

Unpacking Public Sentiment toward the Government:

How Citizens' Perceptions of Government Communication Strategies Impact
Public Engagement, Cynicism, and Communication Behaviors in South Korea

Abstract

In this study, we explore the relationship between two types of public sentiment toward the government (i.e., public engagement and cynicism) on publics' information transmission behaviors, i.e., megaphoning, about the government. In doing so, we unpack how citizens' perceptions of the communication strategy adopted by the government, as well as perceived authenticity of the government's communication impact their sentiments toward the government. An online survey was conducted in South Korea (N = 1112) to understand these relationships. The results revealed that perceived use of bridging strategy by the government is associated with public engagement, while perceived use of the buffering strategy is related to public cynicism. We also found perceived authenticity to be significantly associated with public engagement and negatively associated with cynicism. Finally, the two types of public sentiment were found to partially mediate between perceived government communication strategies and citizens' positive and negative megaphoning. Theoretical and empirical implications are discussed (150 words).

Keywords: authenticity, bridging strategy, buffering strategy, communication behavior, government communication, megaphoning, public cynicism, public engagement

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The importance of a government's communication to the population has been well established in the strategic communication literature (e.g., Agerdal-Hjermind & Valentini, 2015; Fredricksson & Pallas, 2016; Salomonsen, Frandsen, & Johansen, 2016). From models of public sector communication (Liu & Horsley, 2007), identifying unique characteristics of public sector communication and how they impact communication decisions, to examining the role of government communication during times of crisis and strife (e.g., Lee, 2009), scholars have contributed to our understanding of government communication from a strategic communication perspective. However, as new and digital media landscapes complicate how citizens of a nation consume and transmit information, particularly related to politics (Loader & Mercea, 2011), there is a need for scholarship to bridge relevant concepts and disciplines, such as political public relations, government public relations, and government communication (Horsley, Liu, & Levenshus, 2010; Sanders & Canel, 2013).

In this study, we focus on one particular aspect of governments' communication with their citizens that has so far been under-examined. We seek to understand how citizens' perceptions of their government's communication strategy impact their positive and negative sentiment toward the government, and their communication behaviors about the government, specifically, megaphoning about the government. This intuitive relationship finds some support in communication literature. As Cho (2008) pointed out, not all citizens remain passive publics who merely receive communication messages from their government. Some of them may emerge as active political actors, particularly when they want to do something about a certain issue (J.-N. Kim & Grunig, 2011) and utilize digital and social networks to talk about their government and its policies and programs, and participate in the political

process using digital tools (Gil de Zuniga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012). It becomes imperative, then, for governments to understand under what conditions they may engender positive communication behaviors from their citizens and mitigate or minimize negative communication behaviors. The present study seeks to understand some of these conditions, and contribute to our understanding of how governments may communicate with their citizens strategically to engender positive (and negative) affective and behavioral outcomes among citizens.

To do so, we (a) investigate the dynamics between the perceived adoption of two types of communication strategies by the government, the perceived authenticity of the government, and two types of public sentiment, public engagement and public cynicism, and (b) explore the roles of these two types of public sentiment in predicting citizens' communication behaviors about the government. Drawing upon Grunig's (2006; 2009) theoretical framework of behavioral, strategic management paradigm and symbolic, interpretive paradigm, and Shen and J.-N. Kim's (2010) theoretical model of symmetrical communication, perceived authenticity, organization-public relationship and publics' communication behaviors, we posit two types of communication strategies, bridging and buffering (Grunig, 2009; S. Kim & Krishna, 2017a; 2017b) and perceived authenticity (Shen & J.-N. Kim, 2012) as antecedents to positive or negative public sentiment toward government. In addition, we postulate that the two different types of public sentiment will respectively predict positive and negative communication behaviors about the government.

Literature Review

Two Types of Public Sentiment: Public Engagement and Public Cynicism

Public engagement and public cynicism. The question of how to successfully engage supportive publics and appease dissatisfied publics has been central to public relations, government communication, and service marketing. In the context of government

communication, how to engage citizens in governmental policies and programs and reduce their cynicism or negative sentiment toward government is a key challenge in our contemporary democratic societies. Considering that citizens are “intelligent investors who coinvest their resources in the community and government” (G. E. Smith & Hunstman, 1997, p. 310), it is an important yet daunting task for governments to shape and understand public sentiment and align their, the governments’, communication and behavior with their citizens’ needs. Addressing issues important to citizens requires strategic thinking and approaches. Additionally, citizens’ perceptions of their governments are complex, as what constitutes “government” in the mind of the individual may vary based on situation, political landscape, and system of governance. It is therefore important to understand what factors may engender engagement or cynicism in the minds of citizens about their governments and further lead them to engage in communication behaviors.

In an effort to invite participation from their citizens in key policies and activities, governments use strategic communication programs such as public campaigns, publicity, or blogging (Agerdal-Hjerminde & Valentini, 2015). Examples of governments’ strategic communication for public engagement are abundant; previous US governments have sought to engage citizens in the discussion on climate change (Brulle, 2010) by increasing the amount of news coverage on the issue (Nisbet, 2009); the Indian government launched the “Clean India Movement” in 2014 to improve levels of cleanliness and sanitation in the nation (Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, n.d.); the Korean government launched an anti-smoking campaign to influence perceptions and behaviors of adolescents by delivering campaign messages via a Web-based cartoon (Ministry of Health & Welfare, 2015).

Although the concept of public engagement has been used in different contexts with diverse meanings (Kang, 2014), the common goal of public engagement is generally understood to be to gain support from key publics and to have meaningful relationships with

them so that organizations can achieve their goals. The concept of engagement has been mainly understood and used as being “the interaction between an organization and those individuals and groups that are impacted by, or influence, the organization” (Bruce & Shelley, 2010, p. 30). The topic of public engagement with organizations has been investigated in several areas including social media (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Men & Tsai, 2013), conceptualization (Kang, 2014), public deliberation (Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004), corporate social responsibility (Devine & Lane, 2014). The concept of engagement is also often interchangeably used with dialogue/talk (Taylor & Kent, 2014), form of interactive participation (Bowden, Conduit, Hollebeek, Luoma-aho, & Solem, 2017.), and involvement (Lewis, Hamfel, & Richardson, 2001). Most investigations into public engagement, however, are focused on corporations’ efforts to engage consumers. Despite the many examples of governmental efforts at public engagement, such efforts are yet to have been explored by strategic communication scholarship.

Additionally, scholars often tend to treat public engagement as a *behavioral* outcome for organizations to encourage and aspire to achieve through their strategic communication activities (e.g., Wang, Ki, & Y. Kim, 2017). Such behavioral indicators of public engagement include social media shares, likes on Facebook, etc. Rather than focusing on the behavioral operationalization of engagement which currently abounds in communication literature, however, Kang (2014) proposed public engagement to be an *affective motivational mediator* between citizens’ trust and satisfaction and their supportive behaviors for an organization. Previously, Higgins and Scholer (2009) defined engagement as “a state of being involved, occupied, fully absorbed or engrossed in something -sustained attention” (p. 102). Similarly, Kang (2014) defined engagement as a *psychological state* which motivates the behavioral outcomes, forwarding three characteristics of engagement: affective commitment, positive affectivity and empowerment. Affective commitment is “a facet of engagement characterized

by emotional bonding and pride that brings additional efforts to sustain that relationship” (Kang, 2014, p. 402). Positive affectivity refers to “activated pleasant affect” (Larsen & Diener, 1992, p. 31) and is characterized by dedication, vigor, and absorption (Kang, 2014, p. 402). Finally, Kang (2014) sees empowerment as a motivational state and similar to an individual’s perception of self-efficacy. She proposed empowerment as being representative of a motivated facet of engagement. In this research, we adopt Kang’s (2014) conceptualization and operationalization of public engagement as an affective, psychological state, and therefore a type of positive *public sentiment* rather than a behavioral outcome.

