A Social Capital Model of Public Relations: Development and Validation of a Social Capital Measure

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A SOCIAL CAPITAL MODEL OF PUBLIC RELATIONS: DEVELOPMENT AND
VALIDATION OF A SOCIAL CAPITAL MEASURE

By

Melissa D. Dodd

A DISSERTATION

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A SOCIAL CAPITAL MODEL OF PUBLIC RELATIONS: DEVELOPMENT AND
VALIDATION OF A SOCIAL CAPITAL MEASURE

Melissa D. Dodd

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A theory and conceptualization of social capital as a resource- and exchange-based function of public relations was proposed. Fourteen hypotheses and one research question tested social capital propositions and postulates in a public relations-specific context, and a measure of social capital was created and tested alongside measures of human capital and organizational financial capital. A holistic model of social capital was tested using structural equation modeling such that human capital was hypothesized to predict social capital, human and social capital were hypothesized to predict public relations outcomes, and public relations outcomes were hypothesized to predict financial capital. It was concluded that the Social Capital Model of Public Relations alongside confirmed hypotheses provide evidence for social capital as a valid theory and concept for the study of public relations. Recommendations for future research are discussed.
DEDICATION

To Henry for your endless support and positivity without which, none of this would have ever been possible. Even on the worst of days, I could always count on you to make me smile.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

*To have friends is to have power: for they are strengths united.*
*(Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, 1663)*

Social capital, an emergent area for inquiry across several disciplines, is broadly understood in comparison to other forms of capital that provide tangible value for organizations: (1) financial capital refers to monetary indicators; (2) human or cultural capital refers to knowledge that can be passed-on to enhance success; and (3) social capital refers to relationships and networks to be used as a form of exchange. Putnam (2000) explains, “Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (p. 19). Importantly, social capital has been conceptualized and approached in a variety of ways; that is, the attributes of social capital have differed in regards to the level of analysis (macro, meso or collective group, organization; and, micro or close family and friends), the benefit to the individual (indirect or direct), the benefit to the collective (direct or incidental), the necessary ties (strong or weak; resilient or fragile), and the individual incentives (weak or strong). (See Leana & Van Buren, 1999, for a full review).

While several articles focusing on the *conceptual* development of social capital at the organizational level exist, less *primary research* has been done to this extent. In an organization-specific definition, Portes (1998, cited in Kennan & Hazleton, 2006) defines social capital as “the ability that organizations have of creating, maintaining, and using relationships to achieve desirable organizational goals” (p. 322). In a public relations-specific description, Kennan and Hazleton (2006) explain that communication facilitates
the accumulation of social capital within an organization based on the successful creation, maintenance, and utilization of relationships. With this emphasis on social factors, relationships, and communication, it is no surprise that several conceptual and some empirical articles and chapters by public relations scholars have outlined social capital and called for its further examination (Edwards, 2006; Fussell, Harrison-Rexrode, Kennan, & Hazleton, 2006; Hazleton & Kennan, 2000; Ihlen, 2005, 2007; Kennan & Hazleton, 2006; Luoma-aho, 2009; Sommerfeldt & Taylor, 2011). In fact, some scholars have even suggested social capital as a meta-theory of public relations. Luoma-aho (2009) posits that,

> These claims are clearly apparent in the recent trends of public relations development. Stakeholder thinking (Freeman, 1984; Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997), relationship building (Hon & Gruing, 1999; Wilson, 2001); relationship management (Brunig, DeMiglio, & Embry, 2006; Ledingham, 2003; Ledingham & Bruning, 2000); and social responsibility (Leeper, 2001; Wilson, 2001) all apply the ideas of [social capital]. (p. 239)

Despite the apparent enthusiasm, research surrounding social capital has faced theoretical and methodological criticism. The study of social capital has been inherently problematic in that the conceptualization of social capital, primarily related to the outcomes it facilitates, has varied greatly across several attributes, as well as the extent to which these attributes serve as predictors or outcomes. Conceptualizations have also differed across multiple areas for scholarly inquiry. Further, methodological issues have emerged, as will be later detailed, but may be implied from issues surrounding conceptualization. In short, however, this research posits that 10 proposed public relations outcomes should be considered social capital as they are predicted from the structural and relational dimensions of a proposed social capital measure and are theoretically and methodologically capable of serving as surrogate measures and
dependent variables. Also, these outcomes, though they may be accessed at a single point in time by researchers, have proven to have a snowballing tendency; that is, are self-reinforcing and cumulative over time.

The current research, then, proposes the creation of a public relations conceptualization, definition, and assessment of social capital that can be used in direct relation to human and financial capital as well as a practical indicator of success for public relations professionals (and their client organizations). In other words, this research has practical implications such that it would lend public relations professionals an industry-specific tool to demonstrate effectiveness for an organization. Likewise, this research suggests a meta-theory of public relations and a complementary/competing model to the dominant normative paradigm, excellence theory (Grunig, 1992), subsequently enhancing several areas of literature in public relations.

Perhaps, the most important rationale for such research is best understood with a brief review of Kuhn’s (1970) discussion of scientific paradigms. Kuhn characterized scientific advancement as normal or supporting discoveries offset by revolutions. As Botan and Hazelton (2006) note,

Quiet periods of normal science are directed and guided by paradigms, while revolutions are the period of conflict between old and new paradigms […] So, one way to understand the difficulty that public relations has had in developing more than one major approach in the past two decades is to realize that scholars have not identified major anomalies that existing models fail to address. If a new paradigm provides a better account for both existing knowledge and the anomaly than does the existing approach, a scientific revolution may occur. The new paradigm replaces the old. (pp. 7-8)

Thus, this research seeks to take the first step in conceptualizing, developing, and assessing what has been proposed as a meta-theory of public relations and could, hence,
result in a new approach or, at its greatest potential, a paradigmatic shift within the public relations discipline.

This study, therefore, proceeds as follows: origins and perspectives on social capital; social capital theory; social capital and public relations; a note about excellence theory; theoretical and methodological limitations of social capital; public relations conceptualization and measurement variables; hypotheses and assumptions; methodology; results; and, discussion.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Social capital stems from a mixture of social and economic approaches to understanding capital; that is, resources to be used as a form of exchange (Adam & Roncevic, 2003). The overarching idea of social capital is that just as physical capital (a hammer, for example) and human capital (a college education, for example) can facilitate productivity toward goal achievement, so too can social relationships facilitate outcomes. Sociologist Portes (1998) comments that social capital is not a new concept and can be traced to Emile Durkheim (1893, 1895, 1897) and Karl Marx (volume of works from 1867-1894). He states,

That involvement and participation in groups can have positive consequences for the individual and the community is a staple notion, dating back to Durkheim’s emphasis on group life as an antidote to anomie and self-destruction and to Marx’s distinction between an atomized class-in-itself and a mobilized and effective class-for-itself. In this sense, the term social capital simply recaptures an insight present since the very beginnings of the discipline. (1998, p. 2)

Durkheim (1897) discussed the match or mismatch (anomie) of an individual’s actions within systems of social norms, and Marx (volume of works from 1867-1894) is credited with initiating what is referred to as the classic theory of capital. From Durkheim, the historical underpinnings of social capital can further be traced to theory and research surrounding social connectedness (Adam & Roncevic, 2003), psychological contracts (Rousseau, 1995), and social exchange (Blau, 1964). Thus, a discussion of the theories of capital as they evolved to include social phenomena bode well here as a starting point for this research (see Field, 2008, and Lin, 2001, for a full review).

Origins and Perspectives

Marx’s classic theory of capital differentiates capital such that the laborer class is exploited and others receive the benefits of their efforts, or the investment made by the
labor class is realized in the benefits accrued by the exploiting class (a two-class system). For Marx, a class in-itself was defined by economic objectives and circumstances, whereas a class for-itself was defined by a shared awareness of a common situation and a determination to achieve collective outcomes (Field, 2008). Marx focused on financial profit accrual for the dominant class and believed that class differentiation was necessary for the generation of such profit.

Nevertheless, the concept of capital remained ever-present in Marx’s formulation, and further, “the basic idea that capital is the investment of resources for the production of profit has been maintained in all subsequent capital theories” (Lin, 2001, p. 8). However, as theory surrounding capital evolved, Marx’s approach seemed too simplistic in that it neglected the individual’s potential for capital generation (human capital) and social relations among and between classes. Thus, neo-capital (“new capital”) theoretical approaches emerged to modify the Marxian approach such that individuals and their social relations were taken into consideration.

A definition of neo-capitalism is appropriate here: “Neo-capitalism is a blend of expansive private enterprise, extensive social-welfare programs and selective government intervention—a syncretism of capitalism's proven methods with some of socialism's less extreme aims. It has already made doctrinaire Marxism outdated, changed many socialists into business-minded pragmatists and made social workers out of many capitalists” (“Neocapitalism,” 1964). French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s (1983/1986) theory of cultural capital similarly suggests a two-class system, but only to the extent that the dominant class engages in “symbolic violence” through pedagogic activities aimed at the exploited class. This results in the legitimization of culture and values that serve to
benefit the dominant class. In other words, Bourdieu saw cultural capital to include knowledge, skills, and education as pedagogically embedded into social systems that represent the values of the dominant class. For many scholars, then, cultural capital may be perceived of as a form of human capital.

**Human Capital**

The notion of *human capital* (Becker, 1964/1993; Schutlz, 1961) paralleled neocapitalist approaches with its inclusion of the idea that the individual laborer engages in capital creation via knowledge, skills, and education that can be used in exchange for individual benefits. Perhaps, the most notable theoretical advancement with the notion of human capital was the blurring of the two-class system inherent in Marx’s classic capital theory (Lin, 2001). Human capital, then, allowed for the accumulation and exchange of capital, not just for the benefit of the dominant class, but also for the “exploited” laborer. Loury (1977) further included opportunities facilitated by individual characteristics such as family, gender, race, etc. In researching racial inequality regarding income and policy, Loury made clear the simplicity of neo-classical approaches to human capital that overlooked social conditions.

The inclusion of social considerations made it clear that there are not equal levels of opportunity for human capital creation among all individuals. Loury states, “The merit notion that, in a free society, each individual will rise to the level justified by his or her competence conflicts with the observation that no one travels that road entirely alone. The social context within which individual maturation occurs strongly conditions what otherwise equally competent individuals can achieve. This implies that absolute equality of opportunity…is an ideal that cannot be achieved” (cited in Portes, 1998, p. 176).
In other words, Loury touches on the concept of social capital here such that the social context provides (or fails to provide) opportunities for capital generation. Importantly, the evolution of this concept into social capital theory, as will be discussed at length as follows, did not dissociate social capital as a neo-classical theoretical approach to capital. While different approaches exist,

All scholars remain committed to the view that it is the interacting members who make the maintenance and reproduction of this social asset possible. This consensual view puts social capital firmly in the neo-capital theory camp. Thus, Bourdieu, Coleman, Lin, Flap, Burt, Portes, and others all share the understanding that social capital consists of resources embedded in social relations and social structure, which can be mobilized when an actor wishes to increase the likelihood of success in a purposive action. Like human capital, it is an investment on the part of the actor to increase the likelihood of success in purposive actions. Unlike human capital, which represents investment in training and other programs of activities to acquire skills, knowledge, and certifications, social capital is an investment in social relationships through which resources of other actors can be accessed and borrowed. (Lin, 2001, p. 24)

Loury (1977), however, was not the first to allude to or even specifically mention social capital. In fact, one of the earliest conceptualizations of social capital was termed by L.J. Hanifan (1916) in regards to local support for schools. Hanifan (1916) suggested that an accumulation of capital is a necessary condition to “constructive work” and drew a strong comparison between the building of a corporation via financial capital and the building of a community or a “social corporation” via social capital.

Social Capital

Bourdieu (1983/1986) is credited as pioneering what were the first systematic examinations of social capital. Portes (1998) states that Bourdieu’s approach is “the most theoretically refined among those that introduced the term in contemporary sociological discourse” (p. 3). In 1982, Lin posited that in addition to “personal resources” (to include physical and human capital), individuals can obtain and use social resources; that is,
“resources accessed through an individual’s social connections,” and “depending on the extensity and diversity of their social connections, individuals have differential social resources. [...] Social resources far outweigh personal resources in their potential usefulness to individuals” (cited in Lin, 2001, p. 21). Related, intangible assets “surpass physical assets in most business enterprises, both in value and contribution to growth” (Lev, 2001, p. 7). Further, Coleman (1986, 1988, and 1990) examined social capital as it relates to the creation of both collective action and human capital. Coleman’s work was largely influenced by economist Ben-Porath (1980) who developed the “F-connection;” that is, families, friends, and firms as a source of impact for economic exchange and by Granovetter (1985) who discussed the neglect of economists to identify the salience of personal relationships to the exchange process or what he termed “embeddedness” to include trust, expectations, and norms. Additionally, the concept of social capital was subsequently popularized by the mainstream media and in the general public by the publication of Robert D. Putnam’s (1995) article and consequent (2000) book, Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. Putnam suggested a nationwide decline in social capital based (generally, here) on membership and participation in organizations and attributed it to the rise in technology (specifically, television) since the 1950s when his survey begins. The result, he suggests, is an individualizing or isolation among members of American society; that is, a lack of interaction to form social networks. Putnam’s conceptualization parallels Max Weber’s (1905/1930) thesis that combines economics and religion such that participation in religious groups is said to impact economies. Putnam discussed his book and findings on National Public Radio (NPR) and in The New York Times and People Magazine, among
others. Accordingly, there has since been exponential growth in scholarship surrounding social capital from a variety of perspectives. Adam & Roncevic (2003) state,

Indeed, since the early 1990s and especially after the publication of Putnam’s study…we have witnessed what is perhaps an unprecedented acceptance, study and application of this single concept, which manifests itself both in the number of works published on the concept of social capital and in the variety of studies in which this concept is used as either an ‘explanandum’ or an ‘explanans.’ Instead of listing the fields of application of social capital, it would perhaps be easier to describe where it has not been applied. (p. 156)

And, Field (2008) showed that the frequency of references to social capital in the *Social Science Citation Index* (1990-2006) increased from zero in 1990 to 429 in 2006. Portes (1998) posits two sources for the “novelty and heuristic power of social capital.” He states,

First, the concept focuses attention on the positive consequences of sociability while putting aside its less attractive features. Second, it places those positive consequences in the framework of a broader discussion of capital and calls attention to how such nonmonetary forms can be important sources of power and influence, like the size of one’s stock holdings or bank account. The potential fungibility of diverse sources of capital reduces the distance between the sociological and economic perspectives and simultaneously engages the attention of policy-makers seeking less costly, non-economic solutions to social problems. (pp. 2-3)

Perhaps, Portes’ statements are recognized in the modern embrace of social capital as a “bottom-up” approach to development by both The World Bank and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), for examples.

**Levels of Analysis**

Today, then, contemporary approaches to social capital have generally come from the “founding fathers” of the concept: Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam. Lin (2001) suggests that despite apparent differences, the general premise behind each approach to social capital is “rather simple and straightforward: investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace” (p. 19). However, a major divergence in
contemporary approaches to social capital is evident in the level of analysis: macro or collective/group and micro or individual. Or, others have further subcategorized into the following: macro or community, national-level; meso or communities and organizations; and micro or family and close friends (Halpern, 2005). More specifically, the level at which benefits are accrued from exchanges (collective or individual) has been the focus of much theorizing.

These approaches have been termed public good (benefits accrue to the collective) and private good (benefits accrue to the individual). Leana and Van Buren (1999) draw a clear distinction between the two for the following criteria as they relate to each: “(1) level of analysis (public good: macro and meso; and, private good: micro); (2) benefit to the individual (public good: indirect; and, private good: direct); (3) benefit to collective (public good: direct; and, private good: incidental); (4) necessary ties (public good: resilient; and, private good: fragile); and, (5) individual incentives (public good, weak or moderate or a function of indirect benefits assessment; and, private good: strong)” (p. 541).

Micro. The use of social capital by individuals to achieve benefits to the individual is the focus of the micro perspective. Importantly, individual benefits can and do serve to benefit the collective; however, the aggregated return of benefits to the collective is not the focus of the micro perspective. Rather, “the focal points for analysis in this perspective are (1) how individuals invest in social relations and (2) how individuals capture the embedded resources in the relations to generate a return” (Lin, 2001, p. 21). Further, research from the micro-perspective incorporates the seminal works of Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam, but applies them to the individual level of benefits.
Flap (1999, 2002) and Lin (1982, 1990, 1999) have examined social capital from this approach, specifically looking at occupation attainment, status, and income as an individual outcome of social networks (between ego and actors\(^1\)). Flap and Boxman (2000) state that social capital results from “the size of the network, the structure of the network, the investments in network benefits, and the resources of these network members (Burt, 1992, 2000; Flap, 1999, 2002)” (p. 4). Similarly, Burt (1992) examined the social structure of competition and suggested that an individual’s location in a social network creates a competitive advantage for him or her to be used to some individual benefit. He identified “structural holes” between social networks that could be “bridged” by the individual to access more diverse resources.

**Macro.** On the other hand, the examination of social capital at the macro-level has been the focus of much research among pre-eminent scholars to include the aforementioned Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam. Lin (2001) posits that discussions from this perspective have dwelled on

1. how certain groups develop and maintain social capital as a collective asset and
2. how such a collective asset enhances group members’ life chances

While acknowledging the essentiality of individuals interacting and networking in developing payoffs of social capital, the central interest of this perspective is to explore the elements and processes in the production and maintenance of the collective asset” (p. 22).

For Bourdieu, then, social capital is ultimately reducible to financial capital (as are all forms of capital according to him) such that the accumulation of social capital requires a deliberate investment that results in economic outcomes that are considered a collective asset (Portes, 1998). Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual

\(^1\) In sociology, ego refers to the individual of interest; however, unlike psychology, which is concerned with a single ego, sociology is concerned with social interactions such that alters, then, refer to the other actors in the interaction.
or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (p. 51).

Similarly, Coleman (1986, 1988, 1990) defines social capital by its function and suggests that social structures facilitate social capital when they serve a function for individuals in the collective engaged in specific activities. Coleman (1998) distinguishes social capital within the micro- and macro-level approaches well: “The kinds of social structures that make possible social norms and the sanctions that enforce them do not benefit primarily the person or persons whose efforts would be necessary to bring them about, but benefit all those who are part of such a structure” (p. S116). However, unlike Bourdieu who contends social capital is reducible to financial capital, Coleman suggests that such complete fungibility is not a feature of social capital. He states, “A given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others” (Coleman, 1998, p. S98).

Further, Coleman (1998) introduces the idea of social capital for organizations: “Because purposive organizations can be actors (‘corporate actors’) just as persons can, relations among corporate actors can constitute social capital for them as well (with perhaps the best-known example being the sharing of information that allows price-fixing in an industry)” (p. S98). Baker (1990) explores the concept of social capital in firms as it relates to their interactions with other firms. And, finally, Putnam (2000, 1995, 1993) suggests that civic engagement (to include involvement in voluntary organizations, newspaper reading, voting levels, and so forth) is indicative of the collective social capital for communities and nations. This, in turn, affects the collective well-being of the community or nation. Similarly, Fukuyama (1995) extends the concept to nations or
geographic regions, demonstrating economic outcomes. In other words, social capital produces outcomes and impacts collective well-being not just for collectivities or groups, as posited by Bourdieu and Coleman, but also for entire communities and nations according to Putnam and Fukuyama.

**Ties.** Other differences in the approaches and treatments of social capital are apparent in aspects that include the analyses of strong and weak ties and bonding and bridging forms of social capital, respectively. First, bonding forms of social capital occur within social networks or collectivities. *Strong ties* within collectivities create what has been termed “bonding” social capital. Lin (2001), although he does not term it as such, suggests that homophilous interactions create bonding capital; that is, interactions between individuals who share sentiment for one another and have similar resources. Bridging capital, then, comes in the form of *weak ties* that are created through heterophilous interactions (Lin, 2001) among individuals from different collectivities; that is, have a lack of shared sentiment and resources. In other words, strong ties and bonding capital may be found generally within a social network or circle, and weak ties and bridging capital may be found generally between separate social networks or circles.

As previously mentioned, Burt (1992) identified “structural holes” as opportunities to create bridges that provide more diverse resources. As will be detailed further later, Granovetter (1973, 1985) called this the “strength of weak ties.” Woolcock (2001) provides a helpful explanation and distinguishes between three types of social capital: “(1) bonding social capital, which denotes ties between like people in similar situations, such as immediate family, close friends, and neighbors; (2) bridging social capital, which encompasses more distant ties of like persons, such as loose friendships
and workmates; and, (3) linking social capital, which reaches out to unlike people in
dissimilar situations, such as those who are entirely outside the community, thus enabling
members to leverage a far wider range of resources than are available within the
community” (pp. 13-14).

Networks. Relatedly, open and closed networks have been analyzed within the
scholarship surrounding social capital; that is, the extent to which density within a
collectivity is preferential to openness (Coleman, 1988). Coleman (1988) states,
“Reputation cannot arise in an open structure, and collective sanctions that would ensure
trustworthiness cannot be applied. Thus, we may say that closure creates trustworthiness
in a social structure” (pp. S107-108). Generally speaking, then, dense networks seem
preferable to open networks because open networks do not allow the collective
collaboration necessary to sanction negative behavior.

For example, in a closed social network, A, B, and C all have strong ties to one
another; therefore, if A engages in behavior (anti-normative for the network) that can
have negative outcomes for the collective, B and C are able to use their strong ties to
collectively make attempts to constrain the actions of A. This would not be the case if B
and C lacked a strong tie (open network); that is, there is no capability for collective
action.

Summary

Clearly, then, the development of social capital has diverged in several areas and
across scholars throughout history. However, as previously noted, it seems that despite
any differences,

All scholars remain committed to the view that it is the interacting members who
make the maintenance and reproduction of this social asset possible. […] Thus,
Bourdieu, Coleman, Lin, Flap, Burt, Portes, and others all share the understanding that social capital consists of resources embedded in social relations and social structure, which can be mobilized when an actor wishes to increase the likelihood of success in a purposive action. (Lin, 2001, p. 24)

**Social Capital and Theoretical Components**

The concern of the current research is with social capital as an organizational asset facilitated by public relations. Therefore, this research examines social capital from an individual methodological approach (the public relations professional) but aggregates results to an organizational level for outcomes. In other words, the individual, professional level is from where social capital is examined, but this is to the benefit of the organization (macro-level). This will be discussed later; however, the notion here is that the macro-level approach is most appropriate for this review of social capital theory and its related components, yet the inclusion of micro-level approach components is also recognized in this research. Rationale for such an approach is, perhaps, apparent in a discussion of internal organizational social capital by Leana and Van Buren (1999) who note,

Public and private goods [benefit to the collective or to the individual, respectively] models of social capital might initially appear irreconcilable because they operate from different assumptions about individuals and organizations… The two need not be in conflict if properly managed. For example, newly formed organizations must create organizational social capital where none exists. If individuals within such organizations operate solely according to a private goods model of social capital, it is unlikely that the organization will be able to build a sufficient stock of social capital to make successful collective action possible. However, if individuals act in ways that enhance organizational social capital, secondary benefits will accrue to them as well. Encouraging an optimal balance between individual interests and the interests of the collective can be shaped by employment practices. (pp. 540-541)

In other words, there is a reciprocal relationship between social capital at the macro- and micro-levels within organizations despite the distinctions that can be draw between them. Lin (2001) describes 12 postulates and propositions and four resulting characteristics that
underlie social capital theory and suggests that they place social capital “in a unique place to address the macro-micro gap” (p. 77). For clarity’s sake here, this research will use Lin’s discussion as a guide for understanding the very complex social capital theory. Further, the following questions will help guide this theoretical literature in a logical manner: (1) What is social capital? (2) How is social capital used? (3) What opportunities or barriers exist to accessing social capital? And, (4) what are the empirically recognized and potential outcomes of social capital use?

What is Social Capital?

To begin, social capital is defined as being “rooted in social networks and social relations and is conceived as resources embedded in a social structure that are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions” (Lin, 2001, p. 41). Further (for the first three postulates), Lin (2001) states, “Social capital contain three components intersecting structure and action: structure (embeddedness), opportunity (accessibility through social networks), and action (use)” (p. 41).

1. The structural postulate: Valued resources are embedded in social structures in which positions, authority, rules, and occupants (agents) usually form pyramidal hierarchies in terms of the distribution of valued resources, number of positions, level of authority, and number of occupants. The higher the level in the hierarchy, the greater the concentration of valued resources, the fewer the number of positions, the greater the command of authority, and the smaller the number of occupants. (Lin, 2001, p. 75)

The structural postulate points to the idea that within social structures, both formal such as organizations and informal such as friendships, are resources to which value is
prescribed by those in the collective. Resources can be everything from gender to knowledge (ascribed and acquired, respectively, according to Lin, 2001) wealth, material goods, reputation, power, lifestyle, social networks, and so forth. “We define social resources as those resources accessible through social connections” (Lin, 2001, p. 43), and “when resources are being invested for expected returns in the marketplace, they become social capital” (Lin, 2001, p. 55). However, resources are dictated by hierarchical conditions such that there are fewer occupants at the top of the hierarchy with a greater concentration of resources and vice versa.

2. The interaction postulate: Interactions usually occur among actors with similar or contiguous characteristics of resources and lifestyles—following the homophily principle. The greater the similarity of resource characteristics, the less effort required in interaction. (Lin, 2001, p. 75)

The interaction postulate describes the relational nature of social capital. The homophily principle (Blau, 1964) suggests that individuals tend to interact with similar others to form social networks, here in regards to resources, which as has been noted are dictated by hierarchical conditions. McPherson (1983) and McPherson and Ranger-Moore (1991) explain that the homophily principle argues that the likelihood of interaction between persons declines as abstract (and, often physical) distance increases. The greater the distance between persons in “Blau Space,” the less likely they are to interact or communicate; meaning social differences are more likely. Accordingly, less effort is required for homophilous interactions such that the basis of interaction is shared sentiment (Homans, 1950). Further, because desirable interaction partners are able to both give and receive similar resources (reciprocal relationship), homophilous
interactions may be preferable. Lin (2001) suggests a sentiment-interaction-resources hypothesis such that, “There are triangular reciprocal relationships among sentiment, resources, and interaction that thus link interactions not only to shared sentiment, but also to similarity in resources” (p. 39). On the other hand, heterophilous interactions require greater effort such that the individual must seek out a dissimilar other and the likelihood of reciprocation based on hierarchical conditions may be low. In other words, there may be no incentive in regards to sentiment or reciprocation for the heterophilous interaction. Of further importance to note here is that interaction occurs via communication, and Kennan and Hazleton (2006) suggest that communication facilitates the accumulation of social capital.

3. The network postulate: In social networks, directly and indirectly, interacting actors carry varying types of resources. Some of these resources are in their personal possession (personal resources or human capital), but most of the resources are embedded in others with whom each actor is in contact, directly or indirectly, or they are embedded in structural positions each actor occupies or is in contact with.

a. The definition: These structurally embedded resources are social capital for the actors in those networks (Lin, 2001, p. 75).

The network postulate explains the core of social capital; that is, resources embedded in social networks. Lin (2001) differentiates between personal and social resources: “Personal resources are in the possession of individual actors who, as their owner, can use, transfer, and/or dispose of them without needing to receive specific authorization or be accountable to other actors or social positions” (p. 42). However, Lin
(2001) further explains that social resources are more prevalent than personal resources,

and:

Social capital contains resources (e.g., wealth, power, and reputation) of other
individual actors to whom an individual actor can gain access through direct or
indirect social ties. They are resources embedded in the ties of one’s networks.
Like personal resources, social resources may include material goods, such as
land, houses, cars, and money and symbolic goods such as education,
memberships in clubs, honorific degrees, nobility or organizational titles, family
name, reputation, or fame. (p. 43)

Specifically, Lin makes note of three types of resources accessible via social ties as the
contents of social capital: “(1) wealth: economic assets, (2) power: political assets, and
(3) reputation: social assets” (pp. 61-62). So, for example, an individual may acquire the
personal resource of a college degree (human capital, here) to be used at their disposal to
achieve a goal, such as obtaining a new job. Social capital, however similarly abstract, is
obtaining a new job via the recommendation of a reputable individual in one’s social
network. In other words, the individual can leverage the embedded reputation of an
individual in their social network to achieve their goal, getting a new job. Similarly,
wealth or material goods and power are embedded in the social networks of an individual
and can be used to obtain goals. Again, then, “We define social resources as those
resources accessible through social connections” (Lin, 2001, p. 43), and “when [these]
resources are being invested for expected returns in the marketplace, they become social
capital” (Lin, 2001, p. 55).

But, additional examination is necessitated as to the uses of social capital.

