

THEME 1: CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

Organizations are social systems in which people commonly pursue goals. Employees of an organization play a crucial role in achieving these goals. For an organization, it is therefore important that the employees feel involved in the organization and want to work towards the goals. Identity research deals with this problem and also internal communication plays an important role. It is also important for organizations to differentiate themselves in today's market environment. To steer external image (reputation/ image) different communication strategies are being used. Within this theme you will research things like identity, internal communication, external communication and public opinion, at which you will use, for example, quantitative methods such as survey research or Q-sort.

THEME 2: (PRODUCT) MARKETING

In order to create a specific image for their products, organization can use different kinds of marketing strategies. Ultimately these strategies are used to differentiate their selves and their products from competitors and make their products attractive for consumers in order to sell them. Within this theme a broad range of marketing related research projects can be executed.

THEME 3: BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE THROUGH INFORMATION

In many attempts to influence people's behavior it is blindly assumed that information on the positive or negative effects of (considered desirable or undesirable) behavior leads people to change their behavior. That this is a rather optimistic approach is evident from the many campaigns that have no or marginal effect. One of the ways to enlarge the changes of influencing campaigns is to do prior research to the determinants of the behavior that is being influenced.

THEME 4: MEDIA & COMMUNICATION

Innovations in the field of new media and information and communication follow each other in rapid succession. Communication between individuals and between complex organizations are increasingly using electronic media. New media such as social networks, (micro) blogs and online video offer new opportunities for communication between individuals, marketing and organizational communication. But how do you ensure that users can interact with these new resources? How should new media be designed from the perspective of the user? How can new media contribute to effective communication between employees? How can social media be helpful to political parties in elections? Etc.

THEME 5: POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK

Interpersonal Work Relationships

Regardless of your role or industry, relationships define your work. The people around us help us determine our values, attitudes, ideas, perceptions, and experience of work. Within this theme you conduct research in subdomains such as: leader-member exchange, supervisory relationships, coworker exchanges, relationships in teams, developmental networks, or mentoring.

For example, you investigate:

- How developmental networks in a specific organization are composed;
- How a newcomer in an organization builds a network;
- How a formal mentoring program is embedded in one's developmental network;
- What the preferences of both mentor and protégé are when engaging in a mentorship;
- How leaders can build fruitful relationships with their employees (LMX);
- How friendships at work impact professional development.

THEME 6: TRUST IN THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

The facelessness and the intangibility of transactions and exchanges in the virtual environment could significantly contribute to their perceived 'riskiness'. The reality of risks and risk perceptions in the online environment prompt the necessity for online trust formation.

Research proposals that aimed at investigating the factors influencing online trust and the impact of such trust on behavioural intentions within the digital environment, particularly in the contexts of electronic commercial transactions (e-commerce, e-banking) and online government transactions (e-government), would certainly belong to this research category.

THEME 7: TRUST WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS

Trust, within the context of an organization, has been regarded crucial in influencing cooperation, commitment, and performance. The research domain of trust within organizations is relatively broad and could focus on many interesting issues. For instance, the effect of culture and other demographic characteristics on trust formation among organizational members would be worthy of research pursuit. The impact of trust among organizational members and trust between organizational members and leaders on cooperation, job satisfaction, or performance could also be explored.

THEME 8: TRUST IN ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations, in the course of their operations, ought to secure the trust of their stakeholders. Organizations that are not trusted are bound to fail in the long run. When people do not trust an organization, the former's willingness to enter into a business relationship with the latter would expectedly be low or non-existent. The determinants of trust in organizations and the impact of trust on behavioural intentions to transact with those organizations certainly merit research attention. It is even interesting to explore how organizations build their trustworthiness and maintain it. Furthermore, the strategies employed by organizations to repair stakeholders' trust after it has been broken or betrayed could be pursued as possible research agenda.

THEME 9: PRIVACY ISSUES AND CONCERNS IN ONLINE TRANSACTIONS AND INTERACTIONS

Online transactions and exchanges are predicated on the need to disclose personal data. Ordering a product or availing a particular service online would be impossible to complete when the necessary or relevant personal data are not supplied to an organization that offers the product or the service. The increasing commoditization of personal data increases their susceptibility to exploitation and misappropriation – either by the organization that collects the data or by third parties with the advanced technology and expertise to gain unlawful access to people’s personal data. Several studies have shown that information privacy concerns and the perceived risks of personal information abuse in the digital environment are potent forces that could thwart people’s inclination to engage in online interactions, transactions, and exchanges.

The currency of the issue certainly makes it a potential research topic. Though broad in scope, research on privacy issues and concerns in online transactions could focus on the causes and the effects of those issues and concerns and the differences in privacy concerns among Internet users in terms of individual characteristics.

