressed.
Third, the reliability of the individual journalism orientation (IJO) measure needs to be scrutinized with different data. People with low IJO (i.e., objective journalism orientation) reacted significantly more positively to journalists’ self-disclosure and interaction than people with high IJO (i.e., public journalism orientation) although the opposite result was expected. IJO was measured with an index of 10 two-point items, and showed a normal distribution with an average being almost the middle point (.49; see Appendix C). As there are so many items, few participants maintained the same position (0 or 1) across the items, and a majority of people ended up being located around the middle point, such that a normal distribution resulted. To sharpen the effect of IJO, it could have been measured with a smaller number of items, even just one item, thus rendering the distribution close to bimodal and priming participants’ orientation at the same time. Even with the current 10-item measure, the distinctions between the two norms could have been clearer. For instance, current items deal with several different points such as attachment vs. detachment, objectivity of facts vs. subjectivity of facts, and value decisions in war time vs. no value decisions at any time. Many participants might have chosen the position of the objective journalism norm for one point, but the position of the public journalism norm for another, thereby blurring the distinctions in their norm orientation. These several factors can be separately analyzed in order to determine the main ground for the objective vs. public norm distinctions and only the core items can be included in the analysis.

This dissertation also has several limitations in terms of its experimental design.
First, our participants consisted entirely of young college students who were more active in regard to social media use than the rest of the population and less critical in regard to journalism norms. With different age groups, the results might be significantly different from those obtained herein. The purpose of this study’s experimental design was to determine causal relationships between stimuli and the outcomes of processing the stimuli, rather than to generalize results to the whole population. However, replications of this study with a broad range of age groups will help find boundary conditions of the present findings.

Second, there is a chance that the manipulation checks did not accurately capture participants’ recognitions of the manipulations. The post-hoc analysis indicated that what the question wordings might be differently interpreted by participants depending on the condition they belonged to. When there was little self-disclosure, for instance, 38.4% (71) incorrectly answered that there was high self-disclosure whereas only 16.8% incorrectly answered that there was little self-disclosure when there was high self-disclosure. The difference in the success rate by condition was significant, $\chi^2(1, 369) = 77.53$, $p < .001$ (see Table 20).

Also, more than a third (38.4%; 71) of those in the low-interaction condition incorrectly answered that there was interaction whereas only 16.8% incorrectly answered that there was little interaction when there was high interaction. The difference in the success rate by condition was significant, $\chi^2(1, 369) = 77.53$, $p < .001$ (see Table 21). This result indicates that when there was no status update from the journalist regarding
his personal thoughts or feelings, participants may interpret other things (e.g., having an account on Facebook and updating his account with news links) as the journalist’s self-disclosure.

Even the success rate in the interaction manipulation check significantly differed by the self-disclosure condition, $\chi^2(1, 369) = 6.42, p < .05$. Significantly more people (126) correctly answered that there was high interaction when they were in the high self-disclosure condition, suggesting that participants in the high self-disclosure condition might interpret the personal disclosure as the sign of interaction (see Table 22). The success rate in the self-disclosure manipulation check did not significantly differ by interaction condition, $\chi^2(1, 369) = .65, p = .42$ (see Table 23), but the success rate in the interaction manipulation check did significantly differ by interaction condition, $\chi^2(1, 369) = 141.65, p < .001$; A dominant percentage of people (93.7%; 164) correctly answered that there was high interaction when they were in the high self-disclosure condition whereas only 66.5% (129) correctly answered that there was little interaction when they were in the low interaction condition, suggesting that participants in the low interaction condition might interpret other things (e.g., having an account on Facebook and updating his account with news links) as the sign of interaction. These confusions in the concepts of self-disclosure and interaction could be reduced by better question wordings. By eliminating some participants who failed the self-disclosure manipulation check, it might possibly result in a somewhat skewed sample.
### Table 20. Crosstab between self-disclosure in the stimuli and participants’ responses to the self-disclosure manipulation check (N = 369)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-disclosure (Stimuli)</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>71 (38.4%)</td>
<td>114 (61.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>153 (83.2%)</td>
<td>31 (16.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>224 (60.7%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>145 (39.3%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 21. Crosstab between interaction in the stimuli and participants’ responses to the interaction manipulation check (N = 369)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction (Stimuli)</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>65 (33.5%)</td>
<td>129 (66.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>164 (83.2%)</td>
<td>11 (16.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>229 (62.1%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>140 (37.9%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 22. Crosstab between self-disclosure in the stimuli and participants’ responses to the interaction manipulation check (N = 369)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-disclosure (Stimuli)</th>
<th>Interaction check (Participants’ answers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>103 (55.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>126 (68.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>229 (62.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 23. Crosstab between interaction in the stimuli and participants’ responses to the self-disclosure manipulation check (N = 369)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction (Stimuli)</th>
<th>Self-disclosure check (Participants’ answers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>114 (58.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>110 (62.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>224 (60.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Third, an issue was found relative to the interaction manipulations. Journalists’ questions about the news links (i.e., “What do you think? Do you agree?) were provided only when there was journalists’ status update (high self-disclosure). Although the questions were intended to be part of the high-interaction condition, it ended up creating an extra interaction condition apart from the absence and presence of the journalists’ feedback interaction (i.e., journalists’ “like”s and responses to audiences’ comments), thereby making the design of the study 3 x 3, rather than 2 x 2 as intended. As this flaw was found at the final review stage, it could not be fixed in the analyses.