Scholars have offered disengagement and negative engagement as logical opposites of public engagement (e.g., Bowden, Luoma-Aho, & Naumann, 2016). A key challenge in public administration (Bowden et al., 2016), disengagement refers to the process by which a customer-brand relationship (citizen-government relationship in the context of public administration) experiences a trauma or disturbance, which may lead to relationship termination (Bowden, Gabbott, & Naumann, 2015). However, disengagement is conceptualized to be a more passive form of negative affect toward the government.

Instead, negative engagement, considered a “premeditated, activated and dedicated behavior” (Bowden et al, 2014, p. 268) represents a more active form of citizens’ negative sentiment. Displays of negative engagement by citizens against the government, such as protests, boycotts, negative word-of-mouth, and revenge-seeking behavior (Bowden et al., 2016; Louma-aho, 2015), present key challenges for the government. Negative engagement refers to “unfavorable brand-related thoughts, feelings, and behaviors within a service relationship” (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014, p. 62). Within the context of local government, Bowden et al. (2016) defined negative engagement as a “goal-directed process that involves citizens’ active and persistent expressions of negativity towards some aspects of their local government, which has a detrimental effect on the service relationship and the value derived

from the relationship” (p. 262). However, current conceptualizations of negative engagement as a behavioral outcome do not lend themselves to being the conceptual opposite of public engagement as defined in this study.

An emotion that may underpin negative engagement is that of cynicism, a negative affect that results from disappointment leading to disillusionment (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989). Cynicism has been defined as “a sense of being let down or of letting oneself down, and more darkly, the sense of being deceived, betrayed or used by others” (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989, p. 3). According to Helm (2004), “cynics are not merely dissatisfied – they are bitter, angry and resentful” (p. 345). Cynicism is characterized by empty promises, false appearances, and a feeling of manipulation (Helm, 2004). Although cynicism has been defined in many different ways, such as an attitude (Cook & Medley, 1959), an emotion (Meyerson, 1990), or personal trait (T. W. Smith, Pope, Sanders, Allred, & O’Keefe, 1988), Andersson and Bateman (1997) concluded it as “both a general and specific attitude, characterized by frustration and disillusionment as well as negative feelings toward and distrust of a person, group, ideology, social convention, or institution” (p.450). We argue, then, that it is such frustration and feeling of being let down by their government that may lead citizens to be negatively engaged with their government. In other words, we argue cynicism to be the negative affect driving the negative engagement behaviors conceptualized by Bowden et al. (2014), and therefore the conceptual opposite of public engagement as a public sentiment (Kang, 2014).

Furthermore, while the concept of cynicism has been investigated in the areas of advertising, marketing, corporate social responsibility, and politics, in the context of government communication and political communication, the term public cynicism has been often used. The term public cynicism has been used by scholars as ‘political cynicism’ to specifically indicate people’s cynicism of politics or political figures/organizations resulting from their evaluations of political behaviors after exposure to messages about political

candidates or institutions (e.g., Valentino, Beckmann, & Buhr, 2001). For the purpose of this article, we adopt Miller's (1994) concept of public cynicism, which refers to the degree of negative affect toward the government, and is a statement of the belief that the government is not functioning and producing outputs in accordance with individual expectations.

Scholars have been interested in the role of media or media influence in citizens' political attitude and willingness to participate (e.g., Moeller, de Vreese, Esser & Kunz, 2014; Valentino, Beckmann, & Buhr, 2001). de Vreese and Semetko (2002), for example, investigated the effects of citizens' exposure to strategic news coverage on political cynicism and evaluation of a political campaign in Denmark. For Capella and Jamieson (1997), it is the framing of the message that affects citizens' level of cynicism, engagement, and political evaluation. Similarly several studies on governments' communication efforts (e.g., Pingree, Hill, & McLeod, 2012) have investigated how media relations strategies, framing and agenda setting can influence public opinion.

Our research interest lies in citizens' perception of or their attitude toward their government's communication strategy, its influence on their affective state and any subsequent communication behaviors they might undertake as a result of this affective state. This represents a key point of departure from other public opinion research which tends to focus on news media effects, as evidenced from the body of work reviewed on political cynicism. With the advent and dominance of social media, organizations' engagement and relationship building efforts go beyond the effects of news media and media relations strategies. The world is witnessing a shift from the one-way communication of traditional media to the two-way communication of digital and social media (Men & Tsai, 2015). We live in the age of media convergence – messages are reaching citizens through interaction between different media forms. To align the research gap with this paradigm shift in communication, it is necessary to understand how citizens perceive their government's

communication *as a whole*, how they feel about their government as a result, and what they do as a consequence. Such perceptions of the government's communication stem from how citizens evaluate all the messages that they receive from their government, and what features or characteristics they ascribe to those messages – whether those messages are meant to be dialogic and engaging (i.e., adoption of the bridging strategy) or simply symbolic efforts to keep citizens happy without genuine engagement efforts (i.e., adoption of the buffering strategy). To investigate how citizens perceive their government's communication as a whole, this study focuses on their perceptions of the government's adoption of communication strategy rather than the message itself.

Of note here is the focus on citizens' perceptions of their government's communication strategy rather than the actual strategy employed. This focus represents another point of departure from experimental news and message design research that presupposes strategies (or in some cases, frames) as experimental conditions. Scholars have examined citizens' perceptions of the government and its performance vis-a-vis their satisfaction with their government (e.g., Citrin, 1974; Erber & Lau, 1990), as well as the success of their communication efforts (Vos, 2006). Of note is that different people perceive government's communication differently, since “different people have different probabilities of exposure to, and acceptance of, potentially persuasive communication” (Valentino, Beckmann, & Buhr, 2001, p. 348). It would follow, then, that citizens' perceptions and evaluations of their governments' communication strategy would impact its success. In addition, limited responsiveness to public opinion and lack of understanding on citizens' needs and expectations has been identified as discouraging public engagement (Evans & Reid, 2013). These issues signal the need for governments to look at how they communicate with citizens and how they address citizens' issues and needs. Accordingly, it is crucial for government communicators and public policy decision makers to understand how citizens'

perceptions of the communication strategy employed by the government impact their sentiments toward the government, and affect their behaviors. In the section that follows, we present two types of communication strategies that communicators commonly employ, and propose our hypotheses on how these strategies impact public sentiment and behavior.

Antecedents to Public Sentiment: Perceived Government Communication Strategies and Authentic Behavior

Bridging and buffering strategies. According to Sanders and Canel (2013), government communication is defined as “the role, practice, aims and achievements of communication as it takes place in and on behalf of public institution(s) whose primary end is executive in the service of a political rationale, and that are constituted on the basis of the people’s indirect or direct consent and charged to enact their will” (p. 3). This definition covers different levels of government communication, from presidential communication to local and regional communication (Sanders & Canel, 2013). Government communication can be complex, and often involve a variety of stakeholders. From a strategic communication perspective, government communication should aim at improving the quality of government-public relationships, for which symmetrical communication has been found to be crucial (e.g., Canel, 2012; Grunig, 2008; Ledingham, 2011). When government communication is understood as managing the government-public relationship (e.g., Liu & Horsley, 2007; Hong et al., 2012), it may be considered as a strategic communication activity encompassing issues and reputation management, rather than a communication tactic to influence public opinion via media relations (Sanders & Canel, 2013).