THEME 10: SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CRISIS COMMUNICATION (Ardion Beldad)

The dialogic nature of social media platforms such as online social networks (e.g. Facebook) and microblogs (e.g. Twitter) has prompted private individuals and organizations and government agencies to increasingly use the media mentioned for communication with diverse interest groups during crisis situations. Social media, it can be argued, facilitate immediate and cost-effective communication between organizations and stakeholders, especially during a crisis (societal or organizational).

However, research into the potential of social media for crisis communication is still in its infancy stage, which implies that a plenitude of research questions remained unaddressed. Possible issues within the theme that could be investigated include the perceived credibility of crisis communication messages transmitted through social media, the impact of organizational use of social media on stakeholders’ emotions and behaviors, and the factors influencing people’s decision to rely on crisis-related information from social media for critical decisions.

THEME 11: ORGANIZATIONAL CRISIS AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE

Organizational crises are regarded to be potentially harmful for the viability of organizations as crises could threaten organizational reputation, trustworthiness, and the organization’s position within a specific market. Organizations, therefore, are expected to act adequately and promptly during and after a crisis, whether the crisis is attributable to the organization or to external parties and forces. Often, it is not the type of crisis that matters a lot but the attribution of crisis responsibility and the response of the organization embroiled in a crisis. Research within this domain could focus on the ways different types of organizations deal with different types of crisis, the effects of different crisis-related organizational responses on the beliefs, intentions, and actions of different types of stakeholders, and the impact of crisis responsibility attribution on the perceived effectiveness of a particular crisis-related organizational response.

THEME 12: AGE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS WORLDWIDE

Minors spend a lot of their spare time watching television and movies or playing video games, and it is not likely that this is going to change soon. Therefore, it is important that they can consume media products in a safe and responsible way. Media rating systems (also known as age classification systems, warning label systems, or restrictive ratings) can serve as an effective tool in restricting access and exposure to harmful media. Such systems, which at this time are used in at least 52 countries worldwide, are designed to inform parents about and protect children from violent or otherwise harmful media content. Age pictograms show whether a media product's content is harmful for minors below a given age. Furthermore, in various systems, the actual content is specified with additional warning pictograms. Both the age limit labels and the warning labels can be placed on covers, packing materials, posters, and other advertising materials, and they can be shown at the start of a movie or television program. Many countries have their own rating systems with their own pictograms and their own regulations. Especially in the context of television programs, many differences can be found, for example regarding the compulsoriness of the classifications (e.g., an age limit system exists in Argentina but is not compulsory), the types of television networks involved (e.g., in Australia government-owned television networks are sometimes not bound by the same regulations as their commercial counterparts), when the classification is shown (e.g., during the entire duration of a program in France, once an hour in Canada, and at the beginning of the program in most other countries), and the restrictions regarding the time of broadcasting (e.g., programs rated as 15+ may only be broadcast after 9 PM in Australia, whereas this time applies for programs rated 14+ in Brazil and South Africa). There are also differences in the appearance of classifications. Classifications are often shown as a number in a small box in a particular color, by means of lettering (e.g., 'TV-PG' in the United States), or by means of a verbal announcement beforehand. In Iceland, the channel's logo in the top-right corner is colored either yellow (12 years) or red (16 years). Furthermore, most countries have their own system of coding media products, which may result in very different classifications per country. For example, the motion picture 'X-Men Origins: Wolverine' (released in 2009) was rated 'PG-13' (Parents Strongly Cautioned, some material may be inappropriate for children under 13) in the United States, '12A' in Great Britain (no one younger than 12 may see a '12A' film in a cinema unless accompanied by an adult, and films classified '12A' are not recommended for a child below 12), '16' in Germany and Austria, '11' in Denmark and 'for all ages' in France.

Preliminary research question: what are the similarities and differences regarding media ratings worldwide and why is this?

THEMA 13: STORYTELLING, DE OPLOSSING VOOR 230.000?

230.000. Dat is het aantal werknemers dat volgens het RIVM jaarlijks een arbeidsongeval heeft, oftewel ruim 600 werknemers per dag. En ondanks de toenemende mate aandacht voor arbeidsveiligheid vanuit bedrijven en de overheid blijft het aantal arbeidsongevallen op jaarbasis ongeveer gelijk.

Veel bedrijven brengen veiligheid bij hun medewerkers onder de aandacht door middel van waarschuwborden, instructies en maandelijkse meetings, maar is dit wel dé manier op de werkplaats veiliger te maken? Nieuwe inzichten wijzen erop dat onze hersenen informatie beter verwerken als de informatie wordt gepresenteerd als een samenhangend verhaal van gebeurtenissen in plaats van op zichzelf staande feiten. Daarnaast worden verhalen vaak beter onthouden dan regels en richtlijnen omdat ze levendiger en boeiender zijn.