Fourth, in terms of timeframe, the design of this study did not allow any time effects to be captured as the outcome variables were measured only once, immediately following exposure to a given stimulus. It was not possible, therefore, to determine how long the initial impressions would hold; for instance, it is possible that any effects related to self-disclosure or interaction on perceptions would increase or decrease over time. The possible effects of time are important particularly because SIP has a clear time component such that CMC can only be as efficient as FtF communication when enough time is allowed. By tracking the impact of stimuli over time, we can determine whether the time component is crucial in relatively cue-rich CMC environments such as social media such that any initial perceptual or relational effect increases over time. As a history of a profile owner’s activities can easily be tracked on the person’s profile, the longer timeframe associated with FtF communication may no longer be as decisive as in old CMC environments. A longer timeframe would allow the potential time effect to be
captured, and it would be worthwhile to address this issue.

Fifth, given the design of the experiment, it was not possible to test the effect of perceptions of the news products on perceptions of the journalists. This is because the participants were exposed to the journalists’ social media activities before they were given the news products. If the participants had read and evaluated the news products before they were asked to think about the individual journalists, their perceptions of the journalists might have been influenced by their impressions of the news products. Obviously, initial impressions can influence subsequent perceptions, and it is important to know whether the same mediation mechanism would be found should participants be exposed to the same stimuli in the reverse order. If it were found that the order in which stimulus is presented matters, such information would set a clear boundary condition on the findings of the present study. In real life, it may be more common for people to consume a news product without having any preformed perception of its writer than vice versa. However, reverse-order exposure is becoming more common in social media, as users can receive news through subscriptions to the journalists of their choice. It would be worthwhile for future scholars to explore the dynamics of social media impression formation using a range of designs in order to establish the boundary conditions.

Finally, this dissertation did not differentiate between the various ways in which journalists revealed information about themselves and interacted with other users. A certain style of self-disclosure and interaction was uniformly used in the stimuli. However, the effects could differ when journalists disclosed themselves and interacted
with other users in different ways, e.g., in regard to tone. For instance, some journalists were relatively serious whereas others were relatively humorous. Some personal statements or feedback were relatively analytic whereas others were relatively intuitive. These differences in journalists’ communication styles could moderate the effects of their social media activities such that some styles increase the impact on audience perceptions whereas other styles decrease it. As the “how” component is in general more vital than the “how much” component in communication, future scholars are encouraged to investigate the moderating role of differing journalists’ communication styles relative to their self-disclosure and interaction.