**How is Social Capital Used?**

4. *The action postulates:* Actors are motivated to either maintain or gain their
resources in social actions—purposive actions. Action to maintain resources
can be called expressive action, and action to gain resources can be called
instrumental action. Maintaining resources is the primary motivation for action; therefore, expressive action is the primary form of action. (Lin, 2001, p. 76)

Lin (2001) notes that social actions are both rational and motivated toward goal attainment. Portes (1998) expands on this premise: “Social networks are not a natural given and must be constructed through investment strategies oriented to the institutionalization of group relations, usable as a reliable source of other benefits” (p. 3). This premise arises out of rational choice theory (Becker, 1976). Rational choice theory suggests that individuals weigh the costs and benefits of their actions, here in regards to social actions. In other words, the basic premise behind social capital theorizing has been that social relations not only serve as a form of exchange, but also there seems to be an expectation of action toward exchange in the building of social relationships.

Importantly, however, it has been posited that these motivated actions need not occur at the conscious level (Bourdieu, 1983/1986). More specifically, Lin (2001) explains that expressive actions are aimed at “maintaining one’s resources, which requires recognition by others of one’s legitimacy in claiming property rights to these resources or sharing one’s sentiments….The expected response is primarily expressive: acknowledging ego’s property rights or sharing ego’s sentiment” (p. 45). On the other hand, instrumental actions are those with “the motive to seek and gain additional valued resources that hope to trigger actions and reactions from others leading to more allocation of resources to ego” (p. 46). While it is noted that people can individually acknowledge their own property rights and gain additional resources, it is only the concern of social capital theory when actors engage in interaction with other actors (because social
resources are embedded in social networks) to achieve the goals regarding resource maintenance or gain. Likewise, these different actions are relevant to the aforementioned concept of homophilous and heterophilous interaction. For homophilous interaction, there is a low effort/high return for maintaining resources and a low effort/low return for gaining resources. And, for heterophilous interactions, there is a high effort/low return for maintaining resources and a high effort/high return for gaining resources (see Lin, 2001, for a full discussion). In other words, Lin (2001) states, “Expressive action is likely to result in ego’s seeking out other actors who have similar resources and a similar interest in maintaining and defending them. The more similar the partners’ resources, the more likely they will share an understanding and concern for maintaining and defending them” (p. 49).

Thus, the effort required is low for both expressive and instrumental actions for homophilous interactions; however, the return is also low for gaining resources (instrumental resources) because the very nature of homophilous interactions suggests similarity in resources. Therefore, the new resources obtained may not be so far divorced from those the individual already has. On the other hand, heterophilous interactions require greater effort such that the individual must seek out a dissimilar other (form a bridge) and the likelihood of reciprocation based on hierarchical conditions may be low. The effort, then, is high for both expressive and instrumental actions. For expressive actions the return may be low such that the very nature of heterophilous interactions is differences in resources, so the maintenance of current resources offers little to an individual who already has limited hierarchical resources. However, the return for
instrumental action may be high such that the actor is given access to greater hierarchical resources.

5. *The social capital proposition:* The success of action is positively associated with social capital. (Lin, 2001, p. 76)

The social capital proposition is the basis of social capital theory such that if the action (whether expressive or instrumental) is not positively associated with social capital, then none of the remaining propositions are relevant. For example, if instrumental actions fail to result in new social resources for an individual, then no social capital has been developed, which may, in fact, be the case. It is possible that an individual lacks the social network ties or resources embedded in their social networks to acquire new social resources. Thus, we see a lack of social capital. This is not to say that the individual lacks social capital entirely, but to note that social capital (as posed by Coleman, 1998) may not be fungible, perhaps particularly in heterophilous interactions. Social capital that works in one situation may not be relevant for another. However, here the current research reiterates the importance of heterophilous interactions where an individual can build social capital by bridging to those others located in social networks that have the valued resource embedded within their social structure.

Next, Lin (2001) suggests that there are three possible factors that dictate who is more likely to gain better access to social capital resources: “(1) the position of ego in hierarchical structures, (2) the nature of the tie between ego and the other actors, and (3) the location of the ties in the networks” (p. 63). Thus, the resultant propositions as they relate to opportunities or barriers to social capital are detailed as follows.
What Opportunities or Barriers Exist to Accessing Social Capital?

6. *The strength-of-position proposition:* The better the position of origin, the more likely the actor will have access and use better social capital. (Lin, 2001, p. 76)

Social capital theory incorporates the fact that individuals are ascribed (from birth, for example) or acquire (from education, for example) resources that place them in an originating position that is higher on the hierarchy than may be the case for another individual. Thus, it is noted (as first discussed by Loury, 1977) that we do not all begin on an equal playing field in regards to a structural advantage for some. It can further be suggested that the hierarchical position is resource-based. So, for example, if an individual lacks within their own social network and seeks to acquire the skill of an electrician, but has a bridge to a social network that consists of blue-collar workers who have such skills embedded among the individuals in that network, then those blue-collar workers are higher hierarchically than the originating individual based on the resource (electrician skills). In this case instrumental action to acquire a new resource is taken via bridging capital to perhaps, get a financial break on electrical work done. Lin’s (2001) discussion of social resources implies that the more power, wealth, and reputation, the higher hierarchically an individual is located (based on origins or otherwise acquired and accumulated capital). Rather, it seems that these hierarchical relationships among social networks can change based on the desired resource. For the proposition at hand, it may be reasonable to assume that a blue-collar worker is located at a lower hierarchical origin than an individual originating with or born into a trust-fund, for example.
Further, it is reasonable to assume that the social networks to which the advantaged individual has access based on his/her origins will result in greater access to better resources than the blue-collar worker (strength-of-position proposition); however, in some resource-based cases, it seems that the hierarchical relationship may defer. This assertion becomes of particular importance later when social capital is discussed specifically in regards to public relations. Indeed, our trust-fund individual may have the financial means to pay for an electrician; however, in considering the valued resources between an organization and its publics, an organization may not so easily buy such socially embedded resources as reputation, trust, credibility, and so forth. This point will be discussed at length as follows; however, it is worthy of mention here such that the hierarchical relationship between an organization and its publics may be interchangeable based on the resource valued.

7. The strength-of-strong-tie proposition: The stronger the tie, the more likely the social capital accessed will positively affect the success of expressive action. (Lin, 2001, p. 76)

The structural position is not the only component of social capital. Again, social capital is relational such that a high position on the structural hierarchy does not automatically result in social capital. Rather, the strength of the ties accessible to an individual (based on their hierarchical position) will impact action, specifically expressive action as interactions in this case would be homophilous (that is, strong ties are within an individual’s social network of shared sentiment, resources, and interaction). Lin (2001) states, “Even if alter has better resources, alter may not respond to ego’s desire to gain access to them if their relationship does not reflect normative reciprocity,
trust, and mutual obligations. Closer relationships are a necessary condition for getting access to social capital” (p. 66). In other words, stronger ties result in greater access to the social resources embedded in an individual’s social network.

8. The strength-of-weak-tie proposition: The weaker the tie, the more likely ego will have access to better social capital for instrumental action. (Lin, 2001, p. 76)

On the other hand, weak ties can also offer opportunities for social capital. Bridges can be formed among individuals between different social networks: a weak tie because the interaction partners are heterophilous (that is, lack shared sentiment and resources). Lin (2001) states, “If individuals need different information, then they may be more likely to find it in different social circles than their own [instrumental action]. To reach another social circle, ego would need to find ties that link the two circles” (p. 67).

The work of Granovetter (1973, 1985) is relevant here. “Since stronger ties can be characterized by intensity, intimacy, frequency of contacts, acknowledged obligations, and provision of reciprocal services, individuals’ chances of gaining better information are enhanced if they explore, among their ties, the weaker rather than the stronger ones, in order to find likely bridges to other social circles. Granovetter calls this strategy and benefit ‘the strength of weak ties’” (Lin, 2001, p. 67). And, Putnam (1993) concluded, “Ironically, strong interpersonal ties (like kinship and intimate friendship) are less important than weak ties (like acquaintanceship and shared membership in secondary associations) in sustaining community cohesion and collective action” (p. 175).

Therefore, for instrumental actions aimed at gaining different (or new) resources than those embedded within an individual’s own social network, a bridge must be formed to
another social network. Because these interactions are heterophilous, the ties are considered “weak,” but the advantage to weak ties is that they provide new embedded resources different from those the individual already has embedded within their own social networks. Because strong ties within an individual’s own network result from homophilous interaction formed on the basis of shared sentiment and resources, they do not offer such a diversity of resources.

9. *The strength-of-location proposition:* The closer individuals are to a bridge in a network, the better social capital they will access for instrumental action.

(Lin, 2001, p. 76)

To provide an alternative explanation to the strength-of-weak-ties proposition, Lin suggests the strength-of-location proposition. This proposition stems from Granovetter’s (1973, 1985) work and focuses on the work of Burt (1992, 2000) who identified that when social circles exist and are bridged by an individual in a separate social circle, the redundancy in contacts and resources is reduced. So, for example, if individual A bridges his or her social circle to individual B’s and individual C’s separate social circles, then there exists the structural hole that is bridged by individual A. In other words, via A, social circles B and C are connected; otherwise, a structural hole would exist between B and C. Lin (2001) extends this concept to suggest that the closer an individual within the social network is to the bridge, the better access to social capital they will have for instrumental action (because these social circles exist separately, the interactions would be heterophilous). So, as opposed to Granovetter who suggests the exploration of weak ties, Lin suggests that the stronger the tie to the individual(s) who bridge the social
networks, the better access to gaining diverse social capital. In this sense, the strength-of-location proposition may be seen as alternative to the strength-of-weak-ties proposition.

10. The location-by-position proposition: The strength of a location (in proximity to a bridge) for instrumental action is contingent on the resource differential across the bridge. (Lin, 2001, p. 76)

The location-by-position proposition simply notes that the resources available via bridges to other social networks are not necessarily equivalent. So, in the bridging example, A, B, and C should be hierarchically modified such that the bridge created by A to B may generate better opportunities for C than does the bridge created by A to C generate for B. Lin (2001) explains, “Locations near a bridge may not be very useful if the bridge simply leads to nodes that have similar or less highly valued resources. In other words, the relative advantage of proximity to a bridge in a network is contingent on the relative resourcefulness of the nodes to which that bridge provides access” (p. 72). Thus, it is clear that better social capital can be accessed for instrumental goals when an individual is located close to a bridge (or is the bridge) that leads to higher hierarchical resources.

11. The structural contingency proposition: The networking (tie and location) effects are constrained by the hierarchical structure for actors located near or at the top and bottom of the hierarchy. (Lin, 2001, p. 76)

The final proposition notes that constraints are imposed by the hierarchical structure such that better social capital is available toward the top of the hierarchy and, thus, homophilous interactions are those that may be of most benefit. On the other hand, heterophilous interactions are those that may be of most benefit to those who are lower
on the hierarchy. Further, the hierarchy is pyramidal such that there are more individuals at the lower positions of the hierarchy. This, in turn, allows that there are more individuals with whom homophilous interactions can occur and perhaps, a lack of opportunity to access new (weak) ties or bridges. Further, there are fewer individuals at the higher positions of the hierarchy such that homophilous interactions do not provide them with a diversity of resources, and heterophilous interactions are not likely to produce better resources (because they are located high in the hierarchy). In other words, the structural contingency proposition suggests that actions for individuals in the middle of the hierarchy may be most effective because they “should have the advantages of both extensive upper reaches and opportunities to achieve such access” (Lin, 2001, p. 75).

Based on these postulates and propositions, Lin (2001) concludes,

The proposed theory of social capital has four characteristics: (1) Its concepts are relational in nature and cannot be reduced to the individualistic or psychological level. (2) The theory is intrinsically interwoven within a hierarchical structure. In fact, it attains meaning only in the context of a hierarchical structure. (3) It entails actions on the part of the individuals, thus requiring a micro-level analysis. (4) Its development has been based on close reciprocal integration of theorizing and empirical research, thus avoiding pitfalls of infinite abstract-to-abstract deductions from assumed theories or mindless empiricism.

What are the Outcomes of Social Capital?

Finally, Lin (2001) identifies four reasons that social capital works, or “why embedded resources in social networks enhance the outcomes of actions: (1) the flow of information is facilitated; (2) social ties may exert direct influence on agents; (3) social ties may be conceived of as social credentials, exerting indirect influence on agents; (4) social ties provide reinforcement” (pp. 19-20). Again, it is important to note that social capital is measured by its outcomes (wealth, power, and reputation according to Lin, 2001). Much extant research demonstrates the outcomes of social capital. Field (2008)
states, “To summarize the findings of a wide variety of research, it seems that in general social capital broadly does what the theorists have claimed: to put it crudely, people who are able to draw on others for support are healthier than those who cannot; they are also happier and wealthier; their children do better in school, and their communities suffer less from antisocial behavior” (p. 49). Further, it is important to note here that the outcomes of social capital can have a snowballing effect. Putnam (1993) states, “Stocks of social capital, such as trust, norms, and networks, tend to be self-reinforcing and cumulative. Successful collaboration in one endeavor builds connections and trust—social assets that facilitate future collaboration in other, unrelated tasks. As with conventional capital, those who have social capital tend to accumulate more – them as has, gets” (p. 4). In other words, it appears that the outcomes of social capital are not only theoretically and methodologically capable of serving as surrogate measures and dependent variables, but also as outcomes, although they may be accessed at a single point in time by researchers, that have proven to have a snowballing tendency; that is, are self-reinforcing and cumulative over time.

Up until this point, the discussed outcomes of social capital have largely revolved around Lin’s (2001) general categories: “(1) wealth: economic assets, (2) power: political assets, and (3) reputation: social assets” (pp. 61-62). While it may be surmised that most outcomes are reducible to these three broad categories, it is important for this research to address social capital outcomes more specifically from a variety of approaches and then, move on to discuss organizational outcomes of social capital as these are most relevant to the current research.
Educational Outcomes. First, then much research has debated the relationship between social capital and human capital (see Becker, 2008, for a full discussion of human capital), focusing particularly on education and status attainment (the likelihood of getting better jobs) as the outcome variables of interest. Early research suggests that social capital produces human capital. Coleman’s (1988) seminal work in educational outcomes of social capital demonstrated that despite the economic and cultural capital invested in students by their families (thus, becoming human capital for the students), the lack of social capital in the form of investment in the parent-student relationship resulted in higher high school drop-out rates. In other words, better human capital was created when social capital between parents and students was present. He provided a noteworthy example:

In one public school district in the United States where texts for school use were purchased by children’s families, school authorities were puzzled to discover that a number of Asian immigrant families purchased two copies of each textbook needed by the child. Investigation revealed that the family purchased the second copy for the mother to study in order to help her child do well in school. Here is a case in which the human capital of the parents, at least as measured traditionally by years of schooling is low, but the social capital in the family available for the child’s education is extremely high. (p. S110)

However, research has also demonstrated that human capital induces social capital. “Better-educated and better-trained individuals tend to move in social circles and clubs rich in resources” (Lin, 2001, p. 97). In studying income levels, Boxman, De Graff, and Flap (1991) concluded that, “Social capital (external work contacts, memberships) has a substantial independent influence on income, net of human capital (education, experience) and position level (number of subordinates)…. Social capital helps at any level of human capital, but human capital does not make a difference at the highest levels of social capital” (p. 51). Further, Lin, Vaugh and Ensel (1981) found that there was an
“important, independent effect of social resources on occupational achievement” (p. 1163), and Marsden and Hurlbert (1989) replicated and confirmed these findings. Lin (2001) notes, “If these patterns are confirmed, they suggest that human capital supplements social capital in status attainment….Or, given certain minimal levels of human and social capital, social capital is the more important factor in accounting for status attainment” (pp. 97-98). Further, despite the differences apparent here, Field (2008) states, “The connection between human capital and social capital has been rightly described as ‘one of the most robust empirical regularities in the social capital literature’ (Glaeser, Laibson, & Sacerdote, 2002, p. 455). Even if we do not yet fully understand this pattern, we can conclude with some confidence that there is a close relationship between people’s social networks and their educational performance” (p. 55).

In fact, Dika and Singh (2002) performed a comprehensive analysis of the educational outcomes of social capital, asking three research questions: (1) Is social capital positively linked to educational attainment? (2) Is social capital positively linked to educational achievement? And, (3) is social capital positively linked to educational psychosocial factors? The researchers concluded for the first research question that of the 13 studies examining this relationship, the outcomes (e.g., graduation, college enrollment, and so forth) were positive. For the second research question, scores on achievement tests and grades were generally the outcome metric. The researchers concluded that of 14 studies that examined this relationship, the majority found a positive association. And, finally, nine studies examined by Dika and Singh examined the psychosocial factors (e.g., engagement, motivation, self-concept). Of these, studies the researchers again found that
the majority showed a positive relationship between social capital and educational outcomes.

Health Outcomes. Next, the positive health consequences related to social connections has long been documented since Durkheim’s aforementioned research (1897) of suicide rates among Catholic and Protestant populations. Durkheim demonstrated that suicide rates were lower in communities that were considered more dense (close-knit) and higher in communities without dense social structures. The connection between Durkheim’s nineteenth century research and Putnam’s (2000) research is clear: Putnam found a positive relationship between a variety of health factors and his Social Capital Index (SCI) and a negative relationship between mortality rates and the SCI (Field, 2008). Further, Putnam speculates four reasons that health may be positively linked to social capital: “(1) social networks can furnish tangible material assistance, which in turn reduces stress; (2) social networks can reinforce healthy norms; (3) well-networked individuals can lobby more effectively for medical services; (4) interaction may help stimulate the body’s immune system” (p. 327). Macinko and Starfield (2000) examined 20 years of literature surrounding the connection of health and social capital to determine that 34 articles explicitly mention health outcomes regarding social capital. They explain that literature surrounding health and social capital has been approached in four primary ways: “(1) as an explanatory ‘pathway’ in the relationship between income inequality and health status; (2) as a factor in the study of social networks and health; (3) as a mediator of the performance of health policies and reforms; and, (4) as synonymous with social deprivation or social cohesion in relationship with violence and crime” (p. 400). Macinko and Starfield conclude to concentrate on the theoretical and
methodological issues apparent in their analysis, and others have similarly suggested there are issues with studying health outcomes related to social capital (Whitehead & Diderichsen, 2001). However, “the general pattern of evidence at present does suggest a broadly positive relationship between social capital and health” (Field, 2008, p. 67).

Relatedly, the criminology literature has approached social capital. In fact, Putnam (2000) demonstrated a negative relationship between crime levels and the SCI. Most notably, perhaps, is the work of Rosenfeld and colleagues (2001) who used structural equation modeling to account for a host of factors, including social capital, that result in the outcome of homicide. The researchers concluded, “Structural equation models show that the construct of social capital has a significant direct effect on homicide rates, net of other structural covariates and controlling for the reciprocal influence of homicide on social capital….The results indicate that depleted social capital contributes to high levels of homicide” (p. 283).

**Economic Outcomes.** Next, economic outcomes regarding social capital have been of great interest to researchers and are most relevant for the current research, particularly discussed here as it relates to financial outcomes for organizations. According to Prusack and Cohen (2001), social capital is the “relationships that make organizations work effectively. The term captures the notion that investments in these relationships return real gains that show up on the bottom line” (pp. 86-87). And, empirical evidence seems to support this notion. One interesting case regarding social capital leveraged by organizations in the hiring process serves as a noteworthy starting point. In the study of hiring by an American call center, Fernandez, Castilla, and Moore (2000) found:
This particular company had chosen to pay existing employees who referred acquaintances; the going rate at the time of the study was $10 for each referral who was interviewed, rising to $250 for each referral who was hired and remained for at least 30 days. The study found that the firm made savings at several stages of the hiring process: fewer referrals were rejected at the application stage, fewer fell out on interview; and fewer turned down an offer. The total difference between referrals and non-referrals came to $416.43 per recruit, a return of 67 percent on the initial investment of $250 (p. 1347-348, cited in Field, 2008).

This is clearly an example of organizational social capital: an organization that leverages resources within its social structure to obtain benefits.

Leana and Van Buren (1999) analyze social capital internal to the organization and define organizational social capital as “a resource reflecting the character of social relations within the firm” (p. 538). Further, the researchers claim there are four primary ways that organizational social capital leads to beneficial outcomes: “It (1) justifies individual commitment to the collective good, (2) facilitates a more flexible work organization, (3) serves as a mechanism for managing collective action, and (4) facilitates the development of intellectual capital in the firm” (p. 547). Briefly, organizational social capital facilitates shared sentiment for the organization’s values and goals. Thus, according to Leana and Van Buren, members of organizations are more likely to be “good agents.” “If individuals believe that their efforts are an integral part of a collective they are more likely to spend time doing things the organization and/or its members find useful (e.g., engaging in extra-role behavior or working with others cooperatively) and less time doing things benefiting the individual, but not the organization (e.g., social loading, self-promotion, or unwillingness to cooperate)” (p. 548).

Social capital also facilitates a more flexible work organization such that shared trust allows operating norms to rely more on associability and cooperation than on formal control mechanisms that must be put in place. Likewise, extant research on psychological
contracts that form relational exchanges, as opposed to transactional contracts that form economic exchanges, has demonstrated that organizational social capital can serve as a substitute for formal control mechanisms (Fukuyama, 1995), leadership (Kerr & Jermier, 1978) or bureaucracy (Perrow, 1972).

And, finally Leana and Van Buren (1999) suggest that social capital serves to facilitate the development of intellectual capital in a firm. This returns us to the previous discussion of human capital, but in an organizational context. Quinn (1992) states, “With rare exceptions, the economic and producing power of the firm lies more in its intellectual and service capabilities than its hard assets—land plant, and equipment….

Virtually all public and private enterprises—including most successful corporations—are becoming dominantly repositories and coordinators of intellect” (p. 241). As Kogut and Zander (1996) state, “The knowledge of the firm has an economic value over market transactions when identity leads to social knowledge that supports coordination and communication,” (p. 502) and has “roots in discourse, identity, and structure” (p. 516).

And, most notably to this study, Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) describe the connection between “intellectual capital” (that is, the knowledge of the collectivity as opposed to the individual or human capital) as impacted by social capital, although the researchers recognize that causality may be in the other direction. Importantly, Locke (1999) has noted that for the work of Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), “the ideal causal sequence should be the other way around” (p. 8). However, Nahapiet and Ghoshal’s comprehensive conceptual paper provides support for the notion that organizations are most conducive to developing relatively higher levels of social capital (based on time, interaction, interdependence, and closure variables), and organizational social capital
facilitates the creation of intellectual capital for the firm. The combination of these factors leads the researchers to conclude that this results in what has been termed the “organizational advantage.” As this may relate to public relations specifically, Hazleton and Kennan (2000) explain, “expenditures of social capital via communication can result in increases in organizational advantage: productivity, efficiency, quality, customer satisfaction, net asset value, stock value, etc.” (p. 84). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) conclude, “It is these collective forms of knowledge, we believe, that are particularly tightly interconnected with the relational and cognitive forms of social capital with which, we have argued, organizations are relatively well-endowed. Organizations, thus, build and retain their advantage through the dynamic and complex interrelationships between social and intellectual capital” (p. 260).

Additionally, research has found a positive relationship between social capital and reduced transaction costs (Fussell et al., 2006; Fukuyama, 1995; and, Hazleton & Kennan, 2000), intra-organizational resource exchange (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998), customer and employee loyalty (Bates, 1994; Jones, McEvoy, & Barrett, 1993), and innovation (Ichniowski, Kochan, Levine, Olson, & Strauss, 1996), among others. The aforementioned measures serve as proxies for organizations’ economic return based on social capital. In other words, resources embedded in social networks that are used to create loyalty among customers, for example, can thus be said to impact the financial bottom line for organizations. Because of the proxy measures necessitated by much of the research surrounding social capital and economic outcomes, a clear link between social capital and economic returns has, arguably, not been established. Field (2008) states, “Yet if we lack robust evidence to demonstrate that social capital is generally related to
growth rates, there is enough to suggest that there may be specific conditions under which it is an important part of the explanation. The possibility of a relationship should certainly not be ignored” (p. 63).

**Trust and Reputation.** Two outcomes of social capital that have been cited in the literature and are particularly relevant for the current research are trust and reputation. Just as human capital has been debated in the literature as to whether it serves as an explanatory or resulting factor of social capital, so too has trust been debated as to whether it serves as a dimension or outcome (or both) of social capital. Field (2008) explains that, “Trust or trustworthiness have often been compared to a lubricant, oiling the wheels of a variety of social and economic transactions which might otherwise prove extremely costly, bureaucratic, and time consuming” (p. 70). In fact, Fukuyama (1995) has even posited that trust is the ultimate source of social capital, and, hence, we find evidence of a major source of conceptual confusion in the literature. Further, Fukuyama (1995) suggests that high trust among members of society accounts for the positive performance of all institutions in society, including organizations as it pertains to this research.

La Porta, Florencio, Schleifer, & Vishny (2000) use the terms social capital and trust interchangeably to analyze the effect of trust on the performance of large organizations, concluding a positive, predictive relationship when controlling for a number of other variables. On the other hand, Woolcock (2001) has argued that social capital generates trust as an outcome over time. And, Field (2008) explains that, “[Trust] is almost certainly best treated as an independent factor which is generally a consequence rather than an integral component of social capital” (p. 72). Support for this assertion
comes from Rose (2000) who notes, “Drawing an analytical distinction between trust and social capital makes it possible to contrast a cause-and-effect model” (p. 151, cited in Field, 2008). And, Lin (2001) discusses the rationality of trust as a purposive action, thus placing him more in the trust as an outcome camp. Of additional interest regarding trust, Burt (2005) provides extensive discussion and empirical evidence regarding closure, trust, and reputation as they relate to the strength of ties, bridging and bonding, and structural holes. Burt suggests that, “there is clear evidence of trust being more likely in a strong than in a weak relationship, especially if the strong relationship is embedded in a closed network” (p. 97).

Similarly regarding reputation, Stiglitz (2000) states, “Trust is based on reputation and reputation is acquired on the basis of consistent behavior over time, regarding which consistency has value and is the product of human actions” (p. 65). And, “Whatever the content, the mechanism seems to hold. The organization-stakeholder relationship develops over time and a good reputation is formed through trustworthy conduct” (Luoma-aho, 2009, p. 244). Preston (2004) argues for reputation as both a form and source of social capital. And, Lin (2001) suggests that reputation serves as a rational basis for social exchange of resources. He states,

Through reputation, it becomes possible to mobilize the support of others for both instrumental and expressive actions. It is the capacity of resource mobilization through social capital that makes social relationships a powerful motivation for individual actors to engage in exchanges. Both economic and social standings enhance an individual’s power and influence in the structure (over other members) and thus, the individual’s psychic well-being and physical survival as well. (p. 150)

In other words, in a relational exchange (as opposed to purely economic exchange, although Lin, 2001, posits the two are necessarily complementary), reputation serves as social capital when an individual is able to propagate another individual’s
reputation within the social network or outside the social network. Indeed, Blau's (1964) work on social exchange suggests that, “When an actor is unable to reciprocate transactions of equal value in an exchange with another actor, one choice available to ego to maintain the relationship with the alter is to subordinate or comply with the alter’s wishes” (p. 22). In other words, alter may propagate ego’s reputation in order to reciprocate. And, Lin (2001) states, “Collective approval of power gives legitimacy to authority, the backbone of social organizations. Thus, in relationships, and this fundamental microstructural process evokes, though not necessarily explains, the much more complex macrostructural (organizational process)” (p. 145). He specifically mentions the use of mass or public media as a means of propagating reputation, “Public recognition may take a variety of forms…, none of which need involve a substantial economic payback. Thus, recognition can transcend particular social networks and become a mass-circulated asset, like money, in a social group” (p. 152). Thus, it appears that as with trust, reputation is best treated as an independent factor (although it almost certainly covaries with trust) that is generally a consequence rather than a dimension of social capital.

**Negative Outcomes.** Of further importance to note here is that the majority of literature surrounding social capital has focused on positive outcomes, wherein several scholars (all of the “founding fathers,” included) have noted the potential of social capital in facilitating negative outcomes (Portes, 1998; Putnam, 2000; Field, 2008). As early as Bourdieu’s (1983/1986) notion of cultural capital, which suggests that the dominant class engages in “symbolic violence” through pedagogic activities aimed at the exploited class and Loury’s (1977) discussion of an uneven playing field regarding access to social
resources, we see the beginnings of a dialogue surrounding the negative outcomes of social capital. Indeed, Field (2008) states,

> From most of the social capital literature, there shines out a warm glow. Social capital’s ‘dark side,’ by contrast, remains largely unknown terrain….Social capital can enable individuals and groups to achieve a variety of common goals, many of which may be negative in their consequences for others, either directly (as for the victims of organized crime), or indirectly (as illustrated by the roles of informal norms and networks in underpinning institutional discrimination. (p. 79)

And, in drawing on the collective action of Timothy McVeigh and conspirators (Oklahoma City bombing in 1995), Putnam (2000) suggests, “Social capital, in short, can be directed toward malevolent, antisocial purposes, just like any other form of capital” (p. 22). As Fukuyama (2001) explains, “Physical capital can take the form of assault rifles or tasteless entertainment, while human capital can be used to devise new ways of torturing people… [Social capital] tends to produce more in the way of negative externalities than either of the other two forms. This is because group solidarity in human communities is often purchased at the price of hostility towards out-group members” (p. 8). Thus, it seems that despite a lack of emphasis in the literature surrounding the negative outcomes of social capital, several scholars have noted that it serves as a two-way street (or “cuts both ways” according to Field, 2008, p. 100); that is, the same processes and functions that facilitate positive outcomes of social capital are also capable of facilitating negative outcomes (if not more so than other forms of capital, as noted by Fukuyama, 2001).