Binnen dit project staat de vraag centraal of en hoe storytelling gebruikt kan worden om de veiligheid op de werkvloer te verbeteren. De precieze invulling van dit project, alsook de onderzoeksmethode worden afgestemd in overleg met de betrokken student(en), waarbij de student een belangrijke stem heeft. Er kunnen maximaal 2 studenten deelnemen aan dit project.

THEME 14: “JUST READ THE MANUAL..!”; BUT WHAT IS A GOOD INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN..?

How to support people who want to learn something new, like using a new software program or baking an apple pie? How to support people who need to do something that they've never done before, like assembling a tall bookcase?

As we all know, software manuals, recipes and assembly instructions are not always easy to read and to use. This topic focuses on testing the usability of instructions. In the last decade, researchers from different fields (education, technical communication, human-computer interaction, etc.) have started to investigate the effects of affective, motivational and funny elements in user support and learning materials. The general idea is that these elements have a positive effect on the user experience by making the learning process more satisfying, and possibly also more effective and efficient. However, study results are not conclusive and companies are sometimes reluctant to include these elements in their instructional documents.

THEME 15: MULTISENSORY PRODUCT EXPERIENCE

This research area investigates the relationships between sensory, affective, and symbolic product properties and the contribution of different sensory modalities to the overall product experience. The aim of the research is to understand product experience and purchase decision and how it is affected by sensory, emotional, and social stimuli at different levels of awareness. The topic also includes sensory metaphors in advertising and cultural differences in consumer experience.

THEME 16: ERVARINGEN MET LEEFTIJDSCONTROLESYSTEMEN

Veel winkels waar leeftijdsgebonden producten (alcohol, tabak, krasloten) worden verkocht maken gebruik van systemen en hulpmiddelen die verkopers helpen bij het correct vaststellen van de leeftijd van (mogelijk minderjarige) klanten. Er zijn vele systemen in gebruik waarbij de impact voor klant en

verkoper sterk verschilt. Naast de effectiviteit van de verschillende systemen is het bijzonder relevant om te onderzoeken wat gebruikers (verkopers, minderjarige klanten en volwassen klanten) vinden van deze systemen en in hoeverre dat hun winkelervaringen beïnvloedt. In dit thema kunnen meerdere studenten participeren en in overleg zullen we de precieze onderzoeksvragen en methode bepalen. Dit kan exploratief – kwalitatief zijn, maar het is ook mogelijk om een kwantitatief onderzoek te doen. De inbreng van student is hierbij uiteraard relevant. Heel concreet is de actuele vraag hoe een groep slijters in Nederland (contactgegevens bekend) een systeem beoordeeld waarbij via een cameraverbinding de leeftijd van klanten werd vastgesteld door externe experts. Dit systeem is gestopt, maar de ervaringen ermee zijn niet bekend.

THEME 17: PUBLIC AFFAIRS; DE KUNST VAN HET VERLEIDEN

Elkaar proberen te beïnvloeden – iemand verleiden iets te doen wat hij of zij aanvankelijk niet van plan was om te doen - is al zo oud als de mensheid zelf. Dit fenomeen verwierf in onze tijd de duiding 'lobby', maar dit is slechts een deel van het verhaal. Het complete 'verhaal' heet public affairs dat een pakket aan activiteiten omvat die het mogelijk maken voor bedrijven om hun invloed op de overheid uit te oefenen. Denk bijvoorbeeld aan tabak- en drankindustrie, die al decennialang proberen de accijnzen op hun producten te verlagen. Of de wapenlobby in Amerika, die het bijna onmogelijk maakt voor Obama om iets aan de wet te veranderen.

Maar wat is de invloed van deze public affairs activiteiten op de politieke besluitvorming? En waar zit de ware macht? Hoe zijn de public affairs officials georganiseerd: wie betaalt ze, wat doen ze?

Vragen die niet alleen vanuit wetenschappelijk perspectief zeer interessant zijn om te onderzoeken, ook in de praktijk wordt er veel aandacht aan besteed. Kijk bijvoorbeeld eens naar de onderzoeksjournalistieke website van follow the money: www.ftm.nl.

Niets mooier in de politiek dan 'de kunst van het verleiden'. Daarover gaat het bij dit thema.

THEME 18: NATURE HEALS, BUT WHAT EXACTLY?

A large body of research shows that exposure to natural stimuli (ranging from a walk in the woods to merely viewing pictures of nature) benefits wellbeing, healing processes and creativity. Recently, several studies have proposed specific patterns and key aspects prevalent in nature that might be of particular importance here, however little research has actually tested these claims. In addition, research shows that a more active role of the perceiver is important. For instance, moving (as opposed to standing still) and being mindful (as opposed to being lost in thought) might strengthen effects of nature. In this project, you will select specific natural stimuli (specific natural environments or depictions of nature varying on specific characteristics) and specific activities or exercises. In an experimental study (it is up to you to select a specific context and relevant outcome measures) you will test whether specific aspects of nature in combination with an active role of the perceiver indeed strengthen effects of natural stimuli.