**Contributions**

Despite the limitations, the present dissertation makes a significant contribution as one of only a few studies to focus on dissecting the concrete cue effects of journalists’ social media activities in regard to different dimensions of audience perceptions. In these terms, the dissertation contributes to the field of communication both in terms of theory and practice. First, the results of this dissertation imply significant practical implications both for journalists involved and those not involved in social media activities. When a public figure such as a journalist actively engages in social media, it is important for him or her to accurately recognize the potential benefits and damage that could result from such activity. Whereas many journalists or news organizations anticipate positive effects such as attracting new audiences and promoting themselves, the potential downside in
terms of audience perceptions is not commonly recognized or discussed. Some may believe that using social media will not do any harm as long as they do not, for example, make rude or politically incorrect remarks. Further, it is likely that optimistic beliefs such as this are strengthened because in this context journalists mainly interact with other social media users who welcome the journalists’ engagements and leave positive comments rather than with those who are critical of the journalists. However, the results of a series of tests in the current dissertation revealed that journalists’ social media activities could actually significantly hurt their professional reputations even without any seriously inappropriate behaviors. Journalists’ presence in social networks tended to lead audiences to have favorable personal impressions of them inasmuch as audiences generally considered journalists in this context to be attractive and friendly individuals; however, in terms of professional image, audiences tended view journalists in this context less favorably. Self-disclosure and interaction are norms in social media environments. However, the results of this dissertation demonstrated that journalists who reveal their personal sides are perceived as significantly less objective and journalists who engage in conversation with audiences are perceived as significantly less competent. Moreover, these negative effects were found with young college students who were expected to be more accustomed to social media norms than to journalism norms. The perceptions of audiences made up of members of older generations can be even more negative, as this population may not appreciate social media uses as much as younger-generation audiences do. As numerous public figures from politicians to journalists manage their
presence in the social media context without realizing these risks, this dissertation provides valuable insight in regard to the implications of social media uses for audience perceptions of their professional images.

Second, it is noteworthy that audience perceptions of journalists tend to transfer to audience perceptions of news products. The design of the experiments in this dissertation allowed some time lapse between participants’ evaluations of a journalist and their evaluations of the journalist’s article by asking each participant to read one of several long articles about serious news topics as part of the study. All the articles were well-written, neutral, and informative. In reading the article, the participants could turn their attention to understanding and evaluating the news, and even to rethinking their impressions of the journalist in question based on the professionally written article. Nonetheless, their evaluations of the news articles were in many cases significantly influenced by their initial impressions of the journalists. It is important for journalists and news organizations to understand, therefore, that journalists’ social media activities could damage not only the journalists’ personal images but also the credibility of the news articles they produced, and of the news organization likewise. If audiences regard a given journalist as less objective and/or less competent based on his/her social media activities than they would have otherwise, this negative impression may lead them to consider all the news products associated with the journalist as relatively less objective and/or less competent likewise. It is important to recognize the connection between the journalists and their news products given that at present most online news sites provide links through
which audiences can read other articles by the journalists that have already been published. In a situation where different news sources report the same news in ways that differ in regard to tone and/or perspective, a journalist’s reputation as relatively less objective and/or relatively less competent may mean that audiences choose to trust other journalists’ news products more than they do the journalist’s. This is a serious consequence for the news credibility as is related to individual journalists, which the news industry would do well to recognize.

The third strength of the present dissertation is that it investigated the implications of journalists’ social media activities in consideration of both personal and professional dimensions. Most social media studies have focused on looking at the outcomes of social media communications relative to interpersonal relationship building such as conveying affinity or reducing uncertainty. And, even when researchers intended to move beyond the relational consequences, they tended to attempt to detect only positive effects pertaining to such matters as life satisfaction, civic engagement, and political participation. Since the SIP perspective has been widely accepted, little effort seems to have been made to consider the possibility that the effects of computer-mediated communication can be either positive or negative or both positive and negative depending on the dimension of interest. By revealing the contrasting effects of the same action on personal and professional dimensions, the results of this dissertation speak to the need for CMC scholars to test models in light of various dimensions of outcome variables.
Finally, it is worth noting that this dissertation adopted a multiple stimuli approach in which four messages (i.e., articles) were randomly assigned to each manipulation condition. Jackson and colleagues (1983, 1988, 1989) recommended that communication scholars incorporate multiple messages as replications in experiments and treat the messages as an explicit random factor in statistical analysis in order to draw general conclusions about messages. As treatment effects vary across messages, we can have the advantage of replicating messages in both within and between studies such as providing greater reliability in regard to the estimation of treatment effects, equivalent power to detect variability in treatment effects, and easier identification of moderator variables (Jackson, O’Keefe, Jacobs, & Brashers, 1989). Because any two messages are likely to differ in regard to numerous dimensions—style, content, format, source, and tone—the use of multiple messages substantially reduces the incidental confounding problem in both between- and within-message designs (Slater, 1991). By keeping the same style, format, source, and tone as well as other conditions such as the ways in which of self-disclosure and interaction occur, and only manipulating the topic of the news, the present study reduced the confounding effects and increased the generalizability of the results. For instance, it may have been suspected that the negative effects of journalists’ self-disclosure on audience perceptions of their objectivity would be significant only when self-disclosure was coupled with news about a controversial issue, not in the case of light news. However, the present study provided two distinct contexts for self-disclosure and interaction in each Facebook stimulus (i.e., one relative to an
entertainment article about movies, the other one relative to a rather serious news article, see Appendix B). Further, the present study randomly assigned one of the four articles for the serious articles (i.e., student financial aid policy, job market, immigration, gun control). Thus, the results of this study are applicable to various contexts in which journalists post news links with their personal thoughts and feelings via social media, whether or not the news issue is a serious one.