Specifically, in regards to organizational social capital, it should similarly be noted that like other capital (financial and human, for example), social capital does not come without associated costs. From an organizational perspective, it costs the organization financial capital to invest in public relations personnel (and personnel, in general) who will facilitate social capital on behalf of the organization. Further, once
established, social capital must be maintained, so there exists long-term maintenance
costs that may be associated with financial capital invested in personnel. From an internal
(employee relations) perspective, Leana and Van Buren (1999) describe maintenance
costs for organizational social capital as two-fold: “(1) costs associated with maintaining
ongoing relationships and norms, and (2) costs associated with maintaining slack
resources” (p. 550). For the former, the necessary and “ongoing socialization can be
costly in terms of time, resources, and even opportunity costs,” and for the latter,
organizational surplus to include employees is kept at a minimum, and “resources are
added just in time” (p. 550). Operating in such a manner reduces the organizational slack
needed to support the deployment of human resources. At the same time it increases the
difficulty of forming and maintaining the trusting relationships among members required
by such practices as team-based work” (p. 550).

Leana and Van Buren (1999) go on to suggest that innovation can be hindered by
the structure of embedded resources, as previously suggested by Coleman (1990). Powell
and Dimaggio (1991) suggest that “Long-term relationships and ways of operating, as
well as strong norms and specified roles, may resist change, owing to institutional aspects
like shared schemas and organizational field that keep organizational members embedded
in established practices and procedures” (cited in Leana & Van Buren, 1999, p. 551).
Further, Leana and Van Buren (1999) note power structures can impose costs. Others
have similarly noted that “groupthink” can occur within organizations such that “teams
engage in poor decision making, not so much because members cannot think of
alternative courses of action but because strong social relations constrain consideration of
such alternatives once those in power express their preferences” (Janis, 1981, p. 551).
Related, Locke (1999) suggests that an emphasis on social relations may hinder objective communication (that is, “giving information to those who need it, regardless of whether they are your friends or not”), and “an organization that puts strong emphasis on personal relationships is only a step away from making ‘politics’ (i.e., who you know rather than what the facts are) its dominant operating philosophy. That is especially damaging when it leads to non-merit promotions and the non-merit protection of pet projects, products, and ‘empires.’” (p. 8).

Clearly, then, social capital has the potential to facilitate both positive and negative outcomes at both micro- and macro-levels. Regardless, the relationship between public relations and social capital should be becoming clear by this point; however, an in-depth discussion of public relations and social capital is necessary for understanding why social capital has gained momentum in public relations scholarship (Edwards, 2006; Fussell et al., 2006; Hazleton & Kennan, 2000; Ihlen, 2005, 2007; Kennan & Hazleton, 2006; Luoma-aho, 2009) and has even been suggested as a meta-theory of public relations (Luoma-aho, 2009).

**Social Capital as a Public Relations Function**

Social capital and its theoretical components provide a wealth of information from which social capital can be understood as a valid, theoretical concept. It has further been suggested that social capital may outweigh human capital given certain circumstances. Lin (2001) posits that, “At the highest level of management, social capital far outweighs human capital for occupants” (p. 96). This is particularly important to note in that Burt (1997) suggests that such positions that deal with people (as opposed to machines, for example) are more likely to be filled by those with better social capital.
This would obviously include public relations personnel. Thus, the following discussion seeks to bring social capital theory into a public relations-specific context, providing the rationale for the current research.

According to social capital theory, both relational and structural components are important for understanding actions that are taken toward social capital maintenance and attainment that ultimately accrue social resources for individuals and collectives. Accordingly, public relations professionals by nature of their profession (1) have expertise, knowledge, training, and education (human capital) appropriate for maintaining, developing and utilizing social capital; (2) are structurally situated in a unique position regarding social capital; and, (3) perform rational, strategic actions aimed at social capital maintenance and attainment for the achievement of both expressive and instrumental goals on behalf of organizations as a function of their positions. This is not to say that other members of the organization do not impact social capital to be used on behalf of the organization; in fact, they do. Rather, as will be demonstrated, the public relations professional is most suited through human capital and has the most opportunity through location to access social capital on behalf of an organization.

First, research surrounding human capital has demonstrated that knowledge and skills can be accumulated and serve as an exchange of capital. The public relations professional has acquired training and education in areas to primarily include the following macro-concepts (subsuming technical skills components): communication and relationship building, management and maintenance. Accordingly, the public relations professional has the human capital competencies necessary for accruing social capital on behalf of an organization such that interaction is the necessary antecedent to establishing
relationships and social networks from where social capital can be accessed, and interaction is facilitated via communication (Kennan & Hazleton, 2006). In other words, social resources to be used as capital are born out of interaction, and interaction presupposes communication. Ultimately, these interactions will establish relationships if social resources are to be accessed or exchanged. And, current public relations training and curriculum emphasize communication and relationships as macro-concepts. For example, even in the most basic of technical skills, say writing a press release, communication is the basis (and one could argue relationships with the media, as well). Further, relationships can be understood as they relate to both social networks and the strength (or weakness) of ties within those networks. Effective professionals have the skills necessary to manage and maintain relationships with publics important to an organization, generally termed “strategic publics” or stakeholders and stockholders (Stacks, 2011) within the public relations literature.

From a human capital perspective, research surrounding education and training that leads to the exchange of individual human capital for public relations positions can be performed. Related to this, human capital can be posited to include individual variables such as emotional intelligence for professionals. Indeed, Dodd (2011, 2012) found that emotional intelligence accounted for significant differences in promotion (manager/technician dichotomy) for public relations professionals when controlling for other variables, indicating that more “excellent” public relations was being practiced by those with higher levels of emotional intelligence. Similarly, Filak and Dodd (2012) determined that the intrinsic level of practitioners’ willingness to self-censor would impact the effectiveness of offering counsel during organizational crises, and Luoma-aho
et al. (2012) argued that psychological flexibility (the flexibility and open-mindedness of individuals) aided in the development of intangible organizational assets. Although it is arguable as to the degree to which individual/interpersonal variables such as emotional intelligence, willingness to self-censor, psychological flexibility, or the “Big Five” personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism), for example, can be taught or learned, the fact remains that these variables exist as intrinsic features that can be leveraged as individual human capital for desirable outcomes.

The public relations professional is uniquely situated within the organization in regards to social capital. As the theory of social capital contends, (1) access to better social capital occurs for an individual located closer to a bridge (strength-of-location proposition); and, (2) actions for individuals in the middle of the hierarchy may be most effective (structural contingency proposition). Thus, it should be noted that the public relations professional functions to fill the structural hole (Burt, 1992) created for interaction between an organization and its publics. Figure 2.1 is included as follows for clarity purposes.

While, the hierarchy depicted in Figure 2.1 shows the organization as located higher on the hierarchy, it is further suggested that this position can change based on the valued resource regarding social capital. The organization may provide valued resources to publics within the social structure (e.g., financial support for nonprofit groups, for example); however, the hierarchy may be reversed when publics provide valued resources to organizations within social structures (e.g., reputational endorsement of an organization). This, in fact, is the nature of relational exchange in social capital: social
structures that have embedded resources to be used for exchange. So, for example, an organization financially supports a nonprofit with whom they have a relationship in anticipation that the resource will be reciprocated via reputational endorsement, for example. The hierarchical difference may depend on the resource examined such that if the resource to be examined is from the perspective of the nonprofit group seeking funding, the organization is higher because its structure possesses the valued resource.

**Boundary Spanning**

More often than not, however, relational exchanges materialize at several points across time, so it is difficult to determine hierarchically who is better positioned unless it is examined from a single point in time with the assumption that reciprocation by the
other party will occur. Of most importance, however, is that public relations remains in the middle range (spanning the structural hole between an organization and its publics), and the structural contingency proposition contends that those in the middle range have the advantage in social capital opportunity for accrual. In other words, public relations’ unique mid-level position (interests in outcomes for both the organization and publics or *boundary spanning role*) affords the opportunity to access resources embedded in social structures at both the upper and lower levels of the hierarchy (although Lin’s, 2001, description suggests a preference for the higher-level resources because they are considered better).

Briefly, Daft (1989) first examined and termed the individual who links people within organizations, the “boundary spanner,” and this concept has since been extended to examine the role of public relations within an organization. Grunig and Hunt (1984) have noted, “They [public relations professionals] function at the edge of the organization, serving as a liaison between the organization and the external groups and individuals (p. 9). And, Bowen, Rawlins, and Martin (2010) describe the communication facilitator role of the public relations professional as “a boundary spanner who listens to and brokers [emphasis added] information between the organization and its key publics” (p. 27). Indeed, a broker is understood as someone who arranges transactions or exchanges. This is not to say that public relations should not function as part of the dominant coalition or to confuse the physical organizational hierarchy with the more abstract hierarchy that may exist in relational exchanges (wherein the physical hierarchy may, in fact, reflect the reality of the relational exchange hierarchy at times); however, the professional as a member of the dominant coalition still serves to represent the
interests of both the organization and its publics. Thus, we may further consider the shared resources and sentiments (or lack thereof) that create homophilous and heterophilous interactions (as related to expressive and instrumental actions) when the professional serves on behalf of the organization to the public or as an advocate for the public to the organization (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Boundary Spanning Role of Professional as Related to Social Capital Interaction and Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homophilous Interactions</th>
<th>Professional on behalf of Organization</th>
<th>Professional on behalf of Public(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homophilous Interactions</td>
<td>Public shares sentiment, resources</td>
<td>Organization shares sentiment, resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterophilous Interactions</td>
<td>Public does not share sentiment, resources</td>
<td>Organization does not share sentiment, resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining resources (expressive actions)</td>
<td>Homophilous: Low effort/High return</td>
<td>Heterophilous: High effort/Low return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining resources (instrumental actions)</td>
<td>Homophilous: Low effort/Low return</td>
<td>Heterophilous: High effort/High return</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, for example, when a professional is representing the organization in taking actions aimed at maintaining or gaining social resources, he/she may share sentiment and resources on behalf of the organization (homophilous interaction) with the public or may not (heterophilous interaction). A homophilous interaction would be with a supportive public, whereas a heterophilous interaction may be with an opposing or advocacy group. For example, Starbucks recently publicly endorsed the passage of laws providing for marriage equality or in support of gay marriage. In so much they created supporting publics with shared sentiment. Embedded in the social structures of gay rights supporters is reputational endorsement of Starbucks. Thus, in this homophilous interaction, Starbucks received a high return on exchange with low effort among those who already supported Starbucks. In other words, Starbucks maintained their reputational resource.
And, for gaining new resources, Starbucks received a low return on exchange because the shared sentiment and reputational resource already existed among this public, so no new resources were obtained. The effort for Starbucks is high for gaining new resources here because those who already shared sentiment for the organization are less likely to be able to provide any new resources; that is, the reputational endorsement already existed, so the effort becomes high in regards to return on the exchange. On the other hand, among those publics who were not previously supporters of the organization, Starbucks put itself at risk of further isolating these publics (a high risk effort) with a low return for the organization because maintaining the reputational resource among publics that opposed the organization would not be a desired outcome. Rather, Starbucks would hope to gain a new resource through its heterophilous interaction with these publics. However, this comes at a high effort (no doubt, managing relationships with opposing or advocacy groups takes much more effort and can prove much more costly if not properly managed than with those who support an organization), but with a high return on exchange because new resources have been gained: the reputational endorsement of Starbucks from an opposing group.

Similarly, the public relations professional, in performing the role of boundary spanner, may serve as an advocate for the public to the organization. Indeed, several scholars have suggested that the public relations professional should serve as the “corporate conscience” to an organization (Bowen, 2008; Ryan & Martinson, 1983). Bowen (2008) states, “An ethical conscience should normatively be a part of an organization that seeks long-term efficacy and strives to build relationships with publics and stakeholders….The CEO should rely on the ethical counsel of the public relations
professional for a connection to the values, beliefs, and views of varied publics because other organizational functions will see the issue from their own particular perspective” (p. 272).

Of course, in looking at the boundary spanning and corporate conscience roles in regards to shared resources and sentiment among the professional and organization, Table 2.1 and the relevant discussion are an oversimplified explanation of the public relations roles literature. The professional, on behalf of the organization and publics, simultaneously engages in interactions where sentiment and resources are shared to a certain extent as well as are not shared to a certain extent. In other words, the professional’s interaction on behalf of the organization may be homophilous or heterophilous with its publics and vice versa, and this occurs concurrently to different extents and along different points in time. So, the public relations professional serves as boundary spanner in that he/she serves the needs of both the organization and publics, which may be homophilous or heterophilous interactions occurring to different extents and throughout different points in time. Further support for such a role exists in that the professional should normatively serve as the corporate conscience to an organization; that is, the professional should provide ethical counsel and represent the values, beliefs, and views of publics to the organization. The extent of shared values, beliefs, and views between the organization and public are those that create homophilous or heterophilous interaction. Such is the unique function of public relations; however, this does not divorce, instead it reinforces the notion of public relations in the optimal location it holds hierarchically (as boundary spanner and corporate conscience), and thus, the greater opportunity for facilitating access to resources embedded in social structures.
It is clear that the public relations professional is most suited through human capital and has the most opportunity through location to accrue social capital on behalf of an organization. What is lacking is an understanding of the organizational outcomes, i.e. social resources, for which public relations can facilitate via expressive and instrumental actions on behalf of the organization. To review, expressive actions are aimed at “maintaining one’s resources, which requires recognition by others of one’s legitimacy in claiming property rights to these resources or sharing one’s sentiments….The expected response is primarily expressive: acknowledging ego’s property rights or sharing ego’s sentiment” (Lin, 2001, p. 45). On the other hand, instrumental actions are those with “the motive to seek and gain additional valued resources that hope to trigger actions and reactions from others leading to more allocation of resources to ego” (Lin, 2001, p. 46). It is important to mention the social capital proposition here: “the success of action is positively associated with social capital” (Lin, 2001, p. 75). In other words, public relations may be viewed as effective when its actions serve to maintain or gain positive social capital outcomes for the organization among its publics.

As a profession grounded in interaction and relationships, then, it follows that the outcomes of public relations result from social capital. For example, expressive actions in public relations include maintaining resources, such as reputation, and instrumental actions in public relations include adding credibility to the organization. For an organization, then, public relations takes expressive actions toward maintaining resources and instrumental actions toward gaining new resources embedded in the social structures of the organization’s publics to include confidence, credibility, relationship, reputation, and trust (Stacks, 2011). In other words, these resources are important for the
organization because they are social resources (“resources accessed through an individual’s social connections” in Lin, 2001, p. 21) embedded in the social structures of the organization’s publics that can be exchanged for more tangible assets to include financial resources and the achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

Indeed, Stacks (2011) suggests that there is a “return on expectations (ROE)” that influences the economic decisions of stock- and stakeholders (see Figure 2.2). In this respect, Stacks suggests the relational exchange of public relations outcomes as embedded social resources. In other words, public relations produces reputational outcomes, for example, on behalf of organizations with their publics. These outcomes in turn “establish certain expectations in our targeted audiences” (Stacks, 2011, p. 25) such that these professionals can maintain resources through expressive actions and further generate additional resources through instrumental actions. Again, then, these public relations outcomes are social resources embedded in the structures of publics and may be exchanged as social capital for tangible organizational outcomes.

Figure 2.2: Stacks (2011) Model of Public Relations Impact on ROI

Outcome = B ± {credibility ± relationship ± reputation ± trust} x {confidence} + error

Putnam (1993) has noted the cumulative, self-reinforcing nature of social capital. Moreover, Hazleton and Kennan (2000) suggest the following consequences of social capital as important from a public relations approach, noting the potential for negative outcomes, as well: “increased and/or more complex forms of social capital, reduced transaction costs, and organizational advantage. These outcomes can be either positive or negative and can be characterized along a continuum that ranges from the highly concrete to the highly abstract” (p. 84). So, instrumental actions (e.g., an awareness campaign) by a public relations professional working for a technology organization, for example, result in a reputation (a resource embedded in the social structure) of “being cool” among a segmented target audience of teenage boys who play video games. As a result, these teenage boys buy (or ask their parents to buy) technology from the organization. This began as a heterophilous interaction via instrumental action that facilitated social capital (reputation as an embedded resource) for the organization that was then exchanged for a financial outcome and the achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

If the public relations professional then performs expressive actions (in what may now be considered homophilous interactions) to maintain the resource (reputation) among the target audience, we see the return on expectations posited by Stacks (2011) that results in financial outcomes again (e.g., the teenage boys continue to buy the company’s product because of its reputation within their social network), and so on and so forth until the available stock of social capital is depleted (as a result of organizational failure to perform expressive or instrumental actions, organizational change of direction, and so forth). From this approach, it seems that social capital as related to public relations outcomes is reducible to financial capital (a point that is paralleled by Bourdieu’s, 1985,
work). It should further be noted that the abstract point at which social capital is depleted and the macro- or micro-level actions that facilitate depletion is a relatively unexplored area; although, much of the literature suggests that defaulting on the exchange or return on expectations from Stacks (2011) depletes trust and, thus, reputation (for example) as socially embedded resources that can facilitate future exchanges.

**Social Capital as a Meta-Theory of Public Relations**

Finally, as a proposed meta-theory of public relations, it is argued that social capital presents an ontological basis for the existence of public relations and can be considered the primary function of public relations for an organization. Indeed, in a discussion of how Bourdieu can contribute to public relations theory, Ihlen (2009) posits that, “The most important point remains that current public relations theory often offers no good ontology” (p. 77). Expanding on this, Cheney and Christensen (2001) state, “Public relations grew out of a highly practical context and subsequently developed theoretical apparatus to support the analysis and legitimation of its professional activity….A vibrant discipline, we believe, needs to pursue a vision—or visions—of what it ought to be” (p. 167). In other words, this research suggests that the ontology of public relations is necessitated out of valued resources to the organization that are contained in publics (a resource-based approach) for which public relations serves as broker (an exchange-based approach). Such a perspective is not new to the public relations discipline: In Broom, Casey, and Ritchey’s (1997) seminal work regarding organization-public relationships, the authors pulled on research from organizational behavior using resource dependency and exchange theories (specifically examining interorganizational relationships) to suggest,
According to resource dependency theory, relationships form in response to an organization's need for resources. Satisfying the need for resources allows an organization to survive, to grow, and to achieve other goals. Relationships consist of the transactions that involve the exchange of resources between organizations. Similarly, exchange theory suggests that voluntary transactions result from knowledge of domain similarity and lead to mutual benefit, as well as mutual goal achievement. Importantly, exchange theorists define relationships in terms of the voluntary transactions and the mutuality of interests and rewards. (p. 91)

Such resource and exchange-based approaches have been criticized for a lack of inclusion of environmental considerations that can result in behavioral changes. Grunig and Huang (2000) suggest, “These theories do not describe all of the ‘change pressures’ from the environment. These pressures may have little or nothing to do with resources or with exchanges. Instead, they may come from publics, activist groups, government, or media who simply want to change the behavior of the organization in specific situations, thus interfering with the behavior the organization wants to implement” (p. 35). Perhaps, however, the current research would suggest that the structural, hierarchical component of social capital would explain that the government operates as a social structure (hierarchically able to enforce formal sanctions on organizations) because it is socially constructed and afforded the power to do so via socially embedded resources turned laws. In other words, the government does not exist absent from the social networks that comprise, support, and ultimately, legitimize it. A government would not have the power (a socially embedded resource) to impose formal sanctions on organizations were it not for the social support and norms that have enabled it to exist and do so. One need only look to rebel uprisings (both past and present) that seek to overthrow governments to understand that social networks of people legitimize and construct organizations. The hierarchical structure of the government dictates what the organization can and cannot do through formal sanctions (just as an organization similarly establishes guidelines for its
employees). Thus, the organization complies with the government in exchange for legitimacy or not being sanctioned (as the employee complies with the organization in exchange for not being terminated, for example). The research surrounding the extent to which formal sanctions versus norms, for example, dictate outcomes such as legitimacy and compliance is beyond the scope of this research; however, both have the capability of doing so.

To reiterate, the government (and other groups) may “interfere,” but this does not seem to provide sufficient evidence that such situations are not grounded in the exchange of valued resources. In fact, it seems to indicate the opposite; that is, the exchanging of resources becomes more salient when environmental pressure arises. It should be noted here that when groups or individuals seek to interfere, it would necessitate their status as a public of concern to the organization. Thus, the organization may seek to gain or maintain social capital with these publics through strategic actions. For example, compliance with the government (or noncompliance, for that matter) can be leveraged by public relations for reputational and trust outcomes both with the government, and among other strategic publics. Although more loosely related, it has been demonstrated that Starbucks, among others, have leveraged the political climate surrounding marriage equality for exchange-based social resources.

Today, public relations has evolved as a profession and academic discipline to include a normative theoretical approach: excellence theory, which “specifies how public relations makes organizations more effective, how it is organized and managed when it contributes most to organizational effectiveness (that is, when it is excellent), the conditions in organizations and their environments that make organizations more
effective, and how the monetary value of public relations can be determined” (Grunig, 1992, p. 27). Excellence theory allows that academics and professionals may use the theory as a guide for effectiveness and thus, indicates the scholarship that should surround the profession; however, it does not provide an ontological argument for public relations, nor does it address the macro-level social system processes and the resource- and exchange-based motivations within these social systems that necessitate public relations on behalf of an organization.

If the relationship between an organization and its publics were based in economic exchange only, then there would likely be no need for the public relations role. However, this is not the case, and it is posited here that public relations legitimizes the organization’s existence via necessary resources that are maintained or gained through relational exchanges. This is not a new concept and has recently garnered attention in public relations scholarship (Boyd, 2000; Chay-Nemeth, 2001; Heath, 2001). More specifically, Waeraas (2007) suggests that, “having sufficient external support is seen as the ultimate purpose of public relations, and legitimation is seen as the efforts which are aimed at acquiring organizational legitimacy” (p. 281). Indeed, Scott (2000) suggested that the survival and success of organizations extends beyond material and technical resources, and Leana and Van Buren (1999) note that, “It is hard to imagine an organization surviving over the long term without any social capital” (p. 551).

Organizational legitimacy theory, then, demonstrates a similarly alternative sociological approach to studying public relations. Thus, social capital theory extends organizational legitimacy theory to the idea that resources embedded in social networks are those that legitimate the organization’s existence or social acceptability and, in fact,
the current research assesses legitimacy as a public relations resource, accordingly. Further, in one of the few public relations-specific research pieces performing primary research, Sommerfeldt and Taylor (2011) note that social capital is both a process and outcome, and “fostering social capital in the organization’s environment is public relations’ raison d’être because it creates and maintains collaborative relationships between an organization and its publics” (p. 199). Similarly, Fussell et al. (2006) found significant associations between social capital and transaction costs and organizational outcomes.

Of further interest, perhaps for its novel value, it should be noted that much of the economics, organizational behavior, and management literature discusses social capital using terminology to include: “employee relations” (Prusak & Cohen, 2001; Muthuri, Matten, & Moon, 2009; Williamson, 1981); market and industrial relations (Baker, 1990; Eklinder, Eriksson, & Hallen, 2011; Helliwell & Huang, 2010); and interpersonal/group relations as they relate to organizations (Hongseok, Labianca, & Giuseppe, 2006, 2004). This should not be surprising in that a major component of social capital is that it is relational in nature. However, if anything, such terminology and approaches only serve to reinforce the notion that social capital serves as a major, if not the, function of public relations.

Finally, this research proposes a more holistic approach to the study of public relations, tracing effectiveness from the individual human capital level to the organizational outcome level, than is present in current theorizing. The social capital model of public relations proposed by this research is detailed at-length as follows; however, it is important to note here that excellence theory suggests a macro normative
theory and many relevant sub-theories that have importantly demonstrated what is the
effective practice and measurement of public relations. Public relations scholarship, then,
provides little in regards to a diversity of theory and even less in regards to holistic
approaches. Ihlen and Verhoeven (2012) explain, “Almost since its inception in 1984,
symmetrical theory/excellence theory has been the dominant paradigm in public
relations….The field has not, however, been without competing perspectives…However,
these theoretical approaches have long been characterized as peripheral visions (see the
special issue of Public Relations Review (31(4), 2005)) or as perspectives from the
margins (see the special issue of Journal of Public Relations Research (17(1), 2005))”
(pp. 159-160).

Thus, this research begins by considering the human capital of public relations
professionals, develops a measure of and assesses social capital, and concludes with an
evaluation of relevant contributions to socially embedded resources that are ultimately
reduced and compared to financial capital. In short, social capital theory can be
conceived of as a meta-theory of public relations such that it is capable of explaining both
the ontology and function of public relations. The current research applies social capital
theory holistically to its examination of public relations. But, first, a note about the
dominant normative paradigm guiding public relations scholarship follows.

**A Note about Excellence Theory**

As public relations scholars are aware, public relations scholarship, especially in
the corporate context, has a primary normative guiding theory: excellence theory. Due to
such a limited variation in theoretical approaches to public relations scholarship, it is thus
important to note here the relationship between social capital and excellence theories.
First, Grunig (1992) poses three questions in his introduction to the well-regarded *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*: “(1) When and why are the efforts of communication [professionals] effective?; (2) How do organizations benefit from effective public relations?; (3) Why do organizations practice public relations in different ways?” (p. 1). Insert social capital.

(1) The efforts of communication professionals are effective when they serve to maintain or produce social resources that serve as capital for an organization. Why? Because professionals who are maintaining or gaining social resources are fulfilling their function (and producing what may be beneficial organizational outcomes, as follows). (2) Organizations benefit from effective public relations based on maintaining and gaining socially embedded resources (confidence, credibility, relationship, reputation, trust, legitimacy, etc.) that further can be exchanged for more tangible or financial outcomes for an organization; (3) Organizations practice public relations in different ways because of the hierarchical structure both within the organization and external to the organization; that is, the structure of the relationships with and within their publics. And, the valued resources embedded in these structures differ in regards to those that are desired (and when) and the accumulated stock that is available. Of course, this is overly simplistic, but the notion of social capital as an important theory for public relations scholarship is apparent.

Importantly, this research does not purport to position excellence theory diminutively or to subsume excellence theory. Rather, this research offers an alternative and complementary broad resource- and exchange-based approach grounded in strong
theoretical evidence and based in sociology and economics (that can be argued to be the major underpinnings of public relations; that is, relational and capital considerations). A point-by-point analysis of where social capital theory may specifically diverge from excellence theory is beyond the scope of this research (and may not even fully be known at this exploratory stage); however, it is respectfully noted that much of the current public relations scholarship surrounding excellence theory may similarly contribute to the development of social capital theory and vice versa.

Hon and Grunig (1999), for example, suggest that organization-public relationships may be categorized as exchange (benefits exchanged for benefits) or communal (benefits provided out of concern, with no expectation of reciprocation) or may be a combination of the two, but that public relations should be more concerned with building communal relationships. Perhaps, social capital fills this gap to the extent that relationships are always used as a form of exchange by public relations professionals on behalf of an organization, with an expectation (conscious or unconscious) of reciprocation of socially embedded resources, such as reputational endorsement. Importantly Hon and Grunig do, in fact, note that communal relationships operate to this extent. They state,

Public relations professionals add value to an organization when they develop communal relationships with all publics affected by organizational behaviors—not just those who provide the organization something in return. Communal relationships are important if organizations are to be socially responsible and to add value to society as well as to client organizations. They also greatly reduce the likelihood of negative behaviors from stakeholders mentioned above—litigation, regulation, strikes, boycotts, negative publicity, and the like. Exchange relationships are necessary for customers, stockholders, and suppliers. However, exchange relationships never develop the same levels of trust and the other three relationship indicators that accompany communal relationships. Therefore, public relations can enhance the relationships with these stakeholders by using their unique expertise to produce communal as well as exchange relationships. (p. 21)
Indeed, this may be true; however, the emphasis here is that publics may or may not provide something in return. From a social capital approach, the expectation and underlying presupposition is that an organization will receive a return of resources from strategic actions aimed at exchange. Even research surrounding corporate social responsibility has sought to define the financial return on investment for organizations (see Dodd & Supa, 2011 for a full review) because, ultimately, organizations (excluding nonprofits and governmental organizations to a certain extent) are profit-oriented and are not interested in a something-for-nothing approach. Perhaps, here, we see evidenced the difficulty public relations has faced as being considered a profession that creates a return-on-investment (ROI) for organizations.