THEME 19: THE RATIONALE BEHIND GERMAN LICENSE PLATE CHOICE

In Germany, car owners are (partly) free to design their own license plate. Within certain restrictions (uniqueness, non-offending, number of characters) people might choose to publicly expose their date of birth, their initials, their car type or something else.

Within this project we want to explore what types of license plates exist by conducting a large scale content analysis. Second, we want to explore why people choose for a certain type of public disclosure via the license plate by, for instance, focus groups. And third, we want to explore what these different license plates 'communicate'.

THEME 20: MEDIA RATINGS

Media rating systems (also known as age classification systems, warning label systems, or restrictive ratings) can serve as an effective tool in restricting access and exposure to harmful media. Such systems, which at this time are used in at least 52 countries worldwide, are designed to inform parents about and protect children from violent or otherwise harmful media content. Age pictograms (also known as evaluative ratings) show whether a media product's content is harmful for minors below a given age. Furthermore, in various systems, the actual content is specified with additional warning pictograms (descriptive ratings). Both the age classification labels and the warning labels can be placed on covers, packing materials, posters, and other advertising materials, and they can be shown at the start of a movie or television program. How are these pictograms used by the public and what are the effects?

THEME 21: ANALYSE VAN DE MEDIA AGENDA GEBRUIKMAKEND VAN EEN NIEUWE TECHNIEK

Inhoudsanalyse is een analysemethode waarmee op systematische wijze relevante concepten in een tekst worden gemeten. Tot voor kort was dit een tijdrovende bezigheid omdat na het bepalen van de corpus de analyse met de hand diende te gebeuren. Sinds kort beschikt de UT over geavanceerde apparatuur die automatische inhoudsanalyse mogelijk maakt. Geautomatiseerde inhoudsanalyse verwijst naar inhoudsanalyse met behulp van een computer. Het grote voordeel van geautomatiseerde inhoudsanalyse is dat computers snel en goed kunnen tellen. Daardoor kunnen met behulp van geautomatiseerde inhoudsanalyse grote hoeveelheden tekst snel geanalyseerd worden. Het nadeel van geautomatiseerde inhoudsanalyse is dat computers woorden kunnen herkennen en tellen, maar dat ze niet kunnen lezen. Computers kunnen woorden herkennen, maar geen concepten. Daarom is aan onderzoekers de taak om zoektermen te formuleren om de computer te instrueren om concepten te herkennen op basis van woordcombinaties.

Binnen deze opdracht is het de bedoeling dat de student mediaberichtgeving ten aanzien van een bepaald onderwerp (denk aan berichtgeving over actuele kwesties zoals de opkomst van bepaalde technologische innovaties etc.) analyseert gebruikmakend van deze nieuwe techniek.

THEME 22: AANTREKKELIJKHEID VAN KRASLOTEN VOOR MINDERJARIGEN #1

De decembermaand is weer voorbij en er zijn weer (bijna) 3,5 miljoen Decemberkalenders open gekrast (2,5 miljoen van 5 euro en 1,0 miljoen van 10 euro). De vraag is hoe aantrekkelijk deze kalenders nu eigenlijk zijn voor minderjarigen. In deze studie willen we vergelijken hoe aantrekkelijk deze kalenders zijn voor jongeren van verschillende leeftijdsgroepen jongeren. Een idee zou kunnen zijn om de kalenders te vergelijken met andere producten (bijvoorbeeld LEGO, de Donald Duck, Frozen). Maar ook staan we open voor eigen ideeën van de student.

THEME 23: ORGANISATIONS IN THE MEDIA

The media play an important role in the constitution of how the public (but also the own employees) may perceive an organization. Due to all kinds of developments in the field of our information society it is increasingly difficult to deal with the media, but at the same time these developments make it essential to respond in a quick and effective way.

Several research areas may be an option here: for example a content analysis of the strategies used by organizations (strategies applied nowadays compared to earlier times, different types of organizations, different types of coverage (television, online, printed media), the topic of the media coverage at hand, etcetera), addressing the points of view of relevant actors responsible for the communication strategy, an analysis of recent major news stories, framing of the news stories, what types of stories are selected by the media, etcetera.

THEME 24: COMMUNICATING FOOD BENEFITS THROUGH PACKAGE DESIGN

To communicate food benefits (such as health, quality, taste, naturalness, etc.), manufacturers use a lot of various elements, including product names, claims, labels, information about ingredients and sensory elements of package design, such as colour, shape and material. Consumers often associate sensory elements of a package (colour, shape, and material) with certain product properties. When sensory cues are incongruent with the message communicated by product names and labels, it can lead to a less positive product evaluation and a lower purchase intention. The variables that can contribute to consumer responses to food products can also include product familiarity, consumption context, food neophobia, scepticism towards food labels and motivation to process information. Within this theme, students will investigate the effects of different factors on consumers' food choice, including the effects of colour and material of the package, hedonic and health claims, and different formats of health labels.