This dissertation also makes substantial theoretical contributions to the discipline. First, it is worth noting that it brought the SIP perspective to the field of journalism and viewed journalists and audiences not just as news providers and consumers but as social information providers and processors. This is an approach that journalism scholars had not taken to date, and it opens a door to many new questions relative to journalism in new media environments where the distinctions between news providers and consumers are becoming increasingly blurred. In addition, by borrowing a CMC perspective that had been developed within the interpersonal communication traditions as the theoretical framework of journalism research, this dissertation made connections between usually discrete areas of the communication discipline. Although journalism is becoming increasingly close to interpersonal communication as audiences form impressions of or interact with individual journalists via multiple channels, many journalism scholars continue to treat audiences’ news-consuming processes as a strict mass communication process that is not influenced by interpersonal components. This old-fashioned approach needs to be reconsidered and more effort should be extended to recognizing today’s news
experiences as masspersonal communication process. The interpersonal communication component (e.g., impressions formation of journalists) is important in regard to audience perceptions and evaluations of news, and the mass communication component (e.g., different criteria applied to journalists’ actions) is important in regard to audience perceptions of individual journalists. By comparing and applying different concepts and perspectives from distinct communication areas in journalism research, we have an opportunity to better understand the present environment characterized by masspersonal communication.

Second, by focusing on the individual perceptions of audiences, which has been understudied in the context of social media, this dissertation scrutinized the process whereby audiences engage in social information processing in considerable detail. Many studies in which the researchers intended to connect general social media uses to rather abstract outcome variables such as social capital, self-esteem, and life satisfaction using survey data omit the perceptual implications of specific activities from their accounts of the process. Such a general approach almost certainly makes offering any consideration of how social media users consider given information an impossible assignment. Moreover, cross-sectional analyses cannot be used to establish causal relationships among the variables with any degree of confidence. By separately examining the concrete effects of different social media activities using an experimental design, this study attempted to open the black box of social media users’ perceptions in regard to the topic
under investigation. In particular, the experimental design allowed a degree of confidence in the position that journalists’ social media activities have causal effects.

Finally, the present dissertation focused on understanding the implications of news audiences’ journalism orientation in light of prevalent social media norms for their interpretations of social information relative to journalists on social media sites. Journalism is in a state of flux at present with ongoing debates over journalistic norms in changing media environments, but traditional objective journalism norms are being taught in journalism schools without realizing the changing environments. It is important that the news industry understand the criteria, the ways in which they have changed and the ways in which they have stayed the same, pertaining to journalistic ideals in light of other emerging norms. This dissertation is a step in exactly that direction.
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Appendix A. Example stimuli (for the job market group)

1. The low disclosure & low interaction condition
2. The low disclosure & high interaction condition
3. The high disclosure & low interaction condition
4. The high disclosure & high interaction condition
Appendix B. Stimulus articles in full length

Article 1: Report Suggesting Replacement of Pell Grants with a Federal-State Matching Grant Causes Controversy

By David Miller

A new report from the Committee for Economic Development suggested that Pell Grants and other non-loan federal student aid be replaced with a single federal-state matching grant. The report, one of 16 studies commissioned by the Rinehart Foundation as part of its Reimagining Aid Design and Delivery project, also proposes eliminating federal tax credits for higher education, claiming that abolishing the credits could free up $18.2 billion for other programs.