Further, excellence theory and relevant scholarship should not be discounted; rather, this research posits that there exist alternative theoretical approaches to the study of public relations. In fact, the social capital and excellence theories of public relations serve as complements to one another, where one is lacking the other may contribute. More broadly, where excellence is considered a normative theory (Grunig, 2001) that explains how public relations should be practiced (indicates a judgment as to what should or should not be), social capital may be considered a positive theory that explains what is, or there is no judgment as to the desirability.

Social resources exist in social structures from which there are outcomes that impact organizations: the premise of social capital theory. In other words, the difference is apparent in understanding behavior (social capital) as opposed to influencing it (excellence). However, it should further be noted, as Grunig (2001) has that “A normative theory often is practiced positively, which adds support to the idea that is can
be practiced” (p. 13). And, vice versa such that social capital theory explains what is but can be normatively approached as to the desirable (or undesirable) uses and outcomes of socially embedded resources regarding public relations practice. For instance, in discussing transaction-cost theory, Ghoshal and Moran (1996) state, “All positive theories of social science are also normative theories, whether intended or not” (p. 15). Perhaps, it could further be argued that normative theories such as excellence not be examined positively because these sorts of examinations fail to divorce the understanding of what is from predetermined desirable outcomes (perhaps, introducing pre-judgments into such research).

Excellence theory, for example, sets forth the desirable (and undesirable) components of organization-public relationships such that an existing measure is used and judgments are made based on that measure. A social capital approach, on the other hand, may positively examine what is the relationship between an organization and its publics based on socially embedded resources. For better or for worse (and if we believe that social capital is a valid theoretical approach), it is what is. That is not to say that judgments as to the desirability do not naturally follow; in fact, they do, and much of this research has discussed outcomes of social capital as positive or negative regarding desirability and impact on the organization. But, they follow in a logical order: from what is to what is desired (or undesired). On the other hand, excellence theory approaches this normatively and, thus, illogically when it moves from normative to positive: from what is desired (or undesired) to what is as demonstrative that it can be. Thus, we see a broad understanding of the complementary and competing nature of excellence and social capital theories.
Theoretical and Methodological Limitations

Next, as with any theory, social capital theory has been the subject of criticism, both conceptually and methodologically. Lin (2001) identifies three such theoretical and measurement issues that have resulted from the previously discussed divergence in perspectives and approaches. First, Lin posits that social capital should not be used interchangeably with culture, trust, norms, and so forth when the benefits are theorized to be collective. Rather, social capital “as a relational asset, must be distinguished from collective assets and goods such as culture, norms, trust, and so on” for which “causal propositions may be formulated (e.g., that collective assets, such as trust, promote relations and networks and enhance the utility of embedded resources or vice versa), but it should not be assumed that they are all alternative forms of social capital or are defined by one another (e.g., trust is capital; Paxton, 1999)” (p. 26). In other words, the structural nature of social networks as a component of social capital distinguishes the concept from being synonymous with trust, for example.

Second, Lin discusses the idea of closed (“closure”) versus open networks. For Lin, the issue of closed versus open networks is more relevant when assessed via the outcomes of interest: “preserving or maintaining resources” (p. 27), which has greater benefits for dominant classes seeking to preserve membership benefits (as described by Bourdieu, 1983/1986) or “searching for and obtaining resources” (p. 27), which has greater benefits for those looking to build new memberships and acquire the benefits accordingly. As Lin states,

Rather than making the assertion that closed or open networks are required, it would be theoretically more viable to (1) conceptualize for what outcomes and under what conditions a denser or sparser network might generate a better return and (2) postulate deduced hypotheses (e.g., a denser network would be more
likely to promote the sharing of resources, which in turn would maintain group or individual resources; or an open network would be more likely to access advantaged positions and resources, which in turn would enhance the opportunity to obtain additional resources) for empirical examination. (2001, p. 27)

Finally, Lin notes the functionalist approach advocated by Coleman (1990) and explains that such an approach may be indicative of a tautology. “Social capital is identified when and if it works; the potential causal explanation of social capital can be captured only by its effect; or whether it is an investment depends on the return for a specific individual in a specific action. Thus, the causal factor is defined by the effectual factor” (Lin, 2001, p.28). While Lin does not deny that a functional approach can be hypothesized, he recommends the concepts be treated and measured separately:

It would be incorrect to allow the outcome variables to dictate the specification of the causal variable (e.g., for actor X, kin ties are social capital because they channel X to get a better job, and for actor Y, kin ties are not social capital because they do not channel Y to get a better job. […] A theory would lose parsimony quickly if the conditional factors become part of the definitions of the primary concepts. In fact, one would question whether it remains a theory if it is required to make a good prediction for every case and every situation. (2001, p. 28)

Despite these apparent issues, however, Lin remains optimistic, concluding that, “Once these issues are resolved, social capital should and must be measurable” (2001, p. 28). Further, as evidenced by the work of Stacks and associates (Stacks, 2011; Stacks & Watson, 2007; Stacks, Dodd, & Men, in-press), it is methodologically possible to take the social capital of the individual (public relations professional) and use it in comparison to outcomes for the collective (organization). Thus, having discussed the theoretical and measurement issues prevalent in the literature surrounding social capital, it is important to duly note such issues as an in-depth discussion of the design of this research ensues.
Social Capital and Public Relations: Definition & Conceptualization

This research expands upon existing definitions of social capital, resulting in a public relations-specific definition: *Social capital is facilitated by public relations knowledge, skills, and competencies that impact the interaction of the structure of publics and components of relationships with those publics from which professionals maintain and gain social resources to be exchanged for organizational outcomes.* More specifically, social capital is facilitated by human capital (measured here by public relations knowledge, skills, and competencies) for which interaction and communication is materialized in expressive and instrumental actions that impact the interaction of the structure of publics and components of relationships with those publics from which professionals produce public relations outcomes, ultimately reducible to financial capital. From a practical standpoint, a public relations professional who is an effective communicator or has a high level of public relations competency (human capital) will better facilitate the maintenance and gain of socially embedded resources (confidence, credibility, relationship, reputation, trust, and so forth) to be used as social capital with a member of the media, for example, which results in the achievement of an organizational objective such as increased credibility for the organization’s CEO (via articles positioning the organization as an authority for a particular issue). Increased credibility, in turn, impacts return on stake- and stockholder expectations (ROE), which increases (is exchanged for) the financial capital of the organization via the purchase of additional stock in the organization. Accordingly, this research proposes the Social Capital Model of Public Relations (see Figure 2.3). This conceptualization draws on the synthesis of the previously discussed literature and includes elements of conceptualizations from several
disciplines; however, the primary sources from which this conceptualization was drawn include Adler and Kwon (2002), Hazleton and Kennan (2000), Lin (2001), Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), and Stacks (2011). A discussion of the Social Capital Model of Public Relations ensues.

**Human Capital**

Human capital is generally understood as knowledge, skills, abilities, competencies, education, training, and so forth acquired and invested with the expectation to yield a return (see Becker, 2008, for a full review). In the Social Capital Model of Public Relations, human capital is an antecedent condition to both social capital and public relations outcomes. Indeed, “The connection between human capital and social capital has been rightly described as ‘one of the most robust empirical regularities in the social capital literature’ (Glaeser et al., 2002, p. 455). It is also reasonable to assume that higher levels of human capital will impact public relations outcomes directly as extant research has described the ability of individuals to exchange human capital for valued resources. In other words, it is expected that outcomes might not only be obtained via the interaction of structural and relational components that comprise social capital, but also via human capital.

The current conceptualization of human capital (Figure 2.3), then, posits three broad areas, for which overlap is likely, as indicators: *education and training, knowledge, skills, and abilities,* and *interpersonal and personality.* It should be noted here that social capital exists between more than one individual; thus interaction or communication is also a necessary and antecedent condition for social capital. Again, Kennan and Hazleton (2006) suggest that communication facilitates the accumulation of social capital within an
organization. The existence of relevant competency scales, such as communication and interpersonal competency scales (see McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988, and Rubin & Martin, 1994, respectively) provides evidence that communication and interpersonal knowledge, skills, and abilities serve as measurable competencies from which researchers can use as evaluative and predictive tools. Thus, education and training and knowledge, skills, and abilities are posited as contributing to human capital and simultaneously enhancing other areas of human capital.

For example, public relations professionals who take strategic communication courses are enhancing their communication competency and, overall, their human capital. And, public relations professionals who attend professional or academic conferences such as the annual International Public Relations Research Conference or who prepare for and receive accreditation in public relations (APR) are enhancing their public relations competency via obtaining new knowledge, skills, and abilities and again, their overall human capital. Relatedly, human capital also includes intelligence as a measured intelligence quotient (IQ). This research further posits that interpersonal and personality variables can serve as human capital. It may be arguable as to the degree to which individual/interpersonal variables, such as emotional intelligence, willingness to self-censor, or the “Big Five” personality traits, can be taught or learned; however, the fact remains that these variables exist as intrinsic features that can be leveraged as individual human capital to produce outcomes.

Additionally, it is important to understand that human capital is brought in at all levels of the organizational structure: frontline employees, management, and dominant coalition, to name but a few. Thus, it follows that social capital can be facilitated through
all levels of the organizations. This research does not suggest otherwise, but rather, suggests social capital is the *primary* function of public relations departments/personnel, and social capital brought in at other levels is less common and may be incidental and/or opportunistic.

A discussion of different exchange relations as they are related to social capital is appropriate here: Adler and Kwon (2002) posit, “Indeed, we can differentiate social capital from other types of resources by the specific dimension of social structure underlying it […] (1) market relations, in which products and services are exchanged for money or bartered; (2) hierarchical relations, in which obedience to authority is exchanged for material and spiritual security; and (3) social relations, in which favors and gifts are exchanged” (p. 18). Importantly, however, they go on to say that “Any concrete relation is likely to involve a mix of all three types (Adler, 2001, and Cardona, Lawrence, & Bentler, 2004). And, insofar as market and hierarchical relations give rise to social relations—as is inevitable under conditions of repeated interaction—the other dimensions of social structure contribute indirectly to the formation of social capital” (p. 19). It is only through the social relations function that Adler and Kwon (2002) suggest social capital is facilitated (with the former two social structures impacting social relations).

It is reasoned in the current research, then, that given the human capital competencies of the public relations professional (e.g., communication and relationship strategies), and the fact that an organization’s social relations with publics are primarily “operated” by public relations professionals, public relations professionals are the primary generators and maintainers of social capital for an organization.
Social Capital

Next, the current research suggests that there are two dimensions to social capital: *structural* and *relational*. The interaction of these dimensions results in social capital; that is, socially embedded resources as public relations outcomes. According to Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), the structural dimension refers to “the overall pattern of connections between actors—that is, who you reach and how you reach them” (p. 244). The current research considers the structure of a specific public within the structural dimension to include *network ties, network configuration,* and *network norms*. First, Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) suggest that *network ties* refer to access to resources provided as a result of an individual’s or organization’s ties to one another. The fact that a collectivity is (or is not) considered a strategic public for an organization implies the existence (or nonexistence) of a network tie. Perhaps, what is of most importance here is the strength of ties to the public, which will be discussed as follows regarding the relational dimension of social capital.

Second, Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) suggest that *network configuration* refers to the density, connectivity, and hierarchy of channels that provide resources such that these features of the network configuration impact the level of contact or accessibility (see also Stacks & Watson, 2007). Similarly, Lin (2001) suggests that hierarchy impacts accessibility to socially embedded resources. Thus, the current research considers the potential for resources to include the three aforementioned components. Connectivity of a public refers to how well-connected the individuals in the public are to one another; that
Figure 2.3: Social Capital Conceptual Model of Public Relations
is, the extent of shared connections among them. Density, then, refers to the strength (or weakness) of individual member’s ties to or communication with one another. And, hierarchy refers to the potential for better resources to include affluence, influence, and power of individuals within the public.

Similarly, the *network norms* of the public are understood as representing “a degree of consensus in the social system” (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 255). Importantly, Nahapiet and Ghoshal consider norms to be a relational feature. In fact, this may be appropriate for their conceptualization; however, the current research represents the structural dimension as related to the public and the relational dimension as related to the resource- and exchange-based relationship between the organization and its publics. Thus, the current research considers the existence of norms as inclusive to the structural dimension of social capital such that the degree of consensus among a public would not be considered a feature of the relationship between the organization and public (relational dimension).

Additionally, Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) suggest that the *appropriable organization* refers to a structural component of social capital and refers to the idea that social capital developed in one context can often be transferred into another. This research similarly considers the appropriable organization in its analysis of social capital; however, it is considered not as a feature of the public, but as a feature of the individual public relations professional. While the appropriable organization is not considered as a structural component in this research, it is nevertheless worthy of analysis as an individual variable that may be considered human capital capable of producing differences in access to social resources.
As described above, the relational dimension of social capital is understood in this research as the resource- and exchange-based relationship between the organization and the public. Similarly, Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) have defined the relational dimension to include “those assets created and leveraged through relationships” (p. 244). For these researchers, the relational dimension describes trust, norms, obligations, and identification. However, extant research has indicated that trust is better treated as an outcome (see Field, 2008). Relatedly, this research also considers that identification (with the organization, here) will be an outcome of social capital. Thus, this research suggests that the relational dimension of social capital consists of homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligation, and referral.

First, homophily is based in the previously discussed homophily principle and describes the similarity in shared sentiment, interaction, and resources (Lin, 2001). Further, homophily has been found to be an important public relations variable (Michaelson & Stacks, 2011; Stacks & Michaelson, 2009, 2010). The current research suggests that the mutuality of shared beliefs, values, ideas, and circumstances is a relational component of social capital such that shared sentiment and circumstances will strengthen the ties between the organization and its publics. For example, if both the organization and public support gay marriage (shared sentiment: beliefs, values, ideas), then interaction may become more frequent, and the tie between them strengthened. And, similarly, if environmental conditions such as the rejection of the right to marry for gay couples result in shared circumstances, then the tie is again strengthened. In fact, one may examine the recent public statements to this extent among such powerhouse organizations as Amazon, Microsoft, and Starbucks. Importantly, as well, is the fact that a lack of
shared sentiment, interaction, and resources serves to have the opposite effect and are indicative of heterophily. Regardless, it is clear that homophily or heterophily are an important feature of the relationship between the organization and public that can give way to social resources for exchange.

Next, strength of ties refers to a perception of overall closeness between the organization and its publics. Indeed, this is resource-based such that the organization’s proclivity to provide both tangible resources (e.g., sponsorship of events, lending of facilities to the community, etc.) and ability to facilitate intangible resources (e.g., confidence, credibility, relationship, reputation, trust, and so forth) with the public may strengthen or weaken the perceptions of closeness and thus, the ties with the organization. Further, the strength of ties clearly falls within the relational dimension of social capital as a.

Additionally, dependence refers to the extent to which the organization depends on the public (and vice versa) in regards to actions that can impact the organization (or public). So, returning to the gay marriage example, it is clear that Starbucks depends on consumers to purchase its products. If anti-gay rights advocacy groups were such a significant portion of Starbucks’ consumer base that a boycott among this public would cripple the organization, then clearly, Starbucks depends on this public. Indeed, this is resource and exchange-based. Likewise, the public may depend on the organization. For example, Starbucks employees no doubt depend on the organization for employment. Dependence, then, is a component of the relational dimension of social capital such that the dependency between an organization and its public is a product of the relationship
between the organization and public (as opposed to a component of the public’s structure).

Similarly, obligations were originally defined by Coleman (1990) and are included within the relational dimension by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998). Obligations can be distinguished from norms such that “viewing the former as expectations developed within particular…relationships,…obligations operate as a credit slip held by A to be redeemed by some performance by B…” (Coleman, 1990, cited in Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 255). In other words, obligations can be understood such that it may be argued that organizations have obligations to their publics. Or, at the very least, it may be argued that publics perceive that organizations have obligations to them. These obligations may be considered resource-based such that it may be considered that publics perceive organizational obligations accordingly. For example, publics likely believe that organizations have an obligation to maintain good relationships with them. In exchange for a positive relationship, for example, the public purchases the organization’s products. As in the Starbucks case, advocacy groups may believe that as consumers of Starbucks’ products, Starbucks has an obligation to either not become involved in social-political issues or to share their sentiment toward the issue of gay rights.

Last, referral refers to recommendations among individuals to others in their social circles, specifically as it is related to an organization. Referral may be considered resource- and exchange-based such that Blau’s (1964) previously mentioned work on social exchange suggests that, “When an actor is unable to reciprocate transactions of equal value in an exchange with another actor, one choice available to ego to maintain the relationship with the alter is to subordinate or comply with the alter’s wishes” (p. 22). In
other words, referrals may be made in exchange for a positive relationship. Further, Lin (2001) states, “Collective approval of power gives legitimacy to authority, the backbone of social organizations. Thus, in relationships, and this fundamental microstructural process evokes, though not necessarily explains, the much more complex macrostructural (organizational process)” (p. 145). Referral, then, may serve as a resource- and exchange-based component of the relational dimension of social capital.

Public Relations Outcomes as Resources and Financial Capital

And, finally, the results of social capital are posited to impact several resources of interest to public relations professionals and organizations: collective action, confidence, credibility, goodwill, identification, legitimacy, power, relationship, reputation, and trust. Briefly, to make clear the use of the “outcomes” and “resources” terminology used in the following discussion, recall that Lin (2001) in the definition states that “structurally embedded resources are social capital for the actors in those networks” (p. 75). Thus, the outcomes of public relations described by Stacks (2011) and included in this research are resources to the extent that they exist within the structures of collectivities for actors in those networks or for organizations and their publics and may be maintained or gained by public relations professionals to be exchanged for organizational outcomes.

Public relations or communication objectives, unlike most marketing, advertising, and business objectives, deal with nonfinancial indicators such as those proposed by this research. Indeed, Stacks (2011) identifies four nonfinancial outcomes of public relations resulting from return-on-expectations (ROE) and having the potential to impact financial return-on-investment (ROI): credibility, relationship, reputation, and trust (see Figure 2.2). He further suggests that confidence modifies the interaction of the aforementioned
variables such that stakeholders and stockholders confidence in an organization
influences the public relations outcome (Stacks, Dodd, & Men, in-press). Stacks (2011) explains,

If the outcome is increased credibility, then credibility is seen as influencing relationship, reputation, and trust—with confidence an ‘intervening’ variable (one that impacts in different ways on the variables being ‘manipulated’ or addressed in the campaign. These campaign variables in turn establish certain expectations in our targeted audience—defined as stakeholders (employees, customers) and stockholders (people with financial interest in the company)—expectations of performance. This we label return of expectations (ROE), which, in turn, influences economic decisions. (p. 25)

In other words, according to Stacks (2011), an outcome of public relations is trust among a public. The confidence that the public has in the organization modifies the interaction of trust and reputation, for example, such that the more confident an individual is that they can trust the organization, the more likely the reputation of the organization will be evaluated positively by that individual. Further, the organization is able to provide a return on these expectations for the individual such that the individual expects that a trustworthy organization with a good reputation will act in a certain manner. When the organization acts accordingly, there is a return-on-expectations for the individual. This may also be viewed such that an untrustworthy organization with which the individual evaluates as having a poor reputation can act accordingly, thus providing a return on these expectations. Or, the organization, when seeking to improve its reputation, may not provide a return on the expectations of untrustworthiness and poor reputation; that is, the organization will take actions that are perceived as trustworthy and the confidence the individual has in the organization as untrustworthy is modified, thus improving the perceived reputation. If the organization continues to produce a return on expectations contrary to the untrustworthy perception the individual formerly had, then
the expectations of the organization to act in an untrustworthy manner are elevated to include the revised expectation of trustworthy behavior. Of course, this sort of change in perception and expectations takes time, and public relations professionals certainly understand that the outcome variables posited by Stacks (2011) do not accumulate overnight. In other words, such nonfinancial outcomes may also be considered *intangible social assets* for organizations; that is, “An intangible resource is everything of immaterial existence, which is used or potentially usable for whatever purpose, which is renewable after use, and which not only decreases, but can remain or increase in quantity and/or quality while being used” (Diefenbach, 2006, p. 409). Further, the combination of these outcomes and return-on-expectations is thus, exchanged for *financial outcomes* (return-on-investment) for the organization such that greater returns-on-expectations result in greater or lesser financial returns. Luoma-aho *et al.* (2012) provide support, stating: “Intangibles, enable the accumulation of other types of capital, and, as such, constitute a central resource for organizations” (p. 9).

The Social Capital Model of Public Relations modifies Stacks (2011) original nonfinancial outcomes to further include *collective action, goodwill, identification, legitimacy,* and *power* as resources relevant to public relations efforts (see Figure 2.4). Similar to Stacks (2011) conceptualization of public relations outcomes and return-on-expectations these resources, *although some may seem more actionable*, can also be understood as modified by confidence and reinforced by a return-on-expectations. Thus, this research considers identification and legitimacy as more readily understood concepts related to Stacks (2011) original outcome model and collective action, goodwill, and power to be more actionable outcomes. For example, goodwill represents a nonfinancial
public relations outcome of interest and describes how stake- and stockholders feel
toward the organization when faced with situations where their actions could be either
beneficial or detrimental. An employee’s goodwill toward his or her organization may
prevent him from stealing office supplies or a consumer may continue to purchase an
organization’s product during times of crises. Indeed, the employee’s or consumer’s
goodwill is impacted by Stacks (2011) outcomes: credibility, relationship, reputation, and
trust. And, the goodwill is then modified by the confidence the consumer has in the
organization’s credibility, relationship, reputation, and trust. Again, then, the return-on-
expectations is relevant because if the individual has expectations that the exchange of
their goodwill is warranted, then they likely expect that the organization will continue to
behave in a manner that warrants such behavior. This is similar to Toulmin’s (1969)
model of persuasion as the relationship between claim, data, and warrant. Thus, social
capital may yield a warrant implicit in the data supporting the claim. In other words, the
organization’s claim to a good relationship and the evidence in action that supports such a
claim (data), warrant acknowledgement and behavior (exchange) accordingly by an
employee, for example.

This is also the case for the collective action and power resources added to Stacks
(2011) conceptualization; that is, collective action, goodwill, and power are all public
action resources that aid or inhibit the organization in achieving goals. Nonetheless, the
fact that they are more actionable does not divorce them from inclusion alongside the
more abstract outcomes and return-on-expectations posited by Stacks (2011). Publics can
take collective action toward aiding or inhibiting the organization from achieving goals.
If the public is taking collective action aimed at aiding the organization, they will have an
expectation that the organization will behave in a certain manner. If that expectation were violated (the organization did not act accordingly), then the collective action on behalf of the organization would either cease or perhaps, transform into inhibiting action. For example, when in 2012 the Susan G. Komen Foundation pulled funding from Planned Parenthood, supporters of Planned Parenthood took collective action to rally Susan G. Komen to reinstate the funding. Here we see that Susan G. Komen violated the expectations of its publics, and collective action was taken to hinder the organization’s goal. Of course, collective action could be analyzed from both the perspective of the Susan G. Komen Foundation and Planned Parenthood here; however, a discussion of power may be more appropriate as follows. Similarly, power can be aided or inhibited by publics for organizations. If Susan G. Komen had not assumed to have the institutional power to pull funding from Planned Parenthood and had garnered public support for this goal in advance, the organization would have been perceived as having the power to do so by the public (or at the very least generated an understanding of this organizational goal and reduced the public outrage) in much the way Johnson & Johnson defused its litigation with the American Red Cross’ misuse of the organization’s trademark—the red cross. Thus, having provided a general understanding of the social resources addressed in this research, it is important to further provide definitions and relevant discussion for each more specifically.

*Credibility* is defined as the degree to which stakeholders and stockholders believe in an organization’s trustworthiness and expertise (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001). *Relationship* is an oft studied concept in public relations research, specifically in regards to the previously referenced research surrounding organization-public relationships.
According to Hon and Grunig (1999), relationships are characterized by the following: control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, commitment, and exchange and communal relationships. Relationship refers to “stakeholders perception of connection with an organization” (Stacks, Dodd, & Men, in-press). Reputation, on the other hand, describes “the historical relationship between organizations and publics” (Stacks & Watson, 2007, p. 69). Trust refers to the idea that “the results of somebody’s intended action will be appropriate from our point of view” (Misztal, 1996, pp. 9-10, cited in Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 254). Adding to this, Bowen (2010) argues that trust is built through organizational ethics. Regarding the trust feature, several researchers have demonstrated that “where relationships are high in trust, people are more willing to engage in social exchange in general, and cooperative interaction in particular” and “where there are high levels of trust, people are more willing to take risks in such exchange” (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 254).

In terms of social capital, identification refers to the “extent to which actors view themselves as connected to other actors” (Hazleton & Kennan, 2000, p.83). Inclusion in one of these groups will create an environment “in which the individual takes the values or standards of other individuals or groups as a comparative frame of reference” (Merton, 1968, cited in Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 256). And, legitimacy refers to “the generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate” (Suchmann, 1995, pp. 573-4). Thus, “it appears that a central element of legitimacy, as currently understood, is meeting and adhering to the expectations of a social system’s norms, values, rules, and meanings (Hirsch and Andrews, 1984;
Parsons, 1960) (cited in Deephouse & Carter, 2005, p. 331). Lin (2001) suggests that “Collective approval of power gives legitimacy to authority, the backbone of social organizations” (p. 145). And, Waeraas (2007) suggests that, “having sufficient external support is seen as the ultimate purpose of public relations, and legitimation is seen as the efforts which are aimed at acquiring organizational legitimacy” (p. 281).

Next, collective action describes group collaboration toward a common goal or goals. Coleman (1986, 1990) examined social capital as it relates to the creation of collective action and the strength of ties among actors. The current research is most concerned with collective action as it materializes among strategic organizational publics. Likewise, goodwill describes the actions stake- and stockholders take toward an organization when faced with situations where their actions could be either beneficial or detrimental. Adler and Kwon (2002) suggest that goodwill is “the substance of social capital” (p. 18) and, in fact, define social capital generally as “the goodwill available to individuals or groups” (p. 23). Power refers to the ability to do or act. Power for an organization is in large part provided by the publics for which it serves as well as the publicly-legitimized institutions that govern it. Clegg, Courpasson, and Phillips (2006) explain, “Power is not necessarily constraining, negative, or antagonistic. Power can be creative, empowering, and positive. The organizational media that form, condense, and distribute social relations shape power and they can shape it either way” (p. 2).

And finally, confidence, modifies the interaction of the aforementioned variables such that stakeholders and stockholders confidence in an organization influences the resources obtained by public relations professionals on behalf of an organization (Stacks, Dodd, & Men, in-press). It follows then, from Stacks’ (2011) model and the adapted
model used in this research that individuals and publics receive a return-on-expectations from these resources. The return-on-expectations influences stock- and stake-holder behaviors that ultimately impact the organization’s bottom line; that is, the financial capital (return-on-investment) and/or achievement of specified organizational objectives. A revised version of Stacks’ (2011) model of public relations outcomes is presented as follows (see Figure 2.4).

Moreover, it is important to again note that the outcomes of social capital pose risks such as groupthink, costly ties, and/or the backfiring of power and solidarity (Adler & Kwon, 2002) in addition to beneficial organizational outcomes, such as information, influence, control, power, and solidarity (as mentioned by Adler & Kwon, 2002, pp. 28-32).

Returning to the Social Capital Model of Public Relations (Figure 2.3), then, this research incorporates a modified version of Stacks (2011) public relations outcomes model (Figure 2.4) to demonstrate that: (1) social capital impacts nonfinancial public relations resources (collective action, confidence, credibility, goodwill, identification, legitimacy, power, relationship, reputation, and trust) for which public relations primarily facilitates via human capital (public relations knowledge, skills, and abilities); (2) resources facilitated by public relations activities impact stakeholder-stockholder expectations (ROE); and (3) these expectations impact financial capital or organizational return on investment (ROI).

Situational Considerations: Opportunity and Motivation

Further, although not explicitly outlined in the Social Capital Model, it is important to give attention to situational considerations that, as with any organizational
outcome, have an impact on the generation of social capital. In order for social capital to be generated opportunity and motivation must be present (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

*Opportunity* refers to the idea that “external ties to others give actors the opportunity to leverage their contacts’ resources, and internal ties create the opportunity to work together” (p. 24). *Motivation* refers the idea that “the mere fact of a tie implies little about the likelihood that social capital outcomes will materialize” (p. 25). In other words, one must be motivated, for example, through trust to produce and/or facilitate social capital. Although these considerations are not specifically measured by this research, opportunity may be considered as relevant to the extent that public relations professionals have opportunities to interact or communicate with publics. And, motivation may be relevant in regards to the motivation a public has to interact with the organization.