Research on communication strategies has primarily focused on specific elements of strategy. For example, public relations scholars have discussed the utility of symmetry versus asymmetry, and one-way versus two-way communication for decades (Shen & J.-N. Kim, 2012). Grunig and Hunt (1984)’s four public relations models explain these dimensions. Hon

and Grunig (1999) and Grunig and Huang (2000) pioneered the principles of relationship cultivation strategies (i.e., access, positivity, openness, sharing of tasks, networking, and assurances) on organization-public relationships, and several scholars (e.g., Ki & Hon 2007, 2008, 2009) continue to conduct research in this area.

Although a government may adopt a wide range of communication strategies, in this study, we draw upon S. Kim's (2014) conceptualization of bridging and buffering strategies based on the underlying goals of communication. S. Kim's (2014) conceptualization emerged from Grunig's (2009) discussion of paradigms of public relations practice based on the underlying goal, either to bridge the gap between an organization and its stakeholders, or to buffer an organization from its stakeholders (Grunig, 2006; Wonneberger & Jacobs, 2016). Grunig (2006; 2009) referred to the most commonly practiced, message-oriented approach to persuading individuals about an organization's point of view brand of public relations as the *symbolic, interpretive paradigm* of public relations. Within this paradigm, Grunig (2006; 2009) propounded, the focus of the public relations is to use messages and imaging tactics to convince the public to accept the organization's behaviors, whether good or bad. Grunig (2009) referred to the symbolic, interpretive paradigm as *buffering*, where the organization attempts to buffer itself from any backlash from its publics, and, in the government's case, citizens, mainly through strategic messaging activities. As part of the relationally oriented *behavioral, strategic management paradigm*, the focus of the organization would be to invest in mutually beneficial relationships with their strategic publics, and amend its behaviors in accordance with the expectations of the publics. The behavioral, strategic management paradigm is also referred to as *bridging* (Grunig, 2009), where the organization attempts to bridge the gap between itself and its publics' expectations.

S. Kim (2014) reinterpreted the two paradigms of public relations practice, bridging and buffering, as two different communication *strategies*. It is important to note here that the

bridging and buffering strategies are not mutually exclusive; indeed most organizations, including governments, tend to apply both strategies in tandem as the need may arise, but one strategy is often emphasized over the other in most cases (S. Kim, 2016). Wonneberger and Jacobs (2016) interpreted the two strategies as being on a continuum, where bridging is an open and active approach toward the organizational environment while buffering is an imbalanced, one-way approach which reflects an “organizational unwillingness to change” (Sha, 2009, p. 300) and an organization’s interest in “accomplishing its own agenda” by “changing the publics” (Wonneberger & Jacobs, 2016, p. 373). In other words, buffering shapes publics’ perceptions about the organization’s behavior instead of changing an organization’s behavior itself.

The bridging strategy involves communication activities aimed at building strong, positive relationships between an organization and its publics (Grunig, 2009). An organization implementing the bridging strategy, i.e., an action-based, relationship-focused approach (S. Kim, 2016; J.-N. Kim, Hung-Baesecke, Yang, & Grunig, 2013; S. Kim & Krishna, 2017a; S. Kim & Krishna, 2017b), employ and adopt the principles of dialogic communication to foster an understanding with its citizens such that each understands the interests of the other, and through this process, work toward identifying mutual interest. The organization using bridging strategy adapts itself to the changes and needs of its environment to make its actions not only responsive to the pressures from the environment (Ashmos, Duchon, & McDaniel, 2000) but also ethical and responsible by integrating the perspectives of various stakeholders into its decision making. Governments’ use of social media to increase their transparency and their collaboration with citizens (Agerdal-Hjermin & Valentini, 2015) may be considered an example of their bridging strategy. R. D. Smith (2013) supported an idea similar to the bridging strategy by proposing that “one of the principles of effective public relations is adaptation, the willingness and ability of the organization to make

changes necessary to create harmony between itself and its key publics” (p. 114). The intended beneficiaries of this strategy are both an organization and its publics (Laskin, 2012).

When emphasizing the buffering strategy, on the other hand, an organization would focus on spinning its behaviors in a positive way even if those behaviors are problematic (S. Kim & Krishna, 2017a; 2017b). Massey’s (2001) discussion on a strategic approach of manipulating symbols in crisis communication is conceptually equivalent to S. Kim and Krishna’s (2017a; 2017b). The focus, then, is on creating strategic messaging and communication plans to create positive images to convince potentially hostile publics that actions taken by the organization are acceptable, and create a buffer between the organization and any hostile individuals. The implementation of the buffering strategy would theoretically allow the organization to continue any problematic or even unethical behaviors while protecting it and its reputation from negative outcomes from the publics (S. Kim & Krishna, 2017a; 2017b). Therefore, buffering is considered as a manipulative strategy, as the favorable or positive image created via strategic messages will not match the organization’s problematic behavior (S. Kim & Krishna, 2017a; 2017b).

Following the conceptualization of bridging and buffering as two communication strategies, scholars have investigated the impact of the perceived use of these strategies on relational and reputational outcomes. For example, S. Kim and Krishna (2017a) found that while the perceived use of the bridging strategy was associated with ethical organizational conduct, along with paths to relational improvement and conflict avoidance with strategic constituencies, no association was found between buffering strategy and ethical organizational conduct. The mutually dependent nature of the relationship between the government and its citizens (Gelders & Ihlen, 2010) makes it even more imperative for the former to understand whether citizens perceive the government’s communication efforts as actually being for the furtherance of their relationship rather than merely for persuasion.

Governments' efforts to communicate with citizens in ways designed to build mutually beneficial relationships with them may engender positive emotions among the citizens, as citizens may believe the government to be genuinely dialogic and ethical (Yang, Kang & Cha, 2015). The following hypothesis is therefore posited:

H1: Perceived use of the bridging strategy by the government is positively associated with public engagement.

While S. Kim & Krishna's (2017a; 2017b) research focused on businesses and corporations, scholars of government communication too have found similar patterns in public perceptions. For instance, Liu and Horsley (2007) found poor public perception of a government's communication to constrain positive government-public relationships. Specifically, citizens' skepticism and cynicism about the intentions of the government's communication have been found to be associated with perceived use of propaganda and spin-doctoring (Graber, 2003). Propaganda refers to "the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 6). Other interchangeable terms for propaganda are used in political communication literature including political marketing (Strömbäck, 2007), spinning (Farnsworth, 2009) and packaging of politics (Franklin, 2004).

These descriptions of governments' communication strategies aimed at shaping public perception correspond well with our discussion of the buffering strategy, which also aims at creating a positive image of the organization, in this case the government, in the eyes of the citizens. It would follow, then, that when citizens perceive their government to be employing a communication strategy aimed at manipulating them into its (the government's) way of thinking, their levels of cynicism and skepticism about the government would be higher. In other words, if citizens feel that the government's communication strategy seeks to

push the government's agenda for its own benefit and not necessarily the benefit of the citizens, they may be disillusioned by the government, and may not want to engage with its programs and policies. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are posited:

H2: Perceived use of buffering strategy by the government is positively associated with public cynicism.