THEME 25: THE EXPERIENCE OF EVERYDAY TECHNOLOGY

Technology is incredible. It enables us to do all sorts of things that we could not even imagine a couple of years ago, and it continues to develop at an increasing pace. At this point, almost everyone regularly uses computers, smartphones, or other technological products which are now considered to be commonplace. But what is it that makes these technologies so great? Why do we like certain aspects about technological products, but dislike others? What can the companies that are involved with these products do in order to act in accordance to this information?

There are many different areas which can be explored within this theme. The main focus will be investigating the usability and/or user experience of one or multiple technological products. This can be approached from different directions through both quantitative and qualitative methods. Topics you could think of are: Investigating how a certain technological product can be adapted in order to fit the needs of users, which factors are important to users in entertainment technologies, or how to make technology more suitable for an older target group. A lot of personal input is possible within this theme.

THEME 26: EEN STEEDS MULTICULTUREEL NEDERLAND EN VERHARDE POLITIEKE STANDPUNTEN

In Nederland zien we enerzijds in de politiek steeds hardere standpunten en bijdrages aan het debat (die vervolgens als quotes in de media verschijnen). En anderzijds wordt Nederland steeds meer een multiculturele samenleving, wat mooie dingen en uitdagingen met zich meebrengt. De paradox is dat je zou verwachten bij deze toenemende hoeveelheid maatschappelijke issues, de politiek eendrachtig en eensgezind bezig is om dit te besturen, echter, er lijkt meer politieke verdeeldheid dan ooit. Enerzijds de partijen die de problemen bagatelliseren en anderzijds de partijen die de problemen hard benoemen. Een constructieve, gezamenlijke aanpak lijkt verder weg dan ooit. Deze situatie is interessant voor communicatiewetenschappers. Meerdere invalshoeken zijn mogelijk:

- 1) Een diepgaande analyse (case study of inhoudsanalyse) van een complex politiek probleem en hoe de verschillende partijen dit benaderen en welke communicatie-strategieën hier gebruikt zijn.
- 2) Een kwantitatieve analyse van “veranderend Nederland / Europa” en het oordeel daarover. Welke gebruiken, tradities en regels zijn er eigenlijk veranderd de afgelopen jaren? Denk bijvoorbeeld aan multiculturele feesten en voedsel, maar ook aan gescheiden zwemmen, moskees en een toename van bijvoorbeeld religieuze kleding in het straatbeeld. Wat is er eigenlijk veranderd en wat vinden burgers daar eigenlijk van?
- 3) ...Eigen inbreng van studenten. Binnen dit thema kunnen studenten ook hun eigen inbreng realiseren. In overleg met de begeleider worden dan onderzoeksvragen opgesteld en een geschikte methode bepaald

THEME 27: ENHANCING ONLINE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE THROUGH MULTISENSORY CUES

In traditional shopping experience, consumers perceive the products with multiple sensory modalities, including vision, touch, audition and olfaction. In the online shopping experience, the sensory information is restricted to visual and sometimes auditory cues. The lack of haptic and olfactory information during online shopping can negatively influence shopping experience for certain product groups (such as clothing and food). Within the scope of this theme, students will investigate the possibility to use various sensory, symbolic and embodied cues to compensate for the lack of haptic and olfactory information during online shopping. The aim of the study is to better understand consumer experience during online shopping and to develop recommendations on designing multisensory interface for online stores that can enhance online shopping experience.

THEME 28: CORPORATE STORIES

Organizations can communicate (internally and externally) by means of dry facts and figures, but they can also use stories: emotionally and symbolically charged narratives that enrich, enhance and infuse facts and figures about an organization with meaning. In this way, information becomes more tangible and memorable. So, it is assumed that corporate stories are useful instruments for organizational branding and reputation; organization scholars and practitioners have stressed the importance of storytelling for internal and external purposes. However, not much is known yet about the effects of corporate stories on an organization's stakeholders.

THEME 29: ZWARTE PIET

In de Nederlandse samenleving is sinds enige tijd een verhitte discussie over Zwarte Piet. In een recent rapport van de Verenigde Naties wordt Nederland zelfs opgeroepen om de tradities te veranderen. De relevante vraag voor communicatiewetenschappers is welke communicatie op welke wijze heeft bijgedragen aan dit proces. In dit project gaan we een inhoudsanalyse uitvoeren waarbij we alle communicatie rondom ZP in kaart brengen om zo een reconstructie te maken van deze case. Mocht je als student andere ideeën hebben rondom het thema Zwarte Piet, dan zijn deze ook bespreekbaar. Denk aan: hoe moeten we dit oplossen?