The recommendation is provoking controversies. While some policy researchers agreed that subsidized loan expenditures could be better used elsewhere, others worried that it would penalize students in states that chose not to participate and expressed doubt that a federal methodology for determining need would distribute aid fairly. Stephen R. Cole, Northwestern University professor, contended that state-based college funding has been inconsistent and major changes to federal student aid programs can negatively impact universities’ mission of serving many students who otherwise may not have an opportunity at higher education.

Tuition and fees for four-year public colleges grew by 72 percent above inflation over the past decade, averaging $8,244 last year, according to the College Board, which represents more than 6,000 schools. Data shows many low-income families can’t afford to make the college dream a reality. According to Postsecondary Education Opportunity, a private institute providing public policy analyses, 79 percent of students born into the top income quartile in the U.S. obtain bachelor’s degrees while only 11 percent of students from bottom-quartile families graduate from four-year universities.
A diploma means higher salaries and better career advancement, and it’s important that students from low-income backgrounds understand all financial options available to them, said Amy Kerwin, chief educational opportunities officer at Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation. “Even with increasing tuition costs, college remains an incredibly worthwhile investment in building a better and more prosperous life,” she said. “In fact, census data shows that people who earn bachelor’s degrees earn nearly $1 million more over their lifetimes than high school graduates.”

But some lawmakers and policy groups warn that student loan debt in the U.S. has hit $914 billion and is reaching bubble-bursting levels. The average borrower owes more than $24,000, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York says. Last week, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York reported that student loan debt increased to $956 billion, more than auto loan debt or credit card debt. The student loan 90-day delinquency rate increased to 11% this past quarter and for the first time exceeds the “serious delinquency” rate for credit card debt. By comparison, in October 2007, the start of the subprime mortgage crisis, 16% of subprime mortgages were 90 days delinquent, according to Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke.

(Word count: 444)

**Article 2**

**US Job Market Looks Strong but Unemployment Remains High**

By David Miller

The U.S. job market is proving surprisingly strong and raising hopes that the economy will be resilient enough this year to withstand a budget standoff in Washington and potentially deep cuts in federal spending. Still, doubts remain as unemployment remains persistently high.

Many economists, though, focused on the steady job growth - especially the healthier-than-expected hiring late last year. Employers added 157,000 jobs in October. The Labor
Department revised its estimates of job gains for November from an initial 161,000 to 247,000 and for December from 155,000 to 196,000.

“The significantly stronger payroll gains tell us the economy has a lot more momentum than what we had thought,” Joseph LaVorgna, chief U.S. economist at Deutsche Bank, said in a research note.

Beyond the job market, the economy is showing other signs of health. Factories were busier last month than they have been since April 2012. Ford, Chrysler and General Motors all reported double-digit sales gains for last month, their best January in five years. Home prices have been rising steadily. Construction companies added 28,000 jobs in January. Health care employers added 28,000 jobs in January. Retailers added 33,000, and hotels and restaurants 17,000.

However, some economists argue that economy remains weak due to continued high levels of unemployment. Unemployment remains far higher than the 5 percent to 6 percent that economists regard as normal. The unemployment rate ticked up to 7.9 percent last month from 7.8 percent in December. Even with the job increases, construction employment is about 2 million below its housing-bubble peak of 7.7 million in April 2006. About 4.7 million people have been out of work for six months or more.

Some analysts say that the job market has a long way to go to fully heal from the recession. Between January 2008 and February 2010, the United States lost 8.7 million jobs. Since then, it's regained 5.5 million - 63 percent of the lost jobs.

“There is no time for celebration. We are still in a crisis-level jobs hole. In some states, including Illinois and Georgia, nearly 40 percent of unemployed people have been out of work for a year or more.”
Very long periods of unemployment were only rarely reported in the United States before the Great Recession. Laid-off workers, along with those just entering the labor force, typically found jobs relatively quickly. From 1990 to 2007, for example, more than a quarter of all American workers who were classified as unemployed in a given month found jobs the following month.

(Article 3)

Immigration Reform Offering Citizenship Path to Illegal Immigrants Raises Debates
By David Miller

The nation is abuzz with talk of immigration reform since a bipartisan group of senators released a bill framework. The most controversial part of the plan is a pathway to residency – and even citizenship – for the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants already in the U.S., combined with tighter border security.