Perceived Authenticity. Organizations have encountered increasing demands for authenticity in marketing and communication (Shen & J.-N. Kim, 2012). The rise of the internet and social media has brought forth demands for transparency and openness, and such calls have been met with discussions of an authentic enterprise (Arthur W. Page Society, 2007; Shen & J.-N. Kim, 2012). A new approach to public relations proposed by Stoker & Tusinski (2006) emphasizes reconciliation and engagement, with the goal of communication to be to achieve authenticity. Although several definitions exist, authenticity generally refers to the genuineness and sincerity (Napoli et al., 2014). Shen and J.-N. Kim (2012) defined authenticity as the "extent to which one acts in accord with the true self" (p. 375). Perceived authenticity, then, refers to the extent to which publics (citizens) perceive an organization to be acting in accordance with its claims. Furthermore, "perceived authentic organizational behavior is characterized as truthful, transparent, and consistent" (Shen & J.-N. Kim, 2012, p. 375). In the context of governments' communication, perceived authenticity refers to the extent to which citizens believe the government to behave genuinely for their citizens, and match their promises and actions. Shen & J.-N. Kim (2012) found that perceived authenticity mediated the relationship between symmetrical communication and perceived organization-public relationship.

Stoker and Tusinski (2006) argue that authentic communication from a government aimed at the discovery of truth is the order of the hour, as is the reconciling of differences between the government and its citizens. The dialogic and mutual interest aspects of the

bridging strategy fit well with Stoker and Tusinksi's (2006) call for strategies to balance and reconcile differences between citizens and governments. Since an essential element of the bridging strategy is the use of dialogue to engage publics (Grunig, 2009; J.-N. Kim, Bach, & Clelland, 2007; J.-N. Kim & Ni, 2010), a logical extension of Shen and J.-N. Kim's (2012) work would be that the adoption of bridging strategy would be positively related to perceived authenticity. An organization which adopts bridging strategy is more likely to match its actions, such that its behaviors may be perceived as being genuine, truthful, and transparent in the publics' eyes.

Accordingly, if citizens perceive their government to employ the bridging strategy in their communication, it would follow that the citizens would perceive the government's behavior as being authentic and thus would be more willing to engage with the government. In contrast, if citizens perceive their government to use the buffering strategy in their communication, they would perceive the government as being inauthentic and manipulative, since they may feel the government's communication and image do not match its action. Additionally, when policy-making involves an interactive process between citizens and their government, it becomes a coproduction - beyond engagement and participation - where citizens' opinions and voices are reflected in the policy making process, and they become contributors to the policies (Bovaird, 2007). Thus, the sense of connection and perceived authenticity of government behavior among the citizens emerging from this interaction with the government, we propose, may increase public engagement with the government and decrease cynicism against it. Hence the following hypotheses are posited:

H3: Perceived use of bridging strategy by the government is positively associated with perceived authenticity of government behavior.

H4: Perceived use of buffering strategy by the government is negatively associated with perceived authenticity of government behavior.

H5: Perceived authenticity of government behavior is positively associated with public engagement.

H6: Perceived authenticity of government behavior is negatively associated with public cynicism.

Outcomes of Public Sentiment: Citizens' Positive and Negative Communication Behaviors

Although the public sentiments of engagement and cynicism are important for governments to understand and capture, they are abstract concepts by definition. It is equally important for governments to be able to identify the behavioral outcomes of public engagement and public cynicism, because these sentiments operationalized through behaviors may impact the government, its reputation, and its functioning. Previous research on engagement and cynicism has been preoccupied with explaining voting behavior, or turnout in the U. S. elections (e.g., Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Verba & Nie, 1972). The assumption behind such research was that engagement elicits voting while cynicism discourages it. Furthermore, such research focuses on the behavioral impact of political communication rather than government communication. Additionally, such a focus on voting and voter turnouts ignores the communicative aspects of citizens' behaviors toward the government.

Citizens' communication behaviors about their governments have long been a context for study in the social sciences. Much research has been dedicated to understanding public deliberation about social issues (e.g., Carpini, Cook & Jacobs, 2004), the media through which citizens might communicate with and about the government (e.g., Bimber, 1999), and the impacts of advertising and mass media on public communication (e.g., Cho, 2011) and political mobilization (e.g., Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). However, a discussion of overall communication strategy and how it might impact citizens' behavior is still missing

in strategic communication literature.

Additionally, although scholars have investigated publics' communication behaviors and their antecedents, these investigations have often been limited to information seeking behaviors (e.g., Cho, 2008; McClurg, 2004). And although citizens' information seeking behaviors are important for governments understand, another important communicative action of note is information transmission behavior about the government. Corporations and organizations have begun to understand the importance of their internal and external stakeholders' communication behaviors, especially given the increasing presence of social media in our daily lives.

Scholars have turned their attention to what factors influence stakeholders' voluntary information transmission behaviors about an organization, and have found an organization's communication strategy to predict the likelihood and valence of (positive or negative) communication behaviors (see megaphoning in J.-N. Kim & Rhee, 2011). J.-N. Kim and Rhee (2011) proposed the concept of megaphoning to explain employees' (positive or negative) information transmission behaviors to those outside of the organization. Although the original conceptualization of positive and negative megaphoning was examined in the context of employees, scholars have argued that the act of transmitting information about an organization need not be limited to employees but also be extended to other publics (e.g., J.-N. Kim & Krishna, 2014). Indeed, employees constitute an important public for an organization; therefore, rethinking megaphoning as publics' positive and negative information transmission behaviors about an organization may help expand the conceptualization to include employees and other publics. Such an expansion may also help address the operational limitations of word-of-mouth behaviors, which are generally limited to understanding consumers' information transmission behaviors (e.g., Ye, Law, Gu, & Chen, 2011).

In the context of governments and their citizens, megaphoning may take the form of proactive and engaged citizens forwarding their opinions of the governments and its actions on their social networks. Indeed, a rich body of literature has explored citizens' political participation on social media (e.g., Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011; Gil de Zuniga, Molyneux & Zheng, 2014). However, this notable body of work focuses on encouraging political participation and expression from citizens on social media, rather than understanding the valence of such participation, and what might encourage or inhibit positive or negative communication behaviors respectively. Proactive and engaged citizens may forward their opinions of the government and its actions to their social networks as a result of their subjective perceptions about government's communication strategies toward them and their affective reactions. It therefore behooves strategic communication scholars as well as government communicators to understand how governments wanting to function effectively might use communication strategy to encourage positive communication behaviors and discourage negative communication behaviors, i.e., megaphoning in this study.

Scholars have examined the impact of public sentiment, such as public engagement, on citizens' behavioral outcomes, and found a positive relationship (e.g., Men & Tsai, 2014). When trust is present in social exchanges between an organization and its publics, and the message source is perceived as trustworthy, publics are more likely to perform organizational citizenship behaviors (Andersson & Bateman, 1997). Kang (2014) explicated public engagement as a psychological state, and further suggested public engagement by organizations to be an affective motivator for behavioral, communicative outcomes, especially positive word-of-mouth behavior. Following this logic in the context of governments and their citizens, the next hypothesis is posted.

H7: Public engagement with the government is positively associated with positive megaphoning about the government.