THEME 30: HET PROFIEL VAN DE OPLEIDING COMMUNICATIEWETENSCHAP

De opleiding Communicatiewetenschap is altijd in beweging en probeert de inhoud af te stemmen op de toekomstige werkomgeving van studenten en om tegelijkertijd aantrekkelijk te zijn voor toekomstige studenten. Daarbij moeten de opleiding CW rekening houden met eisen vanuit de UT (denk aan TOM en het technisch profiel van de UT). Er zijn wel degelijk keuzes te maken in de toekomst, maar wat wil de toekomstige student? Met welk profiel is de opleiding CW aantrekkelijk voor middelbare scholieren? Welke inhoud en vorm spreekt studenten aan? Hoe zouden we ons moeten profileren? Erg relevante en actuele vragen waar de opleiding momenteel over nadenkt. Met dit onderzoek lever je hier een belangrijke bijdrage aan.

THEME 31: COMMUNICATION AND DESIGN OF INFORMATION DISPLAYS ACCOMPANYING SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGIES

Nowadays, surveillance technologies (security cameras, detection ports, sensors of all kinds) are omnipresent. Although in many cases intended to increase citizen safety, they may also evoke reactance and anger as they are often perceived as an invasion of privacy or a sign of distrust. A very interesting study (conducted last year by a communication-science bachelor student) showed that information displays explaining why such technologies are there in the first place may reduce such negative feelings and increase acceptance. In addition to textual elements, design elements of such displays (color, layout, images) may also create a more friendly or hostile appearance. In this project, you will further investigate the impact of information displays surrounding surveillance technologies and explore the role that design elements can play here. In an experimental study you will test your predictions.

THEME 32: WAT ZEGT DAT NOU..? “UIT ONDERZOEK BLIJKT DAT...”

Vaak staat in de krant uitspraken van te lezen zoals “Nederlanders toleranter jegens immigranten” of “Radio luisteren minder populair” of “Vrouwen prefereren gouden horloge boven ketting” of “Klanten meer tevreden over supermarkt-beleving”. Vaak staat bij een dergelijk bericht ook dat er onderzoek is uitgevoerd door een onderzoeksbureau, een adviesbureau of een universiteit. In dit onderzoek willen we een eerste verkenning doen naar in hoeverre uitingen in een krantenbericht (het persbericht uitgegeven door de betrokken organisatie) stroken met de onderliggende onderzoeksrapporten. Een aantal vragen zouden onderzocht kunnen worden. Denk hierbij aan (i) de mate waarin de onderzoeksrapporten ook echt worden vrijgegeven, (ii) de mate waarin de publieke communicatie een correcte weergave is van de onderzoeksbevindingen (naast correct ook of het een representatieve afspiegeling is, of dat er selectief is gewinkeld in de resultaten), (iii) de relatie tussen de zender van het bericht en de inhoud, enzovoorts. De exacte inhoud van het project wordt afgestemd tussen begeleider en student, hierin heeft de student een nadrukkelijke eigen inbreng.

THEME 33: VISUAL COMMUNICATION, DESIGN, AND CREATIVITY

Creativity is an elusive thing; we all want to be creative, sometimes are, but at the same time it is very hard to explain what it is that inspires creative thinking. Nonetheless, recent research has shown that two factors in particular might inspire creative behavior; spaciousness and mystery. For instance, Meyers-Levy & Zhu (2007) showed that people were more creative under a high (as opposed to a low) ceiling. Likewise, results from a study conducted last year by a communication science bachelor student showed that pictures of nature that could be characterized as both ‘open’ (spacious) and ‘unpredictable’ (mysterious) boosted creativity amongst high-school students. Interestingly, such findings parallel linguistic phrases such as “out of the box” thinking and “having an open mind”. In this study you will further investigate the role of these factors and think of ways you can manipulate visual displays based on these factors. Subsequently, you will test in an experimental study whether your displays/designs indeed boost creative thinking.

THEME 34: SHAPING SALTINESS, THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN TASTE AND SHAPE / SOUND SYMBOLISM

Eating and drinking are daily activities that are usually considered pleasurable. Although the taste of food and beverages is important, we tend to use all of our sensory modalities to perceive, identify and enjoy the features of food. This means that taste is more than just a sensation on the tongue, other sensory modalities like audition, olfaction, touch and vision are also involved. This study investigates the correspondence between the sensory modality taste and the use of shapes/names in packaging design, specifically the effects of shapes and sound on perceptions of saltiness. Previous studies have shown that angular shapes and angular sounding words (e.g., “Tuki” and “Takete”) correspond with the (imagined) taste of salt. As a practical implication, shape and sound symbolism can be used in packaging design to enhance the perceived saltiness of products, which may help improve people’s health.