**Assumptions and Hypotheses**

The current conceptualization considers not only social capital, but also financial and human capital, in the creation of a Social Capital Model of Public Relations. Importantly, however, this research does not seek to explore all of these concepts in-depth because other research already does so, providing measures that are used across several disciplines (IQ as human capital and ROI as financial capital are two primary examples). What is missing from the literature are anomalous or revolutionary holistic approaches within the discipline and a public relations-specific understanding of social capital. This research seeks to take the first steps, forwarding this conceptualization into a measure using primary research initiatives. Thus, it expands upon existing definitions of social capital, resulting in a public relations-specific definition: *Social capital is facilitated by public relations knowledge, skills, and competencies that impact the*
Figure 2.4: Revised Stacks’ (2011) Conceptual Model of Public Relations Impact on ROI
interaction of the structure of publics and components of relationships with those publics from which professionals maintain and gain social resources to be exchanged for organizational outcomes. This definition is operationalized and will be tested using the following variables and scales (detailed in Chapter 3) mentioned briefly here: Public Relations Competencies Scale, Specified Public, Frequency of Interaction, General Public Relations Professional Outcome Belief Scale, Maintain-Gain Scale, Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale, Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale, Financial Capital, and organizational and individual professional demographic items to include a one item measure of the manager/technician role of public relations.

First, participants are asked to respond to the Public Relations Competencies Scale that was created based on the Public Relations Accreditation (APR) knowledge, skills, and abilities materials that are used for preparation in taking the APR exam. This is a measure of the latent variable, human capital. Second, the General Professional Outcome Belief Scale assesses the public relations outcomes (collective action, confidence, credibility, goodwill, identification, legitimacy, power, relationship, reputation, and trust) in regards to the extent to which professionals believe each outcome has the potential to benefit or harm their client/organization.

Third, participants are provided with one of three Specified Publics: consumers/distributors /retailers, whichever is most applicable; employees; or, the media. Participants are then asked to indicate the Frequency of Interaction they have with this public. It is important to note here that the three specified organizational publics used in this research were selected based on potential differences (that specifically may arise in regards to frequency of interaction, the proclivity to maintain or gain social resources,
and the public relations outcomes as important for the primary study) demonstrated by Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) organizational linkage model (see Bowen, Rawlins, & Martin, 2010 and Rawlins, 2006, relatedly).

The organization linkage model identifies stakeholders via their relationships with the organization to include: enabling, functional, diffused, and normative linkages. Briefly, consumers/distributors/retailers and employees both fall within the functional linkages; that is, these stakeholders are essential for the function of the organization and are subcategorized into input functions who provide labor and resources (employees) and output functions who consume products and services (consumers/distributors/retailers). The media is categorized as a diffused linkage such that “they include stakeholders who do not have frequent interaction with the organization, but become involved based on the actions of the organization” (Rawlins, 2006, p. 4). Thus, these three publics were selected among those others identified by Grunig and Hunt (1984) due to their general commonality as identified stakeholders within the public relations industry and in combination with the different linkages and associated potential differences among them.

Also important, the term “public” is used in this research (as opposed to “stakeholder”). This is important to note because the terms “public” and “stakeholder” have been differentiated as follows: “Organizations choose stakeholders by their marketing strategies, recruiting, and investment plans, but ‘publics arise on their own and choose the organization for attention’ (Grunig & Repper, 1992, p. 128)” (Rawlins, 2006, p.2). In other words, the consumers/distributors/retailers, employees, and media categories used in this research are referred to as “publics” (or more accurately, “audiences” according to Rawlins, 2006) because it seems to encompass the more general
concept such that for an individual research participant, employees may be considered a “public” and for another individual research participant “employees” may be considered a “stakeholder,” for example. Thus, there was no a priori method for categorizing the specified publics used in this research accordingly.

The next section of the questionnaire asks practitioners to respond with respect to the Specified Public, regardless of the Frequency of Interaction. First, the Maintain-Gain scale asks professionals to indicate whether they are more likely to maintain or gain the public relations outcomes for the specified public. A “not applicable” (NA) option is also provided if the professional does not believe it is an outcome of their work or an important feature of the specified public for their client/organization. Second, the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale, which underlies the latent public relations outcomes variable, asks professionals to respond to items related to each of the public relations outcomes in regards to how they believe the specified public would rate each item toward the professional’s client/organization. For example, “My client/organization has a good reputation” is an item the professional will evaluate in regards to the specified public’s beliefs. Last, the Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale underlies the latent social capital variable and includes items that comprise the structural dimension (network ties, network configuration, and network norms) and the relational dimension (homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations, and referral). The scale asks professionals to respond, again with respect to the specified public.

And, finally, the questionnaire includes client/organizational and individual public relations professional demographic variables. Of most importance to mention here is the organizational demographic question regarding financial profitability. The item asks,
“Compared to other similar organizations, this organization is very financially profitable.” The degree to which professionals indicate financial profitability will be used to assess the financial capital for the organization.

Thus, having provided a general understanding of the definitions and measures used in this research, the following assumptions, hypotheses, and research question are posed, building on Lin’s (2001) postulates and propositions, for a social capital theory of public relations.

1. **The structural postulate**: Valued resources are embedded in social structures in which positions, authority, rules, and occupants (agents) usually form pyramidal hierarchies in terms of the distributions of valued resources, number of positions, level of authority, and number of occupants. The higher the level in the hierarchy, the greater the concentration of valued resources, the fewer the number of positions, the greater the command of authority, and the smaller the number of occupants (Lin, 2001, p. 75).

- Assumption 1a: Valued resources are embedded in the social structures of publics.
- Assumption 1b: Valued resources are embedded in the social structures of organizations.
- Assumption 1c: These social resources are brokered by public relations professionals.
- Assumption 1d: The hierarchical relationship differs based on perspective and which resource is valued.
2. The structural contingency proposition: The networking (tie and location) effects are constrained by the hierarchical structure for actors located near or at the top and bottom of the hierarchy (Lin, 2001, p. 76).

- Assumption 1e: Generally, public relations professionals are the facilitators of social capital for an organization due to their unique mid-level position within the organizational hierarchy. However, the public relations outcomes are constrained when professionals are located at the top of the organizational hierarchy or at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy.

Discussion of extant literature has provided a strong foundation for these assumptions to be applied to public relations via social capital theory. In order to keep the amount of questionnaire items reasonable, this research relies on such extant research for the posed assumptions. Indeed, the current research does provide for some superficial points of analysis that can contribute to the validity of these assumptions. For example, resources facilitated by public relations will be assessed generally to include a question as to the extent to which professionals believe these are potential outcomes of their work that serve to benefit or hurt their organization, perhaps providing evidence of socially embedded resources in publics. Further, the dependence and obligations components of social capital may provide evidence of the presence of valued resources embedded in the organization’s social structure for which publics seek to maintain or gain. This research has further argued the boundary spanning role of the public relations professional and posits the assumption that such a conceptualization of the role of public relations suggests that the professional serves as broker filling a structural hole. Relatedly, the hierarchical location of public relations was discussed at length (see Figure 2.1), specifically as it
relates to the perspective from which the exchange is viewed and the resource that is valued. Given these prior assumptions, several hypotheses and a research question are proposed as follows.

3. *The interaction postulate:* Interactions usually occur among actors with similar or contiguous characteristics of resources and lifestyles—following the homophily principle. The greater the similarity of resource characteristics, the less effort required in interaction (Lin, 2001, p. 75).

**H1:** Frequency of Interaction will be predicted by homophily such that the extent to which professionals believe the public shares beliefs, values, and ideas with the organization, the more frequent the interaction will be.

*Homophily* describes the similarity in shared, sentiment, interaction, and resources (Lin, 2001), and the mutuality of shared beliefs, values, and ideas is posited as a relational component of social capital that describes homophily. This research further asks professionals to respond to questions surrounding one of three publics (consumers/distributors/retailors, whichever is most applicable; employees; or, the media), foremost of which the questionnaire will ask how frequently the professional interacts or communicates with that public. Thus, according to the interaction postulate, interactions are more frequent among actors with shared sentiment, resources, and so forth such that it is reasoned that the homophily item will predict the frequency with which professionals indicate interaction with the specified public. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 posits that the extent of homophily between the organization and public will be a predictor of frequency in interaction.
RQ1: Will Frequency of Interaction also be predicted by the extent to which professionals believe the public’s actions can impact the client/organization?

This research further understands that perhaps, for public relations specifically, the frequency of interaction may be based on opposition (or a lack of shared sentiment, resources, and so forth) as is the case with advocacy groups or other publics who are not supportive of the organization’s goals. The frequency of interaction with these publics may be based on the idea that their actions can impact or have the potential to impact the organization. Such a relationship is based in a lack of shared sentiment or resources and, thus, a lack of interaction according to the homophily principle and Lin (2001). Research Question 1 may be antitheoretical to this extent, but seeks to consider such a relationship in analyses.

4. The network postulate: In social networks, directly and indirectly, interacting actors carry varying types of resources. Some of these resources are in their personal possession (personal resources or human capital), but most of the resources are embedded in others with whom each actor is in contact, directly or indirectly, or they are embedded in structural positions each actor occupies or is in contact with.

   a. The definition: These structurally embedded resources are social capital for the actors in those networks (Lin, 2001, p. 75).

H2: Organizations receive indirect benefits or harm from publics through access to publics’ networks (e.g., third-party reputational endorsements).
Hypothesis 2 is measured using a single item focused on referral; that is, “This public recommends my client/organization to others in their social circles.” It is commonly referenced in the professional and scholarly public relations literature (e.g., Stacks & Michaelson, 2011) that third-party recommendations serve as an important antecedent and result of the public relations outcomes described in this research. Thus, it is posited that the extent of indirect contact, measured by referral here, will directly impact the public relations outcomes posed in this research.

**H3:** The Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale will differ based on which public is specified.

The current research asks professionals to rate the public relations outcomes as they believe they are perceived by the specified public (consumers/distributors/retailers, employees, or the media). These items form the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale. Based on the network postulate, Hypothesis 3 posits that as social resources, these outcomes differ based on the specified public. So, it is expected that identification, for example, as a public relations outcome of social capital will differ between employees and the media.

5. *The action postulates:* Actors are motivated to either maintain or gain their resources in social actions—purposive actions. Action to maintain resources can be called expressive action, and action to gain resources can be called instrumental action. Maintaining resources is the primary motivation for action; therefore, expressive action is the primary form of action (Lin, 2001, p. 76).
**H4:** The Maintain-Gain Scale will differ based on which public is specified. Similarly, then, it is expected that differences in the maintenance versus generation of public relations outcomes will differ based on the specified public (consumers/distributors/retailers, employees, or the media). As noted in the action postulate, “actors are motivated to either maintain or gain resources” (Lin, 2001, p. 76). And, the actions that are taken will differ accordingly. The Maintain-Gain scale asks professionals to rate the extent to which they seek to maintain or gain public relations outcomes regarding the specified public. Thus, hypothesis 4 reasons that the specified public will cause differences in responses to the Maintain-Gain Scale.

**H5:** Professionals will indicate that their function is to maintain and gain public relations outcomes on behalf of a client/organization such that professionals will generally *not* select “not applicable.”

The Maintain-Gain scale asks professionals to rate the extent to which they seek to maintain or gain public relations outcomes regarding the specified public. In addition, the Maintain-Gain scale offers a separate “not applicable (NA)” option for which the introductory text reads, “Also, you may select NA (not applicable) if, for example, you do not believe this is an outcome of your work or if you do not believe this is an important feature of this public for your client/organization.” While the effect of whether a professional chooses NA cannot be definitively separated out in the current research as to whether the professional has indicated NA because he/she does not believe it is an outcome or because it is not a feature of the public defined, it is hypothesized that they will generally *not* select NA, providing evidence to the idea that they see their function as maintaining and gaining social resources on behalf of the client/organization. Further, the
outcomes of public relations are assessed generally (General Professional Outcome Belief Scale) as to the extent to which it is believed that these are potential outcomes of their work that serve to benefit or harm their organization, potentially providing evidence for Hypothesis 5 as to whether the professional has indicated NA because he/she does not believe it is an outcome or because it is not a feature of the public defined.

**H6:** The Maintain-Gain Scale of public relations outcomes is predicted by the Relational Dimension Scale such that the relational features found between an organization and its publics will influence the extent to which outcomes are sought to be maintained or gained by the public relations professional.

Working from *the interaction postulate* and *the action postulates*, Hypothesis 6 predicts that because interactions are more frequent among actors with similar characteristics and maintenance of resources or expressive action is more common among actors with such similarities (and vice versa for actors with dissimilar characteristics and instrumental actions), the Relational Dimension Scale will predict the extent to which the maintenance or gain of resources is indicated by professionals.

**H7:** Maintaining resources is more common than gaining resources for public relations outcomes such that the overall mean for the Maintain-Gain Scale will indicate accordingly.

Further, the *action postulate* suggests that “maintaining resources is the primary motivation for action; therefore, expressive action is the primary form of action” (Lin, 2001, p. 76). This is because interaction with others with similar characteristics is posited to be less complicated. Accordingly, then, Hypothesis 7 suggests that maintaining
resources will be indicated more frequently than will be gaining resources on the Maintain-Gain Scale as demonstrated by the overall mean of the scale.

6. *The social capital proposition:* the success of action is positively associated with social capital (Lin, 2001, p. 76).

**H8:** The Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale will predict the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale.

Social capital is conceptualized in this research as consisting of a structural and relational dimension. The combination of items related to these dimensions comprises the Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale. Because *the social capital proposition* posits that the success of action is positively associated with social capital, this scale will predict the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale. It is important to mention here that although this predictive relationship is a hypothesized path within the overall Social Capital Model of Public Relations (see Hypothesis 14), the current hypothesis allows for a solitary predictive assessment; whereas, the hypothesized path is assessed in relation to the Social Capital Model of Public Relations as a whole.

7. *The strength-of-position proposition:* the better the position of origin, the more likely the actor will have access and use better social capital (Lin, 2001, p. 76).

**H9:** Demographic items (age, gender, race, current position, income, years of industry experience, APR, and appropriable organization) will predict the Relational Dimension Scale such that these items provide information about the position of origin that will impact the relational features between an organization and its publics.
Demographic items in this research are reasoned to provide information about the overall position of origin and may be considered indicators of overall human capital. According to Loury (1977) opportunities are facilitated by individual characteristics such as family, gender, race, etc. The current research further suggests then, that opportunities for the production of better social capital via the relational dimension may result from these individual characteristics that place individuals at differing positions of origin.

Thus, Hypothesis 9 predicts that the combination of these demographic items as they are related to the position of origin will predict the relational dimension of social capital, (but not the structural dimension as this refers to the structure of the public). In other words, this is relevant to the strength-of-position proposition such that not all public relations professionals begin on an even playing field. Some have higher levels of human capital that will aid them in processes to obtain social capital on behalf of their client/organization. The public relations competencies scale items that contribute to the human capital latent variable in this research are assessed in the overall structural equation model (see Hypothesis 14).

**H10:** The assessment of public relations roles (manager/technician dichotomy)

will predict the Relational Dimension Scale.

Research surrounding public relations’ roles (manager/technician dichotomy) has shown support for public relations professionals functioning in the manager (as opposed to technician) role as more likely to practice two-way, open-systems models of communication, which are considered the most effective method of public relations practices, as opposed to one-way models of communication that involve more technical tasks (Dozier, 1992 and Grunig & Grunig, 1992). While valid and reliable scales exist to
measure public relations roles (see Diga & Kelleher, 2009; Dozier & Broom, 2006; Kelleher, 2001), the current research includes only a single demographic item to this extent in order to prevent the survey from becoming too long. The item reads, “Which of the following best describes the responsibilities of your current positions? (1) I establish public relations programs and campaigns and provide counsel to leadership; (2) I write, edit, and design messages and public relations materials; and (3) Other (please specify).” Thus, it is suggested that those performing a manager role of public relations, who have been identified as practicing “more excellent” public relations by extant research, will be more capable of producing better social capital than those practicing the technician role of public relations.

8. *The strength-of-strong-tie proposition:* the stronger the tie, the more likely the social capital accessed will positively affect the success of expressive action (Lin, 2001, p. 76).

9. *The strength-of-weak-tie proposition:* the weaker the tie, the more likely ego will have access to better social capital for instrumental action (Lin, 2001, p. 76).

**H11:** The Maintain-Gain Scale is negatively correlated with the Relational Dimension Scale.

Hypothesis 11 suggests that the more positive the relational dimension (indicative of *homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations,* and *referral*), the more likely maintenance via expressive actions will be indicated by public relations professionals in this research. Thus, the Relational Dimension Scale will negatively correlate with the Maintain-Gain Scale. And, vice versa, such that the more likely gaining resources via
instrumental actions is indicated by professionals, the more negative the relational dimension.

10. The strength-of-location proposition: the closer individuals are to a bridge in a network, the better social capital they will access for instrumental action (Lin, 2001, p. 76).

**H12:** Frequency of Interaction and the Relational Dimension Scale predict the Maintain-Gain Scale.

In other words, frequency of interaction in combination with the relational dimension predicts the Maintain-Gain Scale such that the greater the frequency of interaction with publics who are indicated as having a lack of homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations, and referral, the greater the degree to which public relations professionals indicate gaining new resources on the Maintain-Gain scale. And, vice versa, such that the greater the frequency of interaction with publics who are indicated as having more homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations, and referral the greater the degree to which professionals indicate maintaining resources.

11. The location-by-position proposition: the strength of a location (in proximity to a bridge) for instrumental action is contingent on the resource differential across the bridge (Lin, 2001, p. 76).

**H13:** The Structural Dimension Scale is positively correlated with the Maintain-Gain Scale.

Similarly, the network ties, network configuration, and norms as components of the structural dimension of social capital predict the Maintain-Gain Scale such that hierarchical items, specifically, are included in this dimension that suggest the resources
or potential for resources within a public’s social structure. Accordingly, the structural dimension predicts the Maintain-Gain Scale because better resources (or resource potential) as indicated by professionals for a public are associated with a proclivity to gain resources.

12. The public relations proposition: Social capital is facilitated by public relations knowledge, skills, and abilities (human capital) that impact the interaction of the structure of publics and components of relationships with those publics from which professionals produce social resources (public relations outcomes) for the organization.

H14: The Social Capital Model of Public Relations predicts financial performance such that the Public Relations Competencies Scale (human capital) predicts the Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale and Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale. The Structural-Relational Social Capital scale, thus, predicts the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale (see Hypothesis 8), and the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale predicts perceived financial performance. The hypothesized paths are demonstrated as follows:

H14a-c. The individual demographic variables—(a) age; (b) years of experience, and (c) annual income—will positively influence the latent Human Capital Variable.

H14d. The latent Human Capital variable will positively influence the latent Social Capital variable.
**H14e.** The latent Human Capital variable will positively influence the latent Public Relations Outcomes variable.

**H14f.** The latent Social Capital variable will positively influence the latent Public Relations Outcomes variable.

**H14g.** The latent Public Relations Outcomes variables will positively influence the perceived financial capital of an organization.

The Social Capital Model of Public Relations is grounded in strong theoretical support, and thus, Hypothesis 14 is proposed as the ultimate evidence for the validity of social capital in a public relations context. First, in the predicted model, the Public Relations Competencies Scale is indicative of the latent variable, human capital, and will predict social capital, which has been operationalized through a structural and relational dimension, as well as the latent public relations outcomes variable. Also, relevant interval-level demographic variables (age, years of experience, and annual income) are included as predictors of the latent human capital variable. The Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale, then, is predicted to impact the nonfinancial public relations outcomes conceptualized in this research as relevant resource- and exchange-based resources. Finally, the model posits that public relations impacts financial goals for an organization via these nonfinancial outcomes. Perceived financial capital is measured using a one-item organizational demographic measure. Thus, a simplified measurement model of the specific portions of the conceptualized Social Capital Model of Public Relations (see Figure 2.5) that are hypothesized and will be assessed in this research is visually presented as follows.
Figure 2.5: Measured Portions of the Social Capital Model of Public Relations (Measurement Model)
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Secondary research on existing conceptualizations and operationalizations across multiple areas for scholarly inquiry, namely business/management, sociology, psychology, and public relations, was first conducted in order to identify relevant dimensions, and generate assessment items that reflect those dimensions for variables used in this research. A pilot test was performed in order to assess the scales’ reliabilities and identify any points of confusion that might arise. The final instrument was administered to a nationwide sample of public relations professionals via the Public Relations Society of America membership list (PRSA) and confirmatory factor analysis was performed on relevant measures. Additionally, the overall model was statistically analyzed via structural equation modeling to include maximum likelihood estimation. Goodness of fit was assessed via the following statistics: model Chi-square, relative Chi-square (CMIN/DF), comparative fit index (CFI), non-normed fit index or Tucker-Lewis rho index (TLI), and root-mean-square error of percentage (RMSEA).

Pilot Examination

A pseudo-experiment pilot examination of the questionnaire and scales included in the current research was administered to a sample of students in an introductory public relations course. Twenty-four completed questionnaires were used, two from each of 12 conditions that specify the position (agency or corporate), the organizational public (consumers, distributors, or retailers; employees; or the media); and the frequency of interaction (more or less frequent). Each condition is listed as follows: (1) Agency professional/Consumers, Distributors, Retailers (whichever is most applicable)/More Frequent Interaction; (2) Agency professional/ Employees/More Frequent Interaction; (3)
Agency professional/the Media/ More Frequent Interaction; (4) Corporate professional/Consumers, Distributors, Retailers (whichever is most applicable)/ More Frequent Interaction; (5) Corporate professional/Employees/More Frequent Interaction; (6) Corporate professional/the Media/ More Frequent Interaction; (7) Agency professional/Consumers, Distributors, Retailers (whichever is most applicable)/Less Frequent Interaction; (8) Agency professional/Employees/Less Frequent Interaction; (9) Agency professional/the Media/Less Frequent Interaction; (10) Corporate professional/Consumers, Distributors, Retailers (whichever is most applicable)/Less Frequent Interaction; (11) Agency professional/Employees/Less Frequent Interaction; (12) Agency professional/the Media/Less Frequent Interaction. Student participants were provided introductory text placing them in one of the 12 conditions and were asked to respond to questionnaire items accordingly.

**Public Relations Competencies Scale**

Adapted from exam preparation materials for Public Relations Accreditation (APR), the Public Relations Competencies Scale is a 23-item scale created to assess the latent human capital variable. Items were generated based on each area covered by the exam and reflect an approximate percent of each area’s content covered by the exam. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability for the Public Relations Competencies Scale was .951, which is considered good. The reliability of the scale would not have been improved by more than .01 with the deletion of an item.

**General Professional Outcome Belief Scale**

The General Professional Outcome Belief Scale is a 10-item scale created to assess the public relations outcomes (*collective action, confidence, credibility, goodwill,*
identification, legitimacy, power, relationship, reputation, and trust) in regard to the extent to which student participants believed each outcome has the potential to benefit or harm their client/organization. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability for the General Professional Outcome Belief Scale was .932, which is considered good. The reliability of the scale would not have been improved by more than .06 with the deletion of an item.

**Specified Public**

The next section of the questionnaire asks participants to respond with respect to a specific Public (Consumers/Distributors/Retailers, whichever is most applicable; Employees; or, the Media), regardless of the Frequency of Interaction.

**Maintain-Gain Scale**

The Maintain-Gain Scale is a 10-item measure that asks participants to indicate whether they are more likely to maintain or gain the public relations outcomes (collective action, confidence, credibility, goodwill, identification, legitimacy, power, relationship, reputation, and trust) for the specified public. A “not applicable” (NA) option is also provided if the participant does not believe it is an outcome of their work or an important feature of the specified public for their client/organization.

The wording of the Maintain-Gain Scale was found to be confusing in the initial pilot test, resulting in a Cronbach’s alpha reliability of .447. After the wording was revised, the scale was retested among a sample of students in an upper-level public relations course, again using 2 questionnaires from each of 12 conditions (n=24). The resulting Cronbach’s alpha reliability was .890, which is considered good, and would not have been improved with the deletion of any items.
Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale

The Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale is a 10-item measure that was created to assess the public relations outcomes (collective action, confidence, credibility, goodwill, identification, legitimacy, power, relationship, reputation, and trust) in regards to how participants believe the specified public would rate each item toward the participant’s client/organization. These items comprise the latent variable, public relations outcomes. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability was .724, which is considered good. The scale would not have been improved by more than .045 with the deletion of an item.

Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale

This 18-item scale was created to assess the latent social capital variable and includes items that comprise the structural dimension (network ties, network configuration, and network norms) and the relational dimension (homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations, and referral). The scale asks participants to respond, again, with respect to the specified public. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability was .714, which is considered good. The scale would not have been improved by more than .028 with the deletion of an item. For the final scale used in the primary study, three items were added due to their perceived relevance for the overall study: one item was added to the structural dimension, and two items were added to the relational dimension.

For certain hypotheses, it was necessary to separate out the structural and relational dimensions of the scale. Thus, the following are worthy of mention.

Structural Dimension Scale. The structural dimension is a 5-item measure that resulted in a Cronbach’s alpha reliability of .741, which is considered good. The reliability of the scale would not have been improved with the deletion of an item.
**Relational Dimension Scale.** The relational dimension is a 13-item measure that resulted in a Cronbach’s alpha reliability of .681, which is considered moderate. The reliability of the scale would not have been improved by more than .037 with the deletion of an item.

**Primary Study**

**Participants and Recruitment.** The current research was approved by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the University of Miami’s Institutional Review Board for distribution to a sample of the PRSA membership. The PRSA is the world's largest and foremost organization of public relations professionals with more than 21,000 public relations and communications professionals across the United States. The online survey was distributed to 8,000 members of the PRSA membership using a probability, simple random sampling method. The data collection period lasted three weeks (May 28 to June 18, 2012). Participants were offered the opportunity to enter to win one of four Amazon.com gift cards worth $25 each as incentive for completing the questionnaire.

The PRSA sent an invitation to participate in this research via email on May 28, 2012 to 5,000 randomly selected members of the professional organization. On June 1, 2012, a reminder email was sent to the same 5,000 members. Due to a low initial response, the PRSA sent an invitation to participate in this research to an additional 3,000 randomly selected members on June 2, 2012. These 3,000 members were sent a reminder email on June 10, 2012. See Appendix A and B for a copy of the invitation to participate and reminder emails, respectively.

**Data Collection and Screening.** Of the 8,000 potential participants, 570 responses (to include clicks on the survey link where no items were answered) were
received (response rate: 7.2%). Of the 570 responses, 252 were excluded due to missing data for a resultant n=318. No responses were included where more than 10% of the data were missing. For any cases included in this research where less than 10% of the data were missing, these missing data were replaced using the series mean whenever appropriate.

**Participant and Organizational Demographics.** Of the 318 participants, the following organizational affiliations were indicated: agency/consultancy (n=60, 18.8%); corporate (n=51, 16%); educator, faculty or academic (n=13, 4.1%); education, public relations staff (n=35, 11%); government/military (n=30, 9.4%); health care (n=16, 5%); independent public relations professional (n=53, 16.6%); nonprofit/association (n=14, 4.4%); professional services (n=7, 2.2%); research provider (n=15, 4.7%), and 8 participants (2.8%) indicated “other,” which included responses such as “foundation,” “in-house agency,” and “publishing” among others.

Participants further indicated the following years of experience working in the public relations industry: None (n=89, 27.9%); 5 or fewer (n=69, 21.6%); 6-10 (n=37, 11.6%); 11-15 (n=99; 31%); and 16 or more (n=2, 0.6%). And, the following individual annual incomes were indicated by participants: $25,000 or less (n=11, 3.4%); $25,001-50,000 (n=84, 26.3%); $50,001-75,000 (n=71, 22.3%); $75,001 or more (n=102, 32%), and 28 participants preferred not to answer (8.8%). The majority of participants indicated that they had not received accreditation in public relations (APR): n=230, 72.1%. Sixty-four participants (20.1%) indicated that they had received accreditation.

Participants further indicated the following age ranges: 18-28 (n=76, 23.8%); 29-39 (n=75, 23.5%); 40-50 (n=75, 23.5%); 51-60 (n=53, 16.6%); and 61 or older (n=17,
5.3%). And, the majority of participants indicated that they were female (n=225, 70.5%) as opposed to male (n=65, 20.4%). Also, the majority of participants indicated that they were “White,” with the following racial backgrounds indicated by participants: Asian (n=4, 1.3%); Black (n=15, 4.7%); Hispanic (n=16, 5%); White (n=251, 78.7%); and other (n=8, 2.5%).