In contrast, Shin and Han (2016) proposed that publics exhibit a negative emotional reaction as outcomes of their situational perceptions about certain problems and their emotional experience affects their situational motivation and communicative actions. J.-N. Kim and J.-Y. Kim (2009) also suggest that publics exhibit negative emotional responses to perceived problems and engage in online flaming behavior. Public cynicism is a negative attitude involving a negative affective component, such as frustration, disillusionment, and distrust toward persons or objects (Andersson & Bateman, 1997). Andersson & Bateman (1997) found cynicism to be negatively associated not only with intention to perform organizational citizenship behaviors but also positively associated with intention to reject to comply with demands when the source is untrustworthy. This indicates that cynicism is not necessarily related to passive behavior, but may be considered as the underlying psychological affective state that may trigger negative engagement behaviors. As negatively engaged people are actually involved and committed with their service relationship (i.e., government-citizen relationship), they may exhibit destructive behaviors, such as negative megaphoning or boycotting (Bowden et al., 2016; Juric, S. Smith, & Wilks, 2016; Hollebeek & Chen, 2014; Van Doorn et al., 2010). Negative engagement can “manifest through a customer’s negatively valenced immersion (cognition), passion (affect) and activation (behavior), resulting in negative brand attitude and electronic word-of-mouth” (Bowden, 2016, p. 262). As a corollary, then, public cynicism may encourage negative communication behaviors about the government from its citizens. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is posited:

H8: Public cynicism toward the government is positively associated with negative megaphoning about the government

Method

Sample and Data Collection

The hypotheses for this study were tested using survey data collected from South Korea. South Korea was chosen as the site for this study for several reasons. First, South Korea offers a great opportunity to explore citizens' perception of government communication and their sentiments toward the government. Korean citizens have gone through political turmoil for several decades. In recent years, several social and political issues, such as the Korean ferry tragedy (Song, Park, & Park, 2015) and corruption scandals, have caused conflicts between citizens and Korean government, resulting in citizens' negative emotions and disillusionment toward the government. During President Park's term, people reported their frustration with the Korean Government due to several reasons, including its lack of transparency in communication (Gallup Korea, 2014–2015). Of note is Korean media's "unique relationship with the political power structure" (Lin & Lim, 2002, p. 29), where media play a powerful role of representing the government's interests to publics, to influence public opinion, and to help the government maintain its ruling structure (Lin & Lim, 2002). Korean citizens have been active in driving dramatic changes in political environment, such as the impeachment of President Park. Additionally, the Korean government has enough technological advancement in its communication infrastructure to allow open and transparent communication, and yet, "the Korean political system has been known for its deeply rooted corruption" (Lin & Lim, 2002, p. 29).

A nationwide electronic mail survey was created and administered through a research company. Participants were recruited by the company in March 2015, when President Park was still serving, and it had been about one year since the ferry tragedy. Probability quota sampling method was used to ensure that the sample is the representative of the South Korean population. Population statistics from the Ministry of the Interior (2015) were referenced to set sampling quota for age and gender. Participants were given credit according to the individual reward policy of the survey company. A total of 1112 valid responses were

received, of which 50.3% of respondents (N = 559) were male and 49.7% female (N = 553). In terms of age distribution, 17.4% (N = 193) reported being between 20-29 years old, 19.7% (N = 219) were between 30-39 years old, 24.7% (N = 275) reported being between 40-49 years old, 24.4% (N = 271) were between 50-59 years old, and 13.8% (N = 154) of the respondents were over 60 years of age.

Instrumentation

We measured the following key constructs to test the proposed framework of two types of sentiments, their antecedents and outcomes (See Table 1). The survey was administered in Korean, and translated into English by the first author of this article. Perceived adoption of the communication strategy by the government was measured using items derived from S. Kim and Krishna's (2017a; 2017b) scales of buffering strategy and bridging strategy, after revising them for the purpose of this research. Public cynicism was measured using four statements adapted from Miller's (1974) items. Public engagement was measured using Kang's (2014) measures. Perceived authenticity was measured using Shen and J.-N. Kim's (2012) scales. Finally, to measure citizens' positive and negative megaphoning about the government, J.-N. Kim and Rhee's (2011) items of positive and negative megaphoning were adapted. Agreement with the statements was recorded on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). All variables reported were found to have an acceptable level of reliability (see Table 1; $\alpha > .70$). Bicorrelations among the variables were also examined (Table 2).

[Insert Table 1 and 2 here]

Data Analysis

To test the hypotheses posited in this study and to allow for the complex relationships between the numerous variables, SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) was chosen. SEM as a statistical technique is particularly useful to in situations where relationships between

variables are theoretically driven, as was the case with the study. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS 23 and IBM SPSS AMOS 22. Maximum likelihood (ML) procedures were selected for data analysis because these procedures tend to be more robust to violations of non-normality (Yuan & Bentler, 2007). Missing data were treated using Maximization (EM) imputation. Standardized path coefficients are reported in the results.

Kline's (1998) two-step process was followed to analyze the data using SEM. First, the measurement model including all the measures of analyzed variables was tested. Then, the structural equation model including all the hypothesized paths was used to test the possible relationships between the two communication strategies, authenticity, public engagement, public cynicism, and the communication behaviors. Hu and Bentler's (1999) joint criteria was used to evaluate the structural equation model wherein good data-model fit conditions are met when the structural model achieves either Comparative Fit Index (CFI) $\geq .96$ and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) ≤ 1.0 or Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) $\leq .06$ and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) $\leq .08$.

Results

Structural Equation Models for Tests of Mediation

The measurement model including all variables was tested first, and good model fit was found (CFI = .945, RMSEA = .048, SRMR = .070). To understand the roles of two types of public sentiments, we tested three structural equation models. The purpose of testing two models was to see whether the two types of sentiment fully mediated the relationship between communication strategies and megaphoning, or not. Holmbeck's (1997) procedure was used to test for mediation in structural equation modeling, wherein the three models were tested as follows: Model A, a model without mediators; Model B: a fully mediated model; Model C: a partially mediated model.

The results for the Model A are shown in Figure 1. The structural equation model provided good fit to the data (CFI = .957, SRMR = .068, RMSEA = .053, χ^2 [334] = 1366.938, $p < .001$) (Figure 1). In the Model B (Figure 2), we posited that public relations strategies will be related to citizens' megaphoning through public sentiments. Model B also resulted in good fit indices, χ^2 [879]=3272.211, $p < .001$, CFI=.941, SRMR=.073, and RMSEA=.050. Finally, Model C (Figure 3) posited that public relations strategies will also have direct effects on citizens' communication behaviors (i.e., megaphoning). Direct paths from the two strategies to their respectively valenced megaphoning were added. Model C also provided a good data fit, which is similar to the Model B(CFI=.942, SRMR=.071, RMSEA=.049, χ^2 [866] = 2731.962, $p < .001$). Both paths were significant in that there was a direct relationship between bridging and positive megaphoning ($\beta = .149$, $p < .001$) as well as between buffering and negative megaphoning ($\beta = .202$, $p < .001$). Then, Sobel tests were conducted to examine the mediation effect of public engagement between bridging strategy and positive megaphoning ($z = 6.033$, $p < .001$) and of public cynicism between buffering strategy and negative megaphoning ($z = 5.33$, $p < .001$). These results show that the mediation effects of public engagement and public cynicism were significant. Model C was adopted as the final model for hypothesis testing given the statistical significance of the partial mediation.

[Insert Figure 1, 2, and 3]

The first hypothesis predicted that perceived use of the bridging strategy would be positively associated with public engagement (H1). A significant relationship was found between the perceived use of the bridging strategy and public engagement (H1: $\beta = .254$, $p < .001$), supporting H1. Next, it was predicted that the perceived use of buffering strategy would be positively associated with public cynicism (H2). H2 was supported (H2: $\beta = .310$, $p < .001$). The third hypothesis posited that there is a positive association between bridging

strategy and perceived authenticity of government behavior. H3 was strongly supported with a coefficient of .773 ($p < .001$). Next, it was predicted that the perceived use of the buffering strategy will be negatively associated with perceived authenticity of government behavior (H4). This hypothesis too was supported ($\beta = -.110, p < .001$). Then, perceived authenticity was predicted to have a positive relationship with public engagement (H5) and a negative relationship with public cynicism (H6). H5 and H6 were both supported (H5: $\beta = .638, p < .001$; H6: $\beta = -.353, p < .001$). Finally, public engagement was expected to have a positive relationship with citizens' positive megaphoning about the government (H7) while public cynicism was expected to have a positive relationship with citizens' negative megaphoning about the government (H8). H7 and H8 were both supported (H7: $\beta = .794, p < .001$; H8: $\beta = .297, p < .001$). These results indicate that when people are engaged with the government, they also report undertaking positive communication behaviors as a way of supporting the government. However, when people are cynical about the government, they may engage in negative communication behaviors about it.