THEME 35: SAFETY AND THE APPROACH-AVOIDANCE TEST

Securing occupational safety is an organizational challenge in many industries. Organizations strive to prevent unsafe actions as early as possible as it believed that an estimated 300 000 at-risk behaviors are underlying each fatality (for more information see Heinrich's pyramid). Traditional approaches seek to transform unwarranted behavior in a rational fashion (using, for instance, safety instructions).

A relatively novel approach to modify (risk) behavior seeks to prevent risky behaviors by targeting subtle bodily actions associated with either approach or avoidance. For instance, several studies show that people show less liking for stimuli (e.g., alcoholic beverages) when they have to push a joystick away from their body (as opposed to pulling a joystick towards their body). These findings suggest that attitudes and related action tendencies are embodied. The aim of the proposed Bac helor's project is to test whether this approach can also be used to modify at-risk safety behaviors in an organizational context.

THEME 36: STORYTELLING, DE OPLOSSING VOOR 230.000?

230.000. Dat is het aantal werknemers dat volgens het RIVM jaarlijks een arbeidsongeval heeft, oftewel ruim 600 werknemers per dag. En ondanks de toenemende mate aandacht voor arbeidsveiligheid vanuit bedrijven en de overheid blijft het aantal arbeidsongevallen op jaarbasis ongeveer gelijk. Veel bedrijven brengen veiligheid bij hun medewerkers onder de aandacht door middel van waarschuwingsborden, instructies en maandelijks meetings, maar is dit wel dé manier om de werkplaats veiliger te maken? Nieuwe inzichten wijzen erop dat onze hersenen informatie beter verwerken als de informatie wordt gepresenteerd als een samenhangend verhaal van gebeurtenissen in plaats van op zichzelf staande feiten. Daarnaast worden verhalen vaak beter onthouden dan regels en richtlijnen omdat ze levendiger en boeiender zijn. Binnen dit project staat de vraag centraal of en hoe storytelling gebruikt kan worden om de veiligheid op de werkvloer te verbeteren. De precieze invulling van dit project, alsook de onderzoeksmethode worden afgestemd in overleg met de betrokken student(en), waarbij de student een belangrijke stem heeft. Er kunnen maximaal 2 studenten deelnemen aan dit project.

THEME 37: VEILIGHEIDSCULTUUR OP SCHIPHOL

Op Schiphol is veiligheid van ongekend belang. Maar de veiligheid beperkt zich niet tot die van de vliegtuigen, bagage en reizigers. Ook de veiligheid van alle (in)directe medewerkers van Schiphol zelf is van groot belang. Op korte termijn zal communicatieadviesbureau Salmay een communicatieplan uit gaan rollen om de technische eisen naar de medewerkers te gaan communiceren. Salmay wil graag inzicht krijgen in de huidige veiligheidscultuur binnen deze groep medewerkers. In dit project staat het onderzoeken van de huidige veiligheidscultuur binnen deze groep medewerkers van Schiphol centraal. De student(en) zijn verantwoordelijk voor het bepalen van de juiste onderzoeksmethodiek voor, en het daadwerkelijk uitvoeren van deze nulmeting. De uitkomsten van het onderzoek zullen Salmay helpen bij het funderen van hun communicatieplan. De concrete invulling van het onderzoek zullen worden gedaan in samenspraak met de betrokken student(en), de betrokken docent en communicatieadviesbureau Salmay.

THEME 38: CHARITABLE GIVING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES : TRUST, RISK PERCEPTION, AND DONATION

Dutch charitable organizations have been receiving substantial media coverage not so much for their virtuous deeds but rather for their dubious activities. Such negative publicity can expectedly harm donors' and potential donors' trust in those organizations and, probably, in the entire charitable sector. When trust level depreciates, first-time donation and repeat donation intentions could be thwarted. Earning donors' trust once it has been breached requires sufficient and complete communication from the negatively exposed organization.

Hence, one of the questions that will be addressed within this research theme pertains to the impact of communication on donors' trust in charitable organizations. However, there are also other important issues that merit research attention within this theme. For instance, the decision to focus on certain communicative elements (e.g. message framing) might also have consequences for donors' attitude towards the charitable organization and charitable giving (either in the form of monetary donations, volunteering, or organ donations), in general.

THEME 39: AANTREKKELIJKHEID VAN KRASLOTEN VOOR MINDERJARIGEN #2.

De decembermaand is weer voorbij en er zijn weer (bijna) 3,5 miljoen Decemberkalenders open gekrast (2,5 miljoen van 5 euro en 1,0 miljoen van 10 euro). De vraag is hoe aantrekkelijk deze kalenders nu eigenlijk zijn voor minderjarigen. In dit project willen we met behulp van eye-tracking kijken hoe de voorkanten van de Decemberkalenders eigen worden verwerkt en hoe jongeren eigenlijk de kalenders bekijken. Welke elementen trekken de aandacht en welke dingen juist niet? En onderdeel van de analyse moet ook zijn in hoeverre de "speel bewust 18+" waarschuwing wordt bekeken.