Additionally, participants were asked to indicate the size of their organization/client’s organization for which they considered in responding to the questionnaire. The following organization sizes were indicated by participants based on the number of employees: small or less than 50 employees (n=74, 23.2%); mid-size or between 51-250 employees (n=66, 20.7%); and large or 250 or more employees (n=156, 48.9%).

**Design and Procedure.** The overall questionnaire contained 89 items related to human capital, social capital, financial capital, and both organizational and individual demographic questions. In order to provide more specificity, participants were randomly presented with one of three publics: consumers/distributors/retailers (whichever is most applicable); employees; or, the media. Participants responded to social capital items regarding this specific public, despite the frequency of interaction the participant indicated that they had with the public. Presenting participants with a specific public was important in order to make distinctions for hypotheses that suggested social capital differed based on the frequency of interaction/communication. In other words, the current research sought responses from participants with both high and low levels of interaction with specific organizational publics. Additionally, specificity was increased by asking participants to think of a specific client/organization. The questionnaire text is as follows:
“The remainder of these questions will ask about a specific organizational public. If you have multiple clients/organizations that you work with (if you work for a public relations agency, for example), please think of your primary account or the organization you work with most often and answer the questions accordingly. If you are an educator or non-practicing professional, you may think of a past client/organization.”

Details regarding each measure used in this research are provided as follows. Also, see Appendix C for the full questionnaire.

**Public Relations Competencies Scale.** Adapted from exam preparation materials for Public Relations Accreditation (APR), the Public Relations Competencies Scale is a 23-item scale created to measure the latent human capital variable. Items were generated based on each area covered by the exam and reflect an approximate percent of each area’s content covered by the exam. Participants responded to items using a 5-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The Cronbach’s alpha reliability for the Public Relations Competencies Scale was .925, which is considered good. The reliability of the scale would not have been improved with the deletion of any item.

The dimensionality of the items was analyzed using an unrotated principal component factor analysis with the a priori hypothesis that the measure was unidimensional. The principal component analysis revealed a strong primary factor where only three items loaded higher on a separate factor; however, none of these items differed more than .012 from the primary factor loading.

**Frequency of Interaction and Specified Publics.** Again, participants were randomly assigned one of three publics (consumers/distributors/retailers, whichever is
most applicable; employees; or, the media) and asked to indicate the frequency of interaction they have with that public. Of the 318 participants, n=100 (31.3%) responded to items regarding consumers/distributors/retailers, whichever is most applicable; n=98 (30.7%) responded to items regarding employees; and n=120 (37.6%) responded to items regarding the media.

Participants responded to the following question as to the frequency of their interaction or communication with the specified public: “In the past 12 months, how frequently have you interacted or communicated with [specified public] on behalf of your client/organization?” Participants responded using a 5-point Likert scale from “never” to “always.” The following frequencies were indicated by participants overall: never (n=24, 7.5%), rarely (n=40, 12.5%), sometimes (n=94, 29.5%), most of the time (n=91, 28.5%), and always (n=68, 21.3%). Participants who indicated “never” or “rarely,” (n=64, 20.2%) received an additional question as follows: “You indicated that you have interacted or communicated never or rarely with [specified public] in the past 12 months. Why would you say this is the case?” Participants responding to this item indicated: “It is someone else’s responsibility” (n=40, 12.5%); “It is not a public of concern for my client/organization” (n=13, 4.1%); and other (n=11, 3.4%) for which responses included answers that generally may have been categorized within the two aforementioned options. For example, the following were responses to “other:” “I do not seek out media coverage for my work-college professor; plus, there’s a PR person for the college/university;” “My job focuses primarily on internal and employee communications AND because much of our business is won by bid, this public is not a top public of
concern;” and “I work with B to B more than B to C.” The following table displays the Frequency of Interaction variable as it differed per Specified Public.

Table 3.1 Differences in Frequency of Interaction per Specified Public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Consumers (n=100)</th>
<th>Employees (n=98)</th>
<th>Media (n=120)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8 (8.1%)</td>
<td>9 (9.2%)</td>
<td>7 (5.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>12 (12.1%)</td>
<td>9 (9.2%)</td>
<td>19 (15.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>29 (29.3%)</td>
<td>29 (29.6%)</td>
<td>36 (30.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>31 (31.3%)</td>
<td>29 (29.6%)</td>
<td>31 (25.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>19 (19.2%)</td>
<td>22 (22.4%)</td>
<td>27 (22.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Professional Outcome Belief Scale.** The General Practitioner Outcome Belief Scale is a 10-item scale created to measure the public relations outcomes (collective action, confidence, credibility, goodwill, identification, legitimacy, power, relationship, reputation, and trust) in regards to the extent to which participants believe each outcome has the potential to benefit or harm their client/organization. Participants responded to items using a 5-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The Cronbach’s alpha reliability for the General Professional Outcome Belief Scale was .886, which is considered good. The reliability of the scale would not have been improved by the deletion of any items.

The dimensionality of the items was analyzed using an unrotated principal component factor analysis with the a priori hypothesis that the measure was unidimensional. The principal component analysis revealed a strong primary factor where
only one item loaded higher on a separate factor; however, for this item, the difference was only .046 greater than the primary factor loading.

Participants in this research demonstrated strong agreement to each of the public relations outcome items in the General Professional Outcome Belief Scale, which asks “In general, I believe the following are outcomes that result from my work and have the potential to benefit or hurt my client/organization…” Participants responded to each of the 10 public relations outcomes on a 5-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Results for the extent of agreement to each outcome item are as follows: collective action ($\bar{x}=4.02, SD=.78$); confidence ($\bar{x}=4.41, SD=0.60$); credibility ($\bar{x}=4.65, SD=0.527$); goodwill ($\bar{x}=4.47, SD=0.63$); identification ($\bar{x}=4.21, SD=0.72$); legitimacy ($\bar{x}=4.47, SD=0.61$); power ($\bar{x}=3.75, SD=0.84$); relationship ($\bar{x}=4.62, SD=0.57$); reputation ($\bar{x}=4.63, SD=0.57$); and trust ($\bar{x}=4.63, SD=0.56$). The overall mean for the General Professional Outcome Belief Scale was 4.39 (SD=.45). Participants’ strong agreement with these outcomes provides support for the validity of these items as perceived public relations outcomes that are assessed with regard to specified publics using additional measures in this research (Maintain-Gain Scale and Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale).

The next section of the questionnaire asks participants to respond with respect to the specified public (consumers/distributors/retailers, whichever is most applicable; employees; or, the media), regardless of the frequency of interaction, and with regards to a specific client/organization.

**Maintain-Gain Scale.** The Maintain-Gain Scale is a 10-item measure that asks participants to indicate whether they are more likely to maintain or gain the public
relations outcomes for the specified public. Participants responded to items using a 5-point Likert scale from “maintain” to “gain.” A “not applicable” (NA) option is also provided if the participant did not believe it was an outcome of their work or an important feature of the specified public for their client/organization. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability was .925, which is considered good, and would not have been improved by more than .002 with the deletion of any items.

**Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale.** The Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale is a 10-item measure that asks participants to respond to items related to each of the public relations outcomes (*collective action, confidence, credibility, goodwill, identification, legitimacy, power, relationship, reputation, and trust*) in regards to how they believe the specified public would rate each item toward the participant’s client/organization. These items comprise the latent variable, public relations outcomes. Participants responded to items using a 5-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The Cronbach’s alpha reliability was .830, which is considered good. The scale would not have been improved by more than .056 with the deletion of an item.

The dimensionality of the items was analyzed using an unrotated principal component factor analysis with the a priori hypothesis that the measure was unidimensional. The principal component analysis revealed two primary factors where two items loaded higher on a second factor. These items were regarding the outcome variables *collective action* and *legitimacy*. Also, the item regarding power loaded similarly on both the primary factor and second factor.

**Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale.** This 21-item scale (revised to include three additional items from the initial pilot) underlies the latent social capital
variable and includes items that comprise the *structural dimension* (*network ties, network configuration, and network norms*) and the *relational dimension* (*homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations, and referral*). The scale asks participants to respond, again, with respect to the specified public and client/organization. Participants responded to items using a 5-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The Cronbach’s alpha reliability was .882, which is considered good. The scale would not have been improved with the deletion of an item.

The dimensionality of the items was analyzed using an unrotated principal component factor analysis with the a priori hypothesis that the measure would reveal two dimensions. The principal component analysis revealed two strong primary factors where the structural and relational items loaded as expected.

For certain hypotheses analyzed in this research, it was necessary to separate out the *structural* and *relational* dimensions of the scale. Thus, the following are worthy of mention.

**Structural Dimension Scale.** The structural dimension is a 6-item measure that resulted in a Cronbach’s alpha reliability of .856, which is considered good. The reliability of the scale would not have been improved by more than .006 with the deletion of an item.

**Relational Dimension Scale.** The relational dimension is a 15-item measure that resulted in a Cronbach’s alpha reliability of .883, which is considered good. The reliability of the scale would not have been improved with the deletion of an item.
CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

Again, the final survey instrument was administered to a nationwide sample of public relations professionals via the Public Relations Society of America membership list (PRSA). Data were statistically analyzed as appropriate for each of the 14 hypotheses and one research question posed in this research. Results are detailed as follows.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that Frequency of Interaction will be predicted by homophily; that is, the extent to which professionals believe the public shares beliefs, values, and ideas with the organization. In other words, it was predicted that shared beliefs, values, and ideas between an organization and public will be a predictor of the frequency of interaction indicated by participants. Thus, the homophily item was separated out from the Relational Dimension Scale for regression analysis. Frequency of Interaction was used as the dependent variable and the homophily item was used as the independent variable. Table 4.1 demonstrates the regression results.

Table 4.1 Frequency of Interaction and Homophily Item Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Summary</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>1.1684</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>6.663</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.663</td>
<td>4.881</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>431.387</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>1.365</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>438.050</td>
<td>317</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the homophily item was linearly regressed on the Frequency of Interaction variable, results were significant $F(1, 316) = 4.881, p<.05$. The sample multiple correlation coefficient (R) was .123, which indicates that approximately 1.5% of the variance in Frequency of Interaction indicated by the sample can be accounted for by the homophily item. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was confirmed such that the frequency of interaction indicated by professionals in this research was significantly predicted by the perception of shared beliefs, values, and ideas.

**Research Question 1**

Research Question 1 asked to what extent Frequency of Interaction is predicted by the extent to which professionals perceive the public’s actions *actually impact* and *have the potential to impact* the client/organization because for public relations specifically, the frequency of interaction may be based on opposition (or a lack of shared sentiment, strong ties, dependence, obligations, referral, and so forth) as is the case with advocacy groups or other publics who are not supportive of the organization’s goals. Thus, two items regarding the impact and potential impact, respectively, of the public for the client/organization were separated out from the Relational Dimension Scale for regression analysis. Frequency of Interaction was used as the dependent variable and the two aforementioned action items were used as the independent variables. Table 4.2 displays the regression results.

---

**Coefficients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.808 (.293)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.594</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R3) Homophily</td>
<td>.172 (.078)</td>
<td>.123 (.209)</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---
Table 4.2 Frequency of Interaction and Impact/Potential Impact Regression Results

Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>1.1643</td>
</tr>
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ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>9.657</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.828</td>
<td>3.562</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>428.394</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>1.356</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>438.050</td>
<td>318</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.679</td>
<td>.402</td>
<td>6.660</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R12) Actual Impact</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>2.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R13) Potential Impact</td>
<td>-.052</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td>-.428</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The linear regression of these two items on the Frequency of Interaction variable was significant $F(2, 316) = 3.56, p<.05$. The sample multiple correlation coefficient (R) was .148, which indicates that approximately 2.2% of the variance in Frequency of Interaction indicated by the sample can be accounted for by the sample’s perceived impact and potential impact of the specified public for their client/organization. However, it was found that only the single item regarding the extent to which professionals believe the public’s actions *actually impact* the client/organization was a significant predictor. The *potential impact* did not significantly predict the Frequency of Interaction variable. Thus, Research Question 1 can be answered affirmatively such that the perceived actual
impact of a specified public predicted the frequency of interaction with the public as indicated by public relations professionals in this sample.

**Hypothesis 2**

Next, Hypothesis 2 posited that the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale would be predicted by the relational dimension item focused on referral such that organizations receive indirect benefits or harm from publics through publics’ networks (*the network postulate*). Thus, the referral item was separated out from the Relational Dimension Scale for regression analysis. Table 4.3 displays the regression results.

Table 4.3 Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale and Indirect Benefits Regression Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Summary</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.482</td>
<td>.232</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>.52785</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>26.607</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26.607</td>
<td>95.496</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>88.044</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>.279</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>114.652</td>
<td>317</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.530</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.288</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R11) Referral</td>
<td>.337</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.482</td>
<td>9.772</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the referral item was separated out from the Relational Dimension Scale and linearly regressed on the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale, results were significant $F(1, 316) = 95.4969, p<.000$. The sample multiple correlation coefficient (R)
was .482, which indicates that approximately 23.3% of the variance in the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale (collective action, confidence, credibility, goodwill, identification, legitimacy, power, relationship, reputation, and trust) indicated by the sample can be accounted for by the referral item. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was confirmed such that referral directly impacted the public relations outcomes posed in this research.

**Hypothesis 3**

Hypothesis 3 predicted that the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale would differ based on which public is specified (consumers/distributors/retailers, employees, or the media). A one-way univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated in addition to Tukey’s post-hoc significant difference test. The specified public was used as the independent variable and the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale was used as the dependent variable. Table 4.4 displays the results.

Table 4.4 Differences in Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale per Specified Public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specified Public</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumers/Distributors/Retailers</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results indicated that there were significant differences $F(2, 315) = 5.66, p<.01$ among the specified publics regarding the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale. The Tukey’s post-hoc significant difference test indicated that there were no significant
differences in outcomes between consumers/distributors/retailers and employees. However, significant differences ($p < .05$) existed in regards to the following combinations: consumers/distributors/retailers and the media; employees and the media. Participants indicated more agreement that the specified public would indicate an outcome (*collective action, confidence, credibility, goodwill, identification, legitimacy, power, relationship, reputation, and trust*) when the specified public was consumers/distributors/retailers or employees as opposed to the media. In other words, participants indicated a higher level of agreement to public relations outcomes when the specified public was consumers/distributors/retailers or employees as opposed to the media. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was confirmed such that public relations outcomes differed when the media (as opposed to consumers/distributors/retailers or employees) were the specified public.

**Hypothesis 4**

Similarly, Hypothesis 4 predicted that the Maintain-Gain Scale would differ based on which public was specified (consumers/distributors/retailers, employees, or the media). A one-way univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated in addition to Tukey’s post-hoc significant difference test. The specified public was used as the independent variable and the Maintain-Gain Scale was used as the dependent variable. Results indicated that there were no significant differences $F(2, 315) = .232, p > .05$ among the specified publics regarding the Maintain-Gain Scale. Thus, Hypothesis 4 was rejected such that there were no significant differences found for participants’ responses to the Maintain-Gain Scale based on the specified public.
Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 predicted that public relations professionals would indicate that their function is to maintain and gain public relations outcomes on behalf of the client/organization such that professionals will generally not select “not applicable (NA)” on the Maintain-Gain Scale. A simple frequency count of NA responses to the Maintain-Gain Scale for each of the public relations outcome items indicated the following:
collective action (n=63, 19.7%); confidence (n=15, 4.7%); credibility (n=11, 3.4%);
goodwill (n=14, 4.4%); identification (n=27, 8.5%); legitimacy (n=13, 4.1%); power (n=61, 19.1%);
relationship (n=12, 3.8%); reputation (n=11, 3.4%); and trust (n=12, 3.8%). For no single outcome did the majority of participants select NA. Thus, Hypothesis 5 was confirmed such that the majority of participants indicated that they sought to maintain or gain the public relations outcomes used in this research.

Further, strong agreement with the aforementioned General Professional Outcome Belief Scale provides evidence to the idea that of those participants who selected NA, it would seem that the majority believed the outcome was not a feature of the specified public (as opposed to did not believe it was an outcome whatsoever). The following analysis was run to add further support to this idea: Responses where NA was selected were separated out for each Maintain-Gain Scale item, and descriptive analyses were run on the General Professional Outcome Belief Scale. For each item (using only participant data who selected NA for the Maintain-Gain Scale), the following mean agreement was indicated for the General Professional Outcome Belief Scale: collective action (n=63, $\bar{x}=4.23$, SD=.51); confidence (n=15, $\bar{x}=4.19$, SD=.48); credibility (n=11, $\bar{x}=4.20$, SD=.52); goodwill (n=14, $\bar{x}=4.15$, SD=.48); identification (n=27, $\bar{x}=4.11$, SD=.46);
legitimacy (n=13, \( \bar{x} = 4.21, SD = .52 \)); power (n=61, \( \bar{x} = 4.21, SD = .52 \)); relationship (n=12, \( \bar{x} = 4.20, SD = .52 \)); reputation (n=11, \( \bar{x} = 4.23, SD = .53 \)); and trust (n=12, \( \bar{x} = 4.17, SD = .50 \)).

This strong agreement among those who selected NA indicated that they seemed to believe that the outcome was not a feature of the specified public (as opposed to not a public relations outcome whatsoever).

**Hypothesis 6**

Hypothesis 6 posited that the Maintain-Gain Scale of public relations outcomes would be predicted by the Relational Dimension Scale such that the relational features (*homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations*, and *referral*) found between an organization and its publics would influence the extent to which outcomes are sought to be maintained or gained by the public relations professional. When the Relational Dimension Scale was linearly regressed on the Maintain-Gain Scale, results were not significant: \( F(1, 316) = .005, p > .05 \).

To this extent it was reasoned that more diversity in the Maintain-Gain scale may support the hypothesis. Therefore, the 5-point Maintain-Gain Scale was dummy coded into a 2-variable scale where responses with values of “1” or “2” were considered “maintain” and coded as “1,” and responses with values of “4” or “5” were considered “gain” and coded as “2.” Responses in the middle (“3”) and responses of “not applicable” were coded as missing data, so they did not enter into the analysis.

For this recoded categorical data, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted on each public relations outcome item to determine if the “maintain” or “gain” categories affected scores on the Relational Dimension Scale. To answer the hypothesis to this
extent, 10 separate tests were run, which therefore required that to meet significance, the
t-statistic for each test would need to be less than .005 (10 tests divided by \( p < .05 \)).

First, however, results must meet the equality of variances assumption, which
uses the Levene’s test for equality of variances. Five of the outcome items (credibility,
goodwill, legitimacy, trust, and power) indicated a nonsignificant Levene’s test for
equality of variances \( (p > .05) \), which means that equal variance is assumed. Again, this is
a necessary assumption for independent samples \( t \)-tests. The remaining five outcome
items (confidence, reputation, relationships, identification, and collective action) did not
demonstrate equality of variance \( (p < .05) \). In other words, five variables were
uninterpretable in providing evidence to the hypothesis.

Thus results of the mean differences for those outcome items that met the equality
of variances assumption are as follows: credibility \( t (273) = -23.87, p < .000 \); goodwill \( t \)
\( (263) = -18.30, p < .000 \); legitimacy, \( t (270) = -21.99, p < .000 \); trust, \( t (263) = -23.09, p < .000 \);
and power, \( t (208) = -13.57, p < .000 \). All of these statistical comparisons met the
aforementioned \( p < .005 \) criteria necessary for such an approach. Therefore, Hypothesis 6
was accepted such that nominal-level data difference analyses indicated statistically
significant differences in the maintain and gain categories for public relations outcomes
(credibility, goodwill, legitimacy, trust, and power) based on the relational features
between organizations and publics as indicated by participants in this research. Because
the other five items did not meet the Levene’s test assumption, they were uninterpretable
in regards to Hypothesis 6.
Hypothesis 7

Hypothesis 7 stated that maintaining resources would be more common than gaining resources for public relations outcomes such that the overall mean for the Maintain-Gain Scale would indicate accordingly. A simple descriptive statistics analysis indicated the following results for each outcome: collective action ($\bar{x}=2.62$, $SD=1.89$); confidence ($\bar{x}=2.67$, $SD=1.75$); credibility ($\bar{x}=2.65$, $SD=1.72$); goodwill ($\bar{x}=2.52$, $SD=1.69$); identification ($\bar{x}=2.97$, $SD=1.81$); legitimacy ($\bar{x}=2.49$, $SD=1.69$); power ($\bar{x}=2.28$, $SD=1.78$); relationship ($\bar{x}=3.06$, $SD=1.69$); reputation ($\bar{x}=2.72$, $SD=1.71$); and trust ($\bar{x}=2.71$, $SD=1.70$). Nine of the ten outcomes revealed a mean closer to maintain than gain, whereas only the “relationship” outcome had a mean closer to gain by .06. The overall mean for the Maintain Gain Scale was 2.67 ($SD=1.35$), indicating means closer to the “maintain” end of the scale. Thus, Hypothesis 7 is confirmed such that maintaining public relations outcomes was indicated more often than gaining public relations outcomes by participants in this research.

Hypothesis 8

Hypothesis 8 posited that the Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale would predict the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale. Although this predictive relationship is a hypothesized path within the overall Social Capital Model of Public Relations (see Hypothesis 14), the current hypothesis allowed for a solitary predictive assessment. Thus, Table 4.5 displays the regression results.
When the Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale was linearly regressed on the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale, results were significant $F(1, 317) = 134.28$, $p<.000$. The sample multiple correlation coefficient (R) was .545, which indicates that 29.8% of the variance in the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale can be accounted for by the Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale. Thus, Hypothesis 8 was confirmed such that the interaction of the structure of the specified public with the resource- and exchange-based relational items between the public and client/organization accounted for a significant portion of the variance in the public relations outcomes as indicated by participants in this research.
Hypothesis 9

Hypothesis 9 predicted that demographic items (age, gender, race, current position, income, years of industry experience, APR, and approvable organization) would predict the Relational Dimension Scale such that these individual differences place participants at differing positions of origin (Loury, 1977) that were hypothesized to impact *homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations*, and *referral* (relational dimension components). When the demographic variables were linearly regressed on the Relational Dimension Scale, results were not significant $F(9, 308) = 1.475, p>.05$.

A backward, stepwise regression was then performed to determine if any significant combination of the demographic items would predict the Relational Dimension Scale. The overall model became significant with the deletion of race, income, years of experience, and one of the two approvable organization items. The deleted approvable organization item is as follows, “I often use connections made within the workplace to achieve personal benefits.” The remaining, significant model ($F(5, 312) = 2.377, p<.05$) contained the following demographic items: age, gender, current position, APR, and one of the two approvable organization items. The approvable organization item in the significant model is as follows: “I often use connections made outside the workplace to achieve outcomes in the workplace.” The sample multiple correlation coefficient ($R$) was .192, which indicates that 3.8% of the variance in the Relational Dimension Scale can be accounted for by the aforementioned demographic items. However, only the approvable organization item was a significant predictor of the Relational Scale. Table 4.6 displays the backward step-wise regression results.
Table 4.6 Demographic Items and Relational Dimension Scale Regression Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Summary</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.192</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.54864</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>3.571</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.714</td>
<td>2.377</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>93.611</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>.301</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>97.300</td>
<td>317</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>3.456</td>
<td>.197</td>
<td>17.573</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriable Org</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.152</td>
<td>2.679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current Position</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>.884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.049</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>-.103</td>
<td>-1.736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.077</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>-.056</td>
<td>-.991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APR</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>1.190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, Hypothesis 9 was confirmed such that the appropriable organization item regarding connections made outside the workplace used to achieve outcomes in the workplace significantly predicted the relational dimension.

**Hypothesis 10**

Similarly, Hypothesis 10 predicted that the one-item assessment of public relations roles (manager/technician dichotomy) would predict the Relational Dimension Scale such that this difference in position of origin (as more likely to practice “excellent” public relations) was hypothesized to impact *homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations, and referral* (relational dimension components). An independent samples *t*-
test was conducted on the Relational Dimension Scale to determine if the manager or technician categories affected scores on the Relational Dimension Scale. Results of the Levene’s test for equality of variances were not significant, indicating that equality of variances is assumed. However, results of the \( t \)-test equality of means were not significant, indicating that significant differences do not exist between manager and technicians mean scores on the relational dimension: \( t(251) = -1.56, p = .120 \). Thus, Hypothesis 10 was rejected such that difference analysis failed to demonstrate significance. In other words, the public relations roles item did not significantly predict differences in the \textit{homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations, and referral} (relational dimension components).

**Hypothesis 11**

Hypothesis 11 predicted that the Maintain-Gain Scale would be negatively correlated with the Relational Dimension Scale such that the more positive the relational components (\textit{homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations, and referral}), the more likely maintenance via expressive actions would be indicated and vice versa as related to gaining resources via instrumental action (based on the \textit{strength-of-strong-tie} and \textit{strength-of-weak-tie propositions}). A Pearson’s product moment correlation revealed a negative, but nonsignificant correlation, although results approached significance (\( r = - .135, p = .052 \)). Thus, Hypothesis 11 was rejected.

**Hypothesis 12**

Hypothesis 12 stated that Frequency of Interaction and the Relational Dimension Scale would predict the Maintain-Gain Scale. When the combination of Frequency of Interaction and the Relational Dimension Scale were linearly regressed on the Maintain-
Gain Scale, results approached significance $F(2, 316) = 2.93, p=0.055$. The sample multiple correlation coefficient (R) was .135, which indicates that 1.8% of the variance in the Maintain-Gain Scale indicated by the sample would be accounted for by Frequency of Interaction and the Relational Dimension Scale had results reached significance. Thus, Hypothesis 12 was rejected.

**Hypothesis 13**

Hypothesis 13 predicted that the Structural Dimension Scale would positively correlate with the Maintain-Gain Scale such that network ties, network configuration, and norms among the specified public may indicate higher levels of potential resources that are sought to be gained via instrumental action. A Pearson’s product moment correlation revealed a positive, but small and nonsignificant correlation ($r=0.053, p>0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 13 was rejected.

**Hypothesis 14**

Hypothesis 14 posited that the Social Capital Model of Public Relations would predict perceived financial performance such that the Public Relations Competencies Scale (human capital) was hypothesized to predict the Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale and Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale. Also, relevant interval-level demographic variables (age, years of experience, and annual income) were hypothesized as predictors of the latent human capital variable. The Structural-Relational Social Capital scale, thus, was hypothesized to predict the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale (see Hypothesis 8), and the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale was hypothesized to predict perceived financial performance. The hypothesized paths are demonstrated as follows:
H14a-c. The individual demographic variables—(a) age; (b) years of experience, and (c) annual income—will positively influence the latent Human Capital Variable.

H14d. The latent Human Capital variable will positively influence the latent Social Capital variable.

H14e. The latent Human Capital variable will positively influence the latent Public Relations Outcomes variable.

H14f. The latent Social Capital variable will positively influence the latent Public Relations Outcomes variable.

H14g. The latent Public Relations Outcomes variables will positively influence the perceived financial capital of an organization.

The model scales were first analyzed via confirmatory factor analyses. The model was then analyzed using structural equation modeling to include maximum likelihood estimation. Goodness of fit was assessed via the following statistics: model Chi-square, relative Chi-square (CMIN/DF), comparative fit index (CFI), non-normed fit index or Tucker-Lewis rho index (TLI), and root-mean-square error of percentage (RMSEA).

**Confirmatory Factor Analyses.** Confirmatory factor analyses were performed for items predicting latent variables in the measurement model to include the Public Relations Competencies Scale items (latent: human capital), the Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale items (latent: social capital), and the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale items (latent: public relations outcomes). Confirmatory factory analysis was conducted to confirm consistency with the previous exploratory factor analyses and to demonstrate the validity of the measures to the extent that individual scale items
contribute to each relevant latent variable; that is, convergent and divergent validity. The modeling results indicated a satisfactory fit: $\chi^2(1319) = 2112.335, p<.000$, CMIN/DF = 1.601; CFI = .931; TLI = .902; RMSEA = .043 with 90 percent confidence interval of RMSEA between .040 and .047. The significant Chi-square indicates a bad fit of the predicted model to the data. However, according to the values of the CMIN/DF, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA, the model demonstrated good fit to the data.

Table 4.7 displays the confirmatory factor analysis estimates for each item in the Public Relations Competencies Scale as it predicted the latent human capital variable. All coefficients were significant at $p<.000$.