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to unpack the role played by citizens' perceptions of their government's communication strategy in impacting their positive and negative sentiment toward the government and communication behaviors (megaphoning) about it. Results from a nationally representative sample of citizens in South Korea, a country that has been mired in several political scandals over the last few years, revealed that citizens' perceptions of governmental use of bridging strategy were associated with positive sentiment, i.e., public engagement with the government, as well as positive megaphoning about it. Conversely, citizens who perceived the government to use the buffering strategy to engage with them tended to be cynical of the government and engage in negative communication behaviors about it. Furthermore, perceived adoption of the bridging strategy was also

associated with citizens' perception of the government being authentic, whereas perceived use of the buffering strategy was negatively associated with perceived authenticity. The implications of this study for strategic communication scholarship and practice are discussed next.

First, this study contributes to the body of knowledge in strategic communication in the context of communication strategies adopted by the public sector, particularly the government, toward its citizens, by proposing a model of two public sentiments, their antecedents and outcomes. The suggested model was based on the idea of citizens as *actors* who can interpret and evaluate communication strategies adopted by the government toward them, as well as engage in proactive actions as a result. Several studies in the past have looked at the relationships between citizens' media exposure and their attitude toward the government (e.g., Boukes & Boomgaarden, 2014; Leung & Lee, 2014). And although several studies have investigated how media relations strategies are used to influence public opinion (e.g., Strömbäck & Van Aelst, 2013), few have investigated citizens' *perceptions* of communication strategies, and their attendant sentiments and behaviors. In this study, by reconceptualizing citizens as being active communicators who exhibit diverse communication behaviors (vs. prior assumptions of passive message receivers primarily seeking information) this study attempts to add a new dimension in our understanding of citizens' behaviors in the context of government-citizen relations and governments' strategic communication.

Additionally, a broad perspective was taken to understanding communication strategies in this research. The conceptualizations of communication strategies in previous political communication research have been limited to message framing or imaging strategies to elicit certain behaviors from people who are exposed to strategic news or political advertising. However, communication strategies have evolved beyond such symbolic

approaches (S. Kim & Krishna, 2017a). By using the two paradigms of communication strategies – interpretive, symbolic paradigm, and behavioral, strategic paradigm - in this study, we were able to exhibit a holistic picture of how citizens perceive the communication strategies used by their government, how they feel about them, and what behaviors they may engage in as a result. Juxtaposing and testing two opposite public sentiments with respectively valenced communication behaviors (megaphoning) in the model allowed us to see the dynamics of citizens' emotional reactions to their own perceptions of the government's communication strategies toward them.

Furthermore, this study adds to strategic communication scholarship by presenting a theoretically driven explication of positive and negative public sentiment. Although communication scholarship has focused on public engagement and negative engagement as behavioral outcomes of organizational strategy (e.g., Bowden et al, 2014), such operationalizations ignore the affective components of public engagement (Kang, 2014). In this study we complement Kang's (2014) explication of public engagement as a positive, affective psychological state by presenting a conceptualization of public cynicism as the negative affect underlying negative engagement.

Not only do the results of this research help in theory-building about government communication, we believe that the essence of this research and its results is in their contribution to key applied issues faced by government communicators almost on a daily basis. Several scholars have pointed out the dearth of research on public sector communication (e.g., Graber, 2002; Lee, 2007; Liu & Horsley, 2007). Based on the results of this study, we recommend to government communicators to think critically about their communication strategies, carefully think through their tactics and plans, and as far as possible employ a bridging, relationally oriented strategy to communicate with citizens. Focusing on a bridging strategy versus a buffering strategy will help governments not only

successfully develop key policies, build relationships with their citizens, but also promote positive word-of-mouth behaviors from citizens about their government. The importance of governments and regulatory agencies building trust with their citizens is particularly underscored by the eroding trust in these institutions, particularly in relation to key social issues (e.g., Krishna, 2017).

Governments often may be tempted to use a buffering strategy to manipulate their citizens' perceptions and opinions by not disseminating complete and accurate information about issues that affect their citizens significantly. Governments' lack of transparency, secrecy, and spin-doctoring may elicit citizens' criticisms of government (Gelders & Ihlen, 2010). Citizens' misplaced perceptions about the government and its policies may lead to confusion and draw further ire from citizens (Gelders & Ihlen, 2010). In addition, given the wide use and acceptance of social media as a news source as well as a means of information dissemination, citizens can put pressure on the government to come up with a better communication and action plan to deal with issues. Thanks to social media, lay persons have the added capability to evaluate the quality of the government's communication strategy, and they may react with their positive or negative communication behaviors according to their interpretation. It is not just a matter of media message frames anymore. For South Korean citizens, the new Moon administration has committed to working on its "actions to improve communication with the public" (Choi, 2017, para. 15).

This study is not without limitations. First, this study is applicable only in South Korea until replication studies in other countries are conducted and yield similar patterns. Second, other possible factors (e.g., leadership) may have impacted public engagement and public cynicism beyond citizens' perception of the government's communication strategies. Negative organization-public relationship outcomes, including distrust, should also be examined in the context of government communication. Moreover, investigations of citizens'

negative behavioral outcomes could be extended to activism behavior, such as sending an online letter/email to a government official/representative, signing a petition, and participating in demonstration against government, and even voting intentions.

Then, in designing our survey, we treated the “government” as the broader entity writ large, rather than specifying the executive branch, specific leaders, political parties, and so on. Future research may seek to understand citizens’ perceptions of communication strategies adopted by different branches of government and/or individuals. Furthermore, the timing of the data collection must be noted: data collection was conducted in March 2015, when the sitting president’s approval ratings had been exhibiting a steady downward trend since 2014. We have not investigated what specific small and big political issues might have occurred throughout the year of 2014 to influence these numbers.

The effect of communication strategy employed by the government may well vary depending on the social and political issues or situations people face. However, our study considered that people may have overall impressions or perceptions about the communication strategy used by their government. Strategy/strategic management literature (e.g., Mintzberg, 1977, 1987) discusses how organizations tend to be consistent in their strategy formulation, meaning that citizens may have developed perceptions about their government’s communication strategy over time. We therefore believe that our proposition of citizens’ perceptions of their government’s communication strategy impacting their sentiment, and resulting communication behavior about the government to be important for the theory and practice for government communication. While we hesitate to conjecture on the validity of the results in contexts other than South Korea, we are confident that the trends exhibited in our results will help government communicators take more informed decisions about their communication strategy.