THEME 40: ORGANISATIE VAN DECENTRAAL TOEZICHT OP DE DHW

Per 1 januari 2013 is het toezicht op de Drank- en Horecawet decentraliseert. Waar eerst de NVWA belast was met het toezicht, zijn dat nu de gemeenten, onder bevoegdheid van de burgemeester. De burgemeester heeft nu ook de bevoegdheid om tijdelijk (1 tot maximaal 12 weken) de vergunning te schorsen indien verkopers drie keer in een jaar alcohol verkopen aan minderjarigen ('3 strikes out'). De vraag is nu hoe dat toezicht is georganiseerd bij de gemeenten en wat de ervaringen van de toezichthouders zijn. In dit project zal worden samengewerkt met het Nederlands Instituut voor Alcoholbeleid, zij hebben ook een netwerk met toezichthouders die als respondent kunnen dienen.

THEME 41: DON'T EAT THAT PIZZA WITH A METAL SHEET – PRODUCT RECALL COMMUNICATION AND ITS IMPACT ON CUSTOMERS' EMOTION, ATTITUDE, AND BEHAVIOUR

The German pizza manufacturer, Wagner, recalled 9,000 boxes of pizza from Dutch shops in 2012 after it was discovered that those products harbored thin metal sheets. In 2015, some supermarkets in Great Britain recalled food items advertised as gluten-free because they were eventually found to have contained gluten. Reports on product recall are, indeed, aplenty.

While researchers tend to look at product recall either as a crisis response strategy or an impetus for a crisis, there is no denying that news about products being recalled can adversely influence how customers would feel and think about the recalled product and the company that produces it and how inclined (or disinclined) they would be to purchase something from a brand or company that launched a recall. Previous studies into product recall, nonetheless, echo the important role of appropriate and immediate communication in reducing or inhibiting the negative consequences of a recall. Within this theme, the focus will be on the impact of communicative approaches and elements and product recall information design that could counter negative customer emotions (e.g. anger) and enhance customers' positive attitude towards the brand or company (e.g. trust, loyalty).

THEME 42: ETHICAL CONSUMERISM – CONSUMING AND TRYING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

People are increasingly acknowledging the potential deleterious consequences of their consumption behavior(s) not only on their health but also on their environment and on the lives of people involved in the production of goods sold in the market. Occasional media reports of how workers are exploited in the production process, how the state of the environment is compromised by toxic wastes from production sites, and how natural resources are depleted by the need to meet high market demand for goods have nudged people to make ethical consumption-related decisions. In a way, hence, a segment of the market has become ethical consumers, with their increasing preference for goods unstained by morally dubious practices such as child labor or the infliction of unnecessary harm or pain to animals. In the Netherlands, for instance, ethical consumerism is manifested in consumers' preference for Fair Trade products over those that are not.

Despite people's belief that they should be ethical in their purchase decisions, this belief often does not translate into ethical actions, as the concern for ethics in consumption is often outweighed by price considerations and product quality. Contrary to the notion of human beings as homo oeconomicus, with their need to maximize the benefits of their actions and to reduce those actions' cost, however, there are still consumers who would be willing to pay more for goods produced ethically. This prompts the question on the considerations people take into account when opting to consistently consume ethically despite having to pay premium prices for ethically produced goods.

THEME 43: PREDICTORS OF HEALTH-RELATED MOBILE APPLICATION TRUST AND USAGE

The widespread popularity and usage of smart phones has resulted in the unabated rise of mobile applications as systems strongly embedded in the daily activities of many people. Mobile applications do not only enable people to while away their time (e.g. gaming applications) but also to keep track of their activities (e.g. calendars, agenda), engage in impression management (e.g. location sharing applications), and enter into business transactions (e.g. m-commerce and mobile banking applications). Nowadays, the market for mobile applications is also proliferated with health-related applications that allow users to monitor their eating habits, perform guided exercises, or keep track of their health conditions.

Although health-related mobile applications have their benefits, some of these apps have also been accused of compromising their users' personal information. One wonders whether or not the risks associated with the use of these applications could outweigh the benefits these apps offer. The relative newness of these mobile applications imply that research into their usage could still address several unanswered questions. One possible question would pertain to the predictors of people's continuous usage of these apps and the intention to use the apps among non-users. Another possible question could pertain to the criteria people use when assessing the trustworthiness of a mobile application. For this research theme, the primarily objective is to test a model for either health-related mobile application usage or trust.

THEME 44: EXPLORING CHILDREN'S OPINIONS ON THE WORLD

In this theme you are going to do research with children and explore their view on the world. This could be any theme: refugees, food, school days and school materials, bullying, etc. However the theme needs to be interesting for children and they need to be able to talk about it. You need to be able to empathize with children and be willing to learn how to work with them in research settings.