Table 4.7 Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Public Relations Competencies Scale as indicative of Human Capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Unstzd. Coefficient</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Critical Ratio</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Stzd. Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Distinguish between goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics</td>
<td>.804</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>12.025</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Segment publics and tailor messages</td>
<td>.843</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>12.173</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Determine if public relations goals and objectives were met</td>
<td>.976</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>11.600</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Use qualitative and quantitative research methodologies</td>
<td>1.012</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>9.438</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Justify the budget for public relations</td>
<td>.887</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>9.121</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Follow the four-step strategic planning process</td>
<td>1.372</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>10.641</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Identify stakeholders</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>12.465</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Strategically position the client/organization</td>
<td>1.024</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>12.832</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Adhere to professional codes of ethics</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>8.566</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Explain relevant laws governing my profession</td>
<td>.947</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>8.541</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Explain the various models of communication</td>
<td>.922</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>8.531</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Explain the various theories of communication</td>
<td>1.035</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>9.181</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Explain how clients/organizations generate revenue</td>
<td>1.028</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>11.354</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Unstzd. Coefficient</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Critical Ratio</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>Stzd. Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. This public consists of many well-connected individuals (S)</td>
<td>.443</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>4.653</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. This public consists of many influential individuals (S)</td>
<td>.376</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>3.862</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. This public consists of many powerful individuals (S)</td>
<td>.386</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>3.658</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. This public consists of individuals who generally know one another (S)</td>
<td>.375</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>3.478</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. This public has strong ties to one another (S)</td>
<td>.607</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>5.551</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. This public has shared norms among them (S)</td>
<td>.482</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>5.166</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My client/organization impacts others with whom they have close ties (R)</td>
<td>.883</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>7.913</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My client/organization impacts their community or society, in general (R)</td>
<td>.834</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>7.450</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.484</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, Table 4.8 displays the confirmatory factor analysis estimates for each item in the Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale as it predicted the latent social capital variable. All coefficients were significant at $p < .000$.

Table 4.8 Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale as indicative of Social Capital
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>This public shares beliefs, values, and ideas similar to my client/organization (R)</td>
<td>.945</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>8.494</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>This public does not have strong ties to my client/organization (R)</td>
<td>.820</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>6.551</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>This public has expectations of my client/organization (R)</td>
<td>.979</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>9.058</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>This public depends on my client/organization (R)</td>
<td>1.293</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>9.118</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>This public has obligations to my client/organization (R)</td>
<td>.774</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>5.908</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>This public reciprocates when my client/organization does right by them (R)</td>
<td>.966</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>8.635</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>My client/organization depends on this public (R)</td>
<td>1.226</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>9.634</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>My client/organization has obligations to this public (R)</td>
<td>1.150</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>9.070</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>This public recommends my client/organization to others in their social circles (R)</td>
<td>.982</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>8.771</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>The actions of this public have a major impact on my client/organization (R)</td>
<td>.953</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>8.740</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>The actions of this public have the potential to have a major impact on my client/organization (R)</td>
<td>.757</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>8.019</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Actions that are beneficial for this public are often beneficial for my client/organization, as well (R)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>.610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Actions that hurt this public, often hurt my client/organization as well (R)</td>
<td>1.092</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>13.399</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.605</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(S)=Structural Dimension Items; (R)=Relational Dimension Items

Table 4.9 displays the confirmatory factor analysis estimates for each item in the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale as it predicted the latent public relations outcomes variable. All coefficients were significant at p<.000, except for the single item assessing the public relations outcome of collective action.
Table 4.9 Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale as indicative of Public Relations Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Unstzd. Coefficient</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Critical Ratio</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Stzd. Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My client/organization has a good reputation (REPUTATION)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>.861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My client/organization can be trusted (TRUST)</td>
<td>1.019 .037</td>
<td>27.460</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.898</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My client/organization is credible (CREDIBILITY)</td>
<td>.988 .045</td>
<td>22.118</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.927</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My client/organization will do what it says it will do (CONFIDENCE)</td>
<td>.880 .054</td>
<td>16.389</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.790</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My client/organization has a good relationship with them (RELATIONSHIP)</td>
<td>.866 .053</td>
<td>16.391</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My client/organization has power because of them (POWER)</td>
<td>.654 .074</td>
<td>8.879</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.483</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My client/organization is able to exist and operate because of them (LEGITIMACY)</td>
<td>.507 .088</td>
<td>5.784</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My client/organization hinders them from taking collective action (COLLECTIVE ACTION)</td>
<td>-.060 .080</td>
<td>-.746</td>
<td>.456</td>
<td>-.043</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My client/organization is an organization they personally identify with (IDENTIFICATION)</td>
<td>.619 .068</td>
<td>9.060</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. When faced with a situation where their actions could be beneficial or detrimental to my organization, this public would choose the beneficial action (GOODWILL)</td>
<td>.645 .062</td>
<td>10.339</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.556</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, then, it appears that the confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated consistency with the prior exploratory factor analysis and the scale items generally served as valid predictors of the latent variables used in this research. Thus, latent variables will be referred to hereafter in all relevant discussion (as opposed to scales).

**Social Capital Model of Public Relations.** To test the Social Capital Model of Public Relations (Hypothesis 14a-g), a structural equation modeling analysis was performed on the hypothesized model (see Figure 2.5). The modeling results indicated a
The significant Chi-square indicates a bad fit of the predicted model to the data. However, according to the values of the CMIN/DF, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA, the model demonstrated good fit to the data, and most of the hypotheses (14a-g) were supported. Specifically, Hypothesis 14a-c predicted that demographic variables (age, years of experience, and annual income) would positively influence the latent Human Capital variable. Hypothesis 14a demonstrated that age did not have a positive or significant influence on Human Capital ($\beta = -0.097, p > .05$). However, Hypothesis 14b and 14c demonstrated the positive significant influence of years of experience ($\beta = 0.354, p < .000$) and annual income ($\beta = 0.173, p < .05$) on Human Capital.

Next, Hypothesis 14d predicted that Human Capital would positively influence Social Capital, and Hypothesis 14e predicted that Human Capital would positively influence Public Relations Outcomes. Human Capital was not found to have a significant influence on Social Capital ($\beta = 0.068, p > .05$). However, Human Capital was found to have a positive, significant influence on Public Relations Outcomes ($\beta = 0.114, p < .05$).

Hypothesis 14f predicted that Social Capital would have a positive influence on Public Relations Outcomes, and modeling results confirmed this hypothesis ($\beta = 0.398, p < .000$). Last, Hypothesis 14g predicted that Public Relations Outcomes would positively influence the perceived financial capital of an organization. Results confirmed this final model hypothesis ($\beta = 0.200, p < .05$). Table 4.10 demonstrates the structural equation modeling estimates for Hypothesis 14a-g, and Table 4.11 demonstrates the standardized direct and indirect model effects. Further, Figure 4.1 is included to depict the hypotheses.
testing and displays the standardized results of the Social Capital Model of Public Relations.

**Model Revision.** Although the hypothesized Social Capital Model of Public Relations indicated satisfactory fit, it was necessary to revise the model given that two nonsignificant hypothesized paths (Hypotheses 14a and 14d) were indicated. The purpose of such revision is to identify a model that is “both substantially meaningful and statistically well fitting” (Byrne, 1998, p. 8) or “to find the model with the properly specified covariance structure that fits the data and is theoretically justifiable” (Kline, 2011, p. 215). Thus, empirically based model trimming was conducted on the two nonsignificant parameters; that is, the two non-significant paths (Hypothesis 14a and d) were dropped in the revised model.

The models were compared using a nested competing models approach in order that revisions were analyzed statistically rather than qualitatively (Keith, 2006). The revised model demonstrated a satisfactory fit: $\chi^2 (1487) = 2293.812, p < .000; \text{CMIN/DF} = 1.543; \text{CFI} = .916; \text{TLI} = .907; \text{RMSEA} = .041$ with 90 percent confidence interval of RMSEA between .038 and .045. The significant Chi-square indicates a bad fit of the predicted model to the data. However, according to the values of the CMIN/DF, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA the model demonstrated good fit to the data.

The Chi-square difference between the revised and original hypothesized model was not statistically significant $\Delta \chi^2 (2) = 2.801, p > .05$, indicating that the revised model fit as well as the original hypothesized model. The value of parsimony suggests that “given two models with similar fit to the same data, the simpler model is preferred, assuming that the model is theoretically plausible” (Kline, 2011, p. 102). Further, the
lower AIC and BIC measures indicated by the revised model suggest better fit. Table 4.12 displays the model fit comparisons.
Table 4.10 Hypothesized Social Capital Model of Public Relations Structural Equation Modeling Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Unstzd. Coefficient</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Critical Ratio</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Stzd. Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H14a. Human Capital ← Age</td>
<td>-.043</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>-1.277</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>-.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H14b. Human Capital ← Years Experience</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>4.332</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H14c. Human Capital ← Income</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>2.501</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
<td>.173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H14d. Social Capital ← Human Capital</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>1.089</td>
<td>.276</td>
<td>.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H14e. PR Outcomes ← Human Capital</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>2.414</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
<td>.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H14f. PR Outcomes ← Social Capital</td>
<td>.587</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>5.890</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H14g. Financial Capital ← PR Outcomes</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>1.983</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
<td>.160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11 Hypothesized Social Capital Model of Public Relations Direct and Indirect Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Human Capital</th>
<th>Social Capital</th>
<th>PR Outcomes</th>
<th>Financial Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.097</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-.097</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Experience</td>
<td>.354</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>.354</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Capital</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Capital</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR Outcomes</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.1 Hypothesized Social Capital Model of Public Relation

- Age
- Experience
- Income

Human Capital

Public Relations Outcomes

Social Capital

Financial Capital

Arrows indicate the direction of influence:
- Age to Human Capital: -.10
- Experience to Human Capital: .35
- Income to Human Capital: .17
- Human Capital to Public Relations Outcomes: .11
- Human Capital to Social Capital: .07
- Public Relations Outcomes to Financial Capital: .16
- Social Capital to Financial Capital: .40
Table 4.12 Comparison of Hypothesized and Revised Social Capital Model of Public Relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$\Delta\chi^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta$df</th>
<th>$P$</th>
<th>AIC</th>
<th>BIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesized</td>
<td>1.543</td>
<td>1485</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>2987.011</td>
<td>3145.559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised</td>
<td>1.543</td>
<td>1487</td>
<td>2.801</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.246</td>
<td>2985.812</td>
<td>3143.449</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the revised Social Capital Model of Public Relations was retained as the final research framework for relevant interpretation and discussion. Table 4.13 demonstrates the structural equation modeling estimates for the revised model, and Table 4.14 demonstrates the standardized direct and indirect model effects. Further, Figure 4.2 is included to depict the hypotheses testing and displays the standardized results of the revised Social Capital Model of Public Relations.
Table 4.13 Revised Social Capital Model of Public Relations Structural Equation Modeling Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Unstzd. Coefficient</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Critical Ratio</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Stzd. Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H14b. Human Capital ← Years Experience</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>4.359</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H14c. Human Capital ← Income</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>2.278</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
<td>.153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H14e. PR Outcomes ← Human Capital</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>2.421</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
<td>.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H14f. PR Outcomes ← Social Capital</td>
<td>.588</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>5.901</td>
<td>&lt;.000</td>
<td>.399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H14g. Financial Capital ← PR Outcomes</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>1.977</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
<td>.160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.14 Revised Social Capital Model of Public Relations Direct and Indirect Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Human Capital</th>
<th>PR Outcomes</th>
<th>Financial Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Experience</td>
<td>.299</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Capital</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Capital</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR Outcomes</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.2 Revised Social Capital Model of Public Relations
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

The current research suggested social capital as a meta-theory of public relations and a complementary/competing model to the dominant normative paradigm, excellence theory (Grunig, 1992). This research then presented strong theoretical evidence for such an approach and proceeded with the creation of a public relations conceptualization, definition, and assessment of social capital that was used in direct relation to human and financial capital.

Extant literature was first explored and provided theoretical and empirical sources from which the current conceptualization, definition, and assessment were drawn. The resulting conceptualization posited a Social Capital Model of Public Relations that is defined as follows: **Social capital is facilitated by public relations knowledge, skills, and competencies that impact the interaction of the structure of publics and components of relationships with those publics from which professionals maintain and gain social resources to be exchanged for organizational outcomes.**

Social capital postulates and propositions were drawn primarily from Lin (2001) and tested accordingly in a public relations context (Hypotheses 1-13 and Research Question 1).

The postulates and propositions as well as the Social Capital Model of Public Relations (Hypothesis 14) were operationalized and tested using the following variables and scales: Public Relations Competencies Scale, Specified Public, Frequency of Interaction, General Public Relations Professional Outcome Belief Scale, Maintain-Gain Scale, Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale, Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale, Financial Capital, and individual and organizational demographic items. All relevant scales were found to be reliable and both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses.
generally loaded as expected. Thus, the following latent variables are referred to in all relevant discussion: human capital, social capital, public relations outcomes (again, considered social resources in this conceptualization), and financial capital.

The major results of this research are discussed as follows in relation to each of Lin’s (2001) postulates and propositions, which were used to guide this research, for a public relations specific context.

First, based on the *structural postulate* and *structural contingency proposition* (Lin, 2001), five assumptions were posed for social capital in a public relations context and are worthy of mention again here:

1. *The structural postulate*: Valued resources are embedded in social structures in which positions, authority, rules, and occupants (agents) usually form pyramidal hierarchies in terms of the distributions of valued resources, number of positions, level of authority, and number of occupants. The higher the level in the hierarchy, the greater the concentration of valued resources, the fewer the number of positions, the greater the command of authority, and the smaller the number of occupants (Lin, 2001, p. 75).

   - Assumption 1a: Valued resources are embedded in the social structures of publics.
   - Assumption 1b: Valued resources are embedded in the social structures of organizations.
   - Assumption 1c: These social resources are brokered by public relations professionals.
   - Assumption 1d: The hierarchical relationship differs based on perspective and which resource is valued.
2. *The structural contingency proposition:* The networking (tie and location) effects are constrained by the hierarchical structure for actors located near or at the top and bottom of the hierarchy (Lin, 2001, p. 76).

- Assumption 1e: Generally, public relations professionals are the facilitators of social capital for an organization due to their unique mid-level position within the organizational hierarchy. However, the public relations outcomes are constrained when professionals are located at the top of the organizational hierarchy or at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy.

Discussion of extant literature provided a strong foundation for these assumptions to be applied to public relations via social capital theory. In order to keep the amount of questionnaire items reasonable, this research relied on such extant research for the posed assumptions. However, the current research did provide for some superficial points of analysis that contributed to the validity of these assumptions. For example, resources facilitated by public relations was assessed generally to include a question as to the extent to which professionals believe each (*collective action, confidence, credibility, goodwill, identification, legitimacy, power, relationship, reputation, and trust*) was a potential outcome of their work that served to benefit or hurt their organization. Strong agreement to the General Professional Outcome Belief Scale was demonstrated, which provided support for the notion of socially embedded resources in publics (Assumption 1a).

Further, the dependence and obligations components of the relational dimension of social capital provided support for the presence of resources embedded in organizational social structures for which publics place value (Assumption 1b). The mean for the dependence and obligations items are presented accordingly, as follows:
dependence ($\bar{x} = 3.62, SD=1.04$); obligations ($\bar{x} = 3.09, SD=1.10$). In other words, professionals indicated agreement that the specified public both depends on and has obligations to their client/organization. It may then be reasoned that publics place value on resources embedded within organizations.

This research further argued the boundary spanning role of the public relations professional and posited that such a conceptualization of the role of public relations suggests that the professional serves as broker of social resources, filling a structural hole between the organization and public (Assumption 1c). The overall significant results of the Social Capital Model of Public Relations among the sample of public relations professionals used in this research provided support for such an assumption.

Related, the hierarchical location of public relations was discussed at length (see Figure 2.1), specifically as it relates to the perspective from which the exchange is viewed and the resource that is valued. Assumption 1d requires further analysis focused on the hierarchical relationship between organizations and publics as related to both tangible and intangible resources.

The last of the posed assumptions (Assumption 1e) suggested that the efforts of public relations professionals in facilitating social resources are constrained when professionals are located at the top of the organizational hierarchy or at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy. This assumption suggests an internal analysis of the public relations department and/or organization as a whole. As such, this assumption requires further analysis into the organizational structure (as opposed to the structure of the specified public analyzed in this research) or institutionalized collective public relations department.
Given these prior assumptions, 14 hypotheses and one research question were tested and are discussed as follows.

**Interaction Postulate**

*The interaction postulate* suggests that “interactions usually occur among actors with similar or contiguous characteristics of resources and lifestyles—following the homophily principle. The greater the similarity of resource characteristics, the less effort required in interaction” (Lin, 2001, p. 75). Hypotheses 1 and Research Question 1 sought to confirm and explore, respectively, this postulate in a public relations context.

Hypothesis 1 was confirmed such that the frequency of interaction between public relations professionals in this research and specified publics are dictated by perceptions of homophily (Hypothesis 1). In other words, the perceived shared beliefs, values, and ideas between the organization and public was a significant predictor of the frequency of interaction indicated by professionals with specified publics.

Specifically within a public relations context, it was further important to separately analyze frequency of interaction in regards to the perceived *actual* and *potential impact* (Research Question 1) of the specified public because interaction may be based on opposition such as is the case with advocacy groups, for example. Research Question 1 was answered affirmatively such that the perceived *actual impact* of a public predicted the frequency of interaction. In other words, the perceived *actual impact* separate from perceptions regarding shared sentiment and resources, strength of ties, dependence, obligations, or referral also significantly predicted the frequency of interaction indicated by professionals with specified publics.
Thus, it seems that the *interaction postulate* is generally supported for a social capital theory of public relations. The combination of results from Hypothesis 1 and Research Question 1 suggests that public relations professionals not only communicate more frequently with publics that are perceived as having similar beliefs, values, and ideas to that of their client/organization, but also with publics that are perceived as having an actual impact (but not potential impact) on their client/organization.

From a practical standpoint, this is reasonable to expect because (for maintaining as opposed to gaining resources, which were indicated most often by professionals in this research: see Hypothesis 7), communicating with *homophilous* publics: (1) requires less effort; (2) produces a higher return; and (3) may be those who professionals perceived of as having an *actual impact* on their client/organization. For example, consumers who purchase a specific organization’s product (have an actual impact) likely share beliefs, values, and ideas similar to the organization such that they choose that brand over others. Thus, public relations professionals communicate more frequently with this public.

It was interesting to find that the *potential impact* was not a significant predictor of frequency of interaction, despite the fact that *actual impact* was and that the overall frequency of interaction with the specified publics was generally high. This suggests that the potential impact of a specified public does not enter into the frequency of communication aimed at the specified publics. From a practical standpoint, this could possibly be explained such that (for maintaining as opposed to gaining resources, which were indicated most often by professionals in this research; see Hypothesis 7) communicating with *heterophilous* publics (that is, those who lack shared beliefs, values, and ideas) are conceived of more so in regards to having a *potential impact*; that is, the
public will only arise as a public of concern to the organization when the heterophily of beliefs, values, and ideas come into direct conflict between the public and organization. Such heterophilous interactions, then, require more effort with a lower return. In other words, the efforts aimed at such heterophilous publics that may only have a potential impact on the professionals’ client/organization do not generally impact the frequency of interaction such that the high effort required will produce a low return.

In order to increase the generalizability of the specified publics for professionals participating in this research, the current research did not opt to specifically include publics that are generally considered in opposition to organizations (advocacy groups, for example). Thus, future research may be aimed at such considerations focused on heterophily and potential impact between organizations and publics as relevant to the frequency of interaction or the interaction postulate.

The Network Postulate

The network postulate suggests that “in social networks, directly and indirectly, interacting actors carry varying types of resources. Some of these resources are in their personal possession (personal resources or human capital), but most of the resources are embedded in others with whom each actor is in contact, directly or indirectly, or they are embedded in structural positions each actor occupies or is in contact with. And, the definition suggests that these structurally embedded resources are social capital for the actors in those networks” (Lin, 2001, p. 75).

Hypotheses 2 and 3 provided support for the network postulate in a public relations context such that it was determined that referral was a significant predictor of public relations outcomes (Hypothesis 2), and these outcomes significantly differed based
on the public that was specified (Hypothesis 3). Because referral was a significant predictor of public relations outcomes, it suggests that these social resources are affected indirectly; that is, via referral. In other words, this provides evidence to the notion that “most of the resources are embedded in others” with whom the professionals in this research believed the public has contact. Referral, then, from a practical standpoint suggests that third-party endorsement directly impacts social resources. This should not be surprising and is a generally accepted notion in the public relations literature.

Further, because the social resources differed by specified public (for the media, specifically), it is confirmed that publics “carry varying types of resources.” In the current research, the media as a specified public were indicated as having fewer social resources overall for each of the 10 public relations outcomes than were consumers or employees. From a practical standpoint, this indicates that professionals may seek out differing social resources based on the public.

This is also particularly interesting in regards to the previously mentioned organization linkage model, which identifies stakeholders via their relationships with the organization (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). To review, consumers/distributors/retailers and employees both fall within the functional linkages; that is, these stakeholders are essential for the function of the organization and are subcategorized into input functions who provide labor and resources (employees) and output functions who consume products and services (consumers/distributors/retailers). The media, on the other hand, are categorized as a diffused linkage such that “they include stakeholders who do not have frequent interaction with the organization, but become involved based on the actions of the organization” (Rawlins, 2006, p. 4). Indeed, the media have been categorized as having a
separate linkage to the organization than do consumers/distributors/retailers or employees, and the results of the current research as related to the network postulate indicate that the social resources accessed through interaction with the media differed from those accessed through interaction with consumers/distributors/retailers and employees.

Moreover, because results were relevant to the organization linkage model, the supposition that the media are stakeholders “who lack frequent interaction” was tested post-hoc using a one-way univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine if significant differences existed in regards to frequency of interaction per specified public. Results indicated that there were no significant differences among the publics in regards to frequency of interaction.

Thus, future research should examine the complementary nature of the organization linkage model and the network postulate in regards to public relations outcomes that serve as social resources. Specifically, future research may be aimed at identifying those social resources that public relations professionals believe are especially salient for each public, perhaps as categorized by the organizational linkage model.

**The Action Postulates**

*The action postulates* suggest that “actors are motivated to either maintain or gain their resources in social actions—purposive actions. Action to maintain resources can be called expressive action, and action to gain resources can be called instrumental action. Maintaining resources is the primary motivation for action; therefore, expressive action is the primary form of action” (Lin, 2001, p. 76). Hypotheses 4-7 sought to provide support for the action postulates in a public relations context.
First, Hypothesis 5 confirmed that professionals seemed to believe that their function was to maintain or gain social resources such that they did not select the “not applicable” option for any of the 10 public relations outcomes. Further, strong agreement with the General Professional Outcome Belief Scale provided support for the idea that of those participants who selected NA, the majority did so because they believed the outcome was not a feature of the specified public (as opposed to did not believe it was an outcome whatsoever). Therefore, it is further reasoned that the public relations outcomes used in this research operate as social resources (the definition, above) that are brokered by public relations professionals (Assumption 1c).

Next, Hypothesis 6 suggested that the Maintain-Gain Scale would be predicted by the relational dimension of social capital. Regression analysis of the scales was nonsignificant; however, when the Maintain-Gain Scale was categorized into “maintain” and “gain” categories, an independent samples t-test revealed significant differences for five of the Maintain-Gain Scale items: credibility, goodwill, legitimacy, trust, and power. The remaining five items (confidence, reputation, relationships, identification, and collective action) did not meet the basic assumption necessary for interpretation. Because the relational dimension predicted differences in the maintenance or gain of social resources, it was concluded that the combination of homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations, and referral impacted whether social resources (credibility, goodwill, legitimacy, trust, and power) are sought to be maintained or gained by professionals. Therefore, support is provided for the notion that public relations professionals take expressive actions aimed at maintaining and instrumental actions aimed at gaining social resources on behalf of clients/organizations, specifically in
regards to credibility, goodwill, legitimacy, trust, and power. Or, in other words, “actors are motivated to either maintain or gain their resources in social actions—purposive actions” (Lin, 2001, p.76).

Likewise, Hypothesis 7 confirmed that maintaining resources was indicated more often than was gaining resources. This adds support to the action postulates such that “maintaining resources is the primary form of action” (Lin, 2001, p. 76). And, resources are maintained via expressive actions, which are defined as actions aimed at “maintaining one’s resources, which requires recognition by others of one’s legitimacy in claiming property rights to these resources or sharing one’s sentiments….The expected response is primarily expressive: acknowledging ego’s property rights or sharing ego’s sentiment” (Lin, 2001, p. 45).

From a practical standpoint, it seems that actions aimed at maintaining or gaining social resources are indeed purposeful or what we may call strategic. These actions are primarily expressive such that for each social resource, professionals in this research indicated that the resource was sought to primarily be maintained. Further, the maintenance or gain of these resources differed based on the relationship between the organization and public. This seems to clearly be strategic (purposeful), then, on behalf of professionals because it implies that rather than gaining trust, for example, professionals generally indicated that they seek to maintain it for a specified public. And, the maintenance or gain of trust differed based on the relationship with that public (homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations, and referral).

In addition, this should not be surprising because as was discussed previously regarding the interaction postulate, professionals communicate more frequently with
homophilous publics; therefore, maintaining resources via expressive actions requires less effort and has a higher return. On the other hand, professionals communicate less frequently with heterophilous publics; therefore, maintaining resources via instrumental actions requires more effort and has a lower return.

Last, Hypotheses 4 was rejected such that the Maintain-Gain Scale did not differ based on the specified public. This means that specified publics did not differ as to whether public relations professionals indicated that they sought to maintain or gain social resources. Perhaps, this may be due to an overall lack of new or what may be heterophilous publics because the specified publics used in this research were, in fact, selected for their generalizability among professionals for this broad examination.

Future research, then, should be aimed at classifying or differentiating more clearly the differences between expressive versus instrumental actions among public relations professionals in regards to the action postulates. In other words, the circumstances under which certain actions are taken, as well as specific actions that may be categorized as expressive or instrumental accordingly deserve further attention in the public relations literature as they contribute to a social capital theory of public relations. However, it is reasonable to consider expressive actions (as confirmed here as the primary forms of action) are generally taken to maintain social resources among existing organizational publics; whereas it might also be reasonable to consider that instrumental actions are generally taken when new or what may be considered heterophilous publics are targeted or arise on their own. For example, a public relations professional may seek to maintain trust among consumers; however, the professional may also seek to gain trust among stockholders in an organization that has recently had a public offering (e.g.
Facebook). Specific organizational case studies would allow for further examination to this extent.

Future research may also be aimed at examining those social resources that were unable to be interpreted (Hypothesis 6) as well as the relational dimension items to the extent that each predicts differences in maintenance or gain of social resources.

**The Social Capital Proposition**

*The social capital proposition* states that the success of action is positively associated with social capital (Lin, 2001, p. 76). Thus, although this predictive relationship is a hypothesized path within the overall Social Capital Model of Public Relations, Hypothesis 8 demonstrated that the Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale significantly predicted the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale. This added validity to the social capital proposition in a public relations context, as well as to the Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale. In other words, the interaction of the structural and relational dimensions of social capital significantly predicted the extent to which professionals perceived that the social resources were present in specified publics. This will be discussed in relation to the overall model as follows; however, it is important to note here that the interaction of the structure of publics and the components of relationships with those publics serve as a strong predictor of social resources (separate from other variables).

**The Strength-of-Position Proposition**

*The strength-of-position proposition* posits that “the better the position of origin, the more likely the actor will have access and use better social capital” (Lin, 2001, p. 76). Thus, Hypotheses 9 and 10 were posed as indicators of the position of origin from which
it was expected that the relational dimension would be predicted as indicative of the potential to access and use better social resources.

Hypothesis 9 was confirmed such that of the demographic variables analyzed (age, gender, race, current position, income, years of industry experience, APR, and appropriable organization), only one of the two appropriable organization items was a significant predictor of the relational dimension of social capital. While it was surprising to find that the demographic variables were generally not significant predictors of the relational dimension (*homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations, and referral*), particularly in regards to years of industry experience and APR, it was also very interesting to find that the appropriable organization item was a significant predictor.

The appropriable organization item that significantly predicted the relational dimension was related to using connections made outside the workplace to achieve outcomes in the workplace. On the other hand, the appropriable organization item related to using connections made within the workplace to achieve personal outcomes was not a significant predictor. This may not be surprising, however, in that achieving outcomes in the workplace is closer to the basis of the current research (and thus, relational dimension) than is achieving personal outcomes.

Overall then, the results of Hypothesis 9 lend credence to the notion of individual/interpersonal variables as an important area for examination in public relations such that this area is relatively unexplored in regards to individual differences among professionals that may serve to predict outcomes. Specifically, in regards to a social capital theory of public relations, additional research is needed in regards to individual/interpersonal variables that may serve as human capital and contribute to
better social capital perhaps, via the position of origin or in regards to the strength of position proposition.

