

MASTER'S THESIS

My word against yours: point of view in health messages

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Date of Award:
2020

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ABSTRACT

Building on existing research on self-referencing persuasion and narrative health communication, this study examined the persuasive effects of a linguistic message strategy—narrative point of view—and assessed the effects of first-person point of view as compared to third-person point of view. Web-based experimental results (N = 222) showed that the first-person point of view brought about higher levels of character identification and perceived susceptibility than third-person point of view, while the two points of view were equally effective in evoking transportation, self-referencing, and perceived severity. The results also indicated that self-referencing fully mediated the positive relationship between transportation/identification and perceived susceptibility. Yet self-referencing showed no significant impact on perceived severity, whereas more transportation/identification directly led to more perceived severity. Theoretical and practical recommendations are provided for health practitioners, and social media health campaigns.

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