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Tables

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics*

Variable Name (Cronbach's alpha)		Mean	SD	Item
Bridging Strategy ($\alpha=.930$)	BG1	2.30	1.045	I feel our government's decision making process reflects the citizens' needs or interests
	BG2	2.71	1.093	I feel that our government believes that making and revising its decisions and behaviors is important to address the issues of its citizens
	BG3	2.41	1.076	Our government believes that it is important to conform to the expectations of its citizens
	BG4	2.49	1.041	When creating strategic messages in its public relations programs, our government reflects public's needs on them
	BG5	2.70	1.117	Building and nurturing relationships with its citizens is the key to our government's public relations program
	BG6	2.71	1.116	The purpose of our government's public relations program is to develop mutual understanding between the government and citizens
	BG7	2.73	1.062	The purpose of our government's public relations program is to adapt the attitudes and behavior of government as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of citizens
Buffering Strategy ($\alpha=.859$)	BF1	3.36	1.100	The creation and dissemination of strategic messages to influence public perception of the government as the government wishes is the key to our government's public relations programs.
	BF2	3.84	1.050	When creating strategic messages in its public relations program, I think our government values effective advocating the position of our government more than reflecting the needs of citizens.
	BF3	3.63	1.022	I think our government's public relations program is quite analogous to image management or image creation.
	BF4	3.66	1.085	The role of our government's communication program is to provide explanation and rationalization for its activities and to create an image that its activities are legitimate although they might not be legitimate.
	BF5	3.67	1.078	I think our government believes that public relations is to protect the government from public opposition or negative public behaviors, by creating favorable impressions of its behaviors although its behaviors are not necessarily decent.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics (continued)*

Variable (Cronbach's alpha)		Mean	SD	Item
Public Cynicism ($\alpha=.873$)	PC1	3.48	1.157	Our government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves
	PC2	4.03	1.040	People in the government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes
	PC3	3.94	1.022	People running the government don't seem to know what they are doing
	PC4	3.86	1.040	Most of the people running government are crooked
Public Engagement (Affective Commitment) ($\alpha=.935$)	AC1	2.30	1.090	I feel emotionally attached to our government
	AC2	2.19	1.061	I do feel like a part of the family with our government
	AC3	2.23	1.096	I do feel a strong sense of belonging to our government
Public Engagement (Positive Affectivity) ($\alpha=.813$)	PA1	3.02	1.124	I am interested in our government's activities
	PA2	1.83	.904	I am excited about our government
	PA3	1.94	.958	I am enthusiastic about our government
	PA4	2.03	1.026	I am proud of our government
Public Engagement (Empowerment) ($\alpha=.903$)	EP1	2.38	1.057	I believe I can make differences in what happens in our government
	EP2	2.65	1.034	I am determined to be involved for the development of our government
	EP3	2.39	1.097	I believe I have a great deal of control over the decision-making process of our government
	EP4	2.63	1.091	I am confident about my abilities to improve our government
	EP5	2.45	1.083	I believe I can collaborate with our government as a valuable partner

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics (continued)*

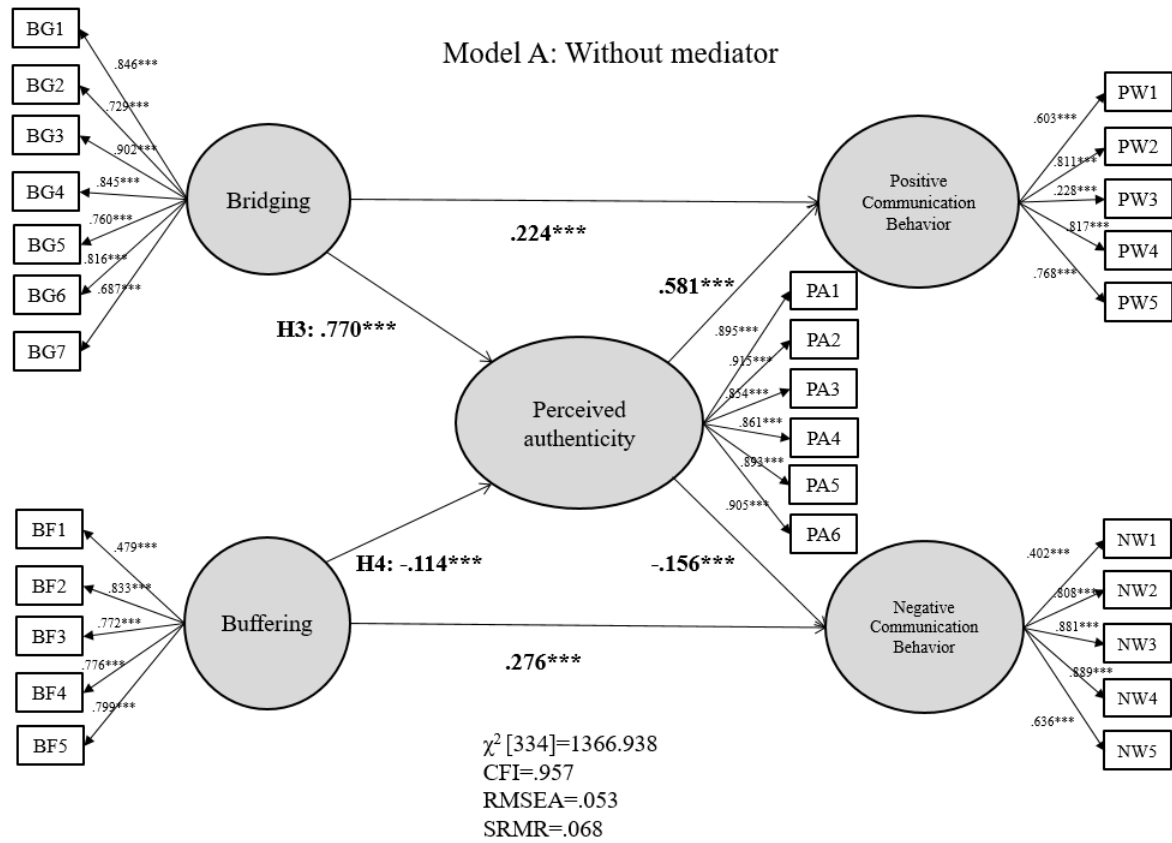
Variable (Cronbach's alpha)		Mean	SD	Item
Perceived Authenticity ($\alpha=.958$)	PA1	1.93	.924	Our government always tells the truth.
	PA2	2.08	1.013	I believe that our government's actions are genuine.
	PA3	2.08	1.021	I feel that our government is willing to admit to mistakes when they are made.
	PA4	2.13	.979	I feel that our government's behavior matches its core values.
	PA5	2.05	.978	Our government's beliefs and actions are consistent.
	PA6	1.98	.973	I think our government matches the rhetoric with its action.
Positive Megaphoning behavior ($\alpha=.784$)	PW1	2.00	1.138	I have experiences posting some positive notes about our government in the Internet
	PW2	2.89	1.252	I talked things to neighbors and friends that our government does better than other governments
	PW3	3.02	1.165	I cannot but speaking up when I see ignorant but biased view about our government
	PW4	3.12	1.171	When our government was in trouble: I was proactive and aggressive in defending our government during the trouble
	PW5	3.65	1.195	When our government was in trouble: I was upset when meeting those people accused our government as bad government
Negative Megaphoning Behavior ($\alpha=.848$)	NW1	3.60	1.138	I have experiences posting some negative notes about our government in the Internet
	NW2	3.03	1.182	I talked things to neighbors and friends that our government does poorer than other governments
	NW3	2.80	1.154	I feel motivated to criticize our government and public services to people I meet regularly
	NW4	2.92	1.142	When our government was in trouble: I talked how poor our government handled the situation to my family
	NW5	3.31	1.136	When our government was in trouble: I felt our government and top officials deserved such troubles because of its malpractice