On the other hand, Hypothesis 10 was rejected such that the one-item measure of the manager-technician dichotomy did not serve as a significant predictor of the relational dimension of social capital. It is reasoned that this is likely due to the fact that the manager/technician dichotomy was measured using a single item whereas reliable scales exist to measure public relations roles (see Diga & Kelleher, 2009; Dozier & Broom, 2006; Kelleher, 2001). However, such an approach was necessitated in order to keep the number of questionnaire items to a minimum. It is recommended that future research use the full manager/technician dichotomy scale in comparison to the social capital and public relations outcomes variables. If those performing the manager role are practicing “more excellent” public relations, then it can be predicted that better social capital will be produced by managers as opposed to technicians. Further, such an approach is relevant to a social capital theory of public relations in regards to human capital and the strength of position proposition.

The Strength-of-Strong-Tie Proposition and Strength-of-Weak-Tie Propositions

The strength-of-strong-tie proposition states that “the stronger the tie, the more likely the social capital accessed will positively affect the success of expressive action” (Lin, 2001, p. 76).

And, the strength-of-weak-tie proposition posits that “the weaker the tie, the more likely ego will have access to better social capital for instrumental action” (Lin, 2001, p. 76).

Thus, Hypothesis 11 was tested such that maintenance of resources is indicative of expressive action, and the gain of resources is indicative of instrumental action.
Therefore, it was expected that the Maintain-Gain Scale would negatively correlate with the Relational Dimension Scale because the stronger the relational dimension, the more likely expressive actions are to be taken according to social capital theory. And, vice versa, such that the weaker the relational dimension, the more likely instrumental actions are to be taken.

However, Hypothesis 11 was rejected because the likelihood of maintaining or gaining social resources was not related to the likelihood of stronger or weaker relational dimension items. Therefore, homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations, and referral were not related to taking expressive versus instrumental actions among professionals in this research, and the strength-of-strong-tie and the strength-of-weak-tie propositions are not supported by this research.

The Strength-of-Location Proposition

The strength-of-location proposition states that “the closer individuals are to a bridge in a network, the better social capital they will access for instrumental action” (Lin, 2001, p. 76). To review, instrumental actions are those with “the motive to seek and gain additional valued resources that hope to trigger actions and reactions from others leading to more allocation of resources to ego” (Lin, 2001, p. 46). Thus, Hypothesis 12 proposed that frequency of interaction and the relational dimension would predict the Maintain-Gain Scale because the greater the frequency of interaction with publics who have a lack of homophily, strength of ties, dependence, obligations, and referral the greater the degree to which professionals may indicate gaining new resources. Although it reached significance, Hypothesis 12 was rejected, and therefore, the strength-of-location proposition was not supported by this research.
Future research may be aimed at physically mapping social networks of publics (as has been approached by Sommerfeldt & Taylor, 2011) in relation to public relations professionals and their clients/organizations. It may further be reasoned that those individuals who are considered “closer to a bridge” may be identified as key opinion leaders for a specified public.

**The Location-by-Position Proposition**

The *location-by-position proposition* posits that “the strength of a location (in proximity to a bridge) for instrumental action is contingent on the resource differential across the bridge” (Lin, 2001, p. 76). Thus, Hypothesis 13 was posited such that the *network ties, network configuration, and norms* as components of the structural dimension of social capital would correlate with the Maintain-Gain scale. In other words, higher scores on the structural dimension scale should indicate more embedded resources in the specific public. Therefore, it was posited that professionals would indicate that they sought to gain resources when more embedded resources were present. However, this was not the case, and Hypothesis 13 was rejected.

From a practical standpoint, this indicates that the structure of the public (to include hierarchical items such as affluence, influence, and power, which should suggest the potential for better resources) did not impact the extent to which public relations professionals indicated a proclivity to maintain or gain social resources. Further examination of the relationship between the structure of publics and the actions aimed at maintaining or gaining social resources is necessitated to this extent.
Social Capital Postulates and Propositions in a Public Relations Context

Overall, this research provided strong support for three of Lin’s (2001) original postulates and propositions when applied to and tested in a public relations specific context. The following postulates and propositions were supported by hypotheses and analyses used in this research: the interaction postulate, the network postulate, and the social capital proposition. Marginal support was found for the action postulates and the strength-of-position proposition. No support was found for the strength-of-strong tie proposition, strength-of-weak tie proposition, strength-of-location proposition, and location-by-position proposition.

Following analyses of the hypotheses where no support was found for the propositions, it was determined that future research should revise the Maintain-Gain Scale, which is used in each of the nonsupported hypotheses and propositions, in regards to the semantic differential from maintain to gain. For example, results may have provided support for the propositions where “maintain” was centered on the scale with the addition of a low-end term such as “lose” for one example and “gain” remaining on the high-end of the scale. Such revision may increase the validity of the scale and provide additional support for a social capital theory of public relations.

The Public Relations Proposition

Finally, the public relations proposition posed by the current research suggested that social capital is facilitated by public relations knowledge, skills, and abilities (human capital) that impact the interaction of the structure of publics and components of relationships with those publics from which professionals maintain and gain social resources to be exchanged (social capital) for organizational outcomes (financial capital).
In other words, the Social Capital Model of Public Relations was predicted to impact perceived financial performance such that the Public Relations Competencies Scale was hypothesized to predict the Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale and Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale. The Structural-Relational Social Capital scale was then hypothesized to predict the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale (see Hypothesis 8), and the Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale was hypothesized to predict the perceived financial performance. The hypothesized paths are restated as follows:

H14a-c. The individual demographic variables—(a) age; (b) years of experience, and (c) annual income—will positively influence the latent Human Capital variable.

H14d. The latent Human Capital variable will positively influence the latent Social Capital variable.

H14e. The latent Human Capital variable will positively influence the latent Public Relations Outcomes variable.

H14f. The latent Social Capital variable will positively influence the latent Public Relations Outcomes variable.

H14g. The latent Public Relations Outcomes variables will positively influence the perceived financial capital of an organization.

Thus, Hypothesis 14 was proposed as the ultimate evidence for the validity of a social capital theory of public relations. The hypothesized model demonstrated good fit, and support was provided for a social capital theory of public relations. However, two hypothesized paths were nonsignificant and were deleted in the revised model.
For the purposes of discussion, these paths warrant some attention. First, the age demographic variable was deleted as an indicator of Human Capital (Hypothesis 14a). This indicates that the age of professionals did not impact the Human Capital. Perhaps, this is relevant to the **strength-of-position proposition** and the rejected hypotheses (9 and 10) regarding position of origin. Additionally, a better indicator of human capital in this research might have been the level of education. More examination of this proposition and these variables as they contribute to human capital are necessitated by the overall results of this research.

Most notably, however, the hypothesized path from human capital to social capital was nonsignificant (Hypothesis 14d). This indicates that the public relations competencies assessed in this research did not predict Social Capital; that is, the interaction of the structure of publics and components of relationships with those publics from which professionals produce outcomes for the organization. This is particularly surprising in that, “The connection between human capital and social capital has been rightly described as ‘one of the most robust empirical regularities in the social capital literature’ (Glaeser, Laibson, & Sacerdote, 2002, p. 455). Even if we do not yet fully understand this pattern, we can conclude with some confidence that there is a close relationship between people’s social networks and their educational performance” (Field, 2008, p. 55).

Perhaps, this nonsignificant path can be attributed to a lack of predictive validity for the Public Relations Competencies Scale used in this research. Moreover, the causality between human capital and social capital was described by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) in the opposite direction from which the hypothesized Social Capital of
Model of Public Relations predicted (although the researchers did recognize that causality may be in the other direction, and Locke (1999) noted that “the ideal causal sequence should be the other way around” (p. 8) as hypothesized in the current research). Thus, it is recommended that future research be aimed at validating the Public Relations Competencies Scale (specifically in comparing it or replacing it with existing communication competency scales: McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988, and Rubin & Martin, 1994, for example). And, it may then be suggested that the path between human capital and social capital be theorized and tested in the opposite causal direction for future research.

The revised Social Capital Model of Public Relations, then, showed good fit to the data and all paths (Hypothesis 14b, 14c, 14e, 14f, 14g) were significant. This establishes validity for a social capital theory of public relations, the ultimate objective of this research. Therefore, a discussion of public relations outcomes as social resources and an interpretation of the overall results ensue.

**Public Relations Outcomes as Social Resources**

It is important to give specific attention to the public relations outcomes used in this research as they are posited to serve as social resources; that is, resources embedded in social structures to be used as a form of exchange. In other words, these resources are important for the organization because they are social resources embedded in the social structures of the organization’s publics that can be exchanged for more tangible assets to include financial resources and the achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

The overall validity of the Social Capital Model of Public Relations provided support to this extent, and the confirmatory factor analysis provided support for the
convergent and discriminant validity of the 10 specified outcomes (collective action, confidence, credibility, goodwill, identification, legitimacy, power, relationship, reputation, and trust). However, while both the current empirical evidence and the previously discussed theoretical support (return-on-expectations from Stacks, 2011, specifically as relevant to a public relations context) are present, it is important to note that an inherent problem with intangible resources to be used as a form of exchange is that it is difficult to measure the actual exchange process. In other words, it is more difficult to examine the exchange of trust, for example, in regards to consumer purchasing behavior than it would be to measure the exchange of tangible goods (money for a product, for example). Furthermore, it is even more difficult to measure the exchange of trust for more complex forms of social capital such as a greater degree of credibility and reputation, for examples. Perhaps, then, such an examination for future research may necessitate more qualitative methods to include interviews and participant observation. Future analyses may also focus on the public relations outcomes as they are related to one another or serve to impact one another (are exchanged for an increase/decrease in one another) as well as the extent to which each contributes to organizational outcomes, specifically financial capital. And, the extent to which specific organizational outcomes (in addition to financial capital) are achieved may also be addressed from a case studies approach to this extent.

Additionally, Hypothesis 2 found that social resources significantly differed per the specified public (for the media, specifically). There are several interesting considerations as relevant to social resources here. An examination of each social resource (collective action, confidence, credibility, goodwill, identification, legitimacy, legitimacy,
power, relationship, reputation, and trust) in relation to specific publics and public relations/communication strategies and tactics would aid in the development of a framework that would allow for a more practical application of this research (discussed further as follows).

The validated Social Capital Model of Public Relations found that both the latent human capital and social capital variables predicted social resources. To this extent, individual areas of public relations knowledge, skills, and competencies (human capital) and individual areas within the structural and relational dimensions of social capital may be analyzed in regards to predictive power for social resources. For example, ethics research would serve as an interesting extension to this extent for both human capital and social capital. For human capital, the Public Relations Competencies Scale included a single item focused on the professionals’ perceptions of their ability to effectively adhere to professional codes of ethics. Thus, future research may expand on ethics from a human capital perspective (perhaps even from a position of origin and/or individual intrinsic variable conceptualization) to understand the predictive power of ethics on social resources. Similarly, the current conceptualization of social capital includes within the structural dimension the network norms represent a degree of consensus within the social system. So, it may be reasonable to expect that the norms within a specified public dictate a certain level of expectations and obligations (the relational dimension of social capital) regarding ethical organizational practices. Again, then, ethics may be specifically analyzed in regards to predictive power on social resources such that network norms within the structural dimension and expectations and obligations within the relational dimension likely result in social resources. Also, such analyses could again focus on
specific social resources as to the extent that individual areas such as ethics serve as a predictor for each, ultimately resulting in an understanding of the individual contribution of these areas to financial capital as well.

**Interpretation of Overall Results**

Having provided a specific discussion of each of Lin’s (2001) postulates and propositions and each hypothesis and research question in a public relations context with recommendations for future analyses specific to each as well as a specific discussion of public relations outcomes that serve as social resources for organizations, it is now important to provide a general interpretation of the overall results.

The primary objective of the current research was to provide support for a social capital theory of public relations, giving rise to a complementary/competing model to the dominant normative paradigm, excellence theory (Grunig, 1992). This research presented strong theoretical evidence for such an approach and proceeded with the creation of a public relations conceptualization, definition, and assessment of social capital that was used in direct relation to human capital and perceived financial capital. Support was provided for several of Lin’s (2001) postulates and propositions, providing evidence for social capital as a public relations theory. For those postulates and propositions not supported by this research, it is primarily recommended that the semantic differential of the Maintain-Gain scale be revised. Additionally, the hypothesized Social Capital Model of Public Relations demonstrated good fit to the data, but the revised model was retained for the purposes of parsimony. The ultimate validity of a social capital approach to public relations was confirmed by the overall results of this research and the good fit of the model.
Therefore, it may be suggested that for a social capital theory of public relations, both relational and structural components are important for understanding actions that are taken toward social capital maintenance and attainment that ultimately accrue social resources for individuals and collectives. Accordingly, public relations professionals by nature of their profession (1) have expertise, knowledge, training, and education (human capital) appropriate for maintaining, developing and utilizing social resources; (2) are structurally situated in a unique position regarding social capital; (3) perform rational, strategic actions aimed at social capital maintenance and attainment for the achievement of both expressive and instrumental goals on behalf of organizations as a function of their positions; and, (4) these actions produce social resources that can be exchanged for tangible organizational outcomes (financial capital).

It was further noted by Ihlen (2009) that, “The most important point remains that current public relations theory often offers no good ontology” (p. 77). Perhaps, then, the current research through its holistic examination contributes to an ontology of public relations, providing a rational basis for the existence of public relations as an organizational function; that is, in maintaining and gaining social resources that are exchanged for tangible organizational outcomes.

Overall, this research cautiously suggests that social capital could indeed exist as a meta-theory of public relations. However, it is first important to understand the practical implications of the current research and the limitations and future research required to validate such a claim. Thus, the practical implications and recommendations for future research are discussed as follows.
**Practical Implications**

Public relations as an applied discipline should produce theory capable of benefiting the industry as a whole, as well as individual public relations professionals. The Social Capital Model of Public Relations demonstrated good model fit, and therefore, may have practical implications such that public relations professionals may use the model to demonstrate *what is* (that is, as a positive theory) and make inferences as to the desirability of particular outcomes when applied to their clients/organizations.

Social capital theory and the current research allow that a public relations professional may determine that there is a social resource valued by their client/organization that exists within a specific public. Further, the professional may assess the structure of the public and the relationship between the organization and public in order to determine whether actions aimed at maintaining or gaining that resource are more appropriate. And, last, a professional may demonstrate the financial return on investment for an organization for the social resource(s).

It is not reasoned that public relations professionals will actually take such a convoluted approach to performing their jobs. However, as the current research is pioneering in nature, it is hoped that as progress is made in the development of measurement instruments and in the theory as a whole, usable measures and concepts will be more readily applied to practice.

**Limitations**

Again, as a pioneering examination of this theory applied to a public relations context, there have already been several recommendations for specific improvements and future research. Moreover, there are a few broader limitations to this research that are
important to note. It is first noted that there is an inherent bias in allowing public relations professionals to evaluate the public relations outcomes as they believe the specified public perceives them. Similarly, financial capital was measured by the perception of financial profitability for a client/organization by public relations professionals in this research. Again, there is inherent bias in such an approach. However, the broad and exploratory nature of this research necessitated such an approach.

Again, it is recommended that future research test the social capital postulates and propositions and apply the Social Capital of Model of Public Relations to a specific organization using a case-study approach. A few public relations-specific studies using alternative conceptualizations and methods already exist to this extent: Fussell et al. (2006) and Sommerfeldt and Taylor (2011). Such an approach allows specified publics to respond to items that serve as social resources for organizations. Also, such an approach allows for validation of the overall model, and additional items or scales may be added for such an approach. For example, it is recommended that specific outcomes be incorporated into and traced via the Social Capital Model of Public Relations when applied via a case-study approach. In other words, it is expected that the social resources could be measured using more tangible criteria for such an approach. Additionally, future research could use organizational financial reports over time or third-party indexes for the assessment of financial capital or organizational outcomes.

Next, the public was specified in this research among three pre-determined publics: consumers/distributors/retailers, employees, and the media. As may have been inferred by the results of the postulates and propositions, overall results may differ based on the specified public. Therefore, future research should be aimed at a more diverse
group of publics or stakeholders, particularly perhaps using Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) organizational linkage model as the framework.

Finally, it has been noted that in order for social capital to be generated opportunity and motivation must be present (Adler & Kwon, 2002). These considerations were not specifically measured by this research, and it was posited that opportunity may be considered as relevant to the extent that public relations professionals have opportunities to interact or communicate with publics. And, motivation may be relevant in regards to the motivation a public has to interact with the organization. Future research is necessitated in these areas, and the overall model may be lacking to this extent.

**Future Research**

Several specific recommendations have been noted for future research regarding social capital as a theory of public relations. Here it is broadly recommended that future research particularly focus on scale revisions and validation as well as in applying the model to specific organizations such that specified publics will respond to outcome items.

Specifically, an exploration into the basic assumptions used in this research would be beneficial to forwarding a social capital theory of public relations. While these assumptions are grounded in strong theoretical support and superficial evidence has provided for them in this research, future research may seek to validate these basic underlying assumptions.

Next, comparisons with other members of organizations would be valuable in confirming the different capacities for social capital as a primary function of public relations. If it is found that marketing or advertising, for example, do not produce social capital outcomes to the extent that public relations professionals do, the results of such a
finding would not only validate the conceptualization of social capital as a primary function of public relations, but would also produce some very interesting points of comparison.

Also, the concept of community as examined by Putnam and others was neglected in the current research. Future research may approach a social capital theory of public relations from such a standpoint in order that additional support is provided for the theory as applied to public relations, but also may be specifically examined as related to Kruckeberg and Starck’s (1988) theory of public relations and community, which posits that professionals should attempt to stimulate a broad-based sense of community (as opposed to only serving their clients).

Similarly, it was noted that the specific points at which excellence (Grunig, 1992) and social capital theories may serve as complements or competitors is not yet completely realized. Future research may be directed at such an endeavor, and the current research has posited that overlap is likely.

Also, the area of social media no doubt offers an exciting area for future research into social capital. The connections between social networking analysis methods and social capital are clear. Therefore, future research may examine the social media networks of organizations and the individuals who are connected to them (and the individuals who are connected to those individuals, and so on and so forth) to examine social resources to this extent.

Finally, the current research has offered a wealth of individual points of analysis; that is, individual items or scales that could be expanded upon. Specifically, extensions of specific areas of this research (such as ethics, for example) to the extent they serve to
predict social resources (overall and individually) and ultimately financial capital would be an interesting and valuable avenue for future research that fits within a social capital theoretical approach to public relations. Further, such individual analyses may give rise to additional variables or scales that could be expanded upon in future research in order that an even better fitting or more parsimonious revised model could be proposed.
References


Durkheim, E. (1893). *De La Division du Travail* [The Division of Labor in Society].


Durkheim, E. (1897). *Le Suicide* [Suicide].


Appendix A: Invitation Email

If you are unable to see the message below, click here to view.

Dear PRSA Member:

I am conducting important research on social capital as it relates to public relations. This research can benefit the public relations industry in better understanding these variables and seeks to offer a measure that can be used to demonstrate public relations effectiveness for an organization.

As an incentive for completing this survey, you will have the opportunity to be entered to win one of four $25 Amazon gift cards! The final page of this survey allows you to submit your email address for award consideration. The email address you submit is in no way connected to your survey responses, and will only be used for the purposes of notifying you if you have been selected to receive one of the Amazon gift cards.

I would very much appreciate your time in completing this survey that will take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete: Click here to take the Social Capital and PR survey.

Or, copy and paste the following web link into your browser: http://miamicommunication.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3BG3KUp0gP8Muws

Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary, and you are able to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice from the investigator.

Please answer the questions as honestly as possible and with as much information as you can. Your identity will be kept completely anonymous. I won't ask for or record your name or the name of your organization.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,

Melissa D. Dodd
Doctoral Candidate
University of Miami
m.dodd4@umiami.edu
(305) 284-6706

PRSA’s Research Committee has reviewed this survey. We encourage your participation in this study.
Appendix B: Reminder Email

If you are unable to see the message below, click here to view.

Dear PRSA Member:

If you have already participated in my survey on public relations, thanks. If you haven't, this is to remind you that the survey is still open and that I would greatly appreciate your participation.

As an incentive for completing this survey, you will have the opportunity to be entered to win one of four $25 Amazon gift cards! The final page of this survey allows you to submit your email address for award consideration. The email address you submit is in no way connected to your survey responses, and will only be used for the purposes of notifying you if you have been selected to receive one of the Amazon gift cards.

The survey will take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete: Click here to take the Social Capital and PR survey.

Or, copy and paste the following web link into your browser: http://miamicommunication.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3BG3KUp0gP8Muws

Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary and your identity will be kept anonymous.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,

Melissa D. Dodd
Doctoral Candidate
University of Miami
m.dodd4@umiami.edu
(305) 284-6706

PRSA's Research Committee has reviewed this survey. We encourage your participation in this study.
Appendix C: Questionnaire

All of your answers will be anonymous, and all electronic data will be stored in password-protected computer files. Only people who are directly involved with the project will have access to those records. When the project is finished and results are reported, no individual will be identified in any way.

Your participation is voluntary. You can decline to participate, and you can stop your participation at any time, if you wish to do so, without any negative consequences to you.

By continuing with this research, this means you are 18 or older and consent to participate in this research project.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact: Melissa D. Dodd at m.dodd4@umiami.edu or #(305)284-6706.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact the University of Miami, Human Subject Research Office at (305)243-3195 or hsr@med.miami.edu.

As an incentive for completing this survey, you will have the opportunity to be entered to win one of four $25 Amazon gift cards. The final page of this survey allows you to submit your email address for award consideration. The email address you submit is in no way connected to your survey responses and will only be used for the purposes of notifying you if you've been selected to receive one of the gift cards. There will be only four randomly selected winners.

>>NEXT>>
**Section One: Public Relations Competencies Scale**

Please respond to the following regarding your personal knowledge, skills, and abilities in public relations (from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

**I am able to effectively:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Distinguish between goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Segment publics and tailor messages</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Determine if public relations goals and objectives were met</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Use qualitative and quantitative research methodologies</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Justify the budget for public relations</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Follow the four-step strategic planning process</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Identify stakeholders</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Strategically position the client/organization</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Adhere to professional codes of ethics</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Explain relevant laws governing my profession</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Explain the various models of communication</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Explain the various theories of communication</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Explain how clients/organizations generate revenue</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Explain current issues and</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Perform a SWOT analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Explain the differences and similarities among publics</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Perform in a leadership role</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Explain the different phases of a crisis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Identify potential risks to my client/organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Build relationships with the media</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Use information technology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Describe the general history of public relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Give consultation to leadership</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Section Two: General Professional Outcome Scale

In general, I believe the following are outcomes that result from my work and have the potential to benefit or hurt my client/organization (from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Legitimacy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Identification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Collective action</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
NOTE: For the following portions of the questionnaire, participants were randomly assigned to one of three publics. This pseudo-experimental approach is used in order to increase specificity. The following questionnaire sample uses only CONDITION/PUBLIC 1 (Consumers/Distributors/Retailers) to demonstrate the applicable questions. All questions remain the same for participants who receive CONDITION 2 or 3: The specific public mentioned is simply changed.

(1) [CONDITION/PUBLIC 1: CONSUMERS/DISTRIBUTORS/RETAILERS]
(2) [CONDITION/PUBLIC 2: EMPLOYEES]
(3) [CONDITION/PUBLIC 3: THE MEDIA]

Section Three: Frequency of Interaction and Specified Public

The remainder of these questions will ask about a specific organizational public. If you have multiple clients/organizations that you work with (if you work for a public relations agency, for example), please think of your primary account or the organization you work with most often and answer the questions accordingly. If you are an educator or nonpracticing professional, you may think of a past client/organization.

In the past 12 months, how frequently have you interacted or communicated with Consumers/Distributors/Retailers (whichever is most applicable) on behalf of your client/organization?

 Never
 Rarely
 Sometimes
 Most of the Time
 Always

Note: If “Never” or “Rarely” was selected, participants receive this additional question:

You indicated that you have interacted or communicated never or rarely with Consumers/Distributors/Retailers in the past 12 months. Why would you say this is the case?

 It is someone else's responsibility.
 This public is not a public of concern to my client/organization.
 Other ____________________
Section Four: Maintain-Gain Scale

Regardless of the extent of interaction or communication you have with Consumers/Distributors/Retailers on behalf of your client/organization, please answer the following to the best of your knowledge.

Please rate the following in regards to maintaining or gaining new outcomes for Consumers/Distributors/Retailers on behalf of your client/organization.

For example, if you believe your client/organization has a good reputation with this public, you may seek to maintain that reputation. On the other hand, if you believe your client/organization has a poor reputation with this public, you may seek to gain a new reputation. The scale is on a continuum, so you may indicate to what degree you feel this is the case.

Also, you may select NA (not applicable) if, for example, you do not believe this is an outcome of your work or if you do not believe this is an important feature of this public for your organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Confidence</th>
<th>Credibility</th>
<th>Goodwill</th>
<th>Legitimacy</th>
<th>Reputation</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Collective action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Maintain</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Section Five: Public-Specific Outcome Belief Scale

Please consider how Consumers/Distributors/Retailers would rate the following in regards to their feelings about your client/organization (from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree).

Consumers/Distributors/Retailers would indicate that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>My client/organization has a good reputation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>My client/organization can be trusted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>My client/organization is credible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>My client/organization will do what it says it will do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>My client/organization has a good relationship with them</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>My client/organization has power because of them</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>My client/organization is able to exist and operate because of them</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>My client/organization hinders them from taking collective action</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>My client/organization is an organization they personally identify with</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>When faced with a situation where their actions could be beneficial or detrimental to my organization, this public would choose the beneficial action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Section Six: Structural-Relational Social Capital Scale

Please answer as to the extent of your agreement with the following statements about Consumers/Distributors/Retailers from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>This public consists of many well-connected individuals</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>This public consists of many influential individuals</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>This public consists of many powerful individuals</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4</td>
<td>This public consists of individuals who generally know one another</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5</td>
<td>This public has strong ties to one another</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6</td>
<td>This public has shared norms among them</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>This public shares beliefs, values, and ideas similar to my client/organization</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>This public does not have strong ties to my client/organization</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>This public has expectations of my client/organization</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>This public depends on my client/organization</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>This public has obligations to my client/organization</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>This public reciprocates when my client/organization does right by them</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>My client/organization impacts their community or society, in general</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8</td>
<td>My client/organization impacts others with whom they have close ties</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>R9</td>
<td>My client/organization depends on this public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10</td>
<td>My client/organization has obligations to this public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R11</td>
<td>This public recommends my client/organization to others in their social circles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R12</td>
<td>The actions of this public have a major impact on my client/organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>R13</td>
<td>The actions of this public have the potential to have a major impact on my client/organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R14</td>
<td>Actions that are beneficial for this public are often beneficial for my client/organization, as well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R15</td>
<td>Actions that hurt this public, often hurt my client/organization as well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*S=Structural Dimension items; and R=Relational Dimension items
Section Seven: Organizational Demographic Items and Financial Capital

For the client/organization you described in this survey, please answer the following organizational demographic questions for further statistical analyses.

How would you classify the size of your organization/client's organization?

- Small (less than or equal to 50 employees)
- Mid-size (between 51-250 employees)
- Large (more than 251 employees)

Compared to other similar organizations, this organization is very financially profitable.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
Section Eight: Individual Demographic Items

Please answer the following individual demographic questions for further statistical analyses.

I believe that my work as a professional impacts society, in general.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

I often use connections made outside the workplace to achieve outcomes in the workplace.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

I often use connections made within the workplace to achieve personal benefits.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Which of the following best describes the responsibilities of your current position?
- I establish public relations programs and campaigns and provide counsel to leadership.
- I write, edit, and design messages and public relations materials.
- Other ____________________
Which of the following best describes your current position?

- Agency/Consultancy
- Corporate
- Educator (Faculty, Academic)
- Education (PR, Staff)
- Health Care
- Government/Military
- Independent Practitioner
- Nonprofit/Association
- Professional Services
- Research Provider
- Other (please identify) ____________________

Approximately, how many years of experience do you have working in the public relations industry?

- 5 or fewer
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16 or more
- None

I have received accreditation in public relations (APR).

- Yes
- No

Please select your age range:

- 18-28
- 29-39
- 40-50
- 51-60
- 61 or older
What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

Which of the following best describes your racial background?

- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic
- White
- Other ____________________

What is your individual annual income?

- $25,000 or less
- $25,001 - 50,000
- $50,001 - 75,000
- $75,000 or more
- Prefer not to answer
Section Nine: Thanks and Incentive

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please send an email to prsa.research@gmail.com to be entered to win one of four $25 Amazon gift cards!

Remember, the email address you submit is in no way connected to your survey responses. Only winners will be notified via reply to the email address used to enter. Winners will be notified within two weeks of the close of the survey.