The so-called Gang of Eight bipartisan Senate immigration proposals, unveiled on Monday, would require individuals here illegally to register with the government, pay a fine and back taxes, and undergo a criminal background check. In return, they’d get probationary legal status – and the opportunity to stand in the back of the line for permanent legal status. Everyone who’s already in that line, legally, would get their opportunity first.

“Our purpose is to ensure that no one who has violated America’s immigration laws will receive preferential treatment as they relate to those individuals who have complied with the law,” states the proposal.

“We cannot also continue as a nation with 11 million people residing in the shadows but we can’t also round up millions of people and deport them,” Florida Sen. Marco Rubio,
one of the seven senators who released the immigration reform plan, told a news conference, “This is the best option we have.”

Immigrant rights organizations and unions have applauded that progress is being made. However, some conservatives label it “amnesty” and a draw for future illegal immigrants, who will come to the US believing that eventually they will receive similar treatment.

“By granting amnesty, the Senate proposal actually compounds the problem by encouraging more illegal immigration,” said Rep. Lamar Smith of Texas.

Supporters of the bill argue it is not amnesty because the immigrants will be required to pass an additional background check, pay taxes, learn English and civics, demonstrate a history of work in the United States, and current employment, among other requirements, in order to earn the opportunity to apply for lawful permanent residency. Those individuals who successfully complete these requirements can eventually earn a green card.

The path to citizenship outlined in the Senate’s immigration plan is actually not a short one as it sounds. Given the current backlog of those who have legally applied for such status, it would likely be at least a decade before current illegal immigrants would be able to satisfy all criteria and reach the head of the line.

And not all want to go through the process. A new Pew Research Center poll notes that nearly two-thirds of the 5.4 million legal immigrants from Mexico who are eligible to apply for citizenship have not done so. Mexicans are by far the largest group of both legal and illegal US immigrants.

(Word count: 441)

Article 4

Colo. House Passes Gun-Control Measures Raising Debates

By David Miller
Limits on the size of ammunition magazines and universal background checks passed the Colorado House on Monday, during a second day of emotional debates that has drawn attention from the White House as lawmakers try to address recent mass shootings.

The bills were among four that the Democratic-controlled House passed amid strong resistance from Republicans.

The proposed ammunition restrictions limit magazines to 15 rounds for firearms and eight for shotguns. Three Democrats joined all Republicans voting no on the bill, but the proposal passed 34-31.

The House also approved bills requiring background checks on all gun purchases, including those between private sellers and firearms bought online; a ban on concealed firearms at colleges and stadiums; and a requirement that gun purchasers pay for their own background checks. The ammunition restrictions measure would limit magazines to 15 rounds for firearms, and eight for shotguns. The background check measure passed 33-32 in the closest vote of the four.

“Enough is enough. I'm sick and tired of bloodshed,” said Democratic Rep. Rhonda Fields, a sponsor of the bill and representative of the district where the shootings at an Aurora theater happened last summer. Fields' son was also fatally shot in 2005.

“This will not ban [assault weapons] but it will hold everyone in the chain responsible for what happens with that weapon,” Senate President John Morse, D-Colorado Springs said. “My hope is that it will finally bring an end to mass shootings and serve as a model of how other states might deal with gun violence.”

Republicans argued that the proposals restrict Second Amendment rights and won’t prevent mass shootings like the ones in Aurora and a Connecticut elementary school.
“This bill will never keep evil people from doing evil things,” said Republican Rep. Jerry Sonnenberg. “This is part of our heritage. This is part of what it took to settle this land.”

Republicans also say students should have the right to defend themselves.

“Do not disarm our young adults in general and our young women in particular on our college campuses in the name of a gun-free zone,” Republican Rep. Jim Wilson said.

The debate highlighted a fundamental philosophical difference between many Democrats and Republicans. The Democrats’ leader in the House, Dickey Lee Hullinghorst, said he resented “the implication that unless we all arm ourselves, we will not be adequately protected.”

Republican Rep. Christ Holbert became emotional while explaining his opposition to the bills. He said he understood Fields' support of the bills, given her district and her son's shooting death.