Table 2. *Correlations*

	Bridging	Buffering	Positive comm	Negative comm	Engagement	Cynicism	Authenticity
Bridging	1						
Buffering	-.424**	1					
Positive comm	.540**	-.359**	1				
Negative comm	-.259**	.276**	.024	1			
Engagement	.664**	-.279**	.645**	-.114**			
Cynicism	-.428**	.447**	-.320**	.375**	-.375**	1	
Authenticity	.765**	-.431**	.612**	-.239**	.726**	-.472**	1

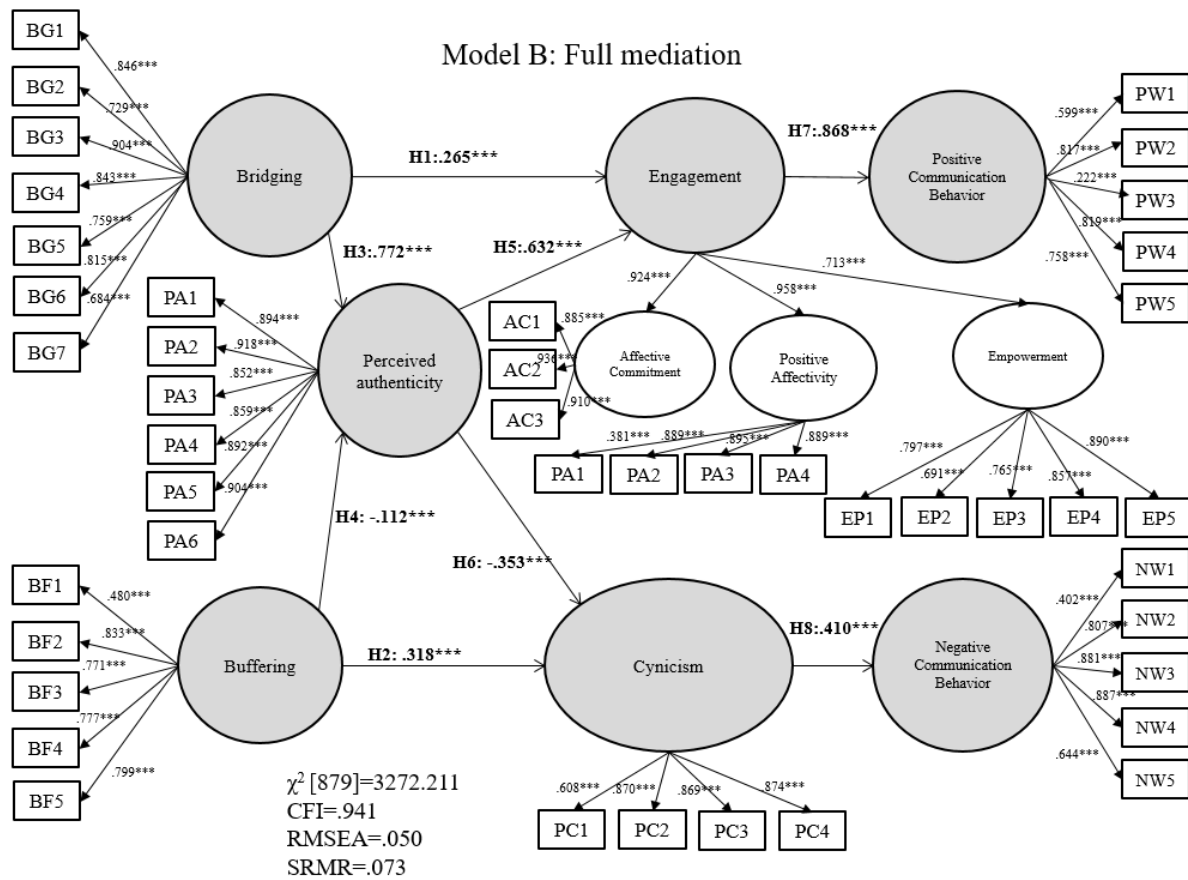
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figures



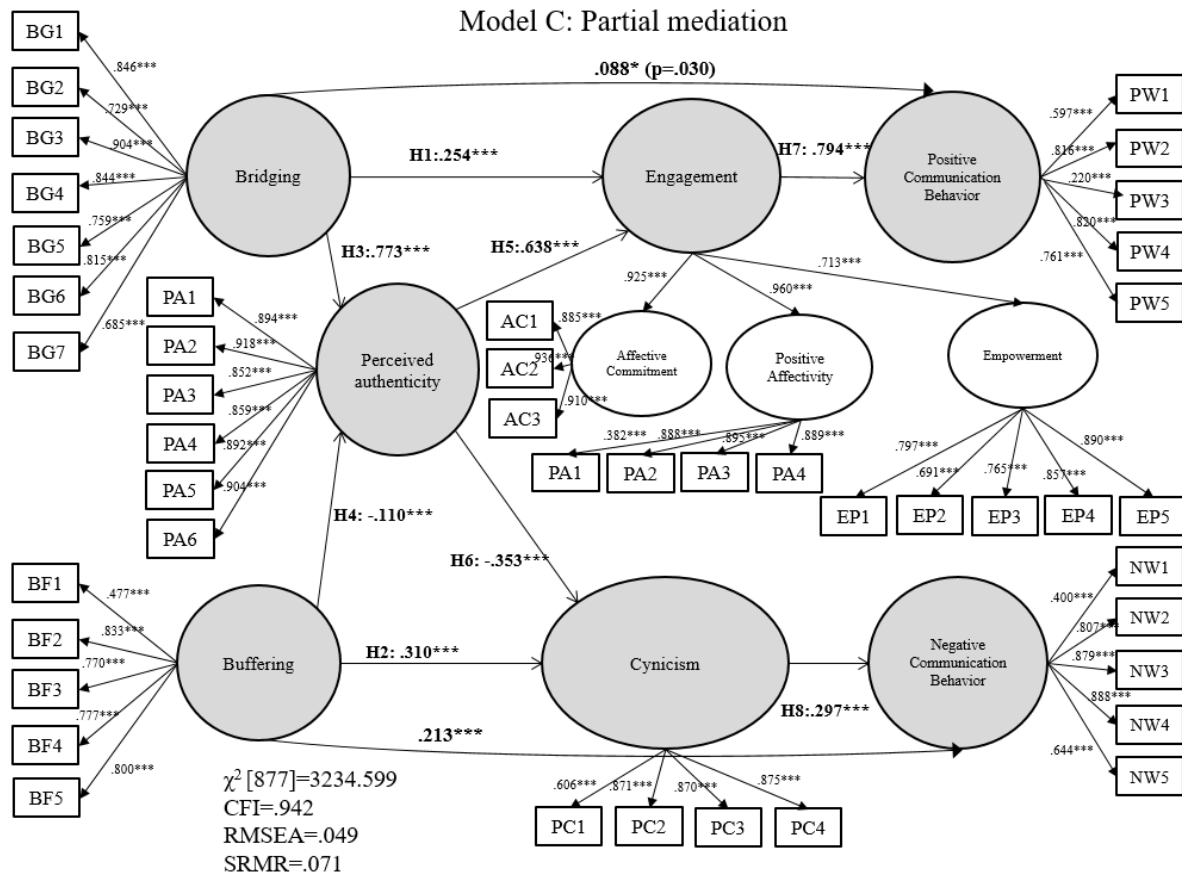
Note: *** denotes $p < .001$

Figure 1. Results of Structural Equation Model Testing (Model A)



Note: *** denotes $p < .001$

Figure 2. Results of Structural Equation Model Testing (Model B)



Note: *** denotes $p < .001$

Figure 3. Results of Structural Equation Model Testing (Model C)