

DOCTORAL THESIS

The impact of news text, news frames and individual schemata on news comprehension

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**The Impact of News Text, News Frames and Individual Schemata on
News Comprehension**

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Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

News comprehension is a process through which audience members grasp the essential meanings of news events as narrated by the media. This study explicates the news comprehension construct by examining three of its key components: news memory, news understanding and news knowledge. These components, in this study, are treated as conceptually distinct but operationally related entities. This study clarifies the concepts and measures of news memory and news understanding, and proposes the hypotheses about the factors that influence the two processes separately. Four experiments were conducted to test the hypotheses in analysis of two types of issues with varying degree of complexity, one as entertainment news, the other as economic news. Results demonstrated that education, rather than the manifestation of news narratives, played an important role in influencing news memory. Two types of news frames (i.e., generic frame and issue-specific frame) together with individual schemata affected how audiences interpreted news stories. Meanwhile, individual schema was regarded as the dominant factor. This study also discusses the relationship among news memory, understanding and individual schemata. Results showed that the former two were not necessarily linear correlation, and individual schema was a stronger predictor than news memory to lead to audiences' news understanding. Based on the findings of news comprehension research, the contributions and implications to general media effects research are discussed.

Key words: news comprehension, news memory, news understanding, individual schema, news frame

TABLE OF CONTENT

DECLARATION	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENT	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Statements of the Problems.....	1
1.2 Purpose of the Study	4
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1 The Concept of News Comprehension	6
2.1.1 <i>Previous Studies on News Comprehension</i>	6
2.1.2 <i>Conceptual Definition of News Comprehension</i>	9
2.2 News Memory.....	12
2.2.1 <i>Conceptual Definition of Memory</i>	12
2.2.2 <i>Measures of Memory</i>	13
2.2.3 <i>Factors Influencing Memory</i>	15
2.3 News Understanding	20
2.3.1 <i>Conceptual Definition of Understanding</i>	21
2.3.2 <i>Measures of News Understanding</i>	22
2.3.3 <i>The Nature of News</i>	24
2.3.4 <i>Definition of News Frames</i>	26
2.3.5 <i>The Role of Individual Schemata</i>	28
2.3.6 <i>Individual Factors</i>	32

2.4 The Relationship between Memory and Understanding	32
CHAPTER 3 METHODS	36
3.1 Overview and Design.....	36
3.2 Participants.....	36
3.3 Materials	37
3.3.1 <i>Tse and Cheung Story</i>	37
3.3.2 <i>Personal Tax Story</i>	38
3.4 Experiment 1	40
3.4.1 Procedure	40
3.5 Experiment 2.....	40
3.5.1 Design and Subjects	41
3.5.2 Construction of Stimulus Materials	41
3.5.3 Measurement.....	42
3.5.4 Procedures.....	44
3.6 Experiment 3.....	45
3.6.1 Design and Subjects	45
3.6.2 Construction of Stimulus Materials	45
3.6.3 Measurement.....	47
3.6.4 Procedures.....	47
3.7 Experiment 4.....	47
3.7.1 Design and Subjects	48
3.7.2 Construction of Stimulus Materials	48
3.7.3 Measurement.....	50
3.7.4 Procedure	54
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS	56

4.1 Experiment 1	56
4.2 Experiment 2	57
4.2.1 <i>Tse and Cheung Story</i>	57
4.2.2 <i>Personal Tax Story</i>	59
4.3 Experiment 3	61
4.3.1 <i>Tse and Cheung Story</i>	61
4.3.2 <i>Personal Tax Story</i>	63
4.4 Experiment 4	65
4.4.1 <i>Understanding: Tse and Cheung Story</i>	66
4.4.2 <i>Understanding: Personal Tax Story</i>	74
4.4.3 <i>Relationship between Memory and Understanding</i>	79
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION	86
5.1 Summary	86
5.2 Implication	94
5.3 Limitations	100
REFERENCE.....	102
APPENDIX 1 STIMULUS MATERIALS FOR EXPERIMENT 2	111
APPENDIX 2 STIMULUS MATERIALS FOR EXPERIMENT 3	116
APPENDIX 3 STIMULUS MATERIALS FOR EXPERIMENT 4	122
APPENDIX 4 QUESTIONNAIRE.....	135
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	142