“But I care passionately about the United States Constitution and the constitution of this state, and the oath that we have taken,” Holbert said.

(Word count: 443)
Appendix C. Post-stimulus Survey Questionnaire

The items offered below are designed to measure your perceptions (impressions) of the journalist/article, owner of the Facebook profile you just saw. Based on the profile, how do you think the person is? Choose the number that best indicates your feelings toward the person.

Please treat individual items independent from one another. It is possible that you have 0 or 1 for one item and 9 or 10 for another.

I think the journalist is… (or likely to be…)

**Personal dimension** ($M$, $SD$ for the journalist/article)

- Attractiveness dimension:
  - attractive – unattractive (5.6, 1.5/5.7, 1.6)
  - approachable – unapproachable (7.3, 1.8/6.2, 1.6)
  - appealing – unappealing (6.1, 1.8/6.0, 2.0)
  - friendly – unfriendly (7.4, 1.9/5.9, 1.5)

- Trustworthiness dimension
  - trustworthy – untrustworthy (6.7, 1.6/7.1, 1.6)
  - reliable – unreliable (6.9, 1.6/7.0, 1.7)
  - honest – dishonest (7.2, 1.6/7.0, 1.6)
  - sincere – insincere (7.1, 1.6/6.8, 1.6)
  - can be trusted – cannot be trusted (6.6, 1.6/7.0, 1.7)

- Goodwill dimension
  - caring – uncaring (7.0, 1.7/6.4, 1.7)
  - considerate – inconsiderate (6.9, 1.6/6.7, 1.5)
  - concerned with people – not concerned with people (7.2, 1.8/7.1, 1.8)
thoughtful – not thoughtful (6.8, 1.6/6.6, 1.6)
respect readers – not respect readers (7.2, 1.9/6.9, 1.6)

**Professional dimension** \((M, SD \text{ for the journalist/article})\)
- Objectivity dimension
  - objective – not objective (5.4, 1.9/4.3, 1.9)
  - fact-based – opinion-based (4.9, 2.3/5.2, 2.1)
  - unbiased – biased (4.9, 2.1/4.3, 2.1)
  - neutral – not neutral (5.4, 2.0/4.5, 2.0)
  - separating facts and opinions – not separating facts and opinions (5.8, 1.9/4.8, 2.0)
- Competence dimension
  - competent – incompetent (7.1, 1.6/5.3, 1.6)
  - trained – untrained (6.8, 1.7/5.2, 1.6)
  - informed – uninformed (7.2, 1.7/5.3, 1.8)
  - qualified – unqualified (6.7, 1.6/5.1, 1.7)
  - professional – not professional (6.9, 1.9/5.5, 1.8)

**Individual journalism orientation (IJO) \((M, SD)\)**

This set of items below is designed to measure your personal beliefs toward various journalistic norms. There is no right or wrong answer, so please choose the statement that better describes your feelings. (2 options: either left or right)

1. Journalists should be neutral in any case --- It is **not** always desirable for journalists to be neutral. (.47, .50)
2. Objectivity can be achieved by treating all sides equally --- Objectivity can be achieved by giving all sides a fair hearing. (.41, .49)
3. Journalistic objectivity means having **no value judgments** involved --- Journalistic objectivity means having **fair judgments** involved. (.68, .47)
4. Journalists should **not** make moral decisions. --- Journalists should make moral decisions. (.71, .45)

5. It is **desirable** for journalists to cover international conflicts neutrally as a distant 3rd party. --- It is **irresponsible** for journalists to cover international conflicts neutrally as a distant 3rd party. (.19, .39)

6. War coverage should **not** distinguish between right and wrong in their portraits. --- War coverage should distinguish between right and wrong in their portraits. (.30, .46)

7. It is **dangerous** for journalists to have voices on issues. --- It is **okay** for journalists to have voices on issues. (.58, .50)

8. Journalists’ versions of truth are **objective** --- Journalists’ versions of truth are **subjective**. (.54, .50)

9. It is important for journalists to inform the public, but it is **not** journalists’ job to help the public solve social problems. --- It is important for journalists to inform the public, and ultimately help the public solve social problems. (.37, .48)

10. It is **not** journalists' job to care about the public and attempt to improve the public lives. --- Journalists should care about the public and attempt to improve the public lives. (.79